

When the honeymoon is over

What comes next for US-Myanmar relations?

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US President Barack Obama hugs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi after making a speech at her residence in Yangon on November 19.
Pic: AFP/Jewel Samad



IN DEPTH

with Bill O'Toole



In Kachin, 'Red' Shan struggle to avoid the fighting

IN the Kachin State conflict, the people of the Tai-Leng, or "Red Shan", ethnic group from the south of the state say they have faced violence and discrimination at the hands of soldiers on both sides of the conflict, prompting some communities to form militia units to protect themselves.

The Red Shan first settled in the plains of southern Kachin State 900 years ago and since then they have earned a living from agriculture and commodities trading, according to senior Red Shan leaders. They speak their own dialect of the Shan language and are almost exclusively Buddhist. Red Shan community leaders say the group numbers as much as 100,000, about one-third of the total Shan population in Kachin State, which is home to about 1.2 million people.

Shan communities have been squeezed by fighting in Kachin State between government and Kachin Independence Army soldiers that broke out in June 2011, ending a 17-year ceasefire.

"We are a nation afraid of both sides," said U Saw Win Tun, secretary of the Tai-Leng (Red Shan) Nationalities Development Party and resident of Myitkyina, the Kachin State capital.

According to members of the Tai-Leng party, government soldiers often take food and other supplies from Red Shan farmers by force. Since last year, U Saw Win Tun said government troops have levied heavy taxes against Red Shan villages and forced "many dozens" of their residents to become porters in the Tatmadaw, a practice that has regularly been documented by rights groups such as Human Rights Watch.

But far from seeking protection under the KIA by fleeing to relief camps, as many of the state's Kachin population have done, Red Shan living in conflict zones say the most violent abuses often come from soldiers on the rebel side.

U Saw Win Tun said the KIA,

Obama visit gets mixed response from minorities

Kachin leaders criticise US president for not pushing hard enough for peace, equality

By Bill O'Toole

UNITED States President Barack Obama might have enjoyed a warm response from crowds in Yangon, but outside the former capital, among the country's various embattled ethnic minority groups, the response was much more mixed.

In a speech at Yangon University on November 19, President Obama emphasised the importance of national reconciliation, peace, and tolerance in parts of Myanmar where "conflict still lingers". He said the civil war in Kachin State, which began in June 2011 when a 17-year

ceasefire between the government and Kachin Independence Army broke down, was of particular concern. But while the president stressed the need for "a lasting peace" and for humanitarian groups to be given access to the estimated 80,000 civilians displaced by the conflict, some Kachin leaders say President Obama is not doing enough, either in words or actions.

"He only spoke generally about equal rights," said a senior official from the Kachin Baptist Convention,

who asked not to be named. "We want him to strongly focus on the issue ... if he pressured [President U] Thein Sein, if they pushed him, [then peace] would work."

Even before President Obama arrived in Myanmar, the US-based Kachin Alliance (KA-USA) accused the administration of effectively supporting the Tatmadaw over the people of Kachin State. In an opinion piece published on November 17 on the *Kachinland News* website, KA-USA spokesperson Nsang Gum

San wrote: "This [visit] indicates a lack of leadership, poor intelligence or the abandonment of American ideals, but the strong American foreign policy that leads by example in this world has been absent for the Kachin in recent years."

On the other hand, President Obama's remarks drew effusive praise from Rohingya activists. Speaking of the rioting and violence in Rakhine State, President Obama said: "For too long, the people of this state, including ethnic Rakhine, have faced crushing poverty and persecution. But there is no excuse for violence against innocent people."

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US-Myanmar ties: beware the backlash

By Josh Gordon

UNITED States President Barack Obama's visit to Myanmar last week highlights how much has changed over the past two years in the relationship between the world's lone superpower and a country that has been one of the world's most inwardly focused. But even in this moment of mutual success, the US and Myanmar should be wary of the potential for disappointed expectations to combine with autarkic (self-isolating) and xenophobic trends in Myanmar's political culture and create a backlash.

Long-term economic and social mismanagement in Myanmar means that the US-led developed world offers an idealised model, as well as an idealised pathway for Myanmar to reach that model. The US and its allies are societies that many in Myanmar aspire to become more like, and it is through trade, investment, technology transfer and knowledge sharing that this hoped-for transformation in Myanmar will occur. But the political and economic systems of the developed world are not a panacea for the many social and economic ills that trouble Myanmar. When it becomes apparent that re-engagement with developed world capitalism will not only fail to solve existing problems but also creates new ones, seemingly discredited ideas from Myanmar's past may once again become important.

In Myanmar, expectations for the reforms and concomitant re-engagement with the developed world are unrealistically high. These include expectations for economic growth, and for how that growth will affect material and social conditions. Emblematic of this sentiment is President U Thein Sein's call for Myanmar to triple its per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) by 2016. This would require growth of more than 25 percent a year, a rate that would be little short of miraculous. Such unrealistic expectations can also be seen in the spirit underlying the electricity protests over the summer. The abysmal state of the electricity grid in Myanmar is not something that can be fixed simply by the will of the government to do so and it also cannot be fixed overnight. But the sudden break from long isolation and the breakneck pace of political opening make even the miraculous seem possible, if not probable.

High expectations also cluster around improvements that Western companies will bring to business practices in Myanmar. The hope is that the contrast with what noted Mandalay writer, Daw Ludu Amar, has called the *laupan*



US President Barack Obama during his historic visit to Myanmar on November 19. Pic: Kaung Htet

khit, or "era of the Chinese boss", will be stark. Myanmar's reliance on China for imports of finished goods, infrastructure development and energy investment has brought to the fore resentment about how Chinese businesses operate in the country. Chinese products are a byword for poor quality, humorously shown in the popular Myanmar saying "*ti yoke set, ti yet soke*" ("Chinese machine, broken in one day"). Chinese resource extraction companies are decried as wantonly looting and polluting. Popular belief holds that the companies are able to get away with these practices because they

reason they do around the world: price. The overall result is that both quantitative and qualitative changes in Myanmar's economic life are likely to disappoint widely held expectations. More crucially, the close links between Myanmar's reforms and its opening to the US and its allies mean that disappointment in Myanmar is likely to focus on Western companies. This will be exacerbated by the conspicuous success of a few Western firms, and the invisibility of the losses of those many that do not succeed in Myanmar's challenging business environment.

British Burma coincided with large-scale immigration, mainly from India and China. The small community of Europeans were at the top of society, while Indian and Chinese groups controlled much of what constituted the modern commercial economy. The predominantly rural and agrarian Bamar population became economically marginal in their own homeland. This was the plural society famously described by scholar and colonial official JS Furnivall.

Burma's struggle for independence was also a struggle against the economic

internal elements to secure control. This schema is still very much alive in Burmese politics today. The US and its allies will easily slot into the role of covetous outsiders, and the reformers that of their domestic henchmen, when disappointment with the results of the reforms and concomitant opening sets in.

This schema underlies two major, but opposed, positions in Bamar politics under the post-1988 Tatmadaw governments. Popular perceptions have been that the leadership of the Tatmadaw was selling out the country to the Chinese for personal gain. Here the Tatmadaw leadership are the domestic henchmen and the Chinese the covetous outsiders. Conversely, the post-1988 Tatmadaw governments argued that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy were stooges of a neo-colonial West. This position, which sees the West as covetous outsider, abetted by the democratic opposition, has never been popular and is now almost entirely discredited. But when disappointment with the results of the reform process sets in this position could provide the core of a revived isolationist and nationalist narrative.

The question then becomes what can be done to forestall a backlash against the US and its allies. For the West, the first step is to understand Myanmar's historical experience. Myanmar should not be seen simply a pawn in a struggle with China. Myanmar needs to be understood on its own terms and that understanding needs to inform Myanmar policy.

The key is to help Myanmar cultivate an inclusive and outward-looking nationalism to replace the schema developed out of the colonial experience. To this end President Obama should reach out to elements in the Tatmadaw and Union Solidarity and Development Party because it is from within their ranks that leaders of an isolationist push would likely come. If the reforms and better relations with the US and its allies benefit these groups too, they are less likely to dust off inward-looking nationalist rhetoric and try once again to lead the country into xenophobic autarky.

(Josh Gordon is a PhD candidate in anthropology at Yale University. His dissertation research is on Chinese identity in the China-Myanmar borderlands. Josh has been doing research in Myanmar since 2003, and has conducted fieldwork both in Myanmar and on the China-Myanmar border. He has also worked as a consultant for Chinese companies researching investments in Myanmar's energy sector.)

'Autarkic and xenophobic trends in modern Myanmar political culture make the possibility of a disappointment-triggered backlash against the US and its allies more likely.'

have bribed venal government officials. These conditions raise the hope that the re-entry of Western companies will bring less corruption and better stewardship of both natural resources and the environment.

Undoubtedly, those Western firms that do enter the Myanmar market are likely to be better on conservation and corruption but ultimately, as profit-making enterprises, they will have to adapt to the local business culture and conditions more than change them, particularly at first. Furthermore, low-quality Chinese products will continue to dominate many market segments for the same

Autarkic and xenophobic trends in modern Myanmar political culture make the possibility of a disappointment-triggered backlash against the US and its allies more likely. These trends have their roots in the colonial experience. The establishment of British colonial control over what had been the independent Konbaung kingdom coincided with a peak in the first wave of globalisation before the First World War. British control brought the former Konbaung lands into deepening and expanding networks of international trade and migration. The growth of the commercial capitalist economy in

marginalisation of the Bamar people. The ultimate negation of the commercial, capitalist and immigrant-receptive British Burma was General Ne Win's governments under the Revolutionary Council and the Burma Socialist Program Party. These governments were socialist and isolationist, and set immigration control as a priority. Underlying the broad policy directions of the Ne Win era was schema describing Burma's place in the world. This schema was that Burma's abundant natural wealth and strategic position made it a draw for covetous outsiders who would work with self-interested

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Hluttaw passes probe into mine at Letpadaung

By Soe Than Lynn

THE Pyithu Hluttaw has unanimously approved a motion to form an independent commission to investigate the Letpadaung copper project in Sagaing Region and whether a planned expansion should be allowed to proceed.

The mine has been the focus of months of protests, with residents angry at the confiscation of thousands of acres of farmland for the expansion, which has been halted because of the unrest.

The extraordinary motion, presented on November 23, the final day of the fifth session of parliament, was sponsored by National League for Democracy member Daw Khin San Hlaing, the representative for Pale in Sagaing Region. While Minister for Defence Lieutenant General Wai Lwin defended the conduct of the project's investors, including military-owned Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (UMEHL), and told the hluttaw it was not necessary to form the committee, he was overruled.

The motion called for the formations of "an independent, national-level commission composed of individuals and organisations trusted by the public and local and foreign experts and organisations", which would investigate the Letpadaung expansion, as well as existing mines at Sabetaung and Kyisintaung, and then issue public findings and recommendations.

The motion also called on the "Pyithu Hluttaw to urge the president to assess whether [the Letpadaung expansion] should be allowed to continue and, if allowed, how it should be done" based on the findings of the commission.

The commission should consider the effects of the project on society and environment, the measurable and non-measurable short- and long-term benefits for the state and the people, and will of the public, the motion said.

The Letpadaung deposit has 1.478 billion tonnes of copper ore with a copper content of 0.38 percent, as well as about 577 million tonnes with 0.44pc copper, according to 2007 estimates, making it the largest deposit in Southeast Asia.

In 1996, Canadian company Ivanhoe and the Ministry of Mines formed a

joint venture called Myanmar Ivanhoe Copper Company Limited with an equity ratio of 50:50 and produced copper from the Sabetaung, Sabetaung South and Kyisintaung deposits. In 2006, it produced as much as 39,000 tonnes of pure copper and in 2006 and 2007 earned US\$112 million and \$160 million respectively.

After Ivanhoe divested its share, the ownership "fell into the hands of" UMEHL, hluttaw representatives were told, and more than 14,000 acres were acquired for the Letpadaung expansion and villages, monasteries and schools were forced to move.

"Though peasants were given compensation of three times the value of cultivated crops, social life, health and the power of human spirit deteriorated. The environment was badly damaged. So the local people strongly protested against it and people all over the country extensively supported their objection," the motion said.

In his clarification regarding the motion, Lt Gen Wai Lwin said that profit from the project was shared between the government (16.55pc), UMEHL (13.15pc) and Myanmar Yang Tse Copper Ltd (12.63pc), a subsidiary of Chinese arms manufacturer Norinco. The other 57.67pc covers production costs, including investment, the minister said.

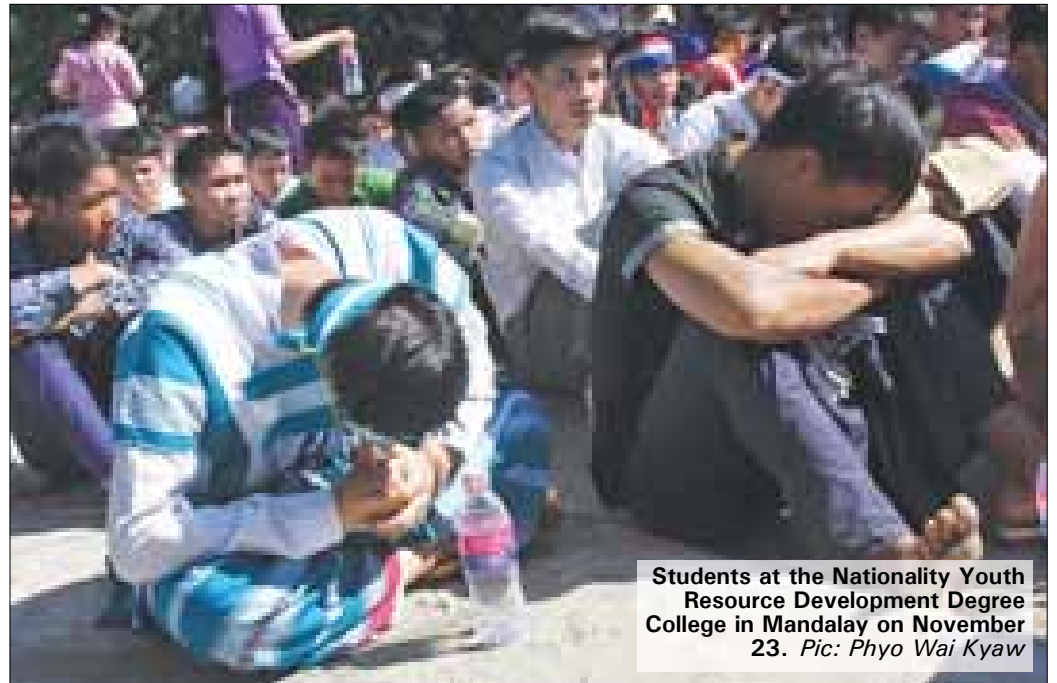
Profit is calculated based on annual production of 25,000 tonnes and a London Metals Exchange price of \$6250 a tonne. Last week copper closed the exchange at \$7716 a tonne.

The minister also said the investors are "providing social, educational and healthcare assistance to local people" and "using world-standard management practices" to avoid environmental and other damage.

Because the investors will "systematically execute [the project] to honour the contract and for long-term profit, it is not necessary to form a commission", the minister said.

Rather than put the proposal to a vote, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann asked three times if there were any representatives who objected to approving it and none responded, including the 25pc from the military, ensuring its passage through the hluttaw.

- Translated by Thit Lwin



Students at the Nationality Youth Resource Development Degree College in Mandalay on November 23. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

Ethnic students win reprieve after two-day Mandalay protest

By Phyo Wai Kyaw and Sithu Lwin

MINISTER for Border Affairs Lieutenant General Thein Htay has agreed to try and help students from a Mandalay college for ethnic minorities who protested last week after their school was transferred to Sagaing.

More than 500 students from the Nationality Youth Resource Development Degree College in Mandalay demonstrated in Mandalay on November 23 and 24 to express their anger over the transfer.

Lt Gen Thein Htay met with the students behind closed doors on September 24, with even teachers barred from the meeting. Three students emerged and told journalists the minister had agreed to allow them to stay in the Mandalay campus for one month and said a resolution is likely in two or three weeks. The students said they trusted the minister would stick to his promises.

The students were transferred to Ywarthitgyi University in Sagaing on September 7. In October, they sent two letters to the president asking to be transferred back to Mandalay.

After receiving no reply, the

students marched for about eight hours from Sagaing to Mandalay on the night of November 22 and staged a sit-in protest in the college compound the following day, asking the authorities to let them take their classes back in Mandalay. They stayed in the convocation hall and negotiated with the principal and other officials but when no resolution was reached they shifted to an area near the main entrance to the campus at about noon, where they spoke to journalists.

"We don't understand about protests... we have never been involved in political affairs. We are just ethnic students and we feel that the responsible officials have neglected us. They never asked whether we wanted to transfer to Sagaing and did not give any reason," Shan students Mg Hla Htun and Mg Thein Moe Aung told *The Myanmar Times* on November 23.

"We also heard that our school will close and be transformed into Mandalay University. If they close it and we lose our opportunity [to study], it is as if all minority people lose the opportunity. The top leaders regularly say that they care more for ethnic affairs now but if that's the case why are they

doing this to us? We want to understand how unhappy we are about this," they said.

After shifting from the convocation hall, the students sat on the college's main entrance road in the burning sun, proclaiming loudly that they would not leave until they got an official letter stating that their demands would be met. The students refused to accept any food or water during the sit-in protest.

Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Major General Zaw Win told the students their request would be passed on to the president.

"We will inform the president what you all want. We chose you [to attend] this college because we wanted to support you. If you want to return back to this college in Mandalay, we will inform the authorities again," he said.

However, the students remained in the compound until early on November 24, after which Lt Gen Thein Htay arrived to negotiate.

Myanmar's two Nationality Youth Resource Development Degree Colleges opened in 2000. Run by the Ministry of Border Affairs, they offer arts, science and Associate of Government Technical Institute certificates.



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Aid should strengthen public, not govt, says Daw Suu

By Pyae Thet Phyo

INTERNATIONAL assistance to Myanmar should be directed towards democratic development that strengthens civil society rather than the government, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said last week.

"[Foreign governments] said they would give assistance. We don't have any reason to refuse but how they will give assistance

matters. It doesn't need to strengthen the government but needs to strengthen the public," the National League for Democracy leader said during a meeting with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key on November 22.

"Because Myanmar is a country that has been under authoritarian rule, the power of the government is very strong. If this is strengthened, democratic activities won't be free from

mistakes," she said.

Mr Key said New Zealand had been a long-time supporter of Myanmar's democracy movement and would continue to offer assistance to smooth the country's path towards democracy.

"For many years Aung San Suu Kyi led efforts to bring democratic reform to Myanmar, and she has made great personal sacrifices on behalf of the country's people," Mr Key said, according to a New Zealand government statement.

"Her ability to travel to Oslo in June to receive in person the Nobel Peace Prize was both a tremendous personal tribute to her, and reflected how far Myanmar has come since she was released from house arrest. "I was pleased to reaffirm to Aung San Suu Kyi New Zealand's support as Myanmar continues to promote the democratic and economic reforms she has dedicated so much of her life to achieving."

- Translated by *Thit Lwin*

From page 1

Obama visit

And the Rohingya hold themselves - hold within themselves the same dignity as you do, and I do."

In an open letter to the president published on the group's website, Nay San Oo, the co-founder of the Free Rohingya Campaign in Rakhine State, described the speech as "remarkable".

"We are greatly admired by your leadership and your approach to educate Burmese civil, religious, political, military, government and general public about religious freedom, civil liberty, freedom speech and equality among all citizen of Burma," he wrote.

"The every words in your

speech today have cured the mind and thought of millions of Burmese infected by General Ne Win Philosophy of Burman and Buddhist as the only superior race and religion."

It was less popular with Rakhine politicians, however, with Rakhine Nationalities Development Party chairman Dr Aye Maung telling *Irrawaddy* that President Obama was ignorant to use the word "Rohingya".

"I do not like the word 'Rohingya,'" the Amyotha Hluttaw representative told the Chiang Mai-based organisation. "The word 'Rohingya' is newly invented by illegal immigrants. They are trying to be an ethnic group of our country with a

grave intention. Obama has to study about them."

But Shan Nationalities League for Democracy chairman U Khun Htun Oo, a prominent Shan politician and former political prisoner, praised President Obama for both the speech and his decision to visit.

"It came at the proper time," he said in a phone interview last week.

Referring to President Obama's promise to assist Myanmar in its democratic development, U Khun Htun Oo said he believes the US will provide support for reforming the 2008 constitution. "I think he can talk to the federal government, apply pressure on them," he said. "If this country has a genuine constitution, the

whole nation will enjoy peace and tranquillity."

The international dimension of the visit, particularly in terms of Myanmar's political and economic relations with regional powers, was not lost on some ethnic leaders.

U Saw Hla Ngwe, a general secretary of the Karen National Union, had measured praise for President Obama. "Generally I liked his speech," he said by phone from Thailand. "I like that he recognised our political transformation."

"But I hope that our country won't become a hostage between powerful countries in the East and West. Whatever they bring, it should help our people escape from poverty and difficulties."

In Kachin, 'Red' Shan caught between Tatmadaw and KIA

From page 1

like the Tatmadaw, extorts taxes from small villages, to the point where residents end up paying 20 to 30 percent of their monthly income to armed groups. Those that refuse to pay are often driven from their homes.

"A lot of our Shan villages suffer," said a young Red Shan teacher from Myitkyina, who asked not to be named. "This year, in March, the KIA fired on [the Red Shan village of] Tar Law Gyi [in Myitkyina] with heavy weapons ... 500 people fled to refugee camps. Right now, about 200 [Red Shan] students are staying at a local monastery."

U Saw Win Tun said about 20,000 Shan people in Kachin State have been displaced by the fighting and based on this figure they comprise about one-quarter of the total displaced. He said the number is relatively high because most of the Shan villages are in the south of the state, where much of the fighting has taken place.

In addition, the KIA routinely drafts Red Shan men to fill its units, said U Sai Htay Aung, the chairman of the Tai-Leng Nationalities Development Party. He said that while this has been common practice for many years, it has significantly increased since the resumption of fighting 18 months ago.

"I was forced to become a soldier when I was 16. My grandmother and father paid [the KIA] K5000 for my freedom. When I was 18, this problem happened again. This time the money was K10,000," said a Red Shan Buddhist monk from Tar Law Gyi village, about 65 kilometres from Myitkyina on the east bank of the Ayeyarwady River.

When he was 25, the man was drafted yet again. This time his family did not have the money to free him, so he deserted and joined the clergy.

In April, KIA soldiers came to his monastery and demanded he organise a group of young men to be sent to the front lines. The monk refused and was forced once again to flee and said the soldiers tried to "assassinate" him. "They looked everywhere. They searched the monastery and all the



Members of a Red Shan 'pyithu sit', or people's militia, train in Tar Law Gyi village, about 65 kilometres from Myitkyina. Pic: Supplied

village boats ... I narrowly escaped," he told *The Myanmar Times* by phone.

Residents in some Red Shan villages, including Tar Law Gyi, have resorted to forming a *pyithu sit*, or people's militia, to protect themselves. These volunteer forces bring a measure of peace, say residents; the monk said this is what prompted him to return home after fleeing the KIA in April.

But a senior official from the Kachin Baptist Convention described the attack on Tar Law Gyi as "an isolated incident carried out by a few corrupt officers".

He said he had also heard of isolated incidents of KIA soldiers demanding heavy taxes and forcing young men to join but these incidents aren't representative of the larger relationship between the KIA and the Shan people.

"As far as I know the KIA has a good relationship with the Shan people," he said, adding that Shan were treated the same as Kachin in the state's many refugee camps. "I

know there were some problems in Tar Law Gyi village ... [but] it's just in some areas, not very many ... it's not a big deal."

The plight of the Red Shan and other Shan groups in the conflict is rarely acknowledged, either at home or internationally, something the Tai-Leng Nationalities Development Party, which was formed less than six months ago, is looking to change. The party will likely field several candidates in the 2015 general election, say leaders.

Though the Kachin Independence Organisation has invited members of the Red Shan community to attend peace negotiation meetings with the government, U Sai Htay Aung said he does not want to attend and will try to maintain his distance from Kachin politicians. Speaking in the group's Mandalay headquarters, he said: "[We] are the innocent victims between the Kachin armed groups and the Myanmar army. ... We don't think the KIO is representative for the whole of Kachin State."

ERIA to support 'Comprehensive Development Vision' drafting

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

THE Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) will provide capacity-building support to facilitate the drafting of a plan to guide national economic development, an official said last week.

The institute's chief economist, Mr Fukunari Kimura, told *The Myanmar Times* in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh last week that it would start training

government officials responsible for creating the Myanmar Comprehensive Development Vision from the middle of next year. A survey of Myanmar's economic, political and social context is already underway ahead of the start of the program, after which ERIA will advise the ASEAN Secretariat of Myanmar's funding needs.

"Myanmar is trying to change very quickly now. You should have a vision for that development otherwise the coordination with

other countries will not be good," he said.

A major aim of the vision is to improve connectivity with neighbouring countries and reduce inequality between urban centres and rural and border areas.

"[The support] comes from the agreement from the national leaders, particularly the part of the project about construction and connectivity within Myanmar - Yangon and Mandalay as well as the rural areas, and at the

same time, border areas," Mr Kimura said.

"You know that on the Thai side [of the border] people can earn higher income and the Myanmar side gets lower income. We need to increase the income in the Myanmar side.

"I expect a lot of stakeholders will also be included but especially we will cooperate with many government ministries."

According to a recent ERIA report, *Toward CADP 3: Regional Connectivity, the Comprehensive*

Asia Development Plan and Myanmar Comprehensive Development Vision, Myanmar is the "weakest link" in the region in terms of connectivity, despite its "high potentiality".

"ERIA is supporting the Myanmar government to develop the Myanmar Comprehensive Development Vision because ... connectivity enhancement and better spatial design will maximise the potential of Myanmar and will dramatically change the shape of East Asia," the report said.

President pushes Obama on sanctions in Cambodia

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein asked United States President Barack Obama to lift America's sanctions against Myanmar and to invest in the country's development, President U Thein Sein told *The Myanmar Times* during a briefing for Myanmar journalists in Phnom Penh last week.

President U Thein Sein met Mr Obama for about one hour during his historic visit to Myanmar on November 19, discussing the needs of the national economy and its role in moving the country forward, President U Thein Sein said on November 21.

"For the needs of our economy, I had the opportunity to plead with him [Mr Obama] to lift all of America's sanctions against Myanmar," President U Thein Sein said.

"I discussed with him [Mr Obama] what would be good benefits for our country," President U Thein Sein said.

President U Thein Sein said he told Mr Obama that he hopes the US will assist Myanmar to upgrade the highway between Yangon and Mandalay,



President U Thein Sein and US President Barack Obama during a meeting in Yangon on November 19. Pic: Kaung Htet

a project initiated under Eisenhower's presidency.

President U Thein Sein added that he hopes the US will help develop Yangon's

infrastructure while preserving its many heritage buildings.

Mr Obama's visit to Myanmar was positive for the country, even

amid some criticism and prior speculations of security concerns, President U Thein Sein said. - *Translated by Zar Zar Soe*

Civil society organisations upbeat after meeting with US president in Yangon

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

REPRESENTATIVES of 14 Myanmar organisations got the chance last week to bend the ear of a particularly influential visitor: the President of the United States.

Civil society groups covering a range of political and social issues were able to share their views with the president, and to invite his attention to their concerns. They included the Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw, and members of the 88 Generation student group, the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, the Food Security Working Group, political science school Bayda Institute, the Karen Women's Action Group and more. The encounter took place at the Convocation Hall of Yangon University, before the president delivered his speech to the public. The representatives said they found Mr Obama in a mood to listen.

"He told us the role of civil society was vital to Myanmar's transitional period. When we discussed human rights violations, he said he sympathised with the peace marchers who are facing trial, and he thanked them for their activities," said Daw Susanna Hla Hla Soe, director of the Karen Women's Action Group, referring to the alleged organisers of an illegal peace march held in September.

"I explained to him the peace process involving the Karen National Union and the government, and requested him to urge them to give peace a chance. It is women and children who suffer

most in war," she said, adding: "We didn't have much time, so I gave him a letter."

Ko Myo Yan Naung Thein of the Bayda Institute said he discussed education reform with President Obama.

"I told him I would like the army to be trained as a democratic force, and asked for more support for the education sector," he added.

Dr Ohnmar Khaing, coordinator of the Food Security Working Group, said she discussed the long-term problems facing the country's farmers.

"Most smallholders have debts. Others lose their land, especially in conflict areas. We want to help improve their security and give them a chance to work in line with the government's agriculture policy," said Dr Ohnmar Khaing.

"I requested President Obama to support the agriculture sector financially and technically," she added.

Other representatives asked the president to support the development of the country through the United States Agency for International Development, better known as USAID.

"He didn't exactly agree, but he said the US would continue to provide support according to the needs of the people via USAID. The head of USAID was standing near President Obama at the time," said Daw Susanna Hla Hla Soe.

The representatives also met with Ms Samantha Powers, the president's human rights adviser.

"We got the chance to discuss what we wanted," said Dr Ohnmar Khaing.

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Thousands flock to see Obama make history in Yangon

By Zaw Win Than

THE President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, made his historic visit to Myanmar on November 19 together with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. It was the first visit to this country by a sitting American president.

President Obama first met with his counterpart, President U Thein Sein, at the parliament building in Yangon, where he said the reforms undertaken by President U Thein Sein would move Myanmar forward.

"The steps that he has already taken for democratisation, elections, the release of prisoners of conscience, a commitment to work with us on a human rights dialogue all can unleash the incredible potential of this beautiful country," President Obama said during his meeting with U Thein Sein.

"And I shared with him the fact that I recognise that this is just the first step on what will be a long journey. But we think that a process of democratic reform and economic reform here in Myanmar that has been begun by the president is one that can lead to incredible development opportunities here. And we are committed to continuing to work very hard to try to strengthen the bilateral relationship so that we can promote progress that will be good not only for this country but for the region and for the international community," he said.

President Obama also appreciated the concrete cooperation that President U Thein Sein announced on November 18 with respect to non-proliferation issues, including adherence to the IAEA additional protocol.

"I think we share an interest in trying to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. And that is obviously a significant security concern for the United States, but also for the world. And so we very much appreciate that step forward,"

said President Obama. During the meeting, President U Thein Sein recognised "disappointments and obstacles" in relations with Washington over the past two decades, but stressed his commitment to improving ties. President U Thein Sein stated that he wanted to use the exact words of President Obama: "We will continue to move forward. We will move forward."

He also highlighted that discussions with the US had reached agreement to develop democracy in Myanmar and to promote human rights to international standards. "We will continue to cooperate with the United States in the capacity-building of our officials and for the development of our education and public health care services. We will redouble our efforts and we will continue to work with the US as a partner," said U Thein Sein.

After meeting with President U Thein Sein, President Obama made a brief visit to Shwedagon Pagoda where he poured water (a meritorious deed) over a Buddha statue at the Friday planetary post.

Then, as thousands of people lined the streets to welcome him, President Obama left to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at her residence on University Avenue Road. After the meeting, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said relations between US and Myanmar could only continue to improve. "The US government has been staunch in its support for the democracy movement in Burma, and we are confident that this support will continue through the difficult years that lie ahead. I say difficult because the most difficult time in any transition is when we think that success is in sight. Then we have to be very careful that we are not lured by a mirage of success and that we are working to a genuine success for our people and for the friendship between our two countries," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said during a

joint press conference with President Obama.

"I believe that we have been able to discuss our various concerns openly, and that as a result of the president's visit to this country, the relations between our countries can only progress in the right direction. I intend fully to keep in touch with the United States government as far as possible, and to make sure that we always liaise with one another on the most important matters," she added.

In the joint press conference, President Obama said the US goal was to sustain momentum for democratisation in Myanmar.

"Today marks the next step in a new chapter between the United States and Myanmar. Last year, in response to early flickers of reform, I asked Secretary Clinton to visit this country and explore with Aung San Suu Kyi and the government whether the United States could empower reform efforts and begin a new relationship between our peoples," he said.

He later delivered a speech to hundreds of students, officials, politicians, ethnic leaders and former generals in long-closed Myanmar about freedom and the importance of finding strength in diversity at the Convocation Hall of the University of Yangon.

President Obama offered a "hand of friendship" between two countries that had become "strangers." He spoke of Myanmar's continuing ethnic strife and said the country should harness the "power of diversity." He said that people of his skin colour were once denied the right to vote in the United States.

"And so that should give you some sense that if our country can transcend its differences, then yours can too. Every human being within these borders is a part of your nation's story, and you should embrace that. That's not a source of weakness, that's a source of strength if you recognise it," he added.



US President Barack Obama addresses a crowd of about 1500 people at Yangon University

Alumni toast speech at

By Kelly Macnamara

YANGON – For prominent comedian and former political prisoner Zarganar, the US president's visit last week to Yangon University marked nothing less than a "rebirth" of an institution whose history is entwined with the nation's struggle for freedom.

From its role as a cauldron of the independence movement against British rule to the scene of a brutal 1988 crackdown on student protests, the campus has for decades incubated dissent in the face of authoritarian rule.

"I got my degree here in 1985 ... Obama comes here 27 years later than me," Zarganar quipped, explaining the sight of the painted and refreshed campus left him "highly emotional".

The "rebirth" of his

beloved university follows decades of neglect after Myanmar's military rulers closed campuses and moved universities out of towns in an effort to weaken their influence, following a student revolt in 1988.

