

The Global **NEW LIGHT** of MYANMAR



A glimpse of an area of the Mount Popa National Geopark – to become a world geopark.

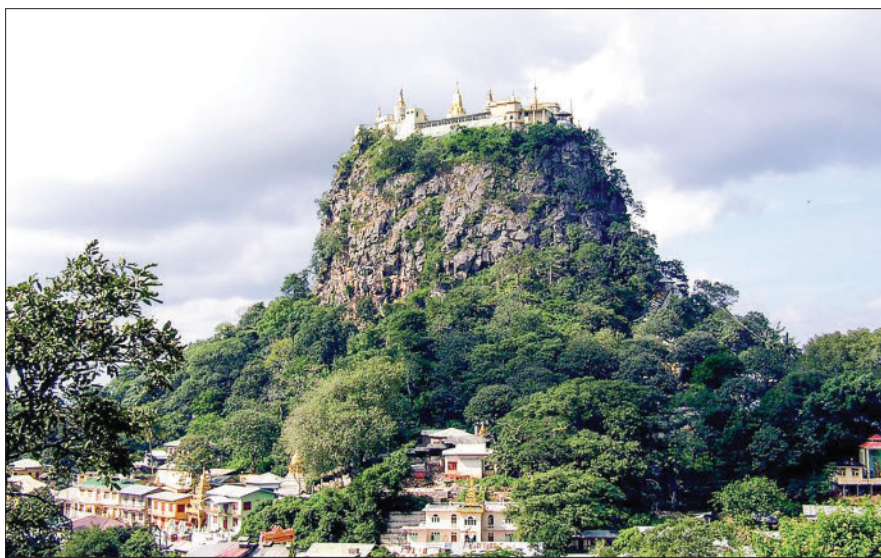
Mount Popa National Geopark nears world geopark status

PREPARATIONS are underway for Mount Popa National Geopark to be designated as a world geopark, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Among the numerous sites in Myanmar that could achieve world geopark status, Mount Popa is considered the most promising.

If Mount Popa National Geopark is designated as a global geopark, it will not only aid in the conservation and protection of Myanmar's unique natural heritage but also promote awareness of Myanmar's rich natural resources and cultural heritage worldwide.

UNESCO's World Geopark Programme, initiated in 2001, currently includes 177 geoparks in 46 countries. China, with 39 world geoparks, has the



Captivating image captures the grandeur of Mount Popa and its surroundings in Mandalay Region.

highest number of global geoparks. In Southeast Asia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia also have world geoparks. — ASH/MKKS

Customs tariff relief announced for SKD, CKD fuel vehicle imports with MIC

IMPORTS of fuel vehicles that are to be domestically assembled under the semi-knocked down system and entirely built up (completely knocked down) system with the permit of the Myanmar Investment Commission are eased Customs tariff, according to Notification 42/2024 of the Ministry of Planning and Finance released on 30 May.

In the exercise of the power entrusted by Subsection (D) of Section 3 of the Customs Law, the ministry released that notification with a view to supporting economic recovery and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The directive is effective from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025.

According to the Myanmar Customs Tariff 2022, the previous Customs duty for personal vehicles under 2000 CC was set at 30 per cent for completely build-up vehicles, 7.5 per cent for SKD vehicles and five per cent for CKD vehicles. The reduced amounts are five per cent for SKD vehicles and three per cent for CKD. For personal cars above 2001 CC, tariffs were cut to five per cent for SKD and three per cent for CKD from 40 per cent for CBU, 7.5 per cent for SKD and five per cent for CKD. The tariffs for personal three-wheelers were reduced to three per cent for SKD, 1.5 per cent for CKD from 20 per cent for CBU, 7.5 per cent for SKD and five per cent for CKD.

Moreover, auto parts for trucks, body and building, commercial three-wheelers, and buses were set at 10 per cent for CBU, 7.5 per cent for SKD and five per cent for CKD. They are now at three per cent for SKD and CKD, respectively. The tariff for motorcycles was also reduced to 1.5 per cent for SKD and CKD compared to the previous duties of five per cent for CBU and three per cent for SKD and CKD. — NN/EM

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DPM MoTC Union Minister leaves for Russian Federation

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Mandalay welcomes new academic year with smooth start: Students return to schools joyfully and harmoniously

BUSINESS

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Central Myanmar's oil crop zones boost beekeeping for enhanced agri, honey production

NATIONAL

Myanmar delegation's visit strengthens friendship with China



Delegates of the Myanmar-China Friendship Association pose for the group documentary photo at the Mangshi Golden Pagoda during their five-day visit to China.

A delegation consisting of 22 members, led by U Khin Oo (aka) U Shin Phu, Vice-Chairman of the Myanmar-China Friendship Association (Central) and In Charge of the Muse District, departed from Mandalay for Mangshi by air on 29 May, upon invitation from the government of Dehong Prefecture of China.

During the five-day trip from 29 May to 2 June, the delegation engaged in discus-

sions on cultural and educational sectors explored scholarships in nursing and traditional medicine, visited companies and factories, paid homage to the Mangshi Golden Pagoda, made cash donations, and fostered friendly relations with the Chinese people. The Myanmar delegation returned yesterday evening.

Additionally, Rector Dr Myintzu Min from Mohnyin University attended the 11th

World Women University Presidents Forum held at Huanghe S&T University, Hunan Province, People's Republic of China, from 24 to 29 May. The event was organized by the Myanmar-China Friendship Association (Central), and over 270 representatives from 65 countries participated in the forum, discussing and exchanging views on various sectors of education. — MNA/MKKS

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“သဲကန္တာရတိုက်ဖျက်ရေးနှင့် မိုးခေါင်ဓရုဏ်းဒဏ်ခံနိုင်ရေး မြေယာပြန်လည်ပြုပြင်ရေး”
“Land restoration, desertification and drought resilience”

Public Notice

The Anti-Corruption Commission has established corruption prevention units within ministries to curb corruption effectively. The ACC used SMS on mobile phones to ask the public who sought services at an office of the department of the relevant ministries via short code No “1111” for feedback, including the public feedback programme (PFP). According to the PFP, the proper replies of the citizens via short code No “1111” will provide the quality of services of each department and the requirements for corruption prevention to be fixed. Therefore, the public should reply to the questions of the ACC and corruption prevention units of the ministries via SMS at short code “1111”. Such doing is a supportive measure for PFP, and the people are urged to cooperate in the operations.

Anti-Corruption Commission

COVID-19 report, 3 June 2024	
NEW TESTS	31,762
NEW CASES	69
CASUALTIES	Nil

Thai Embassy in Yangon warns of strict action against fake visa documents

THE Royal Thai Embassy to Myanmar has issued a statement warning effective action will be taken against the use of fake documents in visa applications.

The statement said that thorough verification of documents is required before visa application starts, and if doubtful documents or fake documents are found in the application, they will be reported to the authorities, and effective action will be followed.

In a statement issued in May, the Royal Thai Embassy

said the reservation cancelling system would be stopped from 7 May, and the appointment booking date would also be changed as there has been inappropriate behaviour by some individuals trying to make as many reservations as possible by using different passport numbers and fake names in order to get a lot of booking slots, resulting in a high rate of “no show up” of registered applicants on the appointment date.

The reservation systems would also be changed from



Visa applicants at the Thai Embassy in Yangon in February 2024.

opening for making the reservation 30 days in advance to 14 days in advance. The applicants

who make the reservation before 7 May 2024 can still cancel the booking with the cancella-

tion code or cancellation link in the booking confirmation email. However, the applicants who made the reservation on 7 May 2024 would no longer accept the cancellation code or cancellation link, it said. The applicants cannot cancel the prior appointment and can make the reservation again after the previous appointment date, it added.

More and more young people in Myanmar have migrated to foreign countries, including Thailand, according to overseas job employment agencies. — MT/ZS

DPM MoTC Union Minister leaves for Russian Federation

MEMBER of State Administration Council Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo, along with a delegation including the Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Union Ministers from the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Health, as well as senior officials and business representatives, departed for the Russian Federation yesterday evening.

They were invited by Mr Anton Kobayakov, Adviser to the

President of the Russian Federation Executive Secretary of the Forum Organizing Committee, to attend the 27th St Petersburg International Economic Forum in St Petersburg from 5 to 8 June.

The delegation, led by the Deputy Prime Minister, was bid farewell by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Soe Thein, Commander Maj-Gen Zaw Hein of the Yangon Command, officials from the Embassy of the Russian Federation to Myanmar, and department officials at Yangon International Airport. — MNA/TS



SAC Member Deputy Prime Minister and Union Minister for Transport and Communications General Mya Tun Oo seen before departing for the Russian Federation yesterday.

Union Commerce Minister attends export promotion coord meeting



Union Minister U Tun Ohn leads the coordination meeting for export promotion yesterday in Yangon.

A coordination meeting on export promotion was convened at the Yangon Region Office at 9 am yesterday.

