

## As report deadline looms, Letpadaung protesters prepare for dashed hopes

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

AN UNEASY calm has descended over the Letpadaung issue, as residents and activists await the outcome of the commission of investigation set up by the government after a series of violent clashes.

The commission, chaired by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, is due to submit its report by January 31. At a press conference on December 6, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi pledged that her investigation would serve the long-term interests of the country but she also warned that not everyone would be satisfied with the commission's findings.

Wanbao Mining, a Chinese company, has run the copper mine at Salingyi township in Sagaing Region since 2010, in cooperation with army-owned Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Company Limited (UMEHL). A planned US\$1 billion expansion would consume thousands of acres of farmland.

Since then, conflicts have broken out between the mine's operators and local villagers over issues such as land acquisition, compensation, and the mine's environmental, social, and health impacts. A sharp escalation occurred on November 29, 2012, when police violently dispersed protesters, including monks, who were demanding a halt to the expansion. The police and government subsequently apologised for the incident.

On December 1, the Office of President U Thein Sein formed a 30-member investigation

More page 4

Farmers from the Letpadaung area wait near the mine site for talks with a member of parliament from the National League for Democracy on September 13, 2012. *Pic: AFP*

## Govt declares ceasefire in Kachin

President tells donor forum political talks with other ethnic groups will begin soon, hopes KIO will attend

By Hla Hla Htay and Win Ko Ko Latt

THE government on January 18 announced an end to a military offensive against Kachin Independence Army soldiers in the face of growing international concern.

The pledge came hours

after the parliament passed a motion calling for a halt to the fighting, which has left dozens reported dead and marred optimism about the country's political reforms.

"The commander in chief reaffirmed that the Tatmadaw will follow the command of the president not to carry out offensive attacks except in self-defence," the

Ministry of Information said in a statement.

The halt was to take effect from 6am on January 19.

"But in an armed conflict, both sides need to halt attacks to cool tensions," the statement added, accusing the KIA of launching dozens of attacks on roads and the rail network.

Speaking at the opening of

the two-day First Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum in Nay Pyi Taw on January 19, President U Thein Sein reiterated an earlier offer of peace talks with leaders of the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), the only major armed ethnic group not to agree a ceasefire with the government.

"I want to invite my colleagues from the KIO to come to the peace meeting from here. I believe KIO will soon join in the peace process. To seek a peaceful solution to the conflict ... the KIO will need to reciprocate in a similar way," he told hundreds of Myanmar and

More page 4

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16-page inside ▶



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## The Mail Box



Dear editor,

I wish to compliment the article about SEA Games budget ("SEA Games: Breaking Myanmar's budget?" December 24-30, 2012) by Tim McLaughlin and Aung Si Hein.

I have always opposed wasteful spending and I was unhappy from the beginning when the previous government decided to stage the SEA Games. The only reason behind this foolish and whimsical decision, which was made by one man, was to show off to neighbouring countries that Myanmar is not as poor as they think.

It is indeed a great waste of state or sponsors' money without any consideration for the majority of our people, who have no access to electricity, healthcare and education. It is a great burden for the new government and I only hope that it has learned a lesson and does not make such a foolish mistake at the expense of the people again.

What can we expect out of the SEA Games?

Debts for the people, sir.  
Myo Aung (retired)

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

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# Philippines: the other good news story



WE all know the ancient Roman city of Pompeii was destroyed when nearby Mount Vesuvius erupted and buried the place under about 5 metres of hot ash. Most of us, however, are unaware that the people of Pompeii realised what was coming and all but a few reckless souls fled before the eruption, leaving it a ghost town.

Somehow, that fact can't shift the emotive myth of the city's entire population being suddenly engulfed and sealed in stone for all antiquity.

The same goes for the persistent myth that the

Philippines is the region's basketcase: a dysfunctional place, saddled with rampant corruption and shackled by the medievalism of an all-powerful Roman Catholic Church.

This nonsense is relished in places like Singapore, where, as the BBC World Service, still entrapped in an outdated mindset, last week extolled the Red Dot's cleanliness, affluence and hyper-efficiency.

Well, ask subway riders in Singapore what they think of their hyper-efficient public transport system and prepare to purge your ears of bile and other nasty substances.

Let us not digress onto Singapore but instead return to our Roman-inspired mythology and seek to leaven its daftness with a huge pile

of steaming good news.

The Philippines is booming. So ignore Vietnam, whose malignant economy slides deeper into despair. And forget Myanmar, because, despite the uplifting reforms, it's too early to tell how things will pan out.

Instead, focus on the Philippines, and note how its economy, which has been growing at a steady 5 to 6 percent annually, hit 7.1pc in the last quarter and is projected to notch 8pc this year. The rating agencies have bumped its grade up to near investment level, the stock market rose 32.5pc last year, the peso is strong, inflation is under 3pc and overseas remittances have tripled to US\$20 billion.

What's not to love? Certainly, growing numbers

of foreign companies seeking alternatives to China and Vietnam are renewing interest in setting up manufacturing plants there.

Already, the Philippines has surged ahead of India in call-centre revenue, and Manila expects the back-office business to haul in \$25 billion by 2016.

On top of this, Manila has sealed a peace deal with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to end a 40-year insurgency in Mindanao, which will give another positive hike to the economy.

President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino also faced down stiff opposition from leading Catholic troglodytes and managed to push through a Reproductive Health Bill, which took effect on January 17. The long-overdue but

sensitive measure authorises free contraceptives, family planning, and reproductive health classes in schools.

Experts say it won't curtail the fun, but it will reduce the unsustainably high birth by as much as a third.

Noynoy has also garnered kudos for his fight against corruption, and his campaign against tax evasion, particularly among the elite families - one of which is his own Aquino clan.

His tenacity in forcing out the discredited chief justice and taking legal action against his venal predecessor, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, also won Noynoy acclaim, as did his firmness over the territorial disputes with China.

Of course, a lot still needs to be done, especially given

that two out of five Filipinos survives on less than \$2 a day. To remedy that the Philippines must become more open to investment and must amend its laws to make it easier for foreign companies to come in and compete with the elite's vested interests.

Currently, foreigners cannot own land and in most industrial sectors they are restricted to a 40pc stake.

Whether Aquino will have time to push through these changes before he leaves office in 2016 remains to be seen.

But in the meantime we should ignore the barmy myths and relish the sunshine of success.

As the recent adverts promoting tourism there rightly extol: "It's more fun in the Philippines." It really is.

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Migrant workers sort fish on a Thai fishing boat in Thailand's Rayong province. Pic: AFP

## Thailand agrees to April extension for worker registration program

By Bill O'Toole

AFTER more than a month of wrangling, the Thai government last week agreed to extend the deadline for undocumented migrant workers to register for official work papers until April 15, sources familiar with the process told *The Myanmar Times*.

The previous deadline expired on December 14, leaving an estimated one million workers, the majority of whom come from Myanmar, with no means of legalising their employment status. More than one million had registered since the program, known as National Verification, was introduced.

The January 15 decision

was made following a meeting between Thai officials from the Ministry of Employment and a delegation from the Department of Labour, led by Director General U Myo Aung. The two agencies have met more than a dozen times since the previous deadline expired.

"This is a very happy day for Myanmar workers," said Daw Khin Lu, a special adviser in the office of the director general.

While the government and migrants' rights advocacy groups applauded the decision, questions remain over how the policy will be implemented, particularly whether it will simply end up lining the pockets of brokers and corrupt government officials.

"The challenge now for

Myanmar and Thailand is in implementation of the policy in terms of ensuring transparency, regulation of any agents involved in the process to keep costs low and avoid debt bondage, and awareness raising for the workers concerned," said Mr Andy Hall, an expert on migrant workers in Thailand and regular adviser to the government in Nay Pyi Taw.

Before the previous deadline, the process for migrant registration was notorious for its corruption and extremely high costs.

Mr Hall and Jackie Pollack of the Mae Sot-based MAP Foundation confirmed that workers normally paid more than US\$500 to register under the National Verification

program, in many cases borrowing the money from local crime syndicates.

In an open letter to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Migrant Workers' Rights Network called the process "extortionate in practice" and urged the democracy icon to take action.

Sources familiar with the situation confirmed that all undocumented workers in Thailand are eligible to participate in the new National Verification program. Additionally, migrant workers' children under 15 years of age can be included on the same passport as their parents, which should lower the financial burden on families. Workers can register at 10 centres throughout Thailand.

## More unrest in NLD ranks over assembly preparations

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

ABOUT 2000 National League for Democracy members in Ayeyarwady Region's Maubin township staged a protest last week over the selection of delegates for the party's national assembly, a number of sources confirmed.

Members from Maubin and nearby villages demonstrated because, they said, the head of the commission tasked with organising the assembly in the township, U Thaung Aye, had abused his authority to ensure commission members were selected to attend the NLD's national assembly.

"There were about 2000 people who demonstrated in Maubin to show their dissatisfaction," said Ko Nay Myo Htwe, press officer for the party's Maubin office.

Maubin residents said members from about 50 villages took part in the demonstration, which ended at 7pm, holding posters describing U Thaung Aye's alleged misdeeds.

U Htein from Maubin's ward three said the demonstration had been preceded by "big arguments" between party members and the commission chairman over how the township assembly was managed.

"Some members who are actually involved in the party's activities are not satisfied with [U Thaung Aye] and want to reveal the truth," he said.

He said it was the second demonstration in the township over the assembly.

Following the

demonstration, party patron U Tin Oo met U Thaung Aye and other members of the commission on January 18, said U Than Oo, a social activist who has tried to mediate between the two groups.

"Neither side will talk to each other now – they won't even look at each other – so U Tin Oo and some other party leaders tried to solve this problem but U Tin Oo met only one side, not the demonstrators," U Than Oo said.

He said that some respected Maubin residents had already tried to resolve the dispute before the demonstration. Members of about a dozen social groups, many formed by former NLD members, took part in the demonstration as "eyewitnesses", he said.

"Actually about half of the people were real demonstrators and the other half were their supporters. Some villagers were holding the posters and they sat on the ground for the whole day," he said. "We got involved to try and solve this problem through negotiation, without further conflict. But both sides just say the other is wrong."

Similar disputes have erupted around the country, particularly in Ayeyarwady, Magwe and Mandalay regions. The NLD's first national assembly was originally scheduled for late 2012 but the party's head office said recently it is preparing to hold the assembly in late February. Party spokesperson U Nyan Win did not respond to requests for comment last week.

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# China urges Kachin ceasefire, complains over border shelling

By Ma Ning

THE Chinese government has called for a ceasefire in Kachin State after a fourth bomb landed in Chinese territory last week.

A bomb landed about 500 metres from China's border with Myanmar on January 15, while three other bombs fell inside China on December 30, China's Foreign Ministry said. There have been no reports of casualties or significant damage.

"China has lodged urgent representation to Myanmar over the incident, to express grave concerns and dissatisfaction," Mr Hong Lei, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said at a daily press briefing on January 17.

China has demanded that Myanmar thoroughly investigate the January 15 incident and take every necessary step to prevent similar incidents from happening again, Mr Hong said.

He urged both the Tatmadaw

and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) to exercise the "utmost restraint" and conclude a ceasefire soon.

The rebuke from China follows a protest by an estimated 1500 Chinese Kachin in Yunnan Province on January 10, Kachin State Day. The protesters demanded a ceasefire and said they would cross the border to help Kachin in Myanmar if a ceasefire was not agreed, *The Beijing News* reported.

Chinese Kachin are known as Jingpo, one of 56 ethnic groups officially recognised by the Chinese government.

In Myanmar Jinghpaw is the main subgroup of the Kachin people, a generalised term for the six ethnic minority groups in Kachin State. The terms Kachin, Jingpo and Jinghpaw are used interchangeably for the main subgroup.

The protest took place in Nabang, a small border town in Yunnan. Nabang faces Laiza, the headquarters of the Kachin

Independence Organisation (KIO).

Residents of Nabang and Laiza have established strong economic ties through brisk border trade since the KIO moved its headquarters to Laiza in the 1990s. The amicable relationship is further strengthened by shared cultural roots and cross-border marriages.

However, the fighting has ended much of the trade and put Nabang near the heart of the 20-month conflict. Earlier last week, the KIO alleged that the Tatmadaw fired artillery shells into Laiza, killing three civilians and injuring four others.

China's Foreign Ministry confirmed at the briefing that local authorities had taken effective measure to maintain stability in the border areas.

State-run newspaper *Global Times* reported that the local Chinese government has set up a military command office in Nabang along with four refugee settlement sites that

can accommodate more than 10,000 people, in anticipation of a huge influx of refugees from Kachin State if the conflict further intensifies.

Mr Hong said at an earlier press briefing on January 14 that China was following developments in Kachin State "closely ... and hopes that the Myanmar government and relevant parties would ease the tension through peace negotiation, prevent further escalation of the conflict and properly solve their dispute".

Like a number of ethnic minority groups in Myanmar, the Kachin have long sought greater autonomy from the central government. However, the KIO is the only non-state armed group that has not reached a ceasefire agreement with President U Thein Sein's administration. A 17-year ceasefire broke down in June 2011 and since then the fighting is thought to have caused thousands of military and civilian deaths.

From page 1

## Letpadaung report

team to establish the facts and to look into whether the Letpadaung expansion should continue and file a report by the end of December. Two days later it was re-established with 16 members and given a month longer to investigate.

As the commission prepares to issue its report, public interest has intensified.

"We expect *Amy* Suu to do her best for us. We don't blame her and won't hate her if the outcome doesn't meet our wishes. We know *Amy* Suu doesn't have the power to stop the project completely," said Ma Thwe Thwe Win of Wattmhaty village, using the Myanmar word for mother to refer to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

"We hope for the best, but we're prepared for the worst," she added.

Like Ma Thwe Thwe Win, most residents in the Letpadaung area have suspended their protest out of respect for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as they await the commission's findings. Many say they want the mine closed, and will not negotiate with Wanbao or with UMEHL, both of whom they distrust.

On January 11, the commission announced that it had engaged two experts to review the contracts signed between UMEHL and Wanbao and received a preliminary report from the Myanmar Environmental Science Group (MESG), which it formed to look into the ecology, social aspects, cultural heritage, project management and development analysis at Letpadaung. Commission members have visited villages in the area and worked with the government to ensure those injured in the November 29 attack receive proper medical treatment.

"We're satisfied with the commission's activities. But

we don't think they've had enough time for a thorough investigation. I think there will be confrontation between the government and the public if the commission doesn't decide in the people's favour," said Sayadaw U Sandar Thiri, of San Mya Wadi Monastery in Zeedaw village.

Activists who led the protest campaign in Yangon and elsewhere say they are ready to act in response to the commission's findings.

"Local and international opinion accepts that the project should be stopped. We are ready to continue our campaign," said Ko Ye Lin, who faces trial in connection with the protest.

Others have already thrown down the gauntlet in advance of the January 31 report.

"We don't trust U Thein Sein or Daw Suu. I think Daw Suu is on the cronies' side," said Ko Aung Soe, a member of the Public Service Network (Yangon).

"We have some hope of getting the answer we want, so we're we preparing for the best. We don't want to say more about our plans now," said Ko Wai Lu, another Public Service Network member.

Wanbao Mining Company says it plans to invest \$1 billion at Letpadaung over 30 years. The government says it will receive 16.8 percent of the profits, UMEHL 13.8pc and Wanbao will take 13.3pc. It is not clear where the remaining 56.1pc will go.

U Maung Maung Tint, project director of Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper, told a press conference on September 26 that the expansion will allow the mine to produce about 100,000 tonnes of 99.9pc pure copper a year, while 78pc of workers will be Myanmar.

However, the villages of Wattmhay, Zeekone, Seltel and Kantkaw will be displaced by the project. The companies say they have paid more than \$5 million in compensation

in respect of more than 6000 acres.

China's ambassador to Myanmar has said his government would accept the outcome of the Letpadaung Investigation Commission if it is balanced and accurate, but has also warned that if the project is cancelled, it could damage the climate for foreign direct investment.

As the January 31 deadline approaches, residents in the camps they opened last month in Tone Ywa village are biding their time. "People from 16 villages have come to stay in the camps, but not to mount a protest campaign. We await the answer," said Ma Aye Aye Khing of Tone Ywa village. "If they won't stop the project, we will fight as hard as we can to stop it," she said.

## Ceasefire in Kachin

foreign delegates at the forum.

The president thanked donor countries and organisations that have contributed to the peace process and said the government will "continue to do everything necessary to turn a ceasefire agreement into lasting peace".

He said political discussions with ethnic groups will begin "in the near future".

"I want to stress that we will continue to try to achieve peace in the country. We will start political dialogue with all 10 major ethnic armed groups that have concluded ceasefire agreements with the government in the near future," he said.

"It is very important to create job opportunities in order to improve socioeconomic conditions" in areas dominated by ethnic minority groups, he said.

The conflict between the government troops and the KIA had escalated recently with the use of air strikes by the

military, prompting the United States and United Nations to voice concern.

The exact number of casualties is unknown, but the government said on January 18 that 35 soldiers had been killed and 190 injured in a series of ambushes by the rebels since 2011, in the first official death toll for the military's side.

President U Thein Sein's reformist government said a year ago it had ordered the military to halt offensives against ethnic minority rebels but the Kachin conflict continued, raising doubts about his control over the armed forces.

The government has said the recent strikes aimed to regain control of an area about 11 kilometres (7 miles) from the KIA headquarters in Laiza, on the Chinese border, in order to prevent rebel attacks on transport routes and government troops.

"The KIA also needs to stop attacking and blocking the highways and railways to show sympathy for the people suffering because of the renewed fighting in Kachin State," the government statement said.

Earlier on January 18 a proposal to halt the clashes and resume ceasefire talks was passed by a voice vote in the lower chamber of parliament, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann announced.

"To implement the peace process, the proposal was approved to urge the responsible organisations and the government to start peace dialogue as soon as possible after immediately stopping the fighting between the KIO/KIA and government troops," said Thura U Shwe Mann.

It was unclear whether the halt later announced by the government was in direct response to the motion, which easily cleared a legislature dominated by the military and its political allies. – *With AFP*



## Parliament vows to investigate writer over 'above the law' accusations

By Win Ko Ko Latt

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw last week approved a motion to form a commission to investigate the identity of a blogger who criticised MPs for an earlier vote on changes to the Constitutional Tribunal Law.

Dr Soe Yin, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Kamaryut and a member of the Hluttaw Rights Committee, submitted the "urgent" proposal on January 17 to investigate the identity of the author of the article,

**'We agree criticism [should be allowed] but the article included insults to MPs.'**

who goes by the penname Dr Seik Phwar.

The article, titled "Hluttaw above the law?", suggested MPs had not acted in conformity to the constitution when they approved amendments to the Union Auditor General Law and Constitutional Tribunal Law on January 14.

The writer cited the change that will require the president to negotiate with the speakers of the lower and upper house when choosing the chair of the nine-member tribunal. Section 321 of the constitution states that the "president shall submit the candidature list of ... one

member from among nine members to be assigned as the chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal of the union, to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for its approval".

Dr Soe Yin, a former professor of Yangon University, said the article could "cause misunderstanding among citizens and the international community about the hluttaw's decision".

He said Pyidaungsu Hluttaw MPs were working under the constitution on legislation and other issues.

He said there had been no breach of the constitution as the changes had been decided through a vote of MPs under the supervision of the speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

After reading the article, MPs had asked the Hluttaw Rights Committee to take action against the author in accordance with parliamentary procedure, he said.

"We agree criticism [should be allowed] but the article included insults to MPs," said Dr Soe Yin.

But not all supported the motion. U Ohn Kyaing, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative from the National League for Democracy, said he did not agree with Dr Seik Phwar's criticism but in a democratic system he had the right to express his opinion.

"I am a democrat and I believe in democracy. Everyone has different opinions. For me, asking if the hluttaw is above the law was not a problem," he said. — *Translated by Zar Zar Soe*

## MPs ignore president on tribunal law changes

Amendments are unconstitutional, U Thein Sein warns the hluttaw

By Soe Than Lynn

THE long-running dispute between the government and hluttaw over the Constitutional Tribunal continued last week, with the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw ignoring warnings from the president and deputy attorney general that proposed changes to the Constitutional Tribunal Law are unconstitutional.

The president had returned amendments approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in November, rather than sign them into law. In a statement read out on January 14, he said that any law contrary to the constitution will be automatically annulled and several of the amendments were unconstitutional. He said the changes would undermine the independence of the judiciary.

Some of the changes also appear to introduce ambiguity as to whether the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal is final, contrary to section 324 of the constitution. Two Tatmadaw MPs and U Ye Tun from the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party also spoke out against some of the proposed changes.

However, U Mya Nyein of the Joint Bill Committee responded that the changes were in conformity with the constitution. Addressing the amendment that the president must consult with the upper and lower house speakers before appointing the tribunal chairman, he said: "There may be controversies in the constitution. We inserted this point because we think it is better if the president and two speakers work together selecting the nine members or a chairman. Inserting this supplement does not harm the original primary objective of the constitution."

"Moreover, reporting back to the speakers who have selected the members of the tribunal only means reporting on what the members have



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and President U Thein Sein. The parliament and president appear on a collision course over controversial changes to the Constitutional Tribunal Law. *Pics: AFP*

done, not taking instructions."

All four amendments were approved by MPs, although not without some opposition: one amendment was passed 332 to 236 votes, with 28 MPs abstaining. The widest margin for an amendment was 387 to 186 votes, with 37 abstaining.

The changes will become law in seven days, with or without the president's signature. The government has not yet indicated how it will respond, and, with the no replacements yet confirmed for the Constitutional Tribunal members who resigned in September, a verdict from the tribunal appears out of the question.

In his discussion, U Ye Tun warned his counterparts that they should not "forcefully" enact laws that do not conform to the constitution.

"It [can] become a habit and lead to intractable constitutional

problems. Problems will be worse and worse because there is no competent, unbiased and independent Constitutional Tribunal and decisions of the tribunal over constitutional disputes are no longer final," he said.

"Everybody knows that when we pass a law, the law should not be contrary to the constitution. If we found that the constitution cannot serve the interests of people or is contrary to them, we will have to try to amend the original clauses of it."

Discussing the amendment that appeared to conflict with section 321, he said: "If this amendment was meant to replace section 321 of the constitution, I would second it. But because it is [for a law and] contrasts with the constitution, I second that the opinion of the president is correct."

— *Translated by Thit Lwin*

## Quick return to negotiating table needed: Kachin MP Daw Dwe Bu

By Soe Than Lynn

THE Pyithu Hluttaw unanimously approved an urgent proposal to stop the fighting in Kachin State and return to the negotiating table as soon as possible on January 18. It immediately issued a statement urging the government and Kachin Independence Organisation to resume stalled ceasefire talks.

The proposal was submitted by Daw Dwe Bu, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Injayang, and preceded a government announcement of a ceasefire later in the day.

She told *The Myanmar Times* on January 19 that while the unilateral ceasefire was a positive step "both sides need to start negotiations urgently" to dispel any doubt over whether the government was genuine in its offer.

"In my proposal, I urged them to stop the fighting urgently. It doesn't just mean to stop offensives, it means all fighting ... both sides need to negotiate as quickly as

possible," Daw Dwe Bu said.

"The fighting needs to stop so the people can sleep soundly, and after it stops it must not resume again. So I want them to discuss quickly about how they can withdraw their forces," she said.

"But I am satisfied that [the government] stopped the fighting, whether it is stopped because of our proposal or for other reasons," she said.

U Khine Maung Yi, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Ahlone, said both sides needed to take responsibility for ensuring lower ranks adhere to a ceasefire.

"All must collaborate to get everlasting peace. The fighting in Kachin State is reportedly escalated by a confrontation between low ranks from both sides while they were patrolling and taking water at a creek. These cases started with low ranks but their superiors have to be responsible for these lower ranks. Leaders from both sides need to meet and discuss [a ceasefire] with each other," he said.

"Peace can only be achieved by

discussing seriously with peace-building groups and a third party that both groups trust. Anyway, the fighting has now stopped and I welcome that situation. It offers the promise of peace in the future."

There was also hope that the economy of Kachin State would quickly return to normal if the ceasefire holds. Because of the fighting, jade mines in Hpakant have been shuttered and a KIO-owned dam at Bukha has stopped supplying electricity to government-controlled areas of the state, including Myitkyina township.

"The government and KIO have problems for political reasons. But they have good businesses in Kachin State, they got a lot of money. One side got money from jade mining and the other got money from a power station. Locals have to survive without any income. We can't sleep or eat well. Now that the attacks have apparently stopped, we can breath a sigh of relief," one Myitkyina elder said, asking not to be named. — *Translated by Thiri Min Htun*

## Form new negotiating team: Amyotha Hluttaw

By Win Ko Ko Latt

KACHIN parliamentarian U Hket Htein Nan last week urged the government "to lay down basic principles" for peace talks that can help to build trust between the government and Kachin Independence Organisation.

U Hket Htein Nan, the Amyotha Hluttaw representative for Kachin State Constituency 1, also called for the Amyotha Hluttaw to form an intermediary team comprising union-level dignitaries, reliable parliamentarians and ethnic leaders who are widely respected, to move forward ceasefire talks and help displaced people.

The proposal was unanimously seconded by the Amyotha Hluttaw.

"More than 100,000 displaced people are in panic and in trouble in Kachin State and northern Shan State,"

said U Hket Htein Nan, who is also secretary of an ethnic affairs committee.

"Every time the hluttaw is in recess, we go to displaced people's camps to comfort them," he said.

When ethnic affairs committees, peace-building committees and other bodies were travelling around the country after the fifth parliament session, the people they met demanded more effective measures to quickly achieve internal peace, he said.

He said the outbreak of fighting in June 2011, which ended a 17-year ceasefire, had been unnecessary.

"The clashes broke out because of weaknesses at the lower levels. The government and KIA have no particular intention to fight [but the conflict] has lingered for more than one year," he said. "Things got worse because there were no mediators that both sides could trust." — *Translated by Thit Lwin*



# Destitute, farmers seek compensation

Farmers from Pathein complain over 2006 land confiscation for rubber plantation that left them out of work

By Noe Noe Aung

FARMERS in Ayeyarwady Region are demanding "reasonable" compensation for land confiscated for a rubber plantation in 2006.

About 300 acres of land was taken from farmers of Thauk Yay village, about 35 kilometres from Pathein on the Pathein-Maw Tin Soon Road, by the Department of Forestry, which then leased it for 30 years to Myanmar Aung Company. Farmers received K25,000 an acre from the company for some of the confiscated land – about one-eighth of the then-market price.

As well as some rice, they cultivated cashew, mango and banana on the land, and the loss of the land had a disastrous impact on their livelihoods, U Than

**'My children were forced to quit school and became labourers ... the company drove us off our land by force.'**

Win, who lost more than 7 acres of land used for perennial cultivation and 4 acres of farmland, told *The Myanmar Times* in mid January.

"We had more hillside (perennial) land than farmland [used to grow paddy]. But when the company gave money to us, they gave it to us only for some of the farmland," he said.

"My children were forced to quit school and became labourers and I also became a farm-hand. The company drove us off from our land by force. All I owned were the trees [on the land]. I couldn't take the trees along with me so not only did I not have anywhere to live, I didn't have any money."

He said the company was not using all of the confiscated land and was renting some of it to other farmers in the area.

Like U Than Win, the other residents of Thauk

Yay now earn a living through casual jobs.

Ko Pauk Phaw's father, U Ngwe Lay, lost 13 acres of perennially cultivated land and 3 acres of farmland to the company in 2006. He also received compensation of K25,000 an acre for the farmland.

"The farmland and hillside land was owned by my father. Since the company took the land, my parents have struggled to survive. Even though they are in their 70s, they have to do odd jobs to get by. I have my own family and I'm also a casual worker so I couldn't help my father. We didn't have money to cure him even when he was sick," he said, adding that U Ngwe Lay died in the first week of January.

U Than Win said the villagers were hopeful of getting reasonable compensation for the perennial cultivated land they lost so they could buy property elsewhere.

"We know that we can't get the land back. So we want to ask for reasonable compensation for our cultivated hillside land. If so we could buy some acres elsewhere we would have some way of making a living," he said.

U Zaw Lin Aung, manager of Myanmar Aung, said the issue of compensation should be discussed with the Department of Forestry.

"We made a contract with that department under the Ministry of Forestry legally and we are growing rubber under a contract," U Zaw Lin Aung told *The Myanmar Times* on January 11.

He said that the company gave some money to the farmers out of sympathy in 2006 but was not legally required to pay them anything.

"No one told us to give compensation to them. But we discussed with the township administration and we gave them K25,000 an acre out of sympathy," he said.

U Zaw Lin Aung said that the company signed a 30-year contract with the Ministry of Forestry in 2006. The company got permission to grow rubber on 2400 acres of land but he said to date it only used about one-third of the total



Farmers in front of Myanmar Aung Company's rubber plantation on the Pathein-Maw Tin Soon Road. Pic: Ko Taik

concession.

"They could ask for more compensation from government by showing proof that these lands were really theirs for many years, as they say," U Zaw Lin Aung said.

land is owned by the state.

"We cleared the trees to cultivate the land more than 20 years ago. We had to deal with malaria and other difficulties. We thought that meant we owned the land. We didn't

them for cultivation and we got a receipt. But in 2006, a manager from the company came to us and told to move out from the land as he said they had permission from the government to grow rubber," he added.

manager, when they gave money to us [in 2006], the people from township office took those receipts from us," she said.

The case is not unusual in Ayeyarwady Region: the region was the largest source of complaints submitted to a parliamentary commission formed last year to investigate land disputes.

Pathein resident U Soe Min said that rubber plantations began to appear about two decades ago and demand for land was high.

"Starting from about 1995, many people came here to grow rubber. Mostly they make rubber plantations along the Pathein-Chaungtha road. Later, growing rubber became a popular business and now many people want to buy land around here," said U Soe Min, who runs a business renting motorbikes.

**'No one told us to give compensation to them. But we discussed with the township administration and we gave them K25,000 an acre out of sympathy.'**

Like many farmers in Myanmar, the residents of Thauk Yay have no proof of ownership, although they worked the land for more than 20 years. They said they were unaware that under Myanmar law all

know that we had to pay tax," said U Chit Han, who lost nearly 7 acres altogether, including 2 acres of farmland.

"Sometimes authorities from the Department of Forestry came to us and we had to pay some money to them but we were never given a receipt. Starting from 2003-04, some people came to our village each year and we had to pay

Ma Moe Moe Win said local officials took their tax receipts, which are often used in Myanmar as evidence of ownership, when they received compensation in 2006.

"Altogether we had three receipts from the authorities. But after we were forced to sign in front of the people from the township administration office and a company



# After 50 years, farmers in Ayeyarwady end silence

By Soe Sandar Oo

THOUSANDS of farmers in Ayeyarwady Region staged a legal protest earlier this month over land confiscations and fishing rights, with one organiser declaring the demonstration ended "50 years of quiet".

U Thein Win, a farmer from Akel Chaung village in Pantanaw township who led the January 13 protest, said participants wanted to send a message to the government about how much they were suffering.

"We want our government to know that farmers and fisherman from Pantanaw, Nyaung Tone and Danaphyu in Ayeyarwady region are being treated unfairly when it comes to land and fish ponds. This protest is the first after 50 years of quiet. We have been quiet because we were afraid of the military government," he said.

"We expected more than 1000 people would join us but actually more than 2000 from the villages near Pantanaw joined the protest. Some came here by boat."

Organisers applied to the head of police in Pantanaw township on January 7 for permission to hold the protest from 9am to 11am on January 13. Police warned protesters to disperse at 11:30am.

They demanded that land confiscated from farmers and given to companies be returned, that dams be built and management of irrigation systems be improved "urgently", to allow fishermen to fish in ponds that have been licensed to companies and to release those fishermen arrested for taking fish from ponds.

The farmers say the confiscations have occurred over the past 18 years and at least 30,000 acres have been transferred to 10 companies under contracts signed by the military government. The original owners of the land have become tenant farmers, paying the companies 10 to 15 tins of rice an acre to rent the land.

"Now we need to pay money to cultivate crops on our own land. Those lands were confiscated by the authorities in the military period," U Thein Win said.

U Nay Myo Zin from the Myanmar Development of Social Life Network, who also helped arrange the protest, said the



Farmers at the January 13 protest in Pantanaw township. Pic: Soe Sandar Oo

socio-economic conditions for farmers in Ayeyarwady Region were gradually worsening. This year the low price of paddy and rice has been a factor, but he said the loss of land and fishing use rights was the major issue.

"We will do more activities like this in future if the authorities and companies do not give back the land before the start of the next paddy cultivation season," he said.

U Aung Zaw, a fisherman from Khanngwe Kabo village in Pantanaw township, said he knew of six fishermen who had been arrested for fishing in areas that had been licensed to companies and individuals. He said fish ponds are considered separate from land, which means land owners do not have the right to fish in their own ponds unless they have a letter of approval from the government.

"We have no place to catch fish," he said.

In 1992, the government started selling rights to fish ponds but cancelled the initiative after just two years, he said.

U Kyaw Aye Hlaing, the head of police in Pantanaw, refused to comment on the protest. "I have no right to talk about the protest to journalists. And I can't tell you what the law says if the protest goes over the time limit. And I can't say how many security we assigned for the protest," he said.

## Activists launch Dawei bike rally

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

CONSERVATION groups will this week hold a 10-day bicycle ride from Yangon to Dawei to increase awareness of environmental issues.

Cyclists will begin the campaign in Yangon on January 25 and expect to arrive in Dawei – the site of a proposed deep seaport and special economic zone – on February 3.

The campaign has been organised by the Green Bike Team with support from Dawei Development Association, Than Pahy Zayat Church, Gaia Sustainable Management Institute, Myanmar Youth for Christ, Gayhahita Environment Youth Network and Buddhist Youth Program (Myanmar).

On the ride cyclists will engage in a number of activities, including distributing pamphlets about the benefits of cycling, conducting talk shows on the impact of industrialisation, holding informal discussions with locals on preserving the environment, encouraging locals to join the cycle campaign and selling campaign T-shirts.

Anyone with a bike who is capable of riding at least 160 kilometres a day is welcome to join the trip, organisers said.

"Fifteen members of Green Bike Team will participate in this campaign. People can also join in along the trip. People who live along the route can join in as we go by," said Ko Thet Nai.

"Dawei Development Association will support the bike team when it arrives in Dawei. We're pleased the campaign can help to increase public awareness about special economic projects, including Dawei," said association member Ko Ye Lin Myint.

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# Don't expect a 'perfect' media law, warns press council

By Nan Tin Htwe

THE new media law will not be "perfect" but will act to protect journalists, officials from the interim Myanmar Press Council said last week.

"You can't expect the first media law to be perfect," council secretary U Kyaw Min Swe told reporters at the council's first press conference, which was held four months after it was established in September 2012.

**'There will be amendments [to the law] as time goes by.'**

"The first law will be [a compromise]. There will be amendments as times goes by," he said.

The much discussed draft law is now in its second incarnation, as Minister for Information U Aung Kyi ordered the original be rewritten shortly after he took office in August 2012.

U Kyaw Min Swe said despite the fact is would not be perfect, he believed the law would protect journalists. He cited a clause in the draft that forces any government ministry, non-government

organisation or private entity to consult with the press council before taking legal action in a media-related case.

"I think that fact will offer protection for journalists," said U Kyaw Min Swe, the chief editor of weekly journal *The Voice*, which until recently was defending itself against defamation charges filed by the Ministry of Mines.

Meanwhile, U Thiha Saw, head of the council's Information and Public Relations Committee, said the aim of media law was for Myanmar to have "one of the freest" media sectors in Southeast Asia.

He said the council is willing to work with government ministries but would maintain its independence from the government. "We will cooperate but remain independent," he said.

He said that a workshop will be held by the end of the month to collect advice and suggestions from journalists for the new draft law.

U Thiha Saw added that the draft law will include a provision that publishers must be registered but do not need a licence, adding that this could allow publications to be banned or suspended.

"Protection will go to three groups - journalists, publishers and also the people," he said.

# 'The president values role of the media'

Deputy Information Minister U Ye Htut on how he will approach his new position as spokesperson for President U Thein Sein and the government's media policy

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

What are your main duties in this newly created position? For example, will you have to accompany the president each time he is travelling either inside Myanmar or abroad?

We can see the president's policies and views in his speeches and interviews. If there are some more questions on his policies and views I will answer on behalf of him. As the president's spokesperson, whether I need to accompany him depends on the type and nature of trip.

**Previously there was no spokesperson for the president. What kind of policy will you employ in terms of releasing information from the President's Office?**

The Government Information Committee, formed on November 15, 2012, will publish the president's speeches, formal messages and official statements. These pieces of information will also be distributed through the President Office website and state-run media, and I will respond to questions about his remarks. When I answer requests for more information, I will respond with the guidance of senior officials so as not to make any mistakes about the policies of the president and his cabinet. I will instruct [journalists] to contact his relevant ministry if need be.

**Besides the President's Office website, how will you use the internet to distribute information in a timely manner?**

I will give the information [journalists] need by phone or email. If there is a piece of information that needs to be released urgently I will post it on my Facebook page.

**The president has often addressed the issues of ethnic minorities and the peace process. What are his latest views on the fighting in Kachin State?**

In his New Year message to



Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Htut (centre, speaking). Pic: Supplied

the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the president said that the peace efforts made in 2012 were the most significant development among Myanmar's political reforms, and resulted in ceasefire agreements with 10 armed ethnic groups.

In that message, the president said that although there has been a ceasefire there also needs to be political dialogue with them to find answers to the armed conflicts and get everlasting peace. And he added that the government has amended the framework for political dialogue - that means the government is open to the KIA and KIO participating in political dialogue. So not only the armed groups that have already reached ceasefires but also KIA/KIO can participate in political dialogue. It is the president's latest view on the issue.

**There's a great demand for accurate news from Kachin State at the moment. Have there been any further developments in terms of the KIA returning prisoners of war?**

It is being managed by a third party and that process is under way.

**Recently Nyote magazine had its licence revoked and six other journals were warned**

**because they didn't follow government regulations. This prompted some people to question the reforms being undertaken by the Ministry of Information. What's your view on that case?**

The revocation of the licence of *Nyote* magazine doesn't concern press freedom. It was banned because it deviated from the genre specified when it applied for a publishing licence.