Hundreds of thousands of people joined summer protests that year, marking the most serious popular challenge to the junta, before an army crackdown that killed more than 3000.

The university's closure sparked two decades of decay for the once august establishment, as dormitories and departments sat empty, with the main hall – which had been the assembly point for protest – used only for occasional ceremonies.

But speaking on November 19, President Obama raised hopes the university will emerge from the doldrums, in an impassioned address aimed

at bolstering Myanmar's rapid, but fragile, reform process.

Paying tribute to its extraordinary role in Myanmar's gradual emergence from decades of military rule, President Obama name checked former students, including the nation's independence hero Aung San – whose daughter Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sat in the front row with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

With US and Myanmar flags adorning a bamboo screen behind him, he told a rapt audience of students, pro-democracy leaders, lawmakers and other dignitaries that "you can taste freedom" but called for reforms to be deepened.

The symbolism of the occasion could hardly be lost on those listening intently in the packed hall.

The country's recent history has been "intimately

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s historic Convocation Hall on November 19. Pic: Boothee

Visit wins plaudits from reps

By Thomas Kean

HLUTTAW representatives from the Union Solidarity and Development Party and National League for Democracy have applauded President Obama's decision to visit Myanmar and the content of his speech at Yangon University.

Following the euphoria of the six-hour visit on November 19, most representatives managed to make it back to Nay Pyi Taw the following day to attend the seventh day of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session, which concluded on November 23. Most discussion focused on the revised budget for 2012-13 and corruption in government ministries, with U Thein Nyunt proposing that state newspapers be privatised to get rid of graft in the Ministry of Information.

A tired-looking Daw Aung San Suu Kyi returned on an early morning flight to the capital, and used the lunch break of the session to convene a weekly meeting with fellow NLD representatives that had been delayed a day by President Obama's visit.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi declined to comment on the president's trip or respond to comments by activists-in-exile that she had initially opposed the visit.

But other NLD representatives were effusive

in their praise for President Obama.

"I only have one word to say about his whole visit: 'wow,'" said U Win Htein, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Meiktila.

"Some thought that his visit is still premature but the president is quite busy so it is a very rare chance for him to visit; that opportunity can be lost. So we should welcome the opportunity and it will welcome our endeavours towards a future democratic country," he said.

U Win Htein said that while the president's remarks with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were "understandable", the Yangon University address was impressive.

"He related how important Rangoon University is because the majority of our national leaders came from the university. That's why we must improve to lift the standards of Rangoon University."

NLD representative U Min Thu from Ottarathiri said the visit "will give more strength and more encouragement for the promotion of democracy because he came here personally".

He said the most important point President Obama made was about political prisoners, and that "even one prisoner in jail is one too many".

"For example, even

though some were released yesterday morning (November 19), there are still about 40 prisoners in Mandalay's Obo jail. Some are Shan and Kachin, while others are Muslims who were arrested in Kyaukse religious violence in 2003," he said. "All prisoners should be released."

U Win Than, the Union Solidarity and Development Party representative for Thapaung in Ayeyarwady Region, said the visit was "excellent" and offered some clarity on direction US-Myanmar relations will take in the future, particularly on sanctions.

"I think everyone and at every level supported the visit, across many communities," said the representative, who was interviewed on Skynet's live coverage of the visit a number of times on November 19.

He welcomed President Obama's focus on the importance of checks and balances, particularly the importance of civilian control over the military and judicial checks on the president.

"He pointed out the clear way how to proceed to democracy," U Win Than said. "I think he highlighted two major points: [the importance of] check and balances and the support of the people [so that reforms] don't go backwards."

home of national heroes

linked to the university", said historian and writer Dr Thant Myint-U.

"It has been the site of nationalist and democratic struggle for many decades ... many people will hope that the president speaking from there could mean that we have reached a turning point."

The writer also expressed hopes that the top-level visit could also help to foster a revival in Myanmar's higher education system, left in tatters by decades of army rule, reviving "not just academic freedom but

intellectual freedom".

It was a theme picked up by President Obama, who linked the future of country to the education of its youth.

The White House hopes his visit to Myanmar, the first by a sitting US leader, will boost President U Thein Sein's reform drive.

"The flickers of progress that we have seen must not be extinguished. They must be strengthened," added President Obama.

The public enthusiastically embraced his visit, with thousands of people lining

Yangon's streets as his motorcade rolled through the dilapidated city.

After a red-carpet welcome for Air Force One, President Obama met President U Thein Sein at the regional parliament, followed by fellow Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the lakeside villa where she spent a total of 15 years under house arrest.

President Obama stressed his visit was not an "endorsement" of the regime but "an acknowledgement" of the reform process.

- AFP

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Moehiti Moemi marchers arrested

By Pyae Thet Phyto

SIX members of a group of miners marching from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw were arrested on November 23 in northern Bago Region, some of the miners said.

Four leaders of the group and two other members were arrested between Myohla and Yeni in Bago Region's Yedashe township, about 30 kilometres south of the capital, on the old Yangon-Mandalay Highway. One of the arrested is receiving treatment at Pinyinana Township Hospital after being injured in a clash with police.

The six people arrested are Ko Nay Aung Htet, Ko Yeyint Tun, Ko Saw Naung, Ko Yauk Kyi, Ko Han Nyein and Ko Zaw Lin.

"It happened in front of Yeni paper factory near the 214 miles and 4 furlongs milepost between Myohla and Yeni," said Ko Than Htut, a member of the group.

"As they were marching in procession, policemen blocked them from both ends of the procession and hit them without any prior notice. There were about 100 policemen, each holding riot shields. There were about 30 more people in plain clothes who were clearly government officials because they had handcuffs. Policemen forced four of the leaders onto a car after hitting them. Since then we haven't heard anything about them. We have no idea where they were taken," he said. — *Translated by Thit Lwin*

Earlier report page 19.



Miners on the road to Nay Pyi Taw near Myohla in northern Bago Region on November 23. Pic: Pyae Thet Phyto

About 50 political prisoners released

By Naw Say Phaw Waa

ABOUT 50 of the 66 people released in an amnesty on the day United States President Barack Obama visited Myanmar were political prisoners, 88 Generation leader U Ko Zaw Min said last week.

Most of prisoners released in the amnesty were freed from Tharyarwady Prison in western Bago Region. These included Ko Let Tun, Ko Ko Naing, U Win Thein, Ko Kyaw Thu, Ko Aye Lwin and U Myint Aye, who established the Human Rights Development Network while imprisoned in the Kayah State capital Loikaw. Ko Maung Maung Oo, a member of the All Burma Students Democratic Front student army, was also among those released.

While some criticised the timing of the release, coming the same day as President Barack Obama arrived in Myanmar, student leader Ko Jey Me told *The Myanmar Times* the most important thing was that political prisoners had been freed.

"I don't want to think about why they have been released. My priority is the release. I was hoping that all political prisoners would be freed. We will keep asking [the government] until it releases all of them," he said.

Ko Myint Aye, Ko Zaw Aung, Ko Thein Tun and Ko Let Yar held a press conference in Yangon the following day to explain their experiences of prison.

"My survival was a way of showing I could withstand the injustice. I was able to mock it. The only weapon that we had was our mind," said Ko Let Yar, who spent about 20 years in prison.

Rumours fuelled Rakhine violence, says president

Rumours also harmed country's image, particularly with Muslim nations

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

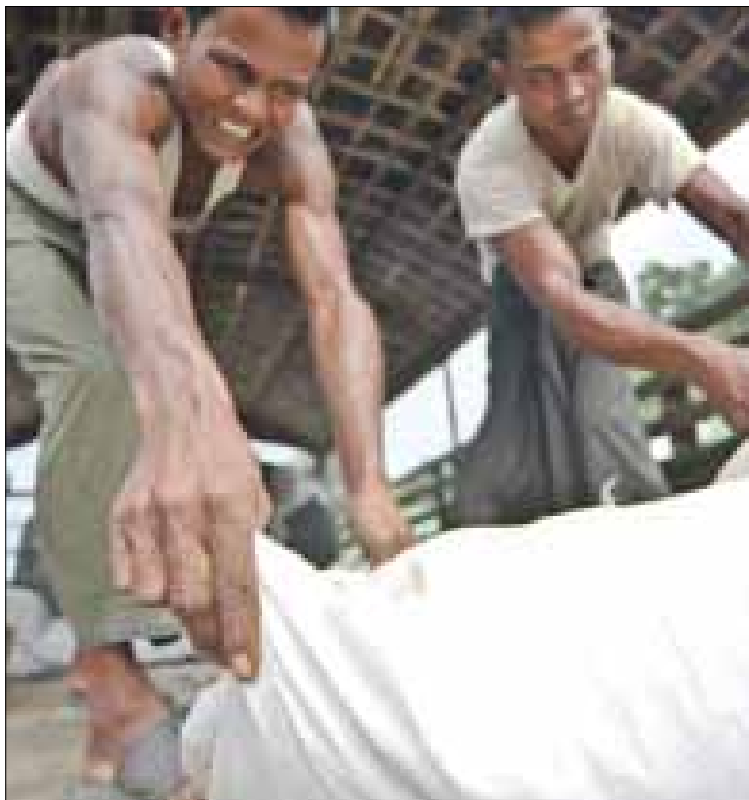
RUMOURS spread by extremists on both sides of the conflict in Rakhine State about the nature of the violence have harmed Myanmar's image with Muslim countries, President U Thein Sein told journalists in Phnom Penh last week.

Speaking during a briefing for Myanmar journalists in the Cambodian capital on November 21, the president told reporters that he had received "overwhelming" support from fellow ASEAN members and the international community when he explained the government's actions in response to the violence in June and October.

Stressing that the violence had originally erupted as an expression of revulsion against "an ugly crime" — the rape and murder of a local woman — the president said the subsequent spread of violence, including killings and the burning of homes by both Buddhists and Muslims, had worsened because of "incitements". He blamed "some people in Myanmar who have strong emotions about their race and religion, and some people from abroad" who spread rumours.

"They uploaded photos of dead bodies, but actually these were pictures of the Tibet earthquake or other disasters. These photos had serious repercussions. There were incitements by some locals who have strong emotions on race and religion. The worst thing is that most Muslim countries doubted our country because of these rumours from abroad," said President U Thein Sein.

"We need to help the victims by focusing first on their humanitarian needs. Then



Men unload relief supplies at a camp in Sittwe in October. Pic: Kaung Htet

we need to boost education standards in these regions and encourage them to live together as a community," he said, adding that job opportunities were also needed.

"There were incitements by some local who have strong emotions on race and religion."

"There are more than 110,000 homeless because rioters set fire to each other's houses. Our efforts to help them are costing US\$1 million a month. We need at least \$65 million to provide food and temporary accommodation and rehabilitation," the president said.

Philanthropic organisations from countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey are also helping with the relief effort.

When asked about the government's decision to backtrack

on a pledge to allow the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to open an office in Myanmar, President U Thein Sein said: "We found that OIC want to make this conflict an international issue. We have invited OIC representatives to go to Rakhine State and see for themselves. But the OIC is trying to put this on the UN's agenda as a human rights issue. So we have to solve this problem." — *Translated By Thiri Min Htun*

UN calls for \$115 million for Rakhine relief effort

By Zaw Win Than

THE United Nations last week launched an urgent appeal for more than US\$115 million to provide humanitarian assistance to up to 115,000 people displaced by violence in Rakhine State.

"We have just completed the launch of the Revised Response Plan to provide assistance to all those affected by the recent intercommunal violence in Rakhine. The plan is intended to meet the needs of all those who need humanitarian assistance without making any distinction between the communities," Mr Ashok Nigam, UN resident representative and humanitarian coordinator, said at a press conference in Yangon on November 21.

"A total of US\$67.6 million is currently needed to continue implementing critical assistance for 115,000 people for one year from July 2012 through June 2013, and a further \$47.8 million is urgently required to address the funding gap," said Mr Ashok.

Since June, the government has led the response in providing food, shelter, household items and medical supplies to internally displaced people across the state, and requested the UN to mobilise humanitarian partners' support. Both international and local NGOs have also provided assistance.

"We are very encouraged by the statement that [Border Affairs] Minister U Thein Htay has made today and the government's very positive and constructive approach. We are very pleased to work with the government in providing support along with our partners," he added.

Minister for Border Affairs Lieutenant General Thein Htay said more humanitarian aid was urgently needed for displaced people in Rakhine.

"Due to the violence in June, there are about 75,000 displaced people mainly from Sittwe and Maungdaw townships. We need more aid for their daily needs," said Lt Gen Thein Htay.

"We are asking donor countries for more funds. Fresh violence broke out in October, resulting in the displacement of an additional 36,000 people," he said.

U Thein Htay said about 29,000 people were also still homeless because of flooding and landslides in 2010, and about 260,000 people were displaced by Cyclone Giri in October of that year.

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Surprise checks needed on courts: MPs

By Soe Than Lynn

SURPRISE checks should be carried out to assess the real state of the legal system, a committee headed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi recommended in an interim report last week.

The Rule of Law, Stability and Peace Committee said the checks were needed to ascertain whether members of the judiciary were making decisions independently and properly.

The interim report, dated

November 21 and submitted to the Pyithu Hluttaw on November 23, included the committee's actions, analysis and suggestions. While it is satisfied so far with its actions, the committee explained that courts had been informed before committee members conducted an inspection so it was difficult to make a proper assessment.

The head of the committee, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, said members surveyed courts in Yangon, including the

High Court, on September 25, 26 and 27 and had not been allowed or able to meet all complainants and witnesses. They also checked township and region courts in Chan Aye Thar Zan township in Mandalay Region and based on these experiences believe courts should be checked without forewarning.

The committee, which has received more than 2000 complaints, appeals and submissions, has also met many stakeholders

to solicit feedback and recommendations. In early November, the committee arranged a conference with judges from all states and regions that was also attended by Thura U Aung Ko, head of Pyithu Hluttaw Judiciary and Legal Committee.

The Rule of Law, Stability and Peace Committee also met professors and lecturers from the Law Department to discuss how to raise awareness about the law, and improve teaching standards and the curriculum.

The committee also detailed the weaknesses of the legal system and these were read out in the hluttaw.

It defined 19 main points, including the use of brokers in the court, the influencing of judges, lawyers, litigants and legal staff in courts of law, fear of speaking openly, the use of confessions extracted through torture, judges' fear of administrative officials, attempts by administrative officials to influence judges, and problems related to bribery.

The committee suggested that laws need to be updated and judges need to be empowered to make their own decisions "bravely". The courts should become a place where people are protected by law, the report said, while a major priority should be the eradication of bribery.

The report was seconded by U Zaw Tun, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Momeik, and was approved unanimously.

— Translated by Thiri Min Htun

Farmers launch more protests over Hlaing Tharyar tsp industrial zone

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

MORE than 30 farmers from four villages in Hlaing Tharyar township protested outside the Department for Human Settlement and Housing Development on Bogyoke Aung San Road last week.

The farmers had been demonstrating for more than three weeks outside the office of Wah Wah Win Company, on the corner of Anawrahta and Sintohtan streets in downtown Yangon, before shifting their attentions to the DHSHD office after getting no response. They are unhappy that the company has allegedly backtracked on a compensation promise made following protests in the middle of the year.

"We demonstrated for 23 days [since October 31] in front of the [Wah Wah Win] office. We called on them to negotiate the complicated land issues in Hlaing Tharyar township but they took no notice so we moved to DHSHD in the hope that they could solve the problem. We decided to stay here until they solve the problem for us," said Ko Kyi Shwin from Kyun Ka Lay village in Hlaing Tharyar township.

The land in Kyun Ka Lay, Kyun Gye, Kan Phyu and Atwin Padan was confiscated by DHSHD more than two decades ago without compensation. It was then sold to Wah Wah Win for the construction of Anawrahta Industrial Zone, but construction work at the site did not get underway until 2011, the farmers said. In the intervening years they were allowed to continue farming in the area but last year workers from Wah Wah Win began destroying their fields and building fences on their land.

On May 31, 35 farmers from Atwin Padan demonstrated outside DHSHD on Bogyoke Aung San Road and a second protest was held on July 2.

On June 5, about 70 farmers from the four villages, representatives from Wah Wah Win, and officials from DHSHD and the general administrative office met and negotiated compensation for the land. The farmers say that the company agreed to pay K3 million per acre.

"Wah Wah Win cheated us twice. They didn't do anything, although they gave a pledge in



Workers build drains at Anawrahta Industrial Zone in Yangon's Hlaing Tharyar township in April. Farmers from the area are calling on the developer to provide compensation for land confiscated for the project more than two decades ago. Pic: Boothee

front of government officials," said U Shwe Kyaing, who lives in Kyun Ka Lay village and lost 23 acres to the project.

"They have not paid anything until now so we demonstrated again. Now we won't accept any compensation, they [farmers] are ready to fight with them [Wah Wah Win] to get their lands back," said U Win Cho, a land rights activist who is assisting the farmers.

Ko Kyi Shwin said he lost 63 acres to the construction of the industrial zone.

"We aren't going anywhere until we get a commitment that they will stop their work on our farmland without our agreement. They are continuing their works and destroying our land - we have no other way to stop them," he said.

Ma Cho Mar from Kyun Gye village urged government officials to help the farmers.

"This land is our life; we can't

do anything without farmland," she said.

But Wah Wah Win general manager Daw San San Win said her company negotiated several times with the farmers in 2011 and gave the compensation they requested, paying 35 farmers K3 million an acre between July 2011 and September of this year.

"We accept the farmers who are willing to negotiate but now they are asking for too much money - much more than we can afford. Some ask us to give K15 million an acre. Some are not willing to negotiate with us," she said.

She said her company gave compensation out of sympathy and was not legally obligated to give the farmers anything.

"This project was implemented by our company and the government for mutual benefit. We implemented this project for a long time so why didn't they ask at the time [the

land was confiscated]?"

"Our company doesn't have any responsibility to pay compensation but we give it to them because we sympathise with them."

She said the regular strikes outside here company's office "could damage the country's image" and were a "waste of time".

"They should not do this ... this situation should not be blamed on our company alone. We are trying to solve it as much as we can. We can't do any more than we are now. If we give them the amount they ask, next time they will just ask for more.

"We want these farmers to work according to the law if they have right to possess these lands and we also want to solve [the dispute] according to the law. I think their actions, protesting in front of the company for many days, are just a waste of time."

Government instructs businesses to repay cash

YANGON - The government has ordered state loans totalling tens of millions of dollars to be clawed back from private businesses - a rare public move to tackle graft in what is often considered one of the world's most corrupt nations.

The order comes after the auditor general found dozens of cases of "misuse and dishonest actions" involving 15 ministries that resulted in nearly US\$65 million in loans leaving government coffers over the 2011-12 fiscal year.

Around \$20 million has been repaid, but \$45 million was still owed by "private businessmen" loaned the cash by the ministries, the financial watchdog said in a report to parliament submitted earlier this month and seen by AFP on November 20.

Scores of businessmen have until March next year to refund the embezzled money or face further legal action.

"If the loans cannot be settled within this period, there will be fines and lawsuit will be made," the report said.

In addition, \$150,000 is owed by staff at the ministries involved.

The money embezzled "would be refunded in a short time by the respective ministries", according to remarks from the president's office attached to the report.

The government of President U Thein Sein has pledged to clean up the country as part of reforms that promise greater democracy and measures to establish the rule of law after decades of corrupt military rule.

The auditor's probe indicates a willingness to investigate government departments, long used to operating without scrutiny over financial matters.

Under decades of military rule experts say the former junta stole huge sums of state cash and doled out preferential treatment to "crony" businessmen linked to the regime.

In the run-up to elections that brought U Thein Sein's government to power, the junta launched a major round of privatisation which critics say handed new chunks of the nation's economy to the cronies.

Myanmar, which Transparency International last year ranked as the world's third most corrupt country, retains a deep-rooted culture of graft among officials and the military who operated with impunity under the junta.

The chief editor and publisher of a prominent weekly newspaper have been charged with defamation for reporting a separate graft probe into the mining ministry - which is not mentioned in the auditor's investigation.

On a historic visit to Myanmar on November 19 US President Barack Obama praised democratic reforms sweeping the nation but warned that graft could undermine efforts to lift the population out of poverty.

"This cycle of economic growth can only be created if corruption is left behind," he said. - AFP

Authorities struggle to secure border

Conflict in Shan State prompts more illegal trade but no link between arrests and Thaksin visit, say police

By Bill O'Toole

A SENIOR police officer from the Shan State border town of Tachileik has rubbished rumours that recently uncovered weapons were "in any way" connected to a planned visit by fugitive former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra but said the incident highlights the challenges police face in securing the border.

Mr Thaksin, who is still technically on the run from corruption charges in Thailand, despite the fact his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, is the prime minister, cancelled a planned visit to Tachileik after a man was arrested with a cache of weapons.

The proposed November 9 trip would have brought the controversial politician within a few hundred metres of the country where he is still a wanted man. But on November 6, Mr Thaksin's lawyer, Nappodon Pattama, issued a statement saying the trip had been cancelled because of security concerns and rumours of an assassination plot. The decision disappointed many hundreds of Mr Thaksin's supporters who had already booked hotel rooms in Tachileik for the weekend.

In his statement, Mr Nappodon cited an October 21 incident in which a Shan man was detained for allegedly attempting to smuggle a rocket-propelled grenade launcher with three rounds of ammunition and an M16 machine gun into Myanmar from Thailand. Mr Nappodon said this hinted at a larger plot to assassinate Mr Thaksin.

But Lieutenant Aung Kyaw Soe of the Anti-Narcotic Task Force, which



Above left: Cars cross the border between Myanmar and Thailand at Tachileik-Mae Sai in eastern Shan State last month. Above right: Weapons confiscated from a Shan man ahead of a planned visit by fugitive former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Pics: Than Naing Soe, Aung Zaw

helps to police the border, told *The Myanmar Times* he did not believe the weapons were connected

handled 56 cases of people attempting to traffic drugs into Thailand but so far in 2012 it has already dealt

traffic crossing the border, which mostly means drugs going out of Myanmar and weapons coming in.

parts of Myanmar – he said simply: "They come across the border."

Most of Tachileik's larger

Most of Tachileik's larger casinos have resorted to posting large 'no gun' signs on their entrances in reponse to more people carrying handguns.

to Mr Thaksin's planned visit.

Lt Aung Kyaw Soe is based in Tachileik and processed the arrested man. However, he acknowledged that policing the border has become increasingly difficult, with an increase in cases this year.

In 2011, his office

with 84 cases, an increase of 50 percent with a month-and-a-half still to go in the year.

Lt Aung Kyaw Soe said that while his team occasionally receives help from the Thai police on larger cases, they don't have the resources to deal with the sheer volume of illicit

One local businessman in Tachileik, who asked not to be named, said the increased activity of the drug gangs has prompted many men in the town to purchase a handgun for self-defence. When asked where these men were buying their guns – firearms are strictly controlled in most

casinos have resorted to posting large "No Gun" signs on their entrances in response to this trend, though none have reported any incidents on their floors, police and staff at the casinos say.

The trends in Tachileik appear consistent with reports from other parts of

Shan State that indicate the war-torn region has experienced a surge in drug production in recent years. In its annual survey of opium production in Southeast Asia, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported that cultivation of opium in Shan State increased 16pc in the past year, with the vast majority coming from the southern and eastern parts of the state and being trafficked into the large drug markets of Thailand, China, and Indonesia.

U Khun Tun Oo, a prominent Shan politician and former political prisoner, said that increasing violence between the government and non-state armed groups had bolstered the drug trade, which in turn has made the border with Thailand a more dangerous place. "They [cultivate opium] because there are no other jobs for the local people. They can't work on their farms or in factories because of the fighting."

He said that most fighting in Southern Shan State between the Tatmadaw and the Shan State Army-South is largely focused on the rural border areas because both sides are seeking control of the illicit drug trade. While he is not satisfied with the government's response to drug trafficking and other illicit activities on the border, he said authorities in Thailand were also responsible for the problem.

"There is corruption on both sides," he said. "We should have better ways of combating corruption. We need help from international experts in this area."

Tachileik traffic jams to ease with new ring road

Worsening traffic prompts resumption of stalled project

By Than Naing Soe

THE Tachileik City Development Committee is completing a ring road in the eastern Shan State border town to relieve traffic congestion, an official said last week.

The proposed ring road is more than 2 kilometres long and much of it has already been built, the official said.

"Tachileik's only main road is Bogyoke Road, which is just 32 feet at its narrowest point and 42 feet at its widest. One spot in particular, near No 1 Chit Kyi Yay Bridge, gets very congested during rush hour. So we are building a ring road nearly parallel with Bogyoke Road to reduce traffic jams," said an official from the town's development committee.

"We have already built a concrete and tar road parallel to Bogyoke Road near No 1 bridge named Gaw Thaniz that is 5400 feet long and leads straight through to Mal Kaung Bridge. However, there is still

another 2370 feet left to build," he said. "We will combine the two sections this year to complete the ring road. It is our first initiative to reduce traffic congestion in the city."

He added that the committee will expand Bogyoke Road if traffic congestion continues to be a problem once the ring road opens. Other measures will also be put in place to improve traffic flow, another official said.

"We will not allow trucks and trawlergyi (farm vehicles) to travel along Bogyoke Road and we can order these vehicles to instead take the Monghsat shortcut if necessary," said U Ko Ko from the Tachileik City Development Committee.

As of September, the township has 44,750 licensed motorbikes, as well as 1193 three-wheeled motorcycles, 1005 trawlergyi, 1217 cars, 162 light trucks, 118 heavy trucks, 49 passenger buses and 12 other vehicles. About 40,000 people live in Tachileik proper.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe

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Government makes bold human rights, governance pledges

By Zaw Win Than

THE government has made a raft of promises – including prison visits for the Red Cross, signing of a nuclear arms agreement and addressing “political issues” behind the violence in Rakhine State – that if kept will represent major steps forward for human rights in Myanmar.

The government made the announcement on November 18, saying that it also planned to be set up a mechanism next month within the Ministry of Home Affairs to “reconsider the charges and punishment of the prisoners”.

The moves were announced on the eve of United States President Obama’s visit to the country. In a statement released on that day, the government said it would act to protect and promote human dignity, and strengthen democratic governance for the people.

The government said it would also allow the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to resume prisoner visits in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs. ICRC returned to Myanmar in 2011, installing sewage systems, solar power and

access to groundwater in many of the country’s prisons. Now Red Cross officials will be allowed to visit prisoners to assess their welfare and living conditions and to facilitate medical treatment, said the statement.

On ethnic conflict, the statement said the government would continue to “make endeavours to reach a ceasefire agreement in Kachin State and to hold negotiations politically. Besides, the Union Government will implement necessary tasks politically to ensure long-term guarantee for good governance and rights of national races,” it said.

As promised in President U Thein Sein’s letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on November 11 concerning the violence in Rakhine State, the government will act decisively to prevent violent attacks against civilians, hold accountable the perpetrators of such attacks, and work with the international community to meet the humanitarian needs of the people, the statement said. The statement added that the government would address questions ranging from the resettlement of displaced populations to the granting of citizenship, as well as

expediting negotiations with the ICRC and other international humanitarian organisations for broader access to conflict zones.

The government will also take further actions to dispel suspicions about its nuclear activities. Pending parliamentary approval of a proposal by the president, Myanmar will also sign an additional protocol to IAEA’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements to bring it into line with the modified standardised text of the Small Quantities Protocol.

The government also announced its intention to become a full member of the Open Government Partnership by the end of 2016 as it strives to become more open and accountable in accordance with the principles of transparency, civic engagement, anti-corruption and the use of technology and innovation to make government more open, effective and accountable.

The US-Myanmar joint plan on trafficking in persons was also approved by the government, as was an action plan by the International Labour Organisation on ending forced labour, and strengthens criminal investigations and the prosecution of perpetrators of trafficking.



Participants at the 2010 Kachin Manaw festival in Myitkyina. Pic: Myanmar Times

People’s Democracy Party chief, members arrested in Kachin State

By Naw Say Phaw Waa

THE chairman of a Mandalay-based political party and other members remain in prison over allegations concerning the financial management of the Manaw festival made in an article in their party journal.

Dr Than Htike Oo, head of the People’s Democracy Party and publisher of the party’s journal, *Pyi Thu Lote Thar*, was arrested in the Kachin State capital Myitkyina on October 24, his daughter, Daw Hnin Htet Lwin, said last week, adding that four other members of the party were also arrested.

They were arrested after travelling Myitkyina to hear complaints of residents, particularly in Tanai, the constituency of Kachin State

Chief Minister U Lajun Ngan Sai. They were charged with allegedly defaming the Kachin State government and harming the peace inside the state because of their article, which was published about six months ago.

They have been charged under sections 500, 505(a) and 505(c) of the Penal Code and section 20 of the 1962 press law. Five of the cases are in Myitkyina, while some are in Tanai township. The complainant U Zar Ni Toe, head of the General Administrative Office for Myitkyina District in Kachin State, and the charges were filed in October.

Along with Dr Than Htike Oo, party vice chairman U Hein Htat Aung and senior members U Win Laing, Daw Kyay Mone and Daw Nan Khan Htwe were also

arrested. Daw Nan Khan Htwe was the only one of the five to be bailed. “We asked for bail for my dad but they didn’t let him go free. Only family members can see him,” his daughter said.

Dr Than Htike Oo was transferred to Tanai on November 3, party secretary U Aung Myint told *The Myanmar Times* last week. “He is going to both [courts]. He came back to Myitkyina custody for the next hearing of the case on November 23.”

At a press conference in Yangon on October 11, Dr Than Htike Oo said the charges were filed against them because they were helping the Kachin people who have lost their rights, citing the abolition of riverboat businesses in Tanai.



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In a first, treaty on rights of child celebrated

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

CHILDREN'S rights have been celebrated in Myanmar for the first time in 20 years.

The occasion was to mark the anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The international convention, signed at the UN General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by the Myanmar government in 1991 has never been officially marked in this country.

The celebration was organised with the help of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and attended by the chief minister of Yangon Region and representatives of UNICEF, as well as children and teachers.

Chief Minister U Myint Swe said Myanmar had assumed its responsibilities by adopting the convention, which built on the country's 1993 law on child protection. The convention's 51 clauses are designed to protect children's rights and meet their basic needs.

"Children are a vital human resource for the future of the state. We need to pay serious attention to promoting the lives of children and protecting them from violation of their rights," said U Myint Swe. "We expect this anniversary to be celebrated throughout the country next year."

U Win Mra, chairman of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, said the convention on children's rights was one of the three core human rights convention ratified by Myanmar. He urged all concerned to protect, nurture, promote and care for children, as well as to protect their rights.

"The convention has been observed in past years on an individual basis, but this year the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission has marshalled all the resources under one banner to celebrate this occasion," said U Win Mra.

U Myint Swe said the Myanmar government had set up committees from the national level down to the township level to carry out child protection activities.

UNICEF representative Mr Bertrand Bainvel said many challenges to children's rights persisted throughout the country, including violence and lack of access to basic needs and services.

"We request all of you to create a better life for us. We don't want to live under conditions that are insecure," said Ma Thin Me Me Zaw, a middle school student from Yangon's Shwe Pyi Thar township who attended the ceremony.

Amendments to change legal definition of child

Minimum age of criminal responsibility also set to rise from seven years

By Shwe Yee Saw Myint

WHAT is a child? Myanmar is about to revise its laws governing the status and treatment of children, including the very definition of a child.

The revision has been prompted by Myanmar's adherence to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which the country has been party since 1991. As such, the government is in the process of bringing the law into conformity with internationally accepted standards.

One of the main changes relates to the age of a child. At present, childhood in Myanmar officially ends at age 16. The law will be amended to extend childhood status to the age of 18, say lawyers and consultants engaged in redrafting the existing 1993 children's law.

Myanmar became a party to the Convention on the Right of Child (CRC) in 1991 and various provision of the CRC manifests through the framework of the 1993 Child law; however, there are some areas in which the law diverges from the CRC, such as defining a child as up

to 16 years rather than 18 years.

"We faced many difficulties in protecting children because young persons in Myanmar were regarded as adult at the age of 16, not 18, so could not receive support," said Daw Si Si Myint, child protection and participant specialist in World Vision Myanmar.

The 1993 law does provide for certain protections for children accused of crimes. They may not be handcuffed, must enjoy a certain amount of privacy in jails and should appear before special juvenile courts, Daw Si Si Myint added.

Dr Phone Myint, a consultant for the United Nations Children's Fund, said Myanmar's existing law and penal code set a very low minimum age of criminal responsibility of seven years, although allowance is made for children under 12 who have "not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequences of [their] conduct". Myanmar's combined third and fourth CRC periodic report for 2006 noted the government's intention to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 10 years.

Once approved, issued as a directive and linked to a clear monitoring mechanism, the minimum standards established by the revised law could help reduce exploitative child labour and better protect the rights of working children (such as establishing a minimum working age, maximum working hours, minimum pay, protection from hazardous working conditions and provision of education opportunities).

Noting most child criminals are orphans or have divorced parents, Dr Phone Myint said that there is insufficient legal support and social welfare for children. A national plan of action is being developed but the monitoring mechanism is weak, he said.

The amendments have been completed and are likely to be submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for approval, although they are still yet to be approved by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs and Attorney General's Office, said U Tin Zaw Moe, deputy director of the Yangon Region Social Welfare Office.

NLD leader appointed UNAIDS ambassador

GENEVA – Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been appointed an ambassador of the UN's program on HIV and AIDS and has been tasked with fighting discrimination against people living with the disease, the agency said last week.

