



O-Burma

White House confirms President Obama will next week become first serving US president to visit Myanmar

By Tim McLaughlin

UNITED States President Barack Obama will make history next week by becoming the first sitting US president to visit Myanmar.

Just two days after President Obama was re-elected for four more years, the White House ended weeks of speculation by confirming the visit on November 8. It did not initially give the date of the visit but the State Department and a Myanmar government official said it would take place on November 19.

President Obama will be joined in Myanmar by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said on November 9.

President Obama and Ms Clinton are scheduled to meet President U Thein Sein and National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Yangon. President Obama will also speak to civil society organisations, the White House said in a statement.

The visit to Myanmar is part of a larger Southeast Asia trip from November 17 to 20 that will see President Obama travel to Bangkok and Phnom Penh, where he will also become the first US president to visit Cambodia. The trip continues the efforts of his administration to strengthen ties with ASEAN as a whole and in particular Myanmar, which it decided to engage rather than isolate following a policy review in 2009.

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US President Barack Obama waves to supporters during a campaign rally in Florida on November 4. Pic: AFP

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Kishore huffs and puffs, to no avail

LET us recall the tale of a drunkard, who, suffering from the ravages of the night before, flops down beside a priest on a bench outside the Roman Catholic cathedral. Dishevelled, reeking of alcohol and with red lipstick on his collar, he tries to compose himself and begins reading a newspaper. After a moment, he turns to the priest and asks: "Father, what causes arthritis?"

The priest says: "My son, it's caused by drinking too much, fornicating with loose women, abusing your body and showing contempt for society."

The drunkard looks startled. "My God, that's very bad news."

Thinking perhaps he's spoken too harshly, the priest adds: "I'm sorry if that upset you. Arthritis is very unpleasant. Have you had it long?"

"Oh, I don't have it," the man says. "But I was just reading here that the Pope does."

The anecdote illustrates that when you condemn something, you better be sure you know the context and the background. Otherwise, you are liable to sound like a sanctimonious hypocrite, as the Singaporean academic and former diplomat, Kishore Mahbubani, did last week.

Writing in the *Australian Financial Review*, Kishore stated that, but for an accident of history, Australia would be full of Asians, not Westerners. A rather trite observation, but acceptable as an opening gambit, except that Kishore plunged into the merde by continuing: "This is how I began a paper for the Australian National University in August, which concluded that as Australia's Western destiny was coming to an end, it had to start preparing for its Asian destiny."

"Sadly, no major Australian newspaper or pundit commented. This made me aware that Australia's intelligentsia is still reluctant to face head on Australia's painful new geopolitical realities."

How typical of Kishore to be upset that no high-profile Aussie had bothered to react to what he'd said. Oh, the shame for the poor man, whose whole ethos as an enfant terrible is based on eliciting indignant outrage



from his largely Western audiences. To be ignored, to huff and puff and only hear the sounds of silence. Oh, the horror, the horror.

Kishore should hardly be surprised, given the conceit he displays in chastising "Australia's intelligentsia" en masse, simply because they ignored his wacky tocsin.

Like the smugly presumptuous priest above, however, Kishore forgot that Singapore is the Pope in the anecdote's punchline.

For when he writes that as Western power recedes, Australia will be left "beached" alone as the solitary Western country in the Asia-Pacific, he neglects to mention that few countries are more Western than his own. Singapore's parliamentary system, judiciary, academia, social and linguistic and cultural parameters are all Western, mostly inherited from the British, but often supplemented by American and even Australian refinements. As they walk around a metropolis that looks more like Melbourne or Vancouver than any truly Asian city, Singaporeans dress, speak, think and behave like archetypal Westerners.

They take pride in it. And good luck to them, although that is why the neighbours mockingly refer to them as "ugly Singaporeans".

The ugliness is redolent in the implication that Australia should cease complaining about the abuse of human rights and religious freedom and media repression in many nations to its north. It should ignore the murder of Chut Wutty, the oppression of Thich Quang Do, and instead emulate Kishore's condemnation of the award of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to jailed writer Liu Xiaobo.

As for "new geopolitical realities", Australia's former PM Kevin Rudd aptly noted Singapore's ever-growing military dependency on the West, notably the United States. If that made his country a "beached" whale because it too maintains ties to the West, then, said Rudd, God knows what it makes little Singapore.

An opportunity beckons after violence in Rakhine

By Nehginpao Kipgen

THE violence between the Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya communities in western Myanmar, which initially erupted in June, has not abated. The simmering tension flared into violence again on October 21. The government said on October 31 that 89 people had been killed, 136 injured, more than 32,000 made homeless. More than 5000 houses were burned down between October 21 and 30.

Questions have been asked as to why the conflict has not been resolved when Myanmar has such overwhelming support from all actors in the international community, both in the East and West. Is it because the government has no serious intention to resolve the conflict, or is it because the government does not have adequate resources and the experience to handle such violence?

Recent developments indicate that both the Rakhine State and central governments have taken certain initiatives to end the violence, including the state government's issuance of article 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in some townships, and President U Thein Sein's declaration of a state of emergency. Are such measures adequate to bring peace and harmony in the state?

When considering the conflict in Rakhine State – or elsewhere in the country – one must understand that it is a consequence of inherent ethnic problems that successive central governments have failed to address since independence in 1948.

The complexity of the Rohingya issue fundamentally lies in the fact that they are not considered citizens of Myanmar. This makes it unique from other conflicts in the country. While other ethnic minorities demand autonomy under a federal system, the Rohingyas struggle to be recognised as an ethnic group of the country.

Some have suggested that had President U Thein Sein reached some resolution on



A soldier in Rakhine State in late October. Pic: Kaung Htet

the Rohingya issue he could have won a Nobel Peace Prize. Some others have opined that opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been careful not to say too much about the conflict for fear of a backlash in the 2015 general election.

While the conflict in Rakhine State should not be viewed as an opportunity for individual glory or political advantage, both President U Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have important roles to play for the emergence of a durable solution.

Many in Myanmar society, including Rakhine people, cannot accept Rohingya as fellow citizens. The government uses the term "Bengali" when referring to them. In these circumstances, is there room for dialogue? If so, where can it begin?

Another broad perception within Myanmar society is that the Rohingya or Bengali are illegal migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh. However, such assertion is rejected by Bangladesh, which already hosts about 300,000 Rohingya as refugees inside its territory.

Both governments – Myanmar and Bangladesh – should promote dialogue to address the issue amicably. If no bilateral agreement can be reached, perhaps both governments could approach a neutral third party, such as the United Nations, for mediation or an alternative arrangement.

President U Thein Sein once suggested resettling the Rohingya in a third country or countries, a proposition that the UN high commissioner for refugees Antonio Guterres rejected outright. Recently, Tomas Ojea Quintana, the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, suggested that the Myanmar government pursue a policy of integration and reconciliation between the Rakhine and Rohingya groups.

International institutions can offer suggestions but, ultimately, responsibility lies with the Myanmar government. If no third country or countries come forward to accept the Rohingya population, the government of Myanmar will have to come up with a solution at some point.

What President U Thein Sein's government and the national parliament can do is review both previous and existing citizenship laws to assess the conditions under which citizenship is granted. Those eligible should not be denied their rights.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi could use her status as the opposition leader and chair of the rule of law committee in the parliament to help advance the reconciliation process. Such initiatives should be bipartisan measures, with the support of other committee members and the parliament as a whole.

Reconciliation programs will succeed only when the Rakhine and the Rohingya are willing to compromise on their differences and respect each other's identity. More importantly, the Myanmar government must be ready to embrace the Rohingya if any genuine reconciliation is to be realised.

Myanmar has adequate resources and experience in managing ethnic violence. It is largely because of successive central governments' indifference and lack of commitment toward minority problems that ethnic conflicts remain unresolved.

The conflict in Rakhine state needs to be addressed simultaneously with conflicts in other parts of the country. While the international community is rallying behind its reform processes, Myanmar should seize the opportunity to address the inherent problems of minority groups, including the Rakhine and Rohingya in Rakhine State.

(Nehginpao Kipgen is general secretary of the United States-based Kuki International Forum. His research interests include political transition, democratisation, human rights, ethnic conflict and identity politics and he has written many peer-reviewed and non-academic articles on the politics of Myanmar and Asia.)

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US policy continuity will strengthen reform: analysts

By Kyaw Hsu Mon and Tim McLaughlin

THE re-election of US President Barack Obama and continuation of US policy is likely to strengthen the reform process in Myanmar, analysts and politicians said last week.

After imposing sanctions and attempting to isolate Myanmar, the US began reconfiguring its policy in 2009 and has been a key international player since President U Thein Sein initiated the reform process after taking office in March 2011.

President Obama was re-elected comfortably on November 6, defeating Republican challenger Mitt Romney.

"[President Obama's re-election] won't have a significant direct impact on Myanmar but he will be able to help a lot to ensure the country does not turn back," said U Win Tin of the National League for Democracy.

U Win Tin's comment echoed that of US ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell, who repeatedly reassured attendees at a November 7 US election event in Yangon that US policy towards Myanmar would follow the course set by President Obama in his first term.

He also applauded both Democrats and Republicans for showing political unity on Myanmar policy since the 2009 review.

"I expected there to be consistency in US policy," Mr Mitchell said. "I think this has been a bi-partisan effort. I've said that repeatedly."

He said the level of bipartisanship on Myanmar had been "remarkable" given the deeply divided state of the US Congress - which is set to continue after last week's election, in which the Democrats held on to control of the senate and Republicans the house.



US President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden celebrate on stage after Obama delivered his acceptance speech on November 7 in Chicago. Pic: AFP

"[T]his issue, this country [Myanmar], has such a deep commitment from the American people," Mr Mitchell said.

Murray Hiebert, senior fellow and chair for Southeast Asia studies at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said the policy continuation could include a further easing of US sanctions.

"We should expect continuing moves to ease sanctions and engage the whole government," Mr Hiebert said.

U Win Tin said there was a widely held belief in Myanmar that President Obama was more focused on the Asia-Pacific region than Mr Romney, a belief reinforced by the announcement on November 8 that the president would visit Myanmar and other countries in Southeast Asia later this month.

"Democratic Party has different kinds of people ... [whereas] in the Republican Party most are white and conservative. So, we can say that it is better for Myanmar that Obama won," U Win Tin said.

"If Mitt Romney won the

election, Asian countries couldn't depend on him," he said.

The US remains the world's largest military and economic power and the possibility of a change in leader ensures that every four years billions of people around the world turn their attention to the US election.

While trade and investment between the US and Myanmar remains almost non-existent, the recent lifting of some sanctions, including a ban on investment in Myanmar, has generated hopes of a sharp increase in bilateral business ties.

"I think Myanmar's economy will benefit from Obama's win in the election. He supported Myanmar's democratic reforms and removed some economic sanctions on Myanmar. [When] he comes to Myanmar, businesspeople will come with him so we can expect a good result for our economy," said U Myat Thin Aung, a well-known businessman.

Myanmar recently enacted long-awaited amendments to its Foreign Investment Law that are designed to attract more foreign

investment, particularly in manufacturing.

"For example, US companies like Apple, which produces iPhones and iPads, it is now making its products in China because wages are cheap. If they open a factory in Myanmar, their export goods can be exempt from tax and if wages are low companies like that will come and invest in Myanmar," U Myat Thin Aung said. "We hope that businesspeople from the technology sector come here with Obama."

U Thiha Saw, editor-in-chief of *Open News*, agreed that the amended investment law would generate significant interest from foreign businesspeople. If President Obama's entourage includes a trade delegation, it could have significant benefits for Myanmar in the long run, he said.

"I don't think that Myanmar's political situation will significantly change because of Obama's re-election. There won't be a big change. But [when] he comes to Myanmar, the world's attention will be on us." - Translated by Thiri Min Htun

Judge denies reports of court media restrictions

By Soe Than Lynn

SUPREME Court Judge U Soe Nyunt last week rejected suggestions from hluttaw representatives that journalists are being unfairly barred from entering courthouses, dismissing the reports as "hearsay".

U Soe Nyunt said there are no laws or rules that ban journalists from entering courts but they are not allowed to disturb court hearings and must abide by court rules. If a judge feels that details of a court case should be controlled, they can restrict publication of news about the case but until now there has been "no problems" between judges and the media, U Soe Nyunt told the Pyithu Hluttaw last week.

"According to section 19(b) of the constitution and section 3(b) of the Union Judiciary Law ... anybody can come and study court hearings except cases which are heard in special courts to maintain law and order or which need to be administered behind closed doors, for example to protect juvenile offenders or rape victims. There are no laws, bylaws, procedures, orders and directives to block the media presence in law court," said U Soe Nyunt.

"But while anyone can watch court hearings they must to abide by court rules not to disturb court hearings ... [and] a judge can ban admittance, photo taking and news collecting by anyone if he thinks fit. But no problems have arisen between the courts and the media," he said.

U Soe Nyunt was responding to a question from Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Yinmarbin U Than Tun, who said there were reports of journalists not being allowed to enter the court or take photos and videos outside the court.

"Prohibiting rights of admittance, assessment and recording by the media may lead to the impression that such restrictions are meant to hide corruption, hurt transparency and facilitate

false judgements by means of a news cover-up. In countries where democracy is thriving, law courts have engaged journalists to prove their transparency," he said.

He asked whether there were any rules in place to "ban admittance into and recording of court hearings by the media and if so are there any plans to amend, supplement or abolish them according to today's circumstances?"

But while rejecting the premise that journalists had been banned from entering courthouses, U Soe Nyunt said that "many countries do not allow photo taking and videoing in courts" because "in the eyes of law, an accused person is innocent until he or she is convicted by a court".

"If we allow photos or videos to be taken of defendants and litigants, it will hurt the dignity and human rights of citizens. So the criticism that there are assumptions that corruption and false rulings may happen because a judge does not allow the media is not appropriate because it amounts to accusing law courts [of corruption] and marring their reputation without taking any notice of the fact that law courts are safeguarding the reputation and human rights of litigants, defendants and witnesses."

However, Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Thingangyun U Thein Nyunt said he had "experienced some incidents ... as recently as last month" where journalists had come into conflict with the judicial system over court access.

"There are often problems between courts and the media. In Dagon township and Tarmwe township law courts, there were incidents where th media was refused admittance," he said. "I can accept their [judges] action for juvenile crimes but what I don't accept is cases that are shifted and heard in Insein Prison on security grounds. Not only the media but also family members are refused admittance."

- Translated by Thiri Lwin



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Entrepreneurship week kicks off

By Oliver Slow

A SERIES of free events will be held in Yangon this week as part of a drive to encourage entrepreneurs.

Global Entrepreneurship Week, which sees 35,000 events held across 100 countries, is being held in Myanmar for the first time and will begin with the StartUp Cup at Grand Mee Ya Hta Executive Residences on November 11. The cup, which includes a series of workshops and opportunities for contestants to receive mentoring from established businesspeople, will culminate with a Pitch Contest on November 18, where contestants will present their ideas to potential investors.

About 80 contestants have signed up for the StartUp Cup and the winner will receive US\$200, said Mr Peter Silvester

of Project Hub Yangon, which is hosting the event.

The week will also include a Social Enterprise Expo on November 11 from 2pm and a Women's Entrepreneurship Night at the British Club on November 13.

"Lots of people are interested in starting their own businesses, but really don't know how to go about it, or don't have the confidence," Mr Silvester said. "Events like this can help people to put their ideas into action."

"This isn't just about writing a 10-page business plan but about being interactive and building concepts for actually starting the business. We hope that the event will be a catalyst for new businesses to start up," he said.

The Social Enterprise Expo will feature about a dozen stalls from businesses that are involved in social enterprise, which Mr

Silvester describes as "a business which not only has an impact model, but also a financial model".

"In its simplest form, it is a business with a social mission that has the benefits of both making profit and contributing to society."

The Women's Entrepreneurship Night is co-sponsored by the EU and British Council and aims to encourage women entrepreneurs to share the secrets of their success and serve as role models for other women considering starting a business.

The events are being organised to give momentum to a push to establish Yangon's first "project hub" early next year, said Ms Allison Morris of Project Hub Yangon.

"A project hub is basically a co-working space for entrepreneurs," she said. "[A place] where like-

minded people come together to discuss ideas. Like a sort of clubhouse, but at the same time it's all-inclusive to whoever wants to join."

"It's a new concept for Myanmar," added Mr Silvester. "But one I think will work here. Myanmar is fertile ground for entrepreneurs, especially when it comes to helping others at the same time."

He said it was difficult to foresee what specific businesses would likely come about from establishing a project hub.

"[T]o be honest, it doesn't matter what [comes out of the project hub] as long as people realise that starting their own business is a viable lifestyle choice," Mr Silvester said.

Those seeking more information can contact Mr Silvester and Ms Morris at projecthubyangon@gmail.com.

From page 1

Obama visit

In Thailand, President Obama will meet Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and celebrate 180 years of relations between the two nations. Thailand has been a long-time ally of the US in Southeast Asia, particularly in terms of military cooperation.

President Obama will also attend the US-ASEAN Leaders Meeting and East Asia Summit in Phnom Penh.

The visit will take place less than two weeks after President Obama was elected to serve a second term, defeating Republican challenger Mitt Romney. It will also represent a milestone in the rebuilding of ties between the US and Myanmar, which were minimal for much of the two decades preceding the military government's handover to U Thein Sein in March 2011.

The re-engagement process began when Myanmar sent signals that it was ready to work with Washington in March 2009, when then-Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win met a mid-level US State Department official - an unusual move by protocol standards.

Since then, a steady stream of US officials have visited Myanmar, the most high-profile being Secretary of State Hilary Clinton in December 2011. Just last month Deputy Secretary of State William J Burns paid a more low-key visit, as did Deputy Secretary of Treasury Neal S Wolin.

Meanwhile, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was

welcomed at the White House in September and while in Washington she was presented the Congressional Gold Medal, which was awarded to her in 2008 while she was under house arrest.

The US also lifted a travel ban on President U Thein Sein, who became the first Myanmar head of state to address the UN when he spoke at the General Assembly in New York on September 27.

As a result of reforms in Myanmar, the US also began the process of easing investment and import sanctions, although certain individuals and businesses still remain on the blacklist. Myanmar exports are also banned from entering the US, although Ms Clinton indicated in September the government was looking at easing the ban in cooperation with Congress.

U Zaw Htay, a spokesperson for the President's Office, said the government "warmly welcomes" President Obama's visit and expressed hope that his trip will bolster Myanmar's political reform drive.

His visit will "strengthen the resolve" of President U Thein Sein to "move forward" with reforms, U Zaw Htay said on November 9, news agency AFP reported.

President Obama's visit shows "concrete support for the democratisation process of President U Thein Sein, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, members of parliaments and the Myanmar people," he said.

"President U Thein Sein fully believes that the trip of President Obama will push

the momentum of the process of democratic reform."

President Obama's visit is a clear signal that his administration plans to continue its policy towards Myanmar, provided the reform process does not stall, analysts said last week.

"I think Myanmar is becoming a key country, which is shown by the quick resumption of [military-military] and other ties; there are high hopes for Myanmar as a close partner of the US," said Joshua Kurlantzick, a fellow for Southeast Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations, a Washington-based think tank.

However, the announcement has prompted criticism from some human rights and advocacy groups, who said last week the visit would be premature.

U Aung Din, executive director of the US Campaign for Burma, sent a letter to President Obama on November 7, prior to the trip's confirmation, urging him not to go and likening the current political situation in Myanmar to "Indonesia under the Suharto's regime or Egypt under the Mubarak's regime".

U Aung Din cited concerns over press freedom, the continued detention of political prisoners and unresolved conflict in minority-dominated Kachin and Rakhine states.

"I believe your visit to the country at this time will only strengthen the ruling USDP party and President Thein Sein's government, and undermine the democracy activists and ethnic minorities as well as remaining political prisoners and ever-growing civil society organisations," wrote U Aung Din.

On November 9, the US embassy joined 10 other embassies in Yangon in signing a joint statement pushing for a resolution to communal violence in Rakhine State, six days after US ambassador Derek Mitchell returned from a trip to affected areas. (See related story page 5.)

"We urge all parties to work together to bring an immediate end to the violence," the statement said. "We further encourage the government to enable safe, timely, and unhindered humanitarian access across Rakhine State to all persons in need."

While President Obama will become the first sitting US president to visit Myanmar, three have previously visited prior to or after leaving office. Ulysses S Grant visited then-Burma in 1879 during a round-the-world trip after completing his corruption- and scandal-plagued second term.

Herbert Hoover worked briefly in Myanmar as a mining engineer in the early 1900s prior to embarking on a career in politics that would see him take the Oval Office in 1929.

Richard Nixon made two visits to Myanmar, the first in 1953 while vice president under President Dwight D Eisenhower. He returned in September 1985, 11 years after resigning from office in the wake of the Watergate scandal.

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Rakhine State visit 'sobering', says US ambassador Mitchell

By Tim McLaughlin

UNITED States ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell last week described a recent visit to areas of Rakhine State affected by an outbreak of violence as "sobering".

Mr Mitchell visited Rakhine State from November 1 to 3 with British ambassador Andrew Heyn and Australian ambassador Bronte Moules, following communal unrest that left at least 89 dead, according to official estimates.

"It is very sobering, it was very sad, I think the results of the recent violence have caused tremendous hardship to many people on the ground, particularly the Muslim communities," Mr Mitchell told journalists at US presidential election event in Yangon on November 7.

He said members of the Rakhine community were also suffering as a result of the violence, which broke out on October 21 in rural Mrauk Oo and Minbya townships.

The ambassadors travelled with Minister for Border Affairs Lieutenant General Thein Htay and other government officials through Myebon, Ramree and Kyaukpyu townships on November 1. The group visited five additional townships on November 2 and also spent time in the regional capital, Sittwe.

Since June 110,000 people in Rakhine have been displaced by communal violence, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The conflict, Mr Mitchell said, is "affecting the reputation, not just of the country, but the people of Rakhine State".

"The international community is quite concerned. It is getting a lot of international attention. The world is watching," he said.

Many of those who have

been displaced are living in overcrowded camps that lack basic necessities. UNHCR said on November 5 its staff have visited affected villages and found those displaced in "urgent need of food and shelter".

Mr Mitchell said additional humanitarian assistance is needed to address the situation.

"We need to get open and fair access to humanitarian aid. It is a very urgent situation; they are getting some aid in but not enough."

Mr Mitchell did not outline any new US aid plans for the region but did say that he expected the US to provide more assistance in the future. On October 19, he announced the US would provide US\$2.73 million to two UN agencies operating in Rakhine State, with UNHCR receiving \$2 million and the rest going to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

"We are doing assessments of the need so I don't think that will be the last of what we provide but I can't give you any sense of exactly what [the US will give]," Mr Mitchell said.

The ambassador's comments came just a day after Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and British Foreign Secretary William Hague pressed President U Thein Sein on Myanmar's response to the violence while attending the Asia-Europe Meeting in Vientiane, Laos.

On November 3, European Union Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso called for an end to the communal violence, while the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged the Myanmar government to take decisive action to end violence on November 5. On the same day, Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs Marty Natalegawa made a similar plea, citing concerns that the violence could grow into a larger issue for the Southeast Asian region.



Supplies are unloaded at a refugee camp in Rakhine State last month. Pic: Kaung Htet

Ethnic leaders, Daw Suu call for transparency on conflict

By Soe Than Lynn

ETHNIC politicians and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have urged the government to be more transparent over its handling of the Rakhine crisis and for humanitarian aid to be made available to both the Rakhine and Rohingya communities.

In a statement released on November 7 following renewed violence last month, they also said the government should take legal action "against individuals and organisations that control from behind or abet" those carrying out acts of violence.

The statement also urged the government to promptly increase security forces in areas prone to conflict and to recognise the worries and anxiety the conflict has caused Rakhine people.

"The clear-cut policies of the government in respect of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law ... and the

Rakhine conflict should also be made public for the sake of transparency. It should be clearly made known to the public how the government will handle citizenship issues and the Rakhine conflict. Humanitarian aid for all in need should be arranged as soon as possible and in a way that is acceptable to both sides," the statement said.

"The governments of two countries bordering each other are also responsible for border security and immigration ... both countries should take responsibility and be accountable in this regard. Both countries should carefully take security measures to protect against border crossings," it said.

The statement was released following discussions between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is chair of the Pyithu Hluttaw's Rule of Law, Stability and Peace Committee, and ethnic representatives at Nay Pyi Taw City Development Council's guesthouse on November 5.

The meeting was organised because of renewed violence in Rakhine State from October 21 to 30 that left 89 dead and 136 injured, according to government figures. About 5300 houses were destroyed with more than 32,000 people homeless as a result.

"I think all ethnic groups should get involved because the Rakhine issue concerns

the entire country. We believe that everyone has to help breed a spirit of unity so as to face and tackle the problems in their own country," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi told *The Myanmar Times* on November 6.

"Military rule may be needed in an exceptional situation but ... the most important thing we need to do is to return the situation to normal very quickly," she said. "This Rakhine issue will not be resolved easily ... I always say that we need to take care of rule of law and safety first. How can people think about the problems calmly unless they can live in safety?" - Translated by Zar Zar Soe

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Historic opportunity for peace: EU chief

But reconciliation likely the country's greatest challenge, EU president Barroso says at opening of peace centre

By Zaw Win Than

SENIOR officials from Myanmar and Europe last week came together in support of peace in the country.

At a ceremony in Yangon on November 3, European Union President José Manuel Barroso and U Aung Min, a minister in the office of President U Thein Sein who leads the government's peace team, signed a joint declaration at the Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) to promote dialogue between all those concerned in Myanmar's ethnic peace processes.

"EU support for the MPC is vital. Without the MPC, the peace processes underway couldn't move ahead. The centre will serve as the main secretariat for the peace process," said U Aung Min.

"I encourage the EU to support us over the long term. The challenges Myanmar faces are complex," said U

Aung Min, who added that Myanmar wants to resolve the problem itself without being dependent on foreign aid.

The EU statement said the Myanmar government and the EU agreed that there was a historic opportunity for lasting peace and for bringing prosperity to ethnic areas after decades of conflict had come to an end.

"Visiting this peace centre now and after my meetings with President U Thein Sein, with [Pyithu Hluttaw] Speaker Thura Shwe Mann and with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi earlier today, I can say that peace and reconciliation are within reach," said Mr Barroso.

"My visit here today is a testimony of the EU's support to the momentous changes underway, a sign of encouragement to continue these reforms and a concrete expression of our wish to support you in this process.

"Much has been achieved already [but] ... [i]mportant

tasks are still ahead. Making Myanmar a home to its entire population is probably the biggest one.

"In this sense I have encouraged the country's authorities to continue with political and legislative reforms and with the release of the remaining political detainees. No one should be held in prison for expressing his or her views."

He said he also discussed recent communal violence in Rakhine State. "We are deeply concerned by these events and by the consequences for the reforms and democratisation of the country. We hope that all religious leaders will call for restraint. Violence needs to stop and urgent humanitarian needs have to be addressed," he added.

Mr Barroso said the EU was ready to mobilise 4 million euros (US\$5.1 million) for immediate humanitarian needs, provided access to affected areas was guaranteed.



European Union President José Manuel Barroso shakes hands with Union Minister U Aung Min at the opening of the Myanmar Peace Centre on November 3. Pic: Boothee

"Myanmar has suffered from decades of violent conflict and internal divisions. It is now time to turn the page and fully embrace the formidable opportunity of peace. I am convinced that today the new political environment offers a historic chance to achieve lasting peace amongst the country's different ethnic communities. Shaping a common national Myanmar identity, respectful of ethnic and religious heritage, will be a challenge. But, it can be achieved."

He said the peace centre would be an autonomous centre of excellence displaying the highest standards in transparency, accountability and inclusiveness.

"It shall be widely open and impartial in its outreach to all groups willing to join this platform for dialogue. And it shall be non-partisan in its activities. No single group or entity shall monopolise its agenda."

U Aung Min said the establishment of the centre confirmed President U Thein Sein's desire for

inclusive and enduring peace and willingness to work with all stakeholders. "To date, we have concluded initial ceasefires with 10 out of 11 ethnic armed groups. The president stated clearly in his speech at the United Nations that this is not enough. Genuine peace will satisfy political aspirations and address the grievances of ethnic communities in Myanmar. This can only happen with a non-partisan platform for comprehensive dialogue," said U Aung Min.



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Norway, Denmark open diplomatic office in Yangon

By Zaw Win Than

THE prime ministers of Denmark and Norway opened a joint diplomatic office in Yangon on November 4 to strengthen their diplomatic presence in Myanmar.

The Scandinavian countries are preparing to welcome Sweden and possibly Finland into the premises, making it a truly Nordic diplomatic compound.

Ms Helle Thorning-Schmidt and Mr Jens Stoltenberg, heads of government of Denmark and Norway respectively, spoke at the event and at a related press conference on the strengthening of relations between Myanmar and their two countries.

"This is an excellent day because it marks a new chapter in the relationship between Norway and Myanmar and Denmark and Myanmar," said Ms Helle Thorning-Schmidt. This year Denmark doubled its development assistance to Myanmar to about US\$18 million and is planning a further increase in 2013.

Ms Thorning-Schmidt also said economic cooperation was on the rise, and several Danish companies were interested in responsible trade and investment in Myanmar if and when the conditions are right.

"We are very keen to look into investments. Our trade and investment minister is coming very soon, bringing a business delegation, and I think it goes for both countries that we have excellent companies that invest in a respectful, responsible and sustainable way," she said.

The Danish prime minister began her visit in Yangon, where she met ministers U Aung Min, U Soe Thein and U Ohn Myint, as well as with democracy activists and former political prisoners U Htay Kywe and U Kyaw Min Yu, leading figures from the 88 Generation student group. She also met political leaders from some of Myanmar's ethnic minorities, some of which are in open conflict with the government.