**What is the future for state-run newspapers when private daily papers appear? Will there be any preference given to state papers when the president releases statements?**

Changing the state-run papers into public service newspapers is in line with democracy and improved transparency in Myanmar. When they become public service media, they should cover the information concern with different races, geography, cultures and lifestyles. They should also issue the information to readers seeing them as citizens instead of consumers or supporters of a particular group. They should aim for the content to reflect what is best about newspapers; reflecting different attitudes within society, presenting

quality news and writing in a dignified, accurate, fair and objective way.

We are beginning to meet the requirements of editorial freedom and financial independence. Since public service newspapers are just another kind of newspaper, they won't get any special favours.

**Are there plans to issue licences for private TV networks?**

It will happen after the enactment of the Broadcast Media Law, which is being drafted now.

**You've just taken up your spokesperson role. What challenges have you already faced and what do you anticipate?**

The president said many times that he values both the print and broadcast media sectors and he answered their questions seriously. The decisions to organise a government information committee and assign a spokesperson show his attitude towards the media and his transparency. Although there may be challenges, I will try as best I can to carry out my duties and I think the media will cooperate. - Translated by Thiri Min Htun

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# Civil society leader, businessman file charges over clash

By Naw Say Phaw Waa

POLICE have charged businessman U Thein Naing of Yoe Yoe Lay Company and three associates with three offences each after they allegedly assaulted a civil society activist at a press conference.

The incident occurred as Ko Htin Kyaw, head of a group called Movement for Democracy Current Forces (MDCF), was preparing to hold a press conference at Yangon's Royal Rose Restaurant titled "Challenging the rule of law" on January 13.

"After undergoing a medical check, we charged U Thein Naing under three sections - 294, 325 and 114, for swearing, hurting and threatening others," said Police Major Khin Maung Kyi from Bahan township.

U Thein Naing has responded by filing a defamation charge against Ko Htin Kyaw for "insulting his dignity", Pol Maj Khin Maung Kyi later confirmed.

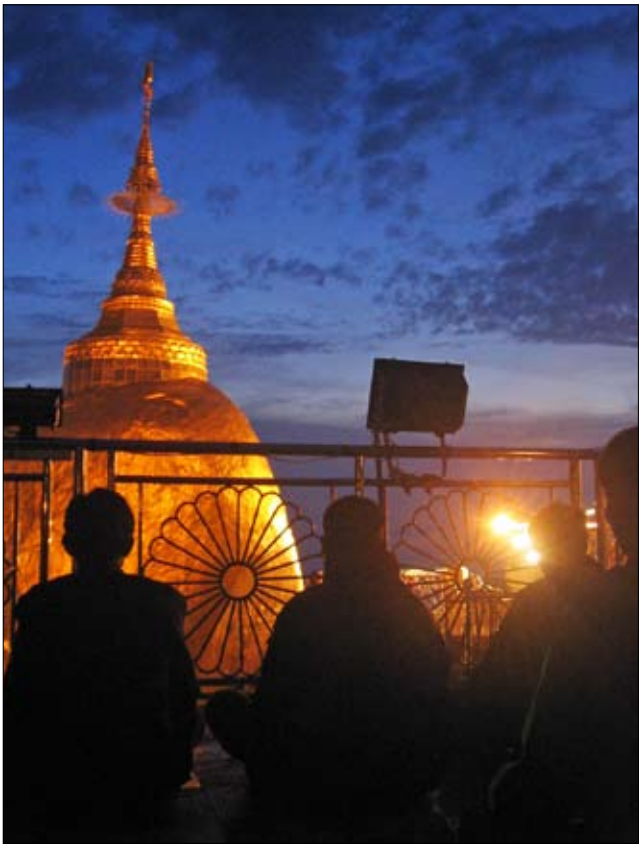
"U Thein Naing said he was also threatened by Ko Htin Kyaw. He said Ko Htin Kyaw gave the wrong information to newspapers and defamed his dignity. He said that's why he tried to stop Ko Htin Kyaw's press conference but it got out of control," he said.

The Myanmar Times attempted to contact U Thein Naing numerous times last week but he did not respond. However, he was quoted as saying in the January 17 edition of 7Day News that the incident occurred when he was "just trying to stop the press conference".

U Thein Naing alleges that Ko Htin Kyaw hit him with his elbow. "Then my men tried to prevent which looked like we hit him. Ko Htin Kyaw wants to be a hero and wants to be popular. We didn't even hit him. I want to say to MDCF not to interfere in other people's personal affairs while they are doing politics," he said.

The dispute dates back to October 2012, when MDCF held a press conference at which Ko Htin Kyaw alleged that U Thein Naing was involved in corruption with Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda's trustees and other local officials. Ko Htin Kyaw also alleges that U Thein Naing assaulted him following this earlier press conference.

Yoe Yoe Lay runs numerous businesses on and around the mountaintop pagoda in Mon State, including hotels, buses, guesthouses, restaurants and shops. MDCF alleged that local authorities and pagoda trustees gave him



Pilgrims at Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda. A civil society group called Movement for Democracy Current Forces alleges that a single company has gained a monopoly over businesses at the pagoda because of its close ties with trustees and local officials. Pic: Nan Tin Htwe

permits to run some of the businesses until 2038.

Ko Zar Ni, a media officer for MDCF, said U Thein Naing was "collaborating" with pagoda trustees to extort money from other businesses at Kyaikhtiyo.

"It seems that making a press conference harmed the business of this crony. That's why he tried to

**'It seems that making a press conference harmed the business of this crony.'**

oppress our activities," Ko Zar Ni said.

Ma Aye Aye Mon, who has run a fabric shop at Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda for 17 years, told The Myanmar Times she asked Ko Htin Kyaw's help in August 2012 after Yoe Yoe Lay raised electricity, bus and hotel fees at the religious site, which is popular with Myanmar pilgrims.

Vendors at the pagoda then signed a petition calling for the removal of the trustees before the MDCF press conference in October.

"The pagoda trustees did everything that the cronies said ... That's why we signed the petition to change the trustees. U Thein Naing was not satisfied because

he is working together with pagoda trustees," Ma Aye Aye Mon said.

In an interview with Snapshot late last year, the chairman of Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda's board of trustees, U San Myint, said the current board would resign and elections for new trustees held.

"We will choose Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda's trustees according to the desire of the vendors through a democratic system," he said.

The trustees have not yet resigned, however.

In 2007, U Thein Naing was sentenced to 12 years jail for selling fuel illegally and being an illegal lottery banker. However, the military government released him under an amnesty after he served about 15 months of the sentence.

Following the January 13 incident, MDCF held a press conference at the Myanmar Journalist Union's office on January 15. The group released a statement saying it would join forces with civilians to fight "a handful of cronies who monopolise business under successive governments".

MDCF was founded during the September 2007 protests, when its members campaigned for commodity prices to be reduced and since then has tackled other consumer pricing issues. Ko Htin Kyaw received a five-and-a-half-year sentence for his involvement in the 2007 unrest and was released in an amnesty in early 2012.

## Spitfire hunter still optimistic

YANGON - An archaeologist involved in a search for dozens of rare Spitfire planes said to have been buried in Myanmar played down doubts last week about the existence of the rumoured trove.

The British Broadcasting Corporation reported that the British-led team believes that no planes are buried at the locations where they have been hunting in the Kachin State capital Myitkyina and Yangon airport.

The team's leader had previously said he believed that dozens of the iconic single-seat aircraft were buried in 1945 by Britain, the former colonial power in what was then Burma.

But local geophysicist U Soe Thein, who has been involved in the search for

more than a decade, said on January 18 that he remained optimistic, pointing to the recent discovery of a crate buried in the ground at the site in Myitkyina.

"I am sure what we found in Myitkyina is a Spitfire. We are still trying to search in Mingalardon," he told AFP.

The team said last week that it was unable to determine the contents of the crate by inserting a camera because of murky water obscuring the visibility.

A local businessman involved in the project, U Htoo Htoo Zaw, also distanced himself from the report on the BBC website, which quoted project leader Mr David Cundall as saying that the team might be looking in the wrong place.

"We are still doing surveys

and haven't started the digging yet. We can't say anything yet," U Htoo Htoo Zaw said.

Issues such as dealing with modern-day obstacles such as underground electricity cables have delayed the actual excavation.

Confusion about the project deepened after Mr Cundall - a farmer and aircraft enthusiast who has spent 17 years chasing the rumoured Spitfires - cancelled a press conference that had been planned for January 18.

Mr Cundall could not immediately be contacted for comment. A spokesman for Wargaming.net, the video game company providing financial backing for the project, did not immediately respond to a request for clarification. - AFP

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## Six activists face court over mine protest

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

SIX Letpadaung activists last week faced court for the fifth time, charged under section 505(b) of the Penal Code – committing an act that could induce others to harm the state or public tranquility – as a result of a protest in Yangon on November 26.

The six have also been charged under section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law by two courts for holding a protest without permission.

Inspectors from Kyauktada and Pabedan township police stations charged Ko Ye Lin from Mother Land Peaceful Mission, Ko Wai Lu of the Public Service Network (Yangon), Ko Nyi Nyi of the Rule of Law and Human Rights Protection Group, Daw Naw Ohn Hla and Daw Shan Ma from the Women's Rights Protection Group, and U Myo Chit with two offences each.

The activists appeared in Kyauktada and Pabedan township courts for the fifth time on January 16 and were told to appear again on January 30. They were first summoned on December 2 for their alleged role in the protest over the Letpadaung mining project outside the office of the

Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (UMEHL), an army-run company that is an investor in the project.

Several of the defendants told *The Myanmar Times* they did not regret staging the rally without permission, saying they did it for the sake of the country.

"We did the campaign because we wanted to cooperate with all people to try to stop the Letpadaung copper mine project, which will not benefit the country or the people. It can harm the environment of the region, and damage the social, economic and health situation of the residents. We did this campaign for a good purpose but they accused us of being criminals," Ko Ye Lin said.

The protesters said they did not apply for permission to hold the event because police officers regularly refuse applications for peaceful protests.

"We already knew that they would not allow our event officially because we protested against UMEHL and also the Chinese company. So we did the campaign even though we already knew that we would be arrested. Now members of the Lawyers' Network are helping us with our cases," Ko Ye Lin said.

"We haven't thought about



Activists demonstrate in Yangon in early December following a crackdown on protesters at Letpadaung on November 29. Pic: Ko Taik

when the trial will finish or how long it will take or even what decision they will make because we are just working for the sake of the country and the people and we are going to continue our work. In this case, we were protecting the people and the country, not protesting against the government."

Ko Ye Lin said the section 505(b) charge was filed first, while they were charged under section 18 on January 2. "We were arrested on the evening of the day of the

protest and police sent us to Insein Prison. But they released us the next day and they started charging us on November 27," he said.

Judges from both courts have approved applications for bail, with the activists agreeing to a K1 million surety for the section 505(b) charge and K500,000 for section 18.

"We've already been bailed by signing a pledge to appear whenever we are summoned by the township court," Ko Ye Lin said.

Outside Kyauktada Township Court on January 16, U Myo Chit said: "The two courts summoned us on the same day but at different times. Today we faced court for the sixth time. The [judges] asked me questions about the events but nothing special. And then they told us the date for the next hearing."

The defendants face a two-year jail term, a fine or both for the section 505(b) charge, while a section 18 offence can incur a jail term of up to one year, a fine or both.

"Extraction of natural resources should be of concern to all people so we are helping [the defendants] because they are trying to protect the natural resources of our country. We will try to help them as much as we can," said U Tun Aung from the Lawyers' Network.

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch last week called for the section 18 charges against the Letpadaung protesters, as well as those charged over a peace march in Yangon on September 21, 2012, to be dropped.

The group said the government should "promptly amend the 2011 Law Relating to Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession to conform with international human rights standards, including eliminating prison terms for permit violations".

"The government's prosecution of peaceful demonstrators reveals troubling limits on Burma's respect for basic rights," Mr Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement on January 14. "Burma's leaders may be saying the right things at global forums and in bilateral talks, but their reform rhetoric rings hollow on the streets and in the fields where protesters assemble."

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# Anger over ministry's SEA Games hotel order

By Yu Yu Maw

SOUTH East Asia Games organisers have angered hoteliers in Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw and Ngwe Saung by forcing them to give up rooms during the peak tourist season at bargain-basement rates for Games athletes and officials.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has instructed hotels in Yangon to keep a certain number of rooms free for SEA Games visitors - Sedona has been told to put aside 102 rooms, for example - while all other hotels in

**‘The ministry cannot order us [to give them rooms] because we are private businesses.’**

the four cities will have to give up 30 percent of their rooms, said U Tin Win, the chairman of the Yangon Zone of the Myanmar Hoteliers Association.

“The ministry instructed hotels on what its occupancy needs will be for the SEA Games. Hotels that are not included on this list will have to keep 30pc of their rooms free,” U Tin Win said.

Hotels are likely to be paid about US\$50 for each room taken by SEA Games organisers and have been told to provide free meals to delegates. The rooms could normally fetch up to \$400, depending on the hotel.

Spokespersons for a number of hotels told *The Myanmar Times* that they should not be forced to provide cheap rooms to SEA Games organisers, particularly given the games are being held during the peak season for tourism. The Games will begin on December 11, 2013.

“The ministry cannot order us [to give them rooms] because we are private businesses. I will help as much as I can but it is impossible to leave 30pc of rooms during peak season ... I will allocate what I think is reasonable,” one hotelier said, asking not to be named.

Ten hotels in Yangon have been requisitioned, including Summit Park View (73 rooms), Yangon Hotel (110), Excel Treasure Hotel (73), Asia Plaza Hotel (40), Panorama Hotel (20), Yuzana Garden Hotel (47), Olympic Hotel (50), Parkroyal Hotel (50), Chatrium Hotel (100).

In Mandalay, 16 hotels will be forced to house SEA Games officials, while 31 hotels in Nay Pyi Taw will also be required to cooperate. At Ngwe Saung Beach, Orient Hotel, Yamonar Oo Resort and Ngwe Saung Hotel have been told to host athletes and officials.

But most of the demand for hotel rooms will be in Nay Pyi Taw. A spokesperson for the SEA Games’ Committee for Accommodation and Reservation said it expects another 6000 rooms will come online in the capital before the opening ceremony.

“This year, there will be another 20 new hotels in Nay Pyi Taw and we hope that will mean another 6000 rooms. We think international fans and other observers will come and watch the SEA Games too so we need to make allowances for them in terms of accommodation,” the spokesperson said.

The 16 hotels in Mandalay include Sedona Hotel, which will arrange accommodation for VIPs, a spokesperson said.

“We are negotiating with Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Sport for smooth transportation and also with the Myanmar Restaurant Association for food. The association will arrange food that can be eaten by people of all religions,” the spokesperson said.

# Tourism industry grapples with 'scary' success after record-breaking year

By Zaw Win Than

A RECORD-BREAKING surge in tourism brought one million foreign visitors to Myanmar last year, the highest figure recorded. And amid predictions of a further 30 percent increase this year, despite soaring hotel bills and a shortage of skilled staff, industry professionals are describing the country's sudden success as “scary”.

The steady rise in the country's popularity, both as a holiday destination and a place for doing business, has accompanied the process of political and economic reform.

According to Ministry of Hotels and Tourism statistics, most visitors enter the country through Yangon airport, the destination of choice for most international airlines that serve the country. Others come through Mandalay, Bagan, Nay Pyi Taw, and across land borders.

Yangon received 554, 531 foreign visitors in 2012, up 54.31 percent from 2011. Of these, Asian nationals accounted for 347,241, more than 62 pc of the total, including about 91,817 from Thailand - the largest single group by nationality - followed by Japan with 47,501, China with 41,542,283. Nearly 36,500 came from the United States.

European nationals accounted for 135,692 visitors, representing 24.45 pc of total arrivals. France led the way with 29,684, followed by the United Kingdom (23,291) and Germany (21,856).



Monks light candles at Shwedagon Pagoda during Thadingyut. Pic: Boothee

The figures also showed that free independent travellers (FITs) made up the single largest group with 232,715 visitors, followed by package tourists (126,036), business travellers (114,456) and social visa holders (37,778).

Myanmar received 33,771 tourists through Mandalay, Nyaung U and Nay Pyi Taw, and 465,614 tourists through checkpoints on the borders with Thailand, China and India.

Tourist arrival numbers are expected to rise another 30 percent in 2013, mirroring a similar increase in 2012, industry sources said.

While Asian countries will continue to supply most visitors, strong growth is likely in previously nascent Western markets because of the country's improving international image.

U Phyo Wai Yar Zar, managing director of All Asia Exclusive Travel and chairman of Myanmar Marketing Committee, said 2013 would be a challenging year for inbound tour operators in Myanmar.

“Since the infrastructure will be far less than the demand, inbound tour operators will face serious challenges,” he said.

Daw Phyu Phyu Mar, managing director of Seven Star Tours in Yangon, said: “2013 is scary for all inbound tour operators. We suffered and struggled with skyrocketing hotel rates in 2012 with a million visitors, and we expect an increase up to 30 percent this year. All we need is accommodation and skilled workers in the industry. Hoteliers and industry players are trying very hard to provide enough accommodation for 2013-2014.”

## Hospitals to help out at marathon

STAFF from three private hospitals will be deployed to respond in the event of a health emergency during the Yangon marathon this weekend.

Parami General Hospital, Thuka Kabar General Hospital and Aung Yadanar Hospital will assist with the January 27 race, said U Ye Aung, marketing director at Parami.

“We are going to be ready with drinking water for runners, as well as doctors, nurses and ambulances along the course,” he said.

The hospitals were asked to help out by Yangon City Development Committee, he said.

The race is Myanmar's first international marathon in decades, organisers say. About 1000 foreign and local participants are expected to take part in the event, which will feature 42-kilometre, 10km and 3km categories. The race will begin and end at People's Park. - *Shwe Yee Saw Myint*

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## Contract for sewage disposal signed in Mandalay

By Si Thu Lwin

A SOUTH Korean company has been contracted to conduct a study on wastewater and sewage disposal in Mandalay.

Mandalay City Development Committee signed the contract with Sunjin Engineering and Architecture Company on January 8. The study will cover wastewater pipelines, the waste disposal process and potential sewage pipelines.

U Tint Lwin, head of the committee's water and sanitation division, said on January 10 that the study could lead to the South Korean company being engaged to improve the city's primitive sanitation system.

"The contract is just for conducting a study. ... It will take about four months," U Tint Lwin, head of water and sanitation division, said on January 10.

While there is a pipeline system for wastewater in downtown, sewage is transported to a pond at Yetaguntaung by truck.

"The way sewage is currently managed in Mandalay is that it is pumped into sewage container trucks, which then transport it to a dumping ground. If we can use underground pipelines instead, it will improve living conditions in the city," he said.

Residents are charged K29,000 for a truckload in downtown Mandalay and K38,000 in Amarapura township.

U Than Lwin, 45, the owner of a sugar cane juice business in Mandalay, said he hoped the study would lead to improvements in the management of both wastewater and sewage.

"It is better that sewage is carried by pipelines. But in rainy season, the wastewater pipelines and creeks overflow. It damages roads and vehicles," he said. - Translated by Thit Lwin



A Mandalay resident (left) hands a donation to, from left, comedians Tet Toe, Par Par Lay and Chit Chaw, on January 15. The comedians will use the cash to help residents of two Sagaing Region villages affected by a recent earthquake. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

## Comedians raise cash for earthquake victims

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

COMEDIANS from Mandalay and Yangon have combined their talents to raise almost K40 million (about US\$46,700) for residents of two remote villages affected by a recent earthquake.

About 40 famous comedians from the two cities travelled around the downtown area of Mandalay on January 15 seeking donations for those affected by a powerful earthquake that hit Sagaing and Mandalay regions in November 2012.

Among the comedians who took part in the fundraiser were Par Par Lay and Lu Maw, two-thirds of the Moustache Brothers troupe, along with Bay Lu Wa, Pan Thee and Chit Chaw. Dressed in their traditional outfits the comedians toured the city on a float and sang for onlookers, who were asked to donate.

The comedians toured the city until the evening, when, joined by dancers, they held a free show in the compound of Mahamuni Pagoda that ended about 2am.

**‘We also worked to get funds for Cyclone Nargis victims and at that time we raised about K30 million.’**

"I really wanted to donate for earthquake victims but I couldn't do it on my own so when I found out comedians from Yangon also want to do something we discussed the issue with them and got this idea. We used our own money to cover the expenses," Par Par Lay said.

"We intend to donate [the money raised] to two villages, Malal and Shwe Zagar, in Shwebo district, Sagaing Region as we thought they were places where it was particularly difficult to send help. We have got nearly K40 million," he said.

One donor said the fact that the organisers were comedians had encouraged more people to donate.

"I always cooperate with Par Par Lay for these kind of activities. We also worked to get funds for Cyclone Nargis victims and at that time we raised about K30 million," said U Ngwe, a member of the Mandalay Region Gold Merchants Association.

"Artists have a strong power to capture the attention of the public as the people love them. I am so pleased to see comedians lead this event so enthusiastically," he said.

## Free clinic in Sagaing treats up to 40,000 patients

By Si Thu Lwin

A CHARITY clinic in Sagaing Region's Yinmabin township has so far treated up to 40,000 patients, says its founder.

Shwesannwe Sayadaw Damadara Ahshin Wayamanandaka established the Shwesannwe Damadara clinic in Yinmabin's Sinte Village in December 2009.

It has two permanent doctors and six nurses, while visiting teams of doctors also help out.

"It started treating patients since the construction of its building was started. We have brought a team of doctors here 11 times so far. On the opening day, 200 general patients, 80 dental patients and 32 surgical patients received treatment," he said.

The clinic attracts residents from 90 nearby villages and treats up to 100 patients each day.

The sayadaw said he plans to expand it into a hospital but this will take some time to achieve.

"There are many requirements to meet to shift from dispensary to hospital. Now labour patients are being referred to Monywa hospital. We are trying to shift to hospital but have to wait for a while," he said.

U Pho Maung, a 60-year-old resident of Sinte village, said the clinic has significantly improved the lives of the people of Sinte and the surrounding area.

"We are grateful to the sayadaw for opening this clinic where minor illnesses can be treated for free. It can fully take medical care of the native people," said

The clinic costs about K200,000 to run and those interested in contributing can contact 09-203-5154 or 09-4027-46699.

- Translated by Thit Lwin

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## Indian liver specialists to visit MDY hospital

By Sithu Lwin

THE Indian government is arranging to send liver specialists to a new centre at Mandalay Central Hospital, the Indian consul general in Mandalay said last week.

“It is likely to be started in April. We have negotiated with officials to open a liver centre in Mandalay [Central] Hospital,” Dr Madan Mohan Sethi said on January 12.

The liver specialists will be rotated through Mandalay from

Apollo Hospital in Kolkata. The new centre is expected to offer a range of services for patients suffering liver disease, including liver transplants.

But Dr Suddhasattwa Sen, a liver specialist from Apollo Hospital, said it was important the centre was supported by an adequate number of blood and liver donors.

“Unless you have liver donors, you cannot do a liver transplant even if [the patient] has enough money,” he said. “And blood is also important for transplantation.”

He added a liver transplant can take from 18 to 48 hours and requires up to 50 nurses in addition to a surgeon.

Meanwhile, India will launch a health education program for remote areas in February, said an official from Apollo Hospital, which is also supporting the project.

“We have negotiated with [Myanmar] officials to provide a vehicle with medicine and medical equipment that will visit remote areas,” said public relations officer Mr Sanjeet Nayak. – *Translated by Zar Zar Soe*



Firemen fight a blaze at a home in Patheingyi's Aung Thukha ward on January 10. Pic: Si Thu Lwin

## Two saved from fire in Patheingyi

By Si Thu Lwin

A PARALYSED elderly man and a child with motor neuron disease were last week rescued from a fire in Mandalay's Patheingyi township.

The fire broke out in the township's Aung Thukha ward at about 10am on January 10.

“We rushed to the spot when we heard there was a fire. The residents of the ward rescued a paralysed old man from his house, which was where the fire started, along with a child suffering from motor neuron disease who lived next door. There were no fatalities,” said a nearby resident.

Almost 100 firemen and eight

trucks attended the scene, extinguishing the fire in about 30 minutes.

It is thought to have ignited when a smouldering stove came into contact with bamboo matting and the owner of the house in which the fire started has been charged with negligence, police said.

– *Translated by Zar Zar Soe*

## Mandalay cemeteries to ban burials from April

A LACK of space in Mandalay's cemeteries has prompted authorities to introduce a ban on burials that will take effect in April.

The city has two Buddhist cemeteries, and only one allows burials, allocating plots measuring up to 4 feet by 6 feet. However, from the start of the 2013-14 financial year only 4 square feet will be given to each site – a layout Mandalay City Development Committee's Department of Cleansing says is based on the Tauckyant War Cemetery for Allied soldiers on Yangon's northern outskirts.

“We are finding it difficult to not encroach on farmland adjacent to the cemeteries,” said U Min Aung Phyo from the department. “The

cemetery land will be filled soon if we continue to use such a wide space for each gravesite so we will only allow urns to be buried in 4-square-foot plots from the start of 2013-14.”

As well as modelling the size of plots on Tauckyant, he said the department also wants to have similar “pleasant” gardens. It will spend about K50 million on the project.

Department head U Nay Win Myint said the committee will try to keep prices as low as possible for the new plots, of which Kyar Ni Kan Cemetery will have 3744 and South-North Lake Cemetery will have 2080.

– *Si Thu Lwin and Than Naing Soe, translated by Zar Zar Soe*

# UPPER MYANMAR

## ‘Give us our money back’: residents seek refund from hluttaw rep

By Si Thu Lwin

RESIDENTS in Sagaing Region's Wuntho township are demanding a local parliamentarian return money he collected from them to install electricity in the area, alleging he failed to follow through on his promise.

The residents, from 26 villages in the township, have enlisted the help of U Khin Maung Thein, the National League for Democracy Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Sagaing, to get the money back.

Locals say a Sagaing Region Hluttaw representative from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), U Khin Maung Latt, collected K50,000 to K70,000 from each house to install electricity, along with a service charge of K2000, on behalf of an “electricity committee” in July 2008. The committee was organised by the USDP's predecessor, the Union Solidarity and Development Association.

Residents say electricity has not been installed and want their money refunded.

“Money was taken more than four years ago but no electrical posts were erected and no refund was made. We are going to form a new committee to get electricity. We have already lodged a complaint with many governmental departments,” said Ko Kyaw Moe Zaw, a resident of Gyotaung Village who is acting as a spokesperson for the villagers.

He alleged that that some residents were threatened by people connected with U Khin Maung Latt when they were collecting signatures for a petition earlier this month.

“The amount of money [collected] runs into the tens of millions [of kyats] but there is no light and no refund,” said another resident, U Soe Soe. “Some villages have had lighting only at night-time after so-called government meters were installed, at the rate of K70 a unit,” which is double the K35 the government charges for electricity from the national grid.

“We lodged a complaint both in person and by letter with Wuntho Township General Administration Department and the township electric supply office because we were dissatisfied at the lack of action but nothing came of it,” said one resident.

But U Khin Maung Latt, the representative for Wuntho 2, defended his actions and said the committee was still working to install electricity in the villages.

“I am only responsible for connecting cables and getting transformers in place. The project proposal was approved since 2009. The committee will proceed with bringing lighting to the villages. It will also clarify how the money was used,” he said.

Residents said they would wait for clarification but if none was received they would apply to protest.

– *Translated by Thit Lwin*



GSK Access to Medicines Op-Ed Draft: 27 November 2012, Myanmar  
Doing good business for better health in Myanmar By Maung Maung Naing

The drive to ensure access to medicine across Myanmar is a vital priority in which private sector companies, governments, NGOs, international agencies and academic institutions all have a vital role to play. True, pharmaceutical companies have not always been seen as altruistic leaders in this field, but in recent years our industry has been playing an increasingly progressive part. Today, we are seen as part of the solution.

This week, the annual Access to Medicine Index was published. This ranking, published by the Access to Medicine Foundation, an independent, not-for-profit organisation, rates pharmaceutical companies according to their efforts to bring essential medicines to people in low-income countries.

I am pleased that, for the third consecutive time, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is ranked highest. This ranking is a public recognition that validates our objective: to improve people's health and well-being, regardless of where they live in the world or their ability to pay. In developing countries, we give equal focus to building a sustainable business and on working with partners to improve healthcare in that country.

Previously the healthcare industry reached only the more affluent end of the population, but thanks to economic growth and partnerships in these countries, it has led to improvements in the healthcare infrastructure, training and supply, which means we are now able to expand our reach. Further investments and partnerships are required to ensure life-saving medicines reach societies in need, but it is entirely possible for private companies with a social conscience to achieve commercial success and meet the healthcare needs of the people.

GSK's number-one ranking in the Index further acknowledges our four -part strategic approach in low-income countries, that is:

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- 4) Is done so in partnership with governments, NGOs and the private sector.

GSK's business model focuses on selling a higher volume of medicines at lower prices. This allows us to reach more people, and save more lives. This is not easy work, but it is critically important to building a stronger, healthier future for everyone in Myanmar.

We are committed to re-investing 20 per cent of profits generated in the world's least developed countries back into community programmes. These projects are designed to strengthen the local healthcare infrastructure, and provide training for community health workers. Today, we have begun projects in all least developed countries where we make a profit, including Myanmar.

GSK is taking a different approach to meeting the challenges in these countries, working in partnership with others and aligning the healthcare needs of people in developing countries with the commercial success that will ensure sustained investment. Our partnerships are central to the success of these endeavours – a sign of the new paradigm for our industry. With the right commitment and support from governments and NGOs and the involvement of the private sector, the potential impact is staggering – to make quality medicines and vaccines available to everyone and not just the privileged few. This will achieve quantum gains in Africa's health and development to provide a better, healthier and brighter future for people, communities and societies. That, surely, is a goal worth pursuing.

About the author  
Maung Maung Naing was appointed Country Manager, Myanmar in January 2011. He first joined GSK in 2004 as Sales & Marketing Director and business leader for Myanmar, which is a branch of GSK Thailand. He has a Medical degree from the University of Medicine, Yangon, Myanmar and an MBA from the Institute of Economics in Yangon.

Editor's Note: Please find high-resolution photos of the authors attached.



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# Red Cross eyes Kachin role

By Nan Tin Htwe

RED Cross assistance in Kachin State will be even-handed, the organisation's top official promised last week.

Mr Peter Maurer, in the first visit to Myanmar by a president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said assistance would be provided at a location where both sides, government forces and the Kachin Independence Army, were present.

Fighting in the Kachin conflict in northern Myanmar intensified towards the end of December, with daily outbreaks of fighting between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army.

"Kachin is typically a situation to which ICRC with its core mandate dealing with violent conflict is an appropriate actor to bring in," Mr Maurer told a press conference on January 17, the penultimate day of his six-day visit.

He said he had proposed the idea when he met President U Thein Sein and other ministers in Nay Pyi Taw, and was encouraged by their reaction.

"We will go into one key central area or two areas where both sides are present. It's not realistic to consider a presence in several different locations," said Mr Georges Paclisanu,



International Committee of the Red Cross president Peter Maurer (centre) speaks at a press conference in Yangon on January 17. Pic: Nyein Chan Naing/EPA

ICRC resident representative. Mr Maurer said that ICRC, which operates in 75 countries, would focus on medical support as a first step and would work closely with Myanmar Red Cross Society.

"We have a fairly precise idea of what we want to do when we get to those conflict areas," he said.

On January 17, Mr Maurer travelled Sittwe, Rakhine State, to meet leaders of the Buddhist and Muslim communities, as well as the chief minister.

"ICRC's concept of neutral and impartial independent humanitarian action is particularly appropriate for such a protracted and emotive conflict," Mr Maurer said.

ICRC, which was founded 150 years ago to mitigate the effects of armed conflict, has increased its budget for activities in Myanmar to US\$7 million in 2013, up from \$5 million last year.

In November, the government announced that it would allow ICRC to resume prison visits, which it was forced to suspend in 2005.

# ICRC targets prison visits this week

YANGON – Red Cross inspectors may be allowed into Myanmar's prisons as early as this week to assess conditions, the head of the humanitarian body said.

President U Thein Sein last year promised to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross into its detention facilities after an absence of more than seven years.

"We hope that the first visit will take place very soon ... next week hopefully," ICRC chief Peter Maurer told reporters in Yangon on January 17 following talks with U Thein Sein and other ministers in Nay Pyi Taw.

Expressing hope of meeting individual prisoners, he said the group is "ready to work on prison facilities, water, sanitation, on medical deliveries and the health of prisoners".

Myanmar's government has overseen a plethora of reforms since coming to power in 2011, including the release of hundreds of political prisoners from its jails.

But scores of other dissidents jailed under the military are believed to still languish in the nation's prisons.

Rights groups have accused the former junta of overseeing an arbitrary system of detention, with torture and other mistreatment of prisoners.

Guidelines on the ICRC website say it keeps the findings of its prison visits confidential, sharing them only with the host government unless it decides "speaking out publicly is likely to be helpful". – AFP



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## Neighbour charged with rape of disabled girl

By Yamon Phu Thit

THE alleged rape of a 12-year-old disabled girl on Christmas Day has sparked outrage among Yangon's disabled community and advocates for their cause.

U Myat Thu Win, president of Shwe Min Tha Foundation, described the case as "inhumane" and said it was "unacceptable in a civilised society".

"We will call for the defendant to face a severe punishment in order to avoid similar cases in the future," he said.

The girl, who cannot be named, suffers from cerebral palsy. According to a witness, she was raped by a neighbour at her home in South Dagon township on the evening of December 25 while her parents were away.

A 28-year-old South Dagon man has been charged with the offence and was expected to appear in court

on January 19.

U Aung Thein, a member of Myanmar Lawyers' Network, said there was no specific law governing cases of rape involving disabled victims. In view of the particularly heinous nature of the crime, he suggested "the punishment will be a minimum of 10 years imprisonment to a life sentence."

Daw Nyunt Nyunt Thein, head of the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf, said similar cases have happened to young disabled girls who are blind, deaf and deaf mute, and who may have difficulty identifying their attacker.

The mother of an autistic child said news of the crime had made parents of children with disabilities more conscious of their vulnerability. "As parents we felt shocked and worried for our children. This case reminded me of the need to always keep an eye on our children," the Yangon resident said.

## Activists call for stronger laws to protect disabled

By Yamon Phu Thit

ACTIVISTS are calling for stronger laws to protect disabled people. In a six-point statement issued on January 8, the activists cited the alleged rape of a 12-year-old girl with cerebral palsy on December 25 in South Dagon township.

Those involved in this movement include civil society organisations working with disabled people, political activists and the Myanmar Lawyers' Network. Their statement called for an analysis of current laws followed by effective reform to protect people with disabilities.

U Myat Thu Win, president of the Shwe Min Tha Foundation, told *The Myanmar Times* in an

interview on January 14 that Myanmar law does not effectively protect disabled people against violence and abuse, and fails to prevent many forms of discrimination.

"No law prevents physically impaired people from becoming victims and

rights of disabled people was drafted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in May 2011 it is not clear when it will be submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

U Aung Thein, a lawyer and a member of Myanmar Lawyers' Network, said

Yangon's Central Hotel on January 8 to release the statement.

The group will now submit these issues to hluttaw, calling for a law to protect disabled people, said U Myat Thu Win.

Ko Jimmy, one of the 88 Generation student leaders, said civil society should act as a watchdog to protect disabled people. "We don't know how many cases like this are being ignored. We should strengthen civil society," he said.

According to government statistics, about 1.3 million people are disabled, and there are eight organisations working on disability-related issues. Myanmar ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2011.

### 'People are being treated in abusive ways because of their disability.'

no special law protects them. Disabled people are being treated in abusive ways because of their disability," he said.

U Myat Thu Win said the existing 1950 law was outdated and its enforcement is weak.

Though a bill on the

there was no specific law to protect disabled people, and the absence of such a law could leave the disabled facing violence and abuse.

"This alleged rape case shows how much we need to protect disabled people effectively," he told a press conference held at

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88 Generation leader Ko Min Ko Naing at a civil society event in Yangon earlier this month. Pic: Nyein Maung

## 88 Generation studies Philippines peace process

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

SIXTEEN members of the 88 Generation student group made their first overseas trip last week, visiting the Philippines from January 14 to 18 at the invitation of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies.

Speaking ahead of the trip, 88 Generation leader Ko Min Ko Naing said the visit would allow the group to learn about how internal conflicts had been resolved in the Philippines.

"I think ethnic issues that happened in Philippines are similar to the issues happening in our country. We are participating in the peace process in Myanmar so I expect our members can take lessons from this trip and we can use these experiences in our own country," said Ko Min Ko Naing.

"CPCS told me we will get a chance to meet experts on ethnic issues and non-governing organisations that took part in the peace process," said Ko Pyone Cho, another 88 Generation member. "We will share our experiences with others when we arrive back and put into practice what we learn."

The decision to travel abroad comes after Ko Min Ko Naing refused to attend a ceremony in the United States in September 2012 to accept an award from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) because the government had not issued passports to other 88 Generation members.

Twenty members of the group applied for passports in March and April and Min Ko Naing and Ko Mya Aye received theirs in August and July respectively. The remaining 18 members received their passports on September 19, Ko Pyone Cho said in an interview at the time, one day before the NED ceremony.

CPCS is involved in conflict resolution and peace issues in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Orissa and Manipur in India, and Mindanao in the Philippines.

In Myanmar, it is working with the Karen National Union and All Burma Students' Democratic Front in their negotiations with the Union Government. In the Philippines, it is involved with the central government's negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.



# Shan groups try to find middle ground

By Bill O'Toole

A COALITION of Shan political parties, militias and civil society groups will soon meet in their home state to try to find common ground on issues that still divide the various factions of their war-torn home.

"Before we can have peace with the government, we need to have peace [among ourselves] in Shan State," said Shan Nationalities League for Democracy chairman U Khun Htun Oo, who is taking a lead role in organising the event.

