

Japan

Recognize 'black rain' victims

75th Anniversary of end of World War II

Aug 15, 2020, is the 75th anniversary of Japan's surrender, which ended World War II. The Associated Press plans the following coverage before the anniversary. Details of the schedule and spot coverage on Aug 15 are not yet confirmed. Playbook and AP Coverage Plan will have the most updated information.



The modern legacy of a dark chapter in Japan's history, when hundreds of thousands of people were brought from the Korean Peninsula and other Asian nations to work in logging, in mines, on farms and in factories as forced labor, lives on in the companies that came to dominate the Japanese economy after World War II. Many of those companies are still facing demands for compensation that they say were settled by treaty decades ago. Critics say Japan has failed to fully atone for wrongs dating back to the late 1890s that overshadow its relations with its neighbors even today.

About 400 aging South Koreans are desperately seeking traces of husbands and fathers still lost to Japan's brutal rule of the Korean Peninsula. Shin Yun-sun has spent most of her life pestering government officials, chasing records and searching burial grounds for a trace of a father she never met. Lee Gwang-nam bears a striking resemblance to his missing father, who was conscripted the same day as Shin's father. The conscripts were sent to Sakhalin Island, their fates lost to war, the split between the Koreans and Cold War animosities. Their relatives still seek closure after decades of emotional distress and economic hardship.

Seventy-five years after the end of World War II, more than 1 million Japanese war dead are scattered throughout Asia, where the legacy of Japanese aggression still hampers recovery efforts. The missing Japanese make up about half of the 2.4 million soldiers who died overseas during Japan's military rampage across Asia in the early 20th century. As the anniversary for the end of the Pacific War arrives Saturday, there is little hope that these remains will ever be recovered, let alone identified and returned to grieving family members. Upcoming, 800 words, photo.

The hard part for Fumie Sato came only when the war ended. Hours after she heard Emperor Hirohito's Aug 15 radio speech declaring Japan's defeat, she began preparations for an honorable suicide with her family. Her father saved her when, unlike their neighbors, he decided his family must live. She almost became an orphan two years later when her little sister died of illness after their mother and little brother took an earlier boat back to Japan.

For years, orphans in Japan were punished just for surviving the war. They were bullied. They were called trash, sometimes rounded up by police and put in cages, or sent to institutions or sold for labor. They were abandoned by their own government. They were easy targets for rampant abuse and discrimination. Now, 75 years after the end of the World War II, some have broken decades of silence to begin speaking of recovery, survival, pain - and demands for justice. The stories they've shared with The Associated Press ahead of Saturday's anniversary of the end of the Pacific War underscore both the lingering pain of the war for the children who lived it and Japan's broader failure to face up to parts of its wartime past.

Intelligence

A Tokyo University lab is using artificial intelligence to add color to historic wartime photographs. Their methods include the latest AI technologies, but also traditional methods, going door-to-door interviewing survivors who track back memories to color their family photographs. The team has brought to life hundreds of black-and-white wartime photographs and those of post-war devastation.

Japan marks the 75th anniversary of its surrender at the end of World War II. Emperor Naruhito and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to speak at the national ceremony.

The bombs stopped falling 75 years ago, but it is entirely possible - crucial even, some argue - to view what's now happening in Northeast Asia, with its world-beating economies, enviable cultural traditions and simmering political and military standoffs, through the prism of the Pacific War. Even as the tangle of webs interlinking the countries in the region grows denser, the potential for an unraveling catastrophe, from a trade war to a military skirmish to a dangerous, unchecked arms buildup, looms as large now as it has any time since 1945. Each of these points of friction is inextricably linked to WWII.

People gather at the Yasukuni shrine to honor Japanese war dead, including 14 convicted war criminals.

In another development, Japan's government and the city of Hiroshima have appealed a court ruling ordering them to certify dozens of people who were exposed to radioactive "black rain" in the aftermath of the 1945 US atomic bomb attack.

