

## 'Help us build a new Myanmar'

Government makes pitch to potential foreign investors, despite confusion over fate of investment law

By Thomas Kean and Stuart Deed

THE head of the investment commission has encouraged representatives from hundreds of foreign firms to invest and help build "a new Myanmar", amid continued uncertainty over planned amendments to the foreign investment law.

"We need your assistance and support," Myanmar Investment Commission chairman U Soe Thein told 800 Myanmar and foreign delegates at the Myanmar Global Investment Forum in Nay Pyi Taw on September 12.

"Please assist us by helping to promote our trade and industry by facilitating investment, by exposing us to world-class business practices, please assist in training our young businessman and entrepreneurs to grow with you and assist us to regain our stance back in the global arena," he said during the opening speech at the two-day forum.

"We are in the midst of an unprecedented and multifaceted transition from military government to democracy, from armed conflict to peace and from a state-centred economy to a free market economy. And from isolation to being an active and productive member of the international community.

"We are committed to build a new Myanmar: democratic, inclusive, peaceful with sustainable economic growth, which will actively and responsibly participate in our shared mission to build a thriving and harmonious Asia."



Pic: Boothee

President U Thein Sein, Myanmar Investment Commission chairman U Soe Thein (front right) and Euromoney chief executive officer for Asia Tony Shale (front left) enter the Myanmar Global Investment Forum venue on September 12.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to undertaking further reforms "in order to re-enter the global economy", including signing on to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

"We need to improve our political environment and ensure future stability. Democratic institutions must be strengthened. ...

We have a major weakness in infrastructure and reform steps are being taken regarding judiciary and other rules of law institutions," he said.

However, U Soe Thein, who was recently shifted from the Ministry for Industry to the President's Office, mostly avoided the main talking point among prospective investors: amendments to

the foreign investment law passed by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on September 7.

While a controversial clause setting the minimum initial capital at US\$5 million has been scrapped, foreign businesses are restricted from owning more than a 50 percent share in 13 vaguely defined sectors, including "small- and medium-sized enterprises".

Under the 2008 constitution, the president has two weeks to either sign off on the changes or send them back to the parliament - now in recess - with suggested amendments.

Prominent businessman U Serge Pun, executive chairman of Yoma Strategic Holdings, said during a panel discussion at the forum that it would be "better for us to

debate a little more so that we can find a good foreign investment law that will be sustainable".

"Presently ... there are still a lot of flaws" in the version approved by parliament on September 7, he said.

"There's been a lot of people saying it's taking too long, but let me say that for such a big, significant piece of legislation it is actually a very short time they are taking ... we have to manage expectations."

One potential issue, he said, is the parliament's decision to raise the cap on foreign ownership in restricted sectors from 49pc to 50pc.

"Giving that additional 1pc, to me is really not meaningful. In fact, it is counterproductive ... 50-50 is a sure way for a deadlock and investors fear deadlock because it means limbo, it means no progress."

Denis O'Brien from telecommunications firm Digicel said small and medium companies would become the "powerhouse" of the country's economy. As such, some amount of initial protection for Myanmar companies was in the country's interests.

"A gradual opening up of the market is better than a 'big bang'," he said.

While the foreign investment law amendments are yet to be enacted, he said his firm had already made its first investment in the country, a job search website, and he encouraged other foreign companies to follow suit.

"Go in and do something small and work with a local partner. It's time to be bold and make a move," Mr O'Brien said.

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## Shift in forced labour complaints from govt to private sector

By Thomas Kean

AGROWING number of complaints submitted to the International Labour Organisation's forced labour complaints mechanism concern the private sector, the organisation's liaison officer in Yangon said last week.

The organisation is receiving about 60 complaints a month of forced labour incidents, which include underage recruitment

into the military, up from about 50 in mid-2011 and just 42 in the whole of 2007, the year the mechanism was introduced.

"We are now seeing some shift, in fact, with a slight increase in people raising issues with the private sector and different types of forced labour," liaison officer Steve Marshall told *The Myanmar Times* on September 6.

Recently received complaints

include state employees not being allowed to resign and housekeepers being imprisoned by their employers. A further problem coming to light is the practice of children being sold by parents to the owners of teashops.

"We're seeing different things develop as people get to understand the issues around rights," he said.

starting to be an understanding that actually these principles apply right throughout [society].

"In response to that, the government has agreed ... [to] look at putting into place a specific program on child labour, which will be very useful. The government has agreed in our action plan that we should be

doing educational activities in the private sector jointly with a view to ensuring in the private sector these practices are not condoned."

While the number of forced labour complaints received each month has increased steadily, Mr Marshall said the ILO was receiving "clear messages from communities" that incidents of forced labour were decreasing.

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Myanmar stays on US drug list: page 21

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# ASEAN woes to return in November

ASIAN FOCUS

INSIDE COVER

with Roger Milton



IT brings only sorrow to recall the July meeting of foreign ministers of ASEAN in Phnom Penh.

The ill-begotten gathering ended in such disarray that for the first time in almost half a century the region's top diplomats could not even agree on the wording of a final communiqué.

Like naughty children in a nursery, they kept bickering to the bitter end and then ran home crying that it was all the other person's fault.

While the shameful episode reflected most badly on Cambodia, the association's chair this year, it also laid bare an astonishing degree of disunity among the 10 members.

And that is causing many

in the region to worry that an even worse debacle may ensue at the full leaders' meeting in November.

Eighteen heads of government are scheduled to descend on Phnom Penh for the 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit and the 7<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit from November 18 to 20.

If you live in Phnom Penh it may be a good time to consider taking a holiday, for rest assured the capital is going to be horrendously locked down during those days.

But traffic snarl-ups and security hassles aside, what many fear is another nasty verbal altercation over sovereignty claims in the South China Sea.

This one would not just involve ASEAN members, but also the leaders of China, which claims virtually the entire sea, and the United States, which staunchly backs the multilateral approach of the association's claimants.

Speaking in Jakarta on September 3, US Secretary of

State Hillary Clinton urged Southeast Asian nations to forge a united front to secure a peaceful resolution with Beijing over the maritime disputes.

"We believe very strongly that no party should take any steps that would increase tensions or do anything that would be viewed as coercive or intimidating to advance their territorial claims," she said.

Naturally, Beijing, which has been gun-boating around the waters aggressively this year, and which favours dealing bilaterally with other claimants rather than with any "united front", responded in kind.

*Xinhua*, its official news agency, berated Washington for meddling in these matters and for adopting a sinophobic stance on the sovereignty disputes.

"US politicians, who preposterously fancy they could do gold-digging in China and rein in China's rise simultaneously, should remember the old saying

that no one can have his cake and eat it too," thundered *Xinhua*.

It went on to demand that the US should "stop its role as a sneaky troublemaker sitting behind some nations in the region and pulling strings".

Belatedly, and not a little hypocritically, Clinton pleaded for moderation, saying: "It is time for diplomacy. We have the East Asia Summit coming up."

Well, yes, we do, but already the train of verbal sabre-rattling has left the station and others have jumped aboard.

On September 6, Singapore's PM Lee Hsien Loong got into pre-EAS mode by warning China not to underestimate the US and stressing that his country backs a multilateral approach to solve the territorial conflicts.

That stance, anathema to Beijing, will further rile chairman Cambodia, which, supported by Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, will back China and insist that the disputes be solved bilaterally.

That will not deflect Washington, of course. It will support the multilateral approach of claimants like the Philippines and Vietnam – and it will be backed by the remaining ASEAN members, including Indonesia.

In Jakarta last week, foreign minister Marty Natalegawa agreed with Clinton that an all-encompassing code of conduct for the South China Sea must be set up soon so that the sovereignty disputes can be settled peacefully.

Recalling the July ministerial fiasco, Marty said: "Absent a code of conduct, absent the diplomatic process, we can be certain of more incidents and tension for our region."

It is the prospect of more "incidents and tension" caused by the self-evident and palpably deep-rooted disunity in ASEAN that makes participants at the coming November summit fear for the worst.

## Time to review the state of our higher education

By Dr Nyi Win Hman

A UNIVERSITY is a community of teachers and scholars who both impart knowledge as well as extend it by inquiry and research. Acquiring and searching for knowledge is the business of higher education. Knowledge constitutes one of the main sources of power and prosperity in the world and the business of knowledge is as dynamic and competitive as any other business.

Health and education are also the backbone of development, especially for developing countries. Unfortunately, however, Myanmar's entire education system, from primary to tertiary levels, has deteriorated to the lowest imaginable standards over the past half a century. Reforming and redeveloping our universities and the wider higher education sector, in

particular, is going to be one of our greatest challenges – one that will require great insight, vision, competence, integrity and goodwill, apart from a tremendous amount of material resources.

There is a Myanmar saying – often disregarded or only paid lip service – that says we need to be "able as well as good people" (*lu tau, lu kaung*). Possessing only ability or capability is not sufficient. In encouraging the development of our country, we will also have to bring our work ethic and professional conduct into line with international standards.

The first step in the reform process should be to critically and exhaustively review the current state of higher education. We should also thoroughly review the status and function of international higher education. Is the level of knowledge, experience and expertise of some of the available higher education

experts inside the country adequate to undertake this task on their own? International consultation and assistance should also be sought. We need to be clear on what assistance and support is required and what is available from the international community, including organisations such as UNESCO.

We need to demolish the basic structure and organisation of the system that has been in place for the past half century.

Many fundamental issues related to higher education need to be tackled. They relate to issues such as governance, entry standards and systems of funding, accreditation, staffing and resources. Also important is the structure, organisation and format of delivery of "teaching-learning" (T-L) activities and assessment. It can be said that we inherited our higher education system



Children at a school in rural Myanmar. Pic: Kaung Htet

from the British. Many higher education systems in the developing as well as developed countries are also essentially based on the same system. It may be better for us to continue with the British system rather than change and make the task at hand more difficult and complicated.

In many developing and developed countries, great value is attached to higher education as a means of achieving success in life. Fairness, equity and transparency are inseparable in the process of acquiring and delivering higher education. The system of "T-L" delivery is structured so that higher education opportunities exist for all socioeconomic strata, including those in employment (usually through part-time delivery) and those with a physical or mental disability. In Myanmar, I feel that we also need to fundamentally change the way we conduct "T-L" activities from the authoritarian "top down" mode of a teacher delivering a lecture to students who receive it passively. Instead, students should be nurtured to adopt a mature, independent, and interactive participation in the process. The system of lectures and a single, final examination is obsolete. Instead, various components such as tutorial/practical presentations, essays and other assignments should constitute a large percentage

to determine success.

The other important aspect of the university is the quality of academic staff, their work, career structure and advancement. We need to remove the antiquated and retrogressive system of career advancement based purely on seniority that is in place. We must realise that the academic staff and universities with the highest international standing are those that undertake high quality research and have high publication productivity. As a result, some universities specialise in conducting research rather than teaching.

Research is going to be one of the most difficult areas to develop as there has been more or less a complete isolation and disconnection from the world of learning for 50 years. Many of the overseas trained and qualified staff are getting on in age. Some disciplines have been discriminated against and as a result overseas training opportunities were minimal or limited.

The Myanmar language expression for this is *khar pyat dei* (the human torso had been cut from the trunk). The standard of "T-L" had deteriorated to the lowest level. The academic system was also pressured to confer many sub-standard postgraduate degrees, including doctorates. We may need to consider whether it is worthwhile to reintegrate all

major disciplines including professional ones (such as medicine and engineering) into the university as faculties rather than separate institutions, as was the case originally.

Nurturing and developing the research capability of academic staff will be a slow and painful task, as the scientific methodology underpinning the disciplines has suffered significantly. From the inception of the new system, academic staff recruitment, selection and advancement should be based as much as possible on research and/or productive potential.

Lastly, we need to systematically and thoroughly plan to reform higher education and most probably conduct the implementation in phases or stages.

There are just a few of the specific issues that are important for the reformation of the universities and the higher education system. It is my hope that a critical examination and intervention will be undertaken to slowly but painstakingly bring back some semblance of progress and development to higher education in Myanmar.

(Dr Nyi Win Hman is a former associate professor of psychology at Yangon University and British-trained clinical psychologist who has worked in Malaysia and Australia and taught in Singapore.)

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# Telecoms giants jostle ahead of licence tender

By Victoria Bruce

THE government is close to selecting an international consultant to oversee an upcoming tender for telecommunications licences, having shortlisted five companies from a pool of 64 applicants, sources said last week.

Indian network services company GTL Limited, China's Huawei and Thailand's Symphony Communications are in the running alongside consultants from Japan, Australia, Germany and the United States.

"We have been participating for this particular tender for the consultancy," GTL's head of business development, Sanjay Hirpara, said last week.

"There are definitely good opportunities here for investment and for business," he said.

But the major prize for foreign firms is the four telecommunications licences that the consultant will eventually recommend the government award. Russian heavyweight VimpelCom, the sixth largest mobile network operator in the world in terms of subscribers, Norwegian firm Telenor, one of VimpelCom's major shareholders, Vietnam's VNPT-Fujitsu and Digicel, the largest mobile operator in the Caribbean, are among the companies seeking a piece of Myanmar's untapped telecoms market.

U Tin Win, the chief executive officer of Yatanarpon Teleport, told *The Myanmar Times* in a recent interview that two operating licences could be given to state-owned Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), while another would go to his company.

But MPT indicated at a telecommunications and ICT investment forum in Nay Pyi Taw on September 14 that there could be several avenues for international companies to enter the telecommunications sector.

Foreign companies can bid to establish a joint venture with MPT or Yatanarpon in an upcoming tender, which will be overseen by the consultant firm, said U Than Tun Aung, deputy director of the ministry's Posts and Telecommunications Department.

But up to two more licenses could be awarded to other foreign firms, which can then choose to start a new firm with a local partner or go it alone, U Than Tun Aung told a roomful of industry players.

The option for 100-percent foreign ownership would depend on planned amendments to the foreign investment law, which have been passed by both houses of parliament and are being reviewed by the President's



Digicel founder Denis O'Brien (left) at the Myanmar Global Investment Forum in Nay Pyi Taw on September 12.

Office, U Than Tun Aung said.

As part of the government's "roadmap" to telecommunications sector reforms, a regulatory body with about 700 staff will also be formed to oversee aspects of telecommunications services, such as network sharing and equipment standards, he said.

Irish entrepreneur and Digicel founder Denis O'Brien told *The Myanmar Times* his company had set its sights on a joint venture with MPT and was prepared to invest up to US\$1 billion into developing the telecommunications network.

"We think we could work really well with them," Mr O'Brien said in an exclusive interview at the Myanmar Global Investment Forum in

Nay Pyi Taw last week.

"In order to build a world-class, future proofed mobile telecommunications infrastructure in Myanmar, which will make affordable telecommunications accessible to the people of Myanmar, an initial investment in the region of \$1.2 billion needs to be made," Mr O'Brien said, adding "as telecommunications penetration and usage increase, the investment will also increase".

Digicel holds operating licenses in 31 countries and has over 13 million subscribers throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America region, and the Asia Pacific region.

The group has already made one investment in Myanmar - an online

recruitment site that has attracted more than 30,000 page views in the past three weeks, said vice chairman Leslie Buckley.

"We operate as local as we can," Mr Buckley said, highlighting the group's strategy to integrate itself in host investment countries through strong community engagement, such as its football sponsorship deals in Myanmar.

While the country's low mobile phone penetration rates and population of about 60 million make Myanmar an attractive prospect for foreign telecoms firms, not all are starry eyed over their options.

"Is this just an exercise to glean as much technology from international companies by saying 'we will partner with you,'?" questioned one potential foreign investor, a supplier of international handsets, at the September 12-13 forum in Nay Pyi Taw.

"The local firms will want a 50-50 joint venture arrangement or to be the majority shareholder but they won't match you buck for buck - they'll match you by allowing you to partner with them and access that operating concession," he said, asking not to be named.

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## Actress confesses to murdering housemaid

By Lwin Mar Htun

A LEADING cast member from the upcoming television series *Flowers and Butterflies* was charged on September 11 with the murder of her housemaid.

Police said actress May Zun tortured 18-year-old Nu Nu Lwin in her Kamaryut township residence before locking her in a bedroom and leaving Yangon on September 8 to visit her hometown of Patheingyi in Ayeyarwady Region.

May Zun was accompanied on the trip to Patheingyi by her other housemaid, 13-year-old Zin Zin Htike, the state-run *Myanmar Ahlin* newspaper reported on September 13.

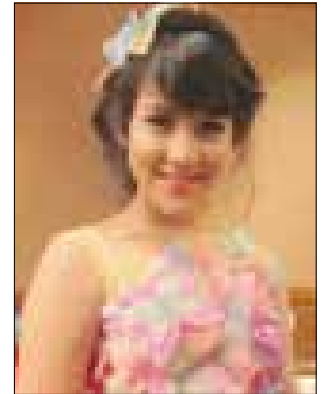
The 21-year-old actress returned to Yangon on September 10 and said she called the police when she saw Nu Nu Lwin's decomposed body. However, neighbours and Zin Zin Htike told police that May Zun had frequently beat Nu Nu Lwin.

A police officer said witnesses allege that May Zun often jumped on her maid's stomach and beat her with 1-metre-long stick.

According to police, May Zun confessed to the killing during lengthy questioning.

The director of *Flowers and Butterflies*, Hla Phyto from Forever Group, told *The Myanmar Times* on September 12 that producers would select a new actress to replace May Zun on September 14.

*Flowers and Butterflies* is a romantic comedy-



May Zun at the launch of 'Flowers and Butterflies' in Yangon on September 8.

Pic: Lwin Mar Htun

drama, or "dramedy", about student life and will air on MRTV-4 starting December 15. Shooting on the first of the show's three 30-episode seasons is expected to start on October 8.

May Zun was one of eight young people set to make their TV debuts as lead actors in the series, with a few well-known faces in supporting roles.

"The series revolves around a group of art students and depicts the romance and funny moments in their lives, whether at home or at college," Hla Phyto said.

He said French directors from Forever Group provided the idea and plot outline, while MRTV-4's script department wrote the script.

Technicians from France and the Philippines will also be involved, while artistic consultant Maung Thi will work behind the scenes as an acting trainer.

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## Korean Air launches direct flights to Yangon

By Yu Yu Maw

KOREAN Air launched direct flight services between Seoul Incheon and Yangon international airports on September 13, inaugurating the route with a fully booked flight that landed in Yangon on schedule at 10:15pm.

The new flights are offered every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, departing Seoul at 6:40pm and arriving in Yangon at 10:15pm. The return flight departs at 11:45pm and arrives in South Korea at 8:05am the following morning. Flight time is about six hours.

The flights are offered using a 138-seat Boeing 737-800 aircraft fitted with a "passenger-inspired" Boeing Sky Interior.

Korean Air's vice president

and director for Southeast Asia, Mr Kim Jang Soo, told *The Myanmar Times* at Yangon International Airport on September 13 that the Boeing Sky Interior was intended to provide more space and comfort for passengers.

"Normally the Boeing has 170 or 160 seats, but we have installed only 138 seats. It is more spacious than other Boeings, and this will help make travellers more comfortable," he said, adding that the new route will offer passengers "the ultimate convenience for travel between two cities".

Roundtrip tickets on the route cost about US\$900, while one-way flights cost more than \$800. Tickets can be booked through travel agencies as well as the Korean Air website (www.koreanair.com).

## President encourages complaints, suggestions

By May Sandy

SENDING a message to Nay Pyi Taw has never been easier, with the President's Office opening a "People's Voice" section on its website to solicit views from the public.

The office will advise the president of the feedback sent to *Pyithu Athan*, as the section is called in Myanmar, and also forward it to the relevant ministries, U Zaw Htay, director of the Ministry of the President's Office, said on September 11.

Submissions to the mailbox can be marked as a complaint, suggestion, appeal or anonymous.

He said more than 50 anonymous letters had already been submitted in the four days since *Pyithu Athan* was launched on September 7.

"So far we are in the review process. Some of the important letters will be forwarded to the respective ministries after we have verified them.

"People cannot be directly involved

in policymaking but all of the issues they raise will be taken into consideration."

U Khin Maung Swe, chairman of the National Democratic Force, said President U Thein Sein's desire for feedback shows that he "trusts his people".

"Opening a mailbox also shows he wants to communicate directly [with the people] to make the political process inclusive and transparent."

Blogger Nay Phone Latt said people who use the service should be held accountable if they submit misinformation. "People should have the courage [to use the service] and express their concerns objectively rather than emotionally," he said.

People who make a submission are required to leave their name, email address, state or region, National Registration Card number, address, telephone number, subject, message and attachment. For more information visit <http://www.president-office.gov.mm/contact>.

### From page 1

#### 'Build a new Myanmar'

Other panelists stressed the importance of investment that creates jobs and fosters equitable growth.

Mr Alisher Ali, chairman of Silk Road Finance, which offers a "three M" investment fund - Myanmar, Mongolia and Mozambique - said a failure to ensure all levels of society benefit from foreign investment could lead to political instability.

In Mongolia, voters recently threw out the incumbent government because economic reforms delivered high growth rates but little material benefits for average Mongolians, he said.

To avoid a similar situation, he said the Myanmar government needed to prioritise job creation.

"You cannot find better empowerment than getting someone a job. It is crucial not to have only political will from the leadership but also buy-in from the broader population," Mr Ali said.

U Serge Pun said the reforms were irreversible but there is a risk in "the resolve of our government to formulate good policy and follow it through".

He cited the application of the existing foreign investment law promulgated in 1988.

"We had an investment law, a good investment law ... [but] nobody wanted to go to [Myanmar Investment Commission] because we felt that it would create more problems for ourselves than it would solve.

"Today we have a very different MIC ... it's a very different mindset, a very different way of working.

"If you have a good law, you need to stick to it and implement it without fail."

#### Shift in forced labour

"Both elements are very positive - it is very positive that the community is feeling more confident to exercise their rights [to complain], and it's also positive that we're getting constant feedback" that forced labour is decreasing.

"It is not fixed, don't get me wrong, the problem is not fixed, but it appears to be improving, both in respect of the civilian government's activities and also the military."

About half of all forced labour complaints relate to underage recruitment into the military, Mr Marshall said.

While cautioning that "it's very early days still", he said it appeared government efforts to strengthen the military recruitment process and in

particular verification of the age of recruits was having a positive impact.

"Last year and in previous years, quite a lot of the complaints we received were related to recruitments in that year.

"This year, a very small number [of complaints] have actually related to recruitments this year. The majority actually relate to recruitments last year and the year before, which is showing us that hopefully the rigour in the recruitment process is starting to show some results - that maybe the recruitment of children has slowed down. It will take some time to prove that, but that's the indication at the movement, which is pretty positive."

Another positive development has been the acceptance over the past 18 months of the principle that underage recruits cannot be charged with deserting, a principle that was "strengthened" with the recent signing of a joint action plan on underage recruitment by the Ministry of Defense and a "task force" comprising United Nations agencies and international non-government organisations.

Mr Marshall said the signing of the action plan under UN Security Council resolution 1612 meant the government was "well on the way" to being

removed from the UN secretary general's list of armed groups that use child soldiers.

Seven non-state armies in Myanmar are also included on the list and the task force plans to begin negotiations for joint action plans with these groups, including the Karen National Liberation Army, Kachin Independence Army and Shan State Army.

"There is an official delisting process. Once we report to the [UN] Security Council that we are satisfied that the policy not only exists but is being applied and there is a commitment to the rights of the child, then the organisation, the army concerned, will be delisted, and it's important that all the listed parties eventually work towards that delisting," Mr Marshall said.

Meanwhile, Mr Marshall said the ILO is negotiating with the Tatmadaw and Kachin Independence Army for the release of about eight child soldiers the KIA recently captured and is holding as prisoners of war.

"We are now in the process of negotiating with the government for the discharge of these kids and with the KIA that they will give them to us and we will arrange for their return to their parents," he said.

### From page 3

#### Telecoms giants jostle

Mr O'Brien said a functioning and accessible telecommunications network was essential for economic growth.

"Everyone is talking about a hyper-growth economy here but they're forgetting one thing: that without a telecommunications infrastructure, that just won't happen," Mr O'Brien said.

Because it is developing its telecoms industry relatively late, Myanmar has the advantage of learning from the lessons of other countries. [It can] pick the most advanced technology available to go straight to 4G, or fourth generation, services, Mr O'Brien said.

"All neighboring countries have 2G or 3G but what Myanmar can do now is just go all the way to [long-term evolution (LTE)] and bring broadband to every part of the country to 60 million people and bring them voice and other data services," he said.

"It could be a quantum leap - Myanmar could jump 50 years all in one move."

Johan Adler, country manager for Swedish telecommunications heavyweight Ericsson, said the fourth-generation LTE technology offered data speeds about three times faster than the latest version of WCDMA/3G.

"In a Myanmar context, with relatively slow data access connections, LTE can be a

substitute to the fixed data line and offer superior bandwidth to residential users and small offices. It's fast to deploy and faster than any other service available today," Mr Adler said.

However, some non-government groups, including US-based Conflict Risk Network, have raised concerns that investment in the telecommunications sector could fuel repressive tactics of internet control and surveillance, which were common during the previous military government.

"The ICT sector is also high risk, as its potential positive and negative roles are heightened in conflict-affected areas," said

Kathy Mulvey, Conflict Risk Network director.

But if managed well, the development of Myanmar's telecommunications industry will be an important driver of economic growth, said Jared Bissinger, a PhD student at Australia's Macquarie University who is studying Myanmar's economy.

"As in many other developing countries, investment in Myanmar's telecommunications industry can decrease the costs of doing business, improve access to information, and facilitate inexpensive and convenient transactions, all of which will help improve the business environment," Mr Bissinger said.



## Conference depends on ethnic groups: U Aung Min

WHETHER a national peace conference is held in 2014 depends on the leaders of ethnic groups, a senior government peace negotiator said last week.

"We will definitely hold this conference if [ethnic leaders] also want to do it. But if they don't have any desire, we won't do it. We want to show we are a responsible government before we hand over power in 2015, so we want to finalise the outstanding peace issues before 2015," said U Aung Min, the leader of the government committee for peace building and a minister in the President's Office. He was speaking on the sidelines of the Myanmar Global Investment Forum in Nay Pyi Taw on September 12.

The government's peace plan includes three stages of peace-building, the last of which is final discussions in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. Some ethnic groups have criticised the requirement for talks to take place in parliament, as it would require them to enter the formal political process.

But U Aung Min said ethnic groups did not necessarily have to enter parliament to be involved in the discussions.

"We'll inform the hluttaw of their views and what they want so the hluttaw can easily take it into account when they discuss the peace issues," he said.

On the ongoing conflict in Kachin State, he said the government was not necessarily averse to the Kachin Independence Organisation's demand to engage in political discussions before reaching a ceasefire.

- Kyaw Hsu Mon

# Arrests in Monywa as mine protests escalate

By Soe Sandar Oo and Phyo Wai Kyaw with AFP

HUNDREDS of Myanmar villagers protesting a Chinese co-owned copper mine vowed to continue their fight against the project last week despite arrests of demonstrators and orders for the rally to move.

In a show of defiance unthinkable just last year when military rule was replaced by a quasi-civilian government, locals in Monywa in Sagaing Region have staged weeks of protest over alleged land grabbing and fears of environmental pollution from the mine.

"The main thing they want is an end to the Letpadaung copper mine project," said U Han Win Aung, an activist helping the villages, adding that between 300 and 600 people had been demonstrating around the project.

He said some 8000 acres (3200 hectares) of land had been confiscated from local farmers without consultation and in some cases without compensation.

"It is like destroying the lives of these villagers who relied on the land since they were born," he said.

Households from four entire villages will need to move to make way for the project, which will affect people from 26 villages.

The copper mine, which is a joint venture between military-owned Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd (UMEHL) and China's Wanbao company, a subsidiary of arms manufacturer Norinco, has been the subject of controversy for several months after local media reports of corruption in



Farmers and their families wait in Monywa ahead of talks with a representative from the National League for Democracy on September 13. Pic: AFP

connection with the project.

The Ministry of Mines is suing *The Voice* over an article that cited an Auditor General's Office report that apparently found evidence of misappropriation at the mine.

Meanwhile, three local women remain in custody after police arrested 12 villagers at a prayer ceremony in Monywa pagoda on September 10. Another activist was arrested on August 31 and also remains in detention.

"At noon the township police inspector locked the door from outside when about 15 female villagers were saying prayers inside the pagoda. About one hour later, the door was unlocked but all the women were arrested and forced to get into a car," said resident Ko Thaw Zin, who witnessed the scene. "One of the women was even refused permission to go and see her sister, who is ill and in the hospital."