The SNLD held a similar conference in Yangon in November that included the north and south factions of the Shan State Army, the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) and the Chiang Mai-based Shan Women's Action Network. At the time, U Khun Htun Oo described it as less of a conference and more of a "small peace workshop with Shan nationalities".

Sai Khur Hseng of the Shan Women's Action Network agreed, saying: "We didn't decide anything at the meeting in Yangon because it was only the first step ... we could not decide on how to have real peace."

Though the projected size and scope of the upcoming conference will be larger, U Khun Htun Oo stressed that the goal of a united Shan State will take more than a couple of meetings to realise.

"We will do our best to have [the different groups] come meet and discuss the issues. To meet and discuss only."

U Khun Htun Oo's tempered expectations reflect the current, deeply divided reality of Shan State. On the political side, the SNLD, which won 23 seats in the 1990 election but boycotted the 2010 vote, often finds itself butting heads with the SNDP, the country's third-largest party in terms of representatives in the national parliament.

As recently as the last week of December, U Khun Htun Oo told *The Myanmar Times*: "We have



Ethnic Shan children playing with toy guns at a village near Lashio in northern Shan State. Pic: AFP

done much. We have gone to jail because of our beliefs. [SNLD leaders] haven't been [to jail] because they have done nothing" for the struggle for democracy.

U Ye Tun, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from the SNDP, said that the rift between the parties stemmed not so much from great ideological differences but from a disagreement over how to deal with the Union Government.

Speaking over the phone from his office in Hsipaw, northern Shan State, he said the SNLD wants to amend the constitution to grant Shan State more autonomy, while the SNDP believes changing the constitution is almost impossible and wants to work within the existing laws to assert the rights of Shan State and its people.

Though no official correspondence has taken place, U Khun Htun Oo confirmed that the SNDP would be invited to the conference, and U Ye Tun confirmed that his group would attend. On the contentious issue of amending the constitution, U Ye Tun signalled a willingness to

work with the SNLD, saying: "I believe our party has no reason to avoid compromise on this issue."

On the military side, the conference organisers will attempt the even more daunting task of getting Shan State's many non-state armed groups on the same page. "There are long, historic problems between the armed groups," said U Ye Tun.

One specific point of contention is the Nam Kha River, just south of U Ye Tun's home district, which is claimed by both the Shan State Army-South and the United Wa State Army (UWSA). The disagreement goes back several decades, and while no blood has been spilled over the river, U Khun Htun Oo acknowledged that "grudges" existed between the UWSA and the Shan State Army-South, along with its political wing, the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS).

The disagreement is enhanced by widespread suspicion over the UWSA's role in the drug trade, which has played a major role in destabilising Shan State. "The RCSS thinks the

UWSA is the main supplier of methamphetamine and *yaba*," said U Khun Tun Oo, a belief shared by many international observers.

U Khun Htun Oo said he had met members of the UWSA in Lashio in early January and they agreed to send a delegation to the conference but the specific issue of drugs is unlikely to be discussed.

He said that while the drug trade was an unresolved issue for the state the conference would be more about holding "a free discussion" than making accusations and ultimatums.

Sai Khur Hseng conceded pressing issues like drugs and women's rights may not be fully addressed at the conference, but was optimistic the event would be worthwhile. "It is important just for all parties to come together and talk, it is good for the peace process."

The date and venue for the meeting have not been finalised but U Khun Htun Oo said it will probably take place in mid-February in either Lashio or Taunggyi.

## People with disabilities get their first art festival

By Yamon Phu Thit

PEOPLE with disabilities are being invited to contribute their work to an exhibition later this year, the first exclusively for the disabled. "Myanmar Art Festival 2013" will be held in October in Yangon, a spokesperson from the festival's organising committee said.

The three-day festival will explore the talent of disabled people and help motivate them to lead independent lives, Ko Nay Lin Soe, program director of Myanmar Independent Living Initiatives, said on January 10.

"We also want to raise public awareness of disabled people. We believe people's attitudes will change when they observe the abilities of the disabled," he said.

The festival will include talent shows, performance booths and stalls to sell works created by disabled artists.

The talents of disabled people in art, cartoon, caricature, song and dance, playwriting, photography, writing, puppetry and video-making will be on show, said Ma Zin Mar Phyu, program coordinator of the organising committee.

"The performance booths and stalls are open to all and tickets will be sold for the talent shows in order to raise funds," she said.

Auditions begin in April to select the best performers for the festival, which will be organised by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Myanmar Independent Living Initiatives, and funded by the Japan-based Nippon Foundation. The estimated cost is more than US\$180,000.

Associations working with disabled people are also planning to hold an ASEAN Disability Art Festival in 2014 featuring participants from ASEAN countries. October's festival will be the pilot programs for the ASEAN Art Festival, said Ko Nay Lin Soe.

"Myanmar will become the ASEAN chair in 2014 and we think it will be best time to host and communicate with disabled associations in other countries," he said.

"We will hold this ASEAN festival based on the experience we have in 2013," he said.

Application forms for the art festival are now available and those interested can contact Myanmar Independent Living Initiatives on 09 43123742, 09 5102118 or [www.myanmarili.org](http://www.myanmarili.org).

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## Singapore firm partners with UMFCCI on events

By Zaw Win Than

SINGAPORE-BASED Sphere Conferences will jointly organise a series of industry-specific investment conferences with the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry following the signing of a cooperation agreement last week.

The events include a Myanmar Urban Development Conference and a Myanmar Banking and Finance Conference in May, and a Myanmar Logistics and Supply Chain Conference in September.

"Myanmar is transforming into a modern country, and we seek foreign participation in industrial sectors. We are happy to partner with Sphere Conferences for the upcoming conferences, which will profile the country's key sectors such as urban planning, banking and logistics," said UMFCCI vice president Dr Maung Maung Lay.

He said the conferences aim to foster better partnerships between the government and international businesses.

"With our re-engagement with the international communities, we aim to grow and develop Myanmar as a country that is both socially and economically

attractive."

Sphere Conferences chairman Mr Chua Wee Phong said the events "will create dynamic platforms" for both companies and government bodies to engage with foreign investors.

Mr Chua told *The Myanmar Times* that the conference topics were chosen based on demand from potential investors, Myanmar exporters and foreign firms looking to buy Myanmar's exports.

UMFCCI is Sphere Conferences' second Myanmar partner. On October 2, 2012, it signed a similar agreement with the Myanmar Tourism Federation to cooperate on the Hospitality and Tourism Conference, which will be held from February 26 to 28.

Mr Chua said early indications were that the conferences would be well attended. "We have already sold more than 60 percent of our capacity. It is going pretty well. We are also dependent upon MTF to get local delegates in because the conferences must not just be international communities. Everybody has a different idea. So a lot of sharing needs to take place and locals must come in and do the networking. I'm sure they will come," he said.



A fisherman in front of beds of tomato plants at Inle Lake. Pic: Khin Su Wai

## Inle agriculture project targets foreign buyers

By Khin Su Wai

AN INLE organisation is to grow fruit and vegetables with reduced use of chemicals, mainly for foreign consumers.

ISDA - the Inle Special Development Association - will grow the produce in 65 floating garden beds on the east side of the lake, starting next month.

The K20 million project

is being funded by the Norwegian government, and Israeli technicians will provide advice.

"This will not be totally organic produce, because there is no market for it here. But we will apply GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) standards," ISDA chairman Ko Yay Aye told *The Myanmar Times*.

"Myanmar consumers always choose low-cost products, and aren't

interested in organic foods, which cost more, or for GAP foods. But more and more foreign visitors are coming to Inle Lake, so we hope to sell to them," he said.

The association will grow Japanese cucumber, seedless papaya and six varieties of peppers, he said.

In the absence of a government body to certify quality, ISDA wants its produce to help set a

national standard for fruit and vegetables produced with minimal use of chemicals.

Speaking of the difficulty of getting Myanmar customers to change their consumer habits, Ko Yay Aye said: "In Thailand, if the king buys a certain product, lots of people would do the same. There is no equivalent in Myanmar to persuade people to reduce chemical use."

### TRADE MARK CAUTION

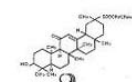
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## Red Shan to push on NRCs

By Khin Su Wai

THE Tai-Leng (Red Shan) Nationalities Development Party will strive to get the ethnicity of Red Shan people officially recognised on their National Registration Cards, officials say.

The party said many Red Shan, who are also known as Shan-ni and mostly live in Kachin State, are incorrectly classified as Burmese or Shan-Burmese.

"Our people live in Kachin State and Sagaing Region ... we have our own culture and literature and our ethnic group is officially recognised but none of us have an NRC that lists our ethnic group as Red Shan. That's what we will try and achieve," general

secretary U Saw Win Tun told *The Myanmar Times*.

"We will try to resolve this issue together with other ethnic parties," he said.

The party says it is important the issue is resolved soon to ensure that Red Shan are correctly classified in the 2014 census.

U Saw Win Tun said the issue was not just an issue in Kachin State, with the ethnicity of Chin people in Sagaing Region and Kachin and Mon in Bago Region often not properly recognised in official documents.

Ma Thandar, 30, from Yangon's North Dagon township, said that her father is Red Shan, her mother is Shan Gyi - another officially recognised group - but her NRC lists her ethnicity

as Burmese. "If it is possible, I would like to change my ethnicity officially to Red Shan because it can be related to voting for ethnic groups," she said, adding that this was an issue for Chin people in her township.

Under the 2008 constitution, if an ethnic minority has a population of more than 0.1 percent of the national population - about 60,000 - in a state or region they are able to elect their own minister to that state or region government.

Meanwhile, the Tai-Leng (Red Shan) Nationalities Development Party recently issued a statement saying Red Shan in Kachin State had been caught in the middle of the conflict between the Kachin Independence Army and Tatmadaw.

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# Second onshore block tender announced

## IN DEPTH

with  
Tim McLaughlin



THE Ministry of Energy has announced the second bidding round for onshore oil and gas blocks.

The announcement, printed by state-run media on January 17, said that bids would be accepted for 18 onshore blocks. Bids must be submitted no later than March 17 to the director general of the Energy Planning Department in Nay Pyi Taw.

"The petroleum operation shall be conducted on production sharing basis and/or improved petroleum recovery basis," the

statement said.

Foreign companies that wish to take part in the bidding round must partner with state-owned Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) through either production sharing contracts or improved recovery contracts. Foreign companies must also select a ministry-approved

Potential bidders will be able to submit up to three proposals for onshore blocks.

The tender was slated to be announced in early September but was delayed when officials from major Western energy corporations approached the Ministry of Energy with concerns over transparency

bidding round."

The first round of tenders was in August 2011.

The ministry later said it was also preparing to launch tenders for its offshore blocks.

"We will announce the tender openly through state media and our website. We are just at the

said Western oil companies "have shown considerable interest in participating" in the tender.

He told AFP that Myanmar, the world's 14<sup>th</sup>-largest gas exporter, was an "exciting" destination for oil and gas firms because sanctions had limited investment in exploration.

"Although rapid economic reforms since 2011 have made Myanmar a gold-rush economy, it also remains a new-frontier market with a high level of country risk for foreign investors," he said, citing political challenges and corruption.

Myanmar's oil and gas industry accounts for some 34 percent of total exports, said IHS. Biswas said the sector "will play a key role in the nation's further economic development, generating new exports and fiscal revenue".

— With AFP

**'We are putting great emphasis on transparency and the rule of law.'**

Myanmar-owned oil and gas firm to conduct exploration and production tasks. At present, foreign companies can choose from more than 60 approved Myanmar companies.

The list of approved Myanmar companies will be compiled by the Energy Planning Department.

and international standards.

"At the present time, we are putting great emphasis on transparency and the rule of law," Minister for Energy U Than Htay said on September 4. "We need some time to consider and assess before we launch our next international

beginning [of the process]," ministry spokesman U Htay Aung said.

Research firm IHS Global Insight has put Myanmar among the world's top five potential oil and gas exploration and production hotspots.

IHS economist Rajiv Biswas

# Ministry of Commerce targets illegal border trade

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

INVESTIGATORS have found discrepancies amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars in the amount of cross-border trade, the Ministry of Commerce has been told. And the government has warned of a crackdown on smugglers.

A meeting in early January organised by the team investigating border trade and charged with clamping down on illegal commerce found that trade volumes reported on the Myanmar side were substantially less than the figures given by the other side – Thailand and China.

The teams looked at the Muse-Lashio route from the Chinese border in November, and the Myawady crossing with Thailand in Kayin State in December.

By September in the 2012-13 fiscal year, the volume of bilateral trade through the Thai border was reported at about US\$85 million in Myanmar figures, but more than \$820 million on the Thai side – almost 10 times



The Myawady border checkpoint in Kayin State. Pic: Myanmar Times Archive/Aye Zaw Myo

as much, and a gap of about \$736 million.

The mobile team found the trade volume increased to about \$28 million in November and \$39 million in December, compared to

\$19 million in October.

However, restrictions on the mobile teams operations mean that the actual figures could be much higher. A senior ministry official said border trade figures had

not been provided from the Chinese side.

"Our investigations faced difficulties because there are many routes between Muse and Lashio that we couldn't control," said U Kyi Sein,

deputy director of the Border Trade Department and the deputy head of one of the teams. The teams could not operate at night, and needed better communications and security, as well as more

staff, he added.

The commodities being traded include jade and gems, narcotics, vehicles, sawn timber and furniture, and foodstuffs not approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

However, the teams also came in for some criticism. U Tine Kyaw, secretary of the Myanmar Eel Association for Mandalay Region, said at the meeting that the team failed to release some information, and its members were lacking in skill. U Tine Kyaw added that while reducing illegal trade, the government should also liberalise some processes and the granting of licences for some commodities.

"Not every commodity needs a license," he said, saying eels for exportation should not be subjected to licensing, and nor should imported goods such as construction materials, which could not be produced locally in sufficient quality or quantity.

U Thein Win, who led the other mobile team, warned: "If we find corruption or bribery, the police will take action."

# MOGE to speed up CNG conversion applications

By Soe Sandar Oo

DRIVERS wanting to convert their vehicle to compressed natural gas use will face a shorter wait in future.

A spokesman for the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise says it hopes to cut down the approval time to four to six weeks.

Natural gas, which Myanmar produces in abundance, is much cheaper than diesel and its widespread use in transportation could reduce the amount of foreign oil imported.

The conversion project began in October 2011 on instructions from the Ministry of Energy. Since then, the number of applicants has continued to increase. Last December, 1700 drivers applied, the spokesman said.

"First priority goes to passenger cars, not taxis or buses. We're trying to speed up our process, and hope to cut it down to four to six weeks in the future," he said.

"In January, more than 500 people applied in a week. We're currently processing applications from last November," he added.

Taxi driver U Mya Han, who uses CNG, said the wait used to be three months. "I really welcome the speed-up because CNG is very useful and important for cars. They should increase the number of shops that sell CNG as well. If most cars convert to CNG, Myanmar won't need to import diesel," he said.

A tank of CNG that costs between K2000 and K3000 will last a whole day, but enough diesel to power a car for a day can cost K16,000, said U Mya Han. However, car owners charge 50 percent more to lease a CNG-powered cab, he said.

"I have to pay the owner of my cab K15,000 a day to lease it, while a diesel-fuelled car would cost about K10,000," he said.

CNG is sold for K275 a litre at about 40 specialised stations in Yangon Region.



A filling station attendant fills the compressed natural gas tank of a Hilux bus in Yangon. Pic: Myanmar Times Archive

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## B&P yields tipped for 40 percent fall

COOL season beans and pulses crops harvested in upper Myanmar will probably be 40 percent smaller than usual because of water shortages and reduced total sown area, a spokesperson for an industry body said last week.

"The harvesting for *matpe* [black gram] is taking place but traders and farmers are reporting that yields will be about 40pc lower," Dr Myan Linn, a trader and central executive committee member of the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association told *The Myanmar Times* recently.

Dr Myan Linn cited two main factors behind the

reduced yields: "Firstly, the sown areas are smaller than last year because market prices for the crops were low at planting time and the weather was poor during the growing season."

*Matpe* and *toor* (pigeon pea) yields last cool season amounted to 550,000-600,000 tonnes and 100,000-150,000 tonnes respectively, he said.

"Some farmers also told us that earthquakes in Sagaing and Mandalay regions [major growing areas] caused topsoil movement and cut the roots of the plants. But this is not the main reason for lower yields," said Dr Myan Linn said. — *Myat May Zin*

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Farmers in Bago Region harvest healthy paddy in May 2012. Pic: Kaung Htet

## Monsoon floods drag down rice prices, say traders

By Myat May Zin

SOME farmers are being paid low paddy prices for their harvests following extensive monsoon flood damage, traders said last week.

Key harvest areas in Bago and Ayeyarwady regions suffered extensive flooding during the monsoon growing season, requiring many fields to be replanted. Much of the paddy that was not replanted suffered minor damage that has resulted in lowered quality.

"The price for 100 baskets [about 2.358 tonnes] of 25-percent broken grain *ehmeta* is about K400,000 normally but farmers are selling that amount for K350,000

or even K300,000 because demand is low," said a spokesperson for Mother's Son rice and oil trading shop on Bogyoke Aung San Road in Kyauktada township.

"Traders don't want to buy rice from the last crop because the quality is poor," he said.

The paddy price is falling only in the areas hit hardest by flooding, such as eastern Bago Region and parts of Ayeyarwady Region. But some townships, such as Maubin and Einme in Ayeyarwady Region, are seeing prices of K400,000 for 100 baskets, the spokesperson said.

"Some farmers are selling their paddy as fast as possible, even accepting delayed cash payments because they don't want

to hold onto flood-damaged paddy," said U Aung Ko Minn, who owns 51 acres in Pantanaw township in Ayeyarwady Region.

"And lots of farmers have debts they need to repay quickly because they needed to borrow the money at high interest rates to replant damaged crops," he said.

"Traders are trying to buy small amounts to mill and test the quality – only after that are they willing to buy whole crops," he said, adding, "that's why the price of paddy varies in different areas."

Myanmar Rice Federation announced in mid-December that it would buy 100,000 tonnes of rice between December and January to boost prices and form a stockpile to

increase food security.

Federation general secretary U Ye Min Aung told *The Myanmar Times* that a separate plan, that would provide low interest loans to specialist rice companies to buy a combined 50 tonnes of paddy from farmers a day, is being planned.

"There are two main factors behind the low paddy price in this harvesting season. First, the quality of paddy is low and traders are not getting enough rice after the paddy is milled. Secondly, bad transport linkages are making it tough for farmers to access market rates," he said.

In the market, dealers are selling bags (about 50kg) of *ehmeta* for K12,000-12,500 each.

## Govt boosts summer loans by 20 percent

By Myat May Zin

THE government has stepped in to aid farmers suffering income loss from a poor rainy-season harvest. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation announced on January 14 a 20 percent increase in loans for the coming summer crop.

According to the statement, which was carried in the state media, the increase – from K80,000 to K100,000 an acre – was agreed to help offset the fall in paddy prices caused by heavy flooding.

"The government will

also extend the deadline for repayment of the rainy-season crop loan to March," Dr Soe Tun, president of the Myanmar Farmers Association (MFA), told *The Myanmar Times*.

"This comes as costs and farm wages are rising. Farmers spend K140,000-K200,000 an acre for summer crops, so the loan is only a partial help. Farmers also borrow from private lenders, and pay high interest," he added.

Farmers receive the loan from the Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank at the rate of K50,000 an acre for rainy-season

crops, K80,000 an acre for the summer crop and K10,000 for winter crop, which includes maize and beans and pulses, with an interest rate of only 1.3pc a month.

"MFA called for an increase in the loan for summer crops last December. MFA will ask the ministry to remove the borrowing limit, which is restricted to only 10 acres of paddy. We will try to get loans for all paddy fields in the coming crop," he added.

Over the past two growing seasons, heavy flooding in the main rice production

areas, Ayeyarwady and Bago regions, resulted in a crop below export standard, and prices have fallen.

"Farmers have to pay back loans, and lenders cannot borrow for the coming crop. Without profit from rainy-season crops, farmers can't grow summer crop. On January 6, the farmers from Nyaungdon, Danuphyu, and Pantanaw townships wrote to the ministry to double the loan for winter crop from K10,000 an acre to K20,000," said U Sein Win, a farmer from Pantanaw township in Ayeyarwady Region.



## Exchange rates close to unified: sources

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

THE gap between the exchange rates offered by the black market and official money changers has narrowed to less than 1 percent in the nine months since the Central Bank of Myanmar began a managed float of the kyat, industry sources said last week.

The Central Bank began establishing a formal foreign exchange market that it could intervene in when necessary in April 2012, beginning by holding daily foreign currency auctions with domestic banks that set a daily rate. The banks were then allowed to offer a rate 0.8pc above or below the Central Bank's rate.

Before April, the bank had allowed private banks to set up official money changing counters in Yangon to assist foreigners and Myanmar to change money. This network has been extended to include airports, shopping centres and banks in other major cities.

"When the first exchange counters were opened the gap between the rate offered at official exchange counters and the black market was significant – sometimes K20-30 a dollar but over



Tourists wait in line to change money at a KBZ Bank exchange counter in Yangon. Pic: Kaung Htet

time it has stabilised," a Central Bank official said.

He added that the Central Bank's decision in December to offer non-bank money changer licenses had encouraged a number of black market money changers to enter the legal fold, and had shrunk the capacity of the black market.

On January 17, the Central Bank's daily rate was K858 for US dollars, while Foreign Exchange

Certificates were trading for K862, Asia Green Development bank's website said.

The black market was offering K855-858 for each.

U Win Myint, a money changer in Kyauktada township, said the exchange rate is stable because gold prices are also firm. He added that his counter is receiving plenty of customers.

A week ago, the FEC value increased by about K5 following confirmation that

vehicle importers and sailors must continue to use FEC, even though supplies of the currency are dwindling.

"Nobody dares to keep FEC because it has been announced that it will be withdrawn and we don't know when," he said.

Since the Central Bank announcing that non-banks could open exchange counters more than 100 applications have been lodged, the official said.

Two companies were granted permission to open counters in January: Farmer Phoyarzar Company, which has opened branches in Chan Aye Thar San township in Mandalay, and at the Chatrium Hotel and on Bo Myat Tun Road in Yangon. And Today Topstar company will open a counter in Myawaddy in Kayin State.

Farmer Phoyarzar is a trading company and its executive director for the money changing operations is U Kyaw Kyaw. He said the all money changers must follow the same rules, regardless of who owns them.

"I think opening non-bank money changers increases competition and I hope it will see the black market gradually fade away.

## Govt calls for telecom EOIs

Tim McLaughlin

THE government has issued a call for expressions of interest (EOI) in the tendering of two nationwide telecommunications services licences.

A press release in the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper on January 15 stated that interested companies have until 3pm on January 25 to submit EOIs to the Telecommunication Operator Tender Evaluation and Selection Committee in Nay Pyi Taw.

The first two licences will be issued during the first half of 2013, the release said.

"The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has laid down the policy framework for the development of the country's telecommunications and ICT industry by facilitating competition of both local and international operators in the sector," the statement said.

"One of the principal goals

for this is to increase the overall tele-density of the country to 75-80 percent in 2015-16, to make the telecommunications services available to the public at affordable prices, and to give the public the capability of choice for the telecoms services," the statement said.

A total of four telecoms licences are to be issued as the underdeveloped telecoms' sector is overhauled. Malaysia's Axiata, Caribbean-based Digicel, Norwegian Telenor, Vietnam's VNPT-Fujitsu and Russian VimpelCom are eager to gain a foothold in the largely untapped market.

Mobile phone penetration within Myanmar is amongst the lowest in the world, with less than 3pc of people having access to a mobile phone.

"Telecommunications, including mobile telephony, is in urgent need of investment," the Asian Development Bank said in a report issued in August.

## Inbound transfers only for now: Western Union

By Myat May Zin

INTERNATIONAL money transfer firm Western Union is working with seven private Myanmar banks but only offering inbound transfers, company officials said at a press conference at Yangon's Park Royal Hotel on January 12.

"It is the strategy of Western Union always to start [with] inward [transfers] in any country," said U Zaw Linn Htut, senior general manager of Kanbawza Bank (KBZ), one of the banks partnering with Western Union.

"Some of the banks have been offering money

transfers since last year and the rest will start soon," he said.

Ms Drina Yue, managing director of Asia Pacific for Western Union, said: "Normally, overseas Myanmar workers remit money to their families here, and now they can do it quickly and safely with Western Union and us."

She added that the company uses a 10-digit security code.

The seven banks working with Western Union are Kanbawza, Myanmar Oriental, Myanmar Apex, First Private, Co-operative, United Amara and Myanmar Livestock and Fisheries Development.




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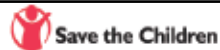


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## JOB WATCH



### Local Call for Tender

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Save the Children, acting as Principal Recipient, has received 3 Grants from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and intends to apply part of the Grants to payments under the contract for which the Call for Tender is published.

Save the Children now invites eligible bidders to indicate their interest in providing the **Basic Health-Product (Laboratory, Surgical and consumable items)**. Interested Bidders can collect complete set of hard copy of bidding documents at the address below during office hours from **9am to 5pm** from the **21st of January 2013** or by email to **myatkaykhine.oo@savethechildren.org**

(c/c to: **myatkay.khine@savethechildren.org**).

A pre-bidding meeting will be organized for the interested Bidders at **Save the Children Office, Wizaya Plaza, 226 U Wizara Road, 3rd floor, Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar**,  
**Tel : ( 95-1 ) 375 739 Ext:318 the 28th of January 2013 at 10am.**

Deadline for submission of bidding document is **13th February 2013 by 12:00 hour.**



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# Huawei sees key role in telecoms future

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

HUAWEI Electronics is poised to become a major player in Myanmar's emerging communications market, its managing director has told *The Myanmar Times*.

Speaking in his office in Sakura Tower, Yangon, on January 11, Mr Geng said: "I think Myanmar is a very important market for Huawei, so we're paying a lot of attention."

However, Huawei, which operates in more than 140 countries, sees itself as a provider of telecoms solutions in the Myanmar market rather than as an operator, he said.

"The SEA Games will be very important as Myanmar opens up to world, and we have rich experience in supporting those kinds of events," he said.

President U Thein Sein talked about Huawei's donation on September 20 of about US\$300 million worth of equipment to the SEA Games organisation and \$200 million for building a mobile technology system to the state-owned Myanma Posts and Telecommunications, he said.

"We've already donated a total of \$500 million for generating mobile systems, as well as video conference systems in support of the SEA Games, the president's office and for MPT," he said.



Huawei Electronics managing director at his office at Sakura Tower on January 11. Pic: Boothee

Mr Geng also cited his company's donations to the post-Nargis recovery and previous assistance given to MPT in 2009.

Speaking of the possibilities of a country where only 5 percent of the population owned mobile phones, he said: "Myanmar is a

potential market for all players in the telecommunications industry all over the world. MPT has announced that they will sell telecoms licenses to both foreign and local companies. This is good news, because we can compete in the market."

On the other hand, Mr Geng

noted three challenges: finance, investment and talent.

"Government revenue is low, while telecommunications require huge investments to improve infrastructure, so I think finding the necessary finance is a real challenge," he said.

# China's growth hits 13-year low

BEIJING – The Chinese economy expanded 7.8 percent in 2012, the government said last week – the worst performance in 13 years – in the face of weakness at home and in key overseas markets.

But gross domestic product (GDP) grew 7.9pc in the final three months of the year, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said, as it snapped seven straight quarters of slowing growth in a positive sign for the spluttering global recovery.

China's GDP reached 51.9 trillion yuan (US\$8.28 trillion) in 2012, cementing its position as the world's second-largest economy after the United States.

Annual growth slowed for a second straight year but the figures were just ahead of expectations, with economists surveyed by *AFP* having projected GDP growth of 7.7pc in 2012 and 7.8pc in the fourth quarter.

The official statistics come as optimism grows among analysts that China will pick up steam in 2013 after two

years of relative weakness. The *AFP* survey showed expectations of an acceleration to 8pc growth this year.

"The international economic environment remains complicated this year and... there are still unbalanced conflicts in the Chinese economy," NBS spokesman Ma Jiantang told reporters.

Still, Ma added: "We expect China's economy to continue to grow in a stable manner in 2013."

China's growth has slowed amid weakness in the global economy, particularly the key export markets of the United States and Europe, and as the government took steps to cool a once red hot property market.

The annual growth figure was the lowest since 1999, when it stood at 7.6pc, according to official statistics.

But IHS Global Insight senior economist Ren Xianfang said the worst was probably over for China's economy and that it had avoided a "hard landing", although challenges remained as it entered a "new

normal" of slower growth.

"The rebound by itself looks quite shaky," she wrote in a report after the data. "The trajectory of recovery is flat, mirroring the shallow downturn it's rebounding from."

Growth had slowed for seven straight quarters through September, when the economy expanded 7.4pc, the worst since early 2009. Annual GDP grew 9.3pc in 2011 and 10.4pc in 2010.

Successfully managing the economy is a key concern for China's leaders who derive much of their claims to legitimacy from the country's reform-led economic rise, which has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty over the past three decades.

The government is due to formally conclude a once-in-a-decade power handover in March with Xi Jinping, already named Communist Party chief, becoming president and Li Keqiang taking over as premier in charge of day-to-day administration.

The country's economy is widely seen as having matured to the point where the growth model of the past, including public spending for big ticket infrastructure projects, must be modified.

The World Bank said last month that China's economy is expected to expand 8.4pc this year, but added that longer-term GDP growth is expected to moderate as China's leaders move away from a growth model based on investment and exports.

Zhang Zhiwei, China economist for Nomura International in Hong Kong, said: "The data showed that the recovery is on track, but in the meantime inflation is picking up."

"So monetary policy will likely be tightened this year, with no chances of cuts in banks' reserve requirements or interest rates. As a result, GDP growth may slow down in the second half of this year."

The government is targeting average growth of 7pc during the five years through 2015.

– *AFP*

# Tele-density may reach 80 percent in 2015

By Pyayt Thet Phyto

ALTHOUGH government officials had announced that cheaper 3G SIMs will replace 2G SIMs this month, Myanma Post and Telecommunications still could not confirm the sale date or the exact prices.

"We cannot confirm prices that are being speculated by outside sources because there is a better plan," MPT's chief engineer, U Htay Win, told *The Myanmar*

*Times* on January 15.

Sources previously reported mixed launch dates and prices to *The Myanmar Times*. U Htay Win said on January 2 the price of the new SIMs would be set at K150,000.

Despite the lack of concrete details on the date and price for the launch of 3G SIMs, the government is banking the network upgrade will help achieve a new goal of putting a mobile phone in the hands of at least three-quarters of the

population by the end of 2015.

"We are determined to increase telephone usage from 75pc to 80pc by the end of 2015," Minister for Information and Technology U Thein Tun said on January 10.

The announcement came ahead of the government's call for Expressions of Interest in the tender for two nationwide telecommunications services licences.

Telephone density, or teledensity, is measured by the

sum of subscribers to telephone mainlines and mobile phones per 1,000 people, according to World Development Indicators.

Access to mobile phones in Myanmar exceeded 10pc at the end of 2012, U Thein Tun said. He added that mobile phone retail outlets will be built in rural areas as soon as possible.

While 70pc of the country's population resides in rural areas, only 1.2 million have access to mobile phones.

– *Translated by Thit Lwin*



# Oil market tightens on Algeria 'cloud': IEA

PARIS – Price pressures on the global oil market have suddenly tightened, and the deadly hostage drama at a gas field in Algeria puts a “dark cloud” over the country’s entire energy sector, the International Energy Agency warned on January 18.

The IEA said that a dominant factor in the global energy market now “has a lot to do with political risk writ large, and not just in Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya or Venezuela”, and included regulatory risks.

The agency raised its forecast for global oil demand this year by 240,000 barrels a day (bpd) from its estimate in December to 90.8 million barrels per day, and to 930,000bpd or 1 percent more than in 2012.

The IEA said that its estimates for global oil demand this year suddenly looked tighter mainly because of unexpectedly strong data for demand in the United States and China in the last quarter of last year.

But while warning that a rebound into bull market conditions was possible, the agency said the signs were not yet clear and it warned that some data was uncertain and would be volatile.

The IEA, commenting on its overall interpretation of data in its monthly report, said that “brutal swings in apparent demand in both directions may become a fact of life, masking unreported inventory builds and draws”.

It said that the United States was by far the biggest user of oil in October, consuming twice as much as the next biggest user China, which in turn which used twice as much as the third-biggest, Japan.

Initial data showing US consumption in the last quarter at an average of 18.84mbpd, which was 155,000 bpd more than the agency had forecast in December, “surprised on the upside”, the agency said.

As a result, US demand will decline by the lowest rate for nearly two years and, in view of a less pessimistic economic climate in the United States, the data support the view of the International Monetary Fund that global economic growth will remain above 2pc this year.

On the attack on the In Amenas gas field in Algeria on January 16, the IEA warned: “The 16 January kidnapping and murder of foreign oil workers at the In Amenas gas field has cast a dark cloud over the outlook for the country’s energy sector.”

“Production at the field was shut in, including an estimated 50,000 barrels per day of condensate,” the IEA said, referring to claims by Islamist attackers that they had acted in retaliation for French military action against Islamists in Mali.

The IEA noted that the In Amenas field was a joint venture grouping the operator Statoil (of Norway), BP and state-run Sonatrach and involving Japanese engineering firm JGC.

The IEA, the energy arm of the 34-member Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, said the outlook for its first monthly report of the year “paints a sobering” view of the oil market.

In “one fell swoop” the estimated demand for oil from members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries in the last quarter of last year had risen by 400,000bpd.

“All of a sudden the market looks tighter than we thought,” the IEA said.

Under a headline “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”, the IEA said that owing to uncertainty about data, notably concerning demand in China and production in Saudi Arabia, it might be too early to “declare the start of a new market cycle or a return



The In Amenas gas field, jointly operated by British oil giant BP, Norway’s Statoil and state-run Algerian energy firm Sonatrach, in eastern Algeria near the Libyan border where a deadly hostage drama unfolded last week. Pic: AFP

to the bull market of yesteryear”.

The bull market of 2003-08

had been driven by demand and worries about supplies.

A bear market followed,

driven by the financial crisis. Now “political risk” is a central driving factor, including regulatory issues and changes, the IEA said.

“Changes in tax and trade policies, in China as in Russia, can, at the stroke of a pen, shake up crude and products markets and redraw the oil trade map,” it said.

The countries in the OECD area were also subject to political risks in part because “above-ground” issues such as export and shipping legislation had become misaligned.

Global supplies of oil fell by 170,000bpd in December to 91.2mbpd but supplies from countries outside OPEC surged by 90,000bpd from the November

level to 54.2mbpd. They were expected to rise by 590,000bpd in the first quarter of this year on a 12-month comparison, and for the whole of 2013 were expected to rise by 980,000bpd to 54.3mbpd which would be the strongest growth rate since 2010.

But supplies from OPEC fell to the lowest level for a year to 30.65mbpd on reduced output by Saudi Arabia and Iraq. However average production by OPEC last year reached a record high level and the agency raised its expected demand for OPEC oil this year by 100,000bpd to 30mbpd.

The IEA noted that OPEC had decided on December 12 to hold its production target at 30mbpd. – AFP

## Fish farmers seek loans for coming year

By Myat Nyein Aye

EXPORTS of fisheries products in the 2012-13 year are going strong but fish farmers are losing money because the cost of doing business is rising, industry sources said during the Myanmar Fisheries Federation meeting last week.

They warned that farmers need monetary assistance to invest in the following year or there is a risk that exports will fall. At the meeting MFF officials asked the Department of Fisheries, under the Ministry of Livestock and Veterinary Breeding, to provide loans to farmers.

U Win Kyaing, MFF general secretary, said farmers need to invest about K180 billion (about US\$210 million) in the next few

months.

“The fish farming sector is losing money. By our estimation we need to invest about K180 billion in the 150,000 acres of fish farms we have,” he said on January 15.

“We have shown our data to the Department of Fisheries and they will then ask the government to provide the money,” he added.

More than 269,000 tonnes of fisheries products, earning about US\$477 million were exported by December 30 in the 2012-13 fiscal year, an MFF official said. Exports At the same time in the previous year stood at 266,682.1 tonnes and earned about \$448 million, the official added.

“Overall exports are looking okay but fish farmers are facing losses,” said U Win Kyaing.



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High house prices in Australia have caused a surge in demand for apartments and townhouses. Pic: AFP

## Australians ditch backyards for balconies

SYDNEY – Anja Leszinsky's budget of A\$420,000 (US\$442,470) would buy two houses in Chicago or three in Dallas. In Sydney, the most unaffordable housing market in the English-speaking world, it gets her a nondescript one-bedroom apartment about 6.5 kilometres (4 miles) from the central business district or a run-down home on the city's outskirts.

She's opting for being close to the CBD.

"I knew properties were expensive, but I'm getting disappointed because they all seem to sell for a lot more than the price indication," said Leszinsky, 25, a medical equipment sales representative who's seen about 18 apartments since September and is still searching. "I want to be close to the city. The size of the place is less important."

Apartment ownership is on the rise as the Great Australian Dream of a house in the suburbs fades for buyers priced out of the market. Apartments and townhouses accounted for 35 percent of new housing construction in the three months ended in September 30, compared with 29pc five years earlier and 21pc 20 years ago, show federal government figures. About 13.7pc of Australians lived in their own apartments and townhouses, the 2011 census showed, compared with 12.4pc in 2006.

The shift is giving a boost to multifamily-property developers. Apartment prices rose 0.5pc in 2012, compared with a 0.5pc decline for houses, said research firm RP Data.

Leighton Properties, the real estate arm of Leighton Holdings Ltd, is now focused almost entirely on apartments. Its property division reported a loss that narrowed to A\$17 million in the six months to June 30 from A\$80 million a year earlier.

Stockland, the nation's biggest

listed housing developer, had a 35pc drop in profit in the year to June 30, and last month forecast an earnings decline of as much as 15pc in fiscal year 2013, citing sluggish housing conditions. The company said in 2010 it would exit its apartments business.

Stockland shares fell 4.9pc in the two years to January 14, compared with a 21pc jump in shares of Mirvac Group, whose profit more than doubled in the year to June 30. While Mirvac's mix of units and detached houses fluctuates, the company is building one of Sydney's biggest apartment projects.