The gathering was attended by Union Minister for Commerce U Tun Ohn, regional officials from the Department of Trade and the Department of Consumer Affairs, the secretary of the Work Committee on Ensuring the Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, and officials from the Myanmar Port Authority, the Myanmar Rice Federation, and the Myanmar Pulses, Beans, Maize,

and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

During the meeting, the Union minister highlighted the government's commitment to bolstering the national economy and boosting exports. Targets for the 2024-25 Financial Year have already been set, including monthly export goals for rice, beans, maize, and rubber. The Union minister emphasized the importance of concerted efforts to achieve these export targets. Additionally, he urged all those responsible to ensure

a seamless supply chain for rice exports, from cultivation to distribution, to expand external market share. Other priorities outlined include increasing exports of beans and corn, stabilizing the domestic crop market, boosting exports of CMP garments, fish, prawns, and other aquatic products, granting priority to rice-exporting ships to moor at the ports, and addressing logistics requirements such as containers and lorries to meet port demands. — MNA/TMT

Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo alerts nationals to natural disaster risk

FOR Myanmar nationals living in Japan, the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo issued a warning against natural disasters on 3 June.

It said a strong 5.9 magnitude earthquake hit the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture at 6:31 am on 3 June 2024. No tsunami warning has been given so far. Therefore, Myanmar nationals living in that area need to pay special attention to announcements timely issued by the relevant authorities, it said.

If assistance is needed, they can contact the embassy hotline at 070 44137383.

A powerful quake also hit Ishikawa Prefecture on 1 June 2024, and as a result of the earthquake, a tsunami warning was issued. Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo issued a natural disaster warning for Myanmar nationals on that day and advised Myanmar nationals living in the preference and quake-affected areas to pay special attention to authorities' announcements and provided a hotline number for help, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. — MT/ZS



Kanagawa Prefectural Police officers are seen walking over the remains of collapsed houses in Suzu, Ishikawa Prefecture, on 3 January 2024. PHOTO: MAINICHI/TAKASHI KAWACHI

NATIONAL

Union Education Minister tours basic education schools, encourages peaceful study for 2024-25AY

UNION Minister for Education Dr Nyunt Pe, along with Deputy Ministers Dr Zaw Myint and Dr Moe Zaw Tun, Permanent Secretary Dr Soe Win, and officials, inspected the opening of the 2024-2025 academic year basic education schools in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, encouraging students to study peacefully.

The Union minister visited Zabuthiri Township No 14 Basic Education High School, Pobbathiri Township No 3 Basic Education High School, and Ot-tarathiri Township No 12 Basic Education High School in Nay Pyi Taw. He observed students studying peacefully, offered encouraging words, and greeted students and teachers cordially.

During the visits, Dr Nyunt Pe emphasized that each student



Union Minister Dr Nyunt Pe and officials view round the school class yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

should have good intentions and goals. He stressed the importance of learning from the start of the academic year to achieve these goals. He encouraged students to become literate, disciplined, and patriotic and to cherish their country and culture. He urged them to be polite and strive to be excellent and reliable students for the State.

The Union minister also inspected classrooms, school patches, and cleaning operations, addressing any needs.

Meanwhile, basic education schools, universities, and education degree colleges across regions and states opened for the new academic year. Altogether, 6,536,713 students reportedly enrolled in schools between 23 May and 3 June. — MNA/TS

Kayah State government extends stipends, stationeries



The ceremony to provide stipends, school uniforms and stationeries in progress in Kayah State.

THE ceremony of providing stipends, school uniforms and stationeries for the basic education teachers, university students and personnel and government employees' offspring who are studying basic education by the Kayah State government for the 2024-2025 academic year was held at the State Hall in Loikaw on 2 June with the attendance of Kayah State Chief Minister U Zaw Myo Tin, the regional control command commander, state ministers, state-level departmental officials and invitees.

Students first opened the ceremony with the song 'Zartiman', and then Chief Minister U Zaw Myo Tin gave an opening speech.

The chief minister, the regional control command commander and state ministers presented stipends, school uniforms, stationeries and cash assistance to teachers, students and relevant officials, and the State government secretary U Kyaw Kyaw Tun expressed words of thanks on behalf of all attendees.

Students sang the songs

of 'Pyi Myanmar' and 'Myanma Student', and the chief minister cordially greeted the attendees. The ceremony concluded afterwards.

At the event, the Kayah State government provided K104,436,000 worth of stipends, uniforms, stationeries and cash assistance for basic education teachers, university students, education personnel and government employees' offspring who are studying basic education for the 2024-2025 academic year. — State IPRD/KTZH

Mandalay University embraces peaceful learning for 2024-2025 Academic Year

STARTING yesterday morning, universities in Mandalay have begun the respective subjects for the 2024-2025 academic year of higher education, and students are studying peacefully, stated the Mandalay University Training Affairs Department.

The second semester of the first year, the second semester of the second year, first and second semesters of the third year, first and second semesters of first-

year honours, the second semester of second-year honours and that of third-year honours, the second semester of the fourth year, first and second semesters of the first-year master's, the second semester of second-year master's, first-year PhD, second-year PhD, third-year PhD and fourth-year PhD and other diploma courses are currently being conducted at Mandalay University. — MNA/TRKM



The photo shows students learning at Mandalay University.

NATIONAL

Nay Pyi Taw opens basic education schools

THE basic education schools for the 2024-2025 Academic Year reopened across the nation and also in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory yesterday, and the students peacefully attended the school.

No 5 BEHS Headmaster U Win Myint Oo said, "The school enrolment week is recognized from 23 May to 2 June according to the instruction of the Ministry of Education. There are 2,597 students enrolled to date. KG+12 education system aims to train the children to be perfect with five essential strengths. In addition to the school curriculums, it includes a collaborative education system, so there are many advantages. The school fee is free at the basic education schools. If the students work hard, they will become outstanding ones. Our school turns out outstanding students every year. We will also start training the outstanding ones for the coming year. Currently, the Head of the State establishes libraries with the aim of building a developing and peaceful nation if all the cit-



Students are seen in the school classroom (L) and on their way to school at the start of the 2024-2025 academic year in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: PHO PYAE SONE**

izens read properly. Therefore, we have added reading classes to our school timetable. There will be one reading session for each class".

No 11 BEHS Headmistress Daw Thet Thet Thin said, "The strange thing for this year is that we have added a reading session in the eight-period timetable. There is a library for primary and another one for middle and high school levels at our school. We arrange proper books for the different levels of students. We

added books that are useful for academics, history-related biographies, and geography-related books. We also arrange science books to support innovations and mathematics books to develop calculating. The benefit of reading is very huge. Therefore, I want all to read."

She continued, "The KG+12 curriculum includes question-and-answer sessions between the teacher and student. It also carries group work and pair work to accelerate

cooperation. They will be flexible. They have to think about the teaching aids materials on their own, so they obtain critical thinking skills and become more interested in their lessons. Deep thinking is the main objective of KG+12 education system, and so they can develop deep critical thinking skills, which are the main pillar of education. The schools are complete when there are students in the school compound. If there are some difficulties in attending school,

we accept the school enrolment without off days."

The government provides free textbooks, notebooks, pencils and ball-pens to all primary to high school students.

There are 31,104 high school students, 56,766 middle school students and 135,480 primary school students, totalling 223,350 students who attend the schools, including basic education schools, monastic schools and private schools in Nay Pyi Taw. — Thant Jaing/KTZH

Over one mln students head back to schools in Yangon

THE basic education schools in Yangon for the 2024-2025 Academic Year reopened yesterday, and a total of 1,007,695 students attended 2,754 schools peacefully.

During the school enrollment week from 23 May to 2 June, school enrolments were made at 2,754 schools – 1,680 primary schools, 665 middle schools and 409 high schools in Yangon Region, and a total of 1,007,695 students attended the school on the first school opening day.

Yangon Region Education Officer Dr Cho Cho Myat Aung said, "We cooperated with the regional government in activities such as cleaning the school compound, classrooms and desks for the students to be able to study on 3 June under the guidance of the Head of State."

Bothtaung District Education Officer Dr Khin Thu Sein



Schoolboys at Basic Education High School No 6 Botahtaung at the start of the 2024-2025 academic year. **PHOTO: KANU**

said, "There are 134 basic education schools, nine monastic schools and 16 private schools in Botahtaung District. There are 5,450 school enrolments until 2 June. It is a free education policy, and all the schools the township are instructed not to collect

any charges. During the school enrollment week, we conducted school cleaning activities together with the district administration body and school committee members. We will try to reduce the dropout rate. We also gave the assistance to the students on

the school enrolment day. The school headmasters and headmistresses are also instructed to create proper circumstances for displaced students and students who suspended their education for various reasons to be able to enrol. The number of

students has increased this year compared to the previous year thanks to the education policy that provides an equal education system for all."

Maung Min Khant Nyi Nyi, a Grade 11 student of No 6 BEHS, Botahtaung, said, "I spent my holiday playing games and reading, and I also missed my friends. I am the happiest person on the school opening day. I am glad that I meet almost all of my friends. I did well in Grade 10 under the guidance of the teachers, and I am so proud to have been able to study in Grade 11. I want to be a sailor just like my father. Therefore, I am studying hard. I could not sit for the outstanding student selection exam last year, so I will try to take the exam this year. I always wish my friends to be interested in their studies and become good students for the country." — Nyein Thu (MNA)/KTZH

NATIONAL

Mandalay welcomes new academic year with smooth start: Students return to schools joyfully and harmoniously



The photo depicts students heading back to school yesterday in Mandalay.

