

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects the progress in construction of Bago River Bridge (Thanlyin Bridge-3) in Yangon Region yesterday.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing fixes gold nut at Bago River Bridge (Thanlyin Bridge-3) in Yangon

Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing fixed a gold nut in connecting the structures of Bago River Bridge (Thanlyin Bridge-3) in Yangon Region yesterday morning.

The Senior General viewed round completion of construction tasks on the bridge and gave necessary instructions to officials.

The ceremony to fix a gold nut at the bridge was also attended by Council Joint

Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, council members General Mya Tun Oo and Lt-Gen Nyo Saw, Union Ministers U Ko Ko Lwin, Dr Thet Khaing Win and U Myo Thant, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein and officials.

Japan International Cooperation Agency-JICA of Japan and Myanmar's Ministry of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Construction and relevant ministries started implementation of the Bago River Bridge (Thanlyin Bridge-3) construction

project in 2013. The bridge will be 8,638 feet long and 75 feet wide. It will be a four-lane facility flanked by a five feet wide motorbike way on either side. The bridge is of cable stayed bridge, steel box and PC box with 75 tonne-load of withstanding. So far, the project has completed by 94 per cent. There remain placing of asphalt concrete on the bridge and approach roads, railing and related facility as well as a toll plaza.

Upon a cent per cent completion, new bridge can help ease traffic congestion

on Thanlyin Bridge-1. Due to booming businesses with local and foreign investments based on Thilawa Special Economic Zone, socioeconomic life of people from Thanlyin, Kyauktan, Kayan and Thongwa townships will have improvement. The bridge will contribute to development of Thilawa SEZ and Thanlyin region and create chances for people to have access to Hpa-an-Myawady area through East-West economic corridor, benefiting Mon and Kayin states for development and improving communication with regional countries. As the new bridge is built with advanced technologies, Myanmar engineers can accumulate experiences of modern technologies in building bridges. Moreover, skilled workers can be turned out from the project which created employment opportunities. — MNA/TTA

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Township-wise distributions of palm oil do not need queuing of people

Shan New Year festival in Taikkyi Township attracts many travellers

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NATIONAL

Selection of receptionists for 2023 Myanmar Film Academy Award ceremony to commence on 17 December



U Aye Kyu Lay, vice-chair of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization (MMPO), announced that the selection process for receptionists at the 2023 Myanmar Film Academy Award ceremony will commence on 17 December. Applications for the receptionist positions were accepted from 1 to 15 December, and personal interviews for the applicants are scheduled on 17 December.

"The preliminary selection stage for the receptionist position will be conducted on 17 De-

cember. The selection board will conduct interviews for applicants numbered from 001 to 216 in the morning and from 217 to 335 in the afternoon," explained U Aye Kyu Lay.

The Myanmar Motion Pictures Organization demanded nomination film professionals and artistes involved in films screened in 2023 through relevant film industries by 8 December. This year's Academy awarding ceremony is set to take place in Nay Pyi Taw. — ASH/MKKS

File photo shows that the selected receptionists pose for documentary photo previous Myanmar Film Academy Award ceremony last year.

Miss Earth Myanmar competes in Costume Competition of Miss Earth 2023

SAUNG Hnin San will represent Myanmar in the Miss Earth 2023 competition to be held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, adorning herself with a costume dubbed as Padaukpan (gum-kino flower), according to the contestant.

Saung Hnin San will wear the costume to compete in the Costume Competition, which is part of the Miss Earth 2023 competition held for the 23rd time from 28 November to 22 December in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.

This pageant competes



Saung Hnin San who competes in the Miss Earth 2023 competition poses for a photo with her costume.

with beauty pageants from more than 100 countries. Since the theme of the Miss Earth pageant is Me Love 20 Trees, the contestants from different countries must choose a plant to represent their country in designing their costume and compete.

"For this reason, I chose the Padaukpan costume as the flower symbolizes Myanmar's New Year," Saung Hnin San said.

The Padaukpan costume made of jute that will shape the pageant as "a beautiful young girl of Bagan period playing in the water" combines indications of costumes used by Bagan era dancers and is made as the national dress of the Miss Earth Myanmar 2023 competition.

The costume is made only with recycled materials and beautified with flowers using jute as the primary raw material.

In addition to the winner award at the Miss Earth Myanmar 2023 competition held at the Royal Mei Hua Function Hall in Yangon on 14 October 2023, Saung Hnin San also won title awards of the Miss ZN Fashion 2023, Best in Swimsuit and Miss Propolis 2023. — ASH/TH

Shan New Year festival in Taikkyi Township attracts many travellers



Shan ethnic students compete in Shan ethnic traditional dance at the traditional Shan New Year festival, at Shankyaunggyi monastery in Taikkyi Township on 16 December 2023.

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A festival to mark New Year of 2118 Shan era was celebrated at Shankyaunggyi monastery in Taikkyi Township on 16 December, according to Sai Kyaw Htoo, chairman of the Shan Ethnic Literature and Traditional Culture Committee (Taikkyi Township).

The traditional Shan New Year festival is usually held for the entire month starting from the first waxing of Nattaw to the 14th waning of the month.

"This year is 2118 Shan era. The Shan New Year festival is usually held locally throughout the month of Nattaw. Shan ethnics living in Taikkyi, Hmawby, Hlegu and Mingaladon town-

ships come together to celebrate the festival at Shankyaunggyi monastery in Taikkyi Township. There are 14 basic education schools teaching Shan literature in Taikkyi and Hmawby townships.

The Shan ethnic traditional dance and poetry competition of the Shan ethnic students were included this New Year's event," Sai Kyaw Htoo said.

The first waxing of Nattaw is Shan New Year Day. In ancient times, heroes, doyen literati, musicians and artistes were awarded, and ceremonies to give respect to senior citizens were held in the new year events while the festival went on with many revellers. — ASH/TH

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Oil refineries need soonest operation for fulfilling domestic energy requirement

An emphasis must be initially placed on operating No 1 Oil Refinery (Thanlyin) as usual with more plan to upgrade it, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

In his inspection tour of the oil refinery in Thanlyin of Yangon Region yesterday afternoon, Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing stressed the need to consider a cost for importing fuel for domestic energy requirement and another cost in operating refineries of the country at full capacity for fulfilling domestic energy requirements.

He urged officials to soonest implement the operation of oil refineries which can contribute to meeting the domestic energy demand successfully.

During his visit, the Senior General asked about necessary procedures to re-operate the refinery and other requirements.

Union Minister for Energy U Ko Ko Lwin and Managing Director U Aung Myint of Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise reported on facts about No 1 Oil Refinery (Thanlyin), arrangements for ensuring energy sufficiency of the nation based on establishment of energy resources, production



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects No 1 Oil Refinery (Thanlyin) in Yangon yesterday.

of oil from refineries at home, upgrading of factories and availability of raw materials.

The Senior General and party inspected No 1 Oil Refinery

(Thanlyin), Oil refinery (B), Lubricant Factory and LNG tank, and the Senior General instructed officials to strive for soonest operating the refineries to supply

fuel requirement of the nation on one hand.

The Senior General was accompanied by Council Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo,

council members General Mya Tun Oo and Lt-Gen Nyo Saw, Union ministers, the Yangon Region Chief Minister and senior military officers. — MNA/TTA

Union Information Minister inspects Youth and Literary & Fine Arts Fest preparations

UNION MINISTER for Information U Maung Maung Ohn inspected preparations for the Youth and Literary and Fine Arts Festival, marking the 76th Anniversary of Independence Day, at the Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium (B) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

He observed the opening rehearsal conducted by service personnel of the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare under the Ministry of Defence and those from the Myanmar Radio and Television alongside

students.

Then, he witnessed the preparations of exhibition halls and ethnic food stalls, offering advice on visitor convenience, entertainment programmes, and healthcare provisions.

Fifteen ministries will arrange 62 booths, and the festival will feature talk shows with artistes, book sales, ethnic cuisines, and entertainment programmes. The festival is open to the public free of charge from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm from 20 to 22 December. — MNA/NT



Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn views round preparation for Youth and Literary and Fine Arts Festival at Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium-B in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

NATIONAL

Democratic system through collective leadership: SAC member



State Administration Council member Mahn Nyein Maung observes local products displayed at the MSMEs exhibition held in Kyonpyaw District yesterday.

MAHN Nyein Maung, a member of the State Administration Council, said that when each ethnic group and party lead the country, they must take their own responsibility and develop a multi-party democratic system through collective leadership.

He said that on arriving at Kyonpyaw District, Ayeyawady Region while meeting with town elders and farmers on 17 December.

Myanmar is home to many ethnics, the collective leadership plays a key role, and individuals need to build mutual understanding and support each other in solving difficulties. Every citizen needs to hand down good historical records to their future generations, he said.

