

Injured villagers sitting on beds at a hospital in Maubin, Ayeyarwady Region, following clashes with police on February 26. Pic: AFP



Officer dies in Maubin melee

IN DEPTH

with
By Noe Noe Aung



A POLICEMAN was killed and more than 40 villagers and officers were injured during violent clashes over a land dispute in Maubin township, Ayeyarwady Region, last week.

The officer was killed on the night of February 26, U Nyi Nyi Lin, chief officer of the Maubin township administration office told *The Myanmar Times* on February 27.

"A member of the Myanmar Police Force died today after being hacked with a knife, while 29 other police and 11 villagers were injured and in Maubin Hospital," he said.

"We are striving to solve the problem gently. And regional hluttaw representatives,

political parties, farmers' associations and civil society groups are helping us to provide care to the injured and maintain law and order," he said.

Villagers from Palaung, Adate, Pa Pin, Zee Gone and Kon Dine Kalay gathered in Maletto village tract [in Maubin] on February 21 to state their ownership of farmlands seized in 1996.

On February 26, the sixth day of the protest, Ayeyarwady Region authorities announced a curfew under Section 144 of The Criminal Procedure Code in an effort to cool the conflict.

However, the order seems to have had the exact opposite effect. By 5pm the crowd of protesters had grown far larger than in previous days. When police arrived and attempted to disperse the crowd, they were attacked, said U Nyi Nyi Lin.

The police responded by firing rubber bullets.

"On February 26 the situation

was getting increasing tense. Villagers were destroying fishing pools, burning fields and behaving very badly. They seemed more interested in acting aggressively than making a claim to their land, so the district authority office announced that Article 144 would be used," he said.

"The police entered into the crowd and pushed people around with their shields to try and break up the mob, and at first it worked – people stepped aside. But then people starting fighting back and the police opened fire with rubber bullets," he added.

He added that more than 150 villagers and 100 police were involved in the skirmish.

But Ko Maung Kyaing, a villager from Palaung village, said the crowd only turned on the police after they assaulted several women.

"On Tuesday [February 26] evening, police emerged from

the compound they had formed two days earlier and tried to split us up," he said "We were trying to avoid them but they started hitting two women in the crowd, so we tried to defend the women. After that, the police opened fire," he said.

Ko Maung Kyaing said a total 460 acres of farmlands in Maletto village tract were flood plain many years ago. However, the state-run *Mirror* newspaper reported on February 28 that 550 acres were still flood plain.

In 1992-93, the government conducted a project to reclaim the land and allowed more than 200 farmers to farm the land.

He said farmers cleaned the area before preparing it for cultivation, which they did for three years until a private company – with government and village administrative backing – reclaimed the land for

Mothers, children flee Myanmar on desperate voyage

By Daniel Rook

KHAO LAK, Thailand – Homeless, hungry and nine months pregnant, Nuru boarded a rickety boat filled with Rohingya asylum seekers fleeing a wave of deadly sectarian violence in western Myanmar.

Six days later she gave birth at sea, far from any hospitals or doctors.

Since Buddhist-Muslim tensions exploded last June in Myanmar's Rakhine State, thousands of Rohingya boat people – including a growing number of women and children – have joined an exodus from the country.

Those who arrived in neighbouring Thailand have been "helped on" by the Thai navy towards Malaysia further south or detained as illegal immigrants.

Hundreds are feared to have drowned along the way while others were rescued as far away as Sri Lanka.

Denied citizenship by Myanmar, where they have suffered decades of discrimination and persecution, they left behind a country where they were never wanted – only to find they are unwelcome elsewhere.

"After my house was burned down I had nowhere to live and no job," Nuru, 24, told *AFP* at a government-run shelter in southern Thailand, cradling her month-old baby boy in her arms.

Even though she was on the verge of giving birth, Nuru decided to make the long and dangerous journey in the hope of reaching Malaysia.

After just a few days at sea, the food and water ran out.

"We had to drink sea water and we got diarrhoea," said Nuru.

Some fishermen took pity on them and gave them water, fish and fuel.

Finally, two weeks after leaving Rakhine, their flimsy vessel reached an island off Thailand's Andaman Coast after a near 1500-kilometre (900 miles) journey.

But their ordeal was not yet over.

The men were separated from their families and sent to detention centres, while the women and children were confined to the shelter in Khao Lak, a popular beach resort just north of the tourist magnet of Phuket.

"They looked terrible. Some of the children drank sea water and had diarrhoea. They vomited and it was full of worms. They looked very scared and upset," said a worker at the shelter, which houses about 70 women and children.

"The journey was very difficult for the pregnant women. They must have been really suffering to come here," said the shelter worker, who did not want to be named.

Some children even made the dangerous journey alone without any relatives, leaving behind a country where they

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More page 4



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Hollywood reminds us of CIA torture in Thailand



ASIA FOCUS
INSIDE COVER
with Roger Mitton

AMONG the better movies currently playing is *Zero Dark Thirty* about the decade-long hunt for Osama bin Laden and the torture of suspects that led to his discovery.

After seeing the film, the *New York Times* columnist Roger Cohen wrote: "Watching torture – the CIA should abandon its ghastly euphemism – is profoundly unsettling."

True, and yet the scenes showing America's CIA operatives torturing suspects are actually less horrific than reviews led us to believe.

Having spent several days at Guantanamo, Cuba, the base used by the United States to hold alleged terrorists, I found the scenes predictable and simply reflective of reality. But perhaps that's due to being infected with the same moral dilution that the CIA contractors suffer from before they set to work.

Either way, it's easier to compartmentalise the Guantanamo experience from my reportage on Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, it is clear they are one and the same, and that's why *Zero Dark Thirty* jolts, because it reminds us that before Guantanamo there were black sites – and several were in our house.

When the first alleged 9/11 planners were caught, they were questioned about their co-conspirators and about details of other Jihadist plots they knew about. Faced with their refusal to answer, the White House approved the use of torture – but stipulated that it must not be done in the US itself for that would almost certainly be deemed unconstitutional.

So the offshore Guantanamo base was prepared for this purpose, and in the interim, several black sites were set up in countries that did not bother too much about what their American allies did.

Thailand was one such

place, and it was there that the *Zero Dark Thirty* story really began.

Much of it has been told before and it was the subject last year of an excellent BBC documentary by the fearless Peter Taylor. When the alleged 9/11 planner Abu Zubaydah and his sidekick Abdul al-Nashiri were captured in 2002, they were flown to black sites in former US bases in northern Thailand, one at Udon Thani, the other at Takli.

There, after physical beatings failed to make the nude, shackled, sleep-deprived Zubaydah talk, he was squashed into a small box of the type shown in *Zero Dark Thirty*. The box was left for many hours in a dark, freezing room with music played at a deafening volume.

Of course, no Thais were told that 9/11 suspects were being tortured on their territory; but Muslims in southern Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines now do.

And many fear similar covert activity continues in this region, which brings us to the subject of unmanned airplanes or drones.

Philippine President Benigno Aquino confirmed recently that US drones are allowed to overfly his country for reconnaissance purposes. Other Southeast Asian leaders have given similar permission.

Last month, a US drone that had been surveying the South China Sea was recovered in the waters off Masbate in the central Philippines. As President Obama explained in his State of the Union address on February 12: "We will continue to take direct action against those terrorists who pose the gravest threat to Americans."

"Direct action" is another euphemism that includes the use of drones.

So, as with this region's black sites for torture, do not be shocked when you hear that a US drone has been used to take out suspected terrorists on Basilan or in Pattani or Rakhine State.

Proposal to cut defense spending voted down

By Win Ko Ko Latt

PARLIAMENTARIANS have failed in their bid to reduce the defense budget, with a majority of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw voting to leave it unchanged.

Chin National Party Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Steven Thabeik proposed that the defense budget for the 2013-14 year be cut to 17 percent from 24pc of total government expenditure. However, a March 1 vote in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw saw the suggestion shot down: Only 60 of the 512 voters present on the day backed the plan, and 445 voted against the cut, with seven abstentions.

"In this year's budget, we increased proposed spending over previous years, which is why we find it unacceptable

to reduce it," said Ministry of Defense Lieutenant General Wai Lwin from Ministry of the Defense Services.

He added that the ministry had already cut K224.8 billion from its initial budget to the final budget submitted to the hluttaw.

The defense budget for the fiscal year is K1067.4 billion, or 20.87 percent of the nation's budget of more than K5114.5 billion. However, it is a significant reduction on the 28.90pc in 2011-12 and 22.83pc in 2012-13, said Lt Gen Wai Lwin said.

U Steven Thabeik said that it is clear that Myanmar spends a significant portion of its budget on defense, and should only increase spending as the economy develops and widespread poverty is reduced.

He added that he had proposed

reducing the defense budget to 17pc from because its allocation far outweighed other sectors, such as health and education that account for 3.9pc and 4.4pc respectively.

U Htay Oo, vice chairman of the Union Solidarity and Development Party, said: "The defense budget is larger according to the percentage ... but we presume that we must allocate that money," he said.

A retired army officer and hluttaw representative, who did not want to be named, said: "The military has ruled Myanmar for more than 50 years and used the budget however it liked, and does not want to reduce it now," he said. "But I think it will happen in the next two or three years and we will see defense spending reduced."

– Translated by Thiri Min Htun

MPs slash nearly 30pc from NPT budget

By Win Ko Ko Latt

HLUTTAW representatives attacks on plans to allocate nearly K180 billion to the city of Nay Pyi Taw out of the K5000 billion to be set aside for developing the country as a whole have seen the territory's budget cut by nearly a third.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on March 1 approved a proposal from U Min Thu, National League for Democracy Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Oattarathiri township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory, to slash K53 billion from the

K178 billion earmarked for the region.

About K33 billion removed from the proposed budget will instead be spent on a local development plan and the rest will be put into rural development and poverty reduction efforts.

But before the March 1 decision, one representative demanded that the Nay Pyi Taw budget be cut by 90 percent, and another said half the capital's budget should be transferred to seven states whose combined allocation was only K120 billion, or about two-thirds that proposed for Nay Pyi Taw.

The criticism came during Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meetings held on February 25 and 26 to discuss the 2013-14 budget proposals. The Nay Pyi Taw City Council budget is directly controlled by the president, and has been allocated more than K178 billion.

Dr Banyar Aung Moe, an Amyotha Hluttaw MP, singled out a proposal to allocate more than K12 billion to build three 500-bed hospitals and pension hospitals for army retirees in Nay Pyi Taw, whose population is less than 100,000. He said the money should pay for hospitals in

other states and regions.

"Only 10 percent of this projected budget should be used, for essential construction in Nay Pyi Taw," said U Min Swe, Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Daik-U township in Bago Region and member of the Union Solidarity and Development Party. U Maung Toe, secretary of the public accounts committee of the Pyithu Hluttaw, said the Nay Pyi Taw allocation should be cut by 22-40pc and the funds reallocated to rural development and poverty alleviation.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe

The Mail Box



Dear Editor

May I ask, who is Bill O'Toole? Regarding his article and interview with Sudha Shah's book on the [sic] Thibaw, it's strange that Shah sounded rather complacent that her book is "a chance for the locals to connect with their own country" and O'Toole ... a stranger to our country? ... did not seem to know we have a written language of our

own and a very rich literary tradition. And yes, we also have a great many history books written by professors like Dr Than Tun (to name just one) or scholars like Maung Than Swe (Dawei) or royal descendents like Taw Paya Lay.

Thank you, we are already well connected to our own history.

Ma Thanegi

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. Address: 379-383, Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Kyauktada township, Yangon. Telephone: (+951) 392-928, 253-642 Fax: (+951) 392-706 Email: your.myanmar.times@gmail.com

CORRECTION:

In our story last week headlined "Uncertainty clouds Myanmar refugee plan: NGO" about Burma Partnership's documentary film screening in Yangon we made two errors. By international refugee standards, the word "resettlement" refers to refugees moving to third countries. The documentary therefore looks at the "repatriation" of refugees back to Myanmar from Thailand. Secondly, we stated that the map is available on the group's website, which is incorrect – it is not yet available. We apologise for any inconvenience caused by these errors.

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President seeks closer ties with the West during European trip

By Pierre-Henry Deshayes

OSLO – President U Thein Sein met Norway's prime minister on February 26 as he kicked off a milestone 10-day visit to Europe aimed at forging stronger ties between Myanmar and the West.

After meeting Jens Stoltenberg, the former general called for more cooperation between the two countries, which are both rich in energy resources but at very different stages of development.

"We wish to learn from you the manners in which we can manage these resources to the benefit of our people," he said.

The president will try to reap the fruits of his liberalisation policies as he visits Finland, Austria, Belgium and Italy before returning home on March 8.

"This kind of visit is important in the context of political change in the country because President [U] Thein Sein and the reformers in this current government need encouragement and support from the international community so that the hardliners who oppose transformation can be isolated," said U Khin Maung Win, deputy editor-in-chief of the independent broadcaster Democratic



President U Thein Sein (right) meets Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide, in Oslo on February 26. Pic: AFP

Voice of Burma (DVB).

The swift pace of reforms undertaken by U Thein Sein, who is described as a discreet and loyal conservative, has surprised many, including the opposition.

Since the former prime minister took over the presidency in March 2011, hundreds of political

prisoners have been released, elections have been held, and long-detained opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been elected into parliament.

Other reforms include lifting the country's press censorship laws.

"What he has introduced in the country since he

came to power two years ago is enormous... These are things that Burmese people, including myself, would never dream of two years ago," U Khin Maung Win said.

The European Union and Norway – which is not a member of the EU – have responded by suspending

all their sanctions apart from an arms embargo, while the United States has also dismantled many of its key trade and investment sanctions.

Last month, Myanmar secured a deal with international lenders to cancel nearly US\$6 billion of its debt.

The former junta general's trip to Norway follows Suu Kyi's own landmark visit to Oslo last year, where she made her long-awaited Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in person for the honour awarded to her in 1991, as she spent the better part of two decades under house arrest.

Stoltenberg said he supported the liberalising measures taken by his guest, and called for continued reform in Myanmar.

"Hardly any other country has during the last years seen a more rapid development towards democracy than Myanmar," he said.

But the "long term stability in Myanmar will depend on continued political reforms, respect for human rights and a more equitable distribution of income and wealth", he added.

The Norwegian head of government said the Scandinavian country would raise the status of its diplomatic mission in Yangon to an embassy.

– AFP

Norway to open Yangon embassy

NORWAY is to upgrade its diplomatic office in Myanmar to the status of an embassy. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg made the announcement when he met President U Thein Sein on February 26 in Oslo.

Along with his Danish counterpart, Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Mr Stoltenberg opened a Nordic diplomatic office in Yangon last November. Norway will now upgrade its section of that office next autumn.

"The increasing cooperation between Norway and Myanmar means that it has now been decided to upgrade the diplomatic office in Yangon to a fully-fledged embassy," said Prime Minister Stoltenberg in a press conference on February 26.

During their meeting, the prime minister said Myanmar had taken important steps towards a more democratic and peaceful society, and praised President U Thein Sein, who is on his first visit to Europe.

"Transition to civilian rule, the release of political prisoners, a by-election in which Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of her NLD party were elected to parliament and the lifting of media censorship are important milestones in the reform process," said Mr Stoltenberg.

The prime minister also announced that Norway was prepared to help further with support in areas such as democracy, the management of natural resources, protection of the environment and the peace process.

"Norway has a long history of support for democracy in Myanmar. We will continue to support the reform forces and the sustainable economic development of Myanmar," said Mr Stoltenberg.

– Maria Danmark

Tutu talks on Rohingya issue but avoids Suu Kyi criticism

By Tim McLaughlin

RETIRED archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Desmond Tutu refused to criticise fellow Peace Prize recipient Daw Aung San Suu Kyi over her continued silence on Myanmar's Rohingya issue, but said he hoped that she would be given the chance in the future to explain how politics had influenced her choices.

Speaking at the American Center in Yangon on February 27, Mr Tutu said that Suu Kyi's reluctance to speak out was linked to her current political position.

"Perhaps it would be important that one day she does get the opportunity of explaining how political considerations can make it difficult to be as clear and unambiguous," Mr Tutu said, adding that Suu Kyi is making the transition between what he described as a "global icon" and politician.

The two met on February 26 in Suu Kyi's home in Yangon, in Mr Tutu's first visit to Myanmar. He has long been a supporter of Suu Kyi and Myanmar democracy struggles.

Mr Tutu's comments came a week after two other Nobel Peace Prize recipients called on the Myanmar government to end "ethnic

cleansing" in Rakhine State and grant "full citizenship" to the Rohingya – something Suu Kyi has not done.

Former president of Timor-Leste Jose Ramos Horta and founder and former managing director of Bangladeshi microfinance institution Grameen Bank, Muhammad Yunus, both Nobel Peace Prize recipients, voiced their concerns in an editorial published by *Huffington Post* on February 20.

"Even as we applaud and rejoice in the new freedoms enjoyed by the Myanmar people, the country's newly elected government must face this challenge as they evolve from autocratic rule into a democratic state. The tragedy of the Rohingya people, continuing to unfold in Rakhine State in the country's western corner, on the border of Bangladesh, will be its proving ground," the pair said in a joint statement.

"The minority Muslim Rohingya continue to suffer unspeakable persecution, with more than 1000 killed and hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes just in recent months, apparently with the complicity and protection of security forces."

Mr Ramos-Horta and Mr Yunus also criticised Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law.

Mr Ramos-Horta was the co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 with bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, "for their work towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor", the Norwegian Nobel Committee said.

The 2006 award was given jointly to Mr Yunus and Grameen Bank, the Norwegian Nobel Committee

said, "for their efforts to create economic and social development from below".

Mr Tutu did not make a pointed demand of the government as Mr Yunus and Mr Ramos Horta had done but said, "How we treat our minority, ultimately is going to decide whether we survive", to loud applause when speaking about the Rohingya.

Mr Tutu, who retired as

the Archbishop of Cape Town in 1996, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his efforts to end South Africa's apartheid. After the abolishment of apartheid he served as the chairman of the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a restorative court-like body formed to review the crimes committed during the apartheid era.



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Constitutional tribunal chair appointed

Win Ko Ko Latt

PYITHU Hluttaw speaker Thura U Shwe Mann seems to have won a brief but possibly significant tussle over the nomination of the chairman of the constitutional tribunal.

On February 25, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw formally confirmed that his choice for the post, U Mya Thein, a retired director-general of the Supreme Court, should lead the nine-member tribunal. The decision follows a six-month gap during which the tribunal was inactive, all its members having resigned in a body last September amid attempts to impeach them.

President U Thein Sein, who had unsuccessfully put forward his own slate of names, signed the measure into law before the hluttaw's decision.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint had also proposed a list of names for the tribunal. The selection of members, and

their chairman, was the first test of a new system by which the two speakers could take a hand in naming the chairman, which used to be the sole prerogative of the president.

"According to the new law of the constitutional tribunal, the assignment of the new chairperson couldn't be decided just by the president, as was the case in the past. This time there had to be consultation, and the hluttaw decided by voting," said U Ye Tun, Pyithu Hluttaw representative of Hsipaw township, Shan State.

The mass resignation of the constitutional tribunal members last September was regarded as an important test for the country's budding democracy. Not only could the tribunal itself play an important, if behind-the-scenes, role in mediating between the country's shifting power structures, but the resignation itself split the hluttaw between military and non-military members. — *Translated By Thiri Min Htun*



Farmers seek protection in 6-point bill of rights

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

HUNDREDS of farmers have joined forces with activists, lawyers and agricultural experts to draw up a six-point bill of land rights that they have sent to the government.

More than 200 people took part in a "Farmers' Forum" at Excel Treasure Hotel in Yangon on February 25-26 to draw up the charter. The six points are: the right to reasonable compensation for land acquired by the government, occupied

by the army or private companies; the right to establish and register farming associations freely; the right to adequate and reasonably priced credit, including long-term loans and technical assistance; the right to amend the land laws; the right to sell produce in a stable market; and the right to grow crops of their choice.

"We've been facing various challenges for many years, not only on land acquisition but also on other issues, such as access to technology, loans and markets. We decided it was time to create a single organisation," said farmer U Ye Htin Kyaw from Mandalay Region.

"These points are very

important for us and we think that they can solve our difficulties," said U Ohn Kywe, a farmer from Ayeyarwady Region.

Forum organiser Ko Tin Ko Lwin said: "We're prepared to circulate this statement to the authorities as widely as possible."

"We're facing so many problems," said U Aung Gye, a farmer from Bago Region. "We can't stand it anymore. We have had bitter experiences for many years. Now we think it's time to express our feelings and demand our rights," he added.

U Ohn Kywe said about two-thirds of the country's population was involved in agriculture, and many

were poor farmers trapped in a cycle of debt because of poor education. "If the government is really interested in alleviating poverty, they must grant these rights," he said.

The farmers also agreed to establish a farmers' network. "We need to stay in contact with each other so we can share our knowledge and cooperate when we face difficulties," said Ko Sithu, a farmland activist from Mandalay Region.

"The forum will enable us to discuss our problems and share experiences," said U Laphai Zaw Taung, a farmer from Kachin State. "United action is better than individual action," he added.

Old landgrabs haunt registration process

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

LAND GRAB issues throughout the country are slowing down the process of farmland ownership registration required by the law, according to sources.

Although the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has declared that it will devote the whole year to registering farmland, farmers engaged in ownership disputes say they cannot register the land they believe is theirs.

"The Farmlands Law gives me the chance to register my ownership, but since our lands were confiscated by the army we can't register," said U Tun Tun, a farmer from Pyay township, Bago Region.

"We went to the registration department but they wouldn't give me a form because our lands had been confiscated. They said I could register only after resolving the conflict," he said.

The agriculture ministry announced through the state media on February 27 that the Settlement and Land Records Department was to undertake farmland ownership registration so that farmers could legally bequeath their land to their

descendants. Registration of all farmland throughout the country was supposed to be complete by the end of the next financial year.

"A registration committee came to Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Region, and distributed forms in the villages. We didn't get the form because our lands had been taken over by the forestry department. The committee said we had to solve the conflict with the forestry department, but we've had no help in solving it. We wrote to the Farmland Investigation Committee, but they didn't reply," said Ko Kyaw Kyaw Aung, a farmer from Yaw Chan Su village in Pyin Oo Lwin.

The investigation committee was set up to help farmers resolve the land ownership disputes they have with the army, private companies and government ministries. But many farmers say they have received no help from the committee.

"Committee members arrived in Bago Region, but didn't go to the most isolated villages. We want them to investigate everywhere," said U Aung Gye, a farmer from Nattalin township, Bago Region.

The situation is worse still in remote areas with Shan, Chin and Kachin states. "There is no registration department in our villages, and it's too far away for farmers to go to them," said U Than Nyunt, a farmer from Inn Daw village in Kachin State.

"In Rakhine State, there are so many problems between Rakhine and Muslim people over land. Some companies and local authorities take land and sell it to Rohingya for a lot of money. The committee should investigate whether they have the legal right to that land," said Ko Naing Zaw, a farmland activist in Maungdaw township, Rakhine State.

Investigation committee member U Aung Zin told *The Myanmar Times*: "Committee members don't make the decisions. We are independent negotiators trying to resolve issues to the benefit of all. Our duty is to investigate the issues and make proposals to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw."

U Aung Zin said the committee was dealing with more than 300 complaints from farmers.

"We need more cooperation from local authorities," he said.

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Brace for a hot summer: DMH

HOTTER-than-normal temperatures are expected for the coming warm season in most parts of the country, according to a weather forecast issued at the end of February.

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) says most states and regions, except Ayeyarwady, Bago, Yangon and Tanintharyi regions, face hotter days in March.

"Average March temperatures will be up by more than 3 degrees Celsius in these areas. For example, the average March temperature of Chauk, Magway Region, is 39C. This March, daytime temperatures there will exceed 42C," U Chit Kyaw, deputy director of the department said on February 28.

America's International Research Institute has also forecast a 70 percent probability of above-normal temperatures over the next three months in Chin and Kachin states and upper Myanmar, and a 60-70pc probability for northern Shan State and central Myanmar. The institute found a 40-60pc probability that lower Myanmar, except Tanintharyi region, would be hotter. DMH forecast that Upper Sagaing, Kachin, Chin and Shan States would have 11 to 13 foggy days, while Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Rakhine States could expect eight to 10 foggy days. Other locations could expect five to seven days of thick fog in the morning.

The department predicts a low-pressure system in the southern part of the Bay of Bengal and unseasonal rain in March, especially in Kachin State and Tanintharyi Region.

— Aye Sapay Phyu

By Htar Htar Khin

SOME relief is in sight for commuters, as Yangon City Development Committee carries out plans to widen major roads throughout the city.

The road-widening, which began last August, is scheduled for completion by the end of March. But more work could be done in the next year, which starts in April.

Road engineers hope the works could reduce congestion by 30 percent or more.

U Tin Tun Oo, executive engineer of YCDC roads and bridges department, said the K500 million project was proceeding along Bogyoke, Kannar, Merchant, Bo Aung Kyaw, Upper Kyeemyindaing, Than Thu Mar, Waizayantar, Bamhu Ba Htoo and Lower Mingalardon Roads.

Another aim of the road-widening is to improve traffic safety, said U Tin Tun Oo. "By increasing parking space we hope to ease traffic congestion, especially downtown," he said.

"The widening program will continue, depending on budget for the next financial year," he said. "We hope the widening of the roads can reduce congestion by 30-40pc," he added.

YCDC's road widening budget for the 2013-14 financial year



A YCDC backhoe digs up the shoulder of Inya Road last week as part of efforts to widen the road.
Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

for Kannar Road is K1 billion, but no funding decision for other townships has yet been taken, he said.

Ko Tin Maung Lwin, 36, is in charge of the 40 labourers working on the road widening project at Inya Road, Kamaryut township.

"By mid March we will widen the road from 36 feet to 48 feet, with six-lane vehicle access, between Pyay Road and the University Avenue Road

junction, a total of 4500 feet.

He said one result of the work would be enhanced pedestrian safety.

"There is a four-foot wide walkway for pedestrian access," he said, adding that the widening should help ease all-day congestion on Inya Road.

A 40-year-old shopkeeper on Inya Road said widening would improve traffic flow.

"Wider access should ease congestion. Parking space is

limited, so adding more will help, I hope," he said.

Ma Nang Hom Kgauk, 44, who lives at Waizayantar Road in South Okkalapa township, said: "The road widening will bring many advantages in communication and living standards, as well as on property values. But the upgrading has raised the road by 6 inches above its old level, and we're a bit concerned about flooding in the rainy season."

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Restaurant fills a democratic void - for space

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

THE transition to democracy has enabled a wide variety of civil society organisations, political parties and ordinary members of the public to express their opinion on a variety of issues, from disability rights and environmental protection to the 2008 constitution and the Letpadaung copper mine.

This is particularly so in Yangon, where many of the groups are based. But while citizens are able to exercise their rights to assemble peacefully and speak freely, finding a place to do so has been less easy.

"We are able to exercise our rights but it is still difficult to find a place. Most owners don't want to let us to use their venues," said Daw Susanna Hla Hla Soe, director of the Karen Women's Action Group.

In 2011, International Business Centre cancelled the group's booking for a birthday ceremony for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

"At that time women's organisations made a plan to celebrate the birthday of our leader. We gave advance money for the booking but IBC cancelled it and gave back our money.



A waiter prepares tables at the Royal Rose Restaurant in Bahan township last week. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

We were so angry we were going to form a petition to condemn IBC but then we decided not to because we realised we would have even more trouble finding

a place to hold seminars on other issues," Daw Susanna Hla Hla Soe.

Most civil society organisations can recount similar stories of having

trouble finding a place to hold a ceremony or press conference.

There are two main reasons: hotels and restaurants that normally host these events were worried that there would be consequences if they allowed political events, while in many cases civil society groups cannot afford to pay the high room charges.

"In the past owners [of venues] would give back our advance money because the government security forces pressured them. Businessman were afraid our event would affect their hotel or restaurant," said U Ko Ko Gyi, a member of the 88 Generation student group. "Security personnel used to take photos of the building and the people. Sometimes they made formal enquiries before and after the event ... their actions were designed to threaten the owners," he said.

But one venue has helped to fill this void: Royal Rose Restaurant in Bahan township. Over the past two years, activists have come to rely increasingly on its owner's willingness to provide a venue for their events, in spite of the risks - to the point where some have even opined it should instead be called "Democratic Rose".

"Our press conferences or activities are regularly held at Royal Rose because we get

a discount and sometimes the owner of the restaurant lets us hold it free of charge. I don't think there is any other place like it," said Ko Thet Oo, a member of the Former Political Prisoners Association.

Located on Shwegondaing Road, Royal Rose's upstairs meeting room, known as Thiri Hall, has become a hub of civil society activity, with press conference, workshops, seminars, ceremonies and more held every day.

Owner U Soe Nyunt, 65, said it is his way of promoting political awareness and supporting the transition to democracy.

"For many years I allowed my restaurant to be used by all people and associations, without discrimination," said U Soe Nyunt, who is also chairman of the Myanmar Bird and Nature Society.

"I am also deeply interested in politics and I want our country to be truly democratic. I was involved in Myanmar's political struggle in cooperation with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi after 1988. But now I don't want to form any political party or join any organisation. Instead I would like to support people who are trying to help bring about concrete democracy," he said.

In 1988, U Soe Nyunt was a member of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's consultative during the uprising. In

1990, he became chairman of the National League for Democracy's central committee for Bahan Township but he quit from politics in 1992 when the government began arresting and jailing opposition members.

"I would have gone to jail if I stayed on so I decided to run my business for my family. Royal Rose opened in 1990. It was just a very small business then. I've struggled so much to get success but my mindset and interest in politics has not disappeared. I am happy to support and assist political organisations and civil society as much as I can behind the scenes."

He said police regularly visited his restaurant to enquire about events being held there.

"I'm used to these police inquiries. I understand they are just doing their duty and also that the government is changing but these changes are not filtering down to the lower levels. They cannot give up their old habits overnight."

U Soe Nyunt said he understood the potential risks of hosting all kinds of events and that it could endanger either himself or the business. On January 13, one activist was even beaten up in the restaurant's compound shortly before a press conference was due to be held.

"If someone wants to destroy my building, he can set fire to it but he can't destroy our political spirit. I don't care about any of that. I decided to stand strongly for what I believe in. I believe in democracy, so I encourage people who also believe democracy and hope that together we can create an all-inclusive political system."

While they are grateful for the valuable role U Soe Nyunt and Royal Rose has played in Myanmar's political transition, civil society activists said they hoped that more venue owners would start to accept political events.

"Many people still think that politics is something they should not touch. Our country changed to democracy but some people don't want to change. I'm happy that the president said recently he will leave behind people who don't want to follow his changes," Daw Susanna Hla Hla Soe said.

"If the broader public becomes more politically mature, I think it will become much easier for us to hold our events and speak out freely and openly."



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NLD confirms assembly location

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

THE National League for Democracy's first nationwide general assembly will be held from March 8 to 10 at Yangon's Royal Rose Restaurant and hall in Bahan township.

The restaurant is on Shwegondaing Road, near the Shwegondaing junction. It has found fame by hosting democratic functions for political parties and social groups. The

party's first pre-meeting for Yangon Region members was held at Royal Rose in October, 2012.

The date for the general assembly has been changed several times, as recently as the last week of February, but the NLD's head office in Yangon has confirmed both the date and location. Party spokesperson U Ohn Kyaing said the event would be attended by 1500 delegates coming from around the country.

Telco tender moves on to prequalification

By Stuart Deed and Htoo Aung

TWO national telecommunications licences will be awarded to companies that meet strict prequalification requirements, the government body charged with overseeing the process said last week.

The Telecommunications Operator Tender Evaluation and Selection Committee announced on February 21 that more than 90 telecoms companies from around the world had submitted expressions of interest for the tender, showing the huge interest in nation's market. The expressions of interest included some of the world's best known telcos, the committee's press release said.

The committee also released a set of prequalification requirements on February 21, with the deadline for submissions set for April 4, giving interested parties little time to put together their applications. The committee will then announce which consortia passed prequalification on April 11.

The guidelines for prequalification were

posted on the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (www.mcit.gov.mm) and Myanma Posts and Telecommunications' (MPT) website (www.mpt.net.mm).

VDB Loi, a specialised law and tax advisory firm that has more than 60 transactional lawyers and tax advisors working in offices across Southeast Asia and including Myanmar, released an analysis of the prequalification rules to clients last week.

VDB Loi's analysis said companies are required to have four million subscribers in one country and generate annual gross revenues of at least US\$400 million, or hold a 50.1 percent stake, including management control for four years, in a firm that meets these requirements.

"Then, you must have activity in a second country since 31 December 2009 where you [or a subsidiary in which you own at least 30pc and where you have 'significant management responsibility'] have one million mobile subscribers," the analysis says.

It adds that according to the prequalification rules in and of themselves, consortia may—but are not specifically



Telecoms companies have until April 4 to file detailed bids to pass prequalification requirements for the two national telecommunications licences. Pic: Boothee

required—to take on a domestic partner.

"Conversely, in view of the experience requirements of the operator, it seems that local partners will have to work with a foreign operator in order to prequalify," the analysis adds.

Applicants must also detail in their bids what the proposed equity interests and voting rights that each member of the consortium will hold in the Myanmar-registered entity, as well as a list of decisions for which

super-majority voting will be required, plus biographical information concerning participating members—especially relevant telecoms experience—in the Myanmar-registered entity.

Additionally, "the applicant must provide a copy of any memorandum of understanding, joint venture agreement, or other similar agreement relating to the Myanmar-registered entity". This means, in practice, that nearly the entire deal needs to have been worked out in

quite some detail between the members including capital and contributions in kind, financing and governance, plus the texts need to be available at the time of lodging the prequalification application. This will likely pose some problems for consortia that are not up to speed yet," VDB Loi's analysis states.

A final but critical piece of the analysis concerns cross ownership, presumably to encourage competition. Effectively, successful

bidders will not be able to hold share ownership, either directly or indirectly, of more than 10pc in the second licence.

Companies that pass the prequalification stage will see their bids scrutinised by comparative evaluation; and after this is completed the licences will be granted.

In a related development, President U Thein Sein said during a March 1 radio address that low-cost SIM cards would be released to the market in April.

"As regards the development of [our] telecom industry, you will all be informed of the efforts of our government since taking office. Plans are underway to sell low-cost mobile SIM cards in April. In addition to the short-term program, constant efforts will be made for the systematic development of the communication sector nationwide. These projects will materialise within one or two years," President U Thein Sein said.

However, the president did not provide a price. But rumours have been spreading that the SIM cards will be sold for K20,000. GSM SIM cards are sold for K200,000, while WDCMA chips are selling for K250,000.

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Ivory trade threatens Myanmar's elephants

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

THE thirst for illegal ivory is killing Myanmar's Asian elephants, conservation experts say.

Over the past 20 years, the population of these rare creatures has declined by nearly 2000, the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry's top anti-trafficking official said last week. Just 2500 to 3000 Asian elephants are thought to survive in the wild in Myanmar, down from 6000 in 1960-1970 and 4639 in 1991, according to the government and other conservation specialist estimates.

"The main reason is the declining population of male elephants," said U Win Naing Thaw, director of the department's Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division.

There are two elephant species in the world, Asian (*Elephas maximus*) and African (*Loxodonta africana*). Myanmar possesses the largest population of elephants in Southeast Asia, and the second place in Asia as a whole after India.

The picture is likely to get worse because of illegal ivory poaching, human encroachment on natural habitats, and hunting for medicinal or other purposes.

"Male elephants are the main target because only



Souvenirs carved from ivory are seen on sale at a shop in Yangon's Bogyoke Market last week. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

they have tusks – females don't," said U Nay Myo Shwe, project officer of the Friends of Wildlife Association.

