

## Regional govts in the dark on cut-price SIM card sale plan

By Aung Shin

OFFICIALS from several regional governments have admitted they are in the dark about the distribution of K1500 SIM cards on April 24, as it emerged one-third of SIM cards would be reserved for civil servants.

State media announced on April 3 that distribution responsibilities for the CDMA SIM cards had been awarded to regional governments rather than private companies in order to avoid price gouging by brokers.

The announcement came after President U Thein Sein held a meeting with regional communications ministers in Nay Pyi Taw on March 29.

Mandalay Region Minister for Transport and Communication U Kyaw San said his government also lacked information about the SIM card sale, particularly how many it will receive. The government has promised to distribute 350,000 cards a month nationally.

"We haven't yet got detailed information about the sale," he said. "For example, we don't know how many SIM cards we are going

to get but it will probably depend on the population ratio. The president instructed that one-third of SIM cards will be for government staff, and the remaining two-thirds for the public."

Yangon Region Minister for Transport and Communication U Aung Khin told the Yangon Region Hluttaw last week that the government "doesn't have any detailed plan for the sale of low-cost SIM cards", and that it had received no instructions from the central government on how to distribute them.

He was speaking in response to

an "urgent" question submitted on April 8 by Yangon Region Hluttaw representative Dr Nyo Nyo Thin, who asked how the regional government planned to sell the SIM cards and urged it to ensure transparency during the sale. Three representatives expressed support for her proposal.

*The Myanmar Times* also tried to contact the Sagaing Region Minister for Transport and Communication but was told that the minister was travelling overseas and would not arrive back until April 24.

Another minister from the

Sagaing Region Government said: "We just know that the cards will be distributed based on the population in the region. We are not sure about the exact details."

U Thet Naing Win from Elite Tech, a company owned by U Tay Za's Htoo Group that has previously distributed SIM cards, said he knew "nothing" about the sale.

"We are not making any plans for [the release of SIM cards] at all. We understand that private companies are not involved in the sale of low-cost SIM cards, according to the government announcement."



### Time is not right for refugee repatriation, says UNHCR

Young Muslim refugees attend a school at the Mae La camp on the Thai-Myanmar border. Despite the government and most armed ethnic groups reaching ceasefires over the past 18 months, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says conditions are not yet right for refugees to return home. Full story page 10. Pic: AFP

## Govt opens oil and gas auction

Policy shift sees foreign investors allowed to bid for 19 deepwater blocks without a Myanmar partner

By Stuart Deed

THE Ministry of Energy has invited bids for the rights to 30 offshore oil and gas blocks and, crucially, dropped the requirement for a domestic partner for

deepwater exploration.

Of the blocks put up for tender, 11 are shallow water, which still require a domestic partner, and the remaining 19 are deepwater.

The April 11 invitation, which calls for expressions

of interest and other related documents from prospective bidders by June 14, says winning bidders will be required to enter into production sharing contracts with the state-run Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE).

It adds that bidders "must have technical competency, financial capability, experience, expertise and technical know-how to conduct petroleum exploration and development works in offshore areas and must

have [a] good track record with respect to offshore petroleum operations" to be considered.

As with other recent tenders, such as the national telecoms licences and onshore oil and gas blocks, potential bidders

will be required to undergo prequalification. Those who pass the first stage will be presented with a general overview of each block "consisting of representative data and information, free

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Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak holds a copy of his coalition's election manifesto during a political rally at a stadium in Kuala Lumpur on April 6. Pic: AFP

# For Myanmar, lessons from the transition in Indonesia

By Jim Della-Giacoma

INDONESIA, with its free media, rambunctious democracy and frequent elections could well be the most democratic country in Southeast Asia. Its robust economic growth is something others want to emulate. It is not surprising that it is regarded as something of a global success story and has been studied by those leading Myanmar's transformation as they also try to create a stable, prosperous and democratic postauthoritarian nation.

But Indonesia is neither a perfect nor model democracy. Its transition 15 years ago was incredibly violent. The sudden end of 32 years of authoritarian rule brought about dramatic political change, but it also unleashed a series of deadly ethnic and religious violent conflicts across the archipelago. It is easy to forget the first dark years of "reformasi" and how many feared that this diverse country would break up into its component ethnic parts. The lessons from this period provide Myanmar with the opportunity to learn from Indonesia's mistakes.

According to one study, between 1998 and 2002, six Indonesian provinces, including East Timor, experienced largescale extended violence that killed almost 16,000 people. This is a conservative estimate, and the death toll was almost certainly higher. But the good news is that in the last decade, four out of the remaining five of Indonesia's extended violent conflicts have ended. How did this happen?

For answers, it is useful to look at how the government halted communal fighting in Poso in the province of Central Sulawesi. Between 1998-2001, this conflict was one of several outbreaks of Muslim-Christian fighting in eastern Indonesia that had its origin in something else – political struggles, land disputes, elite competition for jobs – but ended up with parties identified by religious affiliation.

The imperfect 10-point Malino Declaration brokered by the government in 2001 did not end the killing but it was the turning point. It led this community away from deadly conflict to a wary but durable peace. Each community sent representatives to talks in a resort area outside the conflict zone. The government did its best to get those in command of militias committing violence or otherwise directly involved in the conflict to the negotiating table. After three days, an agreement was signed.

When trying to distil lessons from the Malino agreement for Myanmar's recent intercommunal violence, it is important to look not at the negotiations but the agreement's pragmatic substance. Conflictweary community leaders pledged to cease all disputes, abide by the law and punish wrongdoers. The signatories requested the state take firm and impartial measures against those who broke the law.

Leaders made a public commitment to respect one another

in an attempt to foster an atmosphere of religious tolerance, a pledge that has for the most part held. They recognised that any citizen had the right to come and live peacefully in Poso as long as they respected local habits and customs. It was important in this multiethnic and multireligious country that the agreement reinforced respect for followers of all faiths to practice their respective religions as stipulated by the constitution.

The agreement said property would be reinstated to its rightful owners and those displaced by the violence returned to their place of origin. Government support was given to rehabilitate the economy and damaged infrastructure.

Analysts studying Indonesia's conflicts believe that one reason widespread intercommunal fighting persisted for so long was poor law enforcement. The police and government lacked experience and did not act quickly enough to contain violence before it escalated out of control. The reluctance of law enforcement agencies to act meant either that violence went unpunished to the point that people lost faith in police and courts, or that people took the law into their own hands. In the end, the central government had to reassert itself

**‘The government had to reassert itself in provincial conflicts, rather than leave it to local leaders.’**

in provincial conflicts, rather than leave it to local leaders to resolve.

The Indonesian experience should be instructive for Myanmar as it lays some practical, if difficult steps, that are in line with President U Thein Sein's speech on March 28. In the long term, the country needs to imagine itself as a modern state rather than dwell on the glory of ancient kingdoms. Looking to Indonesia, another multiethnic nation with ethnic and religious tensions unleashed by the easing of tight central control, may help. The mosaic of cultures and religions that is modern Myanmar must be the foundation upon which its democracy is built and the state must be unequivocal about protecting all the people inside its borders.

But to succeed in achieving a national vision of unity and prosperity, resolving local conflicts is essential. There cannot be development if violence spreads. To succumb to mob rule at this point in the transition will only encourage the spread of violence and the postpone any future democratic dividend.

(Jim Della-Giacoma is the South East Asia Project Director of the International Crisis Group ([www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)) and is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.)

## Close race has Malaysia in a frenzy

IT has been said that the definition of frenzy is a group of women working in a fishprocessing plant.

Right now, it might be more apt to say that it is a bunch of Malaysian politicians running for election in the southern state of Johor.

Frenetic is the right word for their behaviour since April 3 when Prime Minister Najib Razak, 59, finally dissolved parliament.

Likely to be held in the last week of this month, the nation's 13<sup>th</sup> general election will feature some of the most hotly contested battles in Malaysia's history and the outcome is anybody's guess.

The victor may be Najib's National Front, which won 137 seats in the 2008 election, or it may be the ascendant People's Alliance helmed by former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, 65, which won 75 seats.

Everyone is on tenterhooks, as indicated by the unseemly frenzy in Johor, the birthplace of the Front's dominant party, the United Malays National Organisation.

Normally, UMNO and its coalition allies would sweep most of the seats in this southern state bordering Singapore, while the opposition would focus on other areas where the prospects look more promising.

Not this time. Such is the confidence of Anwar's men that last week it stunned observers by revealing that some of its heavyweight candidates will



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Roger Milton

forego their safe seats and run in UMNO's bastion of Johor.

It sounded bonkers at first, but upon further consideration it becomes clear that there is method in this madness.

Who dares, wins. And this, the most astonishingly daring move in the annals of Malaysian politics, may well be the pivotal move that wins a slew of seats for the opposition.