ON the morning of 3 June, basic education schools throughout Myanmar commenced for the 2024-2025 academic year, with students in Mandalay attending and studying peacefully.

Teachers on duty at the school entrance organized students according to their classes and ensured an orderly start to their studies.

Daw Khin May Lwin, Deputy Director of the Office of the Education Officer of Mandalay Region, stated, "In the region, a total of 924,059 students have been enrolled for the academic year, including 764,880 in basic education schools, 73,862 in private schools, and 85,317 in monastic education schools. Although the enrolment week has

concluded, we remain open to accepting further enrolments. It is crucial for parents to motivate their children to attend school for their future prospects. We have been preparing for the smooth functioning of schools, not only by arranging classrooms and desks but also by fostering a conducive learning environment."

During the enrolment week, held from 23 May to 2 June, students were provided with school textbooks, notebooks, and stationery without any charges.

Dr Than Htike Soe, Headmaster of No 16 Basic Education High School, expressed, "This year, our school has admitted over 3,000 students, and enrolment will continue throughout

June. We are pleased to see children returning to school. Education is essential for children to attend age-appropriate classes, and we appreciate parents' active support for education. The state also provides assistance."

A parent of a student commented, "My child will be in Grade 11 this year. It is beneficial for the school to provide free textbooks and stationery to ensure a comfortable learning environment for children. I support this education system and encourage other parents to send their children to school."

To ensure students' safety, the Traffic Police Force are assisting schools near main roads in Mandalay. Additionally, township administration body, fire brigade, and the Myanmar police force are providing security for schools across the respective townships.

For the 2024-2025 academic year, 3,950 basic education schools, 237 private schools, and 306 monastic education schools have been opened in Mandalay Region. — Maung Aye Chan/TKO

Students head back to schools:



Hopong, Pa-O Self-Administered Zone.



Hpa-an, Kayin State.



Hsihseng Township.



Shan State (East).



Yenangyoung Township.



Manaung Township.

NATIONAL

Five facing charges for illegal sale of foreign condos



Aung Kyaw Tun (Director)



Min Thu Kyaw (GM) (Absconder)



Min Tun



Nay Myo Han



Myat Myat Mon

CURRENTLY, the government emphasizes forging economic growth in a proper momentum. Upon tip-off, relevant security forces conducted an investigation into two suspects, Minn Thu Company Director U Aung Kyaw Tun and General Manager U Min Thu Kyaw, for selling Thai condominiums illegally. The Minn Thu Company is

located in Pazudaung Township, Yangon Region.

According to the inspection, Director U Aung Kyaw Tun and General Manager U Min Thu Kyaw (still at large) organized a condominium sales event at Sedona Hotel in Yangon two times without any permission from authorities. They col-

lected the payment in Myanmar kyats and transferred it to Thailand via an illegal hundi system.

Moreover, it was found that U Nay Myo Han, U Min Tun and Daw Myat Myat Mon, who purchased Thai property sold by the Minn Thu Company, made payments via their bank accounts opened at Thai

banks illegally without the permission of the Central Bank of Myanmar.

Therefore, action will be taken against five offenders in accordance with the law.

People are urged to confidentially inform relevant security forces about those running condominium sales illegally. — MNA/KTZH

Counter-argument to false information

Fake news on women's military service

MALICIOUS media outlets spread fake news, claiming that women are forcibly gathered to serve in the military in Ayeyawady and Bago regions.

According to officials of Ayeyawady and Bago regions' committees on the summoning of people's military servants, the gathering of women for military service is invalid.

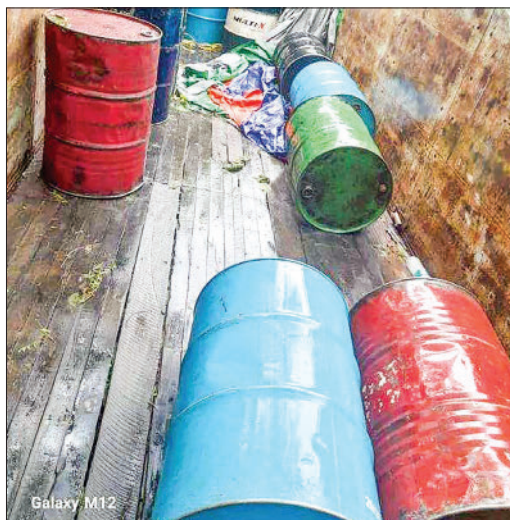
The malicious media and those who do not want peace and tranquillity intentionally circulate misinformation to impose fear among the public, starting from the date the People's Military Service Law came into force.

People can contact region/state committees on the summoning of people's military servants by dialling phone numbers announced in daily newspapers for further enquiries. — MNA/KTZH



The screenshot validates misinformation.

Confiscation of illegal items: Fuel oil, industrial materials, foodstuffs, motorbikes and vehicles



Photos depict confiscated illegal goods in various states and regions.

THE combined team, led by the Customs Department, seized 23,409 kilogrammes of FRP Fiberglass from China valued at K49,158,900, which did not match the Import Declaration (ID), from a container at the Asia World Port Terminal container checkpoint on 1 June. This enforcement was carried out following Customs procedures.

On the same day, teams supervised by the Yangon Region Illegal Trade Eradication Special Task Force impounded three vehicles (estimated value of K95 million) travelling from Myawady to Yan-

gon. They were carrying 18,000 kilogrammes of HI-kote gloss paper from China and 7,500 kilogrammes of Indah Kiat brief card paper from Indonesia, worth K33,052,500, at the Ywathagyi Dry Port. This action was conducted under Customs procedures.

During inspections on 1 and 2 June, combined teams seized an Asia Star bus (estimated value of K40 million) travelling from Thamanya to Yangon, carrying goods valued at K15.31 million, including 1,200 bottles of Chaokoh coconut cream and three Honda Wave

motorbikes, at the Nyaungkhashay X-ray station. Additionally, an unregistered Honda Fit (approximately K12 million) was seized in Mokaung township, and 650 gallons of illegal diesel valued at K6.24 million were seized in Sagaing township. The action was taken under Customs procedures, the Export and Import Law, and the Petroleum and Petroleum Products Law.

The Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee reported that 12 arrests were made on 1 and 2 June, with an estimated value of K250 million. — MNA/MKKS

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OPINION

Ensure smooth process for manufacturing of businesses at SEZs

TO ensure a smooth process for the manufacturing businesses in Special Economic Zones (SEZs), it is essential that their missions, visions, and implementation plans align with the State's objectives. The development of trade and the enhancement of investment are critical for the economic growth of the State. SEZ implementers must remain focused on their roles to foster the development of these zones and the broader State economy.

Following the Head of State's directives, SEZs, industrial zones in various regions, and MSME businesses must strive to increase the production of high-quality export goods while simultaneously working to attract both local and foreign investments.

Thilawa SEZ has demonstrated success with substantial investments and is operational. However, there is a need to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI). Similarly, ongoing projects like the Kyaukpadaung SEZ must continue to draw in investors. Local authorities and SEZ supervisory committees should actively promote investment opportunities in the Dawei SEZ to further this goal.

It is certain that special economic zones will be the lifeblood of the booming state economy in the future. These will be pillars for the improvement of the trade sector as well as the economic sector while contributing to the socioeconomic development of the people. As such, authorities need to create smooth processes for businesspersons to engage production at the SEZs in the correct ways.

Among Myanmar's three SEZs, Thilawa SEZ stands out with over US\$2 billion in foreign investments. Despite this success, the amount lags behind that of neighbouring countries in Southeast and South Asia. Therefore, SEZ authorities should not be complacent but should strive to attract even more investments.

Service personnel stationed at SEZs play a critical role in managing the smooth operation of businesses. These personnel must avoid any abuse of authority. It is equally crucial that officials at various levels oversee these personnel to prevent illegal trade activities, monetary abuse, corruption, and mismanagement.

To address these challenges, SEZ authorities and personnel must manage issues related to raw materials, trade processes, and the utilization of foreign currencies and loans for industrial operations. Additionally, officials must ensure proper compensation for land plots confiscated for the Kyaukpadaung SEZ, adhering to established policies as closely as possible.

By addressing these critical areas and ensuring diligent management, the SEZs can continue to grow and contribute significantly to the State's economic development. These efforts will help create a robust investment climate, attract more foreign direct investments, and support the production of high-quality export goods, ultimately driving the State's economic progress forward.

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ELECTRICITY is a vital part of our daily lives. It powers our homes, schools, and businesses. Without it, life can be very difficult. In many parts of Myanmar, especially in small towns like ours in Ayeeyawady Region, getting electricity is a big problem. Most of us get electricity for only two or three hours during the day and about four hours at night. This is not enough for us to live comfortably or do our work properly. Everyone in our town, including important government officers, gets the same limited amount of electricity. But there is one exception: the ice factory owned by a rich businessman.