He said the ivory trade in Myanmar had become

popular in recent years as hunters organised in gangs to kill elephants, remove their ivory and take other body parts, such as molars, bones and hide.

"Depending on the market, they can get K6 to K10 million for 15 viss of ivory (1 viss is equal to 1.6 kilograms or 3.6 pounds)," said U Nay Myo Shwe, a retired nature and wildlife conservation officer.

"When I served as a range officer in the wildlife department, I learned that some live Asian elephants had been smuggled from Myanmar over the past decade, mostly to Thailand for the tourism industry. It's very difficult to act against the smugglers because they are well-organised, and the contraband they deal in is valuable," he added.

Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division said they have been unable to stop the trade in ivory, though they have taken action against people who killed elephants illegally. Eighteen elephants were killed in 2011 to 2013, mostly for their ivory.

On January 28, a 15-year-old elephant was killed in Bago Region, and its ivory and molars removed. The forestry department arrested one suspect, but two others escaped.

Asian elephants are listed as "completely protected" under the 1994 Protection

of Wild Animals, Wild Plants and Conservation of Natural Areas Law, as well as enjoying international protection under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Myanmar is a member of CITES, which prohibits commercial trade in live specimens, their parts or derivatives. However, ivory can be found on sale in retail outlets in Yangon, Mandalay, Tachileik, Myawaddy and Muse, and is openly sold, often to buyers from China and Thailand.

A dealer selling ivory products in Bogyoke Market said he did not know about the law governing the ivory trade, and has never received any warning from the government. "Ivory items are very popular with the Japanese," he said.

Mr Chris Shepherd, a senior program officer with TRAFFIC, a global network committed to delivering innovative and practical conservation solutions, spoke of a serious lack of law enforcement and a blatant disregard for international conventions and national

laws in Myanmar and neighbouring states.

TRAFFIC and the World Wildlife Foundation have called on authorities in Myanmar to work closely with enforcement officers in neighbouring Thailand and China to address the illegal trade in live elephants and ivory.

"Under the 1994 law, the penalty for smuggling can be seven years' imprisonment," said U Nay Myo Shwe.

However, the government insists the laws are enforced seriously. U Win Naing Thaw said the forestry department had in recent years recruited and trained more field rangers and staff in wildlife conservation, law enforcement, and monitoring techniques in cooperation with international and nongovernmental organisations in order to prevent trafficking more effectively.

He said they had opened files against persons convicted of killing, hunting or illegally possessing elephants or body parts. Moreover, in 2007, the government established a National Wildlife Law Enforcement Task Force comprising representatives from seven government departments to better combat the illegal market for wildlife and wild plants.

"We will investigate shops at airports and some markets. If they are selling ivory, we will take action against them," said U Win Naing Thaw.

The ministry has declared protected areas for elephants at Shwe U Daung Wildlife Sanctuary, Alaungdaw Katthapa National Park, Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range and Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary. Another is being prepared at North Zarnari Wildlife Sanctuary, Bago Region.

• Related report, P.38

Elephant safe zone planned for Bago

By Aye Sapay Phyu

WILDLIFE officials are to create a protected zone for elephants in Bago Region after hunters illegally killed elephants. The zone will be in North Zamari reserved forest in Bago Yoma, Bago Region, said an official of the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division of the Forest Department, Ministry of Forestry.

U Win Naing Thaw, director of the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division, said the proposed zone would include areas of the three townships of Bago, Kyauktaga and Letpadan in Bago Region.

"We have already proposed to establish an

elephant protected area in North Zamari amounting to nearly 300,000 acres. We will allow the cultivation of paddy, sugarcane, beans and salt in the area for the elephants. After that we will relocate the elephants to the protected area. We will also set up fences to ensure that the elephants remain there. We hope to start the process in February," he said on January 25.

U Win Naing Thaw said the establishment of the zone was intended to protect endangered Asian elephants and to reduce the conflict between humans and elephants.

"Illegal wood production in that area destroyed the elephants' habitat. As the result, the elephants

encroached on plantations and clashes occurred between humans and elephants," he said.

He said that the death of six wild elephants was reported in 2012, and hunters killed elephants in four cases in Thabeikkyin township, Mandalay Region and in Ngapudaw and Labutta townships in Ayeyarwady Region.

"The hunters killed not only for ivory but also for skin and flesh," he said.

He said elephants were a protected species in Myanmar, and that under the 1994 conservation law, hunting, killing or wounding the animals, and possessing, selling, transferring and exporting body parts without permission were prohibited. Violators face seven years' imprisonment, a K50,000 fine, or both.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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Myanmar: A nation at war with itself

Opinion by Stanley A Weiss

TOWERING high above the centre of Yangon, the Shwedagon Pagoda is one of the wonders of the religious world. Said to be encased in 60 tonnes of gold, the Shwedagon is older than the city itself. Its earliest legend goes back 2500 years, when two brothers from lower Myanmar are said to have met the Buddha shortly after his enlightenment. As proof of their friendship, the Buddha plucked hairs from his head, and after returning to Myanmar the brothers enshrined them within the pagoda. There they remain, alongside the Buddha's famous precepts, the first of which reads: "Avoid killing, or harming any living thing."

The hillsides that emanate across Myanmar from this shrine have seen some of the most heinous atrocities of the past century – carried out by people who purport to follow the teachings carved inside.

That a country that is 85 percent Buddhist – the religion of peace – is known for non-stop war is a cruel historical irony. That the Burman majority that makes up 60pc of Myanmar's population – and staffs its army – has been engaged for six decades in a violent campaign against the other ethnic minorities here is a modern tragedy. That the campaign continues in some villages to this day – even while Myanmar is praised by foreign leaders, most recently President Barack Obama in his State of the Union Address – is an ongoing outrage that the world must bring to an end.

"This is a pre-democracy society and the predominate thinking is [that] everyone is against each other," a Western ambassador says. "People meet with each other but then foul mouth each other. There's a lack of identity. Alliances shift and there is fighting in every region."

All told, ethnic populations cover half of Myanmar's total land area and make up nearly half of its total population – while housing all of Myanmar's international trade routes, most of its borders and nearly all of its natural resources. That's where the trouble begins.

"What ails Burma is not just about politics and human rights per se, but control of the land and the fruits of the land," says a retired American military adviser to the ethnic groups. "It is about controlling ethnic ancestral lands rich in natural resources, and not being able



Kachin Independence Army soldiers relax near the front line in Kachin State on February 8. Pic: Kaung Htet

to jointly explore and share prosperity." A high profile Myanmar businessman adds: "In the end, it's about economic rights. Ethnic never feel like they have [any] and the government needs to give them some."

While ethnic conflict here goes back to the Middle Ages, the modern chapter begins with the collapse of British rule after World War II. After the war ended, Britain gave power to the Burmans while disempowering ethnic minorities. In the aftermath, most ethnic groups declared war and fighting has continued ever since.

Even while Barack Obama became the first sitting United States President to visit Myanmar last November, the Myanmar army was engaged in vicious fighting with Kachin rebels in the far north. As journalist Bertil Lintner writes, while Kachin troops inflict significant losses on the Tatmadaw, the escalated military campaign "has also sent a stark signal to other ethnic armies which have entered ceasefire agreements with the government ... who say they feel threatened."

While "it might be reasonable", as one United Nations official tells me, "to say that you could have a democracy with eight civil wars going at the same time," President U Thein Sein "knows that he must

make peace with the ethnics", a Western ambassador says. With the international spotlight increasingly on Myanmar in the run-up to its ascension to chair of ASEAN in 2014, ongoing civil war is a distraction Myanmar doesn't need.

But there are two roadblocks to peace.

First, the constitution rammed through in 2008 is anathema to ethnic minorities, since it mandates central control over ethnic lands. It's also hard to alter, as any change require at least 75pc support and the army controls 25pc of parliament. "If the constitution isn't changed, the Karen won't join the 2015 [general] election – all [ethnic minorities] agree on this," a Kayin official says.

Most minority groups want a federal system like the US or, better yet, Switzerland, where regions, known as cantons, have autonomy within a federal structure. Burmans fear the issue of control could unite minorities – it "petrifies Burmans", says the military adviser, "who do all they can to prevent unity, because they realise that the power of ethnic leaders lies in collective action."

The second issue is the army. As an Asian ambassador puts it: "The president tells the military to stop fighting, but the army keeps fighting." Under the constitution, the

military still answers to the National Defence and Security Council, not directly to the president. One local editor says this means "the army still runs Myanmar". But military officials also realise that true democracy is the safest retirement policy.

What can the US do to help? A lot.

America should offer to broker peace between the Kachin, the army and the government – tying future aid to successful negotiations.

It should work with the UN to educate minority groups and government officials about the meaning of federalism – to go slow and

begin to build trust.

It should offer to train young government and ethnic army officers through the military-to-military International Military Education and Training Program, known as IMET, which, through exposure to US civil society, was credited by some for Indonesia's army returning to the barracks in its transition to democracy more than a decade ago.

It should also encourage the private sector to focus all sides on economic development as a common interest, helping Myanmar become the economic powerhouse it has the potential to be if ethnic

violence stops.

If the two sides do find a path to peace, it may be said of Myanmar what the author Somerset Maugham wrote when seeing Shwedagon Pagoda for the first time: "[I]t rose superb, glistening with its gold like a sudden hope in the dark night."

(Stanley Weiss is founding chairman of Business Executives for National Security, a non-partisan organisation of senior executives who contribute their expertise in the best practices of business to strengthening the nation's security. This article represents his personal views only.)

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Three royal buildings in MDY to be restored

By Khin Su Wai

A K1500-million project to restore a vital part of Mandalay's royal heritage is being planned.

Craftsmen will use traditional Myanmar building methods to restore three historic buildings from the era of King Mindon, a planning meeting was told on February 23.

The three buildings are the Pahtan-haw Shwe Thein high ordination hall, the Thudhamma Zayats and Pitakat Taik Taw, the Buddhist scripture library.

In 1857, King Mindon founded a new royal capital at the foot of Mandalay Hill, based around seven royal buildings sited on the advice of astrologers. All but the moat and the Kuthodaw Pagoda were destroyed by fire in the war of 1890.

The Atumashi Monastery has since been rebuilt as a faithful replica of the original, and the royal wall has been repaired.

The three remaining structures will now be renovated under the supervision of Thetagu Sayardaw U Nyanissara and Tampawaddy U Win Maung. Thetagu Sayardaw is a monk known for his public work, including hefty donations for the building of a water supply system in Sagaing Region, a 100-bed hospital for monks, nuns, novices and poor people in Sagaing and the construction of the International Buddhist Academy.

Tampawaddy U Win Maung is a famous Myanmar traditional architect, whose works can be seen in a number of pagoda restorations in Bagan and Sagaing.

"I'm very grateful to have the chance to take

part in renovating these three historic buildings. I will dedicate the work to my grandparents, who looked after me when I was young," U Kyaw Than, who is funding the renovations, said at the meeting on the planned renovation at the Warso Monastery on February 23.

Thetagu Sayardaw U Nyanissara said the task of renovating buildings central to Mandalay's history would be huge.

Tampawaddy U Win Maung said he would consult contemporary pictures and other historical references in carrying out the renovation.

Mandalay Regional Prime Minister U Ye Myint said: "Mandalay is the ancient royal city and stands at the heart of Myanmar's traditions. MCDC is responsible for preserving Myanmar's traditions in Mandalay Region."



A historical photograph of the Thudhamma Zayats building in Mandalay. Pic: SUPPLIED

TRADE MARK CAUTION

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Patent and Trademark Attorneys,
Hong Kong)

P. O. Box 60, Yangon

Dated: 4th March, 2013

NLD representative faces illegitimate child lawsuit

By Sithu Lwin

A PYIN Oo Lwin woman says she is preparing to sue National League for Democracy representative for Pyin Oo Lwin U Kyaw Thiha whom she accuses of failing to support her and their son financially.

Daw Khine Wutyay Thanda Maung, 38, who lives in Pyin Oo Lwin's Big Ward 8, says she had an affair with U Kyaw Thiha more than a decade ago that resulted in the birth of a boy. But she alleges that U Kyaw Thiha has never taken any responsibility for her or the child, who is now 13 years old.

"Ten years ago, I had an affair with U Kyaw Thiha," Daw Khine Wutyay Thanda Maung said. "When I got pregnant and told him, he said he could not take any responsibility and asked me to abort the pregnancy - and gave me K30,000 for the procedure," she told *The Myanmar Times*.

"He later disappeared after saying that he would look for a flat for us to live in in Mandalay. When I went to his house and tried to see him, I was denied access. Later, I gave birth in Amarapura township, Mandalay."

"I sent him photos of the child but he refused to see me. In the end, he was summoned via Women's Affairs but even then he did not come. Instead, some other people came and gave K400,000 as alimony," said Daw Khine Wutyay Thanda Maung.

Before arranging to file the lawsuit against U Kyaw Thiha, Daw Khine Wutyay Thanda Maung filed a complaint to the Amyotha Hluttaw representative for Pwin Oo Lwin, the president, the speakers of the Pyidaungsu and Pyithu hluttaws, as well as NLD chair Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Daw Khine Wutyay Thanda Maung alleges that U Kyaw Thiha took the boy in 2012 and promised to provide child support. But when U Kyaw Thiha took the boy to the Pansakar boarding school in Pyin Oo Lwin, he asked the school's principal to adopt him, saying that he was an orphan.

"My efforts are not aimed at reconciling with him [U Kyaw Thiha] but to force him to recognise the child, who has no national ID card as yet. He should also provide support to the child," she said.

Daw Nyo Nyo Hla, head mistress



Daw Khine Wutyay Thanda Maung examines paperwork with her son for a lawsuit she plans to file against an NLD representative. Pic: Sithu Lwin

of SHS 3 and the then-secretary of Women's Affairs when U Kyaw Thiha was summoned more than 10 years ago, said: "Ko Kyaw Thiha did not come in person. His father did. Because his father was an executive at the school, they were allowed to settle the matter outside," she said.

"If the matter was settled by the association, all the people concerned would have been shamed because it's clear that the child closely resembles the father. I said then that I would have to take sides on who was right."

The scandal has been thrust into the public spotlight following the release of VCDs in Pyin Oo Lwin showing Daw Khine Wutyay Thanda Maung speaking on the matter.

Pyin Oo Lwin NLD member U Than Win says the incident has hurt the community and the party.

"To see that the MP we voted for has been involved in this scandal has marred our town's reputation," he said. "And it has done the same thing to the party. U Kyaw Thiha has also failed to explain how he used some funds in the election campaign. Some villagers are

frustrated at his arrogance.

"Depending on the outcome of the lawsuit, we might end up recalling him," he said.

U Kyaw Thiha responded to the accusations by saying: "I gave them K400,000 more than 10 years ago to stop what they were doing But I didn't give that money in person.

"And the money was not given as damages or child support. They have no evidence at all but I am not going to sue them for defamation because my reputation is being hurt by their words.

"I don't want to explain this situation - it's caused by some members of the party holding grudges against me. The [party's] central level has already suspended their membership. "Anyway, I will try to serve the interests of the region and the party."

U Kyaw Thiha became Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Pyin oo Lwin after winning the 2012 by-election by more than 20,000 votes against his rival U Khin Maung Win from Union Solidarity and Development Party.

- Translated by Thit Lwin

Inthar ethnic group plans public company

By Khin Su Wai

LEADERS of the Inthar ethnic group, who mostly live on or around Inle Lake in Shan State, are working to establish a public company to better engage the community in tourism and share the profits from the trade.

A committee formed at a meeting of Inthar community leaders on 15 February decided to form a public company in which 5000 shares will be sold for 100,000 kyats each. At the committee's first meeting it had been decided that the company would need initial capital of K200 million.

It was also proposed at the February 15 meeting to form a committee for Inthar travel and tourism, which would require additional funding. It was proposed that 41 additional shares would be sold in this body for K300,000 each or about US\$14,300 in total.

U Aung Kyi Win, representative of the Shan State assembly's Nyaungshwe2 constituency, said the proposed public company could provide the Inthar people with ownership of some of the profits from their home.

"I couldn't attend the first meeting at Myoma Monastery in Naungshwe but I am very pleased to know they are trying to get involved in Inle's tourism," he said. "There are many Inthar living in Yangon, Taunggyi and any other places, including youths and professionals, who could help to lead the community," he added.

U Aung Kyi Win, who also operates Shwe Inthar motor boat services, said that he welcomed the idea of a public company because it would profit the Inthar people and boost their rights.

The first public meeting on January 26 mostly discussed the lack of opportunities for Inthar in their homeland and a decision was made at the conclusion to form a public company with initial capital of K200 million, which would be used to develop tourism-related assets.

Shares will only be available to Nyaungshwe ID card holders or people identified as "Inthar" on their National Registration Cards.

Some of the profits from the company will be invested in environmental



Members of the Inthar ethnic group attend the second meeting of a proposed public company that will be owned by the ethnic group. Pic: Khin Su Wai

conservation programs at the lake and surrounding areas, which have witnessed fast growth in the past decade.

This second meeting featured in depth conversations on the shape and organisation of the company, as well as how much initial capital would be required.

The second meeting also included a protest against the Inle Hotel Zone project in support of Nant Pan villagers who have been sued by the authorities for protesting against the

confiscation of their land for the zone.

U Thet Tun, chairman of the Inthar literature and tradition association, warned that doing business is far more difficult than simply talking about it – and concerted effort would be required to make the company a reality.

Dr Tun Aung, representative of Nyaungshwe constituency 1 the Shan State assembly, said planning the company in the right manner is essential.

"The company should be

organised," he said. "People have already started asking me for permits to operate motor boats or transport services to Heho. But this should be part of the second phase.

"Firstly we need to form a committee of people who love the Inthar and establish our rights and responsibilities," Dr Tun Aung said.

He added that the number of tourists visiting Inle is booming.

"More than 80,000 foreign tourists visited Inle Lake in 2011 but this grew to more than 100,000 in 2012," he said.

"Within three years it's possible that up to 200,000 visitors will come here," Dr Tun Aung said.

He added that even though the tourism industry at the lake is booming, there are limited job opportunities for Inthar, and those positions that are available are in unskilled work. He added that non-Inthar control about 75 percent of the sector.

U Zaw Zaw, owner of a boat company, said a maximum of five of his 37 vessels are in use every day because he lacks contacts with tourists.

"I don't know much about

public companies but I want tourists to be using my boats," he said. "What I do know is that I don't get passengers when lots of other boat owners do," he added.

"We have suggested a public company for unity – not for money. Inle's hotel and tourism industry should be for the Inthar, not for travel agencies in Yangon," said U Aung Kyaw Moe, secretary of the Myanmar Restaurants Association.

He added that the process of going public needs to be transparent.

"As far as I know, the first initial public share offering was in 2002 with Bagan Cybertech [now Yatanarpon Teleport] because I worked at Myanmar Computer Company for 14 years. At that time shares were sold for K10 million each, with later offers for K30 million," he said.

"We don't want our company to be a crony organisation – we want to be a public company for the Inthar community. To do what's best for the community we need to make all the information concerning this company publicly available," U Aung Kyaw Moe said.

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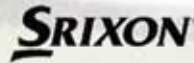
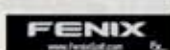
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No state-private JVs until law passed: official

Deputy Minister for Information says state-run papers will not work with private companies until law is enacted

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

STATE-owned newspapers will not form joint ventures with the private sector until the publishing law for public service media is passed by the parliament, Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Htut told *The Myanmar Times* recently.

“We’re arranging to enact the law for public service media for state-run newspapers, so we can’t confirm whether we will work together with the private sector or when,” he said.

Rumours have circulated recently that the state-run *Myanma Ahlin* (the *New Light of Myanmar*) may work together with a

foreign media outlet on a joint venture but U Ye Htut said such cooperation would only occur if it was allowed by the law.

He said there are many steps that must be undertaken to reform state-run papers, which include the *Mirror* and the *New Light of Myanmar* (both English and Myanmar language), although significant progress has been made in recent months to improve quality and accuracy.

The Myanmar Times reported in issue 664 that state-run newspapers used heavily cropped photographs from the Air Bagan crash near Heho on Christmas Day to accompany a story of a Kachin Independence Army

bomb blast.

U Ye Htut said editors had been told “not to use news stories if they could not be confirmed”.

An editor at one of the state-run newspapers should not condemn them for this error.

But U Ye Htut told *The Myanmar Times* that editors from the state’s newspapers can choose their own copy, and should write their own

in this case they just put the story and picture into the paper – they need to take responsibility for writing the news themselves,” he said.

He added that the ministry is trying to train journalists to understand media ethics, take responsibility for what they write and be more transparent.

U Thiha Saw, chief editor of *Open News* journal and *Myanma Dana* magazine, said the state-run newspaper are facing a lot of difficulties in the transition to democracy, adding that it will take them time to adjust.

“It’s hard to convert state-run papers to public news outlets because the staff need to be retrained,” he said.

“But democratic countries do not need government mouthpieces,” he said.

U Ye Htut said *Myanmar News Agency* will become a government press office, with the hope that it will distribute government news to private newspapers when the Public Service Media law is enacted.

MNA was founded in 1962 to distribute government news to private newspapers. However, when all private newspapers were nationalised in 1962 it fed stories only to state-run papers.

“There were many reasons why state-run newspapers relied heavily on *MNA* in the past but they are reforming,” he said.

‘It’s hard to convert state-run papers to public news outlets because the staff need to be retrained.’

responded to criticism after the incident on his Facebook account, stating that all editors of state-run newspapers were told to use news from *Myanmar News Agency*, also run by the state, and the deputy minister

stories.

“In the past, half of news came from *MNA* but now only about 20 percent or less comes from official sources. Editors have the right to refuse stories if they doubt the accuracy of reports. But

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Used in respect of “Non-alcoholic beverages and preparations for making the same”.

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Used in respect of “Non-alcoholic beverages, syrups, concentrates and other preparations for making such beverages”.

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Patent and Trademark Attorneys,
Hong Kong
P.O. Box 60, Yangon
Dated: 4th March, 2013

10,000 acres returned to farmers in Pyin Oo Lwin

By Sithu Lwin

MORE than 10,000 acres of farmland in Pyin Oo Lwin township in Mandalay Region confiscated for use in government projects has been returned to its original owners following a National League for Democracy campaign.

U Kyaw Thiha, National League for Democracy representative for Pyin Oo Lwin township in the Pyithu Hluttaw, is working with government officials from the related departments in ensure that farmers can continue to work their farms.

“The land was taken over a number of years under the former military regime in order to build a government project,” U Kyaw Thiha told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

“But the government did not build the projects in these areas so we are helping farmers to return to their own lands to plant crops,” he said.

U Kyaw Thiha said he is working with officials from the Settlement and Land Records Department under the Ministry of Forestry, as well as other officials from the township’s administrative department to find proof of ownership documents.

“The amount of land returned to farmers amounts to more than 10,000 acres so far,” he said.

However, farmers who have benefitted from the return of the land say they have held back from removing the pillars, foundations and other constructions for the unfinished projects on their land.

U Phyu, a 45-year-old farmer from Myay Pone village, said his land had been returned after a venture at the site failed.

“My land was taken in 2009 for a coffee plantation. But the project was not successful,” he said. “I’ve

heard that some of these confiscated pieces of land have been resold,” he added.

Farmland was taken in Pyin Oo Lwin for agriculture projects that included coffee and mulberry plantations, and some owners were paid compensation for all or part of their land but others were not, said U Sai Min Latt, NLD secretary for Pyin Oo Lwin township.

“The lands that has been returned to farmers was from agricultural projects. And some of the land taken by the military is being cultivated through leases. But if for some reason the lease is not renewed the farmers are unable to cultivate the land,” said U Kyaw Thiha.

“Under the by-law of the Uncultivated Land, Vacant Land and Virgin Land Act the military must ensure that an annual percentage of the land is farmed but they have done nothing with most of the land they took,” he said.

“We have found that new projects are being granted permission, even though previous efforts failed. We have also heard that minerals are being mined in some areas but we are still trying to confirm this information,” he added.

U Sai Min Latt said the office receives complaints about farmland confiscations daily – in some cases up to 10 a day.

According to section 45(d) of the by-laws of the Uncultivated Land, Vacant Land and Virgin Land Act minerals cannot be extracted from land that was appropriated for use in agriculture projects.

There are 58 village tracts and 141 villages in Pyin Oo Lwin township, with most farmers earning a living from growing cabbage, flowers, strawberries and other crops. – *Translated by Thiri Min Htun*



Car traders protest their eviction from the Hantharwaddy car trading zone in Yangon last week. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

YCDC seals car zone amid protests

By Myat May Zin

YANGON City Development Committee sealed the Hantharwaddy automobile trading zone on March 1 following three consecutive days of protests from residents and business owners, who were refusing to leave the area.

There are four main gates at the zone: two entrances and two exits. One entrance was opened in the late morning for restricted pedestrian access only. Meanwhile, more than 20,000 protestors gathered at the zone.

"We protested on February 26, 27 and 28," said U Min

Ko Myint, chairman of the anti-relocation committee, formed by traders to battle the eviction. "We traded until yesterday. But YCDC wouldn't allow us into the zone this morning. Today, more than 20,000 protestors are shouting for their rights. We cannot access the cars that were shut inside the zone," he added.

U Thein Than, treasurer of the Myanmar Central Association for Automobile Purchase and Selling, said: "We are sending letters to policy makers, the mayor and the head of YCDC to ask for meetings and discussions."

"When they introduced a detailed plan of their new

project, they said they would give us a trading zone that would hold 476 automobiles. We added some comments to the plan, and told them we wanted to construct a three-storey building. But they refused to discuss it with us. Now, we are trying to meet with the head of YCDC's finance department."

Hantharwaddy car trading zone has been earmarked by the city for a mixed use commercial, retail and residential development, which will be built by Shwe Taung Development Company, which is owned by U Aik Htun. Shwe Taung Development won the tender for the plot in a tender

announced in March 2012. However, one international consultant said the tender was not widely publicised and given an extremely short window, a significant part of which fell over Myanmar's new year holiday break, when most of the country effectively shuts down.

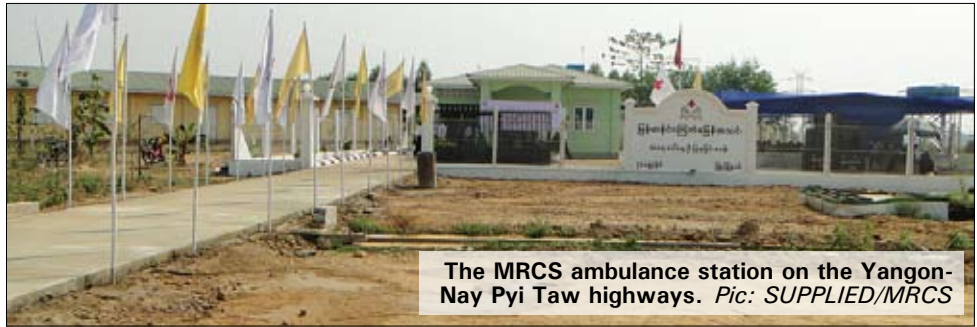
YCDC issued business owners and residents at Hantharwaddy a deadline to leave the area by February 20, with four days notice. The first protest began on February 20.

Although representatives from YCDC and the anti-relocation committee met after the protest of about 500 on February 20, the parties

could not reach an amicable agreement.

However, not all traders are concerned about the move to the new location at Thiri Mingalar Market. U Soe Moe, an auto dealer with 13 years of experience working at Hantharwaddy, said: "This market has had to move from one place to another nine times in the past. It is nonsense when [demonstrators] tell us there will be difficulty relocating to Thiri Mingalar Market."

"YCDC gave us permission to trade at Hantharwaddy temporarily. When dealers move the customers follow, just as they have always done."



The MRCS ambulance station on the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw highways. Pic: SUPPLIED/MRCS

MRCS opens NPT highway aid station

By Yamon Phu Thit

THE 115-mile rest area on the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw Highway now houses a 24-hour pre-hospital care and ambulance station operated by the Myanmar Red Cross Society, a spokesperson said on February 25.

The post will cut the time it takes for ambulances and healthcare to reach crash sites, the society's deputy secretary general, Dr Aung Kyaw Htut, said on February 26.

"Many traffic accidents happen on this highway. And many people have died unnecessarily due to delays in getting them to hospital or by delivering them to hospital in poor transport," he said. "If they receive first aid [at the scene] and are referred to the hospital in time, their

chances of survival will be higher," he said.

With the support of Singapore Red Cross, MRCS has spent more than K19 million building the first-aid post.

MRCS has been providing an ambulance service on the highway since November 2011, and has referred more than 170 patients to the nearest hospitals, said Daw Than Than Myint, officer in charge of the post.

Contact numbers for the service will be displayed along the highway and will provide 24-hour free-of-charge services.

"We need people's cooperation for this service. We want them to note the post's contacts and contact us when accidents happen so that we can reach there in time," she said.

"Apart from accidents and injuries, people can

contact us with whatever difficulties they have on the highway."

The ambulance service will start with one ambulance donated by Singapore Red Cross. "It would be more convenient if we had at least two ambulances, since we'll have a difficult decision to make if there are two accidents at the same time," she said.

MRCS is seeking donations from the public to help fund the project. Restaurant staff at the 115-mile rest area will also be given basic first-aid training so they can help in the event of a major emergency, she said.

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

Panasonic donates solar lamps

By Myat Nyein Aye

THE Japanese electronics company Panasonic has donated 3000 solar lamps for distribution in rural areas.

At a donation ceremony on February 22, a spokesperson for the company said the lamps would go to areas without electricity.

Mr Yoriyoshi Shiokawa, managing director of Panasonic Asia Pacific, said the 3000 lamps were among 10,000 that the company plans to distribute to the world by 2018.

"We want to help people living without electricity to improve their lifestyle. Conditions in Myanmar are improving rapidly. Our donation will bring further improvement," he said.

The lamps were handed over for distribution to four organisations: Bridge Asia Japan, Greater Mekong Initiative, Japan Heart and Myanmar Red Cross Society.

Ms Michiko Ogawa, general manager of Panasonic's corporate social responsibility wing said: "Students who want to study at night and people requiring urgent medical treatment at night will benefit from this donation."

The solar lamps will not be sold in the local market, said Panasonic's spokesperson in Yangon Ma Yin Myo Thu. Solar lamps are powered by a battery that gains its energy from the sun.

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Bago farmers criticise govt over flooding

By Soe Sandar Oo

NYAUNGGLAYBIN township farmers have criticised a Bago Region minister, U Myint Lwin Oo, for giving incorrect information to the regional parliament over seasonal flooding.

U Nyunt Lwin, a farmer from Yay Pu Kan village tract in Nyaungglaybin township, said the Moutkhamu River and other streams nearby are dammed by fishermen to make breeding ponds and block the drainage of water during the monsoon months, causing the water to spill out and flood paddy fields. He

said flooding has destroyed more than 20,000 acres of paddy field every year since 2003.

"We first reported this matter to the Department of Fisheries, township authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in 2005. The last time was in 2007. Finally, we sought help from the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Pyu, U Nyunt Hlaing (Union Solidarity Development Party), who is also a member of the hluttaw's Agriculture and Fisheries Development Committee," he said.

"On December 28, Department of Fisheries

officials came to investigate the problem because they had seen a number of reports. They wrote down what we told them but took no action.

"But the minister said in the regional parliament on January 10 that he had no report on this problem. We are extremely upset about his answer and want to know who was lying - the minister or the ministry bureaucrats," he added.

U Nyunt Hlaing said the minister had probably not been briefed on the issue or had been given incorrect information.

"I think the minister was given the wrong information

from officials when they wrote the report following their trip to the field," he said.

U Nyunt Hlaing sent a letter to the Pyidaungsu office in Nay Pyi Taw on December 28 asking how they intended to solve the flooding problem.

U Myint Lwin Oo, a Bago Region minister, told the parliament that the flooding was not caused by fishermen creating artificial ponds.

He said during the summer months the river nearly dries up - and when the monsoon rains arrive the course of the river changes naturally, leading to flooding. He

added that the Moutkhamu River is connected with the Sittaung River and when the latter floods during monsoon its overflows into the Moutkhamu.

But U Nyunt Lwin said the artificial ponds on that waterway then prevent the water from draining naturally.

"There was also no answer about how the problem would be solved. We face financial hardship every year because 20,000 acres of our monsoon paddy is flooded," he said.

However, U Khin Maung Aye, a deputy minister in the regional government,

said the problem could be solved by clearing the river of artificial breeding ponds and has discussed the matter with U Nyunt Hlaing.

U Nyunt Hlaing said he would put the interests of farmers above those of fish pond owners.

The minister said that starting from the 2013-14 financial year, which begins April 1, the ministry would begin taking precautions, in conjunction with the Department of Fisheries, to ensure the agriculture sector is not affected by fish farming. He added that the ministry will also reduce the number of fish ponds.

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Relays, magnetic relays, static relays, thermal relays, level control relays, solid-state relays, protective relays, grounding relays, overcurrent relays, induction type relays, I/O remote terminal, reed relays; Temperature controllers, temperature sensors; Timers, counters, time-limit relays, time-delay relays, thermally-operated time-limit relays, motor timers, solid-state timers, electromagnetic counters, solid-state counters, power supplies; Monitoring equipments, floatless level switches, relay unit, motor relays, current converters, current sensors, current limiters, heater fault detectors voltage sensors, voltage relays, earth leakage relays, leakage alarm, phase reversal relays, overcurrent and earth-fault relays, frequency relays, reverse power relays, power factor controllers, power relays, pulsers, tool monitors, digital panel meters, transducers, transmitters, electrostatic capacitance type level switches, solid-state level meters; Connectors, F/A connectors, DIN connectors, MIL-type connectors, interface connectors, IC sockets; Photo-micro sensors; Programmable controllers; computers, electronic computers, electronic calculating machines; Factory automation equipments, automatic inspection equipment, automatic test equipment, programmable cam switches, programmable limit switches, memory card system, single board computer, programmable terminal;

Electro-mechanical equipments, motor or invertor systems; Input-output equipments, image scanners, control board for PPC, flat key board, MODEM; Bill changers, coin changes, automatic teller machines automatic cash dispensing machines, bill dispensing machines, bill validators, MICR encoders, depository, pass book printers, card readers; Ticket issuing machines, automatic ticket checking and collecting gates, voucher issuing machines, vending machines, vending machines for tickets/foods/gasoline/ and other articles; Electronic cash registers, point of sales terminal and peripheral equipments; Traffic control apparatus and instruments.

Class 10: Surgical, medical, dental and veterinary apparatus and instruments, artificial limbs, eyes and teeth; orthopedic articles; suture materials, including: Electronic sphygmomanometers, electronic clinical thermometers, electronic blood cell counters, auto cell analyzers, electric steam inhalers, ultrasonic nebulizers, electrocardiographs, electric massages, electric pulse massagers, urine monitors, digital pedometers, ultrasonic cleaners, blood glucose monitors, flow cytometers, sphygmomanometers, hyperthermia treatment systems.

I. The followings are the full wordings of abbreviations used in the List of Goods.

1. "I/O" in I/O remote terminal stands for "input output".
2. "F/A" in F/A connectors stands for "factory automation".
3. "DIN" in DIN connectors stands for "Deutsche Industrie Normen".
4. "MIL" in MIL-type connectors stands for "(US) Military Specification".
5. "IC" in IC sockets stands for "integrated circuit".
6. "PPC" in control board for PPC stands for "pulsed power circuit".

II. Explanation of some of the goods is given below.

1. "Power factor controllers" are controllers for supplying of an electronic power.
2. "Memory card systems" are memory cards and memory card apparatus and systems mainly comprising the same.
3. "Programmable terminal" is an I/O display for a controller or a computer.
4. "Hyperthermia treatment systems" are hyperthermia treatment systems, comprising apparatus and equipment included heating device, thermometer, interface, personal computer and color plotter printer for cancer treatment.