One of its veteran leaders, the pugnacious warhorse Lim Kit Siang, has announced that he will not only switch from his safe Perak constituency to Johor, but that he will fight for the fortress seat of Gelang Patah.

That means he will likely face Johor Chief Minister Ghani Othman, the most powerful politician in the state.

On the surface, it looks like political harikiri but Lim is no fool, nor is he prone to suicidal tendencies.

He knows that the decent, but bland Ghani is vulnerable, and he knows that Geylang Patah is 52 percent Chinese and 12pc Indian.

And he knows that those nonMalays have turned against the front and that if he can win most of their votes, and just get a little support from the constituency's 34pc Malays, he is in.

As well as Lim, former Malaysian army chief, Hashim Hussein, will fight for Anwar in the state capital, Johor Baru, and other "big name" oppositionists will also contest throughout UMNO's heartland.

The move has spooked Najib's men and they sent former PM Mahathir Mohamad down south to stiffen sinews.

He urged Johoreans to continue to make their state the government's "fixed deposit" of seats and called on them to end the political careers of Anwar and Lim.

While Mahathir, 87, derided Lim for being in politics too long and being biased, there were signs that many voters thought being called old and biased by someone like him was like being called ugly by a warhog.

Perhaps an even more disturbing sign for Najib's team was the way one of its brightest new stars, the electrifying UMNO youth leader Khairy Jamaluddin, announced that he will not run in the election.

Naturally, people assume he did this because he knows which way the wind is blowing and that he is distancing himself from imminent defeat and the dispatch of Najib to the glue factory.

That prospect still remains a long shot, and it would be a little unfair on Najib, who has done a halfdecent job and is more likable, if less incisive and visionary, than Anwar.

But then, life's not fair. If it were, Anwar and Lim would never have been jailed and Tuya would still be alive.



# Bill on voting system to be submitted in June: UEC

Changes will not be considered if bill is not passed in 2013, commission boss tells parties

By Win Ko Ko Latt

THE Union Election Commission will submit a proposal to change the election system when the next session of parliament begins in June, chairman U Tin Aye told parties last week.

"The UEC cannot decide whether to change to a proportional representation system as some political parties proposed. The hluttaw will decide on it," U Tin Aye said at a meeting with 56 political parties in Nay Pyi Taw on April 8.

Seven parties, including the National Unity Party and National Democratic Force, expressed support for proportional representation at the meeting, while the National League for Democracy, Rakhine Nationalities Development Party, Inn Nationalities Development Party and Wa Democratic Party spoke out against the proposal. The remaining party representatives did not participate in the discussion.

But U Tin Aye said that if the proposal is not approved in 2013 first-past-the-post voting will remain in place for the 2015 election, as there will not be enough time to prepare for a new voting system after this year.

Union Solidarity and Development Party vice

chairman U Htay Oo did not comment on the issue. However, changing to PR is likely to be beneficial for the party and significantly reduce the likelihood of an NLD landslide in 2015.

U Win Myint, the National League for Democracy representative for Patheingyi, said his party opposed the change because it believed many Myanmar citizens struggled to vote under the much simpler first-past-the-post system.

He said the system also made it easier for a single party to form government.

"If proportional representation is used, MPs will have little connection to their constituency, so there will be a question of who is responsible for which constituency," he said.

He said those who vote for unsuccessful candidates in the first-past-the-post system do not lose out because the winner has a responsibility to improve the socioeconomic situation of all members of their constituency.

But other parties supported the change. U Han Shwe, a senior member of the National Unity Party, said proportional representation would help to create a genuine multi-party system.

"We should have it so we don't waste votes and the hluttaw is all-inclusive," he said.

# Model threatens journal with suit over Michael Learns to Rock article

By Lwin Mar Htun

A NEWS journal has apologised to model Emerald Nyein for publishing an article that inferred she had a sexual relationship with a member of Danish band Michael Learns to Rock.

Following the apology, Emerald Nyein said she would not follow through with earlier threats to file a defamation suit against *Myanmar Newsweek*.

The model took part in an advertising shoot with Michael Learns to Rock singer Mikkel Lentz on April 5 for Amazing Hotels and Resorts' Ngapali property. She posted the photo on her Facebook page, explaining it was an advertisement, but another Facebook user reposted the photo with offensive text, saying she should be ashamed of her behaviour and had damaged the reputation of Myanmar women.

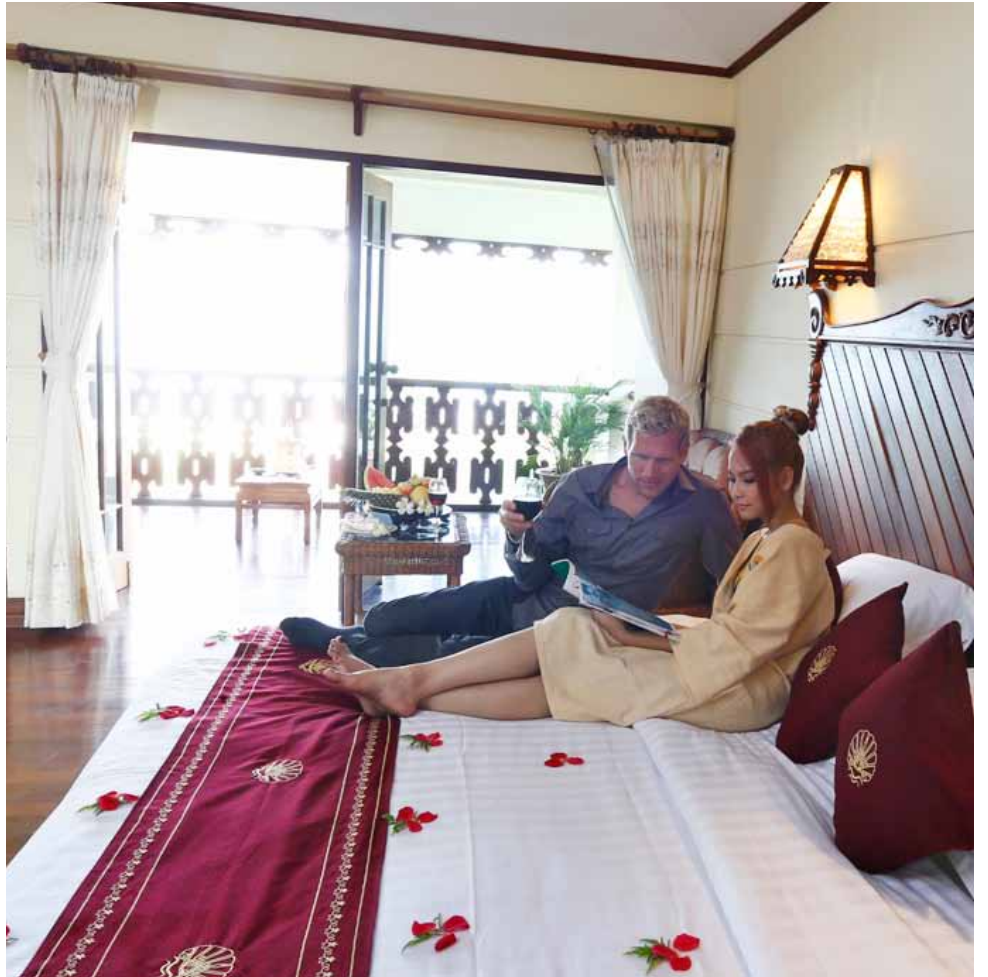
"When I read that post, I was very sad and angry at him (the Facebook user). But a lot of my friends supported me and believed me so I ignored that post. Then *Myanmar Newsweek* also published that photo and they accused me in that journal," Emerald Nyein told *The Myanmar Times* on April 10.

"They didn't check with me whether it was true or not and they didn't ask my permission to use my photo from Facebook," she said.

On April 9, Emerald Nyein called the *Myanmar Newsweek* office but was told there were no editors present. Shortly afterwards, she told *Yanae Khit* journal she would sue the publication.

Later, an editor from *Myanmar Newsweek* called and offered to print an apology in their next issue.

"If they really apologise like that then I won't sue them. I asked them to resolve this problem as soon as they can and now I'm watching to see how they go about doing it," she said.



Mikkel Lentz and Emerald Nyein in the promotional photo for Amazing Hotels and Resorts Ngapali. Pic: Supplied

Emerald Nyein said in the past she had "always" uploaded news and photos about her work to Facebook but this experience has persuaded her to be more selective in future.

"Next time I won't upload everything. This has taught me I need to be more careful in the future."

*Myanmar Newsweek* editor Nay Min Theik said the journal would "apologise until [Emerald Nyein] is satisfied".

"We did not put that news in journal to destroy her image and future. We saw the news on Facebook and just put it in to our journal as a short photo news," he said.

Ma Hlaing Hlaing Win, general manager

from Amazing Hotels and Resorts, confirmed the Danish rock star and Emerald Nyein had taken part in a photo shoot.

