

FATHER, SON PREPARE FOR ECLIPSE AFTER MISSED 1979 VIEWING

MADRAS, Oregon: The last time a total solar eclipse blacked out the sun in Oregon nearly 40 years ago. Gene Brick was working in a timber mill that refused to shut down for the spectacle. The World War II veteran and amateur astronomer was devastated when his friends raved about experiencing a pitch-dark sky in the middle of the day. "Everyone who was outside got to see it, and they enjoyed telling me all about it - and I was hurt by that," said Brick, now 92. "But work is work, you know." Brick will get another chance to witness history this month, when a total solar eclipse begins its path across the US in Oregon.

The one he missed in 1979 covered the Pacific Northwest and parts of Canada. This total eclipse will be visible from coast to coast across the nation - something that hasn't happened in 99 years. Brick plans to watch the event with his son using two telescopes: a fancy new one and one the two crafted together 53 years ago in their basement. The men will peer at the sun through both during the eclipse's totality, when the moon's shadow completely covers the sun for just over two minutes. They also will use special filters to photograph the eclipse through the newer machine.

For Brick, who survived a kamikaze attack on the USS Drexler during the Battle of Okinawa, the opportunity is

the experience of a lifetime. "I always loved to look at the moon," he said, after peering through the telescope the pair crafted in 1964. "I still do." The Bricks will have a prime location for their father-son moment. The town of Madras, in central Oregon, is in the high desert, where summertime skies are often clear and cloudless. Up to 100,000 people are expected to flock to the town and surrounding Jefferson County for the Aug 21 event, creating worries about overcrowding and traffic.

Brick's son, Bartt Brick, is on the Madras City Council and will be on call during the eclipse. But taking the time to watch the event with his father is important to him. The elder Brick got the last four credits he needed for his high school diploma by signing up for the US Navy and never attended college - but even in his 90s, he's studying particle physics.

A new dictionary

The pair decided to build the telescope when the younger Brick was 14, after finding a piece of glass in his late grandfather's garage that was hand-ground into a concave lens for a telescope. Gene Brick worked long, hard days cutting logs at the mill then stayed up into the night working on the project

with his teenage son. "We'd bought ourselves a book on telescopes and a new dictionary, and after about - what - four or five months, we had a telescope," Bartt Brick recalled on a recent summer day. "I'd sleep about half the night," his father added with a chuckle. The two dragged the telescope outside on the night they finished, aimed it toward the heavens by propping it on a stepladder, and peered into the night sky until they spied the Ring Nebula, a dying star in a constellation about 2,000 light years from Earth.

"We were so excited, we ran in and told Mom. But at 2 o'clock in the morning, she wasn't as thrilled as we were," the younger Brick said. Over the years, the telescope got a lot of use from the family and from a string of neighborhood children who lined up most evenings to peer at the moon. But when the 1979 total solar eclipse came along, the elder Brick was working, the younger Brick no longer lived at home, and the telescope went unused. When Bartt Brick moved back to Madras three years ago, the stars aligned for another crack at a shared celestial show.

On Aug 21, three generations of Bricks will assemble. They'll have a sleek black, new telescope equipped with a remote control and a USB cord for snapping photos through a computer. But they'll also have on hand the unassuming,



MADRAS, Oregon: This frame grab from a video shows Gene Brick, 92, left, and his son, Bartt Brick, peering through a telescope that they made together in 1964. — AP

unmounted metal cylinder they worked on so long ago. "Dad's had a message for me ever since I was 2 years old, and it was, 'Be curious,'" Bartt Brick said. "And boy, did I learn how to be curious with this." — AP

SANOFI AND ROCHE COLLABORATE TO MANAGE PATIENT'S WITH DIABETES

KUWAIT: To enable health care providers and patients to effectively manage diabetes, Sanofi, in partnership with Roche Diabetes Care, are introducing 'My Star' Starter Kits in Kuwait and the region. The aim is to channel knowledge, health beliefs, as well as influence adherence to medication and lifestyle measures that can aid diabetic patients cope well in the long run.

The 'Starter Kit' offers easy-to-use resources, information and tools that can improve a patient's understanding of their condition. The objective is to support patients through their journey with diabetes by providing them with useful information on day to day concerns, facilitate regular monitoring of blood sugar levels, and improve awareness on the benefits of effective diabetes management. The kit consists of various components including a diabetes general education booklet, a sugar log book and a blood glucose machine to measure their blood sugar levels.

"At Sanofi, we believe in constantly furthering our commitment to improve patient lives and contributing to the growth of healthy societies. With the launch of 'My Star Starter Kits', our aim is to empower health-care professionals and their patients to use innovative approaches that are scientifically proven, and can help in effective control of diabetes in Kuwait and the region," said Jean-Paul Scheuer, Country Chair and General Manager for Sanofi Gulf.

The starter kits will be distributed to physicians treating

patients across Kuwait, UAE, Oman and Bahrain. In turn, the treating physician will share the starter kits with suitable patients, introduce them to the items included in their kits, and explain how these can be used to improve their well-being and diabetes control. In Kuwait, the 'Starter Kits' will be available for patients in private as well as government hospitals. The initiative is being rolled out in three phases across GCC countries this year, reaching over 150,000 patients.

