



Eight dead as violence spreads to Indonesia

By Atar Ahmad

MEDAN, Indonesia – A group of Myanmar Muslims beat eight Buddhists to death at an Indonesian detention centre on April 5 after becoming enraged at news of deadly communal violence in central Myanmar, officials said.

The Rohingya Muslims launched the attack at the immigration centre on Sumatra island using weapons fashioned from smashed up beds and broom handles after seeing pictures of religious violence that left dozens dead last month.

The attack underscores the soaring Muslim-Buddhist tensions that have cast a shadow over political reforms in Myanmar, where the end of decades of authoritarian military rule has laid bare deep sectarian fault lines.

Last month's disorder was the worst since an eruption of violence between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims, also known as Bengalis, in Rakhine State last year that left scores dead and tens of thousands – mainly Muslims – displaced.

An increasing number of Rohingya – viewed by many Myanmar as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh – have been arriving on Indonesian shores.

Immigration centre official Rida Agustian said the entrance to the block where the detainees were being held was sealed off to stop officers from intervening as the deadly attack was launched in the early hours.

When officers finally got in, they found "blood spattered on the walls and in pools on the floor", he said. "The men had used wood from their beds and broom

sticks as weapons to kill.

"The bodies were covered in blood, it looked like they were beaten and tortured to death."

Mr Agustian said 15 people, believed to be Rohingya, were injured during the violence at the centre, where 106 of them are being held.

Ko Kyaw Kyaw, 25, who is one of a handful of Myanmar Buddhists being held at the centre, said he heard the attack unfolding and was "very scared".

"We ask the Indonesian government to send us straight back home to Myanmar," he said outside the centre before being taken away for questioning by police.

He said the victims were from a group of Myanmar Buddhists being held at the centre at the port of Belawan after being caught illegally fishing in Indonesian waters, and had been due to be deported next month.

The attack began after the detainees saw images of recent violence between non-Rohingya Muslims and Buddhists in central Myanmar that has left at least 43 people dead and many Muslim homes and mosques destroyed, said local police chief Endro Kiswanto.

"They managed to see some photos of the violence in Myanmar, including buildings on fire, and we believe that's when the violence broke out," Mr Kiswanto said.

He said all eight Buddhist men were dead when police arrived at the detention centre in the early hours of April 5.

Twenty-five detainees and 30 other witnesses were being questioned by police, and 30 officers were at the site, Mr Kiswanto said. – AFP

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Emotional farewell for 13 school fire victims

Mourners carry the coffin of a boy killed in a fire at an Islamic school through Yay Way cemetery in Yangon on April 2. Thirteen students sleeping overnight at the school, on the upper block of 48th Street in downtown Yangon, died in the fire, which started in the early hours of April 2. Rumours that the blaze had been deliberately lit were quickly dismissed by the regional government, which said an overheated transformer was to blame. Full coverage pages 3 and 6. Pic: Kaung Htet

A plea for peace from a religious leader

OPINION

with Sitagu Sayadaw



AS a religious leader, I totally condemn any form of social unrest in Myanmar. While it is not possible to pinpoint or trace an origin to it, nowadays there have been riots among people professing different faiths

and coming from different racial backgrounds. It is heartrending and unnecessary situation for all of us.

From its epicentre in Rakhine State, the racial clashes have spread to Meiktila in Mandalay Region, where a serious confrontation broke out between Buddhists and Muslims. From there,

further frightening rumours have spread like wildfire to other parts of the country, in particular western Bago Region. Innocent inhabitants are living in fear. Compatriots wishing to live in peace and unity have been deeply disturbed because of those damaging rumours. At a time when the country is building national unity

and paving the way to democracy brick by brick, these unpleasant situations will certainly have a significant and negative knock-on effect.

I, Sitagu Sayadaw, therefore, deeply denounce these religious, racial and commercial conflicts with no exceptions.

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New governor the only loser after Bangkok vote

By Roger Mitton

WINNERS can also be losers. So it proved last month when Sukhumbhand Paribatra was re-elected governor of Bangkok.

It was a stunning and unexpected victory, although what Sukhumbhand had to do with it is hard to gauge.

Certainly, it is hard to think of a candidate who was frowned upon so much by his Democrat Party colleagues and by the media, and who campaigned so ineptly, and yet who won so handsomely.

Well, politics is a strange and fickle business and we should not dwell too much on Sukhumbhand's failings, for his triumph was a life-saver for the Democrats and its leader Abhisit Vejjajiva.

It was also uplifting for Thailand, and in a way, good for the nationally governing Pheu Thai Party and its defeated candidate, Pongsapat Pongcharoen.

By retaining Bangkok, the opposition Democrats can now continue to provide some semblance of a check-and-balance on the dominant Pheu Thai central government under Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

The PM's party and its allies already dominate parliament and reign supreme across the whole of Thailand, except, thankfully, for the capital and a few pockets in the deep south.

If Sukhumbhand and the Democrats had lost Bangkok, it would have meant ceding almost total control to the swaggering Pheu Thai warlords and their fugitive puppet master, Yingluck's elder brother, Thaksin Shinawatra.

And that would have been just as profoundly unhealthy for Thailand as is the institutionalised stranglehold of the Cambodia People's Party on that country's polity.

So, for all his faults, Sukhumbhand's win was a great fillip for Thailand – and of course, it was hugely uplifting for the Democrats, who have been in the doldrums since losing the 2011 general election.

If they had also lost their



A Thai employee works on a construction area at a shopping mall in Bangkok on April 1. Pic: AFP

Bangkok bastion, it would have been a disaster, which would likely have obliged their leader Abhisit, the Ernest Milquetoast of Thai politics, to resign.

Now, thanks to Sukhumbhand – a man he disdains, and the sentiment is mutual – Abhisit has got another lease on life.

The governor's re-election was even a plus of sorts for Pheu Thai and Yingluck, since it has given them a much needed wake-up call.

The PM's continuing honeymoon, rather like that of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, is starting to show signs of fading – and that trend will accelerate if she continues to underwhelm and put on weight.

More portentously, the Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating an alleged US\$1-million loan she secretly made to a company run by her common-law husband Anusorn Amornchat.

If the commission rules against her, Yingluck could be disqualified and forced to step down – echoing the fate of her brother Thaksin, the former PM, who remains her key adviser.

In case that scenario comes to pass, the party has arranged for Yingluck's elder sister, Yaowapa Wongsawat, to contest a by-election this month in a safe Chiang Mai seat.

Yaowapa is a stern political enforcer, who will whip the somewhat lax Pheu Thai caucus into better shape, and just as importantly, will be positioned to slot into Yingluck's place if the PM is disqualified.

Interestingly, the Bangkok governorship result also brought kudos to the loser Pongsapat, who polled more than a million votes in the opposition's heartland and is sure to be rewarded with a plum appointment soon.

Only the poor winner Sukhumbhand lost out. He never really wanted to be governor in the first place, but was railroaded into taking the job when the former Democrat incumbent was disqualified.

Foreign affairs is really his forte, and as a former deputy minister who grew up among princes and plenipotentiaries, his over-riding ambition has always been to become Thailand's top diplomat.

But his remarkable re-election means he can no longer aspire to that post for at least another four years.

Instead, he'll have to settle for the mansion and the pomp: another trumpet flourish, another pair of embossed underpants. It can't be so bad.

This land is your land

By Lian Kual Sang

IT has been pleasing to see gradual, rather than drastic, changes taking place in Myanmar's political, social and economic spheres over the past two years. There have also been setbacks and challenges, some of which remain huge and perhaps outstrip government capacity to resolve them.

But personally I am content with the performance of the current government. However, this article is not a paean to the government, but rather a message to our ethnic political leaders in the hope that it may stir their conscience and lead them to engage in the country's wider issues.

It appears our ethnic, or region-based, political parties are almost completely preoccupied with political and economic issues in their regions. Of course, I absolutely agree on the value of focusing on areas that concern them the most. However, I think there is also room for them to play a greater role in national affairs. Why not speak out about budget issues, or the country's foreign investment policy? Why not get involved in the debates on tackling poverty and other development issues? Why should we limit ourselves to engaging in just our own regional and racial affairs? It also begs the question: Are there any factors or issues preventing us from taking a broader involvement in politics?

There are three possibilities. The first is that our ethnic political leaders simply do not have a deep interest in wider issues affecting the country. Their interests might not extend past ethnicity, equality, and the introduction of a certain political system – the immediate concerns of the region and ethnicity to which that politician belongs to or is representing. To these leaders I have nothing else to say.

The second possibility is that politicians feel they do not have the background or expertise to deal with issues related to the whole country. We all know most ethnic regions are less socially and economically developed than Bamar areas. I believe that while some ethnic leaders understand they can contribute positively to the national discussion they also feel their opinions and

expertise are not wanted and so refrain from joining the debate. These type of leaders need to be proactive and clearly make their skills, capabilities and commitment known to their fellow politicians.

I am not saying all ethnic leaders fall into these categories. No doubt some have made an attempt and even received a certain level of recognition but far too many have made no attempt at all. Quite a few of our ethnic leaders and politicians are well-educated and have years of experience in politics and business. They can bring fresh insight to complex issues but they either decide not to do so or are incapable of meeting the challenges posed to their participation.

The third possibility is that the government and major political parties do not do enough to actively involve ethnic leaders in the process of solving the country's complex challenges. This broad participation is absolutely fundamental for bringing about unity in Myanmar.

Rather than simply encourage ethnic minority leaders to play a greater role, a simple approach that the government could employ is to recruit them as senior members in important committees or associations that oversee health, education, trade, foreign investment, banking and other sectors. The government should also consider appointing ethnic leaders in ministerial roles. We are yet to see really any technocrats or professionals from ethnic minorities join the government. To keep the reform process moving forward, the government should comprise a fair balance of people of various ethnicities. This suggestion applies to major political parties too. Do any have a policy of empowering ethnic minority leaders within their ranks? A look at the makeup of these parties would suggest not.

This is our country. Every citizen, regardless of their religion or race, is our brother or sister. So to my respected ethnic leaders I want to say: let's play a bigger role on the main political stage.

(Lian Kual Sang is a business consultant and entrepreneur from Yangon. He can be reached at naolian@gmail.com.)



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New look for paper in run-up to daily

IN preparation for the leap into the daily era, *The Myanmar Times* English edition is undergoing a substantial makeover. Showcasing a truly modern, international-standard design, the new look will raise the bar for publications nationwide.

The talented team was fronted by consultant Catherine Tai, whose stylish, cutting-edge designs for high-profile print publications in Hong Kong have netted her awards from the Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) and World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). Myanmar Consolidated Media art directors Tin Zaw Htway (right rear) and Ko Pyo (left rear) also added their expertise to the project.

English edition editor Thomas Kean (middle rear) has been preparing his staff for the exciting transition, and is committed to upholding the paper's top-tier editorial standards, producing the hard-hitting, award-winning news coverage for which *The Myanmar Times* is justly well known.

All signs are pointing to a smooth launch that will push the newspaper to the head of the daily pack in short order. "*The Myanmar Times* has long been the benchmark of publishing in Myanmar," said Wendy Madrigal, MCM's chief operating officer. "And I think our readers will quickly realise that our new-look paper is among the best in the region, befitting of our international status." — *Staff Writers*



Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

UEC calls meeting with all parties

By Win Ko Ko Latt

THE Union Election Commission will meet the leaders and secretaries of all registered political parties on April 8, and some expect by-elections and a proposed change of the voting system to be discussed.

It comes 10 days after an earlier meeting called by the commission was postponed, party officials.

"The Union Election Commission informed us that it would meet with political parties on April 8. But I don't know what will be discussed," said U Htay Oo, vice chairman of the Union Solidarity and Development Party.

However, National League for Democracy officials, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, will not attend, said party spokesperson U Nyan Win. "Our party has already arranged to hold its first central executive committee meeting on the same day so I informed the commission that we cannot attend," he said.

U Min Thu, the NLD's Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Ottarathiri in Nay Pyi Taw, said the commission would likely discuss plans for more by-elections.

"I think the commission is likely to discuss two things. One is holding by-elections in 2013 for 28 vacant constituencies and another issue is discussing changing the election system from first-past-the-post to proportional representation," he said.

U Khin Maung Swe from the National Democratic Force said his party would try to focus discussions on these two issues. "Some local papers also reported that proportional representation will be discussed at this meeting," he said.

Police make second fire arrest

Two teachers detained in connection with Islamic school fire that left 13 students dead on April 2

By Htoo Aung and Noe Noe Aung

TWO men have been arrested over the fatal fire at an Islamic school in downtown Yangon last week that left 13 dead, and prompted rumours that the fire had been deliberately lit.

The rumours were later dismissed by police and regional government officials, who within hours of extinguishing the April 2 blaze had pinpointed the cause as an overheated power transformer under a staircase at the *madrassa*, on the upper block of 48th Street in Botahtaung township.

One teacher from the school was arrested on April 2, while another was detained the following day. They face potential charges of negligence and negligence resulting in death.

Myanmar Police Force said the 13 boys died of smoke inhalation, and thousands attended funerals later that day at the Islamic section of Yay Way cemetery.

They were among 71 students and

two teachers asleep in the building when the fire broke out at 2:30am.

At a press conference later on April 2, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe responded to rumours that the fire had been started deliberately.

"This mosque is also a school and dormitory. The 13 boys who died slept on the upper floor," he said.

"The fire started because of the regulator, which was located underneath the stairs. It spread to

teachers."

Yangon Region Police Chief Colonel Win Naing said at the press conference that a boy sleeping in the school, Ko Wai Yan Phyto, saw the fire start and tried to wake up the teachers. When the teachers woke up, they tried to put the fire out with a wet blanket but were unsuccessful.

"The diesel was located underneath the stairs. This diesel was spread and the blanket was soaked so that the

were listed in an order published in state media on April 3.

State-run media urged the public not to believe rumours, which were also spreading online, contrary to the official version of events, and said updated news would be released in a timely manner.

For many, the immediate challenge was coming to terms with the grief of losing 13 young members of their community. "Most of the boys are from Yangon Region and some are from different parts of the country, including Kawkaik, Thaton, Yamethin and Bago," said the family member of one of the deceased.

A teacher from the school, U Kyaw Naing, said that some other children suffered minor injuries in the fire.

"Some children were injured, and they are afraid of what happened in the building," he said.

"I want to know how government is going to explain this. None of us believe this is an accident. We are sad because we lost our children — they are the future of our religion."

'The blaze was not started intentionally.'

the rest of the stairs so the 13 boys didn't have a chance to escape," he said.

"There was no one to open the entrance so firemen had to break the entrance to extinguish the fire. When the rescue crews arrived, the other boys were able to escape by running out through a door. The upper floor has ... security bars blocking most of the building's windows and the key [for the door] was with the mosque

whole mosque smelled of diesel. The blaze was not started intentionally by throwing something in from outside," the chief minister said.

Despite the regional government's insistence that it had a clear picture of the tragedy, a commission comprising police, fire and power supply personnel was formed on April 2. While the regional government said Islamic leaders would also be included in the commission, none



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A load of confiscated timber at a Forest Department office in Daik-u township, Bago Region, on March 28. Pic: Soe Sandar Oo

Bago forestry officers receive death threats

By Soe Sandar Oo

ILLEGAL timber smugglers are responding to a government crackdown by threatening forestry officers.

A Forest Department officer assigned to an area of Bago Region near the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw Highway that is notorious for illegal timber trading says smugglers have repeatedly threatened to kill him because of the crackdown, which has gained momentum over the past two years.

Forester U Thein Lwin said when he was posted in Kyauktaga in 2012 he was attacked by machete-wielding smugglers several times, and on two occasions suffered injuries to his hands.

"I transferred to Bine Dar [village tract in Kyauktaga township in February] because smugglers said they would kill me if I kept staying in [Kyauktaga town]. They would follow me if I even

went outside at night," he said.

However, U Thein Lwin can expect little respite from smugglers: The Bine Dar area of Kyauktaga, along with nearby Daik-u township, are smuggling hotspots, with more than 500 tonnes of illegally cut timber confiscated in 2012 in Kyauktaga township alone.

"People assigned to these places are really on the front line in terms of tackling the illegal timber trade because it has among the highest rates of smuggling," U Thein Lwin said.

Most smugglers are from villages where there are few other sources of income. As well as threats of violence, residents have responded to the drop in income by refusing to serve Forest Department officers in their shops.

U Hla Moe, a forest ranger at Myochaung in Kyauktaga township, said smugglers often travel down from the hills in groups, carrying their

teak on their motorcycles. They also have machetes to clear checkpoints, he said.

"One time they ran away [from the checkpoint] but then they came back again at nighttime and said they would burn down the checkpoint and kill all of us. They went away when the police arrived to help us. These kinds of threats always make us feel unhappy and unsafe," he said.

Officers said they have no means of protecting themselves from armed groups: prior to 1991, Forest Department officers were able to carry guns but they are no longer allowed to be armed.

Under forestry laws, smuggling of small amounts of timber can result in a jail term of six months to three years, while for commercial amounts the sentence ranges from seven to 15 years, although punishments vary depending on the type of wood being smuggled.

Bus services from capital limited during water festival

By Pyae Thet Phyto

CHANGES to bus and train services will affect those travelling to and from Nay Pyi Taw during the Thingyan holiday, officials say.

The chairman of the supervisory committee for buses, U Win Swe, said most companies will stop running buses between Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw from April 13 to 16. However, the Yazarmin bus line - which runs to other locations, such as Mawlamyine, Kalay and Tamu - will run as normal, he said. The others will resume normal service after April 16, he said.

The government has also yet to issue a directive to run special Thingyan trains between Yangon and Mandalay during the holiday season, a Myanmar Railways official said.

Given that bus seats are limited, if the special trains do not run it is likely to be difficult for those looking to travel to and from Nay Pyi Taw during the holiday.

"At the moment we haven't received any instructions [about the special trains] so we can't say whether they will run or not. It may be confirmed in a week," U Myint Thein, manager of the railway station in Nay Pyi Taw, said last week.

During Thingyan, it is typical that special trains run between Yangon and Mandalay from the first day of the holiday through New Year's day, stopping at Nay Pyi Taw station for three minutes, he said.

If travellers are forced to take buses, U Win Swe said bus fares should not be raised before or during Thingyan. If companies do not comply, he said, action will be taken against them.

"Brokers and buses were told on March 31 not to increase fares," he said.

Some companies have taken advantage of the fact that there are a large number of travellers during Thingyan and have raised bus fares when Thingyan is drawing near, but U Win Swe said they have taken action in the past to stop the practice.

More than 600 buses and 60 bus lines operate between Nay Pyi Taw and other cities around Myanmar daily. Sixteen of those lines are based in Nay Pyi Taw.

From page 1

A plea for peace

Lord Buddha teaches non-violence. I firmly believe other religious denominations share the same concept, and no God prescribed conflict of any kind. Their respective teachings aim for eternal peace of mankind. People of Myanmar, regardless of their ethnic origin, creed, colour and religion, are strongly urged to strive for peaceful coexistence and harmony. The fundamental concept of living in peace and harmony is founded upon the triad of tolerance, forgiveness and forgetting, which are of paramount importance.

Moreover, I would like to ask everyone earnestly not to manufacture any sort of rumour or suspicion for inappropriate purposes. Unfounded hearsay will have a profoundly deleterious effect upon the peace and stability of our nation. Thugs creating

these rumours and suspicion are committing a crime of biblical proportions and trying to pull down our country's pillars of peace and stability.

In this context, Lord Buddha gave his sermon *Ma Anussavena Gahnittha* - meaning, seeing is believing with one's own eyes only; do not take rumours and hearsay at face value. I furthermore ask my brothers and sisters not to be agitated at every manufactured rumour but to analyse them painstakingly and act accordingly.

Myanmar is a country rich with diversity of religion and culture. It is a country endowed with a centuries-old legacy of religion and culture that is augmented by the righteous guidance of mentors and ancestral parents.

The name Myanmar has evolved gradually from Brahma, which signifies nobility. The noble spirit is literally composed of

tolerance, forgiveness, loving-kindness, compassion, justice and above all, sense and sensibility. By bearing these in our hearts, we can repel the destructive forces together and at the same time build lasting peace and unity.

There community of monks in Myanmar numbers nearly 500,000; a figure almost matched by our defence services personnel. Like soldiers defending the motherland's peace and stability, a colossus of Sanghas is strongly asked to deploy the weapon of loving-kindness in order to dismantle this ugly social unrest. At the same time, they should work to their utmost abilities hand-in-hand with other religious leaders sharing the goals of establishing peace, stability and unity.

From this moment in time, political groups of different persuasions are constantly engaging to open a new chapter in history. For this

reason, all leaders of religious, social and spiritual bodies are being requested to render full and unequivocal support to those with righteous and just intentions. Unless peace, harmony and coexistence are quickly established from today, unsubstantiated rumours and suspicions will have terrible consequences, reversing the momentum so far achieved on the path to democracy.

In conclusion, I urge all people, regardless of their ethnicity or faith, to prevent this cancerous communal violence and help build peace and stability in our country.

(This is an edited transcript of a presentation, "Community Dialogue for Social Harmony & Stability in Myanmar", given by the Venerable Ashin Nyanissara, chancellor of the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, at the Myanmar Peace Center in Yangon on March 30.)



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Thousands farewell 13 students after tragedy



IN DEPTH
with
Noe Noe Aung

WHEN Daw Hla Myint sent her nephew to study at a *madrassa* in downtown Yangon, it never crossed her mind that he may not return safely.

"My nephew was studying there until yesterday. Now he's gone. I heard about the fire at about 3am but when we arrived there, we couldn't do anything," Daw Hla Myint said with tears in her eyes.

She was part of a large crowd gathered outside the mortuary at Yangon General Hospital at 9am on April 2; mostly family members of the 13 children who just hours earlier had been found dead inside the burned out Islamic school on 48th Street in Botahtaung township.

As some negotiated with a guard to open the gates to the mortuary, others whispered into their mobile phones, chatting in low voices about the incident. At that point, many believed the fire to have been deliberately lit, and the anger was palpable. When I tried to ask some family members about the fire, a large group formed a circle around us and began to vent their outrage.

"My brother is only 15 years old. I feel so sad for him and if someone did this, I want to kill him right away, as soon as I know who it is," said Ko Min Min, a family member of one of the victims.

"I went there as soon as I got a phone call from my friends, I arrived at 3:30 am. When I went inside, I could smell fuel in the building. But I didn't see my brother and now I am waiting here, in front of the mortuary, to see his body," he said.

As he spoke, a woman in the crowd kept yelling, "Why they did it to the children?"

Police later said that an electrical fault, rather than foul play, was to blame for the tragedy.

U Kyaw Naing, a teacher from the *madrassa*, said the fire started under a staircase.

"I woke up around 2am and I saw the fire was coming from under the stairs and the stairs were on fire. The main exit was 10 or 12 feet away from the stairs and we didn't have an opportunity to open it. The door was also locked," U Kyaw Naing said.

He said the school instructed Muslim boys in the Quran and students normally stayed overnight.

"Normally there are 170 students from all over the country as it is a well-known school. But the school reopened on March 30 so it was just the third day of the term. As a result around 80 students were in the building when the fire broke out."

After the bodies were retrieved from the mortuary, thousands of people began to gather at the Islamic section of Yay Way cemetery for the funerals. The crowd grew and spread over every corner of the cemetery as the time neared for the arrival of the bodies. Most were neither direct family members nor relatives of the boys; simply people, mostly members of the Islamic community, united by tragedy.

News that the police had attributed the blaze to a voltage transformer spread around the cemetery at about 1pm. It didn't placate the crowd; most said they did not believe the official version of events.

"It seemed that the fire was started by a fuel of some sort because at one point I slipped and I noticed that



Above: Grieving women arrive at the Islamic section of Yay Way cemetery in Yangon for the funerals of 13 boys killed in the April 2 fire. Below: A casket is carried through the crowd at Yay Way on April 2. Pic: Kaung Htet

there was fuel on the floor. When we tried to put the fire out with water, it just got worse and we couldn't handle it. The main door was locked from outside so we couldn't get out. I told some boys to cover themselves with blankets and we managed to get out the back door," said U Khin Maung Aye, a teacher from the school.

While the body of the deceased is normally shown to relatives before washing, the families of the 13 boys, all aged 10 to 15 years, had to wait until after the washing had been performed. They were then buried around 3:30pm.

As the mourners slowly left the funeral, the anger had receded but the sadness and concern was still apparent on their faces. The question many seemed to be silently pondering was, "What consequences will this tragedy have for the city of Yangon?"



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Twenty-two bidders in phone licence battle

By Zaw Win Than and AFP

VODAFONE, China Mobile and an investment fund linked to billionaire George Soros are among 22 bidders vying to enter Myanmar, one of the world's last unexplored mobile telephone frontiers.

Foreign giants are lining up in the hope of doing business in Myanmar, where less than 10 percent of the population has access to a telephone – a figure the government hopes to boost to 80pc by 2016.

“Our telecom sector has been so outdated,” said Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Set Aung.

“We can't rely on small companies so we decided to work with internationally known and experienced companies,” he said.

Twenty-two companies or consortiums submitted pre-qualification applications ahead of the April 4 deadline and will be vetted for inclusion in the tender process, U Set Aung said.

Vodafone and China Mobile announced they were teaming up to bid for one of two licences

on offer to build, own and operate a nationwide mobile network for an initial term of 15 years.

Vodafone said Myanmar would be an important market for the global mobile industry, citing its “comparatively young and highly literate population of around 60 million, a GDP growth rate of 5.5 percent per annum and mobile phone penetration currently below 10pc”.

Myanmar's communications sector is poised for a “rapid” expansion as the government doubles the number of mobile operators and encourages the development of a nationwide mobile network, they said in a joint statement.

Quantum Strategic Partners, whose principal investment adviser is Soros Fund Management, has joined forces with telecom provider Digicel Group Limited and YSH Finance, a newly established holding company, to enter the fray.

“It's quite a big opportunity,” Digicel spokeswoman Antonia Graham said.

“We are looking at an initial project investment of between US\$1.5 billion and \$2 billion.”

Mr Soros said in a statement: “The liberalisation of the telecommunications market will serve as an important economic stimulus for the country.”

Countrywide mobile access could provide farmers with daily weather alerts, pesticide and fertiliser advice and market price updates. Mobile health services could be employed to great benefit in Myanmar in helping combat malaria and other diseases, such as dengue fever.

Others firms that have expressed interest in licences include Africa's largest operator MTN, Bharti Airtel of India and Singtel from Singapore, Qatar Telecom and Norway's Telenor.

The government is expected to announce on April 11 which firms pre-qualified. A final decision on the winning bidders is expected on June 27.

Few in Myanmar can afford mobile phones and SIM card fees, which in the past cost about \$200, although the government is now trying to make prices more affordable.

State-owned giant Myanma Post and Telecommunication announced on March 3 it would start selling SIM cards for less than \$2.



Mandalay residents celebrate Thingyan with private water pumps beside the moat in 2012. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

MCDC reminds on water pumps

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

MANDALAY City Development Committee has reminded Thingyan revellers to get permission if they plan to use private water pumps.

The committee published a notice in its daily newspaper, *Mandalay*, in late March stating that those who want to pump water from Mandalay's moat during Thingyan have to pay a fee of K50,000.

Registration opened on April 1 and closes on April 8, and MCDC has threatened to confiscate water

pumps used without permission.

MCDC has approved about 35 Thingyan pandals around the city's moat for the Thingyan festival, which ends with New Year's Day on April 17.

Most private water pumps are set up on 12th Street and 80th Street, on the north and east sides of the moat respectively, where there are few large pandals.

MCDC also warned that it would not tolerate street vendors who set up stalls illegally. Those caught breaking the law will face a fine of K30,000 and their possessions will be confiscated.

Flowers of Friendship Blossom in Kyaukpyu

The Myanmar-China Oil and Gas pipelines are mainly invested by six noted companies from Myanmar, Korea, India, and China. The project will not only satisfy the demands of energy in Myanmar, but also promote the economy of pipeline areas and even the whole country, which will ultimately bring benefits to Myanmar people.

Ever since the commencement of Myanmar-China Pipeline Project, the company has attached highly importance of the social economic programs and public welfare undertakings along pipeline areas. They have been sparing no effort to assist practically and do good deeds to local people, and eventually boom the friendship in Kyaukpyu.

1. Construction and Renovation of Myanmar Local Schools and Hospitals

In 2011, the pipeline project donated 6 million US dollars to Myanmar, which is applied to improve the health and education conditions along the pipeline areas.

Besides, SEAOP and SEAGP, the joint venture companies of oil and gas pipelines will also donate 2 million US dollars annually to Myanmar country to conduct social economic programs.

For now, the first money has been used in Rakhine State, Magway Province, Mandalay Province and Shan State, and the social economic programs include 11 schools (BEHS, Taung Yin in Kyaukpau township, BEPS.(Lun) in Lower Made (Pyein) and so on) and also 5 substation health centers(Outter Kalaba SHC and so on).

2. Building a Reservoir to Improve the Domestic Water on Made Island

Made Island had experienced a shortage of water for quite a long time. After getting onto the island, the workers of the pipeline project have built water pipes of 6000m by keeping working double tides for 60 days, which then solved the domestic water and irrigation water problems on Made Island. In April, 2012, people on Made Island celebrated a fresh water festival for the first time.

3. Donation to Disaster Affected Areas in Kyaukpyu

After destroyed by Giri Cyclone, the affected residents received the donation from CNPC on 15:00 Nov. 8th, 2010, which was highly praised by Mr. U Thein Swe, Minister of Transportation of Myanmar and a member of Myanmar Disaster Relief and Reconstruction Commission.

4. Timely Compensation Distribution for the Lands of Made Island Crude Oil Station, Wharf, and Reservoirs

10:00 am on June 15th, 2010, the Made Land Compensation Ceremony of Myanmar-China Pipeline was held in the City Hall of Kyaukpyu. The pipeline joint venture company signed compensation agreements with 26 households and distributed the compensation on the spot. According to the re-check result by local governments and residents, there was no error during the counting and distributing process of almost 300 million Myanmar Kyats.

5. Great Attention to Environment Protection

There has been no event of pollution and zoology damage ever since the commencement of Made Island wharf project construction. The project has effectively protected the local zoology environment, which was spoken highly by local government.

6. Improvement of Transportation

Since there were no roads in the villages, CNPC and other sub-contractors have worked together to build roads of 5.6 km and 3 wood bridges, which solved the traffic problems when fishing on the sea.

7. Charity Activities

Aid for the elderly: on March 5, 2011, Kyaukphyu Project Department visited 49 childless seniors, bringing for them living goods such as blankets and cooking oil, showing the love of Chinese people to these elderly;

Aid for the children: Kyaukphyu Project Department donated stationaries including school bags, exercise books, pencils, etc., were sent to 580 primary school students on the island before the Children's Day on June 1st, wishing them to do well in their study;

Aid for the dropped-out: a donation totaling 3 million MMK was made for 54 Made children whose families are too poor to afford their schooling. The title of the donation was “Lend a Hand of Love”.



Compensation Ceremony in Made Island on June 15th, 2010



First Fresh Water Festival in Thousands of Years in Made Island



BEHS, Taung Yin in Kyaukpyu (Donated by the Pipeline Project)



Visiting Elderly without Families in Made Island

• By Rachel

Respect for human rights essential: Carter

By Zaw Win Than

FORMER US President Jimmy Carter has stressed the importance of respect for human rights in strengthening the transition to democracy, and expressed concern over recent communal violence.

"Respect for human rights must be a cornerstone of Myanmar's political transition process," Mr Carter told a crowd of hundreds at Parkroyal Hotel in Yangon on April 5.

"I am deeply concerned about the recent religious violence," he said, referring to clashes between Muslims and Buddhists in Meiktila that left at least 40 people dead. "The recent violence risks damaging the reputation that you have gained in your country just as you're trying to rebuild it once again."

He said he was "saddened" to hear of the conflicts in Kachin and Shan states and called on the government to address the grievances of Myanmar's ethnic minorities.

"The international community now stands with you. It supports a Myanmar that is diverse, tolerant, multi-ethnic and multi-religious," he said.

"No people should ever be treated as inferior by the government or by other citizens," he said, referring to the thousands of displaced people, mostly Muslims, in Rakhine State.

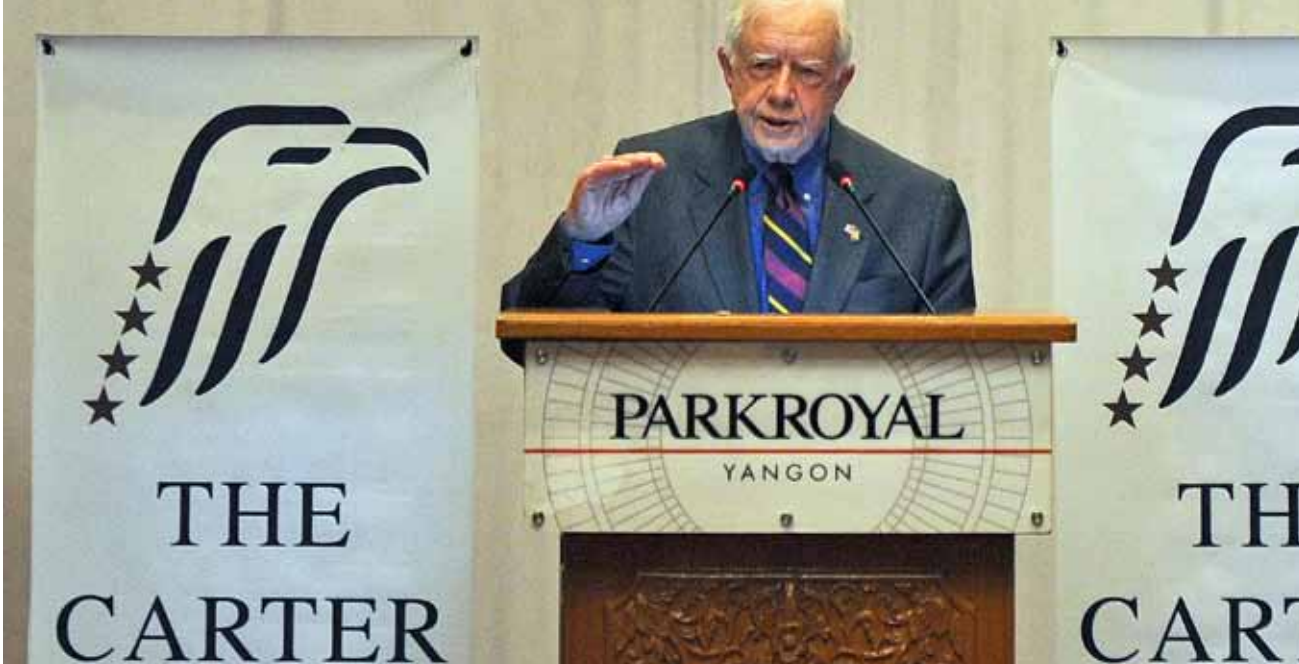
Mr Carter said he was "disturbed" by reports of "hate speech by some prominent people, even religious leaders".

In his discussions with the president about the reform process on March 3, Mr Carter said he told U Thein Sein that "mutual respect, tolerance and open-mindedness are the basis for a democratic society".

"I am filled with admiration for your nation's political leaders," Mr Carter said, praising the government for initiating and sustaining reforms since coming to office in March 2011.

"In order to ensure the continued success of the reform process, it is important for everyone to

Former US President Jimmy Carter speaks in Yangon on April 5. Pic: AFP



speak honestly and directly about the serious challenges that still exist. It's a mistake to try and cover up challenges."

Since leaving the White House in 1981, Mr

Carter has maintained a rigorous schedule of supporting peace efforts and anti-poverty programs around the world. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 "for his

decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development".

He has also observed democratic elections in 94 countries and said that he would like to come back for Myanmar's next general election, in 2015 - "if we are invited".

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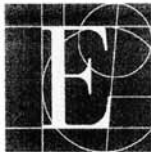
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Dated. April 8, 2013



Ko Ye Min Oo outside court on April 4. Pic: Tun Tun Myint

Supporters of student activist unhappy over arrest, detention

By Naw Say Phaw Waa

RELATIVES and supporters of a political activist have protested against his arrest and detention in Insein Prison for allegedly inciting religious tension.

Ko Ye Min Oo, secretary of the Federation of Students' Unions (Organising Committee), was released under a presidential amnesty after being detained for four years in connection with the September 2007 protests. He was arrested again on March 25 at Bahan monastery in Yangon, where he was living, and has been in custody since.

At a hearing on April 4, Ko Ye Min Oo was charged under section 505b of the Penal Code for allegedly committing an action that could incite people to "commit an offence against the state or public tranquillity". The charges, filed in Yangon's Northern District Court, relate to his alleged role in instigating monk-led protests against the opening of an Organisation of Islamic Cooperation office in 2012, said his brother, Ko Ye Min Aung.

The trial date has been set for April 23.

The manner of Ko Ye Min Oo's arrest and detention has attracted criticism from his supporters.

"He was not allowed to talk with his family, and he shouted [on April 4] that he had been wrongly arrested. Then he was taken back to Insein Prison," said activist Ko Ye Myat Hein.

"We reported Ye Min Oo missing on March 26 and the police wrote to us on April 1 to say Ye Min Oo was inciting the monks to religious conflict. The government should act transparently when they make an arrest, and they should release him," Ko Ye Min Aung said.

"He said he was arrested unjustly. We are trying to resolve this with our lawyers," he said.

An attempt by union supporters to visit Ko Ye Min Oo in Insein Prison on April 2 was not successful, but his family was able to visit him the following day, Ko Ye Min Aung said.

"Holding a person for more than 24 hours is not what we expect of the new government and it makes people nervous. There has been no explanation of this arrest," said union chairman Ko Di Nyein Lin.

