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Tatmadaw to join US military exercises

Myanmar to join Cobra Gold drills in Thailand as observer as US team visits Nay Pyi Taw for human rights dialogue

By AFP with Staff Writers

BANGKOK – The United States plans to invite Myanmar to a major regional military exercise next year, host country Thailand said last week, reflecting a dramatic easing of tensions between the former foes.

The move would see Myanmar's military, which ruled the nation with an iron fist for almost half a century and is accused of a litany of human rights abuses, join the annual Cobra Gold drills as an observer.

"Myanmar is on the list of observers but it's not finalised yet," Thai Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Thanathip Sawangsang said on October 19, adding that the participants would discuss the idea at a meeting later this month.

Cobra Gold is the United States' largest multilateral exercise in the Asia-Pacific region, bringing together thousands of troops from the US, Thailand and other countries for field training.

Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia are expected to

participate next year along with 13 observer nations, Thai officials said.

Past survival training sessions have seen troops drink snake blood and behead chickens.

The proposal to invite Myanmar was Washington's initiative, said a senior Thai military official who did not want to be named.

"If all members agree ... it will become official," he said.

However, US ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell declined to comment on the report.

"I saw the report today. I honestly can't comment on that and I don't have any information on that," he said during a press conference in Yangon on October 19.

Pentagon press secretary George Little told AP in Washington that Myanmar may be invited for the exercise, which normally takes place at the beginning of each year, but there has been no final decision.

The disclosure comes after the US voiced confidence on October 17 that it has

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Pic: Christopher Davy

Thura U Shwe Mann: I'm running the party now

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann leaves the main hall at the Union Solidarity and Development Party head office in Nay Pyi Taw on October 15, flanked by U Htay Oo (right). Despite speculation the speaker would replace U Thein Sein as party chairman, the USDP announced on October 16 that the president would continue to hold the position. However, Thura U Shwe Mann maintains he is in charge of reforming the party. Full stories pages 3, 6 and 15.

Minorities united over land grabs

THE members of the eight major ethnic groups of Myanmar at a meeting earlier this month appeared to momentarily forget the chronic disunity and mistrust that normally characterises their dealings with each other. The reason? They were discussing a more acute problem: the loss of land tenure rights.

While the accents are varied, the 150 participants at a forum on the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land

IN DEPTH

with Sandar Lwin



Management Law were in agreement on one point: farmers from every corner of the country are rapidly losing possession of land on which they rely for their livelihoods.

The forum, held on October 9 at Royal Rose Restaurant in Yangon, was

organised by the United Nationalities Alliance and included representatives from 13 political parties, most of which represent ethnic minorities, and 20 non-government organisations operating in areas where large government-backed projects are being implemented. The delegates brainstormed what immediate action they should demand from policy makers and government in order to save the livelihoods

of locals from their respective region.

If there was a note of urgency in their voices, it was because the "2nd Commercial Farm Asia" forum was to begin just two days later, on October 11 and 12, in Yangon, as part of Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation efforts to encourage foreign investment in the agricultural sector.

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Why CSR matters in new Myanmar

By Viren Lall

AS the foreign investment law is debated in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the press and in the business community in Myanmar, Western companies are preparing to return to the country they left more than a decade ago.

In the past 18 months, as Myanmar's political system has changed from a military junta to a quasi-civilian government with a parliament, the international community has remained divided on how to respond to the actions of the government and unsure how to encourage political and economic openings in the country.

ASEAN and its member states, China, Japan and India have largely pursued a policy of "constructive engagement" and their businesses are well represented in the country. In contrast, companies from Western countries, most notably the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and European Union, have not been able to work in and with Myanmar due to sanctions and the reputational risk they face from activists back home.

Today all this has changed. With the US government dropping more sanctions earlier this month, Western businesses are looking for Myanmar partners, Myanmar markets and Myanmar manufacturing bases for their products. They will act as competition to the established Asian and home-grown Myanmar companies, which have largely operated in a protected environment. This is not only a threat but also an opportunity for Myanmar businesses and society more broadly. Many of the Western companies interested in Myanmar are heeding Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's call for inclusive growth and are pledging to ensure their presence benefits wider Myanmar society. The magic words on everyone's lips are "corporate social responsibility", or CSR.

Business can serve as a powerful incentive to bring people together across different national and cultural lines, creating relationships based on a shared sense of identity and purpose, and overcoming differences that, in other spheres or across society



Sustainable development needs to include the three pillars of sustainability, as shown in the figure above. These must be given due consideration in formulating a holistic CSR strategy.

as a whole, are often more difficult to surmount. These contributions can be made by companies of all forms: small and large, public and private, international and local. The first step of CSR is to bring businesses and wider society together with the aim of solving problems and improving lives.

How CSR is different in Myanmar

Myanmar already has a culture of established private and corporate philanthropy, normally in the form of donations to Buddhist institutions. This is strongly connected to the Buddhist culture of giving and subsequently attaining merit, however, and many of these CSR efforts are simply costs that do not help a company's competitive situation.

This also appears to be changing. Today, there is heightened attention to CSR in the Myanmar business community. The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) has taken note of CSR and is in conversations with civil society groups on how business can better benefit society. This makes sense from a business perspective, too. For example, international investment funds that want to invest in local companies will take a strong look at existing CSR practices and partnerships as a means of assessing core set of values. Increasingly, where

world: trade, partnership and investment.

What are the benefits of strategic CSR to Myanmar companies?

In order to be competitive partners and to be seen as understanding the new globalised business environment, organisations need to create a CSR strategy with similar diligence and choices required in business strategy. While still "doing good", strategic CSR helps them differentiate and become more competitive. Strategic approaches to CSR move away from donations to individual projects, and creating coherence in activities that reinforce each other and benefit both the organisation and society. There are three clear reasons why strategic CSR is important for Myanmar. The organisations that do make the shift will succeed and prosper at the costs of those that don't.

Firstly, any philanthropic activity (whether personal or corporate) from an accounting perspective is a cost. When the intent of doing good is aligned with the company's business strategy, such as outcomes that benefit both the company and society, it has a positive feedback on the company's performance. There are many examples

from companies around the world that have had strategic CSR contribute to their bottom-line.

Secondly, any Western company coming and evaluating its partnering options in Myanmar will look beyond pure numbers to shared corporate values.

‘Any Western company coming and evaluating its partnering options in Myanmar will look beyond pure number to shared corporate values.’

Values are an indicator whether an alliance, partnership or merger will be a good strategic fit. Values differ from pure slogans in that they are things organisations have actually executed. An organisation that executes on its values (for example, on benefiting the environment and society) will typically have a CSR strategy supporting the claim. An organisation with an active

and coherent CSR strategy would have demonstrated better cultural/value fit for business alliance than an organisation that just speaks about its values.

Thirdly, even if the Myanmar businesses are executing on their values, it's important to couch their CSR strategy in terms and language that is understood by their partner. This is where the packaging of how to develop, evaluate and select an appropriate CSR strategy comes in.

Western organisations are extremely nervous when they extend their value chains into organisations in emerging markets, as they become susceptible to reputational risk. It's harder for companies to hide. International civil society continues to innovate, employing increasingly sophisticated research-based advocacy. Therefore, a coherent, professionally articulated, CSR strategy becomes a critical confidence-building measure in establishing new business relationships and trade.

(Viren Lall is the founder of T&M Practice (www.tandmpractice.com), a not-for-profit organisation promoting excellence in transformation – be it business, individual or societal.)

The Mail Box



Dear editor,

We have known the poet James Byrne ('Myanmar poetry published in English', October 15-21) for many years, he is considered to be an accomplished poet here in the UK. He seeks to be different in his writing. *Bones Will Crow* is a must read, looking forward to its publication.

David and Mary Shuttle, UK

Dear editor,

There is a tendency for some long-time expats to become smug about what they think they know ('Every carpetbagger has his day', October 15-21). The fact is, not even those who have been living in Myanmar for decades can reliably

predict how many important matters will go in the coming months or even years. All that any of us with a personal or professional interest in this country can do for now is to keep our eyes open and our ears to the ground. Oft-quoted Dr Turnell may live in Australia, and the owner of a widely read Yangon based English language newspaper may also reside abroad, but this does not stop us from turning to these valuable sources in our effort to accumulate the bits of information and opinions that help us to piece together the picture that is today's Myanmar.

Media has a critical role to play here in the coming years. Well researched, trustworthy and above all unbiased reporting will help people to judge for themselves who are the legitimate

consultants and advisors. The real professionals will, through word of mouth and as a result of their ability to deliver on what they promise, distinguish themselves as a necessary part of the "gold rush", just as did those who sold the picks and shovels needed by the old time prospectors.

In the meantime we might welcome the abundant energy many new arrivals have to contribute to Myanmar's development, and consider the old saying "There are those who watch things happen, those who make things happen, and those who wonder what happened". And fortunately there are also those who report on what happened.

Martin Amada, publisher of The Myanmar Business Report

Got something to say? We want to hear from you. Address all correspondence to the Editor, *The Myanmar Times* (English). We endeavour to respond to all correspondence in a timely manner.

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I'm running USDP, says U Shwe Mann

By Soe Than Lynn with AFP

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein might have retained the chairman post but Thura U Shwe Mann made it clear last week who will be running the Union Solidarity and Development Party over the next three years, telling members he will reshape the USDP into the "people's party".

Speaking to members at the party's first assembly in Nay Pyi Taw on October 16, the Pyithu Hluttaw speaker said he would be "responsible" for reforming the party into a more democratic institution.

However, he also indicated the change in party structure and operations would take time to achieve and said the USDP was "cautious about using democratic ways to change the party formed with centralisation to people's party".

"Both speakers at the convention and central executives believe in the dynamism of the democracy in the party. It can be realised through transparency, responsibility

and accountability," he said on the convention's penultimate day, when most key appointments were announced.

"We central executives will have to take responsibility for the reorganisation of the party. To elaborate, I am the one who is mostly responsible for convening the convention and reorganising the party," he said.

The convention saw the party form an executive committee of 295 members, 73 of which are reserve members. Meanwhile, the 24-member central executive committee was expanded to 44. All were appointed, rather than selected through a vote, while the selection of senior party posts took place behind closed doors.

Two new vice chairmen, U Htay Oo and U Aye Myint, were added to the party roster, with Thura U Shwe Mann to be the lead vice chairman. As U Thein Sein is unable to take part in party activities while in office, the speaker will effectively be the party leader.

The surprise outcome of the October 16 leadership

race was seen as a compromise to maintain unity within a party facing an uncertain future.

"In one sense the party won - it still has the most popular person from the old order as its nominal head," said independent Myanmar analyst Richard Horsey, speaking of U Thein Sein.

A senior USDP official said before the leadership decision that U Thein Sein "doesn't seem to want to give up the chairman's position although we planned to replace him with Shwe Mann".

Many USDP members had said beforehand that they expected Thura U Shwe Mann to be named party chairman. But the mood apparently shifted after U Thein Sein and his entire cabinet turned up on the first day of the conference on October 14.

MPs said the result aimed to prevent friction between the government and the ruling party.

"To have good relations between the executive and the party we have to keep the positions of the ministers and the president the same"

Old wine, old brand, old bottle



within the USDP, said a party member who did not want to be named.

"If we change too much, relations between the government and the party will be difficult."

Members said the party was under intense scrutiny, with observers watching whether it could transition from the centralised structure of the past. The result, they said, would be important not only for the party's future but also the

future of the country.

Thura U Shwe Mann said the 295 central committee members included chairs of

hluttaw committees, former departmental heads and rectors, active members and female members. It was also working to ensure those who have participated in building the party to this stage be given the position they merit, he said.

While the head of the Union Government, the president, is unable to take an active role in the party, the constitution has no such restriction for the heads of region and state governments. Chief ministers of the states and regions who are USDP members will in the coming weeks become region and state branch leaders or patrons, U Htay Oo told *The Myanmar Times*. - Translated by Thit Lwin

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From page 1

Tatmadaw to join US military

opened up a channel to discuss the once taboo subject of human rights with Myanmar leaders after the first talks devoted to the issue.

A 22-strong delegation, led by assistant secretary of state for democracy Michael Posner and including senior US military officers, attended a Myanmar-US Human Rights Dialogue meeting in Nay Pyi Taw "to discuss the full range of human rights issues affecting the country", State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said.

"The tone was very good ... we were able to talk about a broad cross-section of human rights issues," Ms Nuland told journalists after the talks.

"We are confident that we have now an open channel with the government of Burma to discuss human rights and to continue to work on bringing them where they want to be in terms of human rights standards for their government."

State media on October 18 said Deputy Minister for Defence Commodore Aung

Thaw "led the discussion session in which the two sides held talks on levels and operations of defence institutions of Myanmar and US and exchanged views on future dialogue and bilateral cooperation".

Other issues discussed included protection of civilians in conflict areas, provision of humanitarian assistance in those regions, the judicial system, the role of courts and judicial staff in the rule of law, issues related to prisoners, laws enacted by the hluttaws and the role of civil society, the *New Light of Myanmar* reported on October 18.

"This dialogue would promote mutual trust and bilateral ties between Myanmar and the United States of America," Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Zin Yaw was quoted as saying.

The US embassy in Yangon said in a statement on October 18 that Mr Burns "held excellent, productive discussions" with President U Thein Sein and other senior officials, including Minister for Defence Lieutenant General Wai Lwin.

"The United States and Burma have passed a watershed in our bilateral relationship," the statement said.

In a recent report, the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies called on the US government to "increase engagement with Myanmar's military ... to provide training to a new generation of military officers in such areas as civilian-military relations, law of war, and transparency".

"Many of the most reform-oriented senior officers in the current government are products of international military education, including in U.S. institutions," said the September 10 CSIS Myanmar Trip Report.

"If the military continues to support the transition to civilian rule and observes ceasefires in ethnic minority areas, the US should begin to consider joint military exercises with the Myanmar armed forces and provide selected Myanmar officers access to US International Military Education and Training opportunities in US defence academies."



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No protection for taungya farmers in bylaws: experts

By Thomas Kean

A NETWORK of land-focused civil society organisations has raised concerns that bylaws for two new pieces of land legislation fail to offer proper protection for upland farmers who use shifting cultivation, leaving millions at risk of losing their land tenure rights.

Land Core Group chairman U Shwe Thein said that the recently introduced bylaw for the Farmland Law interprets *taungya*, or upland farming, as only fields under permanent cultivation. This leaves farmers who practise upland shifting cultivation with little protection from losing their lands.

"The law recognises the existence of *taungya* but when the bylaws came out we couldn't see any regulation related to

upland farming with rotational cultivation," he said. "Very few upland farmers also have documentary evidence of land use and land without legal title can be legally reallocated by the state to the private sector for agriculture development so you can imagine the scale of risk for upland farmers ... we don't see anything in the bylaws that can properly protect the land user rights of those upland farmers."

Shifting cultivation is practised in Myanmar's upland areas and sees farmers leave fields fallow to regenerate. While there are no exact figures, it is thought to account for about 30 to 40 percent of all cultivation in Myanmar, the Land Core Group says.

Article 12(i) of the Farmland Law states that fields should not be left fallow without good reason - implying that they can be left fallow - while article 17(i)

states that land management committees are responsible for guiding and supervising shifting cultivation.

While the clauses in the Farmland Law related to *taungya* were inserted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives after lobbying by the Land Core Group and other civil society organisations, the bylaws were drafted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation without public consultation or parliamentary oversight.

"In our advocacy work, we also suggested a definition of *taungya* be inserted into the Farmland Law before it was approved but we were not successful," U Shwe Thein said.

He said the Land Core Group wants hluttaw representatives to again take up the issue and urge the ministry to amend the new bylaws to protect shifting

cultivation farmers.

Rotational cultivation has a long history in Myanmar and is administered by customary law, which is also not properly recognised under the Farmland Law or the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law, U Shwe Thein said.

"In many areas the village head or clan leaders decide who uses what land and when it will be rotated. It is left with the intention of regenerating, to allow the soil to recover. They don't have any registration papers for this," he said. "And in the two new laws, those customary practices are not recognised."

"Myanmar could look at examples from neighbouring countries, such as Thailand, the Philippines and others. They have recognised customary practices in their land laws."

Land grabs unite ethnic minority leaders

From page 1

Investors' demand for land is one of the major drivers of small-scale farmers losing their land tenure rights and it was no accident the meeting of minority leaders coincided almost perfectly with the investment forum.

"The locals have been driven out of the land which they have cultivated for many years and some even have been punished [because they are accused of trespassing]," said Daw Nan Htwe Hmon, the head of finance at the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD). "This happens because the farmers do not have official documents [proving ownership] and so the government has licensed [large-scale investors] to implement projects on their land because it is officially classified in the vacant, fallow and virgin land category."

She said many people do not even consider the necessity of applying to the government to use vacant land near their villages; many have already been using the lands in a variety of ways.

"In short, we want the government to inform people what areas are classified as vacant, fallow or virgin land," she said. "Only when the people know that their land is not in the right category can they initiate the registration process."

Other participants agreed with Daw Nan Htwe Hmon's suggestion but added that the government should ensure officials provide official ownership documents to the existing users of the land.

But Daw Naw Elizabeth from Karen Women's Action Group said rampant corruption throughout all levels of the public service was "quite a barrier" for cultivators to secure their land use rights.

"We want the government to solve the corruption of the public servants. There are cases where public servants ignore the law and do not give locals land use rights, even though the laws give preference to them rather than people from other parts of the country," she said.

Daw Hnin Yu Shwe from Rakhine State-based Thazin

Development Foundation said the government should define the usage of the word "local" and ensure that the law gives small-scale farmers preference over investors and companies.

"[Officials] usually consider huge projects are for the benefit of local people, but what does it mean by local? Does it mean all citizens or the ones who are settled in the vicinity of the project?" she said.

"They should give more consideration to the lives of the local people, who are directly and immensely impacted by these projects."

Members of the forum agreed to urge the government to give greater consideration to people living near large development projects when assessing their impacts and benefits.

A representative of the Zomi League for Democracy questioned

Myo Wai, chairperson of the Peace and Diversity Party.

When *The Myanmar Times* asked the Settlement and Land Records Department for comment, an assistant director said the bylaws had been published in the ministry's *Agro Eco* weekly newspaper.

"The ministry has now started holding orientation discussions for this law," he said.

The issue of incorrect implementation of land laws was highlighted at the Commercial Farm Asia forum on October 11 and 12 when an investor put a question to one of the speakers - U Than Maung, a legal consultant and member of Pyithu Hluttaw Legal and Special Affairs Assessment Commission - after he read a paper outlining the main points of the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law. Drawing about 100

and foreign investors to lease up to 5000 acres for perennial crops, 3000 for horticultural crops and 1000 for seasonal crops. However, this can later be increased up to 50,000 acres for perennial crops at the discretion of the government.

Meanwhile, a Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation official, deputy director Daw Khin Mya Mya, said at the forum that the ministry had agreed to lease up to 100,000 acres to a South Korean company in 2011 for cultivating perennial crops. The land laws allow foreign investors to acquire only 5000 acres for perennial crops for a first investment, gradually increasing up to 50,000 acres.

When *The Myanmar Times* asked about the legality of the South Korean investment, another ministry official who accompanied Daw Khin Mya Mya referred to the provision that allows the government to increase the size of the lease and insisted it had been done in accordance with the law, despite the apparent 50,000-acre limit on holdings.

The transfer of land rights in these circumstances is taking place throughout the country and prompting disputes between large investors and small-scale cultivators. Without a change in the existing land rights policy, which seems to encourage the transfer of large swathes of land from small-scale farmers to agribusiness investors, these disputes will only grow in scale, Dr Kyaw Thu from Food Security Working Group warned at the October 9 forum.

He called on the government and legislators to reconsider the country's land policies and draft a new policy that better protects the interests of small-scale cultivators. In the meantime, the government should place a moratorium on the awarding of land concessions, he said.

"As an immediate action, I want to demand the government does not do any new land rights transfers and land lease agreements before setting a strong policy to settle existing land disputes."

'Only when the people know that their land is not in the right category can they initiate the registration process.'

the definition of vacant, fallow and virgin land and whether it included pasture and shifting cultivation, an issue that greatly affects upland farmers. (See related story above.)

"I want to know whether the current definition of vacant, fallow and virgin land includes our pasture lands and *taungya* (shifting cultivation) in the hill regions. In practice we are already losing our pasture and *taungya*," said U Byat Htan from Zomi League for Democracy.

The participants also expressed disappointment that the government did not publish the bylaws of the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law, promulgated on August 31, in state-owned daily newspapers.

"Every law, bylaw, rule and regulations needs to be publicised. But the government did not do that for the bylaw of the virgin land law. We want the government to publish that in the state-owned daily newspapers," said U Nay

representatives from foreign companies, the forum was aimed at attracting investors to lease land from the government for agribusinesses.

The Singapore-based investor asked: "I have bought 100,000 acres of farmland in Bago Region from the chief minister. Can I do business on that land on my own without joining with a local partner?"

The investor's follow-up question - whether his deal is still valid under the new law - was met with a shrug of the shoulders. When *The Myanmar Times* spoke to the businessman, he confirmed he bought the land through the chief minister - former foreign minister U Nyan Win - and indicated he had not yet decided what to use the land for.

The legal land leasing procedure requires the administrators to approve the lease only after inspecting specific plans for land use. For an initial investment, existing land laws allow both local

We are still committed to Monywa cause, say 88 Gen activists

By Naw Say Phaw Waa

88 GENERATION leaders have insisted they will continue to support farmers in their campaign against an expansion of the Monywa copper mine at Letpadaung, despite rumours that they have ended their involvement in the issue.

"There is a rumour that after President U Thein Sein and Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited said there is someone behind [the unrest at the mine], the 88 Generation will stop helping [the farmers] but it is not true," said 88 leader Ko Zaw Min.

"We didn't say we will stop helping them. We will consider carefully how we can get a good resolution to the dispute; a resolution that favours neither the company nor the villagers. We will definitely keep helping them to find this resolution," he said.

During his visit to the United States, President U Thein Sein was quoted as saying on September 28 that the villagers near the Monywa mine could stay if they didn't want to move. However, he also said there were agitators behind the unrest.

Ko Tun Myint Aung, the 88 Generation member overseeing the group's activities at Monywa, said the group remained committed to the cause and

members went to the area on October 15 to provide free health care.

"We will keep helping them," he said. "How can we stop our involvement? We will continue to help if the villagers still want our support." 88 Generation leader Ko Pyone Cho said he was disappointed that comments from the president and military-owned UMEHL on the issue had portrayed the farmers near the mine as manipulative and scheming. "All citizens should be encouraged to get involved in this transformation period. And the relevant organisation also should respect the desires of the villagers," he said.

Meanwhile, about 15,000 people, including residents, and members of non-government organisations, civil society groups and political organisations, attended a public assembly near the site of a planned expansion at the Monywa mine on October 18, said Ko Yae Min Oo, general secretary of Federation of Students' Unions (Organising Committee).

"The main three issues we discussed were the issues of the Letpadaung project, the Rohingya in Rakhine State and refugees in Kachin State. Then different organisations, different committees and networks discussed about the rights of workers, farmers, students and other people," he said.



A worker at the Monywa copper mine last month during a media tour of the site. Pic: Soe Sandar Oo

Chinese mining firm threatens legal action

By Soe Sandar Oo

AN OFFICIAL from Chinese company Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper Limited has warned it is prepared to take legal action against media organisations that "hurt the company's dignity too much" through their reporting.

The company, a subsidiary of Chinese state-owned arms manufacturer Norinco, has come under fire in recent months over its investment in the Monywa copper mine.

"We will see the future consequences and will judge upon the case. There is too much insult [to] the company's dignity already. So I have the right to take legal action if more insult to company," managing director Mr Geng Yi said at a press conference in Yangon on October 14.

The press conference was held to respond to an October 9 report by *Democratic Voice of Burma* (DVB) that a pagoda near the mine had been destroyed with

explosives. The video report showed an explosion at the mine, which the broadcaster said was the pagoda being destroyed.

Mr Geng said the report was false and could create misunderstandings between the company and religious groups.

"If you hear something bad about the company, come and ask to make it sure before you release. We are welcome for your question. In this case, we face the problem with local religious organisation who thinks we destroyed the heritage of Ledi Sayadaw," Mr Geng said.

At the press conference, he used a projector to show a photo of the pagoda taken on October 13.

"Our company is legal and our aim is to get win-win

situation in the long run. We have never aimed to destroy the traditional or religious culture of Myanmar. We respect the country's religion and culture," Mr Geng said, adding that the company had submitted a report about the incident to the Sagaing Region government.

U Maung Maung Tint, project director of military-owned Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (UMEHL), Wanbao's partner in the project, said incorrect news reports were "very dangerous".

"That news creates conflict with the whole country ... people will think we are so rude after combining with Chinese. We never did it. We are Buddhist," he said.

U Myint Aung, managing director at Myanmar

Wanbao and project manager of UMEHL, said the site in the DVB footage where the explosion occurred was about 500 metres from the pagoda.

The DVB report quoted a resident in one of the villages near the mine, Ko Aung Zaw Oo, as saying that the pagoda and a small monastery had been destroyed by the company.

One DVB reporter, who asked not to be named, said his colleague had based the story on what the villager had told him. "I admit that the first two scenes [in the video report] can mislead people. The first one is the pagoda and the second is a mine detonation on the hills," he said.

DVB has since apologised for the report.

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Pic: Christopher Davy

Despite reshuffle, questions over party future

It was 11:15am at the Union Solidarity and Development Party's palatial headquarters in Nay Pyi Taw. Three speakers, one each from Kachin, Shan and Kayin states, had just presented papers on peace and tranquillity, and the almost 1000 delegates were rising to their feet for lunch.

"The next session will convene at 1pm," a young woman on the stage said, prompting a smattering of applause and chatter from the crowd. "Sorry, correction. Please be back at 12:30pm."

There was an audible groan, followed by some laughter.

This is not to diminish the importance of the party conference or the seriousness with which USDP officials regarded the event. But it's fair to say that the presentations over the course of the three-day conference were mostly a sideshow to the machinations that took place behind closed doors. As the rank and file disappeared off to the canteen, the party elite held their own meeting to thrash out who would



IN DEPTH
with
Thomas Kean

lead the party to the next general election, in 2015. Ultimately U Thein Sein was retained, although many senior members appeared unhappy at this given he is unable to actively campaign on the party's behalf for at least the next three years.

The USDP is at a critical juncture. The president is undoubtedly popular and some of the party's hluttaw representatives, at least at the national level, have shown themselves to be capable lawmakers. Like U Thein Sein, the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann has built an impressive reputation as a reformer and man of the people. Most, even many former critics, agree the country is roughly heading in a positive direction. Yet the USDP was trounced in the April by-elections and many of its community-level

leaders are unpopular and suffer from a lack of respect.

I asked a number of party officials, from relatively low-ranking to senior, about the importance of the event, and they all mentioned two words: democracy and decentralisation.

"This conference is very important for the life of the party," said U Zaw Myint Pe, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative with decades of political experience, dating

to correct ourselves. During the congress we will discuss these weaknesses and good things and adopt a future program."

He said he believed the country was on the right track and the most pleasing development under U Thein Sein's government has been the "democratic transformation".

"It's very hard to transform the country from centralisation to the

'This assembly is just the first step in changing from an organisation to a party. Now we can move forward.'

to the Burma Socialist Program Party era.

"We need to change our constitution so that - democratically - the leaders will be elected, the party leaders ... that's the first thing we need to do.

"Another thing is, we have to think [about] our party weakness and what is good and what is bad and we have

democratic way. It's very easy to hold an election, but democratic practice and to form the democratic institutions is very difficult. When the democratic institutions like parliament, government, and political institutions, when they are formed, we are quite happy. We are not the political monopoly, not the democratic dictatorship; we have to welcome other parties."

Pyithu Hluttaw representative Thura U Aung Ko said many MPs had met constituents ahead of the meeting to identify ways in which the party should change to improve its support.

"The main thing that they say is that officials need to be elected democratically," he said.

Senior USDP officials also told *The Myanmar Times* that "active" members would be promoted to positions of greater responsibility as part of an effort to transform the USDP "from an organisation to a political party".

Under this plan, the strict hierarchical structure of the past would be dispensed with to give township leaders more opportunities to take the initiative and win over voters at the "grassroots" level.

"We want to move closer to the people," said one official from the party's youth wing. "In future, younger, better-educated people will be promoted."

Putting rhetoric into practice is always difficult, however. Just as the selection of the party chairman took place behind closed doors despite the talk of democracy, most delegates at the conference declined to be interviewed, referring questions to the leaders who organised the conference, such as general secretary U Htay Oo and U Thein Zaw, a former minister for communications. Many agreed off the record that they and their colleagues were "afraid" to speak to the media in case they give the "wrong answer".

Finally, during the lunch break, U Zaw Aung, the public relations officer for party's Nay Pyi Taw branch, agreed to a short interview.

A township contributor to state newspapers *Kyemon* and *Myanma Ahlin*, he joined the Union Solidarity and Development Association's Lewe township branch shortly after its formation in 1993. He is one of the members in line for promotion, and will soon be appointed to the executive committee for Nay Pyi Taw district.

Over the years he has given many interviews, including with exile media. He says his colleagues have "less experience so they lack confidence" dealing with journalists but he sees improving media relations as one of the USDP's most important challenges. He said he already detects an increase in the party's popularity following the by-election loss, which he attributes to people voting for the National League for Democracy "because they want to experience new things".

But when I asked what problems the people of Nay Pyi Taw want the USDP to resolve, he hesitated. "Not much. Some farmland issues," he said, before adding hastily: "These are all related to events before 1988, though."

Then he added again: "Some politicians are just using the farmers so that they can become famous."

But other delegates highlighted the importance the economy could play in

the 2015 election.

In Bago Region, Chief Minister U Nyan Win said his USDP-backed government has set ambitious growth rates that, if achieved, will see it leapfrog from the seventh-largest state or region in Myanmar in terms of gross domestic product to the third largest by 2015.

"I'm confident that our region government can achieve that but I can't say it will definitely happen," he said. "At present we rely on agriculture but we plan to introduce more industry to create jobs. We are inviting foreign companies to invest in our region and some from China, [South] Korea, Malaysia."

The Hantharwady Airport project will bring foreign visitors, both tourists and businesspeople, to the region, while the national and regional governments will fund other development projects, particularly in agriculture to control flooding during monsoon season, the former foreign minister said.

As the incumbent government, the USDP will likely be able to head to the polls in 2015 trumpeting some level of economic improvement for the people of Myanmar. Should the political transformation continue, the party will also be able to claim much credit for that too. However, without a significant level of change in terms of both the party's structure and in the way it deals with the public, success in 2015 seems unlikely.

It's difficult to gauge the significance of last week's conference. Will USDP leaders really encourage democracy and decentralisation? And will community-level leaders be up to the challenge of winning the public's respect and support?

One senior party official and businessman seemed confident that the party was entering a new phase, telling *The Myanmar Times* as he smoked a cigarette during a break in sessions: "This assembly is just the first step in changing from an organisation to a party. From this we can really move forward towards 2015."



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Foundation makes \$3 million aid pledge

By Tim McLaughlin in Tokyo

A JAPANESE non-government organisation has approved an initial US\$300,000 in emergency aid to internally displaced people living in areas controlled by armed ethnic groups, as part of a larger \$3 million aid package.

The Nippon Foundation made the announcement during the Tokyo Conference on Support for the Myanmar National Races on October 18. In attendance were representatives from 10 of the 11 groups that make up the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), as well as Nippon Foundation officials, including chairman Yohei Sasakawa.

The \$300,000 is the first instalment in a \$3 million aid package that Nippon Foundation has pledged towards improving the lives of people in ethnic minority areas.

It represents a portion of the foundation's enlarged Myanmar focus since Mr Sasakawa was appointed Japan Goodwill Ambassador for the Welfare of the National Races in Myanmar

by Japan's Foreign Ministry on June 12.

Despite Myanmar's recent wave of reforms, Mr Sasakawa warned that without the inclusion of ethnic groups in Myanmar's rapid changes "there will be no genuine peace in Myanmar".

Armed ethnic group representatives briefed members of the Japanese media on the issues in their homeland.

All said that they wished for an open dialogue with the Myanmar government but complained that President U Thein Sein and officials in Naw Pyi Taw have not officially acknowledged the UNFC as a legitimate body.

"The Union Government feels that it is too early to acknowledge the UNFC," said Mr Sasakawa, who has met both the president and National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss Myanmar's democratisation process and economic liberalisation.