In Nay Pyi Taw, she met opposition leader and Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of the National League for Democracy. Mr Stoltenberg said: "The peace process has to be something that the people of Myanmar are responsible for. What we can do is to support and facilitate, but the solutions have to be found in Myanmar by the people of Myanmar."

"The fact that we are

opening an office together with our Danish neighbours reflects the close cooperation and relations between the Nordic countries. And very soon Sweden will join us – so this will be a truly Nordic office," he said. "Norway has been working for decades for democracy to return to Myanmar. We have supported both individuals and organisations that have been working for human rights and democracy, abroad and within the country. And we were among the first to provide assistance when Cyclone Nargis struck your country," he said.

Mr Stoltenberg also met President U Thein Sein on November 3 in Nay Pyi Taw.

"Soon I hope to receive President U Thein Sein in Norway. The president has

already kindly accepted my invitation.

"We know the road ahead will not be easy. It will take time to recover from decades of isolation, economic stagnation and conflict. It will require strong political leadership. It will require patience and hard work from all the people of Myanmar. And it will require solid friendships in the international community. Norway is a friend of Myanmar. We will continue to be so. We will share experience that can be of relevance to your country.

"We will support the peace efforts and political dialogue that are necessary to secure a just and lasting peace for everyone living in Myanmar. The opening of this embassy office is of great symbolic importance."

By Khin Su Wai

THE natural environment at Mt Popa is under threat because of land concessions and illegal clearing of trees for plantations, environmentalists say.

"On October 8, we caught a man who felled 1000 trees at Popa. This is the largest arrest in the area; in the past, we've found people who encroach into the national park by felling a few trees and then replant their own ones there," said U Yuzana, the assistant headmaster at Shwe Nadi monastic school and a member of Popa Lovers Association.

The association began replanting trees, including teak, at the site near Yetin Creek on October 10.

The association was formed in August with the aim of preserving the environment at Mt Popa, a 1518-metre volcano in central Myanmar's Kyaukpadaung township. Popa Mountain National Park, which covers 129 square kilometres, was established in 1989.

But despite the creation of the national park, the area faces a number of threats, including the



Popa Mountain National Park. Pic: Douglas Long

felling of trees to allow for the extraction of pozzolan, which is often found at extinct volcanoes. Pozzolan can be used as a substitute for cement in construction projects.

The extraction of pozzolan generates a large amount of dust, and Popa Lovers Association says it could be harmful to the health of residents in eight villages in the area.

Member U Toe said tea plantations were also

a blight on the natural landscape at Popa Mountain National Park.

"One company got 300 acres of land at the national park for less than K1.5 million for 30 years. That company already planted tea plantations over about 50 acres. If they finish all 300 acres, that will be a problem for the environment at Popa because they will need to fell trees to make room for the plantation," he said.



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Shan peace seminar slated for Nov 26-28

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

SHAN politicians, peace activists and civil society leaders will hold a seminar in Yangon later this month to discuss a range of issues crucial to Shan State.

The seminar, which will be conducted in the Shan language, will take place from November 26 to 28 at Yangon's Royal Rose Restaurant, and Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Khan, and U Aung Min and U Soe Thein, both ministers in the President's Office, are expected to attend, said U Khun Htun Oo, the chairman of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD).

Also present will be representatives of the Shan State Army, Shan State Progress Party, and the Restoration Council

of Shan State, as well as Shan-based NGOs, the Shan Women's Action Network from Chiang Mai, Thailand, and the Shan Literature and Culture group. The SNLD will be the main organiser.

"We are going to read nine presentations at the seminar," said U Khun Htun Oo, who is a former political prisoner.

The major issues will be peace, military affairs, a planned census, narcotics, health, education and social issues, as well as updates on the Shan political parties, said U Khun Htun Oo.

"We've been wanting to hold this kind of seminar for some time to hear the voices of our Shan nationalities. That's why the seminar will be conducted in the Shan language," he said.

Norway provides grant to ADB for power law update

By Yu Yu Maw

NORWAY is to contribute a US\$850,000 technical assistance grant in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank to help update Myanmar's 30-year old electricity law. The update is considered an important step towards meeting the nation's expanding power needs.

Norway's foreign affairs minister, Mr Espen Barth Eide, said the grant would help bring the country's law up to international standards. The minister made the remarks during consultations on the Myanmar tourism master plan at the Myanmar Tourism Federation office in Yangon on November 5, during his third visit to Myanmar.

"Development cannot be achieved without access to electricity. Having an updated electricity law, putting it into practice and conducting initial capacity building on the principles of electricity regulation are essential for the development of Myanmar's power

sector, and an important contribution to the development of Myanmar's economy and the welfare of its people," he told participants.

The drafting of the legislation and related rules and regulations will be carried out by the Ministry of Electric Power in conjunction with other government departments, the private sector, civil society, parliamentarians, and development partners, with completion targeted for June 2014.

"As the country opens up and economic sanctions are removed, huge numbers of visitors are pouring into the country. The local population can now more readily buy household electrical appliances, and local businesses are expanding rapidly. All this has placed an enormous strain on the power supply network, which is often unreliable in urban centres and barely extends to Myanmar's rural areas," he said.

According to the ADB, the Norwegian grant will be used to help update Myanmar's 1984 electricity law.

Mr Stephen Groff, president of operations for the ADB's East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, said: "The development and implementation of a national electricity law is the first step to meeting the country's power needs."

The aim will be to unbundle generation, transmission, and distribution subsectors, allow private-sector participation in power generation, establish rules and regulations for small independent power producers to promote off-grid electrification, implement rural electrification programs and establish a regulatory authority.

The ADB said the grant was made possible by the government's recognition that foreign direct investment is needed to meet the massive costs involved in developing the power sector, and that the lack of a comprehensive and transparent regulatory framework is impeding private-sector participation in the power sector.

A message from HE Dr. Mikhail MGELADZE,

Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Dear readers of the Myanmar Times and friends,

Six years have passed since my first communication with you from the pages of this highly reputable weekly. Through this period, I have had a number of opportunities to address to you on various occasions and issues, sharing with you our news, ideas, joy and concerns. And I thank you all for your kind attention as I complete six years as the ambassador in Myanmar.



HE Dr. Mikhail MGELADZE

The 6 years of my assignment were undoubtedly crucial for the world, for the region as well as for Myanmar. In 2006, when I first stepped down from the plane in Yangon, it was one country in a particularly difficult international environment, and this posed special challenge for me as Ambassador of the friendly state, which felt and is still feeling responsible for all its true friends around the world. Working closely with the Myanmar Government, we managed to provide all assistance and support necessary to overcome many obstacles on the Myanmar way to democracy, easing unprecedented political and economic pressure from outside and effectively proving the right of any sovereign state for independent development, in full accordance with the UN Charter and International Law. Even that time, when the new draft Constitution was debated at the National Convention, when it was adopted at the National Referendum in 2008, when the National Elections were held in 2010, we were sure that this process, conducted in a step-by-step manner, with Myanmar traditional and cultural values in mind, would bring about tangible and long-standing positive outcome. Proceeding from this point of view, Russia has been always standing on Myanmar side on the international arena, persuading other players to adopt more practical and far-seeing attitude towards Myanmar.

And this approach has won. Now we all are witnesses to the first promising results of the democratic steps being taken by HE President U Thein Sein, the Union Government and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, doing their utmost for strengthening internal peace and stability, securing national socio-economic progress and promoting international ties. The Russian Federation highly appraises all these efforts by the Myanmar Leadership and people, feels satisfied that it was able to back Myanmar reforms on their initial stage and sincerely believes in the bright future of Myanmar. We are confident that our comprehensive cooperation and time-honoured friendship, mutual trust, support and understanding constitute a unique and solid base for all-round development of Russia-Myanmar relations. We feel that our friendship - is a time-proven phenomenon, the distinct characteristic of our countries and peoples, though geographically distant from each other, but having much in common - tenderness, hospitality, and benignity.

My 6-year tenure in Myanmar is coming to its end; I will be leaving this beautiful country soon and will subsequently retire from the foreign service. I would like to share with you that I am very happy that my karma presented me a favour of staying and working in the Golden Land for a considerable period of time, and I will always remember my many Myanmar true friends, as well as ancient Bagan, lovely Yangon, busy Mandalay, growing Nay Pyi Taw and sunny Ngapali with the most pleasant feelings.

I wish you all further success in all endeavours, new achievements on the way of development and preservation of your profound traditional and cultural heritage.

Nagani Book Club set for revival

By Aye Sapay Phyu

AN HISTORIC publishing house credited with fostering young independence leaders is set to be re-established, more than 70 years after it closed.

Nagani Book Club was founded in Yangon on November 4, 1937, by a group of patriots intent on ousting the British from Myanmar. The club shut down in 1941 after publishing about 70 books.

Founder U Khin Hlaing of Zawtika International Company said the New Generation of Nagani Book Club would channel the spirit of the original, which was famous for its role in Myanmar's struggle for independence.

He said the new club was being founded to strengthen public understanding about the importance of literature.

"We also intend to give opportunities to a new generation of writers who contribute valuable literature for the public. We will publish that kind of literature, whether it makes a profit or not," he said at an event at Yangon's National Theatre on November 4 held to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the original book club.

"Young people aged 20 to 30 got involved in Nagani's literary activities so that they could help combat poverty, unhealthiness and the lack of education. Later on, these young men became important people in Myanmar's political field," writer Danubyu Maung Khin Min said at the ceremony.

Anyone interested in joining the New Generation of Nagani Book Club can call (01) 380-581 or 380-578.

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Centenary of birth of U Raschid marked at Yangon ceremony

By Naw Say Phaw Waa

STUDENTS, monks and political and religious leaders came together last week to commemorate the centennial of Muslim student leader U Raschid, the hero of a patriotic uprising in colonial times.

About 1000 people, including former and current students, leaders of 88 Generation, former political prisoners, leaders of political parties, monks, and Hindu and Muslim leaders attended and made speeches. The event took place at the Royal Rose restaurant on November 5.

U Raschid, who was born in India and came to Myanmar at the age of two, led a student strike against the British authorities in 1936. He was the first chairman of both the Federation of Student Unions and the All Burma Federation of Student Unions.

Recalling U Raschid's accomplishments, 88 Generation leader Ko Min Ko Naing said refraining from bloodshed was more important than nationality or religion. "We must maintain our stand against racism and religious hatred. Anyone who shares our nationality should receive national rights. We should be faithful to our country," he said.

Other speakers expressed support for the message and called for unity among people of all religions.

Participants recalled the history of the Yangon University Student Union building, which was demolished, probably on the orders of General Ne Win, and called for national reconciliation.

U Raschid in 1931 helped draw up the constitution of the Students' Union based on those of Oxford and Cambridge universities.

He served as vice president and then chairman of the Students' Union in 1935-36.

At the same time, he was elected chairman of the All Burma Students' Union. In 1939 he was elected chairman of the All Burma Youth Muslim Congress, and later chairman of the All Burma Muslim Organisation.

After General Ne Win took power in 1962, U Raschid was jailed for six years. He was arrested again in 1974 and jailed for 18 months.

He died in 1978 in Pakistan, where his gravestone is inscribed: "Raschid of Burma".

Mangrove forests disappearing: NGO

By Aye Sapay Phyu

HUMAN activity has devastated the coastal and marine ecosystems of Myanmar over the past three decades, conservation experts said at a meeting last week.

Dr Kyaw Tint, chairman of the Mangrove and Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation Network (MERN), said mangrove forests in the coastal areas of Rakhine State, and Ayeyarwady and Tanintharyi regions had depleted and degraded considerably since 1980.

"Total mangrove forest cover in Myanmar in 1980 amounted to 531,000 hectares but by 2010 only 312,000ha were left, according to Forest Department statistics. Total mangrove coverage in 2010 had been estimated at 659,033ha. But encroachments by agriculture, fisheries and others in the mangrove forests have occupied 346,590ha, leaving only about 312,443ha for mangroves," he said.

The discussions took

place at the National Consultative Workshop on Conservation and Sustainable Management of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems. The workshop was held at the Sedona Hotel on November 5 and 6, and was organised by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Mangroves for the Future, MERN and Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem.

Dr Kyaw Tint said excessive wood cutting for fuel, agricultural expansion and the building of fish and shrimp ponds were the main reasons for loss of mangroves. He added that natural mangrove forests in Ayeyarwady Region had suffered about 80 percent destruction due to Cyclone Nargis in May 2008 and the intrusion of agricultural land and fish and shrimp ponds, a survey conducted by the Forestry Department after Nargis found.

He said the extent of mangrove forests in Ayeyarwady had declined by about 6475ha from 2007 to 2009.

U Maung Maung Pyone, secretary of the Biodiversity and Nature Conservation



Workers at a shrimp factory in Kyaukpyu township, Rakhine State. Pic: Aung Tun Win

Association, said the consumption of firewood for commercial reasons threatens the future of forest conservation efforts in the area.

"We saw huge piles of firewood, sometimes larger than houses, for use in the dried prawn business when we visited Pyapon township in Ayeyarwady Region. There are a number of such businesses in the area, and firewood demand is very high," he said.

Dr Kyaw Tint said the forestry department survey had recommended the reforestation and protection

of a five-mile strip along the coast, and the planting of trees for 100 metres on either side of big streams to help protect against bank erosion and to protect coastal dwellers from strong winds and sea waves.

He added that Myanmar's rich coral species were also affected by human activities and climate change. Coral is sold at some beaches and fishing on coral reefs is increasing. Illegal dynamite fishing is widespread in coastal areas and is also a major threat to coral systems. Coral bleaching as a result

of climate change has also been observed in Myanmar waters, he said.

Another issue discussed at the workshop was overfishing.

"A survey conducted in 17 fishing blocks near the Ayeyarwady delta coastline and in coastal and deep-sea areas off Tanintharyi Region in 2007 found that the catch was 85.92 kilograms an hour, down from 96.12 kg recorded by government surveys conducted in 1996 and 1998," Dr Kyaw Tint said.

U Mya Than Tun, assistant director of Environment and Endangered Aquatic Animal Conservation Unit, Department of Fisheries, said that fish resources such as hilsa were significantly down because of the use of unsustainable fishing techniques.

The workshop recommended the development and implementation of integrated ecosystem management, the formulation and implementation of integrated coastal management plans involving stakeholders, mainstream biodiversity conservation and climate change initiatives.

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Inle report highlights tourism impact

By Geoffrey Goddard

A CONSERVATION plan for Inle Lake has been given new urgency by the sharp increase in foreign tourists to Myanmar, a leading member of the project team said last week.

Mr Joern Kristensen was commenting on one of the key issues covered in a 118-page report, *Inlay Lake Conservation Project: A Plan for the Future*, which was released last week after more than six months' work by a 20-member team, 11 members of which are Myanmar.

The project's recommendations include the establishment of a Lake Conservation Authority, which would coordinate all conservation activities as well as managing a conservation fund.

The Norwegian government-funded project was coordinated by an Australian-based experts' network, the Institute for International Development, through IID-Myanmar.

The recommendations in the report are aimed at assisting the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry to develop its Action Plan for Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Management of Inle Lake 2010-2025.

Mr Kristensen, the Institute for International Development's Myanmar director and representative, told *The Myanmar Times* there was "certainly" a greater urgency for the conservation project because the ministry's action plan had not considered the impact of tourism on the lake and surrounding environment, probably because in 2010 the number of visitors was still very limited.

"While Bagan can accommodate many more tourists, it is very obvious that unlimited numbers of visitors can damage the lake; it is certainly something to be aware of for the future," said Mr Kristensen, referring

to the number of travellers who visit Inle Lake, one of Myanmar's premier tourist destinations.

A letter accompanying the report said that while the increase in tourism would generate new income, there was a serious threat that the net benefits to the regional communities may be offset by environmental costs to the lake, which is already under stress.

"This would have a negative impact on the livelihoods of ethnic communities making up the population of the lake region, endanger the health of the lake ecosystem and degrade the natural and cultural resources which form the attraction to tourists," the letter says.

"However, there is an equal potential for positive outcomes by managing new income for investment in maintenance of the health of the lake. This requires a permanent Inle Lake governance structure to be established. It also requires assistance to enable local youth from the lake region to shift from unsustainable farming to employment in the rapidly growing tourism industry," it says.

Mr Kristensen said the project's main priority is "proper coordination and management", one of the elements highlighted in an evaluation of the ministry's action plan, which was released in late



A fisherman at Inle Lake. Pic: Douglas Long

committee, as outlined in the ministry's action plan, which would be responsible for the overall coordination of all conservation activities on the lake. Another recommendation calls for the authority to manage a proposed Inle Lake Conservation Fund, as suggested by President U Thein Sein during a visit

doubling the levy, to bring it into line with the fee charged for visiting Bagan and other destinations, with the extra \$5 going to the conservation fund, would enable tourists to pay for some of the conservation activities needed at the lake.

"If you got 500,000 tourists that's \$2.5 million a year,

funding at sufficient scale to implement recommendations effectively and continuously, and; evaluation of the results of actions, particularly where they interacted with other actions.

The report noted that at a meeting with the area's residents, one had observed that there had been hundreds of projects and millions of

electricity services for communities living on and around the lake and for the rapidly expanding tourist industry; widespread support for more applied research into the environmental and livelihood issues affecting the lake and its community; little, if any, coordination of activities by different donors, agencies, institutions and NGOs under the ministry's action plan; and insufficient resources or incentives for stakeholders to implement the plan.

The report says management issues for the lake are many, complex and interactive, with nine being assessed as top priority for immediate action.

They are: the reduced surface area of open water, loss of diversity and abundance in aquatic plant communities, declining water quality, sedimentation of in-shore zones, soil erosion in watershed areas, declining and insufficient productivity of the lake's famous floating gardens, threats to human health due to inadequate sanitation, predicted large and rapid increases in visitor numbers, and a lack of effective engagement and capacity building among lake communities.

Norway funded the IID project because of the emphasis it gave to preserving the environment, said Mr Kristensen, a Danish-Norwegian who has been involved in Myanmar and Southeast Asia in various roles since 1991.

Mr Kristensen, a socio-economist, served in Myanmar with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime from 1991 to 1994 and was director-general of the Mekong River Commission from 1999-2004. He returned to Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis in 2008 to serve as manager for the Tripartite Core Group, which helped to coordinate the relief effort for those affected by the disaster.

'It is very obvious that unlimited numbers of visitors can damage the lake.'

2010 in response to concern generated by the water level of the lake dropping to an unprecedented low.

The IID's recommendations reflect the need for a governance mechanism for coordinating the projects and research needed to address the ministry's long-term plan through the proposed Lake Conservation Authority, to be based at Nyaungshwe. The authority would serve as a permanent secretariat for a central steering

committee, as outlined in the ministry's action plan, which was released in late

2010 in response to concern generated by the water level of the lake dropping to an unprecedented low. The IID's recommendations reflect the need for a governance mechanism for coordinating the projects and research needed to address the ministry's long-term plan through the proposed Lake Conservation Authority, to be based at Nyaungshwe. The authority would serve as a permanent secretariat for a central steering

committee, as outlined in the ministry's action plan, which was released in late

2010 in response to concern generated by the water level of the lake dropping to an unprecedented low.

which could fund a lot of beneficial activities," he said.

The project report said an evaluation of the progress of the ministry's plan had identified three key factors hampering its effective implementation.

They were a lack of: sufficient cooperation between agencies where responsibilities interact, with action often undertaken in isolation, with unintended results; secure ongoing

dollars already spent to address the lake's problems, without visible results.

Among the findings to emerge from the evaluation of the ministry's plan was that while there was insufficient appreciation of the contents and objectives of the ministry's plan, there was widespread support for an integrated development plan for the lake's watershed.

Other findings by IID identified an urgent need for water, sanitation and

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Govt plans more DRR investment

By Aye Sapay Phyu

MYANMAR will invest more in disaster risk reduction and expand local and international networks to enhance emergency response and relief, a government official told an international conference late last month.

Speaking at the Fifth Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from October 22-25, U Phone Swe, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement said that in improving its efforts to protect citizens from disaster, the Myanmar government had learned from the experience of Cyclone Nargis.

"National development and disaster risk reduction (DRR) are interdependent. National, state and regional governments are closely cooperating to explore the best ways to integrate disaster reduction programs with national development projects," he told the conference.

"Some damage is unavoidable in a natural disaster. The most important thing is to avoid loss of life. After Nargis, we built infrastructure such as road networks between villages, hills and cyclone shelters. We also seek to promote individual awareness and experience at

the management level, so we're planning to open a training school for in disaster management," he said. The deputy minister said a disaster management bill would soon be enacted in parliament.

Other DRR efforts included establishing the Myanmar Disaster Preparedness Agency in 2011, chaired by the Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, which operates down to the township level. Disaster preparedness committees have been established to implement the agency's strategies, especially in engaging local communities.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono highlighted the importance of the strengthening of local DRR capacity in the opening speech of the conference, which was attended by 2600 participants, including delegations from 72 countries.

"Before the central government can lend a hand, it is the local governments that must respond first. Therefore it is important to strengthen their capacity for DRR," Mr Yudhoyono said.

Civil society groups, academia, professionals, parliamentarians, religious leaders, and the business community all had their roles to play.

"DRR is a collective responsibility of governments and the people, both at national and local levels," he said.

Letkokkon Hotel reopens as nature resort

By Yu Yu Maw

ALMOST four-and-a-half years after it was destroyed by Cyclone Nargis, Letkokkon Hotel in Yangon has reopened under new management.

The hotel was transferred from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism to National Travels and Tours in October under a five-year build, operate and transfer contract and has been rebranded as Orchid Adventure Shore Resort. The hotel site covers 28 acres and is being billed as an ecotourism destination within easy reach of Yangon and the first five rooms reopened on October 30, with another 13 to be ready by the end of November.

"We have challenges to renovate the hotel and promote the area but ... we believe it will become a very attractive destination and travellers will be excited to come here," said U Htay Aung, managing director of National Travels and Tours.

Letkokkon beach is 48 kilometres (30 miles) south of Yangon near Letkokkon village at the eastern edge of the Ayeyardya delta. The beach is about 15km long and can be reached by car in about 2.5 hours on a bumpy road.

National Travels and Tours, which also owns Orchid Hotel in Yangon, plans to build another 50 to 100 rooms and a swimming pool in 2013. Room rates are likely to be from US\$50 to \$120.

However, the owners of the resort acknowledge Letkokkon



Rooms at Letkokkon Hotel, which reopened as Orchid Adventure Shore Resort in late October. Pic: Ko Taik

lacks the white sand of other beach destinations; the water is often shallow and muddy, particularly during monsoon and high tide.

Instead, the company plans to promote the area's ecotourism potential and is waiting for permission to build a bridge to Princess Island, opposite the beach, which is a haven of bird and plant life.

"Right in front of the beach there is an island that is very suitable for eco tours and adventure tours. After walking 15 minutes across the island you can see the blue sea water," U Htay Aung said.

Myanmar Travels and Tours

managing director U Hla Htay said the nearby village would also be an attraction for visitors.

Residents said they hoped the hotel would support economic development in the Letkokkon area.

"The beach was crowded in 1992 but lost its popularity in 2000 when Chaungtha and Ngwe Saung beaches were developed. Compared to those beaches it doesn't have good enough facilities to attract people but if the beach becomes popular again our lives will hopefully improve with better job and training opportunities," said U Kyin Saw from Letkokkon.




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Survey links HIV and poverty, joblessness

By Shwe Yee Saw Myint

A MAJOR study of people in Myanmar living with HIV/AIDS has found the disease is associated with a wide range of social problems, including poverty, joblessness and social stigma.

The study, which focused on 395 households with at least one HIV-positive person, was a community-based, cross-sectional descriptive survey carried out by the government and non-government organisations in 25 townships in six states and regions from January to October.

It found that while 64.5 percent of people living with HIV work, 70pc of surveyed households spent more than they earned, with 67.3pc reporting that they had borrowed money in the previous 12 months, mostly for daily living costs and healthcare. More than 63pc of households had sold assets to cover the cost of treatment for the HIV-positive person in their family.

The study was conducted by the Burnet Institute Myanmar, the Department of Medical Research (Lower

Myanmar), Myanmar Positive Group and the National AIDS program, with funding from UNDP/UNAIDS, between January and October.

"HIV/AIDS is the third most challenging health problem after malaria and TB. With the introduction of anti-retroviral treatment programs the survival rate has markedly increased. On the other hand, poverty not only adds to the vulnerability of people with HIV, but also lack of access to healthcare," said Dr Myo Thant, director of the Department of Medical Research (Lower Myanmar).

He said the study of the socioeconomic conditions of people with HIV/AIDS would inform the development of a planned AIDS Impact Mitigation Strategy.

The organisations involved in the survey made five recommendations, including conducting a national study on the socioeconomic impact of the effect of HIV on households that could then be used to develop the impact mitigation strategy.

They also said the government should develop a HIV workplace policy and

encourage the promotion of job opportunities for people with HIV, while greater efforts should be made to ensure HIV-positive children and children from HIV-affected households remain in school.

More than 60pc of households surveyed had one person living with HIV, while 31.1pc had two, 6.3pc had three and 2pc had four.

Dr Kyu Kyu Than, technical coordinator at the Burnet Institute, presented the results of the study at a workshop in Yangon on October 29. She said the average monthly income of people with HIV was K100,000, 40pc of which goes towards medication.

She said people living with HIV also have to cope with significant workplace discrimination, adding that many employers sacked workers known to be HIV positive.

Almost 40pc of people living with HIV reported experiencing discrimination, while 22.5pc said they had been denied employment due to their condition.

"Most good and stable jobs require an HIV blood test result, and if you are positive, they don't hire



A patient at a HIV clinic in Yangon. Pic: Kaung Htet

The study showed that access to ART medication was also a factor in migration.

"I lived in downtown Yangon, but I moved to Hlaing Tharyar township about two years ago without my family to get ART treatment," said a member of Myanmar Positive Group, adding that families of those affected faced difficulties in transporting them after death.

However, 32.7pc of those who relocated, which was about three in 10 of households surveyed, said it was because of financial problems. Another 16.8pc said they had been evicted by the house owner, while 10.9pc said they moved because of social discrimination.

U Maung Maung Kyaw of UNDP said the survey's backers plan to show the results to the Ministry of Health and other government departments in Nay Pyi Taw.

"[T]his is the first survey of HIV households, and we need to encourage the HIV community to work in partnership with government departments, NGOs and self-help groups," said U Maung Maung Kyaw.

you," an unnamed health worker from Mandalay was quoted as saying in the survey.

Discussing discrimination in the workplace, she said

people with HIV were even barred from working as labourers and street vendors. Some changed their workplace because of hostility from co-workers.

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Pyin Oo Lwin readies for fire balloon festival

By Phyo Wai Kyaw and Sithu Lwin

The 8th Fire Balloon Festival in Pyin Oo Lwin will be held from November 25 to 29 at an open field near Maha Ant Htoo Kan Thar Pagoda, a member of festival committee said last week.

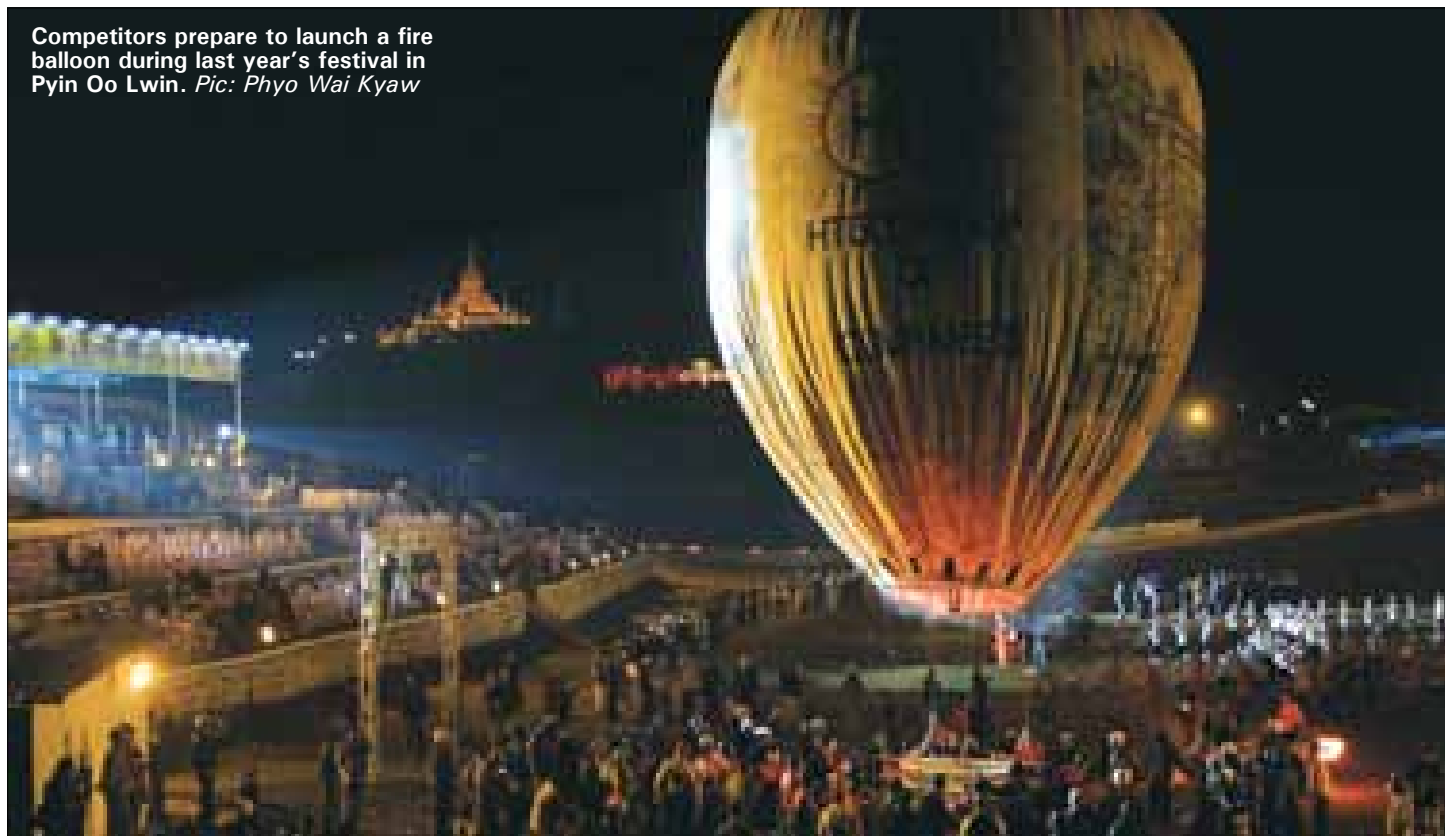
The festival committee will offer prizes for the most attractive fire balloons in a range of categories and will also hold a photo competition, he said.

