

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla join opening of first golden lotus robe weaving contest



Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla attended the opening of the first golden lotus robe weaving for the Maravijaya Buddha Image on the water fountain platform of the precinct of the Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

The Senior General and his wife cut the ribbon to open the ceremony of weaving golden lotus robe for the Buddha Image.

When the looms were functioning, artistes from MRTV of the Ministry of Information, the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and Myawady Entertainment Troupe under the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare performed a song and dances. The attendees released small hot-air balloons at the same time.

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Chairman of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views round the process of weaving at Padamyar Yadana loom yesterday.

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Maravijaya Buddha Park full of pilgrims from central Myanmar on Tazaungdine lighting festival

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OWIC cards issued to about 1,700,000 workers aboard

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Bago Region attracts substantial foreign investments, approves additional funding for industrial business



MRF plans K40 billion loan for summer paddy season to support farmers

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NATION



People prepare to release hot-air balloons on the platform of the precinct of Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla join opening of first golden lotus robe weaving contest

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The artistes also performed choral dances, Ozi and Dobat music and songs.

The Senior General and wife together with attendees interestingly viewed round pro-

cess of weaving at nine looms.

The Senior General, his wife and audiences enjoyed releasing of hot-air balloons.

After paying homage to the Maravijaya Buddha Image, the Senior General and his wife lit

3,600 oil lights together with attendees and cordially greeted monks and people to the Maravijaya Buddha Image Tazaungdine festival.

The ceremony was also attended by the SAC Secretary, the

Joint Secretary and wife, council members and their wives, Union-level persons, Union ministers and their wives, the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council and senior military officers.

The Tazaungdine lighting

festival will last from 25 to 27 November. During the period, arrangements have been made to light 9,000 oil lamps, recite Pathana treatise, launch fire-works, release hot-air balloons and weave golden lotus robes for the first time. Moreover, the Buddha Park is illuminated with LED blubs whereas domestic products, foodstuffs, personal goods and traditional snacks are sold. — MNA/TTA

Maravijaya Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, was crowded with pilgrims from central Myanmar on the second day of the Tazaungdine lighting festival.

During the festival, officials took the security measures at the entrance and exit of the Buddha Park for the pilgrims to enjoy the festival happily in safe and guided them the ways to the places of lights offering, weaving golden lotus robes, and market places.

Pilgrims, monks, and people who came to the Tazaungdine lighting festival peacefully paid homage to the Maravijaya Buddha Image and religious groups lit oil lamps in the pagoda's platform and recited Pathana treatise.

In the Tazaungdine lighting festival, the Buddha Park was full of pilgrims who came to see the weaving golden lotus robes which will be offered to the Maravijaya Buddha Image at dawn of Tazaungmone full moon for the first time.

Releasing hot-air balloons are dedicated to the Buddha in the festival's night and pilgrims from central Myanmar joined the event releasing the balloons of various sizes. LED lights

Maravijaya Buddha Park full of pilgrims from central Myanmar on Tazaungdine lighting festival



Pilgrims crowd at Maravijaya Buddha Park in Dekkhinathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw on the second day of the Tazaungdine lighting festival. **PHOTO: HTEIN AYE**

will also be lit up within the park.

Also, artistes from the modern band of the Myanma Radio and Television performed entertainments for

the people coming to the festival. The programme was organized by the Department of Fine Arts under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

The products from MSME were displayed at market place and were sold as memorial gifts at fair prices to the people. The products also earned the attraction of the people at the market.

Similarly, a children's playground was crowded with children who are playing happily.

The people who came to Tazaungdine lighting Festival did good deeds with peace of mind, and in order to be able to celebrate the festival, and officials and the Myanmar Red Cross Society provided emergency healthcare to the pilgrims in case of any health problems in the Buddha park.

The Tazaungdine lighting festival will continue till 27 November, full moon day of Tazaungmone, so that people will be able to fully enjoy the full moon night of Tazaungmone while paying homage to the Maravijaya Buddha Image. — Myo Sett Thit/TKO

NATIONAL

DPM UM inspects locomotive, carriage factories

Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo, along with deputy minister and officials, inspected locomotive and carriage factories in Sagaing and Mandalay regions yesterday.

The General first visited the Myanmar Railways Diesel-powered Locomotive Factory (Ywahtaung) in Sagaing and received a comprehensive clarification from officials. The clarification covered the factory's historical background, locomotive maintenance practices, annual objectives, and production capacities.

The Union Minister gave instructions for capacity-building and further development and

observed the training systems, textbooks, learning equipment, and lecture hall at the mechanical training school in the factory.

The General inspected maintenance of engines and bodies, electrical systems, and production of spare parts for locomotives.

He also visited the Myanmar Railways' 25-bed hospital and observed patients receiving treatments. Then, the Union Minister checked the Ywataung station.

Their trip continued to the Myanmar Railways' Home for the Aged in Ywahtaung where the Union Minister offered contributions.

In the afternoon, the General travelled to Amarapura Township in Mandalay to inspect the



Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo inspects functions of carriage factory of MR yesterday.

Myanmar Railways' Passenger Coaches and Wagons Workshop (Myitnge).

The officials presented status updates in accord with the guidance of the Head of State,

major maintenance of carriages, and the production of new coaches and wagons.

The Union Minister inspected the new carriages, repair works on the older ones, and

assembly of bogie airbags.

The Union Minister and party finally visited the 50-bed hospital for Myanmar Railways staff in Myitnge to comfort the patients and donate food.—MNA/NT

UNION MINISTER for Information U Maung Maung Ohn received a delegation led by Mr Zhou Xiaoping from the All-China Youth Federation at the Navata Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed media cooperation between Myanmar and China, controlling the spread of fake news and publishing true news in real time, cooperation in the new media sector in addition to broadcast and print media, establishing friendship between peoples of two countries in addition to close relations between the two governments, strengthening relations in business, social, investment and other sectors.

After the meeting, the Union Minister served Mr Zhou Xiaoping and party with a lunch before exchanging commemorative gifts.

MoI Union Minister receives delegation of All-China Youth Federation



Union Minister for Information U Maung Maung Ohn holds talks with Mr Zhou Xiaoping from the All-China Youth Federation in Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

In the evening, the Chinese delegation visited MRTV in Nay Pyi Taw's Tatkon Township and observed broadcasting

processes, equipment used in broadcasting throughout the

ages displayed in the Diamond Jubilee Museum of Myanmar Radio and Television, live broadcasting vehicles, miniature replicas of news presentation activities, documentary photos of those who participated in the programmes that have been broadcasted throughout the ages, musical instruments, news studios including vintage records and other equipment used in the radio programme in 40 booths.

After that, the delegation visited the Tazaungdine lighting festival held in the MRTV park that hosted offering 1,000 oil lamps at the Maha Bawdi Gyoshitkhwin Pagoda, charity fair, amusement games by staff of TV channels, selling traditional foods, launch of hot-air balloons and fire-works, refreshment offering event and the entertainment by MRTV band. — MNA/TH

Daily newspapers available online

FOR those who would like to read the Myanmar Alinn, the Kyemon and the Global New Light of Myanmar, published daily by the Ministry of Information, please visit www.moi.gov.mm/mal, www.moi.gov.mm/km, www.moi.gov.mm/nlm and www.gnlm.com.mm/e-paper.