"When you look at the future of residential living in Australia, apartments will be a big component of it," John Kim, head of Australian property research at

households in the next 30 years. It is seeking to become more compact by locating most new housing near existing services and transport.

Australian state authorities are restricting land releases on city fringes and demanding that developers help pay for roads, transport and other amenities when building outside the limits.

The Great Australian Dream is the country's take on the American Dream, which equates prosperity and freedom with land ownership. In Australia, it encapsulates an idealised suburban lifestyle with grassy backyards, swimming pools and barbecues.

In its pursuit, households doubled their debt load in the past 15 years. Debt as a proportion of disposable income climbed to 147.8pc in the quarter ending

census point to a smaller shortage than initially thought. Australia had 7.8 million households in 2011, compared with estimates of about 8.9 million used by the National Housing Supply Council to forecast a shortfall of about 369,000 homes by 2016.

In the US, Sydney apartment buyer Leszinsky's budget of A\$420,000 would allow her to buy more than two homes in Chicago, where the median price is \$161,300 (A\$152,775), or more than three in Dallas-Fort Worth, which has a median home price of \$126,800. That compares with Sydney's median dwelling price of A\$580,246 as of December 31.

To find a Sydney suburb within Leszinsky's price range a buyer would have to look at least 25 kilometres (16 miles) west of the

and I wanted something that was lower maintenance, like an apartment with a courtyard or large balcony. Houses are a bit of a waste."

Mirvac is building the A\$1 billion Harold Park project in Glebe, a suburb 2.5 kilometres from Sydney's CBD known for its cafes and boutique stores. About 35pc of the site will be set aside as parkland, John Carfi, Mirvac's chief executive officer for apartments and commercial properties, said in a telephone interview.

Next to the Jubilee Park light-rail station, it includes 1250 townhouses and apartments, starting at A\$499,000 for a studio apartment to more than A\$1.8 million for a townhouse. The first stage is expected to be completed in mid-2014, said Mirvac.

"People are time-poor now," Carfi said. "Apartments allow them to access the lifestyle, the infrastructure that's all already there close to the city."

Billionaire Harry Triguboff's Meriton develops only multifamily properties. Closely held Meriton was the biggest homebuilder in New South Wales in the year ended June 30 with 1167 apartment starts, said the Housing Industry Association. The Sydney-based company is also building two of Brisbane's biggest residential towers, adding more than 1000 apartments in 2012 and 2013.

Triguboff, who plans to start about 2000 apartments in 2013, is betting a lack of conveniently located land for detached houses will drive demand for his properties.

"Cities are growing, so as they grow, it's more difficult to get cottages in the right places," Triguboff said in an interview in Sydney. "So apartments will keep growing. And there will be more, others, who'll want to build them."

— Bloomberg News

**'When you look at the future of residential living in Australia, apartments will be a big component of it.'**

CLSA Asia-Pacific Markets, said in a telephone interview. Developers of only detached houses "would have to seriously consider getting into apartments".

Efforts by Australian cities to limit sprawl are also helping boost demand for apartments closer to city centres. Sydney spans about 4064 square kilometres (1569 square miles), five times the size of New York City. With an average of 991 people a square kilometre – compared with 10,425 in New York, 3124 in Los Angeles and 5199 in London – the city is seeking to locate at least 70pc of future growth in existing urban areas, as its population is forecast to jump to five million people by the 2020s from 4.2 million now.

Melbourne, with an urban area covering 5679 square kilometres and a population density of 678 people a square kilometre, expects as many as 620,000 extra

September 30, compared with 76.5pc 15 years earlier, said the Reserve Bank of Australia. The RBA has cut its benchmark rate by 1.75 percentage points since the beginning of November 2011.

"We're in an economy where people are more conservative, wanting to borrow less, and an apartment is much more affordable than a house," said David Milton, Sydney-based managing director for residential projects at broker CBRE Group Inc.

Homes in Australia cost 6.7 times the gross annual median household income as of the third quarter of 2011, says the latest report by Demographia, based in Belleville, Illinois. That compared with 3.1 times in the United States and five times in Britain, it said.

Economists have said a shortage of homes helped Australia avoid a US-style crash and keeps prices high, though findings from the 2011

city centre in outer suburbs such as Merrylands West, Old Guildford or Villawood, show figures from researcher Australian Property Monitors.

Those suburbs are all in or near the Fairfield-Liverpool area, with an unemployment rate of 7.2pc as of November, the fourth-highest of New South Wales state's 21 regions, and a labour participation rate of 57.7pc, the fourth lowest, show government statistics.

Steve Dimopoulos, 39, bought a 1960s-built one-bedroom apartment in a block of six in East St Kilda, a suburb six kilometres southeast of Melbourne's CBD, in 2011 for A\$350,000.

"I wouldn't have put in a bid if it had been in an outer suburb and I wasn't in the market for a house," Dimopoulos, who works in Victoria's department of justice, said in a telephone interview. "I haven't got a family at this stage,



# Singapore property shares slide after cooling measures

SINGAPORE – Shares of major property developers in Singapore were battered January 14 after the government introduced new measures at the weekend to cool the real estate market.

By the closing bell, shares of top developers listed on the Singapore Exchange had sunk more than 4 percent as investors spooked by the measures dumped the stocks.

CapitaLand closed 4.11pc lower at S\$3.73 (US\$3.05), City Developments fell 7.54pc to S\$11.65 (\$9.54) and Keppel Land slumped 7.24pc to S\$3.97 (\$3.25).

“We’re seeing a knee-jerk reaction to the cooling measures,” said Jason Hughes, head of premium client management for IG Markets Singapore.

The new measures, which came into force on January 12, included sharply higher duties on property purchases by foreigners.

Singaporeans’ minimum cash downpayments for second or subsequent homes were raised from 10 to 25pc of a property’s value.

But Hughes predicted property stocks would be able to ride out the storm thanks to their overseas portfolios.

“We do have to consider that a number of these guys are regionally focused,” he said, adding that the effect would have been more severe if they had been purely local developers.



Shares of major property developers in Singapore were battered last week after the government introduced new measures to cool the real estate market on January 12. Pic: AFP

HSBC Global Research said in a report that

**‘We’re seeing a knee-jerk reaction to the cooling measures.’**

Singapore may institute more cooling measures

because property demand is expected to remain robust.

“Low interest rates and an expected economic recovery this year will support demand. Further steps can, therefore, not be ruled out,” the report said.

The measures were imposed after home prices continued to rise even as the city-state suffered an economic slowdown. It narrowly avoided a technical recession in the last quarter of 2012.

The economy grew just 1.2pc in 2012, from 4.9pc in 2011. Expansion this year is forecast at 1-3pc. – AFP

## Housing conference being held in Yangon

By Htar Htar Khin

TWO government bodies are holding a conference to discuss the promotion of the country’s house building industry at the National Theatre in Yangon on January 20 and 21, a press release says.

The event is being organised by the Ministry of Construction and the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development (DHSHD) and will feature research paper readings, the showcasing of construction materials and construction technologies, heavy machinery and equipments, a DHSHD press release states.

The conference will be opened by U Soe Thein, a minister in the President’s Office and Myanmar Investment Commission chair, and Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin. The DHSHD press release says 30 booths will be available for rent to exhibitors for K500,000 (about US\$590) a day or US\$1180 for two days.

The conference is held in collaboration with the Ministry of Construction, DHSHD, Myanmar

Engineering Society, the Committee for Quality Control of High-rise Building Projects, the Association of Myanmar Architects (AMA), the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association and other local and foreign organisations.

The conference is being held to meet the aims of “Vision 2040: Sustainable Long-Term Physical and Social Development of Human Settlement and Adequate Shelter for All Citizens”, report produced by the Ministry of Construction and DHSHD. The report aims to ensure affordable housing is available to everyone nationally.

It is hoped that the conference will meet four objectives: To generate suggestions for housing designs and standards for the different target groups in the country; to encourage the use of new technology to mass produce housing; to boost the use of innovative and cost-effective construction materials that raise structural quality and encourage the production of such materials in Myanmar; and to boost cooperation with the private sector, the press release says.

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# Boeing faces a nightmare as Dreamliner fleets grounded

WASHINGTON – Airlines grounded all of Boeing's new 787 Dreamliners in service on January 17 until a fire risk is fixed, as the US aerospace giant reeled from the high-tech plane's deepening woes.

Authorities in Chile, Ethiopia, Europe, India, Japan and Qatar followed the US Federal Aviation Administration in halting all 787 flights after a smoke alert forced a Japanese Dreamliner to make an emergency landing on January 16.

The US FAA, in grounding all US-registered 787 aircraft late the same day, highlighted "a potential battery fire risk in the 787" after a suspected leak emerged as the focus of inquiries into an All Nippon Airways emergency landing.

The aircraft's flight systems rely heavily on electronics rather than the hydraulics used in older planes.

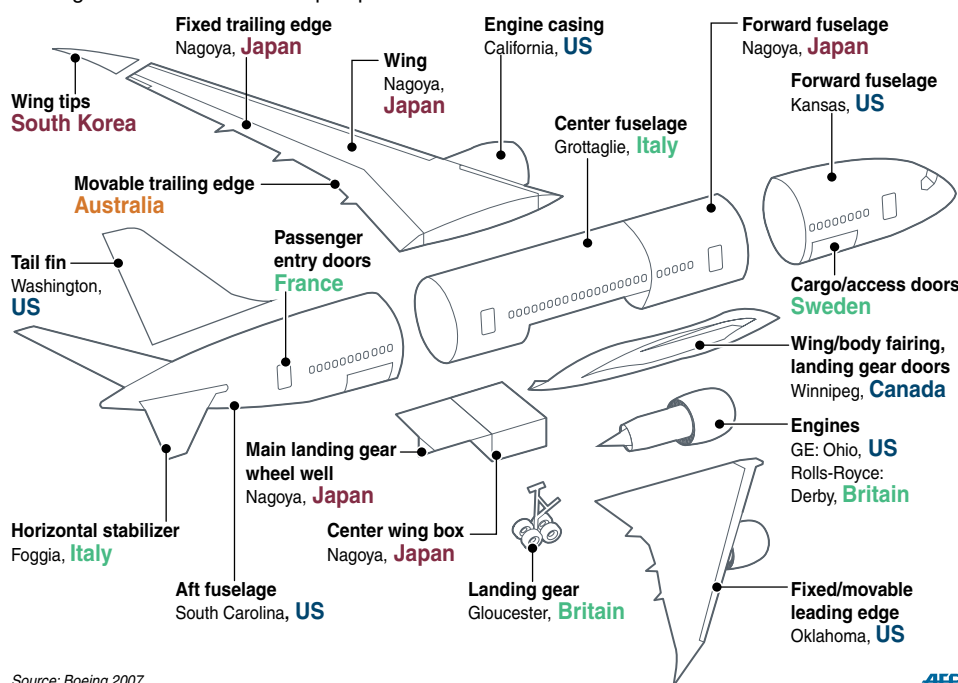
and Boeing's use of Boeing chief executive Jim McNerney said the US aerospace giant "deeply regrets" the impact of recent events on airlines and passengers, and vowed to take "every necessary step" in concert with the FAA to resolve the problems.

But he stressed that "we are confident the 787 is safe and we stand behind its overall integrity."

All of the 50 Dreamliners in operation around the world have been grounded, with Ethiopian Airlines the last to say its four planes would undergo precautionary inspections despite not having

## The Dreamliner's global assembly line

Boeing's 787 aircraft is made up of parts from across the world



Source: Boeing 2007

suffered problems.

Japan is home to 24 Dreamliners and the government in Tokyo said it was taking no chances pending an investigation into whether the lithium-ion battery on the ANA plane had overheated.

Lithium-ion batteries are also widely used in consumer electronics such as laptops and mobile phones.

The powerful lithium-ion batteries used on the Dreamliner have emerged as the focus of concern in light of the ANA incident and another on a Japan Air

Lines flight in the United States earlier this month, with smoke reported on both planes.

Electrolyte leaks and burn marks were found on the battery's metal casing, ANA said. *Kyodo News* reported that officials from the Japan Transport Safety Board were working on the principle that it had overheated.

The batteries are made by Japanese firm GS Yuasa, one of many contractors in a complex global web that contributed to three years of delays before Boeing delivered its first 787 to ANA

in 2011.

GS Yuasa defended its reputation for quality and warned the 787 investigation could take weeks.

"It is impossible to predict at this point how long it will take, in terms of days or weeks, because we must study the system and GS Yuasa is not the only player involved," a company spokeswoman told *AFP*.

GS Yuasa said it supplies its 787 batteries first to France's Thales Group, which then assembles an electric charging system for shipping to Boeing. – *AFP*

# Space station to add an inflatable module

LAS VEGAS, Nevada – The international space station is getting a new, inflatable room that resembles a giant spare tire, NASA said on January 16.

Due to launch in mid-2015, the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module, or BEAM, will be transported deflated before being puffed into a 13-by-10-foot cylinder.

Rather than providing new living space for astronauts, the module will test whether inflatable habitats have a future as orbiting laboratories, lunar outposts or living quarters for deep-space missions.

NASA is paying Bigelow Aerospace of Nevada US\$17.8 million for the module.

"This is a great way for NASA to utilise private-sector investment, and for pennies on the dollar to expand our understanding of this technology," said Lori Garver, the agency's deputy administrator.

Station astronauts will periodically enter the BEAM to check whether its thick yet flexible walls, which include layers of Kevlar, adequately block the twin hazards of space travel: radiation and micrometeorites traveling faster than bullets.

"The plan is to have the hatch closed most of the time, with the crew going in and out a few times a year to collect data," Garver said. The module will stay attached to the station for two years.

"We have ambitions to go to the moon someday, have a base there," said Robert Bigelow, the real estate and hotel magnate who founded Bigelow Aerospace.

Inflatables offer two advantages over traditional aluminum-can-like modules. They weigh less per cubic foot of living space, making them cheaper to launch,

and they can balloon to diameters far too wide to fit on current rockets.

Bigelow licensed the concept from NASA in 1999 after the agency abandoned plans to use inflatable living quarters for a mission to Mars.

NASA is Bigelow's first customer. On Wednesday, Bigelow said he and his wife have spent \$250 million developing inflatable space habitats. They hope to attract wealthy tourists, pharmaceutical companies, and governments that want affordable space programs to an orbital outpost Bigelow says will be ready to fly in 2016.

Called Alpha, the private space station will offer living space for 12 – twice the occupancy of the international space station. Renting one sixth of Alpha for two months will cost \$25 million, Bigelow said, transportation not included.

The January 16 announcement marks a deepening of NASA's partnerships with commercial companies. The agency is also funding three companies developing craft to transport astronauts to and from orbit – vehicles also needed to bring customers to Bigelow's outposts. One of those companies, Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, will fly the BEAM module to the space station in the "trunk" of one of its uncrewed Dragon capsules.

The project may also stymie criticism that the 16-nation international space station, which took 13 years to build, has been underutilised by NASA, said former station commander Michael Lopez-Alegria, president of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation. "It's a real step in the right direction." – *The Washington Post*

**'It's a real step in the right direction.'**

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- ▶ Know the following languages for design: CSS, JavaScript, jQuery, HTML, XML
- ▶ Know how to use Content Management System (CMS), especially Joomla
- ▶ Know how to use the following software: Adobe Photoshop and Dreamweaver
- ▶ Have a good understanding of graphic design and front-end web design
- ▶ Provide his or her portfolio

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Myanmar Consolidated Media Company Limited

379-383 Bo Aung Kyaw St, Yangon Or by email to mcmhrd@myanmartimes.com.mm

# Russia unveils plan to replace Soyuz rockets

MOSCOW – Russia's struggling space agency has unveiled a new multi-billion-dollar plan that will see the development of a replacement for the ageing Soyuz rocket by 2020.

The US\$70-billion plan published on January 12 on the website of the Russian Space Agency (Roscosmos) also envisions the launch of new unmanned missions to the Moon and beyond.

But one of the biggest priorities is finding a replacement for the Soyuz – the backbone of Russian space travel since its development by pioneering Soviet scientists in the 1960s.

Both the rocket and its eponymous space capsule for manned missions have served as humans' main link to the International

Space Station (ISS) since the scientific orbiter's launch in 1998.

But an accident with an unmanned Soyuz cargo ship in August 2011 caused delays to subsequent missions and renewed fears about the safety of space travel.

The Soyuz became the world's only manned link to the ISS following last year's retirement of the US space shuttle program.

Roscosmos did not disclose many details about its post-Soyuz plans or give a specific date by when the vessel might take flight.

The agency's outline only called for the introduction of an "energy transportation module with a promising propulsion installation that will be ready for testing by 2018." – *AFP*



# Uncertainty, criticism as hostage crisis worsens

IN AMENAS, Algeria – An American hostage was confirmed dead on January 18 amid uncertainty over the fate of other foreigners held at an Algerian gas plant, with their captors demanding a prisoner swap and an end to French military action in Mali.

The al-Qaeda-linked gunmen, cited by Mauritania's ANI news agency, said they still held seven foreigners at the site deep in the Sahara desert near the border with Libya. An Algerian security official put their number at 10.

"This is an extremely difficult and dangerous situation," US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in Washington at a joint news conference with an equally concerned Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida.

International criticism of the haste with which Algeria launched a dramatic military assault to rescue those held has been mounting, after an Algerian security official said it had left dead 12 hostages and 18 kidnappers.

Kishida urged Algeria to place the "utmost priority" on ensuring the hostages' safety.

The al-Qaeda-linked gunmen group known as "Signatories in Blood" want an end to the French intervention in neighboring Mali, said ANI, which



quoted sources close to their leader, Mokhtar Belmokhtar.

The gunmen said they were still holding three Belgians, two Americans, one Japanese and a Briton, although Belgium said there was no indication that any of its nationals were being held.

ANI said Belmokhtar, a veteran Algerian extremist with al-Qaeda ties who has claimed responsibility for the attack, also proposed exchanging the remaining two US hostages for the Egyptian blind sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and Pakistani Aafia Siddiqui, jailed in the United States on charges of terrorist links.

"The United States does not negotiate with terrorists," US State Department

spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said when asked about the proposal.

Algerian news agency APS quoted a government official as saying the kidnappers, who claimed to have come from Niger, were heavily armed with machineguns, assault rifles, rocket launchers and missiles.

Clinton urged Algeria to show "utmost care" to preserve the lives of the hostages and offered condolences for those killed.

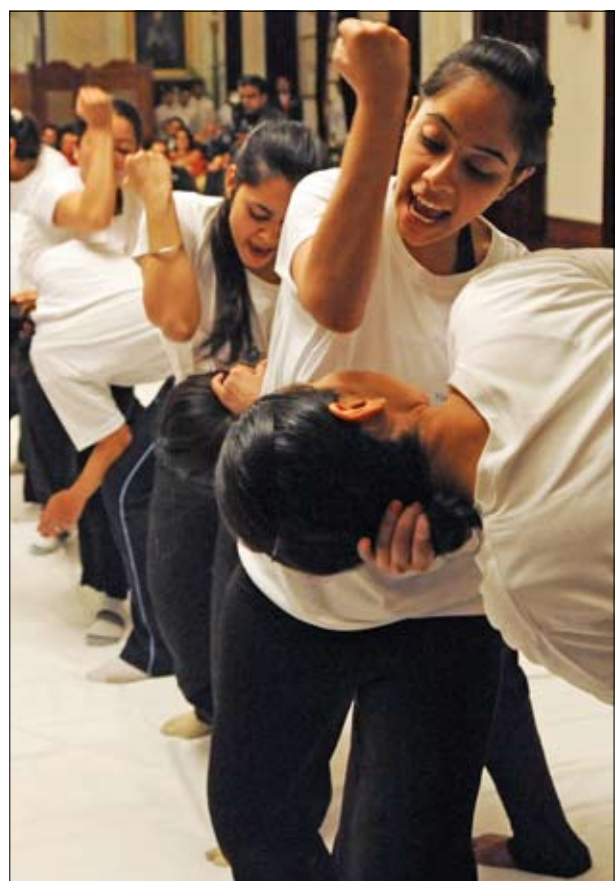
Some of those who escaped said explosives had been wrapped around their necks and others said they hid, petrified, wherever they could.

Alexandre Berceaux of French catering firm CSI said he took cover in his room before troops freed him.

"I had a bit of food, a bit to drink. I didn't know how long it would last," Berceaux said.

Algerian forces launched their rescue bid on January 17, a day after kidnappers seized the plant to avenge what they said was Algiers' support for French military action in neighbouring Mali.

The rebels in Mali have held the north since last April and moved south into government-held territory earlier this month, prompting France to intervene on January 11 in its former West African colony before they could threaten the capital, Bamako. – AFP



Female staff from the Imperial Hotel in New Delhi practice their moves at a self-defence class on January 17. The horrific gang-rape and murder of a student in the Indian capital last month has led to a surge of interest by women in self-defence classes. The five adults charged over the gang-rape and murder were ordered on January 17 to stand trial in a fast-track court, with the first hearing scheduled for January 21, lawyers said. The case against a sixth suspect, who says he is 17, will be heard in a juvenile court. Pic: AFP

## Briefly

DAMASCUS – More than 100 civilians have been killed in a new "massacre" in Syria, a watchdog said on January 17. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the deaths came when the army on January 15 swept through farmland north of Homs, where it said about 1000 people had sought refuge from fighting in the central Syrian city.

• Related reports, P. 30.

BAGHDAD – Bombings targeting Shia Muslims throughout Iraq killed 22 people on January 17 on a third consecutive day of violence which has claimed 81 lives, including that of a Sunni member of parliament.

JERUSALEM – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged on January 18 that there would be no dismantlement of any Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank if he wins a general election on January 22.

WASHINGTON – The United States and Somalia on January 17 launched a new era of diplomatic relations, as Washington recognised the African nation's government for the first time since 1991.

LONDON – London's Metropolitan Police arrested two of its own officers and a journalist from Rupert Murdoch's *The Sun* newspaper on January 17 as part of its probe into corrupt payments to public officials by the media. – AFP



Sadhus (holy men) surge towards the confluence of the Yamuna and Ganges rivers at Allahabad on January 14 at the start of the Kumbh Mela, the world's biggest religious festival. Pic: AFP

## Massive Hindu festival 'good for health': study

NEW DELHI – India's Kumbh Mela, the world's biggest religious festival which sees up to 100 million people gather to bathe in the river Ganges, is good for pilgrims' health, a study has found.

Despite facing cold weather, endless noise, poor food and the risk of disease, Hindu devotees who attend such events report higher levels of mental and physical well-being, said the study by researchers in India and Britain.

"While some might indeed fall ill and feel worse, for most the Mela gathering is good for their health," said the research entitled *Understanding the Pilgrim Experience*.

The 55-day Kumbh Mela in Allahabad in northern India, which takes place every 12 years, began on January 14 where authorities said

eight million people jostled for space to take a dip in the sacred waters which are said to cleanse sins.

Smaller melas take place every year in India.

Social scientists from four British and five Indian universities concluded that the shared group experience of enduring hardships and sharing the same activities outweighed any physical discomfort.

"The experience of being part of a tightly-knit group of Hindu pilgrims, and the sense of support one gets from one's fellow pilgrims, enhances one's sense of being part of the community more generally," it said.

The study, published in the scientific journal *Plos One*, involved two surveys in 2010 and 2011 involving 416 pilgrims and a sample of 127 people who had not attended a mela. – AFP



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# Obama faces tough task in second inaugural address

Analysis by Stephen Collinson

WASHINGTON – US President Barack Obama faces a near impossible task in his second inaugural address on January 21: uniting a nation in which the compromise that oils governing is crushed by deep political divides.

Before a crowd of thousands and the eyes of the world on television and online, Obama will stand on the West Front of the US Capitol and swear to faithfully execute the office of president and defend the Constitution.

In a quirk of history, the 44th president will already be serving the second day of his second term, as the 20th Amendment to the US Constitution states that presidential mandates end at noon on January 20.

When the date falls on a Sunday, the president is privately sworn in – as Obama will be by Chief Justice John Roberts in the Blue Room of the White House on Sunday – and then repeats the ritual for posterity on January 21.

While second term inaugurations lack the majesty of a peaceful power transfer from one leader to another, some have served as important rallying points at perilous moments in US history.

In spectacular prose, and in only 720 words, Abraham Lincoln pledged in his second inaugural address in 1865 with “malice toward none” to bind the wounds of a nation split by civil war and reflected on the evils of slavery.

In his second inaugural address in 1937, Franklin Roosevelt rallied Americans for a fresh assault on the clinging poverty of the Great Depression, warning: “I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.”

While Obama may struggle to reach those heights in the 57th US inauguration, he may recall the prevailing economic panic when he took office in 2009 and style the slow return to growth as evidence of enduring



President Barack Obama is expected to outline the broad contours of his quest for a more equitable economy in his address this week. Pic: AFP

national purpose.

Officials have declined to preview the president’s speech, but he is expected to map the broad contours of his second term, rooted in his campaign quest to frame a more equitable economy.

“I intend to carry out the agenda that I campaigned on, an agenda for new jobs, new opportunity and new security for the middle class,” Obama said on January 14.

In their seminal study of presidential rhetoric, authors Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson identified characteristics underpinning successful inaugural addresses.

First, a newly sworn-in president must unify the wider audience in order to ratify his leadership, and then seal the patriotic binding by reaffirming traditional values drawn from his nation’s past.

Then, presidents seek to lay out the principles by which they will govern and demonstrate that they accept the limitations of executive power, cloaking the whole address in ceremonial and dignified rhetoric.

“Unifying the country is probably

the most important requirement of an inaugural address,” said Leila Brammer, a specialist on political rhetoric at Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota.

“Even if you won by a 60-40 margin, there are still 40 percent out there and you still have to make the case that you are the president of everybody.”

Obama’s task is even more acute – he beat Republican Mitt Romney by 51pc to 48pc of the popular vote in November’s election and his approval ratings, averaging 53pc, reflect a nation split down the middle.

Inaugural addresses are not the place for detailed policy prescriptions – that is the function of the State of the Union address, which Obama will deliver in the House of Representatives on February 12.

But he may refer obliquely to top priorities, including economic fairness, immigration reform, energy independence and an effort to curb gun violence.

After the solemn ceremony will come celebration, as Obama returns to the White House down a parade route lined with crowds, before a night of glittering inaugural balls.

As he pens his second inaugural address, Obama, a president acutely conscious of his place in history, may feel under pressure.

His first inaugural speech, though praised at the time, lacked the soaring cadences of some of the great examples of the genre.

It lacked anything on the order of Roosevelt’s “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” or John F. Kennedy’s “Ask not what your country can do for you,” which have become part of the US political lexicon.

Obama’s most memorable speeches have often come in a political context rather than a formal one and he has excelled at moments of national tragedy. – AFP

# Netanyahu responds to US president’s pre-election criticism

JERUSALEM – Only the people of Israel can decide who will represent their best interests, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on January 16 in remarks directed at US President Barack Obama a week before a general election.

“I think everyone knows that the citizens of Israel are the only ones who can decide who will faithfully represent the vital interests of the state,” he said. His remarks came in response to an article by prominent *Bloomberg* columnist Jeffrey Goldberg in which he quoted Obama as saying repeatedly: “Israel doesn’t know what its own best interests are.”

Obama, he wrote, appeared to see Netanyahu as a “political coward” vis-a-vis the peace process with the Palestinians who was completely “captive to the settler lobby,” and whose settlement activity was moving Israel “down a path toward near total isolation.”

Senior figures from Netanyahu’s ruling rightwing Likud party reacted furiously, accusing the US leader of “gross interference” in the upcoming election, which is widely expected to see Israelis re-elect their hawkish prime minister on January 22.

“Over the last four years, we have faced tremendous

pressure and we will continue to stand up for the vital interests of Israel and its security,” Netanyahu told reporters on a tour of an army base near Gaza, his remarks broadcast on public radio. Until then, there had been no official response to the article, which on January 16 had dominated the headlines in the newspapers as well as on Israel’s main television and radio stations.

“This is gross interference by the US president in the elections in Israel,” senior Likud officials told Israel *HaYom*, while others told *The Jerusalem Post* he was “taking revenge” for Netanyahu’s overt support for Obama’s rival during the presidential race in November.

In the article, Goldberg wrote that Obama was unsurprised when Israel announced plans to build in E1, a highly sensitive area of West Bank land near Jerusalem, suggesting it was “what he has come to expect” from Netanyahu’s “self-defeating policies.”

Although the US would not cut off its aid to Israel, Obama was not likely to “waste his time on Mideast peace” and the Jewish state could soon notice a “significant shift” on the diplomatic front, he wrote. – AFP

# Morsi clarifies comments

CAIRO – Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi said on January 16 that comments on Israel attributed to him before he was elected were taken out of context.

“The president stressed they were taken from comments on the Israeli aggression against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and stressed the need to put the remarks in the right context,” said a statement from the presidency.

In a TV clip released by the Middle East Media Research

Institute of an interview in 2010, Morsi refers to “occupiers of Palestine” as “blood suckers and war mongers, and descendants of pigs and apes.”

“The language that we’ve seen is deeply offensive,” US State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said on January 15, adding “we think that these comments should be repudiated, and they should be repudiated firmly.” – AFP

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## Briefs

### Atomic agency, Iran fail to reach deal

VIENNA – The chief UN nuclear inspector confirmed on January 18 that talks in Iran had failed to reach a deal on investigating possible past atomic weapons research.

“Differences remain so we could not finalise” the agreement, Herman Nackaerts told reporters at Vienna airport. “We have agreed with Iran that we will meet again on February 12 (in Tehran).”

Nackaerts, from the International Atomic Energy Agency, had said after his last visit to Tehran in December that he expected to conclude a deal last week after a year of fruitless efforts.

### UN agency issues dengue warning

GENEVA – The World Health Organisation warned on January 16 that dengue fever was spreading at an alarming rate.

“In 2012, dengue ranked as the fastest spreading vector-borne viral disease, with an epidemic potential in the world, registering a 30-fold increase in disease incidence over the past 50 years,” the Geneva-based UN agency said in a report.

An annual two million cases of dengue fever were reported by 100 countries during the last two years, with between 5000 to 6000 of them resulting in death.

### Kurds, jihadists clash in Syrian city

ALEPPO – Fierce clashes raged on January 17 in the majority Kurdish northern Syrian city of Ras al-Ain, on the Turkish border, pitting jihadists against Kurdish fighters, residents said.

The fighting comes six months after troops loyal to President Bashar al-Assad withdrew from majority Kurdish areas, leaving residents to fend for themselves.

Jihadists have since staged several assaults on the strategic city, and most of its residents have fled.

### Dear Abby columnist dies

WASHINGTON – Pauline Phillips, who consoled millions around the world as the creator of the iconic Dear Abby advice column, has died of Alzheimer’s disease at the age of 94, her syndication service said on January 17.

In a statement, Universal Uclick said Phillips, who wrote under the alias Abigail Van Buren, died on January 16. Her daughter Jeanne Phillips took over the column and the alias in 2002.

Phillips, born Pauline Esther Friedman, was the twin sister of Esther Pauline Friedman, better known as the equally famous agony aunt Ann Landers, who died in 2002. – *AFP*

# Obama urges assault weapons ban

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama on January 16 demanded an assault weapons ban and universal background checks for gun buyers as part of sweeping gun control measures in response to the Newtown school massacre.

“We can’t put this off any longer. I will put everything I’ve got into this,” Obama said, daring Congress not to defy public outrage and block his plans and setting the stage for a generational fight with the US gun lobby.

Obama signed 23 executive actions, using his presidential power in a swift effort to check a rash of gun violence including the killings of 20 children at Sandy Hook Elementary School last month and other recent mass shootings.

He challenged Congress to enshrine enduring reforms into law, including renewing and bolstering a ban on assault weapons, and closing loopholes that permit 40 percent of gun sales to take place without background checks.

“This will be difficult,” Obama warned, unveiling measures drawn up by a task force led by Vice President Joe Biden at a White House event attended by gun crime victims, including the parents of a girl who shot dead in Newtown.

“There will be pundits and politicians and special interest lobbyists publicly warning of a tyrannical all-out assault on liberty,” Obama said.

“Behind the scenes, they’ll do everything they can to block any commonsense reform and make sure nothing changes whatsoever,” Obama said, underlining he



Nelba Marquez-Greene (left) and Nicole Hockley, both mothers of children killed in the massacre at the Sandy Hook primary school in Newtown, Connecticut, console each other during an event held in the town on January 14 to mark the one month anniversary of the killings. Pic: AFP

did not oppose the right to bear arms laid down in the Second Amendment to the US Constitution.

The National Rifle Association, the top gun lobby group, warned that only law abiding gun owners would be affected, and “our children will remain vulnerable to the inevitability of more tragedy.”

Immediate reaction

may attract support, a ban on assault weapons could force many Democrats from largely conservative states to unwelcome tough votes in the run-up to the 2014 mid-term elections.

Several prominent Republicans rejected Obama’s plans out of hand, accusing him of attacking the right to bear arms.

“Guns require a finger

hundreds who wrote to him after the 20 children and six adults were killed when a gunman blazing an assault rifle went on the rampage in Connecticut on December 14.

“This is our first task as a society, keeping our children safe. This is how we will be judged and their voices should compel us to change,” he said.

customers, but private sales of firearms benefit from a loophole.

Obama ordered a new national campaign on safe and responsible gun ownership, a review of standards for gun safes in the home, and new training for schools on how to respond to an invasion by armed assailants.

The president required the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to research the causes and prevention of gun violence.

And he also urged Congress to renew a ban on assault weapons that expired in 2004 and to limit ammunition magazines to 10 rounds.

The White House complained on January 16 that an NRA attack ad accusing Obama of hypocrisy because his daughters get armed Secret Service protection while other school children do not was “repugnant and cowardly.”

The NRA has promised to fight any tighter gun controls, arguing instead that armed guards should be placed in every school in the country.

“I think that the Second Amendment is going to survive this,” NRA President David Keene told *CNN*.

But, he added: “When you’re up against the president, if he is in fact willing to spend his political capital, you wouldn’t want to mortgage your house and bet how it’s going to come out.”

Obama later tweeted a letter sent to him by an eight-year-old boy called Grant.

“Please don’t let people own machine guns or other powerful guns like that,” the boy wrote. “We should learn from what happened at Sandy Hook.” – *AFP*

**‘We can’t put this off any longer. I will put everything I’ve got into this.’**

from pro-gun politicians to Obama’s plans to curb 11,000 annual firearms homicides in America also hinted at the unpromising political terrain the president’s plans face.

Senate Democratic majority leader Harry Reid welcomed the “thoughtful” proposals but gave no commitment to act on specific measures.

While background checks

to pull the trigger,” Texas Republican Governor Rick Perry said.

Republican Senator Marco Rubio, a potential 2016 presidential hopeful, added: “Guns are not the problem; criminals with evil in their hearts and mentally ill people prone to violence are.”

Obama appeared with four children, representing

Obama’s executive actions, which do not need congressional approval, would require government agencies to make relevant information available for background checks to prevent “dangerous” people getting guns.

Currently, licensed gun sellers are required to run background checks on

## Pussy Riot member fails in bid to have jail sentence deferred

MOSCOW – A Russian court on January 16 turned down a request by a jailed member of the feminist punk band Pussy Riot to defer serving her jail sentence until her five-year-old son is older.

“The court has ruled not to satisfy the petition,” the judge said at Berezniki city court in the Perm region of the Urals, the *RIA Novosti* news agency reported.

Maria Alyokhina, 24, had asked the court to allow her not to serve the remainder of her two-year prison term – handed down for a stunt performance in a Moscow church in which the band denounced President Vladimir Putin – until her son Filipp is a teenager.

Under Russian law, a court can allow a woman convicted of a minor crime not to serve the sentence until her child turns 14.

“I am really wishing for a small miracle and for there to be some real people in this court who show some humanity and think about children,” Alyokhina told the court, quoted by the *RAPSI* legal news agency.

But judge Galina Yefremova said Alyokhina’s sentence already took into account the fact that she had a young child.

“We have not established any new circumstances to soften the sentence,” the judge said after prosecutors asked her not to grant the request.

International rights group Amnesty International criticised the ruling, calling it a “further travesty of justice.”

News reports said Alyokhina planned to

appeal.

Alyokhina was sentenced to two years in August last year along with fellow band members, Yekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, for hooliganism motivated by religious hatred after they sang a “punk prayer” critical of Putin in Russia’s main cathedral.

The band’s case galvanised international attention and brought renewed criticism of Putin for his treatment of human rights concerns.

Russian television on January 16 showed Alyokhina smiling as she arrived at the courthouse in a police van wearing a grey knitted shawl, a black top and grey trousers.

Inside the courtroom she sat in a glass-framed aquarium-like box, flanked by police and guards.

The judge questioned her on the way her son is living, arguing that he is in good hands being cared for by family members.

The prosecutor commented on formal reprimands issued to Alyokhina while she has been in prison – including for watching television after lights out – and said that she had not received any commendations.

Of the other band members, Samutsevich had her sentence suspended in October on the grounds that security guards grabbed her before she could take part in the stunt.

Tolokonnikova has a young daughter and has filed a similar request to Alyokhina’s.

– *AFP*

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in respect of “Printshop machines and parts thereof (concerning Class 7), in particular web-fed printing machines and sheet-fed printing machines for letterpress printing, offset printing and gravure printing, devices-as part of printing machines; for feeding and delivering printing material, cutting machines, varnishing machines, folding machines, perforating devices, stitching machines, sorting machines, die-cutting and embossing machines for printed products, plate bending machines; and as accessories of printing machines; electric and electronic control devices, switching units, monitoring devices, display units, information input/output devices, and process computers.”

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said Trademark will be dealt with according to law.

**U Nyunt Tin Associates International Limited**

Intellectual Property Division

P.O. Box 952, Yangon, Myanmar.

Tel: 951 375754, Fax: 951 254321

Email: info@untlaw.com

For: **Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG**

Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2012.





Your Family's Lifestyle Choice

# WEEKLY SPECIALS

17.01.2013 to 30.01.2013

EVERYDAY  
Great value!