"It is a great honour to be chosen as a champion for people who live on the fringes of society and struggle every day to maintain their dignity and basic human rights," the Nobel Peace Prize laureate said in a statement on November 20. "I would like to be the voice of the voiceless," she added.

UNAIDS executive director Michel Sidibe said the agency was honoured she had accepted the task.

"From small villages to big cities, from Africa to Asia, people are talking about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. ... She is inspirational," he said in the statement.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been named UNAIDS Global Advocate for Zero Discrimination, will work to "eliminate stigma and discrimination", which she fears can "create an environment of fear that prevents people from accessing life-saving HIV services", the agency said. – AFP



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Real democracy means no political prisoners: 88 Gen

By Sithu Lwin

MYANMAR cannot be called a democratic nation as long as there are political prisoners, 88 Generation leader Ko Ko Gyi (Sanchaung) said in front of Mandalay's Obo Prison on November 19.

"It is said that a single political prisoner is one too many in a democratic nation. In our country, many politicians are still in detention. So long as this situation continues, the country cannot be called a fully democratic nation," Ko Ko Gyi (Sanchaung) told *The Myanmar Times*.

He was speaking after the government released about 50 prisoners of conscience earlier in the day, including four from Obo Prison. However, according to a political prisoner network, there are still about 30 political prisoners in the jail, along with 17 Muslims being held for their religious beliefs.

The latest amnesty coincided with the visit of US President

Barack Obama and Ko Ko Gyi (Sanchaung) said those released on November 19 had been "used" by the government.

"We were used [by the government] and they will be used when they are needed. They won't release all [political prisoners] but political prisoners should be released for internal peace and political reform. A democratic nation can't develop without internal peace," he said.

The four men released from Obo - Ko Aung Thiha from Taungoo, Ko Kyaw Htay from Bago, Ko Sai Hla Aung from Hsipaw and Ko Maung Maung Oo from Mandalay - were sentenced under Article 17(1) of the Unlawful Association Act.

"I am glad that I was released but I am not happy as my friends are still in there. I wish all political prisoners were freed," Ko Maung Maung Oo said.

On November 15 and 19, the government freed 452 and 66 prisoners respectively around the country under Section 401(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

- Translated by Zaw Winn

Despite offers, Moustache Brothers reject foreign shows for political fight

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

FAMOUS comedy troupe the Moustache Brothers will not travel abroad to perform until they believe the country is firmly on the way to democracy, members of the trio said last week.

Brothers Par Par Lay and Lu Maw said they were unhappy about conflicts in Kachin and Rakhine states and did not want to travel abroad until these situations were resolved, along with other issues that prevented Myanmar from being a "complete" democracy.

The brothers said the group has fielded many requests to perform overseas since the mid 1990s.

"When Par Pay Lay was sent to Kyienkrankha hard labour camp for seven years in Myitkyina after performing at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound in 1996, some fans from the US invited us to perform but we could not accept as we were not together. After that, some fans from Holland, Spain and Germany also invited us to perform often but we did not accept. To go to overseas countries, we just want to go after we believe our country is really on the democratic path ... when we



Par Par Lay from the Moustache Brothers troupe performs at his house for tourists.

Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

believe that our country cannot turn back to the past," Lu Maw told *The Myanmar Times* on November 20.

The troupe, and in particular Par Par Lay, is still a big supporter of the National League for Democracy and has taken

to performing at party office openings across upper Myanmar in recent months.

"The [military] uniforms were taken off but are still beside them and haven't been thrown away yet ... we still need to continue to make an effort for the coming 2015 election to organise people for the NLD," Par Par Lay said.

The pair said they did not anticipate having any problems travelling abroad, such as getting a passport or being allowed back into Myanmar, because the government would not want to be seen as oppressive.

However, the Moustache Brothers are still banned from holding public shows and are only allowed to do performances for tourists.

Par Par Lay said his NLD campaigns were important for spreading information in rural areas.

"I go round to some villages and wards in Mandalay and near places to campaign for the NLD. It is also important to get votes from the people in villages. People in towns can easily get information from internet, television and journals but I found that some villagers are still afraid of political issues and lack information," said the 64-year-old comedian.

Training for journalists

With the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) International Programme for the Development of Communication, Myanmar Consolidated Media, publisher of *The Myanmar Times*, is seeking applications for capacity-building programs for both beginner and senior print media journalists in Myanmar.

Two two-week training programs will be conducted for journalists with at least 1.5 years experience, while one three-week training course will be conducted for journalists with minimal or no experience. Trainees in the three-week program will have the opportunity to undertake an internship at *The Myanmar Times* upon concluding the course.

The programs will be conducted in January and February 2013 with one expatriate and one Myanmar journalism instructor. English skills and a university degree are preferred but not essential. Successful applicants will need to provide a release form from their employer for the duration of the course. For further information please write to the following email address:

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Call for applications for foreign and Myanmar journalism trainers

With the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) International Programme for the Development of Communication, Myanmar Consolidated Media, publisher of *The Myanmar Times*, is seeking applications from experienced journalists to implement capacity-building programs for both beginner and senior journalists in Myanmar.

Two two-week training programs will be conducted for journalists with at least 1.5 years experience, while one three-week training course will be conducted for journalists with minimal or no experience. The programs will be conducted in January and February 2013. We are seeking one foreign (Southeast Asia-based) journalism instructor with extensive print media experience, preferably in Asia, and one Myanmar journalism instructor with extensive print media experience. The employment period is expected to be for seven weeks consecutively.

Applicants should include a cover letter and CV outlining relevant experience. To submit an application or for further information please write to the following email address: administration@myanmartimes.com.mm



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Ward assemblies prompt questions over NLD future

By Phyto Wai Kyaw

NATIONAL League for Democracy members in Mandalay have expressed renewed concern about the organisation of the party's national assembly, saying it casts doubt on the future of the party.

The holding of ward, village and township assemblies ahead of the national meeting has been controversial in a number of regions, with members resigning en masse in Patheingyi because they believed the process was "undemocratic".

In Mandalay, the conflict has focused mostly on Pyigyitagun township, although members in other townships told *The Myanmar Times* last week the problems were widespread.

One member from Maha Aung Myay township's Maha Nwe Sin ward, who asked not to be named, said that the assembly commissions in most Mandalay townships had not followed the proper procedures.

"There has been no proper information campaign for ward assemblies yet in our area. Conflicts between old and new members, as well as new and other new members, are clear," the member, who is a member of the party's district-level committee, said on November 22. "Frankly speaking there are many problems and different colours in most of the places so although we have got a good leader (Daw Aung San Suu Kyi) we have to worry about the future of the leadership. I feel really sorry about that."

He said that while the party's leadership maintains those selected for the commissions are not being appointed to any permanent posts, their temporary time in authority will give them "great chances" to cement their place in the party leadership.

"Being on the commission is temporary but to build the assembly committee, the commission is the basic foundation. If



National League for Democracy members participate in a ward assembly public information event in Pyigyitagun township's Ayataw ward on November 14.

Pic: Phyto Wai Kyaw

someone couldn't get a chance to participate in the commission, they will quickly disappear from the scene, even if they've sacrificed years for the party. The theme of democracy is plurality but if there are more people with bad, undemocratic attitudes joining the party, I am afraid for its future," he added.

He said even though he holds a relatively high district-level official he is still considering whether to compete in the ward assembly because he anticipates he will face personal attacks from other members.

Meanwhile, an NLD member from Chan Mya Thar Si township said he had basically severed ties with the party since the by-elections.

"Fighting for roles and making factions has made me upset. There were also funding problems among members in our township after the by-election. Currently I am working more for the 88 Generation," said Ko Thant Sin.

Members from Pyigyitagun township, who have been outspoken about perceived unfairness

over the national assembly, said they plan to act as a watchdog on the ward-level assemblies, which party officials have said will be completed by the end of the month.

"We will go round to the wards when the assemblies are held. If we see unfairness and undemocratic ways on that day, we will first inform officials in wards and the township. If they don't listen to our complaint, we will continue to inform the headquarters," said NLD member U Ko Ko Aung from Zamyinzwaw ward.

NLD officials at the township and regional level have defended themselves against allegations of impropriety at the ward level by saying that the posts are only for the assembly and members chosen to arrange the assemblies were selected on the basis of ability and suitability.

Conceding that there may have been some "unfair issues" in the selection process, U Myo Naing, secretary of the assembly commission for Mandalay Region, said party officials wanted to cooperate with unhappy members provided they were being

constructive and did not show aggression.

"Instead of blaming the commission process [members] should try to focus on winning the ward assembly," he told *The Myanmar Times* in an earlier interview.

However, U Ko Ko Aung said that unhappy members had tried "many times" to discuss the problems with NLD officials at the regional and township level but were never given the chance.

"If they really want to discuss and cooperate with members opposed to the current assembly process then we welcome that. We don't hold any grudge as we are all working for the good of the people," he said.

Application to protest over land complaint refused

By Phyto Wai Kyaw and Hlaing Kyaw Soe

OFFICIALS in Mandalay Region's Amarapura township have rejected an application from villagers seeking to legally protest over the Ministry of Construction's refusal to return their land, which was confiscated in 2001 for the Yadanarpon Bridge construction project.

The villagers say they were told the land would be returned if it was not used for the bridge but the ministry has since built housing on the site.

Residents of Thapyay Tan village said that more than 50 acres from three villages was confiscated in 2001 and the residents shifted to a floodplain, where they can only live for half to one-third of the year.

"We submitted an application to demonstrate to the Amarapura Township Police Station on November 15. However, officials rejected it on November 18. They gave us a chance to appeal and we will try to do that," Thapyay Tan residents Daw Khin Mar and Daw Saw Win Khaing said on November 20.

Officials said in the rejection letter that the land the villagers want to be returned has been officially transferred to Public Works department of Special Project 2 under the Ministry of Construction. Meanwhile, the site where villagers had asked to demonstrate was under the bridge and that could not be allowed for security reasons.

"There's no work for us where we live now on the floodplain. We had to destroy our perennial crops before we moved but got no compensation. There are no streets and no electricity in our new villages and we have no way to survive. Even to get to our village from the Mandalay-Sagaing Road we need to pay K3000 to take a bullock cart," Daw Khin Mar said.

When the water level of

'They gave us a chance to appeal and we will try to do that.'

the Ayeyarwady River rises during rainy season, the new villages are flooded and residents have to shift to living beside the Mandalay-Sagaing Road for several months. Daw Khin Mar said some residents were in debt and had lost their land because they couldn't find any work to cover their living costs.

Villagers sent letters to the Rule of Law, Peace and Stability Committee chaired by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the parliament's land investigation commission and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in last week of September to explain their grievances, and officials from Amarapura township's general administrative office met some of the villagers in the second week of November to discuss their letter.

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Residents protest proposed eviction for Dawei dam

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

A RESERVOIR planned for near the Dawei special economic zone is in doubt because residents in the area do not want to be relocated, the head of an association aimed at supporting the development of the Dawei project said last week.

U Tin Maung Swe, chairman of the Support Group for the Deep Sea Port and Special Economic Zone, said the top priority of the project's backers was the desire of residents in the area.

"We discussed the proposed Ka Lone Htar Reservoir with villagers in the area but we won't do it without their agreement. They don't support it so we will think how we can build it in another place that has been proposed by the villagers," U Tin Maung Swe told *The Myanmar Times* by phone earlier this month.

Ko Ye Lin Myint, a member of the Dawei Development Association (DDA), said he welcomed the pledge from U Tin Maung Swe but was still not convinced.

"We understand that he's not the decision maker and also he cannot give any concrete promise about the project. We think the company and government authorities are still trying to implement the reservoir here and now they are agitating the villagers and trying to destroy unity by persuading them with money," he said.

Local authorities and

official from Italian-Thai Development Co Ltd (ITD), the Thai company behind the project, attempted to "force" residents of Ka Lone Htar village to move as soon as Vice President U Nyan Tun signed a memorandum of understanding to accelerate the Dawei project with the Thai government in Bangkok on November 7.

On November 10, Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Ye Phyu township, U Shwe Than, general secretary of the Union Solidarity and Development Party for the township, U Aung Myo, and representatives from ITD and the government came to Ka Lone Htar and discussed the move with villagers.

However, the villagers said at the meeting that they are opposed to the plan to build a reservoir along Thlaiya Creek, greeting the delegation with signs reading "No Dam" and "No Relocation".

"They said they came to discuss with us about moving because our village has caused their project



Residents of Ka Lone Htar village in Dawei hold signs protesting a plan to shift them to enable the construction of a reservoir during a meeting with officials on November 10. Pic: Supplied

Ka Lone Htar is about 10 kilometers from the Ye-Dawei road and has 182 households, more than 1000 residents and about 9000 acres of arable land. Villagers make a reasonable income from betel nut, cashew nut,

was later added to the list by developers when they realised they need to have a supply of fresh water to support the Dawei project. The creation of the proposed reservoir would flood the area where the village stands.

Pyin Nyar Wun Tha.

The sayardaw said the villagers do not believe that the developer will pay adequate compensation. "The villagers have heard a lot of news about the company not giving enough compensation

moving the reservoir project to the Heinzal area about 30 kilometres from Ka Lone Htar, where few people live.

More than 300 villagers sent an objection letter over the project to relevant government departments and President U Thein Sein on November 2 and have also been lobbying in Thailand.

"We explained our situation about Ka Lone Htar reservoir to members of parliament in Thailand and discussed with them how to take action against Thai companies if they violate human rights in our country. But they said it is difficult to hold Thai companies accountable according to their law if they violate the law outside their country," said Ko Ye Lin Myint.

"They don't support [the reservoir] so we will think how we can build it in another place that has been proposed by the villagers."

to be delayed. They said they want to continue to build [the reservoir] and are ready to relocate us to another place but we don't want to move anywhere else. We let them know our feelings very clearly," said Sayardaw U Pyin Nyar Wun Tha from Ka Lone Htar monastery.

rubber and other crops and also find precious metals in Thlaiya Creek. The plan to move the village was only announced on October 22, and about 65 residents have agreed to move if adequate compensation is given.

While the village was not originally among those planned for relocation, it

"Developers and U Tin Maung Swe ... told us several times to sign a statement saying that we have reached an agreement to move to another place with reasonable compensation in 2011. But we have not accepted anything and instead we object to this project," said Sayardaw U

to people relocated in other areas. For example, the company is implementing a road project linking Dawei and Kanchanaburi [in Thailand] but some people who live along that road have not received compensation yet," he said.

Instead, Ka Lone Htar residents have proposed

Summit talks boost for Dawei SEZ

PM Yingluck Shinawatra to visit Dawei next month, after Thai government agreed to provide assistance to project

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

THAI Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra will visit the Dawei Special Economic Zone in Tanintharyi region next month following Myanmar and Thailand's invitation for international investors to engage in the project, a senior Thai official said at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia last week.

President U Thein Sein and Ms Yingluck met at Phnom Penh's Peace Palace to witness the signing of a joint declaration that established a joint committee for the development of the Dawei SEZ, Mr Sihasak Phuanketkeow, Thailand's permanent secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said on November 19.

Ms Yingluck said she will visit the Dawei zone in mid-December, but has not yet set a date.

The Thai government agreed to provide technical assistance for the project and extend its full cooperation to ensure it is realised, Mr Sihasak said.

According to the joint declaration,



A truck in the Dawei Special Economic Zone area in March 2011. Pic: Hein Latt Aung

Thailand will fund and implement the development of roads, a deep sea port, a power plant, water supply, communication and a high speed train line within the Dawei SEZ, Mr Sihasak said.

The prioritised development projects for the Dawei SEZ are expected to be completed in 2015, he said.

He said that the joint committee

will maintain an atmosphere conducive to investment by offering incentives to investors and prioritising development projects.

Development projects will be implemented phase-by-phase based on a memorandum of understanding signed in Thailand on November 9. The signing of the MoU was witnessed by Vice President U Nyan Tun during

his visit to Bangkok and Ms Yingluck.

During last week's meeting at the Peace Palace, Ms Yingluck reaffirmed her commitment to the project and told President U Thein Sein that she planned to also send a delegation of major business representatives to Myanmar, Mr Sihasak said.

"[Ms Yingluck] wants Thai businesspeople to inspect and assess the Dawei SEZ," he said.

"A future discussion following the delegation can be electricity-generating gas turbines for Myanmar," he added.

Myanmar and Thailand signed a framework agreement for the project in November 2010 this was expanded on in a new agreement that President U Thein Sein signed on a visit to Thailand in July. The Dawei SEZ project is being implemented by Italian-Thai Development Company.

"After both governments signed the agreement for the Dawei SEZ, progress has been very rapid. The SEZ will provide economic corridors within Southeast Asia that will connect Cambodia, Vietnam and

other ASEAN countries," Mr Sihasak said.

Myanmar and Thailand have issued a joint statement that the Dawei SEZ and its related projects will provide strategic connectivity both within the region and between other regional partners.

Meanwhile, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw said members of the public would be able to invest in the Myanmar share of the project, which will take the form of a public company.

"Italian Thai Company is the main developer for the Dawei Special Economic Zone from Thailand. Then Dawei Development Public Company is also working in Dawei from the Myanmar side. Now we're inviting third countries to invest here, because this project is quite big. There will be a deep sea port, heavy and light industry, and consumer industries. For those related areas, we need to invite [investors from] third countries, such as ASEAN members, East Asia, Australia and New Zealand, the EU and United States," he said.

Wooden homes reduced quake casualties: study

By Aye Sapay Phyu

LIVES were saved in the November 21 earthquake in central Myanmar because of the large number of wooden buildings, and widespread adherence to building codes, an expert has said.

U Soe Thura Tun, secretary of the Myanmar Earthquake Committee, participated in a survey of the affected site from November 12 to 15. He said the type of structures around the location of the quake - Shwebo in Sagaing Region - helped reduce the potential number of casualties.

According to the Relief and Resettlement Department, 17 people died in the Shwebo earthquake, and 477 pagodas, 485 religious buildings, 199 schools, 81 government offices and 1841 houses in Mandalay and Sagaing Regions were damaged.

"Most buildings in the area are wooden houses, and many brick structures are built in accordance with proper engineering systems," he said, contrasting the effect of the disaster with the earthquake at Tarlay, Shan State, last year, when at least 74 people died and damage was estimated

at K3 billion. Most of the brick buildings there did not comply with standards, he said.

Another positive factor in Shwebo was that the quake occurred when many people were outdoors, he said.

"It struck on a Sunday morning, when children were not in schools. Most people were not at home, or had time to get out [of buildings]," he said.

U Soe Thura Tun said that the committee had also warned government officials and residents near hilly areas about the risk of landslides.

"Earthquakes produce cracks, and aftershocks can result in landslides. We warned about that especially in Thabeikkyin because it is on a hill," he said, adding that more public education is still needed. "Most people don't know how to prepare for an earthquake."

U Soe Thura Tun said people living along the Sagaing Fault should also take precautions.

"The Sagaing Fault has been dormant for about 80 to 90 years, so we should be ready for future hazards," he said.

RRD said the Shwebo earthquake affected 22 townships in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Protesting Yamethin gold miners close in on capital

By Pyae Thet Phyo

PROTESTING miners from the Moehti Moemi region of Yamethin township are expected to arrive in Nay Pyi Taw early this week after marching to the capital from Yangon, although it is not clear whether officials will allow them to enter the city.

The 85 miners left Yangon on November 8 and plan to apply for permission to protest outside the Ministry of Mines, the parliament and the president's residence. Ko Nay Aung Htet, the leader of the group, which now numbers 76, said on November 17 that they would protest in Nay Pyi Taw "until a solution is reached".

They are unhappy at what they describe as unfair treatment and broken promises from the Myanmar National Prosperity company, which won a tender to mine gold in the area in late 2011. In June, workers from the hundreds of small mines at Moehti Moemi began protesting after the company allegedly

renege on an earlier verbal agreement to split all gold found in the area 50-50.

Myanmar National Prosperity officials reportedly made the promise to the small mining companies and individual miners in December 2011, saying they could excavate gold from the area for the duration of its five-year contract with the government.

After holding several illegal protests in the mining area, the miners applied for permission to demonstrate in Yamethin but were rejected twice. About 30 of them then protested in front of Myanmar National Prosperity office in Yangon on November 3, 6 and 8, after which they decided to walk to Nay Pyi Taw.

They were originally expected to arrive around November 20, but on November 19 the police chief for Taunggoo District asked them to wait three days because a foreign dignitary was visiting Nay Pyi Taw, said marcher Ko Yauk Kyi.

"We agreed to wait as a gesture of respect for the state. [The police chief] said

he would render help as much as he could when we leave after that," he said.

The marchers are likely to arrive in the capital on November 25, he added.

But residents there said Nay Pyi Taw Council has tightened security at check points on roads entering the city.

Ko Nay Aung Htet said the group would proceed regardless.

"If we are blocked, it is okay; we won't do anything violent. If we are arrested, it is also okay. This is because we are out of work if we go back [to Yamethin]. But we are confident we can bring about a solution," he said.

Their demands include fair rights to work on Moehti Moemi hill, abolishing the National Prosperity's monopoly, taking legal action against companies

that are exploiting the people at Moehti Moemi, ensuring they abide by the rules of any contract, taking action against National Prosperity employees who "bully" other people in the area, better environmental protections and action against acts of forced labour, Ko Nay Aung Htet said.

"Will this be resolved in favour of the poor, who don't even have enough food, or the rich, who have more property than they can even look after? That's the main point in this case," he said.

Gold was found in Moehti Moemi region in 1996-1997 and about 100,000 people worked in the area before National Prosperity won the tender. About 20,000 miners and their families live there, the marchers said. - Translated by Thit Lwin

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Executive Diary 2013

Myanmar reforms to lead growth: IMF

By Tim McLaughlin

THE International Monetary Fund has found that Myanmar's growth in the coming year will be bolstered by the continuation of the nation's rapid reforms.

In a statement issued on November 21, the IMF said that it expects growth to reach to 6.25 percent for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

"These reforms are already bearing fruit," said IMF mission chief Meral Karasulu in a statement. "Growth is expected to accelerate to around 6.25pc in FY2012-13, bolstered by foreign investment in natural resources and exports of commodities," the statement said.

"Inflation has declined rapidly and should remain moderate at around 6pc next year. Meanwhile, the exchange rate has been stable in recent months, with international reserves increasing to US\$4 billion," the statement added.

The findings come after a November 5-22 visit by an IMF delegation. Over the course of the trip IMF officials met U Win Shein, the Minister for Finance and Revenue, U Than Nyein, Central Bank of Myanmar Governor and other senior Myanmar officials. They also met representatives from the private sector.

The IMF cited a number of steps undertaken by the Myanmar government as the reasons for its confidence in the country's economic potential.

"The exchange rate regime has been changed from a peg to a managed float. The financial sector is being gradually modernised, starting with partial deposit rate liberalisation and the relaxing of some restrictions on private banks.

"This year's fiscal budget was debated in parliament for the first time, yielding increased spending in critical areas such as health, education,

and infrastructure," the statement said.

New laws focused on microfinance and the long-awaited foreign investment law, which was passed by the hluttaw on November 1 and signed into law by President U Thein Sein the following day, were also noted as key positive changes.

Despite the positive forecast and improvements, the IMF warned that Myanmar still has obstacles to overcome after decades of economic mismanagement that plunged the country into poverty.

"Nevertheless, the government recognises there is still a long way to go. Myanmar remains one of the poorest countries in Asia, with economic development stymied by many distortions. On the macroeconomic front, the government's overarching priorities are two-fold: to maintain stability during the transition process, and to build the modern tools and institutions necessary to manage a rapidly changing economy," the statement cautioned.

To achieve these two goals, the IMF laid out three priority areas for Myanmar's macroeconomic reforms to continue moving forward. Two of the areas focus on the transition to the managed float of the national currency - the kyat - that the government undertook in April, ending 35 years of a fixed exchange rate.

"First, consolidating exchange rate unification, which will be an important foundational step for securing macroeconomic stability, while at the same time boosting competitiveness and trade," the statement said.

"Second, the recent move to a managed float will be accompanied by a consistent monetary policy framework, focused on achieving low and stable inflation."

The IMF's third recommendation was the lowering of debts and an

More page 22



Myanmar Brewery was the highest payer of commercial and income tax in the 2011-12 year, the Revenue Department says. Pic: Yadanar

Govt to widen tax base

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

GOOD citizens should be proud to pay their taxes, says the government. Armed with technical advice from international financial institutions and based on examples from the region, Myanmar wants not only to revise its tax laws and procedures, but also to change the way people look at tax.

Now that the law on direct foreign investment has been passed, and sanctions lifted, the country is poised for a surge in economic activity. Efforts are under way to make the taxation system fairer and more transparent, more compliant with democratic practice, less open to corruption, and to bring in more revenue for the state.

Ministry of Finance and Revenue officials organised a workshop in Nay Pyi Taw on November 21 to discuss widening the tax base while reducing the tax rate, and reforming rules

and regulations.

The ministry's Internal Revenue Department levies five kinds of taxes: commercial, income, lottery and stamp tax, plus customs duty collected by the Customs Department.

Union Finance and Revenue Minister U Win Shein said the ministry expects large numbers of foreign investors to enter the country following the lifting of US sanctions in September and the enactment of the foreign investment law earlier this month.

Even though tax revenues have been rising year on year, health and education budgets are inadequate, and the ratio of income from tax to gross domestic product is low at about 3.7 percent for the 2011 calendar year. This compares with about 17.7pc in Thailand, about 16.1pc in Cambodia, and about 30.3pc in Vietnam.

"Tax reform is an important part of general reform. The current system of tax assessment by the tax

office should be replaced by a self-assessment system. We must do more to resolve problems between taxpayers and the tax officials, and we have to change taxpayers' mindset as well," said U Win Shein.

International financial institutions (IFIs) such as Asian Development Bank, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and International Tax and Investment Centre have been researching the situation throughout this year and will provide the ministry with technical assistance, the workshop said.

Participants found that the main weaknesses of tax systems in developing countries were over-complexity, rigidity, inefficiency and unfairness. The IFIs stress the need for flexibility and equity.

Minister in the Office of the President U Soe Thein said the tax laws and regulations had to be tightened up. "The ministry should reconsider imposing a penalty when

someone fails to pay tax. We need to look at other countries in the region. We also have to change people's mindset: people should be proud to pay tax," he said.

Citing the example of Thailand, Kanbawza Bank vice-president U Than Lwin said small- and medium-sized enterprises had an important role to play in helping the government broaden its tax base.

"People need to be encouraged to pay tax willingly. Rates should be equitable and fair for all, and the government should stimulate a self-assessment system. If not, corruption will persist," he said. KBZ was the second-highest payer of income tax in the 2011-12 fiscal year.

U Hla Tun, a Minister in the Office of the President, said: "The tax system is closely related to politics. Tax reform is the most important thing. First we make paying taxes easier, then we tell everybody how to do it," he said.

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Myanmar supports rice bloc, says MRF

By Myat May Zin

FIVE rice exporting nations within the ASEAN bloc might be organised into a cartel with the aim of boosting prices by 10 percent, as well as lifting quality control, a Myanmar Rice Federation official said last week.

Dr Soe Tun, an MRF central executive committee member, told *The Myanmar Times* that President U Thein Sein had urged the federation to support the initiative, which would group Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar together as one exporter. He added that the preparatory framework for the cartel could be finished by the end of the year.

However, the *Bangkok Post* reported on November 18 that the initiative had stalled because some of the nations were not ready to institutionalise cooperation in the industry.

Thailand initiated the proposal to form the cartel in August, with Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia agreeing to consider the idea, which would be backed by the creation of an ASEAN Rice

Federation to help move the idea forward. However, the *Bangkok Post* said the plan had drawn criticism from the Asian Development Bank, which labelled it globally irresponsible.

The *Post* reported that after talks with his Lao, Myanmar, Thai and Vietnamese counterparts on November 17, Cambodia's Minister of Commerce Cham Praseth said formal cooperation between the five countries had been shelved because several countries were not ready.

He said the countries would instead focus on what could be done within the region to improve rice production standards.

But Dr Soe Tun said Myanmar stood ready to back the plan.

"Our president is really willing to organise and cooperate with other countries to promote the agricultural sector," he said. "So far Thailand is leading the way to organise the ASEAN 5-E group. We are focusing on the export sector."

"This organisation will mainly work on two items: to boost the quality of rice

exports and increase prices," Dr Soe Tun said.

"We discussed the formation of an organisation in Thailand on October 25 and some fundamental agreements and standards came out from that meeting," he said.

ASEAN 5-E will also work together to set minimum quality standards for exports and to set prices, in much the same way that the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries does.

However, Dr Soe Tun said some of the nations that might join the bloc need to upgrade their rice production systems.

"In some agreements, we are concerned about the weaknesses of some countries [Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia] because farmers in these countries don't have the techniques and access to high-quality seeds that would allow them to export at a high standard."

"That's why I am planning to add an agreement for cooperation to update growing techniques and provide quality seeds from the Myanmar Farmers Association," Dr Soe Tun said.

Siam Commercial Bank opens Yangon rep office

By Stuart Deed

THAILAND'S largest commercial lender - Siam Commercial Bank - opened a representative office in Yangon on November 23.

Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) was granted approval to open the office by the Central Bank of Myanmar in April this year, and in the intervening months has organised seminars and information sessions to boost its profile ahead of opening the office.

The office, at 17 Kabar Aye Pagoda Road in Bahan township, was opened by chairman of SCB's executive committee Dr Vichit Suraphongchai and watched over by officials from the Central Bank, Myanmar private banks and representatives of noteworthy Thai companies operating in Myanmar.

The opening was followed by a gala dinner in the evening that featured speeches by Dr Vichit, Thailand's ambassador to Myanmar, and U Win Aung, chairman of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.



Siam Commercial Bank officials and employees at the bank's representative office in Yangon on November 23. Pic: Nyein Maung

Dr Vichit said the bank's presence in Myanmar represented a "mutual growth partnership", and the bank wanted to play a role in the nation's blossoming in the next 20 to 30 years.

"With this new office in Myanmar, SCB will have a presence in all countries in Indochina," he said, adding that he was personally excited to be working in Myanmar.

"My excitement arises not just from the tremendous upgrade in business volume or the booming investment

climate in Myanmar. My excitement stems from my personal desire to be part of something that could last 20 or 30 years and that later will be regarded as something historic," he said.

"All of us can make history by being part of the emerging economic story of Myanmar," he said.

"SCB has been active in Myanmar long before today. Today's grand opening of our on-the-ground presence can only serve to further our commitment to Myanmar and its people," he said.

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for Mundipharma AG

P. O. Box 60, Yangon

E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm

Dated: 26th November, 2012

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U Than Maung, Advocate

For Thai Lee Agriculture Co., Ltd.,

C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.

Room 1508-1509, 15th Floor, Sakura Tower

Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 26 November 2012

utm@kcyangon.com

From page 21

increase in stable revenues in order to address the country's substantial development needs that span multiple sectors. The IMF said this could be achieved through a multifaceted approach but will not happen quickly.

"This will take some time, but steps are planned to strengthen revenue administration, simplify tax rates, broaden the tax base, improve public financial management, limit non-concessional external

borrowing, and develop government securities markets," the statement said.

The IMF is hopeful that the trip will lead to the formation of a Staff-Monitored Program in 2013. Staff-Monitored Programs are described as "informal and flexible instrument for dialogue between the IMF and a member country on its economic policies". No financial support is provided by the IMF under these programs.

CORRECTION:

In our previous edition a story regarding the World Intellectual Property Organisation incorrectly stated that it administers 24 international treaties. It administers 25 international treaties. Also, WIPO has a cooperation agreement with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to extend legal and technical assistance to countries in the implementation of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) that applies

to all WTO members. The transition period for least developed countries, such as Myanmar, was extended to July 1 next year by the TRIPS Council in 2004. WIPO will continue to provide legal and technical assistance in the finalisation of Myanmar's intellectual property laws as well as in the establishment of a national intellectual property office by the government of Myanmar.

We apologise for any confusion caused by these errors.

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To apply, submit a CV and covering letter to Adam Cooper, HD Centre Country Programme Manager (cooper@hdcountry.org). Salary levels will be in line with international NGO / UN norms. The deadline for applications is 7th December 2012. Women and ethnic nationalities are especially encouraged to apply.

Cheap SIMs coming, for foreigners

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

A US\$15 SIM card for mobile phones is on the way – but only for foreigners. The three-month cards will be on the market from June 2013 in the run-up to the Southeast Asian Games, said U Htay Win, chief engineer of the Department of Mobile Communications at Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT) on November 19.

The cut-price cards will be on sale at airport information counters and sports villages to international athletes arriving for the games, said U Htay Win.

Speaking in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, he said: "We will sell the card for only \$15 like other international low-priced SIM cards. But the mobile SIM cards are meant for international athletes rather than local users."

MPT does intend to sell cheaper SIM cards to the public before Myanmar assumes the ASEAN chairmanship in 2014, U Htay Win said.

"We will continue to cut mobile prices so that more and more people can use them. But we can't reduce the price immediately because the country's mobile network can only support about four million to six million mobiles," said U Htay Win. "We have to balance market demand and [the] number [of users] we can support."

He said there were more than three million mobile phone users in Myanmar, or about 7.8 percent of the country's population.

SIM card prices and mobile phone charges are high in Myanmar compared with other ASEAN countries, which have greatly expanded their mobile phone markets with the use of

prepaid cards.

U Htay Win said a draft communications law bringing in lower charges was being discussed in hluttaw. "I think two or three mobile operators will appear next year if the law is approved during the next hluttaw session," said U Htay Win.