Yoma signs JV for 1000 Star City apartments

By Tim McLaughlin

SPA Project Management Pte Ltd has entered into a joint venture with the Singaporean arm of a French industrial group to further develop Star City, a housing project in Yangon Region's Thanlyin township.

SPA Project Management is a wholly owned subsidiary of Yoma Strategic Holdings. It will hold 40 percent of the new joint venture, known as BYMA Pte Ltd, while Dragages Singapore Pte Ltd holds the remaining 60pc.

BYMA will build more than 1000 apartment units at Star City at an estimated cost of US\$94 million, Yoma said in a statement on April 3. Work is scheduled to begin this month and due for completion in January 2016. During this period, apartment blocks in the zone will be completed and launched progressively to allow occupants to move in as early as possible, the statement said.

"This partnership is an indication of the increasing confidence that many prestigious international groups have in Myanmar," Yoma chief executive officer Andrew Rickards said in the statement.

Yoma is chaired by Serge Pun and is the Singapore-listed affiliate of his company, Serge Pun & Associates (SPA), according to its website.

Dragages Singapore Pte Ltd is a member of the Bouygues Construction Group, an arm of French industrial group Bouygues.

The five residential blocks that BYMA will construct are in Zone B at Star City, which is entering into the second of five development phases.

The Star City complex covers about 420 acres and is located near the junction of the Yangon and Bago rivers. Last year, Yoma acquired a 70pc stake in Star City's land development rights at a cost of S\$91 million (\$73.3 million) from a subsidiary of SPA Group, which holds the remaining 30pc.

Two minor earthquakes strike near Nay Pyi Taw

By Aye Sapay Phyu

TWO moderate earthquakes rocked central Myanmar last week but no casualties were reported.

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) said an earthquake of magnitude 5.5 on the Richter scale with an epicentre 79 kilometres (49 miles) southwest of Nay Pyi Taw was recorded at 11.05pm on April 3. At 5.30am the following day, a 4.7-magnitude quake occurred 64km (40 miles) southwest of Nay Pyi Taw.

"I felt a slight shaking for just a second about 11pm last night. But we haven't had any report of damage or injuries," U Kyaw San Win, a disaster management officer in Nay Pyi Taw, said on April 4.

An official from the seismological division of DMH said shallow earthquakes also hit Taungoo and Bago in Bago Region, Taungdwingyi in Magwe Region and Nay Pyi Taw.

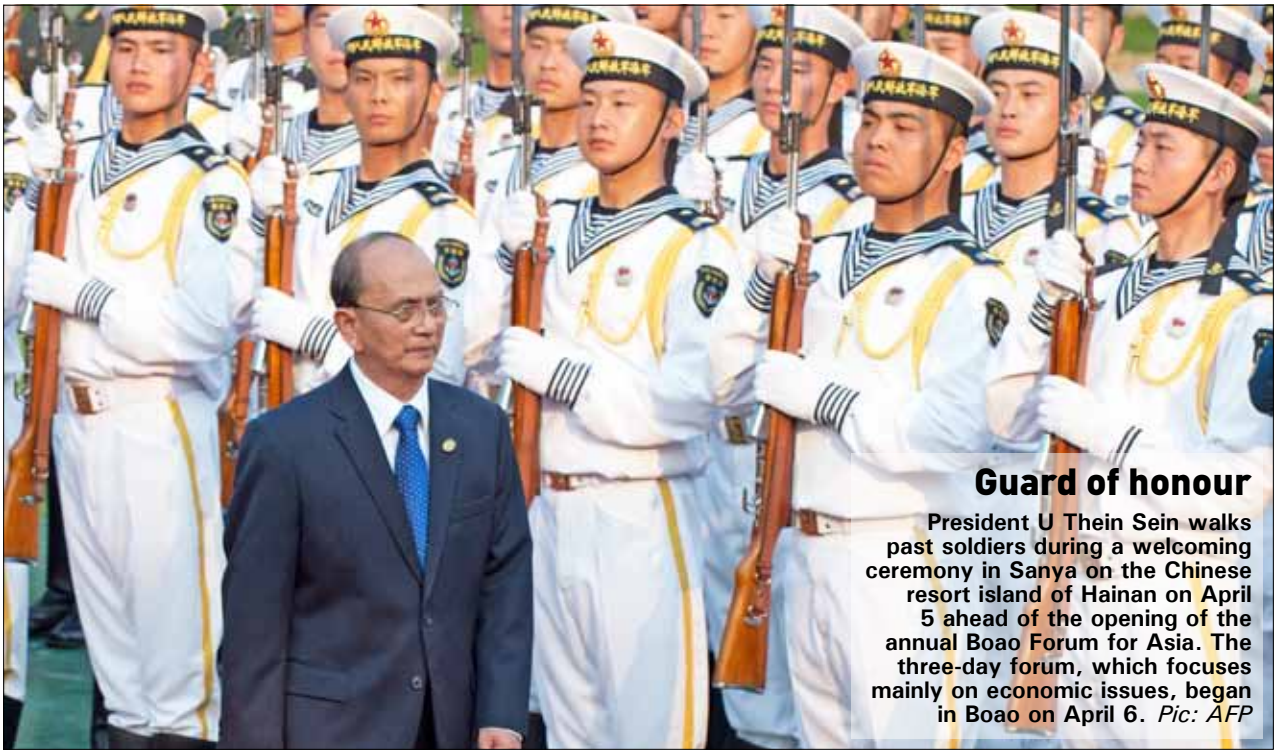
Daw Hla Hla Aung, a researcher with the Myanmar Earthquake Committee, said the earthquakes were associated with the 600-kilometre long fault line that runs north-northwest to south-southeast from Bagan towards Yangon.

"An earthquake of about magnitude 7 occurred on that fault in 1858 and another jolt of magnitude 5 happened in 2007. The two earthquakes on April 3 and 4 occurred on the segment between Pyay, Bago Region, and Aungmye, Magwe Region. We can't say if it's a foreshock or not because earthquakes cannot be precisely predicted," she said.

She said that the earthquakes were not related to aftershocks from the 6.8 magnitude Shwabo earthquake in November 2012.

Meanwhile, Mandalay is proceeding with plans to reduce earthquake risks. On March 28-29, Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) officials met experts from the Ministry of Social Welfare, United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-HABITAT) and the Norwegian foreign ministry to discuss the plan, which is expected to be finalised after three to six months of consultations.

UN-HABITAT earthquake expert Mr Jaiganesh Murugesan said Mandalay was the first city to formulate disaster reduction plans, but that risk assessments were taking place in Bago and Taungoo in Bago Region and Sagaing in Sagaing Region through the Myanmar Engineering Society and Myanmar Geo-Sciences Society. Those cities would subsequently develop their own plans, he said.



Guard of honour

President U Thein Sein walks past soldiers during a welcoming ceremony in Sanya on the Chinese resort island of Hainan on April 5 ahead of the opening of the annual Boao Forum for Asia. The three-day forum, which focuses mainly on economic issues, began in Boao on April 6. Pic: AFP

Mobile phone shops brace for handset rush

Cheap SIM cards to potentially put phones in hands of millions of new users

By Htoo Aung and Aung Kyaw Nyunt

THE impending release of K1500 SIM cards is expected to spark a rush in handset sales, as millions who previously could not afford a phone dive into the market for the first time.

The announcement on April 3 that the government would sell CDMA 800MHz SIM cards through state and region governments from April 24 has also raised concerns about the capacity of the phone network.

With high demand for SIM cards expected, the government has guaranteed that 350,000 will be distributed for sale each month. Cheap GSM and WCDMA cards are expected to go on sale from May, the government said.

"We have the capacity for more than three million new connections on the GSM and WCDMA networks," said U Htay Win, chief engineer for mobile phones at Myanma Post and Telecommunication.

However, U Htay Win confirmed that the network is still hamstrung by insufficient infrastructure.

"We don't have enough relay towers to add large amounts of new connections and we must build more towers, particularly in Yangon and Mandalay. And we need to get more space to build and extend towers and stations," he said.

The infrastructure issues are unlikely to slow demand, which is expected to significantly outstrip supply for the first few months.

"When the SIM cards are launched, I will definitely buy one," said Ko Thein Tun, a 45-year-old cleaner with Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC). "I have to work until late in the

evening so it will mean I can easily contact my family. I am from Rakhine State so I also want to call my elder brother, who is still living there. It is great news that the cards will be launched at K1500."

Trishaw driver Ko Yan Naing Lwin said: "I am very glad to hear this news. If I'm able to get access to one I will definitely buy it. It's great that our country will finally have low-priced SIM cards. I am also going to buy one for my sister if I can."

Distribution has been given to regional governments rather than private companies in an effort to cut out brokers and price gouging, state media said. Yangon Region Minister for Transportation and Communication U Aung Khin said the Yangon government would meet shortly after water festival to finalise plans on how the SIM cards would be distributed and sold.

In a bid to clamp down on reselling the cheap SIMs, cards that are not topped up with K5000 credit within 15 days of purchase will be invalidated, MPT said.

The SIM cards can be used for both domestic and overseas calls and come with K300 credit. However, SIM card holders will be required to spend a minimum of K5000 on call credit every two months.

Outbound call costs for domestic calls will be K50 a minute, with no charge for incoming calls, and U Htay Win said the ministry does not plan to raise call charges. Internet access can also be enabled on the new cards after applying to MPT.

While the distribution process remains unclear, mobile phone shops were still hopeful of being able to sell SIM cards, which

is a significant driver of handset sales. As *The Myanmar Times* has reported previously, when private companies managed the distribution of SIM cards certain stores were given preferential treatment.

"We expect to be able to sell the cheaper SIM cards directly to customers," said an employee from Mobile King. "There will be cheap handsets available, priced at K10,000 to K20,000. These handsets from China have many functions."

Ko Yan Naing Soe Myint, a director from mobile phone shop Lu Gyi Min, said: "This new SIM card will be sold differently from in the past and I think mobile phone shops won't have the chance to sell them. We still expect to sell many handsets."

Ma Pa Pa from KKA

Mobile and Digital Store said there had already been a noticeable increase in sales.

"Demand for CDMA 800MHz handsets has definitely increased and we're selling few GSM handsets now. Huawei handsets are the most popular," she said.

But Ma Cho Wutt Yee, a manager at Eastern Computer and Mobile Sales and Service, said there were fewer handset options for the CDMA SIM cards. She said she expected the launch of GSM cards to spark a sales boom.

"CDMA 800MHz handsets are pretty rare in the market and the price isn't particularly cheap. Cheap GSM SIM cards are going to be launched [in May] so we're just focusing on the GSM market at present," she said.

Shops in NPT scramble to prepare promotions

By Pyae Thet Phyo

PHONE shops in the Nay Pyi Taw area are scrambling to prepare handset promotions ahead of the release of K1500 CDMA 800MHz SIM cards on April 24.

"Almost every shop is going to do a special promotion because the better the promotion, the better the sales will be," said Ko Hla Min Thu from Lu Gyi Min phone shop in Pinyinmana township.

Handsets range in price from K20,000 to K700,000 and so far no discounts have been announced.

"For the time being phone prices are stable. They tend to vary from shop to shop," he said.

There are rumours shops will also offer free SIM cards when they sell handsets. However, questions remain over how they will get access to enough SIM cards, as the central government has delegated responsibility for distribution to regional authorities in a bid to cut out brokers.

"We also heard that shops will offer SIM cards but it's not sure. If that's true, it's good news for consumers," said Ko Aung Win from Pinyinmana.

"Given the price [of the SIM cards], phone shops will probably promote sales by selling a combination SIM card and handset," a salesperson from a phone shop at Nay Pyi Taw's Myoma Market said.

— Translated by Thit Lwin

Relatives of ex-BCP members in fight over land

By Soe Than Lynn

OLD comrades have fallen out as rising property prices have helped intensify a dispute among the children and relatives of former members of the Burma Communist Party.

The dispute surrounds a plot of land granted to 38 former party members who agreed to give up the armed struggle more than half a century ago. Now, the son of one of the members has built a shop on the site in Nay Pyi Taw's Dekkhinathiri township – and family members of the other 37 are up in arms.

On April 4, 50 family members, including many in their eighties and nineties, demonstrated before the local police station in protest.

The long-simmering conflict came to a head as it emerged that the 4200-square-foot plot is now worth approximately K300 million (about US\$340,000). Family members of 37 BCP members plan to mount a demonstration in front of the plot on April 10.

Former BCP Captain U Bala Sein, 91, told *The Myanmar Times*: "We returned to the legal fold in 1957. The same year we were given the plots. We plan to demonstrate because someone is trying to grab land that belongs to all 38 BCP members."

The man in question is U Ba Soe, the son of Lieutenant Khin Maung Lay, who was a member of the BCP group.

"If he does not compromise, we will proceed to the highest level. We're not beaten yet. If necessary, we will go as far as the president. We will continue to use legal means," said U Bala Sein.

After the death of Lt Khin Maung Lay, U Ba Soe, who is a senior clerk in the Dekkhinathiri township general administration department, built a shop to run as his own. The remaining families filed a complaint with the local authorities, including land records office, in 2006. The court threw out the case.

U Ba Soe did not return calls from *The Myanmar Times* last week.

One of the demonstrators, U Kyaw Swe Latt, told *The Myanmar Times*: "The BCP group that returned to the legal fold was not only given plots of land to live on, but also land for a dispensary, a library and an office. The plot in question was designated for the library and the office, and it's now worth about K300 million."

— Translated by Thit Lwin

Shwe Taung gets military compound lease

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

THE Ministry of Defence has leased a 12-acre site near Shwedagon Pagoda to U Aik Htun's Shwe Taung Development Company, which plans to invest US\$150 million in a commercial complex.

The block, between Shwedagon Pagoda and Signal Pagoda roads, was leased for 70 years from

2012, chairman U Aik Htun told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

"I am going to implement this project in this year. A Singaporean company will cooperate with me for an office tower project in this complex," he said on April 2.

The complex will also include a hotel, Asia Royal private hospital, serviced apartments and a small shopping centre. It will comply with a Yangon City

Development Committee law that buildings in the vicinity of Shwedagon Pagoda are not higher than 10 storeys.

"I expected that the first completed building, which may be the office tower, will be done in 2015 and all will be finished in 2018," he said.

"Many foreigners are coming to invest in Myanmar and there's increased demand for office space so that's why we decided to build

an office tower, because some office space rents are increasing a lot."

He said Shwe Taung is working on about 10 projects in Yangon in partnership with firms from Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the United Kingdom, United States and Singapore.

The company's most well-known projects are the Junction shopping centres in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw.

U Aik Htun would not reveal what he paid the government for the rights to the compound, which is located in one of the most sought-after areas of the city.

The compound was formerly used by British troops and then Japanese soldiers in World War II. It remained a military cantonment after independence but was no longer used after the government shifted to Nay Pyi Taw.

More delays for report on Rakhine violence

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

THE report of the investigation commission set up to probe the communal violence in Rakhine State has been delayed again.

The commission was scheduled to submit its report to President U Thein Sein by March 31, but the report will now not be complete before April 23, said commission secretary and spokesperson Dr Kyaw Yin Hlaing.

He said the delay was necessary because the commission had to discuss its findings and recommendations with the government.

However, he denied there was any link to the outbreak of communal violence in Meiktila on March 20.

"Our report is only about Rakhine, and is not related to other issues," he said.

The President's Office announced the formation of the 27-member committee on August 17 last year. In addition to identifying the causes of the violence in Rakhine State in May and June, the report was also supposed to make suggestions for action. The original deadline was November 16.

The commission's members include leaders of the country's four main religions, as well as politicians, civil society activists and journalists.

However, the commission was not able to submit its final report and only filed an interim report on November 17. The interim report was not made public.

"We've already finished the final report, but we need more time to finalise it," said Dr Kyaw Yin Hlaing, adding that it would run to about 50 pages. The commission plans to hold a press conference to release a statement after submitting the report to the president.

"The report will contain advice that we believe to be in the best interests of the state and people, especially in terms of ensuring lasting peace in Rakhine State in the long term," he said.

Commission member Dr Aye Maung, who is also chairman of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party and an Amyotha Hluttaw representative, declined to comment on the delay.

"Actually, I did not fully participate in the commission's activities," Dr Aye Maung said.

"I haven't read the final report yet." More than 200 people, both Buddhists and Muslims, lost their lives in outbreaks of communal violence that wracked Rakhine State between May and October last year.

More than 16,000 houses, 45 mosques, 14 monasteries and three schools were burnt or destroyed and more than 70,000 displaced people remain in camps.



Villagers pan for copper from a mine dump near the Sabetaung copper mine project in Monywa, Sagaing Region, on September 14, 2012. Pic: AFP

Rules for new environmental law ready for hluttaw approval



THE first law to protect the environment will soon come into practical force – more than a year after it was enacted – once the national parliament has approved related by-laws, says the environment minister.

But concerns have been raised by non-government organisations who were invited to assist in the drafting process, as they say they are still in the dark about the contents of the draft legislation.

Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun told *The Myanmar Times* that regulations for the environmental conservation law were ready to be enacted after getting approval from the hluttaw.

"The drafting is complete and the by-laws have been approved by the attorney general. Now they have to be sent to the hluttaw according

to the procedure. If they pass, the draft will come into force and we can apply the environmental conservation law in practice," he said.

The law was enacted on April 1, 2012, based on a draft written in 1998 but never promulgated.

The by-laws were drafted with the help of other ministries and local and international experts and NGOs. Some, however, have questioned the effectiveness of the consultation process.

U Win Tun said the law struck a balance between economic development on the basis of local and foreign investment, and the protection of the environment. He said the law would also help resolve disputes between residents and investors in big projects.

"The law helps guarantee sustainable development," he said.

However, some of environmental experts who helped write the by-laws called on the ministry to publicise the draft and seek advice from the public before sending it to parliament.

"We appreciate the fact that the

ministry recognised our status and sought our advice," said U Ohn, vice president of Forest Resources and Environmental Development Association. "But I don't know how far the ministry took my advice, because they haven't sent me a draft. The ministry should publicise the draft before it is enacted so that the public can see it."

U Ohn said NGOs had recommended that the law should require foreign investors to lodge a deposit that would be lost if environmental regulations were violated, adding that major projects should be subject to environmental and social impact assessments.

U Aung Myint, general secretary of Renewable Energy Association Myanmar, said: "I received the first draft last November and was satisfied with half of it. We recommended some changes. Now we're told the draft has been finalised and will soon be enacted, but we have not seen the final draft."

U Win Tun said the government had taken into account all advice and recommendations received during the drafting process.

Health education coming to radio, television

By Su Hlaing Tun

HEALTH-RELATED radio and TV programming has proven popular with Myanmar audiences and will soon be expanded thanks to a new partnership between the United Nations Children's Fund, the government and private radio and television stations.

The partnership includes UNICEF, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Information and five private FM radio stations, and was finalised with a signing ceremony at the Royal Kumudra Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on March 21.

"To provide this kind of program, a democratic country requires a public service media which could carry people-centred programs," U Pike Htwe, deputy minister for information, said at the ceremony.

New programs that include short stories about healthy living will run on state-run media like MRTV and the Myanmar Broadcasting Service as well as some of the more popular private radio stations: Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Padamyar FM, Cherry FM and Bagan FM.

Daw Thida Swe from Padamyar FM said four or five new health education programs will be added to the existing health shows on her network. These shows, which focus on issues such as maternal and child health, have a potential reach of 15 million people, she said.

Special events like World Health Day will also be highlighted as part of the new programming.

Deputy Minister of Health Dr Thein Thein Htay said she was grateful for the collaboration between the public and private sectors and with the collaboration between radio and TV stations to broadcast health education programs throughout the country.

The spirit of collaboration was also hailed by Mr Bertrand Bainvel, the resident representative of UNICEF in Myanmar.

—Translated by Thit Lwin

Hledan bridge to open April 11

By Noe Noe Aung

CONGESTION at the busy Hledan junction is expected to ease from this week with the long-awaited opening of an overpass along Pyay Road.

Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) announced on April 1 that the overpass would open on April 11, more than a year after construction work began.

U Hla Aung from the Yangon City Public Transport Authority said "bridge and road experts" were predicting a 60 percent reduction in congestion at the five-way junction, where Pyay, Insein, University and Hledan roads meet.

"We'll start by letting cars go through the overpass and then we'll survey the traffic to get a clearer idea of its impact," he said.

"Drivers - actually all road users - should obey the road rules when they use the overpass. If an accident happens on the overpass ... it could be blocked and make the traffic worse than before."

However, U Hla Aung said buses had not yet been given approval to use the overpass.

"I think the authorities will announce whether public transport will be allowed on this overpass very soon," he said.

Shwe Taung Development began work on the overpass in March 2012. The cost is estimated at K14.478 billion (US\$16.45 million), YCDC said.

Drivers who regularly brave the car- and bus-clogged junction said they were expecting some respite when the overpass opens.

"I am tired of traffic everywhere in Yangon but Hledan is just about the worst," taxi driver U Maung said. "Sometimes I'm stuck there for up to an hour. For me, Bayintnaung junction is the worst and Hledan is second, I think."

"The traffic will decrease by about 50pc, I think, because drivers who want to go to the northern parts of Yangon ... are going to use the overpass. If so, the traffic at Hledan junction won't be crowded like before," he said.



The Hledan overpass last month. Motorists reported having to wait up to an hour to pass through the junction prior to the opening of the bridge on April 11. Pic: Boothee

Embassy will seek truth on killings, says govt

MYANMAR'S embassy in Jakarta will push the Indonesian government to investigate deadly clashes between Muslims and Buddhists in a detention centre last week, and to respect the safety of all Myanmar people in Indonesia, a senior official said last week.

Eight Myanmar Buddhists were allegedly killed by Rohingya, or Bengali, Muslims at a detention centre on Sumatra on April 5.

"The embassy will ask to investigate the truth, to charge the criminals according to the law, and respect the safety of Myanmar people in Indonesia," U Zaw Htay from the President's Office wrote on his Facebook page on April 5.

The Jakarta Post reported that the deceased had been detained for illegally fishing in Indonesian waters. Three survived the attack, while 15 Rohingya were reportedly injured. - Nan Tin Htwe



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Daily papers finally make debut

By Sandar Lwin

THE new dailies are out and the initial reviews—favourable so far—are in.

April 1 was the day Myanmar journalism, or part of it, returned to daily publication after a 40-year break. Four newspapers have made the perilous leap from weekly to daily operation, and others will surely follow. How many of them will be still standing a year from now, only time will tell.

The Voice Daily, *The Union Daily*, *The Standard Time Daily* and *The Golden Fresh Land Daily* are, so far, the country's first privately run daily newspapers since 1974.

The publishers and editors of the new dailies and their distributors say market response is encouraging, with a surge in readership on day one.

"The first issue was published yesterday and orders for today's issue are up by 50 percent on yesterday," said U Kyaw Min Swe, the editor in chief of *The Voice Daily*.

Distributors said they had even requested publishers to skip the free promotion period with limited circulation.

"I'm asking *The Union Daily* and *The Standard Time Daily* to provide as many copies as we can sell. They are distributing free with limited circulation, so I can't supply as many as the retailers want," said U Win Khin, a distributor based in Ahlone township.

"I buy dailies for K200 each because I want fresh information on current affairs," said U Than Lwin, a vendor on Merchant Road, Yangon.

"This is a happy occasion, a historic day for our society, and the start of a new long journey. To have daily newspapers is one of the features of an open society," said U Ko Ko, a veteran journalist and publisher of *The Yangon Times Weekly*, which will go daily on May 5.

Thant Myint-U, the writer and historian, welcomed the launch through his Facebook page.

"(It is) wonderful to see the return of private daily newspapers on the streets of Yangon, 47 years after they were banned by the Revolutionary Council. Myanmar once had one of the freest and most vibrant media in all of Asia. Let's



Three of four new daily newspapers that began publication on April 1. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

hope those days return soon," he posted.

Jack Ronald, an American publisher and journalist who several times conducted journalism training in Myanmar with the sponsorship of the American embassy said: "This is a very positive development. Democratic reform requires an informed populace, and a wide range of daily newspapers under private ownership will go a long way toward assuring that the people of Myanmar have accurate, objective information at their fingertips," he said through email.

Between the 100-year era of colonial oppression

people's right to know," he said.

U Ko Ko said the restrictive 1962 publishing law was still on the books, but he did not expect the government to apply it strictly before the new media law came into force.

But despite the abolition of pre-publication censorship last year, official fears of biased or unprofessional reporting could still make for tensions.

Doug Cosper, who has trained journalists by arrangement with the Myanmar Writers and Journalists' Association and the American embassy, said he could understand the government's concern.

media law, not always harmoniously.

The ministry recently sent a bill on a publishing and distribution business law to the hluttaw while the council was still drawing up a media law bill. The council has strongly rejected the ministry's bill and is trying to replace it with its own.

"The council was set up in consultation with the president's office and the minister himself agreed to let the council draw up the media law bill. Under those circumstances, I can't understand why the minister sent his bill to the hluttaw without consultation. I think the minister is at fault," said

become professional without the freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them? Some Myanmar journalists will make mistakes that cause others harm. But every year, Myanmar journalists will grow more professional and more ethical. Freedom of the press and competition will see to that," he said.

If the fight to print the news seems largely to have been won, the fight to distribute it has not. And newspapers are likely to start fighting among themselves as competition for a limited readership heats up.

Though the new foreign direct investment law

but are confined mainly to the Yangon, Mandalay, Mawlamyaine, Taunggyi and Ayeyarwady Region market," said U Kyaw Min Swe.

U Ko Ko Lay, a newcomer to the media business and managing director of Three Friends Construction, publishes *The Standard Time Daily*.

"I entered this industry because I want people to be able to read privately run daily newspapers. There have not been any during my lifetime. And I believe I can run a business like that," he said.

As of the end of March, the government has licensed a total of 16 would-be daily newspapers, and more are likely to arise. More than 100 weekly publications are on sale. In addition, there are four state-run dailies.

"At the moment, readers are buying all the private dailies. Later on they will choose their favourites, which will sort the fishes from the tadpoles," said Ko Aung Aung, a retail distributor from Sanchaung township.

"The coming flood of private daily newspapers means readers will have a voice in who delivers their news in the future. They can vote with their kyat. To be sure, only a few daily newspapers will survive the battle for daily buyers. And the circulation numbers should determine the survivors. If they don't, then there is reason to be concerned about how free the Myanmar press will be," said Mr Cosper.

Mr Ross Dunkley, the managing director of Myanmar Consolidated Media, a long-time foreign investor in the Myanmar media industry and the publisher of one of the most successful weekly papers, *The Myanmar Times*, declined to comment on the new FDI law. MCM's application for daily licences for both its English and Myanmar language editions is still being processed by the ministry.

The economic boom that is accompanying the moves towards press freedom and democratisation could bring increased advertising. "Advertising rates at the state-run dailies are very high. That could help us. There are opportunities as well as challenges. I believe that if we can run the paper professionally, the prospects are very promising," U Kyaw Min Swe said.

'This is a happy occasion, a historic day, and the start of a new long journey.'

and the five-decade military regime, against a background of endless civil war and social destruction, Myanmar enjoyed a brief, 15-year window of press freedom. What changes can be expected now that the window has re-opened?

U Kyaw Min Swe said that the daily papers would have a stronger impact on the public and members of the government, and this could also make them controversial and more likely to face legal action.

"I'll be guided by the law and by journalistic ethics, and by respect for the

"I know the government is worried that Myanmar journalists will use their new freedom irresponsibly, and doubtlessly some of them will, especially in the new competitive daily market. I know that the former leaders of the Press Scrutiny Board believed that they were performing a public service by censoring some news that they thought might be harmful to society. Many of them meant well," he said through email.

The Ministry of Information and the interim press council are both working on the new

U Ye Myint Pe, the retired chief editor of the state-run *The Mirror* and *The New Light of Myanmar* dailies and now chief editor of *The Standard Time Daily*.

"Now the government must understand that they should never have had that kind of power over information—no democratic government should. If the newly free press makes mistakes, it is largely the fault of the former system that did not allow journalists to learn from their mistakes," said Mr Cosper.

"How could journalists

protects the local media from some overseas competition, all local papers are struggling with limited transportation networks.

"I heard four daily newspapers had come out on April 1. None of them has got this far yet," said Ko Min Hti, an NGO worker in Kyaiklat township, Ayeyarwady Region on April 4. He is also the sole authorised distributor for his township for *The Daily Eleven* when it goes daily on May 3.

"We have logistics difficulties. We can't distribute country-wide,

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Mandalay	No(3), 78th St, Between of 27th and 28th St, (Face to West Side), ChanAyeTharZan Tso, Mandalay.

Govt to rebuild all old housing

By Aung Shin

MORE than 40 old government housing projects throughout the country will be rebuilt, a Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development official said last week.

The rebuild will cover 11 projects in Yangon, said department director U Myint Naing.

"We are going to rebuild all old government housing projects. Most of these were built between 1954 and 1970. They are now up to 60 years old and need rebuilding. We are negotiating with residents and will put the project out to tender for private construction firms to participate if the majority of residents agree," he told The Myanmar Times on April 2.

His comments come after a tender for the rebuild of Shwegon housing in Bahan township was published in state-run *Kyemon* newspaper on March 23. The six-storey project covers 2.207 acres.

Another tender announcement, for reconstruction of the Saittadamahi housing complex in Mandalay, was published in the state-run *Myanma Ahlin* on April 3.

Department officials are still assessing the condition of many of the old estates but construction is expected to start in a few months on several sites, U Myint Naing said.

The redevelopment of the complexes, particularly the compensation offered to existing residents, is often controversial: U Myint Naing said DHSHD was yet to finalise negotiations with residents of Pyidawthar housing on 51st Street in downtown Yangon, despite months of talks.

"Myanmar people have strong attachment to places where they have lived for a long time. It is hard for them to move somewhere else, even if it's only temporarily during the reconstruction period. We are negotiating with every resident but I'm sure that not everybody will agree with the change. We will put it up for tender if we get the agreement from the majority," he said.

While private companies will be tasked with rebuilding many of the estates, some will be undertaken by the department, he said.

Most projects will take six months to one year to complete, he said.

Senior editor Geoffrey Goddard teaches a basic journalism skills course at The Myanmar Times' office. Pic: Ko Taik



Journalism training course concludes

By Staff Writers

A PRESENTATION ceremony was held in Yangon last week for five people who hope to build careers in Myanmar's rapidly expanding print media sector.

The ceremony at *The Myanmar Times* on April 5 followed their successful completion of a basic journalism skills course funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Certificates were presented to the five proud trainees – Ko Chan Myawe Aung Sun, 46, Ma Sandi Waing, 28, Ma Su Phyo Win, 23, and Ma Ei Ei Thu and Ma Ei Thae Thae Naing,

both 22 – by Mr Ramon Tuazon, a communications and information specialist at UNESCO's Myanmar office.

The certificates were signed by Mr Tuazon, the editor of the English edition of *The Myanmar Times*, Mr Thomas Kean, who helped to arrange the course with UNESCO, and the trainer, Mr Geoffrey Goddard, a senior editor at the newspaper.

The course touched on some theoretical topics, such as what is news, but focused mainly on enabling the trainees to acquire and develop the practical skills necessary for a career in journalism.

These practical topics included story construction, conducting

interviews in a range of situations the necessity of attribution, research skills, developing a list of sources and the importance of impartiality.

The importance of professional ethics was also covered and included instruction in how to politely decline gifts offered by an interviewee in an effort to secure favourable media coverage.

In a short speech, Mr Goddard thanked the trainees for the diligence and wished them every success.

"I hope this course has been as satisfying for the trainees as it has been for me," he said, adding that he was pleased to have made a contribution towards building capacity in the media sector.

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Shares go on sale for Mandalay industrial project

By Bill O'Toole

SHARES are on sale this week for a major industrial, commercial and housing development south of Mandalay that backers say will transform the region and bring significant economic benefits.

The Mandalay Myotha Industrial Development Public Company is selling a total of 360,000 shares at K100,000 each, with the proceeds – potentially US\$41 million – to go to the realisation of the project. The project's major backers collectively hold 1.26 million shares, the equivalent of \$143.2 million.

However, the Myotha Industrial Park, as it is known, has already attracted criticism from activists unconvinced by the company's pledges to mitigate any environmental problems, as well as farmers whose land will be acquired for the project. (See adjoining reports.)

According to the prospectus the company released last week, the Myotha Industrial Park will comprise more than 10,000 acres of land, of which 30 percent is earmarked for homes and 35pc for industrial projects, with the remaining 35pc taken up by roads, municipal infrastructure and public green space, including a golf course.

The main backer of the project is Royal High Tech Group. The company's chairman, U Aung Win Khine, is also chairman of Mandalay Myotha Industrial Development Public Company.

It includes three five-year phases, with the first

phase expected to see about 2000 acres developed, and the company says that when completed the park will create hundreds of thousands of jobs and require investment of more than US\$600 million.

The company says the project will be "a model international-standard industrial park and river port with a sustainable eco-friendly environment" attractive to both local and overseas investors. The offering period runs until April 11.

Mr Frankie Tan, chief financial officer for the project, told *The Myanmar Times*: "Our master plan is a 15-year project developed in three phases. Phase one, which will run from now until around 2018, will involve developing road and basic warehouse infrastructure. The next five-year phase will be focused on building up the commercial and residential population, and the final third will be focused on developing high-level shipping and commercial industries."

The public offering is seen by many as an effective means of raising the necessary capital in Myanmar's often uncertain business environment.

"Such projects have a history of delays, especially with regard to financing issues," said Mr. Andrew Wood, a Myanmar researcher with the Singapore office of Business Monitor International. "The difficulties inherent in the realisation of ... large-scale initiatives are well-evidenced in the delays of the Dawei port and the [Thilawa] SEZ project."



The developer's impression of the layout of the Myotha Industrial Park in rural Mandalay Region. Pic: Supplied

But farmers angry over compensation

By Si Thu Lwin

SHARES in Mandalay's Myotha Industrial Park went on sale on April 3 despite widespread complaints over compensation and threats of protests from landholders in the proposed project site, which covers more than 10,000 acres.

Farmers are unhappy that while K2 million has been offered for farmland, compensation for areas without a registered owner will be just one quarter of that figure. Barely 900 acres is registered with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Mandalay Region Minister for Electricity and Industry Dr Myint Kyu said, and negotiations are described as being at a "deadlock".

"Much of the land is pasture that cannot be cultivated. We are planning to give K500,000 an acre to those who are on land without registered ownership. Receipts for crop tax payment have nothing to do with ownership," the minister said.

A 50-year-old farmer from Paukseim village said residents were unsure of their ownership status.

"We didn't ask for any money, they just offered K2 million. We have no idea whether the land is registered or not and they certainly didn't tell us anything. If they offered the same amount [for all land], there would not have been any problems," the farmer said.

Other farmers in the area said they simply wanted to continue their traditional way of life and were not interested in compensation, regardless of the amount.

"Residents in our village don't want any compensation but instead want to continue our normal way of life. If we take compensation, it will just last us



A man gestures towards the site of a planned 10,000-acre Myotha Industrial Park in rural Mandalay Region. Pic: Sithu Lwin

for a short while. This land not only allows us to produce crops now, but our children and grandchildren will be able to cultivate it as well," said U Soe Nyunt, a farmer from Nawarat village.

If negotiations fail, farmers will start planting fields at the beginning of rainy season, said Ko Myo Han, an

"If no negotiations are reached but peasants cultivate land at the start of rainy season, we will have to act according to the law," he said.

Mr Frankie Tan, chief financial officer of Mandalay Myotha Industrial Development Public Company, said his firm was offering a generous level of compensation for the estimated 800 to 900 people who will be forced to relocate.

"For farmers (about 200 people) we will be paying K2 million an acre," Mr Tan said. "If you're a farmer, and you make K200,000 a year on one acre, we compensate you for five to 10 years for your earnings."

Mr Tan said is engaging in "open, friendly" negotiations with non-farmer residents who will have to move.

The project's prospectus lists one of its competitive advantages as the land being "free from encumbrances", as "compensation to the farmers has been made in a fair and transparent manner". – Translated by Thit Lwin

'If we accept their compensation it will just last us for a short while.'

activist who is assisting the farmers. If the authorities prevent them they will protest, he said.

But Dr Myint Kyu said the project would definitely be going ahead, and those who declined the compensation offer and remained on their land would face legal consequences.

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Pollution fears for 10,000-acre project site

By Bill O'Toole

A COMPANY involved in developing a major industrial project has released a detailed environmental impact statement, listing the damage the project could cause – and the measures the company is taking to mitigate the damage.

Mandalay Myo tha Industrial Development Public Company (MMID) has released a detailed independent assessment of the environmental impact of the Myo tha Industrial Park in Mandalay Region on the surrounding ecosystem.

The assessment was carried out by Malaysia-based ERE Consulting Group, which described MMID as “very receptive” to its ideas and recommendations. The assessment listed air pollution and erosion at an associated port on the Ayeyarwady River as the major concerns.

“It’s not just [pollution] on the land,” said Mr Frankie Tan, chief financial officer of MMID. “We’ve examined air pollution, water pollution and things like that.”

As part of the company’s prospectus for potential investors, MMID listed 37 environmental risks posed by the project along with its plan to mitigate the damage. Mr Tan added that once construction begins in earnest, the company will have a permanent environmental management program to deal with any eco-issues that might arise.

He also said businesses in the industrial park, which will be about 35 percent industrial, will operate according to Singaporean environmental standards.

However, this has failed to convince environmental activists, one of whom has called for the project to be suspended, even though it has scarcely begun.

NGOs fund school rebuilding

By Yhoon Hnin

UP to 6000 children in rural areas will get the chance to go to a new school over the next few years. A group of donors including UNICEF, the Japanese company AEON and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation are providing the funding for 30 primary schools to be built by 2016. Work will start on 10

Groups are especially concerned about the impact of the proposed Semeikhon Port on the Ayeyarwady River.