"When [Mikkel Lentz] came to our hotel, we asked him to take some advertising photos and he accepted. Photos were taken

of him with his family and also with Emerald Nyein," she said last week.

After his band played in Yangon on March 31, Mikkel Lentz and his family visited Ngapali and stayed at Amazing Hotels and Resorts from April 2 to 7, she said.

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# Government refuses to confirm forced resignations, reshuffle

Six senior officials reportedly forced to resign, another 40 demoted under presidential order

THE government is still yet to publicly announce the forced retirement of six senior officials late last month as part of an administrative reshuffle.

*The Irrawaddy* reported on April 2 that the six officials – U Myat Maw, director-general of the Internal Revenue Department at the Ministry of Finance and Revenue; U San Thaung, managing director of Myanma Economic Bank; U Kyaw Htoo, director-general of the Trade Department; Aye Ko, director-general of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development; Aung Min, director-general of the Commerce Department; and Daw Ni Lar Thein, rector of the University of Computer Studies, Yangon (UCSY) – had been forced to retire under a presidential order on March 29. Another 40 officials were effectively demoted in the reshuffle, the Chiang Mai-based publication said.

“Six officials were forced to retire because of mismanagement or corruption,” it quoted an official in the President’s Office

as saying. “The President’s Office received public complaint letters related to mismanagement and bribery cases, and an investigation followed. Some of the high-ranking civil servants were found guilty. Some were hardliners who didn’t want to make [political] reforms.”

The President’s Office refused to comment on the order when contacted by *The Myanmar Times* last week, and repeated attempts to reach presidential spokesman U Ye Htut were unsuccessful.

One executive member of UCSY student union, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed the news about Daw Ni Lar Thein, saying she had stopped coming to the university.

He told *The Myanmar Times* that Daw Ni Lar Thein was unpopular with students and there had also been widespread allegations of corruption.

Her relationship with the students deteriorated badly in December, when she refused to allow them to hold a donation ceremony for a final-

year student who died in a car accident in the university compound.

He said she had also been widely criticised for her management. When she went on a foreign trip, for example, she would not pass on responsibility to another member of staff, he said.

“I personally think that she was a kind of hardliner and preferred to have all of the power in her hands,” the student said.

“I met her face-to-face a couple time for students affairs. Every time I said something, she made fun of me and said, ‘You are just a kid’.”

An official from Myanmar Economic Bank, who asked not to be named, said it was the first time in his 20 years of service that a managing director had been forced to retire.

However, he said he believed it was not related to corruption.

“We are a government bank. We have no funding or facilities like private banks so the process is slower. If customers complain about it, the government might

see it as poor management,” he said, adding that he learned of the change on March 28.

The official also said that MEB has more responsibilities than private banks because it has to manage the national budget.

“We also have many departments. Sometimes the employees at the basic level misbehave, like taking bribes. But we can’t solve those problems unless the customers make a formal complaint,” he said.

Both sources said that the government should have issued an official announcement about the changes to not only ensure transparency but also send a message to other officials.

The UCSY student said no replacemnt rector had been announced, and this was creating issues in terms of decision making. He also said the university has had no vice rector for at least two years.

The MEB official said no new managing director had appeared at the bank, and responsibilities were being shared among four general managers.

# NLD to propose new healthcare policy

By Shwe Yee Saw Myint

THE National League for Democracy will draft a new national health policy and submit it to the government for consideration, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said last week.

“Basic health care is absolutely necessary in our country,” she said. “Without good health or education, we can’t expect to raise the standard of living.”

The NLD leader made the comments at a ceremony at Yangon’s Parkroyal Hotel on April 6 officially inaugurate the National Health Network, the party’s initiative on healthcare, which was first announced in early February.

Work on the new policy would be led by the NLD, the network’s chairman, Dr Tin Myo Win, said at the ceremony. But others will be encouraged to contribute, including ministers and parliamentarians, to ensure the final result is a collaborative effort, he said.

The National Health Network will also seek international input for drafting the policy. “To make the program more effective, we are inviting consultants from foreign countries, such as India, Singapore and Thailand,” said

Dr Mya Thaung, the network’s vice chairman.

However, a spokesperson from a health-related international non-government organisation, who spoke on condition of anonymity, voiced concerns about political parties dictating government policy.

“The [NLD] cannot submit their policy... to the parliament for approval and [have the ministry] use it, just like that,” the spokesperson said.

## ‘We are inviting consultants from foreign countries.’

“I have nothing against a political party developing a health policy. In fact, it’s a very good exercise and every political party should do this, including the USDP, SNLD, NUP, and so on. Even [the 88 Generation] should have a perspective on health policy,” he added.

The spokesperson said, however, that it is widely recognised that the Ministry of Health suffers from a lack of human resources and funding. Management is also a cause for

concern, and he said he believes there may be some reluctance within the ministry to address this issue.

The National Health Network’s stated goals include raising standards in health and education, running emergency life-saving training courses, establishing continuous medical education for local doctors, facilitating medical research, sending medical teams to disaster areas, and linking local and international health organizations.

In her comments on April 6, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi specifically highlighted the need to address maternal and child mortality rates in Myanmar. She said the National Health Network aims to send Myanmar doctors to open more clinics in rural areas, where access to medical care is often low or non-existent.

UNICEF figures show Myanmar has the highest rate of under-five mortality among ASEAN member countries.

**Note to readers:** The English edition of *The Myanmar Times* will skip an edition over the water festival holiday. The next edition will appear on Monday, April 29.

From page 1

## Govt opens oil and gas

of charge, by geological/geophysical team of MOGE”. They will then be invited to submit proposals for up to three blocks, with the “best offered terms and conditions ... selected for awarding”.

“Due to time limitation and in anticipation to interests shown by many international oil companies, there will be no negotiation with respect to proposed terms and conditions. Hence, potential bidders has a single chance to submit their proposed terms and conditions and the submitted proposed terms and conditions must be a final one and non-negotiable,” the Ministry of Energy said in the announcement.

While it was published in

the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper on April 11 and posted on the Ministry of Energy’s website, the timing of the release, coming just before the 10-day water festival break, is likely to be the subject of scrutiny.

A foreign oil and gas operator in Myanmar said he was not surprised that the ministry had dropped the local content requirement for deepwater exploration.

“For the deepwater [blocks] it’s a deal breaker for the supermajors because they would have had to carry somebody on their back who only has a 5 percent stake in the project,” he said. “I think it’s not unreasonable for the supermajors to say to the government this is an

unacceptable requirement for deepwater exploration projects.”

*The Myanmar Times* reported last week that the ministry was considering dropping the local partner requirement for deepwater exploration, mostly on financial grounds, as deepwater exploration can cost up US\$100 million a well.

“[T]he investment needed to explore deepwater blocks is too great – domestic companies cannot afford the capital required for that work,” said U Than Tun, director of MOGE’s offshore exploration department.

Law firm VDB Loi released an analysis of the tender on April 11, with partner Edwin Vanderbruggen labelling the dropping of the local content requirement for deepwater

blocks, which had been in place for about a year, as a “landmark”.

“This does not necessarily mean that foreign oil companies will bid alone,” VDB said in its analysis. “Companies may still consider that their bid will be stronger if a consortium or joint venture is concluded with a suitable local partner. One can certainly imagine there are strategic benefits to teaming up with a strong local player.

“In the onshore bidding round, which is very near the stage where the shortlisted companies will be announced, local partners are only required at the stage where an actual bid is submitted. In other words, one can submit an expression of interest without a local partner,” it added.





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Police present evidence from the 48<sup>th</sup> Street mosque fire at a press conference on April 10. Pic: Yadanar

## Mosque fire was an accident, official investigation confirms

By Aung Shin

THE fire that killed 13 people at an Islamic school in Yangon was an accident, caused by the extreme heat of a transformer. But the failure of teachers to alert the victims could result in criminal charges, an official investigation has found.

"The fire broke out as a result of the extremely high temperatures reached by the transformer at a time of high voltage. The transformer could not cut off the power automatically because it could function only manually. The teachers tried to extinguish the fire, but neglected the students in a mezzanine. Those students died from smoke inhalation. This was the result of a mistake by the teachers," Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe said at a press briefing on April 10.

An investigation committee was formed on April 2 just hours after the fire broke out. The

committee examined 43 witnesses and conducted tests at the scene of the fire.

Investigators found a box of diesel was kept to supply the generator. When the fire broke out, teachers and students tried to extinguish it with wet blankets, pillows and clothing, but the fire reached the diesel, the committee's report said.

The deadly fire took place against a background of fear and mistrust between communities following violent attacks targeting the Muslim communities in Meiktila and Rakhine State.

The report found that mosque teacher U Zayar Phyto had spread rumours that the fire was the result of an attack because he feared being charged with negligence. The report identified U Zayar Phyto and U Khin Maung as bearing the most responsibility, stating that criminal charges were likely.