Following the arrests, members of the Monywa

branch of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions demonstrated in front of the main police station in Monywa, holding placards that read, "Immediately release 12 women from Wathmay and Shwehlay villages," "The rule of law" and "Students cannot ignore the concerns of the people."

Police tore up the placards and threatened demonstrators verbally and by brandishing batons.

"We asked for permission 15 minutes before the demonstration. We went ahead with demonstration because they didn't respond. At first, no slogans were shouted. At about 5pm, we shouted for the women to be released within 15 minutes. Afterwards, we demonstrated by hoisting the student union flag and shouting slogans," said student union member Ko Ye Yint Kyaw.

At about 9pm, roads were blocked with about 10 fire

engines and a large number of police deployed at the city hall, he said. Nine of the women were then released.

Another demonstration took place on September 11 as troops watched on from City Hall, their weapons in the firing position.

That evening, police combed the houses of the students but most of the students had already dispersed and no arrests were made, Ko Ye Yint Kyaw said, adding that earlier on September 11, one student union member from Monywa, U Aung Myint Oo, was taken from his home by police.

"We have heard that arrest warrants have been issued against student union members. But the students are determined to proceed until those who have been arrested are released," Ko Ye Yint Kyaw told *The Myanmar Times*.

Last week's arrests come after farmers who have been displaced by the copper mine expansion protested on September 5, calling for their land to be returned.

Thousands of farmers from the 26 villages took part in the protest, beside the Monywa-Pathein Road near the copper mine, and burnt coffins representing UMEHL, Chinese investors and the section 144 order put in place in the area to quell dissent.

"We burnt three empty coffins as we believe it will help us get back our land ... it will make those who confiscate our lands fail," a farmer at the protest was quoted as saying in local media reports.

## U Thein Sein to make first US trip as president

NAY PYI TAW – President U Thein Sein is to visit the United States for the first time as president, officials said, after Washington waived visa restrictions.

U Thein Sein, who has ushered in a period of sweeping change for Myanmar since nearly half a century of military rule ended last year, will travel to the US to attend a United Nations General Assembly.

"The president will visit the UN and US for three days," a Myanmar government official said on September 12, adding that the Myanmar leader is set to leave for the US on September 24.

US President Barack Obama last month ordered an exception to a visa ban on Myanmar's leaders to let U Thein Sein travel freely during the UN summit.

U Thein Sein, who attended the General Assembly in 2009 as prime minister under the military government, would otherwise have been confined to a narrow area around the UN headquarters in New York.

U Thein Sein's visit to the US follows soon after Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is set to visit the country for the first time in more than two decades.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who was elected to parliament this year in a dramatic sign of Myanmar's reforms, will travel Washington to receive the Congressional Gold Medal as part of her visit.

The medal is the top honour bestowed by the US Congress. - AFP



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# BBC pushes for Myanmar presence

Senior officials meet government, private broadcasters to discuss training and distribution of BBC programs

By Thomas Kean and Nan Tin Htwe

SENIOR officials from the British Broadcasting Corporation's World Service last week met government officials and private broadcasters to push for the opportunity to operate legally inside Myanmar.

Following a recent invitation from the government, the BBC delegation also proposed providing editorial and production training to journalists and editors at state media outlets and some private organisations, including Forever Group and Sky Net.

"The first thing that we want to do is offer a substantial training package and to establish a project office," BBC World Service director Peter Horrocks told *The Myanmar Times* on September 8.

"We would hope to be able to develop from that a regular presence here for our journalists ... but we also want to work closely with the media sector in Burma to help it to reform, to improve its standards," Mr Horrocks said.

"That ability to do the journalism from here is really important and the ability for people here to be able to see and hear our journalism is really important. We would like all of our services in English, both television and radio, but also our Burmese language radio service to be on air as well and we'll be talking to people about the possibility of that, not least because it would be good for the people inside the country to see and hear the journalism and be able to judge it for themselves."

Despite the strict internal

censorship at state media outlets, Mr Horrocks said the BBC felt "the time is right" to start training government journalists.

"I think it's partly the opportunity is there, we're being invited, but it's also something the BBC thinks about carefully, in terms of whether it's appropriate to be working with journalistic organisations that haven't previously been free and independent," he said.

"The key test for us will be can we deliver our journalism training in a way that's true to the BBC's standards. So we're insisting that we provide the full range of journalism training, not just the technical production training but also editorial training, ethical training, and we'll want to make sure we can deliver that full package, including values that maybe some years ago wouldn't have been welcomed in this country."

The broadcaster is already training independent journalists in Myanmar through its Media Action program and remains committed to supporting the private sector, Mr Horrocks said.

"I think the important thing is to provide training at various different levels. It's also important that we're providing training to the media scene as a whole; it's not just about training that we'll offer to the government or the government's agencies."

"We want to work with private broadcasters as well as the state broadcasters. And we want to make sure that we're supporting and training frontline journalists in production skills but most importantly in editorial values."

He said it is more important than ever



BBC World Service director Peter Horrocks during last week's visit to Myanmar. Pic: Ko Taik

journalists have access to training, particularly on ethics, now pre-publication censorship has been abolished.

"It's important for journalists in any country where the media suddenly becomes much more free to realise that that doesn't mean there are no rules. Journalism needs to be responsible ... I think there are still further things that need to happen for [Myanmar's media sector] to meet true international standards but there clearly have been improvements."

The BBC's Burmese-language service was routinely pilloried by the

military regime for its perceived bias but more recently has come under fire from Myanmar who accuse its journalists of misreporting the recent conflict in Rakhine State.

Specifically, BBC journalists were accused of skewing their coverage in favour of the Rohingya, a Muslim minority referred to as Bengalis inside Myanmar.

Mr Horrocks said the BBC was open to criticism and was "always asking itself questions about its reporting".

"I know that the criticism from within Myanmar has been about whether the reporting from the BBC has taken the side too much of the Muslim population. Interestingly, around the world, we've had a lot of criticism that we have not reported the story sufficiently and we haven't given enough of a perspective on the violence against Muslims," he said.

"It's not unusual in situations of community, sectarian violence for people to have strong views on either side and for criticism to follow. Our job is not to take sides, [it is] to tell all sides of the story, even if that sometimes makes some people uncomfortable because they're hearing views that they may not agree with."

"We'll always have ears that are open to criticism and if there are specific mistakes we've made or things that we haven't reported fairly and if there are things that the government or other people want to raise with me while I'm in the country then I'd be happy to look into those."

Allowing the BBC to operate inside Myanmar

would help to improve the broadcaster's coverage of the country, he said.

"Obviously it's hard to report accurately on things when you're reporting from further away. So while I wouldn't accept there has been bias, clearly accuracy can be improved when you're close to a story."

"The story in Myanmar is a very important global story. We've been able to cover it a little more easily in the past year or so with reporters coming in on an occasional basis but we want to be able to report from here more regularly."

**‘Our job is...to tell all sides of the story, even if that sometimes makes people uncomfortable because they’re hearing views that they may not agree with.’**

The broadcaster was also involved in another recent controversy after it emerged that it was employing Ronald Aung Naing, a former All Burma Students' Democratic Front member accused of orchestrating a brutal massacre in the organisation's Northern Burma branch in 1992.

He worked for BBC Media Action until late May, when he was fired for his links to the massacre, in which 15 members of the group were executed for allegedly being Military Intelligence spies and another 19 died during

interrogation.

In a letter to London-based Oak Foundation dated June 1, BBC Media Action director Caroline Nurse said Ronald Aung Naing had been employed as a translator on the broadcaster's Burma Horizon project.

She said that when the BBC had learned of his links to the ABSDF on May 28 "we made the decision that we should end our association with Ronald Aung Naing", who she said had previously worked for "other international organisations".

Noting that Ronald Aung Naing "has not denied any wrongdoing", Ms Nurse said the BBC "view this situation very seriously".

Mr Horrocks said he felt the BBC had handled the issue "effectively" and that it wouldn't harm the organisation's reputation in Myanmar.

"It's the sort of thing that can happen in the kinds of conflicts and pressures in such a tense political situation as there has been in Burma and Thailand but I think that the controversy about those circumstances made it inappropriate for that individual to be working for the BBC and that's why we are no longer employing that individual," he said.

He said he had "made my teams aware of" the importance of conducting stricter background checks on prospective employees.

"It's very difficult, especially when you can't necessarily completely check the circumstances, when there are controversies like this but I think being aware of the way something may be seen can be important, as well as the substance of it. ... I think that we dealt with it effectively."

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# State-owned enterprises to become public firms: ministry

By Thiha Toe

THE Ministry of Transport is pushing its state-owned enterprises to generate annual income of K38 billion this financial year, ahead of a planned "corporatisation" of the state firms.

Myanma Port Authority, Inland Water Transport, Myanma Shipyard and Myanma Airways, as well as the Department of Civil Aviation's service providers, will eventually become public companies under a four-step reform plan approved by President U Thein Sein on September 3, the ministry says.

Minister for Transport U Nyan Htun Aung revealed the plan during a workshop in Nay Pyi Taw on September 4, saying that operational and financial management at the state enterprises would be "significantly improved".

"Each of the state-owned enterprises will function as a public company in the future," U Nyan Htun Aung said, adding that the government aims to complete the process by 2015.

The first step will see the government build and operate transport infrastructure, while step two of the plan will see the government fund construction and private enterprises assume responsibility for management of the assets.

This will be followed by the establishment of a corporatisation unit for the formation of independent but still state-owned limited companies to run the enterprises, which will be able to access commercial loans and have to submit to independent audits. The final step will see project funds generated from private investors and for the corporatisation units to become public companies, with at least some of the equity held by private firms.

"The Ministry of Transport is striving for the development of the maritime and aviation sectors, both domestically and internationally, and will at all times comply with the regulations of the International Maritime Organisation and International Civil Aviation Organisation," U Nyan Htun Aung said.

The Ministry of Transport has 14,000 employees across the departments of transport, civil aviation, marine administration, and water resources and improvement of river systems. It also runs Myanmar Maritime University and Myanmar Mercantile Marine College.

# Govt warns of urbanisation issues

By Noe Noe Aung

ECONOMIC reform is likely to unleash socio-economic problems in Yangon as the city's urban area expands, a senior government official said last week at the launch of a sustainable land management workshop in Yangon.

U Khin Sein, deputy director general of the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development, said the government needed to be ready to handle the rapid urbanisation that would accompany economic growth.

"We are probably going to face many challenges [related to] urbanisation in Yangon in the future. So we need to prepare ourselves and also have to learn the way we can solve land management problems correctly," U Khin Sein said.

"The anticipated rapid economic development will accelerate urbanisation and increase the size of the cities and urban centres, putting additional burden on existing urban infrastructure and services," he said.

"Experience from other countries indicates that

there may be undesirable pattern of urban growth for the whole society in the long run if there are weaknesses in decision-making by urban authorities during urbanisation and urban development process .... socio-economic problems of growing cities will definitely become future challenges for the country as a whole."

U Khin Sein was speaking on September 10 at the launch of a training session, on Sustainable Land Management in the Urban Context, at the Urban Research and Development Institute in Yangon.

The institute is a joint project between DHSHD, a Ministry of Construction body, and the United Nations Human Settlements Program, better known as UN-HABITAT.

Thirty people, from the Ministry of Home Affairs' General Administration Department (GAD), state and region Departments for Rural Development (DRD), Yangon City Development Committee and Mandalay City Development Committee, took part in the six-day training.

UN-HABITAT country program manager Bijay



Participants at an urban land management workshop in Yangon on September 10.

Karmacharya said land management was one of the country's most "urgent" priorities.

Economic growth will "inevitably" be accompanied by rapid urbanisation, and this will impose "huge pressures" on land, he said.

"This pressure on land needs to be managed in a balanced manner with consideration to a multitude of factors. ... Land management needs to be viewed not only from a physical and structural point of view but also from a

socio-economic point of view," he said.

Mr Michael Slingsby, an adviser at UN-HABITAT, agreed land management was "a priority" for Myanmar and needed to take into account the desires all citizens.

"We need land for hospital, we need land for schools and we need land for recreation. The population of Myanmar is growing up and we particularly need to use land carefully. The population of Yangon is around five million now and in the next 25 years

there will be more land problems in Yangon, as this is a problem every growing city [faces]," he said.

U Than Moe, also an adviser at UN-HABITAT, said the training was important because of the lack of urban land management expertise in Myanmar.

"We can't make the number grow overnight but we can train people who are responsible for land management ... and increase the number of professionals gradually," he said.

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## Refugees may go home in 2013

BANGKOK—About 120,000 Myanmar refugees in Thailand may return home within a year, the kingdom's National Security Council said last week, following recent talks between the two nations.

Tens of thousands of people, many from the Shan and Karen ethnic minorities who have fled war, are housed in camps along Thailand's border, but the end of outright military rule in Myanmar has raised hopes they will return.

Myanmar "is clearing landmines along the borders, preparing to build shelters and other infrastructure... to be ready within one year", the NSC said in a statement on September 13, citing its secretary general Wichean Potephosree.

Mr Wichean, who visited

Nay Pyi Taw last week, discussed the issue with U Aung Min, a minister in the President's Office, who told him the former military-ruled country will also provide training and jobs for the returning refugees.

Myanmar also wants Thais "to invest in building industrial estates" on its soil to employ the tens of thousands of potential returnees, the statement added.

The NSC's comments came as Human Rights Watch released a report condemning Thailand for failing to meet international standards on the treatment of refugees.

The kingdom has not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and has no law to protect refugees, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, police harassment and

arbitrary detention, the HRW report said.

"Thailand places Burmese (Myanmar) refugees with the unfair choice of stagnating for years in remote refugee camps or living and working outside camps without protection from arrest or deportation," said Bill Frelick, HRW's refugee program director.

"Refugees from other countries are barely tolerated and Thai authorities sometimes arrest and detain them indefinitely," he added.

After a new quasi-civilian government replaced the long-ruling junta in Myanmar last year, Thailand announced that it wanted to shut the border camps, but HRW praised Bangkok for not rushing to close the facilities. —AFP



Refugees cross a wooden bridge at the Mae La refugee camp, located near the Thai-Myanmar border, some 550 kilometres northwest of Bangkok. Pic: AFP

# Government makes pledge on safety of negotiators

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

THE head of the government team involved in peace talks with ethnic groups has given an assurance that their negotiators will not be charged under the provisions of the Unlawful Association Act.

The assurance was given on September 4 by U Aung Min, a minister attached to the President's Office, at a news conference in the Kayin State capital, Hpa-an, where he had been involved in a third round of peace talks with the Karen National Union (KNU).

"The negotiators need to go from one side to the other and they should not be charged under Section 17(a)" of the Unlawful Association Act, he said, referring to the need for members of the KNU to consult with members of their organisation about the peace talks.

Section 17(a) states that any person who is a member of, or who provides assistance to, an unlawful association is liable to a prison term of up to three years and a fine.

The Karen National Union was declared an unlawful association by the Ministry of Home Affairs on March 11, 1989.

U Aung Min acknowledged that the act, which was enacted in 1908 during British colonial rule, was still in force.

"I can't abolish this act, it was enacted by the state. But this act should not apply to those involved in peace negotiations," he said.

"We are involved in a

peace process and we should not refer to the other side as members of an insurgency or armed forces; we are now ethnic brethren and for peace negotiators to be able to do their work freely they need not be afraid of this act," U Aung Min said.

The government would be prepared to consider removing the KNU from the list of unlawful associations should it be requested to do so, he said.

Daw Nan Sae War, who represents the Palone-Squaw Democratic Party in the Pyithu Hluttaw (Hpa-an constituency), welcomed the assurance given by U Aung Min.

"We want a comprehensive peace agreement and this assurance is very important for the peace process," she said.

The executive director of the Bangkok-based Institute for Peace and Social Justice in Burma, Dr Thauung Tun, said the Unlawful Association Act should be abolished because it was out of date and did not reflect the current policies adopted by the state.

"We have come to work for national reconsolidation within the framework of democracy so we are official and the Unlawful Association Act should no longer be valid," said Dr Thauung Tun, who participated in the Hpa-an talks as a mediator between the government and the KNU.

A draft code of conduct for armed forces of both sides was signed at the Hpa-an talks.

No venue or date has yet been given for the fourth round of talks between the two sides.

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## UNHCR unable to access refugees

By May Sandy

THE UN High Commissioner for Refugees has been unable to access Chinese border areas to confirm reports that since mid-August 5000 Kachin refugees have been sent back to Myanmar from China, a spokesperson from the agency said at a press briefing in Geneva on September 7.

UNHCR spokesperson Mr Adrian Edwards said that "despite repeated requests to the Chinese authorities", the agency "has not been able to reach or assist these groups living along the Chinese side of the border".

"In mid-August this year, we started receiving reports of Kachin being sent back to Myanmar, but were unable to confirm as we could not access the border areas," he said.

In June 2011, after fighting broke out in Kachin State between Myanmar government troops and the Kachin Independence Army, many local residents fled across the border to China's Yunnan Province.

Mr Edwards said that a UNHCR team has travelled twice to Lwe Je on the Myanmar side of the Chinese border to provide relief supplies to 1200 returnees in the four camps for internally displaced people (IDPs). The most recent trip ended on September 6.

"More than 3400 returnees are now staying in camps for internally displaced people in Kachin State as their homes have been destroyed in the fighting and they are afraid to return to their villages. They desperately need food, medicine, shelter and other relief items," Mr Edwards said.

"Local groups and partners say they expect more people to be sent back from China."

In the Naung Dao area of China, there are six camps - Yang Lu, Lau Hpai, Lung Krawk, Na Kwang, Hka dawng Pa and Nga Nawng Pa - hosting 980 households with more than 4900 IDPs.

Ma Khon Ja, coordinator of Kachin Peace Network, said her organisation feels "insulted" that the Chinese authorities were sending refugees back to Kachin State before the situation there had stabilised.

"This is not the action of a good neighbour. IDPs are taking refuge temporarily because of the insecure situation [in Kachin State]. China should not treat them like this," she said.

The UNHCR urged the Chinese government to offer temporary protection to those who have fled the fighting, to respect their humanitarian needs, and to not send them back to a situation where their safety and livelihood could be at risk.



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann poses for a photo with Malaysian politicians after meeting the Standing Committee of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties in Nay Pyi Taw on September 12. Pic: Soe Than Lynn

## Islamic body visits Rakhine

YANGON - Members of an influential Islamic body have visited Rakhine state, a government official said on September 11, to survey fallout from deadly sectarian unrest between Buddhist and Muslim communities.

A delegation from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) led by the group's representative to the United Nations, ambassador Ufuk Gokcen, arrived in the state on September 9, an official in the state capital Sittwe said.

"They met the union border affairs minister and Rakhine chief minister here and also visited some refugee camps and made donations," he said, adding that the group ended its visit on September 10.

Fighting in Rakhine state has left almost 90 people dead, both Buddhists and Muslims, since it erupted in June according to an official estimate, although rights groups fear the real toll is much higher.

At a summit last month in the Saudi Arabian holy city

of Mecca, the 57-member OIC decided to take its concerns over the treatment of the group to the UN.

It also condemned "the continued recourse to violence by the Myanmar authorities against the members of this minority and their refusal to recognise their right to citizenship".

Myanmar in August agreed to allow the OIC to provide aid to the region, on the condition it agreed to assist all communities in the area.

According to a report in the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* on September 11, the delegation had "a cordial discussion on [the] real situation that broke out in Rakhine State", as well as rehabilitation and sustainable development.

But the United States on September 10 said it had "great concern" about the humanitarian situation in Rakhine after its own delegation, led by the new ambassador to the country Derek Mitchell and senior envoy Joseph Yun, ended a visit to the area. - AFP



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# Residents protest FMI eviction plan

By Noe Noe Aung

RESIDENTS of a slum area in Yangon's Hlaing Tharyar township held a demonstration on September 13 against plans by a local firm to evict them from their homes.

The demonstration was held in front of FMI City, where many of the protesters say they have been employed for years as construction workers and gardeners.

The protesters live in an area behind the FMI City residences. The neighbourhood, located beside Tharyar Gone Creek and known locally as the "Labourers' Community", is home to about 2000 people from more than 300 families.

"We have worked for First Myanmar Investment at FMI City since 1995," said U Thaug Sein, a former full-time assistant labourer

in charge of gardening at the residences. According to FMI City management, he was fired in 2005 for "breaking the company's rules".

"The place we are living now is the place the company gave us to live, but now they want us to move out and have even brought charges against some of us for not leaving. But they don't own this land. We are living in a vacant lot near Tharyar Gone Creek behind the residences," U Thaug Sein said.

He said most of the people living in the slum have census and national identification cards, although some lost their census cards during Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

"The township authorities have given approval for us to live here and they even allowed us to vote in the 2010 election. But now First Myanmar Investment is accusing us of invading their property. We didn't

invade. The company gave us this place to live when they built FMI City," U Thaug Sein said.

He said that nearly all the adults living in the community have worked for daily wages in FMI City, mostly as construction workers, gardeners and cleaning staff.

U Aung Zaw Win, a former gardener for FMI City who was also fired in 2005, said the neighbourhood had been approved by former township authorities and there was even a signboard reading "Labourers' Community" at the entrance.

"But the company took the signboard a few months ago, and now they say we are invaders," he said, adding that the company has brought lawsuits against more than 50 people for not leaving the neighbourhood after they were warned to vacate.

"We have nowhere to go, so we didn't move. All of us



Protesters hold signs in front of FMI City in Hlaing Tharyar township. Pic: Kaung Htet Linn

work for daily wages and we don't have spare money to rent a house somewhere else. So we held a protest to request that we be allowed to continue living here and that they stop suing us," U Aung Zaw Win said.

He said First Myanmar Investment also told the people against whom charges have been brought that they would have to repay court expenses and transportation fees after the trials.

"We don't have a chance to fight the charges because we are poor. But we also can't move because we have no money due to the fact that we are daily wage earners. Now we have to pay all the expenses," U Aung Zaw Win said.

One 35-year-old housewife who lives in the Labourers' Community said residents know they do not own the land, but they also want First Myanmar Investment to understand their difficulties.

"Every family has students. Most of the children here are learning in the monastery because their parents don't have

enough money to send them to school. And we don't have enough money to move to another place," she said.

The housewife said the company first told them to move in 2007 but they had nowhere to go.

"Then FMI City started throwing all their trash here. We had to build our houses on top of piles of

**'We didn't invade. The company gave us this land when they built FMI City.'**

waste. And this year they started bringing lawsuits against us. Some families moved out because they were afraid, but most of us still live here," she said.

U Aung Zaw Win said about 200 people in the community have identification cards from the company because of their jobs as construction workers for FMI City. Some

are permanent workers and some are temporary, he added.

But Daw Nwe Win, the manager of the FMI City residences, said there were only ever two permanent labourers there.

"We had only two permanent labourers before, but we fired them in 2005 because they broke the company's rules," she said, referring to U Thaug Sein and U Aung Zaw Win.

U Khin Maung Win, the deputy estate manager of FMI City residences, acknowledged that the company sometimes hires construction workers on a day-to-day basis.

"But they can't say they are workers for our company. They are daily wage earners, and they work at other places too," he said.

Daw Nwe Win said First Myanmar Investment has brought lawsuits against 58 people for not leaving the land.

So far 24 of them have been brought to court, with three more scheduled to appear on September 19. No decisions have been passed down by the judge yet.

"Our company owns a total 650 acres, from the entrance to the residences to Tharyar Gone Creek. We allowed people to live there in the past because we didn't need to use some of the land behind the residences, but now we are planning to extend the area of FMI City and build new houses there," she said.

"We first told them to move out in 2007 and they didn't go, so in June we started bringing lawsuits against them at Hlaing Tharyar Township Court. We've filed lawsuits against 58 people to make them leave the area."

"The new houses can't be too close to the place where these people live. Some of our residents are worried about their security now, and sometimes these people act rudely towards our engineers. Some of them have moved but many are still here," Daw Nwe Win said.

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# US to bring accolades, political risks

By Shwe Yinn Mar Oo

YANGON – Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be feted by US President Barack Obama and given a top honour in her first visit in two decades to the United States, which has been an ardent supporter of her democracy struggle.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who was to leave Myanmar on September 16, is destined for a red carpet welcome during her first visit to the US since she began her campaign for democracy – marked by years of house arrest – under the military government in 1988.

The Nobel laureate, who was elected to parliament this year in a dramatic sign of the country's reforms, will travel to Washington to meet Obama, whose government has been at the forefront of Western re-engagement with the long-time military dominated country.

"This will be a high-profile trip for Aung San Suu Kyi, who has significant star power in the US," said independent Myanmar analyst Richard Horsey, adding that it would be a chance to "showcase her international support".

"But there are also political risks involved."

Unlike Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trip to Europe this year – where she received a rapturous welcome – her visit will coincide with that of President U Thein Sein, who is due in the US later in the month to attend the United Nations General Assembly.



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks during a press conference at the National League for Democracy Party headquarters in Yangon on July 3. Pic: AFP

"There is a risk that she will overshadow this significant first US visit by Thein Sein – who has not yet really gotten the international recognition that he deserves for the remarkable reform process that he has put in place," Mr Horsey said.

It would be "particularly unhelpful" if the US president opted to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi but not the Myanmar leader, "which unfortunately looks to be the case", he said.

"A positive relationship between Aung San Suu Kyi and Thein Sein is critical to the success of the reform process going forward."

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will receive the Congressional Gold Medal, the top honour bestowed by the US Congress, which she obtained in May 2008 when the prospect of her leaving Myanmar looked remote.

Her near three-week visit will also see her hold talks at the United Nations, give speeches in Washington

and New York and meet members of the Myanmar diaspora in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

She is also likely to be quizzed on the changes that have swept through her country since military rule was replaced by a quasi-civilian government last year.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's struggle has been vital in steering international opinion on Myanmar, and her decisions to enter mainstream politics and

to call for sanctions to be eased are seen as pivotal in beginning the dismantling of the punitive measures.

"If she boldly calls for something she has so many supporters there now they would try to meet her expectations, but that is not her style," said Sean Turnell, a Myanmar economic expert at Macquarie University in Sydney.

Following sweeping moves to lift or suspend

sanctions by other Western nations this year, the US in July gave the green light to US companies to invest in Myanmar, although a ban on all imports from the country remains.

But Mr Turnell said internal issues have now taken precedence in reviving the country's moribund economy – notably a foreign investment law, awaiting final approval, that has generated heated debate.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has transformed from long-term prisoner to politician in just two years and international focus is now shifting to policy as the country prepares for 2015 elections that could see her party swept to power.

The 67-year-old has prioritised calls for the rule of law but has produced little in the way of concrete strategy so far, dismaying some observers by remaining largely mute on recent deadly communal violence in western Myanmar, in particular the plight of stateless Rohingya Muslims in the region.

Jim Della-Giacoma, project director for Southeast Asia at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group think tank, said that he hoped Obama would press both Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Thein Sein on the issue.

"There will be plenty to observe there and learn from the trip about the importance of equality, citizenship and opportunity and how providing this for all citizens benefits a democratic country," he said. – AFP

## New Shan party opens first office in Mandalay

By Khin Su Wai and Hlaing Kyaw Soe

THE leader of a new Shan political party said the group supported the government's peacemaking efforts but more needed to be done to "ensure equal opportunities for all".

The Tai-Leng Nationalities Development Party head office was opened in Mandalay on September 5 and the group plans to contest the next general election, expected in 2015, said chairman U Sai Htay Aung.

In the meantime, it will conduct activities to preserve the culture of Tai-Leng, a Shan sub-group known as the "red Shan".

"We will preserve and foster our national identity. In particular, we will try to arrange for all Tai-Leng people a National Registration Card in the name of the Tai Leng, and also strive for equal opportunities for all, regardless of ethnicity," U Sai Htay Aung said.

He said the group supported the peace process and wanted a national peace conference in which all ethnic groups could participate.

"The interests of the residents in conflict zones should be the first priority. The government, armed groups and residents need to work together to find peace," he said.

Members from the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party, Wunthanu NLD, National Unity Party and Shan National League for Democracy also attended the ceremony and gave addresses to the audience.



Tai-Leng Nationalities Development Party chairman U Sai Htay Aung (left) makes a speech at the office opening ceremony on September 5.

## Korean speech contest to be held in November

By Yhoon Hnin Phyu

THE 10<sup>th</sup> Korean Speech Contest will be held on November 4 at Traders Hotel, the South Korean embassy in Yangon said last week, with the winner to receive a full undergraduate scholarship.