U Nyunt Tin Associates International Limited

Intellectual Property Division

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For **OMRON Corporation**

Dated: 4 March, 2013.

NLD launches health network

NATIONAL League for Democracy launched a health network in early February to provide public health services and education, the network's president said at a press conference at Yangon's Royal Rose Restaurant on February 23.

The National Health Network was formed on February 9 to improve health standards in Myanmar, said the organisation's president, Dr Tin Myo Win.

"We aim to fulfil the health requirements of the country as best as we can," he said.

The health network becomes the NLD's third organisation. The network aims to

provide basic healthcare, health education to public and medical providers, emergency healthcare services, mobile healthcare services, and to generate local and international advice for the health policy reform, he added.

"We also aim to reduce the prevalence of common diseases in Myanmar in the key affected populations and hotspots areas."

The network's actions will focus on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's constituency of Kawhmu township in Yangon Region at first, before expanding nationwide in future.

- Yamon Phu Thit

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For **The Procter & Gamble Company**

Dated: 4 March, 2013.

KWR releases investment guidebook update

By Stuart Deed

KWR International has released its updated Myanmar investment guide, which is nearly twice as long as the original and is aimed at providing investors “with the information they need to develop an in-depth understanding of developments in Myanmar”.

KWR International president Keith Rabin said the guide – *Business and Investment Opportunities in the “New” Myanmar* – covers events until just before US President Barack Obama’s visit to Myanmar in November.

“Frankly, the situation is evolving so rapidly we thought it important to both update and give more depth to our coverage. The first edition was 57 pages long and published just before the April 2012 by-elections and the new edition is about twice the length – totalling more than 100 pages,” he told *The Myanmar Times* on February 20.

A new addition to the guide is a section on electricity, which Mr Rabin said was included in recognition of its importance to the country’s development.

“We also included a copy of the new Foreign Investment Law as an appendix. All of the

sections, however, were updated where necessary and most were expanded, as evidenced by the fact the report is now about double the length of the first edition,” he said.

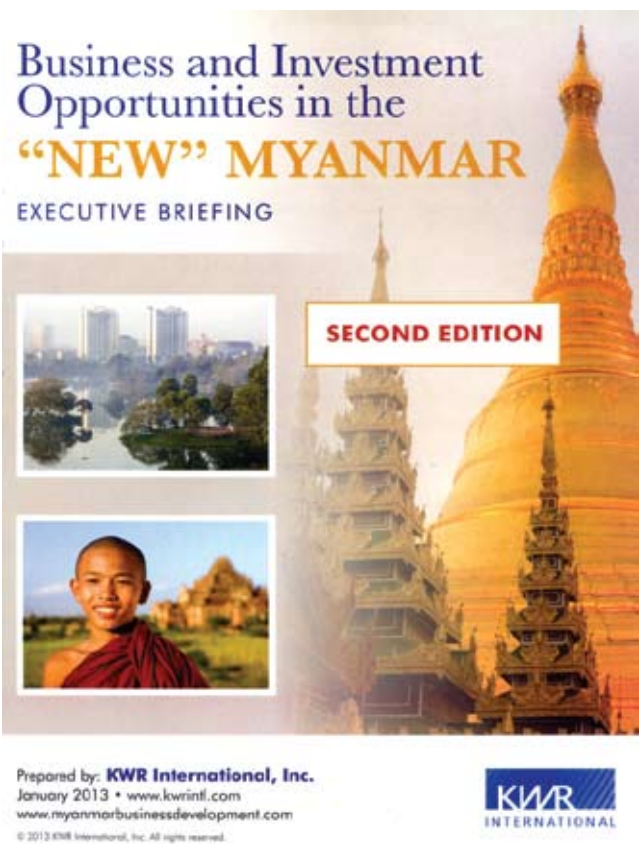
He added that writing the update took “about a month which was substantially less time than the first edition – both because the framework was in place and we are monitoring events on a daily basis for our own understanding as well as for a range of client projects – so most of the data had already been assembled”.

The lead analyst on the update was Christina Madden, Mr Rabin said.

He added that the rapid pace of Myanmar’s progress “continues to amaze”, with the people who know the country the best the most surprised by the changes.

The update also represents a change in tack from KWR regarding pricing and the intended buyers: The first edition was priced at US\$395 and aimed at a “small group of large companies and institutions”. But Mr Rabin said it uncovered a much wider interest group.

“Thousands of people downloaded our executive summary and we received many inquiries from journalists, analysts, companies, investors, as



well as academics who wanted to use it in their classrooms.

“These people sought to better understand the current situation in Myanmar, but could not justify the price we were charging for the full report,” he said.

Following a request from Myanmar Book Centre to

cooperate in selling and marketing the update, Mr Rabin elected to drop the price significantly to \$49 a copy.

“We decided this was a good opportunity to reach a larger audience, both

in Myanmar and other markets, as a printed publication and ebook. While we just embarked on this strategy we have already received an inquiry about translating the report into a Japanese edition,” Mr Rabin said.

Mr Rabin added that finding accurate and specific information on Myanmar remains “very difficult”.

“Interestingly, the level of interest among potential investors and business partners is quite high – but the lack of available information makes it difficult to obtain the data needed to make decisions and to channel this enthusiasm into viable implementation strategies,” he said.

“This is a major obstacle that needs to be addressed whether this information be provided by the government or other parties.”

Mr Rabin said technical information, such as the details of specific laws and regulations, are relatively easy to track down but “underlying dynamics and attractions” were far more challenging, and the guide aimed to address this problem.

“That is where I think our report differs from many

others. While we do address different laws and technical considerations, our primary emphasis is on providing a detailed understanding of the opportunities now emerging.

“By highlighting both positive and negative aspects of the transformation now underway, the reader is better able to better evaluate Myanmar’s potential, as well as the difficulties of operating in this market,” he said.

The guide is available at the Myanmar Book Centre and KWR International is also distributing the document through other outlets in the country, as well as at conferences and seminars, Mr Rabin said.

“We are also working with them to find distributors in other ASEAN and Asian markets, and are now making arrangements to offer it for sale in both hard copy and ebook form on Amazon, the Apple store and our www.myanmarbusinessdevelopment.com site,” he said.

It was also available at the “US-Myanmar Trade and Investment Relations: The Path Forward” conference in Yangon on February 25, which Mr Rabin said was treated as the official launch.

Weather forecasts planned for every town, says department

By Aye Sapay Phyu

EVERY town in the country is to have its own weather forecasts, says the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

With help from the Norwegian government, the department will implement the three-year project starting this year.

“We currently support weather forecasting for regions and states. Extending our service to every town will help farmers, livestock breeders and the health-care service,” said department deputy director U Chit Kyaw

said last week.

“We’re now testing software systems. Then we will train staff how to use the software,” he said.

Meanwhile, weather radars will be set up in Kyaukpadaung in Rakhine State, Mandalay and Yangon with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, a move that will also help disaster risk reduction.

“The radars show the weather within a 250-mile radius, which will not only enable us to trace storms, but also to provide bad weather warnings for transportation services,” he said.

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Email hacking exposes cybercrime curse

By Bill O’Toole

ON February 10, more than a dozen reporters covering Myanmar, both inside and outside the country, received warnings from Google that their Gmail accounts had been the subject of “state-sponsored attacks”.

Though no official list of those who received the warning has been compiled, more than a dozen journalists are said to have received the message. Confirmed cases include an *Associated Press* correspondent in Yangon, journalist and commentator Bertil Lintner, an editor at *The Voice*, a journalist at Eleven Media Group, several staff members at *The Irrawaddy*, and even U Ye Htut, a spokesperson for President U Thein Sein.

The story was reported in several international newspapers, with fingers mostly pointed at the Myanmar government. However, it is just the latest, and most high profile, in a long line of cyber attacks to hit people and organisations with links to the country, and experts warn the difficulties in pinpointing the perpetrators of the attacks mean that labelling them “state-sponsored” might “cause further harm” rather than help.

Eleven Media Group, one of the news outlets whose reporters got the message, has been the targeted several times in the past year. On January 15, its website was hijacked by a group referring to itself as the “Red Army.”

This attack came about one month after the website was attacked by a group calling itself the “Kachin Cyber Army”, who replaced Eleven’s homepage with a message decrying the “[expletive] All Burmese Media Bourgeois”.

As recently as February 3, the website of the office of President U Thein Sein crashed under an attack from the “Indonesian Cyber Army”. Last summer, during the peak of unrest in Rakhine State, the “Bangladeshi Cyber Army” defaced the Myanmar Tourism Board’s website, as well as several other sites.

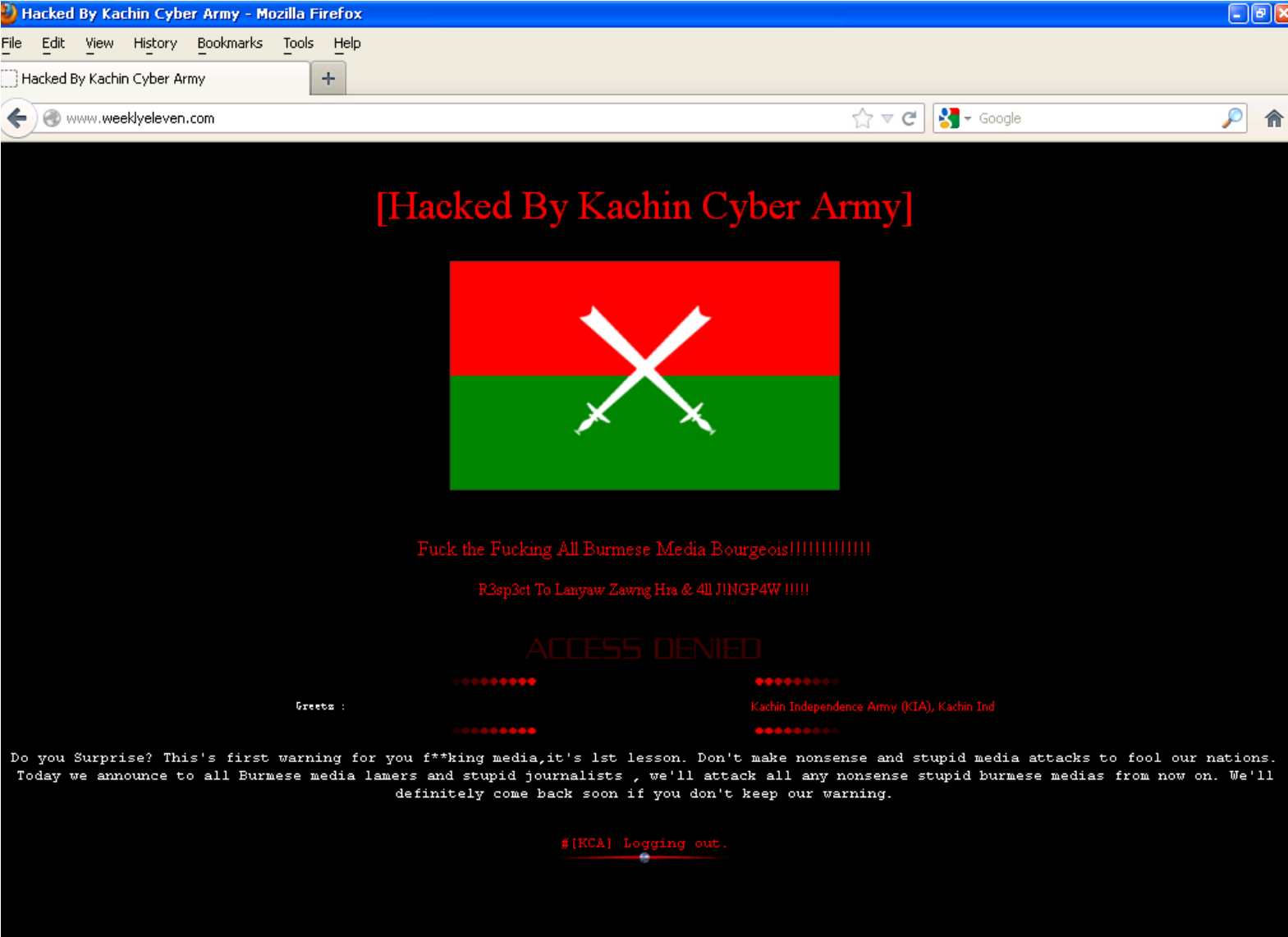
Nobody is safe

“Cyber crime is becoming a severe threat to all nations,” said Mr Lennon Chang, a professor of criminology at the City University of Hong Kong and author of the 2012 report, *Cybercrime in Asia: Trends and Challenges*. “Less developed nations like Myanmar might be more susceptible to these kinds of attacks [because] the whole cyber environment is more vulnerable to attacks as the government is less likely to be equipped to secure the cyber-world,” he said by email.

Though outlets such as *The Voice* have had their Facebook pages hijacked by various hacker groups in the past, this most recent episode appears to be the first time email accounts have been targeted. It is also the first time U Thein Sein’s government has been accused, albeit indirectly, of using the internet to meddle with the newly unmuzzled press.

Presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut has denied that any attacks were sanctioned by the government. “There is no state-sponsored attack on individual accounts...that is not the policy of our government,” he told *Associated Press*.

He said Google should be clearer in identifying who it suspects was behind the attacks “because the vague reference to state-sponsored attackers hurts the image of the government”.



Weekly Eleven’s website was hacked by a grop calling itself the ‘Kachin Cyber Army’ in January.

Others also appear sceptical. Writing on his Facebook page, writer and historian Dr Thant Myint-U, who also received the message, said: “It seems from other news stories that thousands of people around the world have received similar messages ... so I’m not convinced this is something specific to Myanmar.”

Google has also not indicated which “state” might be behind the attack. In recent weeks the Chinese government has been accused by the *New York Times* of using nefarious means to get access to the accounts of staffers who worked on a story about the wealth amassed by relatives of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. The newspaper suggested the Chinese military

from America ... it’s a guessing game.”

He said members of the Press Council are drafting a letter to President U Thein Sein to discuss the vulnerability of Myanmar media organisations and ask the government to take steps to make the internet more secure.

Updating the law to make the cyber world safer

The government said recently it would replace the Electronic Transactions Law from 2004 with more up-to-date legislation. In the meantime, it said, sections of the law that have been used to imprison political activists would be removed.

But any possible increase

systems and cyberlaws that apply to everyone.”

U Thiha Saw and U Kyaw Zaw Linn both said they had no idea why it appeared specific people had been targeted. “Some people say it is [their] reporting on the military or the Rohingya,” said U Thiha Saw. “But they are not the only people reporting on these issues – why target them?”

If earlier cyberattacks are an indication, different groups have attacked different websites for a wide variety of reasons, making a motive difficult to pin down. In many ways, Myanmar’s recent brushes with cyber-warfare resemble its political process, with a large, often chaotic mix of diverse and diverging interests.

that are state-sponsored.”

Professor Roderic Broadhurst from the Australian Research Council’s Centre for Excellence in Policing and Security said it was “not possible to know from an initial attack” whether the act is “state-sponsored” or by non-government groups. “[O]ffenders obfuscate the source and make it difficult to trace back.”

“[Internet] routers are also ‘dumb’. They do not (and are not designed to) capture more than basic information,” Dr Broadhurst, a co-author of *Cybercrime in Asia*, told *The Myanmar Times* by email.

Dr Chang agreed, saying: “Some attacks might look like they are state-sponsored as the attacks might target only certain types of information or certain people. Nonetheless, they might be conducted by patriots, not the government. Therefore, I think it might be dangerous to warn users about ‘state-sponsored’ attacks unless they have very strong evidence to prove it, or if they have a special reason to issue such a warning. These warnings might not help in future crime investigations, but might cause further harm.”

Both Dr Chang and Dr Broadhurst said that “political” cyber attacks are, from a technical standpoint, indistinguishable from “criminal” cyber attacks. Both rely on the same techniques to access and disrupt websites.

In recent years, Google has its own, very public struggles with security issues and cyberattacks. In addition to the aforementioned attacks believed to emanate from China, there are suspicions over the company’s relationship with the National Security Agency, which handles both domestic and foreign surveillance and security gathering for the United States government.

‘Less developed nations like Myanmar might be more susceptible to these kinds of attacks [because] the whole cyber environment is more vulnerable ... as the government is less likely to be equipped to secure the cyber-world..’

has directed cyberattacks at other American targets, including Coke and Google.

None of the news outlets interviewed for this article were ready to definitively blame the Myanmar government for the internet-based attacks on websites, and Facebook and email accounts. “It is not possible to know who attempted to make this cyber-attack,” said U Kyaw Zaw Linn, an executive editor at Eleven Media Group. “It’s possible that it’s those with military [connections].”

U Thiha Saw, secretary of the interim Press Council and editor of Open News, agreed it was difficult to know who was behind the incidents. “Maybe it’s someone from the military, maybe they’re from Mandalay, maybe they’re

in government monitoring or management of the internet and news websites is also a cause for concern among many in the Press Council.

“There are two issues here,” said U Thiha Saw. “There’s protecting freedom of expression, which everyone has a right to, and there’s protecting against this kind of crime.”

U Kyaw Min Swe, an editor at *The Voice* whose Facebook page was hijacked last week, said he felt that the cyberattacks were a greater threat to freedom of expression than government monitoring of the internet. “These [cyberattacks] are not good for us, but they’re also bad for our audience ... in the near future we will face this situation even more if we do not have proper

The “Red Army” claims its attack was designed to enforce Myanmar’s existing internet usage laws as it said the government was not doing this properly. The “Bangladeshi Cyber Army” says it is attacking on behalf of persecuted Rohingya communities.

Google offices in Seoul, Hyderabad, Singapore, and Tokyo could not be reached for comment but when it rolled out the Gmail account warning feature in June 2012, Google said in a statement: “You might ask how we know this activity is state-sponsored. We can’t go into the details without giving away information that would be helpful to these bad actors, but our detailed analysis – as well as victim reports – strongly suggest the involvement of states or groups



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Organisers talk up economic forum in NPT

By Zaw Win Than

THE 22nd World Economic Forum on East Asia in Myanmar in early June is being billed by the organiser as the “largest” in the event’s history in the region.

“It’s great honour to host the 22nd World Economic Forum on East Asia in Myanmar,” Mr Sushant Palakurthi Rao, senior director and head of Asia for World Economic Forum, said during a press conference in Yangon last week. “After hosting this meeting for 22 years in the region, I’m very happy to share that we expect this to be the largest World Economic Forum in Asia in our history,” he said.

The forum will be held in Nay Pyi Taw from June 5 to 7, and will bring together leading international senior decision makers from industry, government, academia and civil society, he added.

“I believe that the number of people who are coming is a reflection of the global interest in the transitions that are taking place in Myanmar ... [and] many investors are coming to Myanmar in recent months but it is important to emphasise here that this is not an investors conference.

“Our objective is to support what we will call the creation of a moral economy. A moral economy is about responsible investing to benefit all stakeholders in Myanmar,” he said.



Senior director and head of Asia for World Economic Forum, Mr Sushant Palakurthi Rao, speaks during a press conference in Yangon last week. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

Under the main theme “*Courageous Transformation for inclusion and integration*”, this year’s meeting will discuss three sub-themes: inspiring inclusive transformation, realising regional integration and regional solutions for global resilience.

He said the forum would take not only business and economic leaders but also the leaders from civil society, government and academia.

“We want to put at the centre

of economic growth a move from a short-term vision to a long-term vision for Myanmar and all the stakeholders. One thing that we focus on is job creation, as well as the expansion of educational opportunities and social entrepreneurs,” he added.

The co-chairs of the forum are Helen Clark, administrator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) from New York, Anthony Fernandes, group

chief executive officer of Air Asia from Malaysia, Yorihiro Kojima, chairman of the board of Mitsubishi Corporation from Japan, Indra Nooyi, chairman and chief executive officer of PepsiCo from United States, Subramanian Ramadorai, vice-chairman of Tata Consultancy Services from India and John Rice, vice-chairman of GE from Hong Kong.

As Myanmar assumes the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014,

Mr Palakurthi Rao said it will have a critical role in guiding the 10 economies of the member states toward the planned economic integration in 2015.

“This summit is on the one hand about Myanmar but it also about the region. It is an East Asia summit as well. We will also look at the integration of Myanmar as a member of ASEAN and as a future chair of ASEAN in 2014.

“Therefore the summit is not only about linking Myanmar to the regional economy and the global economy but it is also equally about linking people and how to facilitate the movements of people, whether for educational opportunities, for tourism, for employment,” he said. He said the forum has already begun a serious of initiatives that would address some of the key challenges and issues facing Myanmar, including energy and sustainable travel and tourism.

In conjunction with the East Asia meeting, the forum will also be hosting its Young Global Leaders Annual Summit in Yangon from June 2 to 7. More than 200 young global leaders representing business, government, civil society, arts and culture, academia and media, as well as social entrepreneurs will take part in the summit. The focus will be on progressing civil society institutions, long-term sustainable economic development and engaging with younger generations.

US official sees ‘real commitment’ in Myanmar’s EITI efforts

By Tim McLaughlin

ATOP United States diplomat said last week that there is a genuine interest among Myanmar’s energy officials to enact widespread reform.

US State Department’s Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs, Carlos Pascual, made the statement after meeting with senior Ministry of Energy and Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) officials last week during a four-day visit that began on February 20.

Mr Pascual said officials demonstrated, “A real eagerness to understand the kind of steps they can take to improve their financial accountability and recording keeping, to improve the ways in which the conduct tenders to insure they are competitive and to be able to adopt the kinds of international practices that characterise some of the best actors regionally and globally in the oil and gas sector”.

Mr Pascual also said that he expects the Myanmar government to submit an application to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) by the end of 2013.

“Within MOGE and the Ministry of Energy and at high levels of the government there is not a resistance to move forward with these kinds of transparency measures, in fact we found the opposite,” said Mr Pascual on February 23.

“It’s a long and complicated process; there is a real

commitment to move forward in a determined and concerted way. The goal is that by the end of 2013 that the government will submit to the EITI Secretariat an application for membership and that would then be reviewed in the next board meeting.”

EITI was launched in 2002. The Norway headquartered multi-stakeholder coalition of governments, companies, investors, civil society organisations, and partner organisations is focused on bringing greater transparency and accountability in the extractive sector.

“It is going to require that they [MOGE and the Ministry of Energy] make information public; their sources of revenue, the levels of revenue, they are going to have to comply with international practices on procurement,” Mr Pascual said.

Currently, 18 countries are EITI compliant and 19 have achieved EITI candidate status. The US is only in the beginning stages of EITI implementation. The US expects to submit its candidate application in the second half of 2013 and publish its first EITI report in 2014.

Minister of the President’s Office and chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission U Soe Thein was appointed chairman of the EITI Leading Authority, a group to oversee EITI implementation, when it was formed on December 14 by President U Thein Sein.

Dyveke Rogan of EITI said

that they were receiving “very good political support”, from within Myanmar and that progress on EITI was “clearly happening”.

The July 2012 announcement by President Barack Obama allowing US oil and gas corporations to conduct activities in Myanmar ended 15 years of US restriction on the sector, although companies are still subject to reporting regulations.

President Obama was criticised by some in Washington for the move, including Senators John McCain of Arizona and Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, who said that they were “concerned” that the Obama administration would allow US firms to do business with MOGE, which has long been surrounded by corruption and lack of transparency.

An entry into EITI would be the latest step by Myanmar energy sector officials that they are undertaking real change as oil and gas interest grows.

The Ministry of Energy delayed a scheduled exploration tender for oil and gas after being urged by Western energy companies in September 2012 to increase transparency. The tender was announced five months later on January 17 for 18 onshore blocks. It will close on March 17.

In 2012 oil and gas was the largest sector for foreign direct investment, amounting to US\$366.6 million, the Union of Myanmar Chambers of Commerce and Industry said.



United States seeks assistance in recovering MIA remains

By Geoffrey Goddard

THE United States government has launched a publicity campaign in Myanmar as part of its effort to recover the remains of American service personnel missing since World War II.

The publicity campaign includes placing advertisements such as the one above in Myanmar newspapers.

The campaign follows the resumption of searches for remains by the Hawaii-based Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), which sent a coordination team to Myanmar in January to prepare for a visit by investigators.

A JPAC spokeswoman said the investigators, including linguists and analysts, would be seeking information to help locate sites where remains might be found.

About 730 American service personnel were listed as MIA in Myanmar during World War II. Most were victims of plane crashes in Kachin State while “flying the hump”, the route used by Allied pilots to ferry supplies from northeastern India to Chinese Nationalist and American forces in China.

The resumption of the search follows the thaw in relations between the United States and Myanmar since the reformist government of President U Thein Sein came to power.

Cooperation between the previous military government and JPAC led to the recovery of the remains of seven airmen in 2003 and 2004.

The caption in Myanmar on the top half of the image says: “U.S. seeks information on unaccounted-for Americans from World War II”.

The caption on the bottom of the image reads: “A team from the U.S. Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) (www.jpac.pacom.mil) will search for information on American service members who remain unaccounted-for from World War II in Burma. If you have any information regarding aircraft crash sites from World War II, please contact 09-541-9569.”

US looks to smooth sanctions era shift

By Aye Thidar Kyaw and Justin Heifetz

JOSE Fernandez, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, said that American companies in Myanmar need to be vocal about road bumps as Myanmar shifts from the sanctions era, during the United States-Myanmar Trade and Investment Conference on February 25.

The US Chamber of Commerce, comprising a delegation of 50 American business representatives, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) during the conference.

Fernandez said that US President Barack Obama has provided incentives for further political and economic reform in Myanmar by easing US sanctions; backing Myanmar legislation to protect the freedom of assembly and the rights of workers to form labour unions; and implementing a US-Myanmar joint plan to tackle human trafficking. Myanmar, he said, has taken steps towards socioeconomic reform by increasing transparency in the national budget.

He added that the Foreign Investment Law, enacted in November 2012, has opened significant opportunities for investors. Although it is an improvement from the 1988 law, he said, "There are still some significant gaps between local law and what we consider international



UMFCCI president U Win Aung presents Jose Fernandez, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, with a mosaic gem painting at the United States-Myanmar Trade and Investment Conference on February 25. Pic: Ko Taik

or doing business here so that we can work with you in order to come up with appropriate solutions.

"We've heard from both companies and NGOs that specific sanctions on a number of banks were making it very hard for them to get certain basic financial services, such as checking accounts," he said.

He said that American companies in Myanmar

soon be expanded and modernised under national development plans following the establishment of the Thilawa special economic zone, he said.

"These new development activities are being implemented through private-public partnerships," he said.

"I believe the US Chamber of Commerce can play a very constructive role in the new era of economic development in our country. American science, technology, expertise and financial resources can help our country's development," U Nyan Htun Oo added.

UMFCCI president U Win Aung said the MoU is a sign of Myanmar's political and economic reforms, as the government continues to chip away at trade barriers and unnecessary bureaucratic processes.

"Our people are longing for a better quality of life, which can only be ensured by the total lifting of sanctions. We request that the US provides our country with the same preferential status this is awarded to other developing countries," he said.

"We are in urgent need of advanced scientific and industrial technology. We need to develop our financial capacities, management expertise and market access."

Myanmar's government officials expect that the US delegation's visit will boost both countries' bilateral trade and American investment to Myanmar. The Directorate of Investment and Company Administration shows that US investment in Myanmar stands at about US\$243 million until January 31, 2012.

should inform the American embassy in Myanmar and the Chamber of Commerce of any problems that they are experiencing for business operations and investment to move forward.

The conference opened three days after the US Treasury announced that it had further eased sanctions in Myanmar by allowing American companies to work with four major banks: Myanma Economic Bank, Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank, Asia Green Development Bank and Ayeyarwady Bank.

U Nyan Htun Oo, minister for Electric Power in Yangon Region, said at the conference that Myanmar's government aims to further industrialise within a short timeframe – and that the Yangon regional government has the responsibility to implement national goals and objectives.

Yangon, with a rapidly increasing population of about six million, will

'I encourage American businesses to let the US government know if there are companies that are encountering particular impediments.'

best practices around the world."

"We remain vigilant about the corruption, lack of transparency and role of the military in this country's economy ...while aiding in the development of an economic and business environment that will provide benefits for all of the people of this country," he said.

During this time of transition, Fernandez said that communication from companies will be key to stabilising bilateral economic relations.

"We need the help of both companies in this country as well as from US companies. As we shift from the sanctions era to a more normalised trade relationship, I encourage American businesses to let the US government know if there are companies that are encountering particular impediments, be they sanctions related or otherwise, to investing



EMBASSY OF INDIA
YANGON

India-Myanmar Business Seminar and B2B Meetings in Yangon and Sittwe

Indian Navy Ship "STS Sudarshini" will be calling on the port of Sittwe from 6-9 March 2013 as part of the events relating to the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of India-ASEAN Dialogue Partnership. The Embassy of India in Yangon would be organizing the following marker events in Yangon and Sittwe on this important occasion:

- 4 March 2013 (2:30 PM) India-Myanmar Business Seminar followed by B2B Meeting and Business Dinner for the invited guests at the Summit Parkview Hotel, Yangon
- 7 March 2013 (2:30 PM) Business Seminar and interaction followed by Cultural performance by ICCR troupe "Kalari" and Dinner at the Royal Sittwe Resort, Sittwe for the invited guests

About 35 businesspersons from Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) would be attending the seminar and the B2B meeting. Business Organizations who are members of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) and the Rakhine State Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RSCCI) and other business persons who are interested in attending the above events may contact the Embassy of India, Yangon (Contact Person Ms. Htet Htet San – Tel. No. 01-381252; Email: bcentre@indiaembassy.net.mm).

YCDC urges shop owners to collect rental deposits

By Myat May Zin

REPRESENTATIVES from the Yangon City Development Committee urged shop owners at Hantharwady automobile trading square to take back their deposit money following a 500-wide protest on part of the square's anti-relocation committee, shop owners said.

YCDC set a deadline to move Myanmar's biggest car trading market, Hantharwady, to former vegetable market Thiri Mingalar on February 20. The trading square has been earmarked by the city for building a department store, residential apartments, automobile showrooms and a public car park, after YCDC sold it to Shwe Taung Development Company for the project in March 2012.

There are 22 food and tea shops and more than 100 small shops selling snacks and betel chew at

Hantharwady. The deposit for food and tea shops is K240,000 a room; most occupants renting have put down their deposit in 2001. If YCDC returns the deposit money on a lease, the tenant can no longer claim a legal relationship with YCDC and must vacate the property.

"Eight staff from YCDC came to the square and called all the shops to take back their deposit money on [February 25]... Nobody signed for their deposit except for two small shops selling snacks and betel," said U Nay Min Thit, owner of Super Matta food and tea shop.

"We have to pay monthly room fees plus a rubbish tax, a shade tax and city development tax. But YCDC hasn't accepted our monthly room fees ever since March 2012, when they released their tender for redevelopment through state media. We have been so worried since last year

and now it's finally happened [that we have to leave the area]," he said.

On February 16, YCDC announced that occupants must remove all automobiles from the trading square and vacate all shops and automobile service centres by February 20. But residents and business owners living and trading at Hantharwady met with YCDC officials after protesting for more transparency over the deadline.

Following a meeting between YCDC officials and leaders from the anti-relocation committee on the same day, YCDC introduced the new "Yangon Car Plaza" plan. YCDC announced they will construct apartments and a car park with a capacity for 600 vehicles to accommodate residents, and 52 automobile car showrooms for trading. They would also build a public car park that can house 600 vehicles, YCDC said.

A woman sits by one of the gates sealed off by YCDC to Hantharwady square on March 1. Pic: Kaung Htet



"There is no plan for shops in this new project. So far, they are only thinking of implementing their project and have given us promises [YCDC] is not sure of. They said they will relocate shops here to another place, but they can't tell us where and how. Now, some automobiles have already been relocated to Thiri Mingalar market, the space we were promised, but not all of them are from Hantharwady. Some of those automobiles are from Min Ye Kyaw Swa Street, because they can't find space in a

trading square," said U Min Ko Oo, chairman of the anti-relocation committee.

More than 1000 residents and business owners at Hantharwady signed a petition against YCDC in February and sent letters expressing their concerns to President U Thein Sein, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Committee for Rule of Law and Tranquility, the Yangon mayor's office and ministers for YCDC on February 25.

Demonstrators in support of the anti-relocation committee continued to

protest on February 26, 27, and 28. However, YCDC closed all entry points to Hantharwady on the morning of March 1 and refused to allow car trading, cutting off traders' access to cars that were parked in the square's lot overnight.

Twenty thousand protestors gathered outside the square on March 1 to demonstrate against YCDC, while Myanma Central Association for Automobile Purchase and Selling (Yangon) prepared letters to policy makers.



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Saw Lu Lu Htaw
Representative for Myanmar
Air France Industries Limited



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This component support cooperation is the first ever undertaken by Air France Industries to Myanmar aviation and will greatly improve the safety and services standard of the Myanmar Airways International (MAI) operation activities in the future.

Saw Lu Lu Htaw
Representative for Myanmar
Air France Industries Limited



Farmers told to up paddy rice price



A labourer arranges a stock of rice at a market in Jakarta, July 2006. Myanmar exports rice to Indonesia, along with China, South Africa and Japan, supplying the country with 50pc broken rice: the country's lowest quality yield. Pic: AFP

By Myat May Zin

THE Myanmar Farmer Association (MFA) issued a letter on February 23 to paddy rice farmers growing summer crops asking them to contract a higher price for export amid the increasing price of paddy rice in China.

"In the first week of February, the Chinese government improved the minimum price of paddy rice by 12 percent. Myanmar is chiefly exporting rice to China by land and by sea. Therefore, the price of paddy rice for upcoming crops will also increase. That is why I would like to tell our farmers not to contract the low [previous] price of rice before they harvest their paddies. Also, farmers have to keep their paddies shaded after harvesting to maintain the quality of their product," said Dr Soe Tun, chairman of the MFA.

The export volume of rice during the 2012-2013 fiscal year is 1.3 million tonnes. Myanmar has exported 800,000 tonnes of rice to China, while

'The Chinese government improved the minimum price of paddy rice by 12pc... the price of paddy rice for upcoming crops will also increase.'

the remaining tonnes have been exported to South Africa, Japan and Indonesia, data from the Myanmar Rice Federation shows.

"Now, we export to China at US\$400-430 a ton. For 25pc broken rice, we get \$340 a ton. All of these prices are from old contracts, as we have been exporting under these contracts. However, we can get \$360 a ton [free on board] for 25pc broken rice in the international market. Later, we can contract a good price by keeping the quality of our rice high with post-harvesting technology," Dr Soe Tun said.

Myanmar exports three types of rice: 50pc broken, 25pc broken, and 5pc broken. While 50pc broken rice is usually exported to Indonesia, 25pc broken rice is normally exported to China and South Africa.

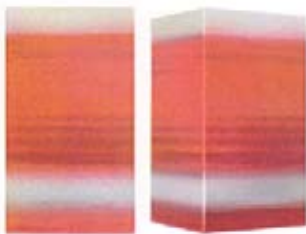
At Yangon Port, exporters launched six ships on February 28 carrying a total of 100,000 tonnes of rice – including a ship that will sail 5pc broken rice to Japan, Myanmar's best quality rice export.

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Fish farms suffer amid early heat wave

By Myat Nyein Aye

UNSEASONABLE early heat and freshwater parasites that thrive in hotter water temperatures are devastating fish farms throughout Myanmar, an official from the Myanmar Fish Farmer Association said.

"Starting on February 9, the temperature shot up unexpectedly, so many farmers' fish pools dried up and the fish died as a result of lack of oxygen. Also, deadly parasites tend to grow in fish farms when the temperature increases," U Soe Tint, the Association's vice chairman, told *The Myanmar Times* on February 21.

While fish farmers normally wait to harvest their fish until monsoon season from June until October, they are harvesting their fish now in fear that

they will die from the heat or parasites.