Ms Ah Nan, a spokesperson for the Kachin Development Networking Group, who has worked extensively on issues along the Ayeyarwady, said: “I think the time is not right for this kind of project. We do not have a real environmental law, or laws to protect the people who depend on the Ayeyarwady.”

Ms Ah Nan said such a legal climate made it all but impossible to manage large industries in a responsible way.

Dr Bala Murugan, a director of ERE, agreed with the activists on the need for a legislative framework for environmental protection. “One of our biggest concerns [for the industrial park] is that Myanmar does not have any laws concerning air pollution. We proposed they set up internal standards,” he said.

Mr Tan acknowledged the potential harmful effects on the environment but said he believed the economic benefits for local communities outweighed the risks.

However, Ms Ah Nan and Sai Khur Hseng of the Chiang Mai-based Burma Rivers Network said large infrastructure and industrial projects in other areas of the country had brought few benefits for locals. “From what we’ve seen [upriver] in Kachin, we didn’t see any good impacts for local people ... the only jobs they can get are manual labour, like digging a ditch on the side of the road. This has no real benefit for them” Ms Ah Nan said.

Speaking by phone from Chiang Mai, Sai Khur Hseng said: “The money is not our money ... the benefits will go to investors, not Myanmar.”

of the schools this year, UNICEF said in a press release.

Each school will feature toilets and clean water facilities, school furniture, basic school supplies, learning materials and a playground.

On 19 March, deputy education minister U Myo Myint announced that the number of books supplied to schools free of charge would double from six to 12.

Kyaukpadaung power struggle ends

By Si Thu Lwin

A THREE-YEAR dispute over electricity in a small village in Kyaukpadaung township has been resolved, an official said last week, following the arrest of a senior monk who refused to share his monastery’s power infrastructure with all the residents.

An official at the Mandalay Region electricity office said Hnakyatkway village now has more than 300 electricity meters and more would soon be installed.

“The supplying of electricity to Hnakyatkway village was delayed nearly three years because of the disturbance of Sayardaw U Kawthala but the village now has more than 300 electricity meters, including 145 household meters. We still have to expand electricity supply to the village,” the official said.

In late January, U Kawthala tried to stop regional government officials from using electricity supply infrastructure installed by some residents at a cost of K70 million to connect the whole village to the national grid. He called regional officials “robbers and bullies”.



An official installs an electricity meter in Kyaukpadaung’s Hnakyatkway village. Pic: Sithu Lwin

When the authorities tried to make the connection by force, residents said monks, novices and other villagers surrounded the electricity pole and physically stopped them. Despite three police orders to disperse, the standoff lasted until nightfall, when the officials departed.

But Mandalay Region Minister for Industry and Electricity Dr Myint Kyu said at the time that the regional government was acting for the greater good, as 800 households in the village did

not receive electricity, and these people had asked to be connected to the grid. He said the 145 households that do get power are near the monastery.

“According to the law, the public cannot be connected to cables for religious use because the government gives electricity to religious building 24 hours a day,” Dr Myint Kyu said.

Following the incident, U Kawthala faced disciplinary action from the township Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and was disrobed.

He has also been charged by police, along with two laypeople, under section 332/333 of the Penal Code, for allegedly voluntarily causing grievous hurt to deter a public servant from his duty. The charge carries a penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment and the trial is continuing.

“I’m happy for the village, that it has been lit up, but we’re all sorry for [U Kawthala],” said U Maung Sein, a resident of Hnakyatkway. – Translated by Zar Zar Soe



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Mandalay fringe-dwellers fight order on fencing

Disputes should be resolved before land is fenced off, farmers argue

By Si Thu Lwin

LAND owners in rural blocks on the southern edge of Mandalay are upset at a municipal order to fence their open blocks, saying ownership of the land should be resolved first.

The two areas, known as La La and Pa Pa, have been the centre of many land ownership disputes.

Residents say the land was acquired by the government "decades ago" and most received no compensation. Rather than be used for a state project, it was later resold for a private industrial zone.

'Now there are many problems because of those plots of land.'

They have since submitted their case to the parliamentary commission investigating land disputes and commission members were expected to visit on April 7.

"We have had arguments almost every day about the notice letter ordering us to fence the plots before March 31. We have been cultivating this land since the time of our grandparents and we were not paid any compensation when the land was seized," said Ko Yan Aung Phyo, who lives in plot number 518 in the La La area.

Residents said they want to wait for the results of the investigation before fencing off the land.

However, not all of them missed out on compensation. Those in Pa Pa were given urban land plots in place

of their farmland, with those who lost up to 5 acres receiving one 2400-square-foot plot, those who lost 5-10 acres getting two plots and above 10 acres three plots, said Ko Soe Myint Aung from La La.

"But we did not get anything for seizure of our farmlands," he said.

He said some steps were being taken to redress this. The owners of 10 of the 100 or so plots in the La La area recently reached a compensation deal with the new owner, he said.

"Those who hold the land ownership now seem to be willing to negotiate with us about compensation so I think it will be okay," he said.

Mandalay City Development Committee announced all unfenced land needed to be fenced off by March 31. Those that fail to comply face losing their land.

Mandalay Mayor Aung Moun told reporters in late February the instruction was designed to make property ownership clearer.

"The disputed land plots were allocated during the time of the former military regime. Some were resold to one person after another informally without registering legal ownership at the municipal department. Now there are many problems because of these plots," he said.

He said the government did not have a responsibility to resolve disputes resulting from land it had confiscated and consequently sold to developers.

"Those who are granted ownership are landlords since the lands have been transferred to their hands. So the owners will have to solve their land dispute problems in the courts by themselves."

— Translated by Zar Zar Soe



Singaporean President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam in Mandalay. Pic: Si Thu Lwin

Singapore leader visits Mandalay hospital

SINGAPOREAN President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam attended a child emergency life support training at Mandalay Children's Hospital during his visit to the upper Myanmar capital last week.

After arriving in Yangon on April 1, Dr Tan travelled to Mandalay the following day. He visited the 550-bed hospital and Mandalay Palace.

The training was organised by Temasek Foundation, KK Women's and Children's Hospital of Singapore and the Ministry of Health. Nine trainers from Singapore led the three-day course, which ended on April 3.

"Twenty-five trainees took part in the program and another 50 observers also attended. We expect the trainees can act as trainers for others in the future. This is the first time we've had a training course [supported by] Singapore at the hospital. We will hold this training twice a year over two years," said Professor Thida, who helped organise the training. — Si Thu Lwin, translated by Zar Zar Soe

Judge slams punishment for speaking to journalists

By Si Thu Lwin

A JUDGE from Sagaing Region says he has been targeted by his superiors for speaking to journalists and meeting National League for Democracy officials.

U Min Thaw Htwe said he was forced to face a tribunal formed by his superiors for not seeking their permission before meeting journalists, not wearing the traditional Myanmar headdress, known as a *gaung baung*, corruption, meeting the head of a ward NLD office and other alleged infractions.

"There isn't any complaint

lodged against me but because I was well-known I was targeted and forced to go before the tribunal. The civil service regulations don't say we should not meet the media," U Min Thaw Htwe said at a press conference on March 26.

U Min Thaw Htwe served as township judge in Ayadaw township, Sagaing Region, but after the tribunal hearing was transferred to the office of the high court of Sagaing Region, he said.

"I was transferred without doing anything wrong. It is shameful. What they did to me makes no sense. It's okay if I took bribes and was

sacked. Because I took no bribes, my superiors plotted against me like this," U Min Thaw Htwe said.

He said he had lobbied the president, NLD and senior members of the judiciary to clear his name.

"Now I will be examined again but this time it will also be by judges in Sagaing Region. That is not fair so I submitted a request to the Nay Pyi Taw Supreme Court that unbiased judges from other regions or states should administer the case," he said.

He said he is considering taking legal action "for impeding the righteous administration of justice".

The relevant officials could not be contacted for comment last week but writer U Han Myint, who has penned several books on government affairs, defended the inquiry.

"A public servant is not like a civilian — he or she has no right to talk about their department or their organisation to the media without permission from their superiors. If there are problems, a public servant has the right to inform their superior. Some people misunderstand the word democracy and think it means 'no discipline'," he said. — with Phyo Wai Kyaw, translated by Thit Lwin

Soldier charged with murder to also face military court: police

By Phyo Wai Kyaw and Than Naing Soe

A SOLDIER accused of killing a street vendor with a mental disability in Mandalay Region will be tried in both civilian and military courts, a police officer said last week.

The accused, 35, is a corporal from a battalion in Bhomo. He allegedly murdered Ma San San Win, 34, in Tada-Oo township on March 8 while returning to his home in nearby Ngazun township.

Ma San San Win's family raised the alarm at 11am that day after she did not return home from her

normal round of selling fried dumplings at the bus terminal in Tada-Oo.

The police reportedly found her naked body in the town's cemetery. Police then apprehended the suspect the

'The victim was an adult but had the mind of a child.'

same day as he travelled to Ngazun. He was found to be carrying a gold ring and earring and three days later charged with murder and robbery.

"We already filed the case

to Kyaukse district court in the third week of March. The accused is from a battalion so a case is also being filed to the military court," Police Officer Zaw Min Htike from Tada-oo township police station said last week.

The case has generated significant anger in Tada-Oo: when police charged the man at the township police station on March 11, a large crowd of residents turned out with signboards calling for him to be sentenced to death.

"Most residents knew the victim well. She stayed in Ponakone ward," community leader U Thant Sin said. "The victim was an adult but she had the mind of a child."

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Norway offers support for new Responsible Business Centre

By Maria Danmark

NORWEGIAN Minister for Trade and Industry Trond Giske has announced that his government has offered US\$350,000 to establish a Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business in Yangon.

Mr Giske led a delegation of Norwegian companies on April 3-4 to explore possible investment and partnerships in Myanmar.

“The purpose of my visit is to look at the business sector and at possibilities where Norwegian companies together with Myanmar counterparts can invest, build infrastructure, create workplaces and be a partner in economic development,” Mr Giske said.

Last month, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg announced that Norway would expand its presence by opening its own embassy in Yangon and offer support in areas where Norway has expertise, such as democracy, natural resources management, environment and the peace process.

“There is a broad political contact between Myanmar and Norway and this visit just adds to that ... it shows the strong ties between the two countries,” Mr Giske said.

The Norwegian delegation comprised a broad range of businesses, including oil company Statoil, hydropower company SN Power and telecoms firm Telenor. The companies had a business seminar in Yangon to get an update on the business environment, and an overview on relevant laws and regulations.



Norwegian Minister for Trade and Industry Trond Giske with Dr Thant Myint-U, founder of the Yangon Heritage Trust, during his visit to Yangon. Pic: Supplied/Trond Viken

Mr Giske stressed that the companies would meet high standards when they do business in Myanmar.

“One of the reasons we have succeeded in Norway is that we not only have developed our natural resources, but we have included the

whole population in economic growth. We have done this by demanding the highest level of social standards and social responsibilities from our companies,” Mr Giske said, adding that the same standards would be expected of Norwegian companies operating in Myanmar.

“For example, when they invest in hydropower they should not only bring electricity to the cities, but also develop living standards in the areas affected by the investments,” Mr Giske said.

“When it comes to trade volume, we have to be patient. Norwegian companies will invest, create activity and develop business in Myanmar to the benefit both of society and of the companies involved and then I think trade will develop,” he said.

“Because of this high degree of responsibility and commitment to sustainability I believe Norwegian companies will be very good partners in Myanmar’s further social and economical development.”

The Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business will support this progress by giving guidance to both local and international businesses, the government, parliamentarians and civil society on how they can contribute responsibly.

The centre is being established by the Institute for Human Rights and Business and will launch within the next few months.

The vice president of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Dr Maung Maung Lay, welcomed the initiative, saying he is looking forward to working with Norwegian companies.

Police arrest youths over broken window

POLICE in Mandalay have arrested a group of youths who allegedly broke the windscreen of a van in Maha Aung Myay township in the early hours of April 1.

The van was parked on the corner of 37th and 74th streets. Five young men were arrested shortly after the incident by police and members of the community and another seven were arrested following an investigation.

The head of No 9 police station in Maha Aung Myay said the men were drunk when the incident occurred.

“They started trouble in Kyunlone-U-Shun ward in the Kandawgyi area by throwing stones and beer bottles at the ward’s patrolman when he asked what they were doing. The residents of the ward chased them and so they ran to Mahar Aung Myay. Instead of going back to their homes, they stayed on the streets and broke this windscreen,” he said.

“They are a group of 12 young men ... we caught all of them within a few hours,” he said.

He said police are investigating whether the breaking of the windscreen is connected to a similar incident on March 18, when windows were broken on seven cars in Maha Aung Myay township. – *Si Thu Lwin, translated by Zar Zar Soe*

Indonesia president to visit Myanmar this month

INDONESIAN President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will visit Myanmar in the third week of April, a senior Indonesian official says.

Indonesia’s Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Mr Muhammad Hatta Rajasa announced the visit at a business forum at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers and Commerce Industry headquarters in Yangon on April 3.

“Our president will visit Myanmar in the third week of this month. We expect several agreements during this visit to Nay Pyi Taw, strengthening bilateral friendship and promoting trade, investment and cooperation for the ASEAN chairmanship in 2014,” said the minister, who led a three-day trade visit to Myanmar that ended on April 3.

The visit comes after President U Thein Sein travelled to Indonesia in May 2011 to strengthen bilateral relations. Importantly, he secured Indonesia’s support for Myanmar’s bid to chair ASEAN in 2014.

Mr Sigit Witjaksono, first secretary at the Indonesian embassy in Yangon, said discussions between the two leaders would focus on trade, particularly in rice, and investment. It is also a gesture of Indonesian support for Myanmar’s chairmanship in 2014, he said. – *Aung Shin*

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New guide to Yangon pagoda released

By Yu Yu Maw

A NEW guidebook devoted to the Shwedagon Pagoda – complete with a 3D map and CD – is on sale.

The Shwedagon Media Kit is designed to introduce pilgrims and travellers to the pagoda compound, says its author, U Ni Hein Aung. For travellers, the pagoda can be a mysterious place, as every corner of the pagoda is packed with meaning and the stories behind the symbols and relics are often hard to find in English, he said, adding that even many locals do not know the full history of the site.

“This book could be effective and beneficial for [tourists],” said U Ni Hein Aung. “We want to spread this book all over the world.”

The package includes a small book, map and CD and features many photos and summaries of the well-known areas in the pagoda compound. The book also describes famous pilgrimage places of the Shwedagon, the pagoda’s history and tells the story of the Buddha. Additional resources include a photo gallery, good spots for taking photos, the location of the tourist information centre and suggestions for restaurants around the Shwedagon.

“Tourist wants to know more about Buddhism after praying and visiting the Shwedagon,” U Ni Hein Aung said. “They want to share their knowledge – what they saw and what they heard about the pagoda – with their friends and family.”

A Myanmar edition of the book is being sold at the east and south entrances of the pagoda for K3000. It will be translated this month into Chinese, English and Thai, and the company will soon begin to distribute it to supermarkets, restaurants, hotels and travel agencies.



Residents of Pyinmana's U Kyay quarter prepare to protect their homes on March 31 as rumours of violence swirled through the town. Pic: Supplied

Residents band together to protect homes in Pyinmana

By Su Hlaing Tun

FEAR stalks the streets of Pyinmana as soldiers and police mount checkpoints, and vigilante groups form to protect their homes, mosques and monasteries, local people say.

Security in the city is tight following several apparent acts of incitement to riot amid pervasive fears of violence.

On the evening of March 31, police and soldiers were deployed to keep order during a power cut after a young man on a motorcycle shouted that religious buildings were on fire and people of different faiths were marching.

“The lights went out. We heard shouts that Myanmar people from Ohbo quarter were being beaten, and monks were involved in clashes at the end of 9th Street. The people who went

to see what was happening went armed with clubs,” said one resident describing the March 31 event.

Merchants who heard rumours and threats of violence shut their shops as fear descended on the city.

“After the motorcycle rider shouted and sped off, shops shut and men from almost every house came out to see what was happening. I was trembling with fear then. Because we live next to the Muslim quarter, we dared not sleep all night. We are afraid to walk past that quarter. In our family, we take it in turns to keep watch through the night,” said Ma Myo Myo from Ohbo quarter.

According to the township administrator’s office, no arrests have been made for incitement to violence and there have been no reports of damage to property. But some residents claimed that four of five inciters had been

arrested and released on bail, and tensions remain high. Security forces continued to conduct night time patrols throughout last week.

“We start to get scared as nightfall approaches. Last night I couldn’t sleep. To support my family, I have to keep my shop open. People were shouting that groups were coming to commit arson attacks,” said flower seller Ma Nge, a Muslim who lives in U Kyay quarter, which is home to people of different faiths.

“The people who start the rumours are looters,” said one resident.

Officials said they acted swiftly to ensure there was no recurrence of the violence that erupted in nearby Meiktila on March 20. As rumours rapidly spread throughout Pyinmana, police cars and the No 85 Light Infantry Unit patrolled the town and security forces were strengthened to mount

an all-night guard from 6pm until the next morning.

“Everybody should realise this is just incitement. We’ve held a meeting to discuss what happened at Meiktila. Inhabitants are being advised to take care of each other and their neighbourhoods,” Nay Pyi Taw City Development Committee member U Than Kyaw Htoo said.

Pyinmana administrator U Kyaw Tint told *The Myanmar Times*: “As soon as we heard the news, we advised residents to stay indoors and ordered security forces into the streets to check passers-by. We managed to take control and to keep strangers out.”

“It’s calm now. Security is maintained round the clock. At night groups of inhabitants mount patrols and police and army units are present at crossroads,” he said. – *Translated by Thit Lwin*

Yangon’s taxis in spotlight as Ma Hta Tha takes control

By Thiha Toe

YANGON’S taxi fleet is to be brought up to international standards of safety and cleanliness – one day, says its new boss.

Ma Hta Tha, the bus service regulator, took over responsibility for the city’s taxis from Yangon City Development Committee on April 1.

Ma Hta Tha, formally known as the Central Supervisory Committee for Motor Vehicles, is determined to manage the fleet properly, says its deputy chairman, U Hla Thaung Myint.

“We want to achieve international standards of excellence for our taxis. We will check all cabs in Yangon for safety and offer training to drivers unfamiliar with traffic rules. We will also ensure all taxis have meters, and that they are clean inside and outside,” said U Hla Thaung Myint, adding that these improvements might take some time.

Ma Hta Tha secretary U Ba Myint said the charge for taxi registration would not change.

The Ma Hta Tha announcement has been met with some scepticism, however.

“When you see how Ma Hta Tha bus drivers get away with speeding and bus conductors get away with insulting passengers, it’s hard to see how Ma Hta Tha is going to sort out the taxis,” said one experienced cabbie. “That’ll be something to see.”

“I don’t care if it’s Ma Hta Tha or YCDC in charge as long as they don’t put up the registration charge,” said Thingangyun taxi driver Ko Myo Nyunt, 35, adding that more discipline for drivers might not be a bad thing.

“The traffic in Yangon is terrible now. Every journey takes longer than before. Downtown, going anywhere takes an hour. So fares are higher. We have to pay the owner of the vehicle and buy fuel as well as support ourselves,” he added.

A 27-year-old IT technician who often takes taxis said: “With meters, the passenger will know exactly how much they have to pay. But there’s still a risk the taxi driver can cheat a passenger who doesn’t know the quickest way to their destination.”

Previous attempts to introduce taxi meters were abject failures, with both passengers and drivers preferring to negotiate the fare before the trip.

SKorea, Myanmar launch naval institute

HIGH-ACHIEVING students from Myanmar’s maritime university will be able to continue their studies at a new institute set up with South Korean support.

The Korea Maritime University, which specialises in ocean research, science and technology, engineering and international studies, opened its Myanmar Ocean Research Centre on April 3 in cooperation with the Myanmar Maritime University (MMU).

Although the institute is new, the cooperation between the two universities is at least 10 years old; the first Memorandum

of Understanding was signed in 2003 and was extended in 2008. Since then, the universities have conducted research and exchange programs with staff and students.

With the opening of the institute, activities will expand to include international conferences, seminars and more student exchange programs. The institute will also grant generous scholarships for outstanding students from MMU.

Myanmar Ocean Research Centre president Dr Kim Hak-so said the new institute will enable the universities to better share information and knowledge.

– *Yhoon Hnin*

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Ministry of Culture finalises Germany cooperation

By Cherry Thein

THE Ministry of Culture is preparing to sign an agreement with Germany on cultural preservation, an official from the Department of Archaeology, National Library and Museum said last week.

Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu discussed the agreement during a visit to Germany in early March, the official said.

He said the minister and his team met Ms Cornelia Peiper, a minister for state in Germany's foreign office, to discuss the proposed deal, which would see Germany provide technical support to encourage cultural preservation in Myanmar.

They also discussed the possibility of Myanmar archaeologists and librarians undertaking further study in Germany, as well as German experts conducting trainings in Myanmar.

"They also negotiated for Germany to rent a building on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road to open a cultural centre so that they can conduct more cultural programs in the future," the official said.

The team also met Dr Friedrich Hulsmann at Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Library in Hannover, the home of a celebrated letter sent by King Alaungpaya to Britain's King George II in 1756.

The gold leaf letter is 55 centimetres long and 12cm wide, and each side is decorated with a line of 12 rubies. The 10 lines of Myanmar script say that the Myanmar king gives permission for British merchants to stay on Hainggyi Island and that he expects relations between the two countries to improve. The letter sheet was encased in an elephant tusk for delivery but King George could not read the letter and forwarded it to his home-town library in Hannover.

Dr Hulsmann, a curator at the library, uncovered the letter in 2007, 250 years after it was catalogued in Hanover.



A government team excavates a mound at Sri Ksetra in Pyay township, Bago Region. *Pic: Supplied*

World Heritage team to assess three Pyu sites

By Cherry Thein

A TEAM from the World Heritage Centre will visit Myanmar in the coming months to assess three ancient Pyu cities for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

U San Win, chairman of a government committee that prepared the nominations for the sites, said experts from the International Council of Monuments and Sites will come in June or July to visit Sri Ksetra in Bago Region, Hanlin in Sagaing Region and Beikthano in Magwe Region.

"We haven't got confirmed dates yet but I am sure they will confirm when the time gets closer. They will inspect the authenticity, integrity and attributes of the cities," he said.

"The team will also assess what development is taking place near the sites and how their authenticity is being maintained. They will check the facts in our submission that we sent on January 22."

The team will also assess the legal environment for safeguarding cultural and memorial zones, he said.

The project to list the three sites was launched with a technical contribution from the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and a 400,000-euro (US\$513,000) financial contribution from the Italian government.

Under the project, UNESCO is bringing in international expertise to assist the government in strengthening its ability to safeguard its cultural heritage in accordance with World Heritage Convention standards, he said.

U San Win said the ministry next plans to register Ananda temple in Bagan.

"It is hard to get the whole of Bagan listed because the authenticity of many parts has been ruined, through the construction of hotels and other things. So we plan to register each temple instead," he said.

Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sandar Khin said that the potential listing for the Pyu sites would bring many benefits for the country, particularly the tourism industry.

More interest in the sites will also create job opportunities for nearby residents and encourage them to pursue education, particularly

languages, she said.

"But at the same time, we are all careful to follow and respect the rules and restrictions" that come with having sites on the World Heritage List.

She said the department is cooperating with local authorities to undertake awareness programs on the need to safeguard historical, archaeological and cultural sites.

"Some residents don't really understand what we are doing; they don't understand the value of heritage. We need to help them so that they actually want to cherish and protect these places and we also need their cooperation," she said.

Meanwhile the nomination committee and Department of Archeology, National Library and Museum are preparing a series of expert meetings to build technical capacity for restoring and managing cultural heritage sites.

Myanmar ratified the World Heritage Convention in April 1994. While it currently has no sites on UNESCO's World Heritage list, in 1996 Myanmar submitted a tentative list of eight cultural sites with technical support from UNESCO.

Doctors warn again on danger of betel nut

By Shwe Yee Saw Myint

MYANMAR'S addiction to betel nut chewing could be costing lives. Using the drug raises the risk of oral cancer, especially when consumed by smokers. According to the WHO, of the six countries in Southeast Asia where people chew betel nut quids, Myanmar consumes slightly more than half of the region's total amount.

Patients diagnosed with oral cancer often forego treatment because it is too expensive, an expert says.

Professor Swe Swe Win, of the University of Dental Medicine in Yangon, says oral cancer is detected in more than 200 patients a year out of the 9000 people who come to the university for treatment.

“We refer these cancer patients to Yangon General Hospital cancer department but only about 25 of them receive treatment. Some patients never go to the hospital,” said Professor Swe Swe Win. Most cannot afford the cost of treatment, which is normally K3 million to K5 million at the government, she added.

No figure is available for the death rate from oral cancer because research is still ongoing, she said.

"I have surveyed about 200 oral cancer patients based on two cancer registries from Yangon and Mandalay hospitals since 2012 with the Medical Research Department," she said, adding that some patients died while the research was being conducted.

Research indicates that toxic chemicals in betel and cigarettes can cause oral cancer. Dangerous betel quid was also being illegally imported from India, she added.

Oral cancer is the fifth most common cancer in ASEAN and is emerging as a public health problem in Myanmar, where many people use betel and tobacco. Tobacco-related legislation is not very effective, Professor Swe Swe Win said.

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Stop relying on state for medical staff, minister tells hospitals

Private sector urged to begin training own staff, as increased health budget allows state to hire more graduates

By Yamon Phu Thit

THE minister for health has criticised the private sector for relying on the state to train doctors, nurses and other medical professionals.

Speaking at the annual general meeting of the Myanmar Private Hospitals Association in Yangon last month, Dr Pe Thet Khin said private hospitals needed to produce their own medical practitioners in future to avoid creating shortages for the state system.

"We can see that most specialists who are now holding important positions ... at private hospitals were produced and trained by the government sector," he said.

‘Previously there was a surplus in the number of doctors trained but in future there will be high demand.’

"For a long time, the private sector has focused only on service provision and failed to invest in training up human resources," he added.

The minister suggested private hospitals cooperate with the ministry to provide training, send doctors abroad for further studies or provide scholarships to medical students.

"It is no longer good enough to simply rely on human resources from the state sector."

Speaking at a press conference shortly after the annual general meeting, association president Dr Ye Moe Myint said the association's members were committed to meeting their human resources needs through training but it was not possible at present for private hospitals to open their own medical universities or colleges.

"It is correct that the private and government [medical] sectors should be more clearly separated. We

have to take time to train our own medical staff and need more technology and experience to do this," he said.

But until recently Myanmar was training many more doctors than the state sector had the budget to employ. Its four medical universities churn out about 2400 doctors a year, Ministry of Health figures show, but until recently the government only hired 500 graduates a year. In 2012-13, this was increased to 1500 because of the larger ministry budget.

Ministry of Health figures for 2010-11 show there were 10,927 registered doctors in the state sector and 15,508 in the private and non-government sector, working for Myanmar's 165 private hospitals, as well as pharmaceutical companies, medical clinics, NGOs and religious charities. Many trained doctors are also working in non-medical fields. Many trained doctors complain they have to wait years to get a job in the industry.

Dr Pe Thet Khin has previously responded to this criticism by saying many more graduates would soon be needed in government hospitals and clinics.

"No government can hire all the doctors it produces," the minister told the Amyotha Hluttaw on January 21. "Previously, there was a surplus in the number of doctors trained but in future there will be high demand."

Dr Thurein Hlaing Win, who publishes the Academic Medicine blog, agreed the government's health budget was to blame for the lack of jobs for graduates. He said doctors are forced to work in the private sector or embark on other careers while waiting to get a job in the state sector.

"Working for the government sector is every young doctor's dream. But most of them end up in the private or non-medical sector because the government fails to hire them," he said.

"Even for those who are hired, it takes at least one to three years for a graduate from a medical university to get a government position."



A doctor speaks to a patient at private medical clinic in Yangon. Pic: Yadanar

Treating patients, as well as illness

Given the ailing state of public healthcare in Myanmar, complaints about care in the burgeoning private system – where, for a wealthier few, money buys a better chance at recovery – may seem misguided. After all, if you can afford private care, what do you really have to complain about?

In some ways this is true. I recently spent 10 days being treated for typhoid in one of Yangon's private hospitals. Unaddressed, typhoid can lead to potentially fatal complications. Fortunately, I was promptly given a range of tests and then started on appropriate antibiotics, of which there was an adequate supply. There was no shortage of equipment or staff and I stayed in a comfortable room. Clearly I received better care than most.

Yet while I'm relieved to have recovered and grateful to those who looked after me, I found the experience one of the more confusing I've had in this country. While the typhoid was treated diligently, the physical and emotional symptoms were often ignored or, sometimes, made worse.

For example, during my first day in hospital, the medical officers, or MOs, examined me every few hours. "Any pain?" they would ask. With increasing urgency as the day went on, I reported severe stomach pain. Each time they said – and did – nothing.

When the pain woke me up at 5am the next day, after I'd managed only one hour of sleep, my wife asked a nurse outright whether I would ever get relief. We were told, to our surprise, that a painkiller had been prescribed 18 hours before, to administer as needed. Yet no one had given it to me. No one had looked at my chart nor connected my feedback with anything requiring action on

their behalf.

Unable to eat or drink, I was the one who suggested an IV drip. It was my wife who suggested paracetamol to calm my fever. In each case the staff said, "Yes, he can take that," and swiftly brought what we requested. But at no time did they initiate such treatment themselves. This casual approach to my well-being worried me. Would my illness, when diagnosed, be handled the same way?

It wasn't, but such worries were soon eclipsed by a different sort. When my wife asked an MO about a test that had been ordered, another staff member crossed the room to chastise her,

Opinion

diseases. Yet when I asked an MO to

please let me know whenever any results came back, she scowled, sent for a chart, and said, brusquely, "Malaria, negative; pancreatitis, negative." My relief was short-lived, however: she walked out of the room without further comment, leaving me still halfway through my followup question.

What should have been an opportunity to put my mind at ease ended up bringing more stress than the illness itself. But not only were we not supposed to ask questions, we soon found we weren't being trusted to understand the answers. I was later told that patients should

Of course, a few staff members did provide welcome comfort during a difficult time. Yet for the majority it was my recovery, not my illness, which eventually prompted compassion. Only after I started regaining strength was I given some of the sympathy I'd needed earlier. Perhaps it was only when I was out of danger that staff felt they could relax and put their medical personas aside. I hope, for the well-being of future patients, they can learn to be both professional and personable at the same time.

Do I have the right to complain about care in a private hospital? Yes – but not for myself. Doctors are highly respected here, deservedly so. But in a country that values mindfulness and meditation, the emotional aspects of healthcare are being neglected. Communication builds trust; trust builds relationships; relationships make patients more informed, relaxed, and confident about the care they're given. But if patients don't feel free to ask questions about what is happening with their own bodies, and if physicians exclude them from involvement in their own recoveries, then respect may instead turn into nothing more than fear of giving offence. That's not healthy for anyone.

Adopting a more holistic approach to healthcare requires a genuine change in attitudes for both patients and carers. It should be addressed alongside other, more obvious reforms needed in healthcare generally, such as increased funding and equal access to care nationwide. Less hierarchy and more sympathy would be a welcome prescription for all.

(The author is an expatriate living in Yangon who requested anonymity.)

‘The longer our stay, the more the hierarchy became clear. From our lowly rung on the ladder, conversations often felt more like power struggles.’

loudly and in public. "This is Burmese culture!" he shouted twice, shaking his finger in the air toward her face. "We do not question the doctor!" Though she had been speaking in fluent Myanmar, he lectured her in stilted English, and treated her as an outsider who had forgotten her place and needed to be given a lesson about manners in Myanmar society. And all because she wondered why her husband was having an X-ray.

Throughout our stay, my wife was often treated this way, ignored or interrupted as if she wasn't worth taking seriously. As the patient's spouse, this was insulting; as the patient's translator, it was exasperating. I was given more leeway, at least with English-speaking staff, but even that had limits.

Before diagnosis, my worry ran the gamut of possible

not be told about individual test results, as only trained professionals knew how to interpret them correctly. First-hand experience, it seemed, was nothing next to a medical degree. When staff discovered a visiting friend was also a doctor, they began addressing questions to her instead, ignoring my wife and me entirely.

The longer our stay, the more the hierarchy became clear: patients, patients' loved ones (conditions are routinely discussed in the hallway, away from patients' ears), foreign patients, other staff, any other doctor (even if uninvolved in the case), then the upper ranks of MOs and physicians. From our lowly rung on the ladder, conversations often felt more like power struggles. You may get better this way, but you certainly won't feel better.

Local requirement in deepwater exploration not confirmed: MOGE

By Soe Sandar Oo

A MYANMA Oil and Gas Enterprise official says foreign companies seeking to explore deepwater blocks offshore might not have to work with a domestic company.

U Than Tun, director of MOGE's offshore exploration department, told *The Myanmar Times* last week that the enterprise was still discussing the possibility of allowing foreign companies to explore deepwater blocks – which are extremely expensive to map – alone. All other oil and gas block exploration must involve a domestic partner.

The Ministry of Energy opened bidding on 25 offshore and 18 onshore blocks on April 1, with at least 90 foreign companies expressing interest, he said on April 1.

“But the investment needed to explore deepwater blocks is too great – domestic companies cannot afford the capital required for that work,” he said. “It's possible that we will allow international oil companies to explore those blocks alone but the Ministry of Energy has not yet made a decision on the matter.”

He advised domestic oil companies, of which more than 120 have registered with the ministry as potential partners with foreign firms, to prepare for the sustainable development of the nation's energy sector by trying to gain international experience. He said domestic companies needed to gain exposure to offshore exploration, where deepwater drilling and exploration programs can exceed US\$100 million in cost.

However, U Ken Tun, chief executive officer of Parami Energy Group, said most domestic companies had

only expressed interest in exploring the shallow water offshore blocks, which can still cost up to \$25 million each well.

“There are some Myanmar companies that want to explore deepwater blocks but need financial and technical assistance, so it would be beneficial if domestic companies were ruled out from doing deepwater exploration,” he said.

“But local companies need to understand the reality of deepwater exploration – and finding finance and a long-term foreign partner are not the only problems. Domestic companies also need to know how to develop the country's energy sector,” he said.

U Ken Tun predicted that the government would allow Myanmar companies to participate in deepwater exploration if they were financially able or allow international firms to explore them alone. He said the deepwater blocks were chiefly of interest to the world's biggest oil and gas companies – because few others had the financial resources and technical knowhow to explore them.

He added that the main reason why the government was forcing foreign companies to partner with domestic firms to conduct oil and gas block exploration was to build the capacity of Myanmar companies and learn from their international counterparts.

He added that only two Myanmar companies have deepwater exploration experience – Parami, and MPRL E&P, owned by U Moe Myint. “The main difficulties faced by Myanmar companies in exploration work are finance and the lack of experienced technicians. All of our oil and gas experts are at least 50 years old – we need young and energetic experts.”



UMFCCI president U Win Aung speaks during a Myanmar-Singapore business forum at Yangon's Sedona Hotel on April 4. Pic: Thiri Lu

IE Singapore opens in Yangon

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

SINGAPORE'S trade promotion agency, International Enterprise Singapore, opened an office in Yangon on April 4 to boost economic ties between Singapore and Myanmar, a business forum at Sedona Hotel was told last week.

Several key cooperation deals were also signed with Myanmar businesspeople during the forum held on April 4.

IE Singapore has coordinated many business missions and study trips by Singaporean companies to Myanmar over the past year.

IE Singapore and the Singapore Business Federation jointly organised and held a business mission in February last year that drew 100 participants representing 74 Singaporean companies.

As Myanmar develops there will be many opportunities for companies from both nations to work together, said Mr Teo Eng Cheong, IE Singapore's chief executive officer.

He added that IE Singapore has organised visits by more than 12 business missions, representing many different sectors, in the past year. The organisation assists an average of five delegations a week, he added.

“The opening of IE Singapore's Overseas Centre in Yangon underscores the interest Singaporean companies have in Myanmar,” he said.

IE Singapore signed a memorandum of understanding with the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in February last year, and signed a further agreement

on April 4 to further boost cooperation in business affairs, he said.

Businesspeople also signed bilateral agreements in telecommunications, hospitality, consumer goods and business services, he added. These included Ya Kun, a bread and coffee company, which signed an agreement with Myanmar's Avitar Group to build 10 outlets in Yangon in the next two years. Another contract was signed between Sing Tel Satellite and Al Noor Group, which will see the companies collaborate to distribute Singtel's phones, its broadband global area network and provide satellite broadcasting bandwidth services in Myanmar.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Singapore's Minister for National Development, said there is great potential for partnerships

in many sectors, including infrastructure, industrial and urban development, logistics, manufacturing and trading.

“We encourage Singaporean companies to suss out these opportunities and turn them to profitable ventures, and to do so in a way that can bring long-term benefits to Myanmar and the local communities,” he said.

He said the ties between the two countries extend beyond government relations because Singapore is one of Myanmar's largest trading partners.

The volume of trade between Myanmar and Singapore ranks third after China and Thailand, says the Ministry of Commerce.

Bilateral trade volume totalled nearly US\$2.8 billion in 2012-13, with Myanmar exporting goods worth about \$283 million and importing products worth nearly \$2.5 billion.



New insurers to offer cover in June, says dep minister

By Aye Thidar Kyaw and Shwe Gu Thitsar

TWELVE private companies will be allowed to begin offering insurance to customers starting June 30, Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Maung Maung Thein said during a meeting at Myanmar Insurance in Yangon on April 3.