## BEST CHOICE

**ANLENE**  
Milk Powder  
-Gold Nano High Calcium  
-Nano High Calcium  
500g

Buy 1 Tin, Get Anlene Glass 1Pc

Buy 2 Tin, Get Loop Handle Pot 1Pc

**ORION**  
Choco Pie  
-6's 168g

-12's 336g

**Choco Pie**

Ks. 1,050  
**950**

Ks. 1,950  
**1,750**

**MONDE VOIZ**  
Cracker (Creamy)  
(Butter Chocolate)  
-2in1 Cracker & Water Strawberry  
288g

each/Ks. 1,200  
**1,080**

**EQUAL**  
Sweetener Sachet  
100's 100g

Buy 1 Box, Get 1 Equal Tea Bottle

**EQUAL**  
Calorie Sweetener Sachet  
50's  
Sweetener Tablets  
100's 8.5g

Buy 2 Boxes, Get 1 Equal Tea Bottle

**LACTASOY**  
Soy Milk Sweetened  
Original  
1000ml

Ks. 1,100  
**990**

**HOSAN A+**  
Aloe Vera Drink  
1.5Ltr

Ks. 1,800  
**1,620**

**POKKA**  
Blood Orange Juice  
1.5Ltr

Ks. 2,800  
**2,600**

**UFC**  
Whole Rambutan In Syrup  
565g

Ks. 2,000  
**1,900**

**COOK & LOBSTER**  
Fish Sauce  
750ml

Ks. 950  
**850**

**SUNAR**  
-Sunflower  
2Ltr

Ks. 5,240  
**4,450**

**SUNAR**  
-Corn Oil  
2Ltr

Ks. 5,620  
**4,780**

## FRESH FOOD

**USA GRAPE FRUIT**

Pc/Ks. 700  
**650**

**GOLD PEAR**

Pc/Ks. 1,000  
**900**

**THAI DRAGON FRUIT**

100g/Ks. 230  
**205**

**KOREA SINKO PEAR (Special)**

100g/Ks. 550  
**495**

**CHUNGJUNGWON**  
Sunchoing Seasoned Bean Paste  
-Doenjang Soy Bean Paste  
-Sunchoing Hot Pepper Paste  
500g

**DO DO**  
Crab Stick  
250g

Ks. 1,600  
**1,450**

**10% OFF**

## GREAT VALUE

**JULIE'S**  
Assorted Biscuit  
600g

Ks. 4,200  
**3,950**

**JULIE'S**  
Assorted Biscuits  
-Jamboree  
-Melodies  
210g

each/Ks. 1,500  
**1,350**

**HAIHACO**  
Cookies  
-Sazoly Egg & Milk 270g  
-Sazoly Cheese 220g  
-Pastry Sesame 200g

**10% OFF**

Price range from  
**Ks.990 to Ks.1,350**

**KRAFT**  
Oreo Sandwich Cookies  
-Blossom Ice Cream  
-Golden Vanilla with Vanilla  
264.6g 9's

each/Ks. 1,400  
**1,260**

**CBE**  
Pistachio Nut  
108g

Ks. 2,200  
**1,980**

**MY BIS**  
Nata De Coco Pudding  
-Mango  
-Lychee  
-Honey Melon  
420g

each/Ks. 1,250  
**1,150**

**DUTCH LADY**  
UHT Milk  
-Chocolate  
-Strawberry  
1Ltr

each/Ks. 1,850  
**1,650**

**SUNQUICK**  
Syrup Orange  
840ml

Buy 1, Get 1 Stationery Set free.

Ks. 1,950  
**1,750**

**BEST FOODS**  
Mixed Berry Spread Jam  
400g

Ks. 1,780  
**1,600**

**BEST FOODS**  
Mayonnaise  
460ml

Ks. 2,580  
**2,350**

**GOLDEN MOUNTAIN**  
Chili Sauce Mild Hot  
680g

Ks. 980  
**880**

**AYAM**  
Sardine in Tomato Sauce Oval  
425g

Ks. 3,300  
**3,100**

**CHAO KOH**  
Coconut Cream  
-250ml  
-1Ltr

Ks. 950  
**850**

**SUNFLOWER**  
Jasmine Tea  
120g

Ks. 2,550  
**2,400**

**THAI**  
Sausage  
-Chicken  
-Pork  
500g

each/Ks. 2,000  
**1,800**

**MEO**  
Cat Food Sealable  
3kg

Ks. 8,400  
**7,560**

**KNORR**  
Chicken Seasoning Powder  
-220g  
-400g  
-800g

Buy Ks.3,000 & above  
Get Knorr Food Container (1Pc)

**THANT**  
Paw San Hmwe Rice  
-2Kg  
-5Kg

Ks. 1,850  
**1,570**

Ks. 4,400  
**3,740**

## WINE SPECIAL

**BANROCK STATION**  
Sparkling White Shiraz Wine  
750ml

Ks. 10,900  
**9,800**

**BANROCK STATION**  
Red Wine  
-Cabernet Merlot  
-Crimson Cabernet  
-Shiraz Cabernet  
-Shiraz  
750ml

each/Ks. 8,700  
**7,850**

**CITY MEDIC PHARMACY**  
Your dependable partner in health care!

**HOT**  
Body Slimming Gel  
250ml

each/Ks. 3,300  
**3,000**

**CAFFEINE**  
Body Slimming Gel  
250ml

**PEPPERMINT**  
Body Slimming Gel  
250ml

<b>AUNG SAN</b> ☎ 01-253022, 394765 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	<b>47th STREET</b> ☎ 01-200026, 298746 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	<b>JUNCTION 8</b> ☎ 01-650776 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	<b>FMI CITY</b> ☎ 01-682323 (9:00AM to 9:00PM) marketplace By City Mart	<b>YANKIN CENTRE</b> ☎ 01-400284 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	<b>MYAY NI GHONE</b> ☎ 01-510697 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	<b>ZAWANA</b> ☎ 01-564532 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)
<b>SHWE MYA YAR</b> ☎ 01-294063 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	<b>CHINATOWN POINT</b> ☎ 01-215568-63 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	<b>JUNCTION MAW TIN</b> ☎ 01-218159 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	<b>THAMINE</b> ☎ 01-523840-43 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	<b>JUNCTION SQUARE</b> ☎ 01-527053 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	<b>78 (MANDALAY)</b> ☎ 02-71467-69 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	



# HOME & KITCHEN

**Luminarc**

Feston White  
-Dessert Plate 19cm  
-Dinner Plate 25cm  
-Multi Purpose Bowl 18cm  
-Rice Bowl 12cm  
-Soup Plate 21cm

-Trianon Dinner Set  
20Pc



Ks.  
59,500  
**53,550**

-Rotterdam Plain Drink Set  
7's



Ks.  
9,500  
**8,550**

**Price range from,  
Ks.1,710 to Ks.2,300**

**LOCK & LOCK**

Food Box  
-Rectangular  
1.4Ltr/1.5Ltr/1.7Ltr/2.4Ltr  
-Square  
1.5Ltr/900ml

**10% Off**

**Price range from,  
Ks.2,520 to Ks.4,140**

**EAGLE**  
Thin Phyu Mat  
6'x6.5'



Ks.  
13,700  
**12,300**

# BABY CORNER

**BABI MILD**

Baby Cream  
Double Milk Protein  
50g

Ks.  
1,750  
**1,600**

-Baby Lotion Double  
Milk Protein 200ml

Ks.  
2,450  
**2,200**

-Fabric Wash  
900ml

Ks.  
4,100  
**3,700**

**HUGGIES**

Diaper Ultra  
-40's (M) / 30's (XX)  
Baby Diaper Ultra  
-34's (M) / 26's (XX)

each/Ks.  
15,160  
**13,640**

-Baby Lotion Double  
Milk Protein 200ml

Ks.  
4,100  
**3,700**

Exclusively Available @

**marketplace**  
by City Mart

**VICENZI**

Cantucci Crunchy  
Cookies with Almond  
225g

Ks.  
3,200  
**2,880**

**VICENZI**

Mini Vagles Assorted Cookies  
275g  
Dolci Persen Assorted Cookies  
200g

each/Ks.  
2,950  
**2,650**

**PUREHARVEST**

Organic Nature's  
Soy Original  
1Ltr

Ks.  
2,750  
**2,480**

**SWEET HOME FARM**

Granola Cereal  
Honey with Almond  
680g

Ks.  
5,900  
**5,300**

**Low Fat with Raisins**

580g

Ks.  
5,500  
**4,950**

# CLEAN & FRESH

**REVLON**

Age Defying DNA Advantage  
-Cream Make Up  
30ml  
-Face Powder  
12.0g

each/Ks.  
26,280  
**21,020**

**BERMAN**

Toothbrush  
-with Case/Complete  
-Complete Extra Soft 3's

Ks.  
3,000  
**2,700**

**DENTISTE PLUS**

White Toothpaste  
Night Time  
100g

Ks.  
4,300  
**3,870**

**ELIZZER**

Shower Cream  
-Goat's Milk Sea Cucumber  
-Cow's Milk Seaweed  
500ml

each/Ks.  
3,700  
**3,150**

**LAFFAIR**

Hair Serum  
100ml

Ks.  
4,000  
**3,400**

**DR.P**

Adult Diapers Day  
-6's (M)  
-10's (XX)

Ks.  
7,150  
**6,440**

**Dr. P**

Adult Diapers Night  
-6's (M)  
-10's (XX)

Ks.  
6,900  
**6,210**

**DAILY**

Dishwashing Liquid  
4Ltr

Ks.  
3,100  
**2,790**

**OK**

Naphthalene Balls  
-6's 130g  
-670g

Ks.  
420  
**380**

**OK**

Best Quality  
Naphthalene Balls  
-6's 130g  
-670g

Ks.  
2,100  
**1,890**

# SPECIAL ELECTRICAL OFFER

**LUCKY**

Rice Cooker  
1.8Ltr  
DR-818

Ks.  
13,900  
**12,600**

**PHILIPS**

Coffee Maker  
HD-7444/7448

Ks.  
38,000  
**35,000**

**PANASONIC**

Pop Up Toaster  
NT-GP1

Ks.  
24,500  
**22,600**

**MIDEA**

Electric Kettle  
MK-17P08A

Ks.  
16,000  
**15,000**

**MIDEA**

Induction Cooker  
C21-ST2125

Ks.  
46,000  
**42,500**

**LUCKY**

4in1 Blender  
DL-2288

Ks.  
18,700  
**16,800**

# Chinese New Year Goodies & Accessories

17.01.2013 to 18.02.2013



# Spring Cleaning

**PAO**

Detergent Powder Soft Nano Tech  
UV Detergent Powder  
(Color/White)  
3kg

each/Ks.  
4,600  
**4,500**

**FAB**

Detergent Powder  
(Color/White/Antibacterial)  
2.5kg

each/Ks.  
4,800  
**4,320**

**ELAN**

Enzyme Detergent Powder  
-2.5kg/1.5kg

**10% Off**

**KAO**

Haier Bleach  
(White/Color)  
600ml

each/Ks.  
800  
**720**

**FINELINE**

Softener Refill  
650ml

each/Ks.  
700  
**640**

**KIWI**

Kleen Concentrate Floor  
Cleaner Superactive  
MR Muscle Liner Floor Cleaner  
(Ocean Fresh/Sweet Floral/  
Purple Bouquet/Romantic Rose)  
2Ltr

each/Ks.  
3,850  
**3,600**

**VIM**

Scrubbing Powder  
600g

Ks.  
850  
**780**

**B.STAR**

Mop with Handle  
(Plastic/Spring/Bicone/  
Duster)

each/Ks.  
5,900  
**5,500**

**VIXOL**

Bathroom Cleaner  
(Tough Stains/Heavy Duty/  
General Use)  
3500ml

each/Ks.  
5,900  
**5,500**

**LION STAR**

Living Toilet Brush  
-Set 102/103  
-with Holder 104

each/Ks.  
1,650  
**1,490**

**10% Off**

**B.STAR**

**We  
Welcome**



**Gift Voucher**

**WE ACCEPT TELEPHONE ORDER**

email: enquiry@city.com.mm

Hot line: 01-253022

Prices may change without prior notice.

While Stocks Last!

All items limited to 6pcs per customer.



## Defections highlight decline in Syrian military's morale

ANTAKYA, Turkey – The Syrian military officer walked around for five months carrying a memory stick loaded with family photos in his uniform pocket, waiting for the chance to defect.

When that moment arrived in late December, Brig-Gen Mohammed Hassoun went to his Aleppo home for lunch, the only brief period during the day when he said he knew he would not be tailed by intelligence agents trying to stop a wave of defections sweeping the Syrian military.

As he recounted in an interview earlier this month, Hassoun hastily saw his family off in one direction, then donned an old overcoat and sunglasses and took off in a public bus in another.

Ten days later, he rejoined his wife and three sons in Turkey, leaving behind a privileged life but with no regrets about abandoning an institution he served for 31 years.

"I thought the army was built for the purpose of fighting foreign enemies, not targeting our own civilians," said Hassoun, 49.

What appears to be a growing number of defections by senior military, police and intelligence officers suggests the brutal government campaign to quell the

Journalists are not permitted inside the well-guarded camp, making it difficult to judge whether the defections reflect a growing unhappiness with the conduct of the war, or a dawning realisation that the rebels may defeat government troops.

Although the Syrian

Hassoun said he met FSA soldiers armed only with shotguns. "The regime can do more killing with one airstrike than the FSA can do with many attacks."

Although his is just one man's account, Hassoun's decision to defect, and the dangers it entailed, helps explain why more have not

in Hassoun's village were shot at and arrested. His brother was arrested. For a long time, nobody told him anything.

"They didn't give me any credit as an officer," he said. "It took three months before I learned he was in prison."

He kept thinking that the targeting of civilians would

taking part in the uprising. He said he didn't consider them "terrorists," as the government labels them.

Hassoun said he knew his decision to leave Syria was risky. Asked what would have happened had his plans been discovered, Hassoun made a chopping movement, his right hand striking the tabletop hard. After some officers defected, he said, their entire extended families were arrested.

"This is the main reason more officers don't do it," he said.

With his 50th birthday fast approaching, Hassoun's life is ruled by much uncertainty. He doesn't know if his house is standing, or when he can return to Syria, or what he will do if the government is replaced. But he does know this: He is proud of his 31 years in the Syrian army.

"I wasn't serving the government," he said. "I was serving my country. My conscience is clear."

— The Washington Post

**'I stood there and in the distance I could see aircraft bombing villages. As a soldier and an officer in the army, this is not what we were trained to do.'**

22-month-old rebellion is sapping morale among some of the most elite members of Syrian society.

Although some officers have remained in Syria and are fighting alongside the rebel Free Syrian Army, the Turkish government has established a separate camp for defecting officers. It will not say how many officers it is sheltering, either in the camp or in private houses around the country.

military has been weakened, by all accounts it remains a formidable force.

"I think it will take more than six months," said Hassoun, who taught engineering at the Assad Military Academy for about 1000 army cadets in Aleppo, during an interview at an Antakya cafe. "The regime's army is strong and well-trained. It has fighter jets and tanks."

On his way to Turkey,

followed suit.

Hassoun said he spent his adult life in the army, entering the Aleppo academy when he was 18.

He said he was optimistic in 2000, when Bashar Assad became president. Hassoun hoped the son of the late president, Hafez Assad, would usher in reforms for society and the military.

But the uprising was deeply unsettling for career military officers. Protesters

peter out and that he could tolerate being part of an army that was dropping bombs on its citizens.

Instead, it got worse. In July, the army attacked Aleppo.

"I stood there and in the distance I could see aircraft bombing villages," he said. "As a soldier and an officer in the army, this is not what we were trained to do."

From his years in Aleppo, Hassoun knew many people

## Bombings kill scores at university

BEIRUT – The death toll from twin blasts that tore through the campus of Aleppo university has risen to 87, a watchdog said on January 16, making the attack one of the bloodiest in Syria's 22-month conflict.

No one has claimed responsibility for the blasts that rocked the university in Syria's northern commercial capital on January 15 as students were sitting exams, but the government and rebels have blamed each other.

"The number of people killed in twin blasts on Tuesday has risen to 87," said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"That number is likely to rise to 100 as body parts continue to

be identified," the Britain-based monitoring group said.

The university lies in a government-controlled area of the battleground northern city, which has been wracked by violence since last summer when regime forces launched an offensive to halt a rebel advance.

Opposition activists said government jets had carried out an air strike on the campus, but a military official said ground-to-air missiles fired by rebels had fallen short.

State television said "terrorists launched two rockets" at the campus.

Elsewhere in Syria on January 16, the army sent reinforcements

to the town of Daraya, southwest of Damascus, as it pressed an assault on rebel enclaves near the capital, said the Observatory.

"It's unbelievable how intense the shelling is," said Daraya-based anti-regime activist Abu Kinan, who spoke to AFP via the internet.

Daraya has been riven by fighting in recent few weeks as the army advances into the town, which in mid-summer was the scene of the worst reported massacre in the Syrian civil war.

More than 60,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed in Syria's conflict, says the United Nations.

— AFP



A Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) image of the aftermath of the twin bombings at Aleppo University on January 15. Pic: AFP/SANA.

### TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **HOYU KABUSHIKI KAISHA (also trading as Hoyu Co., Ltd.)** of 501, Tokugawa 1-Chome, Higashi-Ku, Nagoya-Shi, Aichi-Ken, JAPAN is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademarks: -



(Reg: No. IV/10099/2012)

**Beautylabo**

(Reg: No. IV/10100/2012)

the above two trademarks are in respect of: -

"Hair dyes; hair color preparations; bleaching preparations for hair; color-removing preparations for hair; hair lotions; hair spray; hair waving preparations; hair tonic; hair creams; hair shampoo; hair conditioner; hair treatment cream; cosmetics; toiletries."

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademarks or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

U Kyi Win Associates  
for **HOYU KABUSHIKI KAISHA**  
(also trading as Hoyu Co., Ltd.)

P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.

Phone: 372416 Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2013

### TRADE MARK CAUTION

**Pfizer Products Inc.**, of Eastern Point Road, Groton, Connecticut 06340, U.S.A, is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following Trademarks:-

**AMPHIGEN**

Reg. No. 26/2004

in respect of "All goods in Class 5."

**FABLYN**

Reg. Nos. 4482/2000, 2930/2003

in respect of "Pharmaceutical, Veterinary and Sanitary Preparations; Dietetic Substances Adapted For Medical Use, Food for Babies; Plasters, Materials For Dressings; Material For Stopping Teeth, Dental Wax; Disinfectants; Preparations For Destroying Vermin; Fungicides, Herbicides."

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said Trademarks will be dealt with according to law.

**U Nyunt Tin Associates International Limited**  
Intellectual Property Division

P.O. Box No. 952, Yangon, Myanmar.

Tel: 959 4500 59 247-8, 951 375754, Fax: 951 254321

Email: info@untlaw.com

For **Pfizer Products Inc.**

Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2013

### TRADE MARK CAUTION

**Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc.**, a company incorporated under the laws of United States of America and having its principal place of business at One New Bond Street, WORCESTER, MA, 01615, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following Trademarks:-



Reg. Nos. IV/3938/2009, Reg. Nos. IV/7857/2009,  
IV/8833/2012 IV/8834/2012

in respect of "Cleaning, polishing, scouring and abrasive preparations including powders and grains; coated abrasives, namely abrasive coated or impregnated materials including paper, cloth, fiber and other flexible materials; grinding wheels."

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said Trademarks will be dealt with according to law.

**U Nyunt Tin Associates International Limited**  
Intellectual Property Division

P.O. Box No. 952, Yangon, Myanmar.

Tel: 959 4500 59 247-8, 951 375754, Fax: 951 254321

Email: info@untlaw.com

For **Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc.**

Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2013



**TRADE MARK CAUTION**

NOTICE is hereby given that **MUSIMMAS HOLDINGS PTE LTD** a company organized under the laws of Singapore and having its principal office at 150 Beach Road, #15-01 Gateway West, Singapore 189720 is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following six trademarks:-

**MASCID**  
**Mascid**  
**mascid**

(series of 3 marks)  
**(Reg: No. IV/8326/2012)**

the above trademark is in respect of:-  
“Acids; adhesives for industrial purposes; agricultural chemicals, except fungicides; chemical additives for oils; chemical additives for use in manufacture; chemical fuel additives; chemical preparations for scientific purposes; chemical substances for use in manufacture; chemical substances for use in the manufacture of products for household use; chemicals for use in the manufacture of cosmetics; chemicals used in industry; emollients for industrial purposes; emulsifiers; fatty acids; fertilizing preparations; ingredients for cosmetics; ingredients for skin care preparations; oleic acid; stearic acid; surface-active chemical agents; tanning substances; ingredient for animal nutrition; raw materials for surfactants; raw materials for food additives; raw materials for plastic, rubber and polymer additives” – Class: 1  
“Pharmaceutical preparations; skin care (pharmaceutical preparations for-); air purifying preparations; deodorants, other than for personal use; detergents for medical purposes; disinfectants for hygiene purposes; sterilizing preparations; veterinary preparations; fungicides; herbicides; parasiticides; pesticides; insecticides” - Class: 5

**MASCOL**  
**Mascol**  
**mascol**

(series of 3 marks)  
**(Reg: No. IV/8325/2012)**

the above trademark is in respect of:-  
“Adhesives for industrial purposes; agricultural chemicals, except fungicides; alcohol for industrial purposes; chemical additives for oils; chemical additives for use in manufacture; chemical fuel additives; chemical preparations for scientific purposes; chemical substances for use in manufacture; chemical substances for use in the manufacture of products for household use; chemicals for use in the manufacture of cosmetics; chemicals used in industry; emollients for industrial purposes; emulsifiers; fertilizing preparations; industrial chemicals; ingredients for cosmetics; ingredients for skin care preparations; surface-active chemical agents; tanning substances; raw materials for surfactants, raw materials for plastic antioxidants; raw materials for polymer processing aids” - Class:1  
“Bleaching preparations and other substances for laundry use; cleaning, polishing, scouring and abrasive preparations; perfumery; cosmetics; toiletries; hair lotions; oils for cosmetic purposes; oils for perfumes and scents; dentifrices; anti-perspirants; hair care preparations and products; non-medicated skincare preparations; non-medicated body care preparations; non-medicated sun-care preparations” - Class: 3  
“Alcohol for pharmaceutical purposes; pharmaceutical preparations; skin care (pharmaceutical preparations for-); air purifying preparations; deodorants, other than for personal use; detergents for medical purposes; disinfectants for hygiene purposes; sterilizing preparations; veterinary

preparations; fungicides; herbicides; parasiticides; pesticides; insecticides” - Class: 5

**MASESTER**  
**Masester**  
**masester**

(series of 3 marks)  
**(Reg: No. IV/8328/2012)**

The above trademark is in respect of:-  
“Adhesives for industrial purposes; agricultural chemicals, except fungicides; chemical additives for oils; chemical additives for use in manufacture; chemical fuel additives; chemical preparations for scientific purposes; chemical substances for use in manufacture; chemical substances for use in the manufacture of products for household use; chemicals for use in the manufacture of cosmetics; chemicals used in industry; emollients for industrial purposes; emulsifiers; esters of fatty acids for use in manufacture; esters; fertilizing preparations; industrial chemicals; ingredients for cosmetics; ingredients for skin care preparations; surface-active chemical agents; tanning substances; ingredients for food colouring; ingredients for fragrance; ingredients for health food; ingredients for infant food; ingredients for pharmaceutical products; ingredient for animal nutrition” - Class: 1  
“Bleaching preparations and other substances for laundry use; cleaning, polishing, scouring and abrasive preparations; abrasives; perfumery; cosmetics; toiletries; hair lotions; oils for cosmetic purposes; oils for perfumes; and scents; dentifrices; anti-perspirants; hair care preparations and products; non-medicated skincare preparations; non-medicated body care preparations; non-medicated sun-care preparations” - Class: 3  
“Esters of fatty acids for use as pharmaceutical preparations; pharmaceutical preparations; skin care (pharmaceutical preparations for ); air purifying preparations; deodorants, other than for personal use; detergents for medical purposes; disinfectants for hygiene purposes; sterilizing preparations; veterinary preparations; fungicides; herbicides; parasiticides; pesticides; insecticides” – Class: 5

**MASCEROL**  
**Mascerol**  
**mascerol**

(series of 3 marks)  
**(Reg: No. IV/8329/2012)**

The above trademark is in respect of:-  
“Adhesives for industrial purposes; agricultural chemicals, except fungicides; chemical additives for oils; chemical additives for use in manufacture; chemical fuel additives; chemical preparations for scientific purposes; chemical substances for use in manufacture; chemical substances for use in the manufacture of products for household use; chemicals for use in the manufacture of cosmetics; chemicals used in industry; detergents for use in manufacturing processes; emollients for industrial purposes; emulsifiers; fertilizing preparations; glycerides; glycerine esters; glycerine for industrial purposes; industrial chemicals; ingredients for cosmetics; ingredients for skin care preparations; soap for industrial purposes; surface-active chemical agents; surfactants for use in personal care products; tanning substances.” - Class 1  
“Bleaching preparations and other substances for laundry use; cleaning, polishing, scouring and abrasive preparations; soaps; essential oils; abrasives; perfumery; cosmetics; toiletries; hair lotions; oils for cosmetic purposes; oils for perfumes and scents; dentifrices; anti-perspirants; hair care preparations and products; non-medicated skincare preparations; non-medicated body care preparations; non-medicated sun-care

preparations” - Class: 3  
“Glycerine for medical purposes; pharmaceutical preparations; skin care (pharmaceutical preparations for-); air purifying preparations; deodorants, other than for personal use; detergents for medical purposes; disinfectants for hygiene purposes; sterilizing preparations; veterinary preparations; fungicides; herbicides; parasiticides; pesticides; insecticides; medicated additives for animal foods; nutritional additives for medical purposes; mineral additives” - Class: 5

**MASCOLETH**  
**Mascoleth**  
**mascoleth**

(series of 3 marks)  
**(Reg: No. IV/8327/2012)**

The above trademark is in respect of: -  
“Adhesives for industrial purposes; agricultural chemicals, except fungicides; chemical additives for oils; chemical additives for use in manufacture; chemical fuel additives; chemical preparations for scientific purposes; chemical substances for use in manufacture; chemical substances for use in the manufacture of products for household use; chemicals for use in the manufacture of cosmetics; chemicals used in industry; detergents for use in manufacturing processes; emollients for industrial purposes; emulsifiers; esters of fatty acids for use in manufacture; esters; fertilizing preparations; industrial chemicals; ingredients for cosmetics; ingredients for skin care preparations; surface-active chemical agents; surfactants for use in personal care products; industrial chemicals, agriculture chemicals; tanning substances” – Class: 1  
“Esters of fatty acids for use as pharmaceutical preparations; pharmaceutical preparations; skin care (pharmaceutical preparations for-); air purifying preparations; deodorants, other than for personal use; detergents for medical purposes; disinfectants for hygiene purposes; sterilizing preparations; veterinary preparations; fungicides; herbicides; parasiticides; pesticides; insecticides” - Class: 5

**MASEMUL**  
**Masemul**  
**masemul**

(series of 3 marks)  
**(Reg: No. IV/8324/2012)**

The above trademark is in respect of:-  
“Additives for all kinds of processed food; emulsifiers; esters of fatty acids used in all kinds of food preparations; additives used in all kinds of flavourings; additives used in all kinds of seasonings; additives used in all kinds processed milk products; additives used in dairy products; esters of edible oils; esters of lactic acid; esters of sorbitol; esters of polyglycerol; esters of triacetin; esters of tartaric acid; esters of glycerol; esters of propylene glycol; additives used in cooking oil; additives used in all kinds of yogurt drinks; additives used in all kinds of bakery goods; additives used in all kinds of cakes and fine goods; chemical preparations for scientific purposes; chemical substances for use in manufacture of food products”  
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P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.  
Phone: 372416  
Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2013





# Democracy and India's political class

**COMMENT**  
by Pankaj Mishra

ELECTIONS make for responsive and accountable governments, or so goes the truism. But can they also achieve the opposite – that is, encourage complacency, even callousness, among elected representatives?

Last month's headlines from India and China present a disquieting contrast between elected and unelected governments for anyone committed to democratic politics.

In Beijing, China's new Communist Party general secretary, Xi Jinping, has begun a huge crackdown on corruption, official pomp and ceremony, and "empty talk" – substanceless speeches.

As the estimable China-watcher Melinda Liu has written: "If the changes take hold, they could have far-reaching implications both at home and abroad. Many Chinese seem heartened, even inspired, by Xi's down-to-earth style."

Many Indians, on the other hand, are incensed with their sequestered governing class. Confronted last month with public outrage over the horrific assault on a young woman in New Delhi, it alternated abysmally between paralysis and insensitivity.

Having initially failed to respond, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh muttered some perfunctory expressions of governmental resolve in his characteristically faint tone; then, turning to his handlers while the television cameras were still rolling, he asked, "Theek hai?" Hindi for "Is that all right?"

India's Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde said he was not obliged to meet student protesters braving the police's water cannons and truncheons near the Indian parliament in New Delhi. After all, as he put it, "Tomorrow Maoists will come here to demonstrate with weapons."

In fact, the government responded to the spontaneous protesters as though they were militant insurgents

from central India: It flooded Delhi's streets with armed police and shut down roads and railways, revealing a formidable security apparatus that, many argued, could be put to better use ensuring the safety of ordinary citizens.

It wasn't just the government that acted ham-handedly. Figures from all political parties seemed to vie with one another in their crass responses to an atrocious crime and to the cultures of violence and cruelty from which it issued.

Not surprisingly, India these days brims with a free-floating rage against an obscenely venal and cosseted political class that zealously guards its privileges and perks.

Middle-class anger has periodically erupted in recent months and it even appeared to solidify briefly into mass political movements. First, Baba Ramdev, a yoga practitioner, enlisted tens of thousands to his anti-corruption crusade. He was followed by Anna Hazare, a quasi-Gandhian activist, who managed to attract a motley crowd of industrialists, film stars, students on Facebook and urban professionals.

More recently, one of Hazare's former lieutenants, a former civil servant named Arvind Kejriwal, has run a name-and-shame campaign against some of India's most powerful politicians and businessmen.

Each of these events, including last month's protests over the gang rape, has been widely greeted as the harbinger of a

salaried to sustain mass protests or follow them up with a political program.

The government will probably have little to fear from Kejriwal, whose new political party will struggle to get many votes outside pockets of the urban middle class. And, though startled by public anger over the gang rape, the government will no doubt try to defuse it with some hasty legislation and emollient words.

With elections due in 2014, the government is trying to secure its two main sources of support: wealthy businessmen and the vast majority of poor Indians who vote.

Recent economic policies, which allow greater foreign investment in multi-brand retail, have somewhat mollified the corporate class, inspiring its representatives in the news media to again hail the lame-duck prime minister as a reformer. An ambitious plan of cash transfers to the poorest Indians – a definite vote-getter – was also recently inaugurated.

The government's election strategy seems clear: It desperately wants to be seen as redistributing the spoils of economic growth through greater subsidies, even as it facilitates greater access for India's networks of crony capitalism.

In some respects, the gambit resembles that of Thailand's populist authoritarian Thaksin Shinawatra, who cannily used his support among the rural poor to cement his status as chief crony capitalist.



Narendra Modi, who was re-elected last month as chief minister of Gujarat state. Modi's ascension through a devastated moral landscape points to the radical shrinking of political choices in India, writes Pankaj Mishra. Pic: AFP

instance, demanding public hangings and castrations of rapists – are contemptuous of democratic and legal processes and generally indifferent to the routine killings and rapes in Kashmir and the Northeastern states

despite accusations he was complicit in hundreds of deaths and rapes during an anti-Muslim pogrom in his state in 2002. Modi now hopes that the growing appeal among middle-class Indians of his apparently

least partly to be blamed on the fact that the formal and proceduralist features of democracy – elections – have superseded their substantive aspects: strong, accountable and fair-minded institutions and officials.

Certainly, the importance of the latter is not lost on China's unelected rulers. Buffeted by a series of scandals, they know that strong measures against corruption are essential to maintaining the communist regime's legitimacy and ensuring its survival against a rising tide of discontent. Recent protests, such as the one at *Southern Weekend* newspaper in Guangdong, test the credibility of Xi and his commitment to reform.

India's own entrenched political class derives its legitimacy from routine elections and well-timed sops to the poor majority. These chosen people don't have much incentive to engage with middle-class protesters on the streets of Indian cities and don't have to think hard before dispelling them with brute force.

Indeed, it is now the turn of metropolitan Indians, after political dissenters in Kashmir, the northeast, and central India, to feel the heavy hand of the state. The discontented urban middle class is a growing demographic. But it is deceptively overrepresented for now by India's many, perennially hysterical television anchors.

Politically fragmented and unorganised, the urban middle class has little to look forward to in the short term, apart from the periodic rise and fall of ineffectual demagogues such as Hazare and Ramdev.

Its electoral insignificance in the world's largest democracy has been carefully quantified by the people to be chosen in 2014. As the prime minister might put it, "Theek to hai na – that's all right, then!" – *Bloomberg News*

(Pankaj Mishra is the author of *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* and a Bloomberg View columnist, based in London and Mashobra, India).

**'Though startled by public anger over the gang rape, the government will no doubt try to defuse it with some hasty legislation and emollient words'**

politically awakened and empowered middle class. The government, however, has calculated otherwise.

It unleashed the police on Ramdev, evicting him and his followers from their rally grounds in New Delhi. It was similarly ruthless with Hazare, counting successfully on the inability of the educated and the

As events in Thailand showed, the intolerably squeezed urban middle class, the supposed avant-garde of democracy, can do little except turn, unhelpfully, to even more authoritarian figures in the military and the old conservative elite.

In India, too, many among the relatively privileged – those, for

by security forces. With their narrow conception of civil rights, they are always vulnerable to self-proclaimed vendors of instant justice and efficiency.

In fact, middle-class support has helped the rise of authoritarian figures such as Narendra Modi, the chief minister of Gujarat, who was re-elected last month

successful technocracy will help him unseat Singh's government in Delhi.

Modi may not succeed. Still, his ascension through a devastated moral landscape points to the radical shrinking of political choices in India.

This lamentable situation, where elected representatives act as yet another aggressively self-interested elite, is at

# Political crisis averted in Pakistan as protest called off

ISLAMABAD – A Pakistani cleric late on January 17 called off a mass protest in Islamabad, averting a major political crisis and reaching a deal with the government that paves the way for elections within months.

The decision, hours after the Supreme Court adjourned an alleged corruption case against Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf having earlier ordered his arrest, gives the government breathing space after three days of high tensions.

Pakistan has been weakened by a pooreconomy, resurgent Taliban violence, record sectarian unrest, a dire energy crisis and



A supporter of cleric Tahir-ul Qadri holds a placard at the rally in Islamabad on January 17 before the protest was called off under a deal with the government. Pic: AFP

even fledgling peace gains with India have appeared in jeopardy following five recent cross-border killings.

Tension had been at fever

pitch since January 15, when the court ordered Ashraf's arrest and cleric Tahir-ul Qadri arrived in Islamabad with tens of thousands of supporters,

denouncing politicians and praising the armed forces and judiciary.

The timing sparked panic about a rumoured judiciary-military plot to derail elections due by mid-May. The polls, if on schedule, would be the first democratic transition between two civilian governments in Pakistan's history.

There were few signs of any significant government concessions in the deal reached on January 17, which stated that parliament would be dissolved at any time before March 16 so that elections can take place within 90 days.

The government had previously said parliament would dissolve on March 17.

But Qadri hailed it as victory for the protesters, estimated to number about 25,000 in the largest demonstration in the capital since the current government took office in 2008.

"I congratulate you. Today is the day of victory for the people of Pakistan. You should go home as peacefully as you came here," Qadri told participants after signing the deal with the prime minister.

Qadri, cabinet ministers and members of the coalition negotiated for hours in the bullet-proof container where the cleric has been holed up since early on January 15 while his supporters have slept on the ground

outside.

"I congratulate you. Today this is another victory for democracy," Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira told the crowd, standing alongside Qadri.

Qadri had called for parliament to be dissolved immediately and for a caretaker government to be set up in consultation with the military and judiciary to implement reforms before elections.

His sudden – and apparently well-financed – emergence after years living in Canada has been criticised as a ploy by sections of the establishment, particularly the armed forces, to delay the elections and regain power. – AFP



# Finally, birth control law takes effect in RP

MANILA – A controversial birth control law came into effect in the Philippines on January 17 after more than a decade of bitter opposition from the Roman Catholic church.

The law requires government health centres to hand out free condoms and birth control pills, benefiting the country's poor who would not otherwise have access to them, and mandates that sex education be taught in schools.

The government is still working on the measure's finer details, including how to allocate funding to different regions and at what age to introduce sex education, said officials.

Supporters say the measures will help to moderate the nation's rapid population growth, reduce poverty and bring down high maternal mortality.

But Catholic groups have already shifted their battle to the courts, questioning the law's constitutionality. The church, which counts

80 percent of Filipinos as followers, forbids the use of artificial contraceptives.

The government also has to have "consultations" with various stakeholders including international and local medical and religious groups, said Hazel Chua, an official at the Health Department's family planning unit. Chua said the law needed many guidelines and it would take "a lot of time" before it was implemented.

Under the law, government health centres will be guaranteed a supply of contraceptives, unlike in the past when local mayors could be intimidated by the church into not providing birth control services, Chua said.

One provision of the law, legalising post-abortion medical care, is still undergoing special study since abortion remains illegal in the Philippines, Chua added.

President Benigno Aquino signed the bill into law last month in the face of strong

lobbying by the Catholic church, and religious leaders have vowed that the fight was not over.

The church is relying on lay groups that have filed petitions with the Supreme Court to challenge the law, said Roy Lagarde, a spokesman for the country's Catholic bishops.