"The mobile price will decrease somewhat as the communications market becomes more competitive after the law is approved," he said, adding that many foreign communications companies had expressed interest in investing in Myanmar, and some might be granted a licence to operate before the end of next year.

"We expect to be able to cut prices before 2015 or 2016," said U Htay Win.

He attributed the current high charges to contracts signed with foreign countries for five years, which would

have to expire before charges could fall. MPT charges \$0.98 a minute.

It also emerged that next month MPT will charge for internet services by data volume instead of by the minute.

U Thaug Su Nyein, chief executive of Information Matrix IT, said he hoped the government would expand mobile usage to the entire population at a lower price.

"I think cheap SIM cards will succeed in the private sector as market strategies develop. But the current network can barely support the three million users we have, which is a big weak point," he said. "This won't look good when Myanmar hosts the SEA games and becomes the ASEAN chairman, and it will also deter potential foreign investors," said U Thaug Su Nyein. – Translated by Zar Zar Soe

Seminar explores deposit insurance

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

BOOSTING public trust in banks through deposit insurance was the key theme of a seminar that brought together domestic and international banking representatives at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel in Yangon last week.

The seminar, titled Deposit Insurance: Sharing Experiences With East Asian Countries, was jointly organised by the Ministry of Finance and Revenue, the Central Bank of Myanmar and Myanmar Economic Resources International, and was held on November 15 and 16. The event was sponsored by Malaysia's Maybank.

The value of deposit insurance was thrust into the public spotlight in Myanmar when rumours concerning Kanbawza Bank threatened to start a run on the bank in early October, bank representatives said during the seminar.

Domestic banks were urged to invest in local companies to increase the capacity of those firms to expand, while boosting the banks' holdings and earnings.

Maybank has sponsored two other banking seminars this year – in July and September – that focused on banking sector stability and financing for small- and medium-sized enterprises respectively.

Mr John Wong, the managing director of Maybank, said the bank provided a wide range of presenters with extensive experience in East Asia to share their understanding of



Central Bank of Myanmar deputy director general U Thein Zaw speaks at a seminar in Yangon on November 16. Pic: Thiri Lu

banking in the region.

He said Myanmar's banking sector offered "tremendous opportunities" and he wanted Maybank to assist the country's economic development.

Maybank made agreements to cooperate with five Myanmar banks to offer money remittance services six months ago, and will further assist those institutions by drawing on its 52 years in the industry, he said.

Central Bank of Myanmar deputy director general U Thein Zaw said deposit insurance could create strong cooperation between banks and insurance.

However, the banking sector needs to shore up public confidence and added that deposit insurance was one mechanism that would help it to do so.

"Deposit insurance is essential for stabilising the banking business, even though this is a new product in Myanmar," he said. "We will have a lot of challenges [to implement] this, but this seminar converts these challenges to opportunity."

Some leading private banks, including Kanbawza and Co-operative Bank, have offered deposit insurance, provided by state-run Myanma Insurance, since 2011.

However, private bankers said that the insurance offered benefitted neither the banks nor consumers.

"If a bank faces bankruptcy, the insurance company will agree to pay out its policy but that will take three to four months, which is a long time," said U Pe Myint, managing director of Co-operative

Bank. "And the insurer will never repay the full amount," he said, adding that most payouts amount to 80 percent of the total deposited with the bank.

Domestic private banks buy government-issued treasury bonds from the Central Bank to be used as liquidity during times of crisis. The bonds pay 9.5pc interest annually, while the banks offer from 8-10pc interest on deposit accounts, although most pay 8pc he said.

"So we can get 1.5pc in profit from that, and we have a look at what else we can invest in, whether that's buying paddy [rice] or gold. But paddy prices are unstable and we have to keep an eye on what's happening with the draft of Central Bank Law to see whether it will allow us to buy gold."

Fisheries federation plans US tilapia exports

By Shwe Ku Thitsar

MYANMAR plans to export farmed freshwater tilapia fish to the United States following the easing of an import ban on November 16, the vice chairman of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation said last week.

U Han Tun said US consumers have an appetite for tilapia – about the fourth-most popular plate species – but the federation needs to ensure that quality levels reach the standards required.

"Tilapia is the fourth most popular dinner species in the US but we're trying to work

out what we need to do to export to that market," he said.

He added that the federation would work with Winrock International in a USAID-funded program to upgrade the species of tilapia for export and crab breeding, while another program will target goat breeding.

"We need to export high-quality fish to the US but the species we breed in Myanmar is not good. And we also need to contact potential buyers to assess transportation costs," he added.

"Moreover, we must also sell our fish at a competitive price because other countries

export this fish too," U Han Tun said.

Myanmar's fisheries products, including ocean-caught fish and freshwater prawn, will soon be exported to the US, he said.

He added that Myanmar will no longer need to export via third party nations, such as Singapore, to avoid sanctions, which created a number of problems for exporters.

"In the past, we had difficulties with remittance because we could only work through three state-owned banks. But there are more ways to remit money now and we can also link up with international banks," he said. – Translated by Zar Zar Soe

National Development Co owes four years' tax: official

By Myat May Zin

NATIONAL Development Company Group has apologised to shareholders for failing to register the firm since 2008.

Chairman U Khin Shwe said at the 14th company's annual general meeting on November 17 that National Development Company Group has not paid tax to the Internal Revenue Department since 2007 but assured shareholders that the company has the tax owed in hand and was working to re-register the group.

"I tried many times to re-register the company but I failed," he said. "Last year the government gave permission for us to re-register. And I tried to re-register at that time but was unable to do so because the company could not provide tax receipts for the past two years." However, a company official later clarified that the group actually owes tax for four years.

"We have the money we owe in tax for the past two years but we must get our company re-registered first. If we can do so, we can clear our tax debt," said U Khin Shwe.

The NDCG company official told *The Myanmar Times* that the company owes about K400 million (about US\$473,000) in back taxes.

NDGC has more than 3000 shareholders, who own more than 320,000 shares, with 680,000 shares unsold so far, the company official said.

However, dividends were not paid in the 2007-08 and 2010-11 fiscal years, he said.

The company sold shares for K10,000 each in 1998 and the share price has increased to K14,000. However, the company only allowed shareholders to trade their shares with other buyers and did not buy them back.

"My father bought 50 shares before he passed away," said shareholder Daw San San Aye. "I like it when the company pays dividends but I'd prefer to sell my shares and invest the money in other ventures."

'If companies don't meet their tax obligations they will not be allowed to register.'

A spokesperson for Myanmar Investment Commission said companies that failed to pay the tax they owe will not be allowed to operate.

"If companies don't meet their tax obligations they will not be allowed to register," he said.

U Khin Shwe said the company's failure to re-register meant it could not work in some sectors.

"Without a valid registration, the company can't be involved in the export and import business as well as other international investments. Moreover, we can't accept any foreign investments without a permit," U Khin Shwe said.

"But we try to pay a dividend to shareholders every year," he added.

The highest dividend paid to shareholders was equal to 36 percent of a share – and was paid out in 2002-03 and 2003-04 financial years.

High gold prices to stay until early 2013

By Kyay Mone Win

TRADERS are predicting gold prices to remain largely stagnant until the end of the year because of strong domestic demand and the low value of the US dollar.

"The gold price was about K755,000 a tical (0.576 ounces) from November 3-6 during the US election when the global gold price was down," said Ma Zin Mi Mi Aung from Aung Thamadi gold shop. "But it increased since then to about K770,000 a tical on November 19," she said.

She added that people are buying gold because of the recent earthquake in Mandalay and because it is the Kahtain season, when people traditionally buy gold jewellery.

"And the earthquake reduced gold production at mines in Thabeikkyin, Kantaung and Kyitautput in Mandalay Region. It will take several months for those mines to return to normal production, so we expect prices will not fall until early 2013," she said.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe


Govt signs agreement on 120MW power plant in Yangon Region

THE Ministry of Electric Power signed an agreement with Toyo-Thai Company to build a 120-megawatt gas- and waste heat-fired power plant in Yangon's Ahlone township during a ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw on November 16, state-run media reported last week.

The agreement was signed by Toyo-Thai's Thailand and Singapore companies and was witnessed by Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe, Minister for Industry U Aye Myint, Minister for Energy U Than Htay and Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin, as well as deputy ministers,

department heads and company officials, the *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper reported on November 18.

Speaking at the signing, U Khin Maung Soe said the project is to be implemented as quickly as possible in order to provide electricity to Yangon in the coming summer months. He added that the plant would be expected to follow "non-environmental degradation policies", adding that the ministry will cooperate with local and foreign investors to meet the state's power needs. – Staff Writer

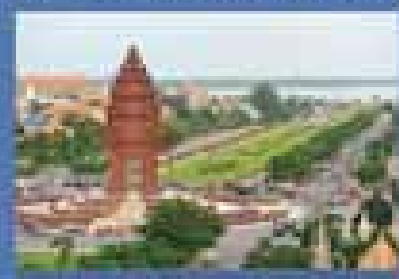


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A draft condominium law in parliament might allow foreigners to buy condominiums, developers say. Pic: Stuart Deed

Industry contemplates possible condo law

By Htar Htar Khin

A CONDOMINIUM law recently introduced into the Pyithu Hluttaw could open the door for foreigners to buy apartments in Myanmar, although details about the proposed legislation remain vague.

Representative for Maungdaw township, Rakhine State, U Aung Zaw Win, who is also chairman

of Shine Construction – one of Myanmar’s biggest construction firms, asked when a condominium law would be established. The bill includes provisions related to construction, ownership, quality control and other related sectors.

Developers said the law has the potential to benefit the industry by mitigating disputes – and allowing more people to legally buy apartments.

U Ko Ko Lay, the general manager of Three Friends Construction in Mingalar Taung Nyunt township, said he welcomes the proposed law.

“I would welcome a condo law, which could solve a lot of the disputes that we face,” he said. “The most important thing is that it could strengthen ownership and limit disputes between developers and Yangon City Development Committee

(YCDC),” he said.

However, he worried that the law might allow foreign buyers to launder their money and could lead to price escalations for available stock.

“We should carefully consider this law because the economic situation is different to how it was in the past. And the condominium market has boomed several times before without any foreign buyers,” he said.

“But we can’t really predict what will happen if foreigners are allowed to buy,” he said, adding that the law might reduce number of foreigners staying in hotels

“As far as I can see, a condominium law would bring mostly benefits, although if there is not an increase in supply then prices could also increase sharply,” he said.

U Min Lwin, the managing director of Danahlaing Construction in Sanchaung township, said a condominium law would empower apartment owners.

“There are many cases where residents must fight with the landowner or developer – and I hope that a law would provide people with protection in disputes,”

he said.

“I think it would solve a lot of problems,” said U Min Lwin.

He said if the law was balanced it would provide more power for apartment owners.

“Every condo project sees arguments between the developer, the landowner and the tenants and I hope the law can address this by establishing the rights of all parties,” he said.

He added that a condo law could possibly remove the need for residents to form housing development committees, such as the one formed by Pearl Condominium residents, to fight the developer as a group. He added that Danahlaing Condo has faced similar problems between residents and the landowner regarding maintenance and service fees in the past.

Weekly Eleven journal reported on November 6 that foreigners would only be allowed to buy in condo buildings at least six stories high.

U Min Lwin said he doubted that allowing foreigners to buy apartments would distort the market.

“There’s no way that sales can be damaged if foreigners are allowed to

buy – sales must surely increase demand, although this might push prices upward well,” he said.

“I think this will also make developers provide better facilities and lift quality standards,” U Min Lwin said.

Ko Soe Wunna, the manager of Shining Star real estate agency in Ahlone township, said the proposed condo law included restrictions that limiting foreign ownership of apartments only above the sixth floor but was hopeful that it would be beneficial for the industry.

“I don’t see restrictions as being a major problem because this is a draft law and we can’t say too much more until the law is enacted,” he said.

“But I think it’s clear that the law would provide some protection to apartment owners, which will probably lift prices as well,” he added.

However, he said the fewer restrictions were included in the bill, the better it would be – with one exception. “I don’t believe that foreigners and Myanmar citizens have the same opportunities, so I would like to see restrictions placed on foreign ownership.”

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Investors eye London as rents hit highs

By Chris Spillane

LONDON – Vivek Jeswani became a landlord by accident when Deutsche Bank transferred him to New York two weeks after he moved into a new home in central London. Now back in Britain, Jeswani views the apartment in Baker Street, the fictional home of Sherlock Holmes, as one of his best assets and is about to buy another home to expand his rental business.

“There are no other investments as attractive and you’ve got some security if you’ve got an asset you can use yourself,” the risk officer at China Construction Bank Corp’s British unit said. “There’s a good yield over 5 percent and being in central London, you’ve got demand domestically and internationally.”

London rents have risen more than 6pc in the past year to a record, even as job cuts by banks reduce employment in the financial-services industry to a 20-year low. Technology and media companies are drawing workers to the city, while lenders restrict mortgages to all but the most creditworthy customers. That’s encouraged individual investors and companies including KKR & Co to enter the rental market as central banks push down yields on debt to record lows.

The average rent in greater London climbed to £1240 (US\$1974) last month, according to an index compiled by HomeLet. That was up 32pc from October 2009, when rents averaged £940 a month. The cost of renting a property in the rest of the country increased 7pc between 2009 and 2012, said Homelet, Britain’s largest referencing and rentals insurance company.

The jump in London mirrors that seen in Manhattan, where the average apartment rent was \$3195 in September, 10pc more than a year earlier. In Berlin, the average monthly rent was 524 euros (\$670) in the first half, 13pc more than a year ago, according to data compiled by Jones Lang LaSalle.

“Improving economic performance creates demand and migration regionally and nationally,” said Yolande Barnes, a director of Savills Plc’s research team. “The economy of those cities is strong because they are world cities,” while asking prices are particularly high, she said.

In Britain, rising rents are encouraging investors to take out loans for buy-to-let transactions, a type of mortgage that helped fuel



Rents in London have hit record highs, even as loans for property buyers dry up. Pic: AFP

speculation during the housing boom. Loans of this kind totaled £4.2 billion in the three months through September, the most since the third quarter of 2008, when the housing market was crashing.

Jeswani bought his first apartment in 1999 on Baker Street for £100,000 and said he plans to spend £1.35 million on the latest property, which he will move into, and then rent out the place where he is currently living.

He is renting out the one-bedroom Baker Street property in a mansion block by Regent’s Park for £395 a week. That compares with an average of £475 a week in the city’s

years. Gross mortgage lending amounted to about £141 billion in 2011, down from £363 billion in 2007, the Council of Mortgage Lenders said.

In August 2007, before the Northern Rock bank collapse sparked Britain’s financial crisis, there were 829 mortgages available for those with a 10pc down payment. Today, about a third of that number are offered at that loan-to-value, personal finance website moneyfacts.co.uk said.

In comparison, there are 101 buy-to-let products available with a loan-to-value of 70pc at the moment, compared with 47 in

to benefit from the Financial Service Authority’s mortgage market reform. From April 2014, lenders will need to be stricter on verifying incomes and must assess borrowers’ ability to handle higher interest rates.

“They don’t regulate the buy-to-let market,” Neil Chegidden, director of residential research at Jones Lang LaSalle, said by phone. “Buy-to-let investors tend to be more affluent. Most have more than one property, so you’ve got greater security by writing that kind of mortgage.”

London rents are expected to rise 3pc this year and 4pc the following

demand for housing from both British residents and international renters and homebuyers, said Ralph Rosenberg, head of KKR real estate.

“The market is a lot deeper than just the local market, given the interest from wealthy individuals in the Far East, Middle East and Europe,” he said.

Rents in London will grow 26.4pc in the five years through 2017, Savills said. That compares with 24pc in London’s best neighborhoods, such as Knightsbridge and Belgravia, and 18.2pc nationally.

That is ideal for those seeking a place to put their money as potential returns diminish in London’s financial-services industry.

European and Japanese financial firms, with securities trading hubs in London, are cutting positions amid volatile markets and increased regulation in the UK. UBS AG plans to cut 10,000 jobs as Switzerland’s largest lender shrinks its investment bank.

The decline in city jobs reflects a 20pc fall in equity trading this year compared with a year earlier and a 50pc fall in international orders for equity trading. UK mergers have dropped by a third, while international deal-making has declined more steeply, the Center for Economics and Business Research said this month.

The British economy’s weakness is crimping the government’s tax revenue from company profits and contributing to an increase in spending. As a result, Britain’s budget deficit widened unexpectedly last month.

Technology workers relocating from overseas will help protect London’s richest rents from the gloom overhanging a European finance industry that’s cutting thousands of jobs this year, according to Savills.

This type of migration has helped drive the type of tenants Jeswani rents to, which have included people from India, Lebanon, Morocco and Switzerland. Soon, he will add a French couple to that list, though he is unlikely to increase his rent.

“Given that there’s a huge demand, I’ve used that to filter out the type of tenant,” he said. “So if I don’t want students I can be fussy. I can avoid void periods and if someone wanted to share, I don’t want to get wear and tear, so I look for a single professional. I became an accidental landlord.”

– Bloomberg News

‘For investors, the UK’s private rented sector looks an attractive option.’

Chelsea neighborhood and £550 in nearby Knightsbridge, according to the Mayor of London’s website.

Demand for rental properties is growing because first-time buyers in the city typically need down payments of about 25pc, the Greater London Authority says. The average deposit is £57,175, more than double the national figure, said Halifax, the mortgage unit of Lloyds Banking.

The restrictions on lending are reflected by a slump in the number of mortgages that have been granted in the past five

August 2007, moneyfacts.co.uk said.

At the same time, bond investors are more willing to buy securities tied to buy-to-let mortgages. The extra yield they demand above benchmarks to hold the debt fell to 1.55pcage points this month, half the spread in July and down from 11pcage points in June 2009, said JPMorgan Chase & Co. Paragon Group of Companies, which lends mainly to landlords with more than 10 properties, sold £175 million of bonds last month.

Buy-to-let investors are likely

year, according to Savills. That is also being fuelled by the lowest number of home completions in London for 18 months in the quarter through September, the Department for Communities and Local Government said.

“For investors, the UK’s private rented sector looks an attractive option,” Barnes said.

KKR, the buyout firm led by founders Henry Kravis and George Roberts, is considering financing development of rental and for-sale apartments in the capital. The company is seeking to meet

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Wen chooses foreign audience to deliver swan song

By William Wan

BEIJING – Wen Jiabao would like China to forget about him.

That may sound strange after decades of propaganda building him up as the populist leader of his generation whose love for China's people was only outweighed by his supposed humility in serving them.

But Wen, China's outgoing premier, has always had a

flair for the dramatic. Wen told a gathering of overseas Chinese in Thailand: "I hope people including overseas Chinese forget about me. But I will never forget about the motherland and its people and will never forget the tens of millions of overseas Chinese."

His latest comments appeared to be a swan song of sorts for his decade-long reign as China's premier.

Wen's speech appeared to have been delivered in

Bangkok on November 20 but only began spreading widely online in China two days later because of a blackout on its coverage by Chinese state media.

Wen has cultivated a folksy populist image of being a humble man of the people – propagating an image of himself as "Grandpa Wen," as some call him. But his family's long-rumoured use of his political connections to amass a huge fortune were confirmed last month in a

New York Times report that caused China to censor the entire *Times* website.

"What Wen says and does are two very different things," said Zhang Lifan, a Chinese historian and political commentator in Beijing. "There's two theories, he wants to change things but he can't. Or he doesn't really want to change and is simply finding excuses. In either case, I think in reality, he doesn't really have the power of his position."


Wen seemed to touch on this point in his speech in Bangkok, complaining cryptically, "I always felt there are a lot of things that haven't been finished."

And he also seemed to defend himself against the allegations of corruption, quoting from a second century BCE poet Qu Yuan to make the point that he would be willing to "die nine times" if it meant the truth could be pursued and that "even I have to die for my own

innocence, I die with honesty and integrity."

The fact that Wen waited until he was overseas to give his first extensive comments on his retirement and the scandal that threatens his legacy suggested he may have encountered opposition from other party factions in speaking out while in China.

His comments were not carried by any of China's major state-run media. – *The Washington Post*



Israeli soldiers near the border with Gaza. Photo: Jack Guenz

Key events in and around Gaza

- Nov 14** Head of Hamas military forces in Gaza killed by Israeli missile, bodyguard also dies
- 15** 11 civilians die in Gaza in Israeli raids. Rocket attack from Gaza kills three in Israeli town of Kiryat Malachi
- 16** Gaza militants fire rockets at Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Israeli troops mass near Gaza Strip
- 17** Israeli air strikes kill 15 Palestinians in Gaza
- 18** Israeli strikes kill 31 Palestinians, including ten from one family. Israeli forces strike two media centres in Gaza City, injuring eight journalists
- 19** Palestinian death toll passes 101, with 24 more killed in single day
- 20** Gunmen in Gaza shoot dead six locals described as "collaborators" with Israel. Gaza building used by foreign media including AFP hit by Israeli air strike targeting Hamas intelligence. Two Israeli deaths confirmed from rocket attacks
- 21** Bomb explodes on a Tel Aviv bus, injuring 17 people. 18 more Palestinians reported killed. Second rocket hits media building used by AFP. Truce takes effect at 19:00. 12 rockets from Gaza hit open fields in southern Israel after the ceasefire

Israeli air strikes
Hit more than 1,500 targets

Palestinian rockets
More than 1,500 fired, some 420 shot down by Israel's Iron Dome defence system

Death toll
Palestinian 155
Israeli 5

Sources: IDF/Palestinian Auth./Hamas Auth. AFP

Truce holds in Gaza

JERUSALEM – Israeli politicians on November 22 returned to the campaign trail as the streets of Gaza came back to life after a truce ended eight days of bloodshed.

Following a night of quiet skies after an Egyptian-brokered truce deal came into effect, Gaza's Hamas prime minister hailed the territory's multiple militant groups for respecting the ceasefire.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government was "giving the ceasefire a chance" but was prepared for the eventuality it could collapse.

The agreement, announced in Egypt on November 21 by Foreign Minister Mohammed Kamel Amr and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, called on Israel to "stop all hostilities... in the

land, sea and air, including incursions and targeting of individuals."

It urged Palestinian militant groups to end "rocket attacks and all attacks along the border."

Both sides claimed the ceasefire as a victory, warning they would be ready to resume fire should the other violate the agreement.

"Israel has failed in all its goals," Hamas chief Khaled Meshal said in Cairo on November 21.

Israel's armed forces chief of staff Lieutenant General Benny Gantz hailed the campaign, saying it had "accomplished its purposes and goals."

"We hit Hamas hard," he said, adding the operation had inflicted "great damage" on Hamas's rocket-launching capabilities.

– AFP

Manila, Hanoi protest at Chinese passports

BEIJING – China's new passports show a map including its claim to almost all the South China Sea – provoking protests by the Philippines and Vietnam – but leaving out islands bitterly disputed with Japan.

Beijing has been engaged in a simmering row with its southern neighbours over its claim to vast swathes of the South China Sea, with Chinese maps having a "nine-dash line" that runs almost to the Philippine and Malaysian coasts.

China and Japan have also engaged in furious exchanges over East China Sea islands administered by Tokyo, which calls them Senkaku, and claimed by Beijing as Diaoyu.

The latest front in the South China Sea dispute is travel documents issued by Beijing, with its new computer-chipped passport, or e-Passport, showing various islands as Chinese territory, including the Paracels and Spratlys.

But the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands are absent, Tokyo said.

Manila claims part of the Spratlys and Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario sent Beijing a formal protest letter on November

22, calling the maps "an excessive declaration of maritime space in violation of international law".

"The Philippines strongly protests the inclusion of the nine-dash lines in the e-Passport as such image covers an area that is clearly part of the Philippines' territory and maritime domain," del Rosario said.

Foreign ministry spokesman Raul Hernandez added: "If we allow that, then that would mean acquiescence to their claim of the whole of the South China Sea."

The Paracel islands within the South China Sea have

'An excessive declaration of maritime space...'

been held by China since it forced out South Vietnamese troops in 1974, but they are still claimed by Hanoi.

Some social media users in China said the maps had delayed them at Vietnamese immigration.

"I got into Vietnam after lots of twists and turns," said a user of China's hugely popular microblogging site Sina Weibo, saying an entry stamp was initially refused "because of the printed map

of China's sea boundaries – which Vietnam does not recognise".

Vietnamese foreign ministry spokesman Luong Thanh Nghi told reporters on November 22 that the Chinese documents amounted to a violation of Hanoi's sovereignty and it had protested to the embassy.

Other claimants to parts of the South China Sea are Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Beijing attempted to downplay the diplomatic fallout from the recently introduced passports, with a foreign ministry spokeswoman saying the maps were "not made to target any specific country".

"We hope to maintain active communication with relevant countries and promote the healthy development of people to people exchanges," Hua Chunying added.

In Tokyo, a foreign ministry official said: "We have confirmed that disputed islands in South China Sea appear in a map printed on new Chinese passports."

"On the other hand, Senkaku doesn't. Therefore, we are not in a position to comment or complain." – AFP

• Related report, P. 37.

Briefly

DAMASCUS – Rebels seized the eastern Syria town of Mayadeen on November 22, the latest in a series of strategic advances, as the number of people killed in the increasingly violent conflict passed the 40,000 mark.

LONDON – The BBC turned to its former news chief on November 22 to lead it through the crisis over its reporting of child sex abuse, naming Royal Opera House boss Tony Hall as its new director-general.

KUALA LUMPUR – Vietnamese authorities have arrested 11 suspected pirates aboard a chemical tanker after the first such hijacking in the waters around Malaysia in years, the International Maritime Bureau said on November 23. – AFP

SYDNEY – The camp set up by Australia to house asylum-seekers on the Pacific island of Nauru was "appalling" and likely in breach of its obligations to refugees, rights group Amnesty said on November 23.

• Related report, P. 36.

NEW DELHI – The Pakistani Taliban vowed on November 22 to avenge the execution by India the previous day of Mohammed Kasab, the sole surviving gunman from the 2008 Mumbai attacks. – AFP

Morsi broadens powers

CAIRO – Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi assumed sweeping powers on November 22, putting him on a collision course with the judiciary and raising questions about the country's democratic future.

The move, a day after Morsi took diplomatic centre stage in brokering a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza's Islamist Hamas rulers, earned him the same derisive moniker of "new pharaoh" levelled at veteran strongman Hosni Mubarak before his ouster in a popular uprising last year.

"The president can issue any decision or measure to protect the revolution," said a decree read out on television by presidential spokesman Yasser Ali.

"The constitutional declarations, decisions and laws issued by the president are final and not subject to appeal."

The move is a blow to the democracy movement that toppled Mubarak last year and raises concerns that Islamists will be further entrenched in power.

Nobel laureate and former UN atomic energy agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei lashed out at the declaration, which effectively puts the president above judicial oversight.

"Morsi today usurped all state powers and appointed himself Egypt's new pharaoh. A major blow to the revolution that could have dire consequences," ElBaradei wrote on his Twitter account. – AFP

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UNAIDS hails fall in deaths

GENEVA – Twenty-five countries, many in hard-hit Africa, have at least halved new HIV infections in the past decade, with particular progress made toward protecting children from the deadly virus, the United Nations said on November 20.

"It is becoming evident that achieving zero new HIV infections in children is possible," Michel Sidibe, the executive director of UNAIDS, said in a statement.

"I am excited that far fewer babies are being born with HIV. We are moving from despair to hope," he added.

In its annual report on the state of the global pandemic, UNAIDS stressed that 25 low- and middle-income countries had managed to at least halve their rate of new HIV infections

More than half of those countries were in Africa, the region most affected by HIV, the agency said, pointing out for instance that Malawi had cut new infections by 73 percent, while Botswana had seen a 68pc drop.

Globally, new HIV infections fell to 2.5 million last year from 2.6 million in 2010 and represented a 20pc drop from 2001, UNAIDS said.

"The pace of progress is quickening. What used to take a decade is now being achieved in 24 months," Sidibe said.

Particular progress had been made toward bringing down the number of children newly infected with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa – a region that today is home to 90pc of the world's infected youngsters, UNAIDS said.

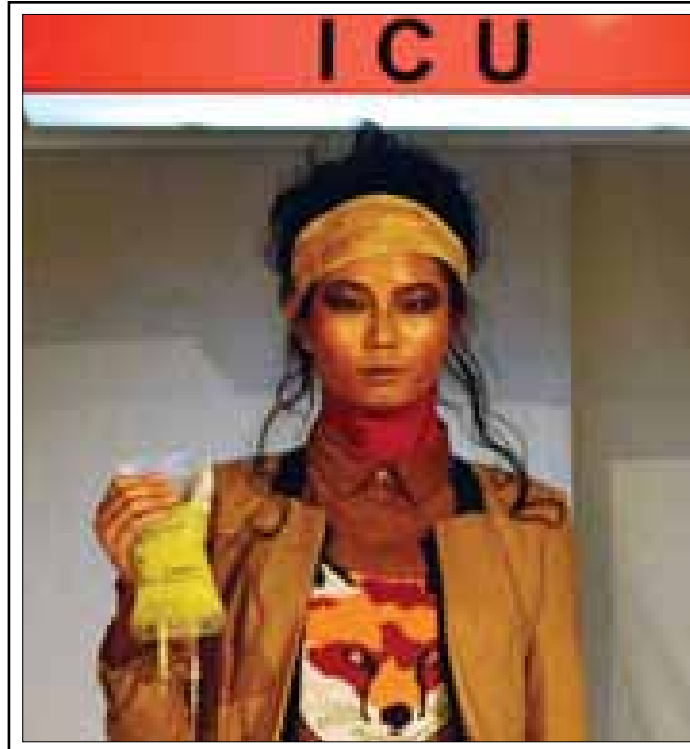
Between 2009 and 2011, the number of children in the

region infected with the virus that causes AIDS dropped 24pc, with a number of countries, including Kenya and South Africa, seeing falls of between 40pc and 59pc.

The number of global deaths linked to AIDS has meanwhile also fallen sharply in recent years, the agency said.

In 2011, 1.7 million people died from AIDS-related causes worldwide – down 24pc from the peak in 2005 and nearly six percent below the 2010 level, said the report, published ahead of World AIDS Day on December 1.

"A new era of hope has emerged in countries and communities across the world that had previously been devastated by AIDS," said the agency, which spearheads the international campaign against the disease. – AFP



A model carries an intravenous drip bag during the 'Toxic Threads – The Big Fashion Stitch-up' fashion parade organised by environment watchdog Greenpeace to highlight chemical contamination in the fashion industry, in Beijing on November 20. The parade coincided with the release by Greenpeace of an investigation which found that nearly two-thirds of the sample fashion products it bought in nearly 30 countries contained hormone-disrupting chemicals or dyes that release cancer-causing substances. Pic: AFP

Greenhouse gases at record levels: UN

GENEVA – The volume of greenhouse gases causing global warming rose to a new high last year, the UN World Meteorological Organisation said on November 20, warning it is becoming increasingly unlikely the world can limit rising temperatures to UN-backed targets.

Levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) – the single most important man-made contributor to climate change – rose to 390.9 parts per million in 2011, which is 2.0 ppm higher than in 2010, the WMO said.

Pointing out that the worst warming gases – CO2, methane and nitrous oxide – had all reached new highs last year, the agency's secretary-general Michel Jarraud said

"it is getting increasingly unlikely" that a UN-backed pledge to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) could be achieved.

"Even if we were able to stop them tomorrow, these greenhouse gases will continue to have an effect for centuries," Jarraud said at the launch of the annual *Greenhouse Gas Bulletin* report in Geneva.

CO2 levels are at 140 percent of the pre-industrial level before 1750, Jarraud said.

The WMO says about 375 billion tonnes of carbon have been released into the atmosphere as CO2 in the past 260 years.

"These billions of tonnes of

additional carbon dioxide in our atmosphere will remain there for centuries, causing our planet to warm further and impacting on all aspects of life on earth," Jarraud said in a statement.

"Future emissions will only compound the situation," he

'Even if we were able to stop them tomorrow, these greenhouse gases will continue to have an effect for centuries.'

said.

Taking the long view on data to smooth out year-on-year anomalies, the WMO showed that while carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

increased on average 1.5 ppm during the 1990s, the average annual increase from 2000 to 2010 stood at 2.0 ppm.

"So it's not just increasing, it's increasing exponentially," WMO scientific officer Oksana Tarasova told reporters.

Jarraud, meanwhile, said

the future."

Five major gases account for 96pc of the warming of our climate, says the WMO, which released its annual greenhouse gas report ahead of a new round of UN climate talks in Doha later this month.

"Between 1990 and 2011, there was a 30 percent increase in radiative forcing – the warming effect on our climate – because of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping long-lived gases," the WMO said.

The levels of atmospheric methane, the second most important greenhouse gas after CO2, also reached new highs in 2011, at 1813 ppb.

This is 259pc of the pre-industrial level, WMO said,

blaming mainly human activities such as fossil fuel exploitation, cattle breeding, rice agriculture, landfills and biomass burning.

Also worrying was the increase in nitrous oxide levels, the WMO said, since its impact on climate is almost 300 times greater than that of carbon dioxide.

The gas, emitted into the atmosphere from natural and man-made sources, also plays an important role in the destruction of the ozone layer, which protects the Earth from harmful ultraviolet rays, the WMO said, indicating that its atmospheric concentration in 2011 was about 324.2 ppb, up 1.0 ppb from 2010 and 120pc of pre-industrial levels. – AFP

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George was not lonely

QUITO – When Lonesome George, the last Pinta Island giant tortoise, died in June in the Galapagos, the world mourned the demise of a species.