Most speakers touched on the plight of their people, who they said face a lack of access to adequate education, medical resources and harassment from government

troops and officials.

Additionally, U Ta Aik Bhone, chairman of the Palaung State Liberation Front, and U Solomon, vice chairman of the Lahu Democratic Union, urged the Nippon Foundation and Japanese government to take a stand against worsening drug problems. Both said they believe that it is negatively impacting their local economies and young people.

U Ta Aik Bhone also accused the Myanmar government of backing militias that protect lucrative opium poppy fields. He also said that *ya-ba*, or methamphetamine, tablets are being produced and trafficked through some Palaung ethnic areas with the knowledge of the government.

The addresses made two notions abundantly clear. Despite their cultural differences the groups are united in their drive to improve the lives of their people and their distrust of the Myanmar government.

"You can change the skin of the snake," said Colonel U Sao Swy Meng Rai, head of foreign affairs for the Shan State Progress Party, the



Nippon Foundation chairman Yohei Sasakawa (front right) and Colonel Hkun Okker (front centre), chairman of the Pa-O National Liberation Organisation and joint general secretary 2 of the UNFC, at the Tokyo Conference on Support for the Myanmar National Races on October 18. Pic: Supplied/Natsuko Tominaga

political wing of the Shan State Army-North. "But it is still the same poison."

Echoing the sentiments of other speakers, he added that Myanmar has a lengthy history - dating back to the colonial period - of broken promises to ethnic groups, of which there are 135 recognised by the Myanmar government.

While the Nippon Foundation aid has been pledged, there are still questions over exactly how, where and when it will be distributed. Internally displaced people have been pushed into some of Myanmar's most remote

and difficult terrain due to armed conflicts. If aid is to be distributed from within Myanmar to these areas, there are significant logistical challenges that will need to be addressed, representatives of Nippon Foundation and armed ethnic groups said.

Roads networks are limited and in poor condition, ruling out use of big trucks. To reach the most far-flung villages, the idea of using elephants was even proposed by representatives of some groups.

More serious than transportation is the fact that some groups represented at the conference, including the Kachin Independence Organisation, have not signed ceasefire agreements with the government. This makes aid distribution to areas controlled by these groups particularly problematic.

One option is cross-border distribution from neighbouring countries. Under this proposal, rice and medicine would be bought with Nippon Foundation funds in Thailand, China, India and Bangladesh and then brought across the border to be distributed.

While it sounds fairly simple, it would necessitate memorandums of understanding being signed between Nippon Foundation and the governments of these neighbouring countries, said Mr Sasakawa. This would delay the delivery of much-needed aid, he said.

"It will take diplomatic negotiations with neighbouring countries," Mr Sasakawa said of the cross-country distribution proposal.

The October 18 briefing is part of a multi-day event that also includes visits to areas hit by a tsunami in March 2011.

On September 23, the UNFC and Nippon Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding after the foundation received approval from the Union Government to act an intermediary between the two groups.

Less than a month later, on October 6, the Nippon Foundation signed a formal memorandum of understanding with the government after meeting U Aung Min and U Soe Thein of the President's Office and Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi.



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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to visit India: organiser

NEW DELHI – Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will make her first trip in 25 years to India next month, a country where she studied and her mother served as an ambassador, an organiser said last week.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will deliver the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru memorial lecture, which honours independent India's first prime minister, on November 14 in New Delhi, organisers said on October 19.

"Preparations are on for the lecture, it is a very important event for us," said a secretary of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, who asked not to be named because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

A spokesperson for India's foreign ministry said they were still working out the rest of the itinerary for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, which is expected to involve meetings with Indian political leaders.

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had invited the 67-year-old National League for Democracy leader to deliver the lecture during his ice-breaking visit to Yangon in May, which was the first trip by an Indian premier to Myanmar in 25 years.

Once an ardent campaigner for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, India faced criticism in recent years for its engagement with Myanmar's former military government, which kept the democracy activist locked up and silenced under house arrest for 15 of the past 22 years.

But New Delhi has since pointed to recent dramatic reforms under a new quasi-civilian regime, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's election to parliament in April by-elections, as a validation of its engagement strategy.

Following her release from house arrest in 2010 after controversial elections, the Nobel laureate said that she had been "saddened" by India's lack of support.

India is seeking business opportunities and influence in Myanmar, with which it shares a border, but it faces stiff competition from better established Chinese firms and other regional powers.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi last visited India in 1987 when she travelled to Simla to join her husband Michael Aris, who was pursuing Himalayan studies at an institute located in the picturesque hill station.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi studied at the Convent of Jesus and Mary school and graduated with a degree in politics from the Lady Shri Ram college in New Delhi. – AFP

NLD leaders again urge unity

Vice chairman U Tin Oo admits 'some errors' over selection process for national assembly delegates

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

NATIONAL League for Democracy vice chairman U Tin Oo has urged party members to resolve their grievances over the party's organisation ahead of the upcoming national assembly "with unity".

He told a press conference in Yangon on October 17 that all levels of the party need to be united and problems should be solved within the party.

The press conference was convened after some party branches complained over the choice of delegates to attend the national assembly, which is expected to be held later this year.

"There will be some errors because we have no experience [holding a party assembly]. So I'd like to urge our party members to solve the controversies between each other with patience," said U Tin Oo, who is a member of commission organising the assembly.

"It is more dignified if we can settle ourselves



National League for Democracy vice chairman U Tin Oo (standing) speaks at a meeting in Yangon on October 17. Pic: Ko Taik

the issues between party members," U Tin Oo said.

U Nyan Win, secretary of the assembly commission, said the problems had

been confined to smaller towns and there had been few problems in Yangon Region.

"We amended the

assembly plan many times [because of disputes]. I'd like to say to all party members to participate democratically," he said.

In some townships, local officials, including police, had to help settle disputes between party members, U Nyan Win said. One complaint is that party members in some areas have refused to sell application forms to people who want to join.

U Tin Oo added that the Union Solidarity and Development Party used a similar system to arrange its recent party assembly.

"The current controversies are in Patheingyi and Myaungmya townships; we don't hear of many problems in other areas. Some people think that being selected [to take part in the assembly] is a permanent position. All members should understand it does not mean a person has been appointed," an NLD member from Kyauktada township said, asking not to be named.

The NLD is expected to hold its first national assembly before the end of the year. – Translated by Thiri Min Htun

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On disappearing river islands, residents ready for evacuation

Cows rest beside the crumbling bank of Sin Kyun, or Elephant Island, in the middle of the Ayeyarwady River near Mandalay. Pic: Bill O'Toole

UNPRECEDENTED levels of erosion in recent years have left several historic island communities that dot the Ayeyarwady River near Mandalay in danger of disappearing, residents say.

The island were first settled in the late 1700s by servants of King Bodawpaya when the Mingun Pagoda was being built.

The island communities are accustomed to dealing with high water levels during the wet season, with almost every home several metres above ground: families use canoes to visit their neighbours at the wettest parts of the year. But it is only in the past several years that their land has begun to literally fall away before their eyes, leading many residents to

IN DEPTH

with Bill O'Toole



question their future on the islands in the middle of the river.

U Agga Bala is the head monk at the monastery on Thone San Boi, an island with a population of about 1300 just north of Mingun. He said that in the last three years about one square mile of the island has fallen into the river, and land continues to disappear at a rapid pace. By U Agga Bala's estimation, 10 to 15 families have been displaced by erosion so far this year.

Just under a kilometre to the south is Sin Kyun, or Elephant Island, which has

a population of about 1500 and got its name after King Bodawpaya kept his royal elephants there.

The men mostly work as farmers, while the women craft bamboo hats to sell in Mandalay. U Win Maw, a member of the village administrative body on Sin Kyun, said a downpour on October 5 prompted almost 10 metres of land to fall into the river within 30 minutes. "The island is shrinking," said U Tin Soe, the head of the village on Sin Kyun. "And every year more people have to move."

Both U Agga Bala and U Tin Soe estimate their islands will be completely gone in the next three to five years. They are already making plans to save money for the day when they and their neighbours have to pull out of the area and buy land for a new village. The residents of Sin Kyun

are already negotiating with land owners on the Ayeyarwady's eastern bank, directly across from the island. U Agga Bala and the village administrative body on Thone San Boi are looking at buying land to the north of Mandalay.

U Tin Soe estimates that the cost of moving one family onto the mainland will be about K500,000, a big sum for villagers who on average make K50,000 a month.

The reasons behind the gradual disappearance of the islands are subject to much debate. However, many environmentalists point the finger at large hydropower and other projects upstream. While the government suspended a controversial 6000 megawatt dam at Myitstone, China Power Investment Corporation is working on six more dams along the tributaries of the Ayeyarwady in Kachin

State.

U Maung Maung, secretary of Mandalay non-government organisation Green Activities, said the environmental consequences of these projects were never a consideration when they were given the green light, citing the fact that an Environmental Impact Assessment was never publicly released.

Mr Witoon Permpongsacharoen, director of the Bangkok-based Mekong Energy and Ecology Network (MEENet), agrees the shrinking islands could be a direct result of the construction of the dams. He says the water levels change more rapidly, which leads the soil going from wet to dry more often. This weakens the soil and makes it more susceptible to erosion, he said.

Additionally, Mr Witoon said large hydropower dams often block sediment flow. Instead of depositing sediment downriver, which would allow the islands to maintain their size, the water washes away the loose soil.

MEENet has a team of representatives in Myanmar working with environmental groups on a broad survey of the effects of the dams on the environment. Mr Witoon says so far they are only working to train local partners and build capacity, however, and the actual assessment will not come until much later.

But U Than Zaw Htwe, an engineer at Sel Taw Lay weir in Mandalay Region, said the effects of climate change are the more likely cause of the erosion. In an interview with *The Myanmar Times*, he said the extreme droughts and flooding that Myanmar has experienced this year had probably led to more unpredictable water levels. He said the dam projects in Kachin State are still under construction and he

thinks they are not yet at a point where they could have a serious impact on the river.

U Phone Kyaw Sein, the deputy director of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems in Mandalay Region, said erosion is a natural process during the rainy season. However, the directorate "recognises the problem it poses for many citizens along the Ayeyarwady River", he said, adding that the government

'The island is shrinking. And every year more people have to move.'

will spend more than K41 million on a variety of projects to lessen the effects of erosion during the dry season. These include using sand bags to build small dams that are designed to slow down currents.

U Tin Soe said his village has already received some sand bags to help stem the tide. "They only help a little bit," he said. "But a little bit helps."

He said the local government has promised that when the time comes for the communities to move to the mainland it will help them negotiate to buy land. U Agga Bala said he and village leaders at Thone San Boi have requested help from the directorate but are yet to receive a response.

In the meantime, villagers on Sin Kyun wait for the day when they will be finally forced to relocate. "It's not a happy situation," said U Bo Gyi, a 78-year-old farmer who has lived on the island his entire life. "But the current is coming quickly for us."

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Dated: 22nd October, 2012

With solar panels, teacher brings light to Elephant Island

By Bill O'Toole

DESPITE its rapidly diminishing shoreline, the residents of Sin Kyun, or Elephant Island, continue to endeavour to raise their standard of living. During the past year, Sin Kyun has been the focal point for a pilot project to bring solar power to rural communities in upper Myanmar. The project was initiated by Ko Thant Zin, a teacher from nearby Mingun who used to live on the island.

Working with a grant from the German Foundation for World Population (Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung), Ko Thant Zin and his partners in the village council have provided more than 200 homes with solar panels and halogen lamps.

He told *The Myanmar Times* he had always been keen to ensure the project was not charity; residents are required to rent the panels, which cost about K100,000 each, for K1000 a month. The money is collected by a three person group of village leaders who use it for public works.

The council has so far put most of the money into a project for an electricity grid on the island. It has already saved enough for a gas generator and is saving up for the necessary copper

wire.

Though the panels are only capable of providing a small amount of light, for families in the village they represent a significant opportunity to boost income. About 80 percent of women on Sin Kyun make bamboo hats, which are sold in markets in Mandalay. "Before we could only work in the daylight," said Daw Mam Yu, as she assembled a hat. "Now we can work late into the night."

Ko Thant Zin said he was inspired to start the project by his own experience growing up on the island. "When I was young there was no electricity," he said. "My family was poor so I sold water and vegetables [on the mainland] to make money so I could go to school."

While the project has faced its share of problems in the past year, Ko Thant Zin said the most common complaint is that people want more solar panels for their homes.

Regardless of Sin Kyun's fate, Ko Thant Zin said he wants to expand the solar project throughout upper Myanmar. Travelling through the region this past summer, he said he visited 12 other island communities, with more than 1000 homes, where people lacked any electricity.

Man crushed under roller

A 44-YEAR-OLD man died last week when he slipped from his motorbike and fell under a roller in Mandalay.

The incident occurred about 10:30am on October 17 at the corner of 72nd Street and Ngushwewhar Street in Chanmyatharsi township. The man, U Ko Ko Myint, was crushed by the roller and died on the spot.

"He slipped over a pile of stones and slid under the roller

machine that was building a road when he turned into 72nd Street from 73rd Street. He seemed to be under the influence of alcohol and was speeding," said a resident who saw the accident.

Police Second Lieutenant Htin Kyaw Thu said on October 17 police were still deciding whether to charge the driver of the roller. — *Si Thu Lwin, translated by Zar Zar Soe*

More disputes emerge in NLD over party assembly

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

MORE disputes are emerging in the lower ranks of the National League for Democracy and the dissent could overshadow the convening of the party's first general assembly later this year, activists in Mandalay warned last week.

In the lead up to the assembly, the party will hold "mini assemblies" at branches from the quarter and village level to regional level throughout the country.

However, the process of selecting delegates for the assembly at the quarter and village level has been controversial, bringing to the fore other disputes that have simmered quietly beneath the surface and highlighting the lack of control the headquarters has over branch offices, members in Mandalay's Pyigyitagun township said last week.

"Some consider that the problem in the party is a battle for power between old and new party members and activists but it is also indicative of the headquarters' weaknesses. The undemocratic commissions should be stopped in time so we can complete the village level selection process," NLD member U Ko Ko Aung, from Pyigyitagun township, said on October 19.

He said "strong conflict" had occurred at party meetings in Pyigyitagun township and since a gathering on September 26 ended in argument no further meetings have been held. He added that some members in Mandalay have received party membership cards but those in Pyigyitagun are still waiting because of the disputes. In mid July he wrote a letter to Daw



Unhappy NLD members from Mandalay's Pyigyitagun township, including U Ko Ko Aung (second left) and U Win Hlaing (left), on October 19. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

Aung San Suu Kyi about the problems at the party's lower levels, which he said was passed to her by Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Pobbathiri U Phyo Zeyar Thaw.

"All that is needed is for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to say that the process should be democratic ... [because] it's probably right to say about 90 percent of people join the NLD because they love Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. To reach the national assembly level, all the levels from village to regional assemblies are important and we totally can't accept that a small group of members are manipulating the party and abusing power in the name of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi," said U Ko Ko Aung, who said he joined the NLD in 1990 but has never been issued a membership card.

Both U Ko Ko Aung and another long-time Pyigyitagun member, U Win Hlaing, told *The Myanmar Times* they are "very upset" with some members at the

district level, who they said have only recently joined the party and were undertaking their roles in an "undemocratic" way. The disagreements, they said, date back to the April by-election.

"Working for the party should be about duty, not about power. We already opened 14 quarter-level offices in Pyigyitagun township and only need to open another two offices. After that, we will be ready to hold the quarter-level assembly selection," U Win Hlaing said.

The two members also discussed Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's comments on the conflict published in the October 18 edition of *7-Day News*, in which she said it would take time to solve conflict between dedicated members and "self-interested people" in the party.

"We feel sorry for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi because she had to apologise to the people for the conflict between party members. It sounded like a mother who

has naughty sons. Senior party members should consider what is right and wrong at the bottom level. You can see clearly there are issues of patronage and unfairness," U Ko Ko Aung said.

"We also think the party should not punish those people in Pathein, Myaungmya and Thongwa who have also spoken out about the undemocratic selection process for the assembly," he said.

However, as *The Myanmar Times* reported last week, spokesperson U Nyan Win said members should recognise that the selection process will only be used for the assembly and those chosen are not being appointed to permanent positions.

"We don't accept some members' claim that the selection process for the commission delegates is not democratic ... we are assigning responsibility for the event to the people who are the most capable," he said.

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Two journals facing contempt charges

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

THE first hearing in a contempt of court case involving U Nyan Win and two publications will be held next week, the National League for Democracy spokesperson said.

U Nyan Win applied to press charges against the owners of both *Messenger* and *Pyi Myanmar* under section 3 of the Contempt of Courts Act 1926 after they published an opinion piece that called for him to be punished for allegedly making false allegations of electoral fraud.

The first hearing in the case

will be held starting on October 29 in Mandalay Region Court, U Nyan Win said.

U Nyan Win is facing charges of making false allegations of electoral fraud during the April by-elections.

An article published in both publications, by a columnist named Ko Upaday, criticised U Nyan Win and said he should be punished for the alleged infraction.

Upaday means law in the Myanmar language and the identity of the real author is not publicly known.

In a recent interview with *Messenger*, U Nyan Win said

he had "no argument with the journals" and was only taking action because he objected to the publication of the specific article.

"The columnist wrote that I should be punished but the case is still being held so has no right to write like this before the court has made a decision," U Nyan Win told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

He said he was pressing charges as an individual and the case was not connected to the NLD.

He said the owner of *Pyi Myanmar*, Dr Tin Tun Oo, who is also a part-owner of *The Myanmar Times*, told him the article had been published on the

instructions of the Press Scrutiny and Registration Division.

"If it is true, they can tell it to the judge in the court," U Nyan Win said.

At a press conference at NLD headquarters on October 8, Mawkyun Soe Myint, a consultant editor at *Pyi Myanmar*, also said the article was published at the request of PSRD.

Staff at *Pyi Myanmar* refused to comment last week and Dr Tin Tun Oo could not be reached for comment despite repeated attempts.

Messenger is owned by U Zaw Min Aye, the son of Union Election Commission chairman

U Tin Aye.

Ko Aung Paw Tun, the editor of *Messenger*, said the journal was still waiting for an official notification from the Mandalay Region Court about the hearing.

"If the court decides this case will go ahead we are ready," he said. "The first hearing will start on October 29 but we still do not have any notice from the court about it."

"We will take all responsibility for news and articles published in our journal because we value ethics in journalism," he said, adding that the article in question had been contributed by an "outsider".

Confusion over committee policy on illegal homes in Mandalay

By Phyo Wai Kyaw and Than Naing Soe

MANDALAY City Development Committee has created lists of families living illegally in Kangyikone village, put numbers on houses and taken photos of the people staying in each home, residents in the area said last week.

The committee had tried to evict the illegal residents on September 20 but gave up because of strong opposition.

The eviction came after MCDC declared in its *Mandalay* daily newspaper on September 15 that there were about 1180 huts and houses in parts of Myayi Nandar ward in Chanmyatharsi township, Kangyikone village, Zeeoke village and Ywarthit Kalay village in Pyigyitagun township and Nat Yekan village in Amarapura township that have been built illegally on municipal land.

After warning the trespassers to leave those places no later than September 16, MCDC demolished illegal homes in Myayi Nandar ward on September 17. However, its workers were unable to evict



A woman walks in front of illegal homes in Kangyikone village on October 16. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

residents in Kangyikone three days later.

"Some are still staying there and the houses are not destroyed yet in Kangyikone, Zeeoke and Ywarthit Kalay villages. MCDC staff came here from October 3 to 9 and made family lists, and took the photos of the illegally built houses. They also assigned house numbers but gave no reason for doing that. We don't know what their plan is or what will happen," a 30-year-old snackshop owner, who lives near Magway Monastery in Kangyikone village, said on October 16.

This has prompted more people to build houses in the area as they have heard they will be able to get compensation from MCDC, said a 45-year-old woman

who runs a cold drink shop in the village. "However, [giving compensation] is just a rumour and we haven't heard any exact information yet."

U Tin Htut Kyaw, head of the committee's Land Records Department, said his staff did as the mayor had instructed them but they are also unaware of what the next step will be.

"We just did as the mayor asked. However, no additional instructions have been given yet," U Tin Htut Kyaw said on October 17.

Mandalay Mayor Aung Moune met illegal residents of Pyigyitagun and Amarapura townships on September 14 and told them that MCDC had already given compensation when it acquired the land in 1991.

USDP representatives meet public to hear 'real voices'

By Soe Than Lynn

THE Union Solidarity and Development Party will present the "real voices" of the people to the fifth session of the national legislatures, says U Ko Gyi, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Mandalay's Aungmyaythazan constituency.

"When we travelled around from one township to another, we got the real voices of the people to submit during the fifth session. The USDP is going to submit the voices of the people that differ from the previous ones we have heard [in the parliament]. Before we took a more bird's-eye view and it is sometimes quite a bit different. We were only exposed to the realities when we went to grassroots," he told *The Myanmar Times* in a recent interview.

U Ko Gyi and Amyotha Hluttaw representative for Mandalay Region constituency 1 Dr Soe Tun visited nine locations in wards of their constituencies during the recess of the hluttaw to get feedback from residents. During their visits, they were

accompanied by township-level officials, who instantly dealt with matters under their authority.

On the evening of October 9, the group met about 150 voters at Waso Monastery in Nyaugkwai Ward, Aungmyaythazan township.

U Ko Gyi and Dr Soe Tun gave a brief account of activities in the hluttaw and encouraged voters to sincerely express their feelings. They

voter asked about recurring crime at the Thiriminglar Highway Bus Terminal and remedial measures to reform the judiciary, a township judge and police officer both gave an explanation.

Similarly, a question about mending drainage was answered by a township municipal officer.

But not every explanation from the department officials could satisfy the audience. In some cases, township officials said they

'Before we took a bird's-eye view and it is sometimes quite a bit different. We were only exposed to the realities when we went to the grassroots.'

also negotiated with the department officials concerned.

Voters raised issues including poor roads, bridges and drainage, municipal problems, the need to control crime, and judicial bias. Where possible, the department officials responded to the complaints.

For example, when a

could not override the order of their superiors at the district and regional levels. This was supported by the township judge, who said: "We can't contravene an order from the region level; we can only follow it."

Dr Soe Tun said it was important that different levels of government worked cooperatively to "fulfil the expectations of the public".

"Departmental officials tend to have restrictions on their authority and other difficulties. When they meet the public, the questions put them on the spot so sometimes they could not instantly reply to your complete satisfaction," he told the audience.

"Besides, in some cases where township level officials could not deal with an issue the region or state levels could not handle it either. We are going to bring these issues forward to the president. The government is still fledgling and the hluttaw is only 21 months old so you should not expect some cases to happen overnight."

"Incompleteness of infrastructure and management restrictions are rife. Only if the lowest levels closely work with the top and middle levels will you be able to fulfil the expectations of the public." - Translated by Thit Lwin

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NPT security rules to be relaxed for festival

By Win Ko Ko Latt

RESIDENTS of Pinyinmana have welcomed Nay Pyi Taw Council's decision to relax a ban on all-night pagoda festivals imposed when it became the capital in November 2005.

The ending of the ban will come into effect for the 94th "28-pagoda festival" from October 29 to 31, an official from the Pinyinmana Township General Administrative Office said last week.

The festival, which sees motorised floats designed as pagodas travel through the town, was celebrated throughout the night but from 2006 until this year the

Nay Pyi Taw Council had set an 11pm curfew.

"Nay Pyi Taw Council has allowed the festival to be held all night this year but religious teams have to take responsibility for security themselves," said U Kyaw Tint, head of the Pinyinmana Township General Administrative Office.

U Ko Thein, a 61-year-old Pinyinmana resident, said he was "glad" about the announcement.

"It has been long time since young people have enjoyed the excitement that we had in the past during this festival," he said.

U Htoo Htoo Kywe, editor-in-chief of *Upper Myanmar Journal* in Mandalay, said

the annual pagoda festival was an important event for Pinyinmana residents.

"The festival has never skipped a year, even during the 1988 uprising period," he said.

One 18-year-old Pinyinmana resident said he was "excited to participate" in the festival this year. "It is really great that the event will be held all night again," he said.

Meanwhile, U Ko Ko Htay, chairman of the Yanaung 1 religious team, said the ban on late-night festivities had diminished the scale of the festival in recent years, with some of the eight religious teams regularly declining to participate.



A Tabauing full moon festival in Pinyinmana in February 2010. Pic: The Myanmar Times

However, all eight will take part this year and they have hired bands including The Ugly and The Warriors and singers and actors including G Latt, So Tay and Hlwain Pain to perform on entertainment floats.

U Ko Ko Htay said the

festival will see floats with performers drive around the town on October 29 and 31, performing at more than 20 locations.

Meanwhile, on October 30, 28 "pagoda" floats will travel around the town.

U Ko Ko, administrator of

Pinyinmana's Kan Oo ward, said young members of religious teams, ward and village administrative staff, Myanmar Red Cross Society members, firefighters and Myanmar Police Force members will provide security for the event.

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Dated: 22nd October, 2012

Shan peace workshop to be held next month

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

THE first Shan nationalities peace workshop will be held in Yangon in November, the chairman of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy said last week.

The talks will also include members of the Shan State Army, Shan State Progressive Party, Restoration Council of Shan State and Shan civil society groups and is being organised by the SNLD, chairman U Khun Htun Oo said.

He said the aim was to understand the major issues between Shan armed groups

and the government peace building team.

"I am going to form a commission to organise this peace workshop and will include all Shan armed force groups too. We have about four armed groups, some of which have already agreed a ceasefire with the government and some have not and we will talk with them about this issue," U Khun Htun Oo said.

"Actually it is not like a big conference, just a small peace workshop with Shan nationalities," he said.

While the venue for the peace workshop has not been confirmed, he said it would be held in Yangon.

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Dated: 22 October, 2012.

USDP to make chief ministers state, region branch leaders

By Soe Than Lynn

THE Union Solidarity and Development Party leadership is likely to appoint chief ministers of region and state governments to lead its regional branches, a senior official said last week, despite criticism of the move from some inside the party.

The chief ministers will be expected to both lead their governments and carry out party activities but will not be compromised by the dual role, USDP vice chairman U Htay Oo told *The Myanmar Times* at the opening of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on October 18.

"Jointly playing two roles can bring more benefits to the country and its people. Will other parties point their finger at this? No, it's none of their business. If they won [the election], they would do the same," U Htay Oo said.

"It is true that some people will hold the positions of chief minister and party chairman [for a state or region] but that chief minister will not only work for USDP members. For example, when he builds a road, can he restrict the road so it is only used by party members? It is a bridge built for every citizen to use," he said.

He said that the appointments are expected to be confirmed in about two weeks and the ministers will be given either a chair or patron role.

The constitution restricts members of the Union Government from party activities but there is no rule forbidding chief ministers from taking on party duties.

But not all hluttaw representatives – including some from the USDP – are happy about the decision, with some saying it will effectively make regional governments and USDP branches a single entity.

"The government and party will get closer and become one and the same. According to the rules of the hluttaw, the government cannot do party activities. When serving the interests of the people, the government should stay away from a party or an ideology. At present, the USDP is not ruling the country. If chief ministers who are members of the USDP become USDP regional chairmen, it suggests that the party is ruling the country," said Amyotha Hluttaw MP U Zakhon Tein Ring, from Kachin State constituency 4.

While U Zakhon Tein Ring contested the 2010 general election as an independent, the co-founder of New Democratic



Bago Region Chief Minister U Nyan Win in Nay Pyi Taw on October 15. Pic: Christopher Davy

Army (Kachin) militia attended the USDP assembly wearing the party's badge.

"[Members of] the executive should have complete freedom [from their party] except when they are campaigning for election. If they strictly adhere to the constitution, there will be no confusion ... they should follow the law," he said.

Others suggested that if chief ministers are to be given senior roles in state and region USDP branches they should be assigned as patron rather than chair.

"In my opinion, it is better if [chief ministers] are appointed patrons rather than chairmen. If they are chairmen, they are

responsible for the party's main activities. A patron only needs to indirectly control or give advice but not to be personally involved. If the chief minister takes on the party chairman's role, then people will have more opportunities to criticise him," said USDP member U Ko Gyi, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Aungmyaythazan.

Last week, the chief ministers of Yangon, Bago, Magwe, Mandalay and Sagaing regions and Mon State were included in the party's 44-member central executive committee, which was announced at its assembly on October 16.

– Translated by Thit Lwin

Foundation readies for Yangon move

By Tim McLaughlin in Tokyo

JAPANESE non-government organisation the Nippon Foundation has confirmed that it will soon have permanent staff based in Myanmar. Staff members should arrive within a month, foundation chairman Mr Yohei Sasakawa said last week, though no exact date has been set.

The foundation will operate from the Mayangone township offices of Saetanar, a Yangon-based NGO that Nippon Foundation supports.

Saetanar works jointly with Myanmar's Ministry of Border Affairs to undertake community development projects, including school construction. Saetanar has built 200 schools in Shan State. The NGO is planning further projects, including agriculture outreach programs, in the communities where it has built schools.

The Nippon Foundation has supported development projects in Myanmar since 1976, when it began helping the country eliminate leprosy. The foundation has renewed its focus in Myanmar in the past year after Mr Sasakawa met President U Thein Sein and opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in July.

By the end of 2012 the foundation will have implemented 23 projects totalling US\$11.8 million in Myanmar.

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Experts start work on tourism master plan

By Yu Yu Maw

EXPERTS will spend up to a month visiting and analysing tourism destinations in Myanmar before drawing up a Tourism Master Plan, the head of the body tasked with writing the plan said last week.

The team began its study at Inle Lake on October 18 and is scheduled to finish on November 4 but could take longer.

"We will go tourist destinations to analyse and collect all data and information for the master plan. And we will return to do a workshop on the results of our analysis. We will take advice from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Ministry of Hotels and Tourism for this plan," Mr Paul Rogers, team leader of Myanmar Tourism Master Plan drafting body, said during a meeting with Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung in Nay Pyi Taw on October 15.

The Norwegian government has given US\$225,000 to Myanmar to implement the master plan and the grant will be administered by ADB.

"ADB will assist the international tourism experts to draw the Tourism Master Plan. The team was also selected by ADB," said Daw Kyi Kyi Aye, a consultant to the team.

The grant will pay for a sector assessment to examine Myanmar's tourist assets and liabilities, visitor traffic, infrastructure and human resource needs, existing laws and policies, and the role of private sector organisations, the ADB said in an online newsletter dated October 12.

It will also look into the cultural and environmental impacts of tourism and recommend new policies and investments to ensure the industry's expansion is sustainable, with the benefits equitably shared.

"Myanmar is undergoing a period of dramatic change, and skyrocketing tourist arrivals are already putting existing tourism infrastructure under enormous strain," Mr Putu Kamayana, the head of the ADB Extended Mission in Myanmar, was quoted as saying in the newsletter.

Plans to enhance connectivity to major markets, improve the investment climate, expand air and hotel services, and introduce visas-on-arrival and electronic visas for tourists indicate an even faster rate of growth is likely in the industry in coming years, he said.

"To ensure benefits are sustainable and extend to more people, the country needs a comprehensive plan that respects culture and the environment," Mr Kamayana said.

KIO rules out talks between KIA, army

By Win Ko Ko Latt and Nan Tin Htwe

THE Kachin Independence Organisation has ruled out talks between the Tatmadaw and Kachin Independence Army, saying the negotiation process should be the responsibility of the government and KIO.

"This is not a problem between the armies. It is just because of the government's policy; it does not want to solve the ethnic problems through political means and the government keeps neglecting the real meaning of 'union'," spokesperson U La Nan said by email on October 17.

He made the comments after rumours emerged that the Tatmadaw and KIA would meet in an effort to bring an end to fighting that broke out in June 2011. On October 15, a senior officer from the Tatmadaw said: "We proposed [talks] but there has been no reply yet from the KIA."

U Aung Min, the vice chairman of the government's Peace Working Committee, told *The Myanmar Times* at the Union Solidarity Development Party assembly in Nay Pyi Taw last week that the next round of negotiations would be "military-to-military".

"There will be negotiations ... it will be done by army leaders. I'm not included," he said.

The senior Tatmadaw official said that

the Peace Working Committee had proposed talks take place in Nay Pyi Taw or Muse but the KIA has not accepted the proposal. "If U Aung Min is not included, then I don't think General Soe Win, deputy commander-in-chief, will be included. I think officers who command the units will meet instead."

U La Nan said that the KIO already rejected an August 25 invitation from the Peace Working Committee to meet in Nay Pyi Taw or Muse.