The contest is organised by the embassy, Korea Foundation and Keimyung University and is open to all Myanmar nationals with a Test of Proficiency in Korean Language (TOPIK) level four certificate.

The grand prize winner will receive an undergraduate scholarship to Kangnam University in South Korea, while the gold prize winner will receive a 10-week language study scholarship to Keimyung University.

Application forms and TOPIK certificates should be submitted to the embassy or neokim85@gmail.com no later than September 28.



## Public IT company to be established

By Zaw Win Than and Kyaw Hsu Mon

MYANMA Posts and Telecommunications will join with a number of private firms to establish a public IT company "very soon", one of the major shareholders in the new venture said on the sidelines of the Myanmar Global Investment Forum.

U Aung Soe Tha, chairman of Myanmar ComBiz Group, said the as-yet-unnamed firm already had 85 shareholders, and would seek to offer a full range of telecommunications services, including mobile phone and internet connections.

**'Everybody can be a shareholder, as is the case with other new public companies.'**

"We are working on the steps to establish it as an official public IT company. We are arranging documents for official registration and we will establish as a proper public company," he said.

"We will announce the company's official name soon after discussing with some of the major shareholders. So far we have 85 shareholders, who all have the same vision and passion to establish this company," U Aung Soe Tha told *The Myanmar Times* in Nay Pyi Taw on September 12.

"I hope later more people will become interested

and join the company, including some from other sectors. Everybody can be a shareholder, as is the case with other new public companies. We will invite shareholders very soon," he added.

He said the company will sell shares for K10,000.

It will also look for a suitable foreign joint venture partner, he added.

Meanwhile, U Aung Soe Tha said about 65 foreign companies had expressed interest in investing in the country's telecommunications sector.

"In my personal view, we lack both technology and capital. That's why we are looking for the right partner. We will definitely make a joint venture if we can find the right partner," said U Aung Soe Tha.

"The Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telecommunications has recently announced it will allow four companies to enter the telecoms sector. Local and international companies can compete to get telecoms operation licences in Myanmar," he said.

However, he said local companies would face "many challenges" because of their lack of experience in offering telecoms services.

"It will even be a challenge for Myanma Posts and Telecommunications as they are only offering limited services at the moment," he said.

When asked whether consumers in Myanmar could expect mobile phone connection fees on par with neighbouring countries, he said: "It is quite early to comment."

## Doctors in Mandalay to separate conjoined twins

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

DOCTORS in Mandalay are preparing to perform an operation next month to separate conjoined twin brothers born last year in upper Myanmar, an official from Mandalay Children's Hospital said last week.

The brothers, named Aung Myat Kyaw and Aung Khant Kyaw, are "pygopagus" conjoined twins, which means they are connected at the pelvis.

Dr Aung Kyaw Myint, the medical superintendent at Mandalay Children's Hospital, said the brothers were born at Aye Thu Kha private hospital in Mandalay in May 2011, and were later transferred to the intensive care unit at the Children's Hospital, where they remain in good health.

"Their parents stay at Hton Bo village near Mingun in Sagaing township, and they come and see their children about once a month," he said on September 11.

Dr Aung Kyaw Myint said the operation to separate the twins will mark the first time such a procedure has been conducted in



Conjoined twins Aung Myat Kyaw and Aung Khant Kyaw at Mandalay Children's Hospital. Pic: Supplied

Myanmar.

"We should not face any big problems during the operation, but we need to proceed with care because their nerves and bones are connected," he said. "Experienced professors

and doctors will cooperate for the operation."

"Pygopagus conjoined twin children are very rare to see, but we're confident that our operation will be successful," he added.

Dr Aung Kyaw Myint said

that while the government is providing care and support for Aung Myat Kyaw and Aung Khant Kyaw, donors are welcome to contribute by contacting the hospital by telephone at 02-24917 or 24918.

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## ASEAN trade bloc pushed back to 2016

PHNOM PENH – Southeast Asia's planned economic union may be delayed until the end of 2015 as some countries are not ready, a senior official said on September 12, in a fresh potential setback for the group after its unity was frayed by a territorial dispute.

ASEAN secretary general Dr Surin Pitsuwan said economic ministers from the 10 countries had asked him for the delay at a meeting in late August and he would put the idea to heads of government at a summit in November.

ASEAN has never been very clear on when the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) would start, but foreign ministers decided in April that it should be January 1, 2015, Dr Surin told a meeting of energy ministers in Phnom Penh.

"Your economic colleagues looked around the landscape and realised that they need one more year, so they have asked me to communicate with all sectoral bodies up to the leaders that we should speak with one voice," he said.

In a separate statement released later, Dr Surin said there had been no formally agreed date for the AEC and that it "remains on track and top priority".

"There have been numerous activities leading up to '2015'. There will continue to be activities throughout '2015'. And there will surely be continued progress and improvements after '2015'," the statement said.

News of the possible delay comes two months after an ASEAN summit in Phnom Penh ended in acrimony over China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, failing to agree on a joint statement for the first time in its 45-year history.

The ASEAN Economic Community would allow free movement of goods, capital and skilled labour across a region with a combined economy of US\$2 trillion and 600 million people.

But the diverse group, ranging from wealthy Singapore to underdeveloped Myanmar and Laos, is struggling to make uniform progress toward an economic union that investors and business are eager to see completed.

Completion of measures towards a single market in its 2010-2011 phase was only 49 percent overall, according to ASEAN's latest scorecard, with reform lagging in food and agriculture. A lack of capacity among some of ASEAN's members is making it hard to implement economic agreements.

A senior ASEAN official said the delay had been discussed by economic ministers last month.

"We're still talking of the same 2015 timeline, but with a realistic interpretation, ie December 31, 2015," said the official, who asked not to be identified.

The official added: "The ministers recognised that despite the AEC progress there are still

More page 16



A customer uses a point of sale keypad during a Myanmar Payment Union launch in Yangon last week. Pic: Thiri Lu

## Debit cards make a return

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

POINT of sale debit cards were reintroduced on September 14 after an absence of nearly a decade, banking sources said last week.

The cards were reintroduced through the Myanmar Payment Union (MPU), which includes 17 banks, and can only be used for now at 14 shopping malls and other businesses.

Co-operative Bank (CB) managing director U Pe Myint said shopping malls are the first to provide the service because it requires K800,000 to install the hardware.

U Phyo Aung, senior general manager of Ayeyarwady Bank, said it is hoped that debit cards will soon be accepted in a wide variety of shops, restaurants, cafes and

petrol stations in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay.

After the United States lifted financial sanctions in July, domestic banks – excluding the military-linked Innwa Bank – have been capable of increasing the range of services that ceased to exist following the banking crisis of 2003.

Automatic teller machines (ATM) were re-introduced in November last year, after an absence of almost a decade.

Kanbawza Bank general manager U Zaw Lin Htut said it will take another six to nine months for foreign debit cards to be accepted for payment, after which time efforts will begin for domestic cards to be accepted overseas.

MPU will also facilitate the use of international credit cards in time for the 2013

Southeast Asian Games in Myanmar

U Pe Myint said CB Bank has already signed a deal with MasterCard and received an operating license.

Pending approval from the Central Bank of Myanmar, other companies are likely to include Visa, China Payment Union and Japanese Credit Bureau.

On September 10, *The Bangkok Post* reported that MPU allows debit cards to be used by customers of rival banks.

The debit card payment system was scheduled to be launched in July. However, several spokespersons said weaknesses were detected in the system during testing, which led to delays in implementing the network.

MPU spokesperson Daw Than Than Swe said the

international payment order system, the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) will also be launched in 2013.

However, she added that electricity shortages and other infrastructural problems need to be resolved.

The owner of a trading company said the business community welcomes the news because the convenience of carrying plastic rather than large amounts of cash is likely to boost retail sales.

"I met a foreigner in Myanmar who was running out of money and he couldn't access his accounts using debit or credit cards. It caused him a great deal of trouble while he was here," he said.

"The new system will be much safer and more convenient."

### “ရန်ကင်းလေကြောင်း (ခ) နှစ်ပြည့်အထူးအင်္ဂါအစဉ်”

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ရန်ကင်း-ဟိဟိုး (V.V)	၅၀,၀၀၀ ကျပ်

**လေယာဉ်လက်မှတ်များကို အခမဲ့အိတ်တိုင်းရာရောက်ရှိပေးမည်။**

**ဝန်ဆောင်မှုများဆောင်ရွက်ပေးနေပါသည်။**

**ထုတ်လုပ်ရန်**

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အထက်ပါအင်္ဂါအစဉ်ကို 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012 မှ စတင်၍  
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 Issue Date : 17 September 2012  
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 Email : [myanmar.office@unfpa.org](mailto:myanmar.office@unfpa.org)  
 For details on duties and responsibilities, educational and other requirements, please see the vacancy announcement posted at UNDP billboard, No.6, Natmauk Road, Yangon and also at UNFPA website (<http://myanmar.unfpa.org>)  
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3. Fluent speaking/reading/writing in English and Myanmar. English proficiency will be tested.
4. Must clearly demonstrate exceptional knowledge of community participation programs and an understanding of the Myanmar operational environment and the appropriate non-governmental entities.
5. Must have a high degree of computer literacy to be able to create and manipulate budget spreadsheets and have knowledge of other computer applications (i.e. Microsoft Office applications).
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Garment workers shield themselves from the sun during a strike demanding salary increases and better working conditions. Pic: Yadanar

## Garment makers fight to survive

A combination of external and internal problems have pushed the industry to the brink

By Noe Noe Aung and Myat May Zin

A LOW-SKILLED workforce, import sanctions and comparatively unfavourable tax policies are blocking the development of Myanmar's garment industry, members of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association said recently.

The comments were made by officials during a press conference at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry workshop on August 25.

It was the first time that manufacturers had spoken to the media since worker unrest broke out five months ago. Workers from approximately 70 garment factories held strikes between May 1 and July 30 to demand salary increases and improved working conditions, such as lifting the prohibition against forming a

labour union.

MGMA president U Myit Soe said: "The countries that sell raw materials to Myanmar, such as Singapore and Malaysia, are geographically distant from our export markets in Japan and South Korea, which increases production time. As we are constantly under pressure to meet deadlines, workers are forced to work long hours and overtime payments are low."

He said Myanmar produces low quality garments due to a lack of skilled workers and total earnings amount to about 10 or 15 percent of an item's total export value.

"We are paid a 'sewing fee' - we do not design the clothes and we must import the raw materials too," he added.

In 2000, the industry was worth US\$300 million," said U Myint Soe, adding that the following year earnings jumped to about \$800 million but have fallen since because the United States imposed sanctions in

2003 following accusations of forced labour by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Countless factories closed down and more than 100,000 garment workers became unemployed. Myanmar garment factories then looked to Japan for business.

"Japan is less rigorous about ensuring good working conditions than the United States was," he said.

"The industry hasn't recovered since [the sanctions were imposed in] 2003," said Daw Khaing Khaing Nwe, MGMA's general secretary.

"We've tried hard to develop the skills of our workers. But once the skills are acquired, workers often quit and move to factories along the Chinese and Thai borders in search of better pay. We are yet to get the high turnover rate under control," she added.

"Myanmar is one of the world's poorest countries. However, unlike equally poor nations, such as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam,

Myanmar is not permitted to export goods to European countries at lowered tax rates under the 'generalising system for preference' (GSP) for Least Developed Countries. This makes it difficult to develop Myanmar's garment industry into one that is competitive with others in the region, as well as making inroads into the western market," she said.

Myanmar was removed from GSP following a 1997 ILO report that documented labour standards violations.

U Khin Hlaing from Zawtika garment factory said that even if US sanctions are completely lifted, the lack of skilled workers will continue to make it tough for Myanmar to compete.

"Even if we were able find Western buyers, it would be difficult to fulfil their demands because there aren't enough skilled workers in Myanmar. It's a huge difficulty," said U Khin Hlaing.

## Traders try to back out of pre-purchase deals

By Myat May Zin

BEANS and pulses dealers in Myanmar are refusing to send exports worth US\$450,000 to buyers in India because international prices are now higher than the agreed rate of \$500 a tonne.

Central executive member of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association (MPBSSMA), Dr Myan Linn, told *The Myanmar Times*: "The price has risen to more than \$700 a tonne since dealers from Myanmar's Bayintnaung Wholesale Commodities Exchange Centre made agreements with Indian companies."

Beans and pulses exports are key export commodities in Myanmar and India is a major buyer.

"Prices have increased in recent months because bad weather in India made it difficult for farmers there to supply the domestic market. Dealers here are bound by agreement to sell the shipments at a lower price but are reluctant to do so," he added.

"The Ministry of Commerce will work to resolve the problem," Minister for Commerce U Win Myint said during the inauguration of Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation (MAPCO) on August 26.

Dr Myan Linn said the association will release an official statement on the matter "shortly".

"Beans and pulses dealers usually conduct business without making a written contract and often renege on oral agreements. Dealers have to return the deposits paid by Indian companies if they do not supply the goods. If dealers lack the financial capacity to incur losses, they should not be trading in this industry," he said.

"Dealers in Myanmar have been trading with Indian companies for many years and nearly every year traders here earn a profit from pre-contract deposits," he said.

A spokesperson from MPBSSMA said the problem is widespread.

"The problem involves more than just four or five dealers. Many dealers accepted

pre-payment from Indian companies to buy beans and pulses but when Indian companies asked for the shipments they were owed, the dealers refused to send them."

Myanmar's beans and pulses industry has been rocked by several major scandals in past year where traders have absconded with large sums of money. In one case in 2008, a small cartel of traders cornered the nation's beans and pulses market through pre-purchase agreements with farmers and other traders, amassing debts of up to K1 trillion (\$1 billion at the time).

However, when Indian buyers opted to purchase their orders from Vietnamese producers because prices of Myanmar's crops were too high, the scheme collapsed and five businesspeople were investigated by the police.

In 2011 a dealer called U Zaw Thet Htwe bought large quantities of beans and pulses from farmers with the promise to sell them to two buyers. He moved to Thailand with his family after stealing profits worth more than \$5 million.

From page 15

challenges, hence it's not realistic that all AEC measures can be achieved by January 1, 2015."

Gundy Cahyadi, an economist at OCBC Bank in Singapore, said a delay would not necessarily be seen as negative by markets.

"I personally don't think that it is a significant setback and in fact, it is perhaps

better to give more time for the countries that are not ready for it as yet," he said.

"I don't see it as a major threat to intra-regional trade, which is likely to remain increasingly important to the regional countries, despite delays in the AEC."

Some analysts have suggested the community might not start as a fully formed bloc, and that its more developed members might have to push on with integration in a

two-tier model, leaving the others at risk of missing out on regional investment.

Dr Surin said a number of challenges need to be addressed, including bridging development gaps between member countries, but he suggested the community would lose credibility if it did not include all 10 ASEAN members.

"The world is expecting us to get there all together," he said. - Reuters



# MOB links with Western Union to offer money transfers

By Myat May Zin

WESTERN Union signed an agreement with Myanmar Oriental Bank to offer international money transfers from the end of September, a company official said during a ceremony on September 11.

"We are going to try to implement this service as soon as possible. At first, we will only offer incoming payments but hope to get permission to offer outbound transfers soon," said U Than Win, an MOB senior general manager.

He said MOB had been in discussions with Western Union to operate international transfers since March.

"We applied to get permission from the Central Bank of Myanmar and then held two rounds of talks with Western Union before signing an agreement on September 11," said Daw Phyo Thu Htwe, the bank's assistant general manager.

Myanmar was one of only four countries where Western Union did not operate - the others being Iran, North Korea and Cuba.

U Than Win said the fee for using the transfer service is relatively high for lowly paid migrant workers but

he guaranteed that it would be safe.

"The service fees are high but Western Union is totally reliable for even for large sums of money, which could be attractive for businesses and NGOs. Western Union official said they will adjust the fee they charge migrant workers," said U Than Win. However, he would not disclose the exact fee for the service.

He added that the service had another key advantage: "Western Union transfers are fast - you can take them from the bank in the same day."

Myanmar Oriental Bank has 19 offices in Myanmar, mainly in the cities of Yangon and Mandalay. However, the bank is preparing to open branch offices in Nay Pyi Taw and Myan Aung in Ayeyarwady Region.

"We have only 19 branch offices, which we know is not enough to make Western Union transfers available nationwide. We are planning to open a network of small stations nationwide to offer more transfers," he said.

U Than Win said most Myanmar workers abroad rely on the *hundi* network, an illegal international remittance network, to transfer money back to their families in Myanmar.

# Two new fishing checkpoints open in Tanintharyi

By Myat Nyein Aye

TWO fishing checkpoints opened in Tanintharyi Region on September 1, a Myanmar Fisheries Federation spokesperson said last week.

As well as checking catches, the Kawthaung and Bokbyen sites will also sell fuel, ice and water, allowing vessels to bypass Myeik Archipelago, located 40 miles (64 kilometres) from the region's main fishing grounds.

"This is good news for fishermen because it saves time and fuel. It also means the fish being sold in markets are fresher," U Maung Maung Soe, a member of the Myanmar

Fisheries Federation and chairperson of the Myanmar Fish Farmers Association, said on September 11.

In May, the Ministry of Commerce announced it would no longer distinguish between the trade processes of free on board (FOB), cost, insurance and freight, telegraph transfer and letters of credit.

Export tax was also lowered in a bid to stop illegal trade.

The new checkpoints use the FOB system and Kawthaung checkpoint, also known as Shwe Wakk Won Tada, is large enough for four ships to dock simultaneously.

The fishing season begins every year on September 1 and continues until May 31.

# Design company wins international prize

By Jessica Mudditt

A NON-PROFIT design company in Yangon won an international award for social entrepreneurship on September 11.

Proximity Designs, founded by Debbie Aung Din and Jim Taylor, received the award from the Schwab Foundation at a ceremony that took place at the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual meeting in Tianjin, China.

Proximity Designs was one of 26 design companies selected from around the world to receive the prize.

The 2012 award attracted a pool of more than 1000 entrants - with winners becoming part of a network that is invited to participate in WEF events. Schwab co-founder Klaus Schwab is WEF executive chairperson.

Louisa-Jane Richards, media communications assistant at Proximity Designs, told *The Myanmar Times* in an email: "Our design lab is one of a handful in the developing world that

designs products specifically for the rural poor."

Proximity Designs, formerly International Development Enterprises Myanmar (iDE Myanmar), was established in 2004 and works in partnership with local manufacturers, retailers, and villagers to distribute low-cost products that aim to boost farmers' productivity and income.

Company co-founder Jim Taylor said: "The idea of extreme affordability keeps us accountable. If people don't find our products of value, they won't spend their hard-earned money on them."

The company's six-member team, which includes local engineers and prototype makers, has developed foot-powered irrigation pumps, water storage tanks, drip irrigation systems and solar lighting.

"Our first product [was] a foot-operated irrigation pump that makes sure water is there when farmers need it, especially during the six months when there's no rain. It boosts farmers' incomes by as much as 300 percent,"

said Debbie Aung Din.

Louisa-Jane Richards said Proximity Designs' products are sold at the cost-price for materials and manufacturing, with new products subsidised in the first year of release.

The company's latest device is a 250 gallon water bucket that is portable, lightweight and stable. It was released on September 8 and Ms Richards said: "Pricing hasn't been set yet, but it will probably start at about K20,000." Proximity has also created a line of products more user-friendly than the cumbersome watering can. Forty-six-year-old U Than Swe from Tharyar Gone village, Sibine township, uses a pump bought from Proximity Designs.

"It's like spraying water with a motor. I expanded my vegetable plot... which increased my income, and now I can survive without taking loans," he said.

Earlier this year, Proximity Designs won a Skoll Award in recognition of the impact its water pumps have on harvesting higher crop yields.

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## Spain's Catalonia unveils plans for mega resort project

BARCELONA – Spain's debt-ridden Catalonia region unveiled plans on September 7 for a US\$6-billion "Barcelona World" resort but with financing yet to be found and no deal signed.

Catalonia revealed the project as its regional capital Barcelona seemed set to lose a battle with Madrid to lure US firm Las Vegas Sands to build a jobs-rich mega casino project, dubbed Eurovegas.

Barcelona World envisages six large tourist complexes near Port-Aventura south of Barcelona with 20,000 hotel rooms, shopping centres, a theatre, convention centre, casinos, services and offices. Each complex would represent a country or region: Europe, the United States, China, Brazil, Russia and India, and the project promoters said they hope to lure 10 million visitors a year.

The plan is backed by the Catalonia government, La Caixa Bank, and the Brazil-based real estate developer Veremonte, whose main shareholder is Spanish billionaire Enrique Banuelos.

They were working "alongside international investors", the Catalan government said in a statement.

But "nothing has been signed, we just have an agreement between the parties to go ahead with the project", said a finance official at the Catalan regional government.

"We are looking for self-financing on an equity basis, which means attracting investors to each of the six complexes who will also take charge of construction in that sector."

Catalonia said the scheme would create an estimated 20,000 jobs, crucial in a period when Spain is suffering an unemployment rate of nearly 25 percent, the highest in the industrialized world.

Barcelona World is being made public as news emerged that Las Vegas Sands was likely to spurn Barcelona for a mega casino project.

The two cities have been in talks for months to lure Eurovegas, with a decision expected by the end of the month.

Last week, Madrid regional government head Esperanza Aguirre said she had a "positive intuition" that the Spanish capital would be selected.

"Yes, that's probable," Artur Mas, the head of the government of the northeastern region of Catalonia agreed in a radio interview.

Catalonia's regional and sustainability minister, Lluís Recoder, said Barcelona World was in some ways better than Eurovegas.

"It is a developed and thought-out project," he said in the Catalan government statement.

Unlike the project pushed by billionaire Sheldon Adelson's Las Vegas Sands, "it is a strategic project that has consensus of the territory", he added.

Since it was to be located in a developed area with no planning modifications required, "the speed of execution of this project is greater than any other that could be on the table, not only in Catalonia but in the whole of Spain", he said.

Opponents of the Eurovegas project fear it will open the doors to a prostitution mafia, and they have denounced a return to the excesses of the Spanish property bubble, which imploded in 2008.

Las Vegas Sands, the world's biggest casino company by market value, operates The Venetian and The Palazzo casinos in Las Vegas and Marina Bay Sands in Singapore. It also operates properties in Macao. – AFP



A brickmaker outside of Nay Pyi Taw arranges bricks to dry. Pic: Kaung Htet

## Govt squeezes brickmakers over usage of farming land

By Myat Nyein Aye

SOME brickmakers in Yangon Region may cease production next year following government efforts to clamp down on the use of farmland for production.

The move could push dozens of brickmakers – and hundreds of workers – out of a job, industry sources say.

U San Naing, the owner of Sayyoepein brick wholesale yard in Danyingone township, said brickmakers had been charged by the government with misusing agricultural land.

"Officials the Ministry of Home Affairs charged us with LaNa/39 [Land Grab Law 39] because they said farmland must be used to produce paddy or other

crops but we used the land to make bricks instead," he told *The Myanmar Times* on August 13.

Machine-made bricks are selling for about K200 each in the retail market, while handmade bricks cost about K120, he added.

U Zaw Min Tun, the owner of a handmade brick factory in Hwambi township, said producers use no more than 4 acres of land, adding that brick production only consumed about 0.25 an acre annually for such a farm.

He added that handmade brickmakers are mostly based in Hlawga, Hmawbi, Taikkyi and Shwe Pyi Thar townships. However, brickmakers in Taikkyi, Hmawbi and Shwe Pyi Thar townships had come under

increasing government scrutiny since March.

"Sixty people from Taikkyi, 47 from Hlawga and another 25 from Hmawbi township have been charged by the government for misusing agricultural land," said Ko Poe Htoo, the owner of a handmade brick factory in Hlawga township.

Ma Poe, the owner of a factory in Taikkyi township, said production had fallen in past months as a result of the government's actions.

"There were more than 100 brickmakers in Taikkyi township in the past but now there are only 30," she said.

She added that brickmakers invested only half as much money this year as they have in previous years because they were afraid they would be shut down by the government.

"We used to invest up to K40 million a year to operate the factory but these days it is between K15-20 million. If this continues it will starve the market of bricks," she said.

Ma Poe said she has been arrested twice for operating her factory – the first time she spent one month in jail and the second time 15 days.

"I hear that sentences in future might be increased to six months. This is a difficult time for us and we might have to stop. But I won't do that until I see what the government's position on this is after monsoon," she said.

"The government said brickmakers don't cultivate the land but some of the farmland cannot be used for farming anyway. And we've been doing this for a long time," said Ko Poe Htoo.

"We want to survey our

farmland and get permission from the government for our work," he added.

Brickmakers said their industry is essential for the country and if they are allowed to continue they would be happy to pay taxes to the government.

"I don't want to cease production because my factory only uses 4 or 5 acres of farmland and I employ more than 200 people.

"There are 26 other factories in Hmawbi township and 44 in Shwe Pyi Thar. It's not fair to rob the people who depend on those factories for an income of their jobs," said one factory owner.

Brickmakers earn about K6 for each brick they bake, an average of K1200 a day.

U Zaw Min Tun, the factory owner Hmawbi township, said: "We pay workers from K1000-2000 a day. We also build basic houses for workers because most of them do not have anywhere else to live."

"We cannot stop this business because we need to consider how our workers will survive," he said.

Another factory owner said brickmakers were being unfairly targeted, adding that vast alcohol factories had been built on farmland too but the government had not charged them with misusing farmland.

A female labourer who lives in Hmawbi township said: "I originally came here from Patheingyi [Ayeyarwady Region]. I have nowhere else to live so the factory owner lets me stay in a small house and provides me with food too."

"I earn a salary of about K20,000 a month and don't want to find another job," she said.

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Dated: 17 September 2012



# Lawyers object to leases for court buildings

By Htar Htar Khin

A GROUP of lawyers held a press conference on September 9 to oppose the government leasing the High Court and Small Causes Court, formerly the Police Commissioner's headquarters, in Yangon to private enterprises.

The High Court building, on the corner of Pansodan and Mahabandoola Garden Roads in Kyauktada township, will become a museum, while the Small Cause Court on the corner of Strand Road and Bank Street in the same township will be turned into a hotel.

Both are heritage-listed buildings.

A member of a lawyers' network campaigning against the leases, U Ko Ni of Laurel Law Firm, said there was no reason the High Court should not continue in its current role.

"The High Court is almost 100 years old and should continue operating as a court of law and a national icon," he said.

U Ko Ni added that lawyers from the Small Causes Court building were evicted from the site in April this year and are have moved to a building in Thingangyun township in a location that he described as "highly inconvenient for



A pedestrian walks in front of the Small Causes Court at the corner Bank Street and Strand Road in Kyauktada township on September 13. Pic: Ko Taik

clients, lawyers and court staff".

"I oppose this move for reasons of public interest.

The former Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Yangon-Pyay Road, for instance, was vacant for a long time

before it was handed over to a private owner.

"But I can't understand why this happened to the

court buildings," he said.

Lawyers first met to discuss the campaign on June 1 at Royal Rose restaurant

in Bahan township and submitted a letter of appeal to President U Thein Sein and the speakers of the upper and lower houses of parliament in July. A letter was also been sent to the Yangon Region Chief Minister last month.

"While we were waiting for a reply from the authorities, a green iron fence was erected in front of the Small Causes Court," U Ko Ni said.

The lawyer said this latest development, which took place in late August, is cause for "great worry".

He told *The Myanmar Times* that the case has become a heated concern and the lawyers' network held the September 9 press conference to let know media about the subject as well as the planned campaign.

"If nothing happens in the next few weeks, we will hold demonstrations and other means of opposing the government's decision - in accordance with bylaws," U Ko Ni said.

*Weekly Eleven News Journal* reported that the High Court building has been leased to Htun Foundation and the Small Causes Court will be co-leased by Flying Tiger Engineering and Jewellery Lucky Production. The agreed terms are 60-year leases.

## Swivelling solar home stars in Madrid contest

MADRID – International teams have built 19 sun-powered homes in Spain's capital for a contest that shows off futuristic designs, including one house that swivels 180 degrees.

In western Madrid's huge Casa de Campo park, the sun glints off the solar panels of a futuristic mini-village erected in 10 days by university teams from China, Japan, Brazil, Egypt and across Europe.

One home built by a Portuguese team can turn to track the sun's rays, a French-designed house has walls that move electronically, and a Japanese abode has its own rice paddy.