"At Roche Diabetes Care, we strive to help people with diabetes worry less about their daily diabetes management routines and experience true relief. For people with diabetes, simplifying the management of their condition can be an essential part of championing their own health and wellness. We are happy to be a part of an integrated effort through the launch of the 'My Star Starter Kits'. We hope that many members of the community will benefit from the initiative and allow them to learn more about diabetes, while helping them live healthier by staying in range," said Fadi Gedeon, General Manager of Roche Diabetes Care Middle East.

The increased prevalence of diabetes in Middle Eastern countries is a major health concern. Lifestyle interventions and adherence to medications are central to disease prevention and management. The efforts are being driven in alignment with the GCC strategy to reduce the incidence and effectively manage non-communicable diseases like diabetes in the region.



YANGON: Photo shows elderly resident of the "Twilight Villa" nursing home receiving free dental work at the center on the edge of Yangon.



YANGON: Photo shows elderly residents of the "Twilight Villa" nursing home being watched by nurses in one of the centre's rooms on the edge of Yangon.

'TWILIGHT VILLA': HOME OF MYANMAR'S ABANDONED ELDERLY

YANGON: Paralyzed on one side by a stroke and barely able to speak, Tin Hlaing was left to die at the side of a road by her own children. The 75-year-old only survived because a stranger took pity on her as she laid on the street and brought her to the "Twilight Villa" nursing home on the edge of Yangon. Her story has become increasingly familiar as impoverished Myanmar struggles to cope with a rapidly aging population that is piling pressure on its already anemic health system. Twilight Villa's vice chairwoman Khin Ma Ma said many of the residents, like Tin Hlaing, arrive bewildered and sick after being abandoned by their families. "She was in a terrible state-disorientated, dehydrated and above all very angry," Khin Ma Ma told AFP. "It was impossible to communicate with her." Set up in 2010, the retirement home already cares for 120 people over the age of 70 and has more than 100 people on its waiting list. The wards are crowded with beds, all just a few centimeters apart, filled with elderly people who sit quietly staring into space or lie huddled under blankets.

On one, a frail old lady whispered into the ear of a smiling plastic doll, her only companion since she moved to the facility from the shed she used to occupy in her family's back yard. Khin Ma Ma remembers another woman who was thrown out of a car next to a rubbish dump, where she was found covered in cuts and bite marks from rats. She made it to the nursing home but survived for only a few months. "Sometimes we find only a small note in their pockets with their name and age. That's all. When we ask them questions, they can't even respond," she said. "Old people should not be treated like that in a civilized society and those who abandon them should be prosecuted."

'Here to die'

Decades of misrule by a brutal junta, stringent sanctions and ethnic conflict have

reduced Myanmar to one of the poorest countries in the world. Now it is facing a demographic crisis that is already squeezing the life out of Asia's former tiger economies.

The UN estimates some nine percent of the population is currently over 65 but that will surge to a quarter by 2050, outstripping the number of under-15s. "Economic realities oblige many people to continue heavy manual labor into old age to survive," said Janet Jackson, the UNFPA's Myanmar representative. "This underlines the need for adequate social services and policies that serve the aged." Already in tatters after 50 years of underinvestment by the former junta, Myanmar's health system is struggling to cope. Since taking office last year, the new civilian government has set up only one new care facility, exclusively for the over 90s, which receives just 10,000 kyat a month in funding-around \$7.

Traditionally most seniors are cared for by their families, but the pressures of poverty, double-digit inflation and rapid urbanization mean more and more people are abandoning their relatives. "We have nowhere to go. We have come here to wait to die," said Hla Hla Shwe, who has lived in another facility in Yangon run by monks for the past three years. "Here we feel less alone and people feed us, thanks to the donations," the 85-year-old added.

'Good old days' - But to the east of Myanmar's commercial capital, one group of actresses is finding solace together in their twilight years. Set up by former screen queen Nwet Nwet San on a donated piece of land, "Mother's Villa" has become a refuge for more than 20 aging film stars. "The later years can maybe be very difficult, even for former actresses," the 77-year-old founder told AFP. "I saw some people die in terrible conditions, so I decided to set up this place." — AFP

PHILIPPINES HAS FASTEST GROWING HIV INFECTIONS IN ASIA: UN

MANILA: The Philippines has the fastest growing number of HIV infections in Asia, a report by the United Nations and the government showed yesterday. The Southeast Asian nation saw a 140 percent increase in new cases from 2010 to 2016, even though the annual number of new infections in Asia-Pacific declined by 13 percent over the same period, according to the report. "The Philippines has a small window of opportunity to act now and stop a major HIV epidemic from taking hold," Eamonn Murphy, director of UNAIDS Regional Support Team said in a statement. He called on the government to focus anti-HIV efforts on

those at most risk. Genesis Samonte of the Philippine health department's epidemiology bureau said eight out of 10 reported HIV cases were among men having sex with men (MSM). "Risky behaviors are starting very young," she said, adding that the MSM group on average started having sex at 16, and anal sex at 17 before they have started using condoms or taken HIV tests, increasing the risk of infection.

The report also showed that only 35 percent of MSM had comprehensive knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention. Samonte said there were indications that a rise in the use of the Internet and cellphones was allowing more

young people to have multiple partners, further fuelling the risk of contracting HIV. Cases will continue to increase and burden the Philippine health system if the nation does not invest in prevention and treatment, according to Samonte. Health Secretary Paulyn Ubial said that "HIV is one of the top health priorities for the government," that the budget for the disease had been sharply increased and her department aimed to start reversing the trend in five years. The government was directing its services towards MSM and transgender women, and opening clinics in cities where the bulk of the new HIV cases were detected, Ubial added. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368