"There is no reason to accept the proposal as we already informed U Aung Min that we will not meet at a city inside the country until there are transparent and practical negotiations," he said.

He said all talks should be between the government and KIO.

"Our understanding is that the whole process of meetings and negotiations should be for representatives from the government and KIO," he said.

"If [the government] wants peace for the whole nation, they need to change laws concerning ethnic people. Only federalism can unite a country that has different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, languages and history.

"They have been trying to lie to the people for 60 years with the idea that if there's peace there are no problems between the armies [of both sides]. That is why we are the country with the longest-running civil wars in the world."

Yangon to host ASEAN 100 Leadership Forum

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

THE ASEAN 100 Leadership Forum will be held in Yangon in December, with President U Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi invited to take part, one of the forum's founders said last week.

The leadership forum attracts about 100 influential people from the political, economic and civil society fields in the ASEAN region and was first held in 2003. The 9th ASEAN 100 Leadership Forum will be held on December 5 and 6 at Yangon's Sedona Hotel Yangon, said Dato Timothy Ong, founder of the Asia Inc Forum, which organises the leadership event.

"I invited President U Thein Sein but he is still not confirmed to come but Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will give an address," said Mr Ong, who is based in Brunei.

"We're very excited about this year's leadership forum because it is being held in Myanmar [at a] very special time [for the country]. Myanmar today is going through very good change. ... After many decades of

isolation, it became a very poor country [but] now it is regaining its place in ASEAN, opening up and undertaking reform," he said.

He said participants will speak about ASEAN reform and the recent economic reforms in Myanmar. A question and answer section will also be included.

"Myanmar is a latecomer to the ASEAN association so the advantages are that you can learn from what other countries have done," he said. "We will also invite young businesspeople from Myanmar to participate."

About 20 participants from Myanmar have been invited, including Minister for the President's Office U Soe Thein, author and historian Dr Thant Myint-U and businessman U Serge Pun of SPA Group.

"People who are rising as leaders now as well as the leaders of the future, people from politics, people from business and civil society ... intellectuals and journalists; we will bring them together to talk at this forum," Mr Ong said.

The first forum was held in Malaysia at 2003.

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ITUC gets approval for Yangon office

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

THE Ministry of Labour has given the International Trade Union Confederation approval to open an office in Myanmar to help workers improve their skills, the confederation's general secretary said last week.

Ms Sharan Burrow told *The Myanmar Times* by email on October 12 following her three-day visit earlier this month that the ITUC was "pleased to meet with the labour minister and hear first hand a commitment to implement the labour law to protect workers".

"As investment flows into Myanmar it is critical that labour laws are robust and in place with strong unions in all sectors to ensure that decent work is in place. To assist and support local unions the ITUC will open an office in Rangoon and we were pleased to discuss the signing of an MOU with the labour minister. This report will now go to the president for formal signatures," she said.

"Myanmar has a strong and democratic future but there is much work to be done. Overcoming entrenched corporate opposition to unions and labour rights, eliminating forced labour, establishing fair minimum wages and social protection, building collective bargaining capacity and trusted grievance procedures to name just a few."

Speaking during an earlier meeting with workers and employers at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry on October 8, Ms Burrow said the ITUC is willing to help build the capacity of the country's workers and educate them about workers' rights.

Ms Burrow visited Myanmar from October 7 to 9.

MRCSS to open first aid post on Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw Highway

By Yamon Phu Thit

MYANMAR Red Cross Society will open a 24-hour first-aid post with pre-hospital care and ambulance services at the 115 mile rest area on the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw Highway by the end of this year, an MRCS spokesperson said.

With the support of Singapore Red Cross, MRCS will spend K20 million (about US\$23,000) building the first-aid post, the society's deputy director general, Dr Aung Kyaw Htut, said last week.

"We have observed many traffic accidents on this highway. Many people died unnecessarily because it took too long for them to get to hospital and because of the poor method of delivering them to hospital," he said.

"If they are treated with first aid and referred to the hospital in time, their chance of survival will be higher," he said.

The MRCS also plans to expand an ambulance service on the highway that it launched in October 2011. The service has only one ambulance and this is not enough, said Daw Than Than Myint, who is in charge of the service.

"Within one year, we have provided first-aid treatment to 125 people who have been involved in traffic accidents and referred them to the nearest hospital. But we need more ambulances because with one ambulance we can carry six people who are not severely injured at one time and only three people who severely hurt,"



A damaged car beside the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw section of the Yangon-Mandalay Highway. MRCS plans to open a first aid post at the 115 mile rest stop before the end of the year. Pic: Hein Latt Aung

she said.

"Things will be quicker and smoother when the post is finished," Daw Than Than Myint said.

Dr Aung Kyaw Htut said more ambulances will be equipped when the post is officially opened. "We have 15 new ambulances which are donated from Singapore Red Cross and Turkish Red Cross," he

said, adding that some of these would be assigned to the post but the exact number had not yet been decided.

Contact numbers for the service will be displayed along the highway, while restaurant staff at the 115 mile rest area will also be given basic first-aid training so they can help in the event of a major emergency, he

said.

The service will be free of charge and MRCS is seeking donations from the public to complete the project.

MRCS also plans to expand its services to the Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay section of the highway soon. The ambulance service can be contacted on 09-4934-1961 and 09-4281-52600.

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Monks protest near Yangon's Sule Pagoda on October 15. Pic: Kaung Htet

Govt backflips on OIC office promise following protests

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

THE government will allow humanitarian assistance from Islamic countries, dishonouring a promise to allow the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to open a liaison office in Myanmar, President's Office director U Zaw Htay said on his Facebook account last week.

He said President U Thein Sein had said publicly that he has "opened the door for all international humanitarian assistance" and the government is cooperating with local and international organisations on rehabilitation programs for Rakhine State.

Following protests by several thousand people, including monks, in Yangon and elsewhere in Myanmar, the President's Office announced on August 15 that it would not allow the OIC to open an office to distribute humanitarian aid, saying it "goes against the will of the people".

"We welcome the decision of the government because this is what we wanted to happen," said Dr Aye Maung, chairman of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP).

"There is no need to open liaison office in Myanmar for giving humanitarian assistance. If they trust the government, they can donate and give support under the government's management. We think that their plan to open an office in Myanmar is part of a larger strategy," he said.

"The government has made this decision according

to the public's desire. That is the democratic way."

But while the anti-OIC protesters may have been the most vocal on the issue, not everyone was pleased at the government's backtracking.

"We are sad," said U Kyaw Soe, secretary of the Myanmar National Muslim League, adding that he believed the group's views reflected those of most Muslim people in Myanmar.

'We don't understand why those [Buddhists] are campaigning against these meritorious activities. We are really sorry about the government's decision.'

"The OIC is trying to give humanitarian assistance and the government accepted [their request to open a liaison office in Myanmar]. But, the [government] rejected it later because of the complaints of [Buddhists]. We think that every religion should accept work that is being carried out for the sake of other human beings. We don't understand why those [Buddhists] are campaigning against these meritorious activities. We are really sorry about the

government's decision" U Kyaw Soe said.

Highlighting the tensions over the issue, Myanmar Red Cross Society published a statement on October 16 saying there is no OIC liaison office in its headquarter on Strand Road in Yangon, its office in Nay Pyi Taw or at any of its other branches.

But Talal Daous from the OIC head office in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, told Chiang Mai-based news group *The Irrawaddy* on October 16 that the OIC had not received any official confirmation from the government that the liaison office plan had been rejected.

"It is an unfortunate thing to happen, because this office is only for humanitarian purposes. We have already signed an agreement but it seems the government of Myanmar is not serious about humanitarian issues," said Mr Daous, director of the Muslim Minorities and Communities Department at the OIC.

The OIC signed a memorandum of understanding with the Myanmar government on August 11 to open liaison offices in Yangon and Rakhine State. A delegation from the OIC travelled to Rakhine State in September and met government officials and members of the local Muslim community.

OIC is an international organisation consisting of 57 member states. The OIC was established in 1969 as a collective voice of the Muslim world and attempts to safeguard the interests and ensure the progress and well being of Muslims.

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KNU official rejects split talk

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

RELATIONS between the Karen National Union and its armed wing, the Karen National Liberation Army, are on the mend following a recent dispute over the opening of a liaison office in Hpa-an, Kayin State, a KNU official said last week.

"We believe that Karen people feel deeply sorry over the little problems that happened while we are all marching towards attaining peace. ... Our leaders are finding the best solution so I urge all of you to cooperate together for getting genuine peace," Lieutenant Colonel Sae Phae Do, a spokesperson for the KNU, said during a meeting with Kayin people in Yangon on October 13.

KNU officials visited Yangon to inform Kayin groups of its relationship with the KNLA, after reports that the commander-in-chief, Lieutenant General Mutu Say Poe, and two other senior KNLA members, had been sacked by the KNU on October 2 for violating the group's protocol.

The news generated concern in the Kayin community that there would be a split in the KNU leadership.

However, spokespersons from both sides said the reports were just rumours.

"We've already said the relationship between KNU and KNLA remains good. It is a misunderstanding between the leaders and they are discussing [the dispute]," Major Saw Shee Sho from Brigade 6, the head of the KNU liaison office in Hpa-an, said on October 16.

U Saw Htun Aung Myint, the minister for Kayin affairs in Yangon Region, said his party, the Kayin People's Party (KPP), and other Kayin organisations had asked the KNU's central committee for clarification on the reports.

"At present, all people want to get peace. But everyone is anxious about the news of the dismissal of committee members. We are afraid these issues could damage the peace process so the KPP sent our comment to the KNU. We were happy that the KNU has replied to us that they are doing their best to resolve these issues," U Saw Htun Aung Myint said.

The KPP representative said he attended the opening ceremony of the liaison office in Hpa-an on September 27, an event that sparked the apparent dispute.

"U Aung Min [head of the government peace negotiation team] also attended the ceremony. He said he welcomes anyone who is willing to participate in the peace process," U Saw Htun Aung Myint said.

"The peace process between the government and KNU has so far got very good results so we don't want it to go backwards," he added.



A lawyer speaks during a protest in downtown Yangon on October 17. Pic: Ko Taik

Lawyers protest again over heritage buildings

By Noe Noe Aung

MEMBERS of the Lawyers Network last week held a protest against a government plan to lease two court buildings to private companies.

About 150 lawyers from the network walked from Maha Bandoola Park Street to Bank Street during the October 17 protest.

"The High Court building is on the Yangon city heritage list and it's also a really great and grand office. The glory of this building deserves to be recognised in its continued status as the high court. This building shouldn't be changed into a hotel," said advocate U Ko Ni.

"This building was an important player in the history of the Myanmar judicial system. We should preserve our heritage buildings," said lawyer U

Phoe Phyu.

Earlier this year, the government leased the Yangon Region Office Complex, the former Police Commissioner's Office, to Flying Tiger Engineering to run as 180-room hotel on a 60-year lease. The government announced in May it would receive annual rent equivalent to 7 percent of hotel revenue, along with a fee of US\$14.4 million for land use, and the company will be required to invest K20 billion. However, the protesters say a Chinese company is behind the redevelopment.

Meanwhile, the High Court building was leased to U Thein Tun of Myanmar Golden Star and Tun Foundation to run as a restaurant and museum for K240 million a year. The foundation will invest between K3 billion and K5 billion in the project, the government said.

"Since many years ago, lawyers and judges worked in the [Yangon Region Office Complex] building. There are many offices in it. The building style of the rooms is special. Now all offices are scattered [across Yangon]," U Ko Ni said.

He said the Lawyers Network wrote a letter to the President's Office in August asking for the buildings not to be leased to private companies but have not yet received a reply.

"The High Court building is nearly 100 years old now. It's a colonial-era building; both of these buildings are on the Yangon city heritage list. According to the law our heritage must not be destroyed. Even if the government wants to renovate the buildings, the renovations must respect the original design. We can't accept a hotel to be run from this building," said advocate Daw May Khaing Tun from Shan State.

No one above law, speaker says as fifth session opens

By Soe Than Lynn

ALL lawbreakers will be punished under the country's existing laws to build a democratic country with rule of law, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said in an address at the opening of the fifth session on October 18.

The speaker said the legislature would also sanction those who fail to take action against lawbreakers.

"Democracy will live sustainably with peace and stability only when there is rule of law. The three rely on each other. Therefore, everyone has to obey the country's existing laws

and regulations to develop rule of law," Thura U Shwe Mann said.

"Everyone who breaks the law will be penalised ... and elected representatives must have the power to punish a person or an organisation that fails to charge these lawbreakers," he said.

He said the national legislatures have an important role to play in democratic development so the rights and authorities of the hluttaws and their representatives need to be not only maintained but used effectively.

Moreover, the hluttaw and its representatives also need to fulfill the voices, desires and hopes of the public by properly

exercising their authority, he said.

The first day of the fifth session began with the swearing in of 15 new Tatmadaw representatives in front of 388 of 429 eligible MPs

One source close to the Tatmadaw MPs told *The Myanmar Times* that some of the 15 representatives had been reassigned to their regiments for promotion, while others had been allowed to retire or transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

"Some people said that the 15 army representatives were transferred because they did something in the hluttaw that the commander-in-chief was unhappy about. That's not

true," the source said.

He said some of the reassigned Tatmadaw representatives were technical experts from the Air Force who had been promoted and transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs to oversee a plan to use helicopters in the Myanmar Police Force.

Thura U Shwe Mann said the fifth session of the Pyithu Hluttaw was likely to comprise 16 sitting days and end on November 27, while the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw - the combined Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw - was expected to sit for 11 days. However, he said the session may run for longer than anticipated if unexpected issues occur. - *Translated by Zar Zar Soe*

Lawyers want one hearing for peace protesters

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

MEMBERS of the Lawyers Network are preparing to apply to Yangon District Court for all charges against the alleged organisers of an illegal peace rally to be heard in a single court.

Nine people face up to 10 counts of breaking section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law for a September 21 march in Yangon held to mark International Day of Peace.

"They don't need to face the same charges at different courts in each township," said U Maung Maung Soe of the Lawyers Network. The network was established by 15 lawyers in June and provides legal assistance and raises awareness about legal issues.

U Maung Maung Soe said section 71 of the Penal Code limits the punishment of an offence comprising a number of offences.

"If a person allegedly commits a number of offences at the same time and same place, the court must give only one punishment if the person is found guilty after hearing the case," U Maung Maung Soe said.

Moreover, according to section 234 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the court can combine up to three of the offences into one trial if they are committed within the same year.

So far police from 10 township police stations have charged four peace activists - Ma Khin Sandar Nyunt, Ma Phaw Yu Mon, Ko Moe Thway and Ko Kyaw Kyaw Bo - under section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law, while Ko Jaw Gun and Ma May Sabae Phyu from Kachin Peace Network have been charged by police in six townships. The six have already appeared in township-level courts.

"We face difficulties if we have to face the charges in various courts so our lawyers are trying to apply for us to face the charges in a single court," said Ma Khin Sandar Nyunt. "We have to do our work. We don't want to waste time appearing in so many courts."

"The [judges] also understand our situation. The judge from Tarmwe court told us they are willing to hear the case in a single court and they proposed it to a higher court."

However, lawyer U Zaw Zaw Aung, who is representing Ko Jaw Gun and Ma May Sabae Phyu, said some township courts had rejected their request for a single hearing.

"If they reject [the application] constantly, we will instead apply to the Northern District Court in Yangon Region," U Zaw Zaw Aung said.

Rice price falls in upper Myanmar

By Kyayhmon Win

RICE prices in upper Myanmar have been falling since early October as the result of declining exports of low-grade 25-broken-grain *ehmeta* rice to China, millers said last week.

The price of 747 variety rice, which is harvested in Shwebo, as well as *Mataya Shwe Thwe*, both of which are being sold to China through border trade, have fallen by between K700-K1000 a bag (about 50 kilograms). Other higher grade varieties have fallen by K1500-2000 a bag.

"Mandalay's market is stagnant," said U Thein Zaw, secretary of the Mandalay branch of the Rice Millers Association. "When the price of rice for export falls, the domestic market follows suit. But because the price increased a lot some months ago when demand was high, it means it had a long way to fall," he said.

"Rice from the latest harvest has just started entering markets and everybody knows the market will be flooded in November so traders are selling out their stockpiles of last-harvest rice, which is rapidly pushing prices down," he said.

He said 747 rice is selling for about K17,000 a bag, while *Mataya Shwe Thwe* is K16,000, *Ayarmin* is about K26,000, *Manaw* is K23,000 and bags of *pawsan* are trading for K33,000.

These represent year-on-year reductions of about K3000-K4,000 a bag, he said.

"After November, I think the market will return to normal," said U Htay Lwin, chairman of the millers' association.

"Too much rice was exported to China in the past few months, which led to the formation of stockpiles on the border. As a result of this, prices are falling now because those stocks are being sold out," he said.

U Thein Zaw said buyers avoided newly harvested rice in the past because its moisture content was too high and it spoiled easily. As a result, the price of old harvest rice usually increased when the new harvest arrived. But he said advances in milling technology had mostly solved the problem.

A rice trader said there had been rumours that the Chinese government had cracked down on rice imports from Myanmar, which are illegal.

"There are stories that the Chinese government has seized rice stockpiles. And although we can send shipments freely, buyers there are having trouble. But apparently, this will be negotiated between the two sides."

- Translated by Thit Lwin

'No foreign banks' allowed yet: CBM

By Aye Thidar Kyaw and Stuart Deed

THE Central Bank has not yet granted any foreign banks permission to operate or trade within the country, state media reported last week, following apparent confusion over the establishment of a Myanmar-focused investment bank.

"Some journals reported recently that an investment bank is established in Myanmar firstly," the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper reported on October 13. "At present, the Central Bank of Myanmar hasn't granted permits to any foreign banking services yet. And the Directorate of Investment and Companies Administration had yet to allow company registration, announced the Ministry of Finance and Revenue," the *New Light of Myanmar* report said.

A Central Bank official told *The Myanmar Times* on October 18 that no permission had yet been granted for foreign banks to operate in Myanmar.

The *New Light of Myanmar* article states that those wishing to run monetary and banking services must have permission from the Central Bank of Myanmar in line with the existing laws.

"We accepted many phone calls from people asking about Mandalay Capital investment bank opening up because they had seen the news online," said U Win Thaw, deputy director general of the Central Bank.

"We have absolutely denied that this is true and explained that the Central Bank has not permitted any foreign banks to operate in Myanmar," he said.

"That's why the Ministry of Finance and Revenue put a notice to explain the situation in state-owned media," he added.

Bagan Capital also markets itself as



Deputy director general of the Central Bank of Myanmar speaks to the media during a press conference in Yangon on October 6. Pic: Yadanar

"Myanmar's Investment Bank" on its website. Bagan Capital did not respond to questions regarding this story before deadline.

Mizzima News wrote an article quoting a story in *Businessweek* in October that Mandalay Capital had established the country's first investment bank.

"confusion related to a basic understanding of what [an] investment bank is".

"Please be clear that investment banking is not a commercial bank," he said by email. "It is a firm that offers advisory or consulting services in the area of corporate finance, capital raising and research.

around the world engaged in providing investment banking services are regulated by a national regulator equivalent to the US' Securities Exchange Commission or the UK's Financial Services Authority. ... Please note that such a regulatory agency does not exist in

'Investment banking is not a commercial bank.'

The report said Mandalay Capital had been set up by St Kitts businessman Alisher Ali through his Silk Road Finance company, and that it had already raised an investment fund of US\$25 million.

Mr Ali, who also chairs Silk Road Finance told *The Myanmar Times* on October 18 that there has been some

Mr Ali said Silk Road Finance had never engaged in any negotiations with the Central Bank of Myanmar to open a commercial bank.

"We are clearly aware that the Central Bank has not given any licence for foreign investors to date [and does not have] such plans in the near future.

"Advisory companies

Myanmar yet. When such an agency is established, we will seek approval for obtaining a relevant licence, along with other applicants," Mr Ali said.

He added that any service company could offer consultancy or advisory services in Myanmar.

Mandalay Capital uses a Yangon-based team that

has compiled and published the *Myanmar Outlook 2012: A New Dawn for the Golden Land* investment guide in recent months. The company has a "focus on sourcing, structuring and closing Myanmar-related deals and investment projects", says Silk Road Finance's website.

Silk Road Finance operates in Mongolia, Myanmar and other resource-rich frontier markets, where it offers services that include merchant banking, investment banking and asset management.

There are about 22 representative offices of banks from Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, Thailand and Singapore, and the Ministry of Finance and Revenue allowed joint-ventures in late-June, a banker said last week. He said those banks would probably not be allowed to offer full services until 2014 at the earliest.

The ministry allows representative bank offices before full branch offices are permitted. But even representative offices must first be registered with the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration [DICA].

They must then get Ministry of Finance and Revenue approval before a proposal is forwarded to the Central Bank's Financial Institution Supervision Department, which makes the final decision, he said.

"If a bank actually opened and we find they are not registered yet, we will take action soon," he said.

Section 80 of the monetary organisation law says that nobody can run any monetary organisation without the Central Bank's licence.

Section 82 of that law also states that if he/she is found guilty of breaking the prescriptions of Section 80, he/she will face the fines of K50,000 (or), a five-year prison term (or) both, the *New Light of Myanmar* said.

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Tanintharyi official issues help plea for coastal fisherman

By Soe Sandar Oo

SMALL-SCALE fishermen plying the seas off Tanintharyi Region's coast are being bullied and harassed by the captains of larger vessels, a representative of the region's government said on October 14.

U Tin Aye made the comments during a workshop for International Collective in Support of Fish Workers, which was held at the Myanmar Fisheries Federation headquarters in Yangon.

"Grassroots level fishermen with small boats are bullied by larger vessels because they can only fish in areas relatively close to the shore," he said.

"The larger boats also fish

close to shore sometimes and destroy the gear and equipment of the small operators when they pass by," he said, adding "and they do not compensate for the losses."

He added that coastal fishermen were facing problems with their health, attained lower levels of education and had lower living standards.

"I want the government or some group of local or international organisations to solve this problem," he added.

However, Dr Nyunt Wai, the head of the Tanintharyi Region's Department of Fisheries, said the rules and regulations that govern the industry were designed to protect people who abide by the law - and action would be taken against those who

failed to obey the law.

He added that there are 52 designated fishing grounds in Tanintharyi Region and 30 are closed from June to August. However, coastal fishermen are allowed to get five- or seven-day permits for vessels that do not exceed 30 feet in length and have engines of 25 horsepower or less.

"During the closed season, no fishing boat is allowed to trawl near the coast but after those three months they can resume operations again. Captains of larger vessels bully smaller operators by fishing close to the coast, which can also destroy coastal land. The authorities urgently need to take action and restrict these fishermen," Dr Nyunt Wai said.

The government has



Fishermen prepare their nets at Maungmakan beach near Dawei in Tanintharyi Region. Pic: Myanmar Times Archive/Hein Latt Aung

also asked the Ministry of Defence to protect shallow waters near the coast during closed season, he said. U Han Tun, executive vice chairman of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, said the closed season been slightly successful but only because the fishing vessels

had journeyed to other waters instead.

"The capacity of catching fish in Tanintharyi Region is too high and some kinds of fishing methods should not be allowed," he said.

More than 42,440 fishermen are licensed to operate nearly 1120

vessels in deep offshore waters, as well as 11,618 fishing boats licensed to fish shallow coastal waters. Forty percent of Myanmar's marine fisheries are caught in Tanintharyi Region, earning US\$141 million in the 2010-11 fiscal year, Dr Nyunt Wai said.

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for preserving foodstuffs; tanning substances; adhesive substances used in industry; pharmaceutical, veterinary and sanitary substances; infants' and invalids' foods; plasters, material for bandaging; material for stopping teeth; dental wax; disinfectants; preparations for killing weeds and destroying vermin"

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U Kyi Win Associates,
for SUMITOMO CHEMICAL COMPANY, LIMITED
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416
Dated: 22nd October, 2012

Banks working to boost regional reach

By Aye Thidar Kyaw, with AFP

FOREIGN credit and debit cards will be allowed to operate in Myanmar, after permission was granted by the Ministry of Finance and Revenue last week, the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper reported.

Visa, MasterCard, China Union Pay and Japan Credit Bureau have been granted permission by the finance ministry, which is working with the Central Bank of Myanmar and the Myanmar Payment Union, the daily reported on October 19.

However, the story did not state when the services would become available.

Myanma Posts and Telecommunications, under the Ministry of Communications Posts and Telegraphs, and Myanmar Information Technology Co will coordinate the technological and communications services needed to launch the services, the report stated. The cards will be available for use at selected automated teller machines, retail outlets, hotels and restaurants.

MasterCard said last month it had signed a deal with Co-operative Bank that it hoped would pave the way for electronic payments, a move it said would have a "huge impact on tourism and travel".

Meanwhile, private banks are aiming to expand their networks and services throughout Myanmar by the end of the financial year in March 2013 in a bid to prepare for the Southeast Asian Games, industry sources said last week.

Spokespeople for several banks said the expansions are aimed at boosting services outside the major towns and cities to allow more people to



U Thiha Tun and U Aung Kyaw Myo at the opening of Kanbawza Bank's 79th branch recently. Pic: Yadanar

access banks.

The Central Bank of Myanmar began easing its regulations in mid-2011, beginning by lowering interest rates, allowing the reintroduction of automatic teller machines, allowing the establishment of four new private banks, permitting banks to offer foreign currency accounts and taking part in the formation of the Myanmar Payments Union.

However, some restrictions remain in place, such as strict regulations on lending to private businesses and the expansion of branch networks, several bankers said.

U Win Thaw, the Central Bank's deputy director general, said private banks need to open more branches to boost their paid-up capital and to increase the number of clients they can reach.

The bank's Financial Institution Supervision Department has set fixed capital ratios needed to open

branches at K700 million in Yangon, and K300-400 million to open branches in regional towns, he said.

"The department has fixed a [high] paid-up capital requirement because people need guarantees from banks," he said.

"But most banks want to open lots of branches in Yangon - but we've required them to open branches in other towns and cities as well," he said.

"We will continue to closely

regulate banks because we have learned our lessons from the 2003 banking crisis," he added.

Kanbawza Bank has nearly 80 bank branches and is planning to have about 100 by the end of 2013, while its closest competitor, Co-operative Bank, plans to open another 16 branches, bringing its network to 42 by the end of March, officials from both banks said.

U Aung Kyaw Myo, the managing director of Kanbawza Bank, said banks in neighbouring countries had thousands of branches but his bank has fewer than 100.

"The Central Bank is supporting a plan to open branches in other towns but we need to research potential sites to ensure they are safe, and have good transport and telecommunications networks," he said.

The Central Bank requires banks to complete a three-step plan - pre-survey, security inspection and on-site inspection - before it approves possible sites, he said.

The paid-up capital of Myanmar's banking sector is nearly US\$300 million from three state-owned banks and 19 private banks. These banks have about 330 branches, compared with Thailand's 6300 branches, operated by 19 commercial banks, sai

an article published in Issue 589 of *The Myanmar Times* in October and written by two directors at Myanmar Economic Resources International.

Co-operative Bank managing director U Pe Myint said the bank was trying to roll out a network of ATMs at airports and hotels but the cost - about K8 million (about US\$10,000) - is prohibitive and takes a long time to recover.

Several private banks are also trying to offer money remittance services, adding to Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, where the transfers are already available. Both Kanbawza and Co-operative banks made agreements with Malaysia's Maybank, Siam Commercial Bank and Bangkok Bank in Thailand and OCBC Bank in Singapore to allow workers in those countries to remit money to their families in Myanmar.

Myanmar Oriental Bank also made an agreement with Western Union to enable remittances worldwide.

However, in spite of these openings, he said there had been no interest from other Western banks yet.

"Even though US economic sanctions have been lifted, we have not received any reply to our proposals to work with US and European banks," he said.

Small note rumour quashed

THE Central Bank of Myanmar placed notices in state-run newspapers and on its website last week to shoot down rumours that the government planned to withdraw small denomination notes.

The notices debunking rumours that K5, -10, -20 and -50 denomination notes would be withdrawn from circulation were printed on October 17.

They state: "The functions and duties of the Central Bank Prescribed in sub para (a) of para (8) of Functions, Duties and Powers of the Central Bank of Chapter (3) of the Central Bank of Myanmar Law 1990 include acting as the sole issue of domestic currency, either bank notes or coins. Likewise, para (45) of Chapter (6) says that If it is necessary to withdraw any currency notes or coins in circulation the Central Bank may, with the approval of the Government issue a declaration informing the public in advance and call in such currency notes or coins on payment of the face value thereof."

"At present, there is no plan to revoke any banknotes by the Central Bank of Myanmar."

CORRECTION:

In our previous edition we incorrectly stated that Huawei was seeking a telecoms license in Myanmar. Actually, the company aims to provide hardware to support whichever providers are granted licences. We apologise for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

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NOTICE is hereby given that **Wella GmbH** of Sulzbacher Str. 40, 65824 Schwalbach am Taunus, Germany is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademark: -

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Rosneft on track with mega offer for BP's TNK-BP stake

MOSCOW – Rosneft was on the verge of becoming the world's biggest public oil trader last week by buying BP's half interest in the troubled but rich TNK-BP joint venture in Russia.

State-owned Rosneft waited until a deadline on October 19 to make a cash-and-shares offer which *Dow Jones Newswires* reported was worth US\$25 billion – about \$3 billion less than indicated in earlier press reports.

That deal would be followed with a buyout of BP's four ex-Soviet billionaire partners for an even larger sum of up to \$29 billion.

Completing the two arrangements would bring the state control of 40 percent of Russia's oil production and re-define how the market operates under President Vladimir Putin's nationalistic rule.

The TNK-BP agreements also culminate a year of tumult at the firm, the third-biggest crude producer, which highlighted the problems Western majors have had in establishing profitable businesses, with Putin and his coterie of ex-spies in control.

The *Financial Times* reported that under the October 18 deal, BP would raise its stake in Rosneft from 1.4pc to from 10-20pc.

But Rosneft stressed that both deals were still only at the draft stage and did not imply necessary agreement.

"We continue to evaluate a number of opportunities and will update the market as and



Rosneft was last week bidding to buy BP's stake in the troubled TNK-BP venture. Pic: AFP

when appropriate," a Rosneft spokesperson said in an e-mailed statement to *AFP*.

A BP spokesman in London said only that "we are reviewing options including any offers that we have received".

Rosneft and the Soviet-born oligarchs who own the other half of TNK-BP had signed a memorandum of understanding on October 16 that would result in Rosneft acquiring the Russian tycoons' stake at a later date.

The billionaires have experienced strained ties with the Russian government and were forced to concede that a company run by them and Rosneft jointly would most likely fail to function and require them eventually to sell their stake.

Various reports put the value of the deal with the tycoons – to be completed most likely after the BP swap is set in place – at \$28-\$29 billion.

The expected arrangement would make Rosneft the world's biggest publicly traded oil producer with daily crude output of more than three million barrels a day – far more than current leader ExxonMobil's production of 2.3 million barrels.

It should also relieve tensions at one of Russia's most profitable oil companies – a venture BP launched in 2003 to expand its presence in a country with the world's biggest oil and natural gas output.

TNK-BP has generated tens of billions of dollars and was

responsible for more than a quarter of BP's crude output last year.

Yet tensions reached breaking point over efforts by BP early in 2011 to strike a separate Arctic oil tie-up with Rosneft which the tycoons coveted for themselves.

That Arctic deal was blocked by the billionaires in a shock move that worsened their relations with both Rosneft and BP.

BP chief Bob Dudley meanwhile has insisted that he still sees a future in Russia and has been willing to cede shares in TNK-BP in favour of a profitable long-term arrangement with Rosneft.

– *AFP*

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- Experience working in implementation and delivery of humanitarian/recovery projects at the field level is a must.
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- Previous experience in a similar capacity with humanitarian agencies, in particular the UN, preferred.
- Fluency in English and Myanmar language. Knowledge in any other local languages will be an asset.

Candidates should clearly indicate the Vacancy Number and Post Title in their applications, and should submit them together with complete duly filled **UN-P11 form**, bio-data stating personal details, academic qualification and work experience, **copies of master degree certificate and scores transcript**, and a recent passport sized photograph. Applications should be addressed to:

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Closing Date: 02 November 2012 (COB)

Only short-listed candidates will be notified. Interviews will be competency based.

European Union leaders reach bank compromise

By Roddy Thomson

BRUSSELS – EU leaders on October 19 tackled boosting jobs and growth to mend some of the damage caused by austerity policies, after France and Germany reached a compromise deal on bank supervision key to easing the bloc's crisis.