The homes competing in the Solar Decathlon Europe 2012, which opened Friday, face a 15-day marathon of 10 trials to measure their merits, including energy efficiency, design and comfort.

The winner will be the home that consumes the least natural resources and produces minimal waste during its brief lifetime producing electricity.

The contest is sponsored by private enterprise and by the Spanish government, which subsidises entrants with up to 50,000 euros (US\$65,000).

Some students say they have worked day and night to scramble up the homes,

which are linked to a special energy grid capable of storing surplus output and even feeding it back to the Madrid grid.

One of the most striking entrants is by Portugal's Universidade de Porto, a cork and timber home enfolded by a sloping roof of voltaic solar panels.

"The house can turn by 180 degrees," explained 23-year-old engineering student Joao Agostinho.


It is not just a swivelling home, however.

In fact, the house moves electronically according to variations in the sun and light so as to make best use of the sun's energy and to reduce the need for heat and interior lighting.

The rotation of the entire home uses up the equivalent of six light bulbs' energy, the team boasts, and the result is that the building produces 2.5 times more energy than it consumes.

"The concept is that we have a cube in the middle of the house with all the technical equipment and we build around it," said Agostinho.

The competition, first held in 1999 under the sponsorship of the US Department of Energy, lured 200,000 visitors when last held in Madrid in 2010. China is to host the next edition in 2013. – AFP



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## Apple goes big screen with iPhone 5

By Glenn Chapman

SAN FRANCISCO, – Apple on Wednesday introduced a new iPhone 5 with a bigger screen and slimmer body that analysts quickly branded a sure hit for the culture-changing tech giant.

Apple chief executive Tim Cook called the launch “the biggest thing to happen to iPhone since the iPhone.”

The California company called the iPhone 5 “the thinnest smartphone in the world,” with a glass and aluminium body that is 18 percent thinner and 20pc lighter than iPhone 4S.

The new iPhone has a rich four-inch (10-centimeter) display prime for the red-hot smartphone market, in which screen size is one of the key factors important to buyers, according to Nielsen senior vice president Jeff Wender.

At a packed launch event in San Francisco, Apple marketing chief Phil Schiller praised the new iPhone as “an absolute jewel.”

Apple will start taking orders for the phone Friday and begin shipments on September 21 in the US, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, and the phone will be available in 100 countries by the end of the year.

Pricing for US customers will start at \$199 with a two-year telecom service contract.

Schiller said the taller iPhone nestles in one’s palm to naturally align with thumbs and works on the faster mobile Internet networks known as LTE.

“When you carry your phone it should fit beautifully in your hand, that is just how we designed iPhone 5,” he said. “Everything you do looks gorgeous on this beautiful widescreen display.”

The new device features Apple’s own new A6 processor, which according to Schiller doubles the speed for loading Web graphics.

“The primary purchase drivers for smartphones are price, features, operating system, apps and screen size,” Wender said during an iPhone 5 hands-on session during the event. “Apple addressed all those key drivers today in spades.”

Battery life, a key complaint of smartphone users, is extended to eight hours with mobile phone and browsing and 10 hours if Wi-Fi connections are used.

Apple also customized a sophisticated mapping program, upgraded its voice-activated assistant known as Siri and more tightly integrated Facebook.

Analysts expect Apple to sell tens of millions of iPhone 5 models in coming months.

Morgan Stanley analyst Katy Huberty said Apple may ship between 48 million and 53 million iPhones in the fourth quarter and “up to 266 million” in 2013.

But NPD analyst Stephen Baker cautioned that the key US market has “very different dynamics” than for previous iPhone launches.

“The US smartphone market appears to be an increasingly mature one,” he said.

Baker contended that it would be “more difficult for Apple to easily take share from weakened competitors, because many of the easy share gains have already been accomplished.”

Apple has fierce customer loyalty and has been rapidly gaining users, but has failed to keep pace with smartphones powered by Google’s Android operating system.

Research firm IDC said Apple had 16.9pc of the global smartphone market, with 68 percent of the market held by makers of Android phones, led by Samsung.

“I think we will see some reaction that Apple didn’t do enough and that some of the features are just catch-up,” Forrester analyst Charles Golvin said after the event.

“But, when you look at the way the whole package is put together in a beautiful, thin, light device, you’ll see that Apple has taken another step.”

An iPhone change with the potential to irk fans is a new “Lightning” connector to replace 30-pin connections, the piece that connects devices to computers, power outlets or docking stations.

Apple will sell adaptors for plugging new generation iPhone and iPod touch devices into accessories already owned, such as stereo speakers or car sound systems.

The change prompted popular wireless headset and speaker maker Jawbone to release a YouTube video showing stereo dock accessories exploding in time with “The Blue Danube Waltz” by Johann Strauss.

“We think the dock is dead,” said Jawbone chief executive Hosain Rahman. “Some people are worried



Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks during an Apple special event at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts on September 12, 2012 in San Francisco, California. Apple announced the iPhone 5, the latest version of the popular smart phone. Pic: AFP

about the connector news making their mobile docks obsolete, but we think docks make your mobile device immobile.”

“The future is wireless,” said the head of the company behind Jambox speakers.

Apple shares, which hit record highs this week and extended the company’s position as the world’s most valuable firm, rose 1.39pc to \$669.79 on the news. Shares inched up to \$671.20 in after-hours trades on the Nasdaq.

Ben Reitzes at Barclays said much of the news was already

known but added: “We believe today’s announcement marks the beginning of a distinctive holiday season for Apple that blends today’s iPhone launch with the iPad mini launch.”

Apple is widely expected to launch a smaller version of its market-leading iPad tablet computer later this year.

Wednesday’s launch event also unveiled a new lineup of music players including the iPod touch, essentially an iPhone without mobile connections, and the iPod nano. – AFP

### Briefs

#### Internet beats sex for young Germans

BERLIN – Nearly one young German in five would rather do without sex than give up the internet for a year, said a poll on the country’s online habits published on September 10.

Eighteen percent of those surveyed said their drive to use the web was stronger than their sex drive, according to the survey of Germans between the ages of 18 and 35 for lifestyle magazine *NEON*.

“The net plays an important role for the first internet generation but there is also life beyond the World Wide Web,” *NEON* said in a summary of the findings.

It said young Germans who consider themselves “Digital Natives” had different tastes and lifestyles than their parents, with 66pc saying they “rarely” or “never” felt overwhelmed by the online options at their disposal.

Seventy percent said that they only visit 10 or fewer websites regularly while just 12pc regularly visit more than 25 internet addresses. – AFP

#### Global IT spending to grow in 2012

WASHINGTON – World-wide spending on information technology is expected to grow 6 percent this year in constant currency, a slight dip from 2011, a research firm said on September 10.

International Data Corporation said the growth pace, down from 7pc last year, comes “in spite of continuing macroeconomic uncertainty”.

“Strong performances in the software, storage, enterprise network, and mobile device markets has so far offset weaker trends in PCs, servers, peripherals, and telecom provider equipment,” the report said.

– AFP

## Pioneer designer of first modern laptop dies in US, aged 69

By Emily Langer

SAN FRANCISCO – Bill Moggridge, a British industrial designer who was credited with creating the clamshell form of the modern laptop, an innovation that helped transform the computer from a desk-bound behemoth to a ubiquitous, go-everywhere part of daily life, died in a San Francisco hospice on September 8.

He was 69 and had cancer, his son Alex Moggridge said.

Moggridge had been an international leader in the field of design for decades. He was a co-founder of IDEO, an innovation and design firm with offices around the world. Since 2010 he had been director of the Smithsonian Institution’s Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York.

In recent years, he helped create and promote a field of study called “interaction design” – the study, essentially, of how humans

interact with computers.

Until his death, he remained best known for the GRiD Compass, a computing device he began designing in 1979 for the Silicon Valley company, Grid Systems Corp.

The GRiD Compass, *Time* magazine declared in a recent account of the machine’s creation, was “one of the most clever pieces of engineering in computing history.” Released in 1982, it featured a keyboard and 6-inch yellow-on-black screen display. The two pieces were held together by a hinge and that allowed the user to open and close the machine like a briefcase.

Even as laptops became lighter and more powerful, contemporary models continued to rely on Moggridge’s basic design. Laptops were reported to have outsold desktop computers for the first time in 2008.

The GRiD Compass was not the first portable computer on the market, *Time* magazine said,

but the device, despite its initial 1982 price of US\$8150, was a big advance in weight and usability.

Unlike the tablet design, the hinge mechanism allowed users to manoeuvre the screen for optimal viewing. The fold-up construction protected the screen as well as the keyboard. And it was travel-friendly.

It was the embodiment of Moggridge’s belief that design, rather than an aesthetic question, was a means of “solving problems.”

The problem with computers, as far as he was concerned, was that they were too big. Moggridge credited John Ellenby, the founder of GRiD Systems Corp, with being the “impetus” for the GRiD Compass project.

According to Moggridge, Ellenby had met a top-level White House official who told him of the need for the computing power of the desktop in a device half the size of a briefcase. “That became our guiding principle,” Moggridge told *Smithsonian Magazine*.

The GRiD Compass quickly received recognition from the scientific and military community. NASA appreciated the machine’s sturdy magnesium case and took it into orbit during the Space Shuttle program. The military used it, as well. The British defence ministry demonstrated its durability by throwing it out the window and the US military used it during the 1983 invasion of Grenada, the *London Independent* reported.

As his career progressed, Moggridge moved away from physical design as he became increasingly interested in interaction design. His books included *Designing Interactions* (2006) and *Designing Media* (2010).

He became director of the Cooper-Hewitt museum in 2010 and oversaw the museum at a time of rapid expansion. Undergoing renovation, the museum will reopen in 2014.

William Grant Moggridge was born in London on June 25, 1943.

In 1965, Moggridge received a diploma in art and design from what is now Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London. He worked as an industrial designer before founding a consulting firm, Moggridge Associates, in England in 1969. He opened an office in Palo Alto, California, in 1979.

In his early career in America, reported *Design Week*, he worked on “garage projects” with Apple, Microsoft and other companies that became giants in the field of computer technology.

IDEO was formed in 1991 when Moggridge merged his company with two other firms.

Moggridge predicted that the laptop will “last forever,” alongside new technologies and devices such as the iPad.

“It’s a form that is very practical . . . and it is very portable,” he said. “I can’t see the laptop ever being completely replaced.”

– *The Washington Post*



**Briefly**

## Obama lauds film rage victims

**SYDNEY** – A plane carrying 36 Sri Lankan men arrived in the tiny Pacific nation of Nauru on September 14 as part of Australia's tough new stand against a record influx of boatpeople. They are the first asylum-seeking boat arrivals to undergo offshore processing by Australia since the Nauru facility closed in 2008.

**PHNOMPENH** – Cambodia's Khmer Rouge court on September 14 delayed freeing the regime's former "First Lady", who has dementia, after prosecutors requested tighter conditions for the genocide suspect's release. The UN-backed tribunal had ruled the previous day that Ieng Thirith, 80, was mentally unfit for trial and should be released.

**NEW YORK** – New York on September 13 became the first city in the United States to impose a limited ban on super-sized soft drinks which have been blamed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg for contributing to a national obesity crisis. – AFP

**WASHINGTON** – President Barack Obama vowed on September 14 to "stand fast" against spreading anti-US violence raging in the Arab world, as he mourned four Americans slain in Libya after their remains were flown home.

In a heart-rending homecoming, four transfer caskets draped in American flags were slowly borne from the belly of a giant C-17 transport plane by slow-walking Marines in dress uniforms, and set down in a hangar.

US ambassador Chris Stevens and the three other Americans died on September 11 when a mob furious over an anti-Muslim internet video made on US soil torched the American consulate in Benghazi, part of a eruption of violence in the region.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends," Obama said, quoting the Bible as he honoured four "American patriots" for embodying national qualities of courage, hope and idealism.

"Their sacrifice will never be forgotten, we will bring to justice those who took them from us. We will stand fast against the violence on our diplomatic missions," Obama said at Andrews Air Force Base outside



**US President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with employees at the State Department in Washington on September 12, a day after the killing of ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens, and three staff at the US consulate in Benghazi, Libya. Pic: AFP**

Washington.

As he spoke, a furious wave of anti-American violence ripped across the Middle East and North Africa, with a crowd invading the US embassy compound in Tunis, and guards at the US embassy in Khartoum firing warning shots at protesters.

Fresh violence erupted in Yemen and Cairo and demonstrations took

place in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Iraq, Israel and the Gaza Strip, Morocco, Syria, Kuwait, Nigeria and Kenya.

Six people were killed and dozens injured in the violence on September 14.

Obama said that the "awful" loss and terrible images may cause some to question the dangerous work of

US diplomats abroad, but argued that America must not abandon its global mission to spread dignity and freedom.

"Even as voices of suspicion and mistrust seek to divide countries and cultures from one another, the United States of America will never retreat from the world," he vowed.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told grieving relatives of Stevens, information officer Sean Smith and former Navy SEALs Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty that the killings dishonoured the spirit of the Arab Spring.

"The people of Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Tunisia did not trade the tyranny of a dictator for the tyranny of a mob," she said.

US military and intelligence agencies have already launched a manhunt in Libya for the militants who staged the assault on the consulate in Benghazi.

The violence erupted in response to excerpts of the *Innocence of Muslims* video mocking Islam.

In comments on September 13, Clinton described the video as "disgusting and reprehensible". But she also reiterated: "There is justification, none at all, for responding to this video with violence." – AFP

## US keeps Myanmar on drug list

**WASHINGTON** – The United States kept Myanmar, Bolivia and Venezuela on its drug trafficking "black list" on September 14, but said Yangon's recent reforms merited a "national interest waiver" for aid.

For the fourth year running, Washington accused all three countries of having "failed demonstrably" to fight the drug trade.

But President Barack Obama's administration noted that Myanmar, which has been blacklisted since 2002 and is the world's second largest cultivator of opium poppy, has made significant strides this year in joining the international fight against illegal drugs.

Myanmar officials have already destroyed more than three times the amount of opium poppy lands as they did last year, said the president's annual memorandum to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that helps set US drug policy.

Nonetheless, "Burma's current counternarcotics performance is not sufficient to meet its international counternarcotics cooperation obligations," Obama said, using Myanmar's former name.

However, Obama added that "given the government's demonstrated commitment to reform and promising signs of action on future poppy eradication, it is in the interest of the US government to grant Burma a national interest waiver," meaning US support will continue there.

Last year, there was no cooperation with

Myanmar.

Obama said maintaining aid to Venezuela and Bolivia was also "vital to the national interests of the United States," despite the counternarcotics failures of the two Latin American nations.

Venezuela remains "one of the preferred trafficking routes out of South America," thanks to its "porous western border with Colombia, weak judicial system, inconsistent international counternarcotics cooperation and generally permissive and corrupt environment," Obama wrote.

Obama alleged that some officials were "credibly reported" to be involved in the drug trade.

The president's report cheered some success in Bolivia, especially those backed by the US government, but noted that overall, the country has made a "negligible contribution" to global counternarcotics efforts.

The memo also noted that senior Bolivian officials have been arrested for "facilitating drug shipments."

Bolivia responded by "vigorously" denying Washington's allegations, saying they do not reflect La Paz's counternarcotics efforts.

Bolivia, Myanmar and Venezuela are among more than 20 countries – including Afghanistan, Colombia and Mexico – listed as "major drug transit and/or major illicit drug producing countries" in the 2012 memorandum. – AFP



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY  
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### JOB VACANCIES

The Australian Embassy is seeking applications for the following positions:

**RESEARCH, INFORMATION AND POLICY OFFICER**  
SALARY RANGE FROM USD \$1,000 TO USD \$2,000 PER MONTH (depending on skills and experience)

**VISITS, MEDIA AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY OFFICER**  
SALARY RANGE FROM USD \$750 TO USD \$1,000 PER MONTH (depending on skills and experience)

The Australian Embassy in Yangon is a medium sized diplomatic agency representing the Australian government in Myanmar. It is staffed by employees of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and AusAID. The advertised positions will work within the Political Section of the Embassy.

The Research, Information and Policy Officer provides support and advice on the current political and economic situation in Myanmar. This position will monitor, research and analyse public debate and policy developments on a range of domestic and political issues in Myanmar, including trade and investment issues.

The Visits, Media and Public Diplomacy Officer is responsible for representing visits by Australian government officials to Myanmar and provide advice in areas related to public and cultural affairs, e.g. monitoring national and international media including social media activity in Myanmar. They will also be required to translate articles or media releases from at the Embassy, assist with organising media conferences and briefings, and assist in arranging meetings for Australian visitors, including high level visitors.

Please note that the specific duties of these positions may evolve over time, as the Embassy's operational requirements change, so the successful applicant will need to be adaptable.

These challenging positions would best suit candidates with a can-do attitude, that are self-motivated with great communication skills both verbal and written, who have an eye for detail and are well organized. The successful applicants will have an opportunity to work in a professional and rewarding working environment with an attractive salary.

The application form, selection criteria and duty statement can be obtained from the Australian Embassy, 88 Strand Road, or the embassy website at: <http://www.burma.embassy.gov.au/yangon/home.html>.

Applications should be lodged at the embassy or emailed to [australianembassy.yangon@dfat.gov.au](mailto:australianembassy.yangon@dfat.gov.au) together with a one page summary addressing the selection criteria and a copy of your CV with one recent passport sized photo. The closing date for applications is 4.00 pm on 5 October 2012.

**Qualifications and Experience**

The appointee should have the following qualifications and experience:

- A very high level of written and spoken English. Strong Myanmar language skills are highly desirable, but the position may also be filled by a suitably qualified expatriate.
- Hold a relevant University degree or lower qualification accompanied by good practical experience in relevant aspects of the position.
- At least five years proven experience and a demonstrated ability in the relevant field. Experience working in Myanmar and engaging with government, media and other non-government agencies in Myanmar is desirable but not essential.
- Good knowledge of modern office procedures, practices, methods and equipment including use of standard personal computer software programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel.
- Ability to team work, initiative and ability to determine and achieve objectives.
- Excellent communication and analytical skills.
- Excellent interpersonal and team skills.


**Notes:**

1. The Australian Embassy does not discriminate in regards to race, ethnicity, gender and age.
2. Only those candidates whose qualifications and experience are of further interest will be contacted for an interview.

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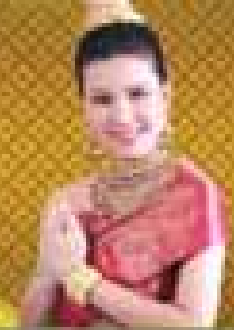






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## US, Israel tensions flare over Iran row

WASHINGTON—President Barack Obama called Benjamin Netanyahu on September 11 after he provoked a sudden crisis in relations by warning Washington had no moral right to stop Israel attacking Iran's nuclear program.

In an unusual move, Obama called the Prime Minister in the early hours Israel time, after a day of fast-rising tensions, exacerbated when Israeli officials said Obama had snubbed Netanyahu's request for talks during a US visit.

The spat erupted less than two months before the US presidential election, as Republican nominee and Netanyahu friend Mitt Romney seeks to damage Obama's foreign policy prestige by accusing him of deserting Israel and appeasing Iran.

A US statement said the call lasted an hour and insisted there was no rift over how to handle Iran, but left the impression Obama was irked at Netanyahu's

rhetoric on a key foreign policy crisis weighing on his re-election hopes.

The statement also said that contrary to reports in the Israeli press "there was never a request for Prime Minister Netanyahu to meet with President Obama in Washington, nor was a request for a meeting ever denied."

"President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu reaffirmed that they are united in their determination to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and agreed to continue their close consultations going forward," it said.

The Israeli leader angered Obama aides, who have seen Republicans accuse the president of throwing Israel "under the bus," when he publicly criticised Washington's refusal to set "red lines" for action on Iran's nuclear program.

"The world tells Israel: Wait, there's still time. And I say: wait for what? Wait until when?" Netanyahu

said in English earlier on September 11, in comments clearly aimed directly at the White House.

"Those in the international community who refuse to put red lines before Iran don't have a moral right to place a red light before Israel," he said.

The dispute came amid fervent speculation that Netanyahu could order a unilateral strike on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program — an action Washington believes would be premature.

The White House says there is still time for diplomacy and sanctions to change Iranian behaviour, though it warns Obama is ultimately prepared to use force to stop the Islamic Republic getting a nuclear weapon.

Washington has been unwilling to publicly state "red lines" for action, fearing that Iran will trigger an immediate crisis by going right up to them in a game of nuclear brinkmanship.

— AFP



A couple strolls at sunset among US national flags erected at Malibu, California, last week to honour victims of the attacks on September 11, 2001. In an anniversary speech at the Pentagon on September 11, President Barack Obama said the legacy of the attacks would "not be one of fear or hate or division. It will be a safer world, a stronger nation and a people more united than ever before." In a poignant ceremony held every year since the attacks, friends and relatives of the 2983 people killed when al-Qaeda hijackers slammed airliners into New York's World Trade Center gathered at Ground Zero to read out the names of the dead. Pic: AFP

## New York judge blocks section of controversial anti-terror law

NEW YORK — A New York federal judge last week shot down part of a controversial anti-terror law that journalists and scholars had feared could see them locked up indefinitely for expressing their opinions.

Judge Katherine Forrest issued a ruling on September 12 that permanently blocked a section of the National Defence Authorisation Act signed by President Barack Obama at the end of last year authorising the detention of US citizens accused of supporting terror groups.

The suit was brought by activists, including former *New York Times* journalist Chris Hedges and outspoken academic Noam Chomsky, who said the law was vague and could be used to curtail reporters' and other civilian citizens' right to free speech

guaranteed under the US Constitution's First Amendment.

They also argued that the Fifth Amendment, guaranteeing Americans' legal rights, was threatened.

In her ruling, Forrest said the plaintiffs did "present evidence that First Amendment rights have already been harmed and will be harmed by the prospect of (the law) being enforced. The public has a strong and undoubted interest in the clear preservation of First and Fifth Amendment rights." The court "permanently" halts enforcement of that part of the law after it issued a preliminary injunction against it in May, Forrest said, calling on Congress to reexamine the measure.

The section of the law, signed by Obama on New

Year's Eve, allows the US military to detain anyone accused of supporting the Taliban or al-Qaeda until "the end of hostilities."

Hedges, a Pulitzer Prize winner, has said that the so-called Homeland Battlefield provisions suggest "the totalitarian credo of endless war waged against enemies within 'the homeland' as well as those abroad."

The judge's decision to confirm the May ruling is seen as highly unusual in its stern rebuke of Congress.

Hedges said he already had cut back on contacts in the Middle East, for fear that his associations could lead to him being accused of breaking the law.

But Forrest, in her ruling, said "no detention based upon (the measure) can occur" because it was beyond the scope of the law. — AFP

## Atomic watchdog chastises Tehran

VIENNA — The UN atomic agency's board approved with a crushing majority on September 13 a resolution criticising Iran brought by world powers that was also aimed at dissuading Israel from military action.

The resolution expresses "serious concern that Iran continues to defy" UN Security Council resolutions for it to suspend uranium enrichment, a process which can be used for peaceful purposes but also in a nuclear weapon.

The resolution was introduced at the meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's 35-nation board of governors on September 12 after days of haggling between Western nations and Russia and China, which are seen as more lenient on Tehran.

It was approved by 31 countries, with Cuba voting against and Egypt, Ecuador and Tunisia abstaining, all four of them members of the Non-Aligned Movement of which Iran

is currently the rotating president.

Iran insists its expanding atomic program is for peaceful purposes. But as the IAEA has repeatedly said that it is unable to vouch for this, the UN Security Council has passed six resolutions against Tehran, four with sanctions attached.

The US and the European Union have also imposed additional unilateral sanctions that have hit Iran's vital oil exports hard.

"I think this resolution sends a very clear signal to Iran that the diplomatic pressure is intensifying and Iran's isolation is growing," US envoy to the IAEA, Robert Wood, told reporters in Vienna after the vote.

Iran's envoy Ali Asghar Soltanieh hit back saying the resolution "is not the way to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue."

"It will only complicate the situation and jeopardise the cooperative environment," he told journalists. — AFP

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## Tax fraud whistleblower paid a reward of \$104m

WASHINGTON — US authorities have awarded former UBS banker Bradley Birkenfeld a US\$104 million reward for blowing the whistle on the Swiss bank's tax fraud, a whistleblowers group said on September 11.

"This is believed to be the largest reward ever given to an individual whistleblower in the United States and the first major reward issued under the IRS tax whistleblower law," the National Whistleblowers Center said in a statement.

Birkenfeld earned the reward from the Internal Revenue Service for providing the US government with "insider information on UBS's illegal offshore banking scheme," said the Washington-based nonprofit organisation.

National Whistleblowers

said his disclosures directly resulted in UBS paying a \$780 million fine to the United States.

"Mr Birkenfeld's disclosures also forced the Swiss government to change its tax treaty with the United States, resulting in UBS turning over the names of over 4900 US taxpayers who held illegal offshore accounts. These 'taxpayers' are now being investigated and prosecuted," the centre said.

The UBS case was part of a broad push by US tax authorities to gain information on accounts held overseas by Americans allowing them to avoid US taxation.

"Today is a great day for whistleblowers," said Dean Zerbe, one of Birkenfeld's lawyers. "Today is a terrible day for big-time tax cheats," he said. — AFP



## Briefs

**Conflict worsening, says peace envoy**

DAMASCUS – Peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said on September 13 the deadly conflict in Syria was getting worse as he arrived on his first official trip aimed at ending nearly 18 months of violence.

“We came to Syria to hold meetings with our Syrian brothers because there is a big crisis, and I think it is getting worse,” the official SANA news agency quoted the UN-Arab League envoy as saying at Damascus airport.

Brahimi succeeded former envoy Kofi Annan, who quit in frustration after his six-point peace plan foundered.

**Former Egyptian PM sent to jail**

CAIRO – An Egyptian court on September 13 sentenced former prime minister Ahmed Nazif to three years in prison and ordered him to pay a fine of nine million Egyptian pounds (US\$1.5 million) for illegal enrichment.

Nazif was accused of abusing his post to make illegal gains, the official MENA news agency reported.

Nazif was appointed prime minister in 2004, but left his post on January 29, 2011, four days after the start of the popular revolt against Hosni Mubarak.

**Turkey refuses to extradite Hashemi**

ANKARA – Turkey said last week it would not extradite Iraq's fugitive vice president Tareq al-Hashemi, who has been convicted of murder and sentenced to death in absentia by an Iraqi court.

“We will host Hashemi in our country as long as he wants to remain in Turkey. We will not hand him over,” Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan told a news conference in Ankara on September 11. Hashemi was sentenced to death on September 9 for the murders of a lawyer and a brigadier general, after being accused of running a death squad.

**Mexico arrests drug cartel boss**

MEXICO CITY – Mexican marines have captured the suspected leader of the Gulf cartel, dealing a new blow to the second most powerful drug trafficking gang in the country, the navy said on September 13.

Jorge Eduardo Costilla Sanchez, nicknamed “El Coss,” was paraded before television cameras hours after he was arrested the previous day in Tampico, a coastal city in the northeastern state of Tamaulipas.

Of the 37 most wanted men in Mexico, 23 have now been killed or captured.

– AFP

## 23 years later, football fans get an apology

LONDON – The editor of Rupert Murdoch's British tabloid *The Sun* at the time of the Hillsborough football stadium disaster apologised on September 12 for a running a story 23 years ago that blamed fans for the tragedy.

Kelvin MacKenzie said he had been “totally misled” into running a front-page story with the headline “The Truth”, together with false claims that supporters picked the pockets of victims and urinated on police.

“Today I offer my profuse apologies

to the people of Liverpool for that headline,” he said in a statement issued hours after an independent panel published a report revealing a huge police cover-up of the tragedy.

“It has taken more than two decades, 400,000 documents and a two-year inquiry to discover to my horror that it would have been far more accurate had I written the headline *The Lies* rather than *The Truth*.”

“I published in good faith and I am sorry that it was so wrong.”

MacKenzie said he had based the story on a dispatch from a news agency in Sheffield, where Hillsborough stadium is located, that quoted a senior police officer and a lawmaker making the allegations.

“I had absolutely no reason to believe that these authority figures would lie and deceive over such a disaster,” he said.

British Prime Minister David Cameron apologised the same day to the families of the 96 victims for the “double injustice” they suffered due to

the cover-up and to official failings on the day of the tragedy.

Families of the victims in Liverpool – where there is still a widespread boycott of *The Sun*, Britain's best-selling newspaper – said the apology was not enough.