But in a statement released on November 21, the Galapagos National Park said there are at least 17 tortoises on the Galapagos Islands that have similar genetic traits to George, including some that may be from his same genus.

George's June 24 death "does not represent the end of the *Chelonoidis abingdonii* species of Pinta Island giant tortoises," the statement said.

The Galapagos, 1000 kilometres (620 miles) off Ecuador's coast, were uninhabited when Europeans first visited in the 16th century and today have a population of about 25,000.

Lonesome George, who was believed to be 100 years old when he died, was discovered on Pinta Island in 1972, when tortoises of his type were believed to be extinct.

Research conducted with Yale University experts "identified nine females, three males and five youths with genes of the Pinta Island giant tortoise species," the statement said.

Researchers analysed more

than 1600 DNA samples taken in 2008 from tortoises living on the Wolf Volcano, on Isabella Island, to George's DNA and samples taken from the Pinta tortoise museum.

The results means that there could be "additional hybrids on the Wolf Volcano, and even individuals on Pinta that could be pure," the statement read.

Experts estimate there were once some 300,000 giant tortoises on the remote Pacific archipelago, but they were decimated by whalers and pirates in the 18th and 19th century, who took them aboard their ships as fresh food and introduced new predators.

Today there are about between 30,000 and 40,000 tortoises of 10 different species on the Galapagos.

The Galapagos became famous when Charles Darwin visited in 1835 to conduct research that led to his revolutionary theories on evolution.

The archipelago has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1978 for the unique plant and animal life found on its island and in the surrounding sea. In 2007, UNESCO declared the island chain's environment endangered due to the increase in tourism and the introduction of invasive species. – AFP

Briefs

Press probe report out this week

LONDON – The Leveson inquiry into press standards in Britain, set up after the phone-hacking scandal at the *News of the World* tabloid, will publish its findings on November 29, it was announced on November 22.

Former senior judge Brian Leveson will unveil his hotly anticipated proposals for regulation of the newspaper industry, whose reputation has been hit hard in the past year by revelations of hacking and allegations of bribery.

Newspaper editors are braced for strong criticism after receiving letters from the inquiry giving them an indication of the inquiry's findings.

President proposes a name change

MEXICO CITY – President Felipe Calderon on November 22 proposed changing Mexico's official name from the United Mexican States to just Mexico.

Calderon, who steps down this week after six years in office, said there was no need to emulate other nations as it did in the 19th century.

"It's time we Mexicans again take up the beauty and simplicity of the name of our fatherland: Mexico. A name we chant, we sing, that makes us happy and fills us with pride," he said.

Chinese hostages freed in Colombia

BOGOTA – Four Chinese oil company employees held hostage since June 2011, allegedly by Colombia's FARC rebels, have been freed in southern Colombia, their embassy said on November 22.

"They are in good spirits," said an embassy spokesman in Bogota.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Latin America's largest rebel group, recently began peace talks with the government aimed at ending a decades-long conflict.

MPs under fire over foreign trips

LONDON – British lawmakers were under fire on November 23 for racking up £1.5 million (US\$2.4 million) worth of visits to foreign countries in the last two years.

Some 242 members of parliament have declared "fact-finding missions" and visits worth £6500 on average, *The Independent* said.

While 36 visits were made to China and Hong Kong, 23 to India and 34 to the United States, only one MP accepted a trip to Afghanistan and just two were recorded visiting nearby Belgium.

– AFP

US envoy hits out at 'unfounded' attacks

UNITED NATIONS – Susan Rice, US ambassador to the United Nations, said last week she has been the victim of "unfounded" Republican attacks over her account of a militant assault on the US embassy in Libya.

Rice is a frontrunner to be the next US secretary of state but Senator John McCain and other Republicans have said they would block her confirmation by the US Senate because of the controversy.

President Barack Obama has strongly defended Rice, but kept everyone waiting to see whether he would risk naming his trusted confidante to replace Hillary Clinton.

"Let me be very clear. I have great respect for Senator McCain and his service to our country, I always have and I always will," Rice told reporters in her first public comments on the controversy on November 21.

"I do think that some of the statements he made about me have been unfounded, but I look forward to having the opportunity at the appropriate time to discuss all of this with him," she added.

Rice insisted the comments she made on US Sunday talk shows after the deadly attack on the US consulate in Benghazi were based purely on intelligence guidance.

US ambassador Chris Stevens and three other American staff were killed in the September 11 attack.

McCain and other Republicans have accused the US administration of seeking to mislead the public over the true cause of the attack.

Rice went on US television news shows and said initial intelligence indicated that the assault arose "spontaneously" out of "copycat" protests against US targets in several Muslim nations at the time. US authorities now say it was a "terrorist" attack.

"As a senior White House diplomat, I agreed to a White House request to appear



Susan Rice. Pic: AFP

on the Sunday shows to talk about the full range of national security issues of the day," she said. This included the Benghazi attack and Iran's nuclear facilities.

"When discussing the attacks against our facilities in Benghazi, I relied solely and squarely on the information provided to me by the intelligence community," the ambassador added.

"I made it clear that the information was preliminary and that our investigations would give us the definitive answers," she added.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and State Department investigators are looking into the Benghazi killings.

"None of us will rest, none of us will be satisfied, until we have the answers and the terrorists responsible for this attack are brought to justice," Rice said. – AFP

Rebels capture city, call for resignation of DR Congo leader

GOMA, DR Congo – Rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo on November 21 claimed control of a town outside the captured city of Goma and threatened to continue their push all the way to Kinshasa, as the UN accused them of carrying out summary executions.

"We are not going to stop at Goma, we will go as far as Bukavu, Kisangani and Kinshasa," M23 spokesman Vianney Kazarama told a crowd massed at a stadium in Goma a day after the rebels overran the eastern city with little or no resistance from UN or government troops.

Rebels said the same day they had also seized the town of Sake, about 20 kilometres (more than 10 miles) northwest of Goma. They vowed to press on southward to Bukavu, the other major city on the border with Rwanda.

Kazarama also demanded that President Joseph Kabila leave power, claiming he was not the legitimate winner of last year's disputed presidential election.

But at talks in Kampala, Kabila and the leaders of neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda insisted that the rebels must immediately pull out of Goma, the main city in the mineral-rich but deeply impoverished east.

UN envoy Roger Meece accused the rebels of carrying out "summary executions" of local leaders in their advance.

Meece told the UN Security

Council that the ethnic Tutsi rebels who launched their uprising in April were trying to set up "a formal administrative or governing structure" in the region.

"We have received numerous reports of targeted summary executions of those who stand in their way, including government and traditional leaders who resist or fail to cooperate with an M23 administrative structure," he said.

Meece said that since the fall of Goma there had been demonstrations in several cities against the UN presence and the government.

The United Nations and other humanitarian groups have reported killings, abductions, looting and extortion of civilians and fears of a humanitarian catastrophe were growing as electricity and water supplies dried up.

Violent demonstrations erupted in several DR Congo towns, including Kisangani where protesters targeted the UN base, as well as a church whose pastor was accused of having M23 ties, a resident said.

Six people were also killed in protests in the town of Bunia, a Western aid worker said. The UN accuses Rwanda of backing the M23 fighters, charges denied by Kigali, which in turn accuses DR Congo of supporting Rwandan rebels based in the eastern DRC. Kinshasa denies the claim. – AFP

Last seats to Democrats

WASHINGTON – Democrats claimed victory on November 19 in the final undecided House races of the 2012 election, as President Barack Obama's party picked up a total of eight seats to narrow the Republican majority.

The wins took the Democratic tally in the House of Representatives to 201 seats, party officials told AFP.

Republicans will still retain control of the House, beginning the 113th Congress in January with 234 seats.

"It was beyond our expectations," Jesse Ferguson of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee said of the elections.

"It puts a real burden on (House) Speaker John Boehner and the Republican leadership, knowing that they can't count on 100 percent of their own caucus on anything, to work across the aisle and find common ground with Democrats on some of the country's most important issues."

Democrats tightened their grip in the Senate in the November 6 election, winning two more seats to take their majority to 55-45, including two independents who caucus with Democrats. – AFP

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Longevity shorter in tropics by 7.7 years, study discovers

SYDNEY – People living in the tropics are likely to die more than seven years younger than those in other regions, according to the first findings of a global research project released on November 19.

The “State of the Tropics” study, by 13 institutions in 12 countries, found that people living in tropical zones in 2010 had an average life expectancy of 64.4 years.

That is 7.7 years less than those living in non-tropical areas, found the broad-ranging research project, initiated by Australia’s James Cook University.

Overall mortality in the region was affected by disease, conflict, poverty and food insecurity, the study

said. Investment in social services, such as health and education, as well as access to water, sanitation and medical technology, were also important factors.

The report found that Central and Southern Africa had the worst adult mortality rates, with 377 in every 1,000 people who live to 15 years old dying before they reach 60.

That compares with an average of 240 in every 1000 in the tropics and 154 in every 1,000 for the rest of the world.

Australia has the largest tropical landmass among developed nations and JCU vice chancellor Sandra Harding said a citizen of the country’s tropical north

typically died two-and-a-half years earlier than one in the south.

The study says that 144 nations or territories are either “fully or partly in the tropical region”.

By 2050 about half the world is expected to live in the tropics.

“However, the resources to sustain larger populations and economic growth are imposing ever-increasing pressures,” said Harding.

“Sooner or later, we will have to take this seriously.”

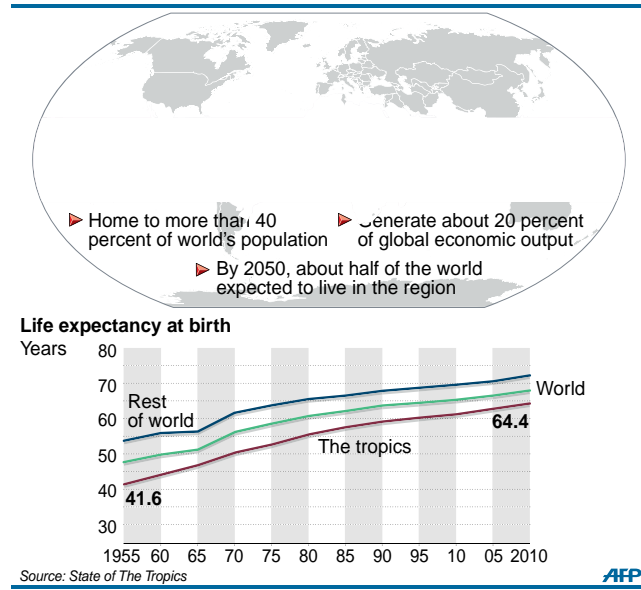
The report found that life expectancy in the tropics has increased in the past 60 years, with people living 22.8 years longer than in 1950.

Southeast Asia saw the biggest improvements in

life expectancy in the 60 years to 2010, adding 26.7 years to the average lifespan, compared with a global average increase of 20.2 years in the same period.

Infant mortality in the tropics also fell from 161 deaths per 1000 live births in 1950 to 58 per 1000 in 2010, though this is still much higher than the 33 per 1000 rate in the rest of the world.

Institutions in Kenya, Ecuador, England, Thailand, Singapore, Costa Rica, Denmark, the United States, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Brazil are partners in the study, which will release its next installments on forests, marine life and economic output in 2013. – AFP



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US must try afresh with Israelis and Palestinians

COMMENT

By Daniel Kurtzer

IN Jerusalem earlier this month with my Princeton University students, I hailed a taxi one day from my hotel to the Israeli foreign ministry.

The driver asked whether I would need him for the rest of the day. “If you can take me to Ramallah,” I replied, “that would be great. Otherwise, no thanks.”

My driver’s reaction was symptomatic of what I was hearing from many Israelis. “Ramallah!” he gasped. “Why would you go there? They’re all rich and spoiled and hate us. They build big houses and then complain that we don’t treat them well. You shouldn’t go there.”

The current spasm of violence in Gaza had not yet begun – his concern was not due to current events, but a general disapproval of ever venturing into the West Bank. I tried to explain the poverty rampant in Palestinian society and especially the dismal conditions in the refugee camps, one of which my students and I had visited the previous day. Yes, there are some wealthy Palestinians, but most do not live all that well under occupation. Settlements are a particular problem. We rode the rest of the blessedly short trip in silence.

Later that week, my students and I took two taxis from the hotel to Abu Dis, a West Bank village just outside the security barrier that surrounds Jerusalem. What should have been a 15-minute ride took about 40 minutes, as the taxis had to travel in a wide loop to circumnavigate the wall. As we approached the office of the Palestinian official we were to meet, the driver in my taxi started to laugh. “My friend [the second driver] is in a panic. He doesn’t want to be here. He’s scared and doesn’t want to go further.”

Indeed, when we reached our destination, the second driver took off in a flash, clearly feeling imperiled to be driving in a Palestinian village, even one just minutes from downtown Jerusalem.

The conflict in Gaza, of course, is only going to deepen such fears. As I write this on November 19 and Israel and Hamas pummel each other in yet another sadly predictable spasm of violence, their political visions seem as irreconcilable as ever. It is the story of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: The



One of the scores of protesters at a demonstration against Israeli attacks on Gaza, in the American city of Chicago on November 19. Pic: AFP

two sides live so near each other, yet can seem so far away.

But while achieving a lasting peace may seem impossible at the moment, the Gaza conflict drives home once more why the United States cannot walk away from this part of the world. Gaza will be a periodic war zone unless a way is found to move Israelis and Palestinians toward reconciliation

The status quo is not sustainable.

and peace.

My trip was part of a study being conducted by my students on whether the two-state solution is still viable and whether there are alternative ways of achieving peace.

It is increasingly vital to detail not only what happened during the past 20 years of Arab-Israeli negotiations, but also to look ahead and argue why an ambitious peace policy is important for

the United States. It seems so logical in Jerusalem and Ramallah to think this way; not so in Washington.

As analysts and pundits suggest what the US president’s priorities should be in the months and years ahead, the Middle East peace process figures on few lists.

The arguments range from “it’s too hard” to the familiar “we can’t want peace more than the parties.”

The assumption is that the status quo will hold while incremental steps are taken – steps designed to smooth the roughest edges off the occupation’s restrictions on mobility, economic activity, or institution-building. These critics direct a blind eye at Israeli settlement activity and rocket fire from Gaza, as though such chronic behaviour can be ignored or managed. As the recent outbreak of violence proves, this is mistaken. The status quo is not sustainable.

Those counselling a hands-off approach are also equally blind toward history, which proves time and again that inactivity by the United States allows the situation on the ground to heat up until it boils over – and that active, agile, and persistent diplomacy by the United States actually has a chance of making things better.

The current escalation in Gaza illustrates the point. The course of this conflict is actually fairly clear: Israel and Hamas will pound each other and when the fighting stops each side will declare “victory.”

Israel will have degraded Hamas’s military capacity and Hamas will have killed some Israeli civilians, disrupted life in southern Israel, and lived to fight another day. There will be a lull in the violence, and the clock will start ticking until the next confrontation. The idea of making peace – real, lasting peace – will not occur to the leaders in the region.

It is time for a fresh American initiative. There is no need for fancy plans or gaudy conferences, but rather a well-structured, fair, and balanced policy aimed at driving the peace process toward resolution.

Failure to do so will handicap everything else Barack Obama’s administration tries to accomplish in the Middle East. If the United States is willing to put in the effort, it may actually yield surprising and positive results. – *Foreign Policy*

(Daniel Kurtzer, who holds a chair in Middle Eastern policy studies at Princeton University, was the US ambassador to Israel from 2001 to 2005).

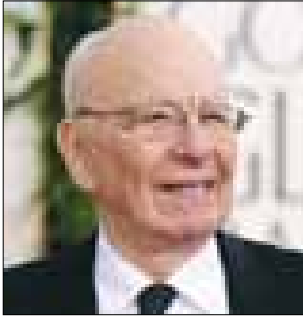
Former Murdoch executives charged with paying bribes

LONDON – British prosecutors charged former News International chief Rebekah Brooks and the prime minister's former spokesman Andy Coulson on November 20 with paying bribes for information on the royal family and the military.

Three other people also face charges over allegations that staff at Rupert Murdoch's market-leading British tabloid *The Sun* and the defunct *News of the World* newspaper made illegal payments to British officials.

The charges are the latest to stem from the phone-hacking scandal which shut down the *News of the World* in 2011, caused a firestorm in British politics and continue to plague Murdoch's empire.

Brooks, who is a close friend of Prime Minister David Cameron, and Coulson, the



Rupert Murdoch. Pic: AFP

premier's media chief until last year, already face trial on hacking charges. Brooks has also been charged with obstruction of justice.

The Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement that Coulson, a former editor of the *News of the World*, and Clive Goodman, the tabloid's former royal reporter, face two charges of conspiracy to commit misconduct in a public office.

They made payments in

exchange for a Buckingham Palace phone book called the "Green Book" which contained "contact details for the Royal Family and Members of the royal household", said Alison Levitt, the principal legal advisor to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The person they paid remains unidentified, the CPS said.

Brooks, former *Sun* chief reporter John Kay, and Bettina Jordan-Barber, a Ministry of Defence employee, face one charge each of conspiracy to conduct misconduct in a public office.

The charges relate to payments of about £100,000 (US\$159,000) that were made to Barber in exchange for information between 2004 and 2011 for stories in *The Sun*, Levitt said.

All five will appear in court in London at a later date.

Coulson issued a statement saying he was "extremely disappointed" and that he would "fight the charges in court."

News International in London declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

Brooks and Coulson, both 44, are due to go on trial on the other charges in September 2013. It was not immediately clear if the latest charges will be dealt with at the same time.

The only person to have previously been charged in the investigation into illegal payments, codenamed Operation Elveden, is Scotland Yard detective April Casburn.

Murdoch closed the *News of the World*, Britain's top selling paper, in July 2011 after it emerged it had hacked the phones of a murdered schoolgirl and other crime victims, as well as politicians and celebrities. – AFP

London rogue trader gets seven year's jail

LONDON – UBS trader Kweku Adoboli received a seven-year jail sentence in London on November 20 for gambling away US\$2.3 billion of the Swiss bank's money in Britain's biggest fraud.

The Ghanaian-born banker, 32, was found guilty of two counts of fraud by a jury at Southwark Crown Court but cleared of four charges of false accounting.

"You were arrogant to think the bank's rules for traders did not apply to you," judge Brian Keith told Adoboli as he sentenced him.

"The tragedy for you is that you had everything going for you.

"Your fall from grace as a result of these convictions is spectacular."

The judge said Adoboli would serve half his sentence before being released on licence.

Adoboli wiped away tears as he was sentenced. He had admitted the losses but denied any wrongdoing.

During the two-month trial he claimed senior managers were fully aware of his activities and encouraged him to take risks to raise profits.

But prosecutors said that in a bid to boost his bonuses and chances of promotion, Adoboli exceeded his trading limits, failed to hedge trades and faked records to cover his tracks between 2008 and 2011.

The tactics initially paid off – prosecutors said he earned \$90 million for UBS and its clients by May 2011 and the bank rewarded him with huge bonus increases, rising from £15,000 in 2008 to £250,000 (US\$398,000) in 2010.

But as the financial crisis took hold, Adoboli's deals went bad.

The court had heard that at one point he was at risk of causing UBS losses of \$12 billion.

His arrest in September wiped 10 percent off the bank's share price. – AFP

Church vote suicidal, say UK newspapers

LONDON – The Church of England's vote against women bishops is a "terrible failure" which threatens its existence, Britain's newspapers said on November 21.

The church was plunged into turmoil after narrowly voting against the ordination of women bishops in a major setback for efforts to modernise the mother church of millions of Anglicans worldwide.

The Times called the vote "a terrible failure" which "does a disservice to half the population."

"Yesterday was a sad and shameful day for the Church of England and therefore for the country of which it is the established religion," said its editorial.

The legislation needed a two-thirds majority among each of the three houses in the general synod, the church's governing body.

But though the bishops and the clergy comfortably cleared the threshold, the legislation fell short by just six votes among the laity.

The centre-right publication blamed a "small but highly motivated group of fundamentalists" for blocking the move.

The Church of England – the mother church of the 85-million-strong worldwide Anglican communion – backed the introduction of women priests 20 years ago and they comprise one-third of its clergy.

The ordination of women as bishops had the backing of Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and his successor Justin Welby, who takes over the position in March.

Andrew Brown, editor of the Belief section of the *Guardian's* comments pages, argued the church was in danger of complete collapse.

"I think I have just watched the Church of



Outgoing Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams embraces a female member of the clergy after a vote to approve women bishops was narrowly defeated at the Church of England's general synod in London on November 20. Pic: AFP

England commit suicide," he wrote, saying the move was "naked and indefensible discrimination."

"The traditionalist rhetoric had a ghastly fascination, as if it came from another planet, one where light no longer travels in straight lines but spirals towards some terrible singularity or black hole."

He said that conservative evangelicals within the church "do not, quite simply, believe that women should exercise teaching authority over men."

The *Daily Telegraph* also called into doubt the church's long-term future.

"I'm sorry if this seems melodramatic, but the anger of the majority of bishops and clergy who supported this move ensures that the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, faces the prospect of an Anglican civil war," wrote columnist Damian Thompson.

"Traditionalists and evangelicals have won a victory, of sorts, tonight, but I very much doubt that they will be allowed to enjoy it," he added. – AFP

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Island un-discovered, say Australian scientists

SYDNEY – A South Pacific island identified on Google Earth and world maps does not exist, say Australian scientists who went searching for the mystery landmass during a geological expedition.

The sizeable phantom island in the Coral Sea is shown as Sandy Island on Google Earth and Google maps and is supposedly midway between Australia and the French-governed New Caledonia.

The Times Atlas of the World appears to identify

it as Sable Island. Weather maps used by the *Southern Surveyor*, an Australian maritime research vessel, also say it exists, Dr Maria Seton said on November 22.

But when the *Southern Surveyor*, which was tasked with identifying fragments of the Australian continental crust submerged in the Coral Sea, steamed to where it was supposed to be, it was nowhere to be found.

"We wanted to check it out because the navigation charts on board the ship showed a

water depth of 1400 metres (4620 feet) in that area – very deep," Seton, from the University of Sydney, told *AFP* after the 25-day voyage.

"It's on Google Earth and other maps so we went to check and there was no island. We're really puzzled. It's quite bizarre.

"How did it find its way onto the maps? We just don't know, but we plan to follow up and find out."

News of the invisible island sparked debate on social media, with tweeter

Charlie Loyd saying that Sandy Island is also on Yahoo Maps as well as Bing Maps "but it disappears up close".

On www.abovetopsecret.com, discussions were robust with one poster claiming he had confirmed with the French hydrographic office that it was indeed a phantom island and was supposed to have been removed from charts in 1979.

Another claimed: "Many mapmakers put in deliberate but unobtrusive and non-

obvious 'mistakes' into their maps so that they can know when somebody steals the map data."

The Google Maps product manager for Australia and New Zealand told the *Sydney Morning Herald* a variety of authoritative public and commercial sources were used in building maps.

"The world is a constantly changing place, and keeping on top of these changes is a never-ending endeavour," Nabil Naghdy told the newspaper. – *AFP*

Briefs

India executes Mumbai gunman

MUMBAI – The sole surviving gunman from the 2008 Mumbai attacks was executed on November 21, nearly four years after 166 people died in a three-day rampage that traumatised India.

Pakistani-born Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, 25, was hanged at a prison in western India for his role in the assaults.

Kasab was one of 10 heavily-armed Islamist gunmen who began their siege of Mumbai on November 26, 2008.

All except him died during what was intended as a suicide mission.

VN officials to face vote of confidence

HANOI – Communist Vietnam has passed a new law requiring top elected officials including the prime minister to win the support of parliament in annual votes for the first time, state media said November 22.

From 2013 top officials, from the president to Supreme Court judges, will have to face an annual confidence vote at the 500-member communist-dominated National Assembly, the official *Vietnam News Agency* said.

Officials who do not win more than 50 percent of the vote for two consecutive years will be asked to step down from their positions, the report said, adding that the results will be made public.

Maldives sacks rights minister

MALE – The Maldives sacked its human rights minister on November 20 after she accused police of brutally assaulting her husband when he was arrested for allegedly drinking alcohol, an offence in the Islamic republic.

Dhiyana Saeed, the minister for Gender and Human Rights, said police had beaten up Abdulla Jabir during a raid on a small island being developed as a tourist resort.

President Mohamed Waheed's office said she was sacked "for making false allegations" against the police.

Attacks in Pakistan leave 37 dead

ISLAMABAD – Muslim leaders pledged to work more closely at a rare summit in Pakistan on November 22 as militant attacks killed 37 people throughout the country in some of the deadliest violence claimed by the Taliban for months.

Twenty-three people were killed and 62 wounded overnight in Rawalpindi, the twin city of summit venue Islamabad, where Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan were among the summit guests. – *AFP*

Blasphemy charges withdrawn

ISLAMABAD – A Pakistan court on November 20 threw out all charges against a Christian girl accused of blasphemy for allegedly burning pages of the Koran in a case that drew international condemnation.

Rimsha Masih, who could have faced life in prison if convicted of the charges, spent three weeks on remand in jail after being arrested on August 16. She was released on bail in September but she and her family have been in hiding under government protection.

The prosecution said it would appeal against the decision in the Supreme Court.

In a 15-page judgement, Islamabad high court chief justice Iqbal Hameed ur Rahman threw out the case registered against Rimsha.

He said putting Rimsha on trial would have seen the courts "used as a tool for ulterior motive" and "to abuse the process of law".

Defence lawyer Tahir Naveed Chaudhry told *AFP* that the family was "delighted" the case had been dropped, but said they "still live in fear".

Paul Bhatti, the only Christian member of Pakistan's federal cabinet, welcomed the "historic" move, saying justice had been done. – *AFP*

Afghan opium poppy surge an 'alarm signal', says UN

KABUL – Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan increased by 18 percent this year, sending a "serious alarm signal" from the world's biggest opium producer, the United Nations said on November 20.

Estimated opium production in the war-torn country fell 36pc because of blight and bad weather. But the area under poppies rose despite tougher eradication efforts, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime said in its annual report.

While farm-gate prices for opium remained relatively high at US\$196 a kilogram, the value of opium produced was halved to \$700 million, dropping from the equivalent of seven percent of GDP in 2011 to four percent in 2012.

Afghanistan produces about 90pc of the world's opium and poppy farmers are taxed by Taliban militants who use the cash to help fund their insurgency against the government and NATO forces.

"Insecurity is the main cause for the rise in opium cultivation," Afghanistan's counter-narcotics minister Zarar Ahmad Moqbel told a news conference in Kabul.

More than a hundred members of the Afghan



A file photo taken on May 6 this year shows Afghan men harvesting opium sap in eastern Nangarhar province, bordering Pakistan. Pic: *AFP*

security forces were killed while destroying poppy fields this year, he said.

"An increase of 18 percent is a serious alarm signal, it's a wake-up call," said UNDOC Afghanistan representative Jean-Luc Lemahieu. "The gains made in the last years have been undone."

High opium prices were blamed for playing a major

role in the increased area under cultivation.

High prices would also "provide a strong incentive for farmers to start or resume poppy cultivation in the coming season", the survey said.

It showed that cultivation increased despite "a significant 154 percent increase in government eradication efforts," with

nearly 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of poppy wiped out.

Most poppy cultivation was concentrated in the southern and western provinces hardest hit by insecurity and organised crime.

The Taliban make at least \$100 million a year from taxing Afghanistan's opium trade, officials say. – *AFP*

Australia defends 'cruel' policy Taxi driver returns S\$1m

SYDNEY – Australia on November 22 denied its policies to combat people-smuggling have failed as a decision to release asylum-seekers into the community with little help or support was blasted as "a new low".

Canberra is struggling with a record influx of asylum-seekers that is overwhelming its offshore camps.

More than 7500 have arrived since the Labor government launched a harsh new offshore processing policy for boatpeople in August, swamping capacity in Pacific camps on Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

To resolve the impasse Immigration Minister Chris Bowen announced on November 21 that some asylum-seekers would be released into the community on severely restricted visas that would still apply even if they gained refugee status.

The temporary visas deny them family reunion, ban them from working, and offer scant financial support, prompting warnings of a new "underclass" in Australia living below the poverty line with few rights.

It is part of a "no advantage" approach by the government to ensure that those who pay people-smugglers get no greater benefits than those who wait years for resettlement

in United Nations camps.

"I don't want people to come here and starve," said Senator Doug Cameron, an opponent of the plan from within the ruling Labor party.

Human rights groups have criticised the approach as "extreme" and "cruel", while the conservative opposition declared the policy a failure and said the government had lost control of Australia's borders.

Bowen said he did not accept "one little bit" that the policy was a flop.

"We're dealing with a challenge here," the minister told *ABC* radio.

"We have implemented offshore processing. We have always said that this was a complex problem which would take time to fix."

The Australian Council of Social Service condemned temporary visas as a "new low" in the treatment of refugees and described it as a "clear abdication of our moral, humanitarian and international legal obligations".

"Leaving people found to be refugees on bridging visas indefinitely with no right to work and only basic accommodation assistance and limited financial support is completely unnecessary and immeasurably cruel," said ACOSS chief Cassandra Goldie. – *AFP*

SINGAPORE – A Singaporean taxi driver has been heralded as a hero after he returned S\$1.1 million (US\$900,000) in cash to a Thai couple who left the money in his cab.

Sia Ka Tian, 70, was shocked to find the money in a black paper bag on the back seat on November 19 after he dropped the couple off at a shopping centre.

"When I saw the money, I thought, trouble is here. I was sure there was at least \$200,000 in the bag," the *Straits Times* quoted Sia as saying.

When he took the money to transport company ComfortDelGro's lost-and-found office, his stunned colleagues counted S\$1.1 million in thousand-dollar bills.

"The money is unimportant to me. It doesn't belong to me, so how can I use it?" he told

the newspaper.

The Thai couple reported the loss to the transport company and Sia was waiting for them when they arrived to claim the money.

The report did not say what the couple were doing with such a large sum.

The driver received an undisclosed cash reward from the grateful couple, whose names have been withheld, and the company also plans to give him an award for good service.

"We are immensely proud of him and are glad that the passengers recovered their money," said company spokeswoman Tammy Tan.

It was the most valuable item returned by a cabbie working for the company. In 2009, another taxi driver returned five kilograms (11 pounds) of gold bars worth Sg\$377,000. – *AFP*

Obama weighs in on maritime dispute

PHNOM PENH – US President Barack Obama on November 20 defied Chinese protests and raised concerns at a summit about territorial disputes that have sent diplomatic and trade shockwaves across the region.

Obama weighed into the debate over China's sweeping claims to the South China Sea, which have rattled less powerful Southeast Asian countries, as well as a separate rift between Beijing and Tokyo over islands in the East China Sea.

"I think President Obama's message is there needs to be a reduction of the tensions... to ensure that these types of disputes don't risk escalation," Ben Rhodes, a senior aide to the president, told reporters.

In response to concerns raised by Obama and other leaders at the 18-nation East Asia Summit in Cambodia, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao issued a stern admonishment of China's

critics and a strong defence of his country's claims.

"We do not want to bring the disputes to an occasion like this," Wen told Obama and the other leaders in one of the final sessions of the two-day event, said Chinese vice foreign minister Fu Ying.

"China's act of defending its sovereignty is necessary and legitimate... and we have properly handled the incidents that were not of the making of China."

Obama's visit to Cambodia was the final leg of a three-nation trip to Southeast Asia – the first foreign tour since his re-election – aimed at deepening Washington's influence in the region and countering the rise of China.

He began in Thailand, then made a lightning and historic visit to Myanmar.

Obama left Phnom Penh later on November 20 for the United States.

China, which claims sovereignty over virtually

all of the South China Sea, prefers to negotiate directly with its neighbours from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei, as well as Taiwan, also have claims to parts of the sea, which has some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

The rival claims have for decades made the sea a powder keg issue in the region. Chinese and Vietnamese forces engaged in clashes in 1974 and 1988 in which dozens of troops died.

After a period of relative calm, tensions have risen during the past two years, with the Philippines and Vietnam expressing concerns that China is becoming increasingly aggressive in staking its claims.

Some diplomatic confrontations this year have overshadowed regional meetings at which participants typically prefer

Disputed claims in the South China Sea



to focus on improving economic ties.

At the East Asia Summit, the first day was dominated by infighting over the issue among the ASEAN bloc.

Cambodia, this year's

ASEAN chair and a close Chinese ally, said the 10 nations had agreed not to "internationalise" the disputes. This would have given China an important diplomatic victory.

But the Philippines quickly denied this had been agreed, with President Benigno Aquino rebuking Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen during one of the meetings on November 19.

"How can there be a consensus? A consensus means 100 percent. How can there be a consensus when two of us are saying we're not with it," Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario told reporters afterwards.

He said later the other country that did not agree was Vietnam.

The feud echoed unprecedented infighting at an ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in Phnom Penh in July, which ended for the first time in the bloc's 45-year history without a joint communique.

The Philippines and Vietnam had wanted the statement to make specific reference to their disputes with China, but Cambodia blocked the moves. – AFP

US leader presses Hun Sen in 'tense' talks on rights

PHNOM PENH – US President Barack Obama told Cambodia's premier in a "tense" meeting on November 19 that his government's human rights violations were "an impediment" to better bilateral ties, a US official said.

Newly re-elected Obama, fresh from an historic visit to Myanmar, met Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen for talks in Phnom Penh ahead of joining an East Asia Summit.