After an 11-hour session into the wee hours to reach the bank supervision deal, in the second and final day of their summit EU leaders were seeking ways to offset the worst effects of spending cutbacks and tax hikes adopted in an effort to tame the eurozone debt crisis.

Violent protests in Greece against more spending cuts and the threat of a general strike in Spain highlighted the risks that unadulterated austerity measures can spark social unrest.

Leaders will also take up foreign affairs, with conflicts in Syria and Mali pressing, while Iran and its disputed nuclear programme is a persistent concern.

Agreement on the banking union proposal was crucial as it clears the way for the bloc's new debt rescue fund, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) to help failing banks directly, without going through governments and thus increasing national debts.

As the talks began Friday, French President Francois Hollande said

it was "a good deal". German Chancellor Angela Merkel made no comment.

For Carsten Brzeski, chief economist at ING, leaders had achieved "a typical European compromise, which had something for everyone".

France had wanted the system up and running for all banks by January 2013, in line with a summit agreement from June, while Germany wanted implementation to be slower, at first involving only the biggest bank groups.

A statement in the early hours said the 27 EU leaders set themselves "the objective of agreeing on the legislative framework by 1 January 2013" while work on putting the union in place would come "in the course of 2013".

Merkel said the timetable was still "very ambitious", stressing the need for "quality before speed", while Hollande pushed again for quick implementation.

European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso said European Central Bank (ECB) head Mario Draghi had told leaders a "reasonable" estimate for implementation would be "less than one year but certainly more than one or two months".

"I can't give you a precise date," EU President Herman Van Rompuy, adding that finance ministers would take up the issue on November 12. – *AFP*

Old notes policy torn up by CBM

TOURISTS might soon breathe a sigh of relief as the Central Bank passed a notification allowing authorised foreign exchange money changers and three state-owned banks to accept older, discoloured and damaged notes, an official said last week.

Central Bank deputy director general U Win Thaw said the bank would be able to accept imperfect notes under notification 7/2012-2013, which was issued on October 17. However, he added that the notes must still be identifiable.

"We've found that many tourists have faced that problem, and there are many complaints from clients in money changer," U Win Thaw said.

"When the US imposed sanctions [on Myanmar], no foreign banks would accept our foreign currencies that we got from export earning but now banks, including some in Singapore, are accepting our currencies.

"So we are depositing our old notes and exchanging them with new notes."

—Aye Thidar Kyaw

Thai finance ministry urges 3G auction probe

BANGKOK — Thailand's finance ministry on October 19 called for a corruption investigation into the country's auction of third-generation (3G) mobile telephone operating licences because of fears of collusion.

All three companies that participated in the sale on October 16 secured three blocks of bandwidth each, according to the National Broadcasting Telecommunication Commission (NBTC), the telecom regulator.

"There was no real price competition," finance ministry deputy permanent secretary Supa Piyajitti wrote in a letter to the NBTC and the National Anti-Corruption Commission urging a probe.

"The spectrum is a limited resource so if there is

inappropriate allocation or collusion it may result in a severe loss for the state and NBTC members may be held responsible under the law," Supa said, according to the memo released by her office.

She said there should have been fewer licences than bidders and a higher reserve price.

Leading telecom firms Advanced Info Service, Total Access Communication (Dtac) and True Move all secured licences in the sale, which critics tried to block because of fears of a lack of competition in the bidding.

Two firms bid the minimum reserve price and one offered only 8 percent more in an auction that raised a total of 41.6 billion baht (US\$1.4 billion). —AFP

Investment law set for Nov: MIC

Parliament to review President U Thein Sein's comments on foreign investment legislation

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

THE long-delayed and heavily amended foreign investment law will likely be enacted in November, Myanmar Investment Commission officials said last week.

The comments were made on the first day of an investment summit held at Parkroyal Hotel on October 17 and 18.

Even though the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the amended law, which will replace one enacted in 1988, on September 7, it needed to be signed into law by President U Thein Sein. However, the president made comments on the draft and returned it to the parliament.

MIC officials said investors

can operate using the existing law but are pushing lawmakers to approve the amended version, which was written to increase transparency and accountability, as soon as possible.

The amended law was expected to be enacted in April this year but was later pushed back to July and November, said Alessio Polastri, managing partner of P&A Asia legal and tax firm.

"This law has been taking so long because Myanmar has to prioritise political stability and many Myanmar bureaucrats are not friendly with investors yet," he said.

Mr Polastri added that incorporating a company requires that many documents be submitted to the relevant authorities for approval, and MIC

may take more than two months before approving any project.

U Tin Ko Win, deputy director general of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), said investors can access three channels to do business in Myanmar, even though the amended law has not been enacted yet.

"The first way is that foreign investors can submit proposals to MIC under the existing investment law or they can also set up a foreign company, branch or representative office in accordance with the Myanmar Company Act of 1914," he said.

U Tin Ko Win said the second channel would likely appeal to smaller companies that wanted to run ventures such as restaurants.

"The third way is that they can prepare a proposal and submit it to the central body of special economic zones such as those at Thilawa or Dawei and under the provisions of the SEZ law, whereby they can set up a joint-venture or foreign company," he said.

He said foreign investors can enter resource sectors such as agriculture, forestry, mining, oil and gas, as well as labour-intensive industries such as garments and electronic parts assembly, and service sectors such as hotels and tourism, logistics and real estate.

He added that the government encouraged manufacturing and had established 30 industrial zones, with another seven to be developed soon.

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Dharamshala: Boom times upset calm in Buddhist retreat

DHARAMSHALA, India – Once the refuge of pious Tibetan monks and a few hippie travellers, Dharamshala in the Himalayan foothills is today a crowded and chaotic town where long-term residents fear for its future.

More correctly known as McLeod Ganj, it suffers from the same traffic jams, wail of car horns, construction work and stinking piles of rubbish that afflict India's largest cities.

Dharamshala's scant resources are being stretched to bursting point by a huge rise in visitors as domestic Indian tourists pour into the cramped streets to join pilgrimage groups from across Asia and young Western backpackers.

For those who remember the sleepy hilltown where India provided a safe haven for Buddhist leader the Dalai Lama and his followers fleeing China after 1959, the modern reality is often ugly and depressing.

"Before, there were virtually no private vehicles, so everyone would walk up and down the steep mountain paths," said Tenzing Sonam, a well-known film-maker who first lived in Dharamshala 35 years ago.

"The town was tiny and there was a close-knit community of the generation who first fled Tibet and their children. Everyone knew everybody."

"The place felt very cut-off from the rest of India, and the only visitors were a small number of the hippies and Buddhist seekers."

As hotels, restaurants and multi-storey car parks sprout from sites excavated into the hillsides, Dharamshala's image as a sanctuary from religious persecution and a place for quiet contemplation are fading.

"It is hard to be critical as people benefit from the economic activity, but it is impossible to expand like this on the side of a mountain," said Sonam, 53, whose

parents were close associates of the Dalai Lama's family in Tibet.

"Most upsetting is the unplanned and illegal development, with laws about height and position flouted due to bribes being paid. If that is not fixed soon, the place will be destroyed."

Sandal-wearing monks in saffron robes and Tibetan women wearing long dresses remain a striking feature of the town, but they are increasingly swamped by four-wheel-drive vehicles squeezing past open drains and bars selling beer and pizza.

At Chonor House, a boutique hotel where actor and devout Buddhist Richard Gere is a regular, one sign of Dharamshala's creaking infrastructure is bath tubs being replaced by showers to save on scarce water.

"There is so much construction going on," said manager Karma, who only uses one name. "All the hotels are booming, and water is



Tourists and locals walking in front of roadside souvenir and jewellery stalls, obstructing traffic along a narrow lane in McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala on September 25. Pic: AFP

becoming a serious issue."

Karma says most of his guests are couples from the United States, Britain and Germany, while tour groups of Japanese, Thai and Vietnamese pilgrims stay in bigger hotels nearby.

"We need a generator because of power cuts, and the roads are rough here because they get washed away by the monsoon," Karma added.

The winding route up to the town is crumbling and congested, while pedestrians walking along the two narrow streets of McLeod Ganj in the busy summer months are assailed by noise and fumes from vehicles.

Rubbish disposal is also a serious challenge, with much refuse simply dumped off the

side of roads, spoiling the enjoyment of walkers who head up forest tracks towards soaring peaks behind the town.

According to the Himachal Pradesh state tourism department, last year 1.8 million Indians and 99,000 foreigners visited the district of Kangra, which includes Dharamshala, a sharp increase on 10 years ago.

"The new popularity is due to people coming to enjoy the cool climate when the plains are hot, adventure sports such as mountaineering and religious places of interest," Kangra deputy director for tourism Ashwani Sood said.

"People enjoy these things, and we want more visitors to come and experience them

too." The town's new role as a popular weekend get-away for young crowds from New Delhi and Chandigarh has been underlined by Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket games played each year in the nearby stadium.

After the most recent matches in May, drunken mobs of travelling fans from neighbouring Punjab state gathered in the tiny main square of Dharamshala, clashing with police and throwing bottles at bars that refused them entry.

Such scenes appalled many Tibetan exiles, who fear that long-standing relations with Indian communities may be threatened by increasing commercialisation. – AFP

Norway house price drop reveals cracks in boom

OSLO, Norway – Norway's housing boom is showing signs it may be about to turn into a decline after real estate prices fell in some parts of the country.

Home prices fell in the third quarter in areas around the nation's biggest west-coast cities, including the oil hub Stavanger and Bergen, while prices for detached houses slid 0.1 percent nationwide, according to a report from Statistics Norway released on October 19. Moody's Investors Service said a fortnight ago that Norway's household income levels do not support the price level in the property market and warned of an "elevated" risk of falling values.

Homeowners in some areas are seeing losses in the market values of their properties as the central bank signals its gearing up to start raising interest rates as early as December. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg said Europe's debt crisis could hit Norway as his government proposed record spending of oil revenue to support the economy.

"Demand has been strong and there are signs of euphoria in the Norwegian housing market that is not sustainable," Bjoern Roger Wilhelmsen, a strategist at Swedbank First Securities in Oslo and former central bank economist, said in a phone interview.

The housing market now faces the twin threats of increased supply and monetary tightening that will raise the cost of holding a mortgage. House price declines would reverse what economists including Yale University's Robert Shiller have warned was a bubble threatening to disrupt in Norway's economy.

Prices on apartments, single homes and row-houses have surged 30pc since 2008 as the global financial crisis and Europe's debt woes drove down interest rates even as Norway's economy enjoyed a boom in offshore oil investments. Housing declines can become self-fulfilling if homeowners lose confidence in the market, Wilhelmsen said.

"The main trigger would be a macroeconomic downturn, leading to expectations of lower house prices that could, in turn, have repercussions on growth and the labour

market," Wilhelmsen said. That would "reinforce a decline in prices," he said.

A rising housing supply may also weigh on real estate values. A report issued by the statistics agency on Sept. 28 showed 10,172 new dwellings were given building starts in May through August, up 30pc from the year-earlier period. That is the fastest building pace since 2004, according to the agency.

Investors have started selling some Norwegian fixed-income assets. Norwegian bonds returned 0.2pc in the third quarter, the worst performance among 26 major sovereign debt markets tracked by Bloomberg/EFAS indexes. The difference in yield between Norway's benchmark three-year note and its German equivalent narrowed two basis point to 136 basis points on October 15. It was as narrow as 119 basis points on September 6. To help ease froth in the market, Norway's Financial Supervisory Authority last year set new guidelines to cap loans at 85pc of a property's value. The watchdog will tomorrow issue a report on the state of the housing market and how the new limits have been adhered to.

A report from the statistics agency released on October 12 showed prices rose 0.6pc in the third quarter and 7pc from a year earlier. Prices in Oslo gained 9.1pc on an annual basis.

Household debt levels have also risen, with the average ratio likely to surpass 200pc of disposable incomes next year and reach 217pc by the end of 2015, according to the central bank. Governor Oeystein Olsen said on September 13 that households need to build reserves to guard against losses should prices start to fall.

That was after indicating in August that he would tighten policy as soon as December after cutting rates by 0.75 percentage point to 1.5pc since the end of last year to ease gains in the krone, which emerged as a haven from Europe's crisis. While the bank doesn't have a specific "warning level" or pace of increases for the housing market alarm, the "imbalances" are becoming "more and more" obvious, Olsen said.

– Bloomberg News

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Bankers create Singapore's own Wall Street

By Pooja Thakur and Sanat Vallikappen

SINGAPORE – Singapore's Marina Bay area is emerging as the city's new financial hub, with banks including Standard Chartered and Barclays taking bigger offices as they pursue Asia's expanding ranks of millionaires.

As new construction pushes rents in the area lower, financial-services companies are consolidating operations from the central business district about a 10-minute walk away that was first built almost two centuries ago. Standard Chartered last year relocated from 11 buildings across the city to one tower in the new office area, while Barclays moved from six to two in the district.

"Our growth in Singapore has been incredibly quick over the past few years," Tony Padgett, head of corporate real estate services at Barclays in Singapore, said in an interview. "Banks tend to go for the prime locations in cities, they gravitate towards the same area like they've done in Canary Wharf in London or Wall Street in New York."

Singapore's emergence as Asia's centre of wealth management prompted the government in 2005 to start expanding the business district around Raffles Place, building on reclaimed land from the Singapore Strait to accommodate demand from the likes of Citigroup and UBS AG. The island-country had US\$512 billion of private banking assets in 2010, the largest such pool of money in Asia, according to the latest available figures from the Boston Consulting Group.

Singapore's millionaire households expanded by 14 percent last year, according to a Boston Consulting study published May 31. The proportion of millionaire homes in the city of 5.3 million people was 17pc, the highest in the world, followed by Qatar and Kuwait.

Located at the southern tip of Singapore, the 360-hectare (890-acre) Marina Bay development sits on reclaimed land about 1 kilometre (0.6 mile) from Raffles Place, named after Sir Stamford Raffles, who founded Singapore as a British settlement in 1819. Gaming tycoon Sheldon Adelson opened his landmark Marina Bay Sands hotel and casino in 2010, and its infinity pool spanning the top of the resort's three towers is a feature of the city's skyline.

Marina Bay's offices, with large floor plates, column-less structures and emergency backup facilities, have become attractive to global banks relocating regional functions to Singapore after the government opened up the financial industry following the 1997 Asian economic crisis.

"It's a flight to quality," Toby Dodd, country manager for Singapore at



Bankers are carving out a new Wall Street in Singapore's Marina Bay. Pic: Bloomberg

property broker Cushman & Wakefield Inc., said in an interview.

HSBC Holdings, Europe's biggest bank, still has its Singapore head office at Raffles Place, as does United Overseas Bank, Southeast Asia's third-largest lender.

Raffles Place, which sits at the mouth of the Singapore River, saw an exodus of retailers to locations such as Orchard Road in the 1960s and 1970s. Financial firms

every year since 2010, DTZ said in September.

Rents in new buildings in Raffles Place with similar specifications to those in Marina Bay dropped 4.3pc to an average of S\$11 a square foot, DTZ said. New buildings in Raffles Place had 92.7pc occupancy compared with the Marina Bay area's 83pc for the quarter ended Sept. 30, DTZ said.

"In the last two, three years we have seen a lot of

bank in Singapore, occupies 24 floors in Tower 1 of the Marina Bay Financial Centre. The London-based lender takes up 900,000 square feet of office space and employs more than 7300 people in the island-state, with 62pc in the Marina Bay office.

"Five years ago, we recognised that there's going to be a new central business district," Tina Singhsacha, chief of staff

was previously located, was half that size.

Singapore is the largest foreign-exchange trading centre in Asia after Tokyo, showed a triennial survey by the Bank for International Settlements, the most recent in September 2010. Average daily foreign-exchange turnover in Singapore was \$300 billion, said a July 30 report from the Singapore Foreign Exchange Market Committee.

'The wealth business has moved in its entirety to the new location in Marina Bay.'

replaced them in towers such as Republic Plaza and Singapore Land Tower.

Cheaper rents are encouraging banks to shift to Marina Bay. Average gross rents in the area fell the most among office locations in Singapore in the third quarter, declining 4.4pc from the previous three months, said property broker DTZ Holdings Plc. Rents slid 10pc this year to S\$10.75 (US\$8.75) a square foot a month as large buildings were completed

supply in the Marina Bay area," Chua Chor Hoon, DTZ's head of research for the Asia-Pacific region, said. "It's more an issue of demand and supply."

DBS Group Holdings, Southeast Asia's biggest lender, occupies about half of a 46-storey tower in Marina Bay Financial Centre, while Barclays' offices are spread across 12 floors in an adjoining tower.

Standard Chartered, which has the global headquarters of its private

in Singapore at Standard Chartered, said in an interview. The move to one location "allows for fantastic decision-making, fast and greater accessibility across functions in the bank".

The move to Marina Bay has allowed Standard Chartered to build its biggest trading floor in Asia, with 65,000 square feet spanning three floors and 800 trading desks. Its trading floor at Battery Road, north of Raffles Place, where its corporate office

Singapore, with the highest density of millionaires, and Hong Kong together manage about \$1 trillion of offshore funds, and may overtake Switzerland within 15 to 20 years as wealth in Asian nations excluding Japan surges at a rate of over 11pc a year, Boston Consulting said in a report in June.

"The wealth business has moved in its entirety to the new location in Marina Bay," Padgett said. "Wealth was expanding here quite

a lot and needed more space."

The area is also home to Asia Square, whose occupants include anchor tenant Citigroup and Google. Asia Square, owned by MGPA, a Macquarie Group Ltd-controlled fund manager with \$11 billion in property assets, will complete next year its second tower, which will include a 305-room Westin hotel that will open in 2014.

"Being in the heart of the financial district, if there are any issues, we have collective bargaining power," said Lay-Sie Teo, chief operating officer, Singapore and Asia emerging markets, at UBS. "When you have other banks that are co-tenants with you, you've got a bigger voice."

UBS occupies 230,000 square feet, housing about half its 2000 employees in Singapore, at One Raffles Quay, in a building just west of Marina Bay Financial Centre. Barclays' other office in the new business district is also located there.

Singapore joins other financial hubs in the Asia-Pacific region that have experienced a move from established business districts because of demand for space as the region's economic growth outstrips the rest of the world.

Still, the euro-zone crisis is hurting expansion plans at some banks. European companies account for 51pc of the space occupied in the Marina Bay area, followed by 22pc from Asia and 20pc from North America, said Los Angeles-based property broker CBRE Group Inc.

Longer term, demand is likely to hold up as global banks increase operations in Asia. Julius Baer Group, the 121-year-old Swiss wealth manager, will move global functions to Singapore as it diversifies costs away from the Swiss franc, chief executive officer Boris Collardi said in February.

"We are part of the right skyline," Singhsacha said. "We're sending the right messages to the client."

— Bloomberg News



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Daredevil makes leap into history

LOS ANGELES – Austrian daredevil Felix Baumgartner celebrated his unprecedented feat on October 15 after becoming the first man to break the sound barrier in a record-shattering, death-defying freefall jump from the edge of space.

The 43-year-old leapt from a capsule more than 39 kilometres (24 miles) above the Earth on October 14, reaching a top speed of 1342 kilometres an hour (833.9mph), or 1.24 times the speed of sound, said organisers.

The veteran skydiver was in freefall for four minutes and 20 seconds before opening his red and white parachute and floating to the desert in the US state of New Mexico, said Red Bull Stratos mission record keeper Brian Utley.

Mission control erupted in cheers as Baumgartner sprung from the capsule hoisted aloft by a giant helium-filled balloon to an altitude of 39,044 metres (128,097 feet), higher than expected.

"I think 20 tons have fallen from my shoulders. I prepared for this for seven years," he told German-language *ServusTV* in Austria in his first interview after the leap.

Referring to a helmet problem that nearly forced him to abort at the last minute, Baumgartner said: "Even on a day like this when you start so well, then there's a little glitch. But I finally decided to jump."

"It was the right decision," added the Austrian, who broke three records: the highest freefall jump, the fastest freefall speed and the highest balloon flight by a human. He failed to make the longest freefall jump.

Shortly before leaping, in footage beamed live around the world on a crackly radio link recalling Neil Armstrong's first words on the Moon, he had said: "Sometimes you have (to go) up really high to (understand) how small you are."



Felix Baumgartner jumps from his capsule...and celebrates after landing at Roswell, New Mexico. Pic: AFP/www.redbullcontentpool.com

After a perfect start, anxious viewers around the world looked on in agony as the Austrian started tumbling chaotically for what seemed like an eternity before finally achieving the correct position.

"The exit was perfect, then I started tumbling – I thought I'd get it under control, but then it really started. I really picked up speed, it got very violent. I thought for a few seconds I'll fall unconscious."

"Thank goodness, I managed to stop – it was very difficult. It was

congratulate him was Austrian President Heinz Fischer, who hailed the "great success." "Austria is proud of your accomplishment," he wrote on his Facebook page.

The Red Bull Stratos mission was the second attempt for the skydiver after an initial bid on October 9 was aborted at the last minute due to winds.

The biggest risk Baumgartner faced was spinning out of control, which could have exerted excessive g-force and made him lose consciousness.

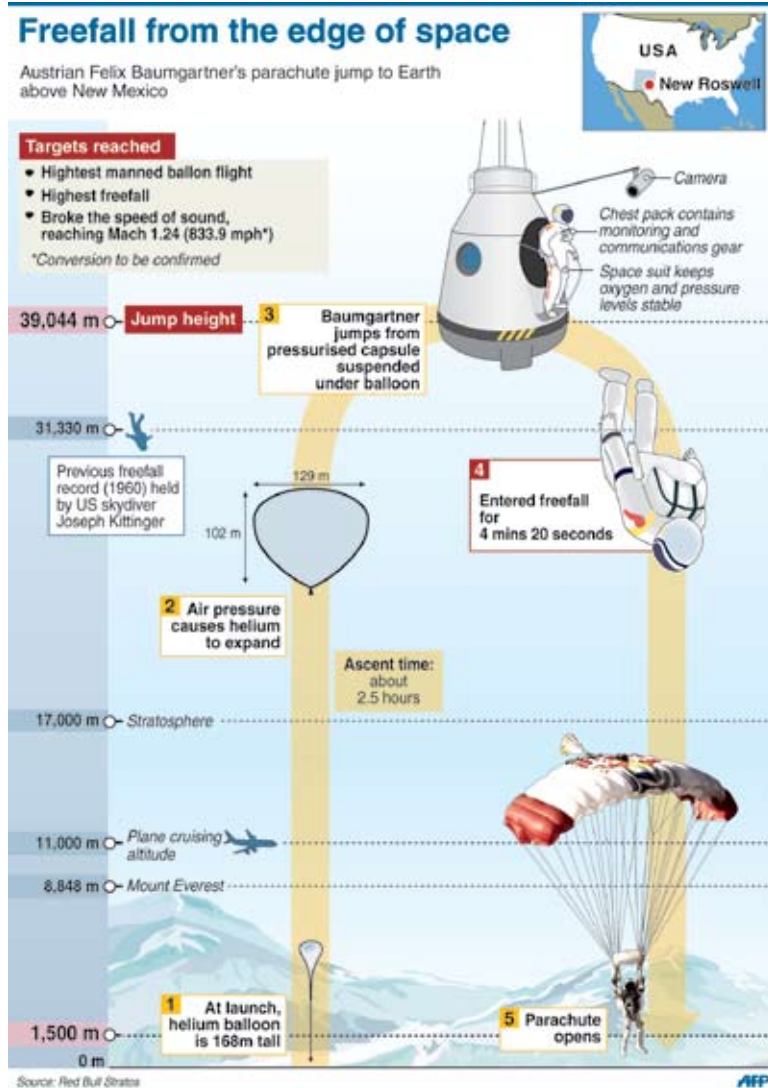
The helmet problem as Baumgartner ascended added to the sense of alarm: the

heater failed on his faceplate, meaning it became fogged up when he exhaled.

After considering the options, the nerveless Baumgartner and his entourage decided to go ahead with the jump.

Baumgartner's 100-strong backup team includes retired US Air Force colonel Joe Kittinger, who held set the previous highest freefall jump record from 31,333 metres (102,800 feet) in 1960.

Baumgartner holds several previous records, notably with



"The only thing is you want to come back alive."

much more difficult than many of us expected."

The Austrian took more than two hours to get up to the jump altitude. Baumgartner had already broken one record before he even leapt: the previous highest altitude for a manned balloon flight was 34,668 metres (113,740 feet), set in 1961.

He had been due to jump from 36,576 metres (120,000 feet), but the balloon went higher than expected.

One of the first people to

spectacular BASE jumps from the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur and the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

After the leap on October 14, he recalled the emotions sweeping through his body when he stepped out of the capsule high above Earth.

"When you're standing there on top of the world you become so humble... The only thing is you want to come back alive," he told reporters in Roswell, where the

launch mission was based. Publicity surrounding the feat made history itself. The mission was recorded by more than two dozen cameras, including one installed on Baumgartner's helmet.

It was webcast live on the event website and on YouTube. More than 8 million computers and other digital devices were tuned in to the live stream on YouTube alone, making the jump the most-watched live event on the site. – AFP

EU agencies issue ultimatum to Google

PARIS – European data protection agencies said on October 16 that Google's new privacy policy does not comply with EU laws and told the US internet giant to fix it within months or face legal action.

"Google has a few months, three or four months, to comply. If it takes no action, we will enter a phase of litigation," said the head of France's CNIL data agency, which took a lead role in a European probe into the company.

Google rolled out the new privacy policy in March, allowing it to track users across various services to develop targeted advertising, despite sharp criticism from US and European consumer advocacy groups.

It contends the move simplifies and unifies its policies across its various services such as Gmail, YouTube, Android mobile systems, social networks and internet search.

But critics argue that the policy, which offers no ability to opt out aside from refraining from signing



Google's stand at the Frankfurt Book Fair, in a file photo taken on October 8, 2006. Google has been told to bring its privacy policy into compliance with EU standards within "three or four months." Pic: AFP

into Google services, gives the operator of the world's largest search engine unprecedented ability to monitor its users.

Google is already facing privacy probes by authorities throughout the globe as it steps up its battle with the social network site Facebook for both users and advertisers.

The CNIL led an investigation into the privacy policy by data agencies from European Union member states and on October 16 presented its conclusions at a

news conference in Paris.

In a joint letter to Google made public ahead of the conference, the agencies wrote that the US firm "provides insufficient information to its users, especially on the purposes and the categories of data being processed."

"As a result, a Google user is unable to determine which categories of data are processed in the service he uses, and for which purpose these data are processed," it said.

CNIL said in a statement that after requests for more

information about Google's new policy, the firm had given "several answers (that) were incomplete or approximate" and "did not provide satisfactory answers on key issues".

CNIL president Isabelle Falque-Pierrotin told reporters that "we now demand adjustments" to the policy, failing which "authorities in several countries can take action against Google".

Falque-Pierrotin added however that action would be taken on a national and not an EU level.

European states' data agencies differ widely in their investigative and enforcement powers.

Google, in response to CNIL's statement, insisted it was complying with EU law.

"Our new privacy policy shows our continued commitment to protecting our users' data and creating quality products. We are confident that our privacy policies respect European law," it said in a statement.

– AFP

Thailand finally auctions its 3G licences, for \$1.4b

BANGKOK – Thailand raised 41.6 billion baht (US\$1.4 billion) on October 16 in a long-awaited auction of third-generation (3G) mobile telephone operating licences, regulators said.

Leading telecom firms Advanced Info Service, Total Access Communication (Dtac) and True Move all secured licences in the sale, which critics tried to block because of fears of a lack of competition in the bidding.

A business dispute meant that as other nations move to introduce faster 4G technology, Thailand has yet to roll out a proper 3G service, more than a decade after it was first launched in Japan.

The government sold all 45 megahertz of bandwidth on offer. It had set a minimum price of 4.5 billion baht for each five-megahertz block.

AIS submitted the highest bid at 14.6 billion baht for three blocks, while Dtac and True Move offered the minimum of 13.5 billion baht each for the same number,

the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission said.

The slow pace of progress has frustrated smartphone users, but people in some areas of Thailand are expected to be able to start using 3G within six months.

In 2010 a court halted a 3G licence auction at the last minute after state-owned telecoms giant CAT argued that the then-regulator, the National Telecommunications Commission, had no authority to conduct the bidding.

Investors appeared nervous that the outcome of the auction could trigger fresh legal action.

"We're seeing all their shares falling, which means people in the market are still wary about potential legal challenges against the auction," Prasit Sujiravorakul, a telecom analyst at Bualuang Securities, said on October 16. – AFP

Newsweek to go all-digital

WASHINGTON - Newsweek announced on October 18 it would end an 80-year run as a print magazine, taking the venerable publication all-digital in another sign of the woes of an industry struggling in the internet age.

Tina Brown, editor-in-chief and founder of the online Newsweek Daily Beast Company, said the change means the magazine will "embrace the all-digital future ... We are transitioning Newsweek, not saying goodbye to it."

Like other US magazines and newspapers, Newsweek has been grappling with a steep drop in print advertising revenue, steadily declining circulation and the migration of readers to free news online.

Circulation has fallen from more than four million a decade ago to about 1.5 million last year and losses were mounting.

The last print edition in the United States will be the December 31 issue. Brown's note did not mention Newsweek's international editions, except to say the new digital version would be a single, worldwide product.

Newsweek, which had a fierce decades-long rivalry with fellow American coffee-table staple Time magazine, has in recent times been losing money steadily and struggling with the transition to online journalism.

"I think Newsweek lost its relevance and that is somewhat obscured by the digital transition," said Ken Doctor, an analyst with research firm Outsell.

"They didn't stand out as being a must-read and you have to be a must-read in some way."

Brown acknowledged the change will mean layoffs "both here in the United States and internationally." - AFP

China flexes its naval muscles

BEIJING - China dispatched naval vessels, aircraft and helicopters to the East China Sea on October 19, flexing its muscles in exercises likely to further stoke a bristling territorial dispute with Japan.

A fleet of 11 vessels, including some warships, along with eight aircraft were sent to waters off its east coast, China said.

The East China Sea is home to tiny islets known as the Diaoyus in China and the Senkakus in Japan, which are administered by Tokyo but claimed by Beijing.

Tensions in the long-running territorial dispute have soared since the Japanese government's move last month to formally nationalise the islands, which triggered anti-Japan protests throughout China and hit the sales of Japanese-manufactured products.

A foreign ministry official in Beijing blamed Tokyo for

ratcheting up tension in the region when asked about the exercises at a regular news briefing on October 19.

"The heating up of the dispute over the Diaoyu Islands between China and Japan is entirely caused by Japan's illegal act of purchasing the islands," spokesman Hong Lei said.

"The Chinese government's resolve and determination to safeguard national territorial sovereignty is unswerving."

Speaking during a visit to Germany, Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba said his country was seeking a peaceful resolution to the territorial row.

"What I can say here is that ultimately we are aiming for a peaceful solution based on international law," he said through an interpreter.

"We must expand the dialogue in Japan-China relations," he added. - AFP

Ceasefire urged in Syria

DAMASCUS - Peace envoy Lakhdar Brahimi was to urge Syrian officials to agree a truce at talks on October 20, a day after Damascus was blamed for killing a top Lebanese security official in a car-bombing in Beirut.

Brahimi arrived in Damascus on October 19 on a mission aimed at securing a ceasefire during the four-day Eid al-Adha Muslim holiday from October 26.

Damascus had said it was ready to discuss the ceasefire proposal with Brahimi. The opposition says it would welcome any truce but insists

the regime must first halt its daily bombardments.

The car bomb in Beirut killed eight people, including the intelligence chief of Lebanon's Internal Security Forces, General Wissam al-Hassan, in one of the most high-profile assassinations since the 2005 murder of ex-premier Rafiq Hariri. Hassan was close to Hariri's son, Saad, who is the leader of the opposition and is hostile to the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Saad Hariri accused Assad of being behind the attack. - AFP



Cambodians pay tribute to their late former monarch, Norodom Sihanouk, in Buddhist rites outside the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh on October 18. Hundreds of thousands of mourners had packed the streets of Phnom Penh the previous day as an ornate golden hearse in the shape of a mythical bird carried his remains to the palace from the city's airport after they arrived from Beijing, where he died of a heart attack on October 15 at the age of 89. Sihanouk, known by Cambodians as the King-Father since abdicating in 2004 for a second time and being succeeded by his son, Norodom Sihamoni, will lie in state in the palace for three months ahead of a lavish funeral. Pic: AFP. • Obituary: P. 33.