The most common parasite affecting fish farms is *dactylogyrus*, a flatworm known to inhabit fish gills. The parasite is temperature dependent: Hotter water temperatures increase the parasite's life cycle from only a few days to five or six months. Anti-parasitic medicine can be bought from China or Thailand and costs about K250,000 (about US\$290).

"Fish farmers who did not use medicine for parasites face higher losses. I used the medicine after suffering about K300,000 (about US\$350) in losses when my fish died," U Soe Tint said, who has a fish farm in Yangon Region's Twantay township.

U Than Lwin, chairman of the Association, said that throughout his 10 fish pools,

each comprising 10 acres, four or five fish will die in a pool on a hot day.

U Aye Kyaw, who also has a fish farm in Twantay township, said his sturgeon usually take three years to farm. However, they have died within only a year.

"It has been very hot these days, so parasites can keep growing. In the last 10 years, farm fish have not died to this extent. This trend started about three years ago and has continually gotten worse. This is not a disease: The fish are dying of climate change," said Dr Myint Swe, a member of the Association.

"I want to advise fish farmers that if fish are dying in their pools, they should take a sample of one fish to a laboratory and have it tested at Thaketa township in Yangon. The results of the test will give evidence

as to what kind of parasite has infected the fish and will indicate what medicine to use," he said.

U Than Lwin said that this is common in April and May as the heat rises, but an uncommon phenomenon to occur as early as February and March.

"Fish farmers can plant trees around their pools to help provide shade and oxygen, and must give their fish medicine in time," he said.

Both the local and export markets have not been adversely affected by the spike in dying fish, said Daw Toe Nandar Tin, treasurer of Myanmar Fishery Products Processors and Exporters Association.

"The price of rohu (a type of carp) rose K50 [from the second week of February to the third week] and local market prices are normal," she said.

Asian stocks continue climb

By Jonathan Burgos

ASIAN stocks climbed for a second week, with the regional benchmark index posting its biggest weekly advance in two months, as US economic data bolstered confidence in the global recovery and Japan's prime minister nominated an advocate of stimulus to head the central bank.

Canon Inc, the world's biggest camera maker, added 1.8pc in Tokyo. Mitsubishi Estate Co (8802) surged 16 percent, pacing gains among Japanese developers on speculation Haruhiko Kuroda, a nominee to lead the Bank of Japan (8301), will loosen monetary policy. Treasury Wine Estates Ltd jumped 11pc after Australia's largest vintner posted earnings that beat analyst estimates.

The MSCI Asia Pacific Index (MXAP) climbed 0.9pc to 134.70 this week, the biggest weekly advance since January 4. The measure rose for a fourth month, its longest winning streak since September 2009, led by Japanese shares. Japan's consumer prices fell for a third month, bolstering the case for more easing from the central bank.

"Deflation is so entrenched and that's why expectations are high for the BOJ," said Isao Kubo, Tokyo-based equity strategist at Nissay Asset Management Corp, which oversees about \$54 billion.

The Nikkei 225 Stock Average (NKY) rose 1.9pc this week, extending gains after capping a seven-month advance, the longest such streak since 2006. South Korea's Kospi Index added 0.4pc, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index advanced 0.4pc.

China's Shanghai Composite Index advanced 2pc. The nation's manufacturing expansion unexpectedly slowed in February ahead of a National People's Congress next week that will set this year's growth target. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 Index rose 1.4pc.

The MSCI Asia Pacific Index benchmark traded at 14.8 times estimated earnings compared with 13.7 for the Standard & Poor's 500 Index (SPX) and 12.4 for the Stoxx Europe 600 (SXXP), according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Exporters advanced as reports showed orders for US durable goods excluding transportation gear climbed in January by the most in a year, while pending home sales increased more than forecast. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S Bernanke said on February 27 recent increases in some interest rates may signal the US economy is gaining vigor.

Canon climbed 1.8pc to 3,375 yen. Nintendo Co, the maker of Wii game consoles, added 1.6pc to 9,070 yen in Osaka. Man Wah Holdings Ltd (1999), a sofa maker that gets 51pc of sales from the US, climbed 3.9pc to HK\$7.24 in Hong Kong.

Sony Corp jumped 7.3pc to 1,390 yen after Japan's biggest consumer electronics maker sold a building in Tokyo for 111.1 billion yen (\$1.2 billion). It's the company's third major asset sale this year as it strives to avoid a fifth straight annual loss.



A pedestrian walks past an electronic stock board in Tokyo. Pic: Bloomberg

Nomura Holdings Inc advanced 3.6pc to 550 yen after Japan's biggest brokerage said it will sell a stake in its real estate unit for about 53 billion yen.

Japanese property companies gained on speculation Kuroda will aggressively ease policy should he become BOJ chief. The central bank could usher in a growth spurt unseen in a generation by stepping up stimulus and ending deflation, according to Kuroda, president of the Asian Development Bank.

Mitsubishi Estate surged 16pc to 2,450 yen. Mitsui Fudosan Co (8801), Japan's second-largest developer by market value, jumped 16pc to 2,434 yen. Sumitomo Realty & Development Co gained 20pc to 3,320 yen.

New World Development Co, controlled by billionaire Cheng Yu-tung, rose 7.3pc to HK\$14.20, while Sino Land Co gained 3.7pc to HK\$14.06. The Hong Kong-based developers advanced after posting earnings that beat estimates.

Of the 572 companies on the MSCI Asia Pacific Index that reported profits since January and for which estimates are available, 50pc exceeded expectations, data compiled by Bloomberg showed.

Treasury Wine Estates jumped 11pc to A\$5.51 after saying first-half profit increased 31pc to A\$52 million (\$53 million). The results beat the A\$47 million median estimate of six analysts surveyed by Bloomberg.

— Bloomberg

Bangladesh Single Country Trade Fair 2013

THE Embassy of Bangladesh in Myanmar will hold the Single Country Trade Fair 2013 from March 6 to 8 at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

"We have to increase our business to business contacts between the two countries. From this trade fair, Myanmar and Bangladeshi business people will make contacts. Private sectors will take initiative to work closely with government matters and trade," said Mr Maj Gen Anup Kumar Chakma, Ambassador to the Embassy of Bangladesh during a press conference at the embassy on March 1.

At the press conference, he also spoke of enhancing bilateral trade.

"Efforts are underway to enhance border

trade. We signed border trade agreements in 1994 but we need to improve them. We have to improve direct shipping links and warehouse facilities. Then, we will resume direct flights between Dhaka and Myanmar and make banking facilities easier," he said.

The trade fair will hold 32 booths from 37 companies. The products show cased will include food and drink, handicrafts, household products, garments, ceramics, services, plastic, steel, electrical appliances, IT and security technology, construction and building materials, paper, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and herbal products.

The trade fair is the fourth of its kind to be held after the previous was held in 2003.

— Myat May Zin



Soldiers on patrol in the Indian town of Moreh, on the border with Myanmar.
Pic: Washington Post/Simon Denyer

Back on agenda, Moreh hopes for better future

By Simon Denyer

MOREH, India – The arch that spans Asian Highway Number One as it passes through this border town proudly announces India’s friendship with its neighbour, Myanmar. The official slogan proclaims that India is “Looking East” and promises that the road will deliver closer integration with Southeast Asia’s fast-growing economies.

It is an idea fervently supported by Washington, which hopes tighter ties between Asia’s free-market democracies can help balance China’s rise. And it is gaining traction in the Indian capital, New Delhi, where attention has traditionally been much more focused on the security of India’s western border with Pakistan than trade via its eastern border with Myanmar. Plans are afoot to correct that balance and Moreh is on the agenda.

But distrust between the two neighbours has combined with Indian apathy and inefficiency to prevent the dream from becoming reality, at least so far.

In Manipur state, 2400 kilometres (1500 miles) from New Delhi, the border feels more like an abandoned backwater than a potential metropolis. The narrow dirt streets that spread out from the main road in Moreh are patrolled by soldiers and stray dogs.

Legal trade that passes under the arch, from betel nuts to spare bicycle parts, is meagre and largely local. But elsewhere across this porous and mountainous border, there is a much larger flow of smuggled drugs and timber, militants and weapons. Police and army officers stationed in Manipur accuse Myanmar officials of supporting Indian separatist groups by allowing them to use camps just across the border as bases to stage attacks on Indian soil.

“They opened trade at Moreh in 1996, but the government didn’t make much effort to promote it,” lamented Lanjingba Khundongba, who formed the

Manipur Chamber of Foreign Trade and Industry in 2009, in the hope that his tiny hill state on India’s fringes could finally join in Asia’s economic boom.

“Let us be a part of this global economy. We can survive,” he said.

Manipur is home to about two million people and its sorry history illustrates the failure of the Indian government to turn rhetoric into reality. Its people look more Burmese than Indian and feel looked down upon and excluded by their countrymen. Its economy is dependent on transfers from the central government, much of which is allegedly stolen by local politicians and bureaucrats. A dizzying array of separatist groups has been fighting the state for decades, with varying degrees of support from neighbouring countries.

Trade with Southeast Asia could be the lifeline Manipur needs. But in Moreh, there

‘Let us be a part of this global economy.’

are no banks to provide letters of credit needed for foreign trade, no qualified customs clearing agents, no proper immigration facilities. Locals say the army is involved in smuggling and the government is corrupt.

In New Delhi, however, the mood is very different. After years of isolation, Myanmar’s opening to the world promises new opportunities for Indian business. Last year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made the first visit by an Indian prime minister to the country in 25 years, signing several agreements to strengthen diplomatic and trade ties.

A bus service is planned from the Manipuri capital, Imphal, to Mandalay, and the Asian Highway is being upgraded from Manipur through Myanmar to the Thai town of Mae Sot.

But Myanmar is perhaps more important as a gateway

to the broader Southeast Asian region. At the Indian commerce ministry, officials proudly note that, thanks to a recently signed free-trade agreement, trade between India and countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations grew by about 40 percent, to US\$80 billion, in the fiscal year that ended last March and now represents about 10pc of the country’s total overseas trade.

Plans to extend that trading bloc to take in countries including China and Australia under a broader regional framework are also advancing.

“Now we want to engage east, not just look east,” said Siddharth, a joint secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry who only uses one name.

Almost none of that trade passes through Moreh, but officials say they hope that will soon change. An integrated customs and immigration checkpoint is due to be built and immigration procedures might be relaxed to allow visitors to get visas at the border.

As evidence of the symbolic importance of this route, a car rally was staged from Indonesia to India at the end of last year, and it passed through Moreh. Siddharth said the event symbolises the opening of India’s northeast and he expressed hope that the renaissance can bring economic and political benefits.

“It develops a stake for people to maintain peace,” he said.

Still, given the slow speed at which the Indian government operates and the low priority that it traditionally gives to the northeastern region, people in Imphal and Moreh are not holding their breath in anticipation.

“The government is very serious about trying to bring opportunity to the northeast and it has many good policies,” said Khundongba, of the foreign trade chamber. “But when it comes to implementation, at every level people are very corrupt.”

– The Washington Post

India curbs subsidies amid deficit

By Unni Krishnan and Kartik Goyal

INDIA’S government raised spending on the poor to court support before elections, relying on higher taxes, asset sales and subsidy cuts to help pare the widest fiscal deficit in major emerging nations.

The country targets a shortfall of 4.8 percent of gross domestic product in the 12 months starting April 1, and achieved 5.2pc in 2012-2013, Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram said in his budget speech in New Delhi on February 28. Bonds fell the most in seven months as Chidambaram unveiled record borrowing to finance the excess of expenditure over revenue.

“The Indian economy is challenged,” said Chidambaram, whose 2014 deficit goal is a six-year low as he strives to avert a credit-rating downgrade. “We will get out of the trough and get on to the high growth path. Fiscal consolidation cannot be effected only by cutting expenditure. Wherever possible, revenues must also be augmented.”

Government spending has contributed to inflation of almost 7pc, which has limited the extent of interest-rate cuts by the central bank in an economy expanding at

the weakest pace in a decade. Chidambaram allocated 330 billion rupees (US\$6.1 billion) for the ruling coalition’s flagship rural jobs program and 100 billion rupees for a plan to give the poor cheap food grains, ahead of a general election due by 2014.

“The budget is disappointing as, even though it is trying to achieve fiscal consolidation, expenditure is still very high,” said Sonal Varma, an economist at Nomura Holdings Inc in Mumbai. “The crucial thing would be to see how credibly the government delivers on deficit cuts amid the growth slowdown and in the run up to the elections.”

Total expenditure will climb to 16.7 trillion rupees in 2013-2014 from an estimated 14.3 trillion rupees this financial year. The budget set gross market borrowing at a record 6.29 trillion rupees for 2013-2014, an increase of almost 13pc. Net borrowing will be 4.84 trillion rupees.

Chidambaram imposed a one-year 10pc tax surcharge on annual personal incomes above 10 million rupees and increased customs duties on yachts, high-end motorcycles and luxury cars. He raised the surcharge on some companies to 10pc.

–Bloomberg



Save the Children

JOB PROFILE

Job Title:	Liaison Advisor
Grade:	-
Reports to:	Country Director and Program Director / GFTAM
Reporting to position:	None
Budget Responsibility:	None
Child Protection Level:	-
Work Place	-Nay Pyi Taw

Job Purpose

The Liaison Advisor has the responsibility to represent Save the Children and its mission, values and programs to the Government structures of Myanmar. Save the Children has programs under Health, Education, Livelihoods, Micro-Finance, Nutrition, child protection. Save the Children works with the Ministries by programming under each Sector Strategic Plan and being actively involved in Technical Working Groups. Save the Children is a co-Principal Recipient of Round 9 Global Fund Grants for HIV/AIDs, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Representation

- Represent Save the Children and promoting Save the Children’s mission and agenda in Ministerial meetings and working groups.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships through proactive active liaison with the Government of Myanmar
- To proactively ensure that relevant Ministerial authorities are kept aware of necessary information.
- To liaise with ministries and relevant authorities and respond to queries about Save the Children
- Network and negotiate with the Line Ministries (MOH, DOH, DSW, RRD, MOFA, MOD, IMMIGRATION) for programmatic and sometimes administrative issues
- Dissemination of government strategies, policies and procedures and the changes to the SMT and for Ministry of Health to the Global Fund Program Director
- Provide organizational program information to line ministries as and when needed.
- Provide monthly reports to SC SMT on any changing or new government strategies, on activities.
- Provide input to SC overall strategic goals.

Requirements

- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain relationships with senior-level colleagues, particularly interacting productively, proactively, and comfortably with government agencies, INGOs, NGOs private sector groups, and donor organizations.
- Demonstrated strategic ability, diplomacy, conflict management, written and oral communication, and negotiation skills.
- Written and oral presentation skills in English is required.
- Develop a solid strategy for building partnerships with key Ministries
- Act as liaison in particularly with Ministry of Health, but also other Ministries to share evidence, best practices and engage in dialogue with key stakeholders;
- Facilitate strong collaboration with SC government counterparts
- Master’s degree
- Worked with Ministry of Myanmar (preferable MOH) for 7 plus years or in a position where there was over 50% interaction with the government of Myanmar for a minimum of 10 years.
- Experience working with an INGO is an asset

Closing Date: March 11th 2013



Myanmar Home Design prepares their new mobile house models to be introduced soon to the local market. They are already readying plans for export. Pic: Myanmar Home Design

Converted containers make a solid home

By Aung Shin

MYANMAR Home Design Company will introduce mobile houses to the local market made from modified shipping containers, a company manager said last week.

"We started making mobile houses seven months ago. The idea comes from our European architects. We have seen the market develop very fast in Myanmar," Daw Than Tar Khaing, assistant manager of MHDC, told *The Myanmar Times*.

MHDC is targeting expatriates

looking to occupy homes and remote offices as their main market. The company said the homes will also be useful as meditation cabins, pool houses, classrooms, shops and even take-away restaurants.

"Building a house is very expensive because the price of materials and land is getting more expensive day after day. That is the purpose of making these mobile houses from modified containers. We're targeting the local market at present but we intend to also export in the future," Daw Than Tar Khaing said.

Mr Yann Lefebvre, a manager at MHDC and an architect responsible for the project, said: "I got this idea of making small mobile houses during my visits to many places in Asia and Myanmar. I have learnt about the living style of Myanmar people too and its natural resources. Today, land is expensive everywhere. It is very hard to own a house."

MHDC is making the homes from high quality shipping containers that are approved for heat and fire resistance, and will also endure tough weather conditions, Mr Lefebvre said.

"The material is high quality

and very compact. Myanmar people won't like it at first, but I believe that people will want to use these lovely, attractive mobile houses in the future."

The designs for the mobile houses are myriad, spanning a classical Myanmar aesthetic to postmodern décor. Throughout the interior, partitions can be arranged to determine the size of the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. Many options are available for designing the roof, covering the exterior, walling and other interior decorations.

The mobile houses are movable, durable, customisable, thermally

efficient and safe, Mr Lefebvre said. One mobile house weighs 4.5 tonnes on average and can be set on concrete ground.

MHDC is now investing in new designs.

"We are always coming up with new creations," Mr Lefebvre said.

The price of a mobile house depends on the design and the materials used to build it. The estimated expense for a basic house, which stands at eight feet high and 20 feet long, is around K10 million (about US\$11,621).

A basic home will take 70 days to finish.

Victoria's Secret plans to open first stores in Hong Kong

By Kelvin Wong

LIMITED Brands Inc's Victoria's Secret, the lingerie chain known for its supermodels called "Angels," is planning its first stores in Hong Kong, where surging demand from shoppers has sent retail rents to a record.

Limited Brands this year will open two 1,500-square-foot (139-square-meter) Victoria's Secret shops at the International Finance Centre in the Central business district and at New Town Plaza, a favored stop for mainland Chinese shoppers in the city's north, according to an e-mail from Robin Hoffman, a spokeswoman for Columbus, Ohio-based



A shopper carries a Victoria's Secret bag at the Cherry Creek Shopping Center in Denver, Colorado. Pic: Bloomberg

Limited Brands.

An influx of mainland Chinese visitors has fueled consumption of branded apparel and accessories in Hong Kong, which commands the world's highest occupancy costs in some of its areas. Abercrombie & Fitch Co and Gap Inc are among international clothing labels that have opened flagship stores in the city in the past 18 months.

Both IFC and New Town Plaza malls are owned or part-owned by Sun Hung Kai Properties Ltd, the world's biggest developer by value.

Brenda Wong, a spokeswoman for Hong Kong-based Sun Hung Kai, declined to comment on its tenants. - Bloomberg

Phoenix Island: from boom to gloom

SANYA – It was billed as China's Dubai: a cluster of sail-shaped skyscrapers on a man-made island surrounded by tropical sea, the epitome of an unprecedented property boom that transformed skylines throughout the country.

But prices on Phoenix Island, off the palm-tree lined streets of the resort city of Sanya, have plummeted in recent months, exposing the hidden fragilities of China's growing but sometimes unbalanced economy.

A "seven star" hotel is under construction on the wave-lapped oval, which the provincial tourism authority proclaims as a "fierce competitor" for the title of "eighth wonder of the modern world".

But the island stands quiet aside from a few orange-jacketed cleaning staff, with undisturbed seaside swimming pools reflecting rows of pristine white towers, and a row of Porsches one of the few signs of habitation.

Chinese manufacturers once snapped up its luxury apartments, but with profits falling as a result of the global downturn many owners need to offload properties urgently and raise cash to repay business loans, estate agents said.

Apartments on Phoenix Island which reached the dizzying heights of 150,000 yuan a square metre (US\$2200 a square foot) in 2010 are on offer for just 70,000 yuan, said Sun Zhe, a local estate agent.

"I just got a call from a businessman desperate to sell," Sun told *AFP*, brandishing his mobile phone as he whizzed over a bridge to the futuristic development on an electric golf cart.

"Whether it's toys or clothes, the export market is bad... property owners need capital quickly, and want to sell their apartments right away," he said. "They are really feeling the effect of the financial



The seaside city of Sanya, on China's southern Hainan province. Prices on Phoenix Island, off the palm-lined streets of Sanya, have fallen by more than half since 2010, say real estate agents. Pic: AFP

crisis."

Official figures showed an almost eight percent increase in China's total exports last year, but sales to Europe fell by almost four percent with the continent mired in a debt crisis and recession.

investment options and low returns from deposits in state-run banks, have used property as a store of value, pushing prices up even higher in the good times but creating the risk of a crash in the bad.

Phoenix Island is part of Hainan, a Belgium-sized province in the South China Sea that saw the biggest property price increases in China after a 2008 government stimulus flooded the economy with credit.

'They are really feeling the effect of the financial crisis.'

At the same time rising wages in China mean that producers of clothes, toys and other low-end goods are seeing their margins squeezed as other emerging economies compete to become the world's centre for cheap manufacturing.

For years Chinese business owners, faced with limited

"China had a lending boom... and so if people are using property as a place to stash their cash, they had more cash to stash," said Patrick Chanovec, a professor at Beijing's Tsinghua university.

"At some point they want to get their money out, then you find out if there are really people who are willing to pay those high prices."

Eager buyers camped out in tents on city streets as prices shot up by more than 50 percent in one year.

But tightened policies on access to credit and multiple house purchases have since knocked values in favoured second home locations, even while prices in major cities they have rallied in

recent months.

Real estate is a pillar of the Chinese economy, accounting for almost 14pc of GDP last year and supporting the massive construction sector, making policy makers anxious to avoid a major collapse of the property bubble.

At the same time ordinary Chinese who cannot afford to buy a home have been frustrated by high housing costs for years.

With anger over graft also mounting state media have carried several reports in recent weeks about corrupt officials' property holdings, including a policeman who used a fake identity card to buy at least 192 dwellings.

Hainan's tropical shores are said to be a hotspot for purchases by well-connected bureaucrats, but estate agents denied they were rushing to sell off apartments for fear of a crackdown.

Officials only account for about 20pc of owners, they said – while doubting any new regulations would be properly enforced. "There are always different rules for people with connections," said one agent, asking to remain anonymous.

It is an example of the multiple competing interests the authorities have to balance, leaving them treading a difficult line, with sometimes unforeseen consequences.

On the other side of Hainan, the Seaview Auspicious Gardens, boasts beachside villas beside artificial rivers and a private library containing 100,000 books, prices have fallen by a third from a high of 12,000 yuan a square metre in the last year, and a third of the flats remain unsold.

Yang Qiong has a thankless task as one of its saleswomen.

"Before the government restrictions we would sell out a development like this in just five months," she lamented. – *AFP*



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A HOME CONTEST THAT'S ALL ABOUT STYLE

Advertorial

Interview with U Zaw Moe Shwe, Principal Architect of Spine Architect

continued from last week

Q. Please explain me why you happen to establish "Spine Architect" company back in Myanmar and why you decided to come back to Myanmar?

A. I come home to Myanmar as an architect to beautify one's own country. When I first arrive back in Myanmar, there were not so many industries and facilities in Myanmar yet. Architect companies, materials shops has grown in numbers now. But then we had to make shift in so many sectors. But now we are pretty much able to tackle about it. The reason why I come back is that I want to show the world that as a Myanmar company we can as the other international companies do.

Q. When did you start establishment of Spine Architect?

A. We established Spine Architect

in 2003 and it is ten-year-old now.

Q. In Myanmar's architecture industry which sector is more advanced? Design or material supply?

A. From my view, neither side can be said more advanced. But truly, they improved gradually. I forgot to mention one issue. It is skill labour. We cannot recommend the best contractor in Myanmar yet. We cannot recommend the best builder also. (For instance, hiring builder to set up tiles.) We cannot feel assured about one contractor for all issues. And it is also very important that builder has skill labour. There should be vocational training schools about it. There has already some in Myanmar now.

I am very happy to get a chance to take part in this contest.

To be continue

This week we interviewed with Ma Sandar who lives in Golden Valley (2) Housing, Bahan Township and she is the contestant in the "Best Beautiful Home" Contest.

Q. What advantage do you think you get by participating with your own home which has a compound.

A. I used to live neat and tidy. I also keep my house tidy. So I don't need to prepare for the contest specially. I also think my house would reach the standard of the contest participants.

Q. Since your house is a three-storeyed building, how did you prepare for each storey specifically?

A. Very special is the timber-parkey floor. Ceilings are differently adorned in each storey we learnt from foreign catalogues and consulted

with engineers.

We bought big planks of padauk wood. So we had to carefully cut it to small pieces of plank to make the design different in each storey.

Q. What is your idea of perfect home?

A. I don't usually visit homes very much. So when I stay home, I'd like to keep my home neat and tidy. I plant flowers. When visitors come home, they used to say how my house is neat and tidy. I appreciate that. I feel obliged about it.

Q. Do you think a house decoration is to show off status or what do you think?

A. Some put in everything expensive in their house to show off status. But it is more comfortable to put in things that match your house. For me I like simple and high-standard homes.

Q. I see you use majority white-colour for your home. Elaborate about it too?

A. I like white-colour. It makes things seem wider. It brings freshness, innocence and peacefulness I feel.

Q. What do you want to say further?

A. I am very happy to have a chance to compete in this contest.

A HOME CONTEST THAT'S ALL ABOUT STYLE is jointly organized by The Myanmar Times, NatRay Co.,Ltd and the Association of Myanmar Interior Design (AMID).

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HONORABLE MENTIONS - 2 PRIZES
DUNLOPILLO KING SIZE MATTRESS
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REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTESTANTS

- (1) Must be citizen of Myanmar.
- (2) Number of Pictures need to submit: 4 Photos
*** (Living room + master bedroom + Dining Room + structure of the whole house)
- (3) Picture size: 10" x 15"

DATE OF CONTEST

Last date for submission - 30 March, 2013
Date of announcement of winner - 29 April, 2013

* 20,000 Kyats Casabella Gift Voucher will be given to all those contestants who register for the contest.

Best interior design

GRAND PRIZE

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FOR 2 PERSONS (4 NIGHTS /5 DAYS)

HONORABLE MENTIONS - 2 PRIZES

massimo

■ **MASSIMO RECLINER CHAIR**

eko
Office Solution

■ **OFFICE CHAIR**

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTESTANTS

- (1) Must be citizen of Myanmar.
- (2) Must be well-trained in Interior Design.
- (3) Member of Association of Myanmar Interior Designs
(One entitled to (1) and (2) can apply for membership)

DESIGN TO BE SUBMITTED

- (1) Interior Design already done anywhere in Myanmar.
- (2) Any type of design (10" x 15" one figure only)
For example: Completed Interior design of home, showroom, hotel and restaurants
- (3) Photo of completed design together with the design submitted to the owner (3D Rendering) or
(Orthographic Plan Elevation Section) 10" x 15" one figure only
- (4) Above two drawings (2) & (3) explanation and concept of Design not more than one page (A4)
Note* The following must not be included in colorful (10" x 15") figures. 1. Name of Design 2. Name of Design Company 3. Logo

DATE OF CONTEST

Last date for submission - 30 March, 2013
Date of announcement of winner - 29 April, 2013

Sponsors by - NatRay Co., Ltd & Casabella Home Furnishing Center
Organized by - The Myanmar Times
Supported by - Association of Myanmar Interior Design (AMID)
& NatRay Design Studio (NDS)

JUDGES FOR BEST INTERIOR DESIGN

1. Daw Khin Marla (NatRay Co., Ltd)
2. Mr. Ross Dunkley (Myanmar Consolidated Media)
3. Daw Hnin Si (Former Principal ZK School of Design)
4. U Win Myint (Architect)
5. U Wai Phyo (Senior Interior Designer)
6. Mr. Thomas (Interior Designer from NatRay Design Studio)

Note* 1. The Judges will inspect the Interior Design if needs be.
2. For membership of AMID, contact the following
Tel: 09 5500 575 | 09 5506 215 | 09 7314 5876 Email: interior.amid@gmail.com

JUDGES FOR BEAUTIFUL HOME CONTEST

1. U Sun Oo
(Association of
Myanmar Interior Design)
2. Daw Khin Marla
(NatRay Co., Ltd)
3. Mr. Ross Dunkley
(Myanmar Consolidated Media)
4. Mr. Thomas
(Interior Designer from
NatRay Design Studio)

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PRIZES!**

Name:..... NRC:..... Marital Status:..... Age:..... Gender M / F
Occupation:..... Address:.....
Contact: (Mobile)..... (Home)..... (Office)..... (Email).....

Submit your entry form and photos now

Personally deliver your entry to **Casabella** No.22, 9 mile, Pyay Road, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 664363, 660769, 656162. Email: nr.casabella@gmail.com | Mail entries to The Myanmar Times - No.379/383, Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon. Tel: 392928, 253642 (MIDY) No. 178, 74th st, (Bet 31st & 32nd st) Chan Aye Thar Zan Tsp, Mandalay. Tel: 02 24450, 24460. Closing date is 2pm on 30 March, 2013 for entries in both Yangon and Mandalay.

Competition terms and conditions

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Apps for taxis a win-win for drivers, passengers

WASHINGTON – Before the smartphone, summoning a taxi involved waving an arm or calling a dispatcher – but mobile apps are changing that, helping both drivers and passengers.

New services have emerged in recent years that enable smartphone users to locate and request taxis with GPS. Drivers confirm they're on the way and payment is made by mobile phone, with no cash changing hands.

"It gives the passenger control and incentivises the driver to provide excellent service," said Yonis Benitez, general manager in Washington for MyTaxi, a German-based firm which has recently expanded to the US market.

"It's no longer anonymous. They know the driver's name and the driver's rating," from customer reviews which can be seen on the app.

MyTaxi was founded in 2009 in Germany and in October began service in Washington, one of 30 cities worldwide where it operates.

San Francisco-based Uber offers a mobile app connecting passengers and taxis in six cities, including Washington, and operates in 27 cities worldwide with a "black car" service, which it says costs more than taxis but less than comparable limousine services.

Uber founder and chief



Washington driver Peter Faris who uses an Uber app for his three car service. "It has filled a need," he said of the app, one of several being used in the US and around the world. Pic: AFP

executive Travis Kalanick said drivers like the system because "they make more money, they can fill out their downtime and can invest and grow." Uber has no cars of its own but partners with taxi or limousine drivers who agree to use the app.

Uber has faced some well-publicised regulatory hurdles, including in New York as city officials consider regulations on the "e-hailing" of cabs.

In Washington, the city council approved a measure last year to clear the way for app-based taxi and limo services.

"The DC law is cutting edge, it's pro-innovation and

a lot of cities are starting to follow," said Rachel Holt, Uber's manager in the city.

Uber has been expanding globally to cities such as Paris, Melbourne and Stockholm.

Washington driver Peter Faris said he has been able to build a car service with three vehicles around the Uber app. "It's hard to communicate the enthusiasm it has created," he said. "It has filled a need."

Hailo, launched in London in 2011, says it is the largest taxi app, with some 30,000 drivers in Boston, Chicago, Toronto and Dublin. This year it plans to launch in New York, Tokyo, Madrid,

Barcelona and Washington.

Jay Bregman, the New York-born founder of the Britain-based company, said the app helps to cut down time, which can be up to 60 percent of a driver's day.

"This is a pattern you find all over the world. It's one of the last bastions of inefficiency," said Bregman, who launched the idea after studying at the London School of Economics. Hailo says it has grown to more than US\$120 million in annualised sales, and has raised \$50 million in venture capital.

Bregman said Hailo only launches in a city after it has recruited enough drivers to provide an adequate supply.

He said the app helps drivers by serving as a kind of social network, alerting other cabbies about traffic or accidents, and of events or neighbourhoods where taxis are needed.

"This is a positive technology with almost no drawbacks," he said. "It doesn't destroy the other industries, it makes them more competitive."

The apps can offer the convenience of fast service for the rider and allow the driver to waste less time.

"I spoke to a driver in New York who said he took someone to the Bronx and for the first time in 20 years had a ride back," Uber's Kalanick said. – AFP

Card companies vie for 'mobile money' market

BARCELONA – Global financial groups battled last week to control the lucrative future of "mobile money", which will enable people to use a smartphone to go shopping instead of cash and credit cards.

MasterCard, Visa and online payments service PayPal struggled for a slice of the industry as the world's biggest mobile fair, Mobile World Congress, opened in Barcelona, Spain, on February 25.

It is a market with potentially rich rewards.

The mobile money industry is expected to grow from US\$13.8 billion in 2013 to \$278.9 billion by 2018, said a study released this month by global research group MarketsandMarkets, which estimates there will be about 5.3 billion mobile phones worldwide this year.

MasterCard announced a new digital payment system that lets people use a variety of devices, including smartphones.

The system, known as MasterPass, stores customers' banking and personal information in a "secure cloud" online where it is available for the moment of payment whether in a store or when browsing the internet, the group said.

Banks and stores will be able to issue their customers with MasterPass-connected "digital wallets", which would accept credit and debit card information, including cards other than MasterCard's, the group said.

Shoppers would be able to use MasterPass on the web without having to key in their bank information and delivery address for each purchase. But they also could make payments with the new system in other ways, including by waving a smartphone equipped with Near Field Communications, or NFC, technology near a special reader.

MasterPass will be launched in Australia and Canada by the end of March before expanding to other markets.

The same day, Visa unveiled a global alliance with smartphone leader Samsung to enable payments with NFC-equipped Samsung smartphones. Under the deal, Samsung will equip the next generation of its mobile devices with Visa payment technology, including by pre-loading Visa's contactless payment system – Visa payWave – in its mobiles with a mini-program known as an applet.

Samsung will let banks send payment account information over the airwaves to a secure microchip embedded in its devices. Banks in turn will use a secure system relying on Visa's so-called Mobile Provisioning Service and

Samsung's digital key management system.

Visa said the deal had the potential to "significantly accelerate" the availability of

mobile payments globally.

But some in the industry are sceptical.

"I think NFC is just a technology in search of a problem to fix that does not exist because it is really easy to pay in the store," the president of eBay subsidiary PayPal, David Marcus, told journalists at the congress.

Five days before the congress, PayPal announced it was expanding its move into MasterCard and Visa's territory. Marcus showcased a new PayPal device, which lets cash-based businesses accept PIN-number based "smart" debit and credit cards.

Merchants will be able to download a Paypal Here application for their Android or iPhone smartphone and then pair the handset with the new device, which they have to buy. For each transaction, PayPal receives a "small fee". – AFP

Some in the industry are sceptical.

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US to provide food, medical aid to Syrian opposition

ROME – The United States has announced it will provide direct aid to Syrian rebels, but not the arms they had hoped for, as well as US\$60 million in extra assistance to the political opposition.

After talks with European and Arab partners and the opposition National Coalition in Rome, Secretary of State John Kerry said on February 28 that the United States will provide aid to the fighters in the form of food and medical assistance.

The move is a significant shift in US policy but falls

short of rebel demands for Western backers to supply the rebellion with weapons or non-offensive military equipment, such as vehicles and body armour.

Coalition chief Ahmed Moaz al-Khatib, standing beside Kerry as he made the announcement, expressed disappointment, suggesting the West was overly focused on the presence of Islamists among rebels.

He also complained about weapons continuing to reach the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

Kerry said the \$60 million would strengthen the Coalition's organisational capacity and help war-torn communities with respect to sanitation, food delivery, public order, education and medical care.

"The stakes are really high. And we can't risk letting this country, in the heart of the Middle East, be destroyed by vicious autocrats or hijacked by the extremists."

In supporting the Coalition and the rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA), "we reject both of those choices, and we stand

with those Syrians fighting for the right to choose dignity and democracy and justice. That's our battle."

A State Department official said the new money is in addition to \$50 million in non-lethal support Washington has already provided to help Syrian opposition activists, including communications equipment.

For his part, Khatib complained that "a lot of people, particularly the media, pay more attention to the length of fighters' beards (an allusion to jihadists in

Syria) than to the shedding of children's blood and regime bombardments."

A Western diplomat who took part in the Rome talks told *AFP* the opposition had seen the announcement of new US money as a step forward.