He also said that the country will be able to achieve develop-

ment through peace. In addition, it is necessary to be able to choose leaders who are generous and full of attitude towards the country. He added that only with peace and stability will the nation's goals be implemented to the best of its ability.

The SAC member attended the (MSMEs) local products exhibition held in Kyonpyaw District and visited the related product booths, including the product showroom.

After that, members of the State Administration Council and the regional chief minister gave the inputs of the Spring Rice Project to the farmers of Kyonpyaw, Yekyi and Kyaunggon townships. The farmers were urged to make all-round efforts to make agricultural activities more successful.

— MNA/KZL

Counter-argument to false information

Misinformation spread: Airstrikes use chemical weapons in Htigyaing daily

FALSE news and misinformation are spread on the social network pages that the Tatmadaw uses chemical bombs in bombing Htigyaing Township of Sagaing Region on a daily basis.

Regarding the news, the Tatmadaw has never used chemical weapons in any battles. The KIA and PDF terrorists are spreading false news through media outlets that support terrorism, whenever their troops face a larger number of casualties.

The Tatmadaw decided to join hands with the people in conducting counter-terrorism operations in order to ensure security of the regions and rule of law. — MNA/KZW

Deputy Information Minister visits printing houses, offices, IPRD offices

ON the morning of 15 December, U Ye Tint, the Deputy Minister for Information, visited Aung San Printing House, Sarpay Beikman Printing House, and GTC Printing House. During the visits, he urged the officials to monitor print quality promptly, ensure error-free work processes, prevent equipment damage and loss of raw materials and finished products, and take responsibility and accountability for the State and relevant departments with loyalty.

In the evening, he inspected operation of printing works at Central Press on Theinbyu Road. During this inspection, he instructed the factory manager and officials to address weaknesses and errors, improve quality, and minimize wastage. On 16 December, the Deputy Minister visited Information and Public Relations Department in Htantabin and Nyaungdon townships to inspect library and office works.

During a meeting with the staff, the



Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint inspects library and office works of Township Information and Public Relations Department in Nyaungdon on 16 December 2023.

Deputy Minister emphasized that technological advancements allow the exploration of knowledge in various ways. He stressed that the department must continue to educate the public through various means of public relations. Considering the current conditions in the country and future activities, the Deputy

Minister highlighted the importance of knowledge and wisdom for all, especially for the youth. He added that people should prioritize acquiring knowledge throughout their lives and called for extensive educational activities for the youth and the general population. — MNA/TKO

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Myeik shrimp framing set for expansion

PLANS are underway to build seven more shrimp farms in Myeik District this fiscal year, reports say.

Currently, Myeik is home to four shrimp farms with more than 1,500 acres of farming area. Shrimp is the district's major export.

Official of the Myeik District Fisheries Department said: "Off-shore fishing has its limits due to reliance on marine resources. So, expansion of farming business is necessary. Now there're four shrimp farms in Kyunsu and Palaw townships".

The districts of Dawei, Myeik, and Kawthoung in Taninthayi Region export marine products, including fish, shrimp and squid, through five established trading routes.

The official added that fishery exports to Thailand amounted to 4,471 tonnes in November. Specifically, 1,141 tonnes were transported through the Mawtaung border trading post in Myeik, while 3,330 tonnes were exported via Kawthoung.

"Mawtaung mainly exports over 20 varieties of fish while Kawthoung fish powder. Kawthoung has a direct export route to Ranong".

Myeik accommodates over 1,200 offshore trawlers but only 900 of them are operating currently, according to the department. — Myint Oo (Myeik)/NT



Workers netting at the shrimp farm in Myeik, Taninthayi Region. Myeik is home to four shrimp farms with more than 1,500 acres of farming area. **PHOTO: MYINT OO (MYEIK)**

Confiscated illegal items: Timbers, foodstuffs, consumer goods, motorbikes and vehicles

THE combined on-duty teams managed by the Customs Department captured a Toyota Hilux (approximately worth K12 million), heading to Bago from Thaton, carrying 60 18-litre jerrycan of One-Shrimp brand palm oil worth K3 million without official documents at the Mayanchaung permanent checkpoint on 13 December and 26 kinds of goods worth K21.377 million, including 1,044 China-made phone charger cables that were not mentioned in the Import Declaration (ID), from luggage at the Yangon International Airport (Import Desk) on

14 December. The action was taken under the Customs procedures.

On 14 December, the combined teams seized a total of 10.861 tonnes of illegal timbers valued at K760,333 in Ottarathiri township, an unregistered Benben 150 motorbike (estimated value of K1.3 million) at the checkpoint on the outskirts of Magway township and a total of 2.939 tonnes of illegal teak worth K1,939,872 in Toungoo district. The action was taken under the Forest Law and the Export and Import Law.

On 15 December, the com-

binced teams impounded a total of 4.647 tonnes of illegal teak valued at K3,067,416 in Mudon township and two kinds of goods valued at K65.88 million, including 600 bottles of Red Label whisky without official documents, at the G1 coach station in Mandalay. These actions were conducted under the Forest Law and Customs procedures.

A total of eight arrests were made on three consecutive days from 13 to 15 December, with an estimated value of K109,325,411, as reported by the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee. — MNA/MKKS



Confiscated illegal timbers in Bago Region.

Businesspersons urged to boost production of marine products meeting set standard



Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi observes the operations process of fisheries in Yangon on 16 December 2023.

DEPUTY Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi visited Two River Co, Ltd's cold storage facility in west Gyogon ward, Insein Township, Yangon Region on 16 December and inspected the operations for exporting frozen shrimp to the UAE and the People's Republic of China.

To meet the standards of export products set by the relevant countries, and according to the market demand, the deputy minister discussed turning out of employees every processing of industry, and the need for capacity building training.

He also inspected func-

tions of the trawler jetty in west Gyogon ward in Insein Township, the jetty of Shwe Zinyaw Hein trawler jetty in Hline Township, and arrivals and departure of trawlers.

Officials reported on inflow of 50,000 visses of fish per day, distribution to the domestic market, exports to the European market and other foreign markets.

The deputy minister instructed officials to directly sell fish to people, ensure sustainability of fish resources in Myanmar sea and follow existing laws for continuously capturing fish. — MNA/TKO

NATIONAL

Township-wise distributions of palm oil do not need queuing of people

ACCORDING to the consumers, there is no need to line up to buy palm oil in the new distribution system by township.

In the townships of Yangon, many people have been seen queuing up around oil shops that have been allowed to buy and distribute palm oil for months on sale for many months.

From 4 December this year, the new distribution system was introduced to consumers according to the townships in Yangon Region and 16,000 tonnes of palm oil were expected to be sold to Yangon Region.

As per reports, 38 per cent of 42,000 tonnes of palm oil was allocated to the Yangon Region, where some nine million population reside, accounting for 16 per cent of the country's population of 54 million.

Daw Yon, a resident of Lanmadaw township told the GNLM that she can buy palm oil on sale days after showing her household registration to the ward administration office of the townships in Yangon Region and obtaining permission to purchase the oil together with address cards of relevant oil shop where she wants to buy it.

U Aung Zaw, who sells Monhinga on the side of Phon-egy Road told the GNLM that foodstuff businesses using



Edible oil sale counter seen without lining up with buyers.

palm oil can also obtain an oil purchase permit card along with the address cards of the oil outlets every sale day.

Palm oil is sold every day and only the volume of palm oil allowed to be purchased for the same day is sold but cannot buy beyond the permitted amount.

In mid-December, the reference price of edible oil was set at K4,815 per viss.

It is reported that the residents of the ward and those working in the oil industry can easily buy oil in their wards, however, most of them do not take out enough oil.

Only those working in the oil-used industries can purchase 1.5 or two visses of oil per day on the sale days.

There have been only

those who need oil to buy, and the scene of people queuing up to buy oil to sell at a profit is no longer seen in Yangon this month. As such, no queue to purchase palm oil was seen in Yangon Region this month.

Similar to Yangon, palm oil is distributed to townships of regions and states via districts this month.

If action is taken against those manipulating prices and taking extreme profits in storage and sale of palm oil, higher price of palm oil than wholesale prices will decline.

In the grey market, a bucket (18 litres) of oil costs around K70,000. The price of palm oil is set at around K2,000 per viss compared to the reference wholesale price of edible oil from the tanks. — TWA/TKO

Yangon region unveils nine new destinations to enrich tourism landscape

THE Yangon Region Hotels and Tourism Directorate has announced the development of nine new destinations, including Yangon University, aimed at attracting foreign tourists to the Yangon tourism market.

As a tourist destination in the Yangon Region, there are 28 recreational areas such as pagodas, gardens and museums.