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Britain fears security risk if Scots back independence

LONDON - British security could come under threat if Scotland votes for independence in its 2014 referendum, Britain's foreign ministry warned on October 17.

Enemies of Britain could exploit any instability caused by the break-up of the 300-year-old union and the creation of a new border along the north of England, the Foreign Office told parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee.

"There could be a short-term risk of opponents of the UK's foreign policy seeking to exploit any uncertainty or distraction that could follow a vote in favour of separation for Scotland," the ministry said in a statement.

The reaction came after Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron and Scotland's pro-independence First Minister Alex Salmond signed a referendum deal in Edinburgh on October 15.

Cameron strongly opposes a breakaway, while Salmond, the leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) which heads the Scottish administration, claims independence would boost the Scottish economy as well as bringing greater political autonomy.

Cameron's Conservatives, their government coalition partners the Liberal Democrats and the main opposition Labour party have all said they will campaign against a Scottish breakaway. - AFP

UK refuses to extradite hacker to US

LONDON - Britain said last week that Gary McKinnon, a 46-year-old Asperger's sufferer who hacked into US military computers, will not be extradited to the United States, ending his 10-year legal battle.

Interior minister Theresa May said extradition would breach McKinnon's human rights.

"Mr McKinnon is accused of serious crimes, but there is also no doubt that he is seriously ill," May, the Home Secretary, told parliament on October 16.

"I have concluded that Mr McKinnon's extradition would give rise to such a high risk of him ending his life that a decision to extradite would be incompatible with Mr McKinnon's human rights.

"I have therefore withdrawn the extradition order against Mr McKinnon."

The US said it was considering its options.

"The United States is disappointed by the decision to deny Gary McKinnon's extradition to face long overdue justice in the United States," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters.

British prosecutors will now decide whether the hacker should face trial in Britain.

McKinnon's mother Janis Sharp - who has campaigned vigorously for her son - thanked May for having "the guts" to block the extradition and said her son was "incredibly emotional" at the decision.

Fighting back tears at a news conference in London, Sharp said: "I'm incredibly happy. I want to say thank you to Theresa May, because it was an incredibly brave decision - to stand up to another nation as strong and powerful as America is rare."

McKinnon was arrested in London in 2002 for hacking into dozens of Pentagon and NASA computers, leaving 300 machines at a naval air station immobilised just after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

McKinnon has never denied the hacking, claiming he was looking for classified US documents on UFOs.

He could have faced up to 60 years in a US jail for the breaches, which the US says caused US\$800,000 worth of damage.

The hacker, who has become a symbol of the campaign to revamp Britain's extradition deal with the United States, lost appeals in Britain's House of Lords and the European Court of Human Rights during his decade-long fight. - AFP

Challenges loom for world's biggest salvation operation

GIGLIO ISLAND, Italy - Work on the world's biggest ship salvage operation was continuing last week on the Costa Concordia, which capsized in January, killing 32 people.

The salvage teams have the unprecedented challenge of recovering a ship of 114,500 gross tons without spilling into the sea any of its rotting contents.

"It's the biggest ship recovery ever by quite some way," said Nick Sloane, salvage master for US company Titan, which won a bid for the project jointly with Italian offshore rig company Micoperi to right and float the *Concordia*.

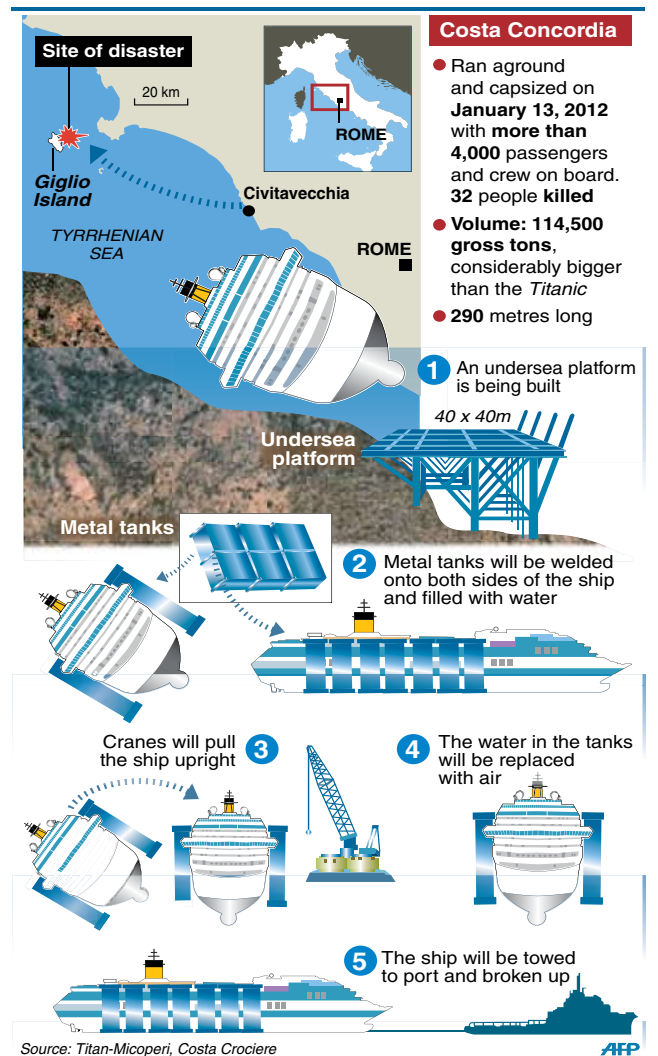
"The plan is based on a lot of assumptions made by our engineering teams. It's a thumbsuck, but an informed thumbsuck," the South African said.

One of the biggest risks is that the ship, which is grounded on two large outcrops close to the shore, will slip when righted and plunge into the depths.

The plan is for 26 pillars to be driven into the seabed to support a series of underwater platforms as big as football fields for the ship to sit on.

Large metal tanks that can be filled with water will then be welded onto the sides of the ship to balance the giant wreckage while it is dragged into an upright position using two cranes as well as cables attached to the platforms.

The largest of the tanks are as high as an 11-storey building and weigh 500-plus tons, and getting them lined up precisely on the frame is far from easy.



"There's never been anything like this. It's part salvage, part offshore operation," said Franco Porcellacchia from the ship's parent company, Carnival.

The project, which Carnival says will cost at least 400 million euros (US\$525 million), is already running several months late due to technical issues.

Meanwhile, the luxury liner's owner said in a statement issued on October 16 that most of the survivors of the *Costa Concordia* shipwreck have collected compensation.

Costa Crociere, Europe's biggest cruise operator, said in the statement released

that "around 67 percent" out of the 3050 passengers who did not suffer any injuries had accepted 11,000 euros (\$14,000) in compensation offered by the company.

The release of the statement came as a series of pre-trial hearings into the disaster continued.

Ten people, including captain Francesco Schettino and three Costa Crociere executives, are being investigated but no-one has been charged.

Court hearings into the disaster in Grosseto - the nearest city to the scene of the shipwreck - are being held to prepare for an trial expected to begin next year. - AFP

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Obama bounces back in round two

HEMPSTEAD, New York – President Barack Obama hammered Mitt Romney on Libya and his corporate past on October 17 as he got the better of his Republican challenger in a fiery debate three weeks from election day.

Bouncing back after being pilloried even by his own Democrats for appearing passive and listless during their first encounter in Denver, Obama was a different character on stage at New York's Hofstra University.

Instant surveys by CNN, which hosted the debate, and a host of other media organisations showed the more aggressive and combative Obama came out the clear winner against Romney, who spent more of the night on the back foot.

Rebounding from the ropes after a dismal showing two weeks earlier that sent his poll numbers tumbling, the president was aware a second poor outing could doom him to the historical ignominy of a single term.

Early signs were that Obama's passion-fuelled performance will revive optimism among Democrats over his re-election bid even if Romney made a strongly-worded case that the president had presided over economic failure.

In one spellbinding



Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney and US President Barack Obama talk over each other during their acrimonious debate at Hofstra University, in Hempstead, New York, on October 16. Pic: AFP

exchange, Obama stared directly at Romney and rebuked him over his criticism of the White House's handling of an attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, which killed four Americans.

"The suggestion that anybody on my team, whether it's a secretary of state, our UN ambassador, anybody on my team, would play politics or mislead when we've lost four of our own, governor, is offensive," Obama said, wagging his

finger at Romney across the stage.

"That's not what we do. That's not what I do as president, not what I do as commander-in-chief," Obama said, in the most memorable clash of one of the most ill-tempered and contentious White House debates ever.

Seeking to recover, Romney then seemed to stumble, accusing the president of taking days to call the attack, which killed US ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens, terrorism.

Obama snapped back that he was record as referring to the assault as an "act of terror" a day after the attack.

Romney's strongest moments came when he delivered stinging indictments of the Obama economy, charging the president with failing to rein in stubbornly high unemployment or cut ballooning deficits.

"The president wants to do well, I understand," Romney said. "But the policies he put in place have not let this

economy take off as it could have."

Obama slammed Romney over his attitude on women's issues, but the former Massachusetts governor and multi-millionaire businessman hit back over debt.

"If the president were re-elected, we'd go to almost \$20 trillion of national debt. This puts us on a road to Greece," he said, before also vowing to stand up to China over its alleged trade and currency abuses.

Obama countered that Romney had invested in companies in China that were pioneers of outsourcing US jobs, saying: "Governor, you're the last person who's going to get tough on China."

When Romney interrupted, asking Obama if his pension scheme included investment in low wage economies abroad, the president openly mocked his wealth.

"I don't look at my pension. It's not as big as yours."

Analysts gave Obama the edge but said the race was far from over.

John Pitney, professor of politics at Claremont McKenna College, said he thought "the president had a much better night than he had in Denver."

"It was close, but I have to give the edge to Obama."

– AFP

Cuba abolishes travel permits

HAVANA – Cubans will no longer need an exit permit to travel abroad from January, the communist regime said on October 16, in a major overhaul of a half-century-old policy despised by the island's citizens.

The changes are the latest in a series of gradual reforms implemented in recent years by President Raul Castro, who took over from his ailing brother Fidel Castro in 2006.

Cubans will no longer have to apply for a "white card" to leave the island from January 14, said a decree published in the official journal.

Another decree would extend the period allowed for overseas stays from 11 to 24 months. – AFP

Bin Laden driver's conviction thrown out

WASHINGTON – A US court on October 16 threw out the conviction of Osama bin Laden's former driver over material support to terrorism, in a case that could potentially benefit other past prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

A top US court for the second time ruled in favour of claims by Salim Hamdan, who served as Osama bin Laden's personal chauffeur and has fought to clear his name even after being released from the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and returned to his native Yemen.

The US Court of Appeals in Washington said that a law that listed material support for terrorism as a war crime – approved in 2006 in response to Hamdan's case – could not

apply to him retroactively.

US prosecutors instead had to rely on international law, which defines some forms of terrorism – such as the intentional targeting of civilians – as war crimes, the court said.

"But the issue here is whether 'material support for terrorism' is an international-law war crime. The answer is no," Judge Brett Kavanaugh wrote for the court in an opinion with which the two other judges largely agreed.

"Perhaps most telling, before this case, no person has ever been tried by an international-law war crimes tribunal for material support for terrorism," he wrote.

All seven men who have been convicted by Guantanamo's military commission, including the Australian David Hicks, faced charges that included material support for terrorism.

Meanwhile, long-delayed efforts to try self-proclaimed 9/11 attacks mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four al-Qaeda co-defendants finally began with a pre-trial hearing at Guantanamo on October 15.

The hearing began 11 years after the attacks and nine-and-a-half years after the capture of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. He is accused of orchestrating the hijacked airliner plot

that left 2976 people dead, while his alleged al-Qaeda accomplices are charged with providing funding and other support for those who crashed the planes.

All five defendants face the death penalty if convicted, but their trial by military tribunal at the Guantanamo is not expected to start for at least another year.

During the five-day pre-trial hearing, the defence is seeking to prevent President Barack Obama's administration from arguing that the treatment and alleged torture of the defendants during interrogations in secret CIA prisons before being sent to Guantanamo in 2006 is classified for national security reasons. – AFP

It's a match: US pair win Nobel for economics

STOCKHOLM – US scholars Alvin Roth and Lloyd Shapley won the Nobel Economics Prize on October 15 for their work on how to best match supply and demand that has potential applications in organ donation, education and on the internet.

The two were honoured for "the theory of stable allocations and the practice of market design," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

The work can be used to help match donors of human organs with patients in need of a transplant, or students with universities, or internet search engines that auction space for advertisers.

Roth, 60, is a professor at

Harvard Business School in Boston, Massachusetts, while Shapley, 89, is a professor emeritus at the University of California.

Roth told public broadcaster Swedish Television he was surprised to win the award.

"No it wasn't expected. But it is certainly expected that Lloyd Shapley won the prize ... I'm glad to share it with him," he said.

Roth said he was happy that the prize would "shine a very bright spotlight on the work" he and Shapley had done in market design, which Roth described as "a newish area of economics."

In choosing market design theory for this year's prize, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

avoided wading into a heated macroeconomic debate over fiscal policy, austerity measures and stimulus packages.

"We neither try to pick topics that are the subject of much debate, nor do we try to avoid them," Per Krusell, chairman of this year's Economic Sciences Prize Committee, told AFP.

"This year's prize just happens to ... not have any connection whatsoever, that I can see, to the financial crisis."

Roth and Shapley worked independently of each other but "the success of their research is due to the combination of Shapley's theoretical results with Roth's insights into their practical value,"

the committee said.

Resources are often allocated through a pricing mechanism: high oil prices give consumers an incentive to conserve energy and high wages attract workers to a particular profession.

But in many markets, pricing is not enough to match different agents. Money is not the only factor that decides which hospital a doctor wants to work in or which university would be best for a prospective student.

Central to Shapley's and Roth's work is the notion of stability, which results for example in the allocation of resources such that individuals do not then perceive any gains from further swaps, or trade. – AFP

Briefs

Bogota, rebels begin peace talks

OSLO – Colombia's government and leftist FARC rebels on October 18 formally launched peace talks in Norway aimed at ending nearly five decades of a conflict that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. The Norway round of talks will focus on the technical details and logistics for the peace process's five-point plan.

Preparatory meetings will be held in Cuba from November 5 and the talks will resume in earnest on the Caribbean island on November 15, the two sides said on October 18.

Britain seeks 'Xbox' spies

LONDON – Britain launched a spy recruitment drive on October 18 aimed at "Xbox generation" youngsters without a university education but with social media and computer game skills to counter the threat of cyber attack.

Britain's Government Communications Headquarters intelligence agency is seeking 100 new recruits from outside the traditional university route.

"We must harness experts from the 'Xbox generation' who have grown up with a world of social media, global connectivity and interactive gaming," a Foreign Office spokeswoman said.

Tainted steroids to blame, say officials

CHICAGO – US health officials confirmed on October 18 that the tainted drugs linked to an outbreak of meningitis contained the fungus which causes the infection, as the death toll rose to 20 people.

The number of cases held steady at 257, said the latest update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Health officials estimate that about 14,000 patients in 23 states may have received the tainted steroids, which are typically injected into the spine to treat back pain.

Rhino toll rises in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG – Poachers have slaughtered 455 rhinos in South Africa so far this year, surpassing the record annual tally for 2011, the government said on October 16.

"The latest rhino poaching statistics indicate that a total of 455 rhinos have been lost to illegal killings since the beginning of this year," the department of environmental affairs said in a statement.

Last year, a total of 448 rhinos were poached, up from 333 in 2010 and 13 in 2007. – AFP

The turbulent life of a mercurial figure

By Michelle Fitzpatrick

PHNOMPENH—Cambodia's mercurial former king Norodom Sihanouk, who died in Beijing on October 15 aged 89, was deft at moving with the political tides that battered the war-ravaged nation for decades.

Twice exiled and twice returned to the throne, Sihanouk abruptly abdicated in 2004 as old age and poor health took their toll on the colourful monarch. It was far from the first time he had caught observers off guard.

Sihanouk repeatedly backed different regimes, including the murderous Khmer Rouge, during a life almost as tempestuous as his country's modern history.

"Sihanouk is Cambodia," his official biographer, Julio Jeldres, once said of the former king.

A self-described "naughty boy" with a taste for life's pleasures and an artistic flair, he embraced the intrigue that swirled around his kingdom with the gusto of a character from one of his many films.

The playboy-monarch married six times and fathered 14 children. Aside from his cinematic creations he wrote poetry and composed songs.

But Sihanouk was far from frivolous, emerging as a shrewd political survivor who caught friend and foe alike off guard with charm and wit.

"He had tremendous energy, but the problem was that his energy just led him eventually to exhaustion. Exhaustion with the problems of Cambodia, and straightforward physical exhaustion," said Australia-based historian Milton Osborne.

"He's an insomniac who could call meetings at 3 o'clock in the morning."

Later in life, the royal was plagued by many ailments including several types of cancer and diabetes and increasingly spent long periods being treated in China.

He was just 18 when placed on the throne in 1941 by French colonial authorities, but quickly defied his patron's expectations of a pliant king.

Twelve years later he gained Cambodia's independence and shortly afterwards quit the throne in favour of his father to pursue a career in politics.

He repeatedly left his political post with a characteristic flash of theatrical anger over perceived slights until becoming "head of state" following his father's death in 1960.

In the decade that followed, he presided over a period of rare stability, now fondly recalled as Cambodia's golden years.



Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk greets his subjects during the annual royal ploughing ceremony in Phnom Penh on May 21, 2000. Pic: AFP

He also found plenty of energy for his cinematic hobbies, routinely directing, producing and starring in his own productions.

He was notorious for making guests at his lavish parties sit through screenings of his often amateurish, melodramatic love stories set against the backdrop of war or spy intrigues.

His frequent public appearances – Sihanouk seemed to relish working alongside rural villagers on various public works projects – formed an unbreakable bond between the man and the country he ruled.

'Sihanouk is Cambodia.'

Topped in a coup by US-backed general Lon Nol in 1970, the prince, while in exile in Beijing, made his most controversial decision.

He aligned himself with communist guerillas who later emerged as the Khmer Rouge and used Sihanouk as a mere figurehead.

When they took the capital Phnom Penh in 1975, they promptly emptied the city, exiling millions to vast collective farms and setting the country on the path to destruction in their drive to create an agrarian utopia.

Sihanouk returned from China and temporarily remained head of state but was forced by the Khmer Rouge to resign a year later and was kept under house arrest with his family.

He was unable to stop the bloodletting that left up to two million people, including five of his

children, dead by the time Vietnamese troops and Khmer Rouge defectors ousted the regime in 1979.

Sihanouk survived because China, a key backer of the Khmer Rouge, wanted him alive. He fled to Beijing after the regime crumbled, living in villas there and in North Korea – another of his allies – for the next 13 years.

Always by his side was his sixth wife, Monique, an Italian-Cambodian he married in 1952.

The ever-mercurial Sihanouk condemned the Khmer Rouge, but during the 1980s he served as the leader of a resistance coalition that included remnants of the regime.

He pushed relentlessly for peace, however, opening negotiations with Prime Minister Hun Sen's government after Vietnamese troops withdrew from Cambodia in 1989.

Sihanouk's strength of will is largely credited with making possible the 1991 UN-sponsored peace accords. In 1993 he triumphantly re-ascended the throne after almost four decades, his popularity undiminished by his long absences.

Despite his later abdication, Sihanouk remained the moral anchor for Cambodians and often used his personal website to comment on political matters.

In October 2009, after surviving a third bout of cancer, the former monarch posted a message saying he had lived too long.

"Lengthy longevity bears on me like an unbearable weight," he wrote. – AFP

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4,050

HWA TAI
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-Always
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-60g
-90g
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Ks
28,200
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900g (Gift Set)
Ks
33,600
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Chocolate 1.24
300g
Chocolate Hazelnut 1.35
375g
Ks
12,160
10,940

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Instant Oatmeal (Sweet)
Quick Cooking Oatmeal (Plain)
1kg
each/Ks
4,600
4,050

LIPTON
Yellow Label Tea Bag
100's 200g
Ks
3,800
3,400

EMBORG
UHT Milk Full Cream
1ltr
Ks
1,360
1,190

COWHEAD
UHT Milk Full Cream
1ltr
Ks
1,600
1,380

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Aloe Vera Drink
-Original
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1.5Ltr
Ks
1,900
1,700

JUICY ISLE
100% Juice
-Apple
-Orange
2ltr
each/Ks
3,850
3,600

CRUSHER
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Ks
680
630

STAR
Cola
1.25Ltr
Ks
680
630

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-Orange
-Guava & Pineapple
-Pineapple
-Pineapple
-Fruit Punch
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each/Ks
800
720

FONTANA
Fruit Juice
1ltr
each/Ks
1,500
1,350

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-Mocha
-Espresso
30's 600g
each/Ks
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2,450

PREMIER
3in1 Coffee Mix
-Original
-Mocha
-Espresso
30's 600g
Ks
2,800
2,480

PREMIER
3in1 Coffee Mix
-Original
-Mocha
-Espresso
30's 600g
Ks
2,700
2,400

ROYAL MYANMAR
Tea Mix
30's 600g
Ks
3,060
2,750

GOLD ROAST
3in1 Coffee Mix
30's 600g
Ks
3,060
2,750

SUPER
3in1 Coffee Mix
48's 960g
Ks
4,050
3,800

COFFEE MIX
3in1 Coffee Mix
30's 600g
Ks
2,450
2,350

OVALTINE
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Malted Milk
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Ks
3,450
3,300

NESCAFE
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Ks
9,000
7,950

NESTLE
Milo
400g
Ks
3,200
3,000

NESTLE
Milo
400g
Ks
3,200
3,000

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-Tablets 100's 8.0g
Ks
3,450
3,300

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HIGHWAY Peanut Butter Creamy 510g 	QUEEN Strawberry Jam 560g 	KNORR Seasoning Powder Chicken 800g 	MOTHER'S CHOICE Margarine 250g/500g 	READY Fish Assorted 6's Set
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400 plants and animals added to 'threatened' list

HYDERABAD, India – An island-dwelling cockroach and a tiny snail were declared extinct on October 17 while 400 plants and animals were added to a threatened "Red List" as global environment ministers met in India.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature updated its authoritative study on the state of biodiversity on Earth, saying 20,219 species were at risk of dying out.

It added 402 species such as the Egyptian dab lizard and the Sichuan Taimen, a fresh water fish from China, to the "Red List", which puts them in the threatened category.

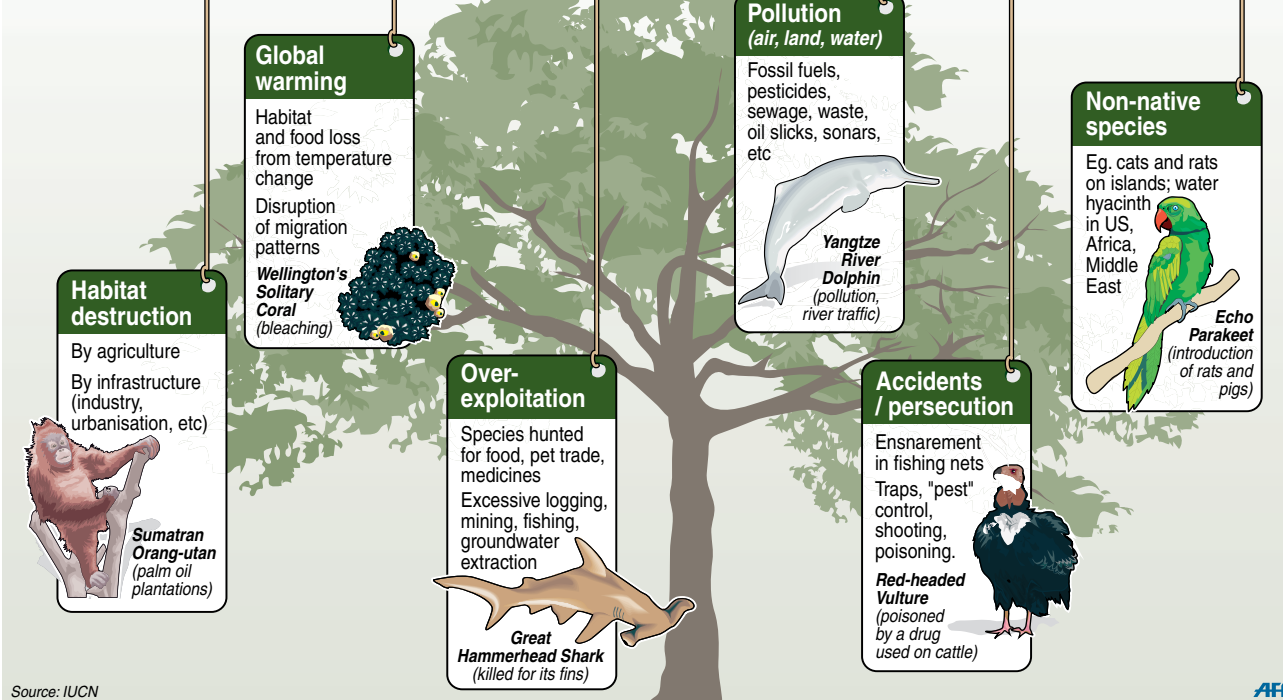
Two invertebrates, a cockroach from the Seychelles last seen in 1905 and a freshwater snail called Little Flat-Top from the US state of Alabama, have moved into the extinct category since the last update of the bi-annual survey in June.

"These are species that do not occur anywhere else in the world," the IUCN's director of biodiversity conservation Jane Smart said at a UN Convention on Biological Diversity conference in Hyderabad, southern India.

The report also showed that 83 percent of Madagascar's 192 palm

Main causes of biodiversity loss

More than 20,000 species are threatened with extinction, almost wholly as a result of human action



species, which the poor rely on heavily for food and housing, are at risk of extinction.

A quarter of the world's mammals, 13pc of birds, 41pc of amphibians and 33pc of reef-building corals are at risk of extinction, said the IUCN.

The report set alarm bells ringing as more than 70 environment ministers met for talks on halting the depletion of the Earth's natural resources, with pressure for them to match political pledges with hard cash.

There was also some

happy news, however, with the IUCN saying eight species had moved out of the extinct category due to new sightings.

They include a Tanzanian tree, *Erythrina schliebenii*, five types of mollusc, a dwarf toad from Sri Lanka, and Holdridge's Toad, a

species from Costa Rica.

The gathering comes two years after UN countries approved a 20-point plan at a conference in Japan for reversing the worrying decline in plant and animal species that humans depend on for food, shelter and livelihoods.

Implementing the plan has been hamstrung by a lack of funding and the Hyderabad talks are being closely watched for new financial commitments.

Environmental economist Pavan Sukhdev said on October 17 that an expert panel had concluded that between US\$150-440 billion (115 to 330 billion euros) would be needed annually to meet the Japan goals, dubbed the Aichi biodiversity targets.

Current conservation spending is estimated at about \$10 billion a year.

With a 2020 deadline, the targets include halving the rate of habitat loss, expanding conservation areas, preventing the extinction of species on the threatened list, and restoring at least 15pc of degraded ecosystems.

"The cost of inaction is something that people have only just begun to appreciate," UN Environment Program executive director Achim Steiner warned.

"When you run out of water, when you run out of arable land... and your rivers run dry, when your lakes silt up, when your fisheries collapse, then it is often too late to start talking about the value of biodiversity ecosystems." – AFP

Zardari denounces attack

BAKU – Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari said last week that the shooting of Malala Yousafzai, 14, by the Taliban would not stop the nation's drive to educate girls.

"The Taliban attack on the 14-year-old girl, who from the age of 11 was involved in the struggle for education for girls, is an attack on all girls in Pakistan, an attack on education and on all civilised people," Zardari said on October 16 at an economic summit in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku.

"The work that she led was higher before God than what terrorists do in the name of religion. We will continue

her shining cause," he said. Malala was shot on a school bus in the Swat valley on October 9 as punishment for campaigning for the right to an education.

She was flown to Britain for specialist treatment at a hospital in Birmingham on October 15 where doctors said she had "a chance of making a good recovery".

The murder attempt has sickened Pakistan, where Malala came to prominence with a blog for the BBC highlighting atrocities under the hardline Islamist Taliban, which terrorised the Swat valley from 2007 until an army offensive in 2009. – AFP

China leads rise in Asian defence spending: study

WASHINGTON – Military spending by Asia's major powers increased dramatically during the past decade with China leading the way, as its defence budget quadrupled since 2000, said a study released last week.

Defence spending in China and four other Asian countries doubled over 10 years and will surpass Europe's military expenditures this year, said the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank.

Asia's arms race still leaves it trailing US defence spending, but it will ensure the United States likely will stick to its plan to shift the country's strategic focus towards the Asia-Pacific region, it said.

Defence spending in China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan reached a total of US\$224 billion in 2011, which "equates to almost twice the amount spent by these five countries in 2000," said the CSIS study on October 15.

"With Asian defense spending projected to overtake that of Europe by the end of 2012, the United States' posture rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region is likely to continue," it said.

In 2005, China's military budget outstripped Japan's as the largest in Asia and recorded a 13.4 percent annual rise that year.

Among all countries, China ranks second behind the United States in total

military spending, though the Pentagon budget still dwarfs Beijing's defence spending at more than \$600 billion (463 million euros) a year.

Experts say China's emergence as a global economic giant has driven the rise in military spending, as Beijing seeks to assert its influence beyond its borders to safeguard its access to sea lanes and resources.

In 2011, Beijing spent \$25.8 billion on new weapons and related research and development, up from \$7.3 billion in 2000, the report said.

China's total defence budget grew from \$22.5 billion to \$89.9 billion between 2000 and 2011, said the report, citing official

figures from the Beijing government.

But the study acknowledged that independent estimates put Chinese spending at a much higher level, with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute estimating Beijing's 2011 defence budget at \$142.2 billion.

India's defence spending grew 47.6pc during the decade, reaching \$37 billion in 2011. Japan's military budget rose from \$40 billion to \$58.2 billion.

South Korea's defence spending swelled from \$17 billion to \$29 billion, while Taiwan's military budget expanded at a slower pace, from \$8 billion in 2000 to \$10 billion in 2011. – AFP

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Dated. 22 October 2012

Australia, India take first steps on N-deal

NEW DELHI – Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard last week agreed to open negotiations to export uranium nuclear fuel to energy-hungry India after meeting her counterpart Manmohan Singh in New Delhi.

The deal, which will provide a boost for India's civilian nuclear ambitions, comes after Australia reversed its policy of refusing to sell uranium to India because it has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"Prime Minister Manmohan Singh welcomed the decision of the Australian government on uranium sales to India,

noting that nuclear energy will play an important role in India's future energy needs," a joint statement said on October 17.

"India and Australia (will) commence negotiations on a bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement which, for Australia, is a prerequisite for uranium sales to other countries," it added.

Gillard overcame opposition within her own Labor party to reverse the ban last year, arguing that the deal was necessary to improve ties with one of Asia's biggest economies.

New Delhi – backed by the US –

won a special exemption in 2008 from the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which governs the global nuclear trade, to allow it to buy reactors and fuel from overseas.

India had been subject to a global embargo since 1974 when it first conducted a nuclear weapons test.

Gillard earlier said that negotiations would guarantee that the uranium would be used only for peaceful purposes and in safe conditions, and that the deal would be overseen by the International Atomic Energy Agency. – AFP

FARFALLA

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အထိ ပါဝင်ပြသမည်ဖြစ်သောကြောင့်
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Protesters outside the Japanese prime minister's official residence in Tokyo on October 17 condemn the alleged rape of a woman on Okinawa by two US servicemen, who were arrested the previous day. The US ambassador to Japan, John Roos, pledged "complete and unequivocal cooperation" with the Japanese authorities investigating the alleged rape on the island, where residents oppose a large US military presence. Pic: AFP

Manila, Muslim rebels ink historic peace pact

MANILA – Muslim rebels waging a four-decade insurgency in the Philippines signed a historic pact with the government on October 15 to end the conflict, but both sides warned the road to peace had only just begun.

President Benigno Aquino and Moro Islamic Liberation Front chief Murad Ebrahim witnessed the signing of the accord, which aims for a final peace pact by 2016, in a ceremony at the presidential palace in Manila.

"I come in peace and to forge a partnership of peace on the basis of the framework agreement between the MILF and the Philippine government," Ebrahim said in a speech during the ceremony.

Aquino, who has driven the process since assuming office in 2010, also hailed the agreement as a chance to "finally achieve genuine, lasting peace".