U Myint Swe told journalists: "Yesterday we called five Islamic organisations here to

explain the report's findings in detail. They have accepted that the fire was accidental, and that those responsible could face charges. That is a judicial matter. We also have met with the parents of the victims and other students. They have voiced no suspicions as to the cause, and have accepted the final report. They just want the school to reopen again as soon as possible."

U Ye Naung Thein, joint secretary of the All-Myanmar Moulvi Organisation, said on April 11 that his group accepted the investigation committee's report.

"The report is impregnable," he said. "The fire broke out at a particularly dangerous moment because it coincided with riots and rumours being spread around the country. We would like to urge all concerned to accept the report, and we are grateful to the Yangon Region Government for its prompt and factual report."

## SIM prices could hit K50,000: shops

By Kyay Mohn Win

THE era of low-cost SIM cards has nearly arrived – but industry experts in Mandalay are not expecting phone connections to be as cheap as the government has promised.

Massive demand and limited supply of the CDMA SIM cards means they are likely to be resold at prices above their face value of K1500 when they are released on April 24.

The government has promised to make 350,000 available each month but some are tipping that consumers will be forced to pay as much as K50,000.

"Certainly, cards will be resold for at least K20,000 or K30,000, at the absolute minimum, on the black market because the official price is so cheap but the number available is very low," Ko Myo from Anycall Mobile Phone and Accessories told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

"Even though the government has warned that the cards will be invalidated if they are not used within 15 days so that they are not hoarded, they can simply be recharged to keep them active and then sold for a higher price," he said.

"It definitely won't be easy to buy a K1500 card like it is to get a K200,000 SIM now because supply

will be much lower."

Ko Thiha Tun, manager of Super Mobile, said consumers might have to pay as much as K50,000 initially.

"There will definitely be a black market to some extent given the limited supply. We predict Mandalay will have a tiny allocation ... because the 350,000 cards is for the entire country. But there will certainly be thousands of people [in Mandalay] who want to buy

when the new SIM cards are released," the phone shop owner said.

The release is likely to spark a large increase in sales of Huawei handsets, as the Chinese company is one of just a handful that offers CDMA 800MHz phones.

These handsets range in price from just K20,000 up to K300,000, and phone shops reported last week that consumers were already buying CDMA phones ahead of the April 24 release date.

"Our shop has already added a wide variety of phone accessories and expanded our counter for CDMA 800 phones so there won't be a shortage," said Ko Thiha Tun.

While news of the cheap SIM cards has been welcomed, Mandalay residents said they were concerned about the transparency of the distribution process.

"The lack of transparency is the main problem for the public. We can't know clearly how the government will allocate them to the states and regions," said on resident, who asked not to be named. "They've also released no details about what measures they are taking to make sure the network can cope with all the new users. Already the lines are congested because there aren't enough mobile towers." – Translated by Zar Zar Soe

**'There will definitely be a black market to some extent given the limited supply.'**

a K1500 card," Ko Thiha Tun said.

The owner of one phone shop on Mandalay's 30<sup>th</sup> Street predicted the release of the SIMs would be "chaos".

"Even if the government let us buy some of the SIM cards, we wouldn't take them up on the offer. We are afraid people will throw stones into our shop if we don't have enough to meet all the demand. There could very well be chaos outside the Myanmar Post and Telecommunication office

## Farmers in Nay Pyi Taw defy military, cultivate farmland

By Su Hlaing Tun

FARMERS in Nay Pyi Taw whose fields were confiscated by the army more than 20 years ago have begun growing crops on the land still vacant.

On April 9, cultivators in Lewe township's Aung Chan Thar village started ploughing 100 acres of farmlands confiscated by 302 Light Infantry Regiment in 1990-91.

After the land was taken, farmers were allowed to cultivate it by paying K15,000 an acre for a period of three years. The army has now allowed the farmers to use 50 acres of confiscated lands as farmlands again, but they have ploughed 100 acres.

"We want the chance to grow on our farmlands because they didn't do anything on the land they confiscated. So we plan to grow on all 100 acres. Everything is going well. We've ploughed the lands and

now we're irrigating them," said farmer U Hla Ohn of Aung Chan Thar village on April 10.

The fields, which are 16 kilometres (10 miles) from the regiment headquarters, are irrigated by the Aawayar dam.

"These lands are easy to irrigate and we can grow in all three seasons," he added.

Meanwhile, farmers in Kyoe Za Lote village in Lewe township have applied to the government to let them grow crops on 231 acres of farmland confiscated by No 6 Mobile Operations Command.

"We've applied for a permit to grow on the confiscated land, which was left vacant. All we want is to cultivate our own land," said Ko Nay Linn Aung.

The land in Kyoe Za Lote was confiscated in 2003, with farmers receiving K200,000 an acre for farmland and K100,000 an acre for other cultivated land. – Translated by Thiri Min Htun

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## Aviation school exams planned for May

By Thiha Toe

WOULD-BE young pilot trainees will have a chance to learn to fly next month as they sit exams to enter the country's first pilot training school.

Myanmar Aviation Academy is holding two sets of exams – one for students funding their own courses and another for scholarship students – in English, mathematics and physics. The exams are being held at the Civil Aviation Institute in Yangon's Mingalardon township between May 21 and May 25, said academy chairman U Kyi Win.

The course costs US\$6500 but 10 of the 24 places will be filled by scholarship students.

"The entrance exam for students applying for the Htoo Foundation's scholarship program will take place on May 22, 23 and 24 for three days and they will answer questions on English, maths and physics for one-and-a-half hours. Students who are providing their own funding will sit the same three subjects on the same day. But the questions are different," U Kyi Win said, adding that it will be "much harder" to get into the program on a scholarship than by paying the tuition fee.

The 24 selected to take the pilot course in June will study 14 subjects over a period of 20 months.

To date almost 100 people have applied for the Htoo Foundation scholarship, and more than 50 have applied to take the course at their own expense, the academy's admin manager, U Kyaw Kyaw Soe, said on April 10.

Application forms are available from the academy's office in Condo C at Tetkatho Yeikmon Housing in Bahan township. The deadline for submission is April 26.

"Everybody who has completed matriculation can apply, but the number of students we can take is limited to 24 by ICAO rules," said U Thant Zaw, the academy's lead trainer, referring to the International Civil Aviation Organisation. "The course is also very difficult," he added.

Applicants for the scholarship program must be aged over 17, medically fit, and must score at least 60 in all three tests. The objective is to be able to pilot an aircraft solo after 20 hours of dual training.



Kachin Independence Army soldiers on the frontlines near Laiza in January. Pic: Kaung Htet

# Questions over China's role after delay in talks

THE Chinese government's refusal to allow international observers at Kachin peace talks has delayed the latest round of negotiations, the Kachin Independence Organisation says, despite the Chinese embassy in Yangon rejecting the allegations.

Talks between the government peacemaking team and Kachin Independence Organisation were scheduled to take place in Myitkyina on April 6 but have been postponed until after water festival.

"China proposed to us that it was proper to invite Asian observers. They are not willing to let Western countries sit at the round table and see what they are discussing in regards to the Kachin issue," KIO spokesperson U La Nan told *The Myanmar Times* on April 10.

"We'll try again to have international observers attend. It's one of our criteria for the talks."

Earlier in the week, peace activist and member of Kachin Peace Network Daw Khon Ja told *Weekly Eleven* that the delay was due to the Chinese government's refusal to allow international observers to attend the talks.

"International observers from the United States, the United Kingdom and the United Nations are ready to attend the meetings, but China doesn't want them to attend and rejected their offer. That is why the meeting was delayed again," she was quoted as saying.

Several sources said China had objected to a point in an earlier agreement drafted by the government and KIO stipulating that an international observer be present for future talks.

Daw Khon Ja's comments were spread quickly through social media and the Chinese embassy responded on April 7 with a statement saying it "feels regret for [the] lack of factual basis of those reports".

"China fully respects the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Myanmar and support Myanmar government in its efforts to maintain national unity and ethnic harmony as the close neighbour and truly friend of Myanmar," the



statement said.

"Chinese side is willing and always ready to render its humble support and assistance to the peace talk between the two sides in the future, as requested by the Myanmar Government, helping them get long-term peace through peace talk."

The statement did not address the issue of whether China would allow third-party observers but a spokesperson from the Chinese embassy said in an email that it had not interfered in the talks in any way.

Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* on April 8, Daw Khon Ja stood by her initial comments.

## 'We'll try again to have international observers attend. It's one of the KIO's criteria for the talks.'

"The KIO proposed to the government at the last talks that they would like international observers from the US, UK and the UN. The government agreed, but the point was left out of the final agreement because China didn't accept it. Now, they have objected again," she said.

The Chinese government has been serving as a facilitator for peace talks since February, with two rounds of talks held in the Chinese border town of Ruili. At the conclusion of the first round of talks, on February 4, the government and KIO released a joint communiqué saying that discussions touched on "persons who may attend as observers and organisations which may attend as witnesses, at the next meeting".