The appeal comes after the Hiroshima District Court for the first time on July 30 recognized the "black rain" victims outside of a government-set physical boundary used as a basis for deciding survivors' eligibility for medical benefits. Both the city and the prefectural government joined the appeal.

Health Minister **Katsunobu Kato** said Wednesday that the government appealed because the ruling was "not based on sufficient scientific evidence."

Kato said, however, that his department will start its own scientific examination to consider expanding the "black rain" zone in Hiroshima to address the request from city and prefectural officials.

The court ruled that 84 plaintiffs who were outside the zone had developed radiation-induced illnesses and should be certified as atomic bomb victims.

The US dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug 6, 1945, killing 140,000 people and almost destroying the entire city. A second US atomic attack on Nagasaki killed another 74,000 before Japan's surrender on Aug 15, ending World War II.

The Hiroshima plaintiffs were in areas northwest of ground zero, where radioactive "black rain" fell hours after the bomb was dropped.

They have developed illnesses such as cancer and cataracts linked to radiation after they were exposed to the rain, not only that which fell but also by consuming water and food in the area that was contaminated.

The plaintiffs and their supporters asked Hiroshima not to appeal. City officials had indicated their intention to accept the ruling, but Mayor Kazumi Matsui said Wednesday that they could not reverse the government decision to appeal.



Tourists stroll by the Sacre Coeur basilica in the Montmartre district Aug 10 in Paris. People are required to wear a mask outdoors starting on Monday in the most frequented areas of the French capital. The move comes as the country sees an uptick in virus infections. (AP)

Coronavirus

Upturn in new cases force delay in lifting restrictions

Scientists question govt's virus response

LONDON, Aug 12, (AP) — As Britain navigates its way through the coronavirus pandemic, the government insists that science is guiding its decisions. But a self-appointed group of independent experts says it sees little in Britain's response that is evidence-based, especially after an uptick in new cases forced a delay in lifting more lockdown restrictions.

Unlike in other European countries where debate has raged over how to control COVID-19, the scientific opposition to Britain's approach is notably organized: the independent group sits almost in parallel to the government's own scientists, assessing the same outbreak indicators but publicly identifying failings and inconsistencies.

The group has issued detailed reports on almost every major issue tackled in recent weeks: contact tracing, reopening schools, restaurants and pubs, and relaxing social distancing. And at nearly every turn, the independent experts have essentially pointed out glaring mistakes in the government's approach.

"There is no long-term strategy, as far as we can see," said University College London virology professor Deenan Pillay, who advised the government during the 2009-10 swine flu pandemic and is a member of the independent group.

"It is the role of scientists and those with expertise to hold the government to account," he said.

The British government established a Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, also known as SAGE, as the coronavirus exploded in China in January to address the emerging crisis. Its membership was kept secret apart from a few exceptions. That troubled David King, a former chief government scientific adviser, who then created an "Independent SAGE" in early May.

On the day of the shadow group's first public meeting, the government finally released a list naming the scientists giving it advice. Cabinet ministers have since dropped giving regular coronavirus briefings and seem to have shifted focus to restarting the economy, while the independent experts hold weekly news conferences analyzing the government's latest virus indicators.

Mark Walport, a SAGE member and

former chief government scientific adviser, said the rival group risks confusing the public with their assessments and that scientists should not be making policy decisions. But psychologist Susan Michie said she and other scientists were frustrated by what they perceived as their lack of impact with officials.

"What's depressing about it is they don't seem to be learning lessons or showing any evidence they're listening to (the World Health Organization) or to scientific advice," Michie, who serves both on a SAGE sub-committee and with Independent SAGE.

Shortly before Britain reopened some schools on June 1, Independent SAGE published a report warning against it because the country did not have the necessary contact tracing system in place. Some schools did reopen, but many will stay closed until September.

Several weeks later, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that social distancing guidelines would be reduced from 2 metres to 1 metre, including indoors. Independent SAGE, however, said the rates of COVID-19 transmission were still too high for such a change, noting that 97% of "super-spreading" events began in indoor environments.