"We will give 50 prizes over the course of the festival and will increase the amount of prize money. We also hope that the numbers of competitors will be higher than last year," festival committee member U Kyaw Htay Ko said on November 6.

The winner of the night category for most beautiful balloon will get K3.5 million, up from K2.5 million last year.

"There were more than 80 fire balloons in last year's competition," he said.

Competitors prepare to launch a fire balloon during last year's festival in Pyin Oo Lwin. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw



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MDY tourism grows but new guides face hurdles

Official training only offered in Yangon, making it prohibitively expensive

IN DEPTH
with
Bill O'Toole



THE influx of foreign tourists to Mandalay has prompted more people to consider a career as a tour guide, but many say they find themselves stymied by the government's onerous rules on licensing.

The course fee and expenses associated with the 2.5 month program in Yangon that must be completed to earn a licence are prohibitive barriers for many new guides. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism says the initial training course is K40,000-50,000, while biennial, three-day refresher courses are free. Voluntary specialist classes, such as history or folk tales, cost about K20,000 each.

Tour guides have to renew their licence every two years and this costs at least K30,000. At the same time, guides also have to pay a biennial tax to the Ministry of Finance and Revenue. The tax is negotiated and varies according to where guides work and whether they are employed by a travel company or are freelance.

Instead, many aspiring guides work unofficially and wait outside attractions in the city and surrounding tourist sites like Mingun for foreign customers. All guides who work for registered travel companies are required to have a licence.

"To get the licence is a lot of money; I am only a trishaw driver," said Ko Chit Ko, a part-time guide who waits at the southern entrance of Mandalay Hill for clients.

U Zaw Win, a spokesperson

for the Mandalay branch of the Myanmar Tourist Guide Association (MTGA), agreed amateur tour guides are common in Mandalay but said they lack the professionalism and knowledge of licensed guides.

"They do not tell the truth, they don't know to explain the history," he said.

centre in Mandalay but with no success.

"In 1998 when I attended [the training] ... it was a big challenge for me," said U Zaw Win. "When I came I had no friends in Yangon. I lived in a monastery and only ate one meal a day. It was difficult."

U Zaw Win said he believes

only had the funding to operate one centre but did not rule out the possibility of opening training schools outside Yangon in future.

For its part, the MTGA has attempted to fill the gap by offering a free, two-month informal training course for aspiring tour guides. The current class has 85 students, who are taught by licensed tour guides. U Zaw Win said graduates finish the class having all the skills and knowledge they would acquire at the training in Yangon but still have no licence.

One such graduate is Ko Kyaw Min, a young freelance guide who speaks perfect English with a distinct Australian accent.

He plans to go to Yangon to get his official licence sometime next year. "I don't mind the exams, the problem is I'm not from Yangon," he said, adding that he was unsure where he would live or how he would cover his costs.

"Myanmar tourism is growing really fast," he said. "It's necessary to have different centres in Mandalay, Bagan and Inle [Lake] so that all the people can benefit."

What is not in doubt is the sharp rise in visitors to Mandalay, famed for its palace walls and thriving handicrafts industry.

U Aung Aung Zaw, general manager of the Mandalay branch of Tour Mandalay, estimates that about 100,000 tourists have already visited Mandalay this year, with many more to come in November and December. "Our company has British, American, and Australian clients like never before," he said. -Additional reporting by Yu Yu Maw



Tourists board a boat at Mandalay's Mayanchan Jetty. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

"To get the licence is a lot of money; I am only a trishaw driver."

However, U Zaw Win agreed the costs associated with getting a licence are a significant burden, even if the training in Yangon is free. He said the MTGA has lobbied the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism to open a training and licensing

the training is necessary to teach young guides about culture, history, and in general how to deal with the tourists.

U Yan Naing, a deputy director general at the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, said the ministry

Hundreds suffer food poisoning after wedding

By Win Ko Ko Latt and Pyae Thet Phyo

HEALTH officials in Pyinmana have sprung into action after two-thirds of the inhabitants of a village suffered food poisoning.

The outbreak, which has so far affected 235 people but was under control late last week, occurred after a wedding breakfast of *mohinga* on November 6 in the village of Kinpontan, said medical staff.

Residents began to complain of vomiting, dizziness and diarrhoea by mid-afternoon.

"We don't know how many people have gone to hospital. We're sending them four to eight at a time," said Daw Mar Lar Aung, an official with the Nay Pyi Taw branch of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS).

Pending lab test results, the cause seemed to be food poisoning, she said, adding: "We've given preventive medicine to the entire village."

In Kinpontan, more than 530 people have been given the medication, said an official from the township health department.

"Residents of more than 200 houses out of up to 300 are showing symptoms, sometimes two or three from the same house," said Daw San Myint, 66.

"My daughter recovered from bouts of diarrhoea, but she is still suffering from dizziness," said U Kyaw Soe, a village resident.

Meanwhile, eight wedding guests suffered food poisoning in Sinthay village and five were sent to the 1000-bed Nay Pyi Taw hospital, said U Kyaw San Win, a disaster manager at MRCS.

Members of Nay Pyi Taw Council, the head of Pyinmana hospital, MRCS members and officials from the general administrative department have helped manage the outbreak by distributing medicines to prevent cholera and treating wells, ponds, drains and refuse piles with chlorine to prevent the spread of disease, said U Kyaw San Win.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe

NLD township officials ban info campaign in Mandalay

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

NATIONAL League for Democracy officials from Mandalay Region's Pyigyitagun township have banned a grassroots campaign to provide information to members on the party's upcoming national assembly.

The party's township-level commission, which was formed to handle preparations for the national assembly, sent a declaration to ward-level commissions in Pyigyitagun township on November 3 saying that the campaign was organised by "some irresponsible persons" and could cause divisions among party members.

The declaration said ward commission officials should not cooperate with the activists, who launched the campaign with a visit to Htain Kone ward on October 23 and have since visited two more of the township's 16 wards.

One of the leaders of the information campaign, U Ko Ko Aung, denied the accusation that their campaign would cause conflict between party members and said he would continue to meet Pyigyitagun residents to discuss the national assembly.

"On the contrary, I think the letter from the township commission could cause dissension among party members. I want to know whether the top leaders know about these issues. The officials from the township commission haven't done any public events for the assembly until now; all they've done is write that letter.



NLD members at the opening ceremony for a ward office in Mandalay's Pyigyitagun township in June. Pic: Supplied

We will continue our campaign and have already visited three wards in the township," U Ko Ko Aung said.

U Ko Ko Aung said some township commission members complained his group had criticised them in the media. However, he said they had only spoken to the media about the issue after not being allowed to discuss their grievances at township, district and regional meetings.

"They did not allow us to talk

or to attend the meetings. We have been unhappy about it for a long time but nobody knew about it. I want Daw Aung Sann Suu Kyi to know about how the [members of the township commission] are acting like dictators," he said.

Another member, U Win Hlaing, said the district commission had told the group it had not yet received the letter.

U Ko Ko Aung and U Win Hlaing also said the regional commission issued instructions

to each township commission that there should be at least two members from the district and township commissions at each ward assembly to "watch and guard" activities.

"That letter was not an instruction from the party headquarters and not included in the instructions for the assembly process. We think the expression 'watch and guard' suggests a level of interference in the ward assembly," U Win Hlaing said.

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Norway-backed tourism master plan to be finalised by March

By Yu Yu Maw

NORWAY will give US\$225,000 to help the government draw up a tourism master plan, which is expected to be finalised by the end of March.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide made the announcement at a consultation meeting on the plan on November 5.

Norway was one of the first countries to withdraw advice to its nationals not to visit Myanmar, said the minister, who has visited this country three times. This was done "in the belief that greater contact with the rest of the world would have a positive effect on a country that had been closed for a long time", he said.

The tourism master plan, which will guide the environmentally and socially sustainable development of the sector, will be drawn up by a six-member team from Thammasat University's Centre of Innovation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and the Asian Development Bank.

Team leader Dr Paul Rogers said on November 5 the team



Monks light candles at Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon on the full moon of Thadingyut. Pic: Boothee

will submit the draft tourism master plan on January 31, 2013 and finalise it by the end of March.

The announcement follows a four-week fact finding trip in which the team consulted more than 150 people in Nay Pyi Taw, Inle Lake, Tachileik, Kengtung, Kawthoung, Yangon and Kyaikhtiyo.

Mr Eide said Norway is also

supporting conservation work at Inle Lake that is being carried out by UNDP, the Institute of International Development, and UN-HABITAT. (See related story page 10.)

In the first half of 2012, international tourist arrivals increased by more than 30 percent compared to the same period last year, making Myanmar one of the world's

fastest-growing tourist destinations.

"Rapid tourism growth presents the country with many opportunities and challenges," Mr Eide said. "Tourism is a labour-intensive industry that can quickly create jobs across all levels of society, help to strengthen economic ties across borders, promote international friendship, and foster greater appreciation of Myanmar's rich cultural and natural heritage."

At the same time, damage to the environment and negative social impacts can occur if tourism development takes place in an unplanned and uncoordinated manner. A sustainable tourism policy would rely on less energy-intensive forms of transport with fewer emissions, Mr Eide said, adding that the tourism industry also had a responsibility to help conserve the country's cultural heritage.

Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung stressed the need to manage tourism responsibly and to avoid "killing the golden goose".

"We're very conscious of the challenges of long-term sustainable tourism development," he added.

Kungyangon school wins ASEAN award

By Aye Sapay Phyu

A SCHOOL in Yangon Region has beaten nearly 70 competitors from across Southeast Asia to win a major international prize for disaster preparedness.

Basic Education High School 1 in Kungyangon township won the US\$1500 "Education for Disaster Risk Reduction" prize, and four to six members of the school will have the chance to go for a four-day study tour to Japan. School representatives will be travelling to Bangkok this week to collect the prize.

The competition, in education for sustainable development, was organised by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) and the Japanese government in cooperation with UNESCO and the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ. The award will be held every year from 2012 to 2014 to promote and share best practices in schools across Southeast Asia.

The SEAMEO website said schools in Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam participated this year.

School principal Daw Saw Phone Kyi said the school disaster management plan had been prepared on the basis of an analysis of the disaster risks facing the school.

"We suffered badly from Cyclone Nargis in 2008, and learned to be resilient in case of future hazards," said one teacher. "We've organised a school disaster management committee and carry out disaster risk reduction activities."

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Pipeline trainees angry over pay

Train fire in Sagaing leaves 25 dead, 100 injured

By Sandar Lwin

MYANMAR engineers taking part in training in China before working on a pipeline project have expressed frustration over what they say are unfair differences in pay between Myanmar and Chinese workers.



Myanmar trainees at Southwest Petroleum University in Chengdu, China. Pic: Yadanar

The 58 trainees are attending a three-month course on pipeline operation at the Southwest Petroleum University in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. Upon completion they will work on the Myanmar-China pipeline project, which will see oil and gas pipelines link Rakhine State with Yunnan Province.

During a media trip to Chengdu between October 31 and November 4 arranged by the Friendship Association for Myanmar-China Pipeline, the workers told *The Myanmar Times* they were unhappy at the higher pay that Chinese trainees at the university will receive when they begin working on the same project.

The friendship association, a public relations vehicle for the project's backers, says the different salaries are because the Chinese workers are employed directly by state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), while the Myanmar workers are employed by its subsidiaries, South-East Asia Gas Pipeline Company Limited (SEAGP) and South-East Asia Crude Oil Pipeline Company Limited (SEAOP).

But the Myanmar trainees say they were not made aware they were working for subsidiaries of CNPC until they attended a welcoming

ceremony for a language training program conducted in Yangon.

"Only at the orientation ceremony we found out we are not working for CNPC but for SEAOP/GP. We applied for the job to CNPC," one trainee said.

"CNPC is the sixth-biggest energy company in the world. So we believe that there would be better job opportunities for us if we work for the company directly," he said.

The Myanmar workers say the Chinese trainees are receiving wages almost three times higher during the training period and five times higher after they start work. The association declined to discuss exact pay details, saying they were confidential.

"We met the Chinese trainees [at Chengdu] and spoke with some of them. They are also training to work on the same Myanmar-China pipeline for the operator position but with different salary. They said they are getting 3000 yuan (US\$480) while we have just about

1100 RMB (\$176) and the company has told them that they will get \$1500 when they start working," one trainee said.

The workers have been told they will be able to discuss the problems with a CNPC official on November 12.

"We will decide what we will do after meeting with that official," a trainee said. "Now we are one. If one of us decides to quit this job, all will do the same."

Most of 58 Myanmar trainees were hired through a Myanmar employment agency, Career Development Consultancy (CDC).

"Both the agency and the official who interviewed us for the job, Mr Zhao Hong Bo, told us we are [being hired] for CNPC and we have to work at the pipeline operated by CNPC. Our understanding was we are working for them," one trainee said.

But Mr Zhang, a spokesperson from the friendship association, said it was clearly expressed in the "job call letter" that the new employees were recruited by

the subsidiary companies rather than CNPC.

"The job call letter clearly expressed that the SEAOP/GP will recruit the new employees," he told *The Myanmar Times* on November 9.

The friendship association said the advertisement for the positions from CDC said "the recruitment is for Myanmar-China pipeline project" and made no mention of CNPC.

But a trainee said they had not seen a "job call letter" and the employment agency had told them they would be working for CNPC.

An employee at CDC said the agency had been told that CNPC was the company calling for applications for engineer positions.

"Currently, CNPC is still calling for [applications from] more engineers. Engineers can apply for it," the spokesperson said.

The trainees said Mr Zhao Hong Bo, who interviewed them before they were recruited, discussed the issue with them in Chengdu and said the difference in pay was partly because of the "different background" of the Myanmar and Chinese engineers.

"Mr Zhao Hong Bo said we are [working] for SEAOP, not for CNPC, and the salary rate is different between these two companies. And the salary difference between the staff for the same position of the same pipeline is because we have different backgrounds. We do not understand what it means by different backgrounds," one trainee told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

The association said by email on November 10 that

"different background" referred to the fact that "all the Chinese trainees of 2011 now in Chengdu major in science-related subjects and quite a number of them hold master and even doctoral degrees. Moreover, all of them hold an operation certificate of the pipeline project."

Mr Zhang confirmed the Chinese trainees are already CNPC employees, while Myanmar trainees are working for SEAOP/GP and will start their probation period when they have finished the training.

"Chinese students in the training at SWPU are for pipeline projects all over the world, including the Myanmar-China ones. They are already CNPC employees. If the staff has signed the job contract with CNPC, he will have the CNPC salary rate," he said.

"We have given the salary rate as [the Myanmar workers] asked for. We have fulfilled their salary expectation as they asked for. They agreed with that. And the Myanmar trainees haven't signed the job contract [yet]."

One of the trainees said they had asked for initial pay of US\$300 when they joined the training program.

"We believed that if we enter CNPC with an initial salary of \$300 then later we could get an attractive salary [from] CNPC ... but now we have found out we are not working for CNPC and the Chinese staff for the same pipeline project and for the same pipeline operator position will get five times higher salary than we will do. It is not satisfactory for us," he said

YANGON - Investigators searched for clues last week to the cause of a train derailment and an ensuing blaze that killed 25 people and injured nearly 100 more in Sagaing Region.

Two petrol tankers loaded onto the train overturned in the November 9 accident and local villagers collecting the fuel were burned to death as flames tore across the crash site.

While the death toll did not rise overnight, police said 93 injured people were undergoing treatment, most of them in local hospitals in the town of Kanbalu in Sagaing Region.

"I don't think the death toll will rise. The people who died perished on the spot when they were burnt," a police officer in Kanbalu said by telephone, asking not to be named.

The officer added that the cause of the accident was still unknown.

Photographs posted on a government website on November 9 showed the charred remains of victims and debris scattered around the wreck site.

Residents in the remote area rely on trains as the roads are poor, but the rail system is in desperate need of renewal after years of underinvestment. - AFP

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Let's Party

Business community ponders the future as investment law enacted

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

DOMESTIC reaction to President U Thein Sein's enactment of the Foreign Investment Law on November 2 was mostly positive last week, although businesspeople said more needs to be done to give local firms a chance to compete.

The law, which was published in Myanmar in state-run newspapers last week, is yet to be officially translated into English and many grey areas still exist for foreign investors but Myanmar businesspeople say further reforms to the country's banking sector and economy must be completed if Myanmar is to benefit from incoming investment.

Key recommendations from U Thein Sein adopted by parliament include the dropping of minimum capital requirements for joint ventures and caps on foreign share ownership.

Tun Foundation Bank chairman U Thein Tun said Myanmar's finance and banking sector needed to be reformed if domestic businesses were to compete in the new climate.

"Domestic businesses are generally financially weaker than foreign companies so we have to encourage banks to offer more loans or perhaps to invest in companies. Most governments encourage their citizens in this way, and I hope that will happen in Myanmar too," he said.

U Thein Tun is also the owner of the Myanmar Golden Star Company, which makes Quench, Crusher and Star Cola and is competing against Coca-Cola and Pepsi, both of which re-entered the market recently. He said companies operating against global giants might have to consider whether it would be better in the long term to form joint ventures rather than attempt to compete.

Myanmar Computer Company



A man displays copies of the Foreign Investment Law, enacted in early November, for sale in Yangon. Pic: Kaung Htet

chairman U Tin Win Aung said it made sense for companies to try and partner with international businesses in some sectors.

"We need foreign companies to help develop the country. But I mean companies that adopt international standards when cooperating with local companies," he said.

"We don't have to think that we will lose out in competition with international companies but should cooperate because our businesses need technology, international experience and management, all of which we can get through cooperation," he said.

U Tin Win Aung said the government needs to encourage further development of the economy and avoid excessive regulations that might stifle growth.

Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association chairman U Myint Soe said even though the United States and the European Union have lifted nearly all economic sanctions on Myanmar, significant Western investment has

so far failed to materialise.

"I hope the investment law is more foreign investor-friendly than previous drafts but at the same time local investors need to be given a chance to compete too," a spokesperson for the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry said.

A Ministry of Energy official said that most investment in the sector has been made by Asian companies and it would benefit from increased involvement by Western companies, which he hoped would lead to technology sharing and stronger competition.

He added that there is little domestic participation in offshore upstream (exploration and production) energy projects because domestic companies lacked the financial might, he said. "Western companies just want to the law to be accountable and will invest whatever the equity ratio or investment amount is if the conditions are right. But the law needs to be specific and clear."

Independent Central Bank likely by 2013, says official



IN DEPTH with Aye Thidar Kyaw

THE Central Bank of Myanmar will likely be independent and endorsed as a ministry-level body before 2013, a bank official said last week.

A draft law that would see the Central Bank be made independent was submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in the latest sitting, which started on October 18 and bank officials were confident it would be enacted soon, most likely this month. Central Bank deputy director general U Win Thaw told *The Myanmar Times* that he expected the bank to be granted independence by the start of 2013.

At present, all of the Central Bank's actions must be approved by the Ministry of Finance and Revenue. However, if it is granted independence it will be able to act as a ministry-level body and perform duties such as intervening in the currency market, for instance, U Win Thaw said.

"When the Central Bank has been promoted to a union level body, the bank's chairman will effectively operate as a minister, which will make the bank much faster to act," he said.

"The Central Bank will then have the authority to manage monetary policy and send proposals directly to the president. However, it will also need to organise a board of directors and consultants," he said.

Former Central Bank deputy governor and current vice chairman of Kanbawza Bank U Than Lwin said granting the bank independence was a positive move.

"This is the government promoting the role of the Central Bank, which will be able to implement its monetary measures faster and boost the trust of international bankers in its abilities," he said.

"But even though the government is reforming the capacities of the bank, they need to think about whether now is right time: is the Central Bank ready? Have the laws been made and

More page 22

1st Clinical Computed Tomography Symposium held in Myanmar



On the 6th of November 2012 there was the opening of the 1st Clinical CT Symposium in Myanmar just prior the Annual Society Meeting at the Chatrium hotel in Yangon. This event, held by the Myanmar Radiological Society and Singapore Radiological Society, was attended by more than 200 participants from the entire country. The whole

event was sponsored and supported jointly by Siemens Healthcare and Meditech Co., Ltd., who has been representing Siemens Healthcare in Myanmar for the last 15 years.

Computed Tomography (CT) is a very advanced and versatile medical imaging technique used in Radiology with a widespread use in Oncology, Neurology, Cardiovascular, Forensic and Emergency Medicine.

The actual CT scan only lasts a few seconds while the whole body can be scanned and structures of less than 1mm can be depicted making CT the most accurate and reproducible 3D imaging technique.

Every year worldwide around 5000 scanners are being installed while over the last couple of years some of these CT scanners have also been installed in Myanmar.

Siemens Healthcare is the global market leader in Computed Tomography and also the only vendor with a commercially available Dual Source CT scanner extremely well suited for the imaging of the beating heart and the coronary vessels enabling better prevention of heart attacks.

Educating Radiologists on making the right diagnosis from the images is very

important as well as teaching them understand to utilize the most modern applications of CT imaging like imaging the beating heart or blood perfusion of the brain.

Meditech Co., Ltd. and Siemens provided a one and a half day clinical education event on Computed Tomography (CT) for the 10th Annual Myanmar Radiological Society Meeting.

This event is open for all Radiologists and Radiographers from Myanmar.

The Singapore Radiological Society from Singapore supported the event with 5 distinguished speakers, amongst them the past & present heads of the Radiology Department from Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and National University Hospital Singapore (NUH).

The Siemens Healthcare Sector is one of the world's largest suppliers to the healthcare industry and a trendsetter in medical imaging, laboratory diagnostics, medical information technology and hearing aids. Siemens offers its customers products and solutions for the entire range of patient care from a single source - from prevention and early detection to diagnosis, and on to treatment and aftercare. By optimizing clinical workflows for the most common diseases, Siemens also makes healthcare faster, better and more cost-effective. Siemens Healthcare employs some 31,000 employees worldwide and operates around the world. In fiscal year 2011 (to September 30), the Sector posted revenue of 12.5 billion euros and profit of around 1.3 billion euros. For further information please visit: www.siemens.com/healthcare.



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BUSINESS

22

THE MYANMAR TIMES



The production floor at the UMH-3 factory in Hpa-an, Kayin State, on November 6. Pic: Myat May Zin

Clothing factory opened at Hpa-an's first industrial zone



IN DEPTH
with
Myat May Zin

THE opening of a new garment factory in a recently established industrial zone in Kayin State could relieve pressure on Yangon's industrial zones, while providing jobs to local people who might otherwise emigrate, industry experts say.

Factory UMH-3 - named after U Myint Htay, owner of UMH Garment Industries - opened in Hpa-an township on November 6. "Many factories are located in Yangon, which has led to the concentration of the work force there. This could lead to social problems. So U Myint Htay agreed to

set up a factory here," said U Myint Soe, chairman of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA).

"The factory can provide thousands of job opportunities. Myanmar has to prepare for entry into the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015," he said.

"We anticipate that garment factories operating near the border would then move to the industrial zones of Yangon because we have good labour sources. If people can get the same wages in their home town, they don't have to emigrate. And the government will benefit from their taxes," he added.

UMH already has two factories in Yangon: UMH-1 in Shwe Pyi Thar township in Yangon Region and UMH-2 in Pinyin Pin Industrial

Zone in Yangon Region. UMH-3 will be the first in Hpa-an. It will employ 150 workers, who have been undergoing training at the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association building in the township since February. The UMH-3 factory will occupy about 20 acres, and another building, covering 50 acres, is under construction.

"I will set up factories here from UMH-3 to UMH-9," said U Myint Htay at the opening ceremony for UMH-3.

U Zaw Min, Chief Minister for Kayin State, said "The main source of jobs here is agriculture, which doesn't pay enough. Most young people go abroad to find work. Setting up industry in Kayin State provides a great opportunity for local people, who will no longer have to leave home to make

a living."

Foundations for the Hpa-an Industrial Zone were laid in December last year, in a ceremony attended by U Zaw Min.

"The zone is close to the city and near the airport, the Thanlwin River and the general vicinity of the proposed East-West Economic Corridor road linking Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh and India," he told *The Myanmar Times* on December 7.

"This industrial zone will not only be connected to East and Southeast Asia but South Asia as well," he said.

The zone is 7 miles (11.2 kilometres) outside Hpa-an and close to the recently reopened Myawaddy-Mae Sot border trading area with Thailand.

Green forum planned for November 13-14

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

ENVIRONMENTALISTS and economists from Europe, the United States and Asia will be gathering in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon this month for the Second Forum for Green Economy and Green Growth (GEGG).

Formed in April last year, GEGG held its first forum last November, said executive director U Kyaw Lwin Hla. It

is a non-profit association for managing the environmental impact of economic development.

"We must think about environmental issues and sustainable social development when we promote economic growth. Because we are so far behind other countries, we can learn lessons from them about environmental impact," he said.

The forum will help match up local non-government organisations and

international institutions.

Up to 100 academics, environmental experts and economists from the United States, Austria, Norway, Australia, Japan and Singapore, and about 20 from Myanmar, will speak before audiences of 200-250 participants.

The meetings will take place in Nay Pyi Taw's Myanmar International Convention Centre on November 13-14, and in Yangon at the Myanmar Banks Association Hall on November 16.

From page 21

are the employees technically proficient?

"If these are not ready, it is unlikely that the bank will act independently," he added.

Co-operative Bank managing director U Pe Myint said that when the Central Bank is under the President's Office, there are

about six ministers after the president who will act as moderators - and the bank's chairman would need much experience to handle the post.

"I think the degree of independence of the bank will be determined by its chairman," he said.

U Maung Maung Win,

former deputy governor of the Central Bank, writing an article for the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper in early 2012, said that when the bank was made independent it would be required to manage the nation's monetary policy.

The article said that the basic objectives of the bank, as laid out in the

1990 Central Bank Law, were to stabilise the value of the kyat, implement effective payment systems and balance the monetary system. It added that when the bank was made independent, it would need to directly negotiate with the government to implement a consistent monetary policy.

Foreign insurers to enter Myanmar cautiously

By Clare Baldwin

HONG KONG – The world's top insurance firms are setting their sights on Myanmar, steeling themselves for a fight with corruption and ghosts from the nation's political past.

The opportunities are many. A large population, economic reforms and a natural resources industry could combine to create rising wealth among Myanmar's people. There is also money to be made by general insurers providing cover for the impending boom in construction projects.

"A few years ago everybody needed to have a China story and India as well," said Michael Daly, a director and consulting actuary for the China and Southeast Asia life insurance practice at Milliman Inc. "Now the attention has shifted to Southeast Asia."

Myanmar could produce US\$1.6 billion in annual premium revenues, according to *Reuters* calculations based on economic data and comparisons with neighbouring markets. That would be less than 10 percent of what Singapore premiums bring in now, but in line with Vietnam's insurance market.

With the opportunities come obstacles, including new rules governing foreign insurers that are yet to be tested.

In addition, the country's sole established insurer – state-backed Myanma Insurance – is guaranteed certain contracts, effectively closing off portions of the market.

Other challenges include competition from a handful of regional players and corruption.

The country's political history may also pose problems for insurers looking to sell products to high net worth individuals who may have ties to the former junta or be on blacklists.

And yet the early enthusiasm among global insurers shows how tough things have become in

their home markets and how crucial they see their position in Southeast Asia's growth story.

Global insurers have had their eyes on Southeast Asia, buying up assets and opening offices in Indonesia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Thailand as growth rates in the developing world far-outpaced developed markets.

Premiums in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam are expected to rise an average of 7.9 percent next year, according to a report by Swiss Re, more than double the global life insurance average.

Myanmar is attractive to insurance executives as its population of nearly 60 million makes it one of the largest in the region. Per capita gross domestic product is also over \$850, near the \$1000 mark that insurers say is the threshold where individuals begin buying insurance.

Tokio Marine Holdings Inc, Sompo Japan Insurance Inc, Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Co Ltd and United Overseas Bank Ltd have already established representative offices in Myanmar.

Before nationalisation in 1963, there were more than 70 local and foreign private insurance companies in Myanmar.

"Myanmar is an economic rising star," said David Wong, who runs Manulife's Southeast Asian operations and who travelled to Myanmar recently as part of a Canadian delegation. "It's not far behind Vietnam."

Analysts and executives interviewed by *Reuters* struggled to put an exact dollar figure on Myanmar's insurance market.

Using Vietnam as a model, Myanmar may eventually generate between \$1 billion and \$2 billion in premiums a year, according to a *Reuters* analysis, based on sources and economic data.

Vietnam last year had a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$120 billion and generated just over \$1.8



The world's largest insurers are setting their sights on Myanmar, which is dominated by Myanma Insurance (pictured). Pic: Thiri Lu

billion worth of premiums. That meant an insurance penetration of 1.5pc of GDP.

If Myanmar's economy grows 7pc annually in the next decade – the lower end of the rate estimated by the Asian Development Bank – it will double in size in 10 years' time to more than \$100 billion. If its insurance penetration matches or comes close to that of Vietnam, Myanmar could generate around \$1.6 billion in premiums.