However some analysts said that America's tepid response is creating the kind of vacuum in which jihadi groups can flourish, and it may damage US hopes of gaining long-term sway with whatever post-Assad government emerges.

"It took seven months to get to the biscuits and Band-Aid," said the director of the US-based Brookings Doha Center, Salman Shaikh, referring to the lengthy negotiations to reach what has been billed as a major shift in US policy.

"This kind of support is not going to have a great impact with regard to the situation on the ground," he stressed, saying what was needed now was to "lay the ground work for the military balance to shift inside Syria." – *AFP*

Thailand, rebel group agree on peace talks

KUALA LUMPUR – Thailand and one of several rebel groups in the country's Muslim south will open talks in Kuala Lumpur in two weeks to try to end a bloody insurgency, Malaysia's prime minister said on February 28.

Najib Razak disclosed the news after talks with visiting Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, and following a deal signed earlier in the day by Thailand and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) rebel group to launch a peace process.

Yingluck said Thailand "wished to see a lasting solution in the southern border provinces", where the nine-year revolt by a number of shadowy groups has claimed more than 5500 lives.

"We need to move forward as soon as possible," she told a news conference in the Malaysian government headquarters of Putrajaya.

Yingluck was in Malaysia for annual talks with Najib on bilateral issues. They have centred this year on the stubborn insurgency along the two countries' border.

Many residents of Thailand's southernmost

provinces are Muslim ethnic Malays who resent being governed by the Buddhist Thais. The region sees near-daily gun and bomb attacks by insurgents seeking greater autonomy, which Thailand rejects.

The agreement to launch peace talks was signed in Kuala Lumpur early on February 28 by Lieutenant-General Paradorn Pattanathabutr, secretary general of Thailand's National

Thailand is "willing to engage in the process of inclusive dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and groups concerned to address root causes of the problem," Yingluck said.

Neither leader gave a date for the talks. A Malaysian official said the meetings would deal initially with determining "terms of reference" for going forward, adding it was hoped other groups would join in later.

"Let us all hope and pray that this series of dialogues that will begin in two weeks' time in Kuala Lumpur will bring the desired results," Najib said.

Marc Askew, an expert on southern Thailand at the University of Melbourne, said there was little evidence that "self-appointed" representatives of various groups exercise control over militants waging the revolt.

"The challenge remains the same as always – to connect with the fighting insurgents, not just the talkers," he told *AFP*. Paradorn had acknowledged on February 27 that Thailand was still working on identifying militant leaders with whom to negotiate. – *AFP*

'We need to move forward...'

Security Council, and Hassan Taib, a representative of the BRN.

However, analysts poured water on suggestions the news marked a breakthrough, noting the splintered nature of the insurgents, lack of concrete demands and Thailand's difficulty finding people who speak for fighters on the ground.

The BRN, whose Malay name means "National Revolutionary Front", is one of the larger groups blamed by Thailand for the violence, but it remains to be seen whether others will join the talks process.



Pope Benedict XVI blesses the faithful for the last time as pontiff from a balcony of the papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo, outside Rome, on February 28. Amid emotional scenes, the pope, 85, told the crowd he would be a "simple pilgrim" on life's last journey. "Thank you for your friendship and affection," said Benedict XVI, the first pope to resign in more than 700 years. In remarks to an audience of cardinals at the Vatican earlier on February 28, the pope took the unprecedented step of pledging allegiance to his successor, who will be chosen later this month. Pic: *AFP*

Briefly

DHAKA – Fresh clashes erupted Bangladesh on March 1, bringing the number of people killed to 52 in violence triggered by convictions for Islamist leaders over war crimes committed during the 1971 independence war. At least 34 people died on February 28 after an Islamist leader was sentenced to death.

KABUL – President Hamid Karzai on February 28 gave US-led foreign forces three months to transfer control over armed Afghan militias to his government. On February 24, Karzai ordered US special forces to pull out of Wardak province in two weeks after accusing the Afghan militias they work with human rights abuses.

ISLAMABAD – An Iranian-Pakistani consortium will start work this week on a much delayed US\$7.5 billion gas pipeline from Pakistan to Iran that has aroused strong US opposition, Pakistani officials said on March 1.

MANILA – Two Malaysian police officers and a Sabah resident were killed and 10 people arrested on March 1 as security forces ended a 17-day stand-off with Filipino gunmen in Sabah, the Philippine government said. – *AFP*

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US refocuses on its ‘legacy relationships’

ANALYSIS by Gregor Waschinski

WASHINGTON – After much talk about a US pivot to Asia, signs of a revived American interest in Europe abound, reassuring Europeans worried about their status as Washington’s closest allies.

Barack Obama, who has billed himself as “America’s first Pacific president,” seems to have taken a fresh look at the Old Continent during his second term, launching negotiations on an ambitious transatlantic free trade deal.

Obama’s Secretary of State John Kerry left on February 24 on his first official trip to four European capitals before heading to the Middle East. His predecessor Hillary Clinton had chosen Asia for her maiden overseas tour.

When Vice President Joe Biden addressed high-ranking officials, ministers and top military brass at the Munich Security Conference in early February, he assured Europeans that Washington still values the transatlantic ties.

“President Obama and I continue to believe that Europe is the cornerstone of our engagement with the rest of the world and is the catalyst for our global cooperation,” he said.

Nicholas Siegel, a scholar with the German Marshall Fund think tank in Washington referred to a “real re-emphasis of the transatlantic relationship.”

Tyson Barker, director of transatlantic relations at the Bertelsmann Foundation North America, said that during Obama’s first term “the fascination with Asia was palpable and it permeated all of their strategic thinking.”

Now the president acknowledges the need “to consolidate and retro-



US Secretary of State John Kerry (left) with British Prime Minister David Cameron at 10 Downing Street in London on February 25. Kerry was in Britain at the start of a tour of allies in Europe and the Middle East. Pic: AFP

fit some of our legacy relationships,” he added.

A year ago, the White House pressed Europe to combat its sovereign debt crisis, fearing that a financial meltdown on the other side of the Atlantic would drag down the US economy ahead of the presidential election.

As markets have calmed in response to action by eurozone governments and the European Central Bank, Washington appears to have turned its attention to opportunities that lie in the transatlantic realm.

Facing a slow recovery and high unemployment, Obama

announced in his State of the Union address on February 12 that talks on a “transatlantic trade and investment partnership” that would create the world’s largest free trade area.

William Galston of the Brookings Institution called the multi-trillion-dollar trade deal a “potentially game-changing policy” that could boost economic growth and create jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

“The focus on China’s surge during the past decade has obscured the continuing strength of Europe and the United States, and the continuing importance for each other,” he wrote in a recent op-ed.

In times of fiscal belt-tightening at home, the United States also hopes that Europe will assume more responsibility on the international scene, especially on its southern flank in North Africa.

“We are entering an era where the US is looking for ever more European burden sharing in international affairs,” said Siegel, calling the French military intervention in Mali a “promising sign.”

But Siegel stressed that “some of the complaining and some of the angst” of Europeans about the so-called pivot to Asia were overstated.

“If you look at it, the US and

Europe have cooperated in the past years very closely on a range of issues,” he said, citing the ouster of Libya’s strongman Moamer Kadhafi, the conflict in Syria and the Iranian nuclear program.

“What has been missing a bit was the public side.”

Kerry’s trip might make up for some of the lack of attention Europeans felt during the past few years.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle hailed Kerry’s European visit as “an important transatlantic signal.”

“This proves everyone wrong, who thought that Europe does not matter anymore for the US,” he told German daily *Passauer Neue Presse*.

Kerry is someone who is “comfortable engaging with Europe, and someone with whom Europe is comfortable engaging,” Barker told *AFP*.

As a child, he lived in post-World War II Berlin when his father was a Foreign Service officer in the divided city. The secretary of state also attended a Swiss boarding school and has relatives in France.

On several occasions in the weeks before his European trip, Kerry put forward the narrative that his bike rides as a boy in war-scarred Berlin shaped his world view.

Speaking to his staff on his first day in the State Department, Kerry said that he learned “a great lesson about the virtue of freedom” venturing on his own into the Soviet sector.

Obama’s choice for secretary of defence, Chuck Hagel, also has a very Atlanticist background.

The former Nebraska senator served as chairman of the Atlantic Council, one of the main transatlantic organisations in Washington.

“This is very europhile cabinet that is put together,” said Siegel. – *AFP*

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Dated. March 4, 2013

Iran hails ‘milestone’ talks on resolving nuclear row

ALMATY – Iran and world powers agreed on February 27 to hold new talks in March and April over the Islamic republic’s disputed nuclear drive, after negotiations in Kazakhstan which Tehran praised as a possible turning point in the decade-old dispute.

There was no sign of a major breakthrough over Iran’s nuclear ambitions in the Kazakh city of Almaty but the agreement on new meetings suggested potential for progress.

The talks saw the five UN Security Council members and Germany offer Iran a softening of non-oil or financial sector-related sanctions in exchange for concessions over Tehran’s sensitive uranium enrichment operations.

A senior US official said Iran “appeared to listen carefully to the offer” and its chief negotiator Saeed Jalili issued rare praise for the world powers’ “positive” and “realistic” attitude.

Speaking in Vienna, Iran’s Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi went even further, saying he was “very optimistic about the outcome”.

“Things are taking a



Iran’s chief negotiator Saeed Jalili (left) and EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton at a news conference in Almaty after last week’s talks. Pic: AFP

turning point and I think the Almaty meeting will be (seen as) a milestone,” Salehi said.

Jalili, seen as close to Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was more circumspect, saying the world powers’ proposals were “more realistic, compared to what they said in the past”.

“We consider these talks as a positive step which could be completed by taking a positive and constructive approach and taking reciprocal steps,” he told reporters in Almaty.

Uranium enrichment is the most sensitive part of the nuclear cycle as the process



can be used to make both nuclear fuel and the explosive core of a nuclear bomb that the powers fear Iran wants to develop.

Officials said the sides would next meet at the level of senior civil servants on March 17-18 in Istanbul. Talks involving Jalili and the six world powers represented by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton would then take place in Almaty on April 5-6.

In contrast to the more effusive Iranian response, Ashton refused to be drawn into a judgement of the talks’ success.

“I hope that the Iranian side are looking positively on the proposals we put forward,” Ashton told reporters. “The proposals we put forward are designed to build in confidence and enable us to move forward.”

“We approach this with the absolutely united view that we need to see international confidence in this (Iranian nuclear) program.”

The offer reportedly involves easing sanctions on Iran’s gold and precious metals trade and lifting bans on some small banking operations.

In return, it demands a tougher weapons inspection regime and the interruption of enrichment operations at the Fordo bunker facility where 20-percent enrichment takes place.

“This is interesting because what we are seeing is the start of a process,” said Moscow-based PIR nuclear safety research institute analyst Andrei Baklitsky.

“The positions are slowly starting to merge. In other words, there are finally things there for them to discuss.” – AFP

Blair admits dismay at situation in Iraq

LONDON – Former British prime minister Tony Blair admitted on February 26 that the situation in Iraq is “not nearly” what he hoped it would be when Britain joined the US-led invasion to depose Saddam Hussein ten years ago.

He said he had made the best of an “ugly” choice between taking action against the Iraqi dictator in 2003 or running the risk that Hussein would launch chemical and biological attacks against his own people or the outside world.

“There are actually significant improvements in many parts of the country for the people, but I agree with you, it’s not nearly what it should be,” the former Labour leader told the BBC in an interview marking ten years since the invasion.

About 162,000 people, almost 80 percent of them civilians, were killed in Iraq between the start of the US-led invasion and the withdrawal of US forces in December 2011, says British NGO Iraq Body Count.

Attacks continue, with 1500 people killed in violence in Iraq last year, according to an AFP toll.

Blair, who stepped down

in 2007 after ten years as prime minister, said he thought constantly about the people who lost their lives in the conflict.

“But in the end you’re elected as prime minister to take these decisions. The question is, supposing I had taken the opposite decision?” he said.

“Sometimes what happens in politics...you come to a decision where whichever choice you take the consequences are difficult and the choice is ugly. This was one such case.”

Blair acknowledged the US-led invasion remained extremely divisive, but said: “I’ve long since given up in trying to persuade people it was the right decision.”

“In a sense what I try to persuade people of now is to understand how complex and difficult a decision it was.

“Because I think if we don’t understand that, we won’t take the right decision about what I think will be a series of these types of problems that will arise over the next few years.

“You’ve got one in Syria right now, you’ve got one in Iran to come,” he said.

“The issue is how do you make the world a safer place?” – AFP

France mourns resistance hero who inspired protest movement

PARIS – French resistance hero and Holocaust survivor Stephane Hessel, whose 2010 manifesto *Time for Outrage* (*Indignez-Vous!*) sold millions of copies and inspired protest movements worldwide, has died at the age of 95, his wife said on February 27.

Hessel joined Charles de Gaulle in exile during World War II, was waterboarded by the Nazis, escaped hanging in concentration camps and took part in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

The career diplomat was already celebrated as one of the last living heroes of the 20th century when, as a nonagenarian, he became the unlikely godfather of youth protest movements such as “Occupy Wall Street” and Spain’s “Indignados”.

Tributes poured in for Hessel, with French President Francois Hollande praising “the exceptional life” of a man he said was a symbol of human dignity and the United Nations celebrating a “monument” in the history of human rights.

“He died overnight,” his wife Christiane Hessel-Chabry told AFP.

Born in Germany to a Jewish family which joined the Lutheran Church, Hessel’s parents moved to France in 1924.

Hessel became French in 1937. After watching the Nazis invade France, he heeded De Gaulle’s appeal and went to London where he became a leading resistance figure.

He was captured by the Gestapo, tortured and deported to the Buchenwald and Dora concentration camps, where he escaped hanging by switching identities with a prisoner who had died of typhus.

After the war, Hessel was involved in editing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and became an indefatigable champion of social justice, human rights and the protection of the environment.

Time for Outrage, his 32-page essay that sold more than 4.5 million copies in 35 countries, inspired the “Occupy Wall Street” movement which began in New York’s financial district and spread to other countries.



Stephane Hessel pictured at his home in Paris on February 8, 2011. Pic: AFP

It coincided with the Arab Spring revolutions which felled many long-serving dictators. Protests in Spain against corruption and bipartisan politics drew their name, the Indignants, from the Spanish title of Hessel’s essay.

In the work, he said: “The reasons for outrage today may be less clear than during Nazi times. But look around and you will find them.”

His reasons for personal outrage included the growing chasm between the haves and have-nots, France’s treatment of its illegal immigrants and the abuse of the environment.

Hessel followed up his best-seller with another book *Get Involved* which focuses on saving the environment.

Hollande said Hessel’s life “was devoted to defending human dignity,” adding: “He left us with an important lesson – that of not resigning oneself to any injustice.”

“Mr Hessel was a monumental figure of human rights,” said Poland’s ambassador Remigiusz Henczel, chairman of the UN Human Rights Council. “His life will continue to inspire our work.”

Hessel served as a diplomat in Vietnam and Algeria and had been made ambassador for life. – AFP



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Hagel says US cannot 'dictate to the world'

WASHINGTON – America cannot "dictate to the world" and must work with allies and build relationships with other nations, US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel said after being sworn in as the new Pentagon chief on February 27.

On his first day at the job, Hagel reinforced his reputation as a reluctant warrior as he told an auditorium of civilian officials and military officers at the Pentagon that America was a powerful country but could not accomplish its goals without forging strong alliances.

"I've always believed that America's role in the world ... has been one that should engage the world. We can't dictate to the world. But we must engage in the world," Hagel said.

"No nation, as great as America is, can do this on their own. We need to continue to build on the

strong relationships that we have built."

Hagel's comments echoed President Barack Obama's emphasis on extricating the country from a decade of ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

US troops pulled out of Iraq in 2011 and roughly 66,000 American forces are due to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

"We make mistakes. We've made mistakes. We'll continue to make mistakes. But we are a force for good," he said.

Hagel, an outspoken opponent of the Iraq war during George W. Bush's presidency, added that "we have great power, and how we apply our power is particularly important."

After a bruising Senate confirmation hearing and a 10-day delay engineered by Republicans, senators voted 58-41 to approve Hagel on February 26. – AFP

Anti-whaling activists are 'pirates', says US judge

LOS ANGELES – A US appeals court has labelled militant conservationist group Sea Shepherd as pirates, and cleared the way for Japanese whalers to pursue legal action against them.

"You don't need a peg leg or an eye patch" to be a pirate, said chief judge Alex Kozinski of the Ninth Circuit US Court of Appeals, overturning a lower court's ruling against Japanese whalers, who he said were "researchers."

"When you ram ships, hurl glass containers of acid, drag metal-reinforced ropes in the water to damage propellers and rudders, launch smoke bombs and flares with hooks; and point high-powered lasers at other ships, you are, without a doubt, a pirate," he said.

This was true "no matter how high-minded you believe your purpose to be," he added in a ruling that dubbed Sea Shepherd founder Paul Watson "eccentric."

Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research and others are pursuing legal action in the United States, seeking an injunction against their activities on the high seas.

In its ruling on February 25, the Ninth Circuit court overturned a US district judge's ruling and allowed the Institute of Cetacean Research to pursue its action



An image taken by Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research on February 25 and released the next day showing a collision between Japanese whaling fleet tanker, the *San Laurel*, and the Sea Shepherd vessel, *Bob Barker*, in waters of Antarctica. Both sides accused the other of ramming their vessels. Japan's Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister, Yoshimasa Hayashi, said in Tokyo on February 26 that his country would never stop hunting whales. He said criticism of Japan's annual whale hunt was "a cultural attack, a kind of prejudice against Japanese culture." Pic: AFP/Institute of Cetacean Research

against the anti-whaling group.

The plaintiffs "are Japanese researchers who hunt whales in the Southern Ocean," which is regulated by an international convention, of which the United States and Japan are signatories, it noted.

The convention "authorises whale hunting when conducted in compliance with a research permit issued by a signatory," said the ruling.

"Cetacean has such a permit from Japan. Nonetheless, it has been hounded on the high seas for years by a group calling itself Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and its eccentric founder, Paul Watson."

It concluded: "The activities that Cetacean alleges Sea Shepherd has engaged in are clear instances of violent acts for private ends, the very embodiment of piracy. The district court erred in

dismissing Cetacean's piracy claims."

The appeals court also ruled the case should be transferred to another district judge.

Japan claims it conducts vital scientific research using a loophole in an international whaling ban agreed at the International Whaling Commission, but makes no secret that the mammals ultimately end up on dinner plates. – AFP

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **Kentucky Fried Chicken International Holdings, Inc.**, a company incorporated in Delaware U.S.A., of 1441 Gardiner Lane, Louisville, Kentucky 40213, U.S.A., is the Owner of the following Trademarks:-

KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN
(Reg. No. IV/100/1995)

KFC
(Reg. No. IV/101/1995)

COLONEL SANDER'S RECIPE
(Reg. No. IV/103/1995)

IT'S FINGER LICKIN' GOOD
(Reg. No. IV/105/1995)

COLONEL'S
(Reg. No. IV/106/1995)



(Reg. No. IV/3812/2012)

in respect of:-

"Meat, fish, poultry and game; meat extracts; preserved, dried and cooked fruits and vegetables; jellies, jams, fruit sauces, eggs, milk and milk products; edible oils and fats." **Class: 29**

"Coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar, rice, tapioca sago, artificial coffee; flour and preparations made from cereals, bread, pastry and confectionery, ices; honey, treacle; yeast, baking-powder; salt, mustard; vinegar; sauces (condiments); spices; ice." **Class: 30**

"Services for providing food and drink; temporary accommodations." **Class: 42**

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 **Kentucky Fried Chicken International Holdings, Inc.**,
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416
Dated: 4th March, 2013

Billions at stake as oil spill trial begins

NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana – Prosecutors accused BP of letting greed triumph over safety on February 25 in the opening of a multi-billion dollar trial over the devastating 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

A federal judge in New Orleans is tasked with determining how much BP and its subcontractors should pay for the worst environmental disaster in US history.

US prosecutors are determined to prove that gross negligence caused the April 20, 2010 blast that killed

11 workers and sank the BP-leased *Deepwater Horizon* rig, sending millions of barrels of oil gushing into the sea.

The US government plans to introduce ample evidence of "systemic problems of corporate recklessness" and how a "culture of disregard to safety" led to the blowout, said Michael Underhill, lead trial counsel for the United States.

"Reckless actions were tolerated, sometimes encouraged by BP to squeeze every dollar," he told the court.

BP is equally determined to avoid a

finding of gross negligence, which would drastically increase its environmental fines to as much as US\$17 billion.

BP is also hoping to shift much of the blame – and cost – to rig operator Transocean and subcontractor Halliburton, which was responsible for the runaway well's faulty cement work.

It took 87 days to cap BP's runaway well, which blackened beaches in five states and crippled the region's tourism and fishing industries in a tragedy that riveted the nation. – AFP

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **NICHOLS PLC** a company incorporated in England and Wales and having its principal office at Laurel House, Woodlands Park, Ashton Road, Newton-Le- Willows, WA12 0HH, England is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademark: -

VIMTO

(Reg. No. IV/4947/2012)

in respect of:-

"Non-alcoholic beverages; preparations for making beverages; fruit juices; mineral water; still and aerated waters" – **Class: 32**

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **NICHOLS PLC**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416
Dated: 4th March, 2013

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WORTHINGTON

(Reg. Nos. IV/912/1989 & IV/5656/2009)

in respect of:-

"beer, ale, stout, lager, and porter"

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **COORS BREWING COMPANY (CBC)**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416
Dated: 4th March, 2013

Briefs

Egyptian opposition to boycott elections

CAIRO – Egypt's main opposition bloc has pulled out of elections due in April, expressing doubts over their transparency and rejecting a call from President Mohamed Morsi for dialogue.

"The decision of the Front, unanimously, is to boycott the elections," National Salvation Front member Sameh Ashour told reporters in Cairo on February 26 after a meeting of the alliance, which groups mainly liberals and leftists.

The decision came after NSF demands, including the formation of a new government "to save the country", had been ignored, Ashour added.

Suicide bomber strikes in Mali

BAMAKO – A suicide bomber killed at least six people after ramming his explosives-laden vehicle into a checkpoint in the northern Malian city of Kidal on February 26, military and hospital sources said.

The attacker struck a checkpoint manned by Tuareg separatists supporting the French-led military offensive against Islamist insurgents.

Kidal is about 1530 kilometres (950 miles) north-east of the Malian capital, Bamako, and the nearby Ifogha mountains have become a haven for al Qaeda-linked fighters forced out of cities after France's intervention in January.

Pistorius's brother on homicide charge

JOHANNESBURG – The older brother of South African star sprinter Oscar Pistorius – himself accused of murdering his girlfriend – has been charged over a deadly road crash five years ago, the family confirmed on February 24.

"Carl Pistorius, brother of Paralympic athlete Oscar Pistorius, faces charges of culpable homicide after a 2008 road accident in which a woman motorcyclist sadly lost her life," the family said in a statement.

Carl Pistorius's case has been adjourned to the end of March, meaning he will likely go on trial before his younger brother.

26,000 missing in Mexican drug war

MEXICO CITY – Mexico said on February 26 that more than 26,000 people have been reported kidnapped or missing in the six years ending November 2012, amid a bloody drug war.

The official accounting came a week after Human Rights Watch criticised the government for failing to investigate at least 249 "disappearances", more than half allegedly perpetrated by members of the security forces. – AFP

Settlements a threat to two-state solution: EU

JERUSALEM – Israel's construction in east Jerusalem is a deliberate strategy to prevent the city from becoming capital of two states, an internal EU report has found, urging members to block funding for any settlement activities.

In its Jerusalem Report 2012, a copy of which was seen by AFP on February 27, the European Union said Jewish settlement construction posed "the biggest single threat to the two-state solution".

It outlined a series of recommendations urging member states to halt or avoid any financial investment or transactions which could directly or indirectly feed into Israel's settlement-building enterprise -- in an effective call for economic sanctions.

Written by the EU heads of mission in Jerusalem and Ramallah, the strongly-worded report described Israel's settlement construction in east Jerusalem as "systematic, deliberate and provocative" accusing the Jewish state of making deliberate political

choices that threaten to render the two-state solution impossible.

An Israel spokesman dismissed the report, saying it showed that the Europeans had failed in their diplomatic mission.

"A diplomat's mission is to build bridges and not to encourage confrontation," foreign ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor told AFP.

Relations between Israel and the EU have been unusually tense in recent months, with Europe voicing anger over Israeli plans for more than 5000 new settler homes in east Jerusalem.

In the 15-page report, EU diplomats flagged construction on the southern flank of east Jerusalem – in Har Homa, Gilo and Givat HaMatos – as being the "most significant and problematic" saying that if it continued unabated, it would likely cut the area off from Bethlehem by the end of the year.

"The construction of these three settlements is part of a political strategy aiming at making it impossible for Jerusalem to become the

capital of two states," it warned.

"If the current pace of settlement activity on Jerusalem's southern flank persists, an effective buffer between east Jerusalem and Bethlehem may be in place by the end of 2013, thus making the realisation of a viable two-state solution inordinately more difficult, if not impossible."

The 27-member bloc is Israel's largest import and export market.

Israel captured east Jerusalem during the 1967 Six Day War and later annexed it in a move never recognised by the international community.

It considers all of Jerusalem its "eternal, undivided" capital and does not see construction in the eastern sector as settlement building. But the Palestinians want east Jerusalem for the capital of their promised state, and they – along with the international community – consider settlement construction there and in the West Bank as a violation of international law. – AFP

Iran slams Hollywood over top Oscar award

TEHRAN – Iran on February 25 criticised Hollywood for awarding its top honour to the Iran hostage drama *Argo*, with a senior official saying it "lacks artistic value" and media poking fun at US first lady Michelle Obama's surprise appearance at the Oscar ceremony.

"This anti-Iran movie lacks artistic value," Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad Hosseini was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency.

"It was awarded the top honour through a massive financing and advertisement campaign ... so that it attracts more attention worldwide," said Hosseini, who also accused Hollywood of targeting the Islamic republic.

Iran's state television earlier slammed the 85th Academy Awards as "the most political Oscar ever," as it reported the news that *Argo* had won the coveted best film Oscar.

Argo recounts the long-classified CIA plot to extract six US hostages out of revolutionary Iran, who managed to evade Islamist students storming the US embassy in Tehran on

November 4, 1979.

The other 52 hostages were held for 444 days in an action that caused the rupture of diplomatic ties between Washington and Tehran.

The movie's Oscar win was announced by the US first lady in an unprecedented satellite appearance from the White House.

Iran's state television said her involvement "increases speculation that awarding this movie was politically motivated."

The *Fars* news agency, affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards, described *Argo* as an "anti-Iran movie" financed by a "Zionist company" – in a reference to the California-based Warner Bros which produced it.

Fars was also critical of Obama and her silver low cut gown, which would be banned in the Islamic republic under its strict dress code for women.

Fars' photo of Obama announcing *Argo* as the winner appeared to have been altered – her dress is shown covering her shoulders, in contrast to the original which shows her bare-shouldered.

– AFP



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Morgan L-Shape Sofa
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High demand in China drives deadly ivory trade

BEIJING – Surrounded by sculptures carved from the white tusks of African elephants – which are being slaughtered in their tens of thousands – Beijing saleswoman Chen Yu says the ivory trade is thriving.

“Business is good,” Chen said, pointing out a 1.2 million yuan (US\$200,000) ivory statue of Buddhist deity Guan Yin, who is associated with compassion.

Surging demand for ivory and rhino horn in Asia is behind an ever-mounting death toll of African elephants and rhinos, conservationists say, as authorities fail to rein in hugely lucrative international smuggling networks.

Policy-makers meet in Bangkok on March 4 for the triennial meeting of signatories to the world’s most important agreement on wildlife trade, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) on February 21 singled out Thailand, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo for tough sanctions to halt what one spokesman called “a poaching crisis... of the kind that we haven’t seen in a long time”.

WWF estimates that about 25,000 elephants were hunted for ivory in 2011 and predicts an even higher toll for 2012. There could be as few as 470,000 left, it says.

The situation facing rhinos – of which only about 25,000 remain in Africa – is also bleak, with a record 668 killed for their horns in South Africa alone in 2012, up nearly 50 percent from the previous year.

Experts agree that most illegal ivory is headed to China, with some estimating the country accounts for as much as 70pc of global demand.

“China is the leading end-use market for ivory in the world today,” Tom Milliken from the wildlife monitoring network TRAFFIC told AFP.

China’s surging economy has created millions of wealthy consumers, many of whom are keen to buy ivory carvings – seen as a status symbol for centuries.

The price of ivory in China nearly tripled from 2006 to 2011, the Canada-based International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) has said, making it an attractive investment and a valuable gift.

‘We have a lot of customers.’

“Our customers don’t buy the sculptures for themselves – they are usually given as presents,” said Chen.

CITES banned the international trade in ivory in 1989 – a historic step which led to a fall in elephant killings.

But like other countries, China permits the resale of ivory bought before the ban – and also has a stockpile bought with CITES approval in 2008, in an attempt to reduce the black market, which it releases for sale with certification.

Chen insisted that the ivory sold in her shop, plastered with signs warning buyers not to take their purchases out of the country, is entirely legal. “There are a lot of limitations on the trade,” she said.

But China’s legal ivory shops mask an illegal market which is six times larger, says IFAW. It says more than half of legal Chinese ivory stores also sell illegal products.

“The main problem is law enforcement against illegal trade in ivory,” said Jianbin Shi, from WWF’s Beijing office. “China needs to increase law enforcement efficiency and effectiveness by increasing the rate of prosecution.”

China however defends its law enforcement efforts, which have resulted in several prison sentences for ivory smugglers. Beijing “attaches great importance to the protection of endangered wildlife,” a foreign ministry spokeswoman said last week.

Ivory sculptures are also prized in Thailand, often as religious items sold to Buddhists, and ivory is openly available in tourist shops.

Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Vietnam has become notorious as the centre of a flourishing trade in rhino horn.

Experts say Hong Kong, which has confiscated more than six tonnes of ivory since last October, is one of the key transit points for the tusk trade in Asia – along with Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam – with routes going on to China.

On a busy street in central Beijing, basketball star Yao Ming stares from a billboard in front of a picture of an elephant carcass – part of efforts to stem Chinese consumers’ voracious demand for ivory. But Chen is not worried that such campaigns will affect business. “We have a lot of customers,” she said. “Prices keep on going up.” – AFP



A carved elephant tusk on display in a shop in Hong Kong late last month. The WWF estimates that about 25,000 elephants were hunted for ivory in 2011 and predicts a higher toll for 2012. Most illegal ivory is destined for China, say experts. Pic: AFP

North Korea warns US

SEOUL – North Korea warned on February 27 that the US mainland was “well within” the range of its nuclear weapons, as Pyongyang continued to ramp up the bellicose rhetoric after its recent nuclear test.

In an article posted on the official *Uriminzokkiri* website, a member of the Korean National Peace Committee – a propaganda body – said the North was now a “fully-independent rocket and nuclear weapons state”.

“The United States should be acutely aware

that the US mainland is now well within the range of our strategic rockets and nuclear weapons,” the signed commentary said.

North Korea made a similar claim in October last year, saying it possessed rockets capable of striking the continental United States.

Pyongyang conducted a successful long-range rocket launch in December, followed by its third nuclear test on February 12.

The December launch was a step towards developing an inter-continental ballistic missile, experts said. – AFP

Park takes helm in SKorea

SEOUL – Park Geun-Hye became South Korea’s first female president on February 25, vowing zero tolerance with North Korean provocation and demanding Pyongyang “abandon its nuclear ambitions” immediately.

As leader of Asia’s fourth-largest economy, Park, 61, daughter of late military strongman Park Chung-Hee, faces challenges of slowing growth and soaring welfare costs in one of the world’s most rapidly ageing societies.

Taking the oath of office less than two weeks after North Korea carried out its

third nuclear test, Park called on the regime in Pyongyang to “abandon its nuclear ambitions without delay” and rejoin the international community.

“North Korea’s recent nuclear test is a challenge to the survival and future of the Korean people, and there should be no mistake that the biggest victim will be none other than North Korea itself,” she said.

“I will not tolerate any action that threatens the lives of our people and the security of our nation,” Park said, while promising to pursue the trust-building

policy with Pyongyang that she had promised in her campaign.

“I will move forward step by step on the basis of credible deterrence,” she added.

Observers say her options will be limited by the international outcry over the North’s February 12 nuclear test, which has emboldened the hawks in her ruling conservative party who oppose closer engagement.

There was no immediate reaction from Pyongyang, but an editorial on February 25 in the ruling Workers’ Party newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* carried a clear message for Park to avoid the “confrontational” policies of her predecessor Lee Myung-Bak.

“Inter-Korean relations have become so tense that the Korean peninsula is threatened with armed conflict,” the newspaper warned.

Park took office a little more than 50 years after her father, a vehement anti-communist, seized power in a military coup.

Park Chung-Hee ruled with an iron fist for the next 18 years until his assassination, and remains a divisive figure – credited with dragging the country out of poverty but reviled for his regime’s human rights abuses.

Most of Park’s inauguration speech focused on the economy and included commitments to job creation, expanded welfare and “economic democratisation” at a time of growing concern with income and wealth disparity.

South Korea’s extraordinary economic revival from the rubble of the 1950-53 Korean War – known



Park Geun-Hye offers a toast at a dinner in the presidential Blue House in Seoul after being sworn in on February 25. Pic: AFP

as the “Miracle on the Han” – has faltered in recent years, with key export markets hit by the global downturn.

Promising “another miracle”, Park said her administration would build a new “creative economy” that would move beyond the country’s traditional manufacturing base and focus on science and technology.

In a clear warning to the giant, family-run conglomerates, or “chaebols”, that dominate the national economy, Park promised a more level playing field and a “fair market” where small and medium-sized businesses could flourish.

South Korea’s journey from war-torn poverty to economic prosperity has done little to break the male stranglehold on political and commercial power.

As South Korea’s first female president, Park leads a country that is ranked below the likes of Suriname and the United Arab Emirates in gender equality. – AFP

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **Wuttisak Clinic Co. Ltd.**, a company organized under the laws of Republic of Cambodia and having its principal office at Phum Kok Chombok Village, Sangkat Chom Chao, Khan Dangkor Phnom Penh, Cambodia is the owner and sole proprietor of the following trademark:-



(Reg. No. IV/1060/2013)

in respect of:-

“Almond soap, cleansing milk for toilet purposes cloths impregnated with a detergent for cleaning, cosmetics, creams for leather, creams, deodorant soap, disinfectant soap, laundry preparations, make-up preparations, powder, shampoos, skin care (cosmetic preparations for whitening), soap, toilet water, washing preparations, whitening the skin” – Class: 3

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **Wuttisak Clinic Co.,Ltd**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416
Dated: 4th March, 2013

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PIZZA HUT
(Reg. No. IV/5337/1996)

in respect of:-

“Prepared meals, included in Class 29 consisting primarily of meats, seafood, poultry, mushrooms, cooked vegetables, cheese and preserved fruits.” **Class: 29**

“Pizza pies; flour and preparations made from cereals, bread, pastry, and confectionery; spices; sauces.” **Class: 30**

“Restaurant services.” **Class: 42**

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **Pizza Hut International, LLC**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416
Dated: 4th March, 2013

Briefs

Indian minister rejects graft denials

NEW DELHI – India last week rejected denials by Italy’s Finmeccanica that the company paid bribes to clinch a US\$748-million contract for 12 British-built helicopters.

Finmeccanica, whose chief executive was arrested on February 12 in Milan as part of a probe by Italian prosecutors, insisted in its response the previous week to a February 14 request from the Indian government that it acted “correctly” in securing the deal.