And at a July 24 press conference, Independent SAGE scientist Christina Pagel said that given the risks of the virus spreading among people exercising indoors, she didn't think it was safe to reopen gyms. The next day, Britain reopened gyms across the country.

While the group's criticism of government policy has mostly been couched in dry, scientific language, that was not the case when the U.K. imposed its first local lockdown in late June as infections surged in the central England town of Leicester.

Independent SAGE called that "a foreseeable crisis of the government's own making" and said that by enforcing new restrictions without consulting local authorities, it risked "creating uncertainty, dissent and even disorder."

The group has called for the government to radically change its approach to COVID-19, saying the aim should be to wipe out the virus in the U.K. instead of allowing it to linger in the population at low levels. The leader of Scotland, First Minis-

ter Nicola Sturgeon, recently adopted that strategy and is aiming to convince the other U.K. countries to do the same.

"We fear that the government has given up trying to control the pandemic further," the independent scientists wrote in a July report. They said Britain should try to eliminate the disease completely, which would require measures like an aggressive contact tracing system and tighter restrictions on international travelers.

"What we are doing is deeply unpopular in the government because it's a reminder that the virus hasn't gone away," said London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine professor Martin McKee, an Independent SAGE member.

Asked whether the government thought Independent SAGE was helpful, the prime minister's spokesman, James Slack, said, "Scientists are making regular public comments and contributions to the discussion, and the government's advisers will take any views into account."

Some experts said that even if the British government hasn't directly acknowledged the recommendations of the independent group, they are having an effect.

"The government might be more careful if they know they are going to be so closely scrutinized," Michael Head, a public health expert at the University of Southampton, said.

Britain's decision to halt the easing of its pandemic restrictions suggested the independent experts were right about the dangers of exiting lockdown too quickly, according to Head. Earlier this month, the government delayed reopening venues like bowling alleys, skating rinks and casinos, citing recent estimates of about 4,900 new cases per day, up from about 2,000 daily cases in June.

Independent SAGE member Pagel, who is also a professor of operational research at University College London, said the group's objective is ultimately not to criticize, but to offer alternative strategies.

"I think our approach of a more gradual opening would have reduced the need for the new restrictions," she said, referring to some of the recently adopted controls to stop the surge of COVID-19. "We try not to be negative about everything, but at the moment, it's hard not to be negative about what the government's been doing."



Independent SAGE scientist Christina Pagel poses for a photo. The British government insists that science is guiding its decisions as the country navigates its way through the coronavirus pandemic. But a self-appointed group of independent experts led by a former government chief adviser says it sees little evidence-based about Britain's response. (AP)



Castillo



Macron

Europe

French aid worker shot: A French aid worker was shot to death on a rural highway in Guatemala, where he had led agricultural projects for indigenous Mayan communities for 20 years.

French President **Emmanuel Macron** denounced the killing of Benoit Pierre Amadee Maria, who represented Agronomists and Veterinarians Without Borders, saying in a tweet Tuesday that his "humanistic, fraternal commitment pays honor to France." The killing Monday came the day after six French aid workers were killed in a giraffe park in the West African country of Niger.

Guatemalan Vice-President **Guillermo Castillo** called for clarity on what happened, saying in a statement that "Amadee Maria dedicated a large part of his life to promoting community development in favor of vulnerable populations."

Amadee Maria was killed Monday afternoon on a rural road in the village of Pacam, the National Civil Police said in a statement. He was traveling in a van when he was attacked by unknown individuals who shot him several times, it said. Two police teams in the area are investigating the case, police spokesman Edwin Monroy told The Associated Press. (AP)



Masks mandatory: The wearing of face mask in the public is now compulsory in all of the Brussels-Capital region from Wednesday, Rudi Vervoort the region's minister-president, said in a statement.

He explained that the new measure was taken after the number of confirmed coronavirus infections over the past seven days passed the threshold of 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in the Brussels region.