The Ice factory: A Special Case

The ice factory in our town gets more hours of electricity than anyone else. This factory is the only one of its kind in our area. It does not benefit the people of the town; it only makes money for its owner. It produces ice, which it sells for profit. The owner of the factory has set up his own transformer and gets electricity directly from the "Maha" power grid, not from the town's electricity supply. This means he uses more money to get more electricity for his business while the rest of us suffer very little.

The Impact on Our Lives

The limited electricity affects every part of our lives. At home, we cannot use electric appliances like fans, refrigerators, or lights when we need them. This makes it hard to cook, study, or even relax after a long day. Students cannot do their homework or study properly, which affects their education. Shops and small businesses struggle because they cannot

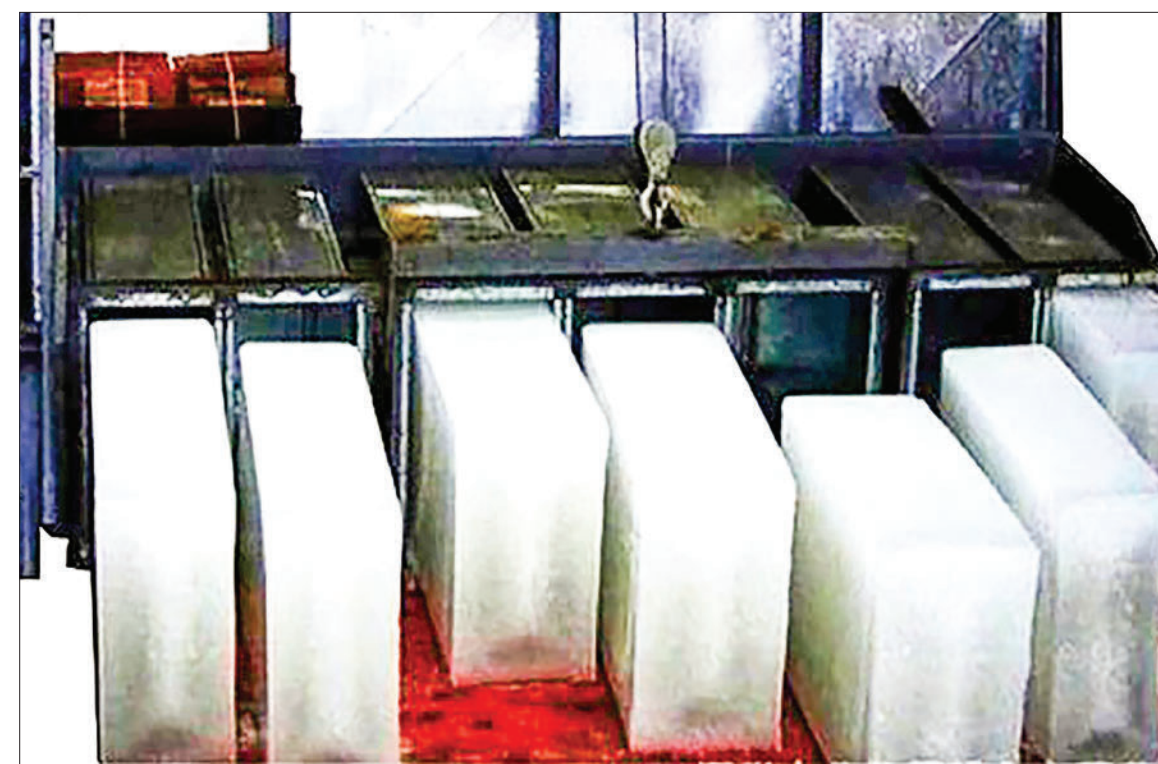
operate their machines or keep their products fresh.

In contrast, the ice factory runs smoothly with its ample electricity supply. It produces ice almost all day, making a lot of money for its owner. This situation creates a big gap between the businesspeople and the ordinary ones in our town. While the ice mill owner enjoys the benefits of more electricity supply, the rest of us are left to manage with what little we get.

Like in other small towns, the supply of electricity is often unpredictable and insufficient to meet the needs of all residents. Suppose, for instance, that the general population begins to receive electricity at 11 am each day. In contrast, an ice factory in the town gets its electricity supply at an earlier time, around 10 am or even as early as 9:30 am. This discrepancy in the timing of electricity distribution raises significant concerns about fairness and equality within the community.

When there is a sudden power outage while the general electricity supply is active, the ice factory's operations remain unaffected. This implies that the ice factory has a continuous, uninterrupted power supply, allowing it to function without any disruption. The uninterrupted supply of electricity to the ice mill, despite the broader outage affecting the town, indicates that it has distinct and privileged access to power.

The owner of the ice factory, regardless of his ownership of a particular transformer or any other infrastructure that ensures this uninterrupted supply, is fundamentally an ordinary citizen of the town. As such, he should be



By Min Zan

The more money, the more electricity?

subject to the same conditions and have the same opportunities as the rest of the town's inhabitants when it comes to electricity access. It is important to recognize that principles of fairness and equity should govern the provision of essential utilities like electricity.

During an electricity crisis, where the supply is limited, and the demand is high, it becomes evident that the ice mill enjoys a special privilege. While the rest of the town's residents are grappling with power shortages,

dealing with the inconvenience of sudden outages, and managing their daily activities without a reliable power supply, the ice factory continues its operations smoothly. This privileged status not only creates a sense of injustice among the townspeople but also highlights the unequal distribution of resources within the community.

In a just and equitable system, no individual or business entity should have preferential treatment over others, especially

in the provision of essential services like electricity. The town's authorities need to address this imbalance and ensure that every resident, including the ice factory owner, receives an equal share of the available electricity supply. By doing so, they would be upholding the principles of fairness and preventing any single entity from monopolizing a vital resource to the detriment of the broader community. This approach would help foster a sense of solidarity and mutual support among the town's

residents, ensuring that everyone shares both the burdens and benefits of their communal resources equally.

This situation raises a big question: is it fair for one person to have more electricity just because they have more money? In our town, everyone should have equal access to electricity. It is not right that the ice factory gets special treatment while the rest of us suffer. Electricity is a basic need, and it should be distributed fairly among all the people in the town.

The Role of Money and Power

Money plays a big role in who gets electricity and who does not. The ice factory owner can afford to set up his own transformer and pay for more electricity. This is something that ordinary people in our town cannot do. We depend on the town's electricity supply, which is very limited. This shows how money and power can create inequality in our society. Those with more money can buy better services, while those with less money have to struggle.

The Need for Change

We need to address this inequality. The government and the electricity department should ensure that everyone gets a fair share of electricity. They should regulate the distribution of electricity so that no one gets special treatment. Setting up more resources for power supply and improving its infrastructure could help provide more electricity to everyone.

Community Action

As a community, we need to come together to demand fair treatment. We can raise our con-

cerns with local authorities and ask for better electricity distribution. By working together, we can make our voices heard and push for changes that benefit everyone.

The story of the ice factory in our town is a clear example of how money can buy better services, creating inequality. It is not fair that one person gets more electricity while the rest of us suffer. We need to address this issue and work towards a fair distribution of electricity for all. By coming together as a community and demanding change, we can create a more equal and just society.

Possible Solutions

To ensure fair electricity distribution, several steps can be taken:

Improving Infrastructure: The responsible authorities should invest in improving the electricity infrastructure in our town. This includes setting up more transformers and upgrading the power lines. Better infrastructure will ensure a more reliable and consistent electricity supply for everyone.

Regulating Private Transformers: They should regulate the use of private transformers. There should be strict rules to ensure that private businesses do not get more electricity at the expense of ordinary people. This will help prevent situations like the one with the ice factory.

Promoting Renewable Energy: Investing in renewable energy sources like solar or wind power can help provide more electricity. These sources are sustainable and can be used to supplement the existing power supply. Encouraging households and businesses to use renewable energy

can reduce the burden on the main power grid.

Community Programmes: Local authorities can set up programmes to educate the community about energy conservation and also manage the use of electricity equally among all the people of the town. Simple measures like using energy-efficient appliances and reducing unnecessary electricity use can help make the available electricity go further.

Advocacy and Awareness: Raising awareness about the issue of electricity inequality is important. The community can organize meetings, write articles, and use social media to highlight the problem. By bringing attention to the issue, we can put pressure on authorities to take action.

The Way Forward

Addressing the issue of electricity distribution requires a combined effort from the government, local authorities, and the community. By working together, we can ensure that everyone in our town gets a fair share of electricity. This will improve our quality of life and create a more equal society.

In brief, the story of the ice factory shows how money can buy better services, creating inequality. It is not fair that one person gets more electricity while the rest of us suffer. We need to address this issue and work towards a fair distribution of electricity for all. By coming together as a community and demanding change, we can create a more equal and just society. In other words, we want equality in utilizing electricity supply among all citizens of our town.

(Based on the True Story)

WHO countries prolong talks on pandemic accord

WORLD Health Organization members on Saturday extended negotiations on a landmark global agreement on handling future pandemics for up to a year, as the WHO chief warned that the next crisis was just a matter of time.

Two years of talks on a deal ended on 24 May without a finalized agreement, chiefly due to differences between well-off nations and those who felt cut adrift during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The final day of the week-

long World Health Assembly (WHA) — the decision-making annual gathering of the WHO's 194 member states — allowed until next year's meeting to reach an accord.