“We do not believe the company’s reply to the government’s show-cause notice,” Defence Minister A.K. Antony told parliament on February 27 during a debate on the contract.

Singapore jails Chinese bus drivers

SINGAPORE – A Singapore court on February 25 sentenced four Chinese bus drivers to jail terms of up to seven weeks after they pleaded guilty to instigating the city-state’s first strike in nearly three decades last November.

Another Chinese driver was sentenced to six weeks in jail in December while 29 others were deported after the strike, over alleged pay discrimination and poor living conditions.

Judge See Kee Oon said after imposing the jail terms on February 25 that “the sentence must be of sufficient duration to signal its deterrent intent” even though the strike “may have been motivated by a sense of grievance”.

Another Cambodian dies from bird flu

PHNOM PENH – A 35-year-old man has become Cambodia’s eighth bird flu fatality this year, prompting concern about the spread of the virus in the country, a health official said on February 26.

The latest victim, from the northeastern province of Kampong Cham, died the previous day from the H5N1 virus in a Phnom Penh hospital, said Ly Sovann, deputy head of the health ministry’s disease surveillance bureau.

The virus has killed more than 365 people worldwide since 2003, says the WHO.

Japanese woman is world’s oldest

TOKYO – A 114-year-old Japanese woman was recognised on February 27 as the world’s oldest female, making the Asian nation home to the longest-living woman and man on the planet.

Misao Okawa, a descendant of kimono merchants in Osaka, said she was “very happy” at receiving the honour – and a certificate to prove her longevity – from Guinness World Records. – AFP

Abe cites Thatcher in speech on islands

TOKYO – Japan’s prime minister on February 28 quoted comments by former British premier Margaret Thatcher about the Falklands War as he spoke about Tokyo’s acrimonious islands dispute with China.

Shinzo Abe cited the Iron Lady in a speech to parliament in which he talked about Japan’s resolve to defend the islands claimed by Beijing in the East China Sea.

“Our national interests are immutable forever,” Abe told lawmakers. “They aim at making the seas – the foundation of our nation’s existence – completely open, free and peaceful.”

Aggressors should never triumph, he said.

“Former Prime Minister Thatcher, recalling the Falklands War, said she tried to follow the principle that above all, international law – the fundamental rule for the entire world – must prevail against the use of force,” Abe said.

The comments echo those by Thatcher in her

autobiography in which she reflected about the 1982 conflict with Argentina over the ownership of the Falklands.

Thatcher sent a task force which recaptured the islands after a 74-day war which left 649 Argentines and 255 Britons dead.

While few observers see all-out war between Beijing and Tokyo over the Tokyo-controlled Senkakus, some

‘The door to dialogue is always open.’

have raised fears that a mistake or a miscalculation by a low-level commander could trigger a military incident.

The dispute between Asia’s two largest economies intensified in September when Tokyo nationalised three of the islands – which Beijing claims as the Diaoyus – in what it said was a mere administrative change of ownership.

In his speech, Abe reiterated

his long-held position that the islands are an inviolable part of Japanese territory and that no dispute exists.

He noted that he had proposed the first rise in defence spending for 11 years in the context of repeated incursions by Chinese ships into waters around the islands.

“(But) the door to dialogue is always open,” Abe said. “I will call on (China) to return to the start line – a strategic partnership of mutual benefit that does not get derailed by single issues.”

Abe, fresh from a summit with US President Barack Obama in Washington the previous week, vowed to strengthen the Japan-US alliance which he described as “precious”.

Tokyo is also embroiled in island disputes with South Korea and Russia.

The premier said Tokyo wants to establish a forward-looking partnership with Seoul while trying to sign a peace treaty with Moscow by “seriously tackling” their territorial dispute. – AFP

Chinese navy gets stealth frigate

BEIJING – China’s navy has taken delivery of a new type of stealth frigate that is expected to bolster the country’s maritime defences amid territorial disputes, state media reported on February 26.

The ship, identified by the state-run *Xinhua* news agency as a “Type 056 stealth frigate”, was delivered to the navy in a ceremony in Shanghai the previous day.

Navy commander Wu Shengli emphasised the importance of mastering its equipment and capabilities amid maritime disputes, said a front-page article on February 26 in the *PLA Daily*, published by the People’s Liberation Army.

Wu, also a member of the Communist Party’s powerful Central Military Commission, called for continuous improvement and growth of an elite naval

force capable of fighting and winning so as to reassure Chinese leader Xi Jinping and other members of the commission.

In January state media reported that the armed forces were instructed to raise their fighting ability in 2013 and “focus closely on the objective of being able to fight and win battle”.

President Hu Jintao, set to step down this month and be replaced by Xi, told a Communist Party congress last November that China should become a “maritime power”.

The February 26 report did not specify the ship’s size, but said it possesses “good stealth performance and electromagnetic compatibility” and needed just one-third the number of crew members as its predecessor, the Type 053.

The report said the new

ship symbolises the start of a transformation in China’s naval defence strength and more of the ships are in production.

The vessels will mainly be used for escort missions and anti-submarine operations, it added.

Separately, the PLA plans to carry out 40 military exercises this year to hone its combat skills and help troops ready themselves for battle with an emphasis on China’s “core security-related interests”, *Xinhua* reported.

Citing a statement on February 26 by the military’s training department, it said the PLA would strengthen “live-ammunition and confrontation exercises” in 2013.

“The exercises are aimed at improving the army’s combat ability and helping soldiers fully prepare themselves for war,” *Xinhua* said. – AFP

Malaysian opposition unveils election manifesto

KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysia’s opposition unveiled a sweeping election manifesto on February 25 that pledges to end authoritarian rule and corruption while promising higher wages and other populist sweeteners.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim vowed a new era for the racially diverse and economically vibrant country, which has been governed since independence in 1957 by essentially the same coalition.

“This is about the rise of the people. We, as leaders, are only the catalyst,” Anwar said in a speech after the manifesto’s release.

“We are responsible for

returning human dignity and pride to the people.”

Parliamentary elections are due by late June but speculation is rife that Prime Minister Najib Razak could call polls for as early as this month.

His ethnic Malay-dominated Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition faces the three-party opposition alliance Pakatan Rakyat (People’s Pact).

The opposition shocked the government by surging to its strongest showing yet in 2008 parliamentary elections. It is widely seen as facing its best chance ever to dethrone the ruling coalition in the coming vote.

Its manifesto seeks to

tap public impatience with the ruling bloc, which is criticised for its tough handling of dissent and a litany of corruption scandals, while pledging wide-ranging economic reform.

It vows to wage “war” on corruption, abolish laws that infringe on democratic rights and end what it portrays as political interference in government institutions and academia.

The manifesto also pledges to cut prices of fuel and other key items, raise wages, create a million new jobs, and dismantle monopolies it says benefit government “cronies.”

The alliance is made up of Anwar’s multiracial



A February 26 photo of the sign in the Beijing restaurant. The sign was removed on February 28 after an outcry in Vietnam and the Philippines. Pic: AFP

Beijing eatery removes sign that gave offence

BEIJING – A defiant Beijing restaurant manager refused to apologise on February 28 despite removing a “racist” sign barring citizens of states in maritime disputes with China, along with dogs, following an international outcry.

The notice in the window of the Beijing Snacks restaurant read: “This shop does not receive the Japanese, the Philippines, the Vietnamese and dog(s)” in both Chinese and English.

But despite taking down the sign after accusations of racism, the manager said he had no regrets and would not apologise for any offence caused.

Images of the sign went viral in Vietnam and were splashed across newspapers in the Philippines on February 27. Both are involved in bitter territorial disputes with China over islands in the South China Sea.

The manager, surnamed Wang, said it was taken down “because it was a lot of bother”.

“I don’t have any regrets,” he told AFP. “I was just getting too many phone calls about it.”

He seemed surprised at the attention it had

generated but said he would not apologise for any offence caused, suggesting it may have been misinterpreted.

“Maybe people misunderstood our meaning... it only said we would not serve customers from those countries,” he said.

The sign’s wording was particularly inflammatory as it recalled China’s colonial era, when British-owned establishments barred Chinese from entering.

A sign outside a Shanghai park supposedly reading “No Dogs and Chinese allowed” became part of Communist propaganda, and was featured in the 1972 Bruce Lee film *Fists of Fury* – but many historical experts say no such notice ever existed.

The restaurant sign provoked an outcry in Vietnam and the Philippines, generating thousands of posts on Vietnamese social networking sites and newspaper comment threads.

Filipinos greeted the photo with a mixture of fury and amusement. “Blatant racism at Beijing Restaurant,” journalist Veronica Pedrosa wrote in one widely-shared tweet. – AFP

Dying lonely in our ageing world

By Kanoko Matsuyama

TOKYO – Itoko Uchida, 82, was counting on the nephew she raised to support her in old age. He refused, forcing her to pay for a sponsor to join the 420,000-long queue of Japanese waiting for a nursing home bed.

With no relatives willing to help, the Tokyo widow had to spend 710,000 yen (US\$7600) on a professional service to be her guarantor and assist with an application to a nursing home, she said. An erosion of traditional Confucian values in Japan means fewer elderly are being cared for at home by relatives – a development for which neither Uchida nor Japan's government were fully prepared.

Japan, with the world's highest proportion of retirees, can't build nursing homes fast enough. By 2025, one in three citizens will be 65 years or older from 12 percent of the population in 1990, estimates the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. A lack of long-term care facilities means the elderly increasingly risk living alone in ill-equipped homes or suffering abuse in the care of resentful relatives.

"The system is designed for the 1970s, when multiple generations lived together

and family care giving was thought to continue forever," said Hiroshi Takahashi, a professor of health sciences at the International University of Health and Welfare in Otawara City. "But that's not the reality now."

By 2030, the number of seniors living alone, like Uchida, will increase 54 percent to 7.2 million household units from 2010 levels, says the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in Tokyo. Elderly-care costs will more than double to 19.8 trillion yen (\$212 billion) a year by 2026, the health ministry estimates. That threatens to overload the world's second-most indebted nation.

From now until 2030, an estimated 470,000 seniors will die alone in Japan unless more investment is made in caring for them, Takahashi said.

"Society and the system will blow up around 2025 without a drastic change," he said.

Japan may be a harbinger of a bigger crisis. Confucian-influenced societies from Vietnam to South Korea are grappling with the conflicting demands of modernisation and traditions that venerated the elderly and obligated families to care for them, the Center for Strategic International Studies said



Itoko Uchida, 82, at her home in Fujimi City, Japan. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates that by 2025, one in three Japanese citizens will be 65 years or older, up from 12 percent of the population in 1990. Pic: Bloomberg News/Tomohiro Ohsumi

in a report in July.

"The family is already under increasing stress from the forces of modernisation," the Washington-based centre said. "Over the next few decades, massive age waves are due to engulf the region, slowing economic growth, driving up old-age dependency costs, and heaping large new burdens on governments and families alike."

China has already sought to protect these values, passing a law last year allowing parents to sue children for failing to visit them. In South Korea, the number of suicides among people aged 65 and older more than tripled in a decade to 4406 in 2011, shows the latest available data from Statistics Korea. The increase was probably spurred by an economic slowdown and the erosion of traditional family support, the OECD said.

Worldwide, the proportion of people older than 60 years in populations is increasing more than three times faster than the overall growth rate. Within five years, adults 65 years and older will outnumber children younger than five for the first time. By 2050, there will be 2 billion people 60 years or older, from 605 million in 2000, the World Health Organisation said.

By 2040, almost 40pc of the population will be aged at least 60 in Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan from 14-to-18pc of the population in 2010, says the United Nations Population Division. The proportion will be 29pc in China by 2040, from 12pc in 2010.

The growing demands of the elderly may be stoking violence toward them. In 2011, 21 seniors in Japan were murdered or died from neglect, and the number of elderly people abused by

family members jumped 32pc to 16,599 from 2005 levels, show health ministry figures.

After Uchida's husband died, her 60-year-old nephew stepped in to assist with her application and sponsor her long-term care. The help stopped when his wife intervened, said Uchida, who is 22nd in line for a bed in a nearby home.

"I stressed his marriage," she said. "He's also getting old and fearing he may not get help from his son, who lives far away, closer to his wife's parents."

Uchida paid for support from the Four-leaf Clover Association, a non-profit group that helps about 200 people in Tokyo and

study. Thirty-six percent of respondents envisaged preferring to live with, or close to, relatives in old age, down from 70pc in 1983.

That preference though has a downside. Almost 15pc of Japanese "rarely" or "never" interact socially with others – making Japan the least social of societies in the developed world, says the OECD.

Social networks are breaking down as family members live further apart and can't afford to socialise, said Katsuyoshi Kawai, professor of social welfare at Meiji Gakuin University and the author of *Seniors Living Alone in Urban Cities and Social Isolation*.

"We cook a lot of food for visitors, give away money

have gone undiscovered sometimes for months.

In 2006, Japan's government introduced a law to protect the elderly from abuse and provide support to caregivers. It is also paying subsidies to convert hospitals into nursing homes, building residential care facilities, hiring more caregivers and urging hospitals to allow medical staff to make house calls.

Businesses, charities and local governments are also innovating to help meet the needs of the elderly. Food delivery services for seniors are expected to double in 10 years to 106 billion yen, while the market for food that doesn't require much chewing will climb 61pc to 158 billion yen, said Fuji-Keizai Co., a marketing research firm in Tokyo.

Utilities are also chiming in with products to detect signs of life: Tokyo Gas Co offers a service to alert relatives to a sudden drop in usage; KDDI Corp sells mobile phones with pedometers to detect mobility; and Secom Co markets a GPS system to track movement.

The initiatives are promoting more independent living.

"Our generation has lived separately from our parents and so wives have enjoyed freedom from their in-laws," said Toshie Kurita, 69, whose mother-in-law volunteered to move into a nursing home eight years ago.

Kurita, whose husband died two years ago, visits her mother-in-law in Chiba, west of Tokyo, every second week and says she would be happy to hire professional help if necessary.

"If money can solve the problem, that's the best," she said. "No one wants to beg their daughter-in-law to care for them when they're nearing the end of their life." – Bloomberg News

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‘The system is designed for the 1970s, when multiple generations lived together and family care giving was thought to continue forever. But that’s not the reality now.’

Kobe complete applications and attain the requisite sponsorship for a place in a nursing home.

The number of seniors seeking sponsorship for nursing homes is increasing about 10pc a year, said Hideyuki Ogasawara, senior director at Kizunanokai, which provides a similar service.

In 1980, 53pc of people older than 65 years in Japan lived with their children, shows health ministry data. In 2010, that proportion was down to 18pc.

Japanese are increasingly eschewing tradition and opting to live independently, found a 2008 government

for weddings, funerals and to grandchildren – and it's expensive," Kawai said. "It's hard to continue such customs" when the economy is stagnating, he said.

Authorities are responding.

In metropolitan Tokyo, officials in Adachi ward are conducting a district-wide audit of people older than 70 who live alone and any shared households whose residents are all over 75. A bylaw was recently passed enabling the information to be shared with volunteer social workers, police and residents' groups to circumvent the isolation that's led to deaths that

Miss Myanmar 2013 contestants look OK but drop the ball on tourism knowledge

By Nuam Bawi

THE final round of the Miss Myanmar International 2013 beauty pageant was held at Myanmar Convention Centre in Yangon on February 24, with contestant Gone Yee Aye Kyaw taking top honours.

The first runner-up was Zon Thansin, while Sweetie Ko was named second runner-up.

Gone Yee Aye Kyaw, who is from Mandalay, told *The Myanmar Times* that she was very happy with her victory, which was her first top prize in a beauty contest.

"I've participated in some other modeling competitions but I've never won the top 'Miss' prize, only second runner-up. But at this competition I got the 'Miss' prize. I can't even find words to express how happy I am," she said.

Twenty contestants took part in the final round of Miss Myanmar International 2013, with the modeling component divided into three categories: traditional dress, swimsuits and evening gowns.

The competition also

included a talent show, and each contestant had to answer one question in the English language about the tourism industry.

Gone Yee Aye Kyaw said she gained confidence after answering the question and heard the applause of the audience.

"I was nervous when the competition started. I had been told by others to be careful because I have a tendency to raise my eyebrows when I smile, which always made me feel disappointed while onstage," she said.

After the competition, social networks buzzed with dissatisfaction over the contestants' lack of knowledge about tourism and the poor answers they provided for the questions posed, but the managing director of event organiser Myanmar Tourism Services, U Lin Htei, said he was happy with the contest.

"I would say I'm satisfied with the final round of this competition when I look at the event overall, although I do agree with the criticism that this year's

finalists suffered from lack of knowledge about tourism," he said.

"It's because most of the finalists are new to modeling, so some of them were very nervous on the stage and could not answer the questions well in English. Before the completion, we even had to teach some of them how to walk on the catwalk."

U Lin Htei further defended the finalists by adding that they had to take many steps and work very hard to reach the final round, unlike some other local beauty pageants.

The Miss Myanmar International competition was held for the first time last year, with winner Nan Khin Zay Yar going on to participate in the Miss International Beauty Pageant 2012 in Okinawa, Japan.

She won the People's Choice Award there, as well as the Miss Internet Award as a result of earning 21.5 million online votes. It was the first time Myanmar had participated in the Miss International Beauty Pageant in 50 years.



Gone Yee Aye Kyaw (right) receives the Miss Myanmar International 2013 crown. Pic: Boothee

Although it has not yet been confirmed whether this year's winner will participate in any competitions outside of Myanmar, Gone Yee Aye Kyaw said she was confident

that she could compete at the international level.

"I know there will be stricter requirements for international competitions, and I will need to prepare

in many ways if I get a chance to participate. I will especially need to improve my English-language skills and my talent show," she said.

Two local documentary movies selected for 'care' film forum at Kyoto University

By Zon Pann Pwint

UAUNG Min works as a family doctor in 44th ward in North Dagon township, but his true passions lie with literature and documentary filmmaking.

He has contributed stories to *Shumawa* and *Sabai Phyu* magazines, and in January he published his debut novella.

Dr Aung Min has also written four scripts for documentary films, and his completed documentary *The Clinic* has been selected to be screened at a film forum on the topic of "care" to be held at the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University, Japan, on March 15.

The film will be one of five movies from four countries shown at the forum. Two of the selections are from Myanmar.

The Clinic explores the relationships between Dr Aung Min, 45, and his patients.

Dr Aung Min opened the clinic, attached to his home in North Dagon township, in 2000. Now, all the residents in his neighbourhood treat him like a member of their families.

"When the residents in my ward get sick, they come rushing into my clinic in anticipation, they think I'm their saviour," Dr Aung Min told *The Myanmar Times*.

"I find myself in conflict with my

patients. I know I can't be their saviour and I can't rescue someone with a severe condition. Clients with great anticipation always bring the doctor into confrontation. I know I can't always help, and it makes me very depressed."

He said these difficult dilemmas are the dominant theme of his documentary.

"I have to work night and day in the clinic, so the clinic is the main setting and I, the doctor, am the protagonist in my documentary," he said.

Dr Aung Min said his clinic is like a hospital in the small town.

"Everyone who suffers from mild illness to serious disease like cancer relies on my clinic. They don't want to go to a dispensary or hospital," he said.

"In the clinic, I have my own personal problems. The clients have their sufferings and pains too, but I am bound to cure them. My problem is that I feel I have nothing much to do for their full recovery."

He said that even those people who live near Yangon General Hospital tend to go to smaller clinics with their health problems.

"That choice is common to most patients in our country," he said. "No patient wants to get a scolding from the doctors. In my experience, half of all illnesses seem to be relieved if the doctor lays his hand on the patient's forehead. Perhaps they just want kind

treatment."

Dr Aung Min said family doctors "never behave in a pompous manner" and he readily provides medical instruction if someone asks him for advice at the tea shop.

"People are obviously attached to family doctors," he said.

Dr Aung Min said he attended workshops at Yangon Film School to study documentary filmmaking.

The Clinic was co-directed by Jau and The Maw Naing. The film took six months to complete.


During the shooting period Jau, who also lives in North Dagon, waited outside the clinic every day. When Dr Aung Min gave the signal from inside the clinic, Jau carried his camera inside to shoot the scene.

"The documentary was made in Dr Aung Min's clinic and other places where he was called in. I didn't tell his clients what to do or how to behave. I shot them doing what they usually did when they came to the clinic," Jau said.

"The patients didn't seem upset at being documented. They didn't even seem to realise I existed, so I was able to document the reality of the patients," he said.


He added that he tried not to be too obvious with the camera while working in the clinic's neighbourhood.

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ASEAN women hold charity flea market

THE Women of ASEAN in Yangon (WAY) will hold a charity flea market at Horizon International School in Yangon on March 9, from 9am to 3pm.

The aim is to raise funds for donation to organisations that provide help to needy women and children, said WAY chairperson, Ms Chua.

"For the past two years we identified our beneficiaries following the flea market, based on how much money we had raised. Since we are a ladies' group, this year we plan to help organisations helping women and children," she said.

"We hope we can raise more money this year, and we will donate all the money raised at the flea market."

This is the third year that WAY is organising a flea

market, with past events held at the Thai embassy in Yangon and at the Indonesian International School in Yangon.

The flea market will include a lucky draw program, with top prizes including a return air ticket to Vietnam, a two-night stay at an island resort in Thailand, and jewellery.

WAY was founded in 1993 as a social and charitable organisation with the aim of doing charity work for the benefit of Myanmar. There are currently about 60 members, consisting of women from ASEAN embassies in Myanmar.

Horizon International School is located at 25 Po Sein Road in Bahan township. The entrance fee to the flea market is K2000 a person.

— Lwin Mar Htun

Comedy troupe takes stage after 25-year absence

LOCAL comedian groups Mya Ponnamar and Thee Lay Thee will perform a concert under the title Pyi Thu A Nyeint Tha Bin at People's Park in Yangon on March 27, at 6pm.

The concert is being arranged by well-known comedian Ko Zaganar, one of the members of Mya Ponnamar.

Ko Zaganar said at the press conference on February 19 that when Mya Ponnamar formed in 1985, they decided to follow the wishes of the audience.

"If the audience hates something, we will hate it too. If they want something, we will want it too," he said, adding that Mya Ponnamar's last public performance was on March 27, 1988.

"The upcoming concert at People's Park will be the first

time Mya Ponnamar officially performs together, and first chance in 25 years for the audience to see us."

The Thee Lay Thee group consists of comedians Sein Thee, Pann Thee, Zee Thee and Kyel Thee, and Ko Zaganar described them as the new generation of Mya Ponnamar.

While comedy groups in Myanmar normally perform to the accompaniment of a *saing waing* (traditional Myanmar orchestra), the upcoming concert will instead feature a 40-piece Western-style orchestra.

"A variety of ethnic cultural dance will also be included in the program," said Ko Zaganar.

Tickets for the show cost K6000, K15,000 and K20,000.

— Lwin Mar Htun

Mon 'proud and happy' to hold public National Day celebration

By Lwin Mar Htun

MEMBERS of the Mon ethnic group celebrated their 66th National Day with a big ceremony at People's Park on Pyay Road on February 26, attended by leaders from the Mon National Committee as well as Daw Aung San Su Kyi.

Committee leaders opened the ceremony by saluting the Mon flag and the Myanmar national flag, while audience members — many of them wearing traditional white and red Mon dress — looked on.

Committee chairman Dr Min Tin Mon addressed the crowd, saying that the Mon arrived in Myanmar around 2000 BCE.

"The Burmese alphabet is based on the Mon alphabet, and we can see the influence of the Mon alphabet in the languages of all the national races," he said.

Daw Aung San Su Kyi also delivered a speech, eliciting a big round of applause from onlookers.

"These days I have been attending quite a few national days for different ethnic groups. As a Bamar I am not directly related to the other ethnic groups, but I might be related to the Mon because my mother's relations were Mon," she said.

"In Myanmar, Shin Saw Pu was the only true queen who led the country, and she was ethnic Mon. That's why I'm so proud of Mon women. When I thought of attending Mon National Day, I thought it would be like attending Mon Women's Day," she said with a laugh.

The speeches were followed by an entertainment program that was kicked off by a song about the history of the Mon, sung by about 30 boys and girls in their ethnic language. A dozen



Daw Aung San Su Kyi speaks during the Mon National Day ceremony at People's Park in Yangon on February 26. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

Mon girls then took the stage to perform the *tabin daing yein* dance.

Students from the University of Art and Culture in Yangon also performed a short drama about a famous incident in Mon history, in which the Buddha gave eight of his hairs to two Mon merchant brothers, Tapussa and Bhallika.

The brothers returned to their home city of Okkalapa, and King Okkalapa and the brothers decided to build a pagoda in which to enshrine the hairs. The pagoda is now known as Shwedagon.

Another highlight of the entertainment program was the *hamsa* (*hintha*) dance

presented by male and female performers, a famous cultural dance about the golden shelduck bird used as the Mon national symbol.

The performances were met with enthusiastic applause from audience members, including 19-year-old Zin Moe Wah, who said she was "proud of being Mon and so happy because we can hold our Mon National Day in a safe place".

"In past years we didn't have an official permit for public celebrations, so I only cooked traditional foods with my friends. This is the first time I can participate in Mon National Day with our Mon nation," she said.

Daw Mi Con Chit, a member of the Mon National Day Celebration Committee, said preparations for the celebration started three months ago and all participants practiced very hard for the event.

This was the second year that the government has given official permission for the Mon to publicly celebrate their national day.

According to Mon history, brothers Prince Samala and Prince Wimala founded the Mon kingdom Hongsavatoi (now Bago) on the first day after the full moon of Tabodwe. Since 1947 Mon National Day has been marked on that day.

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From page 41

Film forum

"Carrying a video camera was very dangerous. Residents on the street might have thought I was an official from Special Branch, and government officials might have thought I was a correspondent from Democratic Voice of Burma," Jui said.

The other entry from Myanmar at the Kyoto University forum is *The Glass Man* by We Ra, which tells the story of an osteoporosis sufferer whose outlook on life has changes when he is sent to a school for the disabled children.

Jui said people think documentary filmmakers are mostly interested in exploring the harsh lives of people in society.

"But for me, I'd rather document the rich people who have comfortable lives, but they won't allow us to document their lives," Jui said.

"If I ask how they became rich, they won't tell me. I want to follow wherever they go to document reality, but they won't allow us to follow them. So most filmmakers focus on the unfortunate people in our society."



Still frame from the documentary film 'The Clinic'.

'Temple cuisine' feeds body and soul

By Park Chan-Kyong

PYEONGTAEK, South Korea — A centuries-old tradition of Buddhist cuisine, with strict bars on foods linked to lust or anger, is enjoying a revival in South Korea, one of Asia's most high-stress societies.

"Temple food", as it is generally known, is moving out of the temples and monasteries and into mainstream restaurant culture, attracting a loyal following for its deceptive simplicity and health-giving properties.

Among its most skilful practitioners — and ardent promoters — is a 54-year-old monk, Jeokmun, who has devoted several decades to refining what he sees as a meditative diet that feeds both soul and body.

At his modest Sudoksa temple in Pyeongtaek City, about 60 kilometres (38 miles) south of Seoul, Jeokmun teaches his techniques to an attentive class of a dozen students — mostly middle-aged housewives.

Shaven-headed with a round, tanned face, the monk shows off his knife skills as he dexterously chops cucumbers and bell peppers and cuts delicate slices of soft tofu.

His recipes for the day

include tofu sautéed in plum-sauce, mushroom casserole, radish kimchi and noodles mixed in chilli sauce and vegetables.

"Temple cuisine means low-calorie dishes that make your body healthy and your spirit clean," Jeokmun said, as he makes fine diagonal slashes across the tofu slices to allow the plum-and-soy sauce flavour to penetrate.

Apart from a few dairy ingredients, temple food is largely vegan in nature and incorporates an impressive variety of wild roots, herbs and vegetables.

Its newfound popularity is partly attributable to the search for a healthier diet in a country which, like other Asian nations that experienced rapid economic development, has growing levels of obesity and diabetes.

As well as eschewing artificial flavourings and additives, temple cuisine also bans such vegetarian staples as chives, leeks, scallions, garlic and onion — known in the Buddhist traditions the "five pungent vegetables".

"The wisdom is as follows," Jeokmun explained. "Eaten cooked, these vegetable may incite the libido, while eaten raw they can set the mind to anger and greed."



South Korean Buddhist monk Jeokmun (left) teaches his techniques to students at his Sudoksa Temple in Pyeongtaek City, about 60 kilometres (38 miles) south of Seoul, on November 2, 2012. Pic: AFP

South Korea is the world's third largest producer of garlic and a passionate consumer of the same.

For many Koreans, the absence of garlic from "kimchi" — the iconic national dish most commonly made of fermented cabbage — is unthinkable.

But Jeokmun sees no room for compromise.

Years ago, as a student reporter at a Buddhist college, he had been shocked to see

scallion, garlic and even artificial flavour enhancers being widely used in the kitchens of many temples he visited.

Determined to bring the cuisine back to its roots, he set out on a nomadic life, visiting temples with renowned Buddhist chefs and learning their recipes.

In 1992, he launched a Korean temple food institute with likeminded monks and nuns.

In an effort to spread the message, he has taken part in numerous TV cooking programs, given lectures and written several books, including one with 227 recipes that was published in 2000 and is now in its sixth reprint.

Jeokmun believes his food has wider appeal, including for foreigners who can have difficulties with standard Korean cuisine — known for its liberal use of salt and

spice.

For one of his students, Chang Bong-Suk, 43, the monk's teachings provide a path to bring a healthier diet to her family.

"I've been applying what I've learned here to cooking healthy meals at home, especially for my son who used to suffer from allergic skin problems," Chang said.

Her son's condition has improved as a result, she said, while admitting that her husband was less enamoured of the meatless diet.

"I transform the recipe a bit to make it more palatable for him," she confessed. "For example, when I make a steamed pumpkin, I put some shrimp inside the hollowed-out pumpkin, together with mushrooms, tofu, ginkgo seeds and pine seeds demanded in the original recipe."

While South Korean TVs, fridges and mobile phones have been exported with enormous success around the globe, Korea's highly distinctive cuisine remains relatively unknown.

In recent years, the government has invited overseas chefs to special "gourmet weeks" as it seeks to give Korean food the same exposure as Asian cuisines like Chinese, Thai and Japanese. — AFP

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Dog's life for Singapore's pampered pets

By Annabelle Liang

SINGAPORE — The guests lean over the side of the boat to catch the morning breeze as their catamaran eases off from a jetty in Singapore. A typical cruise, except for the fact that the passengers are dogs.

"Actually, this is their third cruise," said Andy Pe, 43, the doting owner of two black Labrador retrievers, a yellow Labrador, a golden retriever and two mongrels. "They enjoy the sea breeze and water so much."

From boat cruises and spas to their own obituary section in the leading newspaper, pets are pampered in a big way in Singapore, a city-state with one of Asia's highest standards of living.

Boat owner Joe Howe, 48, started the Pet Cruise company last July.

His 7.8-metre (26-foot) motor catamaran, which comes with a swimming deck, has a fully stocked cleaning station and life jackets for dogs.

On weekends, a basic cruise lasting two hours costs S\$40 (US\$32) per guest — human or pet — or S\$400 to book the entire boat.

Howe, a retired broker who now leads an average of two cruises every week, has even had people bring pet tortoises on board.

"Young couples are having pets

before they have children, it's a stand-in, and at times even a replacement [for kids]," Howe said.

Owners concur. "They are very much like my kids because I'm single and I have some time on my hands," said Pe as the vessel made its way to Seletar Island, where his dogs went for a splash in the sea.

According to official data, there were 57,000 registered dogs in 2012 in Singapore. A densely populated island of 5.3 million people, the majority of its inhabitants live in high-rise apartment blocks with little room for dogs to run.

There are more than 250 licensed pet shops in the city-state, many of them operating in shopping malls, offering everything from hamsters priced at S\$10 to pure breed dogs costing thousands.

Marcus Khoo, the executive director of Petopia, a shop that offers dog grooming services as well as board and lodging, said owners are willing to pay a premium for their pets' well-being.

The shop's modern interior has a wall of doggy collars and glass panels through which owners keep an eye on pets undergoing various treatments.

"People now understand that quality canine lifestyle is not just a roof over their heads and food," Khoo said.

These services offering the best



A Japanese pet stylist grooms an English cocker spaniel at Petopia in Singapore on January 8. Pic: AFP

in canine comfort don't come cheap. A 20-minute micro-bubble bath treatment for an odour-free coat can cost anywhere between S\$64 to S\$119, depending on the breed and size of the dog.

Dog yoga — or doga — is also catching on in Singapore after becoming popular in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"Pets are left at home for hours, so doga is a way for owners and dogs to bond," said Rosalind Ow, 42, the owner of Super Cuddles

Clubhouse, which started offering doga classes last August.

Luxury options extend to the departed. Owners can publish tributes to their deceased pets in the classified ads section of the city-state's leading daily *The Straits Times* on Sundays.

At the suburban Pets Cremation Centre, niches can be rented at a columbarium after the funeral services.

"Most owners treat their pets as part of their family. [A pet's passing]

is a very sensitive issue. When that happens, a pet that usually sleeps with them is suddenly gone from their lives," said the firm's owner Patrick Lim, 60.

A simple cremation for a dog costs anywhere from S\$150 to S\$500, depending on its size.

Owners can opt for express cremation — extra charges apply, of course — and then pay S\$300 to place an urn in the columbarium for one year, after which the rent falls to S\$180 annually.

That excludes a yearly "maintenance fee" of S\$180 for the upkeep of the premises.

But there is a darker side to the growing fondness for pets in Singapore — some of the animals end up being dumped after the novelty wears off and the reality of long-term caring sets in.

Abandoned dogs and cats, even guinea pigs, await adoption in steel enclosures at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), which takes in up to 600 unwanted or abandoned animals each month.

"A lot of people wouldn't bat an eyelid on spending several thousand dollars on a dog. The litmus test is whether the dog stays with them for the rest of its life or not," said the SPCA's executive director Corinne Fong.

"Society at large is not quite there yet," she added. — AFP

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Phyo's Cooking Adventure

Phyo cuts through culture to reveal life's true taste

Greet the grilling season with pork and noodles

THIS is a very simple and refreshing noodle salad made with sweet and rich flavoured grilled pork. The sweet, sour and spicy dressing can tickle your taste buds on hot summer days. This recipe can be made using skewered and grilled pork, and it can also

be eaten with sticky rice. If you don't eat pork, chicken breast or thigh meat is a great substitute. I also sometimes eat this dish with fried mince prawns and sugarcane.

Rice noodles are known as nan gyi phet in Myanmar and are available in local markets. They are used in nan gyi thoke (Burmese style) and meeshay (Shan style) noodle dishes.

Grilled pork (thit nuong) INGREDIENTS

- 500g of pork shoulder or neck
- ¼ cup of lemongrass (diced)
- 2-3 cloves of garlic (crushed)
- 2 tablespoons of sugar
- 4 tablespoons of fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon of freshly crushed white pepper
- 3 teaspoons of sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- 1 tablespoon of roasted sesame seeds

PREPARATION

Mix the lemongrass,



Pic: Phyo

garlic, fish sauce, sugar, honey, white pepper, sesame oil and roasted sesame seeds in a big glass bowl. Cut the pork into thin strips and marinate them in the mixture for at least two hours in the refrigerator.

When the pork is ready, arrange the pieces on a grill or pan, and grill them for few minutes each, brushing them with vegetable oil all the time. Set aside.