From now on, everyone aged 12 or older is obliged to wear a mouth mask that covers the nose and mouth in all public places and private places accessible to the public throughout the Brussels-Capital Region, he said.

Police in the 19 communes of Belgiums capital have been instructed to implement the new measure. (KUNA)



Govt to tighten measures: The Dutch health minister said Tuesday he plans to introduce

mandatory home quarantine for people identified by local authorities as having been in close contact with somebody infected with the coronavirus, and for travelers returning from high-risk countries.

Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said in a letter to lawmakers that mandatory quarantine could be imposed if people refuse to isolate voluntarily.

The move comes amid rising infection rates in the Netherlands and an unwillingness among some people to adhere to social distancing measures and cooperate with contact tracing.

"Mandatory quarantine is a tough measure but justified. Quarantine stops the spread of the virus

so sticking to the rules is crucial," De Jonge wrote.

He added that he also wants to introduce mandatory quarantine for travelers returning from countries considered a high risk for infections. It is not clear how soon such a measure can be implemented. De Jonge said that the move will require a law change.

The Dutch coronavirus quarantine currently stands at 14 days.

Earlier Tuesday, the Dutch public health institute said there were 4,036 new confirmed infections in the last week, 1,448 more than the week earlier. (AP)



PM warns of new levels:



Saki Morioki, 5 years old, looks at paper lanterns floating along the Motoyasu River in front of the Atomic Bomb Dome, on Aug 6 in Hiroshima, western Japan. Japan marked the 75th anniversary Thursday of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The official lantern event was cancelled to the public due to coronavirus but a small group of local representatives released some lanterns. (AP)

French Prime Minister Jean Castex on Tuesday issued a stark warning that the COVID-19 epidemic was "going in the wrong direction" and new alert levels would imminently be reached.

Speaking on television from the southern city of Montpellier, Castex warned that "everyone was responsible" for countering the spread of the virus and he announced more sanitary and repressive measures in view of the discipline that has been creeping into society here.

Castex indicated that there are now 2,000 cases per day, more than double the daily average in recent weeks. From Aug 1-7, France reported 10,800 new cases of COVID-10.

"The alert level will be reached this week," the Prime Minister warned, explaining that 50 cases per 100,000 people was an alert threshold.

French President Emmanuel Macron chaired earlier Tuesday a Defence Council meeting to discuss the worsening situation, demonstrated by rising numbers of hospitalisations and admissions to Intensive Care Units (ICU). (KUNA)

French to stop migrants: Britain's immigration minister said after meeting with French officials Tuesday that the two countries are looking to put new muscle into their efforts to stop a record number of migrants successfully crossing the English Channel from France to Britain in small boats.

Chris Philip said the UK and France were working at "completely cutting" the Channel route

with what he called a "comprehensive action plan."

Philip, who spoke to Sky News, provided no details. There was no comment from the French about Philip's meeting with Interior Ministry officials in Paris. Philip was joined in the talks by Britain's newly appointed Channel threat commander, Dan O'Mahoney. O'Mahoney is to return to France next week to continue talks, Philip said.

More than 650 migrants have reached Britain so far in August - including 235 who made the 33-kilometer (about 20-mile) crossing in a single day last week. (AP)



Police bust cocaine lab: Dutch police have dismantled what they describe as the biggest cocaine laboratory ever discovered in The Netherlands - hidden at a former horse riding school - and arrested a total of 17 people from Colombia, Turkey and the Netherlands.

Police said in a statement Tuesday that they discovered tens of thousands of liters of chemicals and 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of crack cocaine when they raided the riding school on Friday. They also found sleeping quarters for staff in the building in Nijeveen, 120 kilometers (75 miles) northeast of Amsterdam.

André van Rijn, chief inspector at the police organization that dismantles such production facilities, said the lab was equipped to produce 150-200 kilograms (330-440 pounds) of cocaine a day, with a street value of 4.5-8 million euros. (AP)