Singapore brings in around \$19.5 billion in premiums,

the highest in Southeast Asia.

The clearest obstacle for a foreign insurer in Myanmar is corruption.

Transparency International ranks Myanmar as one of the four most-corrupt nations, on par with Afghanistan and only half a point better than North Korea and Somalia.

Rampant corruption would make it nearly impossible for global insurers to run proper background and business checks on policies for individuals and corporations.

Even worse, corruption could get an insurer in trouble if the company backs a person or entity that later becomes a criminal liability, a not-too-distant possibility in a country such as Myanmar.

"Many businessmen with close links to the military are now keen to reposition themselves as business friendly and compliant," said Richard Dailly, managing director at consulting firm Kroll Inc. "However, many of them still appear on blacklists either because of their close link to the

regime or their proximity to narcotics production."

Detailed market information is also hard to come by, with debt and equity analysts and ratings agencies yet to begin covering Myanmar's insurance sector. Performing due diligence is difficult, Dailly adds.

The laws governing Myanmar's insurance sector are loosely-worded and do not apply to the state's monopoly, though some parts of the law could be attractive to foreign insurers.

Insurers can get licenses from the Central Bank of Myanmar that allow them to write policies in foreign currencies. Other parts of existing laws could prove worrisome.

So far, government officials are saying foreign insurers will be kept at arms-length until around 2015. That is when they will be granted licenses and allowed to do business, the deputy minister of finance and revenue told *Reuters* in September.

"For those who invest the time and energy and know-how to actually help it develop, those people are going to get a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Ince & Co partner Iain Anderson, an industry lawyer who recently travelled to Myanmar.

– *Reuters*

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Myanmar's corn farmers could gain from US drought

By Kyaw Myint

THE worst drought in more than 50 years that is affecting large parts of the United States is expected to reduce the nation's corn output by about US\$40 billion, according to the government and analysts.

At its height in July, more than 80 percent of prime US farmland was in drought and corn production this year is expected to fall by 13pc to 272 million tonnes, the US Department of Agriculture said. If the predictions prove to be accurate, the crop would be the smallest in nearly 10 years.

Dire crop forecasts have circulated for much of the summer and have been responsible for driving corn prices to record highs of \$8.4375 a bushel (equal to 56 or 72 pounds or 25.4/32.7 kilograms depending on condition) on August 10, Dow Jones Newswires reported on October 23.

The reduced output is already putting pressure on exporters, ethanol producers and livestock owners by increasing the cost of doing business.

"We don't have buffer stock and if we have another weather problem next year corn prices could explode again," said Don Roose, president US Commodities, Des Moines, Iowa. "We kept saying last year that we couldn't afford a weather

problem this year and look what happened, I kept telling people that weather is 80 percent of the market," he said.

According to global food price monitor export (FAO) prices of corn in August remained close to the record levels reached in July 2012. The benchmark US corn averaged \$328 a tonne, about 5pc higher than in August 2011.

Deteriorating crop prospects for corn in the United States initially underpinned export quotations, but prices eased towards the end of the month following heavy rains in areas hardest hit by drought.

After the US, China is the world's second largest corn producer. Corn production in 2011 in China was forecast at 191.8 million tonnes and 8.1 million tonnes were imported. Average export of corn from 2008-11 was 100,000 tonnes based on FAO statistics. Corn production in 2012 was forecast at 190 million tonnes, with a further 9.6 million tonnes slated to be imported, based on the forecast for 2012-13.

It is in this climate that Myanmar could benefit by feeding China's need for corn.

Myanmar's corn crop is mainly sown during the monsoon months, which typically stretch from May through September. The country's corn sown area in 2011-12 was estimated at 1.017 million acres by the Department of Agriculture (formerly

Myanmar Agriculture Service); of this, 88pc was sown during monsoon.

Total production was estimated at 1.46 million tonnes, with an average yield of 1.43 tonnes an acre.

Yields are comparatively high because many farmers use hybrid corn varieties, mainly CP brand, which are also requested by Chinese traders.

Average yields of hybrid corn are 60-70 baskets (1.47 -1.71 tonnes) an acre, compared with 30-40 baskets an acre (700-900 kilograms) for non-hybrid corn. However, hybrid variety corn also needs more fertiliser than non-hybrid strains.

CP company is involved in many aspects of the trade - it sells hybrid corn to farmers and then buys the milled feed, which is then used as nutrition for its chickens.

However, Myanmar's corn is also sought after by Chinese traders, who buy up to 91pc of total exports.

Corn sown in northern Shan state is sent straight to the town of Muse on the Myanmar-China border, and then traded to Shweli (Ruili) in China. CP corn in Myingyan (Mandalay Region), Momywa (Sagaing Region), and Taunggyi (Shan State) is shipped to Mandalay, where it's bought by traders to sell to China.

In Muse, the Ministry of Commerce established a trading zone at the 105-mile

mark to facilitate Chinese trade. Commerce Journal, which is run by the Ministry of Commerce, maintains a regular corn price record based on free on board prices in Yangon. E-Trade Myanmar also keeps records of corn prices for 2012.

These show that corn price have been generally rising throughout 2012, hitting a high of about \$414 a tonne in early September but have since fallen to about \$316. By contrast, the average export price of corn ranged from \$90-\$250 a tonne during the 2010-11 year.

Myanmar's corn exports have varied from 90,800-465,000 tonnes between 2001-02 and 2010-11. The 2010-11 fiscal year was the highest on record at nearly 465,000 tonnes, with 90.5pc exported to China.

However, with the shortfall in production in the US, prices are tipped to increase in China, India, Japan and Malaysia, which could be good news for Myanmar's corn farmers. However, the higher prices might affect poultry farmers by increasing the cost of feed, which will surely result in higher egg and chicken meat prices for consumers.

U Kyaw Myint is a former civil servant, and consultant with the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation's Market Information Service Project, the Agriculture Market Information Service (AMIS) and E-Trade Myanmar.

Rice federation to spend K14.5b on buffer stock

By Myat May Zin

MYANMAR Rice Federation is planning to spend K14.5 billion (about US\$17.2 million) to buy buffer stock from the November crop, starting from November 20. The federation will accept only 25 percent broken rice, said Dr Soe Tun, central executive member of MRF on November 8.

"We will ask farmers to make bids because we could not collect the buffer stock for last year. We have no milling machines. That's why there were problems with the quality and quantity of rice after milling. For this year's crop, we will accept only 25pc broken rice and will only consider applicants who make bids," he said.

MRF will invite bids in private sector and

state-owned media this month, he said.

"The funding for the buffer stock comprises K10 billion from the government, K1 billion from cooperative departments, and K3.5 billion from MRF," he added.

He said restrictions would apply, and that each bidder might be allowed to sell a maximum of 1000 tonnes, but the amount had not yet been decided.

"We will buy directly from the farmers because some people can't send stock to our warehouses because of transportation difficulties. Some people are still trying to send their deliveries from the last crop, so we will buy only in Yangon this year," he said.

In the recent monsoon season, the major rice production areas of Yangon, Bago and Ayeyarwady regions were flooded for

several days. As a result, some fields were destroyed and in others replanting was delayed.

"There was some impact on rice production because of abnormal weather. But the amount of rice will not decrease significantly, and the price will not increase," said Dr Soe Tun.

Total rice production annually amounts to more than 12 million tonnes. More than 10 million tonnes are used domestically, and less than a million tonnes are exported. MRF plans to export about 50,000 tonnes (25pc broken rice) to Africa in late November, of which more than 10,000 tonnes is left over from last year's buffer stock. The remaining 40,000 tonnes is from Myanmar Agricultural Public Corporation.

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EU urges action on illegal fisheries drugs



IN DEPTH
with
Soe Sandar Oo

THE Department of Fisheries has been urged by European Union food safety officials to closely monitor the import of veterinary medicines from China and stamp out illegal shipments, said U Tint Wai, the department's assistant director.

"There is so much illegal veterinary medicine entering from China. We need to control the market and then wipe out these illegal products," he said.

"The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department has the main responsibility to release clear announcements to farmers about which medicines are illegal and which ones can be used," he said.

He added that the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries needed to take a strong stand in helping to announce which medicines were considered safe for use.

U Tint Wai said EU food safety tests would detect the presence of illegal medicines and the shipment would be sent back.

"The veterinary medicine market needs to be controlled just as carefully as products intended for humans," he added.

U Tint Wai said businesspeople could apply to legally import veterinary medicines through the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

"The most important thing is that farmers must know what medicines they can use because this is not the case at present," he said.

U Tint Wai said EU officials had warned the department that it

would closely inspect fish imported from Myanmar.

Ms Marie Andersen, senior food quality and safety advisor of the EU Quality, Conformity Assessment and Safety Department said: "Myanmar does not have good regulations for controlling the market of veterinary medicines. If it continues in this manner, the EU will not accept fish farmed in Myanmar."

"The EU and the rest of the world are worried about the chemical residue inside fish tissue following the use of illegal medicines," Ms Andersen said.

"If someone eats that fish, the remaining chemical can lead to strong resistance in humans, meaning that medicine might not work in future," she added.

Ms Andersen said the government and private sector – including industry associations

– needed to cooperate to combat the problem.

"Efforts to stop the influx of illegal veterinary medicines have started in Myanmar but they must be kept up for the long term good of the people and market," she said.

Ms Andersen said up to 60 percent of the EU's fish was imported, with South Africa and Malaysia the major suppliers. Myanmar has a good opportunity to contribute to the market, too, if it could meet the safety requirements.

U Tint Wai said that companies that import veterinary medicines should take steps to ensure that those products are shipped to farmers and not switched with cheaper Chinese variants along the way.

There have been allegations in the past that companies provide legitimate products to the department for testing purposes

but then import and sell illegally imported fakes from China.

U Tint Wai said farmers must also avoid using hormones to accelerate the growth of fish, adding that such products should only be used during the hatching process.

"This is not only important in the fish farming sector but also in the rearing of pigs and poultry because the EU never allows imported fish or meat with traces of hormones," he said.

However, the EU is assisting the Department of Fisheries in implementing a project that encourages farmed fish exports. Part of this assistance has been providing information on what products and medicines are acceptable.

Myanmar exports about US\$15 million worth of seafood to the EU a year, U Tint Wai said.

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Developers plan mile-high Ecuador skyscraper

QUITO – Not far from Ecuador's capital, tourists flock to a line etched in the ground and straddle it so they've got one foot on either side of the equator.

A 30-metre (100 foot) obelisk marks the spot. Now, the provincial governor, thinking much bigger and grander, wants to build a mile-high (1.6-kilometre) skyscraper there.

Besides drawing more visitors to what would be the world's tallest building, the structure would honor the Quitu-Cara, an indigenous culture credited with being the first to define the line marking the planet's waistband, said deputy governor Marcela Costales.

Promoters say the building would cost US\$200 million. Its main backer is Gustavo Baroja, governor of Pichincha province, which includes Quito.

Contacts have been established with potential investors in the United States and Europe, and a delegation from Qatar that is interested in the tower has visited Ecuador, Costales said.

The obelisk stands at a site called Ciudad Mitad del Mundo, or Half-the-World City, about 13 kilometres (8 miles) from Quito. The spot draws about 900,000 visitors a year.

The mile-high structure would be called the Tower of the Sun and could draw three times that number, Baroja said.

The obelisk was built in 1979 to honour French expeditions dating to 1736 and late in that century to study the size and shape of the Earth.

That monument was a product of its time "but in the new millennium, with mankind's awakening, this zeal to find new energies, Half-the-World City has a greater value", Costales said.

"We want it to be a global icon reflecting what we are," said Baroja.

The world's tallest building is Burj Khalifa in Dubai, which is 828 metres (2716.5 feet) high.

A first draft model of the proposed new building more than twice that height has been completed by Uruguayan architect Rafael Vinoly.

It is not without critics.

Alberto Andino, president of the Pichincha Architectural Association, said the idea smacks of what he called Dubai-style runaway urban development at the expense of respect for nature.

– Bloomberg News

Race to the sky hots up in YGN

By Htar Htar Khin

MYANMAR'S commercial capital appears to be witnessing a race to the sky following the announcement of a planned 38-storey office tower on Merchant Street, just weeks after a 34-storey development in Mayangone township was unveiled.

The 555 Merchant Street Office Tower will be built on a 23,000-square-foot block at the corner of Merchant and 36th streets in Kyauktada township, said Mr Khalilrudin Bin Shehabuddeen, executive director of Singapore-based Kawa Oil Co, which is developing the project.

He said the tower will offer 720,000 square feet of office space. And in a city increasing beset by parking problems, the tower will have four basement levels for parking, he said.

He added that the total cost of the project is estimated at more than US\$100 million.

"The first six floors will be used for retail and banking but the remaining 32 storeys will be dedicated to offices," he said. "The banking spaces will be available to both domestic and international banks because we expect international banks will be able to operate in Myanmar in future – and they are surely interested in working here," said Mr Khalilrudin.

"We hope to develop the tower as a centre for excellence and we invite local and foreign companies to come and open offices, where we will provide international standard facilities," he said.

Mr Khalilrudin said the timeline for the project was 30 months, with completion scheduled for October or



An Orchid Hotel staff member shows a model of the 38-storey 555 Merchant Street Office Tower last week. Pic: Htar Htar Khin

November 2015.

"The project is designed by Irie Miyake Architects and Engineers from Japan, which has designed more than 100 skyscrapers worldwide. And the firm will also provide technical assistance, engineering and other services. The project design is at the final stage and will be made available within two weeks," Mr Khalilrudin said.

"Myanmar has now become a distinct choice for international investors, including those from Japan. This project is particularly meant as multinational investment project that bring together investors from Japan, Singapore and other countries as well," he added.

He said one of the main

aims of the development was to meet the demand for office space in the city.

"The first aim is to fulfil the office space requirements in Yangon because there is only a limited supply of premium office space," he said.

"Another aim is to create a centre for business incubation: We want to allow our future users the best environment to harness their innovative and creative ideas so they can produce world beating products and services," he said.


The building will include between eight and 12 elevators with backup electricity generators.

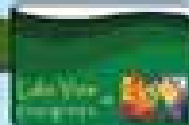
"We want this building to be a long lasting landmark that will remain close to the hearts of the beautiful

people of Myanmar. Through coincidence and luck, the signing ceremony for this project took place just after the enactment of Myanmar's amended Foreign Investment Law," he said.


The signing ceremony was held at Sayasan Plaza in Bahan township on November 3 between Kawa Oil and the two owners of the property – U Khin Maung Aye, chairman of Co-operative Bank and U Htay Aung, chairman of National Group of Companies and owner of Orchid hotel. Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin also attended the signing.

On that same day, Kawa Oil also signed an agreement with Irie Miyake Architects and Engineers to provide technical assistance for the project.






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Social media played key role in Obama's campaign and victory

WASHINGTON – Barack Obama brought his sophisticated social media campaign to an emotional climax on November 6 by proclaiming his victory on Twitter and Facebook just as TV networks called his re-election as US president.

Obama, who defied the undertow of a slow economic recovery and high unemployment, beat Republican foe Mitt Romney after a relentless get-out-the-vote push on Twitter, Facebook, Reddit and other platforms.

"This happened because of you. Thank you," he tweeted to 22 million followers just minutes after the first US network called his victory, indicating the importance he attached to social networks in his 2012 campaign.

"Four more years," he said straight afterwards, posting a photo of him hugging First Lady Michelle Obama as other TV networks followed suit and announced his re-election one-by-one as 44th President of the United States.

The post was his most retweeted ever – shared more than 320,000 times – said Twitter's government and politics account @gov.

The same picture of a relieved and happy-looking Obama hugging his wife appeared on the president's Facebook account – and was



US President Barack Obama delivers his victory speech in Chicago on November 6. Social networks played a critical role in the months-long US presidential campaign. Pic: AFP

shared tens of thousands of times by some of his 32 million fans.

Social networks emerged as key tools in the months-long US presidential campaign, with both Obama and Romney staging major pushes on these popular platforms to draw in supporters and get them to go out and vote.

But while Romney has increased his presence hugely on social media compared to 2008 Republican presidential candidate John McCain, Obama is seen as having retained the upper hand from his successful online campaign four years

ago. Already in January, Obama's campaign manager Jim Messina had hinted at a huge social media campaign in an interview with *Newsweek*.

"Our efforts on the ground and on technology will make 2008 look prehistoric," he was quoted as saying.

Even as election day drew to a nail-biting close late on November 6, Obama made a surprise appearance on social news website Reddit, where he made a last-ditch plea for more votes.

"I'm checking in because polls will start closing in this election in just a few

hours, and I need you to vote," he said on the popular site, which allows users to rank posted information according to whether they like it or not.

As the evening progressed, the Democratic incumbent continued to push Americans to vote on social media, even as polls shut in one state after the other.

His campaign team continued to send messages directed at those Twitter followers in states that were still voting, reminding them to stay in line even if polling stations had officially closed.

Romney, by comparison, sent a general tweet out early evening to his 1.8 million followers asking them to vote, but stayed silent thereafter.

"With your help, we will turn our country around and get America back on the path to prosperity. Please vote today," he tweeted.

Twitter said the election was the most tweeted about event in US political history, with some 20 million poll-related posts fired out on people's accounts – and that was before Obama's re-election for a second term.

When television networks called the victory, Twitter went into manic overdrive, with election-related tweets rising to an average of 327,453 a minute. – AFP

Gabon blocks new Megaupload site

LIBREVILLE – Gabon's government said last week it was suspending the website www.me.ga, which internet tycoon Kim Dotcom had planned to use to launch a new version of his defunct Megaupload file-sharing site.

"I have instructed my departments...to immediately suspend the site www.me.ga," Communication Minister Blaise Louembe said on November 6, adding he wanted to "protect intellectual property rights" and "fight cyber crime effectively".

"Gabon cannot serve as a platform or screen for committing acts aimed at violating copyrights, nor be used by unscrupulous people," the minister said.

The announcement came after Kim Dotcom unveiled plans the previous week to re-launch his file-sharing empire on January 20, exactly one year after he was arrested in New Zealand on online piracy charges.

The United States accuses Dotcom, 38, a German national who legally changed his name from Kim Schmitz, of fraudulently making more than US\$175 million on pirated movies, TV shows and other content.

The United States wants to extradite him to face charges of money laundering, racketeering, fraud and online copyright theft that could see him jailed for up to 20 years.

Dotcom, who denies the charges, is free on bail in New Zealand ahead of an extradition hearing in March.

The new site, www.me.ga, was to be hosted on Gabon's .ga domain.

Louembe said the domain name had been allocated to someone in France who

had then transferred it to Dotcom.

The minister said an investigation by his staff had found the site was set up to redirect

traffic to another site hosted in France that would provide access to shared files.

Dotcom said on Twitter that he was the victim of a US-led "witch hunt" but was not concerned at Gabon's move.

"Don't worry. We have an alternative domain," he tweeted to his 150,000 followers. "This just demonstrates the bad faith witch hunt the US government is on."

Dotcom did not reveal the alternative domain name. – AFP

'I have instructed my departments... to immediately suspend the site...'

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E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
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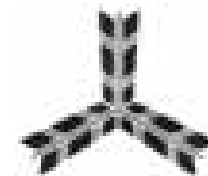
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Dated: 12th November, 2012

Graft could bring 'collapse', Hu warns party congress

Briefly

DAMASCUS – A defiant President Bashar al-Assad on November 8 rejected calls that he seek a safe exit, vowing in an interview with state-backed *Russia Today* television that he will “live in Syria and die in Syria” and warning that the world cannot afford the cost of foreign intervention.

• Earlier report, P. 31.

WASHINGTON – The Pentagon revealed on November 8 that two Iranian fighter jets fired multiple rounds at an unarmed US Predator drone in the Gulf on November 1 but the aircraft was not hit, in an incident that underscored tensions in the region.

BAMAKO – Preparations are accelerating for an intervention in Islamist-occupied northern Mali with West African leaders poised to adopt a military blueprint before seeking approval from the UN Security Council on November 15. – AFP

BEIJING—China's outgoing president warned the Communist Party last week that it faces “collapse” if it fails to clean up corruption and called for an economic revamp as he opened a congress to inaugurate new leaders.

The week-long party congress will end with a transition of power to Vice President Xi Jinping, who will govern for the coming decade amid growing pressure for reform of the communist regime's iron-clad grip on power.

The party's outgoing general-secretary, President Hu Jintao, delivered his starkest warning yet about fighting rampant corruption following a top-level murder and graft scandal involving former regional boss Bo Xilai.

“If we fail to handle this issue well, it could prove fatal to the party and even cause the collapse of the party and the fall of the state,” Hu told more than 2200 delegates inside Beijing's vast Great Hall of the People on November 8.

At the congress, held every five years, Hu also positioned the world's second-largest economy for a more assertive role as he insisted China should be a “maritime power” that “resolutely” protects its interests.

Heading into the 18th party congress, China has been skirmishing with Japan and other Asian neighbours over territorial disputes and flexing its growing military muscles to the disquiet of the United States.

“We must continue to make both active and prudent efforts to carry out reform of the political structure and make the people's democracy more extensive, fuller in scope and sounder in practice,” Hu also said.

Without naming Bo, the president added that the party “must make sure that all are equal before the law”.

In his 90-minute address, Hu also stressed that China must recalibrate its export- and investment-led growth model, after years

of breakneck economic expansion that experts warn is unsustainable.

Communist leaders including Premier Wen Jiabao – who is due to step down in March as part of the leadership transition – have long been calling for China to rebalance its economy by fostering domestic consumer spending.

The congress will end this week with the installation of Xi as the party's new general-secretary, and he is in line to succeed Hu as state president next March.

Behind closed doors, Communist Party leaders appear to have settled on the new line-up of the Politburo Standing Committee, China's highest decision-making body, which will be unveiled when the congress ends on November 14.

The committee will be steered by Xi, 59, who has previously headed some of China's most economically dynamic and reform-minded areas. – AFP

• Related reports, P. 36.



US President Barack Obama savours a hug from his wife, Michelle, after delivering his re-election victory speech before a jubilant crowd in Chicago early on November 7. Obama made history by becoming only the second Democrat to win a second term. His inauguration ceremony will take place in Washington on January 21. Pic: AFP • Related reports, P. 30.



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Victorious Obama challenges Republicans to end gridlock

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama returned to the White House on November 8 emboldened by his stunning re-election and challenging his Republican opponents to work with him to avert a looming fiscal crisis.

The liberal euphoria that greeted Obama's landmark election defeat of Mitt Romney was short-lived as he immediately set about the daunting task of ending the partisan gridlock of a bitterly divided US Congress to avoid a catastrophic "fiscal cliff" that could plunge the fragile American economy back into recession.

A combination of dramatic spending cuts and tax increases will take effect on January 1 without a deal on reducing the ballooning budget deficit, with Democrats and Republicans in Congress locked in a stand-off.

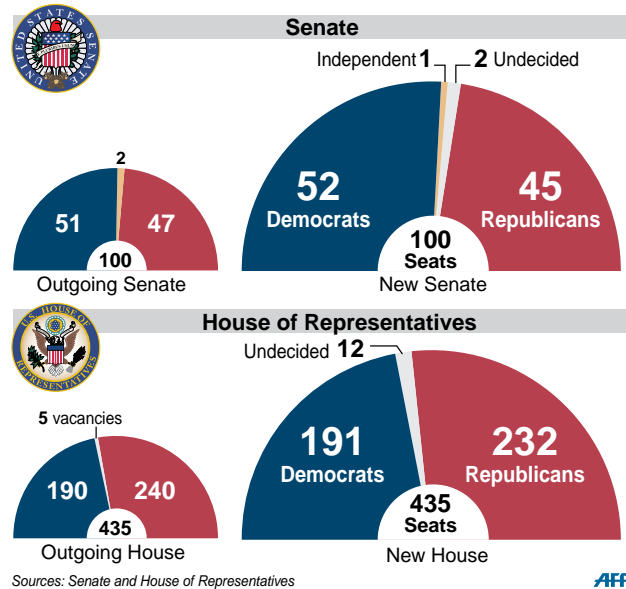
Obama called congressional leaders, sending out an overt message that his priority was to try to break the deadlock in the lame-duck session of Congress that precedes his January 21 inauguration ceremony.

He spoke to Republican House Speaker John Boehner and also telephoned the minority Republican leader in the Senate, Mitch McConnell, as well as top Democrats.

Obama believes that by returning him to the Oval Office, American voters signaled to Washington that both parties must set aside

The new US Congress

Partial election results



Sources: Senate and House of Representatives

AFP

partisan interests and put the economy first, a White House official said.

Obama triumphed despite the highest unemployment rate of any US president

Obama had 303 electoral college votes, easily surpassing the 270 needed to win.

In a soaring victory speech, the 51-year-old

whether it be comprehensive immigration reform, education, or a grand plan to rein in the troublesome deficit.

The big question for Obama is: Will the Republicans be willing or can they be pressured to strike a meaningful deal that will avoid the prospect of a disastrous economic crunch forced by mandatory budget cuts?

Republican nominee Romney, 65, deflated and exhausted, offered a dignified tribute, as he consoled dejected supporters in Boston moments after phoning Obama to formally admit defeat.

"This is a time of great challenges for America and I pray that the president will be successful in guiding our nation," Romney said.

Obama's victory means he will get the chance to embed his healthcare and Wall Street reforms. Romney had pledged one of his first acts would be to repeal Obamacare.

The president ran for re-election on a platform of offering a "fair shot" to the middle class, of fulfilling his pledge to end the war in Iraq, killing Osama bin Laden, and starting to build a clean energy economy.

But Obama also ran a fiercely negative campaign branding Romney – a multi-millionaire former corporate turnaround wizard and ex-governor of Massachusetts – as indifferent to the woes of ordinary Americans. – AFP

'The best is yet to come.'

since Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 and became only the second Democrat since then to win a second term – the other being his stalwart supporter Bill Clinton.

With Florida still totalling up the last remaining ballots after another embarrassing vote-counting debacle there,

president sought to revive the great hopes he stirred in 2008, promising "the best is yet to come" and hinting at a far-reaching agenda in his second term.

But his in-tray is already overflowing with first-term plans thwarted by blanket Republican opposition,

Historic gains for women

WASHINGTON – Historic election gains on November 6 will see the largest number of women in the US Congress.

Beginning with the new legislative session in January, women will hold 20 seats in the Senate, about one-fifth of the US legislative chamber.

In the House of Representatives, there will be a record 76 women – 56 Democrats and 20 Republicans – said the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), which maps the progress of women in elected office.

In one of the most visible displays of women's increasing political muscle, voters in the northeastern state of New Hampshire will send an all-woman delegation to the next Congress. The state also elected a female governor.

In a closely-watched race, Democrats reclaimed the Massachusetts Senate seat caused by the death of liberal icon Ted Kennedy. Harvard professor Elizabeth Warren defeated Republican incumbent Senator Scott Brown.

Before deciding to run for the Senate, Warren had been Obama's choice to head the newly formed federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, but Senate Republicans blocked her nomination.

In another election stunner, Democratic Representative Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin bested popular Republican former Governor Tommy Thompson, becoming the first openly gay member of the Senate. – AFP

Minorities opt for Obama

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama enjoyed soaring support from Asian Americans to win another term, a survey said on November 7.

A poll conducted for community groups found that 73 percent of Asian Americans voted for Obama, a gain from the two-thirds support he won in 2008 and part of a major shift toward the Democrats during the past 20 years.

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the United States and made up 3.4pc of the electorate on November 6, up from 2.7pc four years ago.

Obama, the first African American president, also

enjoyed overwhelming backing from black and Hispanic voters, helping him offset a tilt by white voters toward his Republican rival Mitt Romney.

"It is without question that these three minority groups combined provided the margin of victory for Obama nationally but also in some key states," said Matt Barreto, founding principal of Latino Decisions, a research firm that carried out the survey.

"Congress is slowly, but surely, starting to better represent America," said Representative Mike Honda, whose California district is the first on the US mainland with an Asian American majority. – AFP

Gay rights make advances

WASHINGTON – Supporters of gay rights celebrated important gains for same-sex marriage in four states.

Voters in Maryland, Maine and Washington approved marriage equality in referendums held simultaneously with the November 6 elections – the first time it has been approved at the ballot box in the United States.

In Minnesota, voters rejected a proposal to ban gay marriage in the state's constitution.

Same-sex marriage is already legal in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont, as well as the District of Columbia.

But it remains a divisive issue, banned in some 30 of the 50 states and fiercely opposed by evangelical Christians and Roman Catholic bishops. It is not recognised at the federal level either.

Obama made history in May as the first serving president to publicly support marriage equality. – AFP

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UK plans talks with Syrian rebel groups

LONDON - Britain announced on November 7 it would begin direct talks with military figures in Syria's armed opposition groups, as Prime Minister David Cameron called for a new international approach to ending the conflict.

In a statement to parliament, Foreign Secretary William Hague said Britain would not supply weapons to the rebels and said officials would stress to the opposition groups the importance of respecting human rights.

Hague said opposition groups were playing an "increasingly influential role" in Syria as the conflict worsens.

"I have therefore now authorised my officials to have direct contact with an even wider range of representatives, including military figures in the armed opposition," he said.

"This will help us to understand better the situation in Syria and the relationship between political and armed opposition groups so we can properly support political transition."

All the contacts would take place outside Syria, Hague said.

In an interview with *Al-Arabiya* television on November 6, Cameron had said he would support giving safe passage to President Bashar al-Assad if it meant ending the near 20 months of bloodshed in Syria, and he repeated this the next day.

"I would like to see President Assad face full international justice for the appalling crimes he has

BBC from Zaatari refugee camp while lies not far from the Syrian border.

"We need more pressure at the United Nations, more help for the refugees, more help for the opposition, more action to turn the screw on this dreadful regime.

"And that is my priority with the newly elected president."

Cameron used the visit, at the end of a three-day tour of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, to announce an extra £14 million (US\$22.5 million) in aid for Syrian refugees.