As new destinations, Yangon University, Chin Tsong's OBE Palace, Ancient Portuguese Cathedral or Nazinka tomb, Martyrs' Mausoleum, U

Ottama (or) Kandaw Mingala Park, Shari Kali Temple, Mausoleum of Bahadur Shah Zafar Shah (the King and great poet of the Mughal Empire), Pilakat Hindu Temple, and Kyaik Pyathanataw Kaungmmu Pagoda have been reported as the nine newly developed locations. — TWA/KZW



The photo shows ancient Portuguese Cathedral and Ngazinka Tomb in Thanlyin.



Experts' advice appreciated in industrial development: Industries chair

U Aye Tun, chairman of the Myanmar Industries Association, said they sought advice from experts for industrial development.

He said it during his speech at the 28th annual general meeting of the association at Novotel Yangon Max in Yangon on 16 December.

He added: "Our association actively supports the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises across the country. Additionally, we have helped in import licensing and acquiring fuel oils."

The association is also involved in cut-make-pack businesses, and chemicals and solar industries. The chairman expressed a commitment to driving the association's growth and advancement.

Yangon Region Economic Affairs Minister U Myo Myint Aung stated: "Given the government's encouragement of MSMEs and local production, I urge entrepreneurs to harness high technology and explore foreign markets through participa-

tion in trade fairs."

He also highlighted the importance of the association in the country's industrial sector development.

U Aye Win, President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said: "For entrepreneurs, staying updated with the latest technological advancements is crucial for competing effectively on an international scale".

The association was established in 1993. — TWA/NT



Chairman U Aye Tun's opening speech.

Myanmar seeks to expand global market shares in versatile sectors

THE Ministry of Commerce (MoC) is making efforts to enhance productivity and export goods from various sectors, particularly crops and vegetables, fishery products, jade, fertilizers, fuel, and animal products, according to statistics and statements released by the ministry.

The total value of Myanmar's exports surged by US\$221 million in the first week of December 2023 through both shipment and border trade routes, as reported. With the current months being the flourishing seasons for agricultural produce, the ministry anticipates increased exports in this sector. During the week, Myanmar shipped various crops, beans and pulses, as well as other agricultural produce like rice, broken rice, black gram, green gram, cowpea, kidney bean, peanut, sesame, corn, rubber, fruits, konjac, dried ginger, cashew nut, chili, betel nut, and tamarinds.

Fishery product exports also amounted to over US\$20 million within a week, primarily destined for China, Malaysia, Viet Nam, South Korea, Japan, Australia, Chinese Taipei, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the United States, Canada, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, the UK, Lebanon, Hong Kong, and Brazil through both shipment and aviation transport. Additionally, fishery products like fish, dried fish meal, and dried fish are transported through Kawthoung, Myeik, Mawtaung, and Myawady border trade posts.

The report highlights that, aside from private sector exports, 3,228 kilogrammes of jade sold by gems emporiums were transported to China from the public sector. Furthermore, the One-Stop Service Centre of the Myanma Gems Enterprise sells value-added jade ornaments such as bracelets, beads, and hand chains, exporting them to the Chinese market via air transport. With earnings from rubber exports permitted for reinvestment in essential domestic goods like fertilizers and fuel, aiming to boost commodity flows and increase profits for exporters, rubber exports doubled in early December compared to November, according to statistics.

Similarly, exports of rawhides and leather, finished wood products, and other industrial products such as sugar and CMP garment products also saw an increase. The Ministry of Commerce urged relevant departments, associations, and entrepreneurs from both private and public sectors to collaborate in boosting the country's trade sector, increasing economic ties with partner countries, expanding the global market, and exporting more items. — MNA/TMT

Sugar price in the Yangon market is observed to increase again in mid-December up to K3,870/3,900 per viss despite the domestically operating sugar mills being resumed functioning.

Within the first-nine days of December, the sugar price was K3,760-3,780



Sugar price rises in domestic market

per viss. However, it steadily surged up to K3,820/3,830 on 11 December, up to K3,830/3,850 on 14 December; then, on 15 and 16 December, it rose to K3,870/3,900, which means, the sugar price increased to K120 per viss within half of a month.

The sugar prices in the Mandalay market range within K3,800-3,850 per viss within these days. Transporting a pack of sugar (that weighs 30 visses) from Mandalay to Yangon by train costs K1,600, a sugar seller from Bayintnaung Wholesale Market told the Global New Light of Myanmar.

The gradual upsurge of sugar prices in the domestic market resulted from a delay of new sugar entering the market, which in turn, provides opportunities to the sugar sellers who hold the leftover sugar stock in their hands to increase the price. On the other hand, the forward price of sugar that is sold in advance was agreed only with K3,550 per viss in the market.

New sugars are potentially arriving in the market around the end of this

Two types of sugar that are sold in the market are seen.

month and there will be two types of sugar in the market – old and new ones. It is also expected that the price of old sugar that is currently circulating in the market will be lower than that of the incoming ones.

Although the new sugar produced by the sugar mills in the early period of 2024, the sugar price is forecasted less possibility to decrease next year because some traders will continue purchasing new sugar to keep many stocks in their hands upon gaining much profit, a sugar trader Ko Min Min remarked.

Another reason is that, according to the report, domestic sugar consumers have to consent to the sugar price set by the traders who hold the stocks for the home market since the sugar surplus is exported.

Although price equilibrium is indeed set by the market demands and supplies, the sugar mills only operate four months in a year, which in turn, leads the sugar traders to manipulate

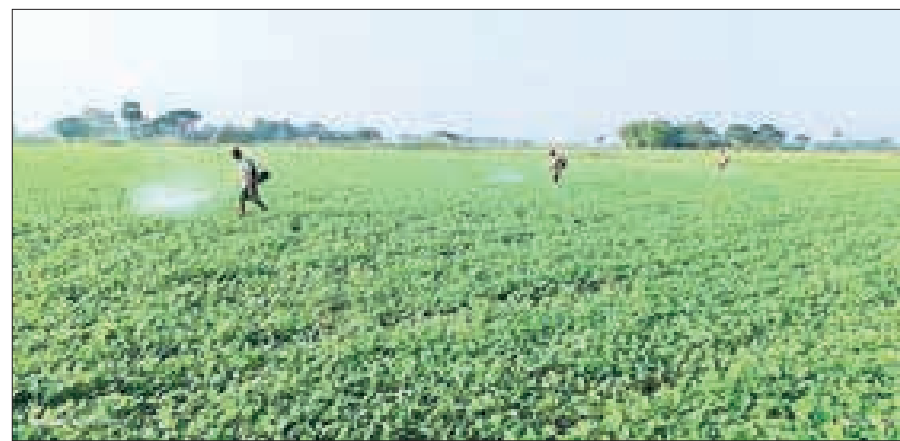
the supply price in the market, especially in such time of closing the sugar mills.

Since the sugar price on 16 December 2022 was K2,425/2,550 per viss, the price is K1,350 higher per viss this year for a similar period. At the moment, the price of NyaungU white jaggery is valued at K4,500 per viss; Yesagy white jaggery is valued at K5,900 per viss; and one viss of brown-slab sugar is valued at K4,300.

However, imported power sugars are increasingly used in making foods and beverages rather than the sugar. As a matter of fact, the former is much sweeter than the latter. Notwithstanding, the power sugars are less healthy for consumers.

Therefore, it is important for the public to be aware of healthy and hygienic sweetening agents in this time of breaking records of high prices of domestic sugar and other related products. — TWA/TMT

Pulse prices move up in domestic market



A farmer seen spraying fertilizers at a 23-day-old green gram plantation.

THE prices of black gram, pigeon pea and green gram climbed in mid-December 2023 in the domestic market, touching highs of K2.98 million per tonne for black gram (Fair Average Quality), K3.237 million for black gram (Special Quality), K3.12 million for pigeon pea, K2,565-2,920 per viss of

green gram from the Pakokku area and K3,750 per viss of green gram (Shwewah) from the Kayan area respectively on 16 December.

The newly harvested pigeon pea price rose to K100,000 per basket in mid-December from K90,000 per basket in early December.

Similarly, the prices jumped to K95,000 per basket of black gram and K62,000 per basket of green gram.

The price of black gram (urad) was relatively stable at 8,500 rupees per quintal in India, the leading buyer of Myanmar's pulses. In contrast, the price of pigeon pea (tur) indicated a two per cent decrease, with 9,700 rupees per quintal.

The pulses prices were registered at K1.782 million per tonne for black gram (Fair Average Quality), K1.76 million for pigeon pea, K2,165-2,250 per viss of green gram from Pakokku area and K2,830-3,000 per viss of green gram (Shwewah) from Kayan area in the corresponding period last year.

The figures reflected a significant rise of more than K1 million per tonne of black gram and pigeon pea and K700 per viss for green gram. Thus, the growers are likely to reap a handsome profit this year. — TWA/KK

OPINION

Avoid noise pollution for the health of people in society

In the realm of environmental concerns, amidst the prevalent issues of air pollution, water pollution, and soil contamination, noise pollution emerges as a significant threat to the well-being of society. Residents of major metropolitan areas most prominently feel the adverse impacts of noise pollution.