News and Periodicals Enterprise

Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal Conditions

Issued at 2:00 pm MST on 26-11-2023

ACCORDING to the observations at 12:30 pm MST today, a low pressure area may form over the South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal on 27.11.2023. It is likely to move West-Northwestwards and may further intensify into a depression over the Southeast Bay of Bengal on 29.11.2023. — DMH

NATIONAL

Counter-argument to false information

Misinformation: Steel mill accused of producing ammos, storing radioactive materials

FAKE news circulating on social media platforms, including Facebook, falsely claims that the No (2) Steel Mill in Pangpet, Taunggyi Township, Shan State, is involved in producing ammunition and stockpiling radioactive materials.

These unsubstantiated reports also allege that the project poses a threat to the livelihoods of local farmers residing on the banks of the Namtabat Creek. They further claim that middle-aged residents are suffering from lung cancer due to the project, citing the Pa-O Youth Organization as their source.

A relevant official at the Ministry of Industry refuted these baseless claims, explaining that the mill exclusively uses hematite and limonite iron ores, along with raw materials such as silica

and alumina in small percentages. The official emphasized that there is no discovery of uranium or plutonium, essential materials for producing nuclear weapons. Therefore, the official reassured the public that these claims are nothing more than fake news.

The mill, which produces 200,000 tonnes of pig iron annually, aims to meet the country's demand for iron and steel. Its objectives include reducing the need for importing iron, supporting the local economy, and creating job opportunities.

The spread of false information on social media is attributed to "malicious media outlets", which are considered an attempt to damage the country's economy and create misunderstandings among the public. — MNA/NT



Terrorist attacks on infrastructure threatens peace and socio-economic stability

ARMED insurgents and PDF terrorists are engaging in the acts of burning and destroying government banks, private banks, departmental offices, State-owned and private property, factories and industries, telecom towers, and electricity transmission towers with the intention of undermining the country's peace, stability and rule of law.

Due to their violent actions, a total of 81 electricity transmission towers were destroyed between 2 February 2021, and 16 November 2023. The most crucial transmission towers, constructed for the development of the country and the improvement of people's socio-economic life, are being destroyed through mine explosions and arson by the



230 KV Thayagon-Kamanet-Baider electricity transmission tower destroyed by terrorists.

terrorists, causing significant damage and loss for citizens who rely on electricity daily.

It is reported that citizens can secretly communicate news of terrorist activities to nearby security forces, and the security forces will continue anti-terrorism operations in cooperation with the public to maintain state peace, tranquility, and the rule of law. — MNA/TRKM

Illegal immigrants handed over to relevant authorities

THE government is focusing on peace and stability as well as rule of law in all regions and states, including the border areas. As some foreign nationals are illegally entering and residing in Myanmar through land borders, administrative organizations conduct necessary checks and repatriate them to relevant countries under the law.

A total of 648 illegal immigrants, comprising 580 males and 68 females, were repatriated to China through Chinese officials. Therefore, a total of 8,641 illegal immigrants, including 7,846 males and 795 females, were repatriated to

China from 31 October to 26 November.

The government will continue the process of screening and repatriation for foreign nationals who have illegally entered and resided in the border areas. — MNA/KZW



The transfer of illegal immigrants underway on the Myanmar-China border yesterday.



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NATIONAL

Golden lotus robe weaving contests take place at eminent pagodas in Yangon



Golden lotus robe weaving contest starts at Kaba Aye Pagoda on the eve of Full Moon of Tazaungmone, yesterday. PHOTO: YEHTUT

ON the eve of the full-moon day of Tazaungmone, famous pagodas in the Yangon Region, such as Botahtaung Kyaikdeatt Pagoda, Thirimingala Kaba Aye Pagoda, and Kyaikkasan Pagoda, opened festivals of golden lotus robe weaving contests.

Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Soe Thein opened the auspicious ceremony of Tazaungdine Lighting and the 23rd golden lotus robe weaving contest of Thirimingala Kaba Aye Pagoda yesterday evening.

The Chief Minister of Yangon Region offered donated

cash for the weaving looms and observed the contest. There were seven looms at the contest at Thirimingala Kaba Aye Pagoda. The first prize will be awarded K700,000 while K600,000 for the second prize, K500,000 for the third prize, and K400,000 for a consolation prize. Trophies and honour certificates will also be awarded.

The 39th golden lotus robe weaving contest took place at Botahtaung Kyaikdeatt Pagoda yesterday evening.

The Chief Minister donated cash for the looms. There are 24 looms at the contest

at Botahtaung Kyaikdeatt Pagoda. The first prize will be awarded K1.5 million while K1 million for the second prize, K800,000 for the third prize, and K400,000 for each consolation prize.

Likewise, the 42nd golden lotus robe weaving contest and Tazaungdine Lighting Festival was held at Kyaikkasan Pagoda yesterday evening.

The golden lotus robes woven at the contests will be offered to the pagodas and Buddha images at dawn on the full-moon day of Tazaungmone. — Ko Ko Zaw-MNA/TMT



Sule Pagoda.

Sule Pagoda’s renovation completion ceremony to be held in December

A ceremony to mark the successful completion of all-round renovation of the Sule Pagoda will be held on 9 December, according to the Pagoda Board of Trustees.

The offering of gold foils and the all-round renovation work started on 13 November 2022 and was successfully completed on 12 April 2023.

The 151-foot-high Sule Pagoda is located in downtown Yangon, near the Yangon City Hall. — TWA/KZL

MRF plans K40 billion loan for summer paddy season to support farmers

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IN the upcoming summer paddy season, approximately K40 billion will be lent to farmers with around 50 acres of farmland in the Ayeyawady, Bago, and Yangon regions, as well as the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

To initiate the project, the list of farmers in the Ayeyawady, Bago and Yangon regions, and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area work-

ing on about 50 acres of farmland has been compiled, and the loan will be initially disbursed for 100,000 acres.

In Myanmar, there are 17 million acres of monsoon paddy and summer paddy fields, yielding 14 million tonnes of rice annually. Of this, 11 million tonnes are for local consumption, and 2.5 million tonnes are for export, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF). — ASH/TRKM

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 26 November 2023)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (17:30) hrs MST today, a low pressure area may form over the South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal on 27.11.2023. It is likely to move West-Northwestwards and may further intensify into a depression over the Southeast Bay of Bengal on 29.11.2023. Weather is a few cloud over the North Bay of Bengal and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 27 November 2023: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Southern Shan State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuations of isolated rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 November 2023: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 November 2023: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27 November 2023: Partly cloudy.

NATIONAL



Some prayer halls seen on platform of Kyauktawgyi Pagoda.

Tender called for Kyauktawgyi Pagoda service works

AN open tender is called for public service works at the Kyauktawgyi Pagoda in Insein Township, Yangon, according to the trustee.

The tender will encompass service provisions across 11 sectors for 12 months in 2024, catering to visitor needs such as restrooms, market stalls, fish and tortoise feed, Myanmar handicraft shops, sale of offerings for the spirits and more.

Bidders can learn the rules and acquire the proposal forms

at the trustee's office starting from 1 December. The winner will be announced in the presence of the bidders on 11 December.

However, the bidders whose proposed prices fall below the minimum bid will not receive a refund of their deposit, according to the announcement.

The pagoda is famous for its Buddha image called Loka Chanthabha Labha Muni and is located on Mindhamma Hill in East Gyogon Ward. — TWA/NT

Yangon-based pilgrim services required to obtain tourism certification

THE service businesses for domestic pilgrims based in the Yangon Region must apply for tourism service business certification

According to the Domestic Pilgrim and Tour Operator Association, only domestic pilgrims and tourism service members must apply for the certification, therefore business operators who have not yet joined the association must apply for membership by 31 December.

Starting from 1 January 2024, the relevant departments will monitor whether Yangon-based domestic pilgrimage tourism businesses

are providing services in line with the requirements.