Dr Maung Maung Thein was previously general manager of Myanmar Insurance and secretary of the Insurance Business Supervision Committee.

Myanmar's insurance industry has been a state-run monopoly under Myanmar Insurance for more than 60 years but the government announced in September last year that the monopoly would be broken, and invited private companies to submit applications.

Myanmar Insurance managing director U Aye Min Thein said the 12 companies granted licences are: Grand Guardian Insurance Public (GGIP), IKBZ, First National, Young, Capital Life, Global World, Excellent Fortune, Pillar of Truth, Ayeyar Myanmar Insurance, Aung Myint Moe Min, Citizen Business Insurance Public Limited and Aung Thitsar Oo.

He added that each company is required to deposit K46 billion in paid-up capital at Myanmar Economic Bank. He said five companies have already settled their transfers but seven have not deposited the money as yet.

Officials said during the April 3 meeting that the government wants

to encourage Myanmar insurance companies to build up strong bases instead of inviting multinational companies to enter the market.

"We would like to expand insurance even to rural areas, so Myanmar Insurance needs the support of the 12 companies," Dr Maung Maung Thein said.

"As Myanmar's economy grows and the our international relations expand, more foreign companies will enter the country and big international insurance firms will want to do so as well but we need time to scrutinise those firms," deputy minister said.

"We have chosen 12 private companies, and at this early stage it's too early to allow in foreign competition because our domestic companies are only at an embryonic stage and cannot compete," he said.

"Some people have criticised us for not giving out more licences but we have to consider if there's enough room in the market for all companies," he said. "We decided that 12 companies was a suitable number of companies to cover Myanmar," he said.

Myanmar Insurance plans to allow companies to offer different forms of insurance to cover credit guarantees and health insurance but to date companies are limited to offering life and general insurance.

"All of us need to cooperate in offering private health cover because there is room for a lot of trickery. Even in America, the government has to be involved in health insurance because of these problems," he said.



Western Union's regional director for Indochina and Myanmar, Ly Nguyen, completes a money transfer in Yangon last week. Pic: Thiri Lu

Kanbawza Bank expands Western Union services

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

KANBAWZA Bank has expanded Western Union money transfer facilities to all of its outlets.

Western Union has been working with Co-operative, First Private, Myanmar Apex, Myanmar Livestock and Fisheries Development, Myanmar Oriental and United Amara banks since

January.

However, Kanbawza Bank initially limited the service to its Yangon branches but from April 3 it is available at all of its 102 branches.

"When we tested the service at branches in Yangon, we found it convenient, so we extended it to other towns. All of our facilities have already been set up," said Kanbawza Bank managing director U

Nyo Myint.

"Western Union is everywhere, and there are Myanmar workers around the world, so it will be convenient," he said.

Kanbawza is cooperating with foreign banks in Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore to remit money, he said.

A Western Union press release said Myanmar citizens in 74 countries

have remitted money home through Western Union.

Kanbawza Bank also announced that the company is one of the biggest tax payers in the country, paying about K10.8 billion in the 2012-13 year, up from K6 billion in tax in 2011-12. U Nyo Myint said the company has already paid more than K15.6 billion in advance for the 2013-2014 year.

Indonesian firm plans Myanmar power plant

By Aung Shin

INDONESIAN state-owned Bukit Asam mining company plans to invest in Myanmar's electricity generation sector, a company official said on April 3.

Mr Oktavianus Tarigan, the company's strategic planning manager, told *The Myanmar Times* that the company intended to build a coal-fired power plant in Myanmar.

"We are planning to invest in Myanmar. We sent a letter to the Myanmar government three weeks ago stating

our desire to build a coal-fired power plant," he said. "We would like to form a joint venture with the government, and are also seeking a local partner that is suitable for our company," he said.

Bukit Asam will invest

"It is not true whatever it said. We are still waiting for a reply from the Myanmar government. We haven't decided how much to invest yet but we hope the government will permit our project."

"I have visited Myanmar

permission, he added.

The company is working on a 1500MW coal-fired plant in Indonesia, he said.

"We are very keen to invest in Myanmar. Many other Indonesian business companies are also interested in Myanmar, which we feel has a bright future," he said.

An Indonesia business delegation led by a minister and consisting of 60 representatives from 11 leading companies visited Myanmar from April 1 to 3.

A Myanmar-Indonesia business forum was held at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry's office in Yangon on April 3.

Indonesia has investments totalling \$241.5 million in Myanmar, making it 14th on the list of foreign investor nations in Myanmar, said UMFCCI president U Win Aung.

'We sent a letter to the Myanmar government three weeks ago stating our desire to build a coal-fired power plant.'

US\$80 million in the proposed coal-fired power station, the state-run *Myanmar Ahlin* newspaper reported in a March 26 article that referred to a *Jakarta Globe* newspaper story.

However, Mr Tarigan said key facts in the *Jakarta Globe* story were incorrect.

three times and met government ministers and officials, and I feel the government welcomes our proposed investment," he said.

Bukit Asam plans to build a coal-fired power plant capable of generating 100 to 200 megawatts (MW) at a cost of about \$400 million if it is given

Govt to spend K25b on rice stockpile

By Myat May Zin

THE National Rice Reserves Supervisory Committee is planning to buy 100,000 tonnes of rice to create a stockpile, or buffer stock, in the 2013-14 financial year, the Minister for Commerce said recently.

U Win Myint, the Minister for Commerce, said during a meeting at the Myanmar Rice Federation on March 25 that the government would spend K10 billion to buy rice to build the stockpile.

"We are planning to buy 100,000 tonnes of 25-percent broken grain rice for this financial year," he said. He added that last year farmers won contracts to supply 28,000 tonnes of rice for the stockpile but only 8000 tonnes had been collected; the remainder

will be added to this year's buffer stock, he said.

"We will supplement this with another 100,000 tonnes of newly harvested rice," he said.

However, finance for the full order is not yet in place, said Dr Soe Tun, chairman of the Myanmar Farmers Association.

"We estimate that we need about K25 billion to buy 100,000 tonnes but we only have K10 billion to date," he said.

The Department of Trade Promotion, formerly Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading (MAPT), is seeking the additional K15 billion needed to buy the buffer stock.

IRRSC was founded on January 25, 2012, to manage the buying of a buffer stock. The committee plans to buy rice harvested from the summer crop, while prices are high.

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Visa to work with three banks to offer electronic payments

By Myat May Zin

VISA will begin cooperating with three domestic banks to introduce an electronic payment system in Myanmar later this month company officials said during a press conference at Strand Hotel on April 1.

The domestic banks are Kanbawza, Co-operative and Myanma Apex.

Peter Maher, Visa's group manager for Southeast Asia and Australasia, said the rollout of electronic payments is geared towards tourists and visitors.

"We are working to bring electronic payments to the tourism industry first to allow foreign visitors to use their cards in Myanmar's shopping centres, restaurants and hotels," he said. "Myanmar's tourism sector is booming but the country cannot develop and modernise without advancement of the financial sector," he added.

Visa entered Myanmar with three missions, he said. First, the company will cooperate with Myanmar banks to ensure its cards



Myanma Apex Bank and Visa officials at a press conference in Yangon on March 29. Pic: Ko Taik

banking in Myanmar.

"We are proud to partner with Visa to provide tourists and merchants with a better and safer way to pay and be paid through electronic payments," he said. "As our country continues to grow and become further integrated into the international finance community, we are proud to be at the forefront of banking innovation for Myanmar and are confident that development of payment systems will contribute to future economic growth."

He added that the bank's clients have the opportunity to use global electronic payments and gain access to a pool of two billion Visa cardholders worldwide.

Somboon Krobteeranon, Visa country manager for Myanmar and Thailand, said: "We are proud to partner with Co-operative Bank, Kanbawza Bank and Myanma Apex Bank under the leadership of the Central Bank of Myanmar to bring the benefits of electronic payments and acceptance to Myanmar's business sector, its people and international tourists."

"Inbound tourism to Myanmar is growing in record numbers, and with 64 percent of international travellers preferring to pay by cards when travelling in Asia-Pacific, we are working with banks and the merchant community to meet their payment needs."

U Zaw Lin Htut, a senior general manager of Kanbawza, said businesspeople had much to gain by using an electronic payments system.

"Merchants just need to open an account at Kanbawza in either kyat or foreign currency to work with us. And businesses have many incentives for doing this - we already have a marketing team and it will work hard to bring more and more companies onboard," he said.

U Win Win Khine, the managing director of Myanma Apex Bank, said: "We are proud to partner with Visa in bringing the

benefits of card acceptance to merchants and tourists. This is a significant step forward for Myanmar as the country opens up to the international community with more restaurants, hotels and retail locations

soon accepting Visa cards. The opportunities for the country's growth are promising, and Myanma Apex Bank will continue to lead the advancement of Myanmar's financial infrastructure."

MFA names three tainted fertilisers

THREE brands of fertiliser have been found to contain high levels of arsenic, which can destroy crops and cause harm to humans, the Myanmar Farmers Association announced last week.

Dr Soe Tun, MFA chairman, said the brands - Gold Crop, Super N and Sun Ray - are commonly used in major rice-cropping areas in Ayeyarwady and Bago regions. Of these, only Gold Crop has permission to be distributed in Myanmar, he said.

He added that the association regularly sends samples of all fertilisers and pesticides for laboratory testing.

"There are 10 pesticides and 15 fertilisers that are in widespread use in paddy farming areas," he said. "We have sent all of them for laboratory testing using secret codes to conceal the brands until the results return to our offices."

"The 10 pesticides all passed testing but three brands of fertiliser failed and we believe they are capable of poisoning crops," he said.

Dr Soe Tun said fertilisers

and pesticides are entering the country illegally through border trade, and are not tested for safety. "I am passing this information from the media to markets and farmers," he said.

"Traders will not be selling low quality or untested products in the market in the future, and we have been doing laboratory tests since December."

"The ministries of Commerce and Agricultural and Irrigation will continue to spread this information across the country," Dr Soe Tun said.

U Tin Myo, who farms 15 acres in Danubyu township in Ayeyarwady Region, said he had heard news stories saying that three brands of fertiliser had been declared poisonous but was unaware of the names.

He said farmers in his township used fertilisers and pesticides they bought from specialist rice companies, which also provided loans and technical assistance to the farmers. The specialist rice company that operates in Danubyu is Gold Delta, owned by U Chit Khine.

- Myat May Zin

'Plastic cards are part of an old system - and we have already introduced mobile payment systems to more than 30 countries.'

are available for use at automatic teller machines (ATMs). The second step is to work with leading domestic banks to expand an electronic payments system to businesses. Visa's final goal is to expand into the mobile phone payments system, which in time will be able to reach everybody with access to a phone in the country, where only 7 percent of the 60 million population has a mobile.

"People in Myanmar have very low awareness about mobile phone payments systems," Mr Maher said.

"We have many challenges to introducing a Visa card system in Myanmar, especially in terms of electricity, phones and awareness of technology. We will introduce a mobile payments system to Myanmar capable of reaching rural areas."

"Plastic cards are part of an old system - and we have already introduced mobile phone payment systems to more than 30 countries," he added.

U Than Cho, senior managing director of Kanbawza Bank, said it was happy to be at the "forefront" of innovative

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Rice on the way back to the top

RICE is mounting a steady comeback in Myanmar. Exports in the 2012-13 fiscal year have already bettered 1.2 million tonnes, surpassing the peak export period in 1956, and the Myanmar Rice Industry Association (MRIA) projects exports to have reached 1.5 million tonnes by the end of the fiscal year, which ended March 31. This is nearly double the 778,000 tonnes exported in 2012.

Exports could be maintained – if not boosted further – in the coming years by increased foreign investment. In the 1950s Myanmar had one of Southeast Asia's strongest economies, promising to become its top rice exporter as it shipped over 1 million tonnes a year. In the following years, however, when the country entered a decades-long global economic isolation, Myanmar forfeited its position as lead exporter, while the rest of Southeast Asia "transformed itself through market-oriented reforms", according to the International Monetary Fund.

However, since Myanmar began relaxing its borders in 2011 and increased its efforts to again take part in the global economy, the agriculture industry is showing its potential to become the country's most profitable sector. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said about 25-30 percent of exports come from the agriculture sector, which is also the largest source of employment in the country.

Recent developments, such



as increased use of fertilisers, high-quality seed and large-scale mill development, which have pushed production capabilities further, emphasise the sector's promise.

At present, Europe, Singapore, Australia, China and Thailand are the primary destinations for Myanmar rice exports, but this year has also been marked by trade route diversification. Japan and South Korea have shown interest in importing Myanmar rice, and border trade with India is now permitted. Myanmar will also begin exporting a total of 500,000 tonnes of rice a year to Indonesia once the two countries ink a deal, likely in March.

The government has taken a number of other steps to nurture growth potential across the sector, which, in turn, is expected to help revive the overall economy. In November last year, President U Thein Sein signed a new foreign investment law, which no longer includes a 35pc limit on foreign ownership of business in the agriculture sector. The state also signed on for loans from the ADB and the World Bank, designated for the bulk of the government's economic revitalisation procedure, which includes significant investment

in rice production and other agricultural development projects.

Much of the US\$80 million World Bank loan will fund agricultural infrastructure development, while the ADB loan will be filtered into Myanmar's delta region, where much of the rice production occurs. The funds from the ADB loan will be used to improve and expand transport infrastructure in the region, as well as increase irrigation capabilities, which should significantly boost crop yields.

To help support farmers in Rakhine State, the National Rice Reserves Supervisory Committee of Myanmar (NRRSC) intends to buy 3000 tonnes of rice for reserve in 2013. The NRRSC made its first purchases in early 2013, offering a price higher than market value so that the surplus can pay for the production costs currently burdening farmers in the region. This assistance, combined with diversification of cultivation techniques, could potentially boost land value, thus increasing farmers' eligibility for loans, as well as help the country rival its stronger competitors, Thailand and Vietnam.

A number of foreign agribusiness firms, including

Singapore-based Wilmar, and US-based firms DuPont Pioneer and Cargill, are already exploring venture opportunities, which include rice, livestock and fertiliser. U Tin Htut Oo, head of the National Economic and Social Development Advisory Committee, predicts that fertiliser use in Myanmar will at least double due to planned expansion efforts.

With the new law allowing greater freedom for foreign investors and myriad venture opportunities available inside the newly opened borders, many agribusinesses and commodities traders consider the country to be a bountiful frontier.

Supporting that notion is the fact that Myanmar's geographical advantages, including favourable climate, three major rivers and other plentiful water sources, make it an ideal candidate for agricultural investment.

Myanmar would jump from ninth to fifth on the list of top rice exporters globally, surpassing Uruguay, Cambodia and Brazil, if it reaches its anticipated export volume of 1.5 million tonnes for the 2012-13 fiscal year. Investment in agricultural infrastructure and diversified farming techniques could bring a rise in export totals to 3 million tonnes by 2015. But to do so, export goals will need to be supported with proper investment, which could lead to Myanmar one day reclaiming its status as the world's top rice exporter.

Experts urge more SME help

By Myat May Zin

SMALL- and medium-sized enterprises are tipped to be one of the drivers of Myanmar's economic reform and development but most face a crucial problem – a lack of capital to expand, say analysts.

However, both non-government organisations and government bodies are trying to support SME development with microfinance loans.

"More than 99.4 percent of local business is classed as SMEs," said U San Thein, an advisor for SME Development Bank, which is overseen by the Ministry of Industry. SMEs are usually defined as operations that employ between 10 and 100 workers.

"But the sector faces a number of development challenges. Only about six million people in Myanmar use the banking system and the rest rely on informal financial institutions," he said.

"Export-oriented businesses will lead the long term development of SMEs. The main challenges that SMEs need to overcome

in order to develop are in information technology, human resources, financial support, market information and taxation," he added.

SME Development Bank is operating a microfinance program and has loaned about K5 billion, about US\$6 million.

"Since December last year SME Development Bank has provided about K5 billion in microfinance loans to help SMEs in urban areas to develop. Our bank is under the Ministry of Industry and we secured a K5-billion loan from Myanma Economic Bank [MEB] with collateral," he said.

"However, we do not have sufficient collateral for MEB for an additional K30-billion loan we have sought from MEB. But because we are an arm of the ministry we are able to seek this loan without collateral," said U San Thein added.

SME Development Bank offers its loans with an interest rate of 8.5pc, with loan terms of up to three years, he said.

"We took our loan from MEB at 8.25pc and offer loans to SMEs for 8.5pc. We believe the gap is very small," he said.

There are more than 126,000 SMEs in Myanmar, U San Thein said.

U Khin Maung Htwe, deputy director of the Internal Revenue Department, said: "The government allows SMEs a three-year tax-free period when they first start. Seventy kinds of basic commodities taxed a single tax rate of 5pc. But 10 special commodities, including cigarettes, attract higher rates. Of these, cigarettes are taxed at the highest level of 100pc, while the rest are 50pc or less."

"Timber, natural gas, petroleum products, jade and jewellery are tax free export products when they are value-added," said U Hla Tun.

Dr Aung Tun Thet, an economic advisor to the President's Office, said: "Our people ask for the government to protect them but that's not right. The government's duty is not to protect business but to create an environment where businesses have opportunities."

"I would like to suggest to SME owners to 'think big and start small'. We should start with the Myanmar market with 60 million consumers, expand regionally into ASEAN where there are 600 million and then go global," he said.

"SME owners need not be afraid of foreign investment – they just need to think how they can cooperate. Our main strength is that we know the Myanmar market very well and foreign companies cannot distribute their products countrywide without cooperating with a local partner," he added.

An SME development and poverty alleviation workshop organised by Mingalar Myanmar, a Myanmar NGO that focuses on sustainable economic development, was held at Sedona Hotel in Yangon on March 18.

The workshop brought together economic consultants, development experts and the media to discuss SME development and poverty alleviation.



The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Myanmar is inviting qualified candidates to apply for the following positions:

Sr.	Title and level	Duty Station	Position	Deadline
1.	Communications Analyst (LICA 5)	Yangon	National	30-Apr-2013
2.	Infrastructure Specialist (IICA 2)	Yangon	International	17-Apr-2013
3.	M&E Consultant (IICA 3)	Yangon	International	21-Apr-2013

For details please visit UNOPS website <https://gprs.unops.org/pages/viewvacancy/VAListing.aspx> and click on the post you are interested in applying for. All applications must be made through UNOPS E-recruitment system.

Drinking water supply to slow in Thingyan

By San Yamin Aung

PURIFIED drinking water distributors are warning customers that deliveries during the annual Thingyan holiday will be slowed because many employees take leave during the festival.

“Most water distributors find it difficult to meet demand during Thingyan because all our workers – mostly young men – want to take leave,” said Ko Soe Min Oo, the owner of Rex purified drinking water factory in Mingalardon township. “We have a problem because we can’t just close our business,” he said.

He added that demand during the festival is at least double a normal week, and the company has to prepare weeks ahead to

increase its supply.

“To cover demand we dig about four additional tube wells. Before summer, we only run four trucks from our factory but during the hot months we have to operate seven,” he said.

“For purified drinking water companies, summer is both the hardest time of the year but also the most lucrative, especially the Thingyan period,” said Ko Zwe Nyi Kyaw Win, the owner of Super Cool water.

He added that summer presents a number of challenges beyond staffing shortages. “There is the risk that artesian wells will dry up because the underground water courses change or our wells will suddenly collapse,” he said “In 2011 most factories faced water shortages because parts of the water table ran dry,” he said.

Ma Win Win Nwe, a sales executive for Rex, said companies must also absorb higher running costs for paying overtime, and buying diesel for trucks and generators.

“But our staff is the most important factor. Normally we have about 90 workers but in summer we need 150.

“In Sanchaung township alone we employ at least 20 people. Each worker can deliver about 60 bottles a day,” she said.

Bottled water usually sells for about K400 for 20 litres.

“When the summer arrives we normally use two 20-litre bottles a week,” a Sanchaung township resident said.

“But in hot season we buy extra bottles because it’s uncomfortable when we run out of drinking water,” she said.



Rex purified drinking water employees distribute bottles in Sanchaung township last week. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

Indonesia, Myanmar double bilateral trade

By Aung Shin

MYANMAR and Indonesia have set a target of increasing bilateral trade to US\$1 billion by the end of 2016, the head of a visiting Indonesian trade delegation said.

The target will be met partly through investments in the mining, agriculture, telecommunications, construction, banking and electric power sectors, Mr Muhammad Hatta Rajasa, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, said at a business forum at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) on April 3.

“We met [the] Myanmar president and ministers in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. We agreed to promote the two countries’ relations. We will double bilateral trade up to \$1 billion in 2016. We would like to be a part of your economy,” he said at the forum, which was

held on the final day of the delegation’s visit.

The two countries previously agreed on a bilateral trade target of \$500 million by 2015 when President U Thein Sein visited Indonesia in 2011. About 15 Indonesian business groups are preparing to invest in Myanmar, the state-run *Myanmar Ahlin* reported on March 26.

“We thank the Indonesian business friends and strongly recommend investing in Myanmar as we are welcoming ASEAN investors with favourable conditions. It is a strategic time to come to Myanmar,” UMFCCI president U Win Aung said at the forum.

The Indonesian business delegation included 60 members from 11 leading companies and arrived in Myanmar on April 1.

Indonesian firms have invested \$241.5 million in Myanmar since 1988, and the country ranks as the 14th-largest source of foreign investment.

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Govt housing tenants claim discrimination

Relocations to new complex to begin in May but tenants ask housing department for ownership of new apartments

By Htar Htar Khin

RESIDENTS of several government housing blocks in Yankin township are complaining that the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development is discriminating against them in a relocation scheme.

About 160 families which live in blocks 366-371 say they are not being given ownership of their new apartments when they relocate in May, unlike previous relocations in the area. DHSHD plans to relocate the residents within the next few months, beginning in May, and redevelop the old plots.

U Han Htay, 54, who lives in block 368, said he has lived there for more than four decades.

"I have lived here since 1969 and we have been paying K51 a month in rent to DHSHD since then," he said.

"We moved here from U Wisara [Min Ma Naing] housing. I want to tell people what's happening to us because we feel that we should be given our new apartments, just like the residents of Shwe Ohn Pin housing in Yankin who moved from blocks of 343-347 and 337 and 338 in 2005-06.

"Those people were given ownership books for their apartments when they were relocated," he said.

"But DHSHD has not told us whether we will be forced to rent the apartments or if we will be given ownership," he said.

Daw Thin Thin Swe, who lives in block 371, said: "We've lived here since 2002. We welcome the relocation because the new apartments



Old government housing apartments in Yankin township last week. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing



The nearly completed housing complexes. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

will be much nicer and larger. But we want to own the new apartment, just like Shwe Ohn Pin housing residents."

Daw Aye Than Tun, a block

369 resident, added, "The apartment complexes are too old and falling apart, and the sanitation system is poor."

"It's a dream come true to

move into a new apartment but we want to own them," she said.

Additionally, the new developments are in an area

that floods often.

"There's standing water at the site nearly all the time and the bedrock is saturated, which we think is a serious

matter. But we know the developers – Pyi Nyein Thu and Phwint Phyo Aung construction companies – used a pile foundation, which in some places was sunk to a depth of 200 feet," said U Han Htay.

He said DHSHD held a meeting with residents about the proposed relocation in December last year to inform them of the proposed dates.

"After the discussion, we agreed to move from our old apartments because they are too small – 500 square feet is not enough space for a family, and the new apartments are 900 square feet and have three bedrooms. But some people, especially those with ground floor shops, don't want to move because they think they will lose their businesses," U Han Htay said.

"At the meeting, I led talks about the infrastructure conditions of the newly built blocks because we know that the septic tanks at Shwe Ohn Pin housing overflowed within one year, which was unpleasant for people on the ground floor and we want to make sure it doesn't happen to us."

Residents said DHSHD officials said people would be housed on the same floor they currently live on.

U Han Htay said he hoped the problems could be solved through negotiation and there are no plans yet to take the complaints to higher authorities.

The newly develop complexes are 95 percent complete, said a spokesperson for Pyi Nyein Thu construction.

DHSHD turned down interview requests from *The Myanmar Times* for this report.

Spaniards protest evictions on lawmakers' doors

By Ingrid Bazinet

MADRID – A man in a white wedding dress flanked by two others in striped prison uniforms is outside the office of a Spanish lawmaker, pushing for changes to the country's tough eviction laws.

The unusual-looking protest is the latest in a wave of such demonstrations – dubbed *escraches*, the Argentine slang word for denunciation – staged outside the homes or workplaces of lawmakers from Spain's ruling conservative Popular Party in recent weeks by campaigners who blame the eviction laws for forcing hundreds of thousands of people from their homes during a deep recession.

"Why am I dressed as a bride? To show that we have come here full of love and not violence," said Daniel Garcia, an activist from the Platform for Mortgage Victims, which organised the protest Wednesday outside the office of lawmaker Eva Duran in Vallecas, a working-class neighbourhood in Madrid.

The grass-roots association wants the government to change Spain's laws to end evictions, allow insolvent homeowners to write off their debts by surrendering their



Anti-eviction activists take part in a protest to demand the vote of a Popular Legislative Initiative to stop evictions and establish social rents, in front of a municipal building in Madrid on April 3. Pic: AFP

homes and transform repossessed flats owned by banks into social housing.

Under the current law, a bank can pursue a mortgage holder to pay off the remaining balance of a loan if the value of the seized property is not enough.

Parliament agreed in February to debate the reforms proposed by the group after it collected over 1.4 million signatures in an online petition, but last week the Popular

Party tabled amendments that would water down some of the key demands.

Spanish courts have executed 252,826 eviction orders – including a record 75,605 last year – since 2008, when a decade-long property bubble burst and Spain sank into recession, throwing millions out of work.

Outrage has been fanned by a string of suicides of people reportedly driven to despair by the prospect of eviction and a 41-billion-euro (about

US\$53 billion) European bailout of Spanish banks hurt by the property crash.

The Platform for Mortgage Victims (PAH) routinely sends activists to block the entrance to the homes of people about to be evicted in order to prevent police from forcibly removing them.

But earlier this year the group began staging *escraches* as well.

The protest tactic originated in Argentina in the 1990s when activists staged plays and demonstrations against human rights violations outside the homes and offices of officials of the Latin American country's former military dictatorship.

In Spain, the demonstrations have involved activists posting stickers on the entrances to the homes of Popular Party lawmakers, pushing fliers under their doors or using a blowhorn to chant slogans under their office windows.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, in power since December 2011, blasted the *escraches* as undemocratic.

"These days we see that many of our party comrades are being harassed. We have seen episodes of intimidation or verbal abuse towards them, and what is worse, to their families. Nobody deserves to be harassed, vilified, threatened

or intimidated," he told a meeting of top Popular Party officials held in Madrid last week.

The interior ministry has said that people who take part in *escraches* would be identified by police and punished.

"Politicians do not want to change the law on mortgages. They criminalise us and say we are terrorists to not change the law," said Manuel San Pastor, a lawyer with the Platform for Mortgage Victims.

"What we want is to visually inform elected officials. They live in a bubble and are not aware of the tragedies that their policies cause." Last month the European Court of Justice ruled that Spanish legislation infringes European Union law as it does not allow courts to halt eviction orders on the basis of possible unfair terms in mortgage agreements.

Rajoy's government has vowed to make changes to the law to ensure it complies with EU rules, but remains opposed to allowing homeowners to write off their debts by surrendering their home.

"Yet this measure exists in the United States," said Beatriz Garcia, an activist with the Platform for Mortgage Victims, at the protest held on April 3. – AFP

Company plans 27-storey office tower near Hledan

By Myat Nyein Aye

ASIA Metal Company will cooperate with China Steel Structure Company to build a 27-storey office tower at Hledan Junction in Yangon's Kamaryut township, said U Yang Ho, AMC managing director, on March 23.

He added that the building will be called the AMC office tower.

"We will build a green [environmentally friendly] building in Yangon using a steel structure," he said. "I have never seen any environmentally friendly buildings in Yangon and we want to make one of the highest standard. We are cooperating with China Steel Structure Company, which will provide technical assistance," he said.

However, U Than Myint, a spokesperson for the Committee for Quality Control of High-rise Building Projects, under

Yangon City Development Committee, said the project did not have approval yet but some simple plans had been shown to the committee.

"We have not seen a detailed outline of the AMC tower project yet but we have had discussions with the company and the Taiwan experts. I think they are waiting for permission from YCDC," he said.

U Yang Ho said the building will be constructed using environmentally friendly techniques and will integrate green friendly systems.

"Buildings with steel structures can be more environmentally friendly than reinforced concrete – and it can be done faster too," he told *The Myanmar Times*.

The AMC office tower will be built to accommodate international companies and space will only be available for lease, not for sale, an AMC spokesperson said.

"We will build it with a hall type plan and allow tenants to decorate and divide the spaces as they require," he said.

The architectural, structural and mechanical and electrical designs are all being supplied by the Taiwan firm and work on the project will begin in May.

The spokesperson said the 30-storey project is expected to be completed within two-and-a-half years. Each floor will cover 20,000 square feet and the compound measures 30,000 square feet.

He added that there will be three levels of underground parking. However, he would not divulge how much the project would cost.

"Taiwanese companies want to invest in Myanmar and we want to help China Steel Structure Co access this market," he said.

China Steel Structure Co was a contractor for the 508-metre Taipei Financial Center Building.



Chairman of Asia Metal Company U Yan Ho (2nd left) with Taiwanese company officials recently. Pic: SUPPLIED/Asia Metal Company

China home prices pick up in March

SHANGHAI – Chinese home prices picked up in March as buyers rushed to beat new government policies aimed at cracking down on speculation, an independent survey showed on April 1.

The cost of a new home in 100 major cities was up 3.9 percent year-on-year to an average 9998 yuan (US\$1587) a square metre, the China Index Academy said, the fourth consecutive monthly rise. In February, home prices rose 2.48pc.

On a monthly basis, prices rose 1.06pc in March from February, continuing a run of increases for the 10th month, the organisation said in a statement.

China issued new rules in March to rein in prices, including a nationwide capital gains tax of 20pc on profits owners make from selling residential property.

Major Chinese cities, including the capital Beijing and commercial hub of Shanghai, have started to announce detailed policies on how they will implement the central government edict.

"Against the unclear policy trend, most buyers caught 'the last bus' to enter the market," said the China Index Academy, which is owned by SouFun Holdings, China's biggest real estate website operator.

"A portion of demand surged into the market accelerating the housing purchase process on panic and psychological pressure from worries over an increase in tax," it added.

Chinese couples have also flocked to divorce to evade the new tax, through a loophole that allows couples with two properties to separate and put each house into one person's name to then sell them tax-free in certain cases.

At the same time, a state media report on April 1 warned of the possibility of buyers in Beijing entering fake marriages to circumvent a new rule barring single people from purchasing a second property in the capital. For the past three years, China has sought to control residential property prices with measures including restrictions on second and third home purchases, higher minimum downpayments and taxes in some cities on multiple and non-locally owned homes. – AFP

IMF urges Denmark to drop risky interest-only mortgages

COPENHAGEN – The International Monetary Fund is urging Denmark to phase out interest-only mortgages or risk destabilising its housing market, as lawmakers and lenders debate whether to aid borrowers unable to pay their loans.

"In many countries, this type of loan is forbidden, so it wouldn't be given in the first place," Yingbin Xiao, senior economist at the IMF, said. "Given that this is an option in Denmark, we think it would be prudent for them to phase them out gradually because of the risk. The Danish market already has experienced a correction."

The IMF is adding its voice to a growing body of critics, including the central bank and Standard & Poor's, arguing the interest-only loans have weakened Denmark's US\$500-billion mortgage market. Though the model helped keep mortgages affordable during recessions, failure to amortise has underpinned growth in private debt to a world-beating 322 percent of disposable incomes, S&P estimates.

Danish mortgage banks started offering borrowers a

decade-long deferment option on principal payments in 2003. The interest-only loans now make up 56pc of outstanding mortgage debt, the industry estimates. More than 100,000 homeowners may need help, said a February study by the University of Southern Denmark.

The loans make up too large a portion of Denmark's \$300-billion economy for banks to drop them from one day to the next, said the IMF. The challenge is phasing them out without fanning the risks they entail, said the fund.

"Given the rapid growth in the proportion of the total they make up, it is not realistic to suddenly ask banks to stop all this," Xiao said. "But it would be prudent to phase out this type of loan gradually."

S&P said last month Denmark needs to encourage borrowers to repay their principal. The government has already rejected an industry plan to limit the debt pool affected by amortisation requirements by splitting mortgages in breach of loan-to-value rules so that interest-only terms would still have applied to

loan amounts within an 80pc LTV cap.

Denmark's house prices have lost more than 20pc since the nation's property bubble burst in 2008, eroding equity and leaving fewer borrowers eligible to roll over their debt into new interest-only mortgages.

Mortgage banks are not allowed to give bond-backed loans that exceed 80pc of a property's value. Loans already on the books that have breached that threshold since house prices sank must be written down if interest-only terms are extended, according to existing legislation.

Casper Andersen, an S&P credit analyst, said last month Denmark's banks should consider extending loan terms and writing down some debt. The Scandinavian nation's AAA status has kept borrowing costs close to record lows, helping make such a move affordable for the industry, he said.

"The banks have access to cheap funding, they've increased their margins so they're being recapitalised by the market, and the losses so far are low, seen in

an historical perspective," Andersen said. "It's not likely that a few more losses will raise eyebrows."

Mortgage industry writedowns climbed 51pc to 1.9 billion kroner (\$327 million) in the six months to June, showed the latest figures from the Financial Supervisory Authority. At 0.08pc of lending, the level remains low, the FSA said.

House price declines already have forced Danish mortgage banks to provide 131 billion kroner in supplementary collateral since 2007 to meet regulatory requirements, and another 107 billion kroner to meet investor demands, the FSA said in December.

Not everyone agrees the loans should be scrapped.

Michael Moeller, chairman of the government-appointed committee on systemically important financial institutions, says inflation – 1.2pc in February – is reducing debt burdens. Prohibiting mortgage lenders from offering interest-only loans would only hurt the housing market and shift the problem to banks, he said.

– Bloomberg News

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The time is right for the 'smartwatch', say analysts

WASHINGTON – Amid much speculation on the future of the "smartwatch," the consensus is growing: The time is right.

In recent weeks, reports have surfaced about plans for smartwatches from tech giants Apple, Samsung and Google, with launches possible later this year.

"I think we have reached a tipping point," Avi Greengart, analyst on consumer devices at the research firm Current Analysis, said on March 30.

Greengart said 2013 may be the year for the smartwatch because "the components have gotten small enough and cheap enough" and a large number of consumers now have smartphones that can connect to a wearable device.

The idea of the connected watch has been around for at least a decade: Microsoft had one in 2003. And some devices are already on the market including from Sony, the crowdfunding maker Pebble and Italian-based firm i'm.

Up to now, smartwatches

have been able to connect to phones wirelessly to give users signals about new messages, and allow some limited Web access.

But analysts say once they gain traction, app developers can come up with new functions, possibly drawing on health and fitness monitoring devices already in use.

The likely entry of new heavyweight players such as Apple "can catalyse the market," Greengart said, while noting that any new device has to prove its utility to consumers.

"This is a market that needs to be created."

Even though Apple has maintained its customary silence on the subject, that has not stopped speculation on the internet, including a likely design of a curved glass "iWatch."

ABI Research predicts that smartwatches and other wearable computing devices will "explode in popularity over the next year" and grow to 485 million annual device shipments by 2018.

"The furor about wearable technologies, particularly



A Smartwatch by Sony on display at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona on February 28 last year. In recent weeks, reports have emerged about plans for smartwatches by Apple, Samsung and Google. Pic: AFP

smart watches and smart glasses is unsurprising," said ABI analyst Josh Flood.

"Apple's curved glass-based watch could prove to be a revelation in the wearable technologies market. The

major question is whether the digital time piece will act as a complimentary device to the company's iPhone smartphones or as a standalone product with other functionalities like

health or activity tracking capabilities."

Citi analyst Oliver Chen said the smartwatch segment, which includes devices from Fossil and Movado, could easily evolve

into a US\$6 billion annual business with "higher than average" profit margins.

"A successful smartwatch likely needs to create a completely new market and not compete on fashion or luxury brand prestige," Chen said.

Forrester Research analyst Sarah Rotman Epps noted that "the body is the next frontier for personal computing," and that "it seems like only a matter of time before Apple enters the market directly."

Epps said that this market could grow because "consumers love their smartphones, and there is some appeal in having an additional touchpoint," which could allow a user to check messages or use other smartphone apps from the wrist.

But she noted that there are several other potential types of competing wearable computing devices, including Google Glass and other "smart" eyeglasses.

"I'm not convinced the smartwatch is the killer form factor," Epps said.

– AFP

Apple issues apology after criticism from Chinese state media

BEIJING – Apple chief executive Tim Cook has apologised to Chinese consumers after the US technology giant was subjected to a barrage of criticism in state-run media over alleged "arrogance" and double standards.

China is Apple's second-biggest market, and its iPhones and other products – many of them made in the country – are highly popular, although it faces fierce competition from South Korea's Samsung.

State media, particularly the *People's Daily*, the Communist Party's mouthpiece, carried vehement attacks on Apple over its customer service and returns policies over several days.

In a Chinese-language letter to "respected Chinese consumers" issued on the company's website late on April 1, Cook said Apple had "profoundly reflected on the opinions" expressed in the country.

"We realised that the lack of external communication during the process has led the outside world to think that Apple was arrogant and did not care or paid no attention to consumers' feedback," he said.

"We sincerely apologise for any concerns or misunderstanding this has caused to consumers."

Cook added that the firm had "many things we have to learn" in operating and

communicating in China and will revise some warranty policies.

Apple will provide new components, including new back covers, when replacing any parts of iPhone 4 and iPhone 4S models that break down, he said.