This brings the total British humanitarian aid in the crisis to £53.5 million since the start of 2012.

Britain's main goal is to encourage Syria's many opposition groups, some of which were meeting in Doha last week, to unite around a single vision for a democratic and stable Syria.

Hague said all contacts with armed groups would comply with Britain's stated policy of only supplying non-lethal support, and with an EU arms embargo on Syria. -AFP



A Syrian boy hit by sniper fire being treated at a hospital on the northern city of Aleppo on November 6. Pic: AFP

'We need more...action to turn the screw on this dreadful regime.'

meted out on his people," he told the *BBC*, but added: "What we want to see is transition in Syria. We want Assad to go."

Cameron was on November 7 visiting a refugee camp for Syrians in northern Jordan, where he said he would press the newly re-elected US President Barack Obama to work on a stronger international approach to the crisis.

"Right now the international community has to recognise that what we've done is not enough," Cameron told the

Death toll exceeds 37,000: watchdog

BEIRUT - More than 37,000 people have been killed since the outbreak of Syria's anti-regime revolt in March 2011, with over 1000 dead in the week to November 7, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Civilians, at 26,596, represented the vast majority of those killed, said the Observatory, which included in that figure non-military people who have taken up arms against President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The rest were from the military - 9445 soldiers - and 1331 who defected to join the

rebellion.

Another 498 people killed could not be identified, it said.

The Observatory did not include thousands of people who have gone missing in the conflict, some thought to be in detention and others dead. It also excluded thousands of pro-regime militiamen.

The violence in Syria has been heavy since an attempt to impose a ceasefire for the October 26-29 Eid al-Adha Muslim holiday collapsed, with 247 killed on November 5 in the bloodiest day since the truce attempt. -AFP

The Observatory relies on a network of activists, lawyers and medics at military and civilian hospitals inside Syria for its information.

The uprising began as pro-reform protests inspired by the Arab Spring but transformed into an armed insurgency after the government began brutally crushing demonstrations.

Most rebels, like the population, are Sunni Muslims in a country dominated by a minority regime of Alawites, an offshoot of Shiite Islam. -AFP

It's a 'residence', by order

JOHANNESBURG - South Africa's state broadcaster *SABC* has ordered its journalists not to refer to President Jacob Zuma's controversial state-renovated homestead as a "homestead" or as "Zumaville."

In a memo to staff, seen by *AFP* on November 7, *SABC* news boss Jimi Matthews said the compound at Nkandla, which has been refurbished at an estimated cost to taxpayers of US\$29 million, should be described as the "Nkandla residence."

"Your (sic) are hereby notified that, with immediate effect, President

Zuma's Nkandla home should be referred to as the President's, or Mr Zuma's, 'Nkandla residence' and not a 'compound' or 'homestead' or any other such term," Matthews wrote.

"Please also refrain from using imported terminology in reporting on the controversy surrounding the infrastructure developments around the residence, such as 'Nkandlagate', 'Zumaville' and such like."

Zuma has been lambasted for the costly and allegedly extensive renovations to the sprawling compound in his home state of KwaZulu-Natal. -AFP

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Rasmussen defends ICG

BRUSSELS—NATO, whose troops are fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan, said last week that Kabul should not interfere with the work of the ICG think tank after a critical report sparked government anger.

Kabul threatened to curtail the ICG's activities in Afghanistan over the report, which warned that the government could collapse after NATO troops withdraw in 2014.

NATO head Anders Fogh Rasmussen said on November 5 that while he did not share the views in the ICG report as the respected think-tank had not considered the help a post-2014 Afghan government would receive, he was also "a strong supporter of freedom of expression."

It was important that the "ICG has the right to express its views ... any democracy profits from an open, transparent and critical debate on how we could possibly make governance better," he said. — AFP

Putin replaces top general

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin on November 9 replaced Russia's army chief of staff with a veteran commander from the second Chechnya war, in a shake-up of the military after the sacking of the defence minister.

Army chief of staff Nikolai Makarov will be replaced by General Valery Gerasimov, a commander at the North Caucasus military district in the second Chechnya war, Putin announced days after the sacking of defence minister Anatoly Serdyukov in a graft scandal.

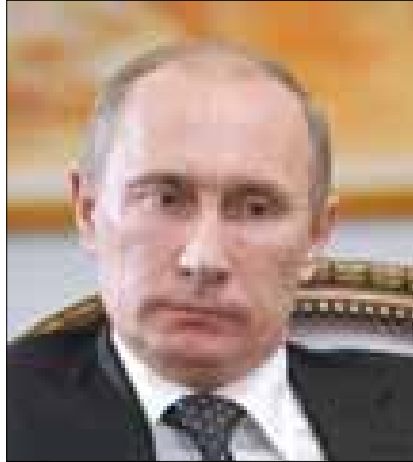
"You are an experienced person," Putin told Gerasimov in a meeting at the Kremlin that also included the new Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu.

The chief of staff is one of three people in Russia with exclusive access to nuclear launch codes. The other two are the president and the defence minister.

Shoigu described Gerasimov — who served as first deputy chief of staff between 2010 and 2012 — as a "military man from head to toe."

A career officer, Gerasimov, 57, also served as the commander of the 58th army in the North Caucasus military district in the late 90s and commanded Russian troops in the second war against separatists in Chechnya.

On November 6, Putin fired defence minister Serdyukov over a corruption scandal, the most dramatic change to the government since he returned for



Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to sack his defence minister on November 6 was described as being "very much in the spirit of Stalin." Pic: AFP

a third Kremlin term in May amid rising discontent.

Putin replaced Serdyukov — who had been implementing unpopular but Kremlin-backed military reforms — with Moscow region governor and former emergencies minister Sergei Shoigu, one of the Russian leader's closest friends and allies.

Many analysts said that the sacking of a top official who had enjoyed Putin's unconditional support was aimed at instilling fear in the elites as the Russian strongman struggles with

the worst political crisis of his almost 13-year rule.

Putin said Serdyukov had been relieved of his duties so that a thorough investigation can proceed into a suspected US\$100 million property scam at a defence ministry holding company.

A former furniture salesman who rose to head the Russian tax authority, Serdyukov became the first civilian to serve as post-Soviet Russia's defence minister when he was appointed in 2007.

His lack of military credentials and controversial military reform program earned him derision in the defence ministry as he tried to push through the army overhaul.

Serdyukov is the son-in-law of Viktor Zubkov, a former Russian deputy prime minister and a long-time Putin ally.

"There are no indispensable people for Putin," a defence ministry source told AFP.

"Putin's Byzantine empire is beginning to live according to completely different laws than before," military analyst Alexander Golts wrote.

"This decision is very much in the spirit of Stalin," added Pavel Felgenhauer, a military commentator for opposition newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*.

"You need to keep the elites in fear," he said. — AFP

Briefs

Malala thanks her global supporters

LONDON — Malala, the teenager being treated in Britain for gunshot wounds inflicted by the Taliban in Pakistan, on November 9 thanked her global supporters, one month from the brutal attack.

"She wants me to tell everyone how grateful she is and is amazed that men, women and children from across the world are interested in her well-being," her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, said on behalf of the 15-year-old in a statement issued by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

Ashton 'regrets' settlements move

BRUSSELS — European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton on November 8 criticised Israel for offering tenders last week to build 1213 homes in two settlements in east Jerusalem.

Ashton said in a statement she "deeply regrets" moves to add 607 units in Pisgat Zeev and 606 units in Ramot.

"Settlements are illegal under international law and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible," it said.

Breivik complains of rights violations

OSLO — Mass killer Anders Behring Breivik, convicted of killing 77 people last year, has complained that prison conditions are violating his human rights, one of his lawyers said on November 8.

Tord Jorget said Breivik, 33, had been denied access to a computer and all the letters he sends and receives are censored if politics is mentioned.

"His freedom of speech is being violated," Jorget said. "Being deprived of this freedom of expression breaches the constitution and human rights."

Jail term for maker of anti-Islam video

LOS ANGELES — The man behind the anti-Islam video blamed for sparking deadly protests in the Muslim world was given a one-year jail sentence in the US on November 7 for breaching the terms of his probation for a previous offence.

Mark Basseley Youssef, 55, had admitted four allegations of using false identities — a violation of the terms of his probation for a bank fraud conviction in 2010.

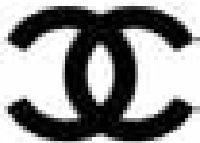
Youssef's amateurish film, *Innocence of Muslims*, about the Prophet Mohammed triggered a wave of violent protests that left dozens dead in September. — AFP

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Dated: 12th November, 2012

Nobel prize for EU 'unlawful', says global peace organisation

OSLO — Giving the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union is "unlawful" since it is not a "champion of peace" as defined by the will of founder Alfred Nobel, the International Peace Bureau said last week.

In an open letter to Sweden's Nobel Foundation, the organisation asked that this year's eight million kronor-prize (US\$1.19 million) be withheld, a demand that was immediately rejected by the Norwegian committee tasked with selecting the peace laureate.

"The European Union ... clearly is not one of 'the champions of peace' Alfred Nobel had in mind and described in his will," the peace federation wrote on November 5.

The Swedish industrialist and philanthropist, who died in 1896, said in his testament that the award should go to the "person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses."

The International Peace Bureau noted that the EU "is not seeking to realise a demilitarisation of international relations", and that its members "condone security based on military force and have waged wars rather

than insisting on the need for alternative approaches."

The Geneva-based peace network, which has more than 300 member organisations and was itself the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1910, accused the committee of having "redefined" the prize, which also recognises environmentalists and anti-poverty campaigners.

The Nobel Prize was on October 12 awarded to a crisis-stricken EU for its "advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe."

The award will be presented to the EU in Oslo on December 10, which is the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death.

In Oslo, the secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee brushed off the criticisms.

"These viewpoints have been presented several times, they are well known and won't impact the evolution of the prize," Geir Lundestad told AFP.

He said the award "will indeed be handed out" at the Oslo ceremony, where it will be jointly collected by European Parliament President Martin Schulz, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and EU President Herman Van Rompuy. — AFP

Weights a queen's wardrobe secret

LONDON — A gust of wind in her skirts worked for Marilyn Monroe, but aides to Queen Elizabeth II take care to avoid any such incident for the monarch by sewing weights into her dresses, one of her aides revealed on November 5.

"The queen undertakes a wide range of engagements, many of which take place in the open air, where a sudden breeze could cause embarrassment," writes Angela Kelly, the queen's personal assistant, adviser and curator, in a new book.

"If we think this is a possibility, we will very occasionally use weights, discreetly sewn into the seams of day dresses."

The glossy hardback

opens the door on the work involved in creating the 86-year-old monarch's famously immaculate style, which saw her voted one of the world's most glamorous women by British *Vogue* magazine in 2007.

It reveals the two years of preparations for the Diamond Jubilee in June, including how the queen's white outfit worn to the river pageant was inspired by Elizabeth I and designed to stand out against the deep reds of the royal barge.

Kelly also describes how palace dressmakers were asked to make two identical versions of the crystal and lace peach cocktail dress the queen wore to the opening ceremony of the London

Olympic Games in July, without knowing why.

One was worn by the monarch and the other by the stunt double who jumped out of a plane alongside James Bond, in one of the highlights of the night.

Dressing the Queen: The Jubilee Wardrobe, which features lavish photographs and design sketches, also reveals how the queen uses her clothes to make a diplomatic point.

This included wearing Irish green on her historic visit to the republic in May 2011, and having one of her outfits on a tour to Canada in 2010 embellished with beads by women from the Mi'kmaq indigenous community. — AFP

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Exonerated Nepalese tells of torture in Japanese jail

KATHMANDU – A Nepalese migrant worker who spent 15 years in a Japanese jail for a murder he did not commit claims he was tortured while incarcerated and has urged Tokyo to reform its police and prison system.

Govinda Prasad Mainali was waiting tables in an Indian restaurant in the Japanese capital, sending money home to his family in Kathmandu, when he was arrested on suspicion of strangling Yasuko Watanabe in 1997.

Watanabe had been an economist earning a comfortable salary who was reportedly living a double life as a sex worker.

When her body was found in a sleazy downtown apartment,

Mainali was charged with her murder and handed a life sentence.

In a scandal which has brought ignominy on Japan's justice system and captivated Tokyo society, Mainali was acquitted in a retrial on November 7 after 15 years in jail, as DNA evidence proved he could not have committed the crime.

"I was forced to undergo 15 years of horrible and torturous time in jail despite being innocent," Mainali told reporters in Kathmandu after his acquittal.

"Had the DNA test not been conducted, I would have been languishing in jail and probably would have died there."

Mainali, now 46, was deported to

Nepal in June after his conviction was quashed and he was finally declared not guilty by the Tokyo High Court five months later.

The case has attracted lurid headlines and exposed Japan's justice system to heavy criticism by rights campaigners.

Watanabe, who was 39 when she died, grew up in an affluent Tokyo neighbourhood, majored in economics and followed in the footsteps of her late father into the Tokyo Electric Power utility company.

She was a high-flyer but became frustrated as she felt she was passed over for promotions, author Shinichi Sano said in a best-seller book on the killing.

She began to work at night in a hostess bar, before turning to high-class prostitution.

But she would also walk the streets, soliciting for as little as US\$20, and this is how she met Mainali, his original trial was told.

Mainali was charged after traces of his sperm were found in a condom at the murder scene and the court found him guilty in 2000 of killing Watanabe.

The Supreme Court upheld his life sentence in 2003.

Mainali, who had always maintained his innocence, was released and granted a retrial after fresh DNA evidence proved the original probe had overlooked

the fact that semen found inside Watanabe was not Mainali's.

The semen in the condom sample was also dated to before well before her death.

Looking nervous and flanked by family members as he read out a statement in Nepali and answered questions in fluent Japanese, Mainali said he had not yet decided whether to seek compensation.

"The details on torture and my experience of jail life will come out in a book very soon. It's a weakness of Japan's legal system. The police failed to conduct a proper investigation," he said.

Mainali said he felt "tears of joy swelling in my eyes" when he learned of his acquittal. –AFP



Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, reacts as she holds a koala at Government House in Adelaide on November 7. Camilla and Prince Charles were in Australia last week on the second leg of a tour to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The British royal couple travelled to Australia from Papua New Guinea and will finish their tour with a visit to New Zealand. Pic: AFP

Japan urges China to use naval power peacefully

TOKYO – Japan last week called on China to use its sea power peacefully, after President Hu Jintao staked a claim in Beijing for his country to become a maritime force.

Tokyo said its neighbour must act as a "responsible member of the international community", a challenge it has made to Beijing repeatedly in recent months as tempers have flared over a disputed island chain.

"It is not surprising to hear leaders in (China) speak about their intention to engage in maritime activities," Naoko Saiki, deputy press secretary at the foreign ministry, told reporters in Tokyo on November 8.

"But those activities must be carried out in a peaceful manner based on international law."

The comments came hours after Hu told the five-yearly Communist Party congress that Beijing should "resolutely safeguard China's maritime rights and interests, and build China into a maritime power".

Saiki said both countries – the two largest economies in

VIENTIANE – The Philippines last week pushed its call for an international solution to overlapping claims in the South China Sea at an Asia-Europe summit on November 5, saying vital global shipping lanes were at stake.

Philippine President Benigno Aquino raised the issue in bilateral meetings with leaders of the European Union as well as with Swiss President Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and Norwegian

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg at the ASEM summit, which is held every two years.

"We noted the increasing importance of maritime security" in what Manila calls the West Philippine Sea, said Aquino's chief spokesman Herminio Coloma.

"There was agreement that it was a matter of international interest considering that a significant amount of world trade passes through that body of water,"

he told reporters in the Laotian capital, Vientiane.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, parts of which are also claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei, as well as the Philippines.

Aquino has insisted in the past that solving the dispute needed a multilateral approach, but China has insisted on solving the problem bilaterally with individual countries involved. –AFP

Asia with a trade relationship worth well over US\$300 billion a year – had a duty to preserve the region's stability and prosperity.

"I think China must be a responsible member of the international community," she said.

Beijing and Tokyo are at loggerheads over the sovereignty of an uninhabited archipelago in the East China Sea.

Chinese government ships have loitered around the Tokyo-administered Senkaku islands, which Beijing calls the Diaoyus, for

weeks, sending diplomatic temperatures soaring and leading to calls from Washington for cool heads.

The islands lie in rich fishing grounds and their possession theoretically grants access to a potential energy reserve in the seabed.

But they also have strategic significance, with some observers suggesting they could provide a beachhead for Chinese projections of military might.

Japan has watched warily over the last decade as China's military prestige has grown. A defence

ministry spokesman said the ministry "has great interest in China's maritime activities" and pledged "utmost efforts in maintaining safety in our territorial air and waters".

"The issue of use of the sea in a stable manner is directly linked to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region," the spokesman said.

"It is important to act on the principle of freedom of navigation, compliance with international laws and peaceful resolution of conflicts." –AFP

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Military reshuffle aids Hu: analysts

BEIJING – China has reshuffled its military top brass in a move analysts said last week was probably aimed at ensuring President Hu Jintao remains commander-in-chief of the military after a 10-yearly leadership change.

At a top Communist Party meeting on November 5, Hu oversaw the promotion of Generals Fan Changlong and Xu Qiliang as vice chairmen of the powerful 12-member Central Military Commission (CMC), state-run Xinhua news agency said.

Hu, the CMC chairman, was set to step down as head of the ruling party at a congress that started on November 8 this week and will retire as national president in March as part of the leadership change.

But Willy Lam, a China politics expert at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, said: "Hu Jintao would want to serve another five years (as CMC chief), particularly given the fact that he has to watch over his political proteges... and protect his political legacy."

"As long as he is the CMC chief, he will still be the power behind the throne."

Lu Siqing, head of the Hong Kong-based Information Centre for Human Rights

and Democracy, which seeks to advance political reform in China, said both promoted generals have close ties to Hu.

Xu is the first air force general to become a vice chairman of the committee and his ascension also reflects the importance China places on quickly developing its air capability.

China's 2.3-million-strong military forces – the world's biggest – include nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles and a recently commissioned second-hand aircraft carrier bought from Ukraine.

The two incoming CMC vice chairmen will be tasked with pushing forward the modernisation of the military and overseeing the increasingly powerful arsenal.

Unlike most modern states the military is directly run by the ruling communist party, not by the government, an arrangement that stems from the revolution that brought the party to power in 1949.

The late revolutionary leader Mao Zedong – who said that "power comes from the barrel of the gun" –



Delegates at the opening of the 18th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on November 8. Pic: AFP

used the People's Liberation Army not only to advance revolution, but also to protect the party's political

of China's opaque and secretive political process, only succeeded him as CMC chairman in 2004.

said, long enough to let him influence the naming of the future heir to Xi Jinping, his own successor as party head

'As long as he is the CMC chief, he will still be the power behind the throne.'

power, Lam said.

Hu took over control of the party from Jiang Zemin in 2002 but, as part

There was also a possibility that Hu would only retain the CMC chairmanship for an extra two years, Lam

and president.

He could also protect his protege Li Keqiang, who is set to take the place of outgoing

Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, and seek to place other key allies in top posts at the 19th Party Congress in 2017, Lam added.

Xi was effectively chosen as China's next core leader in 2007 in a selection process heavily influenced by Jiang, who had already stepped down.

In a statement, Lu said: "Hu Jintao will seek to continue on as chairman of the Central Military Commission for another five years until 2017.

"This is due to worries over Xi Jinping among a lot of people in the higher levels of the military."

Xi was named a CMC vice chairman in 2010 in a rocky approval process that reportedly took more than a year to complete.

"If Hu Jintao retains his seat for another year or so, this certainly maintains the previous political practice," Kenneth Jarrett, a China-based director for the APCO Worldwide consultancy, told reporters.

"But I would say it's not good for China in the sense that you have a divided leadership, where you have Hu Jintao who will have the allegiance of the military at the very top even though he has given up all of his other positions." – AFP

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Presidential frontrunner scoffs at 'merger circus'

SEOUL – South Korea's conservative presidential frontrunner Park Geun-Hye on November 7 dismissed the decision of her two left-leaning rivals to merge their campaigns as a political "circus".

Moon Jae-In from the main opposition Democratic United Party and Ahn Cheol-So, a software mogul running as an independent, announced the previous day a potentially game-changing alliance with a single, unified candidate.

"Will they be able to overcome the crisis in people's livelihoods with such a 'merger circus' that has nothing to

do with the people's lives?" *Yonhap* news agency quoted Park as telling a meeting of her policy advisers.

"How can we put people's lives in the hands of those who are obsessed with taking power through publicity stunts rather than developing policies?" she said at a separate meeting with supporters.

Although Moon and Ahn agreed to merge their campaigns, they have yet to decide which one will drop out of the race in favour of the other.

They promised to announce a decision before November 25 – the final deadline for

candidate registration before the December 19 election.

Lee Nak-Yon, a lawmaker who co-chairs Moon's election camp, said Park's comments reflected the concern within her ruling New Frontier Party over the opposition merger.

"The NFP is overreacting... out of a sense of crisis," Lee said.

Both Moon and Ahn had come under intense pressure to merge and avoid splitting the liberal vote, which would effectively hand the presidency to Park who has a lock on the sizeable conservative bloc.

Polls suggest Park would easily win in the event of a three-horse race, but they put her neck and neck in a face-off with either Moon or Ahn.

Moon's camp had been especially vocal on the need for a unified candidacy. Ahn's side has been more cautious, insisting on a commitment from Moon's party to political reform.

Ahn has virtually no political experience but is enormously popular with young liberal voters, who see him as untainted by corruption or by political or commercial abuse of power. – *AFP*



Park Geun-Hye. Pic: AFP

Briefs

Panetta visits region again

WASHINGTON – US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta will travel to Australia, Thailand and Cambodia this week as part of America's strategic tilt to the Asia-Pacific, officials said.

In his fourth trip to the region since June, Panetta "looks forward to this opportunity to further advance our long-term strategy of rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific," said Pentagon spokesman George Little said.

Panetta will travel to Australia on November 11, before making the first visit to Thailand by a Pentagon chief since 2008, and then travelling to Cambodia for a meeting with his ASEAN counterparts.

Wen faces wealth probe, says paper

HONG KONG – China's ruling Communist Party has launched an inquiry into the alleged wealth of Premier Wen Jiabao's family at his own request, a report said on November 5.

Citing sources, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* said Wen had written to the Politburo Standing Committee – the country's highest policy-making body, of which he is a member – formally asking for the probe.

It comes after the *New York Times* reported that Wen's family had accumulated at least \$2.7 billion in assets.

Self-immolation protests escalate

DHARAMSHALA, India – Six Tibetans set themselves on fire in China last week in an escalating wave of protests, exile leaders said on November 8.

There were two self-immolations on November 8, resulting in the death of a woman, 23, the India-based exile government said, adding that four people self-immolated the previous day, including three teenaged monks, of whom one later died.

Self-immolations to protest Chinese rule in Tibet have occurred regularly since March 2011.

Inquiry to probe cover-up claims

SYDNEY – The Australian state of New South Wales on November 9 announced a special inquiry to look into claims the Roman Catholic Church covered up for paedophile priests, silenced investigations and destroyed evidence.

The inquiry, announced by state Premier Barry O'Farrell, will examine the allegations made by a senior police investigator who outlined his charges in a letter published in the *Newcastle Herald* newspaper. – *AFP*

Sri Lanka's top judge denies allegations

COLOMBO – Sri Lanka's Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake on November 8 denied financial wrongdoing alleged in an impeachment brought by the ruling party, vowing to remain in office and defend her innocence.

Bandaranayake, through her lawyers, told news organisations the charges in an impeachment motion filed in parliament two days ago were false and insisted there was no financial impropriety on her part.

"Our client totally denies the other allegations and can easily refute them," said the law firm Neelakandan and Neelakandan in letters sent to media outlets in Colombo.

Lawmakers from President Mahinda Rajapakse's party had said they wanted Bandaranayake, 54, to step aside until the conclusion of an impeachment hearing, which could take months, but the chief justice made it clear she would not bow out.

"Our client... will, as always, continue to duly and properly discharge her duties without fear or favour (and) she will do so, independently, impartially and fearlessly in accordance with the law," the firm said in a two-page letter.

The drive to impeaching the judge followed a decision last month by the Supreme Court to effectively scupper a bill giving more powers to the economic development minister, who is the president's younger brother, Basil.

"She has plunged the entire Supreme Court and specially the office of the Chief Justice into disrepute," said the motion, printed in the parliamentary agenda and signed by 117 ruling party lawmakers.

The United States voiced concern earlier this month about the move to impeach Bandaranayake, who is Sri Lanka's first female chief justice, and called on the government to protect the independence of the judiciary.

The impeachment motion is the latest sign of efforts by Rajapakse to tighten his grip on power after crushing the Tamil Tiger separatist rebels in 2009 at the end of a decades-long war. – *AFP*

Laos to build Mekong dam

VIENTIANE – Laos said last week it was read to start work on a controversial multi-billion dollar dam, after adapting the design to calm environmental concerns from neighbouring nations.

"After two years of preparation the Laos government will have a ground breaking ceremony on November 7 and will then start working on the dam itself in the Mekong river this week," deputy energy minister Viraphonh Viravong told *AFP* on November 5.

The US\$3.8 billion hydroelectric project at Xayaburi, led by Thai group CH Karnchang, has sharply divided four Mekong nations – Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand – which rely on the river system for fish and irrigation.

Building work on the main project has been stalled for about 18 months over concerns about its environmental impact.

Viraphonh said some aspects of the dam's design had been changed to "reassure

neighbouring countries", but he insisted that objections would not derail plans to finish the project by the end of 2019.

The mooted 1260 megawatt dam has become a symbol of the potential risks of hydropower projects in the region.

Thailand has agreed to buy most of the electricity generated by the project, but Cambodia and Vietnam fear the dam could decimate their farming and fishing industries.

Environmentalists say the dam would be disastrous for the 60 million people in the Mekong basin who depend on the river for transportation, food and economy.

They fear Mekong fish species will become endangered as vital nutrients are trapped and dozens of species are prevented from swimming upstream to mating grounds.

In July, Viraphonh told the state-run *Vientiane Times* that it would be "one of the most transparent

Laos dam project

Construction of controversial \$3.8 billion project to start this week



and modern dams in the world", but promised that construction would not go ahead until fears from neighbouring countries had been assuaged.

He said changes to the project would address the two major issues – fish migration and sediment flow – by including a passage to allow 85 percent of fish to

travel along the river and a "flushing system" to prevent sediment build-up.

Campaign group International Rivers accused the Laos government of pressing ahead with the project without conducting sufficient environmental studies.

"This latest announcement shows that Laos never intended to genuinely cooperate with neighbouring countries," the group said on November 5. "The Xayaburi project was never really delayed and always continued on schedule."

Fifty Thai villagers representing communities along the Mekong river submitted a lawsuit to a court in Bangkok in August seeking to prevent their country buying power from the hydropower project.

Thailand's Administrative Court has yet rule on the suit, which is against the state-run Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, the energy ministry and the Thai cabinet. – *AFP*

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Cartoonists show the 'cancer inside'

By Nuam Bawi

A CONTEST for cartoons satirising political and social issues was held at the National Theatre in Yangon on November 4, in conjunction with festivities marking the 75th anniversary of the Nagani Book Club.

The contest attracted 49 competitors, each of whom submitted two cartoons for consideration. The winners were chosen according to votes cast by those who attended the book club celebration.

The first prize of K100,000 went to Thiha (Sakhan Thit), while three second place prizes (K50,000) were handed out, to Thiha (Sakhan Thit), Maw Mee Kyiang and Maung Shwe Win. Thar Oo was awarded a K30,000 consolation prize.

Thiha (Sakhan Thit) told *The Myanmar Times* that his winning cartoon was aimed at "showing the decline of the justice pillar in Myanmar".

"I drew a cartoon about the lawyers in our country. It's the job of lawyers to turn big cases into smaller cases, and to make smaller cases disappear. One of the lawyers

says in my sketch that if all the cases disappeared, they wouldn't have anything to do," he explained.

One of the event's organisers, U Khin Hlaing (Zawtika), said satirical cartoons were a suitable way to illustrate public sentiments and feelings.

"Many people don't have time to read a long article, but a cartoonist can clearly convey an idea with one sketch, which is why I chose to hold this contest as part of the book club celebration," he said.

U Khin Hlaing (Zawtika) also used the occasion of the anniversary to announce the re-launch of the Nagani Book Club, which had been defunct since it closed in 1941. During its four-year existence, the club published 70 books, mostly on politics.

In a lecture delivered at the ceremony, Aw Pe Kye said cartoons have been published in Myanmar since U Ba Ka Lay started in 1915.

"Our country has just passed through a 50-year era of anarchy, so we are far behind in every sector, including cartoons. But we



More page 40 Guests look at satirical cartoons on display at the National Theatre in Yangon on November 4. Pic: Thiri

Art gallery opens door to raise funds for the elderly

By Pinky

A NEW art gallery opened at Hninzigone Home for the Aged in Yangon on November 3, with the aim of raising funds to help care for the facility's 200 elderly residents.

U Kyine Myint, a member of the Hninzigone management committee, told *The Myanmar Times* that proceeds from sales of artwork at Hninzimyaing Art Gallery will go toward running the home and caring for residents.

"We are now exhibiting about 70 paintings that are the property of the home. They were all donated by the artists," he said.

He said that in the future, the gallery space would be available for artists to rent for holding exhibitions. In those cases, 20 percent of the proceeds from art sales would go to the home.

"In this way artists can show their paintings and donate to a good cause at the same time. This benefits everyone, including the elderly residents at the home, the artists and the art buyers," U Kyine Myint said.

Meanwhile, the Hninzigone Home for the Aged will hold its 51st annual fundraising

sale on December 1, featuring vendors selling food and merchandise, as well as games. The entrance fee will be K200 a person.