"The historic decisions taken today demonstrate a common desire by member states to protect their own people, and the world's, from the shared risk of public health emergencies and future pandemics," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

"The decision to conclude

the pandemic agreement within the next year demonstrates how strongly and urgently countries want it, because the next pandemic is a matter of when, not if."

Pragmatism, and realism

In December 2021, spooked by the devastation of Covid-19 — which killed millions of people, crippled health systems and crashed economies — the WHA commissioned the drafting of an accord on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

Negotiators were meant to

bring a final agreement to this year's meeting.

However, despite increasing momentum in recent months, only 17 of the draft agreement's articles had been fully approved by countries by the deadline.

The assembly "made concrete commitments to completing negotiations on a global pandemic agreement within a year, at the latest", a WHO statement said as the gathering in Geneva closed.

Precious Matsoso, who co-

chaired the two years of talks, told a closing press conference: "There was a spirit of pragmatism and realism. Most of them have said that they want a pandemic agreement as soon as possible — but it has to be a good one."

The main disputes revolve around access to pathogens detected within countries, and to pandemic-fighting products such as vaccines derived from that knowledge.

In developing nations, memories remain vivid of wealthy states hoarding vaccines. Swit-

zerland was one country which destroyed more Covid vaccine doses than it ever administered.

Other tricky topics were sustainable financing, pathogen surveillance, supply chains, and the equitable distribution of tests, treatments and jabs but also the means to produce them.

The assembly also agreed amendments to the International Health Regulations, a legally-binding framework for responding to public health emergencies.

SOURCE: AFP



Testing kits play a crucial role in diagnosing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 by identifying infected individuals, enabling prompt isolation, treatment, and contact tracing. ILLUSTRATION: IMAGE USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSE/PIXABAY

NATIONAL

Govt cracks down on currency speculation, illegal foreign exchange







THE government is working towards the stability of the country and the rule of law. Security organizations have taken action against businesspeople engaged in speculation to hinder the country's econom-






ic development. Additionally, some money changers who violated the rules and regulations set by the Central Bank of Myanmar to destabilize the country's economy have also been targeted.

A total of 14 individuals, including unauthorized foreign exchange dealers and brokers, have been arrested and questioned for their involvement in destabilizing the foreign exchange market in the country.

Following interrogations, it was revealed that 11 businesspeople were orchestrating activities to destabilize the foreign exchange market. Law enforcement agencies have initiated investigations

against them in accordance with the law. However, these individuals are currently evading interrogation and arrest. The fugitives are listed below.

No.	Name	Occupation	Address	Remarks
1	 Ba Nyunt	Perfect Green Money changer	No 204, Bo Aung Kyaw Road, Ward 8, Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region	
2	 Wanna Htun	Sun Flower Money changer	No 259/263, 1 st Floor, corner of Anawrahta Road and Shwebontha Road, Ward 8, Pabedan Township, Yangon Region	
3	 Thet Naung Win	Kayan / Thongwa gold shop and illegal foreign currency seller	No 119, 2 nd Floor, 29 th Street, Ward 7, Pabedan Township, Yangon Region	
4	 Hla Min	Illegal foreign currency seller	Bo Aung Kyaw Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon Region	
5	 Usman (aka) Jack	Illegal foreign currency seller	No 154, 4 th Floor, Bo Sun Pat Road (Middle), Ward 10, Pabedan Township, Yangon Region	
6	 Tin Ko Oo (aka) John	Illegal foreign currency seller	No 748/A, 1 st Kyan-sitha Street, Kamakathwe Ward, Dala Township, Yangon Region	

No.	Name	Occupation	Address	Remarks
7	 Than Htun Aung	Illegal foreign currency seller	Kamakathwe Ward, Dala Township, Yangon Region	
8	 Ye Ko (aka) Wai Min Khaung	Illegal foreign currency seller	Upper Block, Bo Sun Pat Road, Pabedan Township, Yangon Region	
9	 Ye Min Aung	Illegal foreign currency seller	No 500, near Theinbyu Post Office, Theinbyu Road, Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region	
10	 Ei Ei Kyaw (aka) Ma Wah	broker	Room No 106, Shwebontha Road, Pabedan Township, Yangon Region	
11	 Tin Kyaw Kyaw (aka) Arnold	broker	No 14, 88 th Road, West Kandawlay Ward, Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region	

A total of 14 arrested accused of destabilizing the domestic foreign currency exchange rate will be effectively prosecuted in accordance with the law. The public can report to the relevant security organizations and those who accept it will be taken effective legal action if they know about the absconding offenders. — MNA/TKO

The people are urged to receive vaccination of Covid-19 without fail as full-time vaccination of Covid-19 and receiving booster shots can effectively mitigate infection of the virus, severe suffering from the disease and increase of death rate due to the disease.

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Central Myanmar's oil crop zones boost beekeeping for enhanced agri, honey production

THE Apiculture Development Division, under the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, has announced its intention to support apiculture businesses in the oil crop production zones and oil crop cultivations in Central Myanmar.

Pollination is essential for oil crop cultivation, including crops such as sunflower and sesame, to enhance crop yields. Given the necessity of maintaining beehives for pollination, the Apiculture Development Division has expressed its readiness to assist with beekeeping ventures.

"Beekeeping is vital for agricultural endeavours as it facilitates flower pollination by insects, particularly for crops like sunflower and sesame. There-



Sunflower plantations in the Central Myanmar area – an essential oil crop.

fore, in areas where there are sunflower and sesame fields but no beehives, we are prepared to offer assistance in establishing beehives. Many farmers who

cultivate oil crops are now also involved in beekeeping, and we are supporting them in this endeavour," explained an official from the Apiculture Develop-

ment Division.

According to reports, Magway Region, considered the primary beekeeping area in Central Myanmar, hosts six

township-level bee camps and 78 private beekeepers, housing over 13,000 beehives, resulting in annual honey production.

The majority of honey production consists of sesame honey and jujube honey, which collectively account for 60 per cent, followed by sunflower honey at 30 per cent and multi-flowered honey at 10 per cent. Sunflower honey is particularly sought after in foreign markets, commanding the highest price in exports. Myanmar primarily exports honey to China, South Korea, and Thailand.

Currently, Myanmar boasts nearly 900 beekeepers operating around 100,000 beehives, yielding approximately 3,000 to 4,500 tonnes of honey per year. — ASH/TMT

Yangon's palm oil wholesale rate sees uptick this week ending 9 June



Workers seen organizing jerrycans of cooking oil for distribution and sale.

THE wholesale reference rate of palm oil for the Yangon market was set higher a bit to K5,345 per viss this week ending 9 June from K5,270 recorded last week ending 2 June, according to the Supervisory Committee on edible oil import and distribution.

The Supervisory Committee on Edible Oil Import and Distribution under the Ministry of Commerce has

been closely observing the FOB prices in Malaysia and Indonesia, adding transport costs, tariffs and banking services to decide the wholesale market reference rate for edible oil on a weekly basis.

Yet, the market price is higher than the reference price.

To control overcharging, the Consumer Affairs Department under

the Ministry of Commerce informed the consumers of lodging the complaints for overcharging through the call centre's hotline in late August. The department urged consumers not to buy palm oil at high prices. The Committee notified that any person who is involved in price gouging and oil storage to attempt market manipulation will face legal action under the Essential Goods and Services Law.

The department is working together with the Myanmar Oil Dealers' Association and the cooking oil importing companies to offer affordable rates of imported palm oil for consumers.

The complaints for overcharging can be lodged over hotline 1535 of the call centre of the Consumers Affairs Department or sent to the Facebook page of the department and the region and state departments concerned.

The domestic consumption of palm oil is estimated at one million tonnes per year. The local palm oil production is just about 400,000 tonnes. About 700,000 tonnes of palm oil are yearly imported through Malaysia and Indonesia to meet domestic demands. — NN/EM

Myanmar's dried taro stems break into South Korean market

MYANMAR'S dried taro stems are shipped to South Korea, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Green Farm Company, located on the old Yangon-Mandalay highway in Kanyoe village, Toungoo Township, Bago Region, explores international markets with herbs and local products to generate foreign currency earnings.

They export dried *Lagerstroemia speciosa*, turmeric, dried taro stems and other local products to Busan, South Korea, through maritime trade in March.

Exports of dried taro stems to South Korea started in November 2023. Following high demand, Myanmar primarily ships them to South Korea.

Taro naturally grows in the tropical area of Myanmar. It has grasped a substantial market share in foreign markets. Locals mostly use them as swine feed. The export market has gradually emerged. Taros naturally grow in lowland areas beside dams, ditches and lakes. An individual can cut about 150 visses of fresh taro. It can yield 45.48 visses of dried taro stem after drying 150 visses of fresh taro.

Myanmar Green Farm Co Ltd purchased dried taro stems at K5,500 per viss in the last week of May 2024. The export price is K6,500 per kilogramme. — NN/EM

ECONOMY WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

S Korean president says 14 bln barrels of oil, gas possibly buried in eastern waters

SOUTH Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol said Monday that up to 14 billion barrels of crude oil and natural gas could be buried in the country's eastern waters.