The sources of noise pollution are diverse, ranging from the incessant hum of engines and blaring horns of vehicles to the clamour of construction sites and the amplified announcements of vendors traversing the streets with their hand speakers. These auditory intrusions seriously threaten individuals' daily lives, disrupting their routines and impinging on their privacy. Particularly distressing are the loudspeakers employed by certain centres, which emit sounds of such intensity that they encroach upon the personal spaces of individuals.

In the pursuit of livelihoods, vendors resort to various forms of mobile advertising, using hand speakers to promote their wares due to limited employment opportunities. Unfortunately, the reck-

less use of loud sounds in such endeavours has far-reaching consequences, causing mental disturbances, especially among the elderly and those already ailing.

While some vendors conscientiously attempt to minimize the impact of noise pollution on society, others remain oblivious to the adverse effects of their actions. In response, residents often resort to displaying banners and signboards, imploring individuals to refrain from using loudspeakers and lower their sound volumes.

Studies reveal that prolonged exposure to noisy environments can impede the development of children's brains and hinder their language acquisition abilities. Headaches, both acute and chronic, are reported consequences of exposure to noisy sounds. Furthermore, statistics indicate that between the ages of 12 and 64, individuals may experience a decline in hearing due to the effects of noise pollution, with an alarming 48 million people suffering from hearing loss in the United States alone.

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the critical threshold of 75 decibels, beyond which a person may face a decline in their hearing abilities. In contrast, the recommended sound level within homes is below 30 decibels. Those constantly exposed to noise exceeding 55 decibels are prone to various health problems. It is necessary to recognize the repercussions of noise pollution and make conscientious efforts to mitigate its impact. This entails refraining from generating excessively loud noises for the sake of the health and well-being of older individuals, chronic patients, children, and expectant mothers. Those employing loudspeakers for various purposes must exercise caution and responsibility in managing the potential negative consequences of loud sounds.

Appreciation for 22nd Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference & Myanmar Traditional Medicine Seminar

By Dr Than Lwin Tun, Ministry of Health



Traditional Medicine health knowledge to the community



Traditional Medicine Healthcare to community

In Myanmar, traditional medicine has been regarded as an invaluable national heritage and flourished significantly as a major part of the Myanmar culture. In line with the direction of the Union Government, the Ministry of Health has accorded it, as one of the priority activities and exerted all-out efforts from all perspectives for strengthening the provision of traditional medicine services to the people. The provision of traditional medicine services is at the basic health services level to make essential traditional medicine easily accessible for the benefit of both urban and rural populations. It also supports and uplifts the health status of the people of Myanmar in the context of primary healthcare. Particularly for the rural population, traditional medicine is still a priority and has been carried out in the mode of preventive focus, getting along with the traditional values and the traditional art of treatment. The cultural values of traditional medicine have been handed down for generations, sustaining its potent therapeutic milestones, till the current era.

According to one of the objectives of the Social Affairs of State Administration Council (SAC); "To elevate the Health and Sports sectors inclusive of all the people, improving the longevity and health of the nation", the Ministry of Health (MOH), Myanmar, laid down the two ob-

jectives, to enable every citizen to attain full life expectancy and enjoy longevity of life, and to ensure that every citizen is free from diseases.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister's message to the 21st Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference and Symposium Seminar, "the Ministry of Health, Department of Traditional Medicine, University of Traditional Medicine, professionals and representatives from related ministries, Myanmar Traditional Medicine Council, Myanmar Traditional Medicine Association, and representatives of traditional medicine practitioners from all over Myanmar; Traditional Medicine Technical Advisory Group, Association of Myanmar Traditional Medicine Industries Incorporated etc., will have good discussions and consultations leading to fruitful outcomes of the conference and symposium, this 21st Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference and the Myanmar Traditional Medicine Seminar, delegates will be engaged in friendly, open discussions and consultations in unity, submitting proposals to provide more public health services through traditional medicine".

To do that, the Ministry of Health is organizing to continue to conduct the 22nd Myanmar Traditional Practitioners' Conference and Myanmar Traditional Medicine Seminar which

is one of the leading community-based events of its kind bringing together traditional medicine professionals in the various traditional medicine fields around the national and international. The organizing committee is delighted to welcome all traditional medicine professionals to this conference dated 20th to 22nd December 2023 at Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory.

The 22nd Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference and Myanmar Traditional Medicine Seminar will be held with the following objectives:

- To cooperate with related professionals and international organizations for the development of traditional medicine,
- To develop safe and high-quality traditional medicines,
- To train to become qualified traditional medicine practitioners to provide more efficient health care to the population, and
- To provide public health care more effectively by Myanmar Traditional Medicine.

Before conducting the conference, the traditional medicine practitioners doing the preconference activities such as traditional medicine health care to the community, traditional medicine health care to the community as well as older persons and monks and nuns, etc. all over the country.

It's wonderful to express appreciation for the Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference and Myanmar Traditional Medicine Seminar. This conference will play a crucial role in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the advancement of traditional medicine practices. The following are the key points for appreciation;

- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** This conference and seminar provide a platform for traditional medicine practitioners to share and preserve Myanmar's rich cultural heritage. This is essential in maintaining and passing down traditional healing practices to future generations.
- **Knowledge Exchange:** This facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experiences among practitioners. This helps in refining and enhancing traditional medicine techniques, ensuring their effectiveness and relevance in contemporary healthcare.
- **Integration with Modern Medicine:** Bringing together traditional medicine practitioners and collaboration with modern medical professionals. This integration can lead to a more holistic approach to healthcare, combining the strengths of both traditional and modern medicine.
- **Research and Innovation:**

This contributes to the scientific validation of traditional healing methods, increasing their acceptance and integration into mainstream healthcare systems.

■ **Networking Opportunities:** Participants can establish valuable connections and networks during the conference. This fosters a sense of community among practitioners, creating a supportive environment for ongoing collaboration and shared learning.

■ **Public Awareness:** This helps raise awareness among the public about the benefits and importance of traditional medicine. This increased awareness can lead to greater acceptance and utilization of traditional medicine practices.

■ **Professional Development:** Practitioners attending the conference have the opportunity to enhance their skills, stay updated on the latest developments in their field, and participate in workshops or training sessions that contribute to their professional growth.

■ **Cultural Exchange:** This serves as a platform for cultural exchange, not only among practitioners but also with attendees from diverse backgrounds. This promotes a deeper understanding of different cultural perspectives

on health and well-being.

■ **Celebration of Diversity:** Traditional medicine is often deeply rooted in cultural diversity. This celebrates this diversity, showcasing the unique approaches and traditions of Myanmar's traditional medicine practitioners.

■ **Future Collaboration:** Express optimism for continued collaboration and future conferences and seminars along with emphasizing the importance of such events in sustaining and advancing the field of traditional medicine.

In conclusion, our sincere appreciation to all the respected professionals in the field of traditional medicine for contributing to their knowledge and experiences, which will be a valuable historical platform in traditional medicine for future generations and in the promotion of accessible traditional medical care services for all people. The 22nd Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference and Myanmar Traditional Medicine Seminar is a creditable initiative that contributes significantly to the preservation, promotion, and advancement of traditional medicine practices as well as plays a vital role in creating a bridge between tradition and modernity in healthcare.

Study finds how body reacts to high or low oxygen levels

Addressing a research gap, a recent study from Gladstone Institutes sheds light on how the body detects and responds to an oxygen surplus, significantly advancing our understanding of its implications for health.

It only takes a few seconds of holding your breath to know that not obtaining adequate oxygen is detrimental to your health. Is it possible, however, to have too much? Indeed, breathing air that contains more oxygen than your body requires can lead to health problems or even death.

But with scant research on the topic, scientists have known little about how the body senses too much oxygen. Now, a new study from Gladstone Institutes has greatly expanded the scientific body of knowledge about the mechanisms at play, and why it matters for health.

Oxygen Levels Impact

Their findings, reported in the journal *Science Advances*, explain how breathing air with different levels of oxygen—from too little, to just right, or too much—affects the creation and degradation of different proteins in the lungs, heart, and brain of mice. Notably, the study also highlights a particular protein that may play a central role in regulating how cells respond to hyperoxia.

"These results have implications for many different diseases," says Gladstone Assistant Investigator Isha Jain, PhD, senior author of the new study.

"More than 1 million people in the US breathe supplemental oxygen every day for medical reasons, and studies suggest it could be making things worse in some cases. That's just one setting where our work is starting to explain what's happening and how the body responds."