According to the Domestic Pilgrim and Tour Operator Association, 603 members are operating in domestic pilgrimage services. — TWA/TKO



The first workshop to be held by the Domestic Pilgrim and Tour Operator Association in 2024.

Taunggyi Weaving and Vocational Training School announces 6-month weaving course

STARTING from 1 January 2024, a six-month weaving course will be conducted at the Weaving and Vocational Training School in Taunggyi. The course will admit only 10 trainees for each of the two six-month courses per year, providing a comprehensive curriculum encompassing both theoretical and practical

aspects.

The course will cover subjects such as textile design, textile analyses, hand threading, traditional weaving, and colour bleaching and dyeing. Applicants must be between 16 and 25 years old and have completed basic education at the primary school level. During

the six-month training period, the government will arrange accommodation, providing an allowance of K30,000 per month. Upon completion of the course, job opportunities will be made available for the trainees in weaving businesses operating in Taunggyi and Inlay regions. — TWA/TKO

OWIC cards issued to about 1,700,000 workers aboard

ACCORDING to the Department of Labour, Overseas Workers Identification Cards (OWIC) have been issued to approximately 1,684,934 workers employed in foreign countries during the 33-year period from 1990 to 2023.

OWIC cards are issued at the Migrant Workers Unit of the Department of Labour in Dagon Myothit (North) Township. For those who return home on leave, the cards are issued at the Department of Labour in Mayangone Township.

OWIC cards have been issued to 1,110,595 workers in Thailand, 52,035 in Singapore, 64,364 in Korea, 60,013 in Japan, and 385,566 in Malaysia.—TWA/TRKM



Office of the Department of Labour in Dagon Myothit (North) Township.

Myanmar passport section extends deadline for OWIC card withdrawal

THE ordinary Myanmar passport office in Mahachai, Thailand, issued Overseas Worker Identification Cards (OWIC) to Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand during the period from 24 August to 24 November 2023.

Some workers have made the required payment for OWIC but have not collected their cards for various reasons. Therefore, the Myanmar passport office announced on 26 November that it had extended the deadline for the withdrawal of the OWIC cards for them until 31 March 2024. — TWA/KZW

Bago Region attracts substantial foreign investments, approves additional funding for industrial business

IN November 2023, Bago Region received a foreign investment project worth \$1.622 million, as stated by U Ko Ko Latt, the Director of the Bago Region Directorate of Investment and Company Administration. “Bago Region Investment Committee allowed a foreign investment valued at \$1.622 million in November. Additionally, the committee approved the currently-operating foreign business to add \$7 million to its original investment at meeting No. 7/2023,” said U Ko Ko Latt.

Furthermore, regional authorities are eager to invite external investors to invest businesses related to manufacturing agricultural machinery and equipment, producing fer-

tilizers, and establishing cold storage facilities to promote the development of multi-functional agriculture and the manufacturing of farming products. Relevant departments will provide necessary assistance in line with the law.

There were \$197.117 million worth of foreign investments and K 75,456.275 million in domestic investments in Bago Region between February 2021 and November 2023, consequently generating job opportunities for more than 11,281 labourers. — ASH/TMT

File photo shows a factory in Bago Region. Bago Region received a foreign investment project worth \$1.622 million in November 2023.



December sees increase in imported edible oil tonnage



Edible oil imported from abroad.

ACCORDING to the oil market in Yangon, about 70,000 tonnes of edible oil will be imported from abroad starting December.

In 2022, the average monthly import was only around 40,000 tonnes, but in July, the maximum was imported with around 58,000 tonnes, and in February and September, only around 32,000 tonnes were imported, according to the statistics.

In the first six months from April to September of this year

294,457 tonnes of edible oil worth US\$294.58 million were imported from abroad.

In addition, it is reported that 33 companies will import oil in bulk and 27 companies will import ready-packaged consumer oil in December of this year.

This week from 20 to 26 November, the wholesale price of edible oil is K4,990 per viss and the retail price is K5,180 per viss in Yangon, K5,600 per viss in Mandalay, K5,500 in Magway,

K5,500 in Patheingyi and in Pyaw, and K5,200 in Monywa.

In December, local oil sellers are expecting to buy more oil imports from abroad at around the wholesale price in the market. They also wish to have a normal situation where they buy as usual in the market.

The oil market will return to normal if there are systematic actions against selling oil at more than the set price and storing more than the limit. If so, it is expected that the scenes of time-consuming queues for buying edible oil and increasing profit in selling will disappear.

According to staff of the shops at the Bayintnaung brokerage, it has been several months since the scenes of crowded people lining up to buy the oil at the depots disappeared. — TWA/TKO

Russian pharmacy firms prepping to enter SEA market

RUSSIAN pharmaceutical companies eye Southeast Asia including Myanmar for market expansion, according to Myanmar’s Commercial Attaché in Moscow. Russian pharmaceutical company Binnopharm Group is considering entering the Southeast Asian market in early 2024, said CEO Mr Rustem Muratov of Binnopharm Group.

Binnopharm Group has already planned to enter the markets of Viet Nam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines and they are observing market potential in Myanmar as well. They will start registration procedures in all countries as soon as they are ready. Muratov noted that the company will open a representative office in Southeast Asia in the coming months. Binnopharm Group opened a representative office in China and a list of pharmaceuticals for launching in China has been

determined.

The leading Binnopharm Group in Russia was formed in 2020. There are five production factories in Russia and 20 per cent of the products are made from the group’s own pharmaceutical ingredients. The group is one of the leading companies in Russia’s retail pharmaceutical market, exporting its products to 14 countries. On 23 November, the officials of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry met with the Russian delegation regarding bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

The meeting also highlighted cooperation in terms of health service, pathology, importation of pharmaceutical and medical devices for surgery, food processing and other sectors. The two sides also exchanged ideas about market exploration through exhibitions. — NN/EM

OPINION

Ensuring lifelong lung health in controlling pneumonia

Pneumonia, an infectious disease with swift repercussions, poses a grave threat to both children and the elderly worldwide. Its impact on children surpasses the combined mortality rates of AIDS, measles, and malaria, earning it the designation of a formidable health adversary. The World Health Organization (WHO) alarmingly reported that, in 2019 alone, 2.5 million individuals globally, including 672,000 children, succumbed to pneumonia. This underscores the urgency of addressing the critical issue of lung health across all age groups.

Air pollution emerges as a primary culprit, wielding detrimental effects on populations globally. WHO identifies air pollution, stemming from various sources such as smoke from cooking, heating, and the use of firewood and charcoal, as a leading cause of lung-related diseases. In particular, pneumonia infections are exacerbated by inhaling pollutants from cooking, lighting, and the burning of mosquito coils and joss sticks. A collective effort is imperative to mitigate the impacts of air pollution, as it continues to claim lives across the globe.

Preventive measures against pneumonia must be adopted not only by healthcare professionals but also by individuals. Efforts to reduce air pollution, which plays a pivotal role in triggering pneumonia, are essential for safeguarding the health of children and older individuals. Over 50 per cent of deaths among the elderly can be attributed to the detrimental effects of air pollution, as they lack the resilience to access clean air for optimal respiratory function.

Urban areas with high population density are particularly susceptible to pneumonia outbreaks. Managing crowded public spaces, such as bus stops, railway stations, marketplaces, and worksites,

is crucial for minimizing the risk of infectious diseases, including pneumonia. Addressing root causes, such as carbon dioxide, excessive humidity, and inadequate drainage systems that foster mosquito breeding, is essential in the fight against pneumonia.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic further accentuates the vulnerability of lung health. Individuals with pre-existing lung conditions face heightened risks during the pandemic, necessitating stringent measures. The WHO has highlighted the increased susceptibility of smokers to severe COVID-19 impacts due to compromised lung function. Despite intensified efforts to treat COVID-19 patients with pneumonia, the pneumonia-related mortality rate continues to rise.