"He began by expressing that his trip to Burma demonstrated the positive benefits that flow from

countries moving down the path of political reform and increasing respect for human rights," said US deputy national security advisor Ben Rhodes, using Myanmar's former name.

Obama raised the need for fair and free elections in Cambodia and the need for the release of political prisoners, Rhodes added, agreeing that the meeting was "tense".

"He said that those types

of issues are an impediment to the United States and Cambodia developing a deeper bilateral relationship."

Obama, the first US president to visit Cambodia, and Hun Sen shook hands

dissidents and protesters in cases that are often linked to land disputes.

But Cambodia hit back at Obama's comments, saying the country was working to promote human rights

delegate minister attached to Hun Sen, told reporters after the bilateral meeting.

"The prime minister stressed that there are no political prisoners in Cambodia, but there are

for an alleged secessionist plot in a verdict that dismayed rights groups.

Dozens of Cambodian villagers faced with eviction staged several small protests ahead of Obama's arrival with "SOS" messages urging the president to help press the government on land rights issues.

Hun Sen, 60, has been in power since 1985 and has vowed to rule until he's 90.

The country's main opposition leader, meanwhile, lives in self-imposed exile abroad to avoid jail time for what critics say are politically motivated charges. – AFP

'It seems that Cambodia has become a student worse than Myanmar.'

before their meeting but the American did not smile during the greeting.

The Cambodian government has faced mounting criticism from rights groups in recent years for what they claim is a growing crackdown on

and had been the victim of a "campaign" to distort the truth.

"Now through this manipulated campaign, it seems that Cambodia has become a student worse than Myanmar," Prak Sokhon,

politicians who are guilty," he added.

During the talks, Rhodes said Obama highlighted the case of prominent government critic and radio station owner Mam Sonando, 71, who was jailed for 20 years in October

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At 62, Khin Maung Toe dies in Singapore

By Nuam Bawi

MYANMAR composer and singer U Khin Maung Toe, who in the course of his career attracted a huge fan base for his famously sweet voice, died from liver cancer in Singapore on November 15. He was 62 years old.

U Khin Maung Toe composed and performed music in a style that modernised traditional Myanmar music by utilising Western musical instruments and arrangements.

In the 1980s and the 1990s, he and the Mizzima Hlaing (Middle Wave) band created original songs and successfully carved out a niche in the Myanmar pop music scene, which was mainly dominated by covers of foreign songs.

U Zaw Myo Htut, the lead guitarist of Mizzima Hlaing, said the Myanmar music scene has lost a person who "cannot be replaced by anyone".

"We worked with him for more than 30 years, so we all feel very sorry about his death," he said.

U Khin Maung Toe's last public appearance occurred on September 2, at a fundraising concert in Yangon for the 88 Generation Students. Soon after, he departed for Singapore for medical treatment but was unable to return home before his death.

"He didn't even get thinner, so we didn't know he was sick," U Zaw Myo Htut said.

"He looked fine when we performed together on September 2, but after the concert he told me he was going to Singapore the following day. His son is also living there, so I thought the trip was just to visit his son."

He said the members of Mizzima Hlaing would like to hold a remembrance event for U Khin Maung Toe, but would wait until the singer's family returned to Myanmar.

Although U Khin Maung Toe's career as a musician put him in the public eye, he was known as a quiet person who enjoyed meditation and studying the Buddhist dhamma.

Born on April 2, 1950, in the town of Mawlite in Sagaing Region, U Khin Maung Toe launched his musical career in the 1960s.

He released 21 albums over the years, the last one in 2007. His big breakthrough was the 1984 album *Maha Hsan Thu* (person of noble bearing), the success of which made U Khin Maung Toe and Mizzima Hlaing household names.

He leaves behind his wife, Wai Wai Lwin, and three children.

MTV EXIT: Multiple approaches to tackling trafficking in Myanmar

By Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

PLENTY of international buzz was generated by last week's announcement that American singer-songwriter Jason Mraz will perform live in Yangon on December 16, at a free concert aimed at raising awareness of human trafficking.

But this is just the latest in series of efforts by the event's organiser, MTV EXIT (End Exploitation and Trafficking), to highlight issues related to the exploitation and trafficking of vulnerable populations.

The organisation has already made two documentary films, in 2009 and 2012, based on the true stories of human trafficking victims in Myanmar. Now, by holding a free international concert, MTV EXIT hopes to reach a wider audience with its message, in Myanmar and beyond.

"We've made two documentaries to educate people about trafficking in Myanmar, so now we want to try a different type of media with a large international music concert," Mr Matt Love, campaign director of MTV EXIT, told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

"At the concert we'll use big screens to show our trafficking documentaries and highlight the interviews with victims. Next year we'll be making more documentaries, but for now the concert is just a different approach."

He said that although the Mraz concert will be the first such event that MTV EXIT has organised in Myanmar, it has already held some 30 similar concerts in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Nepal and Taiwan, from which they have received positive feedback.

"It looks very different to hold a large concert in Myanmar from other countries. ... There are many



Jason Mraz, looking laid back in brown. Pic: Emily Shur

challenges, but we're ready to overcome any problems. Myanmar is a country that's just starting to open, so it's a very exciting moment for all of us," Mr Love said.

He said he believed the concert will have a significantly higher profile than the documentaries.

"When we hold concerts, the international media, local channels and local radio stations broadcast and report on our event. So sharing the moment is more effective and faster than showing

documentaries. While we can say that documentaries are great, concerts have a much higher profile," he said.

He said MTV EXIT spent more than one year planning the Mraz concert, including researching the views, ideas and opinions of the Myanmar public, government and local celebrities.

"At this time we're preparing the concert, but we will continue making documentaries in the future," Mr Love said.

"We've had good feedback

about our documentaries on Myanmar, and we're very happy that NGOs and young people talk about the films, and that when they organise workshops on human trafficking they often use our documentaries as part of their program."

Mr Simon Goff, the CEO of MTV EXIT, said their programs in Myanmar could not succeed without the cooperation of local citizens and government officials.

"Achieving our aim of stopping exploitation and

trafficking depends on the public, government, non-governmental organisations and news media. There are many ways that people can become victims of human trafficking, but there are also many ways to save people from trafficking," he said at a press conference at Sedona Hotel Yangon on November 17.

He also thanked the Myanmar government for allowing the concert to be held in Yangon, and vowed that he would return to Myanmar in December to see the show.

Supporting Jason Mraz at the concert will be a number of high-profile Myanmar performers representing a variety of musical genres, including R Zar Ni, Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein, Phyu Gyi, Linn Linn, Chan Chan and Chit Thu Wai.

Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein, who in 2008 performed at an international concert organised by MTV EXIT in Thailand, said she believed music can be used to share knowledge with young people.

"From the Thailand concert I learned that music can attract people from all walks of life, who can all learn about human trafficking. It was very effective. I believe the concert on December 16 will also help spread our message about trafficking," Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein said.

Vocalist R Zar Ni has announced that the first song he will perform at the concert will be about human trafficking, composed by Myint Moe Aung.

The first MTV EXIT documentary about Myanmar, released in 2009, was narrated by Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein, while the second, which came out in March of this year and is still being broadcast on MRTV and MRTV-4, features the voice of R Zar Ni.

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CHATRIUM

Shan New Year planned for Kengtong

By Pinky

HUGE celebrations to ring in the Shan New Year will be held in the eastern Shan State town of Kengtong from December 12 to 14, according to an official from the Mong Tai Army (MTA).

The festivities will mark the arrival of year 2107 on the Shan calendar, U Sai Khwan Main from the MTA's political department told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

"Shan New Year is celebrated every year in every part of the world where there are Shan people," he said. "December 14 is the start of Luen Zeing Pi Mai, the first month of the Shan calendar. Farmers celebrate at this time, after harvesting their rice from the paddy fields."

He said the celebration is a time for Shan people to "come together to discuss, rethink and recheck the past, and to make preparations for the coming year".

New Year's Eve is marked by traditional Shan dances, singing, fashion shows with traditional Shan clothing, and other performances. Shan food and traditional handicrafts are also sold by vendors.

U Sai Khwan Main said that starting about two months before the celebration,



Shan New Year is celebrated in Taunggyi, Shan State, in December 2011. Pic: Supplied

young people go around to houses — singing New Year's songs and playing Shan drums and other instruments along the way — to collect donations to be used for the festival and for Shan literature organisations.

"In most years these celebrations are held

separately, from state to state and city to city, but this year the central committee of the Taunggyi-based Shan Literature and Culture Association, members of the 54 regional committees of the association, and Shan leaders from every part of Myanmar will gather in

Kengtong to celebrate the New Year," U Sai Khwan Main said.

The event's programs will be managed by the Kengtong Shan Literature Organisation.

He said Shan people from Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, India, the

United States and Europe have also been invited to attend, and the Restoration Council of Shan State based in Chaing Mai, Thailand, will be involved in the organisation.

The opening ceremony will be held on December 12. On the following morning, a

seminar will be held on Shan literature and education, including a discussion on steps that can be taken to improve and promote these aspects of Shan culture.

Traditional dances, concerts by Shan singers, fashion shows and other performances are planned for the evening of December 13 and for the following afternoon. The fashion shows will feature more than 30 styles of traditional Shan dress, while the performances will include the Shan deer dance and the Shan kinnara and kinnari dance.

Also on December 14, donations will be given to monks and monasteries, and awards will be handed out to outstanding Shan students. Vendors from around the country will sell traditional dress, handicrafts, musical instruments, books and food.

"This is a good opportunity for us to meet Shan people from everywhere. We might become reacquainted with people we haven't seen for many years, and we might meet many new people," U Sai Khwan Main said.

"From this we can form closer ties and move forward with a lot of hope to maintain and improve Shan literature and education for the next generation."



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Australian sculptor thinks big – literally

By John Pancake

GETTING a good look at Andrew Rogers's art can be tough.

It helps to have a satellite. Or a helicopter. Or a plane.

One picture was taken from a hot-air balloon drifting over central Turkey. Rogers used stone walls to sketch a horse across the rocky hills of Cappadocia. The figure is enormous, almost 60 metres (200 feet) wide. It took 450 people to construct it. This horse is one of the dozens of pieces Rogers has scattered over all seven continents.

You've never heard of him, right? Not surprising.

Although he has been doing some of the largest artworks in the world, Andrew Rogers has not generated the kind of comment or respect accorded many others who use the planet as a canvas.

Perhaps that's because this lean Australian is a bit of a maverick, an outlier. Perhaps it has to do with the quality of his art. Even his harshest critics – and he does have his critics – can't deny that he's made his mark on the planet.

In China, he laid the figure of a horseman across the hills of the Gobi Desert using 1000 members of the People's Liberation Army. In the high desert of Chile, Rogers employed 550 local people over two years to build three stone structures. The most striking looks like a flattened lizard from the air. It's actually based on an image of a two-headed llama carved more than 1000 years ago.

Near a 12th century castle in Slovakia, he constructed ribbons of rock that form the outline of a spindly legged horse, a symbol from a 2000-year-old coin found nearby. In the Mojave Desert, his crew of local workers and Mexican stone masons had to deal with 160-kilometre-per-hour winds while building an abstract Native American hunting symbol, a circle with a line through it.

In the Antarctic, at the foot of the Dakshin Gangotri Glacier, he built a temporary "Rhythms of Life" image, using local gravel on a frozen lake.

Rogers, the restless spirit behind these Brobdingnagian projects, lives in Melbourne, on the southern coast of Australia. He recently had a kangaroo bang into his car while travelling home from his studio outside of town. A spare, intense man who works 80-hour weeks, he is described as a person who knows exactly what he wants. "He is one of the most goal-oriented people I've ever met," says Golan Levi, an Israeli architect who has worked with Rogers for years.

Rogers, 65, is not a starving artist and never has been. Although he has been interested in art all his life, he had a successful career as a businessman, running an apparel company founded by his father. He says that's part of the reason he is not interested in making a lot of money from his art. "You can only eat so much."

When he was in the business world, he also taught logistics at a local university, expertise that came in handy when organising projects involving hundreds of workers in Spartan landscapes.

In 1979, he took a very bumpy plane ride across the desert of Southern Peru to look at the mysterious Nazca Lines, created on a dry, windless plain 1500 years ago. Primitive people etched huge geometric figures as well as images of hummingbirds, sharks, monkeys, spiders and humans into surface of the Earth by scraping away the red soil to reveal white earth below.

Rogers eventually left the business world to become a full-time sculptor: "People thought I was crazy." He produced both abstract and figurative pieces in metal. The memory of the ancient geoglyphs in Peru haunted him.

In 1999, Rogers began doing his own geoglyphs. He built the first – essentially stone walls laid out to a careful plan – in Israel's Arava Desert. One of the designs is his signature Rhythms of Life, an abstract piece combining a circle, an arc and a calligraphic squiggle. Another work depicts the Hebrew letters for *chai*, or life.

Over the next 14 years,

Rogers repeated the process all over the world. In each place, he etched his own Rhythms of Life design next to a symbol drawn from local culture: In the barren heights of Bolivia, concentric circles. In Nepal, a labyrinth. In Iceland, an ancient rune. In Kenya, a lion's paw.

The most staggering collection of Rogers's art lies in the rocky hills of central Turkey, near the town of Goreme, where Rogers has built one of the world's largest sculpture parks.

Stone walls, arches and pillars stretch for 2 kilometres (1.2 miles). They were mostly hand-built by Turkish masons using 10,000 tons of stone. In all, he has made 48 of these massive things in 13 countries employing 6700 people. Typically, he brings in a small crew, then hires several hundred local workers. Huge "bucket brigades" are set up across the site to move rocks from hand to hand to stonemasons, who set them in place.

No detail is too small for the former logistics professor, down to providing water, hundreds of pairs of gloves and first-aid stations on site. Rogers insists on giving women the same wages as men, although this has caused some grumbling on a couple of sites.

How does he pay for all this? Rogers is cagey on this point. He lines up corporate sponsors and pays some of the costs out of his own pocket, but he won't go into details.

Rogers picks sites that have – in his view – historical significance and spends a long time – years, in some cases – persuading local officials to allow him to spread his massive artworks across their hills.

To develop a symbol from the local culture, he works with elders, cultural officials and museums to find a design that resonates with the community. Often, the works become tourist attractions. For that reason and because the images are meaningful to the people who live nearby, there's a community effort to maintain them.

William Fox, a leading authority on art and the environment, says: "No one is really drawing on the planet



Australian sculptor Andrew Rogers designed the 'Ancient Language' geoglyph in Chile's Atacama Desert. Pic: Andrew Rogers

like that, in that way, and certainly not at that scale and certainly not with this bimodal business: Here's my mark, 'Rhythms of Life.' And it's sort of a funny gesture. And ... a unique gesture."

Fox, author of 16 books on landscape art, directs the Centre for Art and Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno. Photos of Rogers's work have been on display at his museum this spring and summer. Fox says visitors grasp and like what Rogers is doing. "They apprehend that they are striking projects in the landscape that are related to both his personal vocabulary and that of the region."

In other quarters, reception has been mixed.

John McDonald, art critic at the *Sydney Morning Herald*, says Rogers is "without doubt" the country's most successful living sculptor, but thinks he is "quite, quite clichéd". His view is that Rogers has taken advantage of his wealth to achieve prominence for his work.

Ron Robertson-Swann, arguably the country's most highly regarded sculptor and a former assistant to the British artist Henry Moore, says Rogers's work has "very little soul or innovation". He says Rogers's strongest suit may be in marketing himself, then adds: "That may sound a little like sour grapes."

John Reid, a senior lecturer at the Environmental Art Studio of Australian National University in Canberra, says by email: "There is, for me, something disconcerting about his Rhythm of Life project. Perhaps because it's difficult to discern any rhythm in the totality of the global undertaking – except for the repetitive intonations of verbal spin. ... Each geoglyph is presumably of deep significance to the locals (many of them were involved in both inception and production) but unsettling

for everyone else with a discerning eye for fine art, a jarring intrusion on the mesmerising pleasure of moving at any speed through a landscape otherwise devoid of blatant artefact."

While the art world's criticism might offer insight into Rogers work, it might offer insight into the art world, too.

Fox says Rogers is not doing what museums and art critics and art historians admire most: "Are you pushing forward the medium with which you're working? The answer's no. He's not doing anything in terms of the actual earth or the arrangement of stones on the earth that we haven't seen before. He's using pretty traditional technology, if you will. So that's one thing."

"Another thing is he's not pushing the envelope of sculptural forms. Those are things that make people stand up and pay attention in the art world, and Andrew has not done those because that's not what he's interested in doing."

In his defence, Rogers says: "There are very few people in the art world who have actually observed my process and seen the finished structures. The viewing of it would reveal the effort and sensitivity I employ to ensure that the work sits properly in the landscape and that the process and resultant structures are embraced by the local community. I do this as I want the structures to have meaning for the community apart from being an object."

Ken Scarlett, an authority on Australian sculpture who collaborated with Rogers on a book about the Rhythms of Life project, takes a more charitable view: "I think he has an incredible ability to work with people. I mean to go to China and to work your way through the bureaucracy and get permission to build a work in the Gobi Desert and

then to have 1000 members of the Red Army allocated to assist you – that alone proves his extraordinary skill as an entrepreneur and organiser. It's no mean feat to bring that off."

But simply bringing that off doesn't count for much in the art world, which doesn't necessarily value accomplishing things on a grand scale these days. "Spectacle" has become a dirty word among purist culturati, who believe it comes with implications of conspicuous consumption.

Nor does today's art world generally cotton to sunny optimism and idealism. Cynicism is the more fashionable mode. Rogers built a stone colonnade in Turkey emblazoned with words he considers important, including "truth", "justice" and "responsibilities". It's hard to imagine Damian Hirst, who produced a diamond-crusted skull priced at US\$100 million, or Jeff Koons, famous for gigantic sculptures that look like dogs made of knotted balloons, doing something like that. At least not with a straight face.

Perhaps art world fashion will change someday. Perhaps someday the in-crowd will place a higher value on Rogers's logistical wizardry and Boy Scout sincerity.

Perhaps Andrew Rogers is a global artist deserving of great renown. Perhaps he's simply quixotic. But Rogers seems unfazed, and has no intention of slowing down. He has plans in the works for an even bigger geoglyph, something involving 20,000 people. He's not ready to say where.

Scarlett, who lives near Rogers in Australia, says, "I joke a little bit that when Andrew looks up at the moon he probably just wonders how he could get enough people up there to build his next geoglyph."

— The Washington Post



'Labyrinth – Winding Path' was installed 2008 in Jomsom, Nepal under the direction of Rogers. Pic: Andrew Rogers

Frightening heat in 'super-hot' peppers

By Tim Carman

THE bright red pepper has a shrivelled appearance, as if a bulbous clown nose had somehow wilted into a long, twisted witch's beak. Between its wrinkly complexion and its nasty reputation, the Bhut Jolokia, better known as the ghost pepper, generates fear and fascination. YouTube is littered with videos of bros pumped up enough to eat a whole one — only to crumple to the floor, pounding down milk.

When I cut into my first ghost pepper recently — while wearing food-safe gloves, at the urging of practically everyone who has an opinion on the subject — I was first struck by the aroma. My kitchen was filled with the sweet, tropical fragrance of passion fruit. You quickly learn that the aroma is a trap, designed to entice the innocent and ignorant into tasting the pepper. You will almost certainly regret any attempt to eat the fiery fruit straight up, with seeds and ribs.

I tried a small seedless dice of the pepper, approximately the size of a pea, and within seconds, my right eye was streaming tears down my cheek, my nostrils were dripping and, worst of all, I began to hiccup uncontrollably. It was as if my head had become a wood-burning oven, lighting up my tongue and the interior of my skull. Milk provided little relief, until the burn began to subside on its own some 10 minutes later.

The Bhut Jolokia is one of a rare breed of peppers: The nonprofit Chile Pepper Institute in Las Cruces, New Mexico, calls them,



Frightening heat, in a super-hot pepper. From left: Fatalii and Hot Mama (smaller yellow), Dorset Naga, Habanero Caribbean Red, Jamaican Hot Chocolate and Bhut Jolokia or ghost pepper. Pic: *The Washington Post*

without any whiff of comedic hyperbole, "super-hot" peppers.

Believe it or not, these freak-show specimens are slowly creeping into some farmers markets. Lana Edelen, co-owner of Homestead Farm in Faulkner, Maryland, once had a customer approach her stand at a market and stare at the colourful carnival of hot peppers for sale — not just Bhut Jolokias, but their cousin, the similarly piquant Dorset Naga, as well as Trinidad Scorpions, Jamaican Hot Chocolates and Habanero Caribbean Reds.

"He said nothing was hotter than a habanero," Edelen recalls. You can almost hear her sigh over the phone at the man's arrogance.

So Edelen cut open one of her flame throwers and offered a piece to the man, but with a neighbourly warning. "It's hot," she told him. "I'm telling you beforehand." He popped a piece into his mouth and told Edelen, "It ain't too bad.

There ain't no heat yet," she remembers.

"Then all of a sudden he was looking for something to eat," she adds. An hour later, she spotted him again and "his teeth and lips were still on fire".

To some, Edelen's anecdote would be a cautionary tale. To others, it's a come-hither *Body Heat* signal of seduction, much like those hot sauces with the orifice-oriented names (think: Sphincter Shrinker XXX, Colon Cleaner) were in the 1990s and 2000s. But before anyone attempts this new daredevil stunt, they should know something important: Some of these super-hot peppers can be twice as fiery as the habaneros and Scotch bonnets often used in hot sauces.

To join the elite class of super-hots, peppers must register an average level of 1 million Scoville heat units in replicated, scientifically controlled trials. To give you some point of comparison, a common jalapeno tops

out, depending on what source is cited, at 10,000 SHUs. Habaneros and Scotch bonnets can range from 100,000 to 350,000 SHUs.

At present, only a handful of peppers are members of the super-hot class. Aside from the ghost pepper (an average of 1,019,687 SHUs), the other ultra-hotties include the Trinidad Scorpion (1,029,271 SHUs); Trinidad 7-Pot Jonah (1,066,882 SHUs); Douglah Trinidad Chocolate (1,169,058 SHUs); and the mother of all tongue-destroying peppers, the Trinidad Moruga Scorpion (1,207,764 SHUs), according to a recently published Chile Pepper Institute scientific study. Two Trinidad Moruga Scorpion plants in the study topped 2 million SHUs.

The reigning Guinness World Record holder, the Trinidad Scorpion Butch T, grown by the Chilli Factory in Australia, was not included in the Chile Pepper Institute study, despite being tested at 1.46 million SHUs in March 2011. There's a simple reason

for that, explains Danise Coon, a senior research specialist for New Mexico State University and program coordinator for the institute. The owners "would not send us seed", Coon says. "We'd like to be nice and say they didn't have any more seed. I really can't draw any conclusions."

But without the ability to test the Butch T pepper under scientifically controlled conditions, the Chile Pepper Institute noted in its study that the Trinidad Moruga Scorpion "can be considered the world's hottest known measured chile pepper." Still, as the organisation points out on its site, "the Bhut Jolokia pepper remains the hottest pepper that is commercially available". It was the first pepper to reach 1 million SHUs and was once the Guinness record holder.

This desperate chase for the world's hottest pepper — and whatever commercial applications it may hold for the record holder — is a separate issue, of course,

from the people who want to consume them. You might be shocked to learn that not all consumers are heat junkies looking for their next starring role as a human test dummy in a YouTube video.

The reason Homestead Farm entered the hot pepper market was pure and simple consumer demand, which is interesting because other area farmers have said they're not so hot about these plants, given that customer interest is marginal at best. "They're very hard to make any profit on, because people don't buy very many of them," co-owner Moie Kimball Crawford says about the hot peppers grown at New Morning Farm in Hustontown, Pennsylvania. Zach Lester, co-owner of Tree and Leaf Farm in Unionville, Virginia, says flat-out that super-hot peppers "don't mix in with the food I'm selling and the recipes".

Which brings us back to an issue that Lester raised: Do these carpet bombs for the mouth fit into dishes that are actually consumed by people with functioning palates? Coon with the Chile Pepper Institute thinks "some of these are completely inedible. ... They're not for food consumption, that's for sure." Then again, Coon notes that the institute sells a brownie mix, Dr B's Bhut-Kickin' Brownies, made with ghost peppers. You can buy the product online.

Coon says the brownie mix includes only about a teaspoon of ground Bhut Jolokia powder, which is key. To use these peppers in the kitchen, you have to temper their heat and find a way to emphasize their other qualities, like the floral, fruity aromas of the ghost pepper.

— *The Washington Post*

For fresh cocktails, quality spirits pay off every time

By Jason Wilson

I'M always amazed at how wrong the so-called conventional wisdom can be. But it's never more wrong than when it comes to booze. Certain ridiculous notions are stubbornly accepted as truth. Vodka doesn't give you hangovers! Beer before liquor, never sicker; liquor before beer, never fear!

But when it comes to fine spirits, these two irritate me the most: Older is always better. Never use the good stuff for cocktails.

Let me take on the latter myth first: the idea that you should use cheaper or inferior booze in cocktails. I hear that sometimes when I recommend recipes that call for good-quality spirits that cost more than US\$25 per bottle, or perhaps obscure liqueurs with price tags even higher.

In anonymous comments and rancorous emails, I'm scolded and challenged that "you wouldn't know the difference" between a margarita made with, say, cheap mixto tequila and day-glo "margarita mix" versus one made with 100 percent

agave from a good producer, Cointreau and fresh juices. To these people, I say: Call me in the morning and tell me how your night worked out.

Meanwhile, that other roasty chestnut — that aged spirits are always better, and worth more — is even more persistent. The notion is so pervasive that it drives the spirits market. As spirits consumers, we are obsessed with numbers. We accept that an eight-year-old bourbon is less expensive than a 23-year-old bourbon, or that a 30-year-old Scotch costs more than a 16-year-old Scotch.

In a fascinating poll, conducted by Chivas Brothers in 2010, 94pc of more than 2000 whiskey drinkers surveyed said the age statement on a whiskey serves as an indicator of quality, and 89pc said they actively look to the age statement when they buy spirits.

The problem is, that perception isn't always true. Plenty of times, aging in oak barrels turns a beautiful spirit into oak juice. With wine, we seemed to have learned this. While I'm sure there are people who still love their over-oaked, buttered-popcorn chardonnays, those



The Henry 'Box' Brown. Pic: *The Washington Post*

wines are hardly as popular or coveted as they once were.

With most bourbons, for instance, eight to 10 years is optimal aging. Beyond that, many distillers say, the oak often takes over. Yet some of the most expensive bourbons boast 15, 18 or 20-plus years

in the barrel.

An age statement has become so important to American consumers that you're beginning to see spirits companies use them in categories they never did before. Last year, Courvoisier launched the first age-statement cognacs, at 12

and 21 years old. On its face, this doesn't seem earth-shattering, because brandies like cognac certainly benefit from decades of barrel-aging. But cognac had always played by its own rules, blending brandies of many ages together and classifying as VS, VSOP, XO, Napoleon and so on.

Then there's rum, which is all over the map. At a big rum tasting that I attended in June, my friends and I found that we really enjoyed both the younger rums, up until about eight years, and then the older rums that had 15 years or more of age. We were more mixed on the 10- to 12-year-old rums. It wasn't that the rums weren't high quality; instead it seemed that they had entered a "quiet period" you often hear about with high-end wines from places such as Bordeaux or Barolo.

Given this talk about age — and what you should and should not include in a cocktail — I figured we should toss conventional wisdom to the wind. So I offer the Henry "Box" Brown, which calls for two ingredients: well-aged rum and fresh-pressed grape juice. To answer your emails

and comments now: No, it doesn't work with younger rum or with bottled grape juice from concentrate.

Henry "Box" Brown
(1 serving)

This cocktail is named for the Virginia slave (and eventual anti-slavery speaker and performer) who escaped to freedom in 1849 by mailing himself to Philadelphia in a wooden crate. The genius of this drink — just like Brown's escape plan — is in its simplicity. For best results, juice the grapes right before serving. A juicer works best, though you can muddle the grapes in the shaker as well.

INGREDIENTS

Ice
2 ounces well-aged rum
3 ounces freshly pressed red grape juice (about 15 medium-to-large red grapes)

STEPS

Fill a cocktail shaker halfway with ice. Add the rum and grape juice; shake well, then strain into an old fashioned or rocks glass filled with large ice cubes.

— *The Washington Post*

Phyo's Cooking Adventure

Phyo cuts through culture to reveal life's true taste

All you need is larb (and coconut rice)



FOR this week I am making spicy and sour Thai chicken mince salad to eat with sweet coconut rice. Larb is a very popular Thai mince salad dish that can be found on the menus of nearly all Thai restaurants.

The specifics of the recipe vary from region to region in Thailand. It is also a favourite in Australia, where chefs often experiment with more delicate tastes. While I was living there, I often made larb using turkey mince, and then served it in parcels on baby iceberg lettuce or butter lettuce leaves.

Further trial and error taught me that the mince salad was very nice with coconut rice as well. The beautiful, sweet aroma of coconut and fresh lime juice, along with the strong flavor of fish sauce, will stimulate your taste buds to open up, and then the spicy chilli will add some sparks.

I use coconut milk here for its aroma and to sweeten the taste, so my recipe is a bit less rich than the traditional flavour.



Pic: Htein Linn

Chicken mince salad INGREDIENTS

- (6 servings)
- 750 g of chicken mince
- 2 teaspoons of light soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons of lemon grass (sa par lin)
- 1 teaspoon of chilli powder or flakes
- 8 kaffir lime leaves (rolled up and thinly sliced)
- ¼ cup of loosely packed fresh mint leaves (pu si an)
- ¼ cup of loosely packed Thai basil or pin sein
- 1 onion (thinly diced)
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- 3 ½ tablespoons of lime juice
- 1 ½ tablespoons of jiggery

- 2 tablespoons of fish sauce (ngan pyar yae)
- 2 tablespoons of hmw roasted rice powder

PREPARATION

In a large heat-proof bowl, prepare the kaffir lime leaves, mint leaves, Thai basil, lemon grass, onions, chili powder and roasted rice powder. Heat the vegetable oil in a wok with medium heat and add the chicken mince and soy sauce for frying. Use a wooden spoon to break up the mince and stir it well. When the chicken cooks through and sizzles, turn the heat down and let it cool for 2-3 minutes. Pour the dressing (see below)

over the cooked mince and stir it through the meat. Let the mixture sit for 3 more minutes so the sweet and sour juices will be soaked by the mince. Add the mince mixture into the bowl, toss it well and served warm. For the dressing, mash the grated jiggery with fish sauce in a small bowl, then add the lime juice and mix well.

Coconut rice INGREDIENTS

- 2 cup of rice
- 2 ½ cups of water
- ½ cup of coconut milk

PREPARATION

Wash the rice and mix it with the coconut milk and water in a rice cooker. After it is done cooking, fluff the rice with a fork or spatula. To use the absorption method, cook the rice with all the liquids in a pot with a tightly closed lid over medium-high heat. When the liquid starts boils, reduce the heat to medium and cook for 10 minutes. Then turn the heat off and keep the lid closed for another 10 minutes. Fluff the rice with a fork or spatula before serving.

Main Tips

If you are afraid of coconut milk, use only ¼ cup and make up the balance of the liquid with an extra ¼ cup of water extra. Chicken mince can be substituted with pork mince. If you use pork mince, reduce the amount of oil used for frying, as pork contains more fat. Pat dry the mince before you cook it. Otherwise it will release too much water.

QUAFFING QUOTE

"I am really enthused by food. I love it. I love the feeling it gives me. I love seeing that excitement in other people." — Poh Lin Yeow (Malaysian-born Australian artist, actress and celebrity chef.

NEXT WEEK

Vietnamese rice noodle soup

Red Wine

Foucher Lebrun Saint-Pourcain Rouge 2009

The winery's tasting notes indicate a "supple and round palate" for this gamay/pinot noir blend, but this taster found it to be pleasantly taut and quadrate.



Score BOX

8/10

Ks 10,200

White Wine

CornerStone Sauvignon Blanc 2011

Break out the pad thai and chilli crab: This white wine was specially blended by Singaporean Clinton Ang to complement the flavours of Asian cuisine.



Score BOX

7/10

Ks 8,300

FOOD REVIEW

French for 'The Nacha'



Pic: Htein Linn

Le Nacha

86/A Shin Saw Pu Road, Sanchaung township, Yangon
Tel 09-450013761; email info@lenacha.com

- Food: 9
- Drink: 8
- Atmosphere: 9
- Service: 10
- X Factor: 9
- Value for Money: 7

Score BOX

9/10

of Myanmar beer (K3000). We also tried one glass of the decent house red wine (K6000) and a refreshing cosmopolitan (K5000) from the cocktail list.

The service was impeccable. During my first visit I merely asked to see the menu, and although I made it clear I wouldn't be dining there at that time, the hostess happily guided me through the many food and drink options available, without pressuring me take a seat.

When we did return later to eat, the wait staff were very attentive, while managing to avoid hovering around the table like hungry cats. At one point I dropped my soup spoon, and it seemed to me that in the microsecond between its first second bounce on the floor, a waitress appeared at my side with a sparkling new eating utensil.