Yoon told a televised press briefing that geophysical exploration showed a high possibility for a massive amount of oil and gas reserves off the coast of Yeongil Bay in Pohang, about 260 kilometres southeast of the capital Seoul.

The exploration was launched in February last year on expectations that more oil and gas fields could exist around the gas fields in eastern waters, where 45 million barrels of natural gas reserves were found in the late 1990s and were commercially produced to the end until 2021. Yoon said the exploration indicated a "very high possibility" for as large as 14 billion barrels of oil and gas reserves that can meet South Korea's natural gas demand for 29 years and crude oil demand for four years.

The South Korean president added that he approved the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy's exploration drilling plan, expecting the preliminary results to be announced in the first half of next year. — Xinhua

Vietnam's manufacturing sector sustains growth in May: report

GROWTH was sustained in the Vietnamese manufacturing sector during May while new orders increased solidly again prompting a faster expansion of production, according to a report released by S&P Global Market Intelligence on Monday.

The S&P Global Vietnam manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) was unchanged at 50.3 in May, showing a second consecutive marginal monthly improvement in business conditions in the sector, said the report.

New orders increased solidly again in May as a strengthening demand environment helped firms secure new customers and bring in new business, according to the report. — Xinhua

Resurgent airlines soar towards passenger, revenue records



Passengers queue at a flight connection desk at the Dubai International Airport in Dubai on 17 April 2024. PHOTO BY AFP

AIRLINES will fly almost five billion passengers in 2024 and revenues will near \$1 trillion, both record highs, trade body IATA said on Monday as the industry roars back after the pandemic.

The International Air Transport Association also said it expected the world's airlines to post \$30 billion in net earnings this year, up from its previous estimate of \$25.7 billion.

However, total expenses are expected to hit a record

high this year, climbing 9.4 per cent to \$936 billion, IATA announced at its annual general meeting in Dubai.

Fossil fuel-burning airlines are also under pressure to contribute to the fight against climate change and make progress towards a pledge to reach "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050.

This year's expected \$30 billion profit "is a great achievement considering the recent deep pandemic losses", IATA director general Willie

Walsh told the body's annual general meeting in Dubai.

"Without a doubt, aviation is vital to the ambitions and prosperity of individuals and economies. Strengthening airline profitability and growing financial resilience is important," he added.

The COVID-19 pandemic plunged the aviation industry into crisis, grounding fleets and costing thousands of jobs. IATA put the losses at \$183 billion between 2020 and 2022. — AFP

Turkish inflation exceeds 75% but peak in sight

TURKISH inflation jumped above 75 per cent in May, official data showed Monday, but officials expect consumer prices to have finally peaked in a cost-of-living crisis that has dogged President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Türkiye has been battling soaring consumer prices that prompted Erdogan to drop his opposition to interest-rate hikes to combat inflation.

The central bank began to raise its key rate in June 2023, gradually taking it from 8.5 per cent to 50 per cent.

Last month, central bank governor Fatih Karahan raised the year-end inflation forecast to 38 per cent, up from a previous



People walk at Kadikoy district in Istanbul on 5 March 2024. PHOTO: AFP

estimate of 36 per cent.

But Karahan also said inflation would begin to slow in June after reaching a peak in May.

"The hardest part is over," Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek wrote Monday on X.

"The permanent drop in inflation will begin in June," he added. "The transition period in the fight against inflation has been completed and we are entering the process of disinflation."

Inflation will "very likely" fall under 50 per cent by the end of the third quarter, Simsek predicted.

The staggering rise of consumer prices and the collapse of the Turkish lira are deemed re-

sponsible for the severe electoral setback inflicted on Erdogan's AKP party in March municipal elections.

'Bumpy disinflation'

Türkiye's national statistics office said Monday that annual inflation reached 75.45 per cent in May after accelerating to 69.8 per cent in April. It added that consumer prices had risen by 3.7 per cent on a monthly basis between April and May, in line with central bank forecasts.

A group of independent economists, ENAG, said consumer prices actually increased by 120.7 per cent in May year-on-year and by 5.7 per cent on a monthly basis. — AFP

NEWS ROUNDUPS: BIZ

Indonesia posts annual inflation at 2.84% in May

INDONESIA reported an annual inflation rate of 2.84 per cent in May, down from the previous month's 3.0 per cent, yet still within the central bank's target range of 1.5 to 3.5 per cent, as announced by Statistics Indonesia (BPS) on Monday.

According to Acting Head of BPS Amalia Adininggar Widiasanti, annual inflation was driven by price increases in food, beverages, and tobacco by 6.18 per cent, personal care and other services by 4.99 per cent, and restaurants by 2.51 per cent.

This annual inflation was also influenced by decreases in expenditure groups such as information, communications, and financial services, which fell by 0.16 per cent. —Xinhua

Fiji plans to enhance productivity of larger sugarcane growers

THE Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) plans to change its sugarcane planting grant programme to enhance the productivity of larger, more efficient sugarcane growers. FSC Chief Executive Bhan Pratap Singh said the move comes after the previous grants aimed at smaller growers yielded limited results, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation reported on Monday. Singh said there was also a need for a broader discussion within the industry to develop solutions for these growers.

The industry, once a backbone of Fiji's economy, is grappling with declining sugarcane production, shrinking profit margins for farmers, and escalating cost of production. —Xinhua

China's software, IT service industry sees double-digit growth in revenue, profits

CHINA'S software and information technology service industry reported double-digit year-on-year growth in terms of both revenue and profits in the first four months of 2024, official data showed.

Total profits of the sector jumped by 14.3 per cent year on year to 431.4 billion yuan (about US\$60.69 billion) during this period, while combined revenue rose by 11.6 per cent to 3.8 trillion yuan, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Total revenue of the information technology service sub-sector increased by 13.2 per cent year on year to around 2.5 trillion yuan, contributing 65.9 per cent of the total revenue of the industry as a whole.



A staff member from a technology company demonstrates an AI software at an exhibition at China Science Fiction Convention (CSFC) 2023 in Beijing, capital of China, 30 May 2023. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Specifically, combined revenue of cloud computing and big data services surged by 14.3 per cent compared with the same period of 2023, reaching 410.7 billion yuan.

The data also revealed that revenues from software products and information security had increased by 8.7 per cent and 9.3 per cent, respectively, year on year. — Xinhua

Sharp, KDDI eye launch of large-scale AI data centre in Osaka Pref



File photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter in April 2024 shows the Sharp Corp headquarters (front) and Sakai Display Products Corp in Sakai, Osaka Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**

SHARP Corp and Japanese telecom giant KDDI Corp plan to launch one of the largest artificial intelligence data centres in Asia by converting the electronics maker's liquid crystal display panel plant in Osaka Prefecture, the

companies said Monday.

The data centre is expected to be equipped with next-generation graphics processing units from US semiconductor giant Nvidia Corp, according to a plan agreed upon by the two firms plus Japanese system development firm Datasection Inc and US tech firm Super Micro Computer Inc.

The three Japanese companies will set up a joint venture to operate the data centre, with KDDI taking part in building necessary networks and Datasection procuring GPUs from Nvidia via Super Micro.

The data centre will be built utilizing Sharp's LCD panel plant in Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, which is scheduled to stop operations by the end of September after incurring losses in the face of intensified competition with Chinese and other rivals.

The former Sakai plant "will be able to provide adequate electric power and space to support the AI data centre's electricity needs", KDDI said in a press release. — Kyodo

NTT Docomo to commercialize flying telecom bases in 2026

JAPAN'S largest mobile carrier NTT Docomo Inc said Monday it aims to commercialize high-altitude platform services in 2026 to establish a system that can quickly restore connectivity in the event of disruptions caused by earthquakes or other disasters. NTT Docomo said it will lead a consortium of Japanese businesses to invest up to \$100 million in a subsidiary of European aerospace giant Airbus SE to leverage its technology for operating such platform stations in the stratosphere for long periods.

The emerging technology, also known as HAPS, refers to systems where unmanned aircraft flying at an altitude of around 20 kilometres for months can be operated like telecommunication base stations. SoftBank Corp, another of Japan's top three carriers, is also working on developing HAPS, which is expected to improve connectivity in disaster situations and expand mobile coverage to remote areas such as islands and mountainous regions. — Kyodo

ROLLING UPDATES: WORLD

European powers seek to censure Iran at UN nuclear meeting

BRITAIN, France and Germany will seek to censure Iran over its lack of cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog at its board meeting from Monday despite US opposition, diplomats told AFP.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Tehran is the only non-nuclear weapon state to enrich uranium to 60 per cent, while it keeps accumulating large uranium stockpiles.

That is approaching the enrichment levels of 90 per cent needed for atomic weapons. It is also well above the authorized 3.67 per cent used for nuclear power stations.

Iran has always denied wanting to acquire a nuclear weapon, but the rapid expansion of its nuclear programme has no “credible civilian justification”, said one diplomat who asked not to be named.

Diplomats told AFP that submitting a motion against Iran at the Vienna meeting was



A woman looks at a wall decorated with national flags during the IAEA's Board of Governors meeting at the agency's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on 3 June 2024. PHOTO: AFP

driven by an “urgency to react to the gravity of the situation”.