The shops will open at 3pm, and the opening ceremony, led by singer Daw Yee Yee Thant, will occur at 5pm. An *nyeint* (traditional theatre performance) by the Gita Myin Moe (Mount Meru Music) troupe will start at 7pm.

Daw Myint Myint San, the home's deputy administrative officer, said the annual event always attracts a lot of companies, organisations and schools interested in opening vending booths.

"We ask for a donation of at least K50,000 for renting one shop, but most vendors actually donate more than that," she said.

"All the money goes toward caring for our residents, including supporting their livings, medical care and funding for trips. For times a year we take the residents on trips around Yangon and also outside the city."

Hninzimyaing Art Gallery is located at 21 Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Bahan township. Opening hours are 9am to 5pm daily.

Youth art comp in December

By Lwin Mar Htun

THE Youth Art Award Competition 2012 will be held in December under the theme "Moving on up Hand in Hand with Myanmar", and organisers are calling for submissions by artists aged 14 to 20.

The competition, which has been held since 2008, is organised by Parkroyal Hotel and supported by RVI Centre International and Nanyang Academy of Fine Art (NAFA)

in Singapore. Faculty from the academy will serve as judges for the awards.

"The aim of this competition is to improve the paintings skills, artistic abilities and thinking skills of young artists," Mr Ram Nurani, general manager of Parkroyal Hotel, said at a press conference last month.

Competitors must be Myanmar nationals living in Myanmar, and may submit one painting on 15x24 or 18x24 inch paper or canvas, along with their name, father's name, date of birth, NRC

number, address, phone number and email address. The submission deadline is November 23.

The first prize winner will get US\$800 and a set of oil paints valued at \$200. The prize for second will be \$500 and acrylic paints worth \$80, while third will earn \$300 plus \$80 in acrylic paints.

The paintings will be judged on December 1, and the awards ceremony will be held on December 29. The artwork will be exhibited at Parkroyal Hotel's Young Corner.

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Parisian charged with selling fake 'Indian Picassos'

By Charles Sicurani

PARIS—A Paris-based trickster has been charged with flooding the art market with forged paintings of India's most famous and controversial modern artist, M F Husain, police said last week.

The 32-year-old man, identified as Sofiane B, was arrested last month following a complaint from a city art dealer. He was charged with a number of offences and placed under judicial supervision on a hefty bail after a 48-hour detention.

Based in the working-class northern quarter of Saint-Ouen, where the city's most famous flea market is located, Sofiane B took advantage of Husain's advanced age to get him to sign paintings done by others, police believe.

He then attempted to sell them in Britain and France and succeeded in offloading two of the fake paintings to a Paris art dealer for more than 100,000 euro (US\$130,000) in 2010.

"This is a case of fraud and counterfeit," said a source close to the probe.

Maqbool Fida Husain, dubbed the "Indian Picasso", was a former Bollywood poster artist whose career took off after Indian independence in 1947.

He was forced to flee his country in 2006 after death threats from Hindu extremists and died in London in June last year at the age of 95.

Hindu ultra-conservatives including the regional Shiv Sena party in Husain's home state of Maharashtra — whose capital is Mumbai — denounced his works as pornographic, blasphemous and an affront to national values.

The controversy over his naked depictions of Hindu gods and goddesses however failed to dampen the enthusiasm of overseas collectors.

In 2008, one of his paintings, influenced by Hindu epic *The Mahabharata*, fetched

\$1.6 million at Christie's in London.

The Paris art dealer to whom Sofiane B had sold the paintings became suspicious when he contacted the London auction houses Sotheby's and Christie's to sell them and they cast doubts on their authenticity, according to *Le Parisien* newspaper.

The seller then asked the dealer to proceed to Dubai, where Husain spent the last years of his life and had a studio, to authenticate the works.

He even gave the dealer 15 other watercolours purportedly done by Husain and they too turned out to be fakes.

Paris police suspect Sofiane B had been selling fake Husain works around the world since 2004.

Husain's departure from India followed attacks on his home and galleries showing his work, death threats and the placing of an \$11.5 million bounty on his head.

He said in 2008 he was homesick and longed to return to Mumbai, where he trained at the Sir J J School of Art, but accused the government of not being prepared to provide him with the protection he needed.

Husain, who often went barefoot and was once thrown out of a Mumbai private members' club for not wearing shoes, accepted Qatari citizenship in 2010, admitting that his advancing years made it impossible to fight his detractors.

Indian ministers had tried unsuccessfully to tempt him home.

The artist always said that nudity symbolised purity, insisting that naked goddesses were a long-established part of the country's iconography dating back to antiquity.

Many saw him as a victim of the fierce communalism that gripped India in the 1990s and early 2000s, and of the socially conservative country's tough censorship laws. — AFP

Committee aims to rebuild historic university building

By Zon Pann Pwint

AN art exhibition entitled "Bring the Gangaw Land Back to Life" was held in Yangon last week, with the aim of reviving interest in Yangon University and eventually rebuilding the historic Rangoon University Student Union, which was dynamited by the government during peaceful student demonstrations in 1962.

The exhibition — organised by a coalition of 1962, 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1988 generation student groups — was held at Judson Church Centre on Pyay Road from November 5 to 9.

It featured 105 paintings by 65 artists, including several former political prisoners, with subject matter mostly focusing on important landmarks on the university campus, such as the Convocation Hall and Judson Church.

"Yangon University faded into insignificance after 1988, so I intend for this exhibition help revive the memory of the university," said one of the show's organisers, 88 Generation Student member U Ba Thet Aung.

"During the 1988 uprising, students wanted to rebuild the Student Union, which was destroyed in 1962. Now the time has come to take action, and we founded a committee in June to work towards constructing the building at its previous spot, and restoring the campus to the way it looked before 1988," he said.



The 'Bring the Gangaw Land Back to Life' art exhibition was held at Judson Church Centre on Pyay Road from November 5 to 9. Pic: Nyein Maung

U Ba Thet Aung said the art exhibition was the first step in reestablishing the Student Union, by reminding people of the importance of Yangon University.

"The paintings will spark interest in Yangon University and the Student Union," he said, adding that the committee plans to schedule paper readings on the subject in December as part of their ongoing activities.

"We will launch activities within the accepted boundaries, until the president decides to allow the Student Union to be rebuilt and to bring Yangon University back to life," he said. "It was once a prestigious university in Southeast Asia and local students dreamt of studying there. That's why we want to keep it alive with students and bustling with activity."

About half the paintings at last week's exhibition were by members of the Gangaw Ywar (Gangaw Village) group, founded in 1979 by 20 artists who had been members of the Yangon University Arts Association. The association had been established on the campus in 1951.

"Students had great opportunities to study art, music, drama and singing at the Arts Association on campus, compared with present universities that don't have such associations anymore," said U San Minn, a member of the Gangaw Ywar artist group, who arrived at Yangon University in 1969 to study botany.

He said the beauty of the campus later inspired him to paint important features of the university, and a few of these original artworks were on display

at the exhibition.

"It was so much fun studying art on the campus. We spent a great deal of time drawing. The university was always a hive of activity as students pursued their interests on campus, such as sports, the arts and studying," he said.

"When Dagon University, University of East Yangon and University of West Yangon were built in the outskirts of the city, young students missed the essence of what Yangon University was all about."

Artist and former political prisoner Ko San Zaw Htwe said many people think that rebuilding the Student Union is just a dream.

"For us, it's a long-term commitment that won't fizzle out. We hope to restore Yangon University to its former glory, to hear the sound of studying in the classrooms, and to rebuild the Student Union at its former place on the campus," he said.

Former Yangon University student U Tha Ban, now 78, said that in his day, when the school opened each June, students immediately started forming clubs covering everything from social activities and reading, to geography and philosophy.

"The university was full of activities, it was not just a place to study," said U Tha Ban, who is a chairman of the Arakan League for Democracy.

"I hope it is possible to turn the university into a place that is used again, but we need to work hard."

Yangon festivals survey multimedia art

By Lwin Mar Htun

TWO multimedia art festivals will be coming to Yangon at the end of this month, bringing together local and international artists.

The Third Blue Wind Multimedia Art Festival for female artists will be held at Professional Art Gallery (at Myanmar Art Centre on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Bahan township) and other venues from November 23 to 27.

The event will incorporate local and international participation from several countries including Japan, Serbia, Netherlands, Malaysia and Vietnam, and is expected to attract about 70 artists.

Daw Phyu Mon, director of Blue Wind Organisation, said she started preparations for the event in August.

"Any person, of any age, who is interested in contemporary art can be

involved," she said.

"Many artist groups exist in Myanmar, so they can't all meet in the same place. I want to bring them together, as well as their different forms of art," she said.

"I want people from abroad to learn about this festival so they can see that contemporary art exists in Myanmar, as well as show their work to local people, so people can learn from them."

The festival will include workshops on painting, installation art, photo essays, printed media, video and film at Professional Art Gallery and City Star Hotel, from 1pm to 5pm each day.

There will also be poetry readings, and visual and sound art events, hosted at Myanmar Ink Gallery on November 26 from 1pm to 5pm, while performance art events will take place at Sein Lann Soe Pyay Garden on November 26, from 5pm to 8pm.

Meanwhile, the International Multimedia Art Festival will be held at the French Institute from November 23 to 25, from 10am to 9pm daily. The event, organised by New Zero Art Space, will feature more than 80 video, installation and performance artists from around the world, including Myanmar.

"In our country, only a few artists come and display their art," said event organiser Ko Aye Ko. "I have invited many artists from abroad so that we can learn from them and exchange ideas."

There will be daily presentations from 10am to 12pm, and from 1:30pm to 4:30pm, as well as debates from 4:30pm to 6:30pm and performance art shows from 6pm to 9pm.

The French Institute is located at 340 Pyay Road.

All events at both festivals are free of charge.

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More page 39

were not behind other countries at the beginning," Aw Pe Kye told *The Myanmar Times* after the lecture.

He said the most important characteristic for cartoonists is the ability to see situations in-depth and as they really are.

"If cartoonists can't see accurately, then whatever

information they give to the public will be wrong. We are trying to reflect reality and to help responsible people to see the difference between right and wrong," he said.

"A cartoonist will only become good when he can show the cancer inside, even though it looks fine from outside."

Aw Pe Kye said one of the main challenges for

cartoonists in Myanmar was getting accurate, transparent information from authorities.

"If they can get the true information in a transparent way from authorities, cartoonists in Myanmar will also dare to draw and take responsibility for their creations to directly reflect reality, like in other countries. But at the moment

we still have no chance to do that," he said.

"I understand that the government needs to keep some information secret for the safety of the country, but the public needs to know some information for our safety as well. But there is still no transparency, and we still can't get correct information about our own country."

'Skyfall' elegantly balances old and new

By Ann Hornaday

ONE of the marks of a good director is the taste and judgment with which he deploys the most cherished tropes of the franchise he's in charge of extending. With *Skyfall*, Sam Mendes proves to be just that adept, reinvigorating the James Bond series with a sleek, crisp, classy installment exhibiting just the right proportion of respect for legacy and embrace of novelty. From the first smoky notes of a theme song sung by Adele, it's clear that *Skyfall* will be both classic and of-the-moment.

Thanks to Mendes and the crackerjack team he's assembled, James Bond proves once again that he can survive anything — even *Quantum of Solace*.

To succeed, of course, a James Bond movie must traffic in equal parts sophistication and pure preposterousness, a winking willingness not to take itself so very seriously, but with writing, acting and production values of the highest order. All those elements are on hand in *Skyfall*, which at the outset finds James (Daniel Craig) in Istanbul, pursuing a bad guy through bazaars and over rooftops in a ludicrous motorcycle chase that at one point finds Bond making a wittily blase entrance into a moving train car. (He's as good as nonchalantly shooting his cuffs as he is at shooting his Walther PPK.)

That episode will somehow go all pear-shaped, though, sending Bond into something of an existential spiral, bringing him alongside Jason Bourne and other au courant secret agents as people who are fighting not just shadowy forces of mass destruction but also their own inner demons.



With 'Skyfall', Sam Mendes reinvigorates the James Bond series with a sleek, crisp, classy installment exhibiting just the right proportion of respect for legacy and embrace of novelty. Pic: Francois Duhamel

Eventually, Bond's struggle will reach his relationship with M (Judi Dench), whose initial in *Skyfall* might as well stand for Martinet, Mistress of All She Surveys and, most of all, Mother. When Bond flies into action after a self-imposed hiatus, he's an Oedipal wreck, bleary-eyed, out of shape and visibly aging. (After 50 years and 22 films, he has earned those creases and crevices.)

Craig, who made such a

promising Bond debut in 2006's *Casino Royale*, ably embodies a man feeling his age but still capable of looking awesome in a perfectly fitted tux.

The not-so-sub-text of *Skyfall* is the ongoing dialogue between past and future, whether it's youth versus age, computers versus analogue or point-and-click terrorism versus old-school geopolitics. There even seems to be an argument over the depiction

of screen violence itself: With its tidy bullet holes and pools of blood that look about as menacing as spilled milk, *Skyfall* often plays like a reassuring rebuke against the graphic sadism that has invaded its cousins within the genre.

That the visual language of *Skyfall* is so eloquent, so readable, can surely be credited at least in part to Roger Deakins, the great cinematographer whose unerring eye gives the entire enterprise a

cool, subdued sheen. (London looks especially alluring through Deakins' silky lens.)

That's another welcome return to earlier, adamantly un-frenetic style, as are performances that hark back to the classic Bonds of yore, when the villain inevitably greeted James with an understated, "Hello, James" and everyone delivered their dialogue with a perpetually arched eyebrow. Particularly good here are Craig and Dench (as always), but also Ralph Fiennes, Javier Bardem, the enchanting Naomie Harris as one of Bond's comelier M16 colleagues and Ben Whishaw (currently on view in several roles in *Cloud Atlas*) as Q, who, when he gives Bond a standard-issue gun and radio, delivers one of several self-referential jokes. "You were expecting an exploding pen?" he quips. "We don't really go in for that anymore."

Like everything else in *Skyfall*, Whishaw's new version of Q is both refreshing and comforting, an ineffable mix that makes this piece of well-executed popcorn fluff satisfying on every level. Somehow, Mendes and his writers (Neal Purvis, Robert Wade and John Logan) have managed to make a movie that is your father's Bond, but your teenager's, too, as he invites fans to bid goodbye to one or two beloved characters while making way for one or two new ones (or at least new old ones). As both an advance and a throwback, *Skyfall* shows why good bones and artisanal values tend to endure.

As one of *Skyfall's* most benevolent characters wisely opines, just before he tries his hand at making a bespoke explosive device: Sometimes the old ways are the best.

— The Washington Post

Epic novel set in Corsica wins France's top literary prize

PARIS — France's top literary prize, the Goncourt, last week went to Jerome Ferrari for a Corsican epic about dashed hopes, set in a village bar on the troubled Mediterranean island.

Le Sermon sur la Chute de Rome (The Sermon on the Fall of Rome) tells of a young man who packs in his philosophy studies to open a bar on the island with an old friend, hoping to turn it

into a haven of peace and friendship.

But things take a radically different turn as drink, sex, corruption — and the violence for which Corsica has become known — cast their shadow over the young idealists' plans.

"Did you know that Barack Obama was re-elected today? Don't you think we should put things in perspective?"

the novelist joked with reporters pressing him for a reaction to receiving the century-old prize.

Born into a Corsican family settled on the mainland, Ferrari returned as an adult to teach high school philosophy in the Corsican capital Ajaccio. He now teaches in Abu Dhabi.

His Goncourt win comes with Corsica making

headlines over a jump in violence, with 38 murders and 117 attempted murders since the start of 2011, for a population of just over 300,000 — the highest homicide rate in Europe.

The Goncourt jury called the book a "fine parable on contemporary hopelessness, but with a hopeful message: The end of a world doesn't have to spell the end of the world."

Its title refers to a sermon delivered by the mediaeval philosopher Augustine following the 410 sack of Rome, from which Ferrari quotes the lines, "The world is like a man, it is born, it grows and it dies."

Ferrari said he wanted to show how "the same mechanism can apply to empires, to a village bar or the hearts of men".

"Corsica is my natural literary milieu," he said in a recent interview, explaining how he fell in with pro-independence activists as a 20-year old, writing at the time for a nationalist newspaper.

"This is very good news for Corsica — it gives another image than one of violence," said the top French education official on the island, Michel Barrat. — AFP

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Tea makers customise flavour to fit tastes of their patrons

By Michelle Thane

THE customer's always right, or so the saying goes. For Yangon's myriad teashops, where the customer's needs are the limit, that adage has led to the introduction of countless variations on the humble cup of tea.

And they all come with their own unique name, whether it's a cup of *kya seint*, *ah cho pawt*, *pone mhan*, or *sheh* that you're after.

"It all depends on the customer," says Ma Nyein Aye Tun, who runs the La Pyae Wun teashop on upper block of 34th Street in the downtown area. "There are some who prefer bitter tea, so they ask for more *ah kyar yay*. ...Women prefer sweet [tea], while men like *pan* (bitter) tea."

The style of the tea maker also influences the flavour. "The brewers have different techniques — the amounts of condensed or evaporated milk added vary from one another, for example," Ma Nyein Aye Tun, 22, said.

Ko Hla Tun has been brewing tea at Shwe Padaut Yeit on Bo Aung Kyaw Road in Kyauktada township for eight months. He says regular tea is brewed by steeping the leaves in hot water and "pulling" the resulting liquid, known as *ah kyar yay*, using two cups until the raw tea leaf smell has disappeared.

After adding spoonfuls of condensed and evaporated milk to the waiting tea cup, the tea maker adds the *ah kyar yay* and boiling hot water into the cup, and tea is made. Boiling water is added only to some teas, such as *ah pawt seint* and *ah cho seint*, to tone down the biting flavour of the *ah kyar yay*.

But this is where the process starts to get funky, because there are so many variations on the simple cup of tea.

"In hand-brewed tea, it depends on your tastes. If you like the bitter taste, you add more *pan yay*. If you like your tea sweet, you put more condensed milk. You can do it however you want," says U Win Nyunt, a tea maker at La Pyae Wun.

While the average cup of tea contains a healthy dose of *noe si*, or condensed milk, *sheh* tea — the name derives from the English word "special" — also contains higher quality *noe sein* (evaporated milk). *Sheh* tea can be broadly categorised into four main flavours: *ah cho* (sweet), *ah kya* or *pan* (bitter), *ah seint* (milky) and *ah pawt* (light).

However, the variations don't stop there. Different combinations of these flavours are mixed to produce the right kind of tea, such as *pawt seint* (light milky) and *ah cho pawt* (light sweet). For diabetics, tea is made with just evaporated milk.

If that's becoming too complicated for you, U Zaw Lwin Htoo, owner of Two Brothers teashop on Sayasan Road, Bahan township, recommends ordering *pone mhan*, which literally means regular and is neither sweet nor bitter.

Some teas can be ordered using the *ban* language — modern slang that regular teashop enthusiasts use. "*Ma koe* is a word for a flavour of tea that is between *ah kya seint* and *ah pawt kya*," says U Zaw Lwin Htoo. "Some of the other words in the *ban* language are *pyit le* and *gate sone*."

Pyit le is the same as *Kyaukpadaung* in that both signify extremely sweet tea. *Kyaukpadaung* comes from the name of a town in Mandalay Division famous for its jaggery, a sweet made from toddy palm syrup.

The word *gate sone* is added after *ah cho* or *ah kya* to signify



A tea maker pours condensed milk into cups at a teashop in Yangon. Pic: Seng Mai

the tea is excessively sweet or bitter. It literally means the end of a bus line but in this case simply implies that you can't really make a sweeter or bitterer cup of tea.

But there's one kind of tea nearly all drinkers, brewers and owners shy away from: packet tea mix. Despite their widespread use in rural areas, tea mix packets struggle to match the popularity of customisable brewed tea in Yangon.

"We don't use instant tea mixes because we're a

teashop," U Aung Thiha of Mercury teashop on Banyar Dala Street in Tarmwe township, says somewhat indignantly. "We only use the packets for coffee."

One drinker at La Pyae Wun, U Zaw Lwin, found it hard to put the difference into words, but insisted brewed tea was far superior to its manufactured distant cousin.

"I don't know how to say this but when I drink and compare [tea from a packet to hand-brewed tea], there's definitely a difference in quality."

The rich alchemy of oak and wine

BORDEAUX — It has to be one of the most serendipitous accidents of history.

France's towering oak forests, first cultivated generations ago for Louis XIV's warships, today provide the raw material for the barrels that help produce the best wines of Bordeaux, perhaps the finest expression of the heady alchemy between oak and wine.

"We are lucky in our business, because these trees were initially meant for naval construction, not barrels," admitted Jean-Luc Sylvain, a third-generation barrel-maker, or cooper, and CEO of Tonnellerie Sylvain in the southwest of France.

"But the fact that we selected and cultivated a variety of oak and forced it to grow in height not girth, has a chemical effect, which has a consequence for wine," he said.

"There is something that happens between the oak tannins and the wine tannins, you have a marriage, an alchemy that takes place in the barrel."

With an annual production of 500,000 barrels, France's coopers dominate the global trade, relying on the forests first cultivated on the orders of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, minister under Louis XIV in the 17th century, in his effort to produce tall, perfect oaks to build a navy capable of challenging England's maritime dominance.

"We are the only country in the world to cultivate oak," said Sylvain, with each generation tending saplings that won't reach their prime for another 200 years.

"These trees are more appropriate for making wine barrels than what you can find naturally in the forest."

The French forests are managed to encourage tall, exceptional trees without branches or knots. The result is timber with a tight grain and the quality of tannins and aromas that improve wine, said Sylvain.

But that is a recent discovery. The humble barrel has spent most of its long relationship with wine serving two mundane purposes — storage and transportation.

Winemakers discovered the barrel's true calling at a point when many were abandoning it due to its bad reputation for harbouring mould, and ruining the wine. Only when cement and stainless steel became available did its true worth reveal itself.

"They noticed something was missing in the wine not aged in the barrel," said Sylvain.

Research in the 1970s and 1980s showed that a clean oak barrel was an invaluable multi-tasker.

"The tannins in the wood balance with the tannins in the wine, and it helps develop aromas," said Charles Chevallier, director of Domaines Barons de Rothschild, including Chateau Lafite, one of Bordeaux's elite properties.

Lafite is one of the few estates to run its own cooperage, crafting 2400 bespoke barrels

a year and providing in-house research and development on the marriage between wine and oak.

"For us, above all the barrel is a physical phenomenon. It allows for fining the wine with the racking of the lees every three months. When we put the wine in a small container, the sedimentation happens naturally," Chevallier said. "And the micro oxygenation that happens through the wood is necessary for aging fine wine."

The barrel, as it turns out, excels as a discreet two-way escape route.

"During the barrel aging, water and alcohol evaporate, concentrating the wine, little by little, this is the angel's share," said Dominique de Beauregard, director of research and development at Chene and Company. "There's also a tiny amount of oxygen that enters. Only a barrel can do that. It's terrific."

Unfortunately for wine lovers, only a tiny splash of the world's wine sees barrel time — around 2 percent according to the French federation of coopers, whose 50 members supply 80pc of the world's wine barrels.

This is where oak chips and staves come in. An anathema to a grand cru classé producer, they are an economical option for wine that can't justify the 600 euro (US\$775) price tag for a 225 litre barrel, say experts.

"Oenological wood is used for two main reasons: to imitate barrels or to augment the fruitiness in wine. For example, if you want to enhance the fruitiness, you can add granulated oak chips during fermentation. If you want to add barrel aromas, you can add staves to the finished wine. These are both used all over the world for ordinary wines," de Beauregard said.

Adding aromas to the wine is one of oak's more noticeable tasks. Some aromas develop during cultivation, with different forests producing subtle differences, then the drying stage encourages sweet notes like vanilla while banishing bitterness, de Beauregard said.

Toasting the inside of the barrel unleashes a sensory cornucopia that de Beauregard articulates as "fresh wood, vanilla, coconut, cloves, grilled almonds, toast, mocha, chocolate, dark chocolate, caramel, coffee, toasted coffee and smoke".

Winemakers pinpoint their preferred forest and the intensity of the toast, as well as the percentage of new barrels, according to the style of wine they make.

"The barrel must not dominate the wine. You put the wine in the barrel, not the barrel in the wine," Chevallier said.

Alternative oak products may have their role, but nothing quite matches the barrel.

"If you talk to a winemaker, his dream is to age his wine in barrels," Sylvain said. "If he doesn't, it's because he can't afford it, due to the price of his wine." — AFP

Why do chillies make noses run?

By Nadia Arumugam

IF you've ever bitten into a raw habanero, eaten a dish laced with Scotch Bonnets, or skinned a basket of roasted New Mexico green chillies, you're familiar with a roster of physiological effects. These can include a burning mouth, inflamed hands, a runny nose, sweating, heartburn and, if you're really unlucky, an upset stomach. Why do chillies cause these symptoms?

They're all attributable to one molecule found in hot peppers called capsaicin. When you eat chillies or prepare them with your bare hands, capsaicin binds to pain receptors in the nose, mouth and skin called TRPV1 receptors. TRPV1 receptors are usually activated by heat, but the capsaicin tricks them into reacting as though they're in the presence of something hot even though there's no actual rise in temperature.

Once the TRPV1 receptors are activated by the capsaicin, the duplicitous "heat" stimulus is transmitted to the brain through a series of electrical impulses, and we feel a painful burning sensation. The body then reacts to cool itself down — hence the sweating that often accompanies a spicy meal. Redness

on your hands and face is another sign of your body attempting to cool off. Capillaries below the skin dilate in response to the "heat" and blood rushes through them to move heat to the surface of your body, where it can more easily radiate away.

In addition to trying to cool itself down, your body does its best to expel the heat-causing element. Your mucous glands step up production to flush out the offensive substance, leading to a runny nose. Your mouth also produces more saliva to clear capsaicin out of your mouth by making you swallow more frequently. Similarly, if you touch your eyes after preparing chillies, your tear ducts go into overdrive.

As chilli-infused food makes its way down your throat, you may experience sensations like heartburn. Usually, it's not a genuine episode of heartburn (which is typically caused by acid reflux), but the capsaicin binding to the TRPV1 receptors in the oesophagus, which prompts a comparable visceral burning sensation. Less frequently, capsaicin can cause the lower oesophageal sphincter, a muscular valve that opens and closes to allow food into the stomach, to stay open for longer than usual. This allows acid to leak upwards, causing actual heartburn.

When capsaicin reaches the small intestine, pain receptors lining the intestinal walls can trigger the release of the neurotransmitter that stimulates strong rhythmic contractions in the gut — which manifest themselves as painful cramps. This is another defence mechanism to clear out the "heat-causing" contents in the intestine by moving them as quickly as possible towards the colon. Glands along the gut wall also may secrete more fluids, which can sometimes lead to the most unpleasant outcome of chilli consumption: diarrhoea.

How to mitigate the effects of touching and eating chillies? Capsaicin isn't water soluble, so washing your hands with water or chugging a glass of it will do little to ease chilli-induced burn. Instead, drink cold milk or eat a spoonful of yogurt or sour cream. Dairy contains casein, a protein that pushes capsaicin away from pain receptors and binds to them in its place, bringing almost immediate relief. Additionally, capsaicin is fat-soluble, so if it's your hands that are burning, you can try soaking them in oil to dissolve the compound. You can also scrub your hands thoroughly with detergent, which will cut through and wash away the capsaicin. — Slate

Phyo's Cooking Adventure

Phyo cuts through culture to reveal life's true taste

A bit of N'awlins in your kitchen

THIS dirty rice recipe is a signature dish from the city of New Orleans, and is served throughout the southern United States. The dish was originally cooked with chicken liver, and the name "dirty" came from the dark-coloured look of the chicken liver and rice.

Some chefs add chopped chicken giblets, sausage and ground meat to the rice, but I prefer this vegetarian version, which uses red kidney beans.

I really love the idea of using beans and not too much meat in the rice, but I've included a recipe for pan fried turmeric and lemon chicken for those who can't do without it.

Red kidney beans can be difficult to find in Yangon, and can be expensive when they're available. As I substitute, I have prepared this recipe using pae' lun beans, which are used in steamed sticky rice.

They're a very good match here. I also use soy sauce to add a bit of darkness as well as some flavour.

The result is a delicious dish that I can serve the whole family, including my little toddler.



Pic: Nyein Maung

chicken or vegetable stock
2 teaspoon of ground cumin
3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
2 onions (sliced in rings)
1 cup of cooked pae' lun beans
3 tablespoons of chopped coriander, plus a handful for garnish
10-15 pieces of okra
½ teaspoon of paprika
1½ tablespoons of soy sauce

PREPARATION

Soak the pae' lun beans in water for at least one hour, then cook in boiling water (½ cup of uncooked beans will yield 1 cup of cooked beans).

Wash the rice and cook in stock with 1 cup of water. After the rice is cooked, place it on a tray and allow it to cool.

Blanch the okra in boiling water for 2-3 minutes, until it just becomes tender. Refresh in cool water and drain well. Cut the okra diagonally into 2 cm slices.

In a large wok, heat the oil and fry the onions. When they become translucent, add the okra and fry for 2 minutes. Then turn the heat down to medium, add the cumin seeds and paprika, and fry for 1 more minute. Add the pae' lun beans into the wok and mix well.

Add coriander, cooked rice and soy sauce to the mixture and fry until the rice and beans are thoroughly heated. Salt and pepper for seasoning.

Garnish with coriander leaves on the top and serve with chili sauce.

some meat with their rice, pan fried turmeric and lemon chicken makes a fine accompaniment.

Pan fried turmeric and lemon chicken

500 g of chicken breast (skinless and boneless)
½ teaspoon of turmeric powder

1 teaspoon of ground coriander seeds
1 tablespoon of lemon zest
2 onions (finely chopped)
2 cloves of garlic (crushed)
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
½ teaspoon of salt

PREPARATION

Cut the chicken breast into 3-4 cm cubes and marinate with turmeric powder, ground coriander seeds and lemon zest. Keep in the fridge for half an hour.