Trevor Hicks of the Hillsborough Families Support Group said it was “too little, too late” and called MacKenzie “lowlife, clever lowlife, but lowlife”.

MacKenzie edited *The Sun* from 1981 to 1994. – AFP

## New Somali president survives bomb attacks

MOGADISHU – Somalia's president survived an assassination bid on September 12, just two days into his new job, when bomb blasts claimed by Islamist rebels rocked the Mogadishu hotel where he was meeting Kenya's foreign minister.

Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was unharmed after two blasts went off outside the hotel where he had been staying in Mogadishu, but three soldiers were killed in what appeared to be an attack by multiple suicide bombers.

“There has been a blast around the hotel where the president was. The president is safe. All the people who were inside the hotel are safe,” Ali Houmed, spokesman for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) told AFP.

A police officer said a Ugandan soldier from the regional force and two Somali troops were killed in the attack, adding that initial reports suggested it was carried out by three suicide bombers.

Hassan, 56, whose election on September 10 was widely welcomed as a boost to Somalia's peace prospects, was meeting Kenyan Foreign Minister Sam Ongeru at the time of the explosions.

The Shebab, an al-Qaeda-linked group which

has been waging a bloody insurgency against Somalia's Western-backed government, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Shebab had said the previous day it considered as illegitimate the UN-backed process which saw newly-designated lawmakers elect Hassan.

The newly-elected academic's predecessors have all survived assassination attempts in the war-ravaged Somali capital.

Hassan unexpectedly defeated incumbent president Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in the September 10 vote in what was interpreted as a sign that Somali leaders wanted to break with the corruption-tainted outgoing administration.

The US State Department welcomed the peace activist's election as heralding “new era of Somali governance” while other Western powers also hailed the vote as a major milestone in efforts to restore peace.

Somalia has not had a credible central authority since the 1991 ouster of former president Siad Barre but Hassan's election came as a semblance of normality returned to Mogadishu and hopes of a recovery grew. – AFP



American actress Angelina Jolie, a special envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, greets a Syrian girl at a refugee camp in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley on September 12. The UNHCR said on September 11 that the number of refugees who have fled Syria had reached 253,106. “The speed with which people are fleeing the country ... is an extraordinary acceleration of the crisis,” UNHCR spokesman Adrian Edwards said. In Jordan alone, there are 85,197 registered refugees, with a further 35,961 awaiting processing, the UN agency said. Pic: AFP/UNHCR

## Mining strife escalates in South Africa

RUSTENBURG – The world's top platinum producer Anglo American shut down its main South African operations on September 12 as fears rose that widening strikes are spiralling into an industry revolt.

The latest unrest broke out on roads leading to Anglo American, which halted work at its Rustenburg mines in the same region as the London-listed Lonmin plant where 45 people have died in a wildcat strike that started last month.

Anglo American denied its workers were on strike, saying staff were unable to report for duty and were being intimidated with the threat of violence.

South Africa's key mining sector, which contributes around a fifth of the country's GDP, has been hit by a wave of increasingly militant strikes that have spilled from the world's richest platinum mines into the gold sector.

The police shooting of 34 people at Lonmin's Marikana mine was last month has been described as the worst case of police violence since the end of apartheid.

Lonmin is the world's third biggest platinum producer.

– AFP

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## US urges calm over islands

WASHINGTON – The United States called last week for calm between Japan and China after Beijing sent ships to disputed islands in the East China Sea in response to Tokyo's purchase of them.

"We think, in the current environment, we want cooler heads to prevail, frankly," Kurt Campbell, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said on September 11.

Campbell said that calm was critical because the region serves as a "cockpit of the global economy."

"The stakes could not be bigger," Campbell said at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank.

"We believe that peaceful dialogue and the maintenance of peace and security is of utmost importance always but particularly now in this set of circumstances," Campbell said.

In line with repeated US statements, Campbell said that Washington did

not take positions on the various and increasingly bitter territorial disputes around Asia.

Campbell's comments came as the two Chinese marine surveillance ships reached the waters around the Diaoyu islands – known in Japan as the Senkaku islands – and would "take actions pending the development of the situation," the state-run *Xinhua* news agency said.

The arrival came as the Japanese government announced it had completed its planned purchase of the islands, which lie in a strategically important shipping area.

"This should cause no problem for Japan's ties with other countries and regions," said Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Osamu Fujimura.

"We have absolutely no desire for any repercussions as far as Japan-China relations are concerned. It is important that we avoid misunderstanding and unforeseen problems," he told reporters.

Beijing had earlier summoned the Japanese ambassador and lodged a strong protest over Tokyo's move to buy the islands, while vowing to take counter-measures.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said the islands were "an inherent part of China's territory" and vowed his country would "never ever yield an inch" on its sovereignty.

However, the ships China dispatched were from the State Oceanic Authority and not military vessels and analysts downplayed the significance of the move, saying the deal may even allow Beijing and Tokyo to temper tensions.

State television and all major Chinese dailies in China on September 11 highlighted Beijing's condemnation of the purchase.

The islands, which lie about 200 kilometres (125 miles) from Taiwan and 2000 kilometres from Tokyo, are also claimed by Taipei, which strongly criticised the Japanese move on September 11. – AFP



A grieving woman is consoled as she waits at a Karachi morgue on September 13 to identify a loved one who perished in the fire. Pic: AFP

## Murder charges filed in Pakistan after 289 die in factory fire

KARACHI – Pakistan registered murder charges on September 13 against factory bosses and government officials over the deaths of 289 people in the country's worst industrial disaster, police said.

Workers were suffocated or burnt alive at the Ali Enterprises garment factory in Karachi, which made ready-to-wear clothing for Western export, when a massive fire tore through the building during the evening shift on September 11.

Up to 600 people were working inside at the time, in a building that officials said had no emergency exits, forcing dozens to jump from upper storeys to escape the flames, but trapping dozens in the basement where they perished.

The government has ordered an inquiry and a senior official told AFP that the two brothers who owned the factory, who are being hunted by the police, have been barred from leaving the country.

The government of Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital, has appointed a retired judge to lead an investigation into the fire, with initial findings expected in a week.

Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city with a population of 18 million, shut down in mourning on September 13 for the deaths.

Relatives spent a second day at hospitals, desperate for news of their loved ones, breaking into wails and sobs when medics confirmed the identity of yet another body.

Mohammad Bakhsh, 60, burst into tears and hugged his teenage grandson outside the Civil Hospital morgue when told that son Mohammad Ashraf's body had been identified.

"We are doomed, it is doomsday for us, Allah will help us to survive," he sobbed.

More than 36 hours after the disaster began, several families were still gathered outside the gutted factory hoping for news of their loved ones. – AFP

## Philippines renames disputed waters

MANILA – President Benigno Aquino said on September 12 that the Philippines had officially named South China Sea waters off the country's west coast the "West Philippine Sea", in a move that could further raise tensions with China.

Aquino said his government would

register the new name with the United Nations as part of efforts to delineate its sovereign territory, even those areas claimed by China or others.

"This is to clarify which are the areas that we are claiming," Aquino told

reporters.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, including waters near the coasts of other countries.

The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to the

waters, making the area one of Asia's potential military flashpoints.

The Philippines has been locked in an increasingly bitter row with China this year over their competing claims.

Ships from both countries

engaged in a stand-off at Scarborough Shoal, a tiny group of islands in the sea, in April, and the Philippines says Chinese vessels remain there.

The Philippines has also accused China of bullying diplomatic tactics.

An administrative order released by the presidential palace on September 12 said the "West Philippine Sea" would be included in government maps and charts.

"In the exercise of sovereign jurisdiction, the

Philippines has the inherent power and right to designate its maritime areas with appropriate nomenclature for purposes of the national mapping system," it said.

"The maritime areas on the western side of the Philippine archipelago are hereby named as the West Philippine Sea."

The Philippine government has been referring to the South China Sea as the "West Philippine Sea" since last year, but this is the first time it has made it official with plans to inform the United Nations. – AFP

**'This is to clarify which are the areas that we are claiming.'**

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## Xi appears for first time in two weeks

BEIJING – China's Vice President Xi Jinping has made his first public appearance in two weeks, state media said on September 15, following swirling speculation about the whereabouts of Beijing's leader-in-waiting.

Xi had not been seen in public since September 1 and cancelled meetings with four foreign dignitaries including visiting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, giving rise to intense speculation about his health.

The vice president arrived at China Agricultural University on September 15 for "activities marking this year's

National Science Popularisation Day", state-run news agency *Xinhua* said.

His unexplained disappearance came at a highly sensitive time for China, which is preparing for a generational handover of power.

On September 13, he made his first public communication since September 1 when state media said he had "expressed condolences on the death of old party comrade Huang Rong", who died on September 6 – a day after Xi missed a planned meeting with Clinton.

The news was published widely in China, but made no mention of Xi's

health, which had been the subject of widespread speculation. Theories about a health problem have ranged from back ache to a heart attack.

Xi has been widely tipped to succeed President Hu Jintao as leader of the ruling Communist Party at a crucial meeting that is expected to be held sometime next month, before taking over as head of state in March.

His disappearance from public view has attracted global attention, as well as some speculation on China's popular but heavily censored microblogs.

China's government has so far given no explanation for his absence. –AFP



Xi Jinping had not been seen in public since September 1. Pic: AFP

### Briefs

#### Korean reunification inevitable, says Lee

OSLO – South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak said on September 12 that the peaceful reunification of his country with North Korea was "inevitable".

"We are the only divided nation in the world and it is inevitable that we (will) come to peaceful reunification at some point," Lee told reporters in Oslo.

The death on December 17 of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il and his replacement by his son Kim Jong-Un have revived debate in South Korea about the chances of reunification, though it is seen as being far off given the persisting tension between the two countries.

#### Arrest made over journalist's killing

PHNOM PENH – A Cambodian military police officer has been arrested in connection with the killing of a journalist who exposed illegal logging activities, police said on September 14.

Hang Serei Oudom, a reporter at the *Vorakchun Khmer Daily*, was found in the boot of his car in northern Ratanakiri province on September 11.

His killing is the latest death in a country where environmental activists regularly face threats.

Rampant illegal logging has contributed to a drop in Cambodia's forest cover from 73 percent in 1990 to 57pc in 2010, says the United Nations.

#### William says he's no fan of durian

KUALA LUMPUR – Britain's Prince William declared on September 14 that he is no fan of durian after the future British king and his wife Catherine were served it during a luncheon hosted by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak the previous day.

At a lunch with business executives in Kuala Lumpur on September 14, William said he was "delighted" that durian was not on the menu.

"Having tasted it yesterday, I feared for the safety of the people I met thereafter," he said, causing the crowd of more than 1000 business figures to erupt in laughter. –AFP

## HK polls a govt setback: papers

HONG KONG – Hong Kong's Beijing-backed government is the big loser from legislative polls despite the poor showing of opposition democratic parties, media reports said on September 11.

Democrats won only 27 seats even though they secured almost 60 percent of the popular vote in the September 9 election, while the establishment camp won 43 seats thanks to an electoral system tilted in favour of big business and vested interests.

The pro-Beijing Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of

Hong Kong is the strongest force with 13 seats in the Legislative Council (Legco), a result hailed as a "huge strategic success" by the state-owned *China Daily* newspaper.

Independent media observers said radical parties did better than mainstream democrats at capitalising on strong anti-government sentiment and frustration with the lack of full democracy in the former British colony.

"The dominance of government allies suggests no easy road" for Beijing-backed government leader Leung Chun-ying, the

*South China Morning Post* said in an editorial.

"The wider political spectrum in a larger Legco means more uncertainties and the need for harder lobbying. There will be more political stunts and resistance from rebel lawmakers.

"The rising support for radical pro-democracy groups and the general anti-communist sentiments... are worrying signs of growing discontent with the government and Beijing – a problem that should not be ignored."

The *Wall Street Journal* said Beijing should "draw

the right lesson" from the election in its semi-autonomous southern territory – that Hong Kong people do not want a political culture imposed on them from above.

Beijing has promised universal suffrage for Hong Kong's next leadership election in 2017, and by 2020 for the legislature.

However, democrats are preparing for a fight amid fears the mainland will try to veto candidates.

The election results mean the democratic bloc retained its critical one-third minority, giving it the power of veto over

changes to the Basic Law that will be required for electoral reform.

The Beijing-backed *Wen Wei Po* daily said the "rise of the radical forces" was a warning to the establishment camp that it had to work harder to win support from younger voters.

Turnout was a near record of about 53pc, fuelled by massive protests against a plan to introduce mandatory Chinese patriotism classes that resulted in a policy backdown by the government on the eve of the election. –AFP

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tables; art (works of-) of wood, wax, plaster or plastic; bed fittings, not of metal; chests, not of metal; cushions; desks; display stands; figurines [statuettes] of wood, wax, plaster or plastic; magazine racks; mattresses; umbrella stands. **Class 35:** The bringing together, for the benefit of others, of a variety of goods, namely household and residential furniture, garden furniture, furniture for commercial use, furnishings, flooring products, soft furnishings and their accessories, lighting apparatus, mirrors, mattresses, beds, office furniture, display units, household goods, racks, bed linen, glassware, carpets, rugs, pictures, painting, works of art, lightings, vases, lampshades, chandeliers, hardware for furniture and doors, household accessories, textile goods, enabling customers to conveniently view and purchase those goods in a retail store; administration of the business affairs of retail stores; marketing [does not include retailing]; advertising; business advice relating to the establishment and business management of retail stores; business management and organization consultancy; advisory services relating to business, commercial and marketing management; analysis of business management systems; preparation and dissemination of advertising material; publication of publicity texts; radio and television advertising and commercials; consultancy, information and business research services all relating to business and management advice, advertising, business administration, marketing and retail services; advisory and consultancy services relating to marketing; setting up, organization, administration, operation and supervision of customer loyalty, sales, incentives and promotional activity schemes and advice, consultancy and information services relating to such services; provision of the aforesaid services provided by means of the global computer network and/or computer database".

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### Japan begins bid to save 'miracle pine'

TOKYO – A lone pine tree that stood as a symbol of hope in Japan, after surviving the huge tsunami that swept away a forest of 70,000, was being cut down on September 12 in a bid to preserve it.

The tree, known as the "miracle pine", will be cut into pieces and treated before being put back together, in a process expected to cost about 150 million yen (US\$1.9 million).

A ritual reflecting the beliefs of Shintoism, Japan's animistic native religion, was carried out on the pine before the delicate process began on the shore at Rikuzentakata, a city badly hit by the March 2011 disaster.

"The process of cutting down could take two days or more, as we need to start cutting branches that can eventually be put back on the trunk," city official Shinya Kitajima told AFP.

He said the trunk of the 27-metre (89-foot) tree will be divided into nine sections, which will be hollowed out and given anti-decay treatment before being reassembled using a carbon spine.

The preservation process will finish in February, the official said, and the tree will be put back where it was, on a spot that was previously a thick shoreline forest. –AFP

### Correction

An *Agence France-Presse* report on Page 29 of *The Myanmar Times* of August 27-September 2 incorrectly named Indira Gandhi as India's president. Indira Gandhi is the president of the Indian National Congress.



## New films show teamwork, says festival organiser

By Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

A SON'S portrait of the relationship between his parents, who were both well-known actors in the 1960s, was the popular winner of the Best Documentary category at the Wathann Film Festival, which was held in Yangon from September 5 to 9.

The announcement at the awards ceremony on September 9 that Ko Aung Nwei Htwe's film *Behind the Screen* (*Pate Karr Ei Nauk Kwal*) had been named Best Documentary generated loud applause from the audience, who were clearly in agreement with the judges.

The 28-minute film follows the divorce of the two actors, Mg Yin Htwe and San San Aye, and depicts the hopes of the director for the well-being of his parents. It combines documentary footage with archival material from the

actors' film careers.

"I didn't make this film especially to show at this film festival, but rather because I wanted to show my feelings as a son. I had no idea about making this film until my mom passed away," Ko Aung Nwei Htwe told the audience at the awards ceremony.

He said that in 2007 he attended Yangon Film School, where he won a scriptwriting contest using material that eventually became part of *Behind the Screen*. Afterward, he started collecting archival material for the film, including old magazines and journals, as well as films in which his parents had appeared.

"For my film, I used original material from my parents without changing anything. My mom had a catalogue with a photo of herself and my dad together, but after the divorce she cut my dad out of the picture. You can

still see her, but only the cutout shape of my father," Ko Aung Nwei Htwe said.

"I also spent six days shooting footage of my dad living his daily life, sleeping, eating and talking about my mom with tears in his eyes."

The Best Short Fiction award was given to Htoo Paing Zaw Oo for his nine-minute film *Long Time No See* (*Ma Twe Tar Kyar Pe*), about friends meeting after spending a long time apart.

Htoo Paing Zaw Oo said he wanted to make a film that he thought would be different from the others in the festival, but he never expected to win a prize.

"I wanted to experiment with the chronology of the story, so the audience can't tell whether events are happening at the beginning or the end of the story. My film doesn't give any message, I just wanted to present my idea," he said.



Ko Aung Nwei Htwe speaks to the audience after receiving his award for Best Documentary at the Wathann Film Festival in Yangon on September 9. Pic: Yadanar

The 22-minute documentary film *Flowerless Garden* (*Pan Ma Pwint The U Yin*), directed by Zaw Naing Oo, won the Best New Vision award. The movie shows the difficult lives of families whose children live in Mon State while their parents work in neighbouring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

"I didn't expect to win any awards at the festival, but I'm very appreciative that I

did," Zaw Naing Oo told the audience.

One of the film festival's directors, artist Nyein Chan Su, said that the 20 films selected for this year's competition were "50 percent improved" from last year, and that local filmmakers demonstrated that they understood the term "teamwork".

"Even with the scripts, background music and subtitles, the competitors tried to work in-depth and as

a team rather than showing off the abilities of one person," he said.

"Last year we held the first Wathann Film Festival and there was also the Art of Freedom Film Festival, so this is the third film festival in our country. We can see that directors are gaining a good idea of how to make documentary films and that they're working harder to make good movies," Nyein Chan Su said.

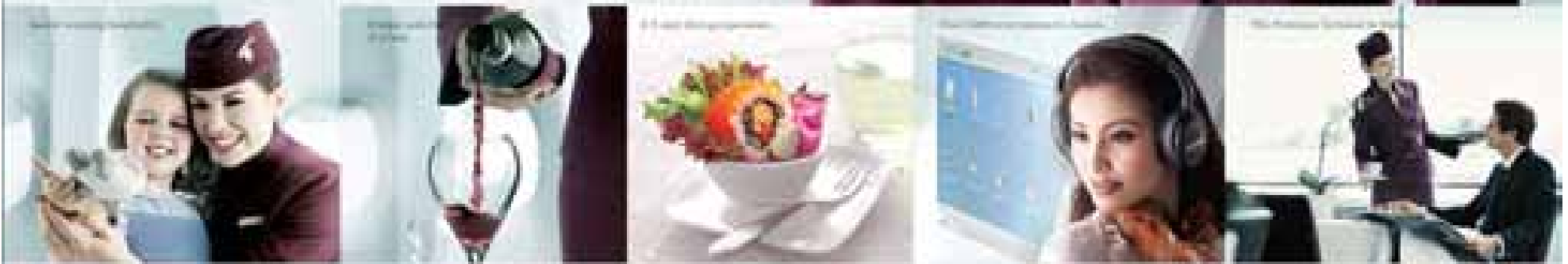
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## Young directors bound for Japan film fest

By Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

THE Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation has chosen three young moviemakers to represent Myanmar at the Asian Children's Film Festival, scheduled to be held in Minamiawaji, Japan, on November 24.

Earlier this year the organisation had called for children under the age of 18 to submit short films on the festival's theme, "The Meaning of Life for You".

About 100 films were submitted, and 12 winners were announced on September 7. From these, three were selected to attend the film festival, along with one official from MMPO.

The selected filmmakers were Ma Su Wint Mon, whose movie *Build up Your Life with Affection* received the highest marks from the judges, followed by Ma Thu Han Thwe's *Life for You* and Ma Yoon Thadar Aung's *Daughter of UNICEF*.

U Myo Zaw Aung, the chairman of MMPO's video subdivision, said the quality of this year's submissions was higher than in the past two years, even through there were fewer contestants this year.

He added that he did not know why there were fewer submissions this year, even though the contest was widely publicised in daily newspapers and other media.

U Myo Zaw Aung said the judges tried very hard to choose the most deserving winners this year, especially because the festival organisers in Japan invited fewer representatives than in the past.

"For the past two years the organisers in Japan invited 10 winners and two officials from Myanmar, but this year they asked for only three winners so we wanted to make sure we picked the best candidates," he said.

He said the festival's organisers had stipulated that the films could be no longer than three minutes, and some "great" submissions had to be disqualified for exceeding that time limit.

"And as it turned out, the second-place winner is the daughter of director Mg Myo Min, but we didn't know that until after the results were announced," he said.

Ma Su Wint Mon's winning film, *Build up Your Life with Affection*, is about two people who spend years hating each other, but finally become close friends after they face a series of difficulties together.

"I heard about this contest at my school but at first I wasn't interested because I'd rather be an actress than a director," said Ma Su Wint Mon, a grade 11 student at Basic Education High School Latha in Yangon, as well as a performance student at Laurel Art Academy.

"But my mother has always taught me how to gain people's affection by speaking politely and trying to understand the views of others. I got the idea to make this short film because to be successful or happy, life should be built up with affection."

She said that after she was finished making her film, she checked and rechecked it more than 20 times before submitting it to the MMPO.

"I showed it to my parents, my siblings and my relatives many times because it was my first attempt at directing. I spent one month shooting in July, then another month checking it over and over, and I only sent it in early September," Ma Su Wint Mon said.

"Now I'm preparing to attend the film festival in Japan and learn Myanmar dance to perform in festival."



The crew of 'Nargis: When Time Stopped Breathing' answer questions at the Wathann Film Festival in Yangon on September 8. Pic: Boothee

## Nargis doc screened in Myanmar for first time

By Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

AMONG the films screened at last week's Wathann Film Festival was a locally produced documentary titled *Nargis: When Time Stopped Breathing*, which, although it was released internationally in 2009, was being shown for the first time in Myanmar.

More than 500 people attended the screening on September 8, the fourth day of the five-day festival that was held at Maha Santi Sukha Buddhist Centre in Tarmwe township, Yangon.

The film was shot almost entirely in the Ayeyarwady delta in the weeks after Cyclone Nargis tore through the region on May 2 and 3, 2008, killing about 140,000 people and destroying the homes of tens of thousands more.

The documentary consisted of interviews with delta residents, mixed with footage of destroyed villages as well as a few clips of the cyclone itself, shot through a window from inside a residence in Yangon.

Most of the people interviewed

in the film told of the hardships they faced during and after the cyclone, including the deaths of loved ones, the loss of homes and property, and the lack of any form of help from the Myanmar government.

Ko Pe Maung Sein, who co-edited the film with The Maw Naing, told the audience at the screening that the film crew wanted to document the "real conditions in the area affected by Nargis" but they faced many challenges in collecting footage.

"We divided into two groups to shoot scenes in the delta. I led one group that followed donors around villages in Bogale township, and my friend The Maw Naing led another group that also took packs of rice and other supplies to hand out to victims," Ko Pe Maung Sein said.

"The most difficult thing was collecting footage in an atmosphere where the government was making announcements that it would punish anyone caught shooting video. So we packed our cameras in plastic bags, and only took them out to shoot when no suspicious or dangerous people were around," he said.

Ko Pe Maung Sein said both groups stayed in the delta for 40 days, and the footage was edited at the end of 2008. Since its release in 2009 *Nargis* has been screened at 16 international film festivals, winning four prizes at festivals in India, Switzerland, France and Nepal.

Ko Thaidi, who served as a cameraman for the documentary and also helped organise the Wathann Film Festival, said the Yangon screening was the first time the filmmakers used their real names in the credits.

"Even though we have won prizes at international film festivals, we were unable to use our real names in the credits. But now we can screen it legally, which makes me happy. I hope all audiences understand that the film was shot by local Myanmar filmmakers according to our own ideas," he said.

"Our film might be different from others about Myanmar that have been made by foreigners, who have their own ideas. Our film is not meant to criticise or blame anyone, but to show the condition and lives of the cyclone victims," he said.

## Another student leader, another book

By Zon Pann Pwint

FOLLOWING closely in the footsteps of U Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, another leader of the 88 Generation Students, Ko Jimmy, launched his book *Lamin Sandar Inle Kantha* (The Moon in Inle Lake) in Yangon on September 6.

The novel, which Ko Jimmy wrote in 2010 while serving a prison sentence in Taunggyi in Shan State, hit store shelves on September 16.

The novel tells the story of a Shan State minister who falls in love with a young businesswoman who imports handmade fabrics produced by residents of Inle Lake. As a result, the minister must reconcile his feelings of love and his political conscience.

"For me it's art that makes my tough life tolerable. I sang and wrote poetry when my life was rough in prison. Then I could handle eating coarse food and sleeping on the rough floor," Ko Jimmy said at the book launch, held at City Star Hotel in Yangon.

While he was in prison Ko Jimmy also translated the mystery-detective novels *Angels and Demons* (2000) and *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) written by American author Dan Brown.

However, he said censors could not decide whether to allow

the translations to be published in Myanmar because "Dan Brown's books raise a storm of controversy".

Among Ko Jimmy's other accomplishments while incarcerated was reading Roberta Leigh's novel *Savage Aristocrat* (1978) in 1995, which he said he "liked very much" and inspired him to want to write a novel with a "broad political background".

"Being a native of the Inle region, I wanted to present the reality of the situation in that area. In 2010 when I was in Taunggyi prison, I could hear the roar of motorboat engines when the water level in nearby Inle Lake rose. So I was always thinking about the lake," he said.

Although he started formulating the story idea in 1995, while serving his first 16-year prison sentence, he didn't actually write it until 2010, during his second prison term. Ko Jimmy was arrested in 1989 and released in 2005, but he was imprisoned again in 2007 and was released on January 13, 2012.

*Lamin Sandar Inle Kantha* is not Ko Jimmy's first published book. Soon after he was released from prison in 2005 he wrote self-help book titled *Mait Phyt Swe Phyt* (Making Friendship), which spent four weeks on the weekly best-seller list compiled by MRTV-4 based on sales at bookstores in Yangon.

While he was in Taunggyi prison he also wrote a collection of politically themed, postmodernist short stories under the pseudonym Pan Pu Lwin Pyin, which was published in Japan.

"In 2007, although writing wasn't officially allowed in prison, officials turned a blind eye to the writing that we were doing," Ko Jimmy said.

Meanwhile, Lucky Seven Film and Video Production bought the rights to *Lamin Sandar Inle Kantha* before publication. Shooting is expected to start next January on location at Inle Lake.

"The novel deals with the affairs of the heart between a Shan State minister and businesswoman with a political background. The novel is a phenomenon - I've never read such a story in the past," U Ohn Win, managing director of Lucky Seven, told *The Myanmar Times*.

"The traditions of Inle Lake are also a highlight of the novel. That's why I want to make it into a film."

Ko Jimmy is continuing a recent trend for leaders of 88 Generation Students to publish books: U Min Ko Naing launched his first novel, *Naut Kyi Hman* (Rearview Mirror) in July, while Ko Ko Gyi released a collection of political interviews titled *Pyaw Chin Lo Pyaw Khae Dar Twe* (Free Expression) on August 28.

## MMPO warns of impostor

THE Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation has issued a warning about a bogus film director who is preying on aspiring actors in Yangon.

The organisation's chairperson, U Zin Wine, said that several actors have reported incidents in which the fake director recruits people to appear in his film, and then demands K95,000 as a religious offering, plus K15,000 to buy registration forms from MMPO.

However, once the impostor receives his money, he disappears and shooting on the film never begins.

He has also reportedly told female actors to be "completely without shame" and willing to expose their bodies, and that they should also be ready to meet the "director" at any hour of the day or night.

"This person is not member of MMPO. I've never heard of him. Victims should report the impostor to MMPO so legal action may be taken," U Zin Wine said.

"Actors mustn't trust an unknown director: Be careful about trying to take shortcuts to stardom. MMPO will soon offer acting and production classes, so agreeing to these sorts of terms is unnecessary."

Director U Hein Soe expressed surprise at the scam.

"I never thought such dishonesty could occur in our film industry. I don't understand what he's out to get, whether it's women or money," he said.

- Lwin Mar Htun

## National art show back after six yrs

THE Myanmar Traditional Artists and Artisans Organisation is seeking artwork and handicrafts for a major exhibition to be held in Yangon in January 2013.