Le Nacha is not the cheapest place to eat in Yangon, but it's the type of restaurant where you feel satisfied that you got what you paid for. However, added to the bill was the ever-irksome, obligatory 10pc service charge (plus 5pc tax), taking the value for money down a notch. — DL

Lee Ruma Kee (K2,000)
Golden Mountain (K1,300)
Double Happiness (K1,000)

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Mr Mikhail Mgeladze and guests @ Russian Embassy Party



Ma Kyu Kyu Khine, Ko Moe Zaw and Ma Yin Mar Nyo @ Traders Square Yangon Opening Ceremony



Guests, Mr Mikhail Mgeladze, Mr Ross Dunkley and Mr. Jose Carlos da Fonseca Junior @ Russian Embassy Party



Lay Mon Tun, May Thu Tun and Aye Aye Nyein Toe @ Paul Mitchell Product Knowledge-Sharing Program



U Kyaw Min Htin and Mr Shuhei Chiba @ Vietnam Airlines New Schedule Launch



U Maung Maung Swe and Ko Myo Thwin @ Vietnam Airlines New Schedule Launch



Shiseido staff members @ Shiseido New Showroom Opening



U Aung Kyi @ Ceremony to Pay Respects to Elderly Writers
Ko Aung Zaw Naing @ Traders Square Yangon Opening Ceremony



Mr Ben Phee @ Hanjin Shipping Company Launch



U Htay Oo @ Ceremony to Pay Respects to Elderly Writers



U Aung Khin @ Hanjin Shipping Company Launch



Mr Michael Chan @ Traders Square Yangon Opening Ceremony



Mr. Kuok Meng Wei @ Traders Square Yangon Opening Ceremony



Ma Sandar Aye and Ma Myint Zu @ Paul Mitchell Product Knowledge-Sharing Program



Mr Miura, Ma Lwin and Mr Shawn @ SONY LED Launch



Ma Wai Thit Lwin, U Wai Lwin and Ma Khin Thit Lwin @ SONY LED Launch



Ko Myint Soe, Ko Myo and Ko Zaw Moe Oo @ SONY LED Launch



Ma Ni Ni Win and Ma Yu Myat Thet @ Vietnam Airlines New Schedule Launch



Ma Ei @ Hanjin Shipping Company Launch



Mr Cao Xuan Phu @ Vietnam Airlines New Schedule Launch



Students design show @ Moon Goddess Design and Beauty Spa Certificate Awards



Ma Mo Mo Linn @ Hanjin Shipping Company Launch



Ma Myint Zu and Ma Kyi Pyar Win @ Paul Mitchell Product Knowledge-Sharing Program



Ei Ei Aung, Thazin Tun and Han Su Mon @ Women's Model Physique and Fitness Physique Competition

SOCIALITE WITH NYEIN EI EI HTWE



EVEN when Socialite tries to have a calm and easy week, it never quite works out that way: All it takes is a quick look at all those pretty invitation cards that warmly call to her, and before she knows it, she's donned her gay apparel and she's out the door, ready for action. At the first event of the week she shared the enjoyment of employees of Ikon Mart at Excel Tower, at their 2012 staff party. The next day was "launch day", including new products and services from Moon Goddess design and beauty spa at Central Hotel, Vietnam Airlines at Park Royal, and Paul Mitchell at its showroom on Parami Road. On November 14, Socialite attended the opening ceremony for Traders Square at Traders Hotel, and the Hanjin Shipping Company launch at Park Royal Hotel. After a three-day lull, things got rolling again on November 17 with an homage-paying ceremony for elderly Myanmar writers, followed by the Women's Model Physique and Fitness Physique Competition at Myanmar Convention Centre. The next day, she attended the new showroom opening by Shiseido cosmetics on Lan Thit Road.



Moon Goddess students @ Moon Goddess Design and Beauty Spa Certificate Awards



Dr. Quek Swee Chong @ iCare Health Seminar



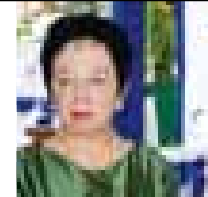
Ma Yamin Aung, Ma Hnin Ei, Ma Nyo Thwe Hnin and Ma Phyu Thwe Hnin @ Vietnam Airlines New Schedule Launch



Ma Yamin and Ma Mee Nge @ Shiseido New Showroom Opening



U Sonny, U Htay and Ma Myat Sandar @ Ikon Mart Staff Party 2012



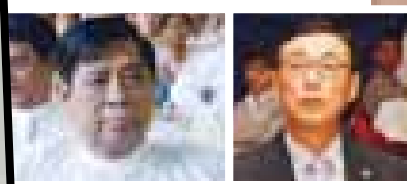
Mrs Kay Goon and U Thura Ko Ko @ Traders Square Yangon Opening Ceremony



Mr Chu Cong Phung @ Vietnam Airlines New Schedule Launch



U Khin Maung Tun @ Ceremony to Pay Respects to Elderly Writers



Mr Jong Hyun Kim @ Hanjin Shipping Company Launch



Nicky and staff members @ Ikon Mart Staff Party 2012

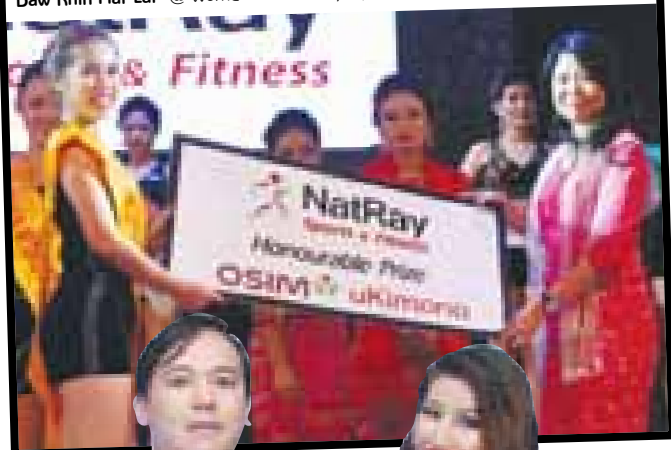


Ma Kay Khine Su Han and Ma Khin Mar Lar @ Ikon Mart Staff Party 2012



U Pite Htwe, U Zin Wine and Dr Tin Tun Oo @ Ceremony to Pay Respects to Elderly Writers

Daw Khin Mar Lar @ Women's Model Physique and Fitness Physique Competition



L Seng Ze and guest @ Women's Model Physique and Fitness Physique Competition

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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
YANGON TO HAY PYI TAW																							
MON	6T 111	07:00	07:55	FRI	W9 205	06:00	07:25	SUN	W9 205	06:00	08:10	MON	6T 401	06:20	09:23	FRI	W9 141	09:00	11:05	SAT	W9 141	09:00	11:05
	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YJ 891	06:15	08:20		YH 918	08:35	10:30		W9 141	06:30	08:45		YH 918	09:20	10:20		YH 918	09:20	10:20
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		6T 401	06:20	08:25		YJ 892	08:35	10:30		W9 011	07:30	09:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		6T 341	06:30	07:55		6T 402	08:48	10:53		W9 119	10:30	11:40		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
TUE	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YJ 211	06:30	07:55		W9 011	08:50	10:30		W9 011	10:30	11:40		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		YJ 909	06:30	07:55		W9 143	09:20	10:45		W9 011	11:00	12:10		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		K7 222	06:30	08:40		W9 143	11:30	12:55		W9 011	12:10	13:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
WED	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		W9 143	07:00	09:05		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 011	13:00	14:10		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		W9 011	07:30	08:30		W9 011	13:20	14:20		W9 011	13:50	15:00		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		W9 7751	11:00	12:00		W9 011	14:20	15:20		W9 011	14:20	15:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
THUR	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YJ 751	11:00	12:55		W9 011	15:20	16:20		W9 011	15:20	16:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		YH 727	11:00	12:25		W9 011	16:20	17:20		W9 011	16:20	17:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		W9 116	11:45	13:40		W9 011	17:20	18:20		W9 011	17:20	18:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
FRI	6T 111	14:15	15:10		W9 255	13:00	14:25		W9 011	18:20	19:20		W9 011	18:20	19:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		6T 501	14:15	16:15		W9 011	19:20	20:20		W9 011	19:20	20:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		YJ 791	14:30	16:25		W9 011	20:20	21:20		W9 011	20:20	21:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		YH 731	15:00	16:55		W9 011	21:20	22:20		W9 011	21:20	22:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
SAT	UB-A1	08:00	09:00		W9 211	16:00	17:25		W9 011	22:20	23:20		W9 011	22:20	23:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
SUN	UB-A1	15:30	16:30						W9 011	23:20	24:20		W9 011	23:20	24:20		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
HAY PYI TAW TO YANGON																							
MON	6T 112	08:15	09:10	SAT	W9 205	06:00	07:25	SUN	W9 205	07:40	09:45	MON	6T 607	11:15	12:40	FRI	W9 141	09:00	11:05	SAT	W9 141	09:00	11:05
	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		YJ 891	06:15	08:20		YH 918	08:35	10:30		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		6T 401	06:20	08:25		YJ 892	08:35	10:30		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		YJ 909	06:30	07:55		6T 402	08:48	10:53		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
TUE	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		W9 143	07:00	09:05		W9 011	08:50	10:30		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		W9 011	07:30	08:30		W9 011	09:20	10:45		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		W9 119	10:30	12:55		W9 011	10:45	12:10		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
WED	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		W9 77601	10:45	12:10		W9 011	11:00	12:10		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		W9 009	11:00	12:40		W9 011	11:45	13:00		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		W9 109	16:30	17:30		W9 011	12:10	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
THUR	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		YJ 761	11:00	12:55		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		YH 729	11:00	12:25		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		K7 244	11:35	13:00		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
FRI	6T 112	09:15	10:15		W9 109	14:30	16:10		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		YH 731	15:00	16:55		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		6T 501	15:00	17:00		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		W9 211	16:00	17:25		W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
SAT	UB-A2	10:00	11:00						W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
SUN	UB-A2	17:00	18:00						W9 011	12:20	13:20		W9 309	11:30	13:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
YANGON TO MANDALAY																							
MON	W9 205	06:00	07:25	SUN	W9 205	06:00	07:25	MON	6T 608	13:00	15:00	FRI	W9 141	09:00	11:05	SAT	W9 141	09:00	11:05	SUN	W9 141	09:00	11:05
	YJ 891	06:15	08:20		YH 918	08:35	10:30		W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	6T 401	06:20	08:25		YJ 892	08:35	10:30		W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	YJ 909	06:30	07:55		6T 402	08:48	10:53		W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	K7 222	06:30	08:40		W9 011	08:50	10:30		W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	W9 143	07:00	09:05		K7 223	08:55	11:05		W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	W9 011	07:30	08:30		6T 501	15:30	17:30		W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	YJ 911	09:15	10:40		W9 211	16:00	17:25		W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	W9 119	10:30	12:55						W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	W9 014	11:00	12:00						W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	YJ 761	11:00	12:55						W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918	09:20	10:30
	YH 727	11:00	12:55						W9 310	13:30	15:15		YH 918	09:20	10:30		YH 918</						

guide to turbulence



Pic: AFP

structural damage. When a weather system threatens such peril, pilots do their utmost to avoid the roiling air. If stuck in an ugly patch, they will attempt to steer the plane toward calmer air, climbing to a higher altitude or changing course.

Pilots rely on numerous systems to track turbulence, including weather forecasts, radar, communication with air traffic control and updates from other planes in the vicinity.

"In general, we have a reasonably good idea of where the rough air is," said Smith. "But it can be more of an art than a science."

To help take the guesswork out of the pin-the-tail-on-the-turbulence game, physicists and other industry specialists are working on innovations that detect unsettled air. For instance, Boeing installed the Vertical Gust Suppression System in the new 787 Dreamliner. VGSS acts like a super-beagle: Sensors in the plane's nose detect volatile air, then relay the message to the aircraft's brain, which automatically makes adjustments to reduce the bump. Passengers will probably sleep right through the tweak.

Cornman is tackling the turbulence issue at the federally funded National Centre for Atmospheric Research. Under the sponsorship of the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), he and colleagues developed the In Situ Turbulence Reporting Program, detection software that allows participating

airlines to share reports on rough air. Also in his bag of new tricks: radar software that can track "stuff embedded in the air", a useful tool for recognising convective turbulence, and "lidar", lasers that detect small particles in visibly clear air and measure their motion. Researchers are also throwing some brain cells at improving weather forecasting, which could inform pilots of upcoming chop.

"Turbulence is pretty dynamic," he said. "Pinning it down is pretty hard."

If you're a nervous passenger, you've most likely heard this one before: Flying is safer than driving. Don't argue with the prophet, because it's true.

"Commercial air traffic, in terms of turbulence, is pretty darn safe," said Cornman. As evidence, he cited the last crash caused by turbulence - in 1966 near Mount Fuji in Japan.

In 2010, the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported 9,442,000 car accidents, including more than 22,000 fatalities and almost 2 million injuries. The same year, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) documented one major accident and 14 injuries on commercial planes, and no fatalities.

But don't be so quick to unbuckle your seatbelt and freely roam the cabin. Turbulence is the No 1 cause of in-flight injuries, with crew members often suffering the highest number of bangs, bruises and broken

bones. The FAA reported that turbulence injured five passengers and 28 crew members last year. Over the same period, the NTSB investigated 10 turbulence-related accidents.

"If people followed the rules," said Smith, "the statistics would be even lower."

Protecting yourself is as easy as insert, click, adjust. Even when the pilot turns off the sign, keep your seatbelt on. If the plane suddenly jolts, you don't want to bump heads with the ceiling.

You can also reduce the intensity of turbulence with a little planning. Larger jets provide more stability than smaller planes. For example, in the same wily patch of air, a passenger in a 747 might feel a mild bounce, while a traveller in a six-seat Cessna might complain of moderate bumps. Also, choose a seat in the middle rows, over the wings, instead of in the front or back of the cabin.

"Imagine a soda straw. Hold it in the middle and see how it flops," explained Tillotson of the phenomenon. "Air pushes on the wing. The nose and tail bounce."

Most important, remember that the rockiness will pass. With this as your mantra, sit back and enjoy the short ride on the atmosphere's waves.

"Instead of the seatbelt sign," said Cornman, "the pilot should turn on the 'wheee!' sign."

I'll throw up my hands to that.

- The Washington Post

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	THUR	AK 859	08:30	12:50	MON	SQ 998	07:55	09:20	MON	SQ 998	07:55	09:20
	FD 2752	08:30	10:20		8M 501	08:55	12:55		8M 232	14:10	15:40		8M 232	14:10	15:40
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		MH 741	12:15	16:30		MI 518	14:20	15:45		MI 518	14:20	15:45
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		AK 851	18:50	23:05		8M 234	19:15	20:45		8M 234	19:15	20:45
	PG 702	10:45	12:40						MI 520	22:10	23:35		MI 520	22:10	23:35
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40												
	TG 302	14:55	16:50												
	8M 331	16:30	18:15												
	FD 2754	17:35	19:25												
	PG 704	18:45	20:40												
	TG 306	19:45	21:40												
TUE	PG 706	07:15	09:30												
	FD 2752	08:30	10:20												
	8M 335	08:40	10:25												
	TG 304	09:50	11:45												
	PG 702	10:45	12:40												
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40												
	TG 302	14:55	16:50												
	8M 331	16:30	18:15												
	FD 2754	17:35	19:25												
	PG 704	18:45	20:40												
	TG 306	19:45	21:40												
WED	PG 706	07:15	09:30												
	FD 2752	08:30	10:20												
	8M 335	08:40	10:25												
	TG 304	09:50	11:45												
	PG 702	10:45	12:40												
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40												
	TG 302	14:55	16:50												
	8M 331	16:30	18:15												
	FD 2754	17:35	19:25												
	PG 704	18:45	20:40												
	TG 306	19:45	21:40												
THUR	PG 706	07:15	09:30												
	FD 2752	08:30	10:20												
	8M 335	08:40	10:25												
	TG 304	09:50	11:45												
	PG 702	10:45	12:40												
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40												
	TG 302	14:55	16:50												
	8M 331	16:30	18:15												
	FD 2754	17:35	19:25												
	PG 704	18:45	20:40												
	TG 306	19:45	21:40												
FRI	PG 706	07:15	09:30												
	FD 2752	08:30	10:20												
	8M 335	08:40	10:25												
	TG 304	09:50	11:45												
	PG 702	10:45	12:40												
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40												
	TG 302	14:55	16:50												
	8M 331	16:30	18:15												
	FD 2754	17:35	19:25												
	PG 704	18:45	20:40												
	TG 306	19:45	21:40												
SAT	PG 706	07:15	09:30												
	FD 2752	08:30	10:20												
	8M 335	08:40	10:25												
	TG 304	09:50	11:45												
	PG 702	10:45	12:40												
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40												
	TG 302	14:55	16:50												
	8M 331	16:30	18:15												
	FD 2754	17:35	19:25												
	PG 704	18:45	20:40												
	TG 306	19:45	21:40												
SUN	PG 706	07:15	09:30												
	FD 2752	08:30	10:20												
	8M 335	08:40	10:25												
	TG 304	09:50	11:45												
	PG 702	10:45	12:40												
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40												
	TG 302	14:55	16:50												
	8M 331	16:30	18:15												
	FD 2754	17:35	19:25												
	PG 704	18:45	20:40												
	TG 306	19:45	21:40												
YANGON TO GAUNGZHOU				YANGON TO TAIPEI				YANGON TO KOLKATA				YANGON TO CHIANG MAI			
MON	CZ 3056	18:10	22:40	MON	CI 7916	11:00	04:35	MON	AI 234	14:05	17:10	MON	W9 7607	14:50	16:20
TUE	8M 711	08:40	13:15	TUE	CI 7916	11:00	04:35	FRI	AI 234	14:05	17:10	THUR	W9 9607	14:50	16:20
WED	CZ 3056	11:20	15:50	WED	CI 7916	11:00	04:35	THUR	CA 906	14:15	17:35	MON	VN 956	19:10	21:30
THUR	8M 711	08:40	13:15	THUR	CI 7916	11:00	04:35	SAT	CA 906	14:15	17:35	TUE	VN 956	19:10	21:30
FRI	CZ 3056	18:10	22:40	FRI	CI 7916	11:00	04:35	SUN	MU 2032	09:40	12:50	WED	VN 956	19:10	21:30
SAT	CZ 3056	11:20	15:50	SAT	CI 7916	11:00	04:35	THUR	CA 906	14:15	17:35	FRI	VN 956	19:10	21:30
SUN	8M 711	08:40	13:15	SUN	CI 7916	11:00	04:35	SAT	CA 906	14:15	17:35	SUN	VN 956	19:10	21:30
YANGON TO KUNMING				YANGON TO HO CHI MINH				YANGON TO GAYA				SINGAPORE TO YANGON			
MON	MU 2032	09:40	12:50	MON	VN 942	14:25	17:10	MON	8M 601	09:00	10:20	MON	SQ 998	07:55	09:20
TUE	CA 906	14:15	17:35	TUE	VN 942	14:25	17:10	TUE	AI 234	14:05	15:25	TUE	3K 585	09:10	10:40
WED	MU 2032	09:40	12:50	WED	VN 942	14:25	17:10	WED	8						

Genius or clown? Paris weighs Dali legacy

By Emma Charlton

PARIS — Twirling his waxed moustache, Salvador Dali's larger-than-life figure was beamed into millions of homes in the 1960s, his televised antics bringing huge fame, but burning his bridges with the art world.

Now a major new Paris exhibit aims to reinstate that legacy, putting Dali's media stunts — burying himself in banknotes, signing books wired to a brain monitor, even ad campaigns — on equal footing with his surrealist painting.

"We wanted to show Dali in his full splendour, from one end to the other of his career," said Alfred Pacquement, director of the Pompidou Centre modern art museum, which hosted the last major retrospective on the Spanish artist in 1979.

Coproduced with Madrid's Reina Sofia museum, the four-month show that opened last week brings together more than 200 paintings and sculptures, along with drawings, writings and television clips from the 1920s to the 1980s.

"Until now, the mainstream critical judgement was that



A visitor looks at a painting entitled 'Construction molle avec haricots bouillis' (Soft Construction with Boiled Beans) by Salvador Dali at Centre Pompidou, Paris, on November 19. Pic: AFP

there was a good Dali — the Dali of surrealism — up until the end of the 1930s, and that after that he went bad," said Jean-Michel Bouhours, co-curator of the show.

"He made money, he shot advertisements — worse still he became a political reactionary" who failed to take sides during Spain's Civil War.

"But today we have enough distance to be able to stand back and look at the whole of his oeuvre."

Visitors enter the show via an egg-like space — containing a 1942 photograph depicting Dali curled up in foetal position, a reference to his claim that he remembered his life in-utero.

From his childhood in Catalonia — haunted by the presence of a dead older brother whose first name he inherited — the show charts Dali's formative years in Madrid, until he found a spiritual home with the surrealist movement.

"By 1928, the pre-surrealist Dali is in place, with elements like headless bodies, severed hands, sexual symbols," Bouhours said.

The following year he unveiled his seminal film *Un Chien Andalou*, produced with Luis Bunuel, earning a nod from the influential French surrealist leader Andre Breton.

With the 1930s came fame — with solo exhibitions in Paris and New York — and his most emblematic paintings such as *The Persistence of Memory* with its melting watches, or cult objects like his lobster telephone or lip-shaped sofa.

In 1939, Dali was expelled by the communist-linked French surrealists after making ambiguous comments on Adolf Hitler and failing to denounce fascism in Spain, where he later extolled General Francisco Franco for restoring "clarity".

Yet, the curators stress, his 1936 *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*, in which a grotesque figure devours itself in a cannibalistic circle, comes across as a powerful antiwar statement.

Fleeing World War II in 1940, Dali and his wife Gala settled

in the United States where he had already begun dabbling in entertainment, designing the outlandish "Dream of Venus" pavilion for New York world fair the year before.

Returning to Spain in 1948, Dali turned obsessively to two new themes — religion on the one hand, and the world post-Hiroshima — coining the term "Nuclear Mysticism" to define his work.

But this was also when he embraced television to reach a wider public, taking part in TV game shows, and two or three times a year staging buffoonish media events which he called "happenings". Ad campaigns made the cut as well — for Braniff Airlines in 1967 or Lanvin chocolate in 1968, included in the Paris show.

Incensed by his willingness to cash in on success — in 1965 he began selling signed sheets of blank paper for US\$10 — Breton nicknamed him "Avida Dollars", an anagram of his name meaning "Eager for Dollars".

"These works were long seen as marginal, perverse side of his art," said Thierry Dufrene, another of the show's curators. "But today, after [Andy] Warhol, things have come full circle."

"He was greatly ahead of his time," agreed Bouhours. "He understood the power of mass media to explore the irrational nature of the world. As early as 1934, he was using pre-Pop language. Dali wasn't just a follower of Pop Art, he was one of its inventors." — AFP

Events Flash

Sleeping Sketches

Artist Quee will hold his first solo show, entitled "Sleeping Sketch Show", at Lawkanat Gallery (62 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada township) from November 23 to 30.

Watercolor show

Artist Aung Maung is holding his 11th solo watercolor exhibition from November 24 to 28 at Gallery 65, Yawmingyi Road, Dagon township.

Painting show

An exhibition of paintings by Kyaw Lin and Aye Nyein Myint will be held at Arrmanthit Art Gallery (143 Myanma Gone Yi Street, Mingalar Taung Nyunt township, Yangon) from November 25 to 29. Gallery hours are 9am-5pm daily.

Jazz Bliss Festival

The third edition of the Jazz Bliss Festival will take place in Yangon from November 27 to December 2. The Sophie Alour Trio (France) will appear at the French Institute on Nov 27, while Charles Sahagian (US) and others will play at House of Memories on Nov 28. On Nov 29 The Tomer Bar Trio (Israel) will play at the French Institute, and on Nov 30 House of Memories will host Jan Klare and Band (Germany), as well as the Hein Tint Hsaing Waing traditional Myanmar ensemble. All events start at 6:30pm, and are free of charge. The festival will close with an open air concert featuring all the musicians at Seinn Lann Soe Pyay Garden on December 2, starting at 4pm.

Tazaungdine book fair

In celebration of Tazaungdine Festival of Lights, an exhibition of photographs,

cartoons and poems that have been published in *Snap Shot* and *Monitor* weekly news journals will be held at Orchid Hotel (corner of Anawrahta and Botataung Pagoda roads) from November 27 to 29. A book fair will also be held in conjunction with the event.

IC concert

Iron Cross will perform with Yadana My at People's Park on November 28. Tickets are K15,000 and K8000.

Japanese film show

The film *Tora-San to the Rescue*, directed by Yamada Yoji, will be shown at the Assembly Hall of the Japanese embassy in Yangon on November 30, at 2:30 p.m. Free tickets (one per person) are available at the embassy from November 12 until the day of the screening, from 9:00am-12:30pm and 1:30pm to 5pm, Monday-Friday.

Cartoon exhibition

An exhibition of cartoons by 70 cartoonists will be on view at Dagaung Art Gallery (7 Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha Road, Bahan township) from December 1 to 5. The exhibition, entitled "Modern Classic 2012", will feature 120 cartoons on a variety of themes, with English subtitles.

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.

Wine dinner

A dinner with acclaimed Spanish winemaker Telmo Rodriguez will be held at QP Inya Shop (30 Inya Road, Kamaryut township) on December 1, at 7pm. Ticket price is \$75.00 per person. Email chad.quarto@gmail.com for information or to RSVP.

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.

Photography workshops

Two free photography workshops will be held at the French Institute (340 Pyay Road) in December. The Introductory Photo Workshop from December 3-8 will be taught in the Myanmar language, and the English-language Advanced Photo Workshop (Dec 12-19) will focus on the creation of narrative photo-essays. The best works from the workshops will be shown during the Yangon Photo Festival, scheduled for January 28-February 16, 2013. Register with Didi or Yves-Noël at the French Institute (Tel 01-536-900).



YOUR STARS

By Astrologer
Aung Myin Kyaw

Aquarius

(Jan 20 - Feb 18)

It is time to wake up from impossible dreams and focus on the reality of what is doable. Focus on your duties at home, as well as family relationships that are suffering from social interference..

Pisces

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

It is time to switch off the autopilot and take some social risks. Close friends will provide useful support, but don't be over-reliant on them. Temptation will be hard to ignore, so use your wisdom.

Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

Life depends on character-building and maintaining a positive outlook. You'll need to master the three S's — service, sacrifice and self-control — to gain success from any opportunities.

Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

Frustration will destroy your simple nature, and you might find it difficult to concentrate at work. Spiritual development is essential to make your mind healthy and strong.

Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

Associate with people who inspire you rather than those who see the world in shades of gray. Strive to live in a state of peace and freedom. You will soon bear a huge responsibility on your shoulders.

Cancer (June 22 - July 22)

Work relationships might be a little stressed right now, but it is never too late to set things straight. Build bridges of understanding in your social interactions, and play your part in maintaining a system of checks and balances among friends and family.

Leo

(July 23 - Aug 22)

The opening of a new channel of communication will help you make progress toward your goals. Truth is whatever the voice inside you says; what might be truth for one person could be untruth for another.

Virgo

(Aug 23 - Sept 22)

Do not hesitate to pursue higher education and foreign languages, which will form the foundation for future success. Your right course of action will result in purification. Allow the truth living inside your soul to inform your every action, and avoid violent means at all costs.

Libra

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)

Faith is the basis of gaining full understanding of yourself, and it will also help you find the pathway to wisdom. Learn more about the value of discipline and listen closely to the voices of the wise. Make sure your education matches your aspirations.

Scorpio

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Now is the time to prepare psychologically for your future success. Enlarge your power, but at the same time don't lose your sympathy for others.

Sagittarius

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Strife and controversy in social relations can be problematic, but you can help calm the situation by serving as an impartial liaison between the two sides, and by cultivating a personal policy of mutual respect and trust.

Capricorn

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Develop a strong and healthy mind that harbours the ability to react to any situation. Do not allow pride and conceit to derail you from your path. Love cannot grow in the land of selfishness.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw, 4th Floor, 113, Thamaing Bayan Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon. Tel: 0973135632, Email: williameast@gmail.com

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Employment

INGO Position

A consortium of international and national organizations comprising HelpAge International, Leprosy Mission International, Network Activity Group, National YMCA and Golden Plain has been implementing a livelihood and food security project in 30 villages in Ayartaw Township in Sagaing Region and Mahlaing Township in Mandalay Region funded by Livelihood and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) for livelihood / food security. We are seeking qualified and experienced Myanmar nationals for the following positions for one year, January to December 2013: Job Title: National Project Manager REVEAL Location: Yangon with frequent travel to the project locations Qualifications/competencies: Master's degree preferably in social work, community development or related fields with five years livelihood/food security project management experience with INGOs/international agencies. Professional experience in project cycle management including participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects. Experience in integration of ageing/cross-cutting issues with livelihood/food security projects. Strategic, transparent,

and flexible in thinking and working process. Experience in budget planning and financial management. Strong familiarity with networking with government, and other national and international agencies. Solid experience in managing staff, and working with expatriates. Proven track record of quality performance in remote locations and high pressure environments. Excellent written and oral communication skills in both English and Myanmar. Experience in facilitating training workshops and coaching. High degree of initiative and problem solving skills. Basic computer skill essential. Advanced written and spoken English and Myanmar language skills. Job Title: Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator Location: Yangon with regular field visits to the project locations. Qualifications: University degree, at least 3 years experience in M&E. Strong familiarity with monitoring and evaluation in livelihood/food security project. Experience in the design of simple M&E tools with project staff and community leaders. Experience in training and mentoring staff and community leaders, facilitating development of simple -M&E tools by staff and community leaders to collect qualitative

and quantitative information on project progress. Demonstrated English language proficiency (reading, writing, speaking), and competency in database establishment & management. Working experience with communities in rural Myanmar an advantage. Job Title: Health & Nutrition Coordinator Location: Yangon with regular field visits to the project locations. Qualifications: Myanmar national with university degree in Medicine, preferably with advance studies in Public and/or community health, Minimum three years experience in general practice/health educator with an INGO, LINGO, UN agency is an advantage. Good experience in training & good facilitation skill. High level of interpersonal, written, oral communication and presentation skills. Computer literate and good report writing skills. Ability to work effectively in a team with from various cultures & professional backgrounds. Fluent in Myanmar, working knowledge of English an advantage. flexibility and ability to change work according to the objectives. Willingly to work at non-Yangon area and make frequent travel to project location. Job Title: Driver/messenger for Yangon office Location: Yangon frequent visits to the project location. **Qualifications, experience and skills Education:** Secondary school education or equivalent, with Valid Driver's license and very good knowledge of driving rules, regulations and courtesies.

Experience and skills: At least 5 years work experience as a driver of 4WD Jeep (auto gear); Safe driving record; Knowledge of driving rules and regulations. Skills in minor vehicle repair. Good knowledge of the English language both in speaking and writing. HelpAge International has received funding from HelpAge Korea/ KOICA for a 3-year livelihood project entitled "Reducing Poverty In Myanmar through Older People's Initiatives" implementing in Patheingyi, Kan Gyi Dauk, Kyaiklat, Pyin Oo Lwin, and Patheingyi Townships and Shwe Thauk Yan Sub Township in Ayeyarwaddy, Mandalay and Yangon Regions. We are seeking qualified and experienced Myanmar national for a period of 2 years: Job Title: Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Location: Yangon with regular field visits to the project locations. Qualifications: University degree, at least 3 years experience in M&E. Strong familiarity with monitoring and evaluation in livelihood/food security project. Experience in the design of simple M&E tools with project staff and community leaders. Experience in training and mentoring staff and community leaders, facilitating development of simple -M&E tools by staff and community leaders to collect qualitative and quantitative information on project progress. Demonstrated English language proficiency (reading, writing, speaking), and competency in database establishment and management.

Working experience with communities in rural Myanmar an advantage. Applicants should submit their Application letter, current CV with complete contact details & 3 email addresses of professional referees and copy of any testimonies in a sealed envelope address to the Human Resources Unit of HelpAge International Myanmar Country Office, No 10 Kanbawza Avenue, Shwetaungaya Ward No. 1, Bahan Township, Yangon OR by email to htwe.helpage@gmail.com no later than 5 p.m., 2nd December 2012. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.