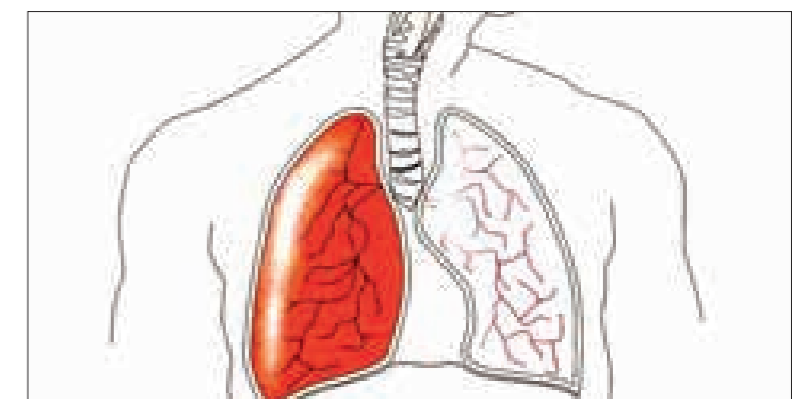
Oxygen's Effects

Most prior research on oxygen levels has examined the molecular effects of too little oxygen. And even in that realm, most of the focus has been on how low oxygen affects which genes are turned on or off.

"Our study enters uncharted territory by using mice and looking downstream of gene expression at which proteins abnormally accumulate or degrade in response to different oxygen concentrations," says Kirsten Xuewen Chen, first author of the new paper and a graduate student at UC San Francisco.

The research builds on the team's prior work, which revealed that in response to too much oxygen, certain proteins containing iron and sulfur clusters become degraded, leading cells to malfunction.

SOURCE: ANI



Even a brief pause in breathing highlights the importance of adequate oxygen, but breathing air with excess oxygen can also pose health risks, even fatal ones. ILLUSTRATION: PIXABAY

SCI/ENVIRON: WORLD

Melanoma vaccine could be available by 2025

MODERNA CEO Stephane Bancel told AFP his company's experimental vaccine against melanoma could be available in as little as two years, in what would amount to a landmark step against the most serious form of skin cancer.

Globally there were an estimated 325,000 new melanoma cases and 57,000 deaths from the disease in 2020. "We think that in some countries the product could be launched under accelerated approval by 2025," he said in an interview.

Unlike conventional vaccines, so-called therapeutic vaccines treat rather than prevent a disease. But they also work by training the body's own immune system against the invader. Therapeutic vaccines today represent a real hope in oncology, an "immunotherapy 2.0",

according to Bancel.

Moderna's aspirations received a boost Thursday with the latest clinical trial results showing an improvement over time in the chances of survival thanks to the vaccine, which uses the same messenger RNA technology that proved highly effective against serious forms of Covid-19.

In a study involving 157 people with advanced melanoma, the Moderna vaccine in combination with Merck's immunotherapy drug Keytruda reduced the risk of recurrence or death by 49 per cent over a period of three years, compared with Keytruda alone.

Moderna had already announced two-year monitoring results last year, which showed a risk reduction of 44 per cent. — AFP



Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel. PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP

Acapulco's cliff divers are back after deadly hurricane



A cliff diver jumps at La Quebrada in Acapulco, Mexico. PHOTO: AFP

Amid the aftermath of Hurricane Otis, cliff-diving resumes at Acapulco's La Quebrada, but the iconic spectacle struggles to regain popularity as the Mexican resort town grapples with a significant decline in tourism following the devastating storm.

WITH few tourists watching the daring feat, Abraham Estrada dives off La Quebrada, an emblematic Acapulco cliff where the spectacle has resumed but struggles to attract visitors after the Mexican resort was hammered by Hurricane Otis.

The devastating storm — recorded at top-intensity Category 5 when it roared ashore in late October — left nearly 50 people dead and another 30

missing, some 90 per cent of tourist establishments affected and the once-vibrant port city licking its wounds.

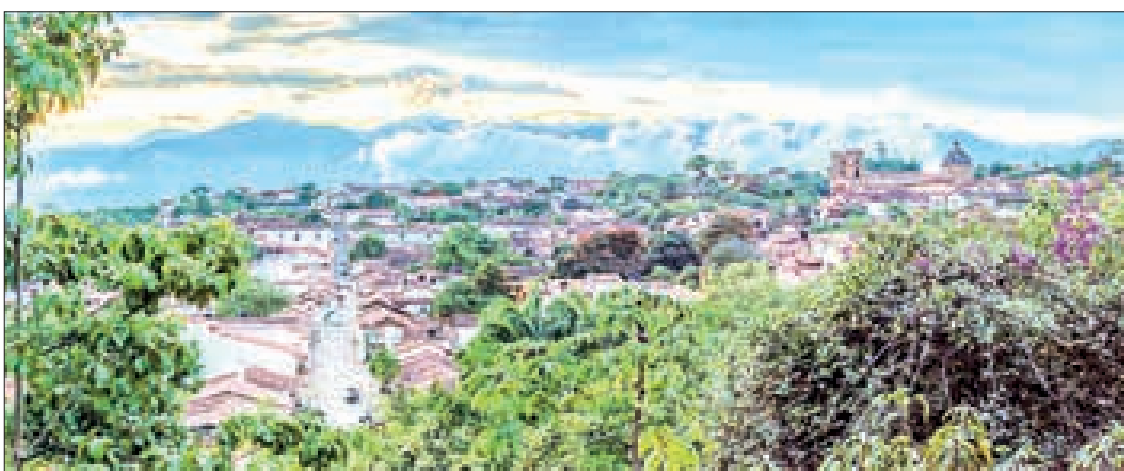
As cliff-diving returned this month, the tourism industry has hoped for a much-needed rebound, but it has been slow to take off.

"We are having a hard time, due to the lack of tourism... We are hoping with faith that this holiday season will bring some" travellers, Estrada tells AFP.

The 36-year-old has been cliff-diving for 22 years, a tradition that has run in his family's blood for nearly a century, his father and grandfather divers before him.

According to the Acapulco mayor's office, at the end of the year — a peak tourism season — there are just 2,890 available hotel rooms in 91 establishments, compared with 20,000 rooms on offer prior to Otis. — AFP

Colombia confirmed as host of next UN biodiversity talks



Colombia was officially confirmed Friday as the host of the the UN's next biodiversity summit to be held in late 2024. Colombia's Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Susana Muhamad, expressed that the upcoming opportunity represents a significant moment for one of the world's most biodiverse nations. PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ ADOBE STOCK

COLOMBIA was officially confirmed Friday as the host of the the UN's next biodiversity summit to be held in late 2024 after Turkey backed out.

The COP16 biodiversity summit would follow up on a landmark deal at the last talks in 2022 in Montreal which promised to preserve 30 per cent of the planet's land and seas by 2030.

It comes as climate change threatens an increasing number of species, with 25 per cent of the world's freshwater fish species at risk of extinction, according to the latest red list assessment by the International Union for Con-

servation of Nature. Meanwhile invasive plant and animal species introduced intentionally and unintentionally by humans in new ecosystems are exacerbating the extinction crisis and causing global economic losses of hundreds of billions of dollars a year. Susana Muhamad, Colombia's minister of environment and sustainable development, said: "This is going to be a great opportunity for one of the most biodiverse nations in the world," adding it "sends a message from Latin America to the world about the importance of climate action and the protection of life." — AFP

TOP NEWS

Musk talks X advertising, birth rate in Rome

ELON Musk claimed Saturday that advertisers were returning to X (formerly Twitter) after an exodus, at a Rome meeting where he also warned Italy's low birth rate could put off investors.

The billionaire was a star guest at the Atreju political festival organised by Italian Prime

Minister Giorgia Meloni's far-right Brothers of Italy party.

Asked about advertisers who had abandoned his platform over concerns about extreme posts, Musk said: "I think X will be fine, and we are actually already seeing advertisers return to X." — AFP

Historic Warren Beatty teenage sex lawsuit dismissed

A lawsuit accusing actor Warren Beatty of coercive sex with a teenager five decades ago was dismissed Friday.

The suit, lodged in Los Angeles last year, was one of a number of historic abuse claims filed under a California law allowing complaints that would otherwise have passed the statute of limitations.

Kristina Charlotte Hirsch alleged in the suit that she met the "Bonnie and Clyde" actor on a movie set in 1973 when

she was 14 or 15 years old.

She claimed he later invited her to the hotel in which he was living and took her for car rides. Beatty — who would have been aged around 35 at the time — "used his position and status as an adult and a Hollywood movie star to coerce sexual contact with Plaintiff on multiple occasions, including oral sex, simulated sex and finally coerced sexual intercourse with the minor child," the suit said. — AFP

Miss France winner says her short hair a victory for 'diversity'

THE woman elected Miss France 2024 has framed her victory as a win for "diversity", drawing praise for her short hair as well as predictable criticism from viewers of the beauty pageant which has faced accusations of sexism.