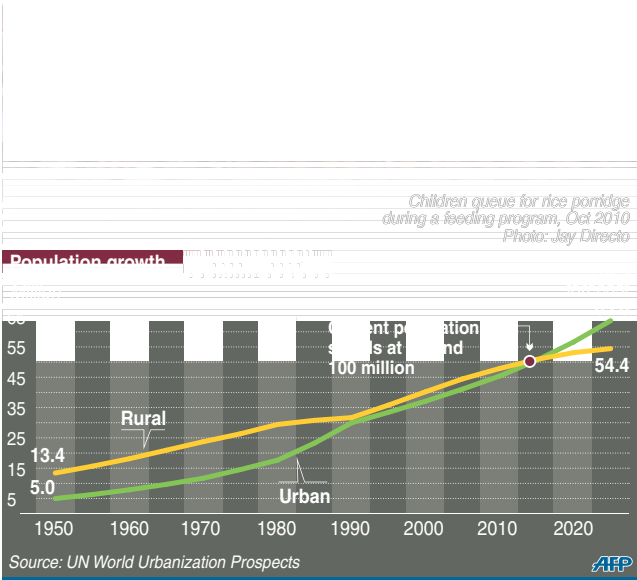
But the legislation's chief author Congressman Edcel Lagman said he was confident it would not be struck down.

"We have long expected that the opposition will go to the Supreme Court. We have prepared for this eventuality," he told AFP.

Housewife Nerissa Gallo, 44, who has given birth to 16 children, said she welcomed the law because it would bring contraceptives into the reach of the poor. Asked about the church's opposition, she said: "We don't pay attention to that. They are not the ones who are giving birth again and again. We are the ones who have to find a way to care for the children." – AFP

## Rising population in the Philippines

The UN estimates half of the 3.4 million pregnancies each year are unplanned



# Prospector strikes it lucky with 5kg nugget

MELBOURNE—An amateur prospector has made the find of a lifetime in southern Australia, unearthing a gold nugget weighing about five kilograms (11 pounds) just outside the town of Ballarat, reports said on January 17.

The nugget was found with a hand-held metal detector at a depth of a little over 60 centimetres (24 inches), showed a video of the find posted on YouTube.

"The prospector said it sounded like the bonnet of a car through the headphones," wrote TroyAurum, who uploaded the video.

The find, made on January 16 at a popular prospecting site outside Ballarat, an 1850s gold rush city about 110 kilometres (65 miles) from Melbourne, was confirmed by the owner of the town's gold shop, Cordell Kent.

"A lot of people think Victoria's goldfields are dead and that there's none left, but he (the prospector) has worked in an area where a lot of people have worked in the past but he persisted and he's been rewarded," said Kent, of the Mining Exchange Gold Shop.

Kent said the 177-ounce nugget, for which he was seeking a buyer, was among the biggest he had seen in 20 years in the gold business.

"We have 800 prospectors on our books and only a couple of those have ever found a nugget over 100 ounces," he said, adding that the sum total of his own finds was little more than 100 ounces.

"There's only been one or two big pieces and they were found a long time ago."

Kent said the nugget was expected to fetch more than A\$300,000 (US\$315,340). The prospector wished to remain anonymous.

The Australian gold rush began in 1851 and attracted thousands of fortune seekers from Europe, the Americas and China. – AFP

# ‘My life is in danger’, says sacked top judge

COLOMBO – Sri Lanka's sacked chief justice Shirani Bandaranayake said on January 15 she feared for her life as a defiant President Mahinda Rajapakse hurried her successor into office.

Speaking to reporters from her car as she left her official residence in Colombo, Bandaranayake told reporters she also feared for the safety of her husband and son after falling foul of the government.

"My life is in danger. The lives of all three of us are in danger," she said in brief comments.

Bandaranayake, the first woman to hold Sri Lanka's highest judicial post, was sacked by Rajapakse on January 13 two days after parliament voted to impeach her.

Rajapakse swiftly filled the vacancy January 15 by appointing the government's senior legal adviser Mohan Peiris as her successor.

The government launched the impeachment in November after court decisions went against the government of Rajapakse, who has tightened his hold on power since crushing Tamil Tiger rebels in May 2009 to end a decades-long ethnic war.

Among other rulings, Bandaranayake stalled a bill that sought to grant greater political and financial power to the president's youngest brother Basil, who is the economic development minister.

The impeachment has drawn further criticism of the government, already accused by the West of rights abuses in the final stages of the war.

The US State Department said on January 14 the impeachment raised "serious questions about the separation of powers in Sri Lanka, which is a fundamental tenet of a healthy democracy". – AFP

# Truce restores calm on India-Pakistan border

SRINAGAR, India – A ceasefire took hold on January 17 in disputed Kashmir after the Indian and Pakistani armies agreed to halt deadly cross-border firing that had threatened to unravel a fragile peace process.

As the foreign minister of Pakistan appealed for talks with her Indian counterpart to help defuse tensions, senior officers reported that calm had returned to the region after a spike in violence in which five soldiers were killed.

"No fresh incidents of firing or violation of the ceasefire agreement have been reported from the Line of Control," Rajesh Kalia, the spokesman for the Indian army's Northern Command, told AFP.

Pakistan says three of its soldiers have been killed in firing by Indian troops since January 6 along the de facto border known as the Line of Control.

India in turn has accused Pakistani troops of killing two of its soldiers on January 8, one of whom was beheaded.

But with Pakistan denying responsibility for the attack and the head still to be returned, officials in New Delhi had struck an increasingly hardline tone towards Islamabad.

The army chief told commanders to respond "aggressively" to any Pakistani firing, the prime minister said there could be no "business as usual" while an opposition leader called for India "get at least 10 heads from the other side".

Speaking on January 15 while on a trip to New York, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar accused India of "warmongering" and its officials of competing against each other to sound more hostile.

But after senior army officers agreed on January 16 to "de-escalate" the tensions, Khar said she would like to have talks with her Indian counterpart, Salman Khurshid, to end the dispute.

The agreement to end the cross-border firing was reached during a 10-minute phone call between two senior generals, India's Vinod Bhatia and Pakistan's Ashfaq Nadeem.

The Pakistani military confirmed the telephone conversation, saying in a statement that "both sides agreed on the need to reduce tension on the LoC".

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars since independence over Kashmir. – AFP

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in respect of: - "Footwear"

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P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.  
Phone: 372416      Dated: 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2013

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P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.  
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**ZAR & ZAR**  
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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L  
for **Zar & Zar Company Limited**  
P. O. Box 60, Yangon  
Dated: 21 January 2013



# Fear grips Lao NGOs after activist disappears

BANGKOK – A month after a prominent activist mysteriously vanished, Laos' nascent civil society is living in fear despite the communist regime's vow it had nothing to do with his disappearance.

Sombath Somphone, 62, the founder of a non-government organisation campaigning for sustainable development, went missing in Vientiane while driving home on December 15.

Images from CCTV cameras, obtained by Sombath's family and published online, show him being taken away from a police post by two unidentified individuals. He has not been seen since.

The secretive communist regime, which has ruled Laos with an iron fist since 1975, has for the last few years appeared to be gradually opening up, allowing local civil society groups to flourish.

But Sombath's disappearance has sent jitters through the activist network.

It came just a few weeks after Laos expelled Anne-Sophie Gindroz, the outspoken country director of Swiss charity Helvetas, for criticising the communist government that is led by President Choummaly Sayasone.

"Other civil society leaders are extremely worried, some have – I hope temporarily – left the country. It could well be a big step back," said one development professional who has known Sombath for 20 years and requested anonymity.

Sombath, whose work for the Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC) targeted the country's marginalised and impoverished rural population, had played a key part in the apparent emergence of Laos' long-muzzled civil society movement.

WASHINGTON – US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last week expressed deep concern for Sombath Somphone.

"We call upon the Lao government to pursue a transparent investigation of this incident and to do everything in its power to bring about an immediate and safe return home to his

family," Clinton said in a statement on January 16.

"His disappearance has generated a tremendous amount of concern from his family, friends and colleagues around the world. We urge his immediate return home and send our thoughts and prayers to his family and loved ones," she said. – AFP

Hopes had been raised "of a process that was going to result in the Lao government recognising that NGOs have a role in a modern society", said Phil Robertson of New York-based Human Rights Watch.

But those hopes had "probably been set back now in a significant way by Sombath's disappearance," he said, adding there was a "growing fear within civil society groups in Laos".

Laos-based activists contacted by AFP spoke only on condition of anonymity, reflecting concern for their safety.

But the regime promises Sombath is not in their hands.

## 'The story doesn't add up.'

"The concerned authority is accelerating the investigations, collecting evidence in order to reach a conclusion," said Yong Chanthalangsy, the Lao ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

"It may be possible Mr Sombath has been kidnapped perhaps because of a personal conflict or a conflict in business or some other reasons," he added in a letter published in the *Vientiane Times* on January 4.

But NGOs and the international community are unconvinced by the explanation.

"The story doesn't add

up," said Charles Santiago, a Malaysian member of parliament who last week led a delegation of parliamentarians from Southeast Asia to Vientiane to pressure the authorities into action.

"The government simply cannot say after one month that they still can't trace him. This stone-walling is not acceptable," he said, noting that Sombath vanished "in a police environment" and there has been no demand for ransom.

At a news conference in Bangkok after the visit to Laos, Santiago said on January 16 that "the government has no political will to resolve the problem."

However, many observers are struggling to understand why the regime, which has sought during the last few years to shed its image as one of the world's most reclusive countries, would have decided to detain Sombath in secret.

The move could have been triggered by the participation of many local activists, including Sombath, in the Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) last October, said Santiago, who is the Forum's Asian coordinator.

"AEPF must have triggered some anxiety within the politburo, because some of the people who came talked about land grabs and so on and so forth, so they want to send a message that this is not acceptable,"



Sombath Somphone in the Philippines in 2005 when he received a Magsaysay award for community leadership. Pic: AFP/Somphone family

Santiago said, noting that the meeting was held just before a major Asia-Europe (Asem) summit.

In a country where major infrastructure projects are displacing tens of thousands of people, "it is also possible companies involved in land grabs are using members of the various groups within the party to send a message" he said.

Other analysts point to the diverging currents at the heart of the regime.

"It may be that behind this is a conflict between the old guard and those who are pushing to move closer to the international community,"

one foreign observer said, noting that Laos was set to join the World Trade Organisation in February.

Meanwhile, Sombath's family is struggling to keep a low profile.

"I have at no point refuted the government's statement," said Ng Shui Meng, in an open letter published online, calling on the government to find her husband.

"Sombath has a medical condition that needs daily medication and once returned to me, I would take Sombath to seek medical attention abroad until his full recuperation," she said. – AFP

## Malaysian suspended over election forecast

KUALA LUMPUR – A Malaysian bank economist who is a member of an opposition party said on January 15 he had been suspended after telling a forum that a narrow opposition win in hotly anticipated elections was "quite likely".

Azrul Azwar Ahmad Tajudin said "political pressure" on his employers at Bank Islam was the likely reason for his immediate suspension by the bank for an "alleged serious act of misconduct".

"I'm shocked. Clearly, I'm a political victim," Azrul, who has been a member of the opposition Parti Keadilan Rakyat for more than a decade, told AFP.

Malaysians must vote by June this year in what analysts expect to be the stiffest challenge yet to the Barisan Nasional coalition that has ruled the country since independence from Britain in 1957.

Azrul spoke on January

10 at a business forum in Singapore on the possible outcome of the election.

"It's a fair analysis. I didn't do anything wrong. The outcome of (the election) may have an impact on the economy, so why shouldn't I analyse it? I was doing my job," he said.

He said the letter set out no timeframe for the length of the suspension or gave other details.

Premier Najib Razak has promised to protect civil liberties such as freedom of expression, after the ruling coalition lost its traditional two-thirds parliamentary majority in the last polls in 2008.

He faces a rising opposition led by Anwar Ibrahim, the ruling coalition's onetime heir apparent until a dispute with strongman leader Mahathir Mohamad led to his ouster in the late 1990s and jailing on sodomy and corruption charges widely seen as politically motivated. – AFP

# China plans survey of disputed islands

BEIJING – Beijing is to carry out a geographical survey of islands in the East China Sea, state media said on January 15, the latest move in an increasingly tense dispute with Tokyo over the uninhabited territory.

The announcement came as Japanese fighter jets were scrambled in response to a Chinese state-owned Y-12 plane flying close to – but not inside – the islands' airspace, said Tokyo's defence ministry.

Separately, official Chinese media reported that Beijing's armed forces have been instructed this year to train for battle, while a Tokyo official said US and Japanese fighter jets carried out joint air exercises.

The dispute over the islands, known as Diaoyu in Beijing and Senkaku by Tokyo, which controls them, has simmered on and off for

years but intensified in 2012 when Japan nationalised those it did not already own, triggering anger and demonstrations in China.

The cartographic survey was part of a program to map China's "territorial islands and reefs" and safeguard its "maritime rights and interests", state-run *Xinhua* news agency said, without saying when it would take place. It did not make clear whether it would involve activities on land or be purely sea-based, but quoted Zhang Hui Feng, of China's National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation, acknowledging there could be "difficulties".

"There are some difficulties in landing on some islands to survey and in surveying and mapping the surrounding sea area of the islands, because some countries infringed and occupied these islands

of China," he said.

In another development, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in Hanoi on January 16 that Vietnam and Japan – which are both locked in separate disputes with Beijing over contested islands – must "play a more active role" in maintaining regional peace and security.

Abe was speaking after talks with his Vietnamese counterpart, Nguyen Tan Dung.

Citing "challenging developments" in the Asia-Pacific, Abe – on his first overseas trip since winning power last month – said the two countries should deepen their relationship.

## Briefs

### Jakarta floods leave 11 dead

JAKARTA – Floods in Indonesia's capital Jakarta have left at least 11 people dead and two missing, authorities said on January 18 as murky brown waters submerged parts of the city's business district, causing chaos for a second day.

The capital's worst floods in five years have forced 18,000 people from their homes, the nation's disaster agency said.

The floods were the worst to hit the capital since 2007, when about 50 people were killed and more than 300,000 were displaced.

### Sydney swelters in record heat

SYDNEY – Temperatures in Sydney on January 18 hit their highest level since records began 150 years ago, reaching 45.8 degrees Celsius (114.4 Fahrenheit). The old record, of 45.3C, was set in January 1939.

It is the latest record to fall as Australia swelters under a heatwave that has affected 70 percent of the vast country and created what experts have called a "dome of heat" over the nation's outback centre.

Australia's all-time record temperature is 50.7C, set in January 1960 at Oodnadatta in South Australia state.

### Thai jailed for insulting monarchy

BANGKOK – A Thai court on January 17 sentenced a comedian and renowned "Red Shirt" supporter to two years in jail for insulting the kingdom's revered monarchy during a speech at a mass rally in 2010, his lawyer said.

Yosawaris Chuklom, 54, who goes by the stage name Jeng Dokchik, was found guilty under Thailand's strict lese majeste law, which punishes anyone convicted of defaming the Thai king, queen, heir or regent with up to 15 years in prison.

Rights campaigners allege that the lese majeste law has been politicised saying many of those charged are linked to the Red Shirt movement.

### Australians farewell notorious bushranger

MELBOURNE – Hundreds of descendants and fans of Ned Kelly bade farewell to the infamous Australian bushranger at a requiem mass at Wangaratta in Victoria state on January 18, 132 years after he was executed for killing three policemen, reports said.

Kelly was hanged in Melbourne in 1880 and his remains were thrown into a mass grave after the execution. The remains were exhumed in 2011. – AFP



## Hindu temple marks 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary

By Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

THE Sri Sri Durga Bari Hindu Temple in downtown Yangon is marking its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary with six days of prayer, music, food and other festivities ending on January 21.

The temple – located at 307 Bo Aung Kyaw Street in Kyauktada township – was founded by Sri Nimai Charan Sinha in 1888, and expanded in 1932 under the efforts of Sri Shashi Bhusan Neogi. It is one of the oldest Hindu temples in Myanmar.

U Kyaw, a member of the celebration council, said the festival was intended to celebrate the establishment of the Hindu community in Myanmar, as well as the work that has been done to maintain the temple.

“This temple was established in 1888, but Hindus were living in the country before that year. During the colonial era, Hindus were brought here from India to work at all levels of society, from engineers, doctors and teachers, to housemaids and toilet cleaners,” he said.

“Hinduism encompasses many ethnic groups, and our living standards are inherited from our grandparents, so there were workers suitable for many different jobs in Myanmar.”

U Kyaw said this year’s event marked the first major

anniversary celebration held by the temple.

“Our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary occurred in 1988, but at that time the 8888 student crisis was taking place in Myanmar, so we had no chance to celebrate. But many worshippers came to our temple for prayers at that time,” he said.

Ko Ye Htut, head of media and invitations for the anniversary, said Hindus from 32 townships throughout the country were invited to participate in the celebration.

“We spent three months planning the anniversary, and we are all eager to showcase the history of the temple,” he said.

Ko Nyi Nyi Lwin, 22, is a member of the Mandalay-based Hindu musical group Eternal Light, which is performing at the festival. He said he had never performed at such an old temple and described the festivities being held there as “great”.

“Our six-member group has performed at many Hindu celebrations, but this is the biggest and most crowded,” he said.

“Most of us believe in the deity Sri Sri Durga Bari because he protects us from danger and usually fulfils our wishes. I sometimes visit the Sri Sri Durga Bari temple in Mandalay, and we also need to keep the Sabbath and maintain a vegetarian diet.”

Dr Khu Khu Damastat,



Hindus participate in Sri Sri Durga Bari Temple’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

a Hindu from Pazundaung township, said she was “very proud” to take part in the festival.

“There won’t be another celebration like this in my lifetime. Since I was young I have come to this temple

to make wishes. And not just Hindus come here, but Buddhists as well,” she said.

The organisers said they expected more than 2500 visitors to the temple during the celebration.

## MMPO hosts film production workshop

By Lwin Mar Htun

A SEMINAR on film production techniques was held in Yangon on January 16, sponsored by the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation and Technicolor Asia post-production service company from Thailand.

The seminar, held at Mingalar Cinema 2 in Dagon Centre 2, provided a chance for MMPO members and representatives from Technicolor Asia to exchange ideas about film production techniques, with the aim of improving the industry in Myanmar.

MMPO president U Zin Wine said some Myanmar filmmakers had already worked with Technicolor Asia, but as the industry changes to digital systems, many in the local industry were having trouble with the new techniques.

“That’s why we requested Technicolor Asia to explain the techniques and show us how to solve problems. The company warmly accepted our invitation, so we prepared this small workshop,” he said.

At the event Mr Giorgio Giordano, general manager of Technicolor Asia, provided a step-by-step explanation about digital film-production techniques, and also answered questions from the audience.

The company’s technical sales support director, Mr Chonlawit Sirikhunt, also described sound-production techniques.

The afternoon was dedicated to discussion techniques for making movies trailers. As part of the demonstration the trailer was shown for the Thai film *3am*, which had been edited by Technicolor Asia.



Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

Director U Soe Moe attends the workshop on January 16.

## US writers attend AC book club anniversary

By Nuam Bawi

THE book club at the American Centre in Yangon celebrated its fifth anniversary on January 14 and 16 with competitions, lectures and workshops led by well-known authors from the United States.

Among the writers who participated in the event, organised by the US embassy in Yangon, were Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Robert Hass, poet Brenda Hillman, fiction writer ZZ Packer and nonfiction author Christopher Merrill.

Mr Hass, who teaches literature at the University of California at Berkeley, gave a short lecture at the event. Afterward he told *The Myanmar Times* that the visit would promote cultural exchange between Myanmar and the US.

“While I’m here I can meet different people, and when I go back to the US I can tell my family, friends and students about these places,” he said.

ZZ Packer – who has published short story collections and whose work has appeared in *New York Times Magazine*, *Washington Post Magazine* and other publications – said the trip was beneficial for the people who attended the lectures,

as well as for the visiting writers who had the chance to see the “new Myanmar”.

“We met university students today, and they wanted to know how to approach literature, how to begin thinking about writing something, and about writing in general,” she said. “Even though we had only a short time, for me it was very fruitful to talk to them because they were really curious.”

Local writer U Hla Thauang was among those who attended a workshop led by Mr Merrill. Afterward he said it was very valuable to hear about the experiences of these visiting writers because it gave local writers inspiration.

“We usually learn from reading books, and we just write what we can write, but these writers know about the technical aspects of writing,” U Hla Thauang said.

“Christopher Merrill told us that he used to take notes about whatever he saw, whenever he travelled or went someplace. This is very important for me because I have never done that before, even though I have already published four nonfiction books. Most of the time we forget what we have experienced and seen,” he said.



# Kayin hope for peaceful New Year

By Lwin Mar Htun

ETHNIC Kayin throughout Myanmar celebrated the arrival of Kayin New Year 2752 on January 11 and 12, with many people gathering at the stadium of Basic Education High School (1) in Ahlone township, Yangon.

U Saw Min Lloyd, president of the Kayin New Year Festival Celebration Committee, said planning for the celebration had started in October.

He said the festival was organised according to the "basic rules" for New Year festivals: that the day belonged to all Kayin people in unity, that no profit be made from the festival, that Kayin traditions be preserved and propagated, and that young Kayin be taught to value their own traditions.

This was U Saw Min Lloyd's second year organising the festival in Ahlone township.

"Last year the festival focused on our culture as normal, but this year we wanted to highlight the progress towards

peace between the Karen National Union [KNU] and government," he said.

Although there were some festivities on the evening of November 11, the celebration officially started at 6am the following day with the raising of the Kayin flag. In the evening, Kayin in traditional costumes performed music and demonstrated traditional dances. Among the highlights was the famous *done yein* dance, in which groups of men and women in colourful costumes move in synchronisation with fast, upbeat drum and gong music. The festival grounds also hosted many booths where vendors sold food, as well as traditional clothing and handicrafts. There was also a small gallery featuring Kayin cultural displays and information.

One of the festivalgoers, U Saw Noe Noe from Kyeemyindaing township, said he celebrates the Kayin New Year every year, but this year's event was more interesting than most. "I'm very happy because our Kayin organisation puts on the traditional New Year festival



Kayin dancers perform the *done yein* dance at a Kayin New Year celebration in Ahlone township, Yangon, on November 12. Pic: Ko Taik

annually, and this year there were many Myanmar and foreign guests who attended so they could learn about our

culture," he said.

The Kayin have been holding nationwide New Year festivals since 1939.

The date varies from year to year, depending on the Myanmar lunar calendar. Big Kayin New Year festivals

were also held in Yangon at Arlein Ngar Sint Pagoda in Insein township, as well as in North Okkala township.

## Fans brave the cold for Daw Mar Mar Aye concert

By Nuam Bawi

THE cold weather in Yangon on January 12 was a real test for fans of Daw Mar Mar Aye, who performed an open-air concert on that night at People's Square Park.

Concert-goers had to weight their uncontrollable shivering against their love for the singer and against how much they longed to hear her songs performed live.

In this case, the cold lost the battle as most of the audience stayed until the end of the show.

It was a special occasion. Daw Mar Mar Aye, 70, performs traditional Myanmar music that some worry is headed for extinction. The famous singer left Myanmar for United States nearly 15 years ago, and returned to her home country for the first time on January 7. The concert was the first solo concert in her life.

The concert kicked off about 30 minutes after the promised 7pm start time. Comedian Zaganar, one of the presenters for the evening, said, "It is a reward for the country to see Daw Mar Mar Aye back under the shadow of Shwedagon Pagoda."

Daw Mar Mar Aye also addressed the crowd before she started performing.

"I'm so happy to see you all. While I was out of this country I didn't forget the songs or all my friends," she said, adding that for many years she had been eager to perform live with a complete orchestra, as she would do later



Daw Mar Mar Aye performs at People's Square Park in Yangon on January 12. Pic: Boothee

in the evening.

Daw Mar Mar Aye told the audience that although she might look good physically, she was in reality a person who felt damaged inside.

"My heart has been troubled for 14 years and now it is old. I'm a different person now, and I can't compare with the previous Mar Mar Aye. But I will try my best to perform, as this is my deepest desire," she said.

She appeared tired during her speech, but if audience members wondered whether she would be able to last through the concert, those doubts were swept away as soon as she started singing.

Soon after the concert started, I heard people behind me remarking that she was a very skilful singer. "Her voice is still as good as it ever was," one of them said.

The atmosphere was quite different from the Western-style concerts now common in Yangon, where the music is loud and the audience is young and energetic. Here, the biggest fans were middle-aged and elderly people, some of whom were in tears and others were happily singing along.

During the concert Daw Mar Mar Aye was joined onstage by her son and daughter, as well as her grandchildren. They helped her sing "That Tant Paw Mar Kasar Mae" (Play on the Rainbow), the breakthrough song that first brought her to the public's attention many years ago.

Also joining her onstage were Wine Lamin Aung and May Thet Htar Swe, two children who won many gold medals at the annual

nationwide Traditional Music Competition.

A highlight of the show was Daw Mar Mar Aye's performance of "The Nwe, The Moe, The Saung" (This Summer, This Rainy Season, This Winter), which she had originally performed with the now-deceased actor Win Oo. At the concert she was joined by singer Daw Tin Tin Mya and singer/actress Daw Cho Pyone.

Hin Thada Tun Yin also performed with the host, and told the audience that Daw Mar Mar Aye's return "gives strength to the community of traditional Myanmar musicians".

"Our national TV channels always broadcast Korean drama series, and our traditional music in now in the back row. But I would like to tell the audience tonight that our traditional music will still be here 50 or 100 years from now," he said.

Pianist Mg Hla Aye conducted the music for the concert, which included more than 30 songs and lasted until 1:30am.

The day after the show, Daw Mar Mar Aye told *The Myanmar Times* that she tried her best to perform despite some technical difficulties.

"There was a problem with the microphone, so I wasn't satisfied with the sound system," she said.

"But I was happy with the performance, and most of the audience left only after the concert was finished. I was very happy that they stayed until the end, even though it was very cold and very late. I would like to say 'thank you' to them," she said.



# Kerouac and Waugh, soul mates in drink and madness

By James Parker

IN the corner of the afterlife where they keep the Catholic alcoholic geniuses, Jack Kerouac and Evelyn Waugh are having a lovely time together — patting back and forth some kind of ethereal shuttlecock, reading aloud from Augustine's *Confessions* and falling about laughing. ... That kind of thing.

Had the two men met here below, however, it is unlikely that the encounter would have been a success. The animus would probably have been on Waugh's side: Kerouac, blowsy with Beat compassion, might — depending on his mood and booze level — have taken pity on the tightly trussed old fart of an English novelist. Waugh, on the other hand, we can imagine being quite merciless with the younger man, with his emotional incontinence, goofy transcendentalism and so on. Desperate drinking, on both sides, would have been assured.

But in the spirit, where it counts, these gentlemen were tragic brothers. Connective fraternal filaments ran invisibly between them, coursing with information, looping with special intensity around two of their books: Waugh's *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, and Kerouac's *Big Sur*. Two novels, written five years apart, each a skimpily fictionalised account of a terrifying mental crack-up.

*The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (published in 1957 and just reissued in a new edition by Little, Brown) was written first, because Waugh went crazy first. Mr Pinfold is a famous English novelist, aged 50, comfortably situated in a country house not far from London. He is bored to death. He is not writing. He is faintly paranoid. A visit from a BBC film crew unnerves him; in the interviewer's manner he detects "the hint of the underdog's snarl". His memory is doing funny things. Physically, too, he is unwell — overweight and achy, with blotchy hands and a purple face. His pharmacist has given him a "sleeping-draught" (which he dilutes sloshingly in creme de menthe), and his doctor has prescribed some fat gray pills (which he swallows on top of his "normal not illiberal quantity of wine and brandy"). Feeling himself to be going, in a general way, to the dogs, Mr Pinfold decides — over the protests of his wife — to take a restorative sea cruise. Frowningly, cumbrously, he boards the Caliban and settles in his cabin. At which point — through the floor, or emitting from hidden tubes — the voices begin to assail him.

*The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is inhumanly funny. The ordeal of Evelyn Waugh was anything but. "Going off his head" was one of Waugh's mortal terrors, and the approach of what he called his "pm" — persecution mania — was perceived with agonising lucidity. And then he was inside it. On February 12, 1954, he wrote to his wife from the Staffordshire, en route from Liverpool to Port Said, Aden, and Colombo. "It is rather difficult to write to you because everything I say or think or read is read aloud by the group of psychologists I met on the ship." A week later, still at sea, he attempted a note of condolence to a recently bereaved friend: "I can't say in the presence of these eavesdroppers how much my heart and prayers are yours. They break into cackles of laughter at any expression of that kind."

In New York City, on July 17, 1960, Jack Kerouac boarded a train bound for California. His intention — a recurrent one in his case — was to get himself cleaned up. Three years had passed since the publication of *On the Road*, three years spent largely in a Kerouacian vortex of acclaim and dissipation, radiance and broken-heartedness. A few



Jack Kerouac. Pic: Tom Palumbo

months before he'd been interviewed on *The Steve Allen Show*, sweating grimly through rehearsals but then, live, performing with jazzy aplomb a passage from *Visions of Cody* (the voice of God telling him "Go moan for man, go moan, go groan, go groan alone, go roll your bones ... alone").

His acolytes, the offspring of *On the Road*, were everywhere, all over the country, drinking and drugging, peering through his basement window, offering endless spurious camaraderie. Diminishing returns had set in: Depleted by 1000 binges, Kerouac now wanted — needed, urgently — peace. "One fast move or I'm gone ..." So he was on his way, via his old San Francisco stomping-ground, to the woods of Big Sur, to a cabin offered him by its owner, the poet

**'Kerouac's spiritual biography is more vagrant, with regular failed emptyings of self into the shining abyss of Buddhism. The older and more messed-up he got, however, the closer he drew to the sentimental-mystical folk Catholicism of his childhood.'**

Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

*Big Sur* was published two years later. Kerouac wrote it in Florida, jamming it out, in the words of Kerouac biographer Ellis Amburn, on "megadoses of Benzedrine". The book records a period of acute psychological and spiritual disorientation, delirium tremens, the near-destruction of a literary intelligence, starring Kerouac as Jack Duloz, "bloody 'King of the Beatniks'".

In *Big Sur* Ferlinghetti's rustic shed becomes a cave of bad dreams. Duloz arrives at night, making his way there through the spooky oceanic dark. He has a couple of nice days pottering around and being whimsical with Nature. Then, feeling expansive, he goes down

to the beach one afternoon and takes "a huge deep Yogic breath". Mistake. Something ineffably horrible attacks him, invades him, he takes a hit of deep-sea Lovecraftian disgustingness, "an overdose of iodine, or of evil. ... I felt completely nude of all poor protective devices like thoughts about life or meditations under trees and 'the ultimate' and all that sh--." And it's downhill from there.

Both *Big Sur* and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, then, deal with literary celebrity, chemical confusion and the anguish of failing powers; the crack-up, in both cases, was precipitated by a private attempt at a cure. And both authors, as mentioned, were Catholic. Waugh had decided as a young man that a Godless universe was "unintelligible and unendurable": He converted, and maintained for the rest of his life a prompt and bristling orthodoxy. Kerouac's spiritual biography is more vagrant, with regular failed emptyings of self into the shining abyss of Buddhism. The older and more messed-up he got, however, the closer he drew to the sentimental-mystical folk Catholicism of his childhood. By the time he wrote *Big Sur* he had concluded that "life without Heaven" was not to be tolerated.

The real common denominator here, though, is courage: the courage of honesty, and the courage and cunning of the artist in the face of material that is aberrant, language-resistant and fatally personal. Jack Kerouac had no choice but to let it all hang out: It was his compulsion and his destiny, "because if I don't write what actually I see happening in this unhappy globe which is rounded by the contours of my deathskull I think I'll have been sent on earth by poor God for nothing". So here was his naked and blubbing self, exposed, crashing through the panes of sanity in *Big Sur*.

Evelyn Waugh overcame the voices, finally, through strength of will and force of intellect. He subtitled *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* "A Conversation Piece", relegating his nightmare to the realm of the merely interesting. Their methods were very different. Kerouac had his idiom of blurts and riffs, and his eerie feel for interdimensional slippage or "skidding"; Waugh his indomitable humour and Parnassian superiority of style. But each man, granted a holiday in madness, wrestled it back into a story: He incarnated it. Which might be rather Catholic after all. — *Slate*

## Americans who rocked Pakistan

By John Kelly

WASHINGTON — I think it's safe to say that if a bunch of long-haired American teenagers was to walk down the streets of a Pakistani city today, clutching electric guitars and looking for a place to play their brand of rock-and-roll, things might end badly for them.

Oh, how things have changed since the 1960s.

That was when the Prints of Darkness planted the flag of rock in the hot soil of Pakistan. The bandmates — ages 14 to 17 — were students in Pakistan at the Lahore American School, children of diplomats, businessmen and aid workers. In a city that had electricity only a few days a week, they still managed to master songs by the likes of the Jefferson Airplane and write their own material.

They played high school dances and even went on a brief State Department-sponsored tour, playing to audiences that consisted of Pakistani men. (No women were allowed, even then.)

Steve Lorber may have been the band's biggest fan. He attended the school from 1961 to 1969, when his hydrologist father was sent to Pakistan to build dams on the Indus River.

"They were like the first rock band I saw with any consistency," said Steve, now 60 and living in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The band broke up when its older members graduated. Steve often wondered what became of them — and what became of their music, crudely captured live at gigs on reel-to-reel tape recorders.

Steve went to Georgetown University in Washington, was a DJ on the school's radio station and threw himself into music, managing the Slickee Boys early in their career. He now runs Metro Music, a mail-order company that trades in collectible records.

He just added a new LP to his stock: He tracked down the members of Prints of Darkness, got his hands on their tapes and had them painstakingly rescued by local audio engineer Tony Eichler. Now he has produced a sumptuous nine-track LP on 180-gram vinyl, with a colourful, photo-filled booklet designed by local album artist Dick Bangham.

All for a band you've never heard of.

Even Steve admits it's total overkill, but it's a neat audio time capsule and a special monument to the Power of Rock. And, actually, the music isn't bad, especially a psychedelic fuzz-and-drum-filled workout called "Night Turns to Day".

Several band members have ties to the Washington area. Singer Roberta "Bourbon" Kilgore — now Roberta McInerney — has exactly the sort of job you'd expect a former singer in a trippy rock band to have. She's deputy general counsel at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. John Sligh, keyboards,

is an architect for the government. Drummer Skip Boyce had a career in the State Department, including a stint as US ambassador to Indonesia. Now he lives in Singapore and heads Boeing's Asia operation. Travis Henderson lives in the Washington area, and Steve Davy is a cameraman in San Francisco.

The band members say they're tickled by Steve Lorber's effort, if a little perplexed.

"I'm both thrilled and a bit embarrassed," guitarist and vocalist Richard Woodbury emailed me from Chicago, where he's a composer and sound designer and is on the faculty of Columbia College. "I mean, we really weren't that good. We were very serious however and my time in Pakistan with the 'Prints' was one of the most formative experiences of my life."

It obviously was for Steve, too. The LP — US\$25 and available on eBay — is called *Zindabad*. It's an Urdu word meaning "live forever".

When I called documentary

**'In a city that had electricity only a few days a week, they still managed to master songs by the likes of the Jefferson Airplane and write their own material.'**

filmmaker Jeff Krulik this week, he was on the way to the house of his editor in Alexandria, Virginia. There, they would attempt to tame hours of material.

"When you're editing, you're just like a pig in a trough," said Jeff, co-creator of cult classic *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*. "You're covered in everything."

Jeff is covered in *Led Zeppelin Played Here*, his new doc about the evening in 1969 — January 20, the night of Richard Nixon's inauguration, incidentally — when Led Zeppelin either did or did not play its first-ever Washington area gig, at the Wheaton Youth Centre in Wheaton, Maryland.

For every person who says he was at that show, man, there's another who says it never took place, dude. There are no faded posters, no old ticket stubs, no grainy black-and-white photos.

"Now everyone has cellphones," he said. "Everything's documented to death. Everything's paper-trailed to death."

Not so in 1969. "I've done a lot of research," Jeff said. "Will it be definite? Who knows. Some people still don't think the moon landing happened."

— *The Washington Post*



# Know what you like with wine, then branch out

By Dave McIntyre

PEOPLE sometimes ask me how I became a “wine expert”. My answer: I drink a lot more than most folks, and I pay attention.

The attention is key, not the drinking. The simplest way to get more enjoyment out of wine is to read the label, then smell and taste the wine and remember what both tell you. If you walk into a wine store or dine in a restaurant, the retailer or sommelier won't be able to help you much if all you can recall about the wine you enjoyed last week is that it was red.

But if you know you like your whites dry and citrusy with a touch of minerality, your retailer or sommelier might direct you to a gruner veltliner or albarino as an alternative to the familiar pinot grigio. Favour full-bodied, rich and oaky whites? Try a white Burgundy instead of a California chardonnay. If you like the perfumed floral aromas of viognier, you might also enjoy a torrontes from Argentina. Do you like your reds fruity or savoury? Unless, like me, you would answer that question with “yes”, your response could lead you to either the New World or Europe — to zinfandel or to a Rhone Valley syrah.

If it sounds like you need a road map to find your way, Madeline Puckette thought so, too. A graphics designer turned sommelier, Puckette, 29, heads the wine program at Poppy restaurant in Seattle and has reached the certified-sommelier level in the Court of Master Sommeliers.

Puckette found herself asking customers a series of questions to lead them to a wine choice that would fit the restaurant's eclectic list and spicy cuisine. She decided to use her design skills to develop an infographic she calls “The

Different Types of Wine”, which she published on her blog, Wine Folly.

“People tend to order familiar wines, like merlot,” Puckette said. “I try to refer them to wines similar to what they know, while giving them new experiences. Shiraz and syrah are different even though they are the same grape variety. So this chart looks at wines by their different flavour profiles. I spent a lot of time thinking about how wines differ: light or full-bodied, lush or smooth. What do you feel like drinking tonight?”