The planned resolution comes after the IAEA board

passed the last one of its kind in November 2022.

Even though Iran continued to significantly ramp up its

nuclear programme since then, the IAEA's board has refrained from a censure.

At the last board meeting

in March, European powers decided to shelve their plans to confront Iran due to a lack of support from Washington.

The United States denies it is hampering European efforts to hold Tehran accountable but fears a censure could aggravate Middle East tensions ahead of presidential elections in November, diplomats say.

Essential and urgent

Cooperation between Iran and the IAEA has severely deteriorated in recent years, with the UN nuclear watchdog struggling for assurances that Iran's nuclear programme is peaceful.

Diplomats say maintaining the current policy of inaction amid Iran's escalation is no longer tenable and the US position could change ahead of the vote scheduled for later this week.

In May, IAEA head Rafael Grossi visited Iran in a bid to improve cooperation, calling for “concrete results...soon”.

— AFP

South Africa's ANC gains 159 seats in National Assembly: official results



An electronic screen shows the final results of seat allocation in the National Assembly in South Africa's 2024 general elections in Midrand, South Africa, 2 June 2024. PHOTO: XINHUA

SOUTH Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) has secured 159 out of 400 seats in the National Assembly in the country's 2024 general elections, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) officially announced on Sunday evening.

The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), came second with 87 seats in the National Assembly, followed by the uMkhonto weSi-

zwe (MK) Party with 58 seats and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) with 39 seats, according to the official election results released by the IEC at the Results Operation Centre (ROC) in Midrand, Johannesburg.

More than 27 million South Africans took part in the 2024 national and provincial elections on May 29 to elect a new National Assembly and provincial legislatures.

In the end, no party won an outright majority in the National Assembly. The ANC got less than 200 seats it needed to maintain its 30-year-old unchallenged dominance in the lower house of parliament.

While announcing the final results, IEC Chairperson Mosotho Moepya declared the 2024 general elections as “free and fair.”

Calling them “the most difficult and highly contested elections” since the end of apartheid in 1994, Moepya said this year's elections were not without their challenges, as attempts to undermine the credibility of the IEC had been made.

In his speech after the announcement of election results, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said it “represents a victory for our democracy, for our constitutional order and for all the people of South Africa”. — Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

12 killed, over 87,000 affected by floods in Sri Lanka

SRI Lanka's State Minister of Defence Premitha Bandara Tennakoon said Monday that 12 people have been killed and over 87,000 people affected by the recent floods in the South Asian country.

The official told a press conference that Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Ratnapura, Kegalle, Galle and Matara districts in Western, Sabaragamuwa and Southern provinces are the most affected.

A total of 12 deaths have been reported, including four in Matara, five in Ratnapura, and three in Colombo, Tennakoon said, adding that five people are reported missing.

There are 119 evacuation and relief centers currently housing over 23,700 people affected by floods, he said. — Xinhua

S Korea decides to suspend military agreement with DPRK

SOUTH Korea decided Monday to suspend the 19 September military agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), according to the presidential office.

The decision was made during the National Security Council (NSC) working-level meeting, presided over by Principal Deputy National Security Adviser Kim Tae-hyo.

The agenda to halt the entire effect of the military agreement will be presented to South Korea's cabinet meeting on Tuesday for approval, the presidential office said. — Xinhua

SPORTS

Myanmar starfighter Thway Thit Win Hlaing to show off excellent skills in ONE Friday Fight



Thailand's Muay Thai fighter Khunsuek versus Myanmar's prominent traditional boxer Thway Thit Win Hlaing. PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP

MYANMAR traditional boxer Thway Thit Win Hlaing is scheduled to participate in the One Friday Fight Muay Thai organized by ONE Championship.

Myanmar's starfighter Thway Thit Win Hlaing will fight Thai Muay Thai fighter Khunsuek in the ONE Friday Fights 66 to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 7 June.

Possessing prestigious results in the Myanmar Traditional Lethwei Championships, Thway Thit Win Hlaing has already joined hands with ONE Championship. ONE Friday Fights 66 comprises 12 fights, and Thway Thit Win Hlaing versus Khunsuek will take place as the fifth bout of its kind.

Currently, some Myanmar fighters

take part in the bouts of ONE Friday Fights. Myanmar's prominent boxer Soe Lin Oo has shown off his brilliant skills and had good results in the One Championship. Thway Thit Win Hlaing, one more Myanmar star boxer, will fight a Thai opponent on 7 June after joining hands with the ONE Championship. — Ko Nyi Lay/TTA

New Fenerbahce coach Mourinho gets warm welcome in Istanbul

TWO-TIME Champions League winning coach Jose Mourinho arrived in Istanbul on Sunday to be unveiled as the new manager of Fenerbahce and was accorded a welcome fit for a popstar by the 19-times Turkish champions' fans.

The Portuguese coach, who won the Champions League with Porto and Inter Milan, has not worked since his sacking

by Italian Serie A side Roma in January.

But like the self-acclaimed 'Special One' Fenerbahce are in need of a boost of their own with 10 years passing since their last domestic title. He was greeted at the airport by a crowd of Fenerbahce fans and later was presented at club stadium alongside club president Ali Koc and in front of the side's fans, decked out

in Fenerbahce yellow and black.

The 61-year-old announced the latest move - his 11th club - in his career in a post on X on Saturday night from Wembley as he was acting as a television pundit for Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League final. He counts Real as one of his former clubs. — AFP

Yuka Saso wins second US Women's Open golf crown

JAPAN'S Yuka Saso powered away on the back nine to win her second US Women's Open title Sunday, carding a two-under-par 68 for a three-shot victory at Lancaster Country Club in Pennsylvania.

Saso finished with a four-under-par total of 276 to claim her second LPGA tour title three

years after winning the US Open at the Olympic Club in San Francisco — when she represented the Philippines.

"It feels great," said Saso, whose mother is from the Philippines and father from Japan.

"Winning in 2021 I represented the Philippines, I feel like I was able to give back to my mom. This year I was able to represent Japan, and I think I was able to give back to my dad.

"It's just a wonderful feeling that I was able to give back to my parents in the same way."

Saso became just the third player, after South Koreans Pak Se-ri and Chun In-gee, to make

her first two LPGA wins major titles, and at 22 she's the youngest player to win the US Women's Open twice.

To do it, Saso shook off a four-putt double-bogey at the par-three sixth, grabbing birdies at four holes in a five-hole stretch from the 12th through the 16th to pull away as a trio of overnight co-leaders headlined by Australia's Minjee Lee faded.

"I just tried to be patient out there," Saso said. "I think that's what you need to win a major like this — just have fun playing with the playing partners and enjoy the challenge."

Japan's Hinako Shibuno, who won the 2019 Women's British Open in her major championship debut, carded a two-over-par 72 to finish second on one-under 279. — AFP

Alcaraz books Tsitsipas rematch as Swiatek races into French Open quarters

CARLOS Alcaraz produced his best display of the tournament to line up a quarter-final rematch with Stefanos Tsitsipas at the French Open, while Iga Swiatek ramped up her bid for a third successive Roland Garros title with a 40-minute blitz on Sunday.

Alcaraz says he feels much more like himself in Paris after an injury-hit build-up saw him sidelined by a sore forearm for almost a month.

His 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 win over Canadian 21st seed Felix Auger-Aliassime suggested he is rounding into top form, sending an ominous signal to his rivals as he made the last eight for the third year in succession.

The Spaniard pumped 34 winners past Auger-Aliassime as the persistent rain which heavily disrupted the first week of the tournament finally relented, allowing matches on the two main courts to go ahead without the need for their retractable roofs.

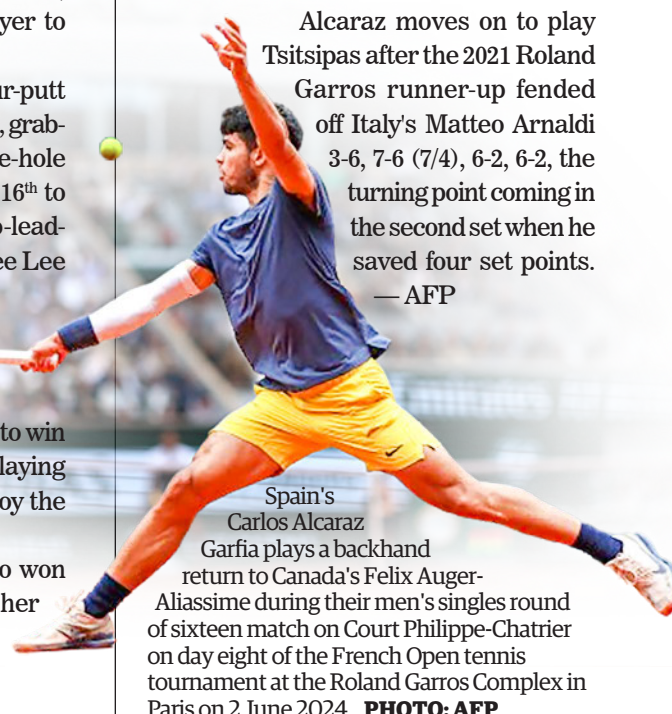
"I'm really happy with my performance. I think I played a really high level of tennis," said Alcaraz, beaten by eventual champion Novak Djokovic in the semi-finals last year.