Heat the oil in a frying pan and sauté the onion. When it becomes translucent, add garlic and fry for 3 more minutes.

Add the marinated chicken into the pan and seal all the meat well.

Add ½ cup of water (125 ml), cover the pan and cook the chicken until tender. Then remove the lid and fry the chicken until the gravy is sizzling. Serve with lemon wedges.

Main Tips

You can add more green leaves and green pepper into the rice. But blanch the green leaves first.

Use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock for the vegetarian version.

QUAFFING QUOTE

"I want children to discover where food is from, how it is grown and how delicious it is to eat, and how easy to prepare. ... We need to capture their interest, curiosity and energy — as well as their appetites." — Stephanie Alexander, on her Kitchen Garden Program

NEXT WEEK

Spanish seafood pilaf — rice cooked in seafood stew — with ju root salad.

Red Wine



Michel Picard Saint-Amour 2010

A sip of this ruby-red French wine will set off a refreshing assault on your taste buds, as if Carmen Miranda's fruit hat had exploded in your mouth.

Ks 14,900

Score BOX

7/10

White Wine



Cantina di Soave Cadis Chardonnay 2011

This inexpensive Italian white leaves a strong, lingering taste of rancid apples. Pay a little more money and purchase a wine with a smoother, less overbearing taste.

Ks 6,200

Score BOX

4/10

FOOD REVIEW

HELLO Maki and Sushi opened its second location on Inya Road six months ago in what is quickly becoming a trendy, albeit still short and traffic snarled, stretch in Yangon. Along with Hello Maki and Sushi there is a gourmet ice cream shop and revitalised colonial hotel; there is no overpriced cupcake boutique, as of yet.

Hello Maki and Sushi offers a large menu that includes the expected: sushi and sashimi, as well as an extensive range of tempura, noodles and grilled items.

I started with the sashimi moriawase (K7000) that included tuna, salmon, crab stick, squid, octopus, sea bass and mackerel.

The stifling cab ride to the restaurant gave me doubts about just how fresh any of the city's sashimi could be, but salmon, tuna, edamame, sake (Japanese rice wine) and other key ingredients are shipped in regularly from Japan and Norway.

The nigiri mix (K5200) used similar fish as the sashimi, but also included a California roll, tamago

Say 'hello' to great sushi



Pic: Nyein Maung

Hello Maki and Sushi

135 Inya Road, Bahan township, Yangon; Tel 09-4924-9297. Junction Centre Mawtin, Yangon; Tel 218155, ext 1411

Food: 8
Drink: 9
Atmosphere: 9
Service: 10
X Factor: 8
Value for Money: 8

Score BOX

8/10

(Japanese omelet) and shrimp nigiri.

The California hand roll (K1200) is actually three ice-cream-cone-sized rolls that are a great value for a quick lunch.

Tonkatsu (fried pork, K2800) and saba shiroyaki (broiled mackerel, K2600) are both nice alternatives for those who might think raw fish is best used as bait while angling in the Ayeyarwaddy. The pork was crispy without being oily. The mackerel was not overly fishy.

The fantastic service is highlighted by manager U Sithu Maung whose six years spent working at Dubai's upscale hotels is evident in his attention to detail and the needs of his customers, many of whom he greets by name.

For group dining the private room is a great option. Like the entire restaurant it has a simple, minimalist appeal.

For the month of November Hello Maki and Sushi will be offering 25 percent off food. An additional discount will soon be rolled out for international school students. — EM

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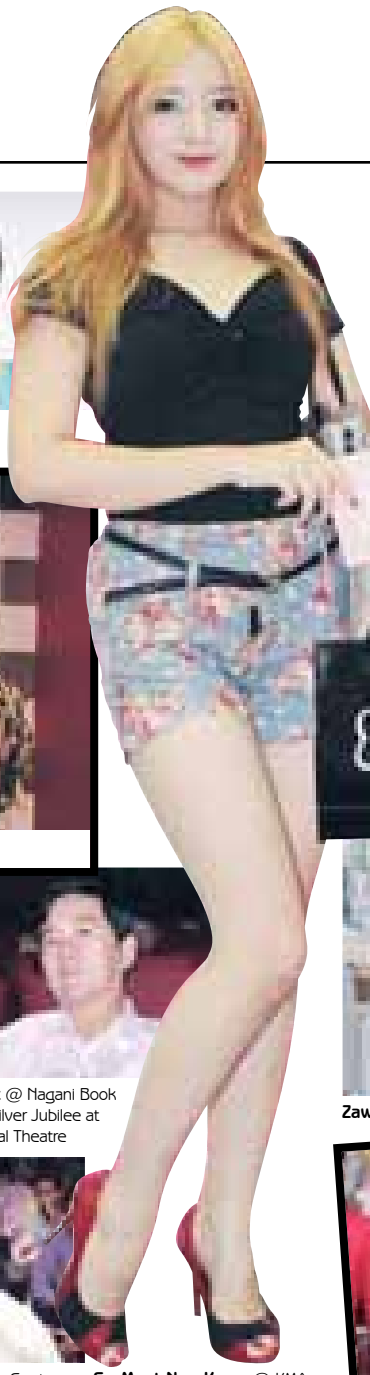
Model @ Sein Gay Har Supermarket 8th Anniversary



U Tun Yee @ KSS Café Lucky Draw Program



Htu Raws @ Beauty Mart New Shop Opening



Yin Yin Htun, Mee Mee Thukha, Wa Ti and U Soe Min @ KSS Café Lucky Draw Program



Wa Ti @ KSS Café Lucky Draw Program



Daw Than Than Nu @ Nagani Book Club Silver Jubilee at National Theatre



Si Thu Aung and Lin Aung @ Taw Win Centre Monsoon Lucky Draw Program



N Kai Ra @ Beauty Mart New Shop Opening



Maung Khin Min @ Nagani Book Club Silver Jubilee at National Theatre



Guest @ Nagani Book Club Silver Jubilee at National Theatre



U Ko Ko Htwe @ Taw Win Centre Monsoon Lucky Draw Program

Su Myat Hne Kyaw @ KMA New Product Launch



Zaw Win Phay, U Kyaw Shin and Than Kyaw Htay @ Garden Home Gallery Opening



Ma Gee @ Taw Win Centre Monsoon Lucky Draw Program



U Myat Nyunt, U Soe Htay and U Kyaw Shin @ Garden Home Gallery Opening



Phyu Phyu, Khin Khin, Hnin Thanda Htun, Kay Khine Aung, Leh Leh Swe and San San Aye @ Best One Mobile Donation at Shwedagon Pagoda

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တစ်နှစ်လုံးလုံး
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(*) RedLink Broadband WIMAX အပိုပေး Customer များ
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0973031884, 0973031885, 0943170015, 0943170016, 0943138338

(**) Nang Khin Zay Yar @ nangkhirzayyar@gmail.com
095413717, 09421118800, 095401258 အားပေးကူညီခြင်းများကို

အားပေးကူညီခြင်းများကို အပိုပေးကူညီခြင်းများကို အပိုပေးကူညီခြင်းများကို အပိုပေးကူညီခြင်းများကို



Hu San Mai and David Zetnan @ Beauty Mart New Shop Opening



Model @ Sein Gay Har Supermarket 8th Anniversary

Contestant @ Mrs Ocean Beauty Pageant Final Competition at East Point

Model @ KMA New Product Launch

SOCIALITE WITH NUAM BAWI

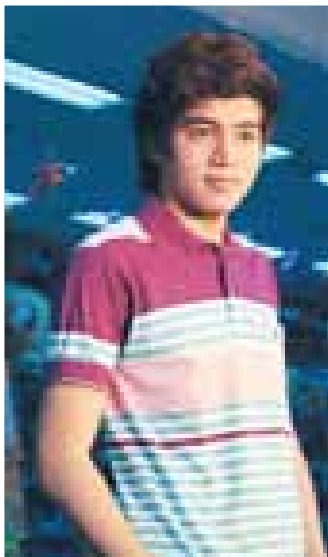


IT was another fine week of whooping it up Yangon-style for Socialite, starting with the über-fantastic KSS Café Lucky Draw program on October 29. Not everyone possesses the capacity to recover from the knock-down, drag-out excitement of a lucky draw within 24 hours, but Socialite does! She was back at it the very next day, starting with the opening ceremony of the Garden Home Gallery at the New Bogyoke Museum, followed by the Mrs Ocean Beauty Pageant Final Competition at East Point. She ended the day by attending a donation ceremony by Best One Mobile at Shwedagon Pagoda. Socialite, being scared silly of ghosts, ghouls and goblins, did not dare go out on Halloween night, but on November 3 she rushed over to the new product launch for KMA Company Ltd, as well as the new shop opening for Beauty Mart. The next day she popped in at the 8th Anniversary of Sein Gay Har Supermarket and the silver jubilee of the Nagani Book Club at the National Theatre. Socialite ended her week by attending Taw Win Center's Monsoon Lucky Draw Program. Now, time for some R&R!



Lin Theik Nyunt @ Taw Win Centre Monsoon Lucky Draw Program

Home Gallery at the New Bogyoke Museum, followed by the Mrs Ocean Beauty Pageant Final Competition at East Point. She ended the day by attending a donation ceremony by Best One Mobile at Shwedagon Pagoda. Socialite, being scared silly of ghosts, ghouls and goblins, did not dare go out on Halloween night, but on November 3 she rushed over to the new product launch for KMA Company Ltd, as well as the new shop opening for Beauty Mart. The next day she popped in at the 8th Anniversary of Sein Gay Har Supermarket and the silver jubilee of the Nagani Book Club at the National Theatre. Socialite ended her week by attending Taw Win Center's Monsoon Lucky Draw Program. Now, time for some R&R!



Model @ Sein Gay Har Supermarket 8th Anniversary

Contestants @ Mrs Ocean Beauty Pageant Final Competition at East Point



Contestant @ Mrs Ocean Beauty Pageant Final Competition at East Point



Eaint Chit @ KMA New Product Launch

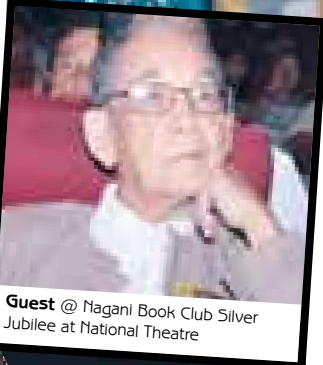


Daw Khin Thet Mar and Chaw Hla New @ Sein Gay Har Supermarket 8th Anniversary



Noe Noe Kay @ KMA New Product Launch

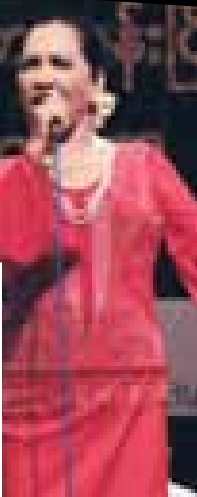
U Kyaw Shin, Kyaw Thein Tun and U Nyein Chan @ Garden Home Gallery Opening



Guest @ Nagani Book Club Silver Jubilee at National Theatre



Jet San Tun @ Beauty Mart New Shop Opening



Khin Nyunt Yee @ Nagani Book Club Silver Jubilee at National Theatre



Soe Mandar Kyaw @ Ma Cho and Aye Zaw Moe @ Mrs Ocean Beauty Pageant Final Competition at East Point

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DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr				
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	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YJ 891	06:15	08:20		YH 917	06:15	07:35		W9 141	06:30	08:45		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30				
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	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		W9 143	07:00	09:05		W9 143	07:00	08:20		YJ 791	15:00	16:10		W9 109	15:45	17:35		W9 109	15:45	17:35				
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	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		6T 341	06:30	07:55		W9 205	17:50	19:15		6T 611	07:30	08:55		6T 611	07:30	08:55		6T 611	07:30	08:55		6T 611	07:30	08:55
SAT	UB-A2	10:00	11:00		6T 341	06:30	07:55		W9 129	17:55	20:00		6T 611	07:30	08:55		6T 611	07:30	08:55		6T 611	07:30	08:55		6T 611	07:30	08:55
SUN	UB-A2	17:00	18:00		6T 341	06:30	07:55																				
YANGON TO MANDALAY																											
MON	W9 205	06:00	07:25	SUN	W9 205	06:00	07:25	MON	W9 205	06:00	07:25	MON	6T 608	13:00	15:00	TUE	6T 612	09:15	10:40	FRI	6T 612	09:15	10:40	SUN	6T 606	13:20	14:45
	YJ 891	06:15	08:20		YJ 211	06:00	07:25		YH 918	08:35	10:30		W9 310	13:30	15:15		W9 310	13:30	15:15		W9 310	13:30	15:15		W9 310	13:30	15:15
	6T 401	06:20	08:25		YH 917	06:10	08:30		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	YJ 909	06:30	07:55		YJ 891	06:15	08:20		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	K7 222	06:30	08:40		6T 401	06:20	08:25		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	W9 143	07:00	09:05		YJ 909	06:30	07:55		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	W9 011	07:30	08:30		K7 222	06:30	08:40		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	YJ 911	09:15	10:40		W9 143	07:00	09:05		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	W9 119	10:30	12:55		YH 731	11:00	12:55		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	W9 014	11:00	12:00		YH 737	11:00	12:55		6T 402	08:48	10:53		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40		6T 612	09:15	10:40
	YJ																										

st magic from 'Hobbit'



A giant Gollum from 'The Hobbit' catches a fish on the ceiling of Wellington Airport on October 31. Pic: AFP

the industry was surprised by the influx of visitors wanting to travel to places featured in the movie.

"We were initially caught out, yes, and geared up over the next year or two to meet demand," he said, recalling a time when the currency was at a 25-year low and international travel was buoyed by a booming global economy.

Gatward-Ferguson's Nomad Expeditions soon revamped its eco-adventure tours along a Middle Earth theme, taking tourists speaking elvish and wearing Tolkien costumes to set locations in the South Island.

With the entire tourism industry abuzz over potential spin-off benefits from Jackson's latest project, there is little chance operators will be wrong-footed when the first *Hobbit* film premieres on November 28.

Tourism New Zealand has changed its "100 Percent Pure" global branding to "100 Percent Middle Earth" and Wellington has dubbed itself "The Middle of Middle Earth" for the premiere, contributing NZ\$1.1 million (US\$905,000) to the event.

Middle Earth coins have been minted, Hobbit stamps issued and Air New Zealand is running an in-flight safety video full of orcs, elves and

wizards.

The national government is so convinced of the benefits to the tourism and movie industries that when a union dispute threatened to send filming offshore in 2010, it amended the country's industrial laws to ensure it stayed.

Glen Croy, a specialist in film-driven tourism at Australia's Monash University, said research showed any jump in visitor numbers would not be driven by hardcore Tolkien fans sporting prosthetic Hobbit feet and pointy Gandalf hats.

He said the film's value lay in putting New Zealand on the agenda as a destination for ordinary travellers considering a long-haul holiday, adding that the country had become synonymous with Middle Earth and each movie release reinforced the association.

"People still talk about *Lord of the Rings*, people still remember the films. You choose to watch a film, which you don't do with an advertisement, and that makes people more receptive."

He said the incidental benefits from filming in New Zealand - such as Orlando Bloom raving about Kiwi ski-fields or Stephen Fry waxing lyrical on Twitter

about Wellington's coffee - also drew people in.

Tourism New Zealand is not specifying how much of a lift it expects from *The Hobbit* but Gatward-Ferguson said the high local dollar and tough economic times meant it was unlikely to match *The Lord of the Rings*.

"It'll be positive but it'll be muted," he said. "There's a lot of naysayers out there and we're not going to get another wall of visitors, but New Zealand is small enough that we only need to win over a small proportion of the world market to make a big difference."

The Kiwi dollar has almost doubled against the greenback since the first movie, currently around 83 US cents and tipped to threaten a record high of 88.43 US cents set in August 2011, compared to 43 US cents in late 2001.

The doubters have not prevented Gatward-Ferguson from expanding his fleet of off-road expedition vehicles by five and buying Hobbit-themed licence plates to adorn them, including "Bilbo", Smaug" and "Thorin", all characters in the movies.

"We've come to our own conclusions, made our investment and now we've just got to wait and see if we were right," he said. - AFP

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr	DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr	DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr	DAYS	Flight	Dep	Arr
YANGON TO BANGKOK				BANGKOK TO YANGON				KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON				GUANGZHOU TO YANGON			
MON	PG 706	07:15	09:30	MON	8M 336	06:40	07:25	MON	SQ 998	07:55	09:20	MON	CZ 3055	15:15	17:05
	FD 3771	08:35	10:20		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		MI 518	14:20	15:45		8M 712	14:15	15:50
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		TG 303	07:55	08:50		8M 502	14:00	15:00		8M 712	14:15	15:50
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		PG 701	09:05	09:55		AK 850	17:10	18:20		8M 712	14:15	15:50
	PG 702	10:45	12:40		TG 301	13:00	13:55						8M 712	14:15	15:50
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		FD 3772	16:50	17:35						8M 712	14:15	15:50
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		PG 703	17:05	17:55						8M 712	14:15	15:50
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55		TG 305	17:50	18:45						8M 712	14:15	15:50
	PG 704	18:45	20:40		8M 332	19:20	20:05						8M 712	14:15	15:50
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		PG 705	20:15	21:30						8M 712	14:15	15:50
TUE	PG 706	07:15	09:30	TUE	8M 336	06:40	07:25	TUE	AK 858	06:55	08:00	TUE	AK 858	06:55	08:00
	FD 3771	08:35	10:20		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		MH 740	10:05	11:15		MH 740	10:05	11:15
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		TG 303	07:55	08:50		8M 502	14:00	15:00		8M 502	14:00	15:00
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		PG 701	09:05	09:55		AK 850	17:10	18:20		AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 702	10:45	12:40		TG 301	13:00	13:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		FD 3772	16:50	17:35						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		PG 703	17:05	17:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55		TG 305	17:50	18:45						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 704	18:45	20:40		8M 332	19:20	20:05						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		PG 705	20:15	21:30						AK 850	17:10	18:20
WED	PG 706	07:15	09:30	WED	8M 336	06:40	07:25	WED	AK 858	06:55	08:00	WED	AK 858	06:55	08:00
	FD 3771	08:35	10:20		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		MH 740	10:05	11:15		MH 740	10:05	11:15
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		TG 303	07:55	08:50		8M 502	14:00	15:00		8M 502	14:00	15:00
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		PG 701	09:05	09:55		AK 850	17:10	18:20		AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 702	10:45	12:40		TG 301	13:00	13:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		FD 3772	16:50	17:35						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		PG 703	17:05	17:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55		TG 305	17:50	18:45						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 704	18:45	20:40		8M 332	19:20	20:05						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		PG 705	20:15	21:30						AK 850	17:10	18:20
THUR	PG 706	07:15	09:30	THUR	8M 336	06:40	07:25	THUR	AK 858	06:55	08:00	THUR	AK 858	06:55	08:00
	FD 3771	08:35	10:20		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		MH 740	10:05	11:15		MH 740	10:05	11:15
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		TG 303	07:55	08:50		8M 502	14:00	15:00		8M 502	14:00	15:00
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		PG 701	09:05	09:55		AK 850	17:10	18:20		AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 702	10:45	12:40		TG 301	13:00	13:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		FD 3772	16:50	17:35						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		PG 703	17:05	17:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55		TG 305	17:50	18:45						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 704	18:45	20:40		8M 332	19:20	20:05						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		PG 705	20:15	21:30						AK 850	17:10	18:20
FRI	PG 706	07:15	09:30	FRI	8M 336	06:40	07:25	FRI	AK 858	06:55	08:00	FRI	AK 858	06:55	08:00
	FD 3771	08:35	10:20		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		MH 740	10:05	11:15		MH 740	10:05	11:15
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		TG 303	07:55	08:50		8M 502	14:00	15:00		8M 502	14:00	15:00
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		PG 701	09:05	09:55		AK 850	17:10	18:20		AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 702	10:45	12:40		TG 301	13:00	13:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		FD 3772	16:50	17:35						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		PG 703	17:05	17:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55		TG 305	17:50	18:45						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 704	18:45	20:40		8M 332	19:20	20:05						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		PG 705	20:15	21:30						AK 850	17:10	18:20
SUN	PG 706	07:15	09:30	SUN	8M 336	06:40	07:25	SUN	AK 858	06:55	08:00	SUN	AK 858	06:55	08:00
	FD 3771	08:35	10:20		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		MH 740	10:05	11:15		MH 740	10:05	11:15
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		TG 303	07:55	08:50		8M 502	14:00	15:00		8M 502	14:00	15:00
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		PG 701	09:05	09:55		AK 850	17:10	18:20		AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 702	10:45	12:40		TG 301	13:00	13:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		FD 3772	16:50	17:35						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		PG 703	17:05	17:55						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	FD 3773	18:05	19:55		TG 305	17:50	18:45						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	PG 704	18:45	20:40		8M 332	19:20	20:05						AK 850	17:10	18:20
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		PG 705	20:15	21:30						AK 850	17:10	18:20
YANGON TO SINGAPORE				YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR				YANGON TO KANGARU				YANGON TO PERTH			
MON	MI 509	00:25	05:00	MON	AK 859	08:30	12:50	MON	8M 336	06:40	07:25	MON	8M 336	06:40	07:25
	8M 231	08:30	13:00		8M 501	08:55	12:55		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		FD 3770	07:15	08:00
	SQ 997	10:25	14:45		MH 741	12:15	16:30		TG 303	07:55	08:50		TG 303	07:55	08:50
	8M 6232	11:30	16:05		AK 851	18:50	23:05		PG 701	09:05	09:55		PG 701	09:05	09:55
	3K 586	11:30	16:05						TG 301	13:00	13:55		TG 301	13:00	13:55
	MI 517	16:40	21:15						FD 3772	16:50	17:35		FD 3772	16:50	17:35
TUE	8M 231	08:30	13:00	TUE	AK 859	08:30	12:50	TUE	8M 336	06:40	07:25	TUE	8M 336	06:40	07:25
	SQ 997	10:25	14:45		8M 501	08:55	12:55		FD 3770	07:15	08:00		FD 3770	07:	

Saudi rapper limited by 'fear and respect'

By Emma Charlton

PARIS—Making hip-hop in Saudi Arabia is a bit of a tightrope act, says Qusai Kheder, self-styled ambassador for the genre who has built a niche following for his sex-and-violence-free brand of rap music.

"Saudi Arabia is a very conservative country — that's where we are from," the 35-year-old said before performing to a crowd of mostly Arab, largely female,

young fans at the Arab World Institute in Paris this month.

"This is our culture, our heritage, and we have reasons to respect it," said the Riyadh-born young man in leather jacket, grey snood and clipped goatee, whose stage name is simply "Qusai".

"But at the same time, we don't have freedom of expression, freedom of speech, so we set up limitations in whatever we do — some people for the fear and some people for the respect. I do a little bit of

both," he said with a laugh.

Qusai cut his teeth as a member of Saudi Arabia's tiny hip-hop underground, becoming the first Saudi to make a rap recording in 1994, earning him the status of "outcast, a black sheep, till one day I felt like, they are out to get me".

So in 1996 he left to study in the United States, making a name as a DJ and radio personality.

Ten years on he returned to a changed Saudi Arabia, he says, where he now runs his

own studio in Jeddah — though with music still viewed as a sin by the country's Islamic leaders, it is a "miracle" to be able to perform in public.

And when it comes to content, Qusai must tread a fine line.

"In Arabic the majority if not all the songs are talking about love — habibi this, habibi that," he said smiling. Whether in Jeddah or Chicago, hip-hop's subject matter is everyday life, he adds.

"You want to party with your friends, talk about it. You see some bad news on TV, you're going to express how you feel," he says. "Our number one subject, for all Arabic rappers, is Salaam. Peace. Because it's a never-ending battle, and we are going to continue singing about peace until we at least smell it."

Peace is the theme of his new album, whose title *The Inevitable Change* is an explicit nod to the Arab Spring and its aftermath across the region.

One track called "Arab World Unite" warns that "most of our wounds are from friendly fire".

But this is no political manifesto: Any allusions

to demands for greater democracy are veiled, or generic, such as: "My Arabic people are waking up/Trying to see a better day so we can live it up."

"I am not a politician," Qusai said. "I don't attack social issues, that's not my place. I drop subliminal messages for the smart people, whoever reads between the lines."

Signed in 2008 to Platinum records, part of the Saudi-owned, Dubai-based broadcaster MBC, Qusai shot to televised fame as co-host of the network's *Arabs Got Talent*, the hugely successful Middle East spin-off of the global franchise.

He has no qualms about having joined the musical mainstream — and relishes the freedom it has given him.

"It's not an everyday thing in Saudi Arabia to find a hip-hop artist becoming a public figure. The people that used to reject me, despise me, and hate me, I guess they love me right now!" he joked.

He says he used the television franchise — broadcast from Beirut to tens of millions across the Arab world — as a launch pad, both for hip hop and his own career.

"*Arabs Got Talent* was the breakthrough of my life," he said. "And it was a chance to introduce that hip hop culture — because it does exist in the Middle East, strongly, but underground."

Nominated for this week's MTV Europe awards in the best Middle Eastern Act category, Qusai switches seamlessly in his lyrics from English to Arabic, injecting riffs of traditional Arabian instruments.

"I would say it's safer in English," he says — allowing him to slip under the radar since the language is still not widely spoken on the Arab street.

Still, when it comes to romance, Qusai keeps things strictly above the belt.

"Sex is always going to be there — but if I touch on it, I touch on it in a nice, entertaining way, not degrading, not insulting, not X-rated," he says. "I respect my culture, I respect my women, period. I was raised in a household full of women so I don't look at them from that angle. It's just not me — and in my culture, this is not something I should focus on." — AFP

Events Flash

Book fair

The Myanmar Book Centre is holding "Book Buffet" fairs at its branches in Yangon (55 Baho Road, at the corner of Ahlone Road) and Mandalay (Room 100, Third Floor, Yadanabon Diamond Plaza) from November 10 to 14, 9am to 6pm daily.

U Thu Kha show

Students of artist U Thu Kha (1918-2007) are exhibiting works in remembrance of their teacher at New Treasure Art Gallery (84A Thanlwin Street, Bahan township, Yangon) from November 10 to 24. Funds from art sales will go to the Great Artist U Thu Kha Fund, which supports the social welfare of artists.

Fashion days

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.

IC concert

Iron Cross will perform with Yadana My at People's Park on November 28. Tickets are K15,000 and K8000.

Solo art show

Artist Moe Myint Zaw will hold his third solo exhibition at Gallery 65 (Yaw Min Gyi Road, Dagon township) from November 14 to 18.

Fundraising fair

Hninzigone Home for the Aged (21 Kaba Aye Pagoda Road) will hold its 51st annual fundraising sale on December 1, featuring vendors selling food and merchandise, as well as games. The entrance fee is K200 a person. Shops open at 3pm, and the opening ceremony, led by singer Daw Yee Yee Thant, will occur at 5pm. A traditional theatre performance by the Gita Myin Moe troupe will start at 7pm.

Illustration show

An exhibition of magazine illustrations and paintings by late illustrators U Tin Aung Myint, U Maung Maung Thiike, U San Toe and U Wathone will be held at Lawkanat Gallery (62 Pansodan Road) from November 16 to 21.

Multimedia artfest

The International Multimedia Art Festival will be held at the French Institute (340 Pyay Road) from November 23 to 25, from 10am to 9pm daily. The event, organised by New Zero Art Space, will feature more than 80 video, installation and performance artists from around the world.

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.

Jazz bliss

The Jazz Festival Bliss will take place at the French Institute (340 Pyay Road) on November 27, starting at 6:30pm. Saxophonist Sophie Alour, contrabassist Sylvain Romano and drummer Frédéric Pasqua will play original compositions as well as traditional jazz standards.

Painting for peace

The "Art of Peace" painting exhibition is being held at Royal Rose Restaurant on Shwegondine Road from November 11 to 13. The show is organised by A Phyu Yang Twe Let Myar (Pure Holding Hands), which aims to provide aid to those suffering in conflict zones in Myanmar.

Korea Week

A week of South Korean cultural events is being

held at various venues in Yangon from November 8 to 14, including a film festival (Thamada Cinema, Nov 9-12); taekwondo competition (Thuwunna Indoor Stadium, November 12-13); and speech contest (Traders Hotel, November 14).

Charity art fair

The British Council will hold a charity art fair for people living with HIV, at Kandawgyi Park on December 1 and 2, from 9am to 10pm daily. Entertainment will include drama shows, arts presentations, and live rock, pop, reggae and hip-hop music by famous singers.

SEA Games fun fair

To stimulate public interest in the 27th SEA Games, scheduled to be held in Myanmar in December 2013, the Ministry of Sport will hold a fun fair at People's Park in Yangon on December 7 and 9. Festivities will include movie screenings, theatrical performances and live music.

Live music

Friendship Band belts out classic rock tunes at 50th Street Restaurant every Wednesday and Friday night.

Wednesday wine

The Wednesday Wine Club 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.

Calle de la Salsa

Tuesday is salsa night at 50th Street Bar, featuring free dance classes (salsa, bachata, mambo, meringue and more), plus dance shows and drink specials. With music by DJ Mani and special guests.

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)

An unexpected opportunity will demand that you take a risk. With the right approach, you can make a beautiful challenge that will help keep your dreams alive. Sincerity and humility will help you expand your social circle but you must be sure to always show your positive nature. Incompatibility in a family relationship needs to be reconciled as soon as possible. Your heart will awaken you to love.

Pisces

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Work to correct inconsistent behaviors in your social life, and endeavour to reconcile growing controversies through reciprocal agreement. Improper language can reduce respectability and change your nature for the worse. A flash of wit will inspire you to improve the way you manage your life. Changing yourself for the sake of love will change nothing.

Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

Work on your powers of observation — the world is passing you by according to its own rules, so you should take notice of your surroundings at all times. Your fast actions and quick decisions could get you into trouble; slow down and think about things more carefully. Rid yourself of the embarrassments of the past and prove your good nature in friendship and society.

Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

Some close friends might leave your side without saying goodbye. Leading by example is the best means of gaining the respect of others. Now is a good time to freshen yourself up and begin to think positively about the future. Don't give up on what you think is right just to please others. Your love interest will give you an easy ride, but this could change without warning.

Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

Blame nothing on yourself, but be courageous in tackling challenges that will expose you to new experiences. Fortune and misfortune are competing brothers in your melodrama, so take care to steer wisely. Speaking the truth directly is sometimes called stupidity. Instead, listen carefully and observe closely to discover the wishes of others, and you will find yourself more welcome everywhere you go.

Cancer

(June 22 - July 22)

Selfishness and the desire to dominate others might make trouble for you soon and limit your development as an individual. Allow social disputes to pass by without paying them much attention. Don't ignore your idiosyncratic thoughts, but rather recognise them as emotional changes stemming from secret mental beliefs.

Leo

(July 23 - Aug 22)

Inject a bit of sophistication into your behavior and think a little more before you speak. You might have to stand up for yourself on more than one occasion this week. Fighting over principles might seem ridiculous and pointless at times but it could help earn you the respect of your colleagues. Pay greater attention to social problems and let your love life take care of itself.

Virgo

(Aug 23 - Sept 22)

A love affair will be a useful means for you to channel your creative energies but don't let your heart take over from your head too much. Don't feel you need to tell people everything about yourself whenever you feel doubtful. Focus on the problems heading your way and not on mistakes made in the past. Free yourself from too many engagements; now is the time for self-reflection.

Libra

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)

It's time to move on and enjoy budding opportunities. A life of luxury or pleasure is meaningless without the trust of your partners and others. Your strong decision-making could make you great, and good luck will be with you. Create opportunities to heal rifts even at the cost of a little pride. There is no virtue in loneliness. Love is an emotional response under the rules of understanding.

Scorpio

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Invest some courage in your love life, and take time to think deeply before assuming greater responsibility. Thoughts of love and sex will drive you a little mad. Criticise yourself but don't get carried away. Don't think too much about luck or fortune; action and language are more important in achieving your goals.

Sagittarius

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Look for something new to do either at work or in your personal life. Try not to overplay your hand, though. Your optimistic and social nature will reward you with new opportunities, but a sharp manner could lose you some political points. In love, you will crave independence as you try to create more space for living in spirituality.

Capricorn

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Forgiveness is the best means of removing whatever anger lingers in your heart. Try to get on better with others even though you will find relations strained at times. A good balance can exist between competition and cooperation. Clever observation in personal relationships can help you make good decisions without misunderstanding.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw, 4th Floor, 113, Thamaing Bayan Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon. Tel: 0973135632, Email: williamteaste@gmail.com

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Public Notice

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Travel

I.S TRAVEL BKK is providing services in Thailand such as individual group tours packages, hotel reservation, transportation, ticketing & meeting at the airport for individual and groups. For more information feel free to contact at Ms. Ei Ei Min. Tel: 6686-1004802. Email: istravel12011@gmail.com

CHAUNG THA Beach (3 nights / 4 Days) - USD 150 per person, Ngwe saung Beach (3 Nights / 4 Days) - USD 175 per person. Rate are inclusive of : 2 Nights stay at deluxe sea view with daily breakfast at BOB Resort. (Ngwe Saung) 2 Nights stay at Superior Villa sea view with daily breakfast at Max Hotel. (Chaung Tha) Bus Ticket (Yangon - Ngwe Saung (or) Chaung Tha - Yangon) Other than those items mentioned in exclusive Hotel information

Check in time : 2:00pm & Check out time : 12:00 pm. Transport information : Depart from Yangon : 8:30 pm & Depart from Chaung Tha : 9:30 am. Reservation by mail : smm@yellowearthtravel.com by ph: 511756, 09-731-85574. Door to Door service

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Property

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RETAIL/OFFICE SPACE available at Pearl Condominium. Please call 095200654.

BAHAN : New University Avenue Lane, Condo, 1Flr, 1500Sqft, Fully Furnished, Fully Furniture, 3A/C, 1 MBR, 2 SBR, 1PH, 8.5 Lakhs, (Suitable to Rent for Foreigner), Call: 09-432-00669.

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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, (85'x 85') 8MBR, 11AC, 3RC, Kyats 60 Lakhs, Ph: 09-492-14276.

MAYANGONE (1) Pyi Rd (6 mile), (45'x 50') 1MBR, 2BR, 4AC, 2RC-USD-1800, (2) Pyi Rd (7mile), (100'x100'), 5MBR, 11AC, 3RC, 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

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Employment

INGO Position

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ALLIANCE IS seeking **Consultant** : must have understanding of HIV in Myanmar context, partnership in the civil society context, facilitation skills, excellent interpersonal skills. Pls send CV to the Country Director, Int'l HIV/AIDS Alliance : 12/F, Pyi Thu St, 7 miles, Mayangone, by 20 November 2012. Or send to ao.alliance@gmail.com orao-alliance@alliance.org.mm Further information www.aidsalliance.org.

AMDA is seeking a **Consultancy** for 'Feasibility studies for formulating Primary Health Care Project in Chin state: A University degree in rural development, public health or related fields. 3 years experience with community-based development projects required. Excellent command of English ability to local languages such as Muun & Dai is an asset. Pls submit application letter with attachments of CV with a recent passport photo, copies of testimonials (references & certifi-cates) to Senior Officer, Admin/Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office 19-B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin, Email: amda@mptmail.net.mm. Closing date : 16th November 2012

CARE Int'l in Myanmar is seeking **Project Manager** (PM) - 1 post (National), for Kokang Self Administrative Region, Northern Shan State:

Diploma in Business Administration, Private Sector Development, related field or substantial equivalent in professional experience. 2 years field experience in Myanmar. Pls send an application letter C.V., passport photo, with necessary documents to HR Manager, CARE Int'l in Myanmar, 17-A, Pyi Htaung Su St, Sayarsan Rd, Bahan. Email: recruitment@care.org.mm.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking **Deputy Head of Division 1** Post: University graduate. 4 years experience in training or other related field. English language skills. Computer literate in MS Office (Myanmar & English).

(2) Psycho social Support Officer, 1 Post : Any graduates but B.A (Psychology) graduates. 2 years experience in health, social work or Psychosocial support. Effective English language & Translation skill (Myanmar - English). Pls submit a letter of application, relevant documents & CV, photo with other documents (cover letter CV documents only need to be sent via e-mail) to U Khin Maung Hla, Executive Director, Myanmar Red Cross Society, Nay Pyi Taw mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com before 16th November 2012, pls visit to the www.myanmar-redcross.org.

THE LEPROSY Mission Myanmar require (1) **Site Coordinator** (Centre Manager) in Thaton, Mon State : Any degree. Demonstrate leadership skills. (2) **Nurses** 2 posts in Sagaing & Monywa, Diploma in Nursing, from Ministry of Health. Flexibility to station at a DRC with a need. For all posts : contract will be initial 1 year with possible extension. Pls submit CVs to Htay Htay Win, Administrative Assistant of TLM by email to: htay.wn@gmail.com. Closing date : 16th November 2012.

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Employment

Local Position

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HORIZON INT'L Kindergarten is seeking **Swimming Teacher** F 1 post: Must have any bachelor degree, Must have a diploma or certificate of Basic swimming course, Must be able to speak

English, Must have an experience in teaching Swimming at least one year, Must have a good communication with kids, Must be patient, kind, honest & reliable, Willing to work with us for a long time. The one who are interested can be applied along with the CV and cover letter to (5) A, Pho Sein Rd, Bahan, Tel: 548452

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QUARTO Products is one of the leading Fine Food & Wine Distribution Company in Myanmar is seeking : (1) **Driver** - M 1 Post: 10th Standard pass, Able to listen and speak in English (2) **Customer Service Assistant** - M/F 1 post: Experience in Int'l hotels or food & wine knowledge preferred, Good command of English. (3) **Junior Sales Officer** - M/F 1 post:

Graduate of Business management, sales or marketing, Experience in retail sales a bonus but not a must outgoing with good written & spoken English, Basic computer & Math skills, (4) **Cleaner** - F 1 post : Good personality & health . Deadline : 20.11.2012 , Email : yu.quarto@gmail.com, yu.quarto-products.com. You can apply with cover letter, CV with 2 recent photos, copies of NRC card, labor registration card, Police recommendation letter, others educational references & experience to 5 (B/ D), Bayint Naung Lane (1), Thurein Yeik Mon Housing, Ywar Ma Curve, Hlaing, Ph: 530768, 530237.

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HOTEL OPENING in Yangon (1). **Hotel Manager** - 1 Post (2). **Front Office Supervisor** - 1 Post (3). **HK Supervisor** - 1 Post (4). **Food & Beverage Supervisor** - 1 Post (5). **Business Law Adviser** - 1 Post (6). **Chief Accountant** (CPA) - 1 Post (7). **Receptionist Staffs** (8). **Housekeeping Staffs** (9). **Kitchen Staffs** (10). **Waiters and Waitress** (11). **Maintainces Staffs** . Add : 126 / A , Damazaydi Rd, Bahan. Tel : 09 730 94644, 524 844, Email : hotelbah@gmail.com

LE NACHA Restaurant

Urgently required for: (1) **Cashier** 1 Female. (2) **Hostess and Waitress** 2 Female. Please bring the CV to: 85, Shin Saw Pu Road, San Chaung T/S, Yangon. Not later than 15 Nov 2012. Tel: 09-4500-13761, 09-730-20932.

ADVERTISING Agency looking for a **Creative Designer** - 1 year experience, Proficiency in design Software such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator & InDesign, Ability to be a team player and must be able to work under tight deadlines. Call : 09-5069346 for an appointment. Salary is negotiable.

THE GOVERNOR'S Residence Hotel, Yangon By Orient Express is looking for (1) **Accountant** : Bachelor's degree in related field. Prefer LCCI Level III & ACCA Level III. Fluent in English. Computer skills on Microsoft word, Excel, e-mail/ Internet experiences is the must. 3 years of accounting experience in hotel industry. (2) **Assistant Storekeeper** : 3 years experience in related field in hotel industry. Must have a Bachelor's degree. Fluent in English. Computer skills on Microsoft Word, Excel. Prefer female. (3) **F & B Manager** : Takes in charge of all Food & Beverages operation and leads a team of 40 employees. 5 years experience in related field as F & B Manager is a plus. Fluent in English. Computer skills on Microsoft Packages. (4) **Safety and Security Manager** : 3 years' experience as a Security Manager in hotel industry. College degree or equivalent work experience. Proficiency with Microsoft Office products. Fluent in English. Pls

submit detailed resume together with a recent photo and supporting documents attention to: HR Department: 35, Taw Win Rd, Dagon Tsp, Ph: 229860-63, Email: Kmu@governors-residence.com

GOENKA BANDOOLA Group is looking for (1) **Business Development Manager** - 5 years of experience in marketing and product promotion. Also experience in market research. (2) **Marketing Manager** : 5 years experience in Tractors & Agricultural Mechanization sectors. Duties include overall operations & marketing of the product. Fluent in English. (3) **Administration Staff** : Any degree holder, prefer with General Management Course. Should have knowledge for Accounting. 4 years experience. Fluent in English. (4) **Accountant** : Must have accountancy certification & complete knowledge of accounting. 3 years experience. (5) **Marketing Executive** : 2 years experience in selling tractor (or) agriculture equipments. Experience in selling products like water pump, generator, heavy equipments, etc. (6) **Demonstrator** : 4 years experience in driving tractors & using agricultural implements. Pls send CV's before 15th Nov 2012 to Email: gbg.2021@gmail.com or Ph: 09-4200-87374.

BLUEBIRD Hotel (Bagan) Carrier Opportunity **Front Office Supervisor** - M/F, **Receptionist** - F, **Guest Relation officer** - F, **Reservation officer** - M/F: Work Place In Bagan **Reservation officer** - M/F, Work Place In Yangon. Pls contact us with your cv to 256-266, Rm 10D, Shine Tower, Seikkantha St, (Upper), Kyauktada Ph: 398030, 09-505-2595

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Duties:- In preparing and creating tour Programs. Being able to handle all areas of bookings such as reservation for hotels, Restaurants, Guides, Transportation. Good computer skill (Excel/ Words) Email/ Internet. Able to speak and write in English. Have experience in Travel in Tour Business. (2) **Ticketing Sales Officer** - M/F 4 Posts : Being able to handle Abacus/ Amadeus computer (Words/ Excel), Email, Internet. Able to speak & write in English. Able to deal with Visa/ D-Form. Pls send with C.V with Photo 2 Nos, Graduated Certificate copy, Police Recommendation letter within 2 weeks to Sky Ride travel Tours Co., Ltd : 14/A, Baho Rd (Khine Shwe Wah St.) Hledan, Kamayut. Ph: 09-512-1804.

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Responsibilities: The Finance Manager will:

- Ensures the project's financial processes and transactions meet USAID/OTI regulations, DAI internal policies, and project needs
- Review all procurement requests, grant payments and travel funds for later approval and authorization by the Chief of Party/Deputy Chief of Party.
- Ensure proper documentation for all expenditures
- Responsible for ensuring the security of all project funds.
- Maintain appropriate documentation for all purchased assets.
- Ensure that salaries are disbursed to all employees on schedule.
- Prepare travel advances for all employees based on travel advance policy. Calculates and distributes all travel advances.
- Prepare and submits bi-monthly financial reports to DAI
- Train all project team members on standards for submitting financial transactions
- Train grantees on financial processes as requested

Qualifications:

- University degree in Accounting, Finance or relevant field required
- Minimum of 4 years of progressively responsible experience in financial management required
- Relevant experience working on donor-funded projects in a related role and with demonstrated supervisory experience
- Experience with financial management software (Quickbooks or similar)
- Strong computer skills (MS Office suite) required.
- Experience with grants or small grants under contract programs highly preferred.
- English language fluency required.

Interested and qualified candidates should e-mail CV and cover letter to DAIRecruit@dai.com by November 23rd, 2012. No phone inquiries will be accepted.

English Speaking Finance Manager x10

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Objectives of the job:

Implement controls and ensure compliance within local office
Oversight of cash payments and forecasting
The provision of accurate, timely financial reports for effective planning and decision making.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Daily cash reconciliations, making staff, supplier and other payments
- Review operating expenses with various departments to ensure actual costs remain within budget.
- Support with supplier negotiations
- Review creditor reconciliations and establish overall opex exposure not accounted for in management accounts
- Create and processing payroll and journals
- Prepare monthly bank reconciliations
- Support local management team with all finance related matters
- Complete monthly cost analysis
- Assist with budget setting process
- Assist with development of AP and Treasury functions
- Regular, clear communications with regional head office

Academic qualifications and experience required for job:

- Qualified accountant
- Previous experience of working in a dynamic company and managing cash and suppliers

Functional Skills:

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- People management skills
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UNAIDS Rm: (1223-1231), 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 252361, 252362, 252498. fax: 252364.

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UNOPS Inya Lake Hotel, 3rd floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279.

UNRC 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), fax: 292739, 544531.

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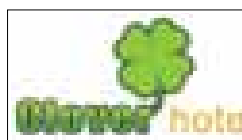
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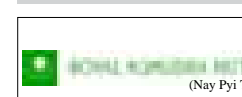
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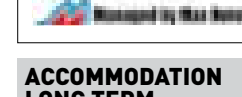
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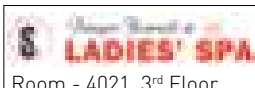


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Room - 4021, 3rd Floor, Taw Win Centre. Ph: 8600111 (Ext:4021), 09-803-2581.



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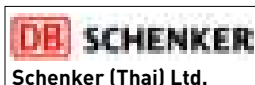
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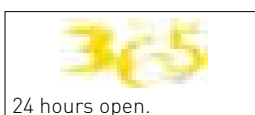


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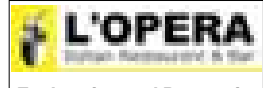
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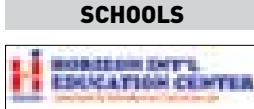
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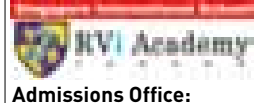
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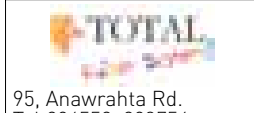


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The tragic title fight that changed boxing

SEOUL – Thirty years ago this month, South Korean boxer Kim Duk-Koo entered a Las Vegas ring for a world championship bout that would end with his death, trigger at least one suicide and change the sport forever.

For a generation of South Koreans, millions of whom watched live on television, the fight between Kim and world lightweight champion, Ray “Boom Boom” Mancini, remains a powerful memory.

Now a new book and accompanying documentary that coincide with the 30th anniversary hope to shed fresh light on the bout, its tragic aftermath and the impact it had on the lives and families of its two protagonists.

For Kim, then 23 and fighting for the first time in the United States, the glitz of Caesar’s Palace with its celebrity audience including the likes of Frank Sinatra, was a different universe from his impoverished upbringing in Korea.

“I remember when we landed in Las Vegas for the fight,” his trainer, Kim Yoon-Gu, now 56, recalled.

“The city was all lit up at night. It was like landing on a garden of flowers in the desert. We’d never seen anything like it,” he told AFP at the boxing gym he runs in Seoul.

US boxing commentators had pretty much written Kim Duk-Koo off before the November 13, 1982 clash with Mancini, a powerful 21-year-old from Youngstown, Ohio making his second defence of the world title.

But Kim was confident. Before leaving Seoul he had a carpenter rig up a mock coffin which he said he would use to bring back Mancini after the fight.

Unimpressed with such bravado, his trainer stomped it to pieces which he then hid under the ring in Kim’s training camp.

The fight when it came was a particularly brutal one.

For 13 rounds, the two men went toe-to-toe in a slugging match that left both with badly swollen faces and struggling to see through bruised, puffed-up eyes.

At the end of the 13th, Kim Yoon-Gu tried to lift his fighter, telling him Mancini was exhausted



South Korean trainer Kim Yoon-Gu, 56, holds a picture showing boxer Kim Duk-Koo with a trophy for the domestic lightweight title in 1981, at his gym in Seoul. Kim Duk-Koo died after a bout with world lightweight champion, Ray “Boom Boom” Mancini in Las Vegas in 1982. Pic: AFP

and exhorting him to put in one last effort to finish him off.

“He clenched his teeth, nodded and said ‘Yes, I’ll do that’. And that was it. That was the last thing he ever said,” Kim said.

At the beginning of the 14th, Mancini connected with a straight right that snapped Kim’s head back and sent him crashing to the canvas.

The Korean managed to haul himself up by the ropes to beat the count, but referee Richard Green stepped in to stop the fight.

Kim Yoon-Gu had been tending to his corner and missed the actual knockout blow, but when he saw Kim on the ground, he knew at once that the fight was over.

“He was obviously hurt,

but at that time we had no idea it was so serious,” he said.

Back in his corner, Kim collapsed and was taken from the ring on a stretcher to hospital where he was diagnosed with a blood clot on the brain and underwent emergency surgery.

He lapsed into a coma from which he never recovered and four days later he died.

On the flight back to South Korea, a traumatised Kim Yoon-Gu locked himself in the toilet and “cried and cried until we landed.”

“I thought about quitting the sport entirely. In the end, I decided to stick with it, but it was a very, very difficult time,” he said at his gym where photos and posters of Kim Duk-Koo adorn the walls.

The consequences of the Kim-Mancini bout were far-reaching and tragic in their own right.

Four months after her son’s death, Kim’s distraught mother killed herself by drinking a bottle of pesticide.

Four months after that, referee Richard Green also took his own life, although there was no indication that his suicide was linked to the outcome of the fight for which he was never held in any way responsible.

Mancini, a devout Catholic, endured a prolonged period of depression and, although he fought again, was never the same boxer.

“In all the obvious ways, he was haunted,” American sportswriter Mark Kriegel, author of a new biography of Mancini titled *The Good*

Son, told AFP in a telephone interview.

“He also got over it. The complications for Ray have more to do with the fact that the rest of the world didn’t get over it and continued using that fight as a kind of reference point for his life,” Kriegel said.

Kriegel’s book, and an accompanying documentary of the same name, climax with an emotional reunion in June last year between Mancini and Kim’s family.

Kim’s fiancée, Lee Young-Mee, had been pregnant at the time of the 1982 title fight and seven months later gave birth to a son, Kim Jiwan, now 29.

While being interviewed by Kriegel for the book, Jiwan had suggested a trip to the United States to meet with Mancini.

“As full of duty and obligation as Ray was, he wasn’t going to turn down a request from the son of the man who, without intention, died at his hands,” Kriegel said.

At the meeting in Mancini’s home, Jiwan admitted to the “hatred” he once felt for the boxer, before absolving him of any blame.

“I think it was not your fault,” he said.

The Kim-Mancini bout proved to be a watershed in boxing, triggering a series of major changes to the sport.

Championship bouts were reduced from 15 to 12 rounds, the standing eight-count was introduced and the medical tests required of boxers before a fight were overhauled. – AFP

US government sells Zetas horses for \$8.8 million

CHICAGO – More than 300 race horses allegedly owned by a top leader of Mexico’s feared Zetas drug gang have been sold for \$8.8 million after being seized in a June raid, US officials said November 8.

US officials allege that Miguel Angel Trevino Morales, who is believed to be in Mexico operating as the cartel’s second in command, and his brothers hid millions of dollars of drug proceeds in a horse racing and breeding operation.

One of the brothers, Jose Trevino Morales, and his wife Zulema Trevino were among seven people arrested in a massive raid which

also saw the seizure of the prize-winning horses.

The quarter horse racing front appears to be more than simply a shell corporation. Several of the horses have won major races, including A Dash of Sweet Heat, which sold for \$1 million.

Nor were the accused making major efforts to stay under the radar – some of the horses ran with names like Number One Cartel and Corona Coronita Cartel.

The US government still retains possession of 45 quarter horses which it plans to auction at a later date, including “Mr. Piloto” which won \$1 million at Ruidoso Downs

on Labor Day 2010.

“Like all criminal organizations, the Zetas are motivated by money,” US attorney Robert Pitman said in a statement. “Identifying and taking their assets is an important way to lay an axe to the root of the tree.”

“This investigation has helped to disrupt this alleged international drug cartel’s US-based money laundering operations and demonstrates the lengths that US law enforcement will go to deprive criminal organizations of the fruits of their illegal activities,” said Steve McCullough of the Internal Revenue Service. – AFP

Royal Montreal to host 2014 Canadian Open

MONTREAL – Royal Montreal, North America’s oldest golf club, will play host to the 2014 US PGA Tour Canadian Open, Golf Canada executive director Scott Simmons announced on November 5.

Royal Montreal, which hosted the inaugural Canadian Open back in 1904, will play host to the event for the 10th time and for the first time since 2001 when American Scott Verplank claimed the title.

“Royal Montreal shares a long

and storied history,” Simmons said. “We are thrilled to add to that special legacy again in 2014.”

The course also hosted the 2007 Presidents Cup matches, where the United States team defeated an International squad of non-European golfers.

No Canadian has won the Canadian Open since Pat Fletcher in 1954. Next year’s Canadian Open will be played July 25-28 at Glen Abbey Golf Club in Oakville, Ontario. – AFP



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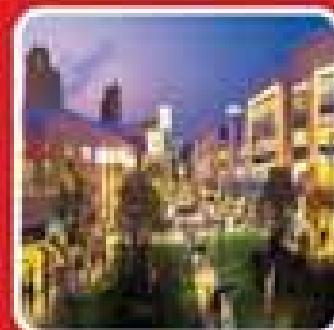
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Celtic cope with expectations

GLASGOW – Neil Lennon said Celtic are in a great position to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League after his injury-ravaged side produced a shock 2-1 defeat of Group G favourites Barcelona at Parkhead on November 7.

However, the 41-year-old Northern Irishman - who is in charge of his first Champions League campaign with the club - added the biggest problem they faced was to cope with the fans expectations that they would reach the Last 16.

"It (the victory) gives us a great chance; maybe a greater chance than we expected before the game but we still have two very difficult games," he said.

"The problem myself and the players will have to deal with now is the expectation level will increase. There is still a lot of hard work to be done but we've given ourselves a fantastic platform."

Celtic could now qualify from the group stages for only the third time in their history if they get a score draw or better against Benfica in two weeks time.

Barcelona still top the group on nine points with Celtic two points behind while Benfica are third on four points having beaten Russian opponents Spartak Moscow 2-0 on November 7.

"We have to go to Benfica now and try and raise our game again but we will cross that bridge when we come to it," said Lennon, who earlier in the campaign saw Celtic end a woeful record when they recorded their first ever away win in 21 Champions League games with a 3-2 win over Spartak Moscow.

"I want them to enjoy their evening and enjoy their moment



Barcelona's goalkeeper Victor Valdes watches the ball hit the back of the net after Celtic's forward Victor Wanyama scored during their UEFA Champions League Group G football match at Celtic Park in Glasgow on November 7. Pic: AFP

and get back to domestic duties on Sunday.

"These are special nights here. When I came back I said I wanted to bring the thunder back here and I have never heard the atmosphere as good as that."

Lennon said he couldn't be prouder of the team's performance, especially as they were missing several first team regulars.

Goals from the outstanding Victor Wanyama and 18-year-old Tony Watt gave them a 2-0 lead and Lionel Messi's stoppage time goal was not enough to stop the Spanish giants going down to their first defeat in the Champions League group stage in three years.

Lennon, who played in the Celtic side that defeated

Barcelona in the Last 16 of the UEFA Cup in the 2003/2004 season, said the result was his greatest in management, coming on the day after the club celebrated its 125th birthday.

"I think it's one of the greatest nights in the club's recent history."

"It was very poignant on the club's 125th anniversary that we got to play Barcelona in such a prestigious game and then to win the game under huge difficulties was amazing."

"The players are heroes. I can't speak highly enough of their performances and they will go down in the history books of the club as the team that beat probably the best team in the world."

"They have been given two of the stiffest examinations (the 2-1 defeat by Barcelona a fortnight ago and Wednesday's match) they will ever get in their careers and they have come through it with flying colours."

"It's one of the proudest nights of my career; it was a monumental achievement from the players."

"As a manager I don't know if I'll top that but I hope I do and progress."

"We've waited a long time to get back into this competition. The club has been in the doldrums a little bit."

"I'm not saying this is the pinnacle because I still think there is more to come from this team but the progression has been great." - AFP

Philippines scours globe for talent

MANILA – Philippines baseball officials have scoured the US and Japan professional leagues for players with the talent and eligibility to help the national side make it to the world championships, officials said.

Similar tactics have already been employed by the country's rugby union and football teams, with some success.

"We're looking far and wide for good players with at least one Filipino parent. Everyone else is doing it," said Hector Navasero, president of the Philippine Amateur Baseball Association.

The obvious plum target was Tim Lincecum of World Series champions the San Francisco Giants, Navasero told AFP.

The Filipino-American pitcher starred in relief in the Giants' World Series sweep of the Detroit Tigers last month, but declined the Philippine offer out of respect for his father.

"His mother was born in the Philippines, but it was his father who raised him after the couple split," Navasero said.

Instead 14 players mostly from the US minor leagues have been recruited, and will join the Philippine team at a qualifying tournament in Taiwan on November 15.

New Zealand, Taiwan and Thailand are also competing, with the winning team qualifying for the World Baseball Classic in March next year.

The minor leaguers in the Philippine team are led by pitcher Geno Espineli, who had one season in the majors with the San Francisco Giants in 2008, posting a 2-0 win-loss record with a 5.06 earned run average.

The pitching staff also includes 21-year-old left-hander Ryuya Ogawa, who is a combined 0-1 and 3.60 ERA in five innings pitched for the Chunichi Dragons in the Japanese pro league over the past two years.

The Philippines national football team, the Azkals -- slang for mongrel dogs -- mined European soccer to improve the record of Asia's perennial doormats, who were ranked 195th by FIFA in 2006.

Former Chelsea FC youth players Phil and James Younghusband, as well as goalkeeper Neil Etheridge, who plays professionally at Bristol Rovers, have since helped boost their ranking to an all-time high of 143rd.

Using a similar approach the Philippines' rugby union team, the Volcanoes, secured the services of six Australian-Filipinos who play professionally in Japan -- and have since risen to 56th in the world and fifth in Asia. - AFP

Beijing marathon bars Japanese amid island row: report

TOKYO – Organisers of the Beijing marathon have barred Japanese runners from taking part due to safety concerns after a fresh flare-up in a territorial dispute between Japan and China, a report said on November 9.

"If they choose other nationalities including China, Japanese can take part," the influential newspaper Asahi Shimbun's online edition quoted a source at the organising committee of the November 25 marathon as saying.

The committee made the decision by taking into consideration the safety of athletes, the daily said in a report from

the Chinese capital.

Japanese companies such as Canon had sponsored the annual event until last year but they are not sponsoring it this year.

Already 26,000 people have signed up for the marathon since its registration process began on Thursday, Asahi said.

Japan was included in the nationality section in the marathon's online registration page until last year but has been deleted this year, it added.

In Beijing, officials from the organising committee were not immediately available to comment on the report.

Tokyo's nationalisation of islands that are at the centre of a territorial row with Beijing sparked violent mass anti-Japan demonstrations in Chinese cities in September. Japanese nationals, businesses and diplomatic missions were targeted.

Japanese and Chinese athletes have since pulled out of several sporting events in both countries due to safety concerns.

But Japanese figure skating stars took part without any incident in the Cup of China Grand Prix event in Shanghai last week as they were escorted by bodyguards and Chinese-speaking coordinators. - AFP

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