Individuals must recognize the interconnectedness of their health conditions and take proactive steps to protect their lungs. Daily lifestyle choices, especially concerning air pollution, directly impact lung health. Efforts to curtail air pollution are paramount for enhancing the longevity of lung function and ensuring a healthier, disease-resistant life.

■

Key Notes on Patient Friendly Hospital

Essentially, the key aspect of making a hospital more patient-friendly is focusing on prioritizing the well-being and comfort of patients and their families.

By Dr Than Lwin Tun

Creating a patient-friendly hospital involves prioritizing the well-being and comfort of patients and their families. The following are some key notes to make a hospital more patient-friendly.

- **Empathy and Respect:** Train your staff to be empathetic and respectful toward patients, regardless of their condition. Show kindness and understanding in all interactions.
- **Easy Navigation:** Hospitals can be confusing. Clear signage, maps, and helpful staff can make it easier for patients and visitors to find their way around.
- **Comfortable Facilities:** En-

sure that patient rooms and common areas are comfortable, clean, and well-maintained. Comfortable furniture, appropriate lighting, and noise control can make a big difference.

- **Privacy:** Respect and protect patient privacy. Ensure that conversations are private and that personal information is kept confidential.
- **Healthy Environment:** Create spaces for families to wait and support patients. Consider family rooms or areas where loved ones can rest and be informed about the patient's condition.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Hospitals serve diverse popula-

tions. Be culturally sensitive and provide materials for necessary corners.

- **Involvement in Decision Making:** Encourage patients to be active participants in their care and provide them with information as well as involve them in treatment decisions when appropriate.
- **Amenities:** Consider offering amenities like free Wi-Fi, charging stations, and entertainment options to make patients and families more comfortable during their stay.
- **Nutrition and Food Options:** Offer a variety of food options that cater to different dietary needs and



Making a hospital more patient-friendly means putting the needs and comfort of patients and their families first. **ILLUSTRATION: FREEPIK**

preferences. Ensure that the food is safe and provides adequate nutrition.

- **Sensory Considerations:** Pay attention to the sensory environment, including noise levels, lighting, and aromas. Minimize unnecessary disruptions and create a calming atmosphere.
- **Patient Education:** Provide educational materials to patients about their condition, treatment options, and self-care. Ensure they understand their treatment plans.
- **Waiting Areas:** More waiting areas for appointments, tests, and procedures. Efficient scheduling and staff coordination can help reduce

patient anxiety.

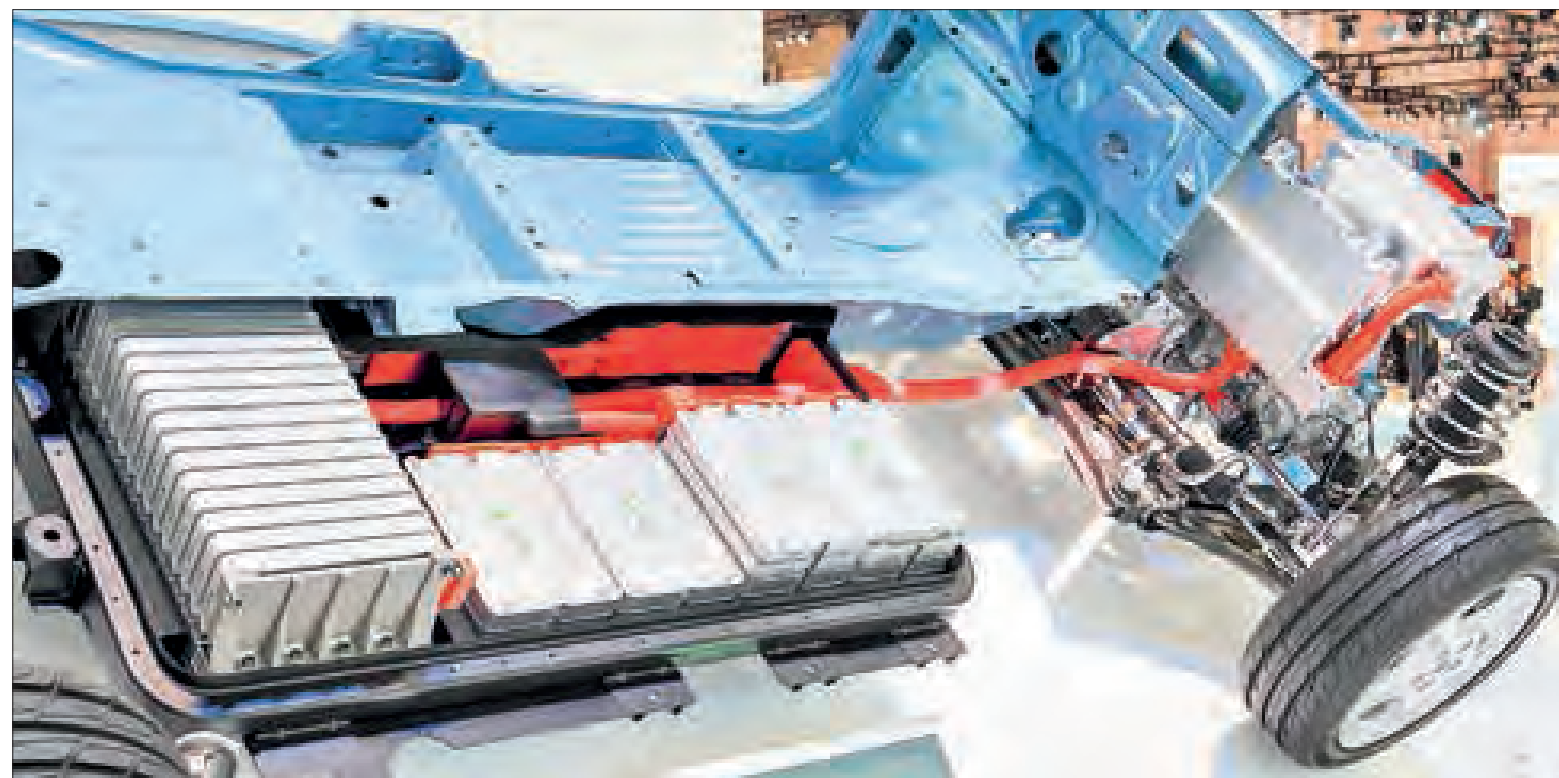
- **Emotional and Psychological Support:** Offer access to psychological and emotional support services, particularly for patients dealing with chronic illnesses or serious medical conditions.

In addition, building a patient-friendly hospital requires a holistic approach, involving not just medical care but also the overall experience and well-being of patients. Continuous assessment, feedback, and a commitment to improvement are essential in achieving a more patient-friendly hospital.

■

Density vital for battery material performance: Study

Zinc, an affordable and eco-friendly option for batteries, faces a challenge as Aqueous Zinc Ion Batteries (AZIBs) currently lag behind lithium-ion batteries in power output.



Aqueous Zinc Ion Batteries (AZIBs) currently exhibit lower power output compared to lithium-ion batteries. Nissan Leaf at the 2009 Tokyo Motor Show. **PHOTO: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/ WIKI COMMONS**

Zinc, which is cheap, abundant, and environmentally friendly, could be the answer to better batteries, but there is a major problem.

Aqueous zinc ion batteries (AZIBs) cannot match with lithium-ion batteries in terms of power output. A Chinese research team developed two organic frameworks with the same constituents but organised differently to investigate what electrode material composition may bring AZIBs up to standard.