China was influential in bringing the two sides together for the February talks following a flare-up in violence in mid-December. However, its efforts

to host negotiations are also seen as a reactionary measure to US ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell's comments that the US would be willing to act as an intermediary.

"Soon after US ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell's visit to Kachin State in mid-December, China decided to act and offered to host the peace talks to preempt a similar move by Washington," Yun Sun, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institute, said in the February 20 issue of the *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, which is published by the East-West Center.

A spokesperson from the US embassy in Yangon said last week that the US had not been asked to act as an observer but would consider doing so if an invitation was extended from "all sides".

Other sources gave mixed reasons for the delay of the April 6 meeting.

The Peace-talk Creation Group, a Myitkyina-based organisation that has helped with the facilitation of prior talks, told *The Myanmar Times* last week that it was because the Chinese had refused to allow observers.

"We had also have heard this information from the KIO. China won't accept an observer from the US," said group member U San Aung.

But the Myanmar Peace Center denied that it was the reason, instead attributing the delay to logistical problems.

"The talks were postponed because observers, those invited by KIO, could not arrive in time. Therefore, the meeting will be held after Thingyan, but we can't fix the date," said Dr Min Zaw Oo, program director of the centre's ceasefire negotiation program.

The vice chair and spokesperson of the United Nationalities Federal Council, Saw David Tharkabaw, also said the Chinese government was not responsible for the rescheduling.

"It isn't that," he told *The Myanmar Times* by telephone. "It is because the other side, the government side, was not ready yet."

He said that the next round of talks were being planned for the end of April but said the location had not yet been decided.

## Briefs

### Police to set up child protection units

POLICE are to set up child protection units in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay later this year. The units are part of a new anti-trafficking force approved by the government in January.

Among the objectives of the units will be to protect children from sexual abuse, including by foreigners, police say.

Police Major Khin Maung Hla, of the anti-trafficking police in Nay Pyi Taw, said last week: "The anti-trafficking police will form 20 units, including three child protection units, later this year."

He said each child protection unit would have 36 officers who would work on child-rights cases and investigate allegations of child abuse and other child-related crimes.

"The country is opening up and foreigners are flocking into the county. We need to be prepared to prevent the use of children for sexual exploitation and abuse," he said, adding that UNICEF would support the police in capacity-building. – *Aye Sapay Phyu*

### Radio programs teach English

THE second in a series of four radio programs intended to help young people in rural regions learn English aired its first episodes last week.

Called "Obla Air", the new program tells the story of a small airline based in Freeport City. It describes the lifestyles of the owner, pilot, staff and passengers. The drama unfolds in English with key words given in Myanmar to help listeners follow along.

"Obla Air" can be heard at 9pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays on Mandalay FM and Pyinsawadi FM. Each episode lasts 15 minutes and the show will run for 20 episodes. The program is part of Learn English Radio, which is produced by the British Council. – *Yhoon Hnin*

### Luxury hotel to open in Nay Pyi Taw

A NEW luxury hotel is set to open in Nay Pyi Taw this month, ahead of the Southeast Asian Games in December. Emerald Palace Hotel, owned by Myanmar Selone Company, will offer rooms from US\$50 to \$150.

The property will be managed by Thai company The Unique Collection of Hotels and Resorts, which oversees a range of boutique properties, the majority in Thailand.

"With the high level of expansion taking place in Nay Pyi Taw as well as the SEA Games ... it was clear that a new category of upscale accommodation will be needed there. We are going to open 46 rooms in April," a spokesperson said.

Another 214 rooms will open shortly before the games begin. – *Yu Yu Maw*



## Extra Thingyan security in Mandalay, NPT

Rumours of violence during water festival prompt police and pandal organisers to beef up security in upper Myanmar

By Si Thu Lwin and Su Hlaing Tun

AGAINST a background of fear, both police and private security measures for the Thingyan festival have been intensified in Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

Rattled by last month's clashes in Meiktila and the still-unresolved intercommunal problems in Rakhine State, residents and visitors appear wary of the crowding and potential for rowdiness that usually marks the water festival.

Mandalay restaurant owner Ko

Pyone Cho said: "The situation is calm now, but rumours are circulating – including one that people will be throwing acid instead of water. I've decided to close my shop during the water festival because I don't know what will happen."

Mandalay Region police said they would increase security. "We will deploy at the most crowded locations where the public are relaxing. We will use all the police forces of the region, district and township. Cars entering the moat area will be checked for weapons such as knives or clubs," said Police

Major Soe Nyein.

He added that security cameras had been installed near pandals, and private security guards and firefighters would supplement the security provided by the police.

This year, officials have changed the location of pandals along the moat and added new pandal sites in the inner city and Kandawgyi Lake areas. There will be 10 pandals on Kandawgyi Ring Road and about 40 pandals around the moat.

"No one can say exactly whether the rumour will come true or not so we need to be alert

to everything," said office worker Ma Hsu Hsu, 30.

In Nay Pyi Taw, both police and private security organisations will be watching the pandals, which will reportedly be less numerous than last year. A spokesperson for the city council said pandals would have their own security. As in previous years, police and a regulatory body for pandals will watch over junctions, but the body will be beefed up with members of the infamous *Swan Arr Shin* militia.

Nay Pyi Taw will have only four pandals – three in the hotel zone and the mayor's pandal

– while only three have been erected in nearby Pyinmana.

"We hear rumours. They make people nervous, but when we investigate there are no details. Security forces will be present in specific places, with a reserve in waiting," said senior police officer Than Myint.

One resident said: "We haven't built a pandal this year. Everybody is being cautious. A lot of young people are going to meditation centres instead. People don't seem to be in the mood to celebrate."

– Translated by Thiri Min Htun and Zar Zar Soe

## Police issue warning on festival fun

MANDALAY police have issued their traditional warning against Thingyan revellers who overstep the mark. But a prominent comedian has challenged their position, saying it should be up to merrymakers to decide whether they celebrate Thingyan in the "traditional" manner.

The police announced through the state-run *Mandalay* daily newspaper on April 7 that they would deploy almost 900 police and firefighting personnel around the mayor's pandal, around the moat and Kandawgyi Lake, to make sure members of the public enjoyed the holiday in safety.

The police warned that they could take action against "indecorous action, speech and dressing up" under two sections of the Penal Code, which could mean fines and three months' jail time for overenthusiastic offenders.

But Lu Maw of the Moustache Brothers comedy troupe thinks this is going too far. "Parents or relatives can tell people to cool down if they get too excited. If the authorities want to preserve Myanmar traditions, they should set up separate programs for family entertainment. Then the merrymakers can choose where they want to celebrate," he said on April 9.

While police normally warn against indecent behaviour, observers said it was the first time they had threatened to charge revellers under the penal code. Most offenders in previous years have been charged with drunken or reckless driving, especially on motorcycles, or violent behaviour. – *Phyo Wai Kyaw*



Thingyan fans enjoy the festival at a pandal on 26<sup>th</sup> Street, beside Mandalay's moat, in April 2012. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw

## Activist charged again over riots Yangon farmers already received compensation: MP

By Naw Say Phaw Waa

A POLITICAL activist already on trial for incitement has been charged again, this time in a township court.

Ko Ye Min Oo, secretary of the Federation of Students' Unions (Organising Committee), was charged under section 505b of the Penal Code in Yangon's Northern District Court on April 4.

He was then charged with the same offence at Bahan Township Court on April 8, his brother, Ko Ye Min Aung, told *The Myanmar Times*. The charges stem from his alleged involvement in inciting the recent violence between Muslims and Buddhists in Mandalay and Bago regions.

Ko Ye Min Oo has denied the charges and says he has been accused because of his role in organising monk-led protests in 2012 against the proposed opening of an Organisation for Islamic Cooperation office.

"We only found out about the new charge on the night of April 7. At the hearing on April 8 at Bahan court, the trial date was set for April 22 and the police allowed us to meet freely today. My brother just kept saying to us that he had been arrested unjustly."

**'My brother just kept saying to us that he had been arrested unjustly.'**

A district court hearing scheduled for April 23 was rescheduled to April 9. At the hearing, police officer Yu Kyi from Kyauktada township said police had arrested Ko Ye Min Oo on April 4, FSU vice president Ko Ye Myat Hein said.

This contradicts statements by friends and family that Ko

Ye Min Oo had been arrested on March 24.

"After police officer Yu Kyi spoke, the court said to come back on April 23 to hear the case," Ko Ye Myat Hein said.

Meanwhile, Ko Ye Myat Hein and three friends, Ko Ye Min Aung, Ma Noe Noe and Ko Chit Lin, were charged in Kyauktada Township Court under section 353/506 for disturbing government officials on April 7. They were charged because they asked security personnel for permission to meet Ko Ye Min Oo at the first hearing in his trial, on April 4. A scuffle broke out after the security personnel rejected their request.