Ebrahim became the first MILF chief to visit the presidential palace, signifying the optimism from both sides about finally ending a conflict that has claimed 150,000 lives and the priority Aquino has put on achieving peace.

Under the plan, the

12,000-strong MILF would give up its quest for an independent homeland in the southern region of Mindanao in return for significant power and wealth-sharing in a new autonomous region there.

However the MILF's leadership, the government and independent observers have all warned the path towards peace remains littered with obstacles, and that the signing ceremony on October 15 does not guarantee an end to the conflict.

'Much work remains to be done...'

"As the saying goes, the devil is in the details. Much work remains to be done in order to fully reap the fruits of this framework agreement," Aquino said in a speech before the signing by both sides' chief negotiators.

The MILF's chief negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, expressed similar caution at a news conference after the signing. "With all the intensity, emotional attachment and substantive

agreement, it is still a piece of paper. It will not implement itself," Iqbal said as he warned of tough negotiations ahead.

Muslim rebel groups have been fighting since the 1970s for full independence or autonomy in Mindanao, which they consider their ancestral homeland.

The estimated four to nine million Muslims are a minority in Mindanao after years of Roman Catholic immigration, but they remain a majority in some areas. Muslims would be a majority in the planned new autonomous region.

The MILF is the biggest and most important remaining rebel group, after the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) signed a peace deal with the government in 1996.

That deal led to an autonomous region in Mindanao but Aquino described it the previous week as a "failed experiment" because of massive corruption and worsening poverty there.

The planned new autonomous region would replace the old one, covering much of the same area but with more powers for self-rule. – AFP

Briefs

Seoul responds to Pyongyang's threat

SEOUL – South Korean Defence Minister Kim Kwan-Jin on October 19 vowed to retaliate if North Korea carried through on a threatened military strike against the South this week.

"If that happens, we will strike back at the origin of fire," Kim was quoted as saying by *Yonhap* news agency.

The North had earlier threatened to carry out a "merciless military strike" if defectors in the South went ahead with plans to scatter propaganda leaflets on October 22 from balloons floated over the border.

Australian FM hails 'juicy win'

SYDNEY – Australia on October 19 hailed its election to the United Nations Security Council with Foreign Minister Bob Carr saying securing the non-permanent seat was a "big, decisive, juicy win".

Australia, which received 140 votes from the secret ballot of 193 members, was elected to the two-year role beginning in January along with Rwanda, Argentina, South Korea and Luxembourg in a vote in New York on October 18.

A delighted Carr described it as a "terrific triumph".

Four held after woman beheaded

HERAT – Afghan police have arrested four people who allegedly tried to force a woman into prostitution in western Afghanistan and beheaded her when she refused, officials said on October 18.

Mah Gul, 20, was beheaded after her mother-in-law attempted to make her sleep with a man in Herat province last week, said provincial police chief Abdul Ghafar Sayedzada.

Gul was married four months ago and her mother-in-law had tried to force her into prostitution several times in the past, Sayedzada said.

Hunt launched for man-eating leopard

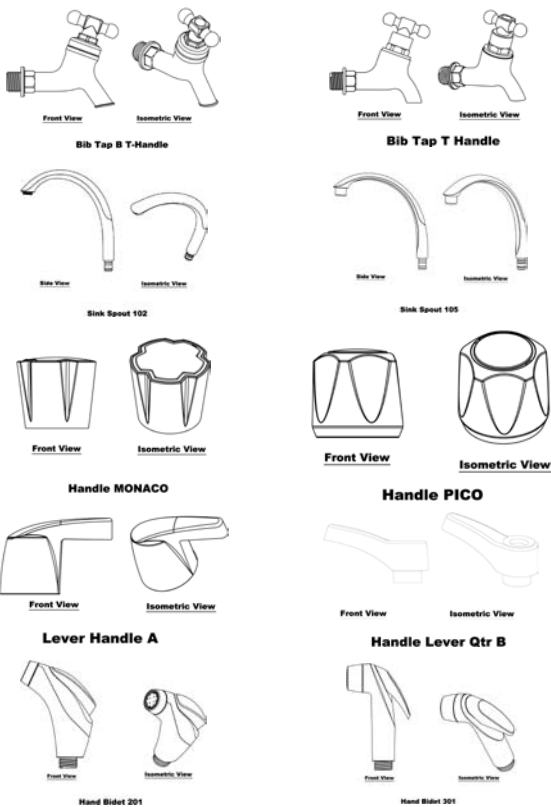
KATHMANDU – Police in Nepal's remote western region have launched a hunt for a wild leopard that has killed five people in the last month, officers said on October 18.

The leopard has been stalking villages on the banks of the Mahakali river and has terrified the local population in the mountainous area, police said.

Police officer Lal Bahadur Saud said a team of about 80 policemen would try to capture the leopard alive but would shoot it if attacked. – AFP

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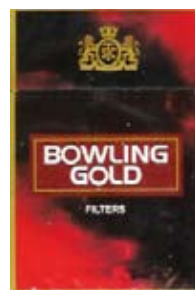
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Graft amount too small to believe, says minister

NEW DELHI – A senior Indian politician has dismissed claims that a colleague embezzled US\$134,000, saying the sum was too small to be taken seriously.

Steel Minister Beni Prasad Verma spoke out in defence of Salman Khurshid, the law minister who has been accused of embezzling government money allotted to a trust that he heads to help disabled people.

"I believe Salman Khurshid could not have embezzled 71 lakh (7.1 million rupees). It is a very small amount for a central minister," Verma was quoted as saying by the *Times of India* on October 16.

"I would have taken it seriously if the amount was 71 crore (710 million)," he added. A lakh is 100,000 rupees, while a crore is 10 million rupees.

The *Times of India* ran an editorial criticising Verma's statement as "grossly ill-timed and ill-phrased".

Verma later tried to withdraw his remarks, saying that corruption on any scale was wrong.

Graft is one of the biggest political issues in India, with a series of scandals tarnishing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government.

Khurshid has denied all the allegations against him. – AFP

Film to shine a light on Yangon's skaters

By Pinky

IN 2011 a 19-minute documentary titled *Altered Focus: Burma* won the Best Independent and Emerging Filmmaker Award at the International Skateboard Film Festival in Los Angeles.

According to the film's synopsis posted on vimeo.com, the movie, shot in Yangon and Mandalay in 2009, "explores the reaction to [skateboarding] while touching on the political situation in [in Myanmar]".

Two of the creators of that documentary, skateboarders James Holman and Ali Drummond, returned to Yangon on September 20 for another film project, bringing with them cameraman Toby Mills and photographer Henry Kingsford.

The crew spent about a month documenting the lives of skateboarders in Myanmar, with shooting locations including the city streets, City Centre Skate Park and Kandawgyi Park in Yangon, and the National Village Skate Park in Nay Pyi Taw.

The aim, according to director, producer and

cameraman Holman, is to create another documentary to submit for screening at the Newport Beach Film Festival near Los Angeles in April 2013.

"The first time we came here was in 2009. We made our film like a travel documentary, and combined that with what we heard about the country's situation during the September 2007 protests," said Mr Holman, whose Hot Knees Media company (hotknees.com) is based in Queenstown, New Zealand.

"The resulting film was shown by BBC and CNN, and we won an award in 2011. But that film is now quite out of date ... so we came back to make a new one."

He said the new documentary would be about 15 to 18 minutes long like the first one, but it might also be split into two parts.

"Part one could be about the difficulties of Yangon skaters, who have to skate at an improper skate park," Mr Holman said, referring to the sudden and unexplained bulldozing of the Thuwunna Skate Park last May, leaving the poorly maintained and

inadequate City Centre Skate Park as the only skateboarding venue in Yangon.

"We hope to promote the scene for local skaters, and get attention for them from international audiences. I hope this documentary will play a part in helping them get a proper skate park in Yangon."

He said the prospective second part would likely be released in 2014 and would require another trip to Myanmar to complete.

"If they build a new skate park in Yangon, or if the National Village Skate Park in Nay Pyi Taw is destroyed, there will be a lot of things going on here and I'll come



Ali Drummond, Toby Mills and James Holman (left to right) shoot scenes in Kandawgyi Park in Yangon on October 15 for their new documentary on the skateboarding scene in Myanmar. Pic: Nyein Maung

More page 36

Junction Square to host fashion week

By Pinky

IT'S only three days long, and the participating designers are from Myanmar, but it's called Myanmar International Fashion Week and it will be held at Junction Square Shopping Centre on Pyay Road in Yangon from November 16 to 18.

Event organiser John Lwin from Star Event and Production told *The Myanmar Times* on September 25 that the event will feature the participation of more than 80 models, actors and actresses on the runway, showcasing styles from 12 local designers.

Participating designers will include Fashion Euphoria, Memory, 7 Picture, Pioneer Fashion, Shwe Poe Nan Taw, BYSI, OPT, Yes I Do, Forever, Chaw Su, Iora and IMMI Fashion.

"The wide open space of

Junction Square will have a big stage, and more than 1000 seats will be available for people who have tickets in hand," John Lwin said.

"The show will also feature dance performances, including international dance performers from America, and DJ Taw Taw will provide music throughout the event."

He added that the event will be the "first time ever in Myanmar that we will feel the sense of international fashion week".

Tickets will be available starting in the first week of November. Anyone who is interested in attending can get free tickets at the Star & Models International office on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Bahan township, as well as at the shops of participating designers.

Shows will be held from 6pm to 9pm on each night of the event.

Correction

The story "Myanmar poetry published in English", which appeared on page 39 of the October 15-21 issue of *The Myanmar Times*, incorrectly stated that a poem about former senior general Than Shwe, written by U Saw Wai, was broadcast by the BBC on February 14, 2006. The work in question was actually a love poem titled "February 14", with the first letter of each line spelling out "Power Mad Than Shwe". The BBC used the poem as part of a human rights campaign in 2008, in response to the arrest of U Saw Wai by authorities in Myanmar following the publication of the poem in a local journal.



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MRTV signs agreement to broadcast Chinese movies

By Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

THE 21st China Film Festival was held at Nay Pyi Daw Cinema in Yangon from October 15 to 20, with the opening ceremony attended by a Chinese actress who starred in the first movie to be shown at this year's event.

The actress, Ms Xu Fan, was greeted with warm applause, and thanked audience members who had come to see her film *Aftershock*.

"I'm very thankful to you all for giving me the chance to attend this film festival, and although this is my first visit to Myanmar, I feel like I'm returning to my hometown," she told the audience.

She then shared her experiences shooting *Aftershock*, which is based on the true story of victims of an earthquake that struck China in 1978. This movie, directed by Feng Xiaogang, was the highest-grossing domestically produced film in China in 2010.

"On the way to this film festival I saw a poster for *Aftershock* and it reminded me of how difficult it was to shoot the movie. It featured a family caught in an earthquake, and their attachments even after they had been separated," she said.

"I played the role of a



Chinese actress Xu Fan is interviewed before the opening ceremony of the 21st China Film Festival in Yangon on October 15. Pic: Yadanar

mother who had to choose between saving her son or her daughter, and chose her son," Ms Xu Fan said. "I tried very hard in this movie, so by watching my efforts please accept me as your relative and neighbour instead of thinking of me as an actress."

Also on October 15, officials from China's Film Bureau under the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television met

at Park Royal Hotel with representatives from Myanmar's Ministry of Information and Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise to sign an agreement for the free transmission of Chinese movies on MRTV.

Mr Tong Gang, the director general of the Film Bureau, said at the ceremony that although film is a relatively new art form, it has become an important means of facilitating

cultural exchanges between countries.

"By watching our movies, Myanmar people can know our history, culture, artworks and quality of film production," he said.

"We are now planning to produce a drama series with cooperation between China and Myanmar, and in the interests of forging a long-term friendship between the two countries we will also organise cultural exchanges and joint film festivals."

U Aung Myo Myint, the managing director of Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise, told *The Myanmar Times* that the idea to sign an agreement for the free transmission of Chinese movies on MRTV came from the China Film Bureau.

"On MRTV we are transmitting movies from South Korea, Hollywood and Bollywood, so now we'll also show some Chinese movies on weekdays. In the past some local business owners paid to have Chinese movies shown but now they'll be allowed for free," U Aung Myo Myint said.

He said MRTV will choose some Chinese movies to show, based on the interests of local viewers.

"Also, to raise interest in tourism to Myanmar, Myanmar movies that feature culture and natural scenes should be shown in China," he suggested.

SE Asian orchestra performs in Yangon

By Lwin Mar Htun

THE Southeast Asian Youth Chamber Orchestra appeared for the first time in Myanmar on October 15, performing a selection of Western classical works at the Strand Hotel in Yangon.

For the two-hour concert, the Thailand-based orchestra consisted of 28 student musicians from countries throughout Southeast Asia, including three participants from Myanmar.

The program included

'Music can erase the differences between people, which is the aim of this concert.'

Edward Elgar's "Serenade for Strings in E Minor, Opus 20"; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Clarinet Concerto in A Major, KV 622" and "Symphony No 29, KV 201"; and Antonin Dvorak's "Nocturne for Strings in B Major, Opus 40".

Ms Daphne Wolf from the Goethe-Institut, which helped organise the concert, said music can bring people together and help them overcome their differences.

"The students came from different countries, and they could not understand each other's language and traditional habits. But music can erase the differences between people, which is

the aim of this concert," she said.

Ko Pyae Pyo from Myanmar, who played violin at the concert, explained how he earned his space in the orchestra.

"First we had to audition in Yangon by performing music. Seven students tried out, and three of us were selected to go to Bangkok, where we rehearsed seven days a week under a famous conductor from Uruguay, Mr Nicolas Pasquet," he said.

Now 22 years old, he said he has been playing violin since he was eight years old, and in recent years has worked at Chatrium Hotel.

Mr Pasquet, who in 1987 won first prize at the 37th International Conducting Competition in France, serves as the orchestra's music conductor. German clarinetist Mr Martin Spangenberg also performed with the orchestra for the Yangon concert.

Audience member Ko Saw Aden said he was very interested in orchestral music.

"Now I'm learning violin and one day I'd like to perform with an orchestra. It's a good idea to hold a concert like this in Myanmar, and it can help us improve our music skills here," he said.

The Southeast Asian Youth Chamber Orchestra is based at the College of Music at Mahidol University in Thailand, and is supported by the Goethe-Institut Bangkok. Global pharmaceutical company Merck is also a major sponsor.

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back to continue the story for part two," he said.

Ali Drummond, a skater from London, described the Yangon skateboarders as creative and social, and coming from different backgrounds.

"It's not easy to skate at an improper park and on terrible roads like they have in Yangon, but they are still doing it and trying the best they can. I really respect them," he said.

He said he hoped the new documentary would "shine a light" on Myanmar and get attention for the skaters so they can build a proper skate park.

"We tried to interview the person who owns City Centre Shopping Mall but no one knew who that was. When we asked the staff, they said the manager had changed and they didn't know who the new one was, and the manager was not concerned with the skate park at the shopping centre anyway," Mr Drummond said.

"This is a huge problem for the skaters. They don't know the owner of City Centre, there's no explanation for the closing of Thuwunna Skate Park and there are rumours that the park in Nay Pyi Taw will close soon because nobody uses it. Of course Yangon skaters can't go there just for skating every day."

Mr Drummond said he also

plans to return to Myanmar soon to get support for building a new skate park in Yangon.

"We already have people in London who will help with the project. Now we need local support," he said.

"The park needs to be centrally located but in a quiet area where they don't disturb the public and the public doesn't disturb them. And they need good-quality skateboards to rent to people who want to try skating."

Mr Holman and Mr Drummond both noted that Yangon had changed since their last visit in 2009; in particular there were more cars on the road and the city seemed more crowded.

But for Toby Mills, a freelancer who operated the second camera and fulfilled production managing duties, it was his first visit to Myanmar.

"I would have never travelled here alone. This was a really good opportunity for me to help James, and at the same time I got to see a third world country. It was a fun trip and experience. I'd like to come here again," he said.

Henry Kingsford, meanwhile, was along as editor and photographer of London-based *Grey* skateboard magazine (greyskatemag.com). He plans to publish a special issue on skateboarders in Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia.

Aimless mobs thwart Pakistan cinema

By Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI – For as long as Pakistan has existed, film lovers flocked to the Nishat cinema, sinking into seats in its plush auditorium to watch Hollywood imports, Bollywood hits and home-grown productions.

All that came to an end last month when an enraged mob set fire to the building, trashed furniture and looted equipment – all in the name of defending the Prophet Mohammed and protesting against a cheap American web trailer that infuriated Muslims.

Eight other cinemas were destroyed – in the conservative, northwestern city of Peshawar and the more cosmopolitan financial capital Karachi – dealing a huge blow to Pakistan's already troubled film industry.

The arson and vandalism has cost scores of jobs and leaves even fewer sources of secular entertainment in a country where a conservative right-wing Islamist agenda whips up the street, and moderates are sidelined in public discourse.

"We didn't make that disgusting film against our beloved prophet, and like everyone else we protested against it. So why loot and destroy cinemas and

render hundreds of people jobless?" asked Nawab Huzoorul Hasan, the Nishat manager.

The auditorium which once held 1000 seats is now a mess of rubble, twisted metal and up-ended chairs. Its staircase is crumbling and its projector room destroyed.

What remains of the gallery could collapse at any time. Fire destroyed the cinema's beautiful ornate ceiling. The giant screen is gone. The wall behind is blackened.

Workers say September 21 was the worst physical attack on cinemas in Pakistan's 65-year history and another setback for a film and entertainment industry that has been nearly stripped bare by decades of Islamisation.

"The cinema culture had just begun to revive when this fatal blow happened," said Mustafa Qureshi, an actor famous for playing villains in Punjabi films in the 1980s.

When General Zia ul-Haq seized power in a bloodless coup in 1977, the country had around 1000 cinemas. Today, there are just over 100 left.

"People used to save up to go to the movies once or twice a month. Pakistani music was all the rage and dancers were immensely popular," said Qureshi.

Pakistan banned Bollywood films in 1965, and although exceptions were made for individual films, Zia is credited with making Pakistan more right-wing, more Islamic and less tolerant of secular entertainment and of minorities.

His 11-year dictatorship coincided with Pakistan's sponsorship, along with the CIA and Saudi Arabia, of jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan that ultimately gave rise to Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Film production houses in Lahore and Karachi went into decline.

"During General Zia's days, even a male actor hugging his daughter on film was ordered to be censored," said Tariq Khalique, a documentary filmmaker.

"Zia's policies discouraged people from going to cinemas and then he facilitated builders to dismantle cinemas and construct shopping plazas," he said.

In 2009, the newly elected civilian government lifted the blanket ban on Indian films, wildly popular in Pakistan, and cinemas began to hope that their fortunes might improve despite a Taliban insurgency that has killed thousands.

Now they are not so sure. "I saw death in front of me," said Abdul Aziz,

who works for the Capri cinema, remembering how he watched armed men he calls criminals cut through the iron gates.

"It was all pre-planned. They looted and burnt cinemas purposely on the pretext of protesting. I wanted to save the cinema and called the fire brigade, but they refused to come, saying they were being attacked by the rioters as well."

Among those destroyed was the Bambino, formerly owned by the father of President Asif Ali Zardari in a building where the president once lived with his parents.

"President Zardari should come forward and help us as his father was one of the pioneers of the business and passionate about it," said Nadeem Mandviwala, owner of the Nishat and head of the film exhibitors' association.

Comic actor Umer Sharif believes lack of entertainment is one factor that sees young men fall into delinquency and militancy.

"It's a great loss. These cinemas provided rare recreational facilities to our young people," Sharif said.

Others are just sad. "I've watched scores of movies in these cinemas. For me it wasn't cinemas, but my childhood that went up in flames," said Abdul Hameed, a construction worker. – AFP



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Scientist bares the bubbly

By Richard Ingham

REIMS, France – Gerard Liger-Belair lives in a bubble, and he doesn't care who knows it.

Bubbles are his passion. And they have given the 41-year-old French scientist arguably the best job in all of physics.

In a lab supplied with top-notch champagne, Liger-Belair delves into the secrets of fizz: What gives this legendary wine its sparkle to the eye, its tingle to the tongue?

A bottle of bubbly without the bubbles – all 10 million of them – would be a sad thing indeed, admits Liger-Belair.

"It wouldn't be a very good wine," the scientist said in his lab at the University of Reims. "The heart of champagne lies in the bubble."

Champagne is made under a two-stage, tightly-regulated process.

First, it is made into a wine from grapes exclusive to the champagne region east of Paris. Then a tiny quantity of yeast, plus sugar to feed it, is added.

The bottle is stored upside down and rotated daily so that the fermentation deposit slides to the neck, which is then frozen, forming a plug of sediment that is then withdrawn. The bottle is secured by a cork and wire cage, and allowed to mature.

When you pour a glass of it, you are also releasing a fluid with two million bubbles, which is where the fun science begins.

"We have made discoveries that are really exclusive to champagne, things that have not been observed before," says Liger-Belair.

How bubbles form, rise and cluster in the glass will determine the champagne's visual allure.

As you bring the glass closer to your mouth, the bursting of bubbles at the surface will release tiny droplets to your face and



French scientist Gerard Liger-Belair poses as he works on a glass of champagne in his laboratory in Reims, France, on September 13. Pic: AFP

aromatic molecules to your nose, adding a discreet, sensual feel.

And when you take a sip, those bubbles will sculpt the "feel" of the wine – too many are unpleasant, too few are disappointing – and activate carbon dioxide receptors on the tongue to send tiny signals of excitement to the brain.

"Here's a sequence of high-speed pictures of a bubble that is about to pop on the surface of the wine," says Liger-Belair, pointing to phenomenon called a Worthington jet captured by a 5000-frames-per-second camera.

"It explodes, making a tiny crater on the surface. The crater closes up and then ejects a thread of liquid, which then breaks up in droplets that can fly up to 10 centimetres [4 inches]."

Using an ultra-high-resolution mass spectrometer in Germany to analyse the chemical structure of samples, Liger-Belair's team found that this effervescence is laden with "tensio-active" molecules, hundreds of them aromatic.

Liger-Belair also figured out why strings of bubbles rise from certain points in glass.

It happens when microscopic fibres – left by a kitchen towel or often just an airborne particle – stick to the side, allowing molecules of dissolved carbon dioxide to coalesce and form bubbles.

The finding is important for champagne fans and the catering industry.

Glasses that are retrieved from a dishwasher, where they have been washed and blown-dry upside down, could be so ultra-clean that – horribly – few bubbles form.

Top-market glassmakers now use lasers to etch a tiny crown of spots at the bottom of the glass, creating flaws to make bubbles form and rise in a pretty ring.

Champagne fans can make a few small scratches of their own – "no more, otherwise you have a huge degassing," says Liger-Belair – with a spiked tool.

This year, Liger-Belair and colleagues issued a devastating verdict on a debate that had raged for hundreds of years.

Should you drink champagne from a tall, long-stemmed glass, a "flute" in French?

Or should it be a "coupe", the shallow cup that according to legend is moulded on the breast shape of Marie-Antoinette?

Gas chromatography showed a "coupe" loses carbon dioxide at least a third faster than a "flute". So unless you drink very quickly, you lose the precious effervescence.

Liger-Belair's work has been published in peer-reviewed journals aimed at fluid physicists and beverage specialists who deal with other sparkling wines, beers and sodas.

In the Champagne region, it has been instrumental in helping winegrowers fine tune the second stage of fermentation.

The tradition was to add in 24 grams (0.8 ounces) of sugar per litre of champagne, but the trend now is 18 grams (0.6 ounces), the lowest permissible under regulations, he explains.

"People prefer smaller bubbles, possibly because this quality is associated with vintage champagne," the scientist says. "The easiest way to produce finer bubbles is to reduce the quantity of carbon dioxide which is dissolved in the champagne, and this is linked to the amount of sugar."

Liger-Belair says he has occasionally sparred with traditionalists who say too much physics will kill the myth of champagne.

But Philippe Jamesse, head wine waiter at a five-star Reims chateau, Les Crayeres, says science and wine can go hand in hand.

"When you see Gerard's work, you understand why the 'coupe' is completely out-dated," he says. "We don't have any here."

So what does the scientist do with all the booze? Once the experiment is over, does he drink it?

"Unfortunately, no," says Liger-Belair. "By that time, it's warm and undrinkable. I think I must have thrown more champagne down the sink than anyone else on this planet." – AFP

Kimchi: affordable Korean skin care

By Tim Carman

WASHINGTON – Best I can tell, the former South Korean minister of food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries is trying to convince me that fermented cabbage could be sold as a regenerative skin-care product.

"I'm 73 years old," says Sung-Hoon Kim, standing under the Gwangju World Kimchi Culture Festival tent in Bull Run Regional Park last month in Centreville, Virginia. "Do you see any wrinkles on me?"

As I inspect his round, friendly, bespectacled face, I have to admit that I don't. Well into his eighth decade, Kim has no crow's feet around his eyes and no apparent worry lines across his forehead – although his brow is semi-concealed by a ball cap, so the jury's still out there.

Kim comes right out and calls kimchi an "anti-aging" food, then points to three nearby women in colourful hanbok dresses. He says they're all kimchi masters. Their skin is flawlessly smooth.

"Don't ask their ages," Kim warns me.

Kim's skin-care pitch is part of his mission in Virginia. He's the chairman of the 19th annual Gwangju World Kimchi Culture Festival, which made its first-ever foray outside of South Korea last month to promote the country's national dish of spicy fermented vegetables (there are hundreds of varieties) as part of the larger, 10th annual Korus Festival, organised by the Korean American Association of the Metropolitan Washington Area.

No doubt indulging America's nearly neurotic desire to outrun death – and look good while doing so – Kim arrived here to sell us on kimchi's health benefits. Its high-fibre, low-fat

properties. Its good bacteria to help with digestion. Its vitamins A, B and C. Frankly, all of this is gravy to me. Kimchi had me at spicy fermented cabbage.

Besides, Kim might be better off selling Americans on the pure enjoyment of preparing a quick, fresh batch of kimchi. Before the festival opened, organisers had me join the three kimchi masters in donning aprons and plastic gloves and smearing a piquant fermented fish paste all over a head of previously soaked, salted and dried Napa cabbage.

I was sandwiched between Ho-Oak Kim on my right and Soon-Ja Kim, president of the Kimchi Association of Korea, on my left. Neither was shy about correcting my faults as a kimchi maker.

The Kims introduced me to the social engagement of kimchi preparation. After you thoroughly coat each leaf with the fire-brick-red paste – but before you wrap the cabbage in its outer leaf to secure the condiment in place – you can pluck a small pale-yellow blade, roll it up and place the cool-and-fiery bite into a neighbour's mouth. Soon-Ja and Ho-Oak repeatedly fed me as if I were a hound begging at the table.

The best gift, though, was that festival organisers let me take my two neatly folded heads of kimchi home, where I debated whether to let them ferment at room temperature for another day or just put them straight into the refrigerator for slower ripening.

For the next several days, I nibbled on the raw kimchi and used it to make Joe Yonan's Grilled Kimcheese sandwiches, with an added slice of late-season tomato for an extra blast of umami.

I've also been wondering whether my skin looks any tighter.

– The Washington Post

Tips for wine-tastings at home

By John Mariani

HOLDING your own wine tasting at home or in a restaurant can be one of the most convivial of pleasures, as long as you go about it the right way, starting with whom you invite.

Basically, there are three kinds of people who drink wine: those who kind of like it, those who truly love it, and those who regard it as a study in oneness.

Only the second type is any fun at a wine tasting, especially if you're going to be serving some expensive wines that the first group will shrug at, and the third will sniff and go into discourses about wine pH levels and vineyard trellising techniques.

Once you've chosen your jolly group, there are certain guidelines that make such tastings a great deal of fun.

Never serve more than six wines. Fewer is hardly worth the effort and more becomes a bore.

Will it be a blind tasting? If so, cover the bottles with a paper bag to hide the labels, making sure the shape of the

bottle is not evident. (Pinot noirs and rieslings always come in distinctively shaped bottles.) Number them and keep the list out of sight.

If it's not a blind tasting, rather than have a random selection of wines, choose one region, say Tuscany, or a single estate, like Jordan cabernet. If the former, a horizontal tasting of a single vintage will give interesting insight into the differences of wines from the same region; if the latter, have a vertical tasting, that is, from different vintages of the same wine.

Use standard wineglasses for all the wines and pour only about an ounce or so to begin with. Later your guests can enjoy whatever they like most.

Have plain water available to help cleanse the palate between wines. Crackers or bread are also traditionally provided, chosen because their blandness does not interfere with the wine flavours.

But I believe it is much better to serve crackers like Saltines or focaccia whose salt works as salt always does, to perk up flavours. I've also found that a little fat, along with the salt, brings out much

more depth in wines you taste, so put a sheer amount of salted butter, or olive oil, on the bread. It works wonders.

If you are serving the wines with dinner, and I heartily recommend you do, keep the food very, very simple, like mild cheese, chicken broth, a steak, or, if you're tasting white wines, fillet of fish.

You might have guests taste all the wines prior to dinner, then match them with the meal. For the real point of tasting wines is that they go best with food and, with few exceptions, aren't worth much without it. Even a glass of Champagne deserves at least a canape.

During the discussion, try to keep the conversation lively (remember, you didn't invite the wine snobs to lecture anyone), and it's a capital idea to have a few choice observations from great writers handy for toasts, like Lord Byron's "Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter, sermons and soda-water the day after".

Finally, print out the names of all the wines for guests to take home. And finish every drop of wine you open.

– Bloomberg News



Soon-Ja Kim (left) and Sung-Hoon Kim demonstrate the messy joy of preparing kimchi at last month's Gwangju World Kimchi Culture Festival in Centreville, Virginia, US. Pic: The Washington Post/Steven Lee



Phyo's Cooking Adventure

Phyo cuts through culture to reveal life's true taste

Quick and easy chicken sausages

THIS week we are making very quick and easy homemade Italian-flavoured chicken sausages. My daughter loves them so much, and this recipe is a good way to introduce herbs to young toddlers. The whole family can enjoy this meal together, so it's perfect for busy mums who



rather than deep frying.

Always keep the pan covered with the lid.

When the sausages are cooked, remove them from the saucepan and lay them on kitchen paper so the excess oil can be absorbed.

SNOW PEA SALAD

1 packet of snow peas (240 grams)

1 red onion or Asian shallot (thinly slices and washed)

1 ½ tablespoon of Italian salad dressing, balsamic vinaigrette or balsamic dressing

Blanch the snow peas with lightly salted boiling water for 3 to 4 minutes and drain them.

Immediately freshen the snow peas with cold water and then drain them.

Mix all the ingredients well in a bowl, and salt and pepper to taste.

If you want to make your own dressing, please check "Phyo's Cooking Adventure" in the October 1-7 issue of The Myanmar Times.

Send feedback, comments and questions to phyocooking@gmail.com, or visit us at www.facebook.com/phyos.

Main Tips

Use a deep saucepan or pot so the air and heat can be trapped, which will cook the sausages more quickly.

Mustard and tomatoes sauce are good accompaniments for the sausages.

QUAFFING QUOTE

"Cooking does bring joy when you can create and eat that creation, and then if you can share it with a friend it's even better."

— Elizabeth Chong (Chinese-Australian celebrity chef)

NEXT WEEK

Ratatouille for vegetarians, and onion and anchovy dip for bread lovers.

must arrange dinner for the entire household. Leftovers can be used for sandwiches, or for nibbling with drinks.

The ingredients are very simple, and the genuine flavours can be enjoyed without any preservatives. The recipe also lends itself to experimentation, as the chicken can be substituted with pork mince, and different herbs can be used as well.

If you can find fresh herbs, use them; if not, you can replace them with dried leaves. For the latter option, however, more herbs are required.

These sausages can be used for children's lunchboxes, as finger food at parties, for hot

dogs and sandwiches, for cooking in pasta sauce, and more. Use your creativity!

Enjoy the recipe, and please share your cooking adventures on my Facebook page.

CHICKEN AND OREGANO SAUSAGES INGREDIENTS

500 grams chicken mince
3 teaspoons of dried oregano leaves
1 ½ teaspoon of salt
½ cup of panko bread crumbs
3 tablespoons of vegetable oil

PREPARATION

Pat dry the chicken mince quickly with

kitchen paper.

Thoroughly mix all the ingredients in a bowl, and then form the mixture into small, short sausages.

Cover the sausages and keep them in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Heat the vegetable oil in a big, deep saucepan, then seal the sausages by placing them in the saucepan and quickly cooking them with the lid covering the pan.