"No one should dictate who you are," declared 20-year-old Eve Gilles, who was the only contestant in this year's competition

whose hair was cropped short.

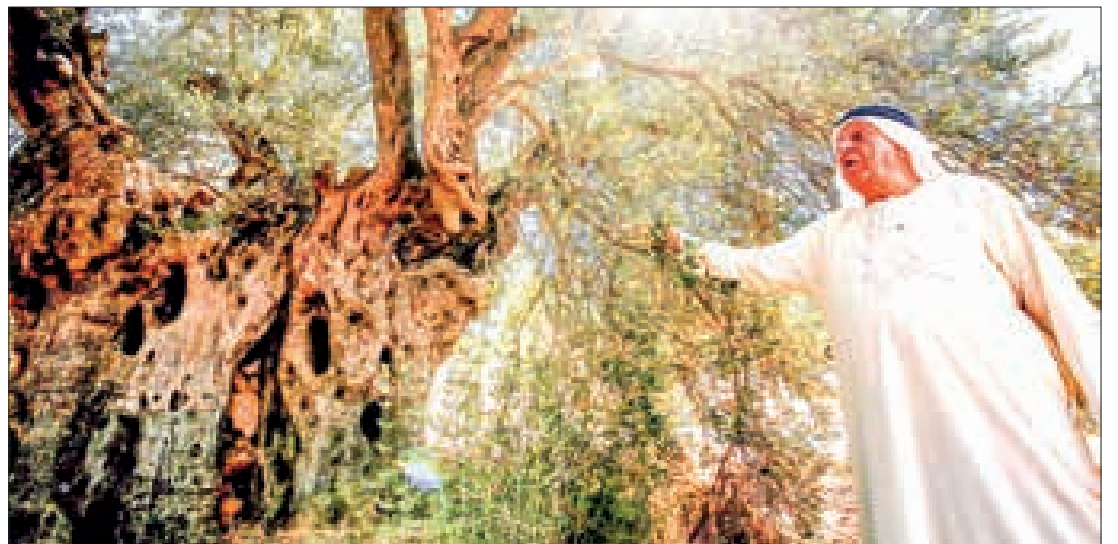
"We're used to seeing beautiful Misses with long hair, but I chose an androgynous look with short hair," she said after her victory Saturday night, adding that every "woman is different, we're all unique". The woman from a village near Dunkirk in northern France was elected in the city of Dijon in front of 5,000 pageant fans. — AFP



The beauty pageant has received accusations of sexism, highlighting the ongoing debate in such competitions. PHOTO: ARNAUD FINISTRE / AFP

Jordan's mission to save its ancient olive trees

Ranked tenth in global olive production by the World Olive Council, Jordan boasts numerous ancient olive trees, a vital aspect of the nation's identity and cultural heritage.



Jordan's oldest olive trees "have been here since the Romans ruled this region". PHOTO: KHALIL MAZRAAWI / AFP

EVERY morning, Jordanian farmer Ali Saleh Atta swallows two cloves of garlic with a cup of olive oil before heading out to check on his ancient olive trees.

"These trees represent the history of Jordan," said the 84-year-old, looking at the 2,000-year-old trees whose enormous gnarled trunks hoist up branches with delicate, pale green leaves.

The trees are a beloved national symbol, but they are also under threat from urban sprawl, illegal logging for firewood and uprooting to the homes and gardens of the wealthy for decoration.

The land of Atta, a father of 10, is in Al-Hashimiyya, a wooded area about 70 kilometres (45 miles) northwest of Amman.

"I have given my children

and grandchildren a written will that after my death, you preserve them and (live) from what they produce," he said.

Jordan is the tenth-largest producer of olives globally, according to the World Olive Council.

Its many ancient trees that have survived thousands of years are an integral part of the country's identity and culture. — AFP

Activision to pay about \$50 mln to settle lawsuit: report



Activision Blizzard is reportedly poised to pay approximately \$50 million to settle a lawsuit by a California regulator, following allegations in 2021 that the gaming giant's leadership overlooked staff complaints related to sexual harassment and discrimination. PHOTO: AFP

VIDEOGAME giant Activision Blizzard is set to pay around \$50 million to settle a lawsuit by a California regulator, a US news report said Friday.

In 2021, California's Civil

Rights Department sued the company, claiming leaders ignored staff complaints involving sexual harassment and discrimination.

The lawsuit had a part in

spurring Microsoft's acquisition of the company, noted the Wall Street Journal report.

The settlement of about \$50 million — the Journal reported citing unnamed sources — would be the second biggest by the agency if completed.

Activision has pushed back on the state's allegations.

The Journal reported that the state previously pegged Activision's liability at close to \$1 billion, to 2,500 staff who could have claims against the firm.

In February, an announcement said Activision agreed to pay \$35 million to settle charges from a US securities regulator, over its disclosure policies on workplace harassment complaints. — AFP

ECONOMY WORLD

Bulgaria tries to stop Russian gas supplies to EU by tax on transit – Serbia's gas company

The \$100 tax was intended to make Russian payments unfeasible, rendering the transit expensive, ultimately disrupting the gas supply through Turkish Stream and Balkan Stream to Serbia, Hungary, Austria, and Slovakia.

BULGARIAN authorities tried to introduce an excise tax on the transit of gas from Russia to stop its gas supplies to Europe, but this is impossible, Dusan Bajatovic, General Director of Serbia's gas company Srbijagaz, told Sputnik.

"The purpose of the attempt to introduce these additional \$100 was that the Russians would refuse to pay, for the rest it would become expensive and, then, they would say — the transit is not paid for, the service cannot be provided.

"This was invented to stop the supply of Russian gas through the Turkish Stream and the Balkan Stream to Serbia, Hungary, Austria, and Slovakia. Another mining of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline, as was the case with Nord Stream, would be too suspicious.

"It would not be possible to justify the fact that another gas pipeline was mined at the bottom of the sea, so this option was invented to stop gas supplies from Russia to Europe," Bajatovic said.



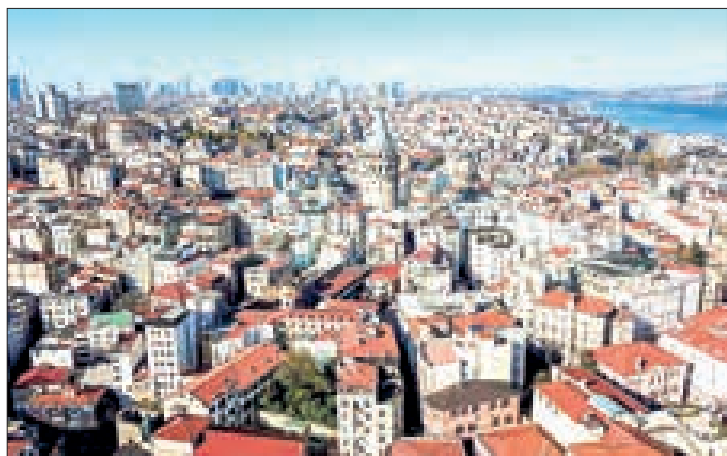
Gazprom's Amur Gas Processing Plant. PHOTO: PAVEL LVOV/SPUTNIK

He added that the Bulgarian authorities themselves had al-

ready withdrawn their proposal, and it was currently being con-

sidered by the Bulgarian Constitutional Court. — SPURNIK

Inflation forces Türkiye's central bank chief to move in with parents



House prices soared 95% in July from the year before, a sign that Turks continue to look for ways to protect themselves against unrelenting inflation. PHOTO: AFP

Hafize Gaye Erkan, Turkey's central bank chief, can't afford a home in Istanbul due to high inflation.

THE new head of Türkiye's central bank said she has been priced out of Istanbul's property market by rampant inflation, leaving no choice for the former finance executive but to move back in with her parents.

"We haven't found a home in Istanbul. It's terribly expensive. We've moved in with my

parents," 44-year-old Hafize Gaye Erkan, who took up her post in June after two decades in the United States, told the Hurriyet newspaper.

Erkan previously worked at firms including Goldman Sachs and First Republic Bank — and is now getting a crash course in the soaring prices that have

seen many young people struggling to find lodgings.

"Is it possible that Istanbul has gotten more expensive than Manhattan?" she said.

Year-on-year inflation stood at 61 per cent in November as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has allowed the lira currency to weaken while promising that a new team of economists with Wall Street experience would tackle years of economic crisis.

To quell growing anger, officials also capped rent increases at 25 per cent — though experts say that has only amplified the housing tensions, as owners try to push out occupants, sometimes fraudulently, in order to set new and higher rents.

The central bank last month pushed up benchmark lending rates to 40 per cent in a bid to get inflation under control.

"We're nearing the end of our monetary tightening measures," Erkan told the paper. — AFP

Volunteers help Arab-Israeli farmers amid Gaza war

IN Baqa al-Gharbiya, an hour's drive from Haifa, city folk have temporarily traded pens for boots to aid farmers in Israel facing a labour shortage exacerbated by the Gaza war.