The closing date for submissions is September 20.

The secretary of Myanmar Artists and Artisans Organisation (Central), Ni Po U, told *The Myanmar Times* in an interview on September 7 that high-quality submissions that "do not ignite religious or political conflict" will be selected.

The exhibition will be held at Tatmadaw Hall on U Wisara Road and will showcase arts and handicrafts from various regions of Myanmar.

"Six years have passed since the Myanmar Traditional Artists and Artisans Organisation held a national exhibition. We really hope the exhibition will be a beautiful one for this new organisation," Ni Po U said.

He explained that organisation representatives from around the country attended a conference at the National Museum in Yangon on March 29, where it was agreed to reconstitute the organisation along democratic lines.

"As artists can express themselves more freely than they could in the past, we hope it will be a beautiful exhibition that showcases ideas as well as tradition," he added. - Pinky



# Cambodian novel recalls life under Khmer Rouge

By Ellen McCarthy

WASHINGTON — There was a time in her life when Vaddey Ratner chose silence. By age 11, the reign of the Khmer Rouge had reduced her world to hunger, fear and loss. She wanted to speak of none of it. Ratner was a living skeleton, labouring in the rice fields of Cambodia while death swallowed her family, her country and her spirit.

She survived the terror of the communist revolutionaries and gradually understood that she had to speak again, to tell the world what she'd experienced as a child.

Ratner's young life was scarred by unconscionable tragedy. When she was five years old, she and her family were forced from their idyllic Cambodian home. They were separated, forced into labour camps and brutally enslaved by soldiers from the Khmer Rouge. She nearly starved and was so traumatised by the atrocities ravaging her country that she became mute.

Yet none of it left as deep a mark as this: Ratner survived, only to be haunted by the private belief that the deaths of her father and sister were somehow her fault.

The agony of that black secret is at the heart of Ratner's new book, *In the Shadow of the Banyan*, a fictionalised account of her years under the control of the Khmer Rouge.

It's a story of terror and blight and the human capacity to inflict suffering on one another. But it's also a tale of perseverance, hope and the drive toward life, even under the worst circumstances.

"When we have been exposed to great atrocity and unspeakable brutality, we are faced with a choice," she says. "Do we choose to believe that which will continue us, will perpetuate our life? Or do we choose to believe in that which destroys us?"

Now 41, Ratner is a small woman with high cheekbones and deep brown eyes. She is composed and regal, though she walks with a limp that is the by-product of childhood polio. The Potomac, Maryland, home she shares with her husband and daughter is on a quiet, tree-lined street where there is little to distract her from writing.

She has been writing this story, in one form or another, for more than 35 years.

Ratner's father was a minor Cambodian prince, Neak Ang Mechas Sisowath Ayuravann, the first three words meaning his highness prince (or princess). Ratner's name was Neak Ang Mechas Sisowath Ayuravann Vaddey, the title and family name coming first. Her father's position afforded Ratner's family a life of privilege and protection.

But when the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975 and unrest bubbled across Southeast Asia in the wake of the Vietnam War, the very things that had made



Vaddey Ratner's *'In the Shadow of the Banyan'* is a fictionalised account of her years under the control of the Khmer Rouge. She is shown at her Potomac, Maryland, home. Pic: Washington Post/Bill O'Leary

Ratner's family fortunate — its aristocratic roots and access to education — made it a target.

Ratner took small liberties with her story, which was published last month by Simon & Schuster and has received praise from critics. The main character in *Banyan*, Raami, is seven rather than five when the Khmer Rouge takes hold; Ratner's father was a pilot, not a poet, but the events track closely with those of her own life.

Like Ratner's, Raami's family is ushered out of its home in Phnom Penh and displaced into camps. Again and again, the family is moved and divided as soldiers attempt

out and were eventually brought to the United States as refugees. Experts estimate that about 2 million people died under the Khmer Rouge as a result of execution, starvation or diseases such as malaria, which could have been treated with proper medicine.

Ratner's book is an attempt to keep vigil with those souls, by bringing their memories to life.

"There's no rhyme or reason for why I survived or why a person like my father died," Ratner says with tears in her eyes. "But I have to believe that a part of him lives on in me — and that those who read this book

**'When we have been exposed to great atrocity and unspeakable brutality, we are faced with a choice. Do we choose to believe that which will continue us, will perpetuate our life? Or do we choose to believe in that which destroys us?'**

to tamp down any inklings of community or familiarity. Adults and children are sent to work long days in the fields and made to give up personal belongings.

When soldiers demand that Raami say her father's name, she submits, revealing his ties to royalty. In a scene of overwhelming despair, her father asks Raami to live because he knows that he will not:

"When I lie buried beneath this earth, you will fly. For me, Raami. For your papa, you will soar."

"I didn't respond. I wanted him to stop talking. Whatever it was he was trying to tell me, it sounded like a goodbye."

By the end of the Khmer Rouge's reign in 1979, Ratner would also lose her toddler sister and much of her extended family. She and her mother made it

without knowing me will know my father, too, and will know those lives that were lost, those lives that I felt could be forgotten."

Ratner and her mother landed first in Missouri and then settled in Minnesota, where Ratner was raised with two half-sisters her mother had after the war.

Ratner had stopped speaking during her final months under the Khmer Rouge. "I chose muteness because I couldn't articulate what I was witnessing," she says. But in the United States, she eagerly lapped up English, learning and talking incessantly.

"I was presented with this language that has no bearing, no connection to my past," she says. "I could have a different voice, have a different expression. I could be whoever I wanted to be."

Ratner was valedictorian of her high school class and studied Southeast Asian history and literature at Cornell University. In 1992, at age 21, she returned to Cambodia. She wanted to make sure that her father hadn't somehow survived and was waiting for her, "that I had not abandoned him", she says. "I wanted to be able to say to myself, 'I went back when I could.'"

Of course, he wasn't there. "And that was devastating all over again."

Ratner married at 23 and moved to Washington to work in international affairs. Her husband, Blake, began a career in sustainable development that would lead the couple to Malaysia and Thailand. In 2005, he was asked to take a position in Cambodia.

"That's when I panicked," Ratner recalls. "I did not want to go back."

But in discussions with her husband, she came to see that returning might help salve old wounds and would give their daughter the chance to develop a relationship with the country.

Even as a child, Ratner knew she would write the story of her saga. "I felt that I needed to explain — give an explanation — as an apology for why I survived when many in my family, many in my country did not," she says.

She first tried to write it as a memoir but received only rejection slips from publishers. She put the manuscript away in a drawer. Returning to Cambodia for four years, she realised that the book needed to be fiction and that it needed to be not just her story, but that of a whole people.

Ratner, who had never written a novel before, merged multiple members of her extended family into singular characters and created dialogue when she couldn't remember exact words.

For more than two years, she laboured over the novel. It was more than halfway finished when she moved back to the United States in 2009. An agent signed on quickly, helped her edit the original version and sold the book in an auction to Simon & Schuster.

Oprah Winfrey's *O Magazine* put the piercing, lyrical book on its summer reading list. *People* magazine gave it four stars. *The New York Times Book Review* recommended it as an "Editors' Choice".

Ratner says that after hearing her story, people expect her to be a solemn, downtrodden figure. In fact, she is exuberant, happy and quick to erupt into laughter. Like the girl in the book, she has a sense that she is watched over, that she was meant to survive.

"In the end, what I really wanted to articulate is the strength of our continuity," she says, "our desire to move on, to live."

— *The Washington Post*

# Arab author on Sudan voyage

By Ian Timberlake

KHARTOUM — He speaks with a German accent and prefers coffee to Sudan's favourite, tea, but three decades after last setting foot in his ancestral home Sudan, Arab author Tarek Eltayeb has returned on a voyage of discovery.

Eltayeb, 52, has published 10 books including two novels that chronicle the immigrant experience that shaped his own life.

Born and raised in Egypt to a Sudanese father and Sudanese-Egyptian mother, in 1984 he ended up in Vienna where writing eased the pain of a lonely life in a foreign land as he initially struggled with the German language.

Eltayeb took comfort in Arabic, he said in an interview over coffee and pastries at Khartoum's colonial-era Grand Holiday Villa Hotel.

"I had nothing except my language. I had no money, no relatives, no friends. I had only my language. So I began to use it, to invest my language in writing. And this helped also to protect me at that time, to feel I am at home," said the bearded author with a warm smile. "I made my friends in paper, I made my family in paper. I made my old life in paper."

His "old life" was the 25 years he had spent in Cairo and the Sinai peninsula.

Eltayeb, who is spending September in Sudan hosting readings and discussions, and meeting Sudanese writers, said he never intended to publish his works until he spotted a call for submissions by a London-based Arabic literature magazine.

He began sending his short stories to newspapers and periodicals, which accepted them and led to the publication in Cairo of the anthology, *A Camel Does Not Stop on Red*, in 1993.

Eltayeb graduated with a business degree from Cairo in 1981, the same year Hosni Mubarak took power. Mubarak ended free post-secondary study for non-Egyptian Arabs, making it too expensive for Eltayeb to continue his education, he said.

He hit the road, and spent a few months in Iraq before ending up in Austria. There, he found he could return to university for free as a student from the developing world.

"It was very hard at the beginning," he said, with financial problems adding to the shock of adjusting to sub-zero weather and the German language.

"I didn't have money," he said. "So I began to work as a newspaper seller in the street."

He eventually mastered both the economics and the language — with help from his Austrian wife — earning a doctorate focused on economic philosophy, and then a professorship at the International Management

Centre/University of Applied Sciences in Krems, Austria, where he specialises in Arabic language teaching.

But Eltayeb can't stop writing, often in a Viennese cafe.

His books are piled in front of him on the Khartoum restaurant table, alongside two faded photographs from Cairo university days with his Sudanese friend, Salah Edein Khider. The two have just been reunited.

Khider has brought along a postcard from Arbil, Iraq, which Eltayeb sent him decades ago when he was trying to run a restaurant there.

The author's work includes the novels *The Palm House* and *Cities Without Palms*, volume one of his autobiography, and poetry collections with his own abstract paintings on the cover.

Some of his writings have been translated into English, French, German and other languages.

"I write what I would like to write," not to provoke but to get people to think, Eltayeb said.

"Some people say, 'You are not allowed to write about this or about that.' It's our job to write about everything, and to criticise everything. And criticise does not mean disrespect. It's also respect."

Eltayeb was commenting generally, without mentioning Sudan or anywhere else, but freedom of expression advocates say Khartoum has intensified a media crackdown since last year.

Sudan ranks 170 out of 179 countries on an index of press freedom compiled by the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders watchdog.

Asked about his long absence from Sudan, Eltayeb, an Austrian citizen, said he received many official invitations to return but didn't accept them, preferring instead to come privately when he had time. "I don't need an invitation. I wanted just to come and see the country first and to visit my friends."

He finally got the chance when a Sudanese novelist friend, Abdelaziz Baraka Sakin, arranged this month-long visit through Sudan's short story association, which collected sponsorships for the tour that brings him to eight Sudanese states. Eltayeb said Austria's culture ministry paid for his air ticket.

The visit has generated extensive local news coverage, and Sudan's Ministry of Information and Culture plans to offer a literary prize in Eltayeb's name, the author said.

"When I came to the airport it was a big [official] delegation," he said. "I didn't know them."

But his colleagues from the short story association were also there to welcome him on his return to Sudan for the first time since 1979. — *AFP*

## PISM Graduation Ceremony



Daw Ni Ni Lwin



Daw Ei Shwe Win, Mr Yacoobsiddique, Mr Joseph Charles and Mr Hubert Phillip



U Tun Shwe



Daw Hla Yin Win



Daw Mya Theingi and Daw Mi Mi

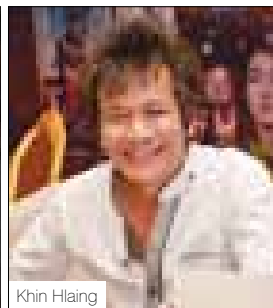
## Actor Si Phyo Movie Launch



Lu Min



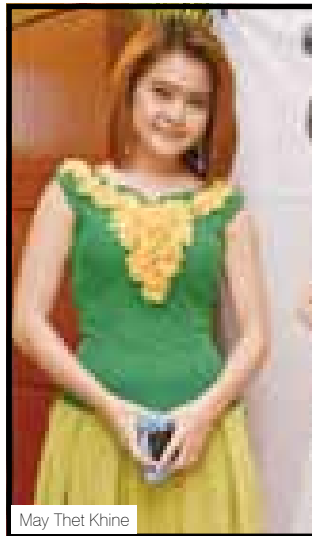
Daw Shwe Zee Kwat and Daw Than Myint Aung



Khin Hlaing



Wine Su Khine Thein, Daw Thi Thi, Si Phyo and Moh Moh Myint Aung



May Thet Khine

DO you think it's fair for Socialite to face a busy calendar, day after day, week after week, while other people spend their time at home? No, it's probably not fair, but it's the privilege of Socialite to happily attend the many, many events to which she is invited. On September 4 she was at the Sedona Hotel for Si Phyo's movie launch event, and the next day she popped in at the Gold Jojoba Night party at Chatrium Hotel. On September 6 Socialite attended a press conference for The Rich Gems at Parkroyal Hotel, and she followed this up the following day with a swing by the Nivea deodorant launch at Junction Square in the afternoon, and then the Kaspersky cocktail party at 1 Two 4 restaurant and DJ lounge in the evening. September 8 was the busiest day of all, but she found time for everything, including the Bio-Essence counter opening at Capital Hyper Mart, the PISM graduation ceremony and the BSC new product launch at Junction Square.

## SOCIALITE

WITH NYEIN EI EI HTWE



## The Rich Gems Press Conference



May Oo Maung



Daw Lu Lu and Daw Khin Khin Lay



Linn Linn and Ko Htay Min Htun



Ma Mya Shwe War and Dr. Yamin Kyaw

## Gold Jojoba Night



Khin Thinn Kyi



Soe Pyae Thazin



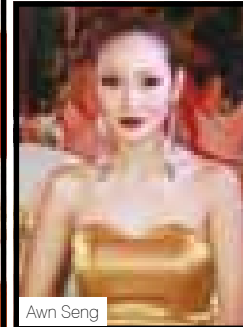
Myint Myat



Kyaw Kyaw Bo and wife



Awn Seng



Okkar Htet (Pop Soul)



Ma Thin Thin Sat and Ma Thet



Sann Thit La



Saudi Arabia Embassy Donation Ceremony



Kaspersky Cocktail Party



Ko Pyae Phyo Win, Ko Nay Myo Win and Ko Aung Thuya

Ma Khine Wai Wai Thwin

Ko Ye Thurein Aung and Ko Lwin Htoo Aung

Nivea Invisible Black and White Deodorant Launch



Alex

Thandar Hlaing

Eint Chit

Ni Ni Khin Zaw

Bio-Essence New Counter Opening

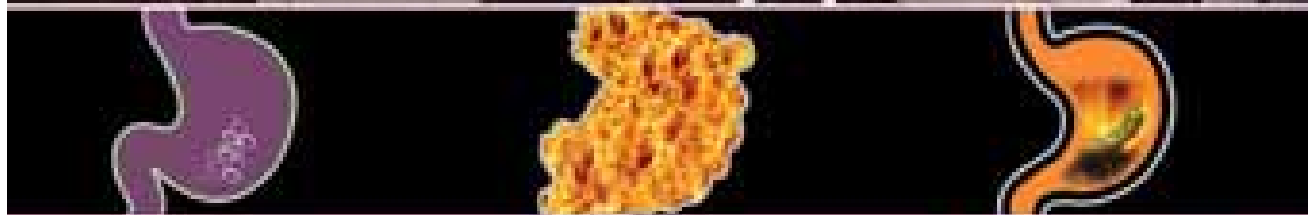


May Phyu Phyu

Mi Sandi

Wint Dari

Ma Julie Zaw



• Flatulent?

• Gastritis?

• Excessive spices?

**Kremil - 5**

Irregular meal, excessive spices, drinking and smoking cause gastric problem and pain. Then, they will be much abdominal pain, bloating, indigestion and flatulence. When this happens, **Kremil - 5** can resolve all gastric problems in the most effective and fastest way.

The fastest most reliable cure to gastric and stomach problems

**Kremil - 5**









A view of the port on the Italian island of Pianosa on August 7. Pic: AFP

# Convicts cook for tourists in Italy

By Gildas Le Roux

PIANOSA ISLAND, Italy — Holidaymakers arriving on the white sands of Pianosa Island off western Italy are welcomed by hosts unlike any others: five prisoners still serving time who help manage a local hotel.

At first sight, there is little to set apart the island, one of seven in the Tuscan Archipelago, with its quaint port, schools of fish and waters as turquoise as those in the Indian Ocean around the Maldives.

The concrete wall of a high security prison attests to its past as a penal colony, where mafia bosses considered particularly dangerous were once sent before the prison closed in 1998.

But a handful of convicted criminals are back on Pianosa, earning their keep and rustling up food for tourists thanks to a program started in 2000 by a local cooperative called San Giacomo in conjunction with the prison on nearby Elba Island.

"It's a really positive initiative. It allows these people to gradually reintegrate into society with a lot less trauma than if they were to leave prison from one day to the next," said

the cooperative's deputy head, Brunello De Batte.

The inmates, each serving a long sentence for undisclosed crimes, have been given contracts to work as barmen, cooks, cleaners, waiters, even gift shop salesmen in the small, 12-room hotel with a bar and restaurant run by the cooperative.

Still considered prisoners, they cannot leave the island and are confined at night to special rooms.

Yet "over the years, I've seen these prisoners mature, take on responsibilities. They are completely changed compared to when they arrived. They have developed a sense of belonging to a group," he said.

Filippo, a 32-year-old Sicilian with piercing blue eyes now in his second year working on Pianosa, said the experience has given him a new sense of self-worth and something to work towards.

"Life has given me a second chance. I feel accepted by society once more," he said, though he added that it is not always easy to win people's trust.

"People are prejudiced and that's normal, but I try right away to switch their opinion," he said as he changed the sheets in the hotel bedrooms.

Pianosa today is a wildlife sanctuary but also draws visitors who remember it as the fictional setting for the World War II squadron trying to keep sane in Joseph Heller's satirical novel *Catch 22*.

Only prisoners who have already served at least two-thirds of their sentence and shown exemplary behaviour can apply to take part in the programme on the island.

"I want to be able to show customers that I am normal. Just because you're a prisoner doesn't mean you have four arms. We are human, and everyone makes mistakes," he said.

At the port, holiday makers tuck into fresh fish caught in the island's pristine waters and prepared by the convicts.

"I think it's a great initiative. I had a fantastic pasta with red mullet last night," said a 30-something tourist named Benedetto, as he strolled with his baby son along the deserted dock.

Organisers consider the program a success, notably in offering job training to inmates. There are no official statistics, but they said prisoners have found work upon release, including one now successfully employed as a mason. — AFP

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr	DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr	DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr	DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr			
<b>YANGON TO BANGKOK</b>				<b>SUN</b>				<b>BANGKOK TO YANGON</b>				<b>THUR</b>						
MON	PG 706	07:15	09:30	MI 519	00:25	05:00	FD 3770	07:15	08:00	MI 512	07:55	09:20	MI 512	07:55	09:20			
	8M 335	07:35	09:20	8M 231	07:55	12:25	TG 303	07:55	08:50	8M 232	13:25	14:55	8M 232	13:25	14:55			
	FD 3771	08:30	10:20	MI 511	10:10	14:45	PG 701	09:15	10:05	MI 518	14:20	15:45	MI 518	14:20	15:45			
	TG 304	09:50	11:45	8M 233	13:20	17:50	8M 336	10:40	11:25	8M 234	18:50	20:20	8M 234	18:50	20:20			
	PG 702	10:55	12:50	MI 517	16:40	21:15	TG 301	13:00	13:55	<b>FRI</b>								
	TG 302	14:55	16:50	<b>YANGON TO SIEM REAP</b>				PG 703	15:00	15:50	MI 512	07:55	09:20	MI 512	07:55	09:20		
	8M 331	16:30	18:15	<b>WED</b>				FD 3772	16:50	17:35	3K 585	09:10	10:40	3K 585	09:10	10:40		
	PG 704	16:40	18:35	<b>SAT</b>				TG 305	17:50	18:45	8M 6231	09:10	10:40	8M 6231	09:10	10:40		
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55	<b>8M 401</b>				8M 332	19:15	20:00	8M 232	13:25	14:55	8M 232	13:25	14:55		
	TG 306	19:45	21:40	<b>MON</b>				PG 705	20:15	21:30	MI 518	14:20	15:45	MI 518	14:20	15:45		
<b>TUE</b>	PG 706	07:15	09:30	<b>MH 741</b>				<b>THUR</b>				<b>SAT</b>						
	8M 335	07:35	09:20	<b>AK 851</b>				FD 3770	07:15	08:00	3K 585	09:10	10:40	3K 585	09:10	10:40		
	FD 3771	08:30	10:20	<b>TUE</b>				TG 303	07:55	08:50	8M 6231	09:10	10:40	8M 6231	09:10	10:40		
	TG 304	09:50	11:45	<b>8M 501</b>				PG 701	09:15	10:05	8M 232	13:25	14:55	8M 232	13:25	14:55		
	PG 702	10:55	12:50	<b>MH 741</b>				8M 336	10:40	11:25	MI 518	14:20	15:45	MI 518	14:20	15:45		
	TG 302	14:55	16:50	<b>AK 851</b>				TG 301	13:00	13:55	MI 520	15:20	16:40	MI 520	15:20	16:40		
	8M 331	16:30	18:15	<b>WED</b>				PG 703	15:00	15:50	MI 520	22:00	23:30	MI 520	22:00	23:30		
	PG 704	16:40	18:35	<b>8M 501</b>				FD 3772	16:50	17:35	<b>SUN</b>							
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55	<b>MH 741</b>				TG 305	17:50	18:45	MI 512	07:55	09:20	MI 512	07:55	09:20		
	TG 306	19:45	21:40	<b>AK 851</b>				8M 332	19:15	20:00	8M 232	13:25	14:55	8M 232	13:25	14:55		
<b>WED</b>	PG 706	07:15	09:30	<b>THU</b>				PG 705	20:15	21:30	MI 518	14:20	15:45	MI 518	14:20	15:45		
	8M 335	07:35	09:20	<b>8M 501</b>				<b>WED</b>				8M 234	18:50	20:20	8M 234	18:50	20:20	
	FD 3771	08:30	10:20	<b>MH 741</b>				FD 3770	07:15	08:00	<b>KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON</b>							
	TG 304	09:50	11:45	<b>AK 851</b>				TG 303	07:55	08:50	MON	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MON	MH 740	10:05	11:15
	PG 702	10:55	12:50	<b>SAT</b>				PG 701	09:15	10:05	8M 502	14:00	15:00	8M 502	14:00	15:00		
	TG 302	14:55	16:50	<b>8M 501</b>				8M 336	10:40	11:25	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
	8M 331	16:30	18:15	<b>MH 741</b>				TG 301	13:00	13:55	<b>TUE</b>							
	PG 704	16:40	18:35	<b>AK 851</b>				PG 703	15:00	15:50	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15		
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55	<b>SUN</b>				FD 3772	16:50	17:35	8M 502	14:00	15:00	8M 502	14:00	15:00		
	TG 306	19:45	21:40	<b>MH 741</b>				TG 305	17:50	18:45	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
<b>THUR</b>	PG 706	07:15	09:30	<b>AK 851</b>				8M 332	19:15	20:00	<b>WED</b>							
	8M 335	07:35	09:20	<b>YANGON TO GAUNGZHOU</b>				PG 705	20:15	21:30	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15		
	FD 3771	08:30	10:20	<b>WED</b>				<b>THUR</b>				8M 502	14:00	15:00	8M 502	14:00	15:00	
	TG 304	09:50	11:45	<b>CZ 3056</b>				FD 3770	07:15	08:00	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
	PG 702	10:55	12:50	<b>THUR</b>				TG 303	07:55	08:50	<b>FRI</b>							
	TG 302	14:55	16:50	<b>8M 711</b>				PG 701	09:15	10:05	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15		
	8M 331	16:30	18:15	<b>SAT</b>				8M 336	10:40	11:25	8M 502	14:00	15:00	8M 502	14:00	15:00		
	PG 704	16:40	18:35	<b>CZ 3056</b>				TG 301	13:00	13:55	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55	<b>SUN</b>				PG 703	15:00	15:50	<b>SAT</b>							
	TG 306	19:45	21:40	<b>8M 711</b>				FD 3772	16:50	17:35	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15		
<b>FRI</b>	PG 706	07:15	09:30	<b>YANGON TO TAIPEI</b>				TG 305	17:50	18:45	8M 502	14:00	15:00	8M 502	14:00	15:00		
	8M 335	07:35	09:20	<b>MON</b>				8M 332	19:15	20:00	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
	FD 3771	08:30	10:20	<b>CI 7916</b>				PG 705	20:15	21:30	<b>SUN</b>							
	TG 304	09:50	11:45	<b>TUE</b>				<b>THUR</b>				MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15	
	PG 702	10:55	12:50	<b>CI 7916</b>				FD 3770	07:15	08:00	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
	TG 302	14:55	16:50	<b>WED</b>				TG 303	07:55	08:50	<b>FRI</b>							
	8M 331	16:30	18:15	<b>CI 7916</b>				PG 701	09:15	10:05	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15		
	PG 704	16:40	18:35	<b>FRI</b>				8M 336	10:40	11:25	8M 502	14:00	15:00	8M 502	14:00	15:00		
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55	<b>CI 7916</b>				FD 3772	16:50	17:35	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
	TG 306	19:45	21:40	<b>THUR</b>				TG 305	17:50	18:45	<b>SAT</b>							
<b>SAT</b>	PG 706	07:15	09:30	<b>CI 7916</b>				8M 332	19:15	20:00	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15		
	8M 335	07:35	09:20	<b>YANGON TO KUNMING</b>				PG 705	20:15	21:30	8M 502	14:00	15:00	8M 502	14:00	15:00		
	FD 3771	08:30	10:20	<b>MON</b>				<b>FRI</b>				AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20	
	TG 304	09:50	11:45	<b>MU 2032</b>				FD 3770	07:15	08:00	<b>SUN</b>							
	PG 702	10:55	12:50	<b>TUE</b>				TG 303	07:55	08:50	MH 740	10:05	11:15	MH 740	10:05	11:15		
	TG 302	14:55	16:50	<b>CA 906</b>				PG 701	09:15	10:05	AK 850	17:10	18:20	AK 850	17:10	18:20		
	8M 331	16:30	18:15	<b>WED</b>				8M 336	10:40	11:25	<b>GUANGZHOU TO YANGON</b>							
	PG 704	16:40	18:35	<b>MU 2032</b>				FD 3772	16:50	17:35	WED	CZ 3055	08:40	10:30	WED	CZ 3055	08:40	10:30
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55	<b>CA 906</b>				TG 305	17:50	18:45	THUR	8M 712	14:15	15:50	THUR	8M 712	14:15	15:50
	TG 306	19:45	21:40	<b>THUR</b>				8M 332	19:15	20:00	SAT	CZ 3055	08:40	10:30	SAT	CZ 3055	08:40	10:30
<b>SUN</b>	PG 706	07:15	09:30	<b>MU 2032</b>				PG 705	20:15	21:30	SUN	8M 712	14:15	15:50	SUN	8M 712	14:15	15:50
	8M 335	07:35	09:20	<b>CA 906</b>				<b>SAT</b>				<b>TAIPEI TO YANGON</b>						
	FD 3771	08:30	10:20	<b>MON</b>				FD 3770	07:15	08:00	MON	CI 7915	07:15	10:10	MON	CI 7915	07:15	10:10
	TG 304	09:50	11:45	<b>TUE</b>				TG 303	07:55	08:50	TUE	CI 7915	07:15	10:10	TUE	CI 7915	07:15	10:10
	PG 702	10:55	12:50	<b>MU 2032</b>				PG 701	09:15	10:05	WED	CI 7915	07:15	10:10	WED	CI 7915	07:15	10:10
	TG 302	14:55	16:50	<b>CA 906</b>				8M 336	10:40	11:25	FRI	CI 7915	07:15	10:10	FRI	CI 7915	07:15	10:10
	8M 331	16:30	18:15	<b>THUR</b>				TG 301	13:00	13:55	<b>KUNMING TO YANGON</b>							
	PG 704	16:40	18:35	<b>MU 2032</b>				PG 703	15:00	15:50	MON	MU 2031						



## Chefs the new US diplomats

By Tom Sietsema

WASHINGTON — Mike Isabella originally intended to leave for Greece and Turkey last month for 15 days of research in anticipation of his forthcoming restaurant, Kapnos. But when his country called, the former “Top Chef” contestant and creator of Graffiato and Bandolero in Washington added some embassy stops and restaurant and vendor meetings to his overseas itinerary.