Chinese consumers have had to pay about US\$80 for new back covers, said Chinese media reports, which said the policy amounted to "double standards" as they were free in other markets including South Korea, Britain, and Australia.

The *People's Daily* ran critical items for five consecutive days late last month, at one point urging consumers to

Apple had been forced into the apology, saying: "You will be the next Google if you do not bow your head."

Google in 2009 suffered state media potshots followed by official penalties and later effectively shut down its Chinese search engine after months of tensions with authorities over censorship. It now sends mainland users to an uncensored site in Hong Kong.

Chinese state-run media generally welcomed the Apple statement, with the nationalist *Global Times* saying it showed the firm's "professionalism and flexibility".

"The blame should not only lie in foreign companies, but also China's business environment," it said in an editorial.

China's foreign ministry also weighed in, with spokesman Hong Lei saying: "It is completely normal for the Apple company to apologise to Chinese customers. I think this act is commendable."

Ben Cavender, an associate principal of China Market Research Group in Shanghai, said Apple had been unfairly targeted by state media and research by his consultancy found customers thought the firm gave good service.

Apple could take no chances in China, he added, as few large economies will continue to have strong growth in future and it was the biggest of them. – AFP



Commuters using smartphones on the platform of a BTS train station in Bangkok. A Facebook-sponsored study in the United States has found that smartphone owners there tend to be connected from the instant they rise until they fall asleep. A week-long survey by IDC of more than 7000 people aged between 18 and 44 with iPhones or Android-powered smartphones showed that four out of five check their handsets within 15 minutes of waking. The top three applications were messaging, Web browsing, and Facebook, in that order, said IDC, which conducted the survey late last month. Pic: AFP

Google's privacy policy challenged

PARIS – Six European countries, including France and Britain, on April 2 launched joint action against Google to get the US internet giant to scale back on new monitoring powers that watchdogs believe violate EU privacy protection rules.

Despite sharp criticism from US and European consumer advocacy groups, Google last year rolled out a common user privacy policy for its services that condensed around 60 previous sets of rules into one and allowed the company to track users more closely to develop targeted advertising.

Among the Google services affected were Gmail, YouTube, the Android mobile system, social networks and its ubiquitous internet search engine.

France's Cnil data protection agency said in a statement that the concerted action – which was also carried out by authorities in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain – was launched "on the basis of the provisions laid down in their respective national legislation" to force Google to bring its privacy policy in line with European regulations. The action came after the European Union's 27

member states warned Google in October not to apply the new policy and gave it four months to make changes or face legal action.

When that deadline expired in February, several European data protection agencies set up a task force to pursue coordinated action against the US giant.

Cnil said it had seen no changes to Google's privacy policy since the company's representatives met on March 19 with the task force, which included agencies from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

Cnil also said it had notified Google that it had launched an inspection procedure.

In a statement sent to AFP, the company said "privacy policy respects European law and allows us to create simpler, more effective services. We have engaged fully with the data protection agencies involved throughout this process, and we'll continue to do so going forward."

But critics argue that the new policy gives the operator of the world's largest search engine an unprecedented ability to monitor its users. – AFP

Briefly

SHANGHAI – A sixth person has died of H7N9 bird flu in China, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported on April 5. It said the latest victim was a farmer, 64, who died in Huzhou, in eastern Zhejiang province.
• Earlier report, P. 34.

ALMATY, Kazakhstan – Iran and six world powers began a new round of negotiations in Kazakhstan on April 5 aimed at ending the decade-long dispute surrounding the Islamic republic's nuclear program, a Western official said.

JOHANNESBURG – Nelson Mandela's wife, Graca Machel, has said the 94-year-old icon is "fine" and his health is improving after he was hospitalised more than a week earlier for pneumonia, it was reported on April 5.

WASHINGTON – US Senator Bill Nelson endorsed gay marriage on April 4, shifting the chamber in favour of rights for same-sex couples. Nelson, a Democrat from Florida, became the 51st lawmaker in the 100-seat Senate to support gay unions.

WELLINGTON – New Zealand troops began their withdrawal from Afghanistan on April 5, with the lowering of the flag for the last time at their base in Bamiyan marking the end of a 10-year involvement in the war.

MADRID – Spanish media on April 4 hailed the decision to name King Juan Carlos's daughter Princess Cristina as a suspect in a corruption case, saying the unprecedented move showed that nobody was above the law. – *AFP*

North Korea issues war warning to foreign embassies

SEOUL – North Korea warned foreign embassies in Pyongyang on April 5 it was unable to guarantee their safety in the event of conflict and that they should consider evacuating missions by this week amid soaring nuclear tensions.

European countries with embassies in Pyongyang, such as Britain and Russia, reported receiving the warning as an increasingly bellicose North Korea moved two mid-range missiles to its east coast.

"They invited the embassies and organisations present at the meeting to inform them by 10 April what assistance they would require from the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) should they wish to be evacuated from DPRK or to be relocated elsewhere," Britain's Foreign Office said in a statement.

The statement there were no immediate plans to withdraw diplomats.

Earlier, a Foreign Office spokeswoman said Pyongyang had warned that "from April 10 (it) would be unable to guarantee the safety of embassies and international organisations in the country in the event of conflict".

"Our understanding is that the North Koreans were asking whether embassies are intending to leave, rather than advising them to leave," she said.

North Korea, incensed by

UN sanctions and South Korea-US military drills, has issued a series of apocalyptic threats of nuclear war in recent weeks and there has been growing international concern that the situation might spiral out of control.

The White House said on April 5 it "would not be surprised" if North Korea carried out a missile test.

"We would not be surprised to see them take such an action. And it would fit their current pattern of bellicose, unhelpful and unconstructive rhetoric and actions," White House spokesman Jay Carney said.

The spike in tensions came as *Yonhap* news agency, citing a top South Korean government official, said North Korea had loaded two mid-range Musudan missiles on mobile launchers and hidden them in underground facilities near its east coast.

"The North is apparently intent on firing the missiles without prior warning," the official said.

The Musudan has never been tested, but is believed to have a range of about 3000 kilometres (1860 miles), which could theoretically be

pushed to 4000 with a light payload.

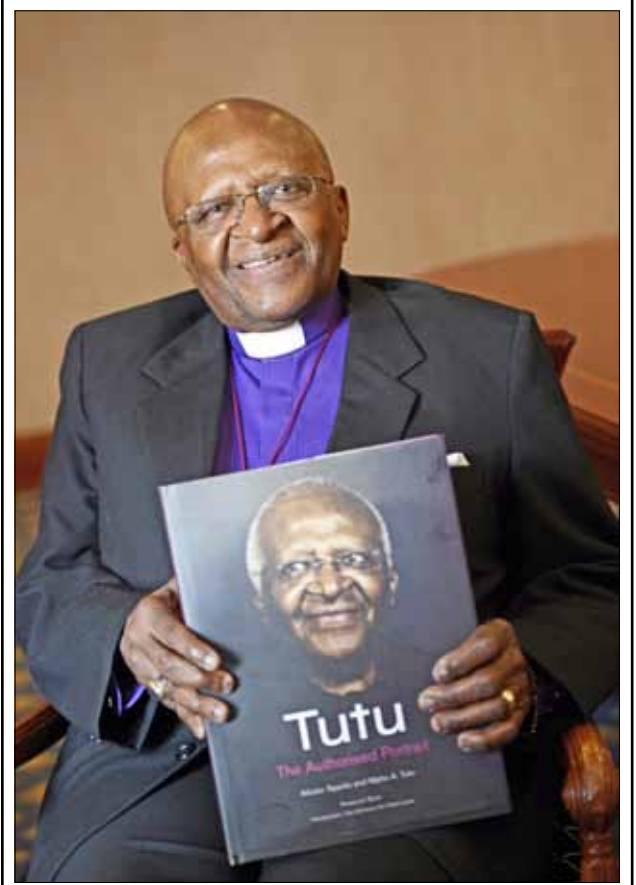
That would cover any target in South Korea and Japan, and possibly even reach US military bases on the Pacific island of Guam.

The Pentagon has said it will send missile-interceptor batteries to protect its bases on Guam, a US territory some 3380 kilometres (2100 miles) southeast of North Korea and home to 6000 American military personnel.

Most experts think the North is not yet capable of mounting a nuclear device on a ballistic missile which could strike US bases or territory.

On April 4, the North Korean army said it had received final approval for military action, possibly involving nuclear weapons, against the threat posed by US B-52 and B-2 stealth bombers participating in joint military drills with South Korea.

There has been speculation that Pyongyang might schedule a missile launch to coincide with the birthday of the North's late founder Kim Il-Sung in mid-April. – *AFP*
• Related report, P. 28.



Anti-apartheid icon and Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, shown in a November 6, 2012 file photo, was on April 4 awarded the US\$1.7 million Templeton Prize for his lifelong work to promote "love and forgiveness". The prize, awarded each year to a living person who has made "an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension", will be presented to Tutu, 81, at a ceremony in London on May 21. The prize is administered by the US-based Templeton Foundation. Pic: AFP

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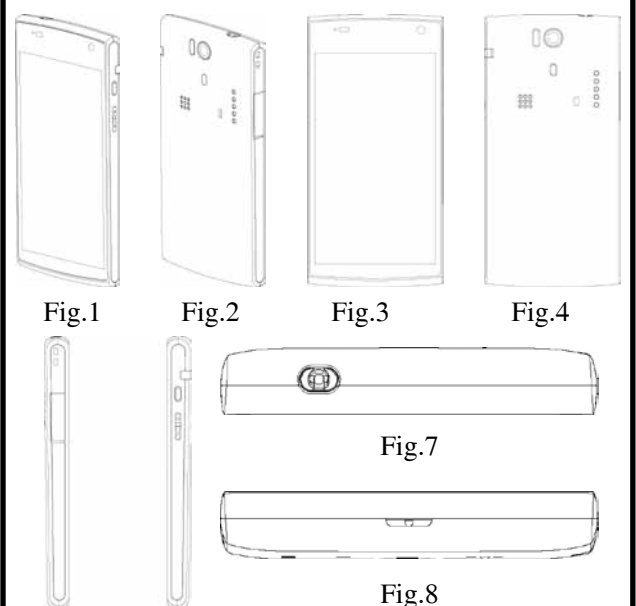


Fig. 5 Fig. 6 **Reg. No. 4/1929/2013 (22.2.2013)**
Fig. 1 is a front perspective view, Fig. 2 is a rear perspective view, Fig. 3 is a front view, Fig. 4 is a rear view, Fig. 5 is a left side view, Fig. 6 is a right side view, Fig. 7 is a top plan view and Fig. 8 is a bottom view.

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Little black sheep put to work in Paris park

PARIS – Four little black sheep on April 3 left the countryside and began their new careers in the city: working as eco-friendly lawn movers in a largely working-class district in northeastern Paris.

Between April and October, the new “park workers” will graze grounds the size of eight tennis-courts in three two-week-long sweeps in a move to

promote biodiversity and make the grooming of the capital’s green areas more sustainable – replacing both chemicals and lawn mowers.

Out of work, they will be resting back at a farm on the outskirts of Paris, the Ferme de Paris.

“For a lawn mowed 24 times a year, there is no biodiversity. When you use animals, the droppings

attract insects and the insects bring birds,” said Eco Terra president Alain Divo whose company plans and organises eco-pasture projects in French urban areas.

Grazing next to a ring road and by the foot of a giant grey building housing the capital’s archive centre in the 19th arrondissement, the sheep seem to have adjusted to their new

environment quickly.

“The fact that they graze right away means that they’re going to get used to this very quickly,” Ferme de Paris sheep-keeper Marcel Collet said, noting the project that was ordered by local authorities is a “first” for the city.

Collet said eco-pasture has existed in France for about 10 years, but “really began to develop in the past

three years”.

He said most of the animals used in the projects are local breeds that have been made redundant due to a more intense and competitive farming culture, where they have been replaced by more productive animals.

“Breeds that were a bit local, a little less productive... were set aside,” Collet said. – AFP

Briefs

Obama upbeat on immigration reform

LOS ANGELES – US President Barack Obama said on April 4 he was more upbeat about the prospects of immigration reform making it through Congress than tougher gun control legislation.

“I am very optimistic that we get immigration reform done in the next few months,” Obama said at an event in Atherton, California.

“And the reason I’m optimistic is because people spoke out through the ballot box, and that’s breaking gridlock,” added Obama, who won 70 percent of the country’s Latino vote when he was re-elected last November.

Assad condemns Arab League

DAMASCUS – Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has lashed out at the Arab League and its decision to hand Syria’s seat to the opposition, according to comments published on April 4.

“The Arab League lacks legitimacy. It’s a League that represents the Arab states, not the Arab people, so it can’t grant or retract legitimacy,” Assad said in extracts from an interview with Turkish media published on the presidency’s Facebook page.

Putin critic declares leadership ambition

MOSCOW – Charismatic Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, a leading critic of President Vladimir Putin, last week declared his ambition to stand for president as he prepares for a trial that could see him jailed.

Navalny said he expected to be convicted in the embezzlement case, which his supporters claim is politically motivated, but insisted he did not fear prison.

“I want to be president” Navalny told the opposition Dozhd (Rain) television channel late on April 4.

Embarrassment for Uruguay’s leader

MONTEVIDEO – Uruguay’s President Jose Mujica was left red-faced on April 4 after disparaging remarks apparently aimed at Argentine counterpart Cristina Kirchner and her late husband, Nestor, who had a lazy eye, were picked up by an open microphone.

Buenos Aires swiftly responded with an official protest, calling the comments “unacceptable.”

“This old hag is worse than the cross-eyed man,” Mujica was caught saying at a news conference with the Argentine leader while speaking quietly with another official. – AFP

Hollande on defensive over former minister’s foreign bank account

PARIS – French President Francois Hollande was forced to defend himself on April 3 as critics questioned how much he knew about a secret foreign bank account that belonged to a former minister facing tax fraud charges.

Jerome Cahuzac – the minister responsible for cracking down on tax evasion until he resigned two weeks earlier – was charged on April 2 with “laundering the proceeds of tax fraud” after he admitted to having a foreign bank account containing 600,000 euros (US\$770,000), following weeks of denials.

Hollande appeared on national television on April 3 to address the scandal, vowing a new law within weeks on the “publication and control” of the wealth of ministers and parliamentarians.

He said he knew nothing of the foreign account and that Cahuzac “did not benefit from any protection” from the government.

“He deceived the highest authorities in the country: the head of state, the head of the government, parliament, and through them all the

French people,” he said.

Hollande later travelled to Morocco, where the scandal – the biggest political crisis for the president since he took power last year – threatened to overshadow his landmark two-day trip to the former French colony.

The president had been quick to condemn Cahuzac’s actions, but critics have pounced on the scandal, saying top officials must have been either lying to protect the ex-minister or naive

‘France is disgusted and so am I.’

enough to believe him.

The head of the main opposition right-wing UMP party, Jean-Francois Cope, demanded Hollande explain the scandal to the French public.

Cope said the president either “knew nothing, and that’s extremely serious because it means he showed a certain amount of naivete” or “he knew and that means he lied to the French people”.

“Who can believe that

Francois Hollande and (Prime Minister) Jean-Marc Ayrault were aware of nothing?” Cope asked on Europe 1 radio.

Opposition lawmakers have called for a parliamentary probe into the scandal and for the resignation of Cahuzac’s former boss, Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici.

Hollande had promised a government of unimpeachable morals, and the scandal is likely to further damage the standing of the president, who is languishing in opinion polls less than a year into his five-year term.

Former UMP prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said Hollande’s promises of reforms had not been enough to tackle the scandal. “France is disgusted and so am I. The president’s statements were not at the level of the shock being felt,” he said.

Cahuzac announced his resignation on March 19 after prosecutors opened a probe into the account, first revealed by the investigative Mediapart news website in December. – AFP



Policemen keep onlookers away from a fire engulfing a 40-storey building in the Chechen capital, Grozny, on April 3. The building, a centerpiece of a campaign by the authorities in Chechnya to promote the city as a smart, modern hub, was unoccupied, officials said. The building is one of several in a development known as the Grozny-City complex which was opened in 2011 and symbolises the mainly Muslim Russian region’s recovery from war. Pic: AFP

Breadline offer backfires in UK

LONDON – An online petition calling for a British minister to survive on £53 (US\$80) a week, after he claimed he knew what it was like to live on the breadline, had attracted the support of more than 370,000 people by April 3.

The petition was launched after works and pensions minister Iain Duncan Smith told a man who runs a market stall that he could live on the measly amount if he had to.

Duncan Smith, of Prime Minister David Cameron’s Conservative Party, dismissed the petition as a “complete stunt”, but it has prompted a wider backlash against a series of welfare reforms which took effect last week.

Market trader David Bennett asked on BBC radio on April 2 if Duncan

Smith could live on £53, to which the minister replied “If I had to I would”.

The petition was subsequently set up by a musician, challenging the minister to give up his £134,565 yearly salary and live on about £200 a month.

The online petition, hosted at www.change.org, says: “This petition calls on Iain Duncan Smith to live on this budget for at least one year. This would help realise the Conservative Party’s current mantra that ‘We are all in this together’.

“This would mean a 97 percent reduction in his current income, which is £1581.02 a week, or £225 a day, after tax.”

Duncan Smith, a former leader of the Conservative Party, told his local constituency newspaper in northeast London

that he had twice been unemployed in his life and knew what it was like “to live on the breadline”.

“This is a complete stunt which distracts attention from the welfare reforms which are much more important and which I have been working hard to get done,” he said in the *Wanstead and Woodford Guardian*.

Duncan Smith is married to an aristocrat and lives in a 17th century mansion.

The reforms began taking effect last week as the coalition government of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats seeks to cut welfare spending.

In one of the measures, 660,000 public housing tenants deemed to have a spare room began to lose an average of £14 a week in welfare payments in what critics have dubbed a “bedroom tax”. – AFP

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Dated: 8 April 2013

Clashes erupt as Palestinians bury prisoner, teenagers

HEBRON, Palestinian Territories – Clashes rocked the West Bank on April 4 as thousands attended the funerals of a prisoner and two teenagers shot dead by Israeli troops.

Israeli soldiers fired rubber bullets in the southern city of Hebron after furious crowds lined the streets to pay their respects to Maisara Abu Hamdiyeh, 63, whose body was carried in a cortege to a mosque for burial.

Abu Hamdiyeh, who had served 10 years of a life term for attempted murder, died of throat cancer in hospital on April 2.

As news of his death spread, protests in several places quickly turned into clashes with the Israeli army, notably in Hebron, Abu Hamdiyeh's home town.

Near the northern village of Anabta close to Tulkarem, the clashes turned deadly, with two teenagers shot dead by troops overnight on April 3, Israeli and Palestinian sources said.

Palestinian security officials said Amer Nasser, 17, was killed by a bullet to the head and Naji Balbisi, 19, whose body was discovered at dawn, was shot in the chest.

The Israeli military said troops had opened fire at "rioters who hurled petrol bombs" at a military post.

In Anabta, where schools and shops were closed in mourning, about 6000 people gathered for the funerals, many calling for revenge as the two bodies arrived, both wrapped in

Palestinian flags, an AFP correspondent said.

After news of Abu Hamdiyeh's death emerged, Hebron had been wracked by clashes between stone-throwing youths and Israeli troops, and since April 2 the city has been shut down for a three-day general strike in a show of mourning.

Abu Hamdiyeh was jailed for life in 2002 on charges of attempted murder in connection with a failed bomb attack on a Jerusalem cafe. He had served 10 years of his sentence when he died.

The issue of Palestinians jailed by Israel is highly sensitive and often sparks mass demonstrations throughout the territories that flare into violent clashes with the military. – AFP



Relatives of Naji Balbisi, one of two Palestinian teenagers killed by Israeli troops during clashes last week, mourn during his funeral in the West Bank town of Anabta on April 4. The clashes followed the death of a Palestinian who died in an Israeli jail. Pic: AFP

Kerry heads to Middle East in new peace quest effort

WASHINGTON – US Secretary of State John Kerry is headed back to the Middle East for his third trip in a month, foraging for signs that Israel and the Palestinians are ready to make tough sacrifices for peace.

In a surprise move, the State Department announced on April 3 that Kerry will return to Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories early this week to build on a series of talks last month between American and regional leaders.

Expectations are growing that the US administration is ready to resume some kind of shuttle diplomacy to rekindle the moribund peace process, which has stalled since late 2010 amid bitter recriminations on both sides.

But State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland cautioned: "I would not expect the secretary to be putting down a plan."

President Barack Obama visited Israel and the West Bank in mid March, with Kerry then staying behind in the region for separate talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas.

"They've had some time to reflect on

the visit," Nuland said. "So this a chance for the secretary to go back and to listen again and to hear what they think is possible."

"But he'll also be making clear that the parties themselves have to want to get back to the table, that this is a choice that they have to make, and that they've also got to recognise, both parties, that compromise and sacrifices are going to have to be made if we're going to be able to help."

Kerry was to start his trip in Istanbul on April 7, with the two-year-old conflict in Syria that has cost more than 70,000 lives set to top the agenda of talks with senior Turkish officials.

Nuland would not go into details about the talks, but many of the top Syrian opposition.

Kerry's latest trip to Turkey also comes after Israel apologised to Ankara in late March for the deaths of nine Turkish activists in a botched raid by Israeli commandos on a Gaza-bound aid ship.

The breakthrough brokered by Obama ended a nearly three-year rift

between Israel and Ankara –both key regional US allies.

Kerry will head to Israel and the Palestinian territories on April 8 and 9 for separate talks with Netanyahu and Abbas, Nuland said.

The stops have been added to a previously announced trip during which Kerry will also travel to London for a meeting of G8 foreign ministers before heading to Asia for the first time as America's top diplomat.

Kerry has stressed he would like to find a path forward in the peace process which has bogged down for decades.

"I think the stage has been set for the possibilities that the parties can hopefully find a way to negotiations," Kerry said in Baghdad after meeting Netanyahu and Abbas. – AFP

Direct peace talks broke down just weeks after Obama made a failed bid to bring the sides together in September 2010 in a bitter row over Israel's settlement building.

Since then, the Palestinians have refused to return to the table without a settlement freeze while Israel has agreed to resume talks only if there are no preconditions. – AFP

Syria's deadliest month takes at least 6000 lives

BEIRUT – March was the deadliest month in Syria's two-year conflict, with more than 6,000 people killed, a monitoring group said on April 1.

"At least 6005 people were killed in March. A total of 2080 were civilians, among them 298 children aged under 16. Another 291 fatalities were women," said Syrian Observatory for Human Rights director Rami Abdel Rahman.

Most rebel fighters in Syria's conflict are civilians who have taken up arms to fight against forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad.

Of the total killed in March, at least 2074 were rebel fighters, among them 86 former Syrian army soldiers who defected and joined the insurgency, Abdel Rahman said.

Also among them were 588 rebels whose names the group could not verify, including "a large number of non-Syrian fighters," said the Observatory, which relies on a network of activists, lawyers and medics for its information.

Also killed were 1464

troops loyal to the Assad regime, Abdel Rahman told AFP.

The Observatory also reported the deaths of 387 people whose identities were impossible to verify.

"We believe the actual numbers of army troops and rebels killed in March were higher," said Abdel Rahman, adding both sides in Syria's war try to conceal the full extent of casualties to boost morale.

The United Nations said in January that more than 70,000 people have been killed in Syria since March 2011.

But the Observatory said on April 1 that according to its count, so far 62,594 people have been killed in the conflict, including at least 30,782 civilians, 15,283 troops, and 14,302 rebels.

The Observatory uses reports from the field and footage of bodies to document fatalities. It also works to record the victims' names, though Abdel Rahman admits that is not always possible.

– AFP

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Dated: 8 April 2013

North Korea's untested young dictator

ANALYSIS By Terry Atlas

WASHINGTON – If North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Un's threats to start a nuclear war are an attempt to get the world's attention, he's succeeded.

The question is why?

The answer would go a long way to determining whether war cries emanating from North Korea herald a devastating conflict or, as many analysts say, are just the latest round of provoke-and-retreat behaviour driven by the leadership politics in Pyongyang.

Even bluster carries risks of misjudgments or accidents if Kim, no older than 30 and new to power after his father's December 2011 death, is not skillful at managing the crisis he's created with missile and nuclear tests, threats against South Korea and videos depicting attacks on the United States.

"What I fear most of all is that he does not have an 'off ramp' to be able to ratchet back the tensions," David Maxwell, associate director of the Center for Security Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, said in an email.

Kim has rattled nerves by declaring North Korea's withdrawal from the 1953

armistice that ended Korean War combat, cutting military hot lines with the South, ordering rocket forces on alert and threatening strikes.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said on April 1 that the United States has seen no troop movements or other changes in the North's military posture to back up its threats. Still, he said, the US takes Kim's threats "very seriously."

Kim is following the same "six-decade-old playbook" used by his grandfather Kim Il Sung and late father, Kim Jong Il, raising tensions in an effort to split the US-South Korean alliance and to win political and economic concessions, said Maxwell, a retired Army special forces colonel who was once stationed in South Korea.

of the South Korean warship *Cheonan*, which killed 46 sailors, and North Korea's shelling eight months later of a South Korean border island, in which four people were killed.

Kim is more of a wild card than his grandfather and his father. He has the unique challenges of being a third-generation dictator, measured against a grandfather revered as the "Great Leader," who led North Korea into war and ran the nation for more than four decades, and an erratic father, the self-proclaimed "Dear Leader" who sought nuclear status and military might while maintaining a centrally planned economy that impoverishes most North Koreans.

The situation is "more dangerous than it has been at any time since 1976," when the US and North Korea

nearly came to blows under Kim's grandfather, said Peter Hayes, executive director of the Nautilus Institute, a research group in California.

In that incident, American soldiers pruning a tree in the demilitarised zone were attacked, and two were killed by North Korean border troops. The US responded with a show of military force, including flying B-52 bombers in the direction of North Korean airspace and Kim Il Sung subsequently expressed regret for the



North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un addresses a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea in Pyongyang on March 31, in an image released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency. Pic: AFP/KCNA via KNS

Kim is more of a wild card than his grandfather and his father.

The North also has a record of stoking tensions at times of transition in South Korea, such as February's inauguration of President Park Geun-hye.

Neither of his elders made good on threats to restart the Korean War, which the 60-year-old United Nations armistice accord suspended but did not end.

The last time tensions were this high, North Korea threatened to turn Seoul "into a sea of flame." That 2010 flare-up followed the sinking

incident.

No one claims to have a good reading on Kim Jong-Un, who rules a reclusive, militarised nation that's trying to develop nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles – while most of its 24 million people suffer privation, hunger and repression.

Kim is thought to be 29 or 30 – his father did not inherit leadership in the dynastic succession until he was 53 – and some analysts say his son may be raising the perceived foreign threat in an effort to bolster his domestic standing.

"One hopes he understands this is a really dangerous game he is playing, because there is not only that domestic audience, there is the international audience that is watching and listening and who are increasingly very worried about his behaviour," said Jennifer Lind, an associate professor of government at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire who has written about the regime.

The uncertainties about Kim's hold on power, as well as his judgment, raise the potential for catastrophic missteps amid North Korea's threats to attack South Korea, US forces in Japan and Guam and the US mainland.

There are more than one million troops and 20,000 armored vehicles and artillery pieces, as well as more than a million land mines

and many fortified defensive positions, within a short range of the demilitarised zone, says the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a research group based in London. Seoul, South Korea's capital with a population of 10 million, is 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the DMZ and well within North Korean artillery range.

Numbers do not tell the whole story. Hayes said North Korea's "military is characterised by centralised control hierarchies and obsolete or aged technology, more than half of it made in the two decades of post-war

heavy industrialisation." Moreover, he wrote in an April 2011 report for the Nautilus Institute: "Its short and medium-range missiles have a reputation for unreliability and are very inaccurate."

As for Kim's threats against the continental US, his country has no missiles able to reach those targets and has yet to arm any of its missiles with nuclear warheads.

The US supports South Korea with about 28,500 troops stationed in the country, plus an over-the-horizon force that includes about 38,000 US military personnel at air, naval and Marine Corps bases in Japan, a major airbase in Guam, and global strike capabilities with air- and sea-launched ballistic missiles and cruise missiles carried on aircraft, surface ships and submarines.

While North Korea's forces haven't experienced combat since 1953, Hayes wrote that the South Korean military "experienced major combat duty in Vietnam and is deployed in many 'hot' spots around the world (including northern Iraq)."

In an effort to deter North Korea and reassure South Korea, US Air Force

Dubbed the "Great Successor," Kim Jong-Un has inherited a country unable to feed its people while its military consumes an estimated quarter of its gross domestic product.

North Korea, which does not release economic data, has an estimated per capita income of \$1800, compared with South Korea's \$32,000, says the Central Intelligence Agency. Its network of political prison camps, where entire families are sent indefinitely for any suspected opposition to the regime, hold as many as 200,000 people, say UN human rights investigators.

There had been some hope that Kim would tone down North Korean belligerence and perhaps open the nation and its economy as a result of his age and experiences, such as attending a private school in Switzerland from 1998 to 2000, where classmates said he was a Chicago Bulls basketball fan. A fashionably dressed wife also suggested change from the bland uniformity of the North Korean leadership.

So far, though, few economic reforms have been set in motion while the military dictatorship's elite prospers through corruption as it maintains an aura of imminent attack by hostile powers.

State-run media reported on March 31 that Kim presided over a meeting of North Korea's leadership

body, the Central Committee of the Workers' Party, that vowed to keep developing nuclear weapons and improve the economy.

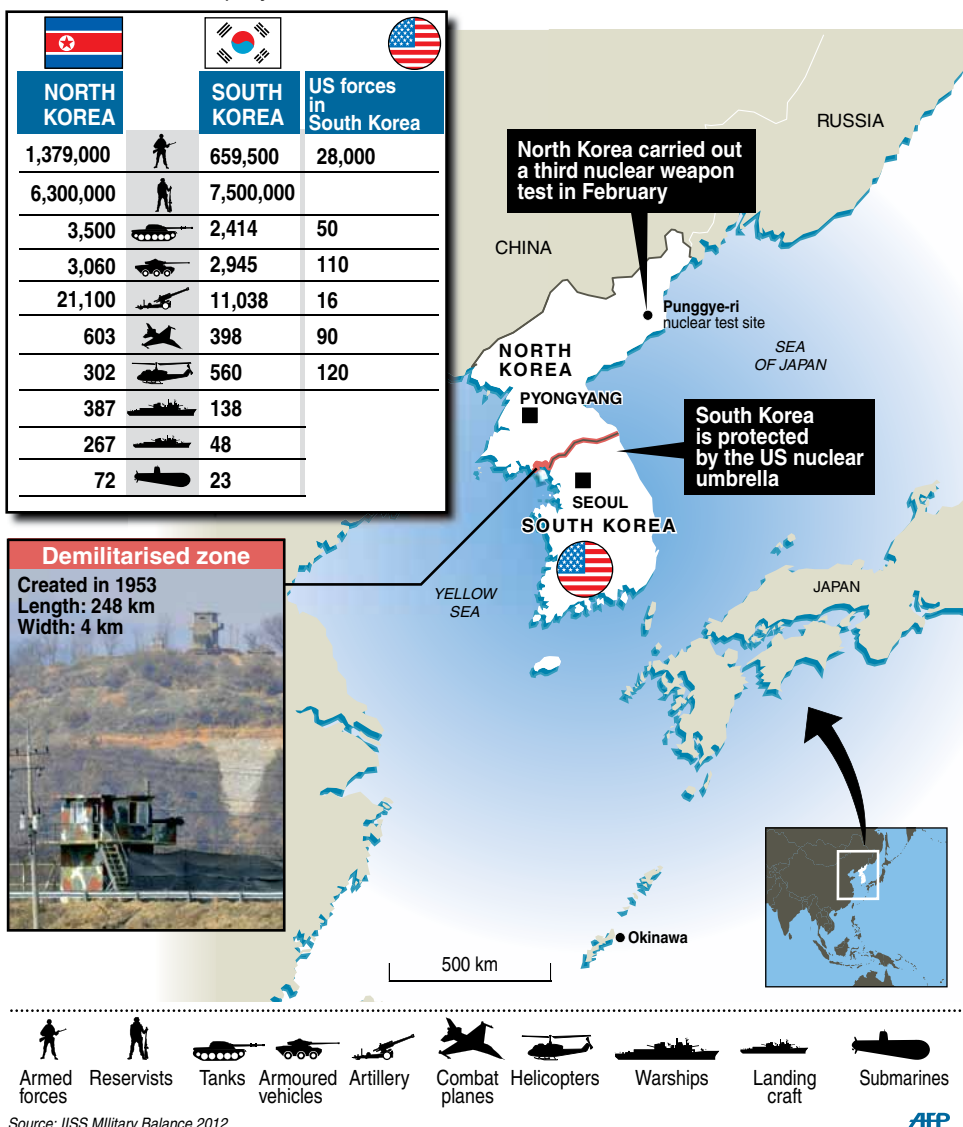
Those goals, though, may prove to be incompatible. Not only do the country's nuclear and missile programs divert capital and talent from other needs, they also have brought tightening international economic sanctions.

In short, White House spokesman Carney said on April 1, North Korea still puts a priority on developing nuclear weapons "over the welfare of its own people."

– Bloomberg News

Armed forces in the Korean peninsula

A standoff there has triggered widespread international concern of an accidental conflict that could escalate rapidly



UN passes historic weapons treaty

UNITED NATIONS – The UN General Assembly on April 2 passed the first treaty regulating the conventional arms trade in an attempt to bring transparency and protection of human rights to the often murky industry.

Only Syria, North Korea and Iran – which had blocked the measure the previous week – voted against, but two of the world's most prolific arms traders, Russia and China, and major buyers Egypt and India, were among the 23 that abstained.

The first major arms accord since the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty covers the estimated US\$80-billion-a-year trade in tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-calibre artillery, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles and missile launchers, as well as small arms.

The treaty has no automatic enforcement, but seeks to encourage the weapons industry to take human rights into account.

Countries abiding by

the treaty would establish national controls on arms exports and would have to ensure that weapons being exported would not be used in genocide, war crimes, or by terrorists or organised crime.

UN leader Ban Ki-moon called the treaty an "historic diplomatic achievement – the culmination of long-held dreams and many years of effort."

"It will be a powerful new tool in our efforts to prevent grave human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law... And it will provide much-needed momentum for other global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts," he said in a statement.

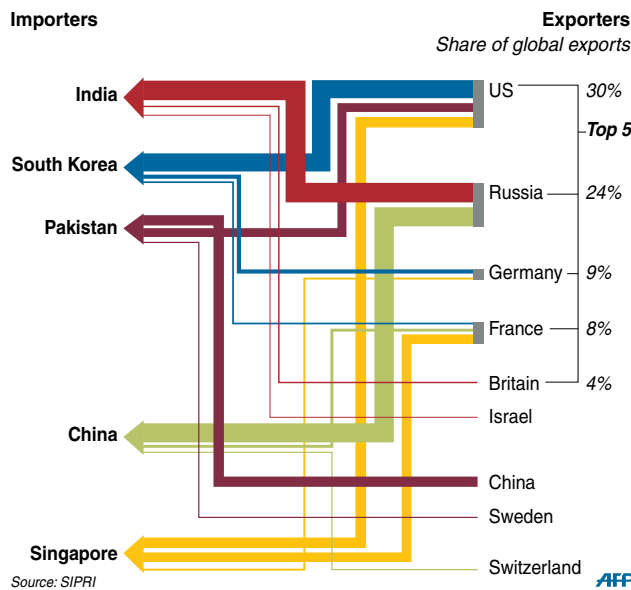
Brian Wood, Amnesty International's head of arms control and human rights, followed suit, saying "the world has been waiting a long time for this historic treaty."

The UN assembly voted by an overwhelming 154-3 margin for the resolution.

Individual nations can start ratifying the accord as of June, and once the 50th

World arms trade

Top importers and their suppliers



approves – a process that could take one to two years – the treaty will take effect.

The United States welcomed the vote, saying the UN treaty would help stem weapons shipments fueling war crimes. Secretary of State John Kerry called the measure "strong, effective and

implementable."

British Prime Minister David Cameron called it a "landmark agreement that will save lives and ease the immense human suffering caused by armed conflict around the world."

However, Chinese ambassador Li Baodong said Beijing "is not in favour

of pushing a multilateral treaty through the General Assembly... It is a negative precedent. We should negotiate by consensus."

Among the few nations casting no votes, North Korea's UN representative Ri Tong-Il called the treaty "unbalanced," saying it did nothing to curb exports, while failing to stop "the diversion to non-state actors."

There was also criticism from the Conflict Awareness Project, a non-government research organisation, which said the treaty left a huge loophole for the middlemen in arms dealing networks.

"Since the broker is the central actor using the cover of legitimate business to divert weapons into the illicit trade, of all actors, this is the one requiring the strictest regulation," CAP's executive director Kathi Lynn Austin said.

"States that are serious about impeding illicit arms trafficking and protecting the legitimate trade in arms should implement a mandatory licensing and registration regime for all arms brokers," she said.

"Until then, these middlemen remain comfortably assured of conducting their lethal business as usual."

There was especially strong support for the treaty during 10 days of arduous negotiations at the United Nations from African and Latin American states, which for decades have been among the prime markets for weapons exports.

The United States – the world's biggest arms dealer, with 30 percent of the market – was another big backer, although ratification by Congress is not assured.

Russia says it has not yet decided whether to ratify the text, claiming there are "omissions" in the treaty and "doubtful" provisions, such as the failure to control arms transfers to non-state groups.