When all the sausages are sealed, fry them until the meat is cooked through.

If you need more oil you can splash in a little bit, but not too much. We are just slightly frying them

Red Wine



Alvinde Cabernet Sauvignon 2006

A fine accompaniment for grilled meats and mild cheeses, this dark red Chilean wine has a peppery aroma and sweet, full flavours.

Score BOX

7 /10

Ks 11,400

White Wine



Antares Chardonnay 2009

Strong tropical fruit and apple aromas; lemon and fresh fruit flavours; and a light, smooth finish characterise this fine, pale yellow Chardonnay.

Score BOX

8 /10

Ks 10,600

FOOD REVIEW

Mexico, via Shan State



Pic: Ko Taik

Sai's Tacos

32A Inya Myaing Road, Bahan township, Yangon
Tel 01-514-950

Food: 7
Drink: 5
Atmosphere: 7
Service: 8
X Factor: 7
Value for money: 7

Score BOX

7 /10

they wish to order, as well as ingredient options. Burritos (K2700) can be ordered with chicken, pork or ground beef; different types of beans and rice; and sautéed onions, peppers and/or salsa. Cheese and sour cream can be added at extra cost.

Portions are adequate; many of my friends are happy with one burrito, but I usually require a chicken burrito plus a beef chalupa (K2000) to satisfy my hunger. Extra tummy space can be filled with tortilla chips (corn K3000, flour K1500), brownies (K800) or honey burritos (K800 for two).

Dining at Sai's Tacos is generally sedate, although recorded mariachi music can sometimes be heard filtering through the speakers, and small herds of rambunctious American children occasionally pass through.

But I usually enjoy my burritos at home, swinging by the restaurant on my bicycle on my way back from work. The staff fill the orders fairly quickly, and they wrap each item in foil so they're still toasty-warm when I get home. — DL

City Mart Supermarket

Ks. 1,100

PANKO
Bread Crumb 200g

Ks. 2,200

RISCOSSA
Tomato Sauce Ragù (Bolognese) 295g

Ks. 3,380

MCCORMICK
Whole Mexican Oregano Leaves 15g

Ks. 5,400

MASTER FOODS
BBQ Sauce Squeazy 500ml

Ks. 3,600

GOLDYNA
Salad Dressing Balsamic Vinaigrette 250ml

Ks. 1,600

REMA
Italian Salad Dressing 250ml

Ks. 2,700

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Guests @ Grand Royal Chelsea FC Sponsorship Event



Contestant @ Mr and Miss Taw Win Contest



Ma Mi Mi Kyaw, Ma Grace and Ma Ei Hinn Pwint @ SP Gems Promotion Event



Ko Aung Kyaw Zin and Daw San San Myint @ SP Gems Promotion Event



Khant Si Thu @ MMPO Movie Day Reception



Ma Zin Myo Swe, Ma Myat Lay Wai, Ma Khine Nyein Htwe and Ma Ei Myo Swe @ I Music Opening



Contestant @ Mr and Miss Taw Win Contest



Ei Chaw Po, Khin Lay Nwe, May Kabyar and Phoo Sone @ MMPO Movie Day Reception



Cutting the ribbon @ Samsung Shop Opening Ceremony



Ma Khine Moe Moe Lin and Ma Sandar @ SP Gems Promotion Event



Eaindra Kyaw Zin @ MMPO Movie Day Reception



Ma Aye Aye Wah @ SP Gems Promotion Event



May Than Nu @ MMPO Movie Day Reception

Popular Japanese dinner buffet now available daily at Shiki-Tei

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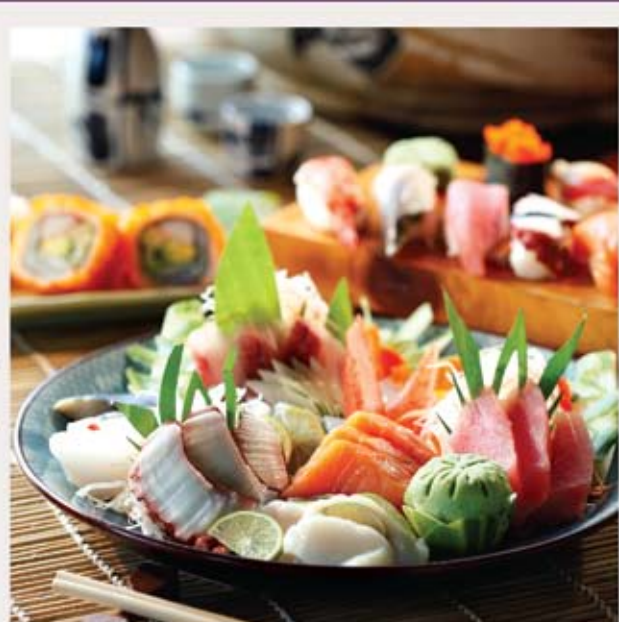
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Models @ Sky Mart Opening



Kaung Khant Kyaw @ Mr and Miss Taw Win Contest

SOCIALITE
WITH NYEIN EI EI HTWE



IF you thought the boys at Birch technology company didn't know how to party, you've got another thing coming! Their event at MICT on October 9 was so full of thrills, spills and excitement that Socialite barely had energy left over to carry on to Chatrium Hotel, where Grand Royal announced its new partnership with Chelsea Football Club. On October 11 she dropped by the Samsung shop opening on Pansodan Road, and also joined the crowd at the SP Gems promotion sale on Pyay Road. On the evening of October 13 Socialite whooped it up with her fellow celebs at the MMPO Movie Day shindig at Sedona Hotel. Other events during the week included the iMusic studio opening in Hledan township, and the Mr and Miss Taw Win Contest at Taw Win Centre, but Socialite is a little too ditzzy to remember what dates they occurred. Sorry!



U Aung Moe Kyaw @ Grand Royal Chelsea FC Sponsorship Event



She @ iMusic Opening



Contestant @ Mr and Miss Taw Win Contest



Daw Sandar Khine and U Sue Aung @ Grand Royal Chelsea FC Sponsorship Event



Phway Phway @ MMPO Movie Day Reception



Moe Yan Zon and models @ Grand Royal Chelsea FC Sponsorship Event



Nobel Kyaw Kyaw and Zay Ya @ Samsung Shop Opening Ceremony



Mr Adrian @ Grand Royal Chelsea FC Sponsorship Event



Ko Aung Min Thway, Mr Johnson Chiang, Mr Edward Chua and Mr Y F Phang @ Birch Technology Event



Ko Naing Zaw and Supan Dra @ Grand Royal Chelsea FC Sponsorship Event



Sai Sai Kham Leng @ MMPO Movie Day Reception



Wutt Hmone Shwe Yi, Soe Myat Mandar and Moe Hay Ko @ MMPO Movie Day Reception



Ko Thiha Lin and Ma Aye Mon Thyua @ SP Gems Promotion Event

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DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Table containing multiple columns of flight schedules, including flight numbers, departure times, arrival times, and destinations for various airlines like Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon to Hedo, Yangon to Mandalay, etc.

England build

By Brendan Sainsbury

If you want to fully understand a country, you have to understand its sporting rituals. And in the United Kingdom, that means deciphering football.

Refined, popularised and given rules in leisure-conscious Victorian Britain, the so-called "beautiful game" enjoys quasi-sacred status in the country of its conception, a worshipful feeling best summed up by the late, great Liverpool coach Bill Shankly.

And there's no better place to see Britain's football passion than in the city of Manchester, a onetime powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution where the country's National Football Museum opened this summer.

I'm an expat Brit now living in Vancouver, Canada, but football is in my genes and the thing I miss most about my native country. So news of the museum's opening had me frantically readjusting my annual family vacation plans. After several years of paying lip service to hockey and baseball, I concluded that my Canadian wife and six-year-old son were ripe for a bit of football indoctrination in the game's spiritual home.

The museum's location is no accident. Manchester plays host to two of the world's most iconic football clubs: the trophy-hoarding Red Devils of Manchester United and their traditionally inferior sky-blue rivals, Manchester City.

The balance between Manchester's red and blue halves shifted in May 2012 when, after a

captivating nine-month-long duel, Manchester City pipped reigning champions Manchester United to win football's revered Premier League title with — quite literally — the last kick of the season.

It was City's first title win in 44 years, a moment of sporting drama akin to Bobby Thomson's "shot heard 'round the world" that won baseball's National League pennant for the New York Giants in 1951.

Feeding off the frenzy, my family and I arrived in Manchester soon after the museum's July inauguration. Unveiled a couple of weeks before Mancunian Danny Boyle's dazzling London Olympics opening ceremony, the bold collection of more than 2500 exhibits (chosen from an archive of approximately 140,000) served to remind visiting fans like me that Britain can still deliver top-class entertainment outside the Olympics-hosting capital.

Modelled on an earlier football museum bivouacked from 2001 to 2010 in the Lancashire town of Preston, the expanded new collection is housed in the futuristic Urbis building, which was built in 2002 as part of Manchester city centre's regeneration after a devastating Irish Republican Army bomb blast in 1996.

The exhibits are spread over four floors, with the higher levels (three and four) hosting temporary exhibitions, while levels one and two are dedicated to permanent displays about football history, the media, fans, stadiums and the global game.

Fortunately for my son, we found them interspersed with half a dozen kid-friendly interactive activities, including a virtual penalty shootout and a ball-passing accuracy test.

Tourism Myanmar Update

Discover Mandalay The Myanmar Marketing Committee is producing a new publication titled Discover Mandalay, with the aim of providing focused information on the former royal capital, and to encourage visitors to stay longer in the city. For more information and details on advertising in Discover Mandalay, contact Honey at the MMC Office by email (pr.officer@tourismmyanmar.org) or fax (+95-1-523-473).

The Myanmar Marketing Committee (MMC), the marketing arm of Myanmar Tourism Promotion Board, aims to market and promote Myanmar as a destination to develop the Myanmar tourism industry. For more information and reference please visit our website at www.myanmar-tourism.com or contact the MMC Office at Diamond Condominium A, Room 904, Level 9, Building 497, Pyay Road, Kamaryut township, Yangon, Myanmar. Telephone and Fax: +95 1 523-473; Mobile: 09-502-9602 and 09-502-9603; Email: mtpb@mtptmail.net.mm.

Domestic Airlines

Table listing domestic airlines including Air Bagan Ltd, Air KBZ, Air Mandalay, and Air Airways, with their respective contact information and addresses.

Table listing domestic airlines including Air Bagan Ltd, Air KBZ, Air Mandalay, and Air Airways, with their respective contact information and addresses.

Domestic Subject to change without notice. Legend: 6T = Air Mandalay, W9 = Air Bagan, YJ = Air KBZ, K7 = Air KBZ, YH = Yangon Airways, UB = FMI UB Charter.

'Walking Dead' still has power and gory

By Jen Chaney

THE makers of *The Walking Dead* clearly heard some of the audience complaints about last season's slow pacing and excessive jibber-jabber regarding what constitutes morally appropriate behaviour in a post-apocalyptic climate. Perhaps that's why Season 3 of America's most-watched zombie-oriented television series begins with a steady barrage of gunshots to undead foreheads, throat impalements and walker-eyeball stabblings.

And that doesn't even count the partial amputation of a key character's leg or the murder of a defenceless hoot owl. Hey, a zombie-apocalypse survivor's gotta eat.

Yes, seven months after the Season 2 finale in which the *Walking Dead* survivors bolted from Hershel's farm in the wake of a rotter takeover, the series has returned, moving home base to an (almost) abandoned prison and cranking up the action to zombie-kill 11.

That's good news for those who watch this drama for the thrill of the goosh-thud of walkers permanently meeting their makers. But viewers who savour the show's prickly tension and deeper existential themes may find themselves



Brought together by disaster and tragedy, the hardy band of survivors from 'The Walking Dead' prepares to battle more zombies. Pic: Gene Page/AMC

pondering a question once kinda-sorta posed by Bob Dylan: How many roads filled with zombies can a fan walk down before she decides to change the channel?

To be fair, only a pair of episodes from this 16-episode third season were made available in advance to critics.

Based on teasers for the new season, as well as the events that unfold in Robert Kirkman's graphic novels, on

which the show is based, we know that the prison move and the introduction of new characters (see: the ruthless, sword-wielding Michonne) promise to take the narrative in fresh directions.

In the few months that have passed within the *Walking Dead* narrative, things have changed, but only a tad. Perpetually conflicted leader and former sheriff's deputy Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) is a little more decisive. His

wife, Lori Grimes, is a bit more pregnant, but no one can be bothered to throw her a baby shower because, you know, zombies.

Their son, Carl — a preteen whose lack of supervision last

season inspired both a Tumblr and a Jeopardy category titled "Where is Carl?!" — is still not being adequately supervised. But now his voice has changed, which means his sassy comments sound slightly more mature.

These hardy souls and the rest of their partners in post-apocalyptic survival-scraping focus the first two episodes on turning that jail into a cosy home where they can comfortably rest without fear of their faces being chewed off. Some obstacles naturally get in the way, including one that pushes a main character's survival into the maybe category and leads to a scene that may make even the most gore-obsessed *Walking Dead* -ophiles a little teary. *The Walking Dead* can still surprise us that way.

And that's one of the reasons why we must keep watching.

We also must keep watching to reassure ourselves that if faced with a global meltdown, zombie-virus-related or otherwise, we could survive, even though in real life we

basically dissolve into puddles when the power company can't flick the power back on three days after a storm.

We'll keep watching to find out how long our undead-battling posse can survive at the prison. We'll keep watching to keep track of how many zombie eyeballs get stabbed over the course of the season, since there's a good chance this show may set a new Guinness World Record in that regard. We'll keep watching because we just know Carl is going to make some terrible decisions that will turn into hilarious internet memes that we won't grasp nearly as quickly if we haven't kept up with the action. And we'll keep watching because we want to believe that if a time comes when the dead really do walk the Earth, attention must be paid to the living who stubbornly remain.

The Walking Dead airs in Myanmar on Fox Movies Premium (Skynet and 5 Movies), on Sunday at 8:30pm.

— *The Washington Post*

Events Flash

Oktoberfest

Inya Lake Hotel will host an Oktoberfest celebration on October 26, featuring free flow beer and soft drinks, traditional German buffet, and a DJ from Germany playing genuine Oktoberfest music. Tickets are K25,000. Contact 09-4211-51036.

Jeannie's Dreams

Painter Jeannie will hold her first solo exhibition at Gallery 65 on Yawmingyi Road from October 26 to 28. The artist will donate 30pc of art sale proceeds to the care of HIV patients.

Japanese film

The Japanese film *A Single Drop of Water in a Mighty River* will be shown at the Japanese embassy in Yangon on October 26, at 2:30pm. Admission is free, but ID is required.

Piano recital

French pianist Nicolas Stavy celebrates the 150th birthday of composer Claude Debussy with a concert at Yangon Parkroyal Hotel on October 27, starting at 6:30pm.

SIR rock concert

Skulls in Ribcage (SIR), which includes members

of Big Bag, Wanted, Idiots and Reason, will hold a concert at Myawsinkyun in Kandawgyi Park on October 27, starting at 7pm. Tickets cost K6000 and are available at City Mart, Ko Ko Beauty Salon and Sun music production.

Hip-hop show

Sai Sai Kham Hlaing, Ye' Lay, Kyaw Htut Swe, Snare, Jauk Jack, Sandi Myint Lwin, Bobby Soxer and others will perform at Myawsinkyun in Kandawgyi Park on October 30. Tickets cost K6000 and can be purchased at Orange Supermarkets, Manthiri and Fashion Star.

Tribute concert

The life of famous artist Ko Saw Nyein will be celebrated with a concert by contemporary and traditional musicians at the French Institute, 340 Pyay Road, Yangon, on October 31 at 5pm.

IC concert

Iron Cross will perform with Yadana My at People's Park on November 28. Tickets are K15,000 and K8000.

Fashion week

Myanmar International Fashion Week 2012 will be held at Junction Square on Pyay Road, Yangon, from November 16 to 18. More than 80 models and actors will showcase styles from 12 local designers. Shows will be held from 6pm to

9pm on each night of the event.

Artfest for women

The Third Blue Wind Multimedia Art Festival for female artists will be held in Yangon from November 23 to 27, with highlights including a directing workshop led by Finnish cinematographer Pekka Niskanen. Venue TBA. Email bluewindmyanmar@gmail.com for info.

Wednesday wine

The Wednesday Wine Cub meets every (you guessed it) Wednesday at the QP Inya Shop (30 Inya Road). Taste four or five wines for K10,000 a person. Contact chad.quarto@gmail.com or 09-7321-8711.

Salsa lessons

The Hola Bar (U Htun Myat Road, near Chatrium Hotel) hosts salsa dance lessons every Thursday, from around 8:30pm to 11pm. Music includes merengue, bachata, and cha cha. Beginners welcome. There's no charge for the lesson but the first drink is K5000.

Friendship Band

Friendship Band belts out classic rock tunes at 50th Street Restaurant every Friday night.

If you would like your event listed in Event Flash, please email editors@myanmartimes.com.mm.



YOUR STARS

By Astrologer
Aung Myin Kyaw

Aquarius Jan 20 - Feb 18

A close bond in social relationships requires personal liberty before mutual trust can be established. Your self-indulgent nature might lead to a lack of balanced perspective. You will find yourself increasingly unable to sustain strong feelings in your love life. Use insight meditation to avoid deep emotionalism.

Pisces Feb 19 - Mar 20

The great thing about great men is that they never worried about whether or not they were needed. You should make yourself needed by serving others who are led by ignorance. Your social policy might require amendments that will help you become more sympathetic in the eyes of others.

Aries March 21 - April 19

Do not rely on your social network to help you imagine ways to make progress in your methods of communication. The root of civilisation is morality, which you must develop using social discipline and social values. Learn to apply your intuitive nature to your intellect — the combination will ensure a great increase in your abilities.

Taurus April 20 - May 20

Obstacles in the pathway of the weak become stepping stones in the pathway of the strong, so decide how you want to use your weakness. God himself gives a helping hand to those who strive earnestly and seriously. You must have great self-confidence because this is the first requisite for any great understanding. Don't let your emotional suffering lead you to selfishness.

Gemini May 21 - June 20

Your intellect must be stabilised to develop a great imagination. Take on greater responsibility to show your communication skills and quick wit. Learn about everything by experiencing it for yourself. Add value to your old friends who are walking in different directions, and organise them as your hands. Your flirtatious manner will lead to the dissolution of harmony.

Cancer June 22 - July 22

Learn to empty your mind of all unhealthy thoughts and replace them with wholesome, creative concepts. Effective communication resulting from proper decisions will lead to right actions that will be accepted by potential partners. Your sphere of adaptability is sure to develop social circles of success. You can win love by maintaining a happy soul.

Leo July 23 - Aug 22

Don't be impetuous about getting the right news and information. Sometimes a passive manner is better than too much activity, so aim to avoid boisterous behaviour and critical habits. Balance your courage with logical decisions against your greedy and self-centred nature. Emotional sensations may be out of your heart, which needs to be healthy to accept love.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sept 22

Be restrained in expressing your feelings; you are too much of a realist to truly enjoy the full depths of romantic love. Try to direct your attention to the positive qualities people possess, and learn to mind your own business where they might lack development. Don't perform good deeds simply to make yourself appear great. Someone close to you might become your sweetheart.

Libra Sept 23 - Oct 22

Be courageous in your pursuit of the truth, and open your heart to accept the harmony of others. Find time to cheer yourself up. Enjoy working hard and never look upon your labours as a punishment. You must decide what is most important to you and structure your time accordingly. Abstain from disputation. Surrender yourself to love, to make your mind feel free and fresh.

Scorpio Oct 23 - Nov 21

Live easily and pay no attention to interference from others. Attain more knowledge about the value of a clean conscience. Accommodating the needs of old friends and partners will help build harmonious relationships. Taking advantage of opportunities will require careful effort. Focus your mind on relaxation and silence to get the right choice of heart.

Sagittarius Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your likes and dislikes will be a source of insecurity in your life, but your social responsibilities will make your existence safe and comfortable. Let others look at the dark side of things, while you focus on making positive, constructive changes. Maintain the unity of your will in a stable of wholesomeness, and find love within yourself first.

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 19

Alien dogmas can cast big shadows that will make your soul superstitious and depress your lifestyle. You need to seek clarity and relaxation through meditation. Rather than feeling frustrated about your lack of close friends and social relations, take the opportunity change yourself to become more flexible and adaptable in friendliness.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw, 4th Floor, 113 Thamaing Bayan Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon. Tel: 0973135632, Email: williamaste@gmail.com

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LANGUAGE Proficiency (A) Effective & Scientific way, (B) Intensive Class, (C) Interpreter - part time/ Full time (Under mentioned languages), (D) Hindi/ Myanmar/ English (Basic Advance for Embassy staff/ Foreigner/ A group single/ Kids + Teens/ NGO - INGO personal/ (Special rate for national peoples) by an Expert Tutor. (1) Home tuition available in groups or single. (2) Translation of English/ Hindi/ Sanskrit/ Bengali/ Nepali & Myanmar are also available. (3) Business Guide & Agency services. (4) Partner-ship business welcome. R.S. Verma. B.Sc..(Bot), Yangon. (UFL-English) Yangon. Email: rsvverma.myanmar@gmail.com, Ph: 09-730-42604, Add: 125, 43rd St, 5th Flr (R), Botahtaung.

TIME TO LEARN REAL English by a REAL teacher! Experienced and qualified English language consultant, native speaker offering evening classes for all levels from basic to advanced. 1-1 teaching focusing on grammar, conversational and business English. Down- town Yangon area. Reasonable price! Email: mingalaenglish@hotmail.com for details.
MYANMAR Language: Foreigners or Myanmar Students for International School who want to learn Myanmar Language and speaking, pls contact to teacher Lin. Ph: 09-730-49543.

ENGLISH is fun! Very experienced British teacher (University of London) offers afternoon or evening classes at your home (south Yangon). 1-to-1

or small groups. Basic to advanced English, grammar, conversation, business English. Kids classes (parents welcome) & adult tuition. Email: yangonteacher@yahoo.com for details.
"INNOVIA Language Solutions : Myanmar Language for Foreigner (From basic to advanced lvi 1, lvi 2, vlv 3) - home teaching services. International school all subject Tutor services (IGCSE/ IELTS/ TOEFL/ SAT). Myanmar language teachers & study guides are welcome to contact for jobs. Ph: 09-431-97761, 09-401-603454

HOME TUTOR japanese language regular course (basic, inter) jpn going course , myanmar language for japanese. Ph: 09-4200-55323

MYANMAR LANGUAGE - Private Myanmar Language Sections for Foreigners who are living in Myanmar. Progressive Teaching Program is available. We are the first and successful language teaching group in Myanmar. For details, pls contact to 09-423668824.

For Rent

NEW TOYOTA Mark ii 99 with driver. Contact : 09-519-2555.
MARK II, 1999 Model, Pearl White, 2.0 Gasoline, 11000 km, 2D/3000, Grade 4.5, Kyat 8 Lakhs per month (minimum 3 month rent), Ph: 09-731-15378.

For Sale

USED IPHONE 2G/3G/3GS/4G/4S/5 Used iPad 1/2/3 Wifi Only & Wifi +3G Used iPod Touch 4G/5G Used Samsung / SonyEricsson / HTC / Huawei/ Nokia HandSet Used Notebook / NetBook / Mac Book / Mac Air / iMac / Any Tablet PC. Ph: 09-450-039844
IPAD 2 64 Wifi White Colour (Good Condition) Ph: 09-450-039844
MACAIR Laptop Huawei Ascend P1 MobilePhone MY-DLINK Browser, All Equipment as New. Call : 09-512-0081

SAMSUNG Galaxy SL GT-i9003, Price : 150000, Nokia 5800 Price : 65000, Ph : 09450039844
VERY GOOD 2nd Hand, (1) GSM/CDMA Handset HTC Desire S RUS 1 Set (200,000 Ks), (2) GSM Handset LOTUS VUTTON Design 1 Set (50,000 Ks), (3) GSM Handset LG KF 350 1 Set (500,000 Ks). All items: (250,000 Ks), Ph: 09-501-8380, 505597.
3 MONTH Used Ipad Touch 4G 32GB White Color With All original Accessories and box & Cover 9 Month Apple Warranty Left Price - 150000 Fixed Price Ph: 09-517-8391.

"CREATIVE ZEN MEDIA Player for sale (Genuine Creative Product) 4 GB internal memory. Original Silicon case and box. Can play music, video, FM, Voice recording & photo view. Very good condition. Battery - more than 3.5 hours. Price - 30,000 Kyats 09 5079980 (Aung Thu Hein)"
IBM Branded CPU Pentium 2.6 GHz Memory 512MB

Hard-disk 40GB Optical Drive CD R/W Window XP Games : Dota, Counter Strike, Small Games Application, LCD BenQ 15' wide. K 170,000/ Ph: 09-421-148603.

CAR: Max X2007 model, push start, Auto parking, White, sport type, High Grade, (5D)----) 250G, Price: 375 Lakhs, Maureen: 09-518-8320.
FOR BUY & SALES (Not Brand but excellent quality) iPhone ipad 1 2 3 Samsung HTC Sony Ericsson, Huawei and Tablet notebook laptop netbook Macbook Pro MacBook Air Contact to 09-517-8391.

HR SOFTWARE Package: Price 250,000. Modules: Employee Management, Time Attendance, Payroll. (Available : Finger Print/Card). Retail Management System: Price 250,000. Modules: Inventory Control, Purchase, Sale, Account Payable (Available : Bar Code Printer/Scanner). Point Of Sale System : Price 400,000 Modules : Inventory Control, Purchase, Sale, Account Payable, Account Receivable, General Ledger (Available : Bar Code Printer/Scanner). Ph: 09-504-2775, 09-506-2812

CAR : Toyota Prado, Model : 2006. Year of Manufacture: 2006. Colour : White. Condition: fairly good. Interested person may contact Ms.Thazin - Tel: 01-516-952

General

PRE ORDER 16GB - 770,000 Kyats, 32GB - 880,000 Kyats, 64GB - 990,000 Kyats. Goodways & Gate International Pte Ltd, Singapore Company. Yangon Contact - 40-42, 136st, Ma Ou Gone, Tarmwe. Ph: 09-510-9966, 09-730-33603.

PARADISE General Service: Security Consultant & Training Master. Contact: 511195, 09-732-24664. winmmkhin@gmail.com

MOBILE Classic Aluminum, stainless steel , Iron & Compos. We can do ! Following Work; Aluminum Decoration & Furniture, Aluminum Partition & Slide door, Stainless Steel Home Decoration & Furniture, Iron Work & Composite Decoration, Sign Board & Light Box, sofa, Concrete brick & block, 10, Bo Moe St, Myaynigone, S a n c h a u n g . P h : 4 3 1 7 9 7 6 4 , 402549843. Email: kungsteel@gmail.com, NYOON Book Dealing:

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ORGANIC FOLIAR Spray for hotels, family gardens and indoor flower plants. Door to door service. Call 09-420080585.

Travel

ISAMI Myanmar Travel & Tour : Ticketing, Visa, D Form, Hotel Reservation, Car Rental, Tour Package. "Golf Tour Package" Ph: 513995, 09-420-094359.

Public Notice

FOUND: iPhone. In taxi on evening of October 6. Owned by a European. Contact: geoffrey@myanmartimes.com.mm

CORRECTION: Please refer to Singapore Airlines advertisement on 5 Oct 12 & 08 Oct 12. Please note that fares quoted are available from now to 30 October 2012 instead of 16 November 2012.

GARAGE Sale: 10th, 11th, 12th November 2012. Ph: 511195, 09-732-24664, winmmkhin@gmail.com, 43, Inya Myaing, Shwe Taungyar Qtr (1), Bahan, Yangon.

Travel

SWEET Seasons Travels & Tours is providing services such as individual/ group tours package, Special request tours, Hotel reservation, transportation, D-form, ticketing & delivering for individuals, families & corporate companies. email: sales@sweetseasonstours.com, www.sweetseasonstours.com, www.facebook.com/sweetseasonstours, Ph: 09-511-7479, 09-730-86864, 09-506-2499.

Want To Buy

USED PHONE - Samsung, Huawei, Iphone Nokia HTC Sony Ericsson Ipad Ipad Laptop, Notebook Net-book, Macbook Pro, Macbook Air, Samsung Galaxy Tablet, External Hardisk. Ph: 376420.

PROPERTY

Housing for Rent

BAHAN, Shwe Than Lwin Condo, 3600 Sqft, 2 MB, 1 BR, Ph, 4 A/C, Nicely apartment, asking price US\$ 3000. Call Maureen : 09-5188320.

BAHAN (1) Kokkaine Yeik Thar St (8500) Sqft, 4MBR, Ph, 7AC, 4RC, USD 15000, (2) Near Chatrium Hotel, (85x85') 8MBR, 11AC, 3RC, Kyats 60 Lakhs, Ph: 09-492-14276.

MAYANGONE (1) PYI RD (6 mile), (45'x50') 1MBR, 2BR, 4AC, 2RC-USD-1800, (2) Pyi Rd (7 mile), (100'x100'), 5MBR, 11AC, 3RC, Mayangone, USD-15000, Ph: 09-4201-14749.

BAHAN, (1) Inya Rd, 0.35 acre land, 2 story nice house, Swimming pool, phone, SQ, 4 master bed rooms, (2) Golden Valley, 0.55 acre land, 3 story building x 2 storey building house, big garden, 10 master bed rooms, European Style house, negotiable price, ph: 09-731-30141

TARMWE, Chanthar Condominium, 1750 sqft, 1 MBR, 2 Single BR, fully furnished with kitchen utensil, daily housekeeping, free drinking water, free facial tissue, free toilet tissue, 4 unit aviable. **Mayankone,** Kabaraye Gamonepint Condominium, 1700 sqft, 1 MBR, 2 Single BR, fully furnished with kitchen utensil, daily housekeeping, free drinking water, free facial tissue, free toilet tissue, 4 unit aviable. Ph: 0943063890

BAHAN, Kanbawza Yeik Tha, 0.6 Acre, 12 MBR, fully furnished with kitchen utensil, daily housekeeping, free drinking water, free facial tissue, free toilet tissue. **Kamayut,** Inya Kan Yeik Thar, 80' x 90' ft, 4 Story Bldg, 2 MBR, 4 Single BR, fully furnished with kitchen utensil, daily housekeeping, free drinking water, free facial tissue, free toilet tissue. **Botahaung,** 8 Story New Bldg, 30'x40' ft, Hall Type, Including Lift. Ph: 09-501-9648

BAHAN, Kanbawza Rd, Golden Valley, 3300 sqft compound. 2 storey building (1110 sqft). Upstairs: 1 master bed room (16x13.5 sqft), 1 bed room (18x11 sqft), family room with small balcony Downstairs: Large living room, dining room with kitchen attached, 1 master bedroom (17x12 sqft) with staircase to upstairs inside). Lawn & plants at backyard, highly secure, best electricity in town, municipal (gyo-phyu water). Fully furnished, heater, air-conditions, fridge, washing machine.

Asking for \$ 1,500. Available immediately. Pls call - Myat@09-501-0816, Email: ixora2007@gmail.com. No agent pls.

DAGON, Manawhari Rd, Near Thai Embassy, 4 MBR, 2 RC. Ph: 09-492-14276, 09-420-114749.

BAHAN, Golden Valley, Inya Myaing Rd, 2 RC, 4 MBR, 3 AC. Ph: 09-492-14276, 09-420-114749.

(1)BAHAN, Nat Mauk Yeik Thar St, 50'x100', 3MBR, 5AC, Ph, 1BR, 2RC, \$ 3500 (2) **San Chung,** Near the Asia Tawwin Clinic, 55'x60', 6MBR, 2BR, Ph, AC, 3RC, \$ 2000, Ph: 09-492-14276, 09-4201-14749.

(1)BAHAN, New University Avenue Rd, 70'x50', RC(1/2), Ph, 30 Lakhs (2) New University Avenue Rd, 30'x100', BN2, Ph, 15 Lakhs, Call Maureen: 09-518-8320 (No Agents Pls).