"They interrogated us and said we were disturbing the police at the court. They also said that we threatened them. We denied these accusations and we told them that we didn't say any threatening words. Then we signed a bond that we would come back when the trial date has been set," he said.

By Noe Noe Aung

INVESTIGATORS have concluded that farmers who complained about a land grab in Shwenanthar village in Yangon's Mingalardon township did in fact receive compensation, and had signed papers saying they wanted to leave farming.

The Zaykabar company had paid up to K600,000 an acre for the land, members of the land dispute investigation commission found when they visited the area in February.

"Commissioners went to Shwenanthar on February 10 and met with the president of Zaykabar company, department heads of the township administration office and the department of settlement and land records," Pyithu Hluttaw representative and commission member U Aung Zin told *The Myanmar Times* on April 6.

"The commission found the farmers had already received compensation. The company paid K300,000 an acre for 643 acres and K600,000 an acre for 172 acres of paddy fields in exchange for a contract signed by the farmers to say they would give up farming and take up another occupation," he said, adding that Zaykabar had wanted to build an industrial zone, but had not received the necessary permission to change the land designation.

U Aung Zin said the farmers had claimed they were forced to sign the contracts.

"We put our findings in the report. Now all we have to do is await the decision of the hluttaw," he said.

*The Myanmar Times* could not reach U Nay Myo Wai, a politician assisting the Shwenanthar farmers, because he is on a month-long trip to upper Myanmar.



# Sayadaw slams '969' campaign

By Cherry Thein

PROMINENT monks have spoken out against the "969" campaign, saying the peaceful symbol has been misused to create divisions between people of different faiths.

The Venerable Kundala Kumar from Magwe township said the symbol, which is meant to be used to "remember and respect" the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, had been "defamed" by the anti-Muslim riots that occurred in Meik-tila last month.

He said it had often been used for missionary work and religious education classes and as a means of reminding Buddhists to be mindful of the core values of their religion.

"969" stickers were found to be widespread not only in Meiktila but also towns in Bago Region to where the violence quickly spread, he said.

"We should not use this logo for any kind of unreasonable purpose or violence because it is meant to represent the 'three gems'," he said, referring collectively to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

The stickers were apparently part of a campaign instigated by Mandalay monk Wirathu that was designed to encourage consumers to shun Muslim businesses. In an interview with *The Irrawaddy* last week, Wirathu denied that the

campaign had been a factor in the violence in Meiktila, which saw Muslim shops, religious buildings and homes targeted by arsonists.

Sayadaw Pan Pyo Let, a monk who has worked extensively with education and health charities as well as preaching, said all religious leaders have a responsibility to preach calm at times of crisis. He said he believed the recent violence was linked to political developments.

"As everybody knows, the country is now in a transition period and the president said he won't go back but it is not happy news for some," he said. "I want all people regardless of race and religion to consider the situation very carefully before doing anything."

Sayadaw Ashin Sandadika said the "969" symbol and its equivalent word, arahem, had long been displayed in houses and shops to remind people about the values of their religion, and to keep the owner free from danger.

"We used this short word to create awareness of and always remember the 'three gems', and to keep peace in our mind. It is not designed to instigate violence or to criticise others," he said.

The venerable Sayadaw urged people to consider the consequences of the recent violence, and to ensure that religious differences are "not abused" in a similar manner



The Venerable Ashin Sandadika arrives at a camp for people displaced by violence in Meiktila on April 1. Pic: Supplied

in future.

"I felt sorry for both Muslims and Buddhists," he said. "If people from different religious groups show loving kindness to each other, the country will get peace."

"True compassionate love isn't based on religion and race - we all need to spread such kindness and compassion to all different faiths."

The Venerable Ashin Sandadika made the comments during a trip to Meiktila with Shwe Parami Foundation, which he helped establish, and other social organisations.

The groups collectively donated K32.8 million (\$37,250) to displaced survivors of the Meiktila violence - both Muslim and Buddhist.

The venerable Sayadaw distributed K27 million in clothing and cash to rebuild destroyed homes.

The Myanmar Motion Picture Association donated K5 million, while the group Sarnar Mu Lat Mya donated K800,000. ID Fashion shop also provided 1000 T-shirts to residents of five Muslim relief camps and two Buddhists camps in Meiktila township.

## Delta village gets training on early disaster warning

By Aye Sapay Phyu

VILLAGERS in a township most heavily affected by natural disasters are to receive training in risk reduction.

The training will help people living in Aung Hlaing village, in Pyinsalu sub-township in Labutta district, Ayeyarwady Region, reduce the risks of storm surges caused by tsunamis or cyclones, said U Maung Maung Soe, deputy director of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

"The training will help the community prepare for hazards by using timely early warning. It will be organised about May 20," he said.

The project is organised as part of Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) based in Thailand and the World Meteorological Organisation regional program.

The training team from the department and RIMES will advise the community on how to get timely early warning of disasters and to make the necessary preparations, and how to use early warning communications equipment to contact other villages in Pyinsalu subtownship. Last year, the department and RIMES implemented a similar project in Yangon Region's Kungyangon township.

Pyinsalu sub-township was devastated by Cyclone Nargis in 2008, suffering a death toll of about 50,000, a department official said. About 25 people were lost in Pyinsalu's Htan Pin Gone village in the 2004 tsunami.



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## NGO report finds mines a constant threat in Kayin State

By Bill O'Toole

A NEW report has detailed how villages in Kayin State and eastern Bago Region continue to be ravaged by the landmines still scattered across the region.

The report, compiled by Karen Human Rights Group based on anonymous interviews with villagers between August 2012 and March, said landmines put "serious restrictions" on villagers' ability to travel, resume farming or rebuild abandoned homes.

"Fatalities and injuries to people and livestock occur frequently, especially when there is no prior knowledge of the mined areas, making displaced communities particularly vulnerable," it said.

In many of the interviews, residents discuss the way the mines can make even the most mundane daily activity potentially life-threatening. One villager in Nyaunglebin district, Bago Region, said his neighbour almost lost his foot while collecting firewood with his family. Another described how people living in mountainous areas "cannot move anywhere" for fear of mines.

While the majority of landmines were placed during the decades-long conflict between the Tatmadaw and the Karen National Liberation Army, there are also reports of landmines being used by members of border guard force militias, such as the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, and even by individuals to settle business disputes. One villager in Kayin State's Papun district recounted how local landowners used mines to stop a construction company from taking bags of sand from their property.

Padoh Mahn Mahn, a spokesperson for the Karen National Union, the political wing of the KNLA, said landmines have become too prevalent over many years of conflict. Not only have many groups lost track of where their mines are, but locals have become skilled at making their own "homemade" landmines.

In addition to detailing the scourge of landmines, the report painted a vivid picture of the tenuous relations between government troops and the people of Kayin State and eastern Bago Region. Despite agreeing to an initial ceasefire in January 2012, both the Tatmadaw and KNLA continue to man their combat positions in the eastern part of the state.

"Frontline government troops still have not returned [to military bases elsewhere in the country] so KNU soldiers still take care of security for the villages, even though fighting has stopped," said one resident of Moo township, adding that he has seen KNLA soldiers laying new landmines in areas near Tatmadaw bases.

Padoh Mahn Mahn told *The Myanmar Times* last week he and his counterparts in the KNLA acknowledged the risk landmines pose for villagers but said he believes they have a purpose. "During war, landmines are one way to protect the people," he said.

Because there is uncertainty over the future of the ceasefire agreement, the KNLA is wary of removing its mines too soon, he said. When the Tatmadaw stopped "occupying" Kayin land, the KNLA would cease to use landmines, he added.

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson could not be reached for comment.



A refugee walks past wooden houses at the Mae La refugee camp on the Thai-Myanmar border. Pic: AFP

## Refugee return will be voluntary, says UNHCR

By Cherry Thein

AS international funding for the refugee camps in Thailand starts to decline, UN refugee officials have repeated assurances that any return to Myanmar must be voluntary, based on each individual's informed decision, and must take place in safety and dignity.

Both the Thai and Myanmar governments have agreed that they will abide by those principles.

But the issue has started to heat up as international donors, noting the signing of ceasefire agreements in some of the country's long-running conflicts, have started to reduce their funding for the camps.

Ms Vivian Tan, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangkok, told *The Myanmar Times* by email that the time for voluntary return to Myanmar was not ripe, as the ceasefires had not yet been translated into peace agreements.

She said there were still many challenges in southeastern Myanmar that had to be addressed before refugee returns from the nine border camps could take place in a safe and sustainable way.

"UNHCR does not have a timeframe to start organising returns, but we do need to work with the refugees, [community-based organisations] and NGOs now to make sure that when the time eventually comes, we will all be ready and not be scrambling to cope with the demand for repatriation assistance," Ms Tan said.