Rice noodle salad INGREDIENTS

1kg of fresh rice noodles or nan gyi phet (150-200g per person)

- 5 tablespoons of fried shallots (kyat thaw nnee kyaw)
- 4 tablespoons of roasted peanuts (crushed)
- 2 bunches of mint (picked leaves)
- 1 bunch of lettuce (washed, drain and shredded)
- 2 bunches of Asian basil (picked leaves)
- 30g of bean sprouts
- 1 big cucumber (julienne cut)
- 2 big red chilies (sliced)
- Vietnamese fish sauce dressing (see below)
- Pickled carrots and white radish (see below)

PREPARATION

Prepare the noodles as per packet instructions. Fresh noodles are available at local markets. Wash all the green salads and herbs, and drain well. Lay the rice noodles in a bowl, then layer the grilled pork strips, fried shallots and roasted peanuts on top. Pour the Vietnamese fish sauce dressing over the top and toss well. Let the noodles soak in the dressing for added flavour. Serve with shredded lettuce, bean sprouts, mint leaves, basil leaves, red chilies, pickled carrots and white radish.

Vietnamese fish sauce dressing INGREDIENTS

- 120ml (½ cup) of fish sauce
- 120ml of white vinegar
- 90ml (5 tablespoons) of lime juice
- 5 tablespoons of sugar
- 6 garlic cloves (crushed)
- 2 big red chilis (diced)
- 1 cup of water

PREPARATION

Dissolve the sugar into the water and mix all the ingredients (except the chilies) together in a jar. Garnish with chilies.

Pickled carrots and white radish (do chua) INGREDIENTS

- 1 carrot (peeled, julienne cut)
- 1 white radish (peeled, julienne cut)
- 2 cups of warm water
- 1½ tablespoon of sugar
- 1 tablespoons of salt
- 2 tablespoons of distilled white or rice vinegar

PREPARATION

Wash and sanitise a jar that can fit all the ingredients. Boil the water and let it cool down. When it is warm, mix in all the ingredients and allow them to completely dissolve. Add all the vegetables into the jar and then pour the mixture over the vegetables. Cover with an airtight lid and allow it to sit in a cool corner out of direct sunlight for one day, or keep in the refrigerator for two to three days before serving.

Main Tips

Be careful while grilling the pork: Grilling for too long can burn the honey. Meat cut into thinner strips requires less grilling time. If using prawns instead of pork, it's best to leave out the honey and sugar. If you use packaged noodles, add 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil into the boiling water. After you drain them, the noodles won't stick to each other. The pickled carrot and white radish recipe can also be made using cauliflower and bean sprouts.

QUAFFING QUOTE

"Cooking is hard work, but when it is done with love, it really is a pleasure." — Margaret Fulton (Australian food and cooking writer and commentator)

NEXT WEEK

Fish on the grill and fish in the steamer

Red Wine

Richmonts Cabernet Sauvignon 2010



A match for venison, and suitable for removing the screw cap with your teeth and guzzling straight from the bottle with your buddies at the hunting lodge.

Score BOX

Ks 6,580

5/10

White Wine

Montrouge Chardonnay 2011



Not the most terrible chardonnay for sipping on a warm, early summer's evening, but there are far better ways to blow K7000. palate.

Score BOX

Ks 7,000

7/10

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Dining with the devil in Kuala Lumpur

I NORMALLY don't head for shopping centres when I think of fine dining. In fact, one of my least favourite activities in the world is eating at noisy shopping mall food courts.

The Central Market in Kuala Lumpur is sort of like a shopping mall and sort of not, and it sort of has a food court and sort of does not. In the face of these ambiguities, whenever I'm in KL and feeling peckish, I find myself heading for the market even when I'm not in the mood to shop for gaudy kites or brightly painted wooden masks to hang on my wall.

My destination? A restaurant on the mezzanine floor known as Precious Old China, specialising in Malaccan Nonya food, which contains influences from Chinese, Malay, Portuguese, Dutch and English cuisines.

The décor is nothing short of amazing, the sort of place that has first-time visitors pulling out their cameras and snapping photos in every direction at



once. The space is filled with vintage and antique items from China and Malaysia, including old medicine cabinets, intricately carved wooden mirror frames, folding screens with stained glass window panes, and old Chinese sign boards.

Other highlights include a bar countertop made from chengal (Malaysian

hardwood) and "sourced from a Colonial-era club", according to the restaurant's website. The walls are also decorated with a collection of modern paintings by regional artists.

Over the course of several visits I've tried a number of menu items, including fish head curry, mutton curry, laksa noodles, seabass in

black pepper sauce, and sinus-clearing ginseng soup.

All of these have proven to be quite tasty, but I've settled on my own definite favourites, starting with a do-it-yourself appetiser nicknamed "top hats" due to their shape. They're sort of like mini taco salads that you have to assemble yourself at the table before consuming — imagine the fun you'll have!

For mains, my top choices start with the beef rending; the sauce is rich with spices, so if you order this dish, opt for the plain steamed rice rather than the coconut rice lest you be overwhelmed by the knicker-twisting flavours.

My other menu favourite is the devil curry chicken with potatoes, which is strong with turmeric, garlic, ginger and chili tanginess. It's an addictive dish that I can never stop shoveling into my gullet even after my hunger has abated. Thankfully the portion sizes are sufficient without being epic.

The bar at Precious Old China serves Carlsberg on tap, ubiquitous in KL and decent enough for taking the edge off spicy foods. Wine, cocktails and soft drinks are also options for those oddballs who prefer something other than beer. — HJ

Precious Old China

Lot M2, Jalan Hang Kasturi, Central Market, Kuala Lumpur

Food:	9
Drink:	8
Atmosphere:	9
Service:	8
X Factor:	7
Value for Money:	7

Score BOX

9/10



Guest and Jung Il-Woo @ Holika Korea Product Launch



Mr Kim Tae Hoon @ Holika Korea Product Launch



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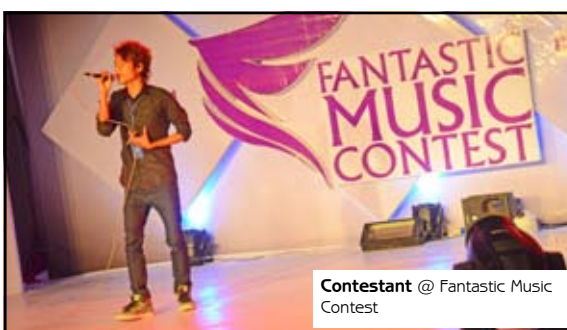
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Contestant @ Fantastic Music Contest



Nwe Hwe Yin and Rolinenar @ Victoria University College Opening Ceremony



Aye Chan Moe @ FP Diesel Product Launch



Contestant @ Fantastic Music Contest



Naung Naung (SF) @ Fantastic Music Contest



Contestant @ Fantastic Music Contest



Min Chit Thu & Si Thu Lwin @ Fantastic Music Contest



Hnin Su Khine Oo @ FP Diesel Product Launch



Mr Augustino and U Kaung Si Tun @ FP Diesel Product Launch



San Thida Oo @ FP Diesel Product Launch



U Tun Tun Win @ FP Diesel Product Launch

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SOCIALITE
WITH NUAM BAW

SOCIALITE kicked off the week at the Victoria University College opening ceremony at Myanmar Convention Centre on February 20. After she took a day of rest, on February 22 she attended the new Samsung mobile shop opening ceremony in Thingangyun township, then dropped by Sedona Hotel to attend the solar lantern donation ceremony held by the Panasonic CSR & Citizenship Group. On the same busy day Socialite also attended a lucky draw organised by South Korean skincare and cosmetic company Holika Holika at Western Park Royal, and the following day she went to the FP Diesel product launch and dinner party at Inya Lake Hotel, and also enjoyed Fantastic Music Contest at Taw Win Centre. Socialite rounded out her week on February 24 with a press conference at Sedona Hotel to explain about the final round of the Miss Lipice competition.



Michelle @ Miss Lipice Final Competition Press Conference



Win Shwe Yee @ Miss Lipice Final Competition Press Conference



Nan Sandar Hla Tun @ Miss Lipice Final Competition Press Conference



Min Pyae Sone @ Miss Lipice Final Competition Press Conference



U Kyaw Swar @ Samsung Mobile Shop Opening Ceremony



Staff members @ Samsung Mobile Shop Opening Ceremony



Myat Pwint Phyu Win @ Miss Lipice Final Competition Press Conference



U Myo Set Aung @ Panasonic CSR & Citizenship Group Solar Lantern Donation Ceremony



Ms Michiko Ogawa @ Panasonic CSR & Citizenship Group Solar Lantern Donation Ceremony



Mr Hideaki Matsub @ Panasonic CSR & Citizenship Group Solar Lantern Donation Ceremony



Mr Hiroki Miyaji @ Panasonic CSR & Citizenship Group Solar Lantern Donation Ceremony

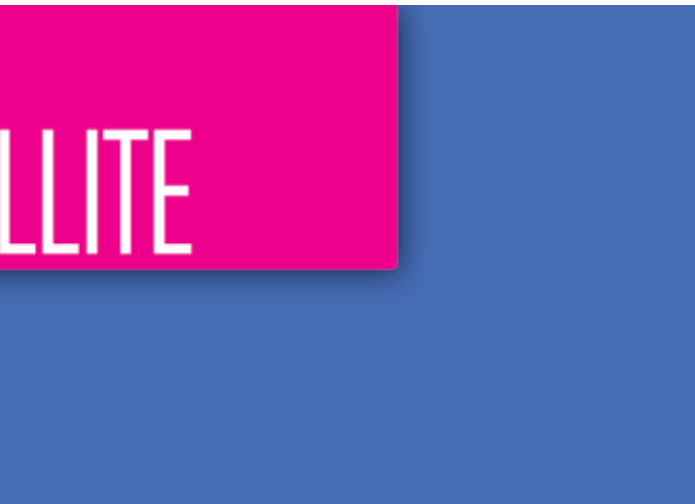


Mr Yoriyisa Skiokowa @ Panasonic CSR & Citizenship Group Solar Lantern Donation Ceremony

PROTECT YOUR BODY
PREVENT SICKNESS

vicee®

- To keep a refreshing mind and active body.
- To protect against running nose, common cold, illness by increasing body resistance.
- To quicken wound healing and recovery.
- To protect our body from aging by its anti-oxidant action and promote clear healthy looking skin.



DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	
YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW																				
MON	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		K7 222	06:30	08:40		W9 109	14:00	16:40		YJ 212	16:45	18:05		YH 891	06:10	09:00	
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		K7 244	06:45	08:10		YI 109/W97109	14:30	17:10		6T 342	17:30	18:50		YH 917	06:10	09:15	
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		Y5 131	08:00	09:00		6T 341	15:00	17:15		YH 732	17:55	19:15		6T 401	06:20	09:20	
TUE	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YJ 601	11:00	14:25		YH 731	15:00	17:55		YJ 911	07:35	10:40		YI 141/W97141	06:30	08:45	
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		YH 729	11:30	14:30		W9 205	06:00	07:20		YJ 891	07:45	10:25		6T 403	06:30	09:30	
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		YI 109/W97109	14:30	16:25		W9 141	06:00	08:10		6T 401	07:55	10:45		YH 505	10:30	11:55	
WED	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YH 761	11:00	12:55		YH 909	06:10	07:45		YH 918	08:25	11:05		YI 751/W97751	11:00	12:10	
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		6T 501	14:45	16:45		YH 917	06:00	08:25		6T 342	09:00	10:20		YH 737	11:15	12:40	
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		YH 731	15:00	17:10		6T 401	06:20	07:40		YH 910	09:35	10:55		K7 822	11:30	13:45	
THUR	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YJ 211	06:00	07:25		6T 351	06:30	07:50		6T 451	12:20	14:25		YH 731	15:00	16:25	
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		YH 891	06:10	08:15		K7 222	06:30	07:50		YJ 602	15:25	16:45		6T 501	14:15	15:25	
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		YH 917	06:10	08:25		YI 141/W97141	06:30	07:50		YH 732	17:50	19:10		YI 129/W97129	14:30	15:40	
FRI	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		6T 403	06:30	08:35		W9 143	06:45	08:05		YH 732	17:55	19:15					
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		K7 222	06:30	08:40		YH 711	10:30	12:50									
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		6T 403	06:30	08:35		W9 109	14:00	16:40									
SAT	UB-A1	08:00	09:00		YJ 222	06:30	08:45		YJ 791	14:30	17:10									
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		Y5 131	08:00	09:00		6T 341	15:00	17:15									
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		8M 6603	09:00	10:10		YH 731	15:30	18:25									
SUN	UB-A1	15:30	16:30		YI 751/W97751	11:00	12:55		YJ 901	06:00	07:20									
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		YH 737	11:15	13:25		YH 891	06:10	07:30									
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		K7 622	12:00	13:25		YH 917	06:10	07:45									
NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON																				
					6T 501	14:15	16:20		YI 141/W97141	06:30	07:50									
					YI 129/W97129	14:30	16:25		K7 222	06:30	07:50									
MON	UB-A2	09:15	10:15						W9 141	06:30	07:50									
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00						W9 143	06:45	08:05									
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30						K7 242	06:45	08:05									
TUE	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		YH 910	08:10	10:15		YJ 911	09:15	11:25									
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		YJ 892	08:30	10:25		YH 918	08:30	10:25									
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		6T 402	08:45	10:45		6T 402	08:45	10:45									
WED	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		W9 502	09:10	11:05		K7 223	09:00	11:05									
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		Y5 132	09:30	10:30		YI 751	09:10	11:05									
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		W9 504	15:45	17:10		W9 504	15:45	17:10									
THUR	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		6T 502	16:05	17:30		6T 502	16:05	17:30									
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		W9 109	16:10	18:15		W9 109	16:10	18:15									
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		YJ 762	16:35	18:00		YJ 762	16:35	18:00									
FRI	UB-A2	09:15	10:15		YI 109/W97109	16:40	18:45		K7 623	16:40	18:05									
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00		YH 728	16:45	18:10		YI 141/W97141	06:30	07:50									
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30		6T 342	16:45	18:50		K7 222	06:30	07:50									
SAT	UB-A2	10:00	11:00		8M 6604	17:20	18:30		W9 141	06:30	07:50									
	UB-B2	10:00	11:00		YH 730	18:15	19:40		6T 351	06:30	07:50									
	UB-A2	17:00	18:00		YH 732	17:10	19:15		W9 143	06:45	08:05									
SUN	UB-A2	17:00	18:00		W9 120	17:50	19:15		W9 501	15:00	17:10									
					YI 752/W97752	17:50	19:15		YH 731	15:00	17:55									
									YH 917	06:00	08:25									
MON	W9 501	06:00	07:25		W9 205	07:40	09:45		YH 910	08:10	10:15									
	YH 909	06:30	08:10		YJ 892	08:30	10:25		6T 402	08:45	10:45									
	YJ 891	06:10	08:15		6T 402	08:45	10:45		K7 223	09:00	11:05									
TUE	YH 917	06:10	08:30		K7 223	09:00	11:05		YH 728	16:45	18:10									
	6T 401	06:20	08:25		W9 143	06:45	08:50		YI 141/W97141	06:30	07:50									
	K7 222	06:30	08:40		6T 502	16:20	17:45		K7 222	06:30	07:50									
WED	Y5 131	08:00	09:00		YH 732	17:10	19:15		W9 109	16:15	18:15									
	YJ 911	09:15	10:40		YH 730	18:15	19:40		YI 109/W97109	17:25	18:45									
	YJ 751/W97751	11:00	12:55		YH 732	17:10	19:15		6T 342	17:30	18:50									
THUR	W9 119	11:45	13:40		YJ 911	11:40	14:40		YH 732	17:55	19:15									
	K7 622	12:00	13:25		K7 225	16:40	18:45		W9 109	16:55	18:15									
	W9 501	12:00	13:25		W9 109	16:55	18:15		6T 342	17:30	18:50									
FRI	6T 501	14:30	16:30		YH 729	17:25	18:45		YH 917	06:10	09:15									
	YH 791	15:00	16:55		6T 342	16:45	18:50		6T 401	06:20	09:20									
	YH 731	15:00	17:10		YH 918	08:25	11:00		YH 917	06:10	09:15									
SAT	W9 129	15:30	17:25		W9 143	08:20	11:00		6T 401	06:20	09:20									
					YH 712	12:50	14:45		YI 141/W97141	06:30	08:45									
					W9 109	16:55	18:15		6T 351	06:30	08:45									
SUN	W9 205	06:00	07:25		YJ 792	17:25	18:45		W9 141	06:30	08:45									
	YJ 891	06:10	08:15		6T 342	17:30	18:50		W9 143	06:45	08:55									
	YH 917	06:00	07:40		YH 732	17:55	19:15		K7 828	10:00	11:15									
MON	6T 401	06:20	08:25		W9 129	18:25	19:45		YH 711											

The recline and fall of western civilisation

By Dan Kois

WASHINGTON – The woman sitting in front of me on this plane seems perfectly nice. She, like me, is travelling coach class from Washington to Los Angeles. She had a nice chat before takeoff with the man sitting next to her, in which she revealed she is an elementary school teacher, an extremely honourable profession. She, like me, has an aisle seat and has spent most of the flight watching TV. Nevertheless, I hate her.

Why? She’s a recliner. For the five minutes after takeoff, every passenger on an airliner exists in a state of nature. Everyone is equally as uncomfortable as everyone else – well, at least everyone who doesn’t have the advantage of first class seating or the disadvantage of being over 6 feet tall. The passengers are blank slates, subjects of an experiment in morality which begins the moment the seat-belt light turns off.

Ding! Instantly the jerk in 11C reclines his seat all the way back. The guy in 12C, his book shoved into his face, reclines as well. 13C goes next. And soon the reclining has cascaded like rows of dominos to the back of the plane, where the poor bastards in the last row see their personal space reduced to about a cubic foot.

Or else there are those, like me, who refuse to be so rude as to inconvenience the passengers behind us. Here I sit, fuming, all the way from IAD to LAX, the deceptively nice - seeming schoolteacher’s seat back so close to my chin that to watch TV I must nearly cross my eyes. To type on this laptop while still fully opening the screen requires me to jam the laptop’s edge into my stomach.

Obviously, everyone on the plane would be better off if no one reclined; the minor gain in comfort when you tilt your seat back 5 degrees is certainly offset by the discomfort when the person in front of you does the



same. But of course someone always will recline her seat, like the people in the first row, or the woman in front of me, whom I hate.

What options do we, the reclined-upon, have? We can purchase the Knee Defender, a product which snaps onto the tray table and prevents the passenger seated in front of us from reclining their seat. But that seems fraught with potential awkward complications. What if the person ahead of you protests? What if the flight attendant gets angry?

Lacking a Knee Defender, you can politely ask the person in front of you not to recline. But then that person is filled with resentment, because he feels you have forced him to give up his comfort in favour of yours.

‘The problem isn’t with passengers, though the evidence demonstrates that many passengers are little better than sociopaths acting only for their own good. The problem is with the plane.’

And it might not even work. Once, on a flight from Chicago to Honolulu, a sweet old Hawaiian lady and her husband sat in front of me, and both reclined their seats at the very beginning of the eight-hour trip. “Excuse me,” I said. “That’s very uncomfortable. Is there any chance you could put

your seat back up, at least partway?”

“No!” she snapped. “We paid for these goddamn seats, and we’ll recline them if we want to.” So then everyone was angry: I was angry because I had no room, and she was angry because I passive-aggressively kicked her seat once every 15 minutes – often enough to be annoying, but not often enough to definitely be on purpose.

The problem isn’t with passengers, though the evidence demonstrates that many passengers are little better than sociopaths acting only for their own good. The problem is with the plane. In a closed system in which just one recliner out of 200 passengers can ruin it for dozens of people, it is too much to expect that everyone will act in the interest of the common good. People recline their seats because their seats recline. But why on earth do seats recline? Some European airlines have begun installing seats that are slightly tilted in their natural resting state, which, anecdotally at least, helps convince passengers they don’t need to tilt further.

But that doesn’t go far enough. It’s time for an outright ban on reclining seats on airplanes. I’m not demanding that airlines rip out the old seats and install new ones; let’s just extend the requirement that seats remain upright during takeoff and landing through the entire flight. To those who say such a rule is unenforceable, I respond: Kick. Kick. Kick. – *Slate*

International Airlines	
Air Asia (FD) 33, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd, Ground Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 251 885, 251 886.	Condor (DE) Unit 10-05, 10 th Flr, La Pyayt Wun Plaza, 37, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Tel: + 95 1 -370836 up to 39 [ext : 810]
Air Bagan Ltd.(W9) 56, Shwe Taung Gyar Street, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 513322, 513422, 504888, Fax : 515102	Dragonair (KA) Unit 1107, 11 th Flr, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 95-1-255322
Air China (CA) Building [2], corner of Pyay Rd and Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Hotel Yangon, 8 miles, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: 666112, 655882.	Malaysia Airlines (MH) 335/357, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Pabedan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 387648, 241007 ext : 120, 121, 122 Fax : 241124
Air India 75, Shwe Bon Thar St, Pabedan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 253597-98, 254758. Fax: 248175	Myanmar Airways International(8M) 08-02, Sakura Tower, 339, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn. Tel : 255260, Fax: 255305
Bangkok Airways (PG) #0305, 3 rd Fl, Sakura Tower, 339, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 255122, 255 265, Fax: 255119	Silk Air(MI) 339, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, 2 nd Flr, Sakura Tower, Kyauktada Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: 255 287-9, Fax: 255 290
	Thai Airways (TG) Room No. 1101, Sakura Tower, 339, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn. Tel : 255491-6, Fax : 255223
	Vietnam Airlines (VN) #1702, Sakura Tower 339, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Yangon. Fax 255086. Tel 255066/ 255088/ 255068.
	Qatar Airways (Temporary Office) 33, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd. 2 nd Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 01-250388, [ext: 8142, 8210]

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
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Film revives ghosts of Mumbai attacks

By Rachel O'Brien

MUMBAI — The director of a new Bollywood movie on the 2008 Mumbai attacks is promising an unflinching depiction of the tragedy, which some traumatised survivors fear will be too painful to watch.

The Attacks of 26/11, which opened throughout India last week, reconstructs the terrifying assault by 10 heavily armed Islamist gunmen on November 26, 2008 — the start of a 60-hour siege that left 166 people dead.

Director Ram Gopal Varma, a Bollywood veteran known for his gangster and horror films, said he wanted to convey the "emotional aspect" of the deadliest militant attack in India since independence.

"Pretty much everyone knows what happened but they don't know how it happened," he said. "The film is very dark and violent. There's no entertainment."

The making of the film has provoked mixed reactions in Mumbai, where feelings still run high over the attacks that targeted luxury hotels, a hospital and a cafe, a busy train station and a Jewish centre.

Some expressed reluctance to drag up memories of the siege and others questioned Varma's ability to pull off such a movie, given his recent run of slated films.

But acting superstar Amitabh Bachchan, who watched a rough cut of the project, wrote on Twitter that it left him "choked with tears" and was "infinitely precise" in its research.

A low-budget film about the attacks was released in 2010 but was panned by critics and soon disappeared.

The seven-minute opening of Varma's film, which includes the gunmen hijacking a fishing boat to reach Mumbai's shores, was released on YouTube in November and has notched up more than one million views.

The budget for the project was initially reported at 400 million rupees (US\$7.4 million), although Varma declined to confirm the final cost.

He said the film was "absolutely based on the true incidents", showing the trauma people went through and how the attackers appeared — especially Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, the only gunman to survive the siege.

"Everyone knows Kasab shot down a lot of people but what was his expression like?" said Varma.

Pakistani-born Kasab was hanged in November, aged 25, after his conviction for a string of offences including waging war against India, murder and terrorist acts.

Varma said he had not purposefully waited for the execution to conclude the



Indian film director Ram Gopal Varma (left) poses with actor Nana Patekar during the launch of his upcoming film "The Attacks of 26/11" in Mumbai on February 12. Pic: AFP

film, but that it offered a "perfect ending".

Kasab and most other characters are played by little-known actors rather

than stars of the typically more escapist Bollywood fare, in Varma's quest for a "heightened sense of realism".

He said he largely based the film on information from the police and other eyewitnesses. Among them was Natwarlal Rotwan, a dry-fruit seller who saw his young daughter shot in the leg in the attack at Mumbai's CST station.

He was invited to the studio to give his views on parts of the movie, but found them hard to watch.

"There is only pain for those who got injured or lost loved ones in such attacks," Rotwan said.

His daughter Devika, who was just nine when she was shot during the attacks, is another survivor who fears the movie will stir painful memories.

"It is good if a movie is made on the Mumbai attacks as people should know what happened," said Devika, who is now 14. "But it is bad for people like me, who are trying to forget things and lead a normal life."

The director sparked controversy just days after the attacks took place, when he was seen touring burned out sections of the landmark Taj Mahal Palace hotel with a local politician and his actor son.

Varma has repeatedly

denied allegations that he was already conducting a recce for a possible film and he now refuses to discuss the matter, saying he has "answered that question a million times".

He also raised eyebrows by holding the launch of the film's songs at the popular Leopold Cafe in south Mumbai, which came under attack by the gunmen.

Varma said the launch was intended in the spirit of the cafe owner, who refused to be cowed and reopened just two days after the attacks. But others found the director's choice of venue tasteless.

"It's a just a gimmick to get eyeballs, to get people to talk about it," said Indu Mirani, a freelance entertainment reporter in Mumbai. "He used to be a sensitive man but he seems to have lost it along the way."

Farzad Jehani, the cafe's owner, played himself in the movie and defended Varma's project.

He said he was initially "a bit scared" to take on the role, "but then soon I got to terms with that and he has made a fabulous film".

— AFP

Events Flash

Vanishing Treasure of Myanmar

The group exhibition "Vanishing Treasure of Myanmar" - featuring the work of Myint Maung Kyaw, Myint Moe Aung, Myint Zaw, Ko Tar and Ju - will be held at Gallery 65 (65 Yawmingyi Road, Dagon township) from March 2 to 4.

About Yangon

Artist MKM will hold an exhibition of paintings titled "About Yangon" at Lokanat Gallery (62 Pansodan Street, First Floor, Kyauktada township) from March 4 to 9.

Textiles show

An exhibition of traditional textiles from Myanmar and Thailand, titled "Textiles of the Two Lands" and organised by the Thai embassy in Yangon, will be held at Junction Square shopping centre on March 9 and 10.

Electronic City

Lokanat Gallery (62 Pansodan Street, First Floor, Kyauktada township) will host an exhibition by

painter Aung Kyi Soe titled "Electronic City" from March 11 to 16.

Local comedians

Local comedian groups Mya Ponnamar and Thee Lay Thee will perform a concert under the title Pyi Thu A Nyeint Tha Bin at People's Park in Yangon on March 27, at 6pm. Tickets cost K6000, K15,000 and K20,000.

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.

50th Street live

Jazz band Great Blessings plays 50th Street Bar on Wednesday night, while Friendship Band belts out classic rock tunes on Fridays.

If you would like your event listed in Event Flash, please email editors@myanmartimes.com.mm.



YOUR STARS

By Astrologer
Aung Myin Kyaw

Aquarius

(Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Great people are products of courage. Your good manners are the shadows of virtues that you must be careful to maintain at all times, otherwise you risk facing the regret of having others misperceive your true nature. If you neglect to exercise self-control, you risk injuring yourself as well as those around you.

Pisces

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

You can be successful in anything you do materially, but you should never lose sight of spiritual progress. Don't worry about the circumstances; if you look after your present state of mind, the future will look after itself. If you strive to live up to the expectations of others, you can expect others to live according to your expectations.

Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

Use your understanding to turn a minus into a plus in the realm of social communication. Learn to accept the reality of the bad things that happen to you without accepting emotional defeat. Add up your joys but never count your sorrows. Look at what you have left in your life, and never at what you have lost, especially when it comes to winning love.

Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

Never tire of waiting for the right opportunity, because if you are prepared to take action when it does come along you will be able to make a great change for the better in your life. Neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, but you can hobble yourself through lack of self-organisation.

Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

Nature does not wait for anyone to reach an abstract hell or heaven before meting out rewards and punishments. Always remember that the laws of cause and effect operate in all spheres of human endeavour. A small incident can crack a human relationship, just as a small gesture can repair it.

Cancer

(June 22 - July 22)

The best way to overcome inner tensions this week is to focus on organising yourself. Change should be implemented in small doses, by taking new, creative approaches to your work on a day-to-day basis. Avoid unnecessary controversies to better focus on making these harmonious adjustments to your methods.

Leo

(July 23 - Aug 22)

Everyone is exceptional at something, and people of virtue don't always look the same. Believe in yourself as a person who can increase your abilities beyond your knowledge and experience.

Learn to sift through the massive amounts of communication you receive, and give close friends credit by acknowledging their contributions. What is the nature of the love vacuum in your life? Shape up your style of loving to be better than the best.

Virgo

(Aug 23 - Sept 22)

You will have to work extra hard to manage your energy well. Burdens unsupported by actions will prevent you from being able to tackle the things that really matter. Once you break through these obstacles, make sure you have enough energy left over to pursue your goals with focus and excellence. Accept advice from a mentor, even if it means making plans that go against your own ideas.

Libra

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)

You would like to avoid suffering at all costs, especially in matters of love, but you would do better to focus on developing feelings of compassion for your fellow humans. The radical sentiment for others that creates the impulse to love is already within you. You will find it difficult to eliminate your stubbornly pessimistic nature. Learn to manage your emotions, just as you manage your time.

Scorpio

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Competence is the key to credibility, and credibility is the key to influencing others. If people respect you, they will listen to you. By focusing on growth, you can become wiser each day. Learn from those who possess the greatest competence and experience. Creating love can be as easy as absorbing the energy that radiates from the simple pleasure of sharing time with your partner.

Sagittarius

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Enjoy talking about leadership with good leaders, and understand clearly that this can be an important bridge between learning more about them and learning more about the self. The secret to a great interview is listening. The only way to improve your nature is to practice your craft until you know it inside and out. At first, do what you know how to do, and the more you practice your craft, the more you will know exactly how to do more.

Capricorn

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

There is a foolish corner even in the brain of a sage. Never let errors or small mistakes pass you by without giving them at least a little consideration, which will help you amend and correct careless and indulgent manners sooner rather than later. The beginning of wisdom is understanding yourself more clearly.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw, 4th Floor, 113, Thamin Bayan Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon. Tel: 0973135632, Email: williameast@gmail.com

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General

Education

SUMMER ENGLISH Classes (11 March - May 31) for ages 6-12 y.o. Monday - Friday 9am to 12noon. Fees: USD200 for the whole course including materials. Register early as places are limited. Call 09-450-032598, 09-730-97836.

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OFFICE Space Available @ Orchid City Hall Hotel Ground Floor USD 5.00 (1 sqft) 2nd Floor & 9th Floor USD 3.00 (1 sqft) Please contacts at 09-507-7594, 09-505-3820.

(1) **SHWEHINTHAR Condo**, 6 1/2 miles, 2000 sqft, f.f. US\$ 4000 (2) **Moe Myat San Condo**, Bahan Off New University Ave Rd, f.f, 25 Lakhs. (3) **Shwe Than Lwin Condo**, 3600 sqft, f.f. US\$ 2500 call maureen: 09-518-8320

(1) **KAMAYUT, Diamond Condo**, Bldg B, Rm (6-01), Corner of Pyay Rd & Nanataw Rd, (1550') (2) **Ahlone**, 54, G Flr, Thake Pan St, Sin Min Ward, (25' x 50') Ph: 09-860-0126, 01-687-878.

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VERY CLOSED to downtown, 1.3 acre land, 2 storey colony house, good condition, 4 master bedrooms, ph line, big and nice lawn, spacious car park, swimming pool and tennis court, 2 big garage and 3 units of staff quater, prefer to rent to foreigners, good for both office & residence. ph 09-513-7670

BAHAN, (1) **Golden Valley** (4500 USD), 318 Sqm, 2 storeys, fully furnish, 3MBR (2) **Inya Rd** (5000 USD), 318 Sqm, 1 Storey, fully furnish, 3MBR (3) **Near Sedona Hotel** (5300 USD), (University housing compound) (364 Sqm, 2 Storey, 5MBR), Ph: 09-4201-14749, 09-4921-4276.

(1) **NEAR EAST POINT** Shopping Mall (10580 USD) (273 Sqm) 3 Storey, 24 MBR (2) **Near Yankin Centre** (Good for office), U Chit Mg St, (364 Sqm) 4 storey, hall type, 5300 USD (3) **Apartment**, Near Kandaw gyi Hotel 1500 USD, (walking 20 minutes) (273 Sqm) all furnish, (4) **United Condo**, (River View Side) 2000 USD (227 Sqm) 3MBR, fully furnish 09-4201-14749, 09-4921-4276.

TARMWE, Grand Diamond Residence,

First Flr, (2400sqft), 2 MBR, 2BR, 1 Ph, 5 AC, Fully Furniture, Car Parking, 10 Lakhs per month. Ph : 09-432-00669, 09-421-083321

THINGANGYUN Kypwaryay (North) drive 25 minutes to down Town, 40*60 FEET 2RC, 3MBR & 2 singal bedrooms. Ready to stay. 4 AC, 1 Ph Line. US\$ (1000) 1 month. Allow 6 months Contract. Ph: 09-731-11190 email: m2k20099@gmail.com

(1) **7 MILE**, near Honda showroom, 70'x 70' 5MBR, 2 storey, USD-4500 (2) **Golden Valley** (Near Korea Embassy) 60'x80 3 Storey, 5MBR, USD - 9000 (3) **Near Vietnam Embassy**, 70'x80' 2 Storey, 2MBR, 3BR, USD 5000 (4) **Near Embassy** 60'x70' 2MBR, Ph: 09-4211-77105.

MAYANGONE, 9 Mile, 80'x90' 2 storey, 4MBR, USD 2700, Ph: 09-511-2525.

KAMAYUT, Maha Bawga St. (Close to Heldan Market) 5th Flr (R) 15'x50' (New) Option I : Deposit 5,000,000K, Monthly rental fee - 15,000K Option II : Monthly rental fee - 120,000K Ph: 09-516-3051, 09-731-45699 09-730-39254, Pls contact Kyi Kyi Hlaing kyiihi@gmail.com.

(1) **MAYANGONE**, Near Myanmar Jewellery centre, Kabaraye pagoda Rd. 25'x40', 2 storey, 1MBR, 2SR, 1500\$ (2) **Po Sein St** Near Chatrium Hotel, 70'x80' 2 storey, 7MBR, 6SR, 20,000\$ (3)

BAHAN, (1) **Inya Lane**, 60'x60', RC2, Newly house US\$ 4000. (2) **Shwe Than Lwin Condo**, 3600 Sqft, 2MBR, 1BR, 6A/C, Ph. US\$ 3000 (3) **Than Lwin Lane**, 60'x80', RC1, US\$ 2500, Maureen: 09-518-8320.

Housing for Sale

9 MILES, Mayangone, Bonyarna Lane (50'x 70') garden with including house (3500 Lakhs) no agent please Pls call - (09-5036519 and 09-421029911)

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HLAING THARYAR, Shwe Kan Thar Land (25' x 75'). Price K 22 million. Call 09-5020-727.

THANLYIN, Sanchin Mi2 No.1128, 837, 2055. Thanlyin Aung Chan Thar J267, J240, J189. ph 09 43184138

SANCHANUG, Min St G flr, HK, With line phone 1 month (6 lakhs). Ph: 09-731-11190

Local Position

GENDER EQUALITY Network is seeking **Finance & Administration Officer**: Demonstrated qualifications and experience in finance & administration. A good knowledge of budgeting & monitoring of expenditure, & contributing to the development of financial & administrative guidelines & policies. Demonstrated interpersonal & communication skills & effective oral & written Myanmar and English language & typing skills. Computer & information technology skills including the ability to produce administrative and financial reports, & the use of applications such as Word, Excel, the internet, email & other software applications. Pls submit a CV and a brief email/letter expressing their interest to Mee Mee Farozar, GEN at the following email: gen.meemee@gmail.com by 6 March 2013.