Isabella is one of the first chefs to be tapped by the United States State Department to serve as a culinary ambassador abroad, part of an ambitious new undertaking to use food as a diplomatic tool. Initiated by US chief of protocol Capricia Penavic Marshall and blessed by her boss, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership aims to “elevate the role of culinary engagement in America’s formal and public diplomacy efforts”, according to a mission statement.

The initiative, in partnership with the James Beard Foundation, named for the late dean of American cooking, was officially announced at the State Department on September 7 at a reception featuring some of the nation’s premiere chefs and pedigreed products.

“James used to say, ‘food is our common ground,’” says foundation president Susan Ungaro. “He would be thrilled [by chefs] getting recognition in ways they never have before.”

The wide-ranging effort creates an American Chef Corps, a network of culinary leaders who could be deployed to promote US cooking and agricultural products abroad.

“They might meet with an embassy, cook a lunch, post blogs or [write] articles, speak at events,” says Marshall, listing the many ways participants might engage.

American chefs who aspire to medals from the James Beard Foundation and to stars from Michelin now have something else to aim for: navy-blue jackets set off with an American flag, the seal of the State Department and their names embroidered in gold on the front. The State Chef designation will be reserved for industry members who have distinguished themselves by, say, serving a meal for the State Department or hosting a foreign delegation.

Among the 20-plus anointed State Chefs are the Washington area’s Jose Andres, who cooked for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms last year; former White House chef Walter Scheib; Vikram Sunderam, who introduced local schoolchildren to “A Taste of India” at a cultural exchange at Blair House three years ago; and Bryan Voltaggio, who prepared a three-course dinner for Japan’s prime minister at the National Geographic Museum in April; plus the travelling Isabella.



Bryan Voltaggio, who prepared a three-course dinner for Japan’s prime minister last April, will be one of the State Chefs. Pic: Washington Post/Astrid Riecken

Headliners from elsewhere include British-born chef April Bloomfield of the Spotted Pig in New York, who made lunch for the British prime minister in March, and Mexican-food maestro Rick Bayless of Frontera Grill and Topolobampo in Chicago. Bayless cooked at the Obama administration’s second state dinner in 2010, for the Mexican president.

Unofficially until last week, the Beard foundation in recent years advised the State Department on chef talent. For a lunch for the vice president of China in February, for instance, the foundation identified Ming Tsai, the Chinese American chef of Blue Ginger in Wellesley, Massachusetts — and freshly minted state chef.

**‘Factoring in others’ tastes, ceremonies and values is an overlooked and powerful part of diplomacy.’**

During the Chicago NATO Summit in May, world leaders saw not chafing dishes, but snack-size tastes of the Windy City: finger foods including mini deep-dish pizzas, popcorn and pierogis. For speed and convenience, the small plates in the leaders-only lounge were arranged on a tiered buffet.

“All of our eating is purposeful,” wherever it takes place, says US deputy chief of protocol Natalie Jones. “There’s a message behind everything.”

The launch with the James Beard Foundation will be message-rich: Buy, and try, American products.

Clinton’s interest in food dates to her days as first lady, when Marshall served as her social secretary, and the super-frequent-flyer’s enthusiasm has only broadened since. While hunger, security and nutrition issues are at the top of the secretary of state’s food agenda, she has encouraged her staff to come up with fresh ways of extending hospitality to foreign guests who are possibly jet-lagged or on a different body clock.

A holding room might come with tea flavoured to remind them of home (hibiscus for the Mexicans, cardamom for the Indians). Table accompaniments now include spreads, flatbreads and nuts: welcoming snacks for visitors who might not have seen food for a while or who must wait for a speech before getting a full meal.

“Factoring in others’ tastes, ceremonies and values is an overlooked and powerful part of diplomacy,” Clinton responded to a request from *The Washington Post*. “The working meals I attend with foreign leaders build stronger bonds between countries and offer an important setting to further the vital diplomatic work we conduct every day.”

The kick-off is being supported with public and private funds. Among the contributors are Mars, the food manufacturing giant, and Lenox, the high-end china and gift producer. “Finding partners has not been difficult,” says Marshall. The Diplomatic Culinary Partnership “is good for American business”.

The food ambassadors are unpaid emissaries who donate their time and effort. “We’re appealing to their sense of patriotism,” says Jones. Before he took off for Greece and Turkey, Isabella said that the request from the State Department was such an honour, “I would pay out of my own pocket to do this.”

So he did. Chefs can “represent their country when it works for them”, says Ungaro of the James Beard Foundation.

Food — what it is, where it is, how it looks — “changes the tone and tenor” of high-stakes meetings, says Marshall. Her boss isn’t the only world leader to agree. “If your dish is a miss, it’s more difficult to plead a cause,” French President Francois Hollande told the Club des Chefs des Chefs at a Paris gathering of chefs of political leaders from around the world in July.

Over two decades, Clinton has learned how matters of the table can burnish her legacy.

As first lady, she hired Scheib away from the Greenbrier resort and did away with what he calls the “quasi-French, quasi-California” White House food of the past. Clinton published her own Martha Stewart-style coffee table book, *An Invitation to the White House: At Home With History*.

“She’s already been the entertainer-in-chief,” says US deputy chief of protocol Mark Walsh.

Clinton has also developed adventurous tastes. During a recent trip to Hanoi, she was encouraged to sample the Metropole Hotel’s European dining rooms. Instead, Clinton insisted on seeking out a Vietnamese menu. At home and abroad, the secretary of state is known to favour spicy food and exotic flavours. But hold off on game, frisee, shellfish and undercooked meat, say those who have made meals for her.

The brokers of the food drive hope it’s around a long time, no matter who’s in office. “There is a reservoir of knowledge” now, says Marshall. “We don’t want to lose it.”

— *The Washington Post*



### YOUR STARS

By Astrologer  
Aung Myin Kyaw

**Aquarius** **Jan 20 - Feb 18**

Your vision might be free from superstition or prejudice of any kind, but your spotlight of truth is a little off the mark when it comes to illuminating the positive. Your lack of courtesy makes it difficult for others to enjoy your company in social situations. Don’t lose your focus on your own education. Your constant involvement in the affairs of others will act as a barrier to understanding your own heart.

**Pisces** **Feb 19 - Mar 20**

Your belief in fate will incline you to harbouring strange fantasies that are beyond reason. Use friendship, one of the most important spheres of your life, to build important social connections. Forget hidden opportunities but freshen your mind through meditation to add value to your life and maximise self-understanding. Love needs to be alive in your soul in order to maintain a healthy and harmonious nature.

**Aries** **March 21 - April 19**

Reduce selfishness in social relationships. Only when you stop focusing on your own well-being will you become important to others. Humility is not the same as weakness or timidity; it will in fact help you cultivate honesty and self-respect. Your needs will be fulfilled by the honour of our solar system. Love should not make you suffer, but rather make your heart harmonious.

**Taurus** **April 20 - May 20**

Respect is an important ingredient in life that everyone deserves to be accorded. Your destiny as an individual is to serve rather than rule, and your main source of development is spiritual expansion that will help you understand the thoughts of others. A short journey will make you feel fresh and happy. Nobody can harness your emotional desires, but you should learn to manage them yourself when pursuing love.

**Gemini** **May 21 - June 20**

Remember that it is the nature of all living things to age, and you are no exception. Remain as free as possible throughout your life, and use your talkative nature to your own advantage. Your longing for new interests and your impatience with routine can lead to brilliant results in literature. Pursue your need for partnership on a high level.

**Cancer** **June 22 - July 22**

Understand that you are not a cosmic accident, but the culmination of the entire natural order. You have been created to perform a peculiar and important function in harmony with your environment. Your social outlook must be clear to see the truth. Pride is dangerous and can gradually kill your harmonious nature. Taking too many emotional risks can become unhealthy.

**Leo** **July 23 - Aug 22**

The world’s situation is not always in your favour. There can be no world and no life without problems. To maintain self-confidence, remain aware of your mind and its relationship with the reality outside of your own head. Learn to come to terms with the ever-changing world rather than clinging blindly to traditional customs and manners. Be courageous in your every action.

**Virgo** **Aug 23 - Sept 22**

Your splendid power of discrimination allows you to easily classify and recognise at a glance the potential value of others, and to put them to work accordingly. Accuracy and method are very important, and your careful ways with finance can lead to success in the position of banker. A keen eye for monetary affairs is needed without fail. You must confirm your own words to build a stable romance.

**Libra** **Sept 23 - Oct 22**

Exercise daily to build your self-confidence. Become interested in a particular job or profession that suits you, and pursue it with all of your energy. Your responsibility is to use all the talent at your disposal and develop it to the fullest extent possible. God manifests within you as an abiding sense of love.

**Scorpio** **Oct 23 - Nov 21**

Tingling physical pain or sharp mental pain is all too often aimed at the wrong people at the wrong time, and as a result you will feel frustrated and discontented. The strong sense of pride that you harbour inside your soul sometimes prevents your penetrating eyes from seeing the truth within. Introspection by meditation is the best way to make yourself healthy and harmonious.

**Sagittarius** **Nov 22 - Dec 21**

Waiting is a strategy that should not be overlooked in all kinds of situations. Sometimes a small span of determined silence can do wonders. There are times when it is important to keep your mouth shut with a view to resisting injustice, consoling a friend or straightening out a misunderstanding. Hidden Cupid is waiting in the wings to create love within you.

**Capricorn** **Dec 22 - Jan 19**

Never feel nervous about encouraging yourself to take action even if no one else agrees. Life is not a 100-metre dash but a marathon. True discipline will fulfil your inner potential to develop creative power, with which you can beautify and purify yourself. Ready yourself to tolerate those in your social circle who make a habit of casting undeserved blame. Learn more about today and yesterday, for tomorrow you must work to create love.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
113 Thamin Bayan Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon.  
Tel: 0973135632, Email: williameaste@gmail.com



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**AMDA** is seeking a dedicated person to work as a (1) **Civil Engineer** for 'Community Based Healthy Village Project' at Myit Chay Field Office, Pakokku, Magwe Division: University degree in Civil Engineering or AGTI (Civil). 3 years experience in construction work & project related environment. NGO/INGO experience would be an asset. Good knowledge of Watsan technical & construction activities. Good command of English & Myanmar. Good computer skill. Pls enclose C.V., copies of testimonials (references) & photograph (passport size), & send it to Senior Office, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office 19-B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin, Ph: 578353. Email: amda@mptmail.net.mm Closing date: 21st September 2012

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Officer, Admin/Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office: 19-B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin Ph: 578353. E-mail: amda@mptmail.net.mm, Closing date: 21st September 2012

**MEDECIN du Monde (MDM)** is seeking **Behavior Change Communication Officer**, 1 post in Yangon: Graduate. Fluent English (oral & written). Knowledge in Basic photoshop software and its tools. Knowledge in basic principles of Budget management. Pls submit CV & a cover letter to MDM Yangon Office: 2, Aung Dhama Yeik Thar St, Hlaing, Ph: 664352, 660948. Email: hr.mdmmyanmar@gmail.com

**BURNET INSTITUTE Myanmar** is seeking (1) **Technical Specialist (Harm Reduction Technical Area)** 1 post (2) **Technical Specialist (Maternal & Child Health Technical Area)** 1 post: Detailed information can be assessed at Burnet Institute Myanmar office. Pls submit an application letter, curriculum vitae with recent passport photo & copies of relevant documents to: HR Officer Burnet Institute Myanmar: 226, 2nd Flr, Wizaya Plaza, U Wisara Rd, Bahan (OR) Email: burnet.myanmar@gmail.com Note: Submitting application with hard copies are preferable. Closing date: September 20, 2012. All positions will be based in Yangon.

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**MANAGER, Liaison & Documentation**, required for Industrial House. Presentable & Communicable M/F. Knowledge of Myanmar Banking (MICB), & Government Departments in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw. Will develop and lead team of capable Assistants. Knowledge of English. CV with 2 references. Pls call for Appointment 01 401093, 09-49323284.

**AN INT'L Media Co.** is seeking for: (1) **Advertising Sales & Marketing Executives** (2) **English language Business News Editor & Writers**. Requirements: Bachelor Degree or Higher, Good command of English, Experience Preferred. Send CV with recent Photo to: Tharaphu Decor Co., Ltd: 22 (A), Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Bahan, Email: marchetti@yangon@gmail.com Ph: 951-8603288, (951) 552886 Ext: 105/106

**WEARE** currently seeking (1) **Secretary** - M/F 1 Post: Bachelor Degree Holder, Fluent in English, 2 years experiences (2) **Admin / HR Officer** - M/F 1 Post: Bachelor Degree holder, Good command in English, Multitasking, good communication, administrative & organizational skills are essential. (3) **Driver** - M 2 Posts: Driving license (Black or Red),

2 years experiences. Pls submit CV with 2 recent photos, copies of relevant qualifications, labor registration, & copy of NRC to Myanmar Agri-Tech Ltd. Rm-504, 5th Flr FMI Center, 380, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Babedan HO Office Ph: 240360 ext-1524: 09-5009527.

**STAFF REQUIRED**, needs to be technologically savvy & has banking / fsi experience, salary 2500USD to 3000USD, to be stationed in Yangon. At least 3 years experience, must include 2 references with contact details (one must be previous employer). Pls send resume to moelwin999@gmail.com.

**SMART Group of Companies** is seeking (1) **Environment Engineer** (Based - Kanbaw, Dawei) M 1 Post (2) **Electrician** (Based - Kanbaw, Dawei) M 4 Posts (3) **Instrumentation Engineer** (Based - Kanbaw, Dawei) M 1 Post (4) **Logistics Coordinator** (Based - Kanbaw, Dawei) M 15 Posts (5) **Project Coordinator** (Based - Kanbaw, Dawei) M 2 Posts. Pls send CV, 2 passport photos, copy of NRC card, academic transcripts (copy) & testimonial documents to City Bank Building 4th Flr, Banyardala Rd, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Ph: 09-8616730, 09-8616731, during 2 weeks.

**GSJ CO., LTD** is seeking: **Secretary** - F: Age 23 ~ 35, University Graduate Working hours: 8:30 am ~ 5:00pm. Language: Korean or Japanese Salary: Negotiation. Pls submit CV with other documents to No.2, Aung Thu Kha St, 9 Mile, Mayangone, Yangon. Ph: 661887, 0973186094

(1) **WEB DESIGNER** - 3 Posts: Design expert, 3 years of experience, Creative portfolio is essential (2) **Web Developer** - 2 Posts: Demonstrated ability to code & program on PHP Programming languages both autonomously and effectively within a team environment, Knowledge in CMS (Joomla) (3) **Networking** - 2 Posts (4) **Journal Layout Designer** - 1 Post: Photoshop in Design, Experience in related fields. Pls submit CV with other documents to Media Lane, The Creative Agency, Ph: 01-430 897, 01 553 918

**MYANMAR AUTO Corporation** is looking for (1) **Manager** (Agricultural B.H.D) Oil-palm plantation experience at least 5 years (2) **Assistant Manager** (Agricultural B.H.D) experience with oil-palm plantation Ph: 66260209-49317989 myanauto@gmail.com Both positions need to be able to live at countryside.

**PEACE Myanmar Electric Co., Ltd.** is seeking (1) **Branch Manager** - M 2 Posts: M.B.A (or) D.M.A (or) Any Graduate with Management Diploma. 5 years experiences in Management & knowledge for TQM & ISO. Be able to speak & write English. Advance computer literate. Age above 40. (2) **Sales Engineer** - M 5 Posts: B.E/B.Tech (or) AGTI (Electrical/ Electronic). 2 years experience in Factory Automation & Industrial Product. Computer literate & able to speak & write English. Age under 35. (3) **Sales Engineer** - M 5 Posts: B.E/B.Tech/AGTI (Electrical/ Electronic). Age 25-40 Strong

working experience in Solar System Products. Computer literate & able to speak and write in English. (4) **Manager** (Project/Data Analysis) - M 2 Posts: Graduate with M.B.A (or) Management Diploma. Age 30 ~ 45. Excellent in English. Computer literate, ability to speak & write English. (5) **Store Keeper** - M 6 Posts: Any Graduate. 2 years experience & knowledge in store. Computer literate and ability to use Microsoft Office. Age under 30 (6) **Receptionist** - F 5 Posts: Any Graduate. Able to speak English. Age under 25. (7) **Computer Operator** - M/F 5 Posts: Any Graduate. Must be able to use Microsoft Office & Adobe Page Maker, Photoshop. Ability to use English & Myanmar font. 2 years experience Age under 35 (8) **Sales & Marketing Staff & Executive** - M/F 10 Posts: Any Graduate (or) B.E (or) B.Tech (or) AGTI (Electronics/ Mechanical/ Mechanical). Marketing Diploma (or) Certificate. 2 years experience. Be able to speak & write English. Computer literate. Age under 35. (9) **AutoCAD** - M/F 3 Posts: B.E (Mechanical) (or) AGTI (Mechanical). Able to 2D, 3D Design. 2 years experience. Age under 30. (10) **Web Developer** (or) **Software Engineer** - M 3 Posts: 2-3 years experience. SQL familiar. Understanding VB6. Under 30 years old. (11) **Hardware Engineer** - M 1 Post: 2-3 years experience. Age under 30. Pls submit CV with relevant documents to: 37/139, Botahtaung Pagoda Rd, Botahtaung. Ph: 202117 (5 Lines).

**YOUNG INTERN photographer** required for a 12 months contract ASAP: University students can apply. Must have good sense of photography. Starting pay: USD 200-300. Camera will be provided. Pls submit applications to HR Solutions @ zenithpowermyanmar.com.

**AQUAMARINE SHIPPING:** We are one of the leading Shipping/Forwarding Companies in Myanmar & currently looking for **Marketing Manager** for necessary expansions of our worldwide services. Age 25 ~ 35, M or F. University graduate. Very good command of English. 3 years experience in the field of shipping (experiences as a marketing manager will be an advantage). Must have leadership, excellent & strong communications & interpersonal skills, as well as basic knowledge of Microsoft office 2007 applications (Excel, Word, Outlook Express). Good team worker. Pls submit the application, resume & recommendation letters to # 503, Excel Treasure Tower, 520, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Shwe Gone Dine, Bahan, Ph: 552674, 552676. Closing date: 21st Sept 2012

**ENCHANTING Myanmar Travel & Tours** is seeking **Operation Staff** 1 Post: English (4 Skills), MS. Word, Excel, Email & Internet, 2 years experience in Tour Operation. Pls submit CV with other documents to Rm 001, Shopping Arcade, Inya Lake Hotel: 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd Yangon Ph: 09-421-140414, 09-731-39194

**SMART GROUP of Companies** is seeking (1) **Secretary to President (Attractive Salary)** - F 1 Post: Bachelor Degree or Master Degree Holder, Fluent in English, 2 years experience (2) **F & B Manager** - M (1) Post: Age under 35, Bachelor Degree or Diploma in Hospitality Management, Good in English, 2 years experience. (3) **Administrator** - M 1 Post: Age under 30, Bachelor Degree in Administration or Management, Good in English, 2 years experience (4) **Translator (Attractive Salary)** - M 4 Posts: Based Kanbaw, Dawei Town, Tanintharyi State, Translation in Chinese & Myanmar, Certificate in Chinese, 2 year experience. (5) **Asst. Internal Auditor** - F 1 Post: B.Com or Diploma in Accounting, Good in English (6) **Asst. Accountant** - F 1 Post: Any Graduate, Diploma in Accounting or LCCI Level 3, (7) **Office Staff (Attractive Salary)** - M 1 Post: Based Kanbaw, Dawei Tanintharyi state, Able to speak Chinese, Fluent in English, Computer literate (8) **Driver** M (2) Posts: driving license (black or red), 1 or 2 years experience. Pls send CV, 2 passport photos, other documents to City Bank Building 4th Flr, Banyardala Rd, Mingalar Taung Nyunt. Ph: 09-861-6730, 09-861-6731 within 2 weeks.

**ORYX Int'l General Svc's Co., Ltd.** is seeking (1) **Computer Operator** - F 2 Post: Good in English, 5 years experience in Internet, Email, Office word, excel, page-maker & photoshop (2) **Admin Officer** - F 1 Post: Good in English, leadership skills, age over 35, computer skills & knowledge of routine administration, strong personality. Able to work under stress situation (3) **Office Staff** - F 2 Post: Good in English, age over 30, computer knowledge, above 5 years experience. Salary will depend on experience & qualification. Submit details resume to Rm. 806, Yuzana Tower, Shwe Gone Daing Junction, Bahan Tel: 558398, 09-430-66708

**AEKAR** Company Limited is looking for water purifying equipments distribution business. (1) **Sale Representative** - M/F 5 Posts: (B.Sc, Science Graduate, A.G.T.I/ G.T.C (Mechanical, Food & Chemical) is preferable). Good command in English. (2) **Administrator** - F (1) Post: Any Graduate (3) **Accountant** - F 1 Post: B.Com or ACCA Acceptable (CPA is preferable), 3 years experience in accounting field (4) **Engineer/ Technician** - M 2 Posts: B.E / A.G.T.I / G.T.C (Mechanical, Food & Chemical) (5) **Driver** - M 1 Post. Pls send C.V with 2 recent photos, photocopies of labor registration card, Recommendation from police force, education certificate & other documents to Block (A), Rm (G-12), Cor of Sayar San St & Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Pearl Condo, Bahan Ph: 09-49312539, 09-4211 49877

**THE PAING SOE Co., Ltd.** seek (1) **Graphic Designer** - M/F 1 post: Possess a Diploma/ Degree in Graphic Design. 2 years experience in graphic designing. Expert Proficiency in design software such as Illustrator & Photoshop.

Excellent organizational, presentation & communication skills. Pls submit a current resume or curriculum vitae with recent photo, labor registration card, NRC card copy & expected salary, should be attached together to Ms Word or PDF Format via: ict@thetpaingsoe.com.mm For faster processing, pls indicate the below information in your resume: Current & Expected salary. Reason(s) for leaving. Availability to commence work. Recent photo to 45, Pyay Rd, 71/2 Miles, Mayangone. Ph: 660-9223, 662749. within 3 weeks.

**WEARE** premium Interior Design company with offices in Singapore & Myanmar **Interior Designer / Draftman (Kitchen & Wardrobe Specialist)** Responsibilities: We are looking for an experienced interior designers who can design dazzling commercial & residential designs. The designer must be able to produce AUTO CAD, 3D Max renders with ease, as well as, accurate construction / on drawings. Requirements: Diploma/Degree in interior Design or Architecture. 2 years of ID experience but fresh graduates are welcome. Good CAD, 3D rendering & Photo-shop skills. Experienced in production drawings is a must. Able to work independently. Basic English. Projects manage the timely delivery of jobs.

**Others:** Good Salary. Work with International Design Team. Great experience. This is a great opportunity. Good team and good career growth awaits the successful candidate. Pls apply via email to info@agop.asia with an updated resume (with a recent passport size photo) and pictures with description of completed projects. Pls indicate your last drawn salary & your availability to commence work.

**WEBSITE Trainer** (HTML, CSS, JS, DW, XML) - M/F 2 posts, Network & A+ Trainer - M/F 1 post. Pls submit to BLDG 5, Rm 4, MICT Park. Email: m3wi.ats@gmail.com, Ph: 652288.

**ENGLISH Language teachers** - 3 posts wanted: For English language learning centre, Min 2 years English language teaching experience. Must have bachelor degree. Must be 30 years old & over. More details contact: tun.john@gmail.com or 09 524 1687.

**CREATION (Myanmar) Co., Ltd** is seeking (1) **Marketing Manager** - 2 Posts. (2) **Marketing Executive** - 2 Posts. (3) **Merchandising Executives** - 2 Posts. (4) **Frontline Manager** - 2 Posts. (5) **Asst. Frontline Manager** - 2 Posts. (6) **Asst. Frontline Manager** - 1 Post. (7) **Warehouse Executive** - 1 Post. All Candidates above the lists must have

good communication & Analytical skill. Initiative skill. Willingness to travel & work in difficult setting. Able to work as gracefully under pressure. Be Proficient in both English & Myanmar. Computer literate. Pls send CV with copies of academic certificates, Original & update police clearance form, a copy of family registration form (10), 1 passport photo & a copy of NRC to HR Manager, Business Development Team: 15-18, Thamaing Bayan Rd, Myitar Yeik Mon Housing, Tarmwe., Hp: 09-202-7605, email: bdtar.manager@goldenland.com.mm

**SHWE SA BWE Hotel & Restaurant Training Center** is looking for (1) **Restaurant Manager** - Any Bachelor degree. 5 years experience in Int'l Hotel & Restaurant. Able to train & guide the students. Fluent in English (2) **Second Cook** - Any Bachelor degree. 3 years experience in Int'l Hotel & Restaurant. Able to train & guide the students. Fluent in English. Pls submit application including CV & related documents to 20, Malika St., Mayangone. Tel: 661983, 09-516-3598.

**ACADEMIC Institute** "Management Institute of Myanmar - MIM" (1) **Receptionist** (2) **Lecturers for Accounts** (LCCI I, II, III, MYOB, Other Accounting related Software). (3) **Lecturers for Computer Studies**. Lecturers for English, Chinese & other languages. Pls submit CV with cover letter plus 3 passport size photos. 2 years experiences. Recommendation letter if possible. Supporting Certificates & documents (academic results & marks). National Identity Card plus National Family Members Registration to: Block 5, 2nd Flr, Cor of Daw Thein Tin Rd & Thein Pyu Rd. Ph: 394214, 399096.

**EXOTISSIMO Travel Myanmar** is currently looking for **French Tour Operator** to correspond with overseas tour operator, travel agents, individual clients. Prepare & submit tailor make itineraries & take care of all travel arrangements as necessary. 2 years work experience in tourism related field. Should have strong sales and customer service focus. Must possess computer proficiency and good communication in English & French. Pls send a detailed C.V with recent photo, expected salary & other relevant documents to: HR Manager, 12th Flr, MMB Tower, No 166, Upper Pansodan St. Email: memecho@exotissimo.com

### Job Wanted

**PART TIME Car Driver** At Saturday & Sunday. Do your family have to get emergency part time car driver, I can drive various kind of cars. Pls call: 09-421-057645

**SMART GROUP OF COMPANIES**  
4th Floor, City Bank Building, Banyardala Road, Mingalar Taung Nyunt T8 (Ph - 0986167301)

1. **Secretary to President** (F) (1 Post)  
(Bachelor Degree or Master Degree Holder)  
(Fluent English, Must be Married & Local)

2. **Business Unit & Admin Staff** (English & Myanmar)  
(Fluent in MS Office, Excel & Internet)  
(At least 2 years experience in Finance or IT Company)  
(Must be willing to accept pressure)  
(Able to travel, accept and attend)

3. **Graphic Designer** (M/F) 1 post: Possess a Diploma/ Degree in Graphic Design. 2 years experience in graphic designing. Expert Proficiency in design software such as Illustrator & Photoshop.



# QUICK GUIDE

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## The Essentials

### EMBASSIES

**Australia** 88, Strand Road, Yangon. tel: 251810, 251797, 251798, 251809, 246462, 246463, fax: 246159

**Bangladesh** 11-B, Than Lwin Road, Yangon. tel: 515275, 526144, fax: 515273, email: bdootygn@mpmail.net.mm

**Brazil** 56, Pyay Road, 6th mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 507225, 507251, 507482, fax: 507483, email: Administ.yangon@itamaraty.gov.br

**Brunei** 317/319, U Wizara Road, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. tel: 524985, 524285, fax: 512854 email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm

**Cambodia** 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 549609, 540964, fax: 541462, email: RECYANGON@mpmail.net.mm

**China** 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 221280, 221281, 224025, 224097, 221926, fax: 227019, 228319

**Egypt** 81, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 222886, 222887, fax: 222865, email: egyptmbyangon@mpmail.net.mm

**France** 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 212178, 212520, 212523, 212528, 212532, fax: 212527, email: ambafrance.rangon@diplomatie.fr

**Germany** 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 548951, 548952, fax: 548899 email: info@rangun.diplo.de

**India** 545-547, Merchant Street, Yangon. tel: 391219, 388412, 243972, fax: 254086, 250164, 388414, email: indiaembassy@mpmail.net.mm

**Indonesia** 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 254465, 254469, 229750, fax: 254468, email: kuckygn@indonesia.com.mm

**Israel** 15, Khabaung Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il

**Italy** 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang.mail@esteri.it

**Japan** 100, Natmauk Road, Yangon. tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643

Embassy of the **State of Kuwait** Chatrium Hotel, Rm: No.416, 418, 420, 422, 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe Tsp, Tel: 544500.