Russia said it is worried about weapons getting into the hands of Chechen rebels, although for two decades the main sources of new weaponry in the tiny Caucasian province have included corrupt Russian suppliers and even military personnel. – AFP

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Reg. No. 2690/2013

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ORIGINAL RECIPE

Reg. No. 2694/2013

ZINGER

Reg. No. 2695/2013

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Reg. No. 2692/2013



Reg. No. 2688/2013



Reg. No. 2689/2013

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CHICKY

Reg. No. 2687/2013

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KFC KRUSHERS

Reg. No. 2693/2013

in respect of "Class 29: Milk shakes, smoothies (milk beverages, milk predominating), drinks flavored with fruit pastes and having a milk base; preparations for making milk shakes; beverages made from yogurts, flavored yogurts, fruit flavored yogurts; yogurt drinks, yogurt desserts; potato snack foods; fruit based snack foods; corn snacks (other than confectionery); snack foods made from eggs or meat; milk-based drinks containing fruit [milk predominating], drinks containing chocolate and having a milk base, drinks containing cookie bits and having a milk base. Class 30: Ice cream, ice cream confectionery, ice cream desserts, ice cream cones, ice cream with pastry; sauces for ice cream; yogurt based ice cream [ice cream predominating]; coffee; tea; cakes, pies, snack foods consisting principally of confectionery or bread; snack food products made from cereal or corn; snack food products made of wheat, potato based snack foods, crisp snack food products; flour based savory snacks, snack bars consisting of chocolate, snack bars containing dried fruits, grains or nuts (confectionery), rice based snack foods; snack foods manufactured from muesli; beverages containing chocolate, beverages containing small bits of confectionery. Class 32: Beverages (non-alcoholic), fruit juice beverages, sorbets [beverages] and preparations for making beverages; smoothies (fruit beverages, fruit predominating); fruit based drinks; fruit flavored non-alcoholic drinks, fruit drinks, and non-alcoholic beverages containing fruit. Class 43: Services for providing food and drink; temporary accommodation".

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L.

for Kentucky Fried Chicken International Holdings, Inc.

P.O. Box 60, Yangon

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

Dated: 8 April 2013

Budget cuts fail to halt traditional White House event

WASHINGTON — A venerable Washington tradition on April 1 staved off the budget axe in an era of austerity, as President Barack Obama welcomed tens of thousands of people to the White House Easter Egg Roll.

Obama and his family, appearing with the Easter Bunny and their dog Bo, officiated at egg rolling contests, storytelling and basketball and tennis demonstrations, at the annual event dating to 1878.

There had been fears that the popular springtime event would be cancelled because of harsh budget cuts known as the “sequester” which have halted visitor tours of the White House and hit government contractors and federal spending.

But the event, backed by a lottery for 35,000 tickets went ahead, partly financed by sales of commemorative eggs signed by the president and First Lady Michelle Obama.

“The Easter egg roll is the biggest event that we have here on the South Lawn of the White House each year,” Michelle Obama said.

“Today, we’re going to have more than 30,000 people who will pass through this yard in celebration of nutrition and health and activity.”

Since the Obamas moved into the White House, the Easter Egg roll has been linked to the First Lady’s “Let’s Move” campaign, designed to promote healthy eating and exercise for children.

President Obama acted as honorary starter of an Easter Egg roll contest for young kids on the South Lawn and read a children’s book called *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* to a group of youngsters.

But he emerged red-faced from a bid to show off his vaunted basketball skills alongside NBA stars – taking 15 shots to net a basket and, to his evident annoyance, going 2-22 overall.

The first White House Easter Egg Roll took place in 1878, when president Rutherford Hayes invited children to roll eggs on the South Lawn.

The egg roll has been held at the White House every year apart from during World War I and World War II. — AFP



US President Barack Obama reads to children on April 1 during the annual Easter Egg Roll event on the south lawn of the White House. Pic: AFP

Top US military officer planning visit to China

WASHINGTON — Top US military officer General Martin Dempsey will pay a rare visit to China this month as the Pacific powers discuss concern over tensions with North Korea, the Pentagon said on April 2.

Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel confirmed Dempsey’s visit when he paid a congratulatory telephone call to China’s new defence minister, General Chang Wanquan, Pentagon spokesman George Little said.

Hagel “said he looks forward to hearing the results of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Marty Dempsey’s trip to China later this month,” Little said in a

statement.

Little said that Hagel also invited Chang to visit the United States later this year.

Hagel told Chang of the “growing threat to the US and our allies posed by North Korea’s aggressive pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs” and called for US-China cooperation, Little said.

The United States and China hold frequent talks but defence relations are less regular.

Dempsey’s predecessor, Admiral Mike Mullen, visited China in 2011 in what was the first trip by a US chairman of the joint chiefs of staff in four years.

— AFP

Obama praises Singapore for ‘close’ military ties

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama thanked Singapore for its military help on April 2, as the first of a new generation of US coastal warships steamed to the city state to support his policy “pivot” to Asia.

Obama made a point of pouring praise on Singapore as an example to the world and as an important ally and source of counsel for Washington in Asia as he welcomed Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong for Oval Office talks.

The meeting took place just before the *USS Freedom*, a littoral combat ship, arrives to start a temporary deployment, one of four of the stealthy vessels that will be rotated through Singapore.

“We have extremely close military cooperation,” Obama said ahead of the meeting, as he praised Singapore as “one of the most successful countries in the world.”

“I want to thank Singapore for all the facilities that they provide that allow us to maintain our effective

Pacific presence.”

Lee said that Singapore was “very happy” that the United States under Obama had been placing greater emphasis on its relations with the Asia-Pacific region.

“We look forward particularly in the next few weeks to welcoming the first littoral combat ship, which will be arriving in Singapore and we will

‘I want to thank Singapore for all the facilities that they provide.’

be playing host to it for a few months,” Lee said.

Singapore plans to host up to four of the stealthy vessels, which are designed to project US power in the fight against terrorists and pirates.

Singapore has traditionally been a key source of advice and interpretation of events in Asia, particularly in China,

for US administrations, and Obama said that Lee had been especially helpful to him.

“Personally, there are very few world leaders who I am more appreciative of in terms of their advice, counsel and thoughtful analysis than Prime Minister Lee,” Obama said.

Lee described US-China ties as perhaps the most important diplomatic relationship in the world, and said he was happy that Washington, which has sent top officials to Beijing in recent weeks, was focusing on the issue.

“Singapore will do our part to do what we can to help America engage the region constructively, productively, and in a way in which it fosters stability and prosperity for all the countries,” he said.

The meeting focused on regional security challenges as well as trade, with Singapore and the United States key players in the evolving Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) pact. — AFP

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **Eiken Industries Co., Ltd.**,
by its Attorneys-at-Law
REMFRY & SAGAR
INDIA.

Dated: 8th April, 2013

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **ONDULINE**
Remfry & Sagar
Attorneys-at-Law
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.

Phone: 372416

Dated: 8th April, 2013

TRADE MARK CAUTION

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for **Goltens Worldwide Management Corp.**
By its Attorneys at-law
Remfry & Sagar
INDIA

Dated: 8th April, 2013

World Bank chief issues plea to eliminate extreme poverty

WASHINGTON – World Bank chief Jim Yong Kim called last week for a global drive to wipe out extreme poverty by 2030, acknowledging that reaching the goal will require extraordinary efforts.

“A world free of poverty is within our grasp. It is time to help everyone across the globe secure a one-way ticket out of poverty and stay on the path toward prosperity,” Kim said in a speech in Washington on April 2.

Kim unveiled his first sweeping agenda since taking office last July, as the Washington-based World Bank faces competition from emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil, which want to set up their own development bank.

Kim, a Korean-American doctor with a background in fighting disease in developing countries, said the goal would be to lower the number of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day from 21 percent of the global population in 2010 to just three percent by 2030.

“Below 3.0 percent, the nature of the poverty challenge will change fundamentally in most parts of the world,” Kim said, in a speech at Georgetown University.

“The focus will shift from broad structural measures to tackling sporadic poverty among specific vulnerable groups,” Kim said.

“The fight against mass poverty that countries have waged for centuries will be won.”

In 2000, the international community set eight UN Millennium Development



World Bank president Jim Yong Kim gestures during his speech at Georgetown University in Washington on April 2. Pic: AFP

Goals to be reached by 2015.

One of them, to halve extreme poverty, was accomplished in 2010, five years ahead of time, Kim noted, after developing countries invested in social safety nets and created buffers to protect against crises.

“To reach the 2030 goal,

‘A world free of poverty is within our grasp.’

we must halve global poverty once, then halve it again, and then nearly halve it a third time – all in less than one generation,” he said.

In a post-speech question-and-answer session, Kim said the goal would be achieved only if progress is seen “in many, many countries at once.”

“What if we’re down to below 3.0 percent for the world but there are many countries that have 70 percent poverty? Well, I have to say I wouldn’t consider that a success.”

To slash extreme poverty, Kim said higher economic growth rates will be needed, in particular sustained high growth in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

But he expressed concern that the crisis that has gripped the global economy since 2008 was lingering.

“As recent events in Cyprus show, it is too early to declare victory,” he said, nevertheless adding that there is growing evidence indicating “that we are on the right track.”

In addition, Kim said, efforts must be made to curb inequality and ensure that growth reduces poverty, especially through job creation. – AFP

Climate change author issues dire warning of rising temperatures

WASHINGTON – The author of an influential 2006 study on climate warned last week that the world could be headed toward warming even more catastrophic than expected but he voiced hope for political action.

Nicholas Stern, the British former chief economist for the World Bank, said that both emissions of greenhouse gas and the effects of climate change were taking place faster than he forecast seven years ago.

Without changes to emission trends, the planet has roughly a 50 percent chance that temperatures will soar to five degrees Celsius (nine degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial averages in a century, he said.

“We haven’t been above five degrees Centigrade on this planet for about 30 million years. So you can see that this is radical change way outside human experience,” Stern said in an address at the International Monetary Fund on April 2.

“When we were at three degrees Centigrade three million years ago, the sea levels were about 20 some metres (65 feet) above now.

On a sea level rise of just two metres, probably a couple of hundred million people would have to move,” he said.

Stern said that other effects would come more quickly including the expansion of deserts and the melting of Himalayan snows that supply rivers on which up to two billion people depend.

Even if nations fulfill pledges made in 2010 at a UN-led conference in Cancun, Mexico, the world would be on track to warming of four degrees Centigrade (7.2 Fahrenheit), he said.

Stern’s 2006 study, considered a landmark in raising public attention on climate change, predicted that warming would shave at least five percent of gross domestic product a year.

Despite the slow progress in international negotiations,

Stern saw signs for hope as a number of countries move to put a price on greenhouse gases.

“My own view is that 2013 is the best possible year to try to work and redouble our efforts to create the political will that hitherto has been much too weak,” Stern said.

Stern said that French President Francois Hollande was keen for nations to meet their goal of sealing an accord in 2015 in Paris.

US President Barack Obama has vowed action on climate change after an earlier bid was thwarted by lawmakers of the rival Republican Party, many of whom reject the science behind climate change.

Emissions have risen sharply in recent years from emerging economies, particularly China. – AFP

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for **Chevron Intellectual Property LLC**
P. O. Box 60, Yangon.
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 8 April 2013

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E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 8 April 2013

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Closing date: 21st April, 2013

Top court in India fines miner \$20m for pollution

NEW DELHI – India's top court on April 2 fined British resources giant Vedanta nearly US\$20 million over pollution from its huge copper smelter, which has just been shut by a new row over a "toxic" gas leak.

The court told Sterlite Industries, a unit of London-listed Vedanta Resources, to pay one billion rupees (\$18.4 million) over five years for air pollution from its copper plant – India's biggest – in Tamil Nadu state's port city of Tuticorin.

"Compensation must act as a deterrent and any amount less than one billion rupees would not have the desired impact," the bench headed by Justice A. K. Patnaik ruled.

But the judge set aside a 2010 Madras High Court order to close the copper plant, which produces nearly 400,000 tonnes a year.

Vedanta, controlled by billionaire Anil Agarwal, has often been the target of environmental criticism. The company's plans to be a major global metals player rest on developing its Indian assets and have suffered a string of setbacks.

In 2010, the government blocked Vedanta's plans to mine bauxite in eastern India on land held sacred by tribes to feed its nearby aluminium refinery. It also blocked the refinery over fears it would damage the area's fragile eco-system. – AFP

Taliban gunmen kill dozens in ruthless court massacre

FARAH, Afghanistan – Taliban gunmen who killed 46 people at an Afghan court complex in a bid to free insurgents standing trial moved ruthlessly from room to room, shooting everyone they found, officials recounted on April 4.

Defenceless civilians, judges, lawyers and court staff were left dead after nine militants disguised as Afghan soldiers launched an eight-hour assault the previous day which ended when security forces finally killed the last surviving gunman.

Taliban fighters often target government compounds, but the unprecedented massacre at a court house in the remote province of Farah raised new fears about the insurgency's strength as NATO forces withdraw from the battlefield.

Three attackers died when their explosive-laden vehicle, stolen from the Afghan army, drove into the entrance of the court in Farah city early on April 3. The vehicle detonated in a



Afghan National Army soldiers at the damaged court in Farah a day after the Taliban raid on April 3. Pic: AFP

huge blast when they refused to stop and police opened fire, deputy governor of Farah province Mohammad Younus Rasouli told AFP.

Six other attackers, disguised as Afghan

soldiers, entered the court buildings and the attorney general's office next door.

"They had 10 hand grenades each and lots of bullets. They smashed down each door and shot anyone

in each room, one by one," Rasouli said. "Everybody, all the attorneys and judges and anyone else. All were unarmed, defenceless."

The governor of Farah, Mohammad Akram Khpalwak, said 36 civilians were killed, including four lawyers and four judges. Ten security force personnel were also killed and about 100 people wounded, he added.

The court was due to put Taliban militants on trial when the attack took place. The militants claimed to have freed 13 of its members, but Khpalwak told AFP that 12 Taliban prisoners at the court were taken back to jail.

The attack in Farah, a province that borders Iran, was the deadliest for more than a year in Afghanistan.

President Hamid Karzai condemned the assault as a "massacre" and said Afghans would "not let such killings of Muslims by the Taliban go unpunished".

The Taliban released a statement celebrating a "successful martyrdom attack". – AFP

Briefs

Filipino, US troops begin war games

MANILA – Thousands of US and Filipino troops began annual military exercises on April 5 which the Philippines said were vital to building its defence capabilities against the rising threat of China.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario used the launch of the 12-day Balikatan manoeuvres to accuse China of destabilising Asia with aggressive and illegal actions in the South China Sea.

"Regional peace and stability have been placed at serious risk," del Rosario said in a speech at military headquarters in Manila.

'Record low' catch for whaling fleet

TOKYO – The haul from Japan's whaling fleet in the Southern Ocean was a "record low" this year, a government minister said on April 5, blaming "unforgivable sabotage" by activists from the Sea Shepherd group.

The hunt netted 103 Antarctic minke whales, less than half its tally last year and no fin whales, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said.

Building collapse kills 63 in India

MUMBAI – The number of people killed when an unauthorised apartment block collapsed on the outskirts of Mumbai has risen to 63, police said on April 6.

The seven-storey partly built structure collapsed on April 4, leaving a mangled heap of steel and concrete about eight metres (26 feet) high that rescuers and residents struggled to remove. – AFP

Acid attack in India injures four sisters

NEW DELHI – Four sisters walking home in north India have suffered severe burns after being attacked with acid by two men on a motorbike, police said on April 3.

The youngest sister, a 19-year-old student, was admitted to hospital after the evening attack on April 2 in the Shamli district of Uttar Pradesh state, about 100 kilometres (60 miles) from the capital.

"The victims were walking together when two men on a motorbike made lewd remarks and the man who was riding pillion splashed acid on all of them," Abdul Hameed, the senior police

officer investigating the case, told AFP.

"The youngest sister suffered maximum burn injuries and she had to be rushed to a hospital in Delhi."

Hameed said no arrests had been made and the motive behind the crime was being investigated.

The three other sisters were all teachers at a local government school. They were taken to hospital for treatment but not admitted.

Attacks on women have topped the national agenda since December, when a medical student who was assaulted and raped by six men on a moving bus in Delhi died two weeks later of her injuries.

Public anger prompted parliament to toughen sex offence laws including doubling the minimum prison sentence for gang-rape to 20 years, but lawmakers voted against increasing the punishment for acid attackers.

They can be jailed for eight to 12 years depending on the injuries inflicted, but the offence is bailable. – AFP

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Reg. No. 4/12484/2012

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Car mats; Mudguard; all goods include in **Class 27**."

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For **PONGS VANICH CO., LTD.**

Dated: 8th April, 2013.

TRADE MARK CAUTION

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Dated: 8th April, 2013.

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U Nyunt Tin Associates International Limited Intellectual Property Division

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For **Wyeth LLC**

Dated: 8th April, 2012.

Najib hopes for 'big win' as tough poll challenge looms

KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said on April 4 he is "cautiously optimistic" of victory on election day if his party can overcome its internal woes.

Najib, who dissolved parliament on April 3 in preparation for a general election seen as the ruling coalition's toughest challenge after 56 years in power, has urged voters to give him a strong mandate to rule.

"We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to win big, which means two-thirds majority," he said.

"We have to work hard towards it and we have to make sure we minimise all internal problems within the party," Najib said, in an apparent reference to factional struggles within his United Malays National Organisation (UMNO).

Announcing the dissolution of parliament in television on April 3, Najib, the son of a former prime minister, urged political parties to observe the rule of law and promised

a smooth transition of power if the opposition wins.

"If there is change in power, it will and must happen peacefully. This is our commitment," he said.

The vote is tipped to be Malaysia's closest, driven by concerns over corruption, the rising cost of living and high crime under the Barisan Nasional coalition which has ruled Malaysia since independence in 1957.

Najib has worked hard to rebrand UMNO, which dominates the 13-member Barisan coalition, by launching a series of reforms to strengthen the economy and grant greater civil liberties.

"For four years we have fulfilled all our promises," he said after chairing an UMNO meeting.

The election date has yet to be set by the election commission, but the vote must be held within two months. Analysts speculate it would be in late April.

Najib is facing his first test at the ballot box since taking over in 2009, after the



Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak receives help to put on his helmet ahead of a bicycling event at Putrajaya, the federal administrative centre near Kuala Lumpur, on April 3. Pic: AFP

coalition lost its traditional two-thirds parliamentary majority in a shock 2008 election result.

The resurgent opposition, led by charismatic former

deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, has gained traction by pledging to tackle authoritarianism and graft and is equally confident of victory. – AFP

Gillard leads ministers on mission to China

SYDNEY – Prime Minister Julia Gillard led a heavyweight team to China last week, touting not just better ties and trade but also the lofty ambition of putting Asia at the heart of Australia's future.

"I'll be leading the most senior Australian political delegation ever to visit China," Gillard told foreign correspondents on April 4.

"I will be among the first Western leaders to meet the new leadership," she said.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr, Trade Minister Craig Emerson, who is also responsible for Australia's Asian Century policy, and Financial Services Minister Bill Shorten are among senior politicians on the April 5-10 trip.

"I'll be promoting our trade and economic interests and sharing perspectives on global and regional economic and security challenges," she said.

The prime minister will meet President Xi Jinping at the Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan and will have talks in Beijing with Prime Minister Li Keqiang.

Gillard said she wanted not only "to celebrate our existing strong relationship

and its underpinnings... but to look ahead to how we can build the comprehensive relationship envisioned in our Asian Century White Paper, including how leaders can help deliver a relationship of greater depth and durability in a more complex future".

"The timing of this visit so soon after the new leadership has entered into office is deliberate and reflects the importance of our rapidly evolving relationship with China," she added. "And more broadly, it reflects the centrality of Asia in the story of our nation for the 21st century."

The Canberra government last October unveiled an "Australia in the Asian Century" plan setting education and business targets to hoist the nation into the world's top 10 economies.

China is Australia's largest trading partner with two-way goods and services worth A\$128 billion (US\$134 billion).

It also provides the greatest number of overseas students to Australia with 150,000 enrolments in 2012, and the second largest source of overseas visitors – 626,000 last year. – AFP

French flag confuses cops

AMBON, Indonesia – Police in eastern Indonesia arrested 17 local supporters of France's football team, mistaking their hoisted French flag for a bold separatist statement, police said on April 3.

The men, illegal gold miners on Pulau Buru in the Maluku Islands chain, raised the French flag in the street ahead of a World Cup qualifier match between France and Spain the previous week.

But police confused the French tricolour with the similar outlawed flag of the Republic of South

Maluku (RMS) separatist movement.

"The men were kept overnight until police confirmed the flag was indeed the French flag," said Buru Island police spokesman Istanto, who goes by one name. He said there were many French fans in the area but did not know why.

Indonesia has strict laws against separatism, in 2008 handing down a life sentence to a man in the Maluku islands capital of Ambon for displaying the RMS flag in front of the visiting president. – AFP

Bali meet backs action on people smugglers

NUSA DUA, Indonesia – Asia-Pacific nations agreed on April 2 to push for "more effective law enforcement" to stop people smuggling, Australia said as it seeks to stem the flow of asylum seekers arriving on its shores.

At a meeting in Indonesia, where many asylum seekers board rickety boats and set off for Australia, Foreign Minister Bob Carr said the 37 countries present agreed they would seek to make

greater efforts to stop people smuggling.

"That means these nations are committed to seeing that there's more effective control at airports and more effective border protection," Carr told reporters on the resort island of Bali.

"To have the nations committed to more effective law enforcement is very important," he added, at the end of a two-day meeting of the Bali Process, which aims

to tackle people smuggling and human trafficking.

"I believe it is a wretched trade and that in stamping out, we're safeguarding people from illusory hopes and risk to their lives."

Boat arrivals of asylum seekers have been a divisive political issue in Australia for more than a decade and several Australian governments have pushed for other nations in the region to help stamp it out.

Australia last year dealt with a record 17,202 asylum-seekers arriving by sea and has already seen 3028 in the first three months of this year.

Many of them use Indonesia as a transit hub, linking up with people smugglers and boarding dangerous wooden fishing vessels to make the perilous journey to Australian territory, but hundreds have died in recent years. – AFP

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P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416

Dated: 8th April, 2013

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(Reg: No. IV/2823/2012)

in respect of goods in

Class 09: Lighting ballast; lighting control apparatus; devices for connecting cables to fuses within street lighting installations; electrical transformers for use with lighting; sensing apparatus being parts of outside lighting apparatus.

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U Kyi Win Associates
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By its Attorneys
Ageless
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416

Dated: 8th April, 2013

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Reg: Nos. IV/1535/2013 in respect of:-

Class: 35 – point of sales (POS), trading in eye glasses, sun glasses, eye glass frames, eye glass chains, eye glass cases, eye glass cords, eye glass lenses, contact lenses, containers for contact lenses"

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **De Rigo S.p.A**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416

Dated: 8th April, 2013

Australia launches national inquiry on child sexual abuse

MELBOURNE – Australia opened a national probe into child sex abuse on April 3, with premier Julia Gillard warning of “uncomfortable truths” as institutions including schools and churches come under scrutiny.

Gillard ordered the inquiry in November after a decade of growing pressure to investigate widespread allegations of paedophilia, two months after the Roman Catholic Church in Victoria revealed hundreds of children had been abused.

“This is an important moral moment for our nation,” Gillard told ABC radio as the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse began at the Victorian County Court in Melbourne.

Gillard said she accepted that the commission would reveal “some very uncomfortable truths.”

Chairman Justice Peter McClellan announced at the opening that the inquiry would hear “serious and shocking allegations.”

At least 5000 people would want to tell their stories, although “the number could be much higher”, he said. Public hearings are not likely to start for several months.

“Part of the task given to us... is to bear witness, on

behalf of the nation, to the abuse and consequential trauma inflicted on many people who have suffered sexual abuse as children,” he said.

“For the individuals who have been traumatised, giving an account of their experiences and telling their story can be an important part of the recovery process.”

An interim report is due by June 2014 but McClellan admitted it was unlikely the commission could complete its work within the timeframe for the delivery of a final report in June 2015. Findings and recommendations will be made public.

Gillard outlined two goals for the inquiry.

“For the survivors of child sexual abuse, I want this to be a moment of healing, for us to say to them as a nation ‘we hear you, you’re valued and you’re believed’ because for too long, so many of these survivors have just run into closed doors and closed minds.”

“And second, I want the royal commission to provide for us recommendations about the future.”

“We’ve let children down in the past as a country. We need to learn what we can do as a nation to better protect our children in the future.” – AFP



A worker on a chicken farm at Zouping, in China's eastern Shandong province on April 1. As of April 5, a new strain of bird flu detected in China had killed five people. Pic: AFP

New strain of bird flu claims lives in China

BEIJING – Authorities in Shanghai began the mass slaughter of poultry at a market after the H7N9 bird flu virus, which has killed five people in China, was detected there, state media said on April 5.

The discovery of the virus in samples of pigeon came as health officials said they were treating a person for flu-like symptoms who had been in close contact with one of the dead, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported. There had previously been no evidence of possible human-to-human transmission of the virus.

The first two deaths from the virus, which had never before been seen in humans, occurred in February but were not reported by authorities until late March. Officials said the delay in announcing the results was because it took time to determine the cause of the illnesses.

Two more fatalities this month brought the death toll from the virus to five – four of them in Shanghai – with the number of confirmed infection cases climbing to 14.

A 48-year-old poultry transporter was one of two victims reported to have died on April 4, while the identity of the other person was not made public.

China's Ministry of Agriculture said on April 4 the virus had been detected in pigeon samples collected at Huhuai wholesale agricultural market in Shanghai, *Xinhua* reported.

After gene sequence analysis, the national

avian flu reference laboratory found the strain to be “highly congenetic with those found on persons infected with H7N9 virus”.

Officials ordered the safe disposal of the culled birds, their excrement and contaminated food, and full disinfection of the market and vehicles used to transport poultry, while attempting to discover where the infected birds had come from.

Meanwhile the live poultry trading areas of another two markets were closed after separate samples showed evidence of the virus.

Chinese authorities are trying to determine how the H7N9 virus infects people.

Shanghai health officials said a patient who had been in contact with one of the victims of the virus had been quarantined on April 4 after developing a fever, runny nose and itchy throat.

The World Health Organisation on April 3 had ruled out the possibility of a pandemic stating that there was no evidence H7N9 could be transmitted from human to human, unlike the more common H5N1 strain. But health experts have emphasised the need to quickly identify the source of the virus and its mode of transmission to reduce human exposure.

The more common strain of bird flu, H5N1, killed more than 360 people globally from 2003 until March 12 this year, said the WHO. – AFP

Pullout from Afghanistan to cost US \$6b: officials

KABUL – The US operation to remove military hardware and vehicles from Afghanistan as troops withdraw after 12 years of war will cost between five and six billion dollars, officials said last week.

Among statistics released by the military about the process known as a “retrograde” was that 25,000 vehicles have been shipped out of Afghanistan in the last year and another 25,000 remain in the country.

About 100,000 containers are also still in Afghanistan and will be used to remove mountains of equipment ranging from fighting gear to fitness machines, furniture and computers.

“The retrograde from Afghanistan is one of the most challenging military transportation operations in history in terms of scale and complexity,” Brigadier General Steven Shapiro said in an email on March 31.

Shapiro, the commanding general of 1st Theatre Sustainment Command, said decisions were being made on what equipment was to be left for the Afghan army and police to take on the fight against Taliban insurgents.

“The figures of five to six billion dollars corresponds to the total cost of retrograde from 2012 through 2014, and they’re constantly being reevaluated,” he said.

Most of the hardware will be flown out of land-locked Afghanistan or taken by road to the Pakistani port of Karachi, though the route has been hit by militant attacks and was temporarily closed by spats between Washington and Islamabad. – AFP

TRADE MARK CAUTION

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Stickers; Plastic film for wrapping or packaging; all goods include in **Class 16**.
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Car mats; Mudguard; all goods include in **Class 27**.”

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U Chit Swe, B.A(law) LL.B, D.B.L., D.M.I., D.I.L. Advocate
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Ms. Saowaluck Lamlert, Attorney at Law
Siam Premier International Law Office Limited
Email: saowaluck@siampremier.co.th
For **LEE VANICH CO., LTD.**
Dated: 8th April, 2013.

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U Nyunt Tin Associates International Limited, Intellectual Property Division
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For **AT & T Intellectual Properties II,L.P.**
Dated: 8th April, 2013.

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For **SAWIT RAYA SDN BHD**
Dated: 8th April, 2013

Michael Learns to Rock draws small but animated crowd



IN DEPTH
with
Maria Danmark

DANISH band Michael Learns to Rock taught Yangon how to rock at People's Square Park on March 31, where they dazzled concertgoers with a dose of the gentle guitar pop

that has earned them hordes of fans in Myanmar. For many years the band's innocuous love ballads slipped beneath the radar of Myanmar's censors, and their songs have long been treasured by local musicians who have frequently covered their tunes. With opportunities increasing for international

bands to perform in Myanmar, Michael Learns to Rock (MLTR) was therefore near the top of local fans' wish lists. "We were honoured to be invited, and I'm so proud to play here before Bono," the band's guitarist, Mikkel Lentz, said at a press conference at Sedona Hotel on March 29. He was referring to rumours he had heard that U2 singer Bono might soon be performing in Myanmar.

MLTR, who this year are celebrating their 25th anniversary, have performed extensively in Asia but they have never had the chance to play in Myanmar. They were received at Yangon International Airport as genuine superstars, with fans and journalists arriving early in the morning to catch a glimpse of the band.

The group's members had a bit of time before the concert to play tourist. Their first stop was Strand Hotel to see where Mick Jagger had stayed when he visited the country a few years back. Shwedagon Pagoda was also on the program, and here the band members were recognised and a tail of fans quickly formed behind them.

MLTR hadn't become famous in Myanmar in the traditional way. For years local pop singers have been performing covers of international hits with rewritten Myanmar-language lyrics, including songs by MLTR.

According to local songwriter Myint Moe Aung, until around 2005 70 percent of all songs in Myanmar were covers, and the first MLTR songs were translated in 1993.

"[MLTR] were really popular from 2000 to 2005, when almost all their hits



Michael Learns to Rock singer Jascha Richter performs at People's Square Park in Yangon on March 31. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

became covers. But their popularity has waned as major artists such as Rihanna and Beyonce have taken centre stage," Myint Moe Aung said.

"But their songs have meant a lot to people over the years, so I think they will still be around for many years to come," he said.

Myint Moe Aung was among

a group of local songwriters who sat in the front row at the concert to hear the songs that for years they have made into covers.

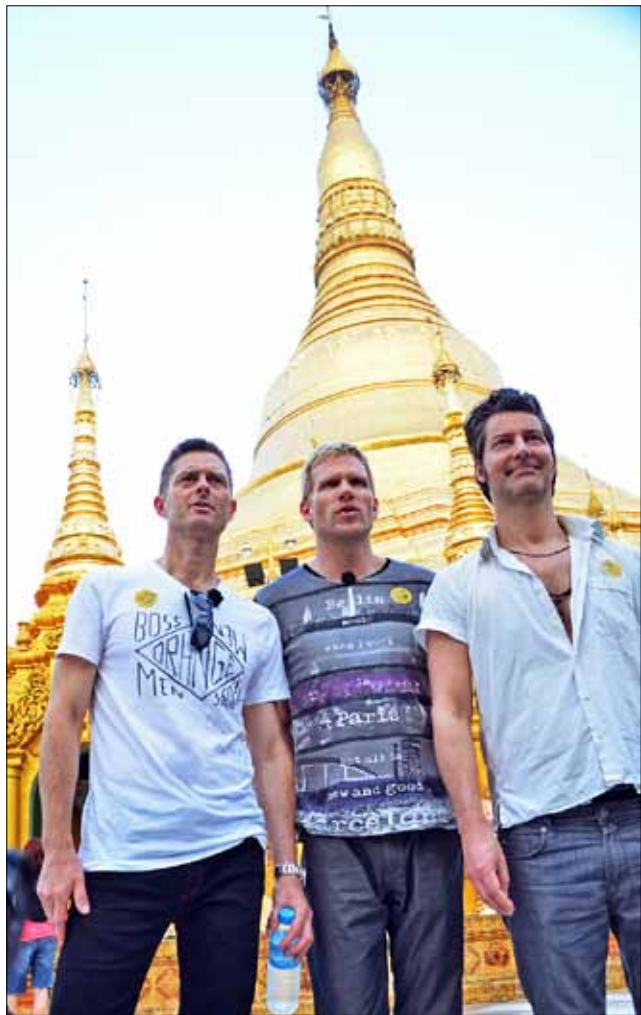
MLTR drummer Kåre Wanscher told *The Myanmar Times* that the band had been unaware that their songs had been translated into Myanmar language, but they were "very proud" of

the fact that they had been. "As long as we are singing the same song at the concert, then it doesn't matter in what language," he said.


Lead singer Jascha Richter added: "It would just be fantastic to hear our songs sung in Burmese."

As is typical in Myanmar,

More page 37



MLTR visits Shwedagon Pagoda on March 30 (left to right: Kåre Wanscher, Jascha Richter and Mikkel Lentz). Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing



With the consent of partents from both sides,
wedding reception of

Sawm Zai Sao
son of **Sao Khan Nong Noi** and **Daw Khin Thanda**
&
Ma Mya Myitzu
daughter of **U Sein Lay** and **Daw Than Than Lay**
was held at Governor's Residence
on 6th April, 2013.

Sawm Zai Sao and Ma Mya Myitzu

A 'new way' to celebrate Thingyan

MINDER Ground in Yangon will be the site of a Thingyan Water Festival celebration from April 13 to 16, featuring a five-zone "fun park", games and free concerts.

U Myo Myat Thu, host of MRTV-4's *Sunday Talk* program, said the event was a "new way of celebrating the water festival for everyone in the family".

"Thingyan is one of the most highly anticipated festivals of the year for Myanmar people, and people from other countries have also told us they would like to participate in the festival. We would like them to join, to know about Myanmar and how we celebrate water festival and the coming of the new year," he said.

He was speaking at a press conference at Chatrium Hotel on March 29, on behalf of event organisers Forever Group and Index Creative Village.

Index Creative Village's regional director, Narindej Thaveesangpanich, said "continuous fun and entertainment will be splashed to everyone at the event through concerts, performances, prizes and activities".

He said there will be five zones: Aquatic Tunnel with pandals and water tunnels; Bubbling Ocean featuring a foam party with upbeat rhythms by DJ Tower; Treasure Island where visitors can enjoy carnival rides from all over world as well as games and prizes; the Beach Lounge rest area with food and drink shops; and the free concert area.

Singers from the *Eain Met Sone Yar* (where dreams meet) television show – a singing contest broadcast on Channel 7 – will perform at the free concert area, while a bigger concert featuring many famous artists will be held at the same venue on evening of the April 16.

Eain Met Sone Yar singer Kyaw Zay Ya told *The Myanmar Times* that he will perform two songs a day throughout the event, and he has already started preparing the clothes he will wear.

"You can do all you things you want to do during Thingyan in one place. If you want to play with water you can, or you can play games or see free shows. So I think it will be very suitable for families who want to spend their holiday together," he said.

Minder Ground is located on Myoma Kyaung Street in Dagon township, near the National Theatre.

The concert programs will run from April 13 to 16 but the fun park will continue until April 19. The entry fee will be K2000 a person, and some games will require the purchase of tickets for K1500. — Lwin Mar Htun

Soe Thu dazzles fans, but poor concert planning disappoints

By Lwin Mar Htun

AFTER more than a decade living in the United States, actor and singer Soe Thu marked his return to Yangon with a concert at Minder Ground in Yangon on April 30.

The free "Past and Present Soe Thu" concert attracted more than 80,000 fans who were keen to see the famous singer, who has released 11 albums throughout his career, but many of the concertgoers complained that the event was marred by shoddy organisation.

'Many people did abandon the show in favour of heading home and watching the broadcast on TV.'

On the plus side, the concert started on time. But organisers had divided the audience area into normal ticket, special ticket, VIP and VVIP sections, with the latter two taking up half of Minder Ground nearest the stage.

That left huge numbers of fans standing so far back from the stage that Soe Thu appeared to be no bigger than their thumbs.

This thoughtless setup was in stark contrast to the Jason Mraz show in People's Square in December, which

had drawn an even bigger crowd of people who were allowed to stand right up against the stage, while VIPs were seated off to the side.

Soe Thu, who was doing his best to deliver a memorable performance, appeared mindful of the less-than-ideal setup, and attempted to overcome the awkward organisation by being extremely polite.

He repeatedly asked the crowd, "Are you all okay? Can you see me?" and asked people in VIP area to sit down so those in the back could see better.

He also appealed to fans not to leave early, repeatedly saying: "Please don't go back home. I will sing many songs tonight, so please don't back."

The fans appreciated Soe Thu's down-to-earth approach, which was very different from the narcissism demonstrated by so many local actors and singers, and the organisers should give thanks that he handled a difficult situation with panache.

Still, the situation was so unappealing that many people did abandon the show in favour of heading home and watching the live broadcast on television.

But whether watching at Minder Ground or from home, fans had no complaints about Soe Thu's performance. He tirelessly blazed through song after song, and even though he took frequent breaks to go backstage and change his clothes, he made up for the delays by continuing well past midnight.



Soe Thu performs at Minder Ground in Yangon on April 30. Pic: Ko Taik

US bluegrass band plays Myanmar friendship concert

By Nuam Bawi

AMERICAN bluegrass band Kyle Dillingham and

Horseshoe Road performed live at the National Theatre in Yangon on April 1, along with a traditional Myanmar musical troupe from the

National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon).

The event, organised by the US embassy in Yangon, was billed as a "friendship

concert" aimed at celebrating diversity and breaking down generalisations between people.

Kyle Dillingham, who sings and plays violin for the band, told the audience during the concert that American music was a "melting pot" of influences.