Tested Structure Outperforms

When tested, the structure with the required density of active sites functioned better (where zinc ions receive electrons to replenish the battery).

The research was published in the journal Energy Materials and Devices.

“For over a decade, AZIBs have gained considerable attention as a highly promising battery technology,” said co-first author Meilin Li, faculty of materials science and energy engineering of the Institute of Technology for Carbon Neutrality, Shenzhen Institute of Technology (SIAT),

Chinese Academy of Sciences.

“Various electrode materials have been explored, with inorganic options being extensively studied. However, these materials often encounter challenges, including crystal structure degradation and limited specific capacity.”

The organic materials constituting the cathode — where functional groups undergo alternating oxidation and reduction processes during charge and discharge reactions, corresponding to the absorption and release of zinc ions — are molecules arranged in a crystalline form.

These molecules contain active sites where ions react and gain electrons. However, inorganic molecules can only accommodate a limited number of reactions and can only sustain them for a finite period before undergoing decomposition.

“In contrast to inorganic materials, organic materials exhibit superior redox properties, high specific capacity and structural flexibility,” Li said.

Exploring Active Site Densities

“In this paper, we designed two covalent organic framework (COF) materials with the same

structure and number of energy groups to investigate the correlation between the densities of active sites and electrochemical performance.”

The first COF used the organic molecule benzoquinoxaline benzoquinone (BB-COF), while the second used triquinoxalylene benzoquinone (TB-COF). Both of the frameworks were ring-shaped, with the same number of energy groups in each.

The energy groups house the active sites, or atoms of carbon bonded to oxygen or nitrogen. BB-COF was also larger, with the energy groups arranged further apart from one another. TB-COF was an overall denser molecule, but BB-COF's energy groups were more sparsely packed with active sites.

And that appears to be the key to better electrochemical performance, according to Li.

“Although TB-COF boasts a commendable initial specific capacity stemming from its densely packed functional groups, its susceptibility to capacity deterioration due to potent interactions places it at a disadvantage when vying for the role of an AZIBs cathode material,” Li said.

Robust Performance in Extreme Cold

“BB-COF, on the other hand, demonstrated stable cycling even at - 40 degrees Celsius for 2,000 cycles — meaning it could remain stable even as a battery charges and discharges 2,000 times.”

The researchers analyzed the chemical composition and the morphology of the COFs, determining that the larger diameter of BB-COF enabled rapid ion transport and more effective utilization of the active sites.

At room temperature, after 10,000 cycles, BB-COF retained a specific capacity — the measurement of charge per weight — of 72 milliamperes-hours per gram mass. TB-COF's specific capacity dropped to 40 milliamperes-hours per gram mass.

“Regulating and controlling pore dimensions to obtain the optimal densities of active sites are believed to not only enhance the zinc ion transport rate in COF pathways but also to help maintain the stability of COF structures,” Li said.

“Therefore, this approach is a direction for future efforts.”

SOURCE: ANI

■

Chinese institute, journal Science select top 10 nanotechnology challenges



Technicians work at the Research Centre for Surface/Interfacial Micro/Nano-technology, Tsinghua University Tianjin Research Institute for Advanced Equipment, in north China's Tianjin, 24 February 2021. **PHOTO: SUN FANYUE/XINHUA**

A Chinese national research institute, together with the journal Science, on Friday unveiled their list of top 10 challenges remaining in nanoscience and technology. Since April, the National Centre for Nanoscience and Technology, a subsidiary of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, has partnered with the journal to survey experts engaged

Since April, the Chinese Academy of Sciences' National Centre for Nanoscience and Technology has partnered with a journal to survey experts globally in the field of nanoscience, selecting the top 10 based on input from over 20 countries, including China, the United States, Canada, and Germany.

in this field from more than 20 countries, including China, the United States, Canada and Germany, and selected their top 10 based on these surveys. The list of challenges includes the following key areas: which characteristics of nanomaterials are relevant with respect to toxicity; how nanotechnology will change the practice of medicine; what scientists will learn about nanomaterials at their surface and interface using new visualization technologies; how nanotechnology will change how we make catalysts and the types of catalysts we can make; and how nanotechnology can transform electronics. According to the Chinese institute, these areas reflect current international frontier research, future sci-tech development and the common needs of humankind. Experts hope these major challenges will stimulate the curiosity and exploration enthusiasm of researchers in nanoscience and technology. — Xinhua

UAE: fossil fuel power and COP28 host

A gas-guzzling fossil fuel exporter trying to spearhead more ambitious climate action, the United Arab Emirates remains heavily dependent on hydrocarbons for its prosperity.

The carbon footprint

The UAE may be a small country of only nine million inhabitants but it emitted 237 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) in 2021, according to the Global Carbon Atlas — without including methane and other greenhouse gas emissions.

The United Kingdom, for comparison, emitted 348 million that year for a population of 67 million people.

The Gulf state ranks at 25 tonnes of CO2 emitted per person, higher than its fossil



Just two weeks before COP28 the UAE inaugurated the Al Dhafra solar power plant — one of the largest in the world. **PHOTO: AFP**

fuel-producing neighbour Saudi Arabia (18 tonnes) but below the record-breaking Qataris (40 tonnes) in 2021. The tallies do not account for the oil and gas exported by these countries to other nations: they solely consider the CO2 emitted directly by inhabitants and businesses — reflecting an economy and a way of life still heavily reliant on the combustion of oil and gas. — AFP

Improved air quality could increase sunlight accessible to plants, carbon sequestration: study

Reducing aerosol particle pollution not only enhances air quality but also potentially boosts plants' carbon dioxide absorption, contributing to climate change mitigation through increased sunlight availability.

AIR quality would improve if pollution from aerosol particles were reduced. It may also improve plants' ability to extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and alleviate climate change by increasing the quantity of sunlight available to them.

A Carnegie-led team lead by Liyin He, Lorenzo Rosa, and

Joe Berry utilized satellites to evaluate photosynthetic activity as well as aerosol pollution across Europe, revealing that plants capture more carbon on weekends when industrial production is reduced and fewer people commute. Their findings are published by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. — ANI



Plants have a special ability, called photosynthesis, by which they convert the Sun's energy into chemical energy. **ILLUSTRATION: PIX FOR VISUAL PURPOSE/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

How climate change impacts health

GROWING calls for the world to come to grips with the many ways that global warming affects human health have prompted the first day dedicated to the issue at crunch UN climate talks starting next week. Extreme heat, air pollution

and the increasing spread of deadly infectious diseases are just some of the reasons why the World Health Organization has called climate change the single biggest health threat facing humanity. — AFP

UK Booker Prize set to name first-time winner



The nominees of the shortlisted for the Booker Prize 2023 (from left) Canadian author Sarah Bernstein, Irish author Paul Murray, British Indian author Chetna Maroo, Irish author Paul Lynch and US author Paul Harding. **PHOTO: AFP**

The award, recognized as one of the world's top literary honours, has previously elevated renowned authors like Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, and Hilary Mantel to fame.

BRITAIN'S Booker Prize for fiction will anoint a first-time winner when the 2023 recipient of the prestigious prize is announced at a ceremony in London on Sunday.

None of this year's six finalists — two Americans, a Canadian, two Irish and a Kenyan author — have been shortlisted before and only one has previously been longlisted.

The prize is one of the world's top literary awards and has propelled to fame countless household names, including past winners Salman Rushdie,

Margaret Atwood and Hilary Mantel. This year's six books offer "terrors, pleasures, joys and consolations", according to organisers, on themes that, among others, touch on grief, immigration and political extremism.