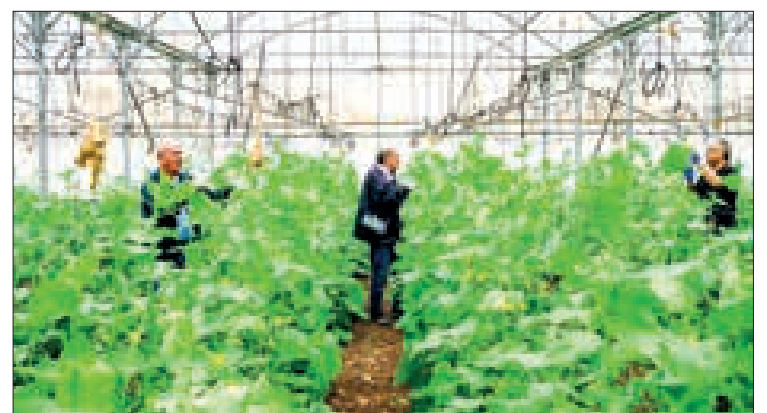
Whether teachers or lawyers, Arab or Jew, they have come together during their leisure time to lend a helping hand to Arab-Israeli farmers like Marwan Abu Yassin for the harvest.

Arabs with citizenship account for around 20 per cent of Israel's population, descendants of Palestinians who remained

after mass expulsions at the time of Israel's founding in 1948.

"I had 16 Thai workers, but nine left the country because of the war, and I had 15 workers from the West Bank who no longer come to Israel because of the roadblocks," said Abu Yassin, 55.

The war in Gaza began on 7 October when Hamas militants from Gaza stormed across the militarised border into Israel, killing around 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and taking around 250 people hostage, according to Israeli figures. — AFP



Volunteers tie up cucumber plants in a greenhouse in Baqa al-Gharbiya on 9 December 2023. PHOTO: AFP

More shipping giants suspend passage via Red Sea after attacks

TWO more major shipping firms, Mediterranean Shipping Company and CMA CGM, said Saturday they were suspending passage through a Red Sea strait vital for global trade after Yemeni rebel attacks in the area.

The announcement by Italian-Swiss giant MSC and France's CMA CGM follows a similar decision Friday by two of the world's largest shipping companies, Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd.

The announcements were in response to a warning by the Iran-backed Huthi rebels, who control much of Yemen but are not recognised internationally.

The Huthis said they were targeting vessels near the strategic Bab al-Mandeb strait to pressure Israel over its dev-

astating war with Palestinian Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. Thousands of ships every year transit through the strait, which runs between Yemen, on the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, and the African continent.

The tensions have added to fears that the Gaza conflict could spread.

Ships belonging to Israel or heading to its ports "will remain vulnerable to targeting until the aggression stops, the siege on Gaza is lifted, and humanitarian aid continues to flow" to Gaza, Huthi spokesperson Mohammed Abdul Salam said on X, formerly Twitter.

Oman was sponsoring discussions "with a number of international parties" regarding operations in the Red and Arabian Seas, he added. — AFP



Thousands of ships every year transit through the strait, which runs between Yemen, on the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, and the African continent. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/AFP**

China's energy output maintains steady growth

China's coal production increased by 2.9% to 4.24 billion tonnes, crude oil output rose 1.8% to 191.25 million tonnes, and crude oil imports grew 12.1% to 515.65 million tonnes in the first 11 months of the year.

CHINA'S production of coal, crude oil and natural gas maintained steady expansion in the first 11 months of the year, official data showed.

Miners in the country churned out 4.24 billion tonnes of coal during the first 11 months, up 2.9 per cent year on year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The country's crude oil output climbed 1.8 per cent year on year during the period to 191.25 million tonnes, while its crude oil imports gained 12.1 per cent to 515.65 million tonnes.



A staff member works at the Yongqing compressor station of the Changling-Yongqing section of the China-Russia east-route natural gas pipeline in Yongqing County, north China's Hebei Province, 3 December 2020. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Production of natural gas rose 6 per cent in the first 11 months of the year to 209.6 billion cubic meters, while natural gas imports expanded 8.5 per cent to 107.4 million cubic metres, according to the NBS data. — Xinhua

Turkish Airlines makes huge Airbus order in bid for air supremacy

TURKISH Airlines said on Friday it has decided to purchase more than 200 Airbus aircraft — with the option for over 100 more — in the coming decade as it seeks to become the world's largest carrier.

Turkish Airlines chief

executive Bilal Eksi said in a social media statement that the entire order could potentially add up to 355 aircraft. The deal would be one of the industry's largest and substantially expand the Turkish flag carrier's existing fleet of 439 jets.

"I wish good luck to our country and our company," Eksi said in a social media statement.

Turkish Airline said in a separate corporate filing that the purchases would be made as part of its "strategic plan" for 2023-2033.

But the airline and Airbus differed slightly about the details of the deal.

The Turkish Airlines statement said it had made firm orders for 230 jets and placed purchasing rights for an additional 125 aircraft. — AFP

Fresh record for Dow at end of week dominated by central banks

THE Dow edged to a fresh record Friday, extending a rally on a mixed day for global equities after this week's central bank announcements.

The blue-chip US index, which topped 37,000 for the first time this week, added 0.2 per cent to finish at 37,305.16, a third straight record.

For the seventh straight time, all three indices in New York scored

weekly gains.

"Selling efforts had been driven by a lingering sense that stocks are overbought on a short-term basis," said Briefing.com. "Still, selling was modest considering the scope of recent gains."

Markets largely shrugged off comments from New York Federal Reserve President John Williams that down-

played talk of imminent interest rate cuts.

Europe diverged amid news of slumping eurozone business activity. Frankfurt ended flat while Paris rounded out the week slightly ahead for a record close but London lost one percent.

Markets faced a busy week for global interest rates after the US Federal Reserve pivoted Wednesday to signal it

would cut next year.

Both the Bank of England and the European Central Bank distanced themselves on Thursday from cutting any time soon.

'Pivot party'

"The ECB and the BoE refused to join the Fed-thrown pivot party," said Ipek Ozkardeska, senior analyst at Swissquote Bank. — AFP

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (060N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V CONTRIVIA VOY.NO. (060N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **18-12-2023** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority

Agent For:

(ONE) OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS LINE

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD



Aerial photo taken on 20 May 2022 shows a view of the Huanghai Shipbuilding Co., Ltd., in Rongcheng, east China's Shandong Province. **PHOTO: ZHU ZHENG/XINHUA**

China's shipbuilding sector maintains robust expansion

From January to November, the country made 38.09 million tons of ships, growing by 12.3% from the previous year. This is half of the world's total, says the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

CHINA has maintained its top position in the global shipbuilding market in the first 11 months of 2023, with strong growth in both output and new orders, industry data showed.

The country's shipbuilding output climbed 12.3 per cent year on year to 38.09

million deadweight tonnes (dwt) during the January-November period, accounting for 50.1 per cent of the world's total, according to data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

New orders surged 63.8 per cent year on year to 64.85 million dwt, taking up 65.9

percent of the world's total during the period, figures from the ministry showed.

The sector's holding orders totaled 134.09 million dwt at the end of November, expanding 29.4 percent year on year. The volume represented 53.4 percent of the global market share. — Xinhua

Wall collapse kills three in Tunisia UNESCO World Heritage Site

A section of the historic walls around the Old City of Kairouan collapsed on Saturday, killing three masons carrying out repairs on the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Tunisian authorities said.

Two workers were also injured in the accident, which saw a 30 metre (100 foot) long section of the six metre (20 foot) high walls near the Gate of the Floggers crash to the ground, the Civil Protection department said.

"A team was carrying out restoration work" on the three kilometre (two mile) long wall that surrounds the Old City, department spokesman Moez Tria told AFP, adding that the accident "could be linked to heavy rains in the area in recent days".

Founded in 670 AD, Kairouan is one of North Africa's holiest cities and a leading tourist attraction. It has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988. — AFP



A crowd of onlookers gathers by the collapsed section of wall around the Old City of Kairouan, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Tunisia's leading tourist attractions. **PHOTO: AFP**

Native oysters return to Belfast after a century's absence

Until the early 1900s, Belfast Lough's oyster reefs declined from overfishing, disease, and pollution, as per Ulster Wildlife.

LONG gone from Belfast's famed harbour where the Titanic was built, oysters are making a comeback thanks to a nursery installation project aimed at boosting marine life and water quality.

Until the early 1900s, the narrow Belfast Lough channel was home to large oyster reefs but overfishing, disease and pollution gradually decimated the population, according to the Ulster Wildlife group.