"We have so many cultures, so many people, so many languages, so many different styles of music, and too often we try to generalise by saying 'this is American music, this is Myanmar music, this is Mexican food' and so on," he said.

"But what we are discovering and hoping to achieve from this concert is to break down the generalisations. Hopefully, we will begin to grow our friendship together, people to people, starting from tonight."

Mr Dillingham performed very energetically onstage, along with his band mates Peter Markes (guitar and vocals) and Brent Saulsbury (upright bass and vocals).

Kyle Dillingham and Horseshoe Road – from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma – refer to their style as "heartland acoustic", a blend of eclectic musical

genres ranging from blues to bluegrass, gypsy jazz to western swing, country, rock and gospel.

The band has won numerous awards, including an International Music Award in 2011 in the Country/Bluegrass category.

Among the songs the band performed at the National Theatre were the famous hymn "Amazing Grace" and a tune composed by Mr Markes called "Success", which asked the audience to consider what real success is.

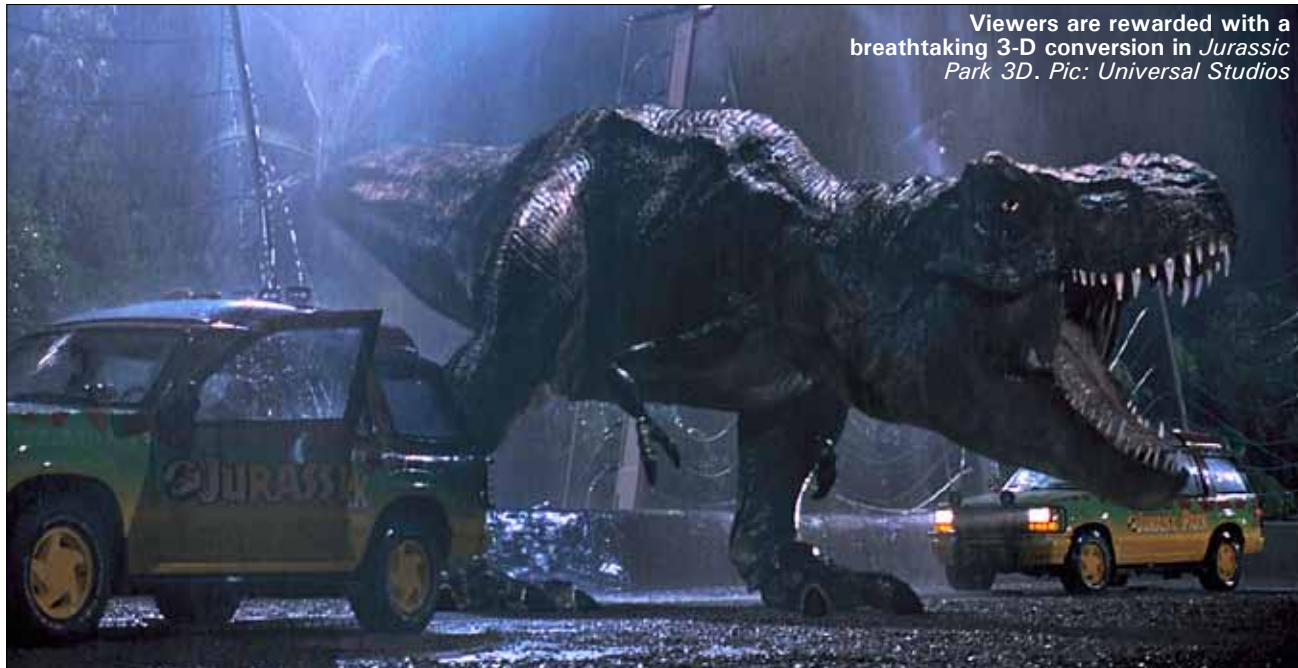
Before the concert Mr Dillingham told *The Myanmar Times* that the band members had "heard a lot about Myanmar politically" but they did not know what was really going on here.

"So there were a lot of question marks when we came here. We didn't know what to expect, and we have been very surprised to find that the country is very advanced, international and modern," he said.

The band spent about a week in the country, performing live at several venues, conducting workshops with local musicians and visiting a local orphanage. They departed Myanmar on April 3.



Kyle Dillingham and Horseshoe Road perform at the National Theatre in Yangon on April 1. Pic: Thiri



Viewers are rewarded with a breathtaking 3-D conversion in *Jurassic Park 3D*. Pic: Universal Studios

‘Jurassic Park’ filmmakers recall video FX nightmares

By Leila Macor

LOS ANGELES — The makers of the original *Jurassic Park* film are recalling the “nightmare” of using pioneering visual effects, as a 3D version of the Oscar-winning movie is released.

Steven Spielberg’s 1993 blockbuster used a combination of stop motion filming with dinosaur models and primitive computer generated technology, which was unprecedented at the time.

The filmmakers talked about the challenges involved at a screening of *Jurassic Park 3D* hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences ahead of its US release on April 5, 20 years after the original.

William Sherak said the most difficult scene was when the T-Rex attacks the visiting guests in their car, in the rain, calling it “my personal nightmare” because of the complexity of effects needed.

“The best moment is the sequence of the car falling down the tree,” he added, referring to a later scene in the landmark movie.

Adapted from a Michael Crichton novel, the movie starred Sam Neill, Laura Dern and Jeff Goldblum and won three Oscars in 1994, while making US\$920 million at the box office globally.

There have been two sequels, in 1997

and 2001, and *Jurassic Park 4* is due out next year.

The 3D version gives extra depth and colour to the original, although critics may argue that the adaptation adds little to what was already a gripping and spectacular film.

“This was really the first time the computer graphics were used to make what appeared to be a living animal in

‘This was really the first time the computer graphics were used to make what appeared to be a living animal in a feature film.’

a feature film. And we didn’t know if we could do it,” said visual effects specialist Dennis Muren.

“We started very slowly doing tests to see if we could have a computer image like a dinosaur because if you can do that, you can give them a performance that you can never see with robotics or stop motion or any other way.”

He also pointed to his work on 1991’s *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, which helped pave the way for the *Jurassic Park* special effects.

Aged 66, Muren is a Hollywood institution — he has won six Oscars, notably for special effects for Spielberg’s *ET* (1982), and some of the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* movies.

“The learning curve for me was very steep on *Jurassic Park*, because I didn’t know the tools,” said Phil Tippett, another special effects guru who has worked on *Star Wars* and the recent *Twilight* movies.

“It was a time where computer graphic animation wasn’t at a very high level, so we developed technology that allowed stop motion animators to be able to manipulate [dinosaurs] — it wasn’t software, it was more mechanical device.”

Presenting the Beverly Hills screening, David Cohen said: “If we didn’t have *Jurassic Park* in 1993, we wouldn’t have had Richard Parker last year” — referring to the computer-generated tiger in Ang Lee’s stunning *Life of Pi*.

Tippett, who shared the 1994 Oscar for special effects with Muren for *Jurassic Park*, added: “Technology is always a pain in the ass.”

“What you need is creative people, an artist. The technology doesn’t do anything. It gets in the way,” he said.

— AFP

Musicians to draft new law for creative rights

MUSIC piracy is common in Asia and free downloads for just about any artist or band in the world can be accessed with a simple click through any number of websites.

It is a convenient practice for consumers, but for musicians piracy is a financial disaster — particularly in a developing country such as Myanmar where artists have few legal rights or controls over their creative property.

To ensure their rights, local musicians are joining the effort by the Myanmar Music Association (MMA) to draft a Myanmar Music Enterprise Law, which will protect artists and those working in the music industry against exploitation and piracy.

Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein, who is serving as general secretary of the MMA, said that as the law is developed, the door is open to every artist and businessperson working in the industry to give any advice or share problems they have faced.

“Only then will the law be complete,” she said.

The association has formed a committee to draft the law, led by composer and MMA secretary U Myint Moe Aung.

He said the target date for the “zero draft” of the law is May 31.

“After the zero draft finished, we will send it to the Ministry of Information and discuss it with lawyers and scholars,” he said.

“The information minister said we can invite scholars from abroad to develop the law if necessary, so it will be a long time before the law is finished and put into practice.”

Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein said that artists in Myanmar face many difficulties because they lack legal protection.

For example, she said there are no rules to prevent television and radio broadcasters from releasing songs or videos too early, a practice that takes control of the release away from the artist or producer.

“Some artists want their album to be broadcast on air just after the debut, but other artists won’t allow it,” she said. “It reduces album sales because the public can listen and watch them for free.”

If there is a specific law that stipulates what rights the artists have to control their own work, she said, then it will be easier to negotiate contracts and terms with different media outlets.

“It will also help artists protect themselves from producers or businesspeople who seek to exploit them,” she said.

This is not the first time Myanmar’s artists and musicians have tried to pass a law to protect themselves from exploitation.

The association’s previous executive board had tried to draft a law in the past, but their efforts were refuted by the previous government. If they get approval for the law this time, Myint Moe Aung and Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein said they expected to get many benefits.

“It will give more discipline to our work,” said Myint Moe Aung.

“If we can stand with protection and care, it will give more value to our creations,” said Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein. “It will be more meaningful to be an artist [in Myanmar] and it will reduce the feeling artists now have that people are using our intellectual property without our notice.”

— Nuam Bawi

From page 35

nearly all the “translations” have involved complete rewrites of the lyrics. Only one of MLTR’s songs, “25 Minutes”, has been directly translated.

Tu Aung was among those who learned the band’s songs by singing karaoke. He told *The Myanmar Times* before the concert that he has been a fan for 13 years and quickly fell in love with the music because of the catchy melodies. Then he learned the lyrics in English.

“I will definitely try to sing along in English. They are finally here, so I will certainly try,” he said and gave a small taste of what his favourite song, “The Actor”, should sound like.

The concert started at 7pm with the Myanmar national anthem and a few songs by local band Lazy Club. Then Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein went on stage, followed by

rock band Emperor, whose appearance increased the mood barometer. People began to sing along and rock to the music.

Backstage, the members of MLTR had arrived early to get a sense of the atmosphere. Nerves weren’t noticeable from the band and unfortunately there were no strange rituals to write home about before they went on stage.

Instead, they just sat waiting while the warm-up bands played in the background. The band members expressed pleasant surprise at the quality of the local music scene.

“There are some really good-quality warm-up bands. They have some good melodies in their songs,” Richter said as Lentz played some air guitar along to one of Emperor’s songs.

“It is exciting how the audience accepts us. But it sounds like the atmosphere

is good out there,” Wanscher said just before the band took a moment to be alone to prepare for their Myanmar debut.

The band has performed in a lot of places where people aren’t used to big concerts. A member of the stage crew said one of the most fantastic places to perform had been in an amphitheatre in Bali. The entire area was roofed except the stage — and of course it started to pour down rain in the middle of the concert and they had to stop playing.

Luckily there wasn’t a single drop of rain in evidence on the warm evening when MLTR played in Yangon.

The concert wasn’t sold out. According to the organisers, about 3000 fans attended. In particular, most of the K99,000 seats were empty. Other tickets sold for K34,900 and K19,000.

Meanwhile, about 100 people stood outside the

gate — some of them had not managed to buy a ticket, and others simply couldn’t afford it.

Among the latter was Htun Aung Kyaw.

“We are used to paying K6000 or K7000 for a local concert, and since I’m a student I couldn’t afford this concert. But I’ve been a fan for a long time so I had to hear them, even if it was from a distance,” he said.

Some fans resorted to unconventional methods to see the band, including climbing up into trees for a better view. In the back, some people started climbing over the fence to get closer. A few guards tried in vain to hold them back, but when the fence was partially overturned, the crowd got a free pass.

MLTR finally took the stage and singer Richter greeted the audience with a “mingalaba”.

“It’s great to be here.

We have missed you for 20 years,” he told the fans.

The first few songs were virtually unknown to the Myanmar crowd, but audience members started singing along when the band broke into “Sleeping Child”.

Richter introduced the huge 1991 hit song “The Actor” by telling the audience with a smile: “We originally started the band to get attention from women, but it meant that we first had to have a car. Now we don’t bother having cars anymore.”

The band demonstrated high energy on stage, and it didn’t seem to matter whether the hit songs had been covered by local bands in the Myanmar language: The audience knew all the lyrics in English and sang along, increasing the volume during the choruses.

The band played for about 90 minutes, then thanked the crowd and prepared

to leave. But the audience wanted more and demanded an encore. MLTR obliged with three more songs, ending with “That’s Why”.

Afterwards heaps of fans wanted their pictures taken with the band.

The members of MLTR said they were satisfied with the concert and the chance to meet their fans in Myanmar, adding that they hoped their appearance would be a step toward developing an international concert scene in the country.

“I’m sure we are helping develop the local scene towards time when Western bands regularly play here,” Wanscher said, before the band went back to their hotel to celebrate the concert with a little after-party.

MLTR left Myanmar a couple days after the show, heading for Dubai for their next concert on April 9.

Art Perspectives

Guggenheim plays it safe with Asian artists

An exhibition of contemporary South and Southeast Asian art at the Solomon Guggenheim Museum in New York City avoids works that court controversy or make political statements, and therefore fails to capture the complexity of Myanmar and the region as a whole, argues art researcher Nathalie Johnston

THIS year marks a major landmark for Myanmar artists: Two of their own are featured at the Solomon Guggenheim Museum in New York City.

The Guggenheim is one of world's premier museums, with collections boasting some of the best European and American modern art in the world.

The prestigious institution now looks to expand its map with UBS Map Global Art Initiative, first covering contemporary arts of South and Southeast Asia, followed by the Middle East and North Africa.

For the past decade, art critics and curators have turned serious attention toward burgeoning art scenes in places like Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand.

Yet Myanmar's artists remain far in the background, no doubt due to years of political isolation and a general scepticism as to whether artists here are producing contemporary art up to international standards.

The exhibition's title, "No Country: Contemporary Art from South and Southeast Asia", references the 1928 W B Yeats poem "Sailing to Byzantium". It is meant to offer an allegorical reference to the region's complex journeys through empires and colonisation, socialist regimes and democratic reform.

From the selection of works by curator and Guggenheim fellow June Yap, it is clear that artists from Myanmar will soon be getting the international recognition they have been missing.

Artist couple Tun Win Aung and Wah Nu are no strangers to major exhibitions in Asia and

Europe, but their combination installation-video-sculpture project displayed in New York was a first for the couple.

Four Pieces [of White] is an ode to their own childhood memories of General Aung San – memories passed down through video and radio clips, considering the general died long before the two were born.

A painting, a bookcase of white busts and a video all attempt to replicate the look and power of the general and the indelible mark he left on the psyche of Myanmar citizens.

The painted portrait mimics the T-shirts now sold on Yangon's streets. The 50 busts of the general's head face the wall, giving off an eerie, impersonal feeling. Best of all, an old video is on display of General Aung San's last speech before his assassination (with English subtitles) lecturing a crowd on the importance of efficiency, economy and unity.

Refreshingly out of place in the exhibition is Aung Myint's *White Stupa Doesn't Need Gold*. Aung Myint is a veteran of the art scene, often referred to as the father of modernism in Myanmar.

In this piece, the paint is roughly applied to the canvas and is perhaps the most successful of the exhibit for that very reason. It is not a museum-quality work like *Four Pieces*. The painting deftly describes Aung Myint's disdain for Myanmar Buddhism's extravagant obsession with gold leaf. The work can also be read as commenting on the decay of Myanmar's ancient temples and the lack of care and consideration paid to them.

When asked why these two particular projects were chosen to represent Myanmar, curator June Yap described her previous encounters with the country and how they changed.

"I had shown Tun Win Aung and Wah Nu's previous work at a video biennale but my first time travelling to Yangon was what really allowed me to understand the context of where their work was coming from. [The way that I was thinking about the work] became more complex after my visit," she said.

She admits that an exhibition such as "No Country" can in no way represent everything that is occurring in South and Southeast Asia, or even in Myanmar, but that this was not the intention. In dealing with representation, Ms Yap said, one dominant group is always better represented than smaller, minority communities.

When asked about the historical implications present in Aung Myint's painting and Tun Win Aung and Wah Nu's installation, Ms Yap said she was more interested in the personal histories of *Four Pieces* as well as the ancient history implied in *White Stupa* than in the general political representation of Myanmar as a whole.

This brings up some questions: When one refers to the complex histories of a region, should there not be a political statement? Does one have to talk about politics when speaking about Myanmar and its artists?

Arguably yes, especially in the past year, when the opportunity has presented itself so strikingly.

As a researcher of Southeast Asian art and artists, I find it problematic that the political nature of the works was not highlighted, nor were more controversial artists chosen.

Why paint new portraits of old regimes? Existing boundary-bending, rule-breaking work is virtually absent from the international exhibit of Myanmar's talented artists, living in and outside of their home country. The self-censorship of exhibitions appears deliberate, indicating more passive creativity than active participation.

I would suggest that work produced specifically for the Guggenheim exhibition would have been in order, so that the artists from throughout the region could better communicate with each other's practices and histories. But the Guggenheim allotted only so much space for so many countries, forcing the collected body of works to simply be on display rather than to speak to each other.

So did the Myanmar artists chosen for exhibit capture the breadth of where the country and its people are headed? In my opinion, no.



Aung Myint, *White Stupa Doesn't Need Gold* (2010)

When the curatorial objective is personality rather than politics, the entire exhibition becomes more of an artist guidebook than an artistic statement.

However, Aung Myint, Tun Win Aung and Wah Nu are three experienced and previously exhibited artists who know where they have been. Future curators are

work locally and those who collaborate with global art institutions.

Although many artists are already engaged on an international level, their work speaks more like local commentary than as art market-friendly commodities.

Surely the international glance of contemporary museums, dealers and

attention to quality work by Myanmar artists, which contributes to an art historical canon worldwide.

Remaining are multiple pockets of artists in Myanmar wishing to meaningfully engage with the world around them, rather than be looked upon as token guests or downtrodden protestors.

The international art world must emphasise the value of sharing histories with heterodox views, by encouraging artists to converse with their surroundings, rather than answer to a homogenous standard. Myanmar artists are now redefining their world and their future, and we must respectfully ask them what they imagine their futures to be through their work.

"No Country: Contemporary Art from South and Southeast Asia" runs through May 22 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City.

Nathalie Johnston is an independent art researcher based in Yangon who holds a masters in contemporary Southeast Asian art history. She can be reached at Nathalie.johnston@gmail.com.



Tun Win Aung and Wah Nu, "Forbidden Hero" from the installation piece *Four Pieces (of White)* (2013)

‘Existing boundary-bending, rule-breaking work is virtually absent from the international exhibit of Myanmar’s talented artists.’

sure to look fondly on their museum-friendly works. Their participation in this major Guggenheim initiative surely signals changes for other artists working in Myanmar.

Should the international art scene look to Myanmar artists for explanations and analytical worldviews through their work, a gap will no doubt develop between those who

collectors will push some of the artists to produce specifically for these markets, possibly taking on activist roles, asserting themselves as Myanmar's new wave of activist artists in the manner of China's Ai Wei Wei.

Whatever the outcome, the Guggenheim Museum and Ms Yap must be given credit for their first attempt to bring



Phyo's Cooking Adventure

Phyo cuts through culture to reveal life's true taste

When the dipping sauce is boss, there's no quibbles with the nibbles

Main Tips

If you prefer a more sour taste for the peanut sauce, you can add 1 tablespoon of tamarind paste. To make vegetarian peanut sauce, use salt instead of fish sauce. You can serve the dip as a side dish for curry and rice. Sticky rice and rice crackers are available at all supermarkets big and small.

QUAFFING QUOTE

"Stay away from restaurants that have menus in five languages. That's always a tourist trap. You want to eat where the locals eat."
— Curtis Stone (Australian celebrity chef and author)

NEXT WEEK

Myanmar- and Shan-style tomato salads

Red Wine

Les Calèches de Lanessan 2009

This Bordeaux blend (50pc merlot, 45pc cabernet sauvignon, 3pc petit verdot, 2pc cabernet franc) makes for smooth, fruity sipping, suitable for serious and casual wine drinkers alike.



Ks 20,700


Score BOX

8/10

White Wine

Gustave Lorentz Fleurelle 2000

The invigorating intermingling of muscat, sylvaner and pinot blanc grapes creates a buoyant, graceful wine with hints of peach and a satisfyingly elevated quaffability quotient.



Ks 15,300

Score BOX

8/10

FOR me it's not too difficult to create a menu with entrées, main dishes and desserts. The biggest problem is creating nibbles — dips, chips, paté — in Burmese style. Tempura vegetables and tofu salad are time-consuming to make, and therefore I can't enjoy chatting with my guests.

The recipes below are based on side dishes from Myanmar traditional meals. I brought them onto the coffee table from the dining room table, serving them as nibbles for drinks. We mostly serve Burmese food at our dinner parties, so I introduced these dishes to my Australian families and friends. They loved them, and I've been serving them ever since.

The first recipe, for a fish-based sauce called ngar htaung, is served with rice crackers. The second recipe was inspired by the sauce commonly served with Thai satay: I changed the traditional myay pae ngapi chet (peanut and dried shrimp sauce) into a dip to be served with white and black sticky rice. You can refrigerate the dip for up to one week.

Ngar htaung dip with rice crackers

INGREDIENTS
1 pack of rice crackers (hta min gyoe kyaw)
100-150g of carp fish (nga gyin)



2 medium onions (grilled)
6-8 cloves of garlic (grilled)
4-6 small green chilies (grilled)
1/8 teaspoon of turmeric powder
1/8 teaspoon of paprika
1/2 teaspoon of salt
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
2 tablespoons of lime juice (more can be added if preferred)
1 tablespoon of fish sauce
Handful of coriander (with roots)
2 heads of lemon grass

PREPARATION

Marinate the fish with 1 tablespoon of fish sauce, 1/8 teaspoon of turmeric powder and

1/2 teaspoon of salt for at least 30 minutes.

Grill 2 medium onions, green chilies and garlic over a gas stove flame, without peeling them. When the onions are soft, remove from the fire and cool them. For the chilies and garlic, remove them after the aroma is released. Discard all the burnt skins from onions and garlic.

Washed the coriander and roots well and drain them. Finely chop the base and roots.

Heat the oil in a pan over high heat. Sauté the coriander roots and pan-fry the fish in a nonstick frying pan for 6-8 minutes

or until it is cooked through. Discard the bones and skin, and save the flesh.

In a food processor, combine the grilled onions, garlic, chilies, fish, lemon grass, coriander, lime juice, fish sauce and oil. Blend until it becomes a paste. Salt for taste. Garnish with chopped coriander.

Peanut and tomato sauce

INGREDIENTS
3/4 cup of roasted peanuts (crushed)
3 onions (finely chopped)
6-8 big tomatoes (boiled, peeled and chopped)
1/2 cup of oil
1/4 teaspoon of chili powder
4 tablespoons of fish sauce
2/3 cups of water
Handful of chives (chopped)

PREPARATION

For this recipe I use roasted peanuts and remove the skins by rubbing them between my palms and tossing them up in flat, round plate or tray.

Heat the oil over medium heat and sauté the onions. When they turn golden-brown, add the chili powder and fry for a few seconds. Add the tomatoes, peanuts and fish sauce, and fry for 2-3 minutes.

Add the water and bring it to a boil, then simmer for 15 minutes while stirring frequently.

Allow the mixture to completely cool, then blend it in a food processor until it becomes smooth. Garnish with chives.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Authentic taste of Myanmar in the Sydney suburbs

THERE aren't too many places where you can pay K5000 for a bowl of mohinga and come away feeling like you got a good deal. In fact, I had to travel thousands of kilometres for the pleasure, to the Australian coastal city of Sydney. Far away from the Harbour Bridge and Opera House, the Myanmar restaurant of Bagan in the suburb of Strathfield has been earning rave reviews in the local press and online — and it's not hard to see why.

The Strathfield shopping strip is the centre of a thriving Korean community but when I visited last month it wasn't the numerous restaurants hawking bulgogi and kimchi that were booming. Bagan was easily the busiest restaurant on the strip and we got the last free table; several groups after us had to wait for a table to free up.

The décor was relatively plain, with a few touches that spoke of idealised, touristy Myanmar and others that hinted at an establishment not far removed from its roots (the kyauksi pan gyika, or gemstone "painting", and the large, gaudily framed vinyl print of a family member in traditional dress were straight out of the Yangon style book). The steady stream of Myanmar around us — more than half of



Pic: Tom Kean

clientele appeared to be Myanmar — also added to the atmosphere. The service was acceptable, with staff friendly but struggling to keep up with the steady stream of customers.

But it was the food that excited and delighted, providing a more authentic taste of Myanmar than some tourist-oriented restaurants in Yangon. The pork curry was delightfully sweet and thick, while

the ngayankyauk (dried fish) salad inspired a raft of "likes" when a photo was later posted on Facebook (and it tasted as good as it looked).

What let the mohinga down slightly was that it came more as a curry than a soup, with no chilli flakes, coriander, sliced bean or lime to add into the mix. I even tried and enjoyed a new dish: Mohnyin-style chicken, a sour stir-

fry containing pickled vegetables.

The price was very reasonable by Australian standards, with mains around \$10-15 and entrees and salads \$5-10, and our bill came to around US\$35. There was too much for two people, and what we took home made a tasty lunch the next day.

Unfortunately, in my excitement for the food I forgot to explore the drink menu but I've no doubt that next time I'm in Sydney I'll find time to take another trip to Bagan. — TK

Bagan

Shop 4, 41 The Boulevard, Strathfield, Sydney, Australia
Food: 9
Drink: NA
Service: 7
Atmosphere: 7
X Factor: 9
Value for Money: 8

Score BOX

8/10



Ko Tun Tun Win @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion



Thiri Swe @ Sai Sai Birthday Show Press Conference



Daw Tuu Tuu Myint Thein @ Pin Ya Journal Launch



U Nyunt Tin, H E Mr Sebastianus Sumarsono and U Phone Myint @ Bangladesh National Day Ceremony



Maj. Gen Anup Kumar Chakma @ Bangladesh National Day Ceremony



U Myint Swe @ Bangladesh National Day Ceremony



Nay Chi Lin Lae @ Follow Me Lucky Draw



Myat Thu Kyaw @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion



Mr Nico, Mr Max, Ms Camilla and Mr Alastair @ Union Bar & Grill Opening



Guests @ Follow Me Lucky Draw



Moe Hay Ko @ Unique Vivaia Que Shop Opening



Khine Thazin Ngu Wah @ Unique Vivaia Que Shop Opening



Daw Khin Mar Yee @ Edulink Australia Graduation Ceremony



Ma Nwe Ni Wai @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion



Mr Alasdair @ Edulink Australia Graduation Ceremony



Ei Nge, Htoo Lay and Lae Phyu Pyar @ Edulink Australia Graduation Ceremony



DJ, Phyo Lay, Sai Sai Kham Leng, Nay Win and Maung Maung Aye @ Sai Sai Birthday Show Press Conference



U Min Thit @ Pin Ya Journal Launch



Thiri J Maung Maung @ Bangladesh National Day Ceremony



U Hla Tun @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion



Daw Shwe Ou @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion



Mr Robin @ Edulink Australia Graduation Ceremony



Yadana Mai @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion



Tun Ko Ko @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion






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SOCIALITE
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THE week started a bit slowly for Socialite but as usual picked up by the end. First on the agenda was the Follow Me lucky draw at Traders

Hotel on March 27. The next day she attended the *Pin Ya* journal launch at Central Hotel and the Union Bar & Grill opening on Strand Road, before heading off to Shwe Kaung Hot Pot for a press conference by her favourite rapper Sai Sai Kham Leng to announce his annual birthday show. On March 29 Socialite attended the 42nd Bangladesh National Day celebration at Sedona Hotel. The week ended with a flurry of events, including the Unique Viva!a Que shop opening in Tarmwe township, the Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit gold shop promotion at Kandawgyi Hotel, and the graduation ceremony for Edulink Australia at Central Hotel.

Ms Ayesha Karm, Chobi, Pamela and Aasfeen @ Bangladesh National Day Ceremony



Ma Shwe Yee and Mr Iain Glover @ Bangladesh National Day Ceremony



Ma Khin Thandar @ Pin Ya Journal Launch



Yoon Wati Lwin Moe @ Unique Viva!a Que Shop Opening



Moe Yan Zun and Melody @ Shwe Ou Yar Su Thit Gold Shop Promotion



Mr Rick Nay @ Union Bar & Grill Opening



Ms Denise Thomson @ Edulink Australia Graduation Ceremony



U Kyi Min @ Pin Ya Journal Launch



Daw Mawli Lin and Daw Ni Ni A @ Follow Me Lucky Draw



Ko Soe Zay Yar @ Union Bar & Grill Opening



Ma Hnin Ei Phyu @ Unique Viva!a Que Shop Opening



Handa Sai @ Sai Sai Birthday Show Press Conference



San Toe Naing @ Unique Viva!a Que Shop Opening

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Days Flight Dep Arr				Days Flight Dep Arr				Days Flight Dep Arr				Days Flight Dep Arr				Days Flight Dep Arr				Days Flight Dep Arr				Days Flight Dep Arr																		
YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW				SAT	YJ891	6:10	8:15					SUN	YH910	8:10	10:15					FRI	YJ891	7:45	10:25					SUN	YJ891	6:10	9:00	SITTWE TO YANGON										
MON	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		YH917	6:10	8:30						YH918	8:30	10:25						YH918	7:45	10:25						YH917	6:10	9:15	MON				6T604C	12:35	14:00				
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		6T401	6:20	8:25						YJ892	8:30	10:25						6T401	7:55	10:45						6T401	6:20	9:20	TUE				K7423	8:55	10:50				
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00		YH909	6:30	8:10						6T402	8:45	10:45						YH910	8:55	10:15						YJ751/W97751	9:00	10:10					6T604C	12:35	14:00				
TUE	UB-A1	07:45	08:45		K7222	6:30	8:40						K7223	9:00	11:05						K7225	16:40	18:00						YH505	10:30	11:55					6T612	13:15	14:40				
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30		K7244	6:45	8:10						YJ201/W97201	9:10	11:05						YJ792	16:55	18:15						YH737	11:15	12:40					6T608	13:00	15:00				
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t-sees for must-eats



Le Jules Verne in Paris had been a tourist trap until Alain Ducasse’s team took it over and created a luxe restaurant where the food (and the price tag, of course) lives up to the view. Pic: Washington Post/Joe Yonan

most glorious attractions. No, it was little Neal’s Yard Dairy for a sampling of exquisite raw-milk cheddar – and Wensleydale, Stilton, Shropshire and other UK cheeses of a quality I had never before experienced. I’m on my most touristy behaviour when I have company. When I went to Barcelona several years ago with my sister, I knew that if we didn’t manage to soak up some Gaudi, especially the wild and unfinished Sagrada Familia, she would have disowned me. Thankfully, she’s also as interested in food as I am, so we returned time and again to La Boqueria, the famed food market. On a two-week trip to Japan, my friend Devra made sure that we took the time to see some temples, such as the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo and the breathtaking Kinkaku-ji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion) in Kyoto. Left to my own devices, I might have skipped them both and hung out for a little longer at Tokyo’s Tsukiji Fish

Market, where we had sushi for breakfast – and where I wanted to return for lunch. The truth is, I know that I’ve learned plenty about every place I’ve been, even as I’ve focused on those must-eats over the must-sees. Food, of course, is just as significant as art when it comes to culture, making a visit to a restaurant or a bakery every bit as valid as one to a museum. And sometimes the lines between the two blur. One of Devra’s best ideas on that Japan trip was that we take a train to the Ramen Museum in Yokohama. The upstairs exhibits taught us how important ramen is to the history of Japan, preparing us for the main attraction downstairs: a theme park set in the year 1958, when the instant version of the noodles were invented. In Paris, the best example might be at the most iconic sight of all: the Eiffel Tower. I hadn’t avoided it, but I also hadn’t gotten up close and personal – not until my friend Rachel and I made

reservations for dinner at Le Jules Verne, which had been a tourist trap until Alain Ducasse’s team took it over and created a luxe restaurant where the food lives up to the view. Why choose between dinner and a trip up the tower when you can have both? Inside the tower, some 120 metres (400 feet) above ground, we wine and dined as the sun set over Paris and the tower lit up. As I write this, I’m planning my next big trip, to Southeast Asia in the fall. And all this talk about my must-not-sees has made me vow to expand my interests a little bit, to let up on the food obsessions and try to experience a wider view of a culture. As I read guidebooks on Southeast Asia, I’m going to try to design an itinerary that can accommodate, say, a guided tour of Angkor Wat as well as a cooking class or two in Chiang Mai. If we run short on time, though, I think I know what to skip. – The Washington Post

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	

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

DAYS

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Renewed Rijksmuseum revamps Golden Age

By Charles Onians

AMSTERDAM — Amsterdam's world-famous Rijksmuseum revealed its eagerly-awaited 21st century identity last week after a vast 10-year renovation aimed at breathing new life into its unparalleled collection of Golden Age masterpieces.

"The Rijksmuseum stands at the threshold of a new page of its history," the museum's general director Wim Pijbes told journalists at a press preview of the 375 million euro (US\$480 million) revamp, masterminded by Spanish architects Cruz y Ortiz.

Architects and artisans have restored much of the original styling of the Gothic-Renaissance building, designed by Pierre Cuypers and first opened in 1885, but with extensive modern touches.

The museum covers 800 years of Dutch history through 8000 objects, distributed through 80 rooms. A 1.5-kilometre walk around the galleries will take you "from the Middle Ages to Mondrian".

But at the heart of the museum's physical and artistic identity is Rembrandt's vast masterpiece of militia intimidation, *The Night Watch*.

The painting, flanked by works by the likes of Johannes Vermeer and Frans



A visitor admires Rembrandt's masterpiece *The Night Watch* at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum on April 4. Pic: AFP

Hals, symbolises the Golden Age, roughly spanning the 17th century, when the Dutch dominated much of world trade and, as a result, art.

Spectacular newfound bourgeois wealth meant that millions of paintings were commissioned, often portraits or landscapes, rather than the romanticised Biblical imagery that had dominated the Italian Renaissance.

The Protestant Dutch spent the first half of the Golden Age fighting for

liberation from the Catholic Spanish, and it is not without irony that Spanish architects have now renovated the world's foremost Golden Age treasure trove.

The museum hopes to draw two million visitors a year, "binding people, art and history," according to director Pijbes. When the museum was first designed, it was to receive 200,000 visitors a year.

"Everything has changed except for one thing, *The*

Night Watch — although it's now hanging a little bit higher than before," he said.

Director of collections Taco Dibbits summarised the museum as being about a "feel for beauty and a consciousness of history".

While previously a museum such as the Rijksmuseum would have a room for paintings, a room for furniture and a room for ceramics, Dibbits said, that has now changed.

Instead, Rembrandt's

paintings now hang alongside furniture made by Herman Doomer, a cabinetmaker friend of his, or a portrait of Golden Age poet Constantijn Huygens, who wrote about Rembrandt.

The objects live happily together, either hung on walls or housed in what Dibbits called "nearly invisible" cases.

"We restored the entire building. We gave it back air, we gave it back light," said Dibbits. "I think that beauty can be asleep for a long time, but when she wakes up, she wakes up and it's party time."

The renovation has not been without controversy, running massively over budget and deadline.

One particularly Dutch headache has been a bicycle path running through a tunnel in the middle of the building.

The museum didn't want the tunnel used as a bike path because of its proximity to the entrance, but the city authorities decided to let the bikes through and monitor the situation.

It was even suggested at one point that Amsterdam hold a referendum on the typically Dutch and divisive issue.

During the renovation, 400 of the museum's works were moved into the Philipsvleugel wing, where they were seen by 8.5 million visitors over nine years.

Other works were to be seen in rotating exhibitions at the museum's annex at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, which has been there for over 10 years, and a full 5000 objects were restored during the building's renovation.

Former Dutch football international Ruud Gullit, whose mother used to work at the museum, has starred in adverts for the Rijks, in the hope of drawing more Dutch visitors, with more than 40,000 advance tickets already sold online.

The Rijksmuseum shares the Museumplein in southcentral Amsterdam with the formidable cultural ensemble of the Van Gogh Museum and the Stedelijk modern art museum, both also world famous in their own right.

The Stedelijk reopened late last year after a nine-year renovation and the construction of a new wing resembling a giant bathtub, and the Van Gogh Museum is to reopen next month after its own renovations, bolstering Amsterdam's credentials as a top art destination.

The museum trio hopes to work together to retake the grassy park of the Museumplein they share, an area more used to serving as a party ground for football fans. — AFP

Events Flash

Re-Please #2

An art exhibition titled "Re-Please #2" is on display at Monsoon Restaurant (85-87 Theinbyu Road, Botahtaung township, Yangon) until April 30. The show will feature the work of two artists from Myanmar and nine artists from Thailand, and focuses on consumer awareness of natural resources in the art creation process.

Intuition show

The "Intuition" art exhibition, displaying abstract paintings by US-based Myanmar artist Paw Thame, is being held at Gallery 65 (65 Yaw Min Gyi Road, Dagon township) until April 30.

Memories for the Future

The paintings of artist Nyein Chan Su are on display at an exhibition titled "Memories for the Future" at the French Institute (340 Pyay Road, Sanchaung township, Yangon) through April 10.

Textiles show

Exquisite loom-woven fabrics are featured in the "Art of Textiles

and Accessories" show at Lawkanat Art Gallery (62 Pansodan Street, First Floor, Kyauktada township) through April 11.

DJs at Mojo

Mojo (Inya Road opposite Savoy Hotel) is hosting a Thingyan-eve dance party on April 12, featuring DJs Cyncity, Iwok and XU spinning UK-bass house, EDM, dubstep, techno and more. The live sets will start at 9pm and continue until around 2am. Free entry.