The literary prize

The literary prize is open to works of fiction by writers of any nationality, written in English and published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October, 2022, and 30 September, 2023.

The winner will receive £50,000 (around \$63,000) and a

huge boost to their profile.

The short-listed novels, announced in September, were chosen from a 13-strong longlist that had been whittled down from an initial 158 works.

Among them is Irish author Paul Murray's "The Bee Sting", a tragicomic saga which looks at the role of fate in the travails of one family. Murray was previously longlisted in 2010. Kenyan writer Chetna Maroo's moving debut novel "Western Lane" about grief and sisterhood follows the story of a teenage girl for whom squash is life. — AFP

Meals to woof down at Italy's first dog restaurant

Pepe, a mischievous-looking four-year-old Bichon, thoroughly enjoys licking his elegant black bowl clean, almost erasing the geometric patterns in the process.

PEPE'S meal is so good he licks the plate clean. In any other Rome establishment, slobbering on one's chicken and mashed potato would be frowned upon — but this is "Fiuto", Italy's first dogs' restaurant.

The lighting is soft, lounge music plays in the background, attentive staff show people and pets to their tables and ask whether furry, four-legged customers might fancy a boiled egg with pureed peas and fontina cheese? Or perhaps a simple fish with ricotta and courgettes?

Thirsty pups can opt for a green apple and watermelon juice, or go wild and have a pear, strawberry or banana one instead.

"We drew up the menu with a veterinary nutritionist with whom I determined the ingredients, taking allergies into account, because dogs have many more allergies than humans," said head chef Luca Grammatico, who previously worked as a dog trainer.

Pepe, a four-year-old Bichon with a naughty face, licks every last crumb off his elegant black bowl, almost taking the geometric patterns off too.

Pets "are part of our family, so why not treat them like family?" says Sara Nicosanti, as she takes a selfie with Mango, her five-year-old Jack Russell, in the mirror-lined area designed especially for this purpose. — AFP



The menu, created in collaboration with a veterinary nutritionist, includes options like boiled egg with pureed peas and fontina cheese, fish with ricotta and courgettes, and various fruit juices for thirsty pups. **PHOTO: AFP**

Impressionist art tour of France, US to mark 150 years



A woman passes by 'Nymphs' (right) a paint by French artist Claude Monet presented in the exhibition. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE world's leading museum of Impressionist art is sending an unprecedented number of its masterpieces on tour in

France and the United States to mark the movement's 150th anniversary, it announced Tuesday.

Impressionism was born in April 1874 when a group of painters including Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir and Paul Cezanne — tired of being rejected by the government-backed Paris Salon — held their own independent show.

The Musee d'Orsay, which today holds the world's largest Impressionist collection, will send 178 of its 400 key works on a "Tour de France", spreading them around 34 museums in early 2024. — AFP

Sweden mulls laws allowing govt to deport immigrants for 'shortcomings in lifestyle'

SWEDEN said Tuesday it wanted to introduce new requirements that would allow the deportation of asylum-seekers and immigrants for substance abuse, association with criminal groups or statements threatening Swedish values.

Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson's minority rightwing government came to power a year ago — with backing from the far-right Sweden Democrats (SD) — vowing to crack down on immigration and crime.

"A prerequisite for success-

ful integration is that people who want to live in Sweden also adhere to basic norms and live in an honest and well-behaved way," Migration Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard told a press conference held with SD.

Rights groups have yet to comment on the initiative.

Paulina Brandberg, Minister for Gender Equality, told reporters the government would review Swedish legislation to determine if there were specific grounds for revoking residence permits. — AFP

ECONOMY
WORLD

Every industry should be 'held accountable' on climate: COP28 president

COP28 in Dubai, 30 November - 12 December, expects 70,000 attendees, including world leaders, activists, and Pope Francis, becoming the largest UN climate summit.

THE president of a pivotal UN climate summit defended on Saturday the large presence of industry representatives at the negotiations, saying private sector engagement was essential to curb global heating.

"Everyone needs to be part of this process and everyone needs to be held responsible and everyone needs to be held accountable," COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber, of the oil-rich United Arab Emirates, told AFP in an interview.

"That includes all industries and in particular heavy emitting industries like aviation, transportation, aluminium, cement, steel, as well as the oil and gas

industry," he added.

World leaders, country negotiators, activists, lobbyists and figures including Pope Francis will be among the 70,000 attendees expected at COP28 in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December, making it the largest United Nations climate change summit ever.

More than 1,000 businesses and philanthropic organisation leaders have registered for a two-day forum on 1-2 December on the sidelines of the negotiations between political leaders on preventing the planet's climate tipping unstopably out of control.

Businesses and industries are to announce a score of com-



People attend the UAE Climate Tech Forum in Abu Dhabi. This year's conference – COP28 – holds immense importance as it marks the conclusion of the first Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement's implementation, evaluating the world's progress towards achieving climate goals. **PHOTO: AFP**

mitments at the forum, according to its organiser, Emirati businessman Badr Jafar.

National negotiators at

COP28 will grapple with a host of flashpoint issues, including the future of fossil fuels — oil, gas and coal — and financial aid

from rich polluters for the poorer nations most vulnerable to accelerating climate disruption. — AFP

Germany on brink of recession, Q3 GDP down 0.1 pct: Destatis

In a year-on-year comparison, consumer spending fell by 2.0 per cent, attributed to high price levels.

GERMANY'S economy is on the brink of recession as the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in the third quarter (Q3) of 2023 declined by 0.1 per cent compared to the previous quarter, according to confirmed figures published by the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) on Friday.

"After the weak economic development seen in the first half of 2023, the German economy began the second half of the year with a slight drop in performance," Destatis President Ruth Brand said. Economic output almost stagnated in the first two quarters of the year.

While government spending rose slightly by 0.2 per cent compared to the previous quarter, private consumption dropped by 0.3 per cent, according to Destatis. In a year-on-



A sales promotion sign is seen during Black Friday sales at a shop in Frankfurt, Germany, 24 November 2023. **PHOTO:ZHANG FAN / XINHUA**

year comparison, consumer spending even fell 2.0 per cent due to high price levels.

German consumers are spending less on food and beverages, restaurant and accommodation services, and short-lived goods, such as clothing in particular. The "persistently high prices continued to have a

noticeable effect," Destatis said.

Before recording a sharp drop to 4.5 per cent in September, inflation in Germany was normalizing more slowly than in other eurozone countries. In October, inflation in Europe's largest economy further declined to 3.8 per cent, according to official figures. — Xinhua

Argentina president-elect discusses economic crisis with IMF chief

ARGENTINA'S president-elect Javier Milei and IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva had a first meeting via video call on Friday, in which they discussed the country's economic crisis.

Argentina has had a \$44 billion credit program with the IMF since the government of ex-president Mauricio Macri requested financial assistance in 2018.

The outgoing administration of Alberto Fernandez renegotiated the loan, but the recession that accompanied the Covid-19 pandemic and a severe drought

this year made it difficult for Argentina to meet the targets agreed with the IMF.

"Today I had an excellent conversation with the director of the IMF, @KGeorgieva, in which we talked about the great economic challenge facing our country," Milei said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"I told her about different aspects of our fiscal adjustment plan and our monetary program. The Fund was collaborative in finding the structural solutions that Argentina needs." — AFP



Argentiniens demonstrating over the economy. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

China tries out unilateral visa-free policy for six countries

China has decided to implement a unilateral visa-free policy for ordinary passport holders from six countries, namely France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Malaysia.