"We're bringing back a lost habitat," the group's marine conservation manager David Smyth told AFP on a harbour quay in the shadow of a noisy downtown

highway and towering commercial buildings.

Extensive native oyster beds were abundant in European seas, and humans have been harvesting them since the Stone Age.

But the group estimates that oyster populations have declined by 95 percent since the 19th century, with native oyster reefs now one of the most threatened habitats in Europe.

'Coral reef'

Last month a nursery comprising some 700 of the molluscs — brought from Scotland by van, and measured and screened for



Until the early 1900s, the narrow Belfast Lough channel was home to a large oyster reefs but overfishing, disease and pollution gradually decimated the population. **PHOTO: AFP**

disease — were lowered into Belfast Lough in over a dozen cages fitted with shelves.

It should eventually create a local "equivalent of a coral reef", said Smyth during a check of the oysters' health with a team of researchers tracking their progress.

After hoisting the metal oyster homes from the water, the team carefully removed each animal and placed them on the pier for measurement and weighing.

Pairs of oysters already conjoined are the early stages of forming a reef, said Smyth holding two aloft. — AFP

SPORTS

Myawady take sixth position in domestic league

MYAWADY FC thrashed Yadanabon 3-1, occupying the sixth place of the Myanmar National League after Week-22 match played at Youth Training Centre in Thuwunna of Yangon yesterday.

Myawady won the 6th place after winning against ISEP FC and Dagon Star FC, but they did not enter the top five teams. Yadanabon FC ended the season without a good result and suffered a loss.

Since it was the last game, both teams played with most of their core players. Thant Zin

Aung scored the opener for the Myawady team in the 10th minute, leading by one goal at the end of the first half.

In the second half, both teams played hard. Thant Zin Aung scored the second goal for the Myawady in the 50th minute, and Soe Min Oo scored the third in the 81st minute. Moe Swe scored an equalizer for the Yadanabon team in the 88th minute through a penalty kick.

Myawady team has the same points as Dagon Star team, but due to the difference



The Myawady FC player (red) prepares to pass the opponent who is lying on the ground during the Week-22 Myanmar National League match at YTC in Thuwunna of Yangon on 17 December 2023. **PHOTO:MNL**

in goals, they are only ranked 6th, while Dagon Star team is ranked 5th and Yadanabon team stood in the 10th place with 23 points.

The best player award for this match was won by Thet Wai Moe from Myawady team.

Defending Champion Shan United will take on Yan-

gon United in the last match of the 2023 football season of Myanmar National League at YTC in Thuwunna of Yangon today. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

UK athlete named in probe of disgraced US therapist: report

The British athlete is referred to as "Athlete 3" in court papers, and the investigation follows Lira's admission of providing drugs to multiple Olympic athletes, aiming to influence the Tokyo Olympics' outcome.



Nigerian sprinter Blessing Okagbare was banned after testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs. **PHOTO: JEWEL SAMAD / AFP**

A male British Olympic athlete is under investigation by anti-doping authorities after being mentioned in court papers linked to the case against US therapist Eric Lira, The Times has reported.

The Athletics Integrity Unit is investigating the matter, according to the British newspaper.

Lira faces a jail sentence after pleading guilty to supplying performance-enhancing drugs to Olympians including Nigerian sprinter Blessing Okagbare.

She was withdrawn hours before the Tokyo Olympics women's 100m semi-finals in 2021 after a positive test emerged and has since been

banned.

In a submission said to have been made by Damian Williams, the attorney for the Southern District of New York, a competitor from the United Kingdom is listed as "Athlete 3" in the case.

That athlete is not identified. A Swiss athlete, again unidentified, is also referenced.

Okagbare is believed to be "Athlete 1".

The letter from Williams to the sentencing judge, which has also been seen by the BBC, states: "Athlete 1 was not the only Olympic competitor who received PEDs (performance-enhancing drugs) from Lira.

"Lira separately met with a third Olympic athlete who competed on behalf of the United Kingdom (Athlete 3) multiple times in the summer of 2021 for the purpose of providing him with PEDs. — AFP



Jesse Rodriguez of the United States celebrates a technical knock out over Sunny Edwards of Britain to unify the IBF and WBA flyweight world titles in Glendale, Arizona. **PHOTO: AFP**

Rodriguez stops Edwards in 9th to unify WBO, IBF flyweight world titles

AMERICAN Jesse "Bam" Rodriguez stopped Sunny Edwards in the ninth round on Saturday to add the previously unbeaten Briton's International Boxing Federation flyweight world title to his own World Boxing Organization crown.

Rodriguez battered Edwards throughout the fight at the Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale, Arizona, finally connecting with a massive left to the chin that saw the Briton pitch forward to his knees, his face on the canvas.

He straightened up, but as the referee administered the count Edwards' corner signaled him to call a halt moments before the bell to end round nine.

"I had a lot of motivation going into this fight knowing I have a daughter on the way, I'm just so happy right now," said Rodriguez, who improved to 19-0 with 12 knockouts.

"I'm just satisfied that I got the win, period," he said.

"That was my main goal. But during camp I knew I had what it took to knock him out or stop him and that's what I did, so (that) just made the win that much better". — AFP

China's shipbuilding sector maintains robust expansion

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The Surat Diamond Bourse stands as a testament to the dynamism and growth of Surat's diamond industry. PHOTO: VAISHP/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

PM Modi to inaugurate world's largest corporate office, Surat Diamond Bourse

Surat's Diamond Bourse, the world's largest interconnected building with over 4,500 offices, surpasses the Pentagon in size and serves as the country's largest customs clearance house.

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the world's largest corporate office hub, 'Surat Diamond Bourse' on Sunday.

Built on 35.54 acres of land at a cost of Rs 3400 crore, the Surat Diamond Bourse is set to become a global centre of rough and polished diamond trading.

The Diamond Bourse is the world's largest interconnected building, as it

houses over 4,500 interconnected offices. The office building is even larger than the Pentagon and is the country's largest customs clearance house.

The building has the capacity to house 4,200 traders from 175 countries who will come to Surat to buy polished diamonds.

Around 1.5 lakh people will get employment from the trading facility, as

diamond buyers from all corners of the world will get a global platform to trade at Surat.

Earlier in July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi responded to a media report on 'X' that said that the Surat Diamond Bourse has now overtaken the Pentagon, which has till date housed the world's largest office building for the last 80 years. — ANI

BOAT OFF SOUTHERN COAST

Senegal navy seizes cocaine worth at least \$210 mn

THE Senegalese navy has seized three tonnes of cocaine worth at least \$210 million from a seven-crew boat moored off the coast, the force said on Saturday.

An offshore patrol vessel intercepted the boat on Thursday "in Senegal's southern waters, 425 kilometres (265 miles) from the coast", the navy said on X, formerly Twitter.

The boat and seven people on board were transferred on Saturday to a naval base in the capital, Dakar, the navy said, without giving details of the crew's identities.

"The seizure is worth at least 126 billion CFA francs (\$210 million)," it added. Senegal's armed forces said on 28 November they had impounded a separate stash of nearly three tonnes of cocaine from on a 10-crew vessel moored off the coast.

The two operations bring to six tonnes the quantity of the class A drug seized by the West African country in fewer than three weeks.

In January, the navy found more than 800 kilogrammes (1,760 pounds) of cocaine on a vessel moored close to Dakar. — AFP

Pakistan uses artificial rain against smog for first time

Pakistan's megacity Lahore is often ranked as one of the worst places globally for air pollution.

ARTIFICIAL rain was used for the first time in Pakistan on Saturday in a bid to combat hazardous levels of smog in the megacity of Lahore, the provincial government said.

In the first experiment of its kind in the South Asian country, planes equipped with cloud seeding equipment flew over 10 areas of the city, often ranked one of the worst places globally for air pollution.

The "gift" was provided by the United Arab Emirates, said caretaker chief minister of Punjab,

Mohsin Naqvi.

"Teams from the UAE, along with two planes, arrived here about 10 to 12 days ago. They used 48 flares to create the rain," he told media.

He said the team would know by Saturday night what effect the "artificial rain" had.

The UAE has increasingly using cloud seeding, sometimes referred to as artificial rain or blueskying, to create rain in the arid expanse of the country.

The weather modification involves releasing common salt

— or a mixture of different salts — into clouds.

The crystals encourage condensation to form as rain.

It has been deployed in dozens of countries, including the United States, China and India.

Even very modest rain is effective in bringing down pollution, experts say.

Air pollution has worsened in Pakistan in recent years, as a mixture of low-grade diesel fumes, smoke from seasonal crop burn off and colder winter temperatures coalesce into stag-



A photo of the plane used in the cloud setting endeavour in Lahore on Saturday. PHOTO: PUNJAB GOVERNMENT

nant clouds of smog.

Lahore suffers the most from the toxic smog, choking

the lungs of more than 11 million residents in Lahore during the winter season. — AFP