"The most important thing is to believe in myself. It doesn't matter that I don't have too many matches on my back and that I didn't come with a lot of rhythm."

"My game is getting better and better," he added. "My confidence is getting higher. Every practice that I'm doing or every day that I'm here in Roland Garros, I'm feeling better and better."

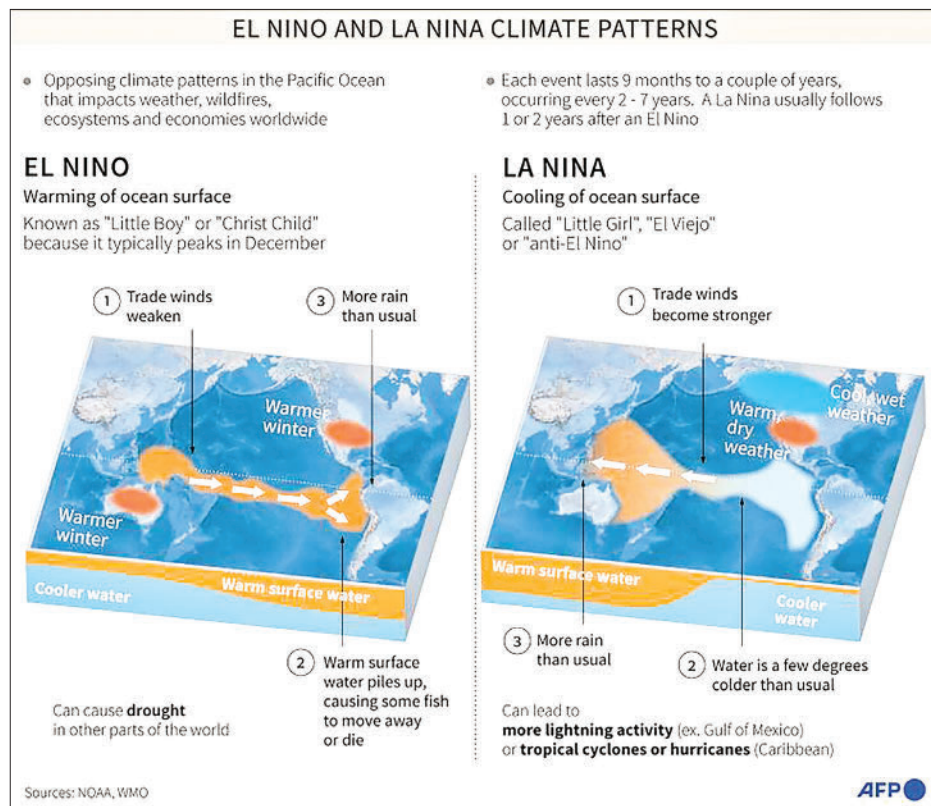
Alcaraz moves on to play Tsitsipas after the 2021 Roland Garros runner-up fended off Italy's Matteo Arnaldi 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-2, the turning point coming in the second set when he saved four set points. — AFP

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz Garfia plays a backhand return to Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime during their men's singles round of sixteen match on Court Philippe-Chatrier on day eight of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros Complex in Paris on 2 June 2024. PHOTO: AFP





UN forecasts La Nina could help lower temperatures this year



Graphic explaining El Niño and La Niña, opposing climate patterns in the Pacific Ocean that can significantly impact weather, wildfires, ecosystems and economies worldwide. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE return of the cooling La Niña weather phenomenon this year should help lower temperatures somewhat after months of global heat records, the United

Nations' weather agency said Monday. The impact is likely to be felt in the next few months because the warming El Niño weather pattern — which has

helped fuel a spike in global temperatures and extreme weather around the world since mid-2023 — "is showing signs of ending", the UN's World Meteorological Organization said in its latest update.

The WMO warned, however, that global temperatures would continue to rise in the long term due to human-induced climate change, which continues to make extreme weather worse and upend seasonal rainfall and temperature patterns.

La Niña refers to the cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in large swathes of the tropical Pacific Ocean, coupled with winds, rains and changes in atmospheric pressure.

In many locations, especially in the tropics, La Niña produces the opposite climate impacts to El Niño, which heats up the surface of the oceans, leading to drought in some parts of the world and triggering heavy downpours elsewhere.

The WMO said there was a "60 per cent" chance of La Niña conditions in the period from July to September and a "70 per cent" likelihood during August-November.

The chances of El Niño redeveloping are negligible, it added.

Every month since June 2023, when El Niño returned, has set a new high temperature record, and 2023 was by far the warmest year on record globally.

The WMO said the planet would continue to heat up overall from the use of fossil fuels that produce greenhouse gases.

"The end of El Niño does not mean a pause in long-term climate change, as our planet will continue to warm due to heat-trapping greenhouse gases," WMO deputy secretary-general Ko Barrett stressed. — AFP

Israel govt spokesman says PM views Biden Gaza plan as 'partial'

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu views a plan outlined by US President Joe Biden for a truce in Gaza and hostage release deal as "partial", a government spokesman said Monday.

Biden on Friday presented what he labelled an Israeli three-phase plan that would eventually end the fighting, free all hostages held by Palestinian militants and lead to the reconstruction of the devastated Gaza Strip without Hamas in power.

"The outline that President Biden presented is partial," government spokesman David Mencer quoted Netanyahu as saying, adding in a press briefing that "the war will be stopped for the purpose of returning the hostages" after which discussions will follow on how to achieve the Israel's goal of eliminating Hamas.

Netanyahu, in a separate statement issued by his office, said that "claims that we have agreed to a ceasefire without our conditions being met are incorrect". The prime minister's far-right coalition partner National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir said Monday that the latest plan was "irresponsible".

Ben Gvir added that the proposal laid out by Biden would mean "the end of the war without achieving the objective that the cabinet clearly set: the destruction of Hamas". — AFP

THE Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, a group known as OPEC+, decided to extend its current output cuts at least into the third quarter of this year to shore up oil prices.

Following a virtual meeting of OPEC+ oil and energy ministers, OPEC said in a statement that OPEC+ will extend this year's production quotas for its members to the whole year of 2025. The quotas include a two million barrels per day (bpd) cut to the official output targets originally agreed in late 2022.

While the 2025 production quotas for OPEC+ countries remain largely the same as in 2024, the oil-producer group agreed on Sunday to raise the output cap of the United Arab Emirates by 300,000 bpd to 3.519 million bpd, according to the statement.

In a separate statement released on

OPEC+ extends output cuts to support oil prices

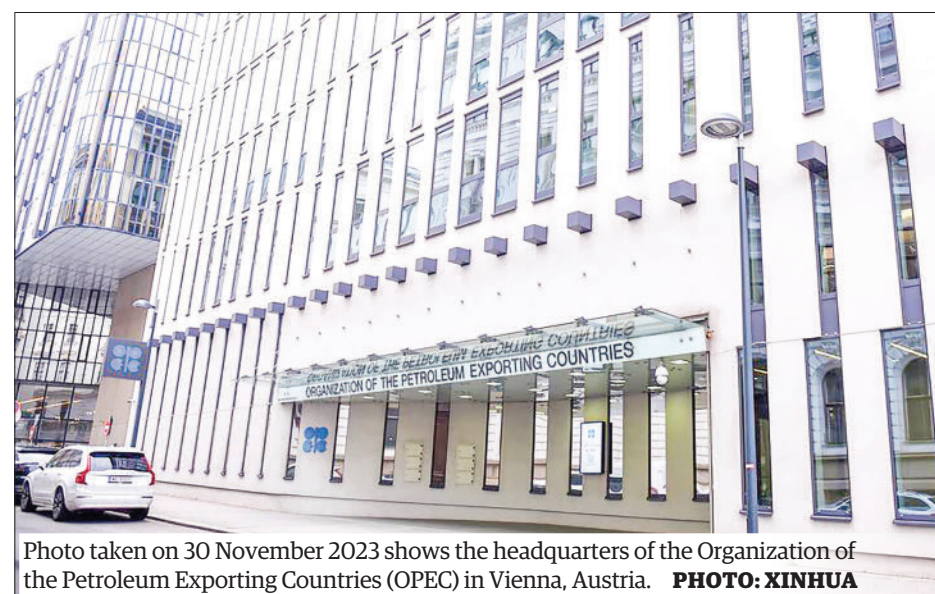


Photo taken on 30 November 2023 shows the headquarters of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Vienna, Austria. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

the OPEC website, eight OPEC+ countries — Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman — said they would prolong voluntary production cuts of 1.65 million bpd, first announced in April 2023, to the end of 2025.

The eight countries will also extend voluntary output cuts of 2.2 million bpd, originally announced in November 2023, to the end of September 2024. This part of voluntary production cuts will be "gradually phased out on a monthly basis until the end of September 2025 to support market stability," but "the monthly increase can be paused or reversed subject to market conditions," according to the statement.

The announcements of the voluntary production cuts were made after oil ministers of the eight countries met in person in Riyadh on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting of the wider OPEC+. — Xinhua