CHINA has decided to implement a unilateral visa-free policy for ordinary passport holders from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Malaysia on a trial basis, according to the statement published on the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s social media account.

From 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024, holders of ordinary passports from the above six countries may enter China visa-free for business, tourism, visiting relatives and friends and transit for no more than 15 days, the online statement said.

People from these six coun-



China Southern Airlines flight CZ3001 takes off at the Daxing International Airport in Beijing, capital of China, 25 September 2019. **PHOTO: ZHANG CHENLIN/XINHUA/FILE**

tries who do not meet the visa exemption requirements still need to obtain a visa before

entering China, the statement said. It further added that this policy will help promote people

to people exchanges, and serve high-quality development and high-level opening-up. —Xinhua

Some farmers in drought-hit Iraq forced to reduce crops: NGO

Iraq is described as one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change and water scarcity.



The reduction in cultivated areas and water usage by farmers may have implications for food production in the affected regions, potentially leading to food security concerns. **PHOTO: AFP**

SIXTY percent of farmers surveyed in four provinces of drought-hit Iraq reported having to reduce cultivated areas

or water used, an international rights group said Sunday.

The Norwegian Refugee Council called on the Iraqi au-

thorities to improve governance of water resources in the country that has been described as one of the most vulnerable to climate change and water scarcity.

“Climate change in Iraq is impeding the economic recovery of communities affected by conflict and precipitating risks of secondary displacement,” the NRC said.

The survey was conducted in July and August and relied on results from interviewing 1,079 people in Iraq’s Anbar, Kirkuk, Nineveh and Salaheddin provinces, 40 per cent of whom were women and 94 per cent of whom were residents of rural areas. —AFP

Türkiye delivers another major interest rate hike

TÜRKIYE’s central bank on Friday surprised the market with a larger-than-expected interest hike as it ramped up its fight against inflation and efforts to support the slumping lira.

The bank lifted its policy rate by 5.0 percentage points to 40 per cent on the sixth month of a belt-tightening cycle that has more than quadrupled borrowing costs.

Most analysts had expected the bank to raise its rate by 2.5 percentage points.

“Really impressive move by the (central bank) ... getting

well ahead of expectations,” emerging markets economist Timothy Ash remarked in an emailed note.

But the bank also gave a strong signal that it was reaching the limits of how high its policy rate will go.

“The current level of monetary tightness is significantly close to the level required to establish the disinflation course,” the bank said in a statement.

“Accordingly, the pace of monetary tightening will slow down and the tightening cycle will be completed in a short period of time.” — AFP



Tourists shop inside spice bazaar at Eminonu district in Istanbul on 16 December, 2021. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

China’s 5G mobile phone shipments soar in September

SHIPMENTS of 5G mobile phones in China surged 90.1 per cent year on year to 28.72 million units in September, data from the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT) showed.

This volume accounted for 86.3 per cent of the country’s total phone shipments in September, said the CAICT, a research institute

under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

In September, 20 new 5G phone models were released, a year-on-year increase of 33.3 per cent.

China’s total mobile phone shipments hit 33.28 million units in September, rising 59 per cent from a year earlier, the data revealed. — Xinhua

ROLLING UPDATES
WORLD

S Korea’s spy chief resigns

South Korea's National Intelligence Service chief, Kim Kyou-hyun, resigned amid escalating tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

SOUTH Korea’s spy agency chief resigned Sunday, Yonhap news agency reported, as tensions soar over neighbouring North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile programmes.

President Yoon Suk Yeol accepted the resignation offer by National Intelligence Service director Kim Kyou-hyun, Yonhap reported, without giving further details.

Kim, a former deputy national security adviser and career diplomat, was appointed in May 2022 after Yoon’s election victory. — AFP



A visitor uses binoculars to look towards the North Korean side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) from the Odusan Unification Tower in Paju on 12 May 2022. **PHOTO: ANTHONY WALLACE / AFP/FILE**

New Zealand 2023
Wings Over Wairarapa
Air Festival attracts
thousands of visitors

THOUSANDS of people gathered and crowded the side of the airstrip of Hood Aerodrome in Masterton, New Zealand on Sunday to watch the biennial Wings Over Wairarapa airshow.

The Wings Over Wairarapa Air Festival this year features over 70 aircraft including vintage, military, and New Zealand Defence Force aircraft, jets, helicopters and aerobatic displays.

Audiences here have previously seen aircraft from World War I and World War II, including the world-famous Vintage Aviator aircraft collection owned by Peter Jackson, which includes replicas of some of the earliest airplanes, and this year was no different. — Xinhua

Kenya's Ruto
pledges action
to tackle deadly
flood emergency

KENYA is drawing up measures to tackle a flood disaster that has killed 70 people and driven tens of thousands from their homes, President William Ruto said on Saturday, describing it as an "emergency situation".

Kenya and neighbouring Somalia and Ethiopia, countries that are only just emerging from the worst drought in four decades, are now experiencing devastating flooding caused by torrential rainfall linked to the El Nino weather pattern.

Ruto said after holding talks with various emergency response teams that the cabinet would meet on Monday to discuss recommendations on how to manage the crisis.

"Unfortunately we have lost 70 people across Kenya because of these rains and about 36,160 households have been displaced so far," he said in an address from State House.

"Kenya is already soaked," he said, adding that the Meteorological Department was forecasting more rains, heightening the risk of further flooding.

"Therefore we need to prepare ourselves for the emergency situation that is going to ensue," he said. — AFP

India bid to free 41 trapped workers in
collapse highway tunnel enters third week

The Indian air force is actively involved, providing support and flying in multiple loads since the tunnel's partial collapse on 12 November in Uttarakhand.

INDIA'S military brought in specialized equipment Sunday as efforts to free 41 trapped workers entered a third week, with digging ongoing in three directions after repeated setbacks to the operation.

The Indian air force said Sunday that they were “responding with alacrity”, as they flew in their third load since the partial collapse of the under-construction Silkyara road tunnel on 12 November in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand.

Rescue officials said they called for a superheated plasma cutter to be brought to the remote mountain location, after engineers driving a metal pipe horizontally through 57 metres (187 feet) of rock and concrete ran into metal girders and construction vehicles buried in the earth.

A giant earth-boring machine snapped just nine meters from breakthrough.

The plasma cutter will be used to remove the broken giant earth-boring drill and metal blocking the horizontal route, before digging will continue by hand.



Rescue personnel work at the mouth of the collapsed under construction Silkyara tunnel in the Uttarkashi district of India’s Uttarakhand state, on 25 November 2023. **PHOTO: AFP**

Thick metal girders in the rubble are blocking the route, and using conventional oxyacetylene cutters to clear them is tricky from inside the confined pipe, only wide enough for a man to crawl through.

The air force said the “critical” kit came from the country’s Defence Research and Development Organization, the government’s defence technology research arm, without giving further details. — AFP

SPORTS



Hanthawady United player (red) vies for the ball with Yangon United player (green) during the Week-20 match of the Myanmar National League at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon on 26 November 2023. **PHOTO:MNL**

Yangon’s win put pressure on Shan United in domestic league

YANGON United beat Hanthawady United 2-1 at the Week-20 match of the Myanmar National League 2023 at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

The second-placed Yangon team and the third-placed Hanthawady team faced each other in the match, and with the winning team Yangon could continue to put pressure on the Shan United team at the top.

Despite the gap of six points with three remaining games, the Yangon United was able to secure a must-win result for the rest of the championship hope.

The Hanthawady team played with most of their core players, while the Yangon team lined up with local players as the team had parted ways with all three foreign players.