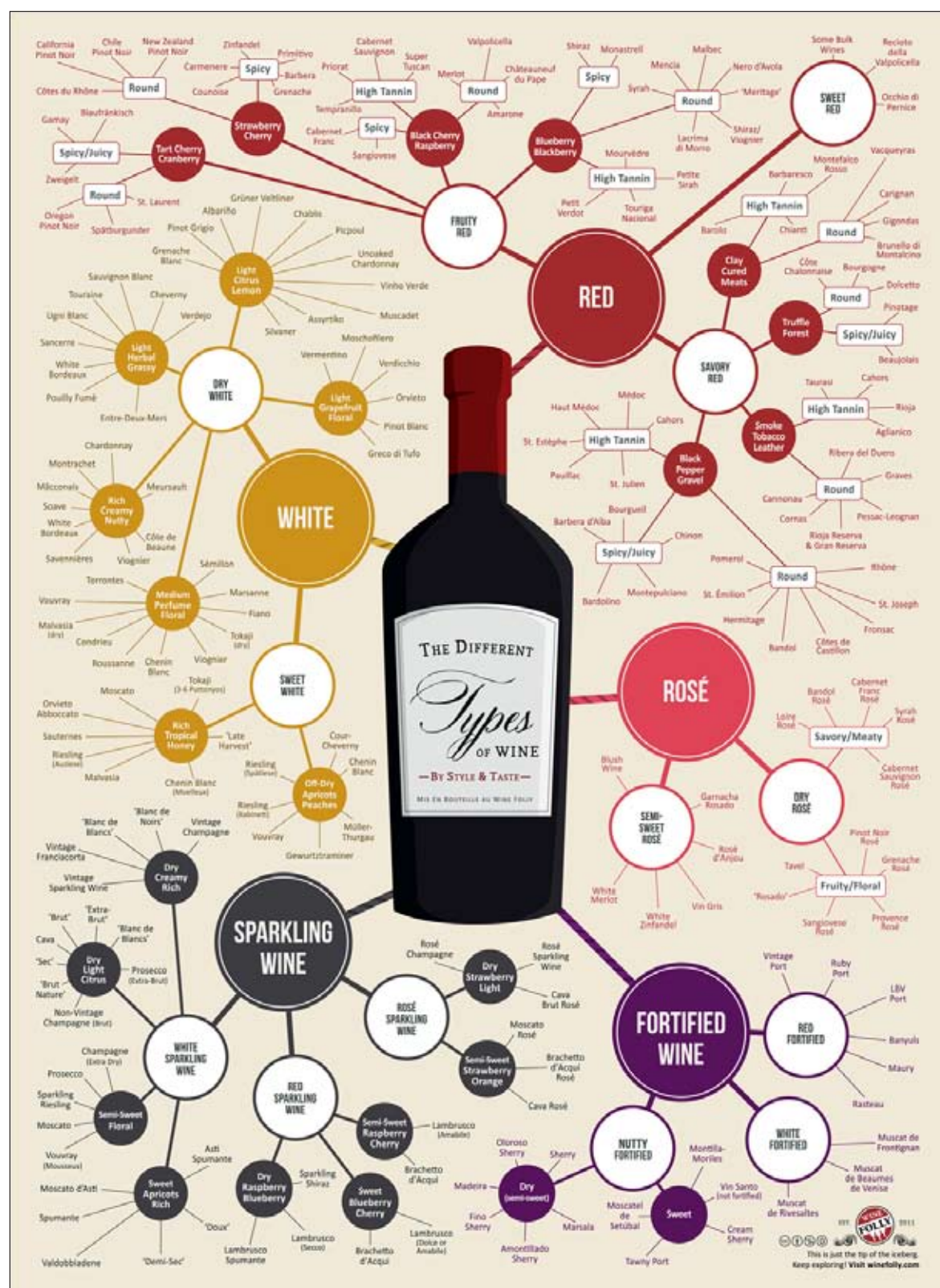
Puckette calls her diagram “a geek thing. Not for wine geeks, but for people who like flow charts.”

Psychologists might prefer the similar flavour-profile-driven approach of Jennifer Simonetti-Bryan in her book, *The One Minute Wine Master: Discover 10 Wines You'll Like in 60 Seconds or Less*.

Simonetti-Bryan, a master of wine, poses 11 simple questions about our eating and drinking preferences, including which flavour of gum we prefer. Depending on our answers, she assigns us to one of four groups, named for the seasons that reflect our flavour preferences in wine. I'm a Fall guy, apparently, which means I like “wines that are not too delicate, not too fruity or jammy, yet not too strong either”. (It might also mean I can't make up my mind, but I'm not sure.) Apparently, I like wines with “medium to medium high” concentration, tannins and alcohol (accurate, as far as it goes), whereas if I were, say, Spring-loaded I'd prefer light wines with low tannins and lower alcohol levels.

Puckette's flow chart and Simonetti-Bryan's personality quiz can help us understand our wine preferences and overcome reluctance to try something new. But the key is still simple: Swirl, sniff, sip ... and pay attention.

— The Washington Post



Graphics designer/sommelier Madeline Puckette created this infographic to help people choose what to drink. Pic: Madeline Puckette/Winefolly.com

## Lofty discourse from an outspoken British chef

By Richard Vines

LONDON — Sat Bains looks like a rugby player.

He's not just physically imposing: He's actually physical. He'll grab you in a bear hug and loudly share with you what's on his mind, littering his monologue with expletives. He's the kind of man who would make a good friend and a bad enemy.

Bains, 41, also happens to be one of Britain's most sensitive chefs. He produces dishes of such delicacy that it's difficult to square them with such a rumbustious character.

His Restaurant Sat Bains With Rooms placed No 4 in Britain's National Restaurant Awards in October. It's located on the edge of an industrial estate in Nottingham, central England, and holds two Michelin stars.

Now, this English-born offspring of Punjabi parents who moved to Britain in the 1960s has released a cookbook, and

it's predictably large. *Too Many Chiefs, Only One Indian* weighs 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds) and costs £75 (US\$120). The introduction is by Heston Blumenthal of the Fat Duck.

Bains developed his love of food enjoying meals with his extended family, and went to catering college to meet girls.

“I started to read books by the great French chefs, [Auguste] Escoffier, Michel Roux, Pierre Koffmann, and I wanted to get into the trade,” Bains said in an interview.

He left his home in the English Midlands to work at Le Petit Blanc in Oxford and L'Escargot in London before winning the Roux Scholarship, the premier award for young British chefs. His prize was training in France at the three-star Le Jardin des Sens, alongside Rene Redzepi, the Danish chef who went on to open Noma in Copenhagen.

A trip with Gordon Ramsay followed, to El Bulli, which held the title of World's Best Restaurant before



The outspoken Sat Bains is one of Britain's leading chefs. Pic: John Arandhara-Blackwell/Face Publications

Noma. Bains also travelled to Japan on a culinary scholarship, and you can see these experiences reflected in his dishes, which combine the modern technology pioneered by Ferran Adria at El Bulli with a Japanese aesthetic of purity and harmony.

Which isn't to say there's anything simple about

the recipes in *Too Many Chiefs*. They're aimed at professional chefs, are designed to feed 10 and many require the kind of equipment (Pacojet, Thermomix, etc) that even the most skilled of home cooks may not possess.

The book is beautiful, with photos by John Arandhara-Blackwell, and

the main buyers may be happy diners rather than food lovers looking for recipe ideas. It most closely resembles books Adria used to produce at El Bulli, which documented dishes more than they encouraged their reproduction.

The text, all in capital letters as if Bains was shouting, is as robust as its creator. Examples: “A CHEF SHOULD REALLY ONLY EVER BE JUDGED FOR THEIR TECHNICAL ABILITY.” And. “NO ONE KNOWS MY FOOD BETTER THAN ME, SO I CAN'T BE JUDGED ON IT. THAT'S NOT ARROGANT. THAT'S PURE HONESTY.”

Sometimes, the line between honesty, arrogance and aggression can be a thin one. Bains says a diner who described one of his dishes as disgusting was summoned to the kitchen and told, “I'M NOT BEING FUNNY, BUT YOUR BLOUSE IS DISGUSTING.”

Bains is known for his robust response to criticism on TripAdvisor, telling an unhappy customer his group resembled a wake. “The

only reason the staff stuck around was to make sure they were still breathing, as a death of grumpy customers is not something I want on my conscience,” Caterer and Hotelkeeper quoted him as saying.

Bains serves only tasting menus. For dinner, it's £79 for seven courses and £89 for 10. When I dined there in October, the dishes included scallop curry (with lentil dahl and cumin yogurt); Cornish crab with avocado and sea vegetables (with pickled turnip and peanut brittle); duck muesli (with savoury granola); and chocolate mousse (with cumin).

It's modern British cooking with influences from France, the Nordic region, Spain, India and Japan, to name but a few of the places. It's served beside a highway on the outskirts of a provincial English city, almost two hours from London by train, an unlikely setting for a meal of such creativity.

The dress code? Don't wear a disgusting blouse.

— Bloomberg News





# Phyo's Cooking Adventure

Phyo cuts through culture to reveal life's true taste

## East meets West in pumpkin desserts

THIS week our experiments with pumpkin continue, as we move on to desserts. Since ovens are not common in Myanmar kitchens, my preparations are based on steaming rather than baking. There are so many recipes for pumpkin desserts, but as usual I prefer to mix flavours from East and West. It works amazingly well, as pumpkin is right at home in food from many places and cultures.

Here I present Malaysian pumpkin snacks — which are lovely for afternoon tea — but I have reduced the amount of coconut in favour of spices similar to those used in pumpkin pie. After a few test runs I created beautiful spiced pumpkin rice cakes. Serving them with vanilla ice cream will surprise your guests. This week I'm also featuring popular Asian pumpkin custard. I hope you will enjoy these lovely sweets, which should help you get through the post-holiday blues.



Pic: Phyo

the cakes from heat. When they are cool enough to handle, remove them from the moulds. Serve at room temperature or warm with tea or coffee. They're also good with vanilla ice cream.

### Pumpkin custard INGREDIENTS

300g of steamed pumpkin (remove skins and puree pumpkin after steaming)  
3 eggs  
3 tablespoons of brown sugar  
300ml of coconut milk  
A pinch of salt

### PREPARATION

Combine all the ingredients in a big bowl and mix them with an electric whisk until they become smooth.

Use butter to lightly grease baking cups (heat-proof ceramic or aluminium). Pour the mixture into the cups, filling them nearly to the top.

Prepare the steamer as in the above recipe, with a wire rack over the opening. Boil 1 litre of water in a kettle and pour it into the pot. The rack should be slightly submerged, such that when the baking cups are arranged on it, the bottoms are under about 1.5 to 2cm of water.

Steam for 15-20 minutes, until the custard is set. Check using a thin wire as with the above recipe. When they are ready allow them to cool, and serve warm.

## Main Tips

Steam the pumpkin with the skin on, so it's easy to handle. Wrap the pot lid with a clean tea towel so water will not drip onto the custard or cake. If you prefer more sweetness, add 1 more tablespoon of brown sugar. I used green-skinned Japanese pumpkin for both recipes.

### QUAFFING QUOTE

"We must have a pie. Stress cannot exist in the presence of a pie." — American playwright David Mamet, "Boston Marriage"

### NEXT WEEK

Pumpkin soup for winter nights

## Red Wine

**Magrez Maison Magrez 2010**

The weak, watery smell is the first sign of trouble. Tasting reveals a disappointing Bourdeaux that packs very little flavour and leaves one with a dry, not altogether pleasant aftertaste.



Score BOX

6/10

## White Wine

**Chateau de Chantegrive Blanc Graves 2007**

A fine, full-bodied white wine. Subtle hints of citrus and pine make for a refreshing companion to a variety of dining options.



Score BOX

8/10

## FOOD REVIEW

A CLEAN and air-conditioned oasis from the grit of a crowded after-work Chinatown, Tomo Sushi could be mistaken for any of the low-scale Japanese joints found around the likes of Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong.

But as you settle in, some things aren't quite right: The lighting is too neon, the walls are too lime green and a menagerie of Michael Bolton collections play on loop.

My date and I quickly ordered the house sake to drink away the bad soft rock: one hot, one cold (K3500 for a 300ml bottle). Although the sake went down smooth and we were impressed at the price, we were unable to discern the hot from the cold as they both came lukewarm.

But Tomo began to redeem itself with its impeccably friendly service. Three chipper waitresses attended our table throughout dinner, scrolling through the menu and recommending dishes for us. We were told to try the pork gyoza (K1500) to start with, the tofu miso soup (K500) and the edamame (K1000).

The tofu miso was surprisingly delicious. Each came replete with a giant tofu cake served at the ideal consistency. The edamame, which can rarely go bad, was also delicious. The gyoza, however, was swing-and-a-miss. While gyoza is usually served steamed or pan-fried, the chef chose to serve it both steamed and pan-fried. The

## A lunchtime oasis in Chinatown



end product was a greasy charred semblance of a dumpling.

When we got to our mains, we ordered the eponymous rainbow roll (K3000), the small Tomo sushi set (K3000), the ebi tempura (2000) and the buta bara pork skewers (K2000). And that's when my date and I learned our lesson about Tomo: Come for the fried food, but don't ever come for the fish.

The rainbow roll was barely a roll at all, let alone sushi. It was loosely packed, falling apart as you picked it up, and scant in ingredients. The Tomo set was disappointing. The salmon was dry, and the tuna sushi was mostly a mouthful of mayonnaise. I made the mistake of eating the ika (squid) sushi — and, for the first time while on a date, had to spit out my food: It was more like a taro doused in fish sauce.

The tempura and the skewers were a different story. The shrimp tempura was light, flakey and scrumptious; the sauce was perfectly salted. The pork had the right balance of meat and succulent fat as the chunks fell right off the skewer with no struggle.

Ultimately, Tomo is a peaceful getaway to shoot down some sake and snack on fried Japanese treats. The bottom floor is non-smoking for those looking to breathe clean air, while there is smoking in the upstairs seating area. — JH

## Tomo Sushi

702 Mahabandoola Road, Latha yownship, Yangon; Tel 251-301

Food:	5
Drink:	6
Atmosphere:	6
Service:	9
X Factor:	5
Value for money:	9

Score BOX

7/10





May @ The Rich Gems New Shop Opening



Ma Khine Zin, Ma Thi Thi and Ma Naw Thae @ Tissot New Branch Launch



Wint Yamone Hlaing and Ma Pyone @ Tissot New Branch Launch



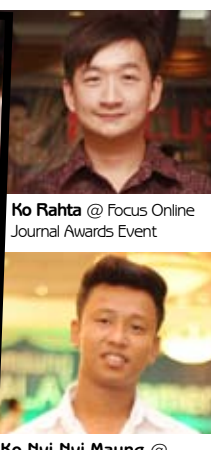
Hnin Su Khine Oo @ Suko Company Third Anniversary



Rebecca Win and guest @ The Rich Gems New Shop Opening



Wut Hmone Shwe Yee @ Suko Company Third

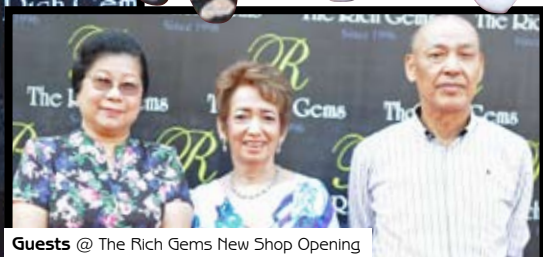


Ko Rahta @ Focus Online Journal Awards Event

Ko Myi Nyi Maung @ Galaxy Camera PC Launch



Guests @ The Rich Gems New Shop Opening



Guests @ The Rich Gems New Shop Opening



Board of directors @ Galaxy Camera PC Launch



D Yay Toe @ Focus Online Journal Awards Event



Sign of Love members @ Tissot New Branch Launch



**Mr. Adirek Sripratak, President & CEO and Executive Group of C.P. Group** visited to **Chic & Chill (Quick Service Restaurant)** at Junction Square on January 10 and joined the birthday party of the friend of **Nan Khin Zayar, Miss Myanmar**. He took remembrance photos with Nan Khin Zayar and also gave birthday present to birthday person and present to Miss Myanmar too.



(Left-to-Right )  
Mr. Siripong Aroonratana: President of MCPL / Mr. Dusit Siriwan: Executive Advisor to Chairman, True Corporation Public Company Limited / Ms. Princess : Hostage (Chic & Chill) / Mr. Nutthakrit Sivasri: Vice Chairman, Agro-Industry and Food Business Group (Livestock), Republic of the Union of Myanmar Area / Ms. Nan Khin Zayar : Miss Myanmar / Mr. Adirek Sripratak: President and Chief Executive Officer, Agro-Industry Business Group (Livestock)





SOCIALITE  
WITH NYEIN EI EI HTWE



THE cool weather during the second week of January made Socialite want to stay in bed all day and snuggle under the covers, but duty called and on January 7 she donned her special journal-oriented-event cocktail dress and attended the launch of Politic journal at City Star Hotel, followed by an awards ceremony by Focus Online Journal at Central Hotel. During the week Socialite flitted about town, attending this event and that event. On January 11 she saw and was seen at the Galaxy Camera launch at Sedona Hotel, and the week closed on January 13 with the opening of a new branch of the Rich Gems at Junction Square shopping centre.



Ma Yin Yin Aye @ Suko Company Third Anniversary



Officials @ Skin White Girls Cosmetic Products Launch



Board of directors @ Galaxy Camera PC Launch



Ko Pyae Phyo Maung @ Focus Online Journal Awards Event



Nan Khin Zay Yar @ Skin White Girls Cosmetic Products Launch



Myo Min Khant @ Focus Online Journal Awards Event



Daw Si May @ Suko Company Third Anniversary



Board of directors @ Galaxy Camera PC Launch



Ko Zaw Win Htet, Ko Zaw Ko Ko Tun, Mr Tun Cheng Hong Martin and Ma Nan Shwe Sin Thein @ Galaxy Camera PC Launch



Hnin Oo Lwin and Daw Mu @ Suko Company Third Anniversary



Models @ Galaxy Camera PC Launch



Michelle and husband @ The Rich Gems New Shop Opening



Board of directors @ Galaxy Camera PC Launch



Zin Aung, Daw Khong Hnang and Zin Zin Zaw Myint @ The Rich Gems New Shop Opening



Thet Mon Myint @ Focus Online Journal Awards Event

Cobra and Khin Myint Zu Khine @ Tissot New Branch Launch

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# Major sights to see on moon vacation

**By Brian Palmer**

IN December, a company called Golden Spike announced plans to offer trips to the moon beginning in 2020. The group's target clientele is scientists – from countries that can't afford their own space programs but can pay the estimated price of US\$750 million a seat – and possibly private foundations on scientific missions. But the prospect of making a trip to the moon has the imagination of every space geek running double time.

Any terrestrial travel expert will tell you that you need to do your research before embarking on a major journey. Travel guides for the moon, however, are hard to come by, so I spoke with a handful of moon enthusiasts about what they would do if they were to make the trip.

First, as with any destination, you have to time your visit appropriately. When is peak moon travel time?

"I'd love to be there during a solar eclipse, watching the Earth move in front of the sun and then seeing the red glow of sunset for 360 degrees around the Earth's eclipse," said Mike Brown, a professor of planetary astronomy at the California Institute of Technology.

The people at Golden Spike plan to have the capacity to make two to three trips a year in the beginning and will work with their clients to pick a time to go. But, if you can't be there to watch the Earth block out the sun, Brown said a lunar eclipse – when the moon passes between the Earth and the sun – is a pretty decent fallback. “Watching downward as the shadow of a lunar eclipse races across the Earth would be pretty spectacular,” he says. “These are things no human has ever seen.”

Once you decide when to go, you have to deal with the where. A Golden Spike trip will have some limitations: "The landing site will have to be on the front side of the moon, so that we have a direct line of communication with Earth," said Alan Stern, president and chief executive of Golden Spike. And travellers won't have a



*Pic: Gregory H Revera*

vehicle to travel on the lunar surface, limiting them to a walking radius around the landing site. Although Stern notes that any site would be loaded with scientific possibilities, the lack of a vehicle makes site location more important. So where would the experts go? It depends on what you're looking for.

For history buffs, the choice is pretty clear. "I'd totally go to the Sea of Tranquillity and visit the Apollo 11 landing site," said Chris Mihos, an astronomer at Case Western Reserve University.

Imagine stepping off the lunar landing vehicle and announcing to whoever was listening, "That's one small step for man ..." But Mihos stresses that the Sea of Tranquility, immortalised in Neil Armstrong's historic report during the first moon landing in 1969, isn't just a location of human interest. "The plains are 3.5 to 4 billion years old," he notes, "so you'd get a sense ... [of] the history of the solar system."

Still, there's something unsatisfying to some about following in the feet of others. As the Swiss-born philosopher Alain de Botton wrote in his book *The Art of Travel*, earthbound journeys have lost their flair since the days of Darwin and Columbus. It's nearly impossible for a traveller to see or do something completely new on Earth these days. The moon offers that opportunity and many of the people I spoke to would seize it.

"I would want to be put down at Aristarchus," said Denton Ebel, chairman of the division of physical sciences and curator of meteorites at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Aristarchus is an enormous crater on the lunar surface, one of the few features of the moon visible from Earth with the naked eye. Ebel points out that Apollo 18 was scheduled to touch down at the crater before the mission was cancelled.

“Schroter’s Valley is located near Aristarchus,” Ebel said, “and it’s much larger than the Hadley Rille, which was explored by the Apollo 15 astronauts.”

Schroter's Valley is probably the result of a volcanic eruption, and any scientist who landed there would have the opportunity to investigate the moon's geologic activity, which remains one of the rock's great mysteries.

When I asked the astronomers about the first thing they'd do after landing, the answer was essentially unanimous, and it was probably the same answer any nonscientist would give.

"I'm pretty sure the first thing I would do is to try to jump as high as I could," said Caltech's Brown.

“Perhaps do standing back flips. I might be a bit worried about my spacesuit, but, really, what is the point of going to the moon if you can’t see how high you can jump?”

– *The Washington Post*

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MU 2030

14:40

17:20

FRI

MU 2030

14:40

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MU 7524

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17:20

MANDALAY TO GAYA

TUE

8M 603

11:10

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THUR

8M 603

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8M 603

11:10

12:15

FD & AK = Air Asia

TG = Thai Airways

8M = Myanmar Airways

International

PG = Bangkok Airways

MI = Silk Air

VN = Vietnam Airline

MH = Malaysia Airlines

CZ = China Southern

CI = China Airlines

CA = Air China

KA = Dragonair

IC = Indian Airlines Limited

W9 = Air Bagan

3K = Jet Star

AI = Air India

QR = Qatar Airways

KE = Korea Airlines

NH = All Nippon Airways

SQ = Singapore Airways

DE = Condor Airlines

MU=China Eastern Airlines

BR = Eva Airlines

DE = Condor

International

IC = Indian Airlines Limited

W9 = Air Bagan

3K = Jet Star

AI = Air India

QR = Qatar Airways

KE = Korea Airlines

NH = All Nippon Airways

SQ = Singapore Airways

DE = Condor Airlines

MU=China Eastern Airlines

BR = Eva Airlines

DE = Condor

Subject to change without notice

FRANKFURT TO YANGON

TUE

DE 2368

12:40

04:25+1

KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON

MON

AK 1424

06:55

08:00

MH 740

10:05

11:15

8M 502

14:00

15:00

AK 1420

15:40

16:45

TUE

AK 1424

06:55

08:00

MH 740

10:05

11:15

8M 502

14:00

15:00

AK 1420

15:40

16:45

WED

AK 1424

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MH 740

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8M 502

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AK 1420

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SUN

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MH 740

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AK 1420

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16:45

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON

MON

CZ 3055

14:45

16:35

TUE

8M 712

14:15

15:50

WED

CZ 3055

08:40

10:30

THUR

8M 712

14:15

15:50

FRI

CZ 3055

14:45

16:35

SAT

CZ 3055

08:40

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SUN

8M 712

14:15

15:50

TAIPEI TO YANGON

MON

CI 7915

07:00

09:50

TUE

CI 7915

07:00

09:50

BR 287

07:30

10:35

WED

CI 7915

07:00

09:50

THUR

CI 7915

07:00

09:50

FRI

CI 7915

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BR 287

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KUNMING TO YANGON

MON

MU 2031

13:30

14:00

TUE

CA 905

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THUR

CA 905</



# US magazines bring glitz to Mongolia

By Michael Kohn

ULAN BATOR — Every time a new Mongolian-language edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine is released, Tselmeg Erdenkhuu sits down with a friend to explore a monthly dose of Hollywood gossip, glitzy fashion and scintillating sex.

"They talk about sex a lot in this magazine, like what position is healthy or how to make men go crazy," said the 28-year-old businesswoman, a single mother.

The titillating revelations are just part of a US media invasion of the once remote country, which has ridden a globalisation wave since shaking off communism two decades ago.

Mongolians are avid readers and the country's literacy rate is over 97 percent, a legacy of the Soviet-era education system that saw village boarding schools set up for nomads' children.

Even in the vast nation's distant grasslands herdersmen

are to be found reading crumpled two-week-old newspapers inside their felt-covered yurts.

With its economy roaring on the back of a mining boom that fuelled 11pc growth last year publishers now see opportunities from targeting newly wealthy Mongolians with premium-priced, Western-linked products.

Launched in December 2010, *Cosmopolitan* has built a circulation of 5000 copies. *National Geographic* and, most recently, *Playboy* have since followed in its wake.

The US financial news agency Bloomberg set up a joint-venture television station in Ulan Bator in October, aimed at the city's emerging financial kingpins and ordinary people looking for advice on what to do with their free government-issued shares in state-owned mining companies.

With the rapidly shifting economy, fast urbanisation, major infrastructure projects and environmental threats, the Mongolian-language *National Geographic* is also making



A Mongolian woman browses magazines at a bookstore in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, on January 15. Pic: AFP

an impact, despite its steep cover price of MNT20,000 (US\$14.40).

"Many people are concerned about nature and how it can be preserved while we simultaneously develop our economy," said Khaliun Tseven-Ochir, the general manager of Irmuun, which publishes both *National Geographic* and *Cosmopolitan*.

"Through *National Geographic* we can influence our country's leaders to avoid the mistakes that have been made in the past. Our readers expect us to raise these issues," she added.

The Mongolian version of *Playboy* has also found its

way to supermarket checkout stands, selling some 3,000 copies of the inaugural October edition.

Racy images of Kim Kardashian and Mongolian model Sarnai Saranchimeg were the primary selling points and for those who buy it for the articles, there were interviews with Ulan Bator mayor Bat-Uul Erdene and actor Jack Nicholson, plus a profile of the late Steve Jobs.

"Before we launched most people thought that *Playboy* is just porn. But we are challenging that perception with intellectual articles that will help keep our Mongolian men informed," said editor-in-

chief Bolormaa Natsagdorj.

Mongolia has 2.75 million people spread across an area half the size of India, and its media landscape is as wild as its physical one.

The new magazines compete with dozens of local publications, many of them trashy tabloids filled with sex scandals, soft porn and yellow journalism, often with unsourced facts.

Some owners of major daily newspapers — which do not do not reveal circulation figures, but are said to sell 5000 to 8000 copies — have family or friendship links to top politicians.

But the arrival of US media

can only raise local reporting standards, said Khulan Jugder, a journalism instructor at the capital's University of the Humanities.

"Mongolian media stations are all private and politicians own many of them. So they can't inform in an unbiased way or make objective programs," she said.

*Cosmopolitan* and *Playboy* split about 50-50 between locally produced and US content, while *National Geographic* is mostly translated. Around four hours a day of the Bloomberg television programming is local, and the rest translated from Hong Kong.

For now they are more emblematic of a social transformation that is already seeing young, upwardly mobile Mongolian women challenging traditional norms of dating, career choice and lifestyle.

Mongolia's Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Oyungerel Tsedevdamba, 46, seems to epitomise the changes. A Stanford graduate and one of nine female members of the country's 76-seat parliament, the Great Hural, she has moved up the ranks of government with positive energy, a can-do attitude and an array of fashionable trouser suits.

*Cosmopolitan* "certainly helps our young ladies and girls gain confidence in themselves", she said. "Women need to share their secrets of success, beauty and strength. Sisterhood is a natural need of every woman." — AFP

## Events Flash

### Art+Plug

A group exhibition titled "Art+Plug" — featuring the work of Han Sann, Myint Soe Oo, Myint Thura, Thoe Htein and Wunna Aung — will be held at Dagaung Art Gallery (7 Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha Street, Bahan township) from January 23 to 27. The gallery is taking the unusual step of charging a K200 entrance fee.

### Ngwe Phyo show

Artist Ngwe Phyo will hold a solo exhibition at Gallery 65 (65 Yaw Min Gyi Road, Dagon township) from January 26 to 30.

### Group show

A group exhibition featuring paintings by 17 artists will be held at Armanthit Art Gallery (143 Myanma Gonyi Road, Mingalar Taung Nyunt township, Yangon) from January 26 to February 1.

### Art Field

Lokanat Art Gallery (62 Pansodan Street, First Floor, Kyauktada township) is hosting the "Art Field" group exhibition from January 29 to February 2. The show includes the work of more than 20 painters.

### Book fair

The Myanmar Publishers and Distributors Association will hold book fairs at Taw Win Centre on Pyay Road from January 26 to 28, and at the National Theatre (Myoma Kyaung Road) from January 31 to February 3.

### Literature festival

The Irrawaddy Literature Festival will be held at Inya Lake Hotel in Yangon from February 1 to 3. The event will include author readings and discussions, film screenings, photo exhibitions and vendors' stalls. Among the writers slated to appear are Fergal Keane, Jung Chang, Pascal Khoo Thwe, William Dalrymple and Vikram Seth. Tickets are available for K1500 (each day) at Inya Lake Hotel, the British Council, Monument Books and Today bookstores.

### Y-Talk Concert

A hip-hop and rock concert will be held at Myawsinkyun in Kandawgyi Park, Yangon, on February 2, to mark the anniversary of Y-Talk telecom network. Performers will include R Zarni, Haelay, Soe Tay, SIR, J-Me, Jock Jack, Kyaw Htut Swe, Hlwan Paing, Snare, Bunny Phyo, Sandy Myint Lwin, Thiri Swe, Eaint Chit and Bobby Soxer.

### Calle de la Salsa

Tuesday is salsa night at 50th Street Bar, featuring free dance classes (salsa, bachata, mambo, meringue and more), plus dance shows and drink specials. With music by DJ Mani and special guests.

### Wednesday wine

The Wednesday Wine Club meets every (you guessed it) Wednesday at the QP Inya Shop (30 Inya Road). Taste four or five wines for K10,000 a person. Contact chad.quarto@gmail.com or 09-7321-8711.



## YOUR STARS

By Astrologer  
Aung Myin Kyaw

### Aquarius

(Jan 20 - Feb 18)

A broad picture in glowing colours will lead you to think big and strive for greatness. Use academic pursuits to gird yourself with the knowledge necessary to work for the good of your community. Do not allow evil influences to lead you astray. Cultivating an optimistic view will help you get through difficult times.

### Pisces

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Apathy is particularly important because of its close relation to love and willpower. Time is passing, so don't wait to tackle new challenges. Understand that fear is stronger than punishment and nothing is as terrible as fear itself. You will face unexpected interference, but nothing will be able to depose you from your current position.

### Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

You will not be moved by any scandals because of your history of humility and humanity. Make sure you are prepared for any situation in life and believe that the worst ruler is one who cannot rule himself. Getting to the truth usually involves intuitive perception and an open mind. You will soon be promoted, and you will enjoy perfect love.

### Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

Love begets love, and gifts and gratitude always invite response. Try not to be drawn into the disputes of others, or into strife that does not directly concern you. Financial affairs will be on the upgrade, and often in a very unexpected manner. Be on the lookout for opportunities and be quick to make decisions, realising that some splendid offers will come your way.

### Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

An unconventional handling of love interests could make you lose control, and might result in embarrassing revelations about how your mind works. You will get unexpected help with financial affairs, and you should also ramp up your search for hidden opportunities. You will soon find romance and enjoy the fruits of love.

### Cancer

(June 22 - July 22)

By focusing your energy on creativity, you will open the way for the people around you to also take their creativity to the next level. Always be on the lookout for new ideas, and be attentive when they come your way. Set aside your pride and listen. In cases where you must reject the ideas of others, make sure you reject only the idea and not the person.

### Leo

(July 23 - Aug 22)

Resist the temptation to fight for your idea when it is not the best idea. Generate good ideas and let the best idea win. Finding good ideas should begin with an open-minded willingness to listen to all ideas. Your own actions will highlight what is most remarkable and outstanding about you. Now is the perfect time to start another romantic chapter in your life.

### Virgo

(Aug 23 - Sept 22)

Creatures of emotion and feeling are far more common than rational creatures of logic. Education has great value in solving the problems of your life, but knowledge without character is a power for evil. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn from those who have something of value to teach. Flowers in the garden are meant to be enjoyed for their beauty, not to pluck.

### Libra

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)

You will be able to remain steadfast against denunciation by others. Do not allow yourself to stray from the path of justice. Make social detachment an important part of your philosophy, and never allow yourself to associate with those whose minds are easily swayed or whose allegiances are constantly changing. Crazy love always leads to frustration.

### Scorpio

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Thoughts must be properly guided by reason, otherwise when uncontrollable thoughts burst out into action, the thinker himself is thereafter powerless to control them. Build good balance in social relationships as soon as possible. Be cautious about sudden changes in connection with family relationships and social communication. It is in your nature to be imprisoned by lust.

### Sagittarius

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Your hopes can be fulfilled by continuous, positive and constructive effort. Everyone should harbour hopes according to the quality of their thoughts and talents. You might face difficulties keeping your mind still, which can make it hard to realise positive changes in your life. You will have no problems with love in the coming weeks.

### Capricorn

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Education polishes good dispositions and corrects bad ones. Put time and effort into book learning, but gain wisdom through real-life experiences. You have the ability to write your own story, and staying healthy will make it easier to do so. Love is already alive within you; your task is find someone with whom you can share it.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
113, Thamaing Bayan Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon.  
Tel: 0973135632, Email: williamaste@gmail.com



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**iPhone** 4G White 32GB With Original Box & Accessories (ios 5.0.1) Price : 330000 iPhone 4G White 16GB With Original Accessories (ios 5.1.1) Price: 290000. Ph : 09-450-039844.

**ACER** Aspire 4740 (Blue Color) Intel Core i3 2.1Ghz RAM 1GB Hardisk 320 GB 14.0 HD LED Screen Webcam Wifi Bluetooth DVD R/W Excellent Condition With Original Charger and Driver CD Price - 250000 Kyats

Lenovo Netbook Intel Atom 1.7GHZ Processor RAM 1GB Hardisk 250GB 10.1 HD LED Screen With All original Accessories Excellent Condition Price - 130000 Kyats Ph: 09-730-48106

**3 MONTH** Used Samsung Galaxy S2 (Black) 16GB With All Original Accessories and box Just like new Price - 250000 Kyats Ph: 09-540-6632, 09-508-7081.

**IPHONE** 4S 16GB White White Original Accessories Price : 380000. Ph : 09-450-039844

**90% NEW SAMSUNG** Galaxy S3 White (32GB) Price : 350000 Ph : 09-450-039844

**HTC DROID** Incredible 2 ( For CDMA 800 & GSM & WCDMA) Price : 160000. Ph : 09-450-039844

**IPHONE** 4, iOS 5.1.1 16GB Black Color Official Unlock with 3 Cover excellent condition . Price : 200,000 Kyats & iPhone 3G 8GB Black Color Official Unlock good condition Price 90,000 Kyats. Ph: 09-508-1344

**IPHONE** 4 32GB official unlock amazing condition (original accessories packing box) 320000 ks. Ph : 09-514-7480.

**ACER ASPIER** 4741G Core i3 1 No. intel Core i3 Ram 2GB H.D.D 500GB Garaphic: Nvidia 512 MB DVD / RW, Bluetooth . Wifi, Card Reader Display 14" LED Price : 280000. Ph : 09-450-039844

**MAZDA DEMIO** (Sport Type) [ 2006 Model ] [ AC, PS, PW, ABS, SRS, TV, Back Camera, Power Exhauster ] Ph : 09-44-800-6520

**WIMAX** (Bagan), McWill Ph: 09-44-800-6520

**IPHONE** 3GS 32GB Black With Original Accessories. Price : 190000. Ph : 09-450-039844.

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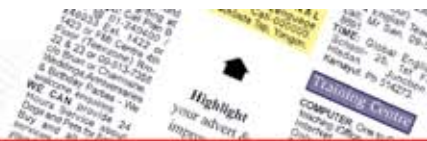
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## Employment

### Overseas

**APEX RESOURCE CO., Ltd.** is seeking GW @ Factory (1F) Salary \$900+ \$200 for Housing, Salesman @ Uniform Shop (1M) Salary \$1100+ \$200 for Housing, Warehouse Assistant & General Worker @ Electronic Co., (10M) Salary \$1000+ \$200 for Housing, Driver & General Worker @ Tent-age Co., (1M) Salary \$1800+ Housing, Driver & General Worker @ Laundry Co., (1M) Salary \$2000 per month, Driver & General Worker @ Catering Service (1M) Salary \$1200+ \$200 for Housing. Ph: 256963, 09-735-22437, 09-732-55438, No. 116, G Flr, 42 St, Botahtaung.

### Ingo Positions

**AMDA** (Association of Medical Doctor of Asia) is seeking (1) CDF (Community Development Facilitator) 1 post in Kokang :Minimum high school level of government school (10<sup>th</sup> standard passed). Fluent in Kokang and Myanmar languages (reading & writing). Fluent in Palaung or Myaung Zee (Pae Zu) is more eligible. 1 year experience, background & knowledge about the community development activities or relevant fields. (2) **Team Leader** in Kokang. The application should have the following knowledge, skills and abilities: Minimum high school level of government school (10<sup>th</sup> Standard passed). Fluent in Kokang and Myanmar languages (reading & writing). Fluent in Palaung or Myaung Zee (Pae Zu) is more eligible. 2 years experience, background and knowledge about the community development activities or relevant fields. (3) **Program Officer** for Yangon Office: University Medical degree with 3 years programming experiences in relevant sectors (INGO experience would be an asset). Excellent in English and Myanmar communication (spoken & written). Strong computer skill (Excel, Word, Power Point, etc.). Pls submit application with attachments of CV with a recent passport-size photo, copies of testimonials (references and certificates) to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office, 19-B, Thukhawa ddy Rd, Yankin, Tel: 578353, Email : amda @mptmail.net.mm, Closing date: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013.