In February, an exile group called Burma Partnership released a documentary, *Nothing About Us Without Us: Refugee's Voices About Their Return To Burma*, in which refugees expressed their concerns about the timing and circumstances of possible repatriation, including where they would live after their return.

UNHCR says it has sought to address the concerns raised in the documentary.

Ms Vicky Tennant, Head of Field Office, South-East, UNHCR Myanmar told *The Myanmar Times* that the refugees must be in a

position to decide for themselves when conditions are right for them to go home.

"If and when they decide to do so, and provided they are able to do so voluntarily, safely, and in dignity, then UNHCR will work with the two governments concerned to ensure that they are able to do so in a way which makes sure that their rights are protected," she said.

"For now, however, we do not think that the conditions are in place yet. For example, landmine clearance has not yet started, and real progress in the peace process will be needed in order to build the confidence of refugees and give them the long-term security they need in order to return home permanently."

Ms Tennant said recent developments in Myanmar, particularly the ceasefire agreements and peace talks, had

**‘For now, we do not think the conditions are in place yet for refugees to return.’**

given rise to hopes that if progress continued many refugees would eventually be able to return home and re-establish their lives back in Myanmar.

She said the Burma Partnership video was "not as balanced as it could have been. It made some unfair allegations against UNHCR and did not fully reflect our responses to those allegations. As a result, the film may have contributed further to the refugees' anxiety about repatriation," she said.

"The film also suggested that UNHCR is involved in 'relocation sites' in southeastern Myanmar for returning refugees to settle in. This is incorrect," she said.

"We do think, however, that it is important for planning to take place in Myanmar to absorb refugees who will eventually return home. The Myanmar authorities have said that returnees will be

able to choose where to return to within the country."

The documentary did not reflect the open and frank discussions UNHCR had and continues to have with Burma Partnership, she said.

Daw Khin Ohmar, coordinator of Burma Partnership, said the documentary aimed to send the message that no policy on repatriation should be decided "without the full and direct participation of members of the group affected by that policy."

"We're trying to present the real situation of what is happening on the ground in the refugees' camps. We are sharing the refugees' communities' worries and concerns to the respective authorities, the media and international organisations in order to ensure that the preparation of the refugees' return is done with the direct participation of the refugees," she said.

"This video is a way to remind the Thai and Myanmar governments that they must prepare and plan the repatriation process in compliance with international standards and in a transparent and inclusive manner with the affected population.

"It is also a way to call on the UNHCR to develop broader consultation and information sharing mechanisms to inform and engage with refugees and their community representatives regularly and meaningfully, including during the preparation phase of the repatriation process."

The Thai government has assured UNHCR on several occasions that it has no deadline for returns, and that refugees will not be forced to repatriate.

The government of Myanmar has also said that refugees will be welcomed back and assisted to reintegrate but that, ultimately, it is for the refugees to decide if and when they are ready to return.

There are more than 128,000 refugees living in the temporary shelters inside Thailand. Some of them have already been accepted for resettlement to third countries, such as the United States and Australia, and some may prefer not to return even if the situation continues to improve.

## Memorial for widely respected professor planned

By Aye Sapay Phyu

SCHOLARS and historians are to honour one of the country's leading academics in a memorial to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

The organisers have invited participants to write articles in both Myanmar and English for a publication and public reading to honour Dr Than Tun (1923-2005). A similar session was held last year.

"The books produced this year will be published as a memorial to mark what would have been the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Dr Than Tun. Books in both languages will appear on November 30," said U Kyaw, a member of the paper-reading session.

"Dr Than Tun is one of Mandalay's best-known scholars. His research and teaching, and the support he showed for his students are still remembered at Mandalay University," said U Tun Aung Chain, a retired professor.

Dr Than Tun was also involved in political activities, serving as chairman of the All Burma Student Union during the highly charged and eventful period of July, 1946 to January, 1947. After independence, he concentrated on research in history and literature.

In 2000, the Fukuoka Asian Culture prize committee awarded Professor Than Tun its highest academic award, a Literate of the 11<sup>th</sup> Fukuoka Asian Culture prize in the academic prize category. The award citation stated that all his academic work, including theses and books, helped place the country's history and culture into the wider context of world history, thus contributing greatly to the further development of the global study of Myanmar history.

Among his many significant publications, the most celebrated both at home and abroad are considered to be his *History of Buddhism in Burma* and *Medieval Myanmar History*, both of which concern the epigraphs of the Bagan Dynasty from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Another of his publications, *The Royal Orders of Burma*, comprises 10 volumes and took him eight years to complete. This 7600-page study, a rigorous analysis of royal orders from the dynasty period, is known as the "Than Tun text".

U Kyaw said anyone interested in Dr Than Tun's work could contact the organising group at the National Museum on Pyay Road in Yangon's Dagon township or call 09-448-032-457.



# Police demand shirt off activist's back

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

FORMER political prisoner and journalist U Win Tin has refused to stop wearing his trademark blue shirt, despite threats from police that his campaign against the detention of political prisoners could see him return to prison.

The 83-year-old National League for Democracy founder says he will continue to wear his blue shirts, which are similar to the Myanmar prison uniform, until there are no political prisoners in the country's jails.

He has worn blue since he was released from Insein Prison in 2008, after 18 years behind bars.

Last week, however, a police officer from the station in Insein township called U Win Tin and ordered him to return his prison uniform within a week. If he does not comply, he could face a fine of K2000, 10 years in prison or both, although the potential charge remains unclear.

U Win Tin told *The Myanmar Times* he has already rejected the order and is ready to return to prison if necessary.

"I've already told them I won't take off my shirt so they said they would pay the fine for me and all I needed to do was sign a statement. I said no, I won't sign, whatever happens, I don't care. I will stay true to my promise," U Win Tin said.

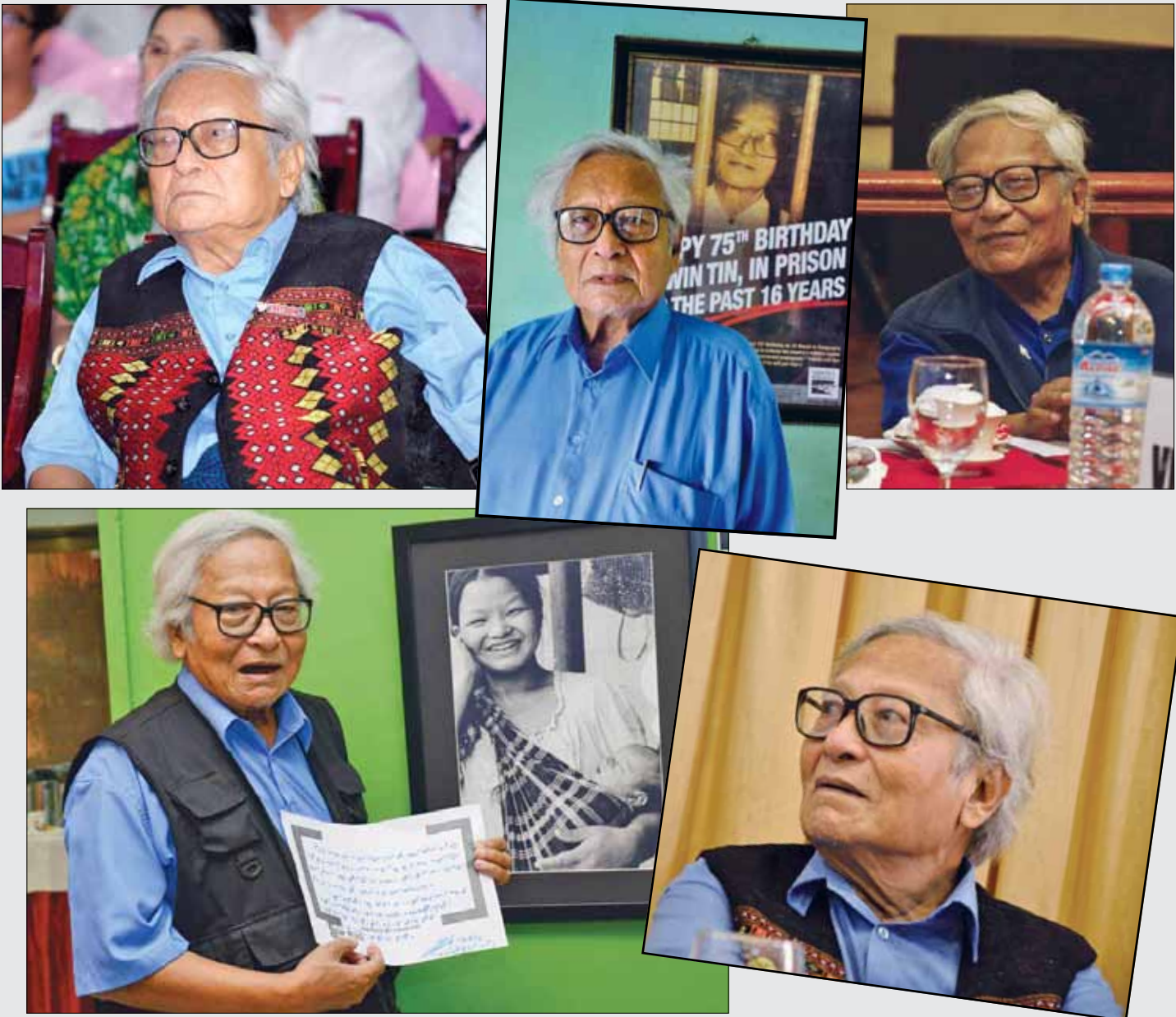
"Actually, I don't have the original prison shirt - all of mine are new," he said.