WE ARE looking for a **Junior Sales Executive** - M/F: Any graduate, but any diploma in Marketing or Business is preferred. Good acquisition skills, Advanced computer skills; typing in English & Myanmar, internet experience. Fair level in English, Willing to do content administration but also to go out for marketing. Age 20 ~ 30, Pls send CV to Rocket Internet Myanmar (we recommend to upload your CV and apply via Work.com.mm)! You can also send CV to theingi.oo@work.com.mm or call 01-255078.

SALES EXECUTIVE - 4 Posts: for F&B Supplies to Hotels & Restaurants Prefer with Supermarket & F&B knowledge background. Ph: 01-450858, 01-450859, 01-450860, 09-500-8359. email: grandtwinbrothers@gmail.com

SAVOY HOTEL, Yangon is urgently looking for (1) **Sales & Marketing Manager** - 1 post: must have at least 2 years experience & very good English skill. (2) **Front Office Supervisor** - 1 post: 2 years experience in related field & good English skill. (3) **Reservation Assistant** - 1 post: 1-2 years experience in related field & good English skill. (4) **Commis chef** (European Food) - 2 post: 1-2 years experience & good English skill. Application letter by email to savoy.hra@gmail.com or 129, Dhammazed Rd, Yangon. Tel: 526298, 526289.

WE would like to hire **vietnam-myanmar**

language teacher for our vietnam company. Pls contact to Swe Zin 01-525598, 09-5004641 email: swezin.hagl@gmail.com

LOOKING for a **house helper** English speaking, good looking lady to work in USA. Know how to taking care of kids and household things. Pls call 01 536153

EXOTISSIMO Travel Myanmar is seeking (1) **English Tour Operator** - 1 year experience. Strong sales & customer service focus. Computer proficiency. Good communication in English. (2) **Language Speaking Tour Operator** (German, French, Spanish), 1 year experience. Strong sales & customer service focus. Computer proficiency. Good communication in respective language i.e. German, French, Spanish. (3) **Operation Staff** : 1 year experience. Computer proficiency. Good communication in English. Pls send a detailed resume with recent photo & other relevant documents to HR Manager : 116, 12th flr, MMB Tower, Upper Pansodan St, email: memecho@exotissimo.com

Employment

ASIAN ACRE Advisors, a real estate advisory firm from Singapore, is looking for motivated candidates to join us in our Yangon office in the areas of business development, marketing, research & office administration. As part of our aim to assist in the development of the skills of Myanmar people, we also welcome university students to join us as interns. Find out more about us at www.asianacre.com. Pls email your resume at careers@asianacre.com. Tan Kok Keong Executive Director, Professional Services ASIAN ACRE ADVISORS | Mobile | Singapore : +65 97322950 | Myanmar : +95 9 97324 2324 |

(1) **CLIENT SERVICE Executive** (2) **PR & Media Executive** needed for Myanmar agency affiliated with international agency. Must be excellent in English writing and speaking. Will give training in Yangon & in Singapore. Pls apply to advertising. myanmar@gmail.com or to SAIL Advertising: 790, Corner of Bogoyoke Rd & Wadan

Rd Junction Suite 403, Danathiha Center, Lanmadaw, Ph: 211870, 224820.


GUNHONG Int'l Co., Ltd. is seeking (1) **Project Manager** Full Time - M/F 2 Post: Preferable a degree in Business & Economics, Specialized knowledge in Myanmar Industry & investment environment, 5 years experience in government units, organizations, law firms of consulting firms, Proficient in English (2) **Consultant/ Legal Advisor** Part Time - 1 Post: Retired from a government ministry, Experience in legal, tax and financial sectors, Foreign investment management, Good relationship with government units & industrial sectors, Able to search for potential investment projects (3) **Research & Analyzer** Part Time - M/F 1 Post: Any Graduate (or) MBA/ DMA/DBA, Able to write reports about Myanmar Industries, 3 years experience in research & business related works, Proficient in English. Pls submit a detailed CV & cover letter with necessary documents

to Gunhong Int'l Co., Ltd. or egunhong@gmail.com by 5 March 2013. Add : 608-6A, Bo Son Pat Condominium, Bo Son Pat St, Pabedan, Yangon. Ph: 09-450-022988, 09-731-92188

WANTED a **housemaid** Decent lady not more than 40 years of age. Understand basic English speaking. Know non-pork dishes cooking. Ph : 536 153

WANTED a **driver** : English speaking, non alcoholic, no betel quid eater, honest and quiet to work in Yangon. Contact: 01 536 153

GOOD in 4 skills English: Good interpersonal communication skill, PC literate with Outlook, Excel, Word skills, Able to help in drawing itineraries & calculating quotations, Knowledge of the travel industry with at least 1 to 2 years of experience, Social and easy to get along, Ability to work under pressure and to meet deadlines for requests from agents & from the office, Full Time. Salary - 150000 kyats. Ph : 543942, 09-502-0660, 09-515-6769, 546404 Ext 371



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THE WORLD BANK

We are recruiting staff to join our office located in Yangon for the position of :

Financial Sector Research Analyst (Vacancy # 130115)

The East Asia and Pacific Financial and Private Sector Development Department (EASFP) is responsible for the World Bank's work in financial and private sector development within the region. The Department works to help the countries of the region achieve sustained growth and poverty reduction through developing sound and well-functioning financial systems, improving the investment climate, and promoting more dynamic private sectors. EASFP currently has an active program, including lending and technical assistance with sector issues ranging from bank restructuring, financial sector supervisory capacity building, regulatory reform, and capital markets development, to corporate governance, the promotion of innovation, and trade facilitation.

In Myanmar, EASFP is building a dynamic program that consists of three main programs at the current time, including: (1) assistance program on financial sector development with the central bank on creating the financial sector development Master Plan, reforming the legal and regulatory framework, enhancing supervision, including on- and off-site systems and crisis preparedness and exploring the policy framework for financial sector infrastructure and payments systems; (2) support to the newly formed regulatory and supervisory body for the microfinance industry; and (3) an investment climate assessment. Other projects and work is expected in the future as well.

Duties and Accountabilities

- Actively engage as part of the financial and private sector development (FPD) team responsible for the preparation, appraisal, and supervision of lending operations and economic and sector work.
- Assist in project management, as well as project development, and provide support for technical assistance projects.
- Provide strong mission (visits by Washington staff, as well as technical assistance providers and consultants) support by arranging meetings, and following up on data and information needs.
- Monitor market developments, update standard financial sector data, and undertake research on economic, financial, and private sectors in Myanmar.
- Help to develop statistical and analytical assessments of the financial and private sector in Myanmar.
- Provide support for financial sector Donor Coordination, including organizing donor meetings.

Details are available in the World Bank Careers website: www.worldbank.org/careers. All applications must be submitted through this website. We welcome applications from individuals who are fluent speakers in Myanmar and English languages. The World Bank is committed to achieving diversity in terms of gender, nationality, culture and educational background. Individuals with disability are equally encouraged to apply. **Please contact paniti@worldbank.org for questions regarding the application process.**

Closing date is March 14, 2013

Working For a World Free of Poverty



THE WORLD BANK

We are recruiting staff to join our office located in Yangon for the position of :

Economist (Vacancy # 130447)

Within the EAP Region, the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department (EAP PREM) is responsible for the Bank's work in the areas of economic policy, public sector management and governance, trade, poverty and inequality, and gender. This involves the provision of policy and implementation advice as well as financial support to our clients through analytical work, technical assistance, lending and supervision in close consultation with the field-based Country Directors. Staff in the department also conducts cross-country analyses of issues that are of interest across the region, monitor regional economic developments including through contributions to semi-annual economic updates, and work with other sectoral staff to address cross-cutting challenges.

The department is highly decentralized with about three-quarters of its staff located in country offices. The management structure of the department includes a DC-based Sector Director, a DC-based sector manager/lead economist (who is also the thematic lead economist for economic policy and trade); two country office-based sector managers (in Bangkok, to whom this position will report, and Jakarta); four country-office based lead economists; and two thematic lead economists (for public sector governance and poverty/gender). This group collectively comprises the EAP PREM departmental management team and provides the overall strategic and operational leadership. Each of the thematic lead economists for public sector and governance, poverty/gender, and economic policy/trade facilitates communities of practice and provide strategic leadership in her/his respective areas of expertise. The selected candidate will work closely with the Senior Economist and Country Manager for Myanmar and report to the PREM Sector Manager in Bangkok in the matrix management environment.

Duties and Accountabilities

Under The Economist is expected to perform the following duties and accountabilities:

- Monitor developments in the economy, and research and analyze economic, financial, country and sector issues;
- Maintain a macroeconomic database and prepare and regularly update medium-term macroeconomic projections. Use/run economic/financial models and toolkits using existing software packages, or Bank's own models;
- Participate in the design, preparation and dissemination of analytical economic work and reporting on Myanmar including Myanmar and East Asia Updates, Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) and Live Data Base (LDB);
- Participate as needed in the preparation and implementation of lending operations; and
- Develop and maintain active engagement with key Government counterparts including Ministry of Finance, Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Ministry of Planning, Central Bank and other development partners and local think tanks and researchers.
- Participate in responding to requests submitted to the PREM department from within and outside the Bank for information, data, inputs, and briefing notes.

Selection Criteria:

- Academic Training: Master Degree in macroeconomics from an internationally recognized university, and at least 5 years of relevant work experience.
- Technical Proficiency: Skills and experience in working on economic policy issues and data analysis. Proven strong conceptual, analytical and evaluative skills in these areas.
- Communication and Team Skills: High level of personal and professional integrity. Self-starter. Strong ability to function well in a multi-cultural environment, and working in teams. Results-oriented personality with proven problem-solving skills, and strong communication skills.
- Language Skills: Fluency in English and Myanmar required.
- Computer Skills: Sound knowledge of STATA or other statistical packages and MS Office programs, including Excel, is essential.

Details are available in the World Bank Careers website: www.worldbank.org/careers. All applications must be submitted through this website. The World Bank is committed to achieving diversity in terms of gender, nationality, culture and educational background. Individuals with disability are equally encouraged to apply.

Closing date is March 15, 2013

Working For a World Free of Poverty

Employment

UN Positions

IOM Int'l Organization for Migration is seeking (1) **Admin & Finance Assistant** in Ye, Mon State: University degree in Business Administration or related fields, preferably with a graduate degree in Management, Business Administration, or Accounting. 3 years related work experience & work experience with int'l humanitarian organizations. (2) **Administrative/Accounting Assistant** in Mawla myine, Mon State: Academic background in Business Administration or related field. 2 years of progressive experience in related field. Good writing & communication skill in English is an advantage. Excellent computer skills in MS office & Excel. (3) **Accounting Assistant** in Myawady, Kayin State: Academic background in Business Administration or related field. 2 years of progressive experience in related field. Excellent computer skills in MS office & Excel. (4) **Medical Logistics Assistant** - 1 post in Mawlamyine, Mon State. IOM Mission in Myanmar-Yangon, 12th Flr, Traders Hotel: 223, Sule Pagoda Rd, Yangon Email: iom.yangon@iom.int, www.iom.int, Tel: 252560, 254008, 375601

Embassy

THE U.S EMBASSY in

Rangoon is seeking (1) **Electrical Control Technician** in the Facilities Maintenance Section: Completion of secondary school & vocational training is required. 3 years experience in electronic & electrical control related to maintenance work, producing high skilled power plant operator of journeyman level or major repairs on high voltage electrical power plant. Level II (Limited) speaking / reading / writing / English & Myanmar is required. Must have basic knowledge of MS office applications. (2) **Travel Expeditor** in the General Services Office: Completion of high school is required. 1 year experience in travel/general clerical work is required. Level III (Good working knowledge) Speaking / Reading / Writing / English & Myanmar is required. Must have a valid driver's license & basic knowledge of MS office applications. Submit application to HROffice, U.S Embassy, 110 University Avenue, Kamayut, Yangon (or) send by e-mail to HROffice@state.gov. Closing date: March 7, 2013.

WE ARE looking for a qualified **Admin/Consul Assistant** for Foreign Mission. All interested applicants must be computer literate, self motivate, fluently speak in English. For more information, pls call 527142~144.

Ingo Positions

AMDA is seeking **Agriculture Specialist** for 'Healthy Village Project' at Western part of Pakokku, Magwe Region: Have a degree of Bachelor or Science on Agriculture with 3 years experiences (INGO experience would be asset). Must have relevant experience on a agriculture training, assessment & M&E. Strong computer skill. Pls enclose a C.V., copies of testimonials (references) & passport photo to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDAMyanmar Country Office. 19-B, Thukha waddy Rd, Yankin Ph: 578353, Email: amda@mptmail.net.mm Closing

date : 5th March 2013.

Re-advertisement : HelpAge International has received funding from HelpAgeKorea/KOICA for a 3-year project entitled "Building Community Organisations to Reduce Poverty and Vulnerability Amongst Older People and their Families in Myanmar" to be implemented in 23 new villages and 40 existing villages in Kyaiklat, Patheingyi, Kandyidauk townships and Shwe Thauung Yan sub-township in Ayeyawady Region, Patheingyi and Pyin Oo Lwin Townships in Mandalay Region and Yangon Region. We are seeking qualified and experienced Myanmar national for the following position: **Job Title: Medical Officer (1 post)** Location: Yangon with regular field visits to the project locations. Qualifications and competencies: Myanmar national with university degree in Medicine, preferably with advance studies in Public and/or community health, Minimum three years experience in general practice/health educator with an INGO, LINGO, UN agency is an advantage. Good experience in training & good facilitation skill. High level of interpersonal, written, oral communication and presentation skills. Computer literate and good report writing skills. Ability to work effectively in a team with from various cultures & professional backgrounds. Fluent in Myanmar, working knowledge of English an advantage flexibility and ability to change work according to the objectives. Willingly to work at non-Yangon area and make frequent travel to Yangon. Interested and qualified candidates are requested to send a Cover Letter and Curriculum Vitae to the Human Resources Unit of HelpAge International Myanmar Country Office, No 10 Kanbawza Avenue, Shwe-taun-gya Ward No. 1, Bahan Township, Yangon OR by email to hr.helpagemyanmar@gmail.com no later than 5 p.m., 10th March 2013. Only shortlisted candidates will be notified for interview. 87

SOLIDARITES Int'l (SI) is seeking **Administrative Supervisor** in Myebon, Rakhine State

: Academic background in Management, Finance or accounting studies. Fluent in English & Myanmar. Good computer skill. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to : HR Department Solidarites Int'l / Or drop your application on an envelope at Solidarites Int'l office: 44(A), Tharyar waddy Lane, Bahan, or per email : hr.recruitment.mm@gmail.com, cc: to mye.admin.super@solidarites-myanmar.com. Closing date: 8th March 2013.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking **Branch Development Officer** for MRCS-FRC DRR Project- Kyauk Taw Branch Capacity Building Program 1 Post : Any Graduate. Myanmar National. 2 years relevant experiences, Red Cross Brigade member & Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Effective computer skill. Effective English language skill. Pls submit a letter of application, relevant documents & CV, 1 pass port photo with necessary documents (cover letter CV documents only need to be sent via e-mail) to mrshrrecruitment@gmail.com before 8th March 2013. www.myanmarredcross.org.

ACTED is currently looking for **AME Officer** in Yangon & Frequent travel to field: A person with significant initiative & a proactive, responsible approach. bachelor's degree in a relevant field. Previous experience in Monitoring & evaluation. Previous working experience with partner organizations. Pls submit a resume, a cover letter & 3 references to : 661 (A), Myakan thar Lane (1), Kamayut, Email: acted-myanmarjobs@gmail.com or acted.org or acted.org.

MEDECINS du Monde (MDM) is seeking **Field Logistician** 1 Post in Yangon: Graduate. 2 years experience in Logistic field. Fluent in English. Good computer skills. Pls submit CV & a cover letter to MDM Yangon Program Office, Yangon : 2, Aung Dhama Yeik Thar St, Hlaing, Ph: 664352, 660948. Email: hr.mdm.myanmar@gmail.com.



VNPT GLOBAL Joint Stock Company is a subsidiary of Viet Nam Mobile Services (VMS / Mobilefone) - a leading mobile operator in Viet Nam, having our business in USA, Singapore, Hong Kong, Czech Republic and Myanmar.

1. Business Development

(3 position in Yangon/Myanmar, prefer Myanmar local)

a) Job description:

- Explore telecom market development in Myanmar, understand Myanmar telecom regulation.
- Build up partner/customer relationship in Myanmar.
- Understand and promote VNPT Global telecom services.
- Participate, coordinate project implementation in Myanmar.
- Prepare business plan for Myanmar market.

b) Requirement:

- Age 23 - 35.
- English speaking/writing fluent.
- Has university/college degree in telecom/electronics/commerce economics.
- Good technical background. Having technical telecom background is a plus.
- Understand telecom market in Myanmar. Having telecom working experience is an advance.
- Ability of working in an independent, active, under pressure environment.
- Travel in Myanmar and overseas is required.
- c) Remuneration:
 - Modern, active, young working environment.
 - Salary is negotiable, bonus with revenue.
 - Travel, training expenses are sponsored.
 - Working facility is provided.

Interested and qualified candidates are requested to send Application letter, CV to:

Office Address: VMS/VNPT GLOBAL 17B4 Tharawaddy, Sayarsan Road, Bahan Township, Yangon.

Or: Quynh@vnptglobal.com.vn and cc to laint@vnptglobal.com.vn.

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La Source Beauty Spa
~80(A), Inya Rd, Kamayut Tsp, tel: 512 380, 511 252. www.lasourcebeautyspa.com

Lemon Day Spa
No. 96 F, Inya Road, Kamaryut Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 514848, 09-732-08476. E-mail: lemondayspa.2011@gmail.com

A Little Dayspa
No. 475 C, Pyi Road, Kamayut, Yangon. Tel: 09-431-28831.

Spa & Boutique Fashion
No. 24, Inya Road, Kamaryut Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: 951 534 654, 09-73200147. theredscarf99@gmail.com

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- 15(B), Departure Lounge, Yangon Int'l Airport.
- 45B, Corner of 26th & 68th Sts., Mandalay. Tel: (02) 66197. Email: yangon@monument-books.com

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Acacia Tea Salon
52, Sayar San Rd, Bahan Tsp, Tel : 01-554739.

Cafe47
47-A, Pyay Rd, 7½ miles, Mayangone Tsp, Tel : 01-651774.

Traders Café
Traders Hotel, Yangon. #223, Sule Pagoda Rd. Tel: 242828 ext: 6519

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Email : danceclub.hola@gmail.com
(Except Sunday)

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FITNESS CENTRE

The Yangon GYM
Summit Parkview Hotel 350, Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp. tel: 211888, 211966.

Traders Health Club.
Level 5, Traders Hotel Yangon#223 Sule Pagoda Rd, Tel: 951 242828 Ext: 6561

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Carlos Beltran of the St. Louis Cardinals bats as John Buck of the New York Mets looks on at Tradition Field on February 27. Beltran will play for Puerto Rico in the World Baseball Classic. Pic: AFP

Japanese bid for 'Three-peat' in World Classic

WASHINGTON – Two-time defending champion Japan will launch its bid for a third World Baseball Classic crown without Major League Baseball talent when the 16-team global showdown opened on March 2 in Asia.

Daisuke Matsuzaka sparked Japan to victory in the inaugural 2006 Classic and was named Most Valuable Player for the second time after Japan held off South Korea in 10 innings to capture the most recent crown in 2009.

But Matsuzaka, Ichiro Suzuki, Texas Rangers star pitcher Yu Darvish and other talent on US clubs will not be available to Japan manager Koji Yamamoto's squad, which opens Pool A first-round play against Brazil at Fukuoka.

"My ultimate goal is to help win a World Series with the Texas Rangers," Darvish said. "Getting ample rest is the most important thing for me right now as I prepare for the 2013 season."

Japan's lineup includes sluggers Shinunosuke Abe and Sho Nakata,

2012 Japan Series Most Valuable Pitcher Tetsuya Utsumi and pitchers Kenta Maeda, Masahiro Tanaka and Tadashi Settsu – the past three winners of the Sawamura Award given to the Japan league's top hurler.

"There are many very talented players in Japan and I am confident this team will uphold Japan's great tradition in this event," Darvish said.

China and 2006 Classic runner-up Cuba will join Japan and Brazil in Pool A with two of those teams advancing to the second round at Tokyo along with two from Pool B, featuring host Taiwan, Australia, South Korea and Netherlands.

Canada, Mexico and Italy will join the host United States in first-round Pool D at Phoenix, Arizona from March 7-10, the same days Puerto Rico will host Pool C rivals Dominican Republic, Spain and Venezuela.

The top two from each North American pool advance to a second-round group at Miami and the top two teams from Tokyo and

Miami advance to the semi-finals in San Francisco ahead of the March 19 championship final.

Cuba, whose amateur dynasty tops the global rankings, will be Japan's top threat in round one, even without outfielder Yoenis Cespedes, who played last year for Oakland after defecting in 2011.

Jose Abreu led the Cuban league with a .394 average and hit 35 home runs last season while Alfredo Despaigne led the league with 36 homers and 105 runs batted in and veterans Frederick Cepeda and Yulieski Gourriel offer problems for rival pitchers.

Barry Larkin, a Hall of Fame major league shortstop, manages unfancied Brazil, which lacks catcher Yan Gomes, the first Brazilian major leaguer.

The only Chinese-heritage major leaguer, Bruce Chen, is not on China's roster, but a young China lineup will be guided by former major league manager John McLaren.

In Pool B, the Koreans will be

favoured despite not having such major league stars at Choo Shin-Soo while Taiwan will feature major league pitcher Wang Chien-Ming but not another US-based hurler, Baltimore's Chen Wei-Yin.

Australia could threaten with a veteran lineup and Colorado Rockies prospect David Kandilas in the outfield while the Dutch, which much talent from the Netherlands Antilles, shocked Dominican Republic twice in 2009 and placed fourth in 2008 at the Olympic farewell of baseball in Beijing.

The Dominicans are favored in Pool C after a first-round ouster in 2009 and have the major league talent to challenge for the crown with David Ortiz, Robinson Cano, Hanley Ramirez and Jose Bautista set to play.

Dominican pitchers from major league lineups include Edinson Volquez and Wandy Rodriguez, closer Fernando Rodney and relievers Jose Valverde and Octavio Dotel.

Venezuela also has a powerhouse

lineup behind sluggers Miguel Cabrera, Pablo Sandoval, Elvis Andrus, Carlos Gonzalez and Miguel Montero and pitchers Felix Hernandez, Anibal Sanchez and Carlos Zambrano.

Puerto Rico's lineup features such major leaguers as Carlos Beltran, Angel Pagan, Alex Rios and Yadier Molina.

A US squad that has disappointed with a first-round exit in 2006 and a 2009 semi-final loss will try again with four players back from 2009 including shortstop Jimmy Rollins and outfielders Shane Victorino and Ryan Braun.

New to the US lineup are second baseman Brandon Phillips, catcher Joe Mauer and outfielders Adam Jones and Giancarlo Stanton while first baseman Mark Teixeira is back after playing in the first Classic.

Canada and Italy are underdogs but Mexico figures to be formidable behind first baseman Adrian Gonzalez, pitcher Yovani Gallardo and closer Sergio Romo.

– AFP

Coach K won't return as US Olympic coach

LOS ANGELES – Mike Krzyzewski reiterated February 26 that he won't return as coach of the US Olympic men's basketball team, which he guided to gold in 2008 and 2012.

"I've loved, loved, loved and it's been an honor being with the USA basketball team," Krzyzewski said in a phone interview with ESPN radio. "And we're in a good spot, we need to keep building."

Krzyzewski had said in May at the US Olympic Committee's pre-Games media summit in Dallas that he expected last year's

London Games to be his last Olympics at the helm of a US team of NBA stars.

Krzyzewski, the hugely successful Duke University coach, was brought in to guide a revamped US squad after a disappointing bronze medal finish at the Athens Games.

He was drafted by USA Basketball chairman Jerry Colangelo, who set up the current system of creating a pool of players to draw from for international duty, thereby creating more continuity in the national team. – AFP

Maradona asks for 'justice' on Italy trip

NAPLES – Football legend Diego Maradona on February 26 asked for "justice" in his dispute with Italian tax authorities on an emotional trip to Naples – the scene of some of his greatest career successes.

"I haven't killed anyone, I've just come to ask for justice," Maradona said at a press conference, saying he had been a "victim" of swindlers and revealing that he wanted to meet Italian President Giorgio Napolitano to discuss his tax difficulties.

"I can explain everything to him," the former attacking

midfielder said.

World Cup winner Maradona, who helped Napoli to their only Italian championship wins in 1987 and 1990, was convicted of tax evasion in 2005 and ordered to pay 37.2 million euros including 23.5 million euros in interest on late tax payments.

An Italian court in November last year admitted there had been a procedural error in the investigation and ordered a new inquiry.

Maradona arrived in Italy on February 25 from Dubai, where he is an ambassador for sport, and watched a Serie A match

between his former club and Udinese, which ended 0-0, in his hotel.

The 52-year-old Argentinean had rarely stepped foot in Italy since leaving under a cloud in the 1990s amid claims of collusion with mafia dons and a positive drugs test for cocaine.

Fans massed outside the hotel where Maradona was speaking, chanting in his honour and blocking one of the main streets in the southern Italian city.

Maradona also quipped about the gridlocked political situation in Italy, saying: "I don't know who your prime minister is!" – AFP

Fraser urges for life ban on sleeping pill users

SYDNEY – Veteran Australian swimming star Dawn Fraser on February 28 urged a lifelong competition ban for members of the London Olympics 4x100 relay team who last week admitted taking prohibited sleeping pills.

The much-vaunted Australian relay side, who talked themselves up as the “Weapons of Mass Destruction” but failed to make a podium finish, confessed to taking Stilnox – banned by Australian team officials – for a “bonding” night.

Five of the six team members called a media conference last week to come clean on using the pills as part of a team-building night at their Manchester training camp ahead of the London Games that descended into pranks.

Australian swimming great Dawn Fraser, winner of eight Olympic medals including four gold between 1956-64, said the group should be barred from

competition for life.

“Those people who take drugs in sport should be banned forever, not to ever be allowed to come back into sport ... especially in this example,” said Fraser.

“They should be punished severely because they are setting a bad example for the younger generation for our country.”

Australian swimmers had previously used Stilnox to ensure a good night’s rest before competition until the AOC banned it in the lead-up to London.

Recreational users of Stilnox often deliberately try to stay awake, which can induce a “high” and even cause hallucinations.

Fraser was herself well known for controversial behaviour and was suspended by officials for 10 years after stealing an Olympic flag from outside the emperor’s palace during the 1964 Tokyo games.

She was arrested but released without charge, and her suspension lifted in

1968, though it was too close to the Olympics for her to be able to compete.

Fraser said her behaviour, which also included wearing a non-regulation swimsuit and marching in the Tokyo opening ceremony in defiance of official orders, was completely different to taking drugs.

“I think they set a bad example. They wouldn’t inspire me if I was a youngster coming up in the sport of swimming,” said Fraser, 75.

London was Australian swimming’s first Games without an individual gold medal since the 1976 Montreal Olympics and marked Australia’s lowest medal haul in the sport since Barcelona in 1992 with just one gold, six silver and three bronze.

Two reports into what went wrong in London found the squad lacked leadership and those “toxic” incidents such as drunkenness and bullying had gone unchecked. – AFP



Australian swimmers James Magnussen, Eamon Sullivan, Cameron McEvoy and members of the much-hyped Olympic swim relay team, dubbed the “Weapons of Mass Destruction,” speak to the media in Sydney on February 22. Pic: AFP

MCC call for T20 at 2024 Olympic Games

LONDON – MCC’s world cricket committee has said it would like to see Twenty20 cricket included at the 2024 Olympic Games to boost take-up of the game around the world.

Cricket is on the first rung of the ladder for inclusion at a future Games, having received full Olympic recognition in 2010, but would still have to apply to be on the programme.

Now the earliest the International Cricket Council (ICC) can apply for the sport to feature at an Olympic Games is 2024.

But following a two-day meeting in Auckland, the MCC world cricket committee said that any financial losses the game might suffer from the sport being included at an Olympics would be outweighed by extra exposure.

“The MCC world cricket committee appreciates that a great deal of effort may be needed to lobby for the inclusion of cricket in the Olympic Games of 2024,” it said in a statement.

“The committee accepts that, were cricket to be played in the Olympics, there would be a short-term loss in income for the ICC, and therefore for dispersion to its members, but is impressed with the potential boost for the game worldwide if cricket were to be included.

“Furthermore, the committee advocates Twenty20 cricket as the

format to be played at the Olympics, thereby providing the ‘pinnacle’ of that form of the sport.”

International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Jacques Rogge, a noted Anglophile, has previously encouraged cricket to make its case for Games inclusion, saying in 2011: “We would welcome an application.

“It’s an important, popular sport and very powerful on television. It’s a sport with a great tradition where mostly you have a respect of the

‘It’s a sport with a great tradition...’

ethics.”

Only once before has cricket appeared in the Games – at the 1900 Paris Olympics, when Britain beat France by 158 runs, with the French team largely made up of British expatriates.

More recently there was also a cricket tournament at the 1998 Commonwealth Games, a multi-sport event for countries who were, in most cases, once ruled by Britain – as is the case with cricket’s leading Test-playing nations.

However, any bid for cricket to resume as an Olympic sport is sure to face opposition from those who believe the Games calendar is already

too congested.

And others will argue no sport where the Olympics is not considered the highest honour should feature at a Games, although that has not stopped tennis being restored to the programme or golf being included for Rio 2016, even though both have their annual four “Majors”.

MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club), which owns London’s Lord’s ground and still has worldwide responsibility for the sport’s rules or Laws, no longer has a day-to-day role in the global administration of the game.

But its world cricket committee, chaired by former England captain Mike Brearley and including the likes of cricket greats Steve Waugh and Rodney Marsh (Australia), as well as India’s Rahul Dravid and Anil Kumble is regarded as an influential group within the sport.

The committee also includes ICC chief executive and former South Africa wicket-keeper David Richardson.

The Auckland meeting saw New Zealand batting great Martin Crowe, who is suffering from cancer, stand down from the committee, having served since its inception in 2006.

Committee members wished him well, with Brearley thanking Crowe for his “passionate opinions, his enthusiasm and clear love of the game”. – AFP

Man Utd to begin pre-season in Thailand

LONDON – Manchester United announced on February 28 that they will begin their 2013 pre-season tour in Thailand.

The current Premier League leaders will tackle the Singha All Star XI at Bangkok’s Rajamangala Stadium on July 13.

United have made four previous visits to the country

but have not played there for 12 years.

The club have already announced that their preparations for the 2013-14 campaign will involve matches in Sydney, Tokyo, Osaka and Hong Kong.

“Our visit to Thailand in July plays an important role in the team’s pre-season preparations for the season

ahead, as well as enables the Club to engage with some of its global fans and commercial partners,” said Manchester United chief executive David Gill.

“There are over 19.5 million Manchester United followers in Thailand and the Club has been lucky enough to visit on a number of occasions.”

– AFP

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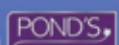
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Fair & Lovely



North Korea's Kim Jong-Un meets 'The Worm'

SEOUL – Flamboyant former NBA star Dennis Rodman has become the most high-profile American to meet the new leader of North Korea, vowing eternal friendship with Kim Jong-Un at a basketball game in Pyongyang.

At a time of heightened US-North Korean tensions following Pyongyang's recent nuclear test, the man who once dated Madonna brought his charm to bear on the leader of the impoverished, isolated state.

"You have a friend for life," Rodman told Kim in a speech after the February 28 match between a North Korean side against a US team featuring members of the Harlem Globetrotters which ended in a diplomatic 110-110 tie.

His comments were recorded in a statement by the New York-based VICE media company, which organised Rodman's trip.

Pictures of the event showed Rodman in dark glasses and a baseball cap clapping and laughing next to a clearly delighted Kim, who was dressed in a blue Mao suit with a lapel pin bearing the likeness of his father Kim Jong-Il and grandfather Kim Il-Sung.

The pair were later photographed again joking together at a post-game

reception, where Rodman, sporting a pink neck scarf and with piercings in his nose and lip, appeared to be enjoying a martini.

The Swiss-educated Kim, believed to be in his late 20s, is reported to be a huge fan of basketball and the Chicago Bulls, with whom Rodman won three NBA titles alongside Michael Jordan in the 1990s.

Rodman's access to Kim, who took over the reins of power in North Korea after Kim Jong-Il died in December 2011, raised more than a few eyebrows among Pyongyang watchers.

A recent delegation to North Korea that included Google chairman Eric Schmidt and Bill Richardson, the former US ambassador to the United Nations, never got to see the young leader.

Rodman's visit came as the UN Security Council is still debating how to punish North Korea for carrying out the February 12 nuclear test that triggered global outrage and condemnation.

A day after Rodman arrived in Pyongyang, a state run North Korean website had posted an article warning Washington that the US mainland was "well within" the range of its nuclear weapons.



Former NBA star Dennis Rodman applauds as he sits next to North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un with other spectators at a basketball game in Pyongyang on February 28. Pic: AFP

In an enthusiastic commentary on the Kim-Rodman meeting, the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the former Chicago Bulls' star -- nicknamed "The Worm" -- as saying the current impasse in US-North Korean relations was "regrettable".

The KCNA report suggested the decision to watch the game together may have been a spontaneous one.

"Dennis Rodman went up to the auditorium to bow

to Kim Jong-Un. Warmly welcoming him, Kim Jong-Un let him sit next to him," the agency said.

At the reception afterwards, Kim expressed his "pleasure" at the Harlem Globetrotters' visit, and said he hoped such sporting exchanges would improve understanding between Americans and North Koreans.

Rodman has been actively tweeting during the visit, saying North Koreans love basketball and that he was

"honoured" to represent the United States.

North Korea and the United States, an ally of South Korea, have never had diplomatic relations.

The US State Department said Washington had nothing to say about Rodman's trip.

"We don't have any details on all aspects of this trip. We weren't in touch with him before... it's not something we've taken a position on," said deputy acting spokesman Patrick Ventrell.

"Private American individuals are welcome to take the actions they see fit. We just don't have a position, this is a private American's travel," Ventrell said.

According to the VICE statement, VICE correspondent Ryan Duffy approached Kim during the post-game reception on February 28 and invited him to visit the United States.

"His invitation was met with laughter," the statement said. – AFP

Koné nets three in AFC rout

By Kyaw Zin Hlaing

A second half hat-trick from Adama Koné ensured Yangon United would collect all three points in their AFC Cup opener as they handily beat Indonesian club Persibo Bojonegoro 3-0 in Yangon on February 26.

Persibo opened the match aggressively and had Yangon United on their heels early. Goalkeeper Naing Zayar Tun was forced to make a save just three minutes into the match, deflecting a shot from Persibo's Rendi Saputra.

Persibo was forced to play the match with only

one substitute due to issues with players' travel documents.

Yangon United made its own first effort eight minutes later when Koné sent in a cross to Kyaw Ko Ko who narrowly missed a chance at the back of the net.

Yangon United continued to push throughout the first half but Persibo defences held their own. At half time the score remained 0-0.

Early in the second half, Yangon United pressed Persibo's solid back line.

Pyae Phyoe Aung made a run down the left and crossed to Kyaw Ko Ko who headed the ball well but Persibo's goalkeeper Happy

Dwi Kurniawan made a spectacular save.

Unfortunately for Persibo, the 0-0 deadlock wouldn't last.

In the 56th minute Adama broke the deadlock when he pounced on Michael Cvetkovski's tip from Kyaw Ko Ko's corner kick to score a header from close range.

Koné scored again in the 62nd minute and put in his final goal before stoppage time in the 90th minute. The performance is the latest in what is shaping up to be a great season for the Ivory Coast native. He currently leads the Myanmar National League in scoring.



Yangon United's Adama Koné makes a run on February 26 at Yangon's Thuwanna Stadium. Pic: Boothee

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