**North Korea** 77C, Shin Saw Pu Road, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. tel: 512642, 510205, fax: 510206

**South Korea** 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr

**Lao** A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. tel: 222482, fax: 227446, email: Laoembca@mpmail.net.mm

**Malaysia** 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 220248, 220249, 220251, 220230, fax: 221840, email: mkyangon@mpmail.net.mm

**Nepal** 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb@mpmail.net.mm

**Pakistan** A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Road, Yangon. tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange) fax: 221147, email: pakistan@myanmar.com.mm

**Philippines** 50, Sayasan Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 558149-151, fax: 558154, email: p.e.yangon@gmail.com

**Russian** 38, Sagawa Road, Yangon. tel: 241955, 254161, fax: 241953, email: rusinmyan@mpmail.net.mm

**Serbia** No. 114-A, Inya Road, P.O.Box No. 943-Yangon. tel: 515282, 515283, fax: 504274, email: serbemb@yangon.net.mm

**Singapore** 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 559001, fax: 559002, 559922, email: singemb\_ygn@sgmfa.gov.sg

**Sri Lanka** 34 Taw Win Road, Yangon. tel: 222812, fax: 221509, email: slembassy.yangon@gmail.com, info@slembyangon.org, www.slembyangon.org

**Thailand** 94 Pyay Road, Dagon Township, Yangon. tel: 226721, 226728, 226824, fax: 221713

**United Kingdom** 80 Kan-na Road, Yangon. tel: 370867, 380322, 371852, 371853, 256438, 370863, 370864, 370865, fax: 370866

**United States of America** 110, University Avenue, Kamayut Township, Yangon. tel: 536509, 535756, 538038, fax: 650306

**Vietnam** Building No. 72, Thanlwin Road, Bahan Township, Yangon. tel: 511305, fax: 514897, email: vnembmyr@cybertech.net.mm

**Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia** No.287/289, U Wisara Rd, Sanchaung Tsp. tel: 01-536153, 516952, fax: 01-516951

### UNITED NATIONS

**ILO Liaison Officer Rm** (M1212-1220), 12 Fl-A, Traders Hotel. 223, tel: 242 393, 242811. fax: 242594.

**IOM** 12th Flr, Traders Hotel, 223, tel: 252560 ext. 5002

**UNAIDS Rm:** (1223-1231), 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 252361, 252362, 252498. fax: 252364.

**UNDCP** 11-A, Malikka St, Mayangone tsp. tel: 666903, 664539. fax: 651334.

**UNDP** 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739.

**UNFPA** 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029.

**UNHCR** 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. tel: 524022, 524024. fax 524031.

**UNIAP Rm:** 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 254852, 254853.

**UNIC** 6, Natmauk St., BHN tel: 52910-19

**UNICEF** 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, KTDA. tel: 375527-32, fax: 375552 email: unicef.yangon@unicef.org, www.unicef.org/myanmar.

**UNODC** 11-A, Malikka Rd., Ward 7, MYGN. tel: 666903, 660556, 660538, 660398, 664539, fax: 651334. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org www.unodc.org./myanmar/

**UNOPS** Inya Lake Hotel, 3rd floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279.

**UNRC** 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), fax: 292739, 544531.

**WFP** 3rd-flr, Inya Lake Hotel, 37, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 657011-6 (6-lines) Ext: 2000.

**WHO** 12A Fl, Traders Hotel. tel:250583.

**ASEAN** Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Township. Ph: 225258.

**FAO** Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673. fax: 641561.

## Emergency Numbers

**Ambulance** ☎tel: 295133.  
**Fire** ☎tel: 191, 252011, 252022.  
**Police emergency** ☎tel: 199.  
**Police headquarters** ☎tel: 282541, 284764.  
**Red Cross** ☎tel:682600, 682368  
 Traffic Control Branch ☎tel:298651  
 Department of Post & Telecommunication ☎tel: 591384, 591387.  
 Immigration ☎tel: 286434.  
 Ministry of Education ☎tel:545500m 562390  
 Ministry of Sports ☎tel: 370604, 370605  
 Ministry of Communications ☎tel: 067-407037.  
 Myanmar Post & Telecommunication (MPT) ☎tel: 067-407007.  
 Myanmar Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768.  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs ☎tel: 067-412009, 067-412344.  
 Ministry of Health ☎tel: 067-411358-9.  
 Yangon City Development Committee ☎tel: 248112.

**HOSPITALS**  
 Central Women's Hospital ☎tel: 221013, 222811.  
 Children Hospital ☎tel: 221421, 222807  
 Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital ☎tel: 543888.  
 Naypyitaw Hospital (emergency) ☎tel: 420096.  
 Worker's Hospital ☎tel: 554444, 554455, 554811.

Yangon Children Hospital ☎tel: 222807, 222808, 222809.  
 Yangon General Hospital (East) ☎tel: 292835, 292836, 292837.  
 Yangon General Hospital (New) ☎tel: 384493, 384494, 384495, 379109.  
 Yangon General Hospital (West) ☎tel: 222860, 222861, 220416.  
 Yangon General Hospital (YGH) ☎tel: 256112, 256123, 281443, 256131.

**ELECTRICITY**  
 Power Station ☎tel:414235

**POST OFFICE**  
 General Post Office  
 39, Bo Aung Kyaw St. (near British Council Library). ☎tel: 285499.

**INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**  
 Yangon International Airport ☎tel: 662811.


**YANGON PORT**  
 Shipping (Coastal vessels) ☎tel: 382722

**RAILWAYS**  
 Railways information  
 ☎tel: 274027, 202175-8.

## General Listing

### ACCOMMODATION-HOTELS

**Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon**  
 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe. tel: 544500. fax: 544400.



No.7A, Wingabar Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon.  
 Tel: (951) 546313, 430245. 09-731-77781-4.  
 Fax: (01) 546313.  
 www.cloverhotel.asia.  
 info@cloverhotel.asia

**Confort Inn**  
 4, Shweli Rd, Bet: Inya Rd & U Wisara Rd, Kamaryut, tel: 525781, 526872

**Golden Aye Yeik Mon Hotel**  
 4, Padauk Lane, 4th Word, Aye Yeik Mon Housing, Hlaing. tel: 681706.

**Hotel Yangon**  
 No. 91/93, 8th Mile Junction, Mayangone. tel: 01-667708, 667688.

**Inya Lake Resort Hotel** 37 Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 662866. fax: 665537.

**Orchid Hotel**  
 91, Anawrahta street, Pazundaung Township, Yangon. . Tel: 399930, 399990, 901061-65. E-mail: orchidhotel@myanmar.com.mm.



No. 205, Corner of Wadan Street & Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: (95-1) 212850 - 3, 229358 - 61, Fax: (95-1) 212854. info@myanmarpandahotel.com http://www.myanmarpandahotel.com

**Panorama Hotel**  
 294-300, Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Tsp. tel: 253077.

**PARKROYAL Yangon, Myanmar**  
 33, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd, Dagon tsp. tel: 250388. fax: 252478. email: enquiry.prygn@parkroyalhotels.com Website: parkroyalhotels.com.

**Savoy Hotel**  
 129, Damazedi Rd, Kamayut tsp. tel: 526289, 526298,

**Seasons of Yangon Yangon Int'l Airport Compound.** tel: 666699.

**Sweet Hotel**  
 73, Damazedi Road, San Chaung Tsp, Ph: 539152

**Sedona Hotel**  
 Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yankin. tel: 666900.

**Strand Hotel**  
 92 Strand Rd. tel: 243377. fax: 289880.

**Summit Parkview Hotel**  
 350, Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp. tel: 211888, 211966. fax: 227995.

**Thamada Hotel**  
 5, Alan Pya Phaya Rd, Dagon. tel: 243639, 243640, 243641.

**Traders Hotel**  
 223 Sule Pagoda Rd. tel: 242828. fax: 242838.

**Winner Inn**  
 42, Than Lwin Rd, Bahan Tsp. Tel: 503734, 524387. email: reservation@winnerinnmyanmar.com

**Yangon YMCA**  
 263, Mahabandoola Rd, Botataung Tsp. tel: 294128,

**Yuzana Hotel**  
 130, Shwegondaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, tel: 01-549600, 543367

**Yuzana Garden Hotel**  
 44, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Tsp, tel: 01-248944

### ACCOMMODATION-HOTELS (NAY PYI TAW)



(Nay Pyi Taw)


**Reservation Office (Yangon)**  
 123, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Dagon Township Tel: 951-255 819-838  
**Royal Kumudra Hotel, (Nay Pyi Taw)**  
 Tel: 067-414 177, 067-4141 88  
 E-Mail: maxhotelsreservation@gmail.com



Managed by Max Hotels

### ACCOMMODATION LONG TERM

**Espace Avenir**  
 No 523, Pyay Rd, Kamaryut. tel: 505213-222.



**HAPPY HOMES**  
 REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT  
 Tel: 09-7349-4483, 09-4200-56994.  
 E-mail: aahappyhomes@gmail.com, http://www.happyhomesyangon.com

**Golden Hill Towers**  
 24-26, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Bahan Tsp. tel: 558556. ghtower@mpmail.net.mm.

**Marina Residence**  
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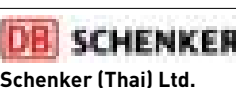
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# China eases pressure on its future sports stars

By Neil Connor

BEIJING – China's status as a sporting superpower was achieved on the back of punishing state-led training in schools, but a softer approach has enabled today's students to seek a life beyond the gym, they say.

China's Soviet-style sports system has been criticised in the past for its methods in grooming children for sporting success from an early age at the expense of basic education and the conventional comforts of childhood – simply because they have been identified as having future potential.

But sporting authorities in China have embarked on a period of soul-searching in recent years, which has led to a more relaxed training environment for the country's next generation of sports stars.

Eight-year-old Yu Zhengyang is one of thousands of youngsters in China who is motivated by his own sporting dreams rather than the demands of the state.

He said the decision to leave his family home in northern China to devote five hours a day to table tennis training at a school hundreds of miles away was an easy one.

"I want to go to the Olympics. I can play table tennis well so this is my

dream. I can win the gold medal," Yu, now ten years old and two years into his training at Shichahai Sports School in Beijing, told AFP.

"I believe in myself that I can play well. I came here to practise more," adds the recently crowned champion of a major under-12s tournament in China, with one eye on the 2020 Olympics.

Yu's first year at Shichahai was spent in a school dormitory. But he left the school grounds when his mother and father arrived in Beijing from Shaanxi last year.

"I like it more now, living with my parents," he said.

"And at the weekends when I have finished my homework, I have time to relax and watch television."

China began to reassess its high-pressure training system after its rise to sporting superpower status was enshrined by the 51 golds it won at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Questions were asked over the true cost of this success, accompanied by widely circulated photos of small children crying in anguish during intense training sessions conducted with little time for rest or socialising.

Revelations this year that Olympic champion diver Wu Minxia was not told about her grandparents' deaths, or her mother's cancer, for fear



Children practice table tennis during training at the Shichahai Sports School in Beijing. Pic: AFP

of disrupting her training, prompted more concern over China's state sports system.

Questions were raised over the system after China's tennis chief recently blamed Li Na's failure to build on her stunning 2011 French Open victory on a lack of mental strength following her rigid state-organised training.

Sun Jinfang said the world number eight, who crashed out of the US Open following a poor run of form, was particularly vulnerable when under pressure on court, blaming this on the fact she had focused purely on sport from an early age.

Fears that China's athletes are being worked too hard were also raised – often on China's Twitter-style messaging sites – when star

athlete Liu Xiang limped out of the 110m hurdles for the second consecutive games in London.

Coaches and sports officials in China say they are now focusing on honing existing ambition and talent, rather than subjecting the country's youngsters to intense training regimes designed to secure victory at all costs.

"Students here don't have to do the tough training that we focused on before," Shi Fenghua, vice-principal of Shichahai, which has produced ten Olympic Champions, including three from the London Games, told AFP.

"What we focus on now is the training quality. We attach great importance to research we have done on this.

"We get coaches involved in scientific research groups which train them to improve a students' performance in less time than before. The general training quality is also improved."

Central to this new style of coaching is giving students time to relax and not pressuring them to win competitions, eight-year-old Yu's coach, Gu Yunfeng, said.

"Pressure is something that you give yourself as an athlete if you want to achieve your goals. It is not something that anyone else gives you," he told AFP.

After China's gold medal tally dropped to 38 at the London Olympics, chef de mission Liu Peng called the results "satisfactory" – and praised China's non-medal-winning athletes for showing the Olympic values of fair play and sporting behaviour.

China notably lost ground in gymnastics in London, where they fell from seven gold medals in 2008 to just three.

But Shichahai gymnastics coach Shiao Gengbo said the key to developing sporting talent is to give children time away from the sports halls.

"I think it's really just about being rational. To train excessively is not the right way," he told AFP.

"We need to spend equal time on studying, relaxing, and training." – AFP

# Pacquiao eyes another Marquez fight, report

LOS ANGELES – Filipino superstar Manny Pacquiao is in talks for a fourth fight against rival Juan Manuel Marquez, the *Los Angeles Times* reported September 12.

*The Times*, citing sources close to the ongoing negotiations, said Pacquiao's next fight will be December 8 in Las Vegas and Marquez is a likely opponent.

Pacquiao (54-4-2, 38 KOs) was also in negotiations for a rematch against Tim Bradley but that fell through and he is now considering Marquez.

Pacquiao defeated Mexico's Marquez in a majority decision in November, the latest in a string of hotly-contested close fights between the warriors.

*The Times* said boxing promoter Bob Arum plans to have each fighter sign the deal September 18 in Los Angeles when they appear for a news conference.

– AFP

# Player died after jumping to tree

SYDNEY – An Australian Rules footballer who died while on holiday in Las Vegas had jumped onto a palm tree from the roof of a four-storey building, witnesses have told authorities.

Port Adelaide midfielder John McCarthy, 22, died in what appeared to be a tragic accident last weekend in the United States where he was on an end-of-season holiday.

Officials said that McCarthy had ended up at the Flamingo casino very early in the morning alone and in a disoriented state after leaving a nightclub, finding himself on a mezzanine roof of the building.

"It seems to be at this point of time, the evidence is suggesting, that he's jumped off that wall to a palm tree," said Australian police officer Stuart Bailey, who had spoken with the local coroner's office about the death.

"Maybe he's been disoriented about how much the fall was, slipped and has fallen to the ground."

McCarthy played eight games for Collingwood in 2011 but made the move to Port Adelaide in 2012, playing 21 of the 22 games this season. – AFP

# Singapore stadium to host top teams

By Talek Harris

SINGAPORE – Singapore's state-of-the-art new stadium will host an annual football tournament featuring top European teams as one of its cornerstone events when it opens in 2014, organisers have revealed.

The 55,000-seat facility, centrepiece of a billion-dollar complex near the city centre, is also likely to hold international rugby and Twenty20 cricket, and is the confirmed venue for the 2015 Southeast Asian Games, they said.

The dome-shaped National Stadium, with a retractable

roof and seating cooled by ducted air, is currently under construction along with two indoor arenas, an aquatics centre and water sports facility, plus a large shopping mall.

Andrew Georgiou, chief operating officer of commercial partner World Sport Group, admitted the roster of events was a "huge talking point" for the stadium, in a city with a patchy sporting calendar.

He said the aim was to create new events that return on a regular basis, along the lines of Hong Kong's Barclays Asia Trophy football tournament, which draws

visits from English Premier League teams.

"I wouldn't call it an exhibition but I'd call it a regular event that we'll host in June, July or August during the summer break," Georgiou said of the new tournament involving European clubs.

He added: "We're trying to avoid only having events which come in one year and then don't happen again."

"So football is going to be a main staple of the event calendar and we're working with the FAS (Football Association of Singapore) and regional football bodies to make sure that football will be a regular, recurring

content at the venue."

Georgiou was speaking at the sales launch of 62 executive suites, available at a cost of up to S\$272,000 (US\$221,000) a year for corporate entertaining, on September 12.

With Singapore's government guaranteed a return on its investment, private-sector backers bear the risk of the project failing to make a profit.

Details of the new stadium's roster are still under wraps but Twenty20 cricket is a priority, possibly featuring Indian Premier League or Australian, New Zealand and South African sides.



This graphic illustration handout image made available on September 13 by SportsHub shows the national stadium under construction in Singapore. Pic: AFP



# Serena hungers for more

By Jim Slater

NEW YORK – Serena Williams has won back-to-back Grand Slam titles for the first time since she completed a “Serena Slam” and after major setbacks the past two years, she is talking about smashing some records.

Williams outlasted World No. 1 Victoria Azarenka 6-2, 2-6, 7-5 on September 9 to win her fourth US Open crown, becoming its second-oldest Open-era winner at age 30, and a 15<sup>th</sup> Grand Slam title, seven shy of Steffi Graf’s all-time record.

“Even though I’m 30, I feel so young and I’ve never felt as fit and more excited and more hungry,” Williams said.

“Even with this win like I’m sitting here so excited still to play the next Grand Slam and see what I can do. I love that feeling. I feel like it’s overdue.”

Williams took her third major title in as many months after Wimbledon in July and Olympic gold last month on the same All England Club grass courts.

“It’s so cool. I’m so excited,” she said. “To cap off the gold medal and then to come from the gold medal to win US Open is unforgettable.”

Williams won her first back-to-back Slam crowns since she captured four in a row – the “Serena Slam” – from the 2002 French Open through the 2003 Australian Open.

And she said if she had not missed 10 Slams with injury, she might have won five more by now.

“Yeah, I think so, but there’s nothing I can do about that,” she said.

Williams has won multiple Grand Slams in a season for the third time in four years, her 2010 and 2009 doubles coming at Wimbledon and the Australian Open.

Now Graf’s mark seems reachable. “I never thought I would even come close to breaking those records but



Serena Williams of the United States celebrates after defeating Victoria Azarenka of Belarus to win the women’s singles at the 2012 U.S. Open in New York. Pic: AFP

if I can play consistently and more matches at Wimbledon, then it will be awesome,” she said. “If I could win two a year it would be great. We’ll see.”

“I will think about my legacy when I’m done. I have so much more I want to create for the history.”

There was a time not so long ago when Williams wondered if she might ever play again, much less recapture her championship form.

Williams battled back from a right foot injury that kept her from playing in the 2010 US Open and battled blood clots last year that jeopardised more than her career.

She fought back into form earlier this year but crashed out of the French Open with a first-round loss to Virginie Razzano, her worst-ever Grand Slam performance and her only 2012 loss in 50 matches where she won the first set.

“I have never been so miserable after a loss,” Williams said. “I felt like I lost a little confidence after that. But finally I pulled it together.”

“A champion is defined not by their

wins but by how they can recover when they fall. I’ve fallen several times. Each time I just get up and I dust myself off and I pray and I’m able to get back to the level that I want to be on.”

“So I feel really awesome I’ve been able to do that.”

Since then, Williams has gone 26-1 with Wimbledon and US Open titles and an Olympic gold medal.

While Azarenka will remain World No. 1 in September 10 new WTA world rankings, Williams has showed beyond all doubt she is for now the true queen of tennis.

“Without doubt, she’s the best player in the world right now regardless of what the WTA rankings say,” Patrick Mouratoglou, the French coach who has worked closely with Williams since her French Open loss, told AFP.

“I knew she was capable of doing what she did today, but that doesn’t make it any less exceptional. There was more pressure on her here than anywhere else, 100 times as much. She refuses to accept defeat.” – AFP

## Seattle officials give green light for new arena

SEATTLE, Washington – The Seattle City Council has agreed to a deal with investor Christopher Hansen to build a US\$490 million arena that could host NBA and NHL teams as well as concerts and other events.

City officials confirmed the deal on September 11 saying it could be the start of bringing an NBA team back to the city.

The former Seattle SuperSonics moved to Oklahoma City after a deal to have a new arena built in Seattle failed to materialise in 2008.

The team was re-named the Thunder in a deal with the NBA and Seattle officials with the hope that one day an expansion team or another relocated NBA franchise could move to Seattle and

pick up the Supersonics’ name and history.

“This agreement marks an exciting day in Seattle as we take a big step towards bringing back the Sonics,” said councilman Mike O’Brien, who said the deal included provisions for improved transportation infrastructure and other benefits for the city at large.

The agreement also includes financial protections for the city and King County. Hansen’s investor group, ArenaCo, must double the security reserve if its revenue fails to meet expectations. At the end of the 30-year arena use agreement, the city and county can require ArenaCo to purchase the land and facility for \$200 million.

– AFP

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## Windies wary of World T20 favourites tag

COLOMBO – It is not often in recent years that the West Indies have been billed as favourites to win a major cricket title, but skipper Darren Sammy is cautious of the tag ahead of the World Twenty20.

“The favourite tag line does not guarantee us a place in the final,” Sammy said ahead of the fourth edition of the tournament, which starts in Sri Lanka on September 18.

“You have to go out there and play good cricket. We may have the best side on paper, but we have to pull all the resources together and win.”

The West Indies have struggled to match their overwhelming success of the 1970s and 1980s when their fast bowlers and aggressive batsmen dominated world cricket.

With young men in the Caribbean turning to American sports like basketball and baseball, it’s been hard to find replacements for the likes of Andy Roberts, Malcolm Marshall, Michael Holding, Clive Lloyd and Vivian Richards.

But Sammy’s men go into the World Twenty20 as the team to beat, looking

for their first major title since 2004 when they won the Champions Trophy in England.

The presence of explosive batsmen suited to the slam-bang T20 format like Chris Gayle and Kieron Pollard, combined with the guile of prolific spinner Sunil Narine, delighted the skipper.

“We have the best spinner right now in T20 cricket in our side and he’s been doing really well for us,” Sammy told reporters in Colombo on September 11.

“The pitches in Sri Lanka will help him and I see him playing a very big role.”

“Chris brings a lot of experience in batting, and we have Pollard, Darren Bravo and others who have done so well in the IPL (Indian Premier League).

“Everyone is aware that this is a wonderful opportunity for us to put a huge smile on our fans’ faces. Everyone is keen to do well.”

The West Indies are drawn with Australia and Ireland in group B of the preliminary league, with two teams advancing to the Super Eights round.

They play their first game against Australia in Colombo on September 22. – AFP



West Indies cricketer Andre Russell (R) is run out by Sri Lanka’s cricketer Nuwan Kulasekara during an ICC Twenty20 Cricket World Cup warm-up match between Sri Lanka and West Indies at the Nondescripts Cricket Club (NCC) Stadium in Colombo on September 13, 2012. Pic: AFP

# TIMESSPORT

## Plan for Myanmar to join rally route

By Aung Si Hein

AN auto rally aimed at strengthening cooperation and understanding between China and ASEAN countries plans to include Myanmar in next year's event, says an official involved in the event.

Mr Chen Li Ji, the head of the China-ASEAN International Touring Assembly, said ahead of the start of the rally in Nanning on August 17, that Myanmar was not included in the route this year because of the difficult terrain in its border areas with Thailand.

"It would take three days to reach Yangon because only one road is accessible; although we would very much like to visit Yangon's beautiful Shwedagon pagoda, doing so is impractical because it would require spending a week of the tour in Myanmar," Mr Chen said.

But there were plans to include both Myanmar and Indonesia in the next year's rally, Mr Chen said.

The rally, held this year for the sixth time, is organised by the General Sports Administration of the People's Republic of China, the People's Government of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and the ASEAN Secretariat. It is aimed at highlighting the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement and promoting the China-ASEAN Expo as well as bilateral exchanges in sport, trade, tourism and culture.

The rally begins and ends in Nanning, the host city of the China-ASEAN Expo, which being held this year from September 21 to 25.

This year's rally, which ended on September 7, involved 24 vehicles and 114 participants, including journalists and travel company representatives, and covered more than 10,000 kilometres. The route was China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam

and China.

It took 12 hours to cover the first leg of this year's rally, a 380 kilometre journey from Nanning to Ha Long in Vietnam.

Vietnamese traditional performers added colour to the flag-off ceremony the next morning on a route which took participants through beautiful mountainous terrain to Vinh.

Flag-off ceremonies were also held at Victory Gate in the Lao

capital, Vientiane, at Sukhothai in Thailand, in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, in Singapore and in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh.

At the flag-off ceremony in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's Under-secretary of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Mr Meas Sarim, spoke of the role of sport in building understanding.

"Sport keeps us united; people speak different languages but in

sport they share the same ideals," Mr Meas Sarim said.

Mr Chen, the convoy's director on behalf of CAITA, told journalists covering the rally that rapid economic development had been evident in many areas along the route since the event began.

"People's living standards are improving and construction in urban and rural areas is better than before," he said.

However, Vietnamese journalist and travel book writer Mr Pham Hoang Hai, said he would have liked more opportunities to meet people and experience their culture during the event.

"We are spending too much time on the road," Mr Hai told *The Myanmar Times*. "If I was organising this event, I would limit the tour to only three countries and spend more time in each," he said.

Travel industry representatives who participated in the event included Mr Ripka Widjaja, from Setia Tours and Travel in Indonesia, who said he would have liked more representatives of ASEAN countries to have taken part.

Mr Widjaja also said it was not necessary to have high-ranking officials from each country officiating at the flag-off ceremonies.

The managing director of Malaysia's Borneo Automobile Leisure Tour Agency, Dr Ling Tung King, said the tour route involved too much back and forth travel in most countries, which was a waste of time and money.



Participants in the China-ASEAN International Touring Assembly celebrate the start of the tour in Nanning, China on August 17. Pic: Aung Si Hein

## Cavendish faces uphill battle to defend world crown

LIMBURG, Netherlands - The world cycling championships were to get underway on September 16, with seven days of racing set to produce several new champions as Britain's Mark Cavendish attempts to defend his road race crown on the final day of the competition on September 23.

The Isle of Man rider who has racked up 23 stage wins on the Tour de France, and became the first British rider since Tom Simpson in 1965 to triumph on the world stage last year on the roads of Copenhagen, is not one of the outright favourites on a rolling circuit suited more to punchers rather than outright sprinters.

The 267km route was to feature the first 100km raced over the

streets of several Limburg municipalities and two challenging climbs, before the final 10 laps over a 16.5km circuit and an ascent towards the finish before a slight dip to the line.

The first section of the route was to be almost identical to that used in the Amstel Gold races and suited to the likes of Belgium's Philippe Gilbert who has won the one-day classic in 2010 and 2011 and will fancy the rolling conditions.

However Gilbert could only finish sixth during the 2012 Amstel Gold race and has also lost his Belgian road race and time-trial titles in the build-up to the championships, although a win on the ninth stage of the

Tour of Spain will have boosted his confidence.

Newly-crowned Tour of Spain champion Alberto Contador is part of a strong Spanish team although the 29-year-old was to only race the time-trial, while three-time world champion Oscar Freire, Alejandro Valverde and Samuel Sanchez will be contenders for the podium in the road race.

Tour de France and Olympic champion Bradley Wiggins is part of the British team but was not to attempt to better his silver medal in last year's time-trial behind Germany's Tony Martin as he also opts to concentrate on the road race and the Cavendish cause.

"Brad has opted out of riding the time-trial at the worlds. This

year's focus for him has been fully on the Tour de France and the Olympics, so to expect him to hold form going into the worlds is a big ask," explained British Cycling director Dave Brailsford.

Switzerland's Fabian Cancellara has declined the opportunity to add to his four time-trial world titles as the 31-year-old continues to recover from a nasty fall during the closing stages of the Olympic road race in London.

The competition was to kick off on September 16 with the return of the team time-trial and will feature outfits from the UCI World Tour and not national teams while there is also a chance for Pro-Continental and Continental teams to qualify.

The women were to race over 34.2km with two climbs while the men's race covers 53.2km and both finish lines appearing after an ascent to the line at Valkenburg.

Italy's Giorgia Bronzini has won the last two women's road races, although she had to dig deep last year in Denmark to hold off Dutch legend Marianne Vos who won gold and relegated Bronzini to fifth in the Olympics as she comes to what can be deemed her home championships as UCI World Tour leader.

Germany's Judith Arndt is the defending champion in the women's time-trial while there are also events for under-23 riders and juniors during the seven days of racing that feature twelve events. - AFP

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