Made up of local players, both teams played to their full potential, and in the 28 minutes, Zin Min Tun scored the lead goal for the Hanthawady United through a penalty kick. After conceding a goal, the Yangon team tried to score an equalizer and in the 41 minutes, Zarni Htet scored an equalizer.

In the second half, both

teams tried to score more goals and in the 63 minutes, Zaw Win Thein scored the winning goal for the Yangon team. Zaw Win Thein won the best player award after the match. With the victory, Yangon United earned 47 points and Hanthawady United collected 34 points.

Kachin United will take on Ayeyawady United at Thuwunna Stadium and Dagon Star team will face Myawady FC at Yangon United Sports Complex today as the final day of the Myanmar National League Week-20. — Ko Nyi Lay/KZL

Khin Cherry Thet wins gold in Women & Junior Petanque World Championship 2023

MYANMAR’S Khin Cherry Thet won the gold medal in the women’s individual event of the Women & Junior Petanque World Championship 2023 held in Thailand.

Khin Cherry Thet won the gold medal by defeating the Vietnamese player in the final, Tunisian player in the quarterfinals, a Thai player in the semifinals.

Khin Cherry Thet won the gold medal this year after finishing third in the Petanque World Championship 2019. In addition, she won gold medals in the women’s individual event at the 31st SEA Games and 32nd SEA Games held in 2022 and 2023, respectively. — Shine Htet Zaw/KZL



Myanmar’s Khin Cherry Thet is seen in action. **PHOTO:MPF**

'Adorable' Havertz ends goal drought to fire Arsenal into top spot

MIKEL Arteta saluted "adorable" Kai Havertz after the German sent Arsenal to the top of the Premier League with the last-gasp goal that clinched a 1-0 win at Brentford on Saturday.

Havertz was a Champions League final hero for Chelsea in 2021, but he has endured a torrid time since crossing London to join Arsenal in the close-season.

The 24-year-old midfielder finally gave a glimpse of why Arteta splashed out £65 million (\$80 million) to sign him when he headed home in the closing minutes.

Havertz's second goal for Arsenal was his first in his last 10 appearances, moving his team one point clear of second placed Manchester City, who were held to a 1-1 draw by third placed Liverpool earlier in the day.

"That is the beautiful thing about life. When you have challenges and you have to overcome them, it makes these moments much better," Arteta said.

"That is the reason the people reacted to him like that today. It is because he is adorable and he is a joy to work with. He fully deserves more than anybody to get that

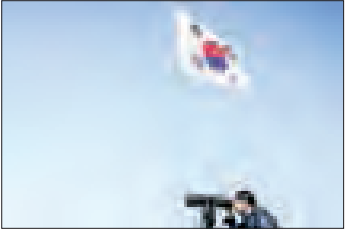


Arsenal's Spanish manager Mikel Arteta congratulates Arsenal's German midfielder #29 Kai Havertz at the end of the English Premier League football match between Brentford and Arsenal at the Gtech Community Stadium in London. **PHOTO: ADRIAN DENNIS/AFP**

win." Arsenal's third successive win in all competitions proved they have erased the bitter taste of their controversial VAR-aided defeat at Newcastle earlier in November. Arteta's men had already won at the Gtech Community Stadium in the League Cup in September and they left it late before making it another successful trip to west London.

"I love winning and we are top of the table. This is where we have to want to be," Arteta said.

"When you have an opportunity to take a bite out of everybody you have to do it. — AFP



WORLD



Participants row their dragon boats during a rehearsal for the Cambodian Water Festival on the Tonle Sap river in Phnom Penh. PHOTO: AFP

At a lively yearly event on the Tonle Sap river, about 300 boats, wearing matching T-shirts, competed enthusiastically. The Cambodian King, Prime Minister, and officials watched, and cheering crowds encouraged the canoes to reach the finish line, signaling the start of the animated celebration.

Tens of thousands of spectators thronged the riverfront in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh Sunday for an annual dragon boat race – the centrepiece of the kingdom’s three-day water festival, cancelled during the

Dragon boat races return to Cambodian capital for water festival

Covid pandemic.

Around 300 boats, their crews dressed in matching bright T-shirts, strained for the win as they dipped their colourful paddles into the Tonle Sap river with the royal palace behind them.

Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni, Prime Minister Hun Manet, his father Hun Sen and senior government officials looked on as the yearly extravaganza began, with crowds urging the canoes over the final line. Concerts, parades of lantern floats bedecked with colourful neon lights — each representing a government ministry — and fireworks are all part of

the three-day festival that will last until Tuesday. “I am happy that we can meet to celebrate the water festival,” 38-year-old rower Hom Phos told AFP. “I am so excited because it is our national festival.” The festival was last held in 2019, after which it was halted during the pandemic.

“During the Covid pandemic, everyone was worried about it, and we were not happy. But now we are happy again,” fellow rower Yorn Vorn, 45, told AFP. The festival marks the end of the rainy season when the Tonle Sap river, which joins the mighty Mekong River in front of the Royal Palace, reverses flow. — AFP

MULTI-AGENCY RESCUE OPERATION

Cargo ship sinks with 14 aboard off Greece’s Lesbos

A Comoros-flagged cargo ship with 14 people on board has sunk off the island of Lesbos in gale-force winds, the Greek coast guard said Sunday prompting a major rescue operation. Ert state-run television reported that a navy helicopter had picked up one crew member.

Five cargo ships, three coast guard vessels, air force and navy helicopters as well as a navy frigate had joined the rescue effort.

The state-run Athens News Agency (ANA) reported that the cargo ship had 14 crew members and was loaded with salt. Citing the coastguard, ANA said it went down 4.5 nautical miles (8.3 kilometres) southwest of Lesbos early Sunday. The ship had sailed from Dekheila, Egypt, heading for Istanbul.

The crew members include two Syrian nationals, four Indians and eight Egyptians, ANA said. Ships had remained in dock across several parts of Greece on Saturday with wind speeds reaching 9-10, a strong gale to storm force, on the Beaufort scale.

An emergency weather warning by the Hellenic National Meteorological Service (EMY) had been upgraded on Saturday from “worsening weather” to “dangerous weather phenomena”, as Storm Oliver (also called Bettina) moved from the Adriatic Sea toward Greece.—AFP

Japan rushes to contain bird flu spread in 1st outbreak of season

Detection of a highly contagious strain triggers task forces with co-operation from neighbouring prefectures and national authorities.

AUTHORITIES in southwestern Japan on Saturday rushed to contain the season’s first avian influenza outbreak, identifying around 40,000 birds for culling and implementing quarantine measures for nearby farms.

A highly contagious strain of the virus was detected on a poultry farm in Kashima, Saga Prefecture, prompting neighboring prefectural and national authorities to convene task forces.

The Saga prefectural gov-

ernment said Saturday morning that bird flu cases were confirmed at a farm in Kashima, with the culling of all 40,000 birds expected to be completed by Sunday morning. The movement of about 255,000 birds at 12 poultry farms located within a 10-kilometer radius of the outbreak’s epicenter and related products such as eggs was restricted, while vehicle disinfection sites were set up across the prefecture. Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

Minister Ichiro Miyashita said at his ministry’s task force meeting that swift action will be taken to combat the virus, including by dispatching an epidemiological survey team.

According to Saga prefectural authorities, an increasing number of dead chickens were reported on Friday, with the results of two basic tests coming back positive. Genetic tests later confirmed the presence of the virus. — Kyodo



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 25 November 2023, shows officials in protective suits working to cull about 40,000 chickens at a poultry farm in Kashima in Saga Prefecture, southwestern Japan, after the season’s first outbreak of bird flu across the country was confirmed there. PHOTO: KYODO