**MEDECINS** Sans

Frontieres is looking for **HR & Administrative Assistant** in Yangon office. Recruitment Criteria: Education: Certificate or diploma in business, Hotel or HR Management or similar education. Experience in a similar position of at least 2 years in a private company or in NGO. English: fluent (writing, reading, speaking and typing). Myanmar: fluent (writing, reading, speaking and typing). Pls submit application (motivation letter, updated CV and copy of professional diploma) to HR Officer, Medecins Sans Frontieres- Switzerland (MSF-CH), 101, Dhama zedi, Kamaryut, Email: msfch-rangoon-web@geneva.msf.org, Ph: 502509, 526195, Closing date: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

**SOLIDARITES** Int'l (SI) is seeking **Deputy Logistics Coordinator** in Yangon: 4 years professional experience in Logistics field with INGO/ NGO. University Degree or Diploma (preferably in logistics or related proven experience in similar area). Knowledge of IT management and MS office (excel, word, power point, networking). Fluent spoken/written English & Myanmar. Good writing & communication skills. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to : Win Htay, Logistics Coordinator - Solidarites Int'l office : 44 A, Tharyar waddy Lane, Bahan or per email: recruitment @ solidarites-myanmar.org.

**SOLIDARITES** Int'l (SI) is seeking **Logistics Coordinator** in Yangon: 5 years of professional experience in Logistics field with INGO/ NGO. University Degree or Diploma (preferably in Logistics or related proven experience in similar area). Strong knowledge of IT management and MS office (excel, word, power point & network ing). Fluent English & good communication skills. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to : HR Unit- Application for Logistics Coordinator, Solidarites Int'l office -44-A, Tharyarwaddy Lane, Bahan, Yangon or email: recruitment @ solidarites-myanmar.org (thanks to use basic excel, word or pdf format). Closing date: 15-2-2013 The position you want to apply for has to be specified in the subject of your email.

**MEDECINS du Monde** (MDM) is seeking **Nurse** 1 post : Diploma in Nursing, B.N.Sc degree. 1 year experience as a

nutritional nurse. 1 year working experience in the field of HIV, preferably with SWs, MSMs. Basic English (Speaking, writing). Pls submit their CV and a cover letter to MDM Country Coordination Office, Yangon : 47-B, Po Sein St, Bahan, Ph: 542830, Email: hr.mdmmyanmar@gmail.com

### Local Position

**CAPITAL** Automotive has been appointed as the official distributor and dealer for several international automotive brands. They will sell new vehicles from a showroom and support their customers with internationally trained staff working in the state of the art workshop and parts facilities. Capital Automotive are searching for the best people to work with these automotive vehicles and to provide their customers with the highest level of service. Today we have the following positions available: Sales Managers - 2. Parts Manager - 1. Workshop Manager - 1. Marketing Manager - 1. Accountant - 1. Workshop mechanics - 6. Sales people - 4. Customer Service staff - 6. Please send your CV to aungthu.winmg@magroup.net, Don't forget to put contact phone No. or hand deliver to 27(A), Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Yankin, Yangon. Please kindly put your detail address on your CV's. Please submit your CV not later than 28 Jan 2013.

**KELVIN CHIA** Yangon Ltd is a foreign legal consultancy firm. We invited motivated and committed individuals to join us as (1) **Lawyers** who will work on a variety of corporate & commercial matters & transactions in Myanmar. If you are a Myanmar-qualified lawyer with strong English language skills, you are invited to apply to join our Myanmar practice group. Myanmar nationals admitted to int'l bars are also welcome to apply. Training will be provided. Applicants may email to klm@kcyangon.com and submit your curriculum vitae. (2) **Corporate Affairs Executive/ Assistant** As a corporate affairs executive/ assistant, you will be involved with business development, networking, market research and liaison work. Applicants should be proficient in English, energetic and self-motivated. All nationalities are welcome (Myanmar, Japanese,

Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, etc). If you are interested, then please email your application and curriculum vitae to klm@kcyangon.com. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

(1) **ADMIN MANAGER** M 1 Post- Age between 40 to 50. Bachelor Degree in Administration or Management. Must have good English Speaking, Reading and Writing. At least five year experience in administration field. (2) **Chief Accountant** F 1 Post- Bachelor Degree in B.Com (or ACCA Part 2/ CPA. Must have good English Speaking, Reading and Writing. At least three year experience in accounting field. (3) **Marketing Executive** M/F 2 Posts- Bachelor Degree in Business Management/ English (or) Petro engineering. Age between 23-28. Must have good English Speaking, Reading

30 plus Years. Good Knowledge of English (both Spoken and Written). Job Profile includes PR Work with various ministries national, & international agencies. Good salary. Ph: 09-511-8453.

**YIUS** (Need **Native English Teacher**) Full-Time (M/F) 1 Post. Responsible person, focus on learning at least 5 years experiences in teaching-must have Study English Language Teacher. Bldg -7, Rm-4, Myanmar ICT Park, Hlaing University Campus, Ph: 652311, 652297

**FOR** English Learning Center: (1) Experienced 4 skills **English Teachers** (Native Speaker). (2) Experienced **Pre-School Teachers** (Local). (3) Experienced **Market ing Persons**. (4) **Reception** : Must be Bachelor Graduates. Must know Basic Computer. Email: tun.john@gmail.com, Ph: 09-524-1687.

Requirements: Good written and spoken communication skills in English. Interested applicants are invited to send their full resume stating their current and expected salaries, together with a recent photograph to klm@kcyangon.com We regret that only shortlisted candidates will be notified. **KELVIN CHIA** Yangon Ltd, Unit 1508-1509, 15<sup>th</sup> Flr, Sukura Tower, 339 Bogoyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada, Ph: 255399, 255033. Email: csg@kcyangon.com

**ONE** of the leading Adventure Tour Operators in Myanmar is seeking for (1) **Finance & Accounting Manager** - M/F 1 Post (US\$ 700 - 800)- Must have strong written and verbal communication skills. Age above 35, 3 years post qualification experience of CA, CPA or equivalent. Must possess high level of knowledge in Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets. (2) **Sales Supervisor** - M/ F 2 posts (US\$ 500 - 600) Age above 25, computer literate and familiar with Microsoft Office applications, general database and web applications. Good knowledge in English & able to understand. (3) **Operation Supervisor** - M 2 posts (US\$ 300 - 400) - Age above 30, 2 years experience in travel industry. Excellent communication in English and able to communicate with foreigners independently. Computer literate & familiar with Microsoft Office applications, general database and web applications. Pls submit application (send by personal, by post or by email) with 1 photo to Journeys Adventure Travel : 53, Nagayon Pagoda Lane, Mayangon (Near Mayangon Labor Office) Ph: 656259, 656307, Email: Admin @journeysmyanmar.com Closing date: January 31<sup>st</sup>

**CHINNERY ASSETS** Limited 1 of the subsidiaries of China National Petroleum Corporation International (CNPCI) is looking for (1) **Contract & Procurement Asst:** - M/F 1 post: University graduate, Age above 30 years (2) **Admin & General Service Asst:** 1 post: University graduate, all above positions are at least 10 years experience in relevant aspects. Please send your CV to Mr. Xu Hao, Administration & HR Officer before 17:00 pm on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2013, Email: xuhao@cal.net.mm; xuhao@cpncint.com; Ph: 01-534461, 532097 Ext: 132, Add: 44, Inya Myaing Rd, Golden Valley-2, Bahan.

**LEGENDARY MYANMAR** Co., Ltd. (1) **Office Staff** (Export/ Import) - F 2 Posts. (2) **Marketing Staff** (Export/ Import) - F 2 Posts. (3) **Tour Operator** (Travel & Tours) - F 2 Posts (4) **Office Staff** (Travel & Tours) - F 2 Posts: 1 year experience in office. All applicants must be University graduate, Spoken & written English, must have excellent interpersonal skill and good computer knowledge. Pls apply CV with one recent photo, other certificate NRC copy, Labour registration card, Police recommendation letter to 9, Rm (A-4), 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr, Kyauing St, Myaingnigone, Sanchaung. Closing Date: 30-1-2013.

**WE ARE** currently looking for (1) **Sales & Marketing Manager** - M 1 post: Age between 30 ~ 38, Any graduate, Higher diploma in Sales & Marketing Management is an advantage, 7 years experience in Managerial field. Language skill in English & computer literate. (2) **Sales Supervisor** - M 2 posts: Age 25 ~ 35, Any graduate, 3 ~ 5 years experience in sales & distribution. (3) **Marketing Executive** - M 1 post: Age 25 ~ 30, Any graduate, 3 years experience. (4) **Sales Representative** - M 4 posts: Age 25 ~ 30, Any graduate, 2 years experience in FMCG. Can drive well and must have valid driving license. (5) **Executive Secretary** - F 1 post: Age 25 ~ 30, Any Graduate, 3 years experience. Good communication skill in English. Computer proficiency. (6) **Driver** - M 1 post: Age 30 ~ 40 years, High school level & 3 years experience as a driver. Must be able to drive auto & manual gear. To be honest. Pls submit applications, updated CV with expected salary, a recent passport photo, copy of labor registration card & NRC card and copy of the testimonials to via email: bduvinco@gmail.com. Closing Date : 31 January 2013. For more information : Ma Nway Nway - 902, 9<sup>th</sup> Flr , Ahlone Tower, Strand Rd, Ahlone, Ph: 212707, 09-420-074913 Pls mark applied position in front of CV.

**AMARA GROUP** Co., Ltd is looking for (1) **Chief Account** 1 Post (Ngapali). (2) **Accountant** 1 Post (Ngapali). (3) **Restaurant** 1 Post (Kalaw). (4) **Accountant** 1 Post (Kalaw). (5) **Chef de partie** 1 Post (Kalaw). (6) **Ground Manager** 1 Post (Mandalay). (7) **Reservation Manager** 1 Post (Yangon). (8) **Sales Manager** 1 Post

(Yangon). Be part of a young dynamic team and contribute to the hotels success with your expertise & experience. Therefore we offer an interesting work environment, accommodation and attractive package. We look forward receiving CV in English. Contact: amaragroup.mmw@gmail.com, Ph: 663347, 652191.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE Teacher cum Coordinator** - M 1 post /F 1 post : Age between 18 ~ 32, Must have good command of English, Good communication skills, (2) **Secretary cum Assistant Teacher** M1/ F1 : Age 18 ~ 32, Must have good command of English, Good communication skills, (2) **Secretary cum Assistant Teacher** M1/ F1 : Age 18 ~ 32, Must have good command of English, Good communication skills. Pleasant personality. Ph: 221-677, 09 - 507-9896, 09- 500-5219.

**ANNAM MYANMAR** Co., Ltd. (1) **HR and Admin Executive** - M/ F 1 post: MBA (or) DMA degree preferable, Age under 40, 3 years experience, Excellent command of English, Computer proficiency in MS Office, internet & email (2) **Inventory Controller** - M 1 post: Any graduate (or) preferable accounting background (B.Com/B. Act/ LCCI level 3), Age under 40, over 3 years experience in warehouse inventory or related level, Must have good English skills, Proficiency in computer (MS office, Email & Internet), (3) **Assistant Inventory** - M/F 1 post: Any graduate, Age under 30, over 1 years, experience in warehouse inventory or related level, Must have computer skills (MS Office, Internet-email) (4) **Senior Accountant** - F 1 post: B.Com, LCCI level (3), Age under 35, Experience in retail business over 3 years, (5) **Accountant** - F 1 post: Age under 30, B.Com (or) LCCI level (3), over 1 year experience (6) **Shop Manager (Wine Shop)** - M/F 1 post: Preferable general knowledge in wine, 3 years experience in shop management and F & B Field preferable, Age over 30 years, Must have knowledge in Computer MS office & Internet-Email, Good English communication skills (7) **Cashier** - M/F 1 post: Any graduate, Age under 25, Must be able to work overtime. (8) **Sales** - M 2 posts: Any graduate, 1 year experience in sales, (9) **Delivery + Driver** - M 1 post: Driving license at least 3 years, Age under 35, Pls apply Annam Myanmar Office to : Curriculum vitae, copy of qualification documents or relevant certificates, one recent color photo, copy of NRC & contact number. Pls send application to Annam Myanmar Co. Ltd : 11 B, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Bahan, Tel: 01-545705 Email: yamin.paing@annam-group.com, nono.annam@gmail.com

**WE are hiring:** (1) **Ticketing Officer:** (International & Domestic) - 4 Posts. (2) **Tour Operator:** (Inbound & Outbound) - 3 Posts. (3) **Sales & Reservation** - 2 Posts: 1-2 years relevant experience. Experience in travel industry. Have good command of English. Proficient in Microsoft Office. If interested call 378181/ 378180 for interview. No. 121, Upper Sint Oh Dan St, Latha.

### Job Wanted

**ECONOMIC Research** AGE : 26 - Female Contact: Bldg 12, 7<sup>th</sup> flr, 153<sup>rd</sup> st, Tamwe Yangon. Near Tamwe Market Name : TELC POST : **MANAGER** candlelight295@gamil.com

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Details on Page 33

and Writing. 2 year experience in Marketing field. (4) **Invoicing Officer** (Account Receivable) F 1 Post- B.Com or Diploma in Accounting (LCCI Level 3). Good in English Reading and Writing. At least two year experience in Invoice or Account Field. Interested and qualified candidates are invited to send CV 2 passport photos, copy of NRC card, academic transcripts (copy and testimonial documents).

**ADMIN STAFF officer** - F/M 2 Posts: Any graduate. Age 25 ~ 35. Must have good in English, active & pleasant personality. Must have knowledge in import & export. Must have good M.S office & Internet. Must understand in customer communication skills. Add: Bldg 5, Rm 2, Aungthabyae St, Yuzana Plaza, Mingalar Taung Nyunt. Ph: 202467, 4411553.

**REQUIRED** urgently by a foreign company **Public Relation Officer.** Myanmar Citizen, Any Gender. Minimum Age

**DIY: GENERAL Manager** - M 1 Post : Age over 35, University Graduate or MBA more preferable. Excellent English 4 skills. 3 years experience. Willing to travel outside of Yangon. (2) **Office Executive** - F/M 2 Posts : Age over 25 , University graduate or higher. Good command in English. Above basic level of computer skills (Excel, Work, PowerPoint & Email ) Able to travel. Experience to contact with UMFCCL and Ministries in Nay Pyi Taw. Pls submit CV with two recent photos, copy of NRC, copy of labour registration card , recommended letter from police station , copy of form (10) , copy of Qualification documents or relevant certificates and other documents copies, expected salary, contact number and address to Add: 10, First Flr, Shwe Gabar Housing, Cor of Minda ma Rd & Kyaukwine Pagoda Rd, Mayangone. Tel: 656849, 09-500-0246 Email: zmlsme@gmail.com. Not later than 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013.

**SAVOY** Hotel is urgently looking for (1) **Receptionist** - 2 posts must have at least 1 year experience in hotel field. Application letter by email to operations @savoyhotel-yangon.com or 129, Dhamma zedi Rd, Yangon. Tel: (95-1) 526298, 526289.

(1). **ACCOUNTS and Admin Manager** 1 post (2). **Export/Import Manager** 1 post (3). **Korean Interpreter** 2 posts. Ph: 09-431-66071. Myanmar DYC Co.Ltd, Mingaladon Industrial Park

**INTERNATIONAL** Law Firm required Expatriate **Lawyer** Graduate of foreign law school. At least 1 year experience Send CV to Su Su Hlaing, email - suhlaing07@gmail.com. Ph. 540995, 556692

**KELVIN CHIA** Yangon Ltd is a foreign legal consultancy firm. We invite motivated and committed individuals to join us as: **Administrative Executive.**

**Recruits: ARCHITECTS**

Archetype Group is a multi-discipline construction consultancy company engaged in Architectural, Structural and M&E designs as well as Project, Cost and Construction Management services.

Archetype now counts over 500 professionals in Asia with offices located through Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Thailand, Laos, Mongolia as well as Paris (France).

**We are looking for talented and motivated architects to join our team in Yangon.**

**Applicants must have strong flair with design and detailing, good English and proficient with Autocad & photoshop.**

**Profiles with 3d rendering skills is also wanted.**

**Please send CV and application letter to: [recruitment.ygn@archetype-group.com](mailto:recruitment.ygn@archetype-group.com)**

**Vacancy Announcement**

We are looking for a person who can work independently, make decisions, possess good interpersonal skills, and with office management experience and is between 30 and 35 years of age:

- **Experience with accounting and processing payroll.**
- **Ability to use Microsoft Office Suite of products**
- **Experience managing a website and using online communication media**
- **Good oral and written communication skills both in English and Myanmar**
- **A positive attitude.**

Salary and incentives will depend on experience and qualifications. Please submit a hand written letter of application with CV by 31st January 2013 to:

The Managing Director, Worldview Myanmar Limited Room 101, 1st Floor, Yaw Min Gyi Condo, Yaw Min Gyi Street, 11191, Yangon. Tel / Fax: (01)375292, Email: admin@worldviewmyanmar.org Only short listed applicants will be contacted.



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THE ESSENTIALS

EMBASSIES

UNITED NATIONS

ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, Chatrium Hotel, Room 425, 40 Watana Road, tel: 544500 ext. 425 fax: 549933

FAO Myanmar Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein, tel: 641672, 641673, fax: 641561

ILO Liaison Officer Rm (M1212-1220), 12 Fl-A, Traders Hotel, 223, tel: 393, 242811, fax: 242594

IOM 12th Flr, Traders Hotel, 223, tel: 252560 ext. 5002

UNDP 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan, tel: 542910-19, fax: 292739

UNFPA 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp, tel: 546029

UNHCR 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp, tel: 524022, 524024, fax 524031

UNIAP Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel, tel: 254852, 254853

UNIC 6, Natmauk St., BHN tel: 52910-19

UNICEF 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel, P.O. Box 1435, KTDA, tel: 375527-32, fax: 375552 email: unicef.yangon@unicef.org, www.unicef.org/myanmar

UNODC 11-A, Malikka Rd., Ward 7, MYGN. tel: 666903, 660556, 660538, 660398, 664539, fax: 651334. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org www.unodc.org/myanmar/

UNOPS Inya Lake Hotel, 3rd floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279

UNRC 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), fax: 292739, 544531

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 Fire ☎tel: 191, 252011, 252022.  
 Police emergency ☎tel: 199.  
 Police headquarters ☎tel: 282541, 284764.  
 Red Cross ☎tel:682600, 682368  
Traffic Control Branch ☎tel:298651  
Department of Post & Telecommunication ☎tel: 591384, 591387.  
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Ministry of Education ☎tel:545500m 562390  
Ministry of Sports ☎tel: 370604, 370605  
Ministry of Communications ☎tel: 067-407037.  
Myanmar Post & Telecommunication (MPT) ☎tel: 067-407007.  
Myanmar Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768.  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs ☎tel: 067-412009, 067-412344.  
Ministry of Health ☎tel: 067-411358-9.  
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**Confort Inn**  
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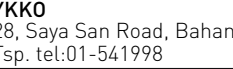
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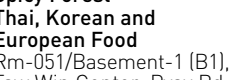
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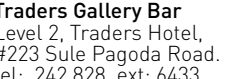
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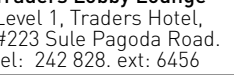
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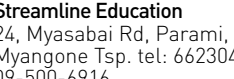
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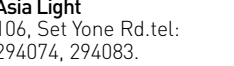
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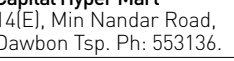


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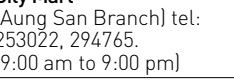
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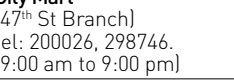
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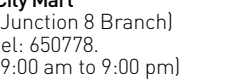
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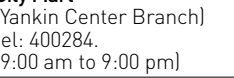
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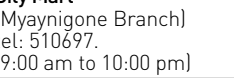
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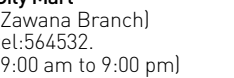
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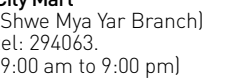
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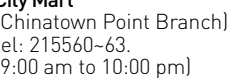
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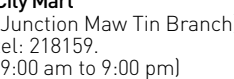
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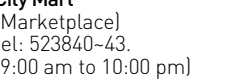
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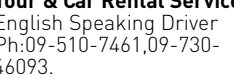


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# Love matches for leading ladies

MELBOURNE, – Maria Sharapova and Grigor Dimitrov. Serena Williams and Patrick Mouratoglou. Victoria Azarenka and Stefan Gordy.

The three best female tennis players in the world have something in common at the Australian Open -- romance.

Not since Jimmy Connors was engaged to Chris Evert in 1973 has tennis been so immersed in high-profile courtships. Although none of the relationships has been formally confirmed, the lack of denials speaks volumes.

"I don't like to kiss and tell," Gordy, the musician better known as Redfoo from LMFAO, told Australia's Channel 7.

"But we are really close, and she's a very special person and I'm very happy in my life right now."

Azarenka and Gordy crossed paths at the US Open last year. He watched all of her matches at Flushing Meadows, and she danced to his music on court.

However, it was only when they were spotted together during the off-season that it appeared they had become better acquainted.

Meanwhile, photographs of a bikini-wearing Williams with Mouratoglou, her coach, in Mauritius appeared on the Internet in December. She was asked at the Brisbane International this month if she would like to confirm a relationship.

"No, not really," Williams replied. "Thanks for asking, though."

Sharapova has played her cards close to her chest regarding Dimitrov, a fellow player dubbed "Baby Federer" for his playing style.



Russia's Maria Sharapova plays a return during her women's singles match against Misaki Doi of Japan on the third day of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on January 16. Pic: AFP

But the Bulgaria's Dimitrov hit out at repeated questions about his private life after he went out in the first round.

"People love gossip. Who doesn't? But I believe it's a privacy invasion. I don't think that's right," he said.

"It's not because we're different, but because it's not right to athletes in general.

It should be forbidden to even be asked but it is what it is, right?"

With the difficulty of maintaining such relationships, in the public eye and with constant travel and distractions, it's not surprising that players should want to keep them quiet.

Last year Sharapova split with former NBA

basketball player Sasha Vujacic. But she insisted dating a fellow elite athlete was manageable, and even preferable.

"I think it's very manageable. We have a very hectic lifestyle and travelling schedule, but in a way, this is what we do and we have to accept it," she said, according to Melbourne's Herald Sun.

Sharapova added: "Relationships are important in life. Tennis only lasts as long as your body allows, and there is another step in life -- relationships."

"It's a matter of how you think and manage it."

For Williams, love and success have blossomed since she joined Mouratoglou's training academy in Paris after her loss to Virginie

Razzano at the French Open last year.

She has since won Wimbledon, the Olympics and the US Open. Her victory over Spain's Garbine Mugurza on Thursday gave her 37 wins from her last 38 matches to make her the raging favourite at the Australian Open.

It has been Williams' most dominant streak since she held all four majors for the so-called "Serena Slam" of 2002-2003.

If the power of love is behind her current charge, the opposite was true a decade ago when she admitted the heartbreak of a failed relationship, with an unnamed suitor, had fuelled her triumphs.

"The guy tore my heart in half," Williams wrote in her autobiography, "My Life: Queen Of The Court".

"The worst part was that he left me thinking it was me. He left me thinking that I was ugly. So I decided that tennis would be my salvation."

"I would get so-and-so to regret how he had treated me. I wanted him to see me everywhere, to stay in this guy's face, to be a constant reminder of what he had, to rise above his shabby treatment."

"It was all about lifting myself from the dirt he left me lying in."

Love is also in the air for former world number one Caroline Wozniacki, the 10th seed, who speaks openly about her highly public relationship with golf star Rory McIlroy.

But another cross-sport love match, between Serbian starlet and Ana Ivanovic and Australian golfer Adam Scott, is reported to have ended. – AFP

## TV 'pirates' prey on Africa Cup of Nations tournament

JOHANNESBURG – Television rights to the Africa Cup of Nations have caused a stir as organisers battle illegal broadcasters using hi-tech modern-day piracy.

Interest in the premier

African football competition has grown in recent years with a rapidly expanding audience inside and outside Africa.

"We'll be present in Europe, we'll be present in the Arabic countries. We

expect to have a viewership of two to three billion people," local organising committee head Mvuzo Mbebe said.

Broadcasting rights for Africa's largest sporting event are a cash cow

which the organisers, the Confederation of African Football (CAF), guards jealously.

CAF sold the media distribution rights for the tournament to French company Sportfive, who

send the match feed to broadcasters.

However, many TV stations in Africa cannot afford the hefty fees, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, while others try to steal and resell broadcasts.

"Some people were trying to sell these television and radio broadcasting rights or related advertising spaces in Nigeria," said the distributor's African affiliate LC2 Media-Afnex.

They were "compelled to draw the public's attention to the fact that these aforementioned people are usurpers", said the company.

"All TV and radio broadcasts of Afcon South Africa 2013, without prior written authorisation, will constitute an act of piracy, leading to systematic and immediate prosecution."

South African public broadcaster the SABC will be the host broadcaster during the January 19-February 10 tournament.

They will film the 32 matches with high-definition cameras, edit the pictures, and send the feed to Sportfive's satellites.

Sportfive then distribute the images to rights-holders.

Pirates tap into this transmission without anybody knowing, explains SABC group head of sport Sizwe Nzimande.

"They hack like you would hack any computer programme," he told AFP.

"They are sending it to another satellite, which then sends it to a receiver tower. You have now got a pirate feed."

The technology to do this is as common as TV cameras, he added.

"It's sophisticated, but it's readily available."

CAF tries to safeguard the transmission by giving access codes that change regularly to rights-holders, but pirates even get around that.

Botswana's public broadcaster, BTV, broadcast the 2012 Africa Cup in Gabon/Equatorial Guinea without a licence.

When the renegade broadcaster said prices were too high, Sportfive halved the initial fee of US\$1.98 million for the following tournament. – AFP



Members of the public check out the new Africa Cup Of Nations ( AFCON ) sign set up in Dr Yusuf Dadoo Street in Durban on January 15 welcoming the Africa Cup of Nations visitors to the city of Durban. Pic: AFP



# Kirsten keen to change South Africa's one-day luck

CAPE TOWN – Gary Kirsten has proved to be a coach with a golden touch, firstly with India and now with South Africa.

He took India to number one in Test cricket and they won the 2011 World Cup in his last assignment with the world's most populous cricket nation.

In less than two years with South Africa he has seen the country of his birth become entrenched as the best in the world in Tests. Now there is the challenge of forging a dominant one-day team.

"We would like to perform at a higher level than we have in one-day cricket," Kirsten said as he looked ahead to a three-match series against New Zealand, due to start in Paarl on January 19.

"We've been okay but we haven't been outstanding."

Being "okay" is not good enough for Kirsten.

"We believe that we are capable of being a unit that can really perform at one-day level," he said.

England's defeat by India in the second one-day international in Kochi on January 15 meant that South Africa gained the number one spot on the International Cricket Council rankings, although South Africa, England, India and Australia are tightly bunched at the top.

Kirsten is well aware that simply being top of a fluctuating ranking list is not enough for supporters who are frustrated by the country's repeated failures in ICC tournaments.

South Africa want to do well in the Champions Trophy in England in June but the ultimate prize is the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand in 2015.

"Winning one of these events is more important in South Africa than in other countries," Kirsten said.

"We have a great opportunity this year. We have potentially 23 one-day internationals this year and there will be a lot more emphasis on ODI cricket, which



South African players acknowledge the crowd after winning day 4 of the second cricket test match between South Africa vs. New Zealand at the Axxess St George's cricket stadium in South Africa on January 14. Pic: AFP

everyone is excited about."

Kirsten said the first priority against New Zealand, who they face in Paarl in the first of three one-dayers from January 19, was to win the series.

But he said within that objective there would be a rotation of leading players, particularly the bowlers, and a chance to assess the claims of four new one-day players.

"We're still exploring," he said. "With a Test series against Pakistan coming up, we don't necessarily want to use our top bowlers in every game but it is also important that we have a good understanding of who our best players are."

Kirsten said rotating key bowlers like Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel was less about physical fitness than mental freshness.

"Test cricket is our number one. We will always play our full strength team in every Test we play," he said.

"But in other versions of the game something has to give and we are mindful of how we manage the workload, particularly of our bowlers. They are physically fit enough to play in every game but it is more about mental fitness. I want every player to be 100 percent mentally ready when they play for South Africa."

One player who will be watched closely in the forthcoming series is wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock, who turned 20 last month.

Kirsten said he wanted De Kock to keep wicket in all three matches against New Zealand to enable AB de Villiers to concentrate on his relatively new role as one-day captain.

"It is also an opportunity to look at a really young 'keeper who has some quality batting ability. He reminds me of a young Mark Boucher 18 or 19 years ago who had exciting batting ability and came through as a 'keeper'."

De Kock faces a disciplinary hearing into an incident in a domestic match last weekend in which he allegedly pushed an opponent. He reportedly has had other disciplinary issues during his short career but Kirsten said he was not concerned.

"The longest conversation I have had with him is about one minute," Kirsten said of De Kock.

"But I am confident that being exposed to the culture of the South African team will help give him a good understanding of the responsibility attached to it." – AFP

## Fan anger mounts over Premier League ticket prices

LONDON – Discontent among supporters over spiralling English Premier League ticket prices is mounting, as fans attempt to make their voices heard and even followers of sworn enemies join forces to call for change.

Opposition reached a head after champions Manchester City returned 912 unsold tickets priced at £62 (US\$100) for the January 13 game at Arsenal, while fans brandished banners reading "Don't price us out of our game" and "£62 and we're still here".

The protest, compounded by claims that fans were threatened with arrest if they did not take down their placards, came after supporters of Manchester United and Liverpool got together last week to express their anger at escalating costs.

"We're looking at working with the arch enemy Manchester United and others to put a bit of pressure on the clubs to introduce a cap for prices on away tickets," said Paul Martin, from Liverpool fan group Spirit of Shankly.

"The rivalry will start to dwindle when the prices are driving local people away from the game."

Having agreed a new domestic television deal worth a staggering £3.018 billion (\$4.832 billion) last year, the Premier League's financial health could scarcely be more robust.

The league is the most popular around the world, with the top players commanding mammoth, six-figure salaries every week.

But a study by the High Pay Centre think-tank, quoted in British newspaper The Guardian, indicated that the fruits of success were not being shared with fans, as ticket prices in the top league rose by between 700 and 1,025 percent from 1989 to 2011.

As such, a knock-on effect on attendances might be expected -- in Germany's Bundesliga, where attendances are the highest out of Europe's five major leagues (England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain), average ticket prices are the lowest.

But despite the ire over prices for going to games in England, attendances in the Premier League are growing.

Seat occupancy rates have hovered above 92 percent since 2009 and according to Premier League chief executive Richard Scudamore, occupancy is up to 95 percent and may even reach a record high this season.

Fans, though, fear a vicious cycle whereby the more popular the product, the more expensive the tickets, the more costly it becomes to follow a club, and the more likely it is that supporters' protests will fall on deaf ears.

Supporters are disgruntled that fans of high-profile clubs such as United, City, Liverpool and Arsenal are being forced to pay more to follow their team away from home than supporters of other sides.

To counter price rises, fan groups the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) and Supporters Direct are set to launch a campaign calling for the introduction of a £20-£25 cap on the cost of tickets for visiting fans.

Scudamore said he sympathised with the complaints.

"There is category pricing at Arsenal. Arsenal, when categorising games and setting prices next season, will have to take that into account," he told BBC radio.

"Arsenal clearly, along with every other club, want a full stadium and we at the Premier League would like every club to take up their away allocation."

The City fans' protest received further publicity at the final whistle on January 13 when television microphones picked up one of the assistant referees telling members of the visiting side, who won 2-0, to say "thank you" to their fans.

Linesman John Brooks was caught on television telling City pair Joe Hart and Joleon Lescott: "They've paid 62 quid (pounds) over there -- go and see them."

– AFP

## Bryant gets record 15<sup>th</sup> straight All Star nod

NEW YORK – Los Angeles Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant led all players in votes in earning a record 15th successive NBA All-Star selection, the NBA said January 17.

The league announced the starters for the 2013 mid-season exhibition and said Bryant received 1,591,437 votes to edge Miami's LeBron James (1,583,646) as the top vote-getter.

Bryant had been tied with Jerry West, Karl Malone and Shaquille O'Neal for the most consecutive All-Star nods.

The Los Angeles Clippers' Chris Paul will be Bryant's partner at the guard position in the Western Conference starting lineup. Paul, with 929,155 votes, beat out Houston's Jeremy Lin (883,809) for the spot.

Paul's teammate Blake Griffin, the Lakers' Dwight Howard and Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant -- the reigning All-Star Game Most Valuable Player -- round out the West's frontcourt.

In addition to James, the Eastern Conference's frontcourt features New York's Carmelo Anthony and Boston's Kevin Garnett. The guards are Miami's Dwyane Wade and the Celtics' Rajon Rondo.

The 62nd NBA All-Star Game will be played in Houston on Sunday, February 17.

The starting lineups were determined by global fan voting. This year in a new twist fans were able to vote via social networks including Facebook and Twitter, and Sina Weibo and Tencent QQ in China.

The reserves will be selected by polling of the 30 NBA head coaches, who must vote for seven players within their conference and can't vote for players on their own teams.

The reserves will be announced on January 24.

The East and West All-Star coaches will be determined by the best record in the conferences through February 3. – AFP



Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers drives past Luc Mbah a Moute of the Milwaukee Bucks during an NBA basketball game at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on January 15. Pic: AFP



## Fallen legend in legal danger

WASHINGTON – Fallen cycling legend Lance Armstrong took a major legal risk in confessing to drug use in a television interview and has exposed himself to significant litigation, lawyers warned on January 18.

The seven-time Tour de France champion already faced several potential lawsuits from former teammates and sponsors who claim they were hurt by his doping and by his ferocious but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to cover it up.

Yet by appearing with talk show queen Oprah Winfrey and bluntly admitting to taking a cocktail of banned substances over a decade and a half while bullying those around him, he may have put more than his reputation at risk.

"I think it's going to be a big judgment against him. I think he's going to have a gigantic money judgment," said Peter Keane, a law professor at Golden Gate University in San Francisco.

Armstrong's admission of guilt could force him to pay substantial out of court settlements to many of his detractors and may encourage US authorities to add their weight to one of the most serious cases against him.



US Postal Service team leader Lance Armstrong passes an anti-doping protester on Mont Ventoux during the 14th stage of the 89th Tour de France, on July 21, 2002. Pic: AFP

Meanwhile, his aggressive demeanor and perceived lack of contrition in the interview could turn judges and jurors against him if cases come to court, and will increase the determination of those seeking to sue him.

"He did a terrible job," said Jordan Kobritz, a former lawyer and head of

sports at SUNY Cortland university, reflecting the view of many sports fans and professionals reacting on social networks and in television studios.

"I didn't think he was sincere, contrite, forthright or remorseful," he told AFP after the first part of the interview was broadcast

late on January 17.

"As a former attorney, I think his attorneys probably weren't in favour of what he did, because of the many potential legal consequences. I think they were right."

Kobritz said Armstrong missed an opportunity to make a genuine apology to two women, former team masseuse Emma O'Reilly and a teammate's wife Betsy Andreu, whom he had insulted when they attempted to reveal his doping.

"The most logical result would be a settlement. He will be buying them off."

But that might not even be Armstrong's biggest legal challenge.

The US Department of Justice is close to making a decision on whether to add the government's name to a complaint lodged in 2010 against Armstrong by former fellow US Postal Service teammate Floyd Landis.

The Postal Service, a

federal agency, paid US\$30 million in public money to sponsor Armstrong's team – and may now seek to get it back. Keane said that a decision to drop a previous Department of Justice probe into Armstrong had been unpopular within the agency and that many officials would be keen to reopen the inquiry.

"Now with him coming out, sort of daring the government to do anything, there will be tremendous pressure within the government and the Department of Justice to reopen and go forward," he told AFP.

"Otherwise, it looks like this guy is totally above the law."

"He's a totally narcissistic, driven person who'd destroy other people to achieve his ends," Keane said.

"It's just so clearly self-serving that he wants to come back into competition and celebrity and to achieve the power that he had. No one is going to believe that." –AFP

## Women's soccer league aims for May start

By Aung Si Hein

THE Myanmar Football Federation is finalising plans to launch a women's domestic league in May after the Myanmar National League expressed its willingness to support the new clubs.

Recent success by the Myanmar women's national teams spurred the calls for the creation of the league.

The Under-19 team qualified for the 2013 AFC U-19 Women Championship after defeating regional power Thailand 1-0 in the qualifying round on December 9. The MFF believes a domestic league will prove beneficial in developing future talent.

"We are forming a women's league because we want to create opportunities for women to excel. They need more games and tournaments to gain more practice," MFF president U Zaw Zaw said.

Many football club owners have faced financial losses in the MNL, making them wary of running second clubs but MFF competition organiser U Ye Myo Hein said that the steps forward for the sport would outweigh the financial costs.

"We are finding ways to make it less expensive because MNL clubs have suffered enough. By having a women's league, we aim at helping female footballers devote their time and effort to their sports and professionalising soccer," U Ye Myo Hein said.

Reigning MNL champions Yangon United FC has stated that it will start a club first at an amateur level and have been scouting talent nationwide.

Matches are scheduled to take place at Aung San and Padonma stadiums in Yangon.

## Myanmar archers strike gold

By Kyaw Zin Hlaing

MYANMAR archers stood atop the podium as the Southeast Asian Archery Championship ended on January 14.

The team boasted the tournament's largest medal haul of nine gold, four silver and three bronze. The event was held at the Wanna Theikdi archery range in Nay Pyi Taw as a preparation event for the Southeast Asian Games, which will open in Myanmar in December.

Along with the host nation, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore and Thailand sent teams to the tournament. Athletes competed in recurve, compound,

recurve mixed team and compound mixed team events.

Malaysia finished second in the medal tally with five gold, four silver and one bronze.

Vietnam was third with four gold, five silver and six bronze. Indonesia was fourth with two gold, two silver and one bronze.

Thailand finished fifth with one silver and one bronze. Singapore was at the bottom of the table winning only two bronze.

After this tournament Prof Park Yong II, chairman of the Korean Kang-wondo Archery Association presented US\$8000 worth of equipment to the Myanmar Archery Federation.

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