Local Position

SEA LION Company is seeking (1), **Gechnical Support Manager** (Service Manager) 1 Post: Master, Bachelor Degree, Diploma in Engineering, 2 ~ 3 years experience. (2), **Service Engineer** 7 Posts: Master Bachelor Degree, Diploma in Engineering. Willingness to travel. (3) **Sales Manager** 2 Posts: Bachelor degree in medical fields. 5 years experience. (4) **Sales Executive** 5 Posts: Bachelor Degree in medical fields preferred. 2 years experience. (5) **Product Specialist** 3 Posts: Bachelor degree in medical fields. (6) **Clinical Application Specialist** 3 Posts: Age under 35. Bachelor degree in medical fields. Radiologists, Radiographers, Anaesthetists, ICU nurses, OT nurses with relevant working experience preferred. (7) **Marketing Manager** 1 Post: Any graduate (with MBA or DBA preferred). 8 years experience. (8) **Accountant** 1 Post: B.Com (CPA). 3 years experience. (9) **Executive Secretary** 1 Post: Any Graduate plus secretarial studies. 3 years experience of 3 years in serving at management level. Computer literate. High proficiency in English. (10) **Receptionist** - F 1 Post: Any Graduate, Age under 35. 2 years experience. Proficiency in English. (11) **Admin Assistant** - F 1 Post: Any Graduate, Age under 35. 2 years experience. Pls submit application letter & CV with necessary documents to HR Department, 179, Bo Myat Tun St, Botah taung, Tel: 299797 (Ext: 206/208). Closing date: 30-11-2012. **VICTORY MYANMAR Group Co. Ltd.**, the appointed distributor of Mandalay Rum, seeking: (1) **National Sales Manager**: Responsible for achievement of company's overall sales targets. Duties include to build relationship with trade customers & to lead the company's sales teams. (2) **Area sales manager**: Responsible for achievement of specific area's sales targets. Duties include to develop sales channels & to manage area sales team. (3) **Brand Manager**: Responsible for improvement of the company's product sales and market share. Duties include to monitor market trends & to oversee advertising & marketing activities. Successful candidates will receive attractive remuneration packages commensurate with qualification, experience, responsibility and result. Send applications to - HR Manager, 216, Bogoyoke Aung San Rd, 5th Flr, Botahtaung, Ph: 398414, 398074, Closing date: 30 November 2012. **JOB Opportunities for Worldwide Branded Elevator Employment condition & qualification:** **Sale Executive** - Male, Age 28 ~ 35 Years, 3 to 5 Years industrial attachment AGTI, B-Tech, B.E (EC, EP, Mechanical, prefer) Prefer if sale experience. Pls send CV to: maymkyi@gmail.com **ORYX Int'l General Svc's Co., Ltd** is seeking (1) **F & B Service Trainer** - M/F 2 Posts (2) **F & B Production Trainer** - M/F 2 Posts (3) **Front Office Trainer** - M/F 2 Posts (4) **Housekeeping Trainer** - M/F 2 Posts (5) **English Trainer** - M/F 2 Posts. 2 ~ 3 years experience in the same field as trainer. **Mobile Phone Software, Hardware Repairing Trainer** M/F 1 Post: Salary 200,000, Experience over 3 years. **Receptionist** - F 1 Post: Good in English, strong personality, age above 35, height about 5' 5" **Computer Operator** - F 1 Post: Microsoft Office, Page Maker, Photoshop. **Marketing Assistant** - M/F 1 Post: Any graduate with degree in education marketing, Age 30 ~ 40, must be able to plan & execute bright ideas and be able to deal with government departments & correspondence by self. Pls send resumes to Rm 806, Yuzana Tower, Shwe Gone Taing, Bahan, Ph: 558398, 09-430-66708, Email: resume.oryx@gmail.com **WE ARE** looking for below positions; (1). **Logistics Manager** - M/F 1 post (2). **Executive Secretary** - F 1 post (3). **Assistance Warehouse Manager** - M/F 1 post (4). **Warehouse Supervisor** - M/F 1 post (5). **Logistics & Operation Staff** - M/F 1 post (6). **Store Keeper** - M 1 post (7). **Driver** - M 2 posts. An attractive salary package commensurate with qualifications and experience will be offered to the right candidate. Interested applicants, please email your detailed resume indicating your current, update photo in MS word format, all scan of academic certificates or diploma, NRC and expected salaries cooperations. myanmar@gmail.com within two weeks. **SUMMIT PARKVIEW Hotel** is seeking (1). **Sales Manager/ Asst**: **Sales Manager** - M/F 1 Post: MBA/ Graduated in any discipline, 5 Years experienced in Hotel Marketing & Sales, Proficiency in English. (2). **Sales Executive** - M/F 1 Post: Graduated in any discipline, Experienced in Hotel Sales & Marketing, Proficiency in English. (3). **Health Club Instructor / Aerobic Instructor** - M/F 1 Post: Graduate in any discipline, 1 year experience, Proficiency in English. Pls submit an application letter, C.V with photo with necessary documents to HR Department not later than 8 December, 2012. **FINANCE HEAD**: The Finance Head shall serve as the lead and primary contact for finance & accounting,

operational performance, and budget and forecasting Job Functions Assists the GM in the formulation, implementation and fulfillment of corporate Policies, decisions and actions necessary for project operations, Prepares monthly financial statements. Manages project, Prepares the annual corporate budget, financial forecasts, and other strategic special purpose studies, Stores corporate records in a secure and efficient manner, Supervises payroll and human resource activities. Qualifications: B.Com, CPA, Proficient in English, 10 years experience in finance function, Willing to travel. Pls send email CV & cover letter to pmar@mpic.com.ph **ASIA Language & Business Academy (ALBA)** is seeking the motivated & experienced **assistant teachers**. University Graduate. Fluent in spoken & written English. Excellent communication & interpersonal skill. Pls send curriculum vitae together with a recent photo and copies of testimonials to 66, Shwedagon Pagoda Rd, Dagon Tsp. Ph: 376236, 376314 Email: admin@albaedu.com **OUR COMPANY** is looking (1) **Customer Services Coordinator** - M/F 1 post (2) **Chinese Translator** - M/F 1 post (3). **Purchasing Supervisor** - M/F 2 posts (4). **Purchasing Assistant** - M/F 2 posts (5). **Maintenance Supervisor** - M-3 posts (6). **Receptionist** - F 2 posts (7). **Driver** - M 2 posts. Pls send CV (resume) (describe working experience from graduation till present and expected salary) with updated photo in MS word format, scan of relevant certificates & documents by E-mail to express338@gmail.com within 2 weeks. (1) **CIVIL ENGINEERS** 20 Posts. (2) **Architects** 20 Posts. (3) **Mechanical Engineers** 20 Posts. (4) **Electrical Engineers** 20 Posts. (5) **Chief Accountant** 2 Posts. (6) **Accountants** 10 Post. (7) **Admin Manager** 2 Posts. (8) **Admin** 5 Posts. Able to speak English fluently. Must have experience in the related jobs. Must be able to go travelling. For accountant position, experience with MICB and MFTB banks. Pls submitted CV form. Address: 483, 9th flr, Aye Yeik Thar Condo, Aye Yeik Thar (2) St, New University Avenue Rd, Bahan, Ph: 555952, 557947 ext: 8903. (1). **CHIEF AUDITOR** - 2 Posts: Age above 35, Degree holder are preferable (Professional Degree or equivalent). 3 years experience. (2). **Management Trainee** - 5 Posts: Age 20 ~ 27, Graduate with (B.Com / B.Econ / B.B.A/B.B.M), Must have good practice on Mathematic & Knowledge of Microsoft office software package. Pls send CV with copies of academic certificates, Original & Update Police Clearance form, A copy of Family Registration Form (10), 1 passport photo & a copy of NRC to - HR Manager: Business Development Team Creation (Myanmar) Co., Ltd: 15-18, Thamaing Bayan Rd, Myittar Yeik Mon Housing, Tarmwe, Ph: 09-202-7605. **JOURNALIST / Business Content**

Writer. Requirements: Able to write business news, Interviewing people by phone or in person, High standards of accuracy, Able to travel, Source for latest news in social networking media (such as FB, Tweeter, Blog and news websites), Preferably with 1-2 years of working experience in writing business news. Pls submit your application by emailing a detailed copy of updated resume in MS Word format to zuneiwinn@gmail.com & maw.san@gmail.com **VIMAL COMPANY** Limited is seeking **Web Developer**: 2+ years of rapid web development, using HTML, JavaScript, CSS, ASP, Net, C#, and T-SQL preferred. Should have proven .NET experience as well as a solid understanding of Object Oriented Design & Programming. A solid understanding of web application development processes, from the layout/user interface to relational database structures. Strong communication skills. Pls submit applications to HR Solutions @ zenithpowermyanmar.com. **PRE-SCHOOL Teacher** (Chinese) A degree holder in pre-school education with at least 3 years' experience. The post requires planning, managing & executing teaching, course coordinating, programming, support in education & social welfare. Good communication skills. Dynamic extracurricular activities, which include dancing, singing, painting & story-telling. Age under 35. Salary: Negotiable. Application with CV, related documents & 1 photo. Email: preschool.ygn@gmail.com The HR manager 09-505-7367 **MYANMAR GOLDEN Rock Int'l Co., Ltd** (Canon) is seeking **sales & marketing assistant** M 3 posts & F 1 post: Age below 20 ~ 30, Any graduate (preferably in sales & marketing), 1 year experience in sales & marketing, Fluent in English, Energetic & outspoken with good communication skills, Car driving license preferred. Interested person, pls write in with CV, photocopies of relevant certificates & testimonials & contact telephone number with a nonreturnable recent passport size photo to Glory department: 6th Flr, FJVCC, Botah taung, Yangon. **BUSINESS Development Finance Company Ltd.** is urgently looking (1) **Assistant Manager** - 2 posts (2) **Office Staffs/ Receptionist** - 10 posts (3) **Housekeeping Manager** - 2 posts. (4) **Room Attendant** - 20 Posts. (5) **Public Attendant** - 15 posts. (6) **Security** - 10 Posts. (7) **Accountant** - 3 posts (8) **Sales and Marketing** - 5 posts. (9) **IT** experience in Networking - 4 posts. For all positions, experience preferred. Good command English. Pls send resume to ECO Apartment - Ga 21, (Between Tower C & D) Pearl condo, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd Bahan, Ph: 557448 ext. 880. Email: bdfc-eco@gmail.com

Job Wanted
POST : MANAGER
candlelight295@gamil.com



Call for CVs: USAID/OTI Program IT/DATABASE MANAGER

Please read the entire advertisement.
Background: DAI, an international consulting firm based in the United States, is currently accepting applications from candidates for an IT/Database Manager position to support the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)-funded program. The USAID/OTI program will work with civil society, the Government, and other stakeholders to foster more participatory and inclusive reform and peace processes.
Responsibilities: The IT/Database Manager will:

- Manage IT and communications equipment, network and information systems, and information security.
- Update the grants database, ensuring compliance with USAID/OTI and DAI standard practices and regulations.
- Collaborate with USAID/OTI on customization and localization of the grants database.
- Review and monitor activity database information for accuracy, consistency and completeness to ensure database integrity.
- Synchronize master activity database between USAID/OTI and DAI office databases on a weekly basis.
- Train staff on the use of the grants database.
- Advise in the planning and implementation of additions, deletions and major modifications to the IT infrastructure
- Oversee the administration and maintenance of computers, servers, peripherals and software

Qualifications:

- University degree in relevant field preferred. Secondary school degree with extensive relevant experience can be substituted for university degree.
- Minimum of 4 years PC and Server support experience, especially with Windows Server & Windows Client operating systems
- LAN, WAN, VSAT and BGAN knowledge and experience
- MS applications, MS Office, MS Project, MS Visio and network management software experience
- IT troubleshooting skills and experience
- Relevant experience working on donor-funded projects in a related role
- English language fluency required.

Interested and qualified candidates should e-mail CV and cover letter to DAIRecruit@ dai.com by December 7th, 2012. No phone inquiries will be accepted.



Call for CVs: USAID/OTI Program INFORMATION OFFICER

Please read the entire advertisement.
Background: DAI, an international consulting firm based in the United States, is currently accepting applications from candidates for an Information Officer position to support the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)-funded program. The USAID/OTI program will work with civil society, the Government, and other stakeholders to foster more participatory and inclusive reform and peace processes.
Responsibilities: The Information Officer will:

- Manage project information and communication needs
- Oversee collection of anecdotal information and other evidence of achievement
- Use information in Activity Database and M&E reports to compile quick results reporting on project status and impact, including press releases and success stories
- Report project status and impact to a number of audiences and through a variety of formats
- Provide guidance and support to media components of activities and to media grantees

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in relevant field required.
- Minimum of 4 years of progressively responsible experience in an equivalent position required
- Relevant experience working on donor-funded projects in a related role and with demonstrated supervisory experience
- Strong computer skills (MS Office suite) required.
- Experience with grants or small grants under contract programs highly preferred.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills required
- English language fluency required.

Interested and qualified candidates should e-mail CV and cover letter to DAIRecruit@ dai.com by December 7th, 2012. No phone inquiries will be accepted.

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Bangladesh 11-B, Than Lwin Road, Yangon. tel: 515275, 526144, fax: 515273, email: bdootygn@mptmail.net.mm

Brazil 56, Pyay Road, 6th mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 507225, 507251, 507482, fax: 507483, email: Administ.yangon@itamaraty.gov.br

Brunei 317/319, U Wizara Road, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. tel: 524985, 524285, fax: 512854 email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm

Cambodia 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 549609, 540964, fax: 541462, email: RECYANGON@mptmail.net.mm

China 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 221280, 221281, 224025, 224097, 221926, fax: 227019, 228319

Egypt 81, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 222886, 222887, fax: 222865, email: egyptmbyangon@mptmail.net.mm

France 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 212178, 212520, 212523, 212528, 212532, fax: 212527, email: ambafrance.rangon@diplomatie.fr

Germany 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 548951, 548952, fax: 548899 email: info@rangun.diplo.de

India 545-547, Merchant Street, Yangon. tel: 391219, 388412, 243972, fax: 254086, 250164, 388414, email: indiaembassy@mptmail.net.mm

Indonesia 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 254465, 254469, 229750, fax: 254468, email: kuckygn@indonesia.com.mm

Israel 15, Khabaung Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il

Italy 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang.mail@esteri.it

Japan 100, Natmauk Road, Yangon. tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643

Embassy of the **State of Kuwait** Chatrium Hotel, Rm: No.416, 418, 420, 422, 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe Tsp, Tel: 544500.

North Korea 77C, Shin Saw Pu Road, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. tel: 512642, 510205, fax: 510206

South Korea 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr

Lao A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. tel: 222482, fax: 227446, email: Laoembca@mptmail.net.mm

Malaysia 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 220248, 220249, 220251, 220230, fax: 221840, email: mkyangon@mptmail.net.mm

Nepal 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb@mptmail.net.mm

Pakistan A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Road, Yangon. tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange) fax: 221147, email: pakistan@mptmail.net.mm

Philippines 50, Sayasan Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 558149-151, fax: 558154, email: p.e.yangon@gmail.com

Russian 38, Sagawa Road, Yangon. tel: 241955, 254161, fax: 241953, email: rusinmyan@mptmail.net.mm

Serbia No. 114-A, Inya Road, P.O.Box No. 943-Yangon. tel: 515282, 515283, fax: 504274, email: serbemb@yangon.net.mm

Singapore 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 559001, fax: 559002, 559922, email: singemb_ygn@sgmfa.gov.sg

Sri Lanka 34 Taw Win Road, Yangon. tel: 222812, fax: 221509, email: slembassy.yangon@gmail.com, info@slembyangon.org, www.slembyangon.org

Thailand 94 Pyay Road, Dagon Township, Yangon. tel: 226721, 226728, 226824, fax: 221713

United Kingdom 80 Kan-na Road, Yangon. tel: 370867, 380322, 371852, 371853, 256438, 370863, 370864, 370865, fax: 370866

United States of America 110, University Avenue, Kamaryut Township, Yangon. tel: 536509, 535756, 538038, fax: 650306

Vietnam Building No. 72, Thanlwin Road, Bahan Township, Yangon. tel: 511305, fax: 514897, email: vnembmyr@cybertech.net.mm

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia No.287/289, U Wisara Rd, Sanchaung Tsp. tel: 01-536153, 516952, fax: 01-516951

UNITED NATIONS

ILO Liaison Officer Rm (M1212-1220), 12 Fl-A, Traders Hotel. 223, tel: 242 393, 242811. fax: 242594.

IOM 12th Flr, Traders Hotel, 223, tel: 252560 ext. 5002

UNAIDS Rm: (1223-1231), 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 252361, 252362, 252498. fax: 252364.

UNDCP 11-A, Malikka St, Mayangone tsp. tel: 666903, 664539. fax: 651334.

UNDP 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739.

UNFPA 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029.

UNHCR 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. tel: 524022, 524024. fax 524031.

UNIAP Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 254852, 254853.

UNIC 6, Natmauk St., BHN tel: 52910-19

UNICEF 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, KTDA. tel: 375527-32, fax: 375552 email: unicef.yangon@unicef.org, www.unicef.org/myanmar.

UNODC 11-A, Malikka Rd., Box 650, TMWE tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), fax: 292739, 544531.

UNOPS Inya Lake Hotel, 3rd floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279.

UNRC 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), fax: 292739, 544531.

WFP 3rd-flr, Inya Lake Hotel, 37, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 657011-6 (6-lines) Ext: 2000.

WHO 12A Fl, Traders Hotel. tel:250583.

ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Township. Ph: 225258.

FAO Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673. fax: 641561.

ACCOMMODATION-HOTELS

Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe. tel: 544500. fax: 544400.



No.7A, Wingabar Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: (951) 546313, 430245. 09-731-77781-4. Fax: (01) 546313. www.cloverhotel.asia. info@cloverhotel.asia

Confort Inn 4, Shweli Rd, Bet: Inya Rd & U Wisara Rd, Kamaryut, tel: 525781, 526872

Golden Aye Yeik Mon Hotel 4, Padauk Lane, 4th Word, Aye Yeik Mon Housing, Hlaing. tel: 681706.

Hotel Yangon No. 91/93, 8th Mile Junction, Mayangone. tel: 01-667708, 667688.

Inya Lake Resort Hotel 37 Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 662866. fax: 665537.

Orchid Hotel 91, Anawrahta street, Pazundaung Township, Yangon. Tel: 399930, 399990, 901061-65. E-mail: orchidhotel@myanmar.com.mm.



No. 205, Corner of Wadan Street & Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: (95-1) 212850 - 3, 229358 - 61, Fax: (95-1) 212854. info@myanmarpandahotel.com http://www.myanmarpandahotel.com

Panorama Hotel 294-300, Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Tsp. tel: 253077.

PARKROYAL Yangon, Myanmar 33, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd, Dagon tsp. tel: 250388. fax: 252478. email: enquiry.prygn@parkroyalhotels.com Website: parkroyalhotels.com.

Savoy Hotel 129, Damazedi Rd, Kamaryut tsp. tel: 526289, 526298, fax: 650933.

Seasons of Yangon Yangon Int'l Airport Compound. tel: 666699.

Sweet Hotel 73, Damazedi Road, San Chaung Tsp, Ph: 539152

Sedona Hotel Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yankin. tel: 666900.

Strand Hotel 92 Strand Rd. tel: 243377. fax: 289880.

Summit Parkview Hotel 350, Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp. tel: 211888, 211966. fax: 227995.

Thamada Hotel 5, Alan Pya Phaya Rd, Dagon. tel: 243639, 243640, 243641.

Traders Hotel 223 Sule Pagoda Rd. tel: 242828. fax: 242838.

Winner Inn 42, Than Lwin Rd, Bahan Tsp. Tel: 503734, 524387. email: reservation@winnerinnmyanmar.com

Yangon YMCA 263, Mahabandoola Rd, Botataung Tsp. tel: 294128.

Yuzana Hotel 130, Shwegondaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, tel: 01-549600, 543367

Yuzana Garden Hotel 44, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Tsp, tel: 01-248944

ACCOMMODATION-HOTELS (NAY PYI TAW)



Reservation Office (Yangon) 123, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Dagon Township Tel: 951-255 819-838

Royal Kumudra Hotel, (Nay Pyi Taw) Tel: 067-414 177, 067-4141 88

E-Mail: maxhotelsreservation@gmail.com



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Espace Avenir No 523, Pyay Rd, Kamaryut. tel: 505213-222.



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Marina Residence 8, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 6506 51-4. fax: 650630.

MiCasa Hotel Apartments 17, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yankin Tsp. tel: 650933. fax: 650960.

Sakura Residence 9, Inya Rd, Kamaryut Tsp. tel: 525001. fax: 525002.

The Grand Mee Ya Hta Executive Residence 372, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Pabedan Tsp. tel 951-256355 (25 lines).

Yangon City Villa (Residence) Pyay Rd, 8 Mile Junction, MYGN, tel: 513101

ACCOUNTANTS AND CONSULTANTS

Charted Certified, Certified Public Accountants. tel: 09-501-0563. drtinlatt@matglobal.com

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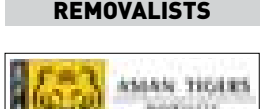
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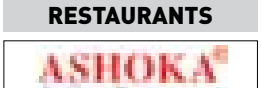
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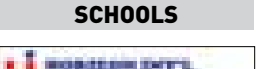
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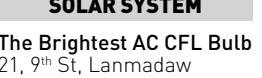


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Injury plagued Myanmar enters Suzuki Cup with a roster of unproven talent

By Aung Si Hein

THE Myanmar National team limped into Bangkok on November 21 before the start of the 2012 AFF Suzuki Cup, racked by injuries that could prove to be costly.

The roster has dwindled to 22 players due to injuries and head coach Park Sung Hwa has been forced to select unproved talent to make up for those who will watch from the sidelines.

"There is a football generation gap in Myanmar. We do not have many good players to choose from. So when lots of first-rate players cannot play, the team suffers," Mr Park said, who added that his squad will quickly need to focus on team building to find success with new player additions.

"Our target so far is to reach semi-finals," Mr Park said of his expectations.

Among those sitting out the tournament is striker Kyaw Ko Ko who is suffering from a nagging ankle injury sustained in October. Fellow striker Soe Min Oo will not make the trip either.

Striker Yan Paing has been forced back into action earlier than anticipated after suffering an injury of his own. His lack of training has left him out of rhythm with the team.

Experienced midfielders Yazar Win Thein, Pai Soe and Kyaw Zayar Win will also be out because of injuries.

Kyi Lin has provided a silver lining amidst the team's health issues. The winger from Yangon United FC has made the successful transition to midfielder. His play has been recognised by Goal.com



Members of the Myanmar national team and Fagiano Okayama fight for a header during a preparation match on November 15 prior to the AFF Suzuki Cup 2012. Pic: Boothie

and ESPNSTAR.com who have posted his highlight reel worthy goals.

Myanmar, unlike other teams competing in the Cup, did not have the chance to prepare by playing against a stronger team. The MFF invited squads from the Middle East and Africa's Cameroon but were declined.

Instead Myanmar will have to be satisfied with the matches they played against Fagiano Okayama of the Japan League's 2nd division. The matches, played in Yangon on November 15 and 17, both resulted in draws. Though Myanmar would have liked to come away with a win, the results were a marked improvement from the 6-0 drubbing Okayama gave Myanmar when the two sides met on September 20.

In addition to focusing on building teamwork to compensate for missing players, Mr Park is counting on early scouting of opponents and the support of Myanmar fans to aid the team's performance.

In anticipation for meeting Vietnam the group stage, Mr Park and coaching staff traveled to Hanoi on November 3 to watch the friendly between Vietnam and Malaysia.

Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) has arranged to bring 50 Myanmar football fans to Thailand through sponsorships with Kanbawza Bank, Sky Net and Max Energy.

MFF has also arranged for free tickets for Myanmar nationals residing in Thailand with the hopes that fans will swarm Rajamangala

and Muang Thong stadiums in Bangkok to act as a "twelfth man." The AFF Suzuki Cup 2012 will feature teams from eight South East Asian countries. The tournament will be held in

Thailand and Malaysia from November 24 to December 22. Myanmar are in Group A where they will be up against hosts Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Myanmar roster for AFF Suzuki Cup

No	Name	Pos	Club
1	Thiha Sithu	GK	AYEYAWADY UNITED FC
2	Kyaw Zin Phyto	GK	MAGWE FC
3	Han Win Aung	DEF	KBZ
4	Zaw Min Tun	DEF	MAGWE FC
5	Aung Hein Kyaw	DEF	ZEYARSHWE MYAY FC
6	Zaw Zaw Oo	DEF	AYEYAWADY UNITED FC
7	Aung Zaw	DEF	HANTHARWADY FC
8	Thein Than Win	DEF	KBZ
9	Pyaye Phyto Aung	DEF	YANGON UNITED FC
10	Thet Naing	DEF	YADANABON FC
11	Moe Win	DEF	NAY PYI TAW FC
12	Aung Moe	MF	HANTHARWADY FC
13	Mai Aih Naing	MF	KBZ
14	Yan Aung Kyaw	MF	YANGON UNITED FC
15	Khin Maung Lwin	MF	YANGON UNITED FC
16	Phyo Ko Ko Thein	MF	AYEYAWADY UNITED FC
17	Naing Lin Oo	MF	AYEYAWADY UNITED FC
18	Kyi Lin	MF	YANGON UNITED FC
19	David Htan	MF	YANGON UNITED FC
20	Kaung Sithu	STRIKER	YANGON UNITED FC
21	Yan Paing	STRIKER	YADANABON FC
22	Soe Kyaw Kyaw	STRIKER	YADANABON FC

McGrady-mania as Chinese basketball season starts

BEIJING – Tracy McGrady was scheduled to make one of the most hotly anticipated debuts in Chinese basketball history on November 25 after a fevered build-up in which he caused a near-riot at one of his sell-out appearances.

The hype surrounding McGrady, a former teammate of Yao Ming, has sent excitement soaring for the start of the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA), which will feature three former NBA All Stars for the first time.

McGrady, 33, who played with Yao at the Houston Rockets during a 15-year NBA career, and fellow All Stars Stephon Marbury and Gilbert Arenas head a cohort of 28 ex-NBA players who have made a new start in China.

Their presence has helped persuade fans to ignore hefty price rises and snap up tickets for the 17-strong league, which precedes an eight-team championship play-off in February.

"McGrady will ensure that attendance in every arena throughout China will rise," commented Basketball Pioneers, China's leading hoops newspaper.

"McGrady is playing a huge role in raising the brand image and marketing power of the CBA."



Former NBA player Tracy McGrady of the Qingdao Eagles dribbling the ball during a game in Qingdao, south China's Shandong province on November 20. Pic: AFP

Marbury's Beijing Ducks, the reigning champions, open the season against Yao-owned Shanghai Sharks on Saturday, while the Fujian Sturgeons will

host McGrady's Qingdao Eagles on Sunday in a game which sold out weeks ago.

McGrady caused a sensation when he signed for Qingdao last month,

selling out each of the club's three pre-season exhibition matches against a team of American players.

The seven-time NBA All Star scored 34 points in 28

minutes in the second game, but there were angry scenes when he played only 98 seconds of the final warm-up this week.

Fans hurled water bottles and other objects and chanted for McGrady to play, bringing the game to an early halt as the shooting guard was ushered from the court by security guards, the Sina.com web portal said.

"China is the place where I have the most loyal and passionate fans. I played in the NBA for 15 years. The time was just perfect for me to come here to play," McGrady told reporters earlier.

"I look forward to building chemistry with my Chinese team-mates and seeing what will happen. I look forward to bringing a championships here."

In Qingdao, a coastal city famous for its beer, McGrady will team with centre D.J. Mbenga who won two NBA championships with the Los Angeles Lakers in 2009 and 2010.

He will look to follow the trail blazed by Marbury, who last year led Beijing to their first ever CBA title and was honored with a bronze statue outside Wukesong arena, the basketball venue of the 2008 Olympics.

Marbury, now embarking on his fourth season in the

CBA, has also traded on his huge popular appeal to expand his Starbury line of sports shoes in China, branded with a snappy "love is love" advertisement campaign.

The 35-year-old multi-millionaire had a reputation for bad off-court behavior in the NBA, much like Arenas, who has signed for the Sharks after a two-week try-out.

Nicknamed "Agent Zero," Arenas, 30, was a three-time All Star in the NBA, but was suspended in 2009 after he brought a handgun into the locker room of the Washington Wizards, his team at the time.

The Sharks are coached by former NBA coach Dan Panaggio and also include ex-Charlotte Hornets power forward D.J. White and two Chinese national team players, point guard Liu Wei and former US collegiate centre Max Zhao.

Beijing's title defence will also be contested by seven-time CBA champions Guangdong Southern Tigers, who have been bolstered by the return of power forward Yi Jianlian from the Dallas Mavericks.

Guangdong, who lost to Beijing in last year's finals, have also signed NBA veterans Ike Diogu and Terrence Williams. – AFP



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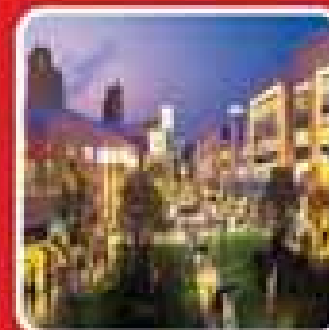
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After 40 years of pain, new hope

YANGON – For an hour, the Myanmar fans were solidly behind their national team with the noise of their cheers and drums spiking whenever the players surged towards the opposing Laos goal.

But as the game went on, and it became clear the players would settle for the 0-0 draw that would take them to Southeast Asia's AFF Suzuki Cup, the crowd turned on their own team.

Unthinkably, they threw their support behind the visitors from tiny, neighbouring Laos, urging them to score a goal that could have knocked Myanmar out of the qualifying tournament and further into the international wilderness.

It never came, but as the final whistle blew, cheers for Laos mixed with boos for the home team as the fans, disaffected by Myanmar's four-decade slide to a record low in the world rankings, shuffled out of the stadium.

In the immediate aftermath of last month's match at Thuwanna Youth Training Centre Stadium, Myanmar's coach Park Sung-Hwa defended the pragmatic approach.

"The supporters wanted us to win but you must understand the circumstances because a draw was enough for us to go through," said the South Korean.

"They supported us well during the tournament but maybe the fans were angry because we didn't attack at the end. We understand that the fans wanted us to win but in the end, we got a result that suited us."

It seemed a reasonable explanation from Park, who will now guide Myanmar's "White Angels" in their opening Suzuki Cup match against Vietnam in Bangkok on November 25.

But the approach did not find favour among Myanmar's proud supporters, who have watched their team's steady decline blamed on a lack of support and facilities, and widespread, crushing poverty.

"Myanmar has a very big history in football that our fans are very proud about," said Ye Naing Win, the chief editor of Myanmar Special, a weekly Burmese-language sports newspaper, and who attended the Laos game.

"Our fans are very passionate about the national team so it is hard for them to understand why we can't get to that level again."

Myanmar stood among the best in Asia from the mid-1960s to the 1970s, which is regarded as the country's golden age for football.



Myanmar and Laos players battle to a 0-0 draw during the qualifying round of the AFF Suzuki Cup on October 13 in Yangon. Pic: Boothie

In that era, led by legendary coach Sein Hlaing, Myanmar won the Asian Games gold medal in 1966 and 1970, and triumphed in five consecutive editions of the Southeast Asian Peninsular Games from 1965 to 1973.

Myanmar also finished runners-up at the 1968 Asian Cup and qualified for the Munich Olympics in 1972, where they won the Fair Play Award.

However, since then moments of brightness have been rare: reaching the 1993 SEA Games final, and the ASEAN Football Championship semi-finals in 2004.

The low point came two years ago, when they were thrashed 7-1 by Vietnam at the Suzuki Cup and finished bottom of their group.

"Our fans felt very sad, disappointed and angry at our bad performance in 2010," admits Soe Moe Kyaw, media and communications director of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).

There is a determination to do better this year after the appointment of Park, who guided Korean club Pohang Steelers to the Asian Club Championships in 1997 and 1998 and led his country's under-23s to regional titles in 2002 and 2004.

With his salary reportedly paid by a Korean multi-national company,

the 57-year-old was installed as Myanmar's coach earlier this year.

He's now trying to bring out the best in Myanmar's promising young players, who last year finished third in the SEA Games' under-23 competition and reached the semis of the under-19 and under-16 AFF Championships.

"The good thing about him is that he is a realistic coach," says Ye Naing Win. "He has been in the job for a while so he knows about the situation of the team and the problems with Myanmar football."

Park knows there is plenty of work to be done if Myanmar is to avoid embarrassment against Vietnam, Thailand or the Philippines in the Suzuki Cup's group stages.

"We have a lot of good players available but we have to train them to play and work as a team," he said.

"We are working on their fitness and stamina and also on their tactics and organisation to ensure that they are ready to play in the final round."

With three wins and a draw during the qualifiers, Myanmar rose 28 spots from a historic low of 184th to 156th in the latest world rankings. But to sustain the improvement much work is needed, particularly at grass roots.

"Not just football but every sports

sector in our country has struggled because of lack of government support in recent years," laments the MFF's Soe Moe Kyaw.

"Because of our lack of football infrastructure in Myanmar, there is not much opportunity for youngsters to learn football nowadays compared to the past."

Political developments give reason for hope, with formerly isolated Myanmar's opening-up to the outside world expected to bring extra sponsorship.

"Obviously there are companies queuing up now to get into Myanmar and to promote their brands," said Ian Mathie, senior vice-president, football, for Southeast Asia and Australia at marketing and media company World Sport Group.

"Football sponsorship is a proven way to attract interest and to gain market share."

But for now, coach Park is realistic about the task facing his team at the Suzuki Cup.

"It will be very difficult because Myanmar have never beaten Vietnam or Thailand in the tournament and we need to get a win against one of them to progress to the semi-finals," he said.

"But we are preparing as well as we possibly can and we hope that we can do well." - AFP

Briefs

Taylor sets US college scoring record

DES MOINES, Iowa – Grinnell College's Jack Taylor set an American collegiate record by scoring 138 points in Grinnell's 179-104 victory over Faith Baptist Bible on November 20. The 1.77 metre (five-foot-10) sophomore took 71 shots from the three point range and made 27 of them. He was 52-of-108 from the field overall. Taylor had 58 points at halftime.

The previous NCAA single-game record was held by Bevo Francis of Rio Grande with 113 in 1954.

Grinnell College, a Division III school, has led the country in scoring in 15 of its last 17 seasons. - AFP

US university rescinds Armstrong's degree

MEDFORD, Massachusetts – An American university has stripped disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong of an honorary degree after a unanimous vote by the school's trustees.

Tufts University, located in a suburb just outside Boston, Massachusetts, rescinded the doctor of humane letters bestowed on the former American icon six years ago.

The university said on November 21 that while respecting Armstrong's cancer-fighting efforts, the board concluded his "actions as an athlete are inconsistent with the values of the university."

Armstrong had his seven Tour de France titles taken away after the United States Anti-doping Agency disclosed evidence that he used performance-enhancing drugs.

For more coverage of the AFF Suzuki Cup see page 54

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