OFFICE : Bayint Naung Junction, Thirimon Plaza 3rd Flr, 1200 sqft, Hall Type, Internet Access with High Speed (3MB, Unlimited plan) Good for Office (or) Training Room, 550 USD per month. Ph: 09- 507-6408

RESIDENCE : F.M.I City, Shwe Hnin Si St, 2 Storey Building, Master Bed Rm (2), Living Room (1), Maid Room (1) Fully Furnished, 4 (Air Con); 2 (Refri); 2 Line Phones (1 D-Line, 1-Ext), Satellite Dish USD 850 per month. Ph: 09- 5076408

HLAING, Near Thiri Myaing Bus Stop, Baho Road, 12'x50' Sqft. Ground Floor, Very good for live, Near from ISM International School and New Thiri Mingalar Market. 1 month only 2 lakhs. Ph: 09-730-49543.

Housing for Sale

BAHAN, New University Avenue Rd, Condo 28' x 80', 2MB, 1BR, Nicely Apartment, Lift, Negotiable price: 3500 Lakhs, Call Maureen: 09-518-8320 (No Agts.).

9 MILES, 5 minutes walk from Main Rd (Pyay Rd), Bonyarna Lane, (50'x 70') garden with including house, Can travel all seasons (Especially Rainy Season), (3500 Lakhs) no agent pls, Pls call : 09-73028726, 09-421029911)

Want To Hire

FOR COMPANY OFFICE : Bahan (Kabaaye Pogada Rd, Pyi Htaung Su Road), Hlaing (Pyay Road), Kamayut (Pyay Road), Yankin, 2RC or 3RC, MB 5, 3 Phase Power Meter, Water-Cute well & YCDC, Compound 80x80, Fully Furnished, Pls contact by house owner only, 556407, 540995, 4412580

FOR JOINT VENTURE (OR) LONG TERM RENT
In Hlegthu Tsp, Beside of Main Road, (8.31) Acre, 315 KV Transformer, Phone, Office, Labour Quarters, Car Parking.
It's most suitable place for Garment Factory, Purified Drinking Water and Food Industry.
Contact No. 09 515 5241, 09 511 1018

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No. 12, Pho Sein Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon
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Fax : (95-1) 209344
E-mail : greenhill@myanmar.com.mm
Website : www.greenhillhotelyangon.com



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Employment

Embassy

WE ARE looking for a qualified **Administrator** for Foreign Mission. All interested applicants must be computer literate, self motivate, fluently speak in English. For more information, please call 01-527142-144 in office hours.

UN Positions

(THE UNITED NATIONS World Food Programme Myanmar) WFP Myanmar is seeking: **Finance Assistant** 1 post: Grade: GS-4, Dutton Station: Maungdaw: Minimum secondary school education including or supplemented by courses related to the area of work. A University degree holder with experience. 3 years of progressively responsible clerical work experience in general administrative work including 1 year in the field of finance, accounting, budget, audit or other related field & 1 year at the G3 level or equivalent. Fluency in English/Myanmar. Pls send applications with UN P-11 form to WFP HR Unit, 3rd Flr, Inya Lake Hotel, 37 Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Yangon, P.O. Box 650 (or) email to Myanmar.vacancy@wfp.org COB 23 October 2012.

INGO Position

CARE Myanmar is looking for **Project Manager (PM)** position in Kokang Self Administrative Region, Northern Shan State: Master's degree in Business Administration, Private Sector Development, related field or substantial equivalent professional experience. Minimum 3 years field experience in Myanmar or other countries in Southeast Asia. Pls send an application letter outline their claims against the matching indicators, along with a current C.V., passport sized photograph, clearance certificate from police station - original and copies of any references HR Manager, CARE Int'l in Myanmar 17A, Pyi Htaung Su St, Sayarsan Rd, Bahan, Email: recruitment@care.org.mm, Closing date: 30th October 2012.

PREMIERE Urgence-Aide

Medicale Internationale (PU-AMI) is seeking (1) **Training Officer** in Dala, Yangon Office: M.B.S Degree Holder. 2 years working as a trainer or in a similar position & experience in an INGO. Myanmar & English compulsory. (2) **Head of Base** 1 post in Yangon: University graduate. 5 years experience in NGOs or International Agencies. Excellent in English & Myanmar. Excellent computer skills. (3) **Base Finance (YGN)**: Any graduate, preferably in bookkeeping. 1 year experience in bookkeeping, administrative management or related field. Good in English. (4) **Base Admin HR** 1 post in Dala Tsp: University degree or equivalent/Secondary education (High school diploma). Fluency in English. CV with a recent passport size photo, cover letter and certificates can be sent to PU-AMI. Yangon Office: 73, Than Lwin St, Kamayut (Ph: 525246), or by email to: ami.recruitment.mm@gmail.com

AMDA

AMDA is seeking a CDF (Community Development Facilitator) for the "Maternal and Child Health Program-MCH" in Kokang Self-administered Zone, Northern Shan State: Minimum high school level

of government school (10th Standard passed). Fluent in Kokang & Myanmar languages, Fluent in Palaung or Myaung Zee (Pae Zu) is more eligible. 1 year experience. Pls submit application letter, CV with a recent passport photo, copies of testimonials (references & certificates) to Program Coordinator, AMDA Laukai Field Office, Paung Fone St, Laukai, Kokang SR (1). Ph: (0883) 6989987, (082) 72047, e-mail: dr.heinlattamda@gmail.com, Closing date: 24th Oct 2012

AMDA is seeking a **Livestock Training Specialist** for 'Livelihood Improve-ment Project, AMDA Myanmar Meiktila Field Office. Have a degree of Bachelor or Veterinary Science. Preferable on trainer experience for relevant training. Pls submit application letter with attachments or your CV with a recent passport-size photo, copies of testimonials (references & certificates) to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office 19-B, Thukha-waddy Rd, Yankin, Ph: 578353, Email: amda@mptmail.net.mm, Closing date: 24th October 2012

SOLIDARITES

International (SI) is seeking (1) **Administrative Officer** in Sittwe: 1 year experience in INGO or private organization. University Degree or Diploma (preferably in accounting field). Fluent in English & Myanmar. Knowledge of MS Office. (2) **Deputy Administrative Manager** in Sittwe, Rakhine State: University level or equivalent in accounting/management/administration. 2 years experience. Excellent knowledge of word & excel, knowledge of accounting software SAGA & HR software HOMERE is a plus. Fluent in English & Myanmar. (3) **Administrative Supervisor** in Sittwe, Rakhine State: Academic background in Management, finance or accounting studies. Fluent in English and Myanmar. Computer knowledge. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to: HR Department Solidarites Int'l. 44A, Tharyarwaddy, Bahan or email: hr.solidarites.mm@gmail.com, Important: the position you want to apply for has to be specified in the subject of your e-mail, otherwise the applications: 31st October 2012.

BURNET INSTITUTE

Myanmar is seeking **Receptionist cum Admin Assistant** (Yangon) - 1 post: Detailed information can be assessed at Burnet Institute Myanmar office. Interested candidates are invited to submit an application letter, curriculum vitae with recent passport sized photo and copies of relevant documents to: HR Officer: Burnet Institute Myanmar - 226, 2nd Flr, Wisaya Plaza, U Wisara Rd, Bahan (OR) Email: burnet.myanmar@gmail.com Closing date: October 25, 2012

CARE MYANMAR

is looking for (1) **Project Manager (PM)** - 1 Post: Master's degree in Business Administration, Private sector development, related field or substantial equivalent in professional experience. 3 years experience in Myanmar or other countries in Southeast Asia. (2) **Technical Officer (M&E)** - Post: University graduate and/or degree holder with related experience 2 years experience in programmatic monitoring & analysis either

in private sector or humanitarian programs in Myanmar. (3) **Technical Officer** (Tea Quality and Processing) - 1 Post: University graduate/ Degree/ Diploma in technical or related field. 3 years experience in tea quality and processing. (4) **Admin Finance Officer** - 1 Post: University graduate. 2 years experience, Good in English. Pls send C.V., passport photo, clearance certificate from police station & copies of any references of testimonials to HR Manager: 17-A, Pyi Htaung Su St, Sayarsan Rd, Bahan. Email: recruitment@care.org.mm

MEDECINS du Monde (MDM) is seeking **Project Officer** - 1 post in Pyapon: M.B.B.S, Advanced diploma/degree in public health would be advantage. Experience working in PHC and MCH project, preferably with 2 years experience in int'l organization. Excellent skills in Myanmar. Fluent in English. Knowledge of the rural areas of Pyapon township. Pls submit CV & a cover letter to MDM Country Coordination Office, Yangon: 47-B, Po Sein St, Bahan, Ph: 542830, Email: ao.yangon.mdm@gmail.com

Local Position

"A LEADING English language media company is seeking: (1) **Business news editor & subeditor** (2) **Business news writers and reporters** (3) **Advertising Sales Executives** (4) **English and Myanmar translator** **Qualifications:** Experience preferred with local, national or inter-national newspaper, online news or wire service. Good command of spoken and written English. Pls send your resume to Tharaphu Decor Co., Ltd: 22 (A), Kabaaye Pagoda Rd, Bahan Email: marchetti.yangon@gmail.com Ph: (951) 8603288, (951) 552886 Ext: 105/106

SAIL ADVERTISING & MARKETING

agency is the first agency in Myanmar for over 20 years offering services to international clients since 1991. We urgently need managers, trainees and promoters. Attractive salary plus international training will be provided. If you want to have a career in advertising and media industry, SAIL is the company that will train and keep you improved in salary & experience. **General Manager:** M 1 Post. To manage office staff in Yangon office assisting the expatriate CEO. Communicate with local clients and government offices. Client Service Manager (International) M/F 1 Post. Good command in English is essential. **Receptionist - F** 1 Post. Good command in English is essential. **Client Service Executive Trainee - M/F** 1 Post: Good command in English is essential. **Media Executive Trainee - M/F** 1 Post. Good command in English is essential. Pls apply to SAIL Marketing & Communications: 790 Bogyoke Rd & Wadan Rd Junction, Danathiha Center, Lanmadaw, Yangon. Ph: 951-211870, 951-224820.

MOBILE GURU Training & Services Centre

(Unit of Myanmar Satellite Telecom Co., Ltd) is seeking **Mobile Repairing Trainer - M/F**

2 post. Pls apply with update CV form, recent photo with NRC copy to Rm. 806, Yuzana Tower, Bahan, **OUR 5 STARS** hotel in Yangon is urgently looking for (1) **Front Office Manager** - 1 post must have at least 5yrs related experience. (2) **Guest Relations Officer** - 1 post must have at least 1 year related experience with excellent communication skills & customer care. (3) **Receptionists** - 2 posts must have experience in related field. Application letter by email to shwecins@gmail.com or call for more information @ 095410512.

Rd & Wadan Rd Junction Suite 403, Danathiha Center, Lanmadaw, Ph: 211870, 224820

INTERNATIONAL LAW firm seeking qualified **lawyers:** 5 years of experience in International Firm. Strong command of English required due to significant interaction with foreign clients. Outstanding opportunity with competitive salary package Submit CV to suhlaing07@gmail.com Tel: 540995, 556692.

WE ARE currently seeking for **Management Trainee** 5 Posts: Any graduate with MBA Diploma, Age 22 years & above, Fresh MBA

in their CV's before 31st October 2012 to Email: gbg.tractors@gmail.com (or) Ph: 09-4200-87374.

WE ARE urgently seeking (1). **Business Development Manager** - M/F 1 post: MBA, DBA, DMA /Any Graduate with management certificate. Age 30 ~ 40. 3 years experience. (2). **HR Manager** - M/F 1 post: MBA, DBA, DMA /other HR related Diploma or Certificate, over 5 years experience. Age 30 ~ 40. (3). **Marketing Manager** - M/F 1 post: MBA, DBA, DMA /Any Graduate with management certificate, over 3 years experience. Age 30 ~ 40. (4). **Secretary** - F 1 post: B.A (Eng) or Any Graduate with certificate for secretary. Age 24 ~ 35. 2 years experience. Pls send update CV with recent photo in MS word format, scan/copy of relevant certificates & documents, describe working experience from graduation till present and expected salary to nys.myanmar@gmail.com within 3 weeks.

SUMMIT PARKVIEW

Hotel is seeking (1). **Duty Manager / Asst: Duty Manager** (Front Office)- M/F 1 Post: Graduate in any discipline, 2 years experience (2). **Night Auditor** - M 1 Post: Graduate in any discipline, 1 year experience (3). **Account Officer** - M/F 1 Post: 3 years experience (4). **Security Officer** - M (2) Posts: Graduate in any discipline, 3 years experience (4). **Health Club Instructor / Aerobic Instructor** - M/F 2 Posts: Graduate in any discipline, 1 year experience (5). **Receptionist** - M/F 2 Posts: Age under 25 (6). **Storekeeper** - M 2 Posts: 1 year in related field is more preferable (7). **Porter/Driver** - M 3 Posts: 1 year experience (8). **Room Attendants** - M/F 2 Posts: Good communication skills with background in construction experience in hospitality is also a plus Requirements: Bachelor Degree or higher, Fluent English and Computer Skill. Creative thinker, Excellent Organizational, Communication & Presentation skills.. Submit resume with photo, expected salary & necessary documents to HR Department. Closing date: 25 October, 2012.

"CLASG Co Ltd

provides int'l accounting outsourcing services, incorporation services, corporate secretarial services, local law and regulatory consulting services and is looking for **Accounting Director** 1 post: MBA (holder of int'l certificate) and CPA with 10 years experience in management & accounting fields. Excellent in English (oral and written), Salary commensurate with experience USD 1,500+. Pls submit a letter of application with full resume and send through email clay@clasg.com not later than 26 Oct 2012.

OUR COMPANY

is currently looking (1). **Office Manager** - M/F 1 post (2). **Brand Manager** - M/F 1 post (3). **Chief Auditor** - M/F 1 post (4). **Chief Accountant** - M/F 1 post (5). **Finance Executive** - M/F 1 post (6). **Executive Secretary** - F 1 post (7). **Reservation officer** - M/F 1 Post (8). **Net Programmer** - M/F 1 post (9). **Auto CAD Designer** - M/F 1 post (10). **Chinese Transla-**

tor - M/F 1 post (11). **Office Staff** - M/F 2 posts (12). **Receptionist** - M/F 2 posts (13). **Store Keeper** - M 1 post. Pls submit your update CV (resume) with recent photo, all copy/scan of certificates and NRC, describe working experience from graduation till present & expected salary within 2 weeks by email to express338@gmail.com.

WE ARE

looking for a qualified **mate**, who can cook Korean and international meals. Applicant must not older than 30 years old. Please contact to Mr. Je Seung Ho (09-43164169) for more information. **WE ARE** well known International Law Firm looking for **Senior Lawyers** (M/F), Age 40 ~ 50, LLB/LLM at least higher grade pleader over 10 years experience, at least over 3 ~ 5 years in International Firm Must have good English skills (Intermediate Level) for Foreign firm specializing in business law Computer Skills (Microsoft office). Submit CV to "Piseth Peng" <Piseth.Peng@dfdl.com> Ph: 556692, 556407.

MYANMAR SEILONE

Hotels & Resorts Co., Ltd. (Emerald Palace Hotel, Naypyidaw) is seeking (1) **Human Resource Manager** M/F 1. (2) **Front Office Manager** M/F 1. (3) **Housekeeping Manager** M/F 1. (4) **Sales & Marketing Manager** M/F 1. (5) **Food & Beverages Manager** M/F 1. (6) **Accountant F** 1. (7) **Chef M** 1. All candidates must have previous hospitality experience and English communication skill. Pls submit resume with copies of academic certificate, NRC, police clearance, labour registration, family registration and two recent photos to 304, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung, Ph: 516579, 503167 later than Oct 31, 2012.

MYANMAR SEILONE

Construction Co., Ltd. (Yangon) is seeking **Sales & Marketing Manager** with background in construction experience in hospitality is also a plus Requirements: Bachelor Degree or higher, Fluent English and Computer Skill. Creative thinker, Excellent Organizational, Communication & Presentation skills.. Submit resume with photo, expected salary & necessary documents within 3 weeks to: 304, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung, Yangon. Ph: 524303, 524307

HR MANAGER

required by manufacturing company with over 500 staff at 4 locations in Myanmar. Candidates must be familiar with local regulations governing labour/employment. Knowledge of international best practices in personnel management would be advantageous. Strong English language skills preferred. Applications to philip@vmgl.com. **GENERAL MANAGER** - (Nay Pyi Taw): Degree holder with over 5 years experience in administrative & HR hotel experience prefer, Speak fluent English & ability to communicate in other language an advantage. Having overseas experience is an advantage. **HR/ Training Manager** (Head Office, Yangon): Degree holder with 5 ~ 7 years experience in relevant fields, English (4-skills) **M & E Engineer**: Degree in Electrical / Mechanical Engineering with over 5 years experience in hotel

engineering department. Should be able to communicate in English. **Sous Chef** (Royal Kumudra Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw): Over 5 years cooking experience in either hotel restaurant or stand alone restaurant Contact: Director, Group HR Department, Max Myanmar Group of Companies: 123, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon, Ph: 951-255 819- 838

MYANMAR AUTO

Corporation is looking for (1). **Manager** (Agricultural B.H.D) Oil-palm plantation experience 5 years (2). **Assistant Manager** (Agricultural B.H.D) experience with oil-palm plantation. Ph: 662602, 09-493-17989 Email: myanmarauto@gmail.com Both positions need to be able to live at countryside.

MARKETING STAFF

(freelance) Marketing Staff for IGCSE tuition theinhikesan01@gmail.com

THE BEST Jobs

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Lance Armstrong competes during the fifth stage of the 91st Tour de France cycling race in 2004. Pic: AFP

Sponsors desert under-fire Armstrong

By Charles Boisseau

AUSTIN, Texas – Sponsors stampeded away from endorsement deals with doping-disgraced US cyclist Lance Armstrong, who also stepped down on October 17 as chairman of the Livestrong anti-cancer charity he founded.

Armstrong was issued a life ban and stripped of seven Tour de France titles in August by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), which last week revealed 1000 pages of evidence against him, including testimony from 11 former teammates.

Sponsors to pull their support included sportswear maker Nike, 24-Hour Fitness health clubs, brewers Anheuser-Busch, Honey Stinger products and Trek bicycles – the brand Armstrong rode to French victories only to lose them all.

“Due to the seemingly insurmountable evidence that Lance Armstrong participated in doping and misled Nike for more than a decade, it is with great sadness that we have terminated our contract with him,” Nike’s statement said.

Anheuser-Busch InBev, which used Armstrong in beer advertisements, said they would not renew a sponsorship deal with Armstrong when their current three-year endorsement contract ends in December.

“We have decided not to renew our relationship with Lance Armstrong when our current contract expires at the end of 2012,” said Paul

Chibe, Anheuser-Busch vice president of US marketing.

Honey Stinger announced it was removing Armstrong’s likeness and endorsement from product packaging of its honey-based sports products.

“Given the evidence surrounding Lance Armstrong’s alleged actions, we have determined that our business relationship with Armstrong no longer aligns with our company’s mission and values,” a statement from 24-Hour Fitness said.

Trek, based in Wisconsin, found USADA’s report too much evidence to ignore even though Armstrong has steadfastly denied any wrongdoing.

“Trek is disappointed by the findings and conclusions in the USADA report regarding Lance Armstrong,” a statement from the bicycle manufacturer said.

“Given the determinations of the report, Trek today is terminating our longterm relationship with Lance Armstrong.”

Most sponsors said they will continue to support Livestrong, the charity Armstrong founded 15 years ago that has raised nearly US\$500 million.

Armstrong stepped aside rather than see Livestrong impacted by the fallout from revelations that a doping scheme was at the heart of his Tour de France triumphs from 1999-2005, the worst scandal in a sport tarred by cheating.

“To spare the foundation any negative effects as a result of controversy surrounding

my cycling career, I will conclude my chairmanship,” he said in a statement posted on the Livestrong website.

Armstrong was set to speak at a gala fundraiser on October 19 in Austin, Texas, to celebrate Livestrong’s 15th anniversary, what could prove to be an emotional moment in the public spotlight, his first since scandal details were revealed.

More than 80 million of Livestrong’s iconic yellow wristbands, launched in 2004 in collaboration with Nike, have been sold, donations that were in part inspired by Armstrong’s now-tainted cancer comeback.

In addition to eyewitness accounts about doping from

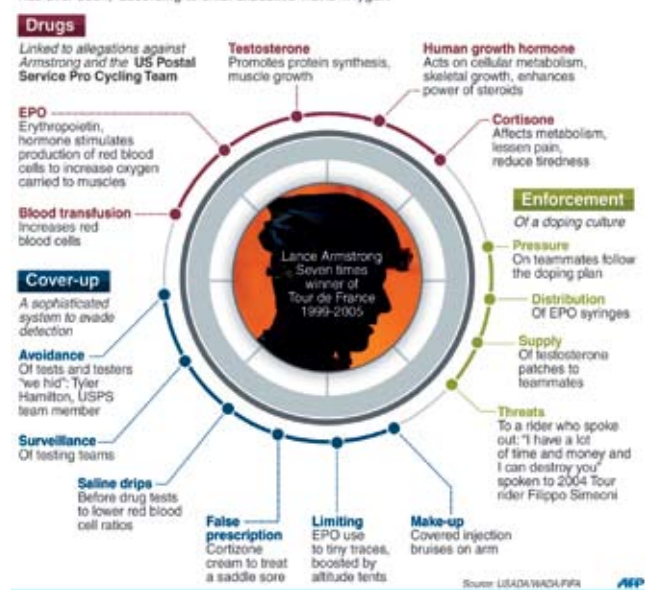
each of Armstrong’s Tour triumphs, USADA’s evidence contained expert medical findings and financial documents linking Armstrong and others to an elaborate doping program.

“The evidence shows beyond any doubt that the US Postal Service Pro Cycling Team ran the most sophisticated, professionalised and successful doping program that sport has ever seen,” USADA chief executive Travis Tygart said.

Armstrong chose not to fight the charges after losing a US federal court fight objecting to USADA’s appeal process, saying he was weary from battling years of similar accusations.

Lance Armstrong and the doping conspiracy

The US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) published damning allegations against Armstrong last week that outlines “the most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program that sport has ever seen,” according to chief executive Travis T. Tygart



Armstrong had been an inspirational figure for millions after recovering from testicular cancer that had spread to his brain and lungs and then winning the world’s most celebrated cycling event seven times in a row.

USADA unveiled its evidence last week in a report to the International Cycling Union (UCI), which faces growing pressure to reveal how the 41-year-old American was able to escape detection for so long.

UCI is considering the sanctions imposed by USADA. Rejecting them would likely set up a fight with USADA in the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Sunglasses-maker Oakley said it would wait to see what UCI decides before making a sponsorship decision regarding Armstrong.

Britain’s Bradley Wiggins, this year’s Tour de France winner, is among those trying to help heal cycling’s shattered reputation, with his Sky team saying it will require all members to sign a pledge they have never doped if they want to stay on the squad.

“We have been shocked by recent revelations of systemic doping in cycling’s past. So we have taken steps to reaffirm our commitment to being a clean team,” a Sky statement said.

US federal agents looked into Armstrong for 18 months but closed their probe earlier this year without filing charges, but USADA’s findings could make some firms and prosecutors reconsider. – AFP

Briefs

Spain bemoans 1-1 “flop” vs France

MADRID – Spain’s press on October 17 bemoaned a “major flop” in their 1-1 World Cup qualifier draw against France, criticising serious weaknesses in midfield and defence that led to France’s last-gasp equaliser.

“Major flop,” headlined the top selling sports paper *Marca*. “Collapse,” said Barcelona-based daily *Mundo Deportivo*. “Spain were not Spain,” was the verdict of leading newspaper *El Pais*.

The big sports titles did not mince their words in describing La Roja’s performance in the World Cup qualifier after Spain started well only to be outplayed by France in the second half.

The draw, played in Atletico Madrid’s Vicente Calderon stadium, brought to an end Spain’s run of 24 consecutive wins in qualifying matches that stretches back to 2007.

It leaves the two sides level at the top of the group on seven points, three ahead of Georgia. – AFP

Senegal appeal to CAF for leniency

DAKAR – Senegal on October 17 urged the Confederation of African Football not to impose a heavy punishment in the wake of the crowd trouble which blighted their Africa Cup of Nations qualifier with Ivory Coast.

The Senegalese Football Federation (FSF) is in the dock as a result of the violence that forced their game against the Ivorians to be stopped on October 13.

On October 16, Senegal were formally disqualified from the 2013 Nations Cup after CAF awarded the game in Dakar to Didier Drogba’s team as a 2-0 win.

That was the score at the time the qualifier had to be called off as Ivory Coast players and fans were subjected to a hail of stones, bottles and chairs with fires lit in the stands and firecrackers thrown. – AFP

City sorry for Mario comments: agent

ROME – Mario Balotelli’s agent says Manchester City contacted him to apologise for their perceived criticism of the controversial striker.

It was widely reported in Britain at the weekend that Balotelli had been warned he must set a better example with his behaviour on and off the pitch.

“I think that it’s important to make a good example,” City’s chief football operations officer Brian Marwood was quoted as saying by several English newspapers on October 14.

“I think – and we all know who we are talking about – that you will get people within the system who do not show the right values and the right behaviour.” – AFP

ICC fighting ‘war’ on corruption: chief executive

LONDON – The International Cricket Council (ICC) is fighting a “war” against corruption that even includes educating groundsmen as well as players and officials, its chief executive said on October 17.

“It is a war we are fighting,” David Richardson said at the launch in London of the final ICC Champions Trophy, which will be held in England next summer before the Ashes series.

“Our anti-corruption unit have their work cut out to make

sure players are kept away from temptation.

“It’s everybody now, unfortunately. Everybody is susceptible – curators, groundsmen – our corruption unit is very aware of what it needs to do.”

Six South Asian umpires were provisionally suspended last week after an Indian TV sting alleged they were open to bribery, while five Indian cricketers were also suspended during this year’s Indian Premier League over allegations no-balls could be arranged to order.

Other tournaments including

Twenty20 leagues in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have also been tainted by scandal.

The Champions Trophy, which pitches the top eight one-day nations together, is being scrapped to make way in the international calendar for a new World Test Championship from 2017.

“This tournament is part of the current rights cycle, as we call it,” Richardson said.

“Somewhere in the middle the strategy was changed as far as ICC events are concerned. We have

three vibrant formats of the game and it makes sense to hold one major event for each format.

“The World Cup is the pinnacle 50-over event so the Champions Trophy is the one to go.

“In 2017 there will be a World Test Championship which will be the first time we have had a Test event on a global scale.”

The Champions Trophy will be played over 18 days with the matches scheduled for Cardiff, The Oval and Edgbaston, which will host the final on June 23. – AFP

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TIMESSPORT

England held by Poland in rescheduled qualifier

By Jonathan Fowler

WARSAW – England were held to a 1-1 draw by Poland on October 17 in a Group H qualifier that went ahead a day late after the scheduled match on October 16 was called off due to a waterlogged pitch.

Wayne Rooney put England up fifteen minutes from half-time, heading in a corner from captain Steven Gerrard for his 30th international goal.

Poland's answer came in the 70th minute, thanks to Torino defender Kamil Glik, courtesy of another header from a corner.

"It wasn't one of our best performances," admitted England manager Roy Hodgson, whose side still lead Group H by one point from Montenegro.

"As far as we're concerned, the extra day, the extra stay, the soggy pitch obviously didn't work in our favour. It's the same for both teams of course," he said.

"I think sometimes in games, you've just got to be satisfied that you come away with something out of the game. I don't think it's going to be easy for teams to come here and beat Poland."

Poland coach Waldemar Fornalik lauded his team and fans who returned having seen the planned encounter on October 16 postponed by a deluge, an hour after the planned kick-off.

"The atmosphere in the stadium was great, the support was massive," he said.

"We did what we're supposed to do. We wanted to play a good game. I don't think England played a bad game, actually."

But Gerrard admitted it had not been one of his



Poland's Kamil Glik (2nd right) scores the equaliser during the FIFA 2014 World Cup qualifying football match against England in Warsaw on October 17. Pic: AFP

team's best nights.

"It's a decent point but we are disappointed," he said.

Despite adding to his goal tally, Rooney was also downbeat.

"We weren't at our best but we dug in and got a draw. We know we can play better but this is a difficult place to come so it is a decent point," he said.

England goalkeeper Joe Hart took responsibility for the goal, having flapped as he tried to clear the corner.

"It was my fault and it cost us three points. They were knocking on the door but it was never going to open unless there was a mistake," he said.

Conscious of their underdog image – they stand 54th in the FIFA rankings to England's fifth – Poland took the game to their rivals from kick off.

It was midfielder Kamil Grosicki who first sent home fans' pulses racing in the 58,000-capacity Kazimierz Gorski Stadium in the eighth minute, though poor control stymied his effort.

England took their chance after 15 minutes but James Milner's lateral pass failed to find a team-mate before Polish goalkeeper Przemyslaw Tyton smothered the ball.

Working hand-in-hand with fellow midfielder Ludovic Obraniak, Grosicki continued to seek weak links in the England defence, to no avail.

Milner fed Jermain Defoe up front in the 26th minute, only for the latter to lose the battle with Poland captain Marcin Wasilewski, standing in for the injured Kuba Blaszczykowski.

Two minutes later, Poland powered back, with Grosicki finding Lewandowski in the box, only for newcomer Pawel Wszolek to fail to latch onto the pass.

A minute after Rooney's goal, Grosicki again came up empty.

After the interval, Poland upped the pace in a drive to close the deficit, with corner-taking stalwart Obraniak firing over the bar in the 49th minute, followed by striker

Robert Lewandowski 10 minutes later.

A lone run by substitute Danny Welbeck left Tyton floundering, but Rooney failed to make it two.

A 70th-minute Obraniak corner then found Glik, who earned his second Poland goal, as Hart came for the ball and was left stranded.

"It's not every day you get to score against England. And do it at home in your national stadium, of course that's really fantastic," said 24-year-old Glik, who made his debut in 2010.

Three minutes from time, Milner found himself free, only for Tyton to beat him, before Obraniak pounded at Hart twice, the second time forcing the England keeper into a lunging save.

The Poles were aware history was against them having beaten England just once – in the race to qualify for the 1974 World Cup, when they deprived them of a berth at the finals – and drawn six times in a total of 17 previous meetings.

– AFP

Serbia, England charged after U-21 game marred by racist chant claims

LONDON – Serbia and England will face disciplinary action over their stormy European Under-21 match which sparked claims of racism and ended with players, fans and coaches embroiled in ugly scuffles, UEFA said on October 17.

England won the match 1-0 in Krusevac on October 16 for a 2-0 aggregate triumph but English defender Danny Rose was sent off for kicking the ball away in response to what he claimed was monkey chanting and physical provocation.

The Serbian Football Federation denied that any racist abuse was hurled at England's players and slammed Rose for "vulgar" behaviour.

"Regarding alleged racist chanting, UEFA will instigate proceedings against the Serbian Football Federation (FSS) over the misconduct of their supporters during and at the end of the match," said a UEFA statement.

"Proceedings will also be instigated against the FSS for the improper conduct of the Serbia players at the end of the game.

"UEFA will also commence proceedings against the English FA for the improper conduct of the England players at the end of the match."

UEFA said the cases will be discussed on November 22.

Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron earlier led calls for UEFA to take a tough line against Serbia.

The British leader was said to have been "appalled" at the scenes from the match and wanted "tough sanctions" against Serbian football if racism is proven, his official spokesman told reporters.

But the FSS hit back at allegations of racism.

"The Serbian FF resolutely rejects and denies that there

was any racist incident in the Krusevac stadium, before and during the match," it said in a statement.

It went on to criticise any attempt to tie claims of racist abuse by English players to scuffles that broke out after the match as "malicious".

The Serbian federation blamed Rose for the events accusing him of "extremely inappropriate, unsportsmanlike and vulgar behaviour towards spectators in the stadium, which is why he got a red card".

"It will come out that, unfortunately, that was when the incident developed," it said.

Rose, who also said stones were thrown at his head, called for Serbia to be banned from European competition.

"I remember getting slapped twice and then I got ushered away. That's when I kicked the ball – and the referee sent me off. I don't understand, the game had finished by then but he still sent me off for kicking the ball," he said.

"As I went off again there was monkey chanting, but the monkey chanting started long before I got sent off," Rose, who is on loan from Tottenham to Sunderland, told Sky Sports News television.

"After 60 minutes my head wasn't really on the game. They [Serbia] have to be banned. I don't understand how else they can learn from it, they have to be banned."

Sepp Blatter, the president of football's world governing body FIFA, gave an indirect reaction to the incident in a message on his official Twitter account.

"Saddened every time I hear about racist incidents in football," he wrote.

"We must keep fighting to eradicate discrimination from our sport. Kick racism out of football." – AFP

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