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)

Finding light in the darkness is a very important means of escaping from evil and delusion. Keep your mind clean and start your efforts to steer yourself away from wrong and negative directions. You must believe in your own management skills, and trust yourself to make decisions without bothering about getting the approval of others. Never try to be somebody you are not, and never tell lies to yourself.

Pisces

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Nature will repay faith with faith, and faithlessness with faithlessness. Shed your ego and learn to apply your optimistic attitude to the realm of social communication. The purpose of life is a life of purpose. Set clearly defined personal, professional and spiritual goals, and have the courage to act on them. Pay full attention to appreciating the exquisite beauty of all sentient beings.

Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

Present your best self to the world and understand that you will never reach your full potential unless you develop your sense of self-esteem. Believe that no solutions to the problems of human destiny are beyond the reach of man, or beyond your capacity for courage and intelligence. Love can be made perfect through social understanding and forgiveness.

Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

Apply logic and creative thinking in a constructive direction, with the aim of finding the cause of your problems and a proper solution. Your optimistic outlook can change the bitterest criticism into well-considered analysis. Don't be afraid to communicate according to your personal experience. Love is not a normal plant but a beautiful flower that will bloom into greatness without time limit or measure.

Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

You should always nurture great and high thoughts, but never drift into the realm of delusion. Enlightenment comes through the consistent cultivation of the mind and right conception. It is important to focus on the most constructive thoughts at any given moment. Accept what is out of your control and optimise what is within your control.

Cancer

(June 22 - July 22)

A positive change in social relationships will provide the opportunity to enjoy the financial success you crave. Increase your focus on social observation and be ready to make the right challenge in the realm of professional investment, which is sure to be profitable. Be bold in choosing

and pursuing your ambitions. Promise a wide-angle vision of the nature and types of love.

Leo

(July 23 - Aug 22)

Invest a little time in social processes. It is important to keep yourself accessible and familiar to people at every level of your organisation or company. Deconstruct your communication problems and put them back together again to find the value of social connections. Learn to pay more attention to the emotional challenges faced by your partner.

Virgo

(Aug 23 - Sept 22)

Social affairs should not be neglected, but don't feel disappointed if interactions with friends and associates don't go your way. New and unexpected communication channels will open, but they could make your life more complicated. You should pay more attention to close partners who can give you the right information. Hope will come in the form of a little spark of love.

Libra

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)

Sustaining true love without end is very difficult. Learn how to make your relationship sweeter, deeper and more passionate, and nourish your loving self. Make the effort to understand the many social favours required on the path to finding love. Expanding your social circle can result in a schedule that is busy with appointments, so be wise in making new connections.

Scorpio

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Incompatibility can often lead to controversy. You might have difficulty finding understanding among the many communities and relationships complicating your life. Be aware of changes in the nature and attitude of those close to you. Strong feelings for your partner are not enough to confirm the strength of the relationship.

Sagittarius

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Be a champion of justice as you strive to contribute to the establishment of democracy. Surviving one danger is just a step toward overcoming the next, more complex and more dangerous situation. Don't forget to keep things in perspective whenever you take action. Mutual respect and understanding are essential in any organisation. Maintain a proper mental balance as you take care of your responsibilities.

Capricorn

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Keep your mind clear and stable at all times, every day, every week and every month. Otherwise you might be prone to suffering nervous disorders as your misconceptions lead to egocentricity. Strive to recognise your own weaknesses and eliminate them as soon as possible. Success in any sphere is the result of strong effort and concentrated attention on one direction.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw,
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Employment

UN Positions

THE INT'L Organization for Migration (IOM) office in Yangon is seeking **Senior Admin & Finance Assistant** 1 post in Myawaddy Tsp, Kayin State. Interested candidates are invited to submit an application letter and an updated CV with a maximum length of 3 pages including names & contact details of 3 referees (copies of certificates & further documents are not required at this stage) to Int'l Organization for Migration, 12th Flr, Traders Hotel : 223, Sule Pagoda Rd, Kyauktada, Yangon, Ph: 252560, 375601, Email: hryangon@iom.int, Closing date: 12 April 2013.

Ingo Positions

HelpAge Myanmar is seeking qualified and experienced Myanmar nationals for the following post: Job Title: **Project Finance Officer** (2 posts) Location: Yangon with frequent travel to project areas Qualifications and competencies - CPA/ACCA, At least 5 years experience in similar position with international agencies/UN, Experience in producing budgets, financial monitoring and donor reports, Solid experience in developing internal finance control systems, Experience in building staff capacity in accounting, controls, budgeting and project finance management. Experience in working as part of multi-disciplinary teams, Excellent communication and negotiation skills, Advance computer skills particularly in Excel, Good command of spoken and written English and Myanmar Languages, Ability to deliver under pressure and willingness to travel in the project areas. Job Title: **Human Resources Officer** (1 Post) Location: Yangon Office. Period: One year (extendable). Educated to Bachelor's degree in

level, preferably in a HR discipline or related field. At least 3 years experience in the field of HR/ administration preferably with UN agencies/INGOs. Significant experience in administering recruitment campaigns. Experience of liaising with NGOs, UN agencies and government departments. Well-developed interpersonal and team skills and proven ability to be flexible in demanding situations. Ability to maintain confidentiality. Fluency in written and spoken English is essential and the ability to write clear reports for a wide range of audiences. Ability to think and plan workload and work on own initiative. Skills in organising filing systems and managing personal and confidential data. Excellent computer skills in MS-Word, Excel, Power-point, databases, internet, e-mail, and any other relevant software. Commitment to humanitarian principles and action, along with the aims and objectives of HelpAge International. 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, Shwetaungaya Ward No. 1, Bahan Township, Yangon OR by email to hr.helpagemyanmar@gmail.com no later than 5p.m., 19 April 2013. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.

MEDECINS Sans Frontieres is seeking (1) **Coordinator** 1 post - Myanmar Emergency Response Unit in Yangon: Medical/ paramedical degree with Full and current registration/ license with relevant professional body. Previous experience in conducting assessments & emergency response. Fluent in Myanmar language. Excellent command of English language. (2) **Finance Manager** for Coordination Office

in Yangon. University degree in accounting, finance or business administration. Qualification Chartered Accountant or equivalent (CPA, ACA, ACCA, CIMA) highly preferable. Minimum 3 years relevant managerial experience, with demonstrated skills in effective compliance to procedures & control of expenses. Pls send application letter, CV & passport photo, copies of education qualifications & references to: HR Officer. Medecins sans Frontieres - Switzerland (MSF-CH). 101, Dhamazedi Rd, Kamaryut, Yangon. Email: msfch-rangoon-web@geneva.msf.org, Ph: 502509, 526194, 503548. (Applications are requested to send in Microsoft Word or PDF format and pls clearly mention the job title in subject if you apply online. Closing date: for (1) 19th April 2013, for (2) 10th April 2013.

MEDECINS Sans Frontieres is seeking **Midwife** 2 posts in Sittve, Rakhine: Midwife Diploma certificate. Previous work experience as nurse-midwife. Able to speak local language & with English highly appreciated. Pls send application letter, CV & passport photo, copies of education qualifications and references to: MSF-Holland/ AZG (Yangon Coordination). No.62A, Bawdiyeiktha-Thaniwin Rd, Bahan, Yangon, or through msf.hk.myanmar.recruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 21st April, 2013.

THE FRENCH Red Cross (FRC) is seeking **Watsan Project Coordinator** 1 post in Yangon: Relevant university degree. 5 years experience in water, hygiene & sanitation field. Experience knowledge of PHAST and Community-Led Total Sanitation methods. Computer literacy in both Myanmar & English. Applications (including CV & references) should

be submitted email to French Red Cross Office : fin.mgr.myanmar.frc@gmail.com, Cc: hod.myanmar.frc@gmail.com, hr.officer.myanmar.frc@gmail.com, Only English application will be considered. Closing date : April 26th 2013.

AMDA is seeking (1) **CDF (Community Development Facilitator)** for the "Maternal & Child Health Program" in Kokang Self-administered Zone: Minimum high school level of government school (10th Standard passed). Fluent in Kokang and Myanmar languages (reading & writing). Fluent in Palaung or Myaung Zee (Pae Zu) is more eligible. 1 year experience, background & knowledge about the community development activities or relevant fields. (2) **Asst Field Logistician** for the "Maternal and Child Health Program" in Kokang Self-administered Zone, Northern Shan State: At least Basic Education (high school) level passed. Prior experience in logistic and warehouse keeping preferred. Good computer skills. Good language skills in speak, read & write in Myanmar & local language such as Kokang. Pls enclose a C.V., copies of testimonials (references) & passport photo to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office, 19B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin, Yangon. Tel: 578353, Email: amda@mptmail.net.mm Closing date : 25th April 2013.

MEDECINS du Monde (MDM) is seeking **Field Administrator** in Pyapon : University Degree. Experience in related position; experience with int'l NGO is an advantage. Myanmar & English fluently spoken & written. Pls submit CV & a cover letter to MDM Yangon Office. 16, Kan Yeik Thar St, Mayangone, Yangon. Ph: 662 604, 723 654, Email: hr.mdmmyanmar@gmail.com

MEDECINS du Monde (MDM) is seeking **Secretary/ Cashier** in Pyapon: University Degree. Experience in related position; experience with int'l NGO is an advantage. Myanmar & English fluently spoken & written. Good knowledge of computing, typing & professional in accounting procedures. Accurate, reliable, strong social skills, common sense, pro-active. Knowledge of rural areas of Pyapon township is an advantage. Pls submit CV & a cover letter to MDM Yangon Office. 16, Kan Yeik Thar St, Mayangone, Ph: 662 604, 723 654, Email: hr.mdmmyanmar@gmail.com

SOLIDARITES Int'l is seeking (1) **Monitoring & Evaluation Officer** in Monywa, Sagaing Division: Previous experience in a M&E position. Good in English (interview will be conducted in English). Understanding of Water, Sanitation & Hygiene an asset. (2) **Construction Technician** (Water Facility Construction Officer) in Monywa, Sagain Region: Specific technical knowledge & experience in construction of small scale community infrastructures (especially water collection and supply facilities). Previous experience in supervising Cash for work or similar activities is considered as an advantage. Knowledge of the Dry

Zone & the project area is considered as an advantage. Driving license & ability to drive motorbikes. (3) **Civil Engineer** (Water Facility Construction Manager) in Monywa, Sagaing Division: Civil Engineer Degree, 4 years of professional experience in civil engineering. Knowledge of the Dry Zone and the project area is considered as an advantage. Very good reporting skills. Excellent in English (interview will be conducted in English). Good computer skills & ideally competent in engineering software (e.g. AutoCAD, GIS). Pls submit application to: hr.solidarites.mm@gmail.com or in hard copy to Saint Sandar Yu at Solidarites Int'l office - 44(A), Tharyarwaddy Lane, Bahan, Yangon. Closing date: 19.4.2013

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking **Project Director** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw (HQ) & Yangon: University education, preferably Master Degree in Social Science or Management. 5 years previous experience in senior positions and similar works capacity. Knowledge of water and sanitation, community development projects. Excellent Command of English language & Good knowledge & Skill in Microsoft Office. Pls submit a letter of application, CV, Photo with necessary documents to (Cover letter CV documents only need to be sent via email) mrcshrrcruitment@gmail.com before 11th April 2013. Pls visit myanmarredcross-society.org.

MLAW is seeking **Program Manager** in Yangon Bachelor's degree. 3 years management experience of programs, preferably those programs relating to rule of law, legal aid. Pls submit CV, including an application letter, copies of academic degree (Master or Bachelor), work related accomplishments and contact address or mails or phone numbers of two referees to mlaw.recruitment@gmail.com no later than April 11. Hard copy applications should be sent to Reception 205, 2nd Flr of Tower E, Diamond Condo, Pyay Rd., Kamayut, Yangon. MLAW will select those of the applicants the merits - the skills and values required for the task or work to be done regardless of their gender, sex, race, religion and social status. The well-qualified women candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

BURNET Institute Myanmar is seeking (1) **Finance Officer** 1 post in Yangon: Detailed information can be assessed at Burnet Institute Myanmar office. Pls submit an application letter, curriculum vitae with passport photo & copies of relevant documents to: HR Officer : Burnet Institute Myanmar : 226, 2nd Flr, Wizaaya Plaza, U Wisara Rd, Bahan, Yangon (OR) Email: burnet.myanmar@gmail.com. Closing date : April 26, 2013

Local Position
NETSYS SOLUTIONS is newly established company in Myanmar is seeking (1) **Customer Support Engineer** : Degree/Advanced Diploma in Computer Science or I.T. related studies, 3 ~ 5 years experience in Windows Server, ie. Active Directory, DHCP, DNS,

FTP & TCP/IP/Red Hat administration & support would be advantageous. Practical experience in the installation, configuration, upgrading and troubleshooting of I.T. systems such as Microsoft Exchange and Firewall. Knowledge and experience in VMware will be advantageous. 3-5 years of networking experience. Fresh grads are welcomed. (2) **Hardware Support Engineer** : Understand & converse in English. 1 to 2 years experience in providing end user support. Experience in basic networking. Troubleshoot and resolve hardware and software issues for desktops and printers. Knowledge of Macintosh/Linux will be advantageous. (3) **General Administrator/ Receptionist** : Understand & converse in English. Diploma & above. Proficient in Microsoft Office. Good communication skills. Pls send resume to admin@netsys.com.mm with recent photo, expected pay and availability.

REGENCY Material Trading Co., Ltd. SANY Heavy Machinery (Myanmar Branch) is seeking (1) **Service Engineer** - M 15 Posts : BE / B.Tech / A.G.T.I (Mechanical/ Electrical), Myanmar national citizenship, 1 year experience in related field, Good communication skills, both written and orally, Able to work in any location of Myanmar which is assigned to, Excellent interpersonal, coordination, negotiation & presentation skills, (2). **Marketing Executive** - M 3 Posts (2 Posts in Yangon, 1 Post in Mandalay): Preferred BE / B.Tech (Mechanical), Myanmar national citizenship, At least 3 years experiences in Machinery field, Good communication skills, both written and orally, Possess Driving license and can drive, Can travel to any place of Myanmar which is needed to, For Mandalay Position, who can stay in Mandalay. Interested candidates should apply with CV with photo, copy of registration card, and other relative documents to No(45/46), Bahosi Development, Wadan St, Lanmadaw, Yangon. Ph : 09 43073537, 09 4310 7758, E.mail : sanymyanmar@gmail.com. Closing date : 30th April 2013.

URGENTLY Needed- **Experience Chef** Needed for cooking Myanmar food & Chinese food. Intrest person Pls Contact: 09-506-1232, 09-730-65958 or apply in person Bldg 5, Rm 1, Pyay Rd, 8th Mile, Mayangone. (Back of Min Min Store)

AQUALAND company are looking for (1). **Sr Accountant** - M/F 1 post : Graduate in any discipline. LCCI level 3 and/or MYOB, 2 years experience in account field. (2). **Cashier** - M/F 1 post (3). **Sales Staff** - M/F 20 posts (4). **Sales Supervisor** - M/F 5 posts (5). **Sales Manager** - M/F 1 post (6). **Inventory** - M/F 1 post (7). **Administrative staff** - M/F 2 posts (8). **HR Executive** - M 3 posts (9). **Driver-In Charge** - M 1 post. For post No.2 & 6 : Graduate in any discipline, 1 years experience. For post No.3 & 4 & 5 : Graduate in any discipline, 2 years experience. For post No.7 & 8 : Graduate in any discipline, 2 years experience. Must be computer literate (10) **Driver** - M 3 post. Pls

submit CV with a recent photo, Labor registration card, copy of NRC, & all the supporting documents to Da 80, Kanbawza Lane, Bahan, Ph: 514408, 512474. Closing date : 30 April 2013.

TECHNICAL Service Manager - M/F 1 Post: With degree in B.Vsc, Age 35 ~ 50 years, Able to travel, 5 years experience in poultry farming, fluent in spoken & written English skills in Writing memos, letter, reports, computer proficiency (Word, Excel, Email, Internet). Pls submit CV detailing your experience & skills to 17(F), Aung Theikdi Rd, Aung Tha Pyay Yeik Thar, Mayangone, Ph: 09-505-3488, 09-506-5355, 662796.

SAKURA TOWER seeks qualified applications as follows (1) **Sales Executive** F 1 post, (2) **Air Con Technician** - M 1 post. Pls contact #0505, Sakura Tower, Yangon. Ph: 255255.

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SPA/FMI is hiring highly motivated staff in the following positions for its Mitsubishi Service Station. Prior experience in respective field required. English knowledge required for all administrative posts. (1) **Mechanics** 10 posts (2) **Accountant** 2 posts (3) **Parts manager** 1 post (4) **Service advisor** 1 post (5) **Service receptionist** 2 posts (6) **Workshop manager** 1 post. Pls send CV's with contact details to HR Department :380 , 10 th flr . FMI Center , Bogoyoke Aung San Rd, Pabedan, Yangon or email: yinwaihun85@gmail.com . Pls indicate Mitsubishi Service Station clearly on your application. Closing date :30.4.2013 .

KELVIN CHIA Yangon Ltd is a foreign legal consultancy firm. We invite motivated and committed individuals to join us as (1) **Lawyers** who will work on a variety of corporate & commercial matters & transactions in Myanmar. If you are a Myanmar-qualified lawyer with strong English language skills, you are invited to apply to join our Myanmar practice group. Myanmar nationals admitted to int'l bars are also welcome to apply. Training will be provided. Applicants may email to kim@kcyangon.com and submit your curriculum vitae.

MYANMA AUTHENTIC Space Travel & Tour Co. Ltd., in Yangon is seeking (1) **Asst: International & Domestic Air Ticketing & Marketing Manager**-1 Post (2) **Asst: Inbound/ outbound Tour &**

Marketing Manager - 1 Post (3) **International Air Ticketing & Marketing Staff** - 1 Post (4) **Domestic Air Ticketing & Marketing Staff** - 1 Post (5) **Tour Operation Staff & Marketing Staff** (Travels & Tours) - 1 Post (6) **Computer / IT Office & reservation Staff**-M1 Post (7) **Tour+ Marketing + Delivery** (Trainee) Pls submit to 1/A, Bldg # (65), Oak Kyin Butayon Rd, Hlaing, Ph: 654780 Closing Date: Until April 1st week

ROCHE Pharmaceuticals is looking for an individual for **Sales & Marketing Assistant** : Degree in Science/ Statistics, Bilingual with Good spoken and written English, High degree of competency in Excel function, 1-2 years in a business with communications with sales reps and managers, Training of systems IDEAL but Not essential. Competencies: Attention to detail, Problem solving skills, Communication skills, Enthusiastic, Task focused, Ability to work independently. Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply! Pls send resume to : HRSolutions@zenithpowermyanmar.com info@zenithpowermyanmar.com

(1) **MARKETING & SALES Manager** (2) **Finance Manager** (3) **HR manager**. The client is ready to pay between 800 and 1800 USD based on the person's experience and profile. Contact email moelwin999@gmail.com, pls include a phone number and all the documents that you believe will demonstrate that you are a good candidate for the position.

PAHTAMA GROUP Company Ltd is looking for (1) **Sr. Marketing Supervisor** - M/F 2 Posts : Age 25 ~ 35, Any Graduate, 2 years experience, Able to lead marketing team. Computer literate. (1). **Sales Supervisor** - M 5 Posts : Age 25 ~ 35, Any Graduate, 2 years experience, Able to travel. (2). **IT Support (Software)** - M/F 2 Posts : Age under 28, Any graduate, IT / Computer Science or equivalent preferred. (3). **Marketing Coordinator** - M/F 3 Posts: Age 20~25, Any Graduate, 2 years experience. (4). **Finance Coordinator** - F 2 Posts: Age 23~28, Any graduate, LCCI Level III, Can be able to cash control and handle cash book/ ledger, 2 years experience. (5). **Admin Coordinator** - F 5 Posts : Age 20~25, Graduate, Prefer to have experience in Administration field, Can be able to drive & must have driving licence. (6). **Accounts / Data Processing Assistant** - F 8 Posts : Age 23~30, B.com/ LCCI/ MYOB, Can use Account Software, 1 or 2 years experiences. (7). **I & E Assistant** - M 1, F 1 Posts : Age 20~28, Graduate, 1 year experience (8). **Asst. Sales Representative** - M / F 30 Posts : Age 22 ~ 30, 10th Standard passed / Graduate, Must have sales experience (9). **Asst. Sales Representative** (Driving) - M 10 Posts : Age 22~30, 10th Standard Passed / Graduate, Must have sales experience, Must have driving skill & license. Pls send C.V, 2 recent photos, with necessary documents to 73-76, Waizayandar Rd, Thingan Gyun, Yangon. Tel: 573286, 565494. Email: hr.pahtama@gmail.com within two weeks.

DAEHAN Co., Ltd.

#1213, 12A Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogoyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Union of Myanmar.
Tel: 01 255 211 / e-mail: daehan.myanmar@gmail.com

Background

DAEHAN Co., Ltd. is a company involved in vehicle service business including parts, after sales service, manufacturing & distribution and overseas investment. We, currently, have opened our office in Myanmar in order to launch the business.

Duration: Open-ended contract

1. Business Development Manager

M/F (1) Post

- Education: University Graduate or higher
- Qualification: Ability to communicate clearly in English both in verbal and written forms
- Computer literate (MS Words, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Extensive (at least 2~3 years preferred) working experience in vehicle service business or similar field

2. Construction Engineer

M/F (1) Post

- Education: University Graduate or higher with construction related major
- Qualification: Ability to communicate in English both in verbal and written forms
- Capability: CAD Drawing
- Extensive (at least 5 years or more preferred) working experience in similar field

3. Admin Manager

M/F (1) Post

- Education: University Graduate or higher
- Qualification: Ability to communicate clearly in English both in verbal and written forms
- Computer literate (MS Words, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Extensive (at least 2~3 years preferred) working experience in admin or similar field

4. Admin Assistant

M/F (2) Posts

- Age: Under 30, any graduate, English ability shall be a plus
- Computer literate, entry level to approximately 2 years of experience

* Please send CV with recent photo, expected salary and other relevant documents to aforementioned contact information. We regret that only short-listed applicants will be contacted.

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La Source Beauty Spa
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Lemon Day Spa
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- 15(B), Departure Lounge, Yangon Int'l Airport.
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Australia Test great Ian Walsh dies at 80

SYDNEY – Ian Walsh, a former Australia Test captain and hooker with the great St George club side of the 1960s, has died after a long illness aged 80, the Australian Rugby League said on April 4.

Walsh held the unique distinction of being the only player to captain-coach his club to a premiership and his country to an Ashes series win over Great Britain in the same year in 1966. He also skippered Australia

to its historic 1963 Ashes triumph against Great Britain in England, becoming the first Australian touring team in 50 years to win a series.

The Kangaroos, featuring Australian league legends Johnny Raper, Reg Gasnier and Graeme Langlands, won the first Test 28-2 at Wembley, the second Test 50-12 at Swinton before losing the third Test 16-5 at Leeds.

The only previously successful

Ashes-winning team was the 1911-12 side that included New Zealand players.

"Ian Walsh was an absolute legend in our game," Australian Rugby League Commission chairman John Grant said in a statement.

"He was a great player and a great leader who had a deep love of rugby league.

"The fact that the victories that he was a part of are still so celebrated today says it all."

Walsh, renowned for his fearless running from dummy-half, joined St George in 1962 and played in five winning grand final sides in the Dragons' record run of 11 successive premierships between 1956-66.

He played 25 Tests between 1959-66, toured Great Britain with the 1959-60 and 1963-64 Kangaroos and made two tours to New Zealand. Walsh also coached NRL side Parramatta in 1971-72. – AFP

Pacquiao to fight in September

MANILA – Philippine boxing hero Manny Pacquiao plans to fight again in September, with the bout likely to be staged outside the United States to avoid high taxes, his spokeswoman said on April 3.

Negotiations are ongoing for a rematch with Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez, who knocked Pacquiao out in his last fight in December, although the opponent and the venue are yet to be finalised, Rose Tamayo told AFP.

"The fight is definitely in September. We will talk about the opponent and the place after the May 13 elections," Tamayo said, citing comments Pacquiao made to her on April 3.

Pacquiao, 34, is running for re-election as a congressman in next month's Philippine mid-term elections, and he is currently on the campaign trail.

Tamayo said Pacquiao wanted his next fight to be outside the United States, where he has traditionally fought in front of huge crowds and for enormous pay-per-view television revenues, to avoid high taxes.

"Manny wants to fight outside the United States because of the taxes... Singapore is one of the top places for consideration. There is also Macau and Dubai," Tamayo told AFP.

Pacquiao has won an unprecedented eight world titles in different weight divisions, and was until recently regarded by many as the best pound-for-pound boxer.

But Pacquiao lost in June last year in a controversial points decision to US fighter Timothy Bradley, and suffered a shock knockout defeat against Marquez. – AFP

Liverpool announce Thailand visit

LONDON – Liverpool announced on April 2 that they will play a friendly game in Thailand as part of their pre-season tour ahead of the 2013-14 campaign.

The five-time European champions will face as yet unnamed opposition in Bangkok's Rajamangala National Stadium on July 28.

"We first went to Thailand in 2001 and this will be our fourth visit to the country, which we feel demonstrates our commitment to our fans in Thailand," said Liverpool managing director Ian Ayre.

According to a news release on their website, Liverpool believe they have more than 14 million followers in Thailand. They last visited the country in 2009.

Liverpool also confirmed that they will also travel to Australia to play a friendly against A-League side Melbourne Victory, at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, on July 24.

"This will be the first time that the Club has visited Australia to play a match and we are delighted to be playing against Melbourne Victory, one of the most successful clubs in the A-League," said Ayre.

"We know we have a large fan base in Australia and New Zealand and this visit shows our commitment to bringing the Club closer to our fans all over the globe, no matter how far away from Anfield they may live." – AFP



Liverpool striker Luis Suarez (L) vies with Aston Villa's midfielder Yacouba Sylla (R) during at Villa Park in Birmingham, England on March 31. Pic: AFP



Bodybuilders flex their muscles on stage during the final SEA Games selection contest in Yangon on February 12. Pic: AFP

Musclemen flexing for glory

YANGON – Sporting just a navy blue thong and several layers of tan oil, Zarli Tin says he dreams of becoming Myanmar's greatest bodybuilder as the discipline undergoes a revival after years in the doldrums.

One of a new generation of musclemen, he hopes to be among the beneficiaries of a cash injection for the sport, which floundered like all others during the wasteful and corrupt junta era.

"I'm not great yet, I'm not very famous... but I'm trying, I'm on the way," says the jovial 33-year-old, flashing a grin as he flexes his grapefruit-sized biceps by way of credentials.

Myanmar's reformist government has loosened the purse strings for sport as it hunts success at the Southeast Asian Games regional event which it will host in December, billed as the country's 'coming out' party.

It has targeted several medals at bodybuilding and hopes to extend the nation's impressive record in the event.

Home to a demure culture and relatively diminutive people, Myanmar has an unexpected lineage in the ultimate of exhibitionist sports – which was popularised through the 1970s by Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Myanmar claimed two silvers at the 2001 World Bodybuilding Championship – held on home soil – a bronze at the Asian Games the following year and has taken a clutch of medals whenever the sport is contested at the SEA Games.

But bodybuilders say those achievements mask a deep malaise, with woeful funding over the final years of the avaricious junta leaving them without decent gyms, proper coaching or nutrition – a huge cost in an impoverished country.

At the final SEA Games selection contest in Yangon, 32-year-old truck driver Tint Lwin says he struggles to afford the high protein diet and supplements required to power him through a brutal four- to six-hour daily training regime.

"The money I get from work isn't even enough for a single bottle of the vitamins I need to train," he says as an

precipitous, but still keenly felt.

Once they toured schools and colleges drawing adulation with their combination of muscle, machismo and showmanship.

But the visits waned as student activities of all kinds came under intense scrutiny from the paranoid former junta after a failed college-led uprising led in 1988, which was brutally crushed by the army.

Strongmen have flexed their way back into popularity over the last few years, with improved access to US bodybuilding websites boosting its popularity just as the reform-minded government throws its weight behind the SEA Games.

'The only bad thing is Myanmar girls prefer the small, skinny Korean pop star look.'

assistant applies a final coat of the stinking copper-coloured tanning oil to his back with a paint roller.

Myanmar's sporting prowess was eviscerated by the former regime, with a lack of investment in facilities and planning choking the pipeline of talent in all disciplines.

Football fell hardest, with the national team slumping from one of Asia's best in the mid-1960s and the 1970s, to claiming just a single 1993 SEA Games final spot, and a semi-final in the ASEAN Football Championship of 2004.

For the nation's bodybuilders the demise has been less

While several contestants quietly share suspicions that some of their rivals take steroids, the high cost of the drugs and lack of ready availability makes doping harder in Myanmar than in western countries where bodybuilding draws its biggest fanbase.

"The top bodybuilders are very famous here," says 19-year-old student Oak Tharkyaw who is among the raucous 150-strong audience.

"It's a healthy sport, it builds your confidence and strength. It feels great... the only bad thing is Myanmar girls prefer the small, skinny Korean pop star look."

Tourists fight the flab at Thai boxing camps

PHUKET – In a sweltering training camp on a tropical Thai island, sweaty tourists wearing oversized gloves and baggy shorts slam their fists, knees, elbows and feet into a row of heavy bags.

Welcome to the latest craze in extreme fitness – Muay Thai boxing.

With worries growing about the world’s bulging waistlines, many foreigners are flocking to Thailand to spend their holidays not on the beach, but following a punishing regime of training in Muay Thai and other martial arts.

Some are going to even more extreme lengths, quitting their jobs to spend weeks or months training in an effort to win their long battles with obesity or hone their skills in the hope of becoming professional fighters.

Jordan Henderson, 26, left behind his London lifestyle of long work days, parties and overeating after the doctors warned him that he faced looming heart problems due to his weight of nearly 184 kilograms.

After one month at a training camp in Phuket off Thailand’s southern Andaman Coast, he had already shed about 20 kilos.

“You’re in an environment where it’s hot all the time,

surrounded by people doing fitness,” he said after an early morning workout.

“It’s about taking yourself out of the box that you live in and just focusing on one thing, and that’s to train and lose weight.”

The first few days were far from easy.

“It was horrible – the heat and the training, the aches you get and the dramatic diet change,” Henderson said.

“I’ve gone from eating whatever I liked to grilled chicken, steamed vegetables and brown rice – hungry for weeks,” Henderson added.

But despite the gruelling regime, he never considered packing his bags and leaving early.

Thailand is home to a flourishing Muay Thai training industry welcoming thousands of guests every year, thanks in part to the popularity of mixed martial arts (MMA) which combines striking and grappling techniques.

“Mixed martial arts is the fastest growing sport in the world and Muay Thai is an integral part of that,” said Will Elliot, director of Tiger Muay Thai, one of more than a dozen such training camps in Phuket.

“It’s definitely extreme to travel halfway across the



A student trains Tiger muay Thai & MMA training camp, in Phuket, Thailand on February 15. Pic: AFP

world,” said Elliot, whose camp welcomes hundreds of guests each month paying up to about \$100 per week for group training.

“But we’re in the tropics. It’s hot. We’re in Thailand, the birthplace of Muay Thai, so it’s about immersion,” he said.

Muay Thai, Thailand’s national sport, is known as the “Art of Eight Limbs” because it combines punches, kicks, elbows and

knee strikes.

Anyone thinking about signing up should be prepared for the challenge.

“It’s very physically intensive. At the end of a workout you’re going to be exhausted. So if you can maintain that twice a day in combination with a diet, your fitness is going to increase rapidly,” Elliot said.

It worked for James Mason, 29, a former used

car salesman from Britain who weighed 200 kilos when he arrived in Thailand a year and a half ago, but has since lost more than 100 kilos.

“The doctor told me that if I didn’t do something drastic to change my life in five years’ time I would be dead,” he said.

“When I first got here I couldn’t walk 200 metres without my back hurting. I had to sit down and take a breath. I’d be dripping with sweat because of the heat and the humidity.”

Three months into his training in Thailand he caught a flesh-eating bacteria and required three operations, narrowly avoiding having his leg amputated.

But he recovered and returned to his regime, and recently completed a 900-kilometre (560-mile) charity bike ride from Phuket to Bangkok.

At the Tiger camp, about 20 students from countries including Australia, Britain, Egypt and Russia sweated their way through a recent beginners’ class under the close watch of muscular former Thai professionals.

“One, two, duck, body punch,” shouted one of the instructors as the students, of varying levels of fitness,

practised their moves.

After warm-up exercises involving jogging, stretching, star jumps and shadow boxing, the students paired up to spar, punching the air within a whisker of their opponents’ ears.

“You’re meant to duck!” one girl reminded her friend after a near miss.

The main goal of most of the trainees is not to become a boxing champion but to lose weight, said instructor Phirop Chuaikaitum, better known as Ajarn (Master) Dang.

“They run for a long time, stretching, punching in the air for a long time -- that makes it easy to lose weight,” he said.

“But we don’t make it hard because they will get hurt. We do it slowly but non-stop for two-and-a-half hours. They only have a three-minute break.”

There is no slacking off, even for royalty.

“There was one guy who was a prince from Dubai,” Phirop said.

“He came for the beginner class. I hit him with a stick and he told me that he was from a royal family. Whether you’re a construction worker or member of a royal family, when you come for boxing training you are all equal.”

– AFP

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Armstrong bid for swim comeback thwarted

WASHINGTON – Disgraced US cyclist Lance Armstrong has been barred from entering a swim race in Texas following objections from the sport's global governing body, organizers confirmed on April 5.

Armstrong, 41, who was stripped of his seven Tour de France wins and banned for life before later confessing to drug-taking throughout his career, had hoped to compete in a US Masters Swimming event in Austin last weekend.

However Armstrong's participation was swiftly opposed by swimming's global governing body FINA, who said in a statement the cyclist should be barred from competing under anti-doping regulations.

"Lance Armstrong is not eligible to race in US Masters Swimming competitions," USMS, which governs adult competitive swimming in the United States, said in a statement.

USMS said while Armstrong was a member of the organization, FINA and US Aquatic Sports officials had concluded that Armstrong's lifetime ban prevented him from competing in sanctioned meetings, even minor ones such as the Masters South Central Zone Swimming Championships which was contested in a non-Olympic 25-yard pool in Austin.

"The World Anti-Doping Agency

has banned Mr. Armstrong from competition. FINA accepts the WADA Code and USMS, as a member of United States Aquatic Sports, recognizes and respects adjudications under the Code," USMS said.

USMS executive director Rob Butcher earlier told *The New York Times* that he had informed Armstrong's agent the disgraced cyclist would not be allowed to compete and Armstrong withdrew his entry.

"After discussion with United States Aquatic Sports and FINA, it was agreed that although Mr. Armstrong is eligible for membership in US Masters Swimming, he is not currently eligible to compete in sanctioned swimming competitions, regardless of the type of course," USMS concluded.

In October 2012, Armstrong was stripped of his Tour titles as well as all other results starting in August 1998, and was banned for life after the USADA determined he was the key figure in a sophisticated doping program on his US Postal Service cycling team.

Armstrong finally made a belated admission of doping, after many denials, in a televised interview with Oprah Winfrey in January, in which he said he used a combination of blood-doping transfusions, blood-boosting EPO and testosterone throughout his career. – AFP



Yazar Win Thein of Yangon United FC runs past a Radiant SC defender on April 3 in Yangon. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

Yangon United continues AFC Cup success

MFF shines at awards

By Aung Si Hein

THE Myanmar Football Federation took top honours at the inaugural ASEAN Football Federation Awards in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on April 3.

The Myanmar Football Federation was named ASEAN Football Federation Association of the Year for 2012. The Myanmar women's national team coach Kumada Yoshinori was named Women's Coach of the Year and Yangon United midfielder to Kyi Lin was named to the Best 11.

"It is a historic triumph," said MFF competition director U Win Thu Moe.

Myanmar men's U-22 team and

women's U-19 both found success last year. The MFF also undertook new training initiatives and hosted international matches.

Kumada Yoshinori led the senior women's team to a second place finish in the ASEAN championship.

Kyi Lin, a winger for both Yangon United FC and the national team, was named to AFF's Best Eleven for his outstanding play. The AFF Player of the Year went to Mohammad Shahril Ishak of Singapore.

Singapore was named the AFF Men's National Team of the Year after winning the 2012 Suzuki Cup. On the women's side, Vietnam, which defeated Myanmar in the ASEAN Championship, took the prize.

By Kyaw Zin Hlaing

YANGON United FC stands atop Group F in the AFC Cup after beating Radiant SC of the Maldives 2-0 on at Thuwana Stadium in Yangon on April 3.

Striker Adama Koné put a shot just under the crossbar in the 17th minute to send Yangon United up 1-0. Just a minute later midfielder Aung Moe dribbled past a defender and scored, sending the home side ahead 2-0.

"We didn't play well today. We had some problems especially when

we lost our best player Ashfaq Ali, who had to be substituted out after only 30 minutes but we will play against Yangon again and I believe we can play better in our home match and get the win," New Radiant SC coach Velizar Emilov Popov said.

The win came as Yangon United was struggling in the domestic league, dropping two straight matches in the Myanmar National League competition.

"We have lost our last two league games to local opponents so there was a lot of pressure on us to get a result tonight and I congratulate

all of my players today for this result because they played very well," Yangon United coach Ivan Kolev said after the match.

Yangon United has collected nine points in three AFC Cup matches. They will play New Radiant SC again on April 9 in the Maldives.

Fellow Myanmar club Ayeyawady United did not perform as well. The team fell 3-1 to Maziya at Galoihu National Stadium in the Maldives on April 2. Ayeyawady United now sits at the bottom of Group G, having failed to collect a single point.

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