He said that although the government has announced several amnesties he believes there are still many political prisoners behind bars.

"I still do not believe these dictators. They cheated me in 2005 when the chief of the prison department said they will release me but I had to wait another three years so I don't trust them at all. And I'm going to keep wearing this shirt.

"If there are no political prisoners ... I will take off my shirt but up until now I haven't seen good indications."

Police in Insein township declined to comment last week.



National League for Democracy founder U Win Tin in his trademark blue shirt. Pics: Myanmar Times archive

# Trishaw drivers give up jobs as mayor refuses more licences

By Aung Shin

ABOUT 300 trishaw drivers in Yangon gave up their career in March alone, Yangon's mayor said during a debate in parliament last week on trishaw licensing.

U Hla Myint, who is also chairman of Yangon City Development Committee, said trishaws were diminishing in usefulness because Yangon residents preferred buses and motorcycles.

"A total of 360 bus routes are running every day in Yangon," U Hla Myint said in the Yangon Region Hluttaw on April 8, during a discussion about the future of trishaws and the economic pressures faced by drivers under the current licensing system.

In the outskirt areas,

motorbikes, which are faster than trishaws, are used. So we will grant licences for trishaws in very limited numbers."

Earlier, U Kyaw, a representative for Thingangyun, had proposed increasing the number of licences for trishaw drivers. The proposal received support from only three representatives.

Yangon has 26,777 licensed trishaws, U Hla Myint said, but YCDC permits only 709 to operate in the six townships that make up Yangon's downtown area.

Each township grants trishaw drivers a licence plate in a specific colour. Any driver caught operating a trishaw in a different township - or operating without a licence at all - faces stiff punishment. The

mayor said 120 licences were granted during February as a way of creating job opportunities in urban areas.

But U Kyaw argued that the existing licensing system does not meet the needs of trishaw drivers in the city.

"For example, Thingangyun township has more than 5000 trishaws but only 968 have licences. The remaining 4000 trishaws are running without licences. If YCDC takes action on these 4000 trishaw drivers, they will be jobless. If a family of three depend on one trishaw driver for income, 12,000 people are going to face real poverty, and that is only in one township."

U Thaung Sein, a representative from Dawbon, agreed that drivers are

"working hard" to earn a livelihood and should be protected. "A trishaw costs between K700,000 and K1.5 million. The trishaw drivers cannot own this vehicle. They just hire from trishaw owners by paying daily charges."

U Thaung Sein said traffic laws are unfair on trishaw drivers.

"When trishaw drivers break traffic rules, YCDC

finest them K20,000 and takes the trishaw. And YCDC profits by renting the trishaw back to the driver. This is not in line with the democratic government's aim of reducing poverty."

Asked about why more trishaw licences are needed in Yangon, U Kyaw told *The Myanmar Times* on April 9: "I presented this proposal in parliament as I understand

the lives of trishaw drivers. A licence is their very basic need. The public desires this."

U Kyaw also argued that the mayor's suggestion that motorcycles can replace trishaws in the city is untrue. "The mayor's words are not relevant to the actual facts. Using motorbikes is not officially allowed in the Yangon area."

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# Leaving Myanmar for life in the dumps

## IN DEPTH

with  
Nyein Ei Ei Htwe



THE boy carefully picked out the rotten orange from the small mountain of rubbish next to his home. He peeled it with care and ate it with enjoyment. "If we find vegetables or meat on the hill we give them to our mums and they cook them for us," said Mg Moe Thu Aung, referring to himself and the other children who work the garbage dump.

Mg Thoe Thu Aung and his neighbours are a group of Myanmar who have found that extracting a living from a mountain of rubbish stinking under the Thai sun is better than living and working in their own country.

This unlikely colony inhabits Mae Pa quarter, a few kilometres from the centre of Mae Sot, the border town through which imports and exports to and from Thailand pass, and where the rubbish of both countries is piled high.

U Kyaw Kyaw, a kind of informal village headman for the community that relies on the tip for its livelihood, says there are more than 100 households amongst the rubbish. "The number has increased during the past three or four years. We keep a list," he said.

It started 15 years ago, when four Myanmar families found they could make a living from recycling plastic bags, bottles and packaging retrieved from the dump. Daw Htway Kyi, who 14

years ago moved from Nyaung Pin Thar village in Bago Region's Pyu township, said it was better than working in Myanmar.

"We have no homes in Myanmar. We sold up before coming here. I heard people in my village talking about the money they could earn in Mae Sot, so I came here with my children. We earned enough to eat, so we stayed. Now I have grandchildren and great-grandchildren," said Daw Htway Kyi, 65.

She also practises as a midwife for the Myanmar families. "Though there is a clinic at Mae Tao, we have no passports or legal right to stay in Thailand. The Thai police are always arresting us, so we tend not to go into town. The funny thing is, we very rarely get sick," she said, as bluebottles droned around the hut. The smell, under the hot sun, was enough to induce vomiting in newcomers, but the children looked healthy.

Htway Kyi picked up a baby and said: "I don't want to stay here till I die, but we have nothing back in Myanmar."

Recently a recycling plant has opened nearby, creating competition for the Myanmar dumpharvesters



The child of a Myanmar migrant family in the rubbish dump at Mae Sot, Thailand, where up to 100 households from Myanmar live. Pic: Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

can call the police on us. We sneak out on Sunday when they're closed and sell to other customers."

She said a worker from the rubbish hill can earn 100 baht (about K3000) a day.

"The money is enough to

two children, whom she plans to enrol in a Myanmar school.

"The school [that they currently attend] is funded by donors, and if money is low they can't get books or supplies. My husband and I are saving so we can send the

is in ninth standard and the younger one is in sixth. They visit me and my wife by crossing the Thaung Yin River by boat for 20 baht each," said U Aung Win.

NGOs sometimes donate supplies, including drinking

the water from a well near the rubbish dump," said U Aung Win.

Most of the families are from Kayin and Mon States, and are saving up to go back home one day. They would like to get help from the Myanmar government to return.

"No one wants to work as a slave in another country, but there were no jobs at home. We're all prepared to go home if we can. For now, we hope conditions here don't get worse," said U Aung Win, as he watched the garbage trucks coming to replenish the dump. Another day's work was about to begin.

## 'I don't want to stay here till I die, but we have nothing back in Myanmar.'

by offering cash for garbage. Another resident, Ma Cho Oo, 26, said: "We used to get 10 baht (about K300) for a kilogram of rubbish, but the factory just pays 5 baht. We don't want to sell to them but we have to because they

live on, and even to save sometimes. But the police are always after us, and sometimes they destroy our huts and we have to run off and hide."

She and her husband, a fellow rubbish-gatherer, have

children back to a school in Myanmar," said Ma Cho Oo.

U Aung Win, a six-year veteran of the tip, has the same idea, and has sent his two daughters to a high school in Mon State. "Now my eldest daughter

water and noodles, to the tip families, he said. "They donated a pond for our drinking water and gave us a contact number to call them when it went dry. But we can't, because we don't have phone cards. So we get

## The Mail Box

### Dear editor,

I am writing regarding various articles that appeared on pages 14 and 15 of the April 8 edition of *The Myanmar Times* titled "Shares go on sale for Mandalay industrial project", "But farmers angry over compensation" and "Pollution fears for 10,000-acre project site".

First of all, let me state that we are an open and transparent group and will take into consideration all constructive criticism as well as good suggestions. As Myanmar is opening up, we strive to bring our company's standards to internationally acceptable levels and for a start we took the first bold step of issuing a prospectus that includes most, if not all, of the issues for a large project. We also recognise this is a small step towards transparency and accountability; however, we shall continue to make great effort in attaining international levels of transparency and accountability.

Please allow me to express our concerns that your various articles published had cast more negative light than given encouragement for more local groups to adopt transparency and accountability. What have not been reflected in your articles are the risks our group has taken for the past 30 months to help this poor area. We invested a great deal of resources in master planning; an environmental study; helping local villages get electricity;

making donations to schools and other charitable causes; applying for the necessary permits and approvals; and establishing an information centre where stakeholders, members of the public and journalists can visit to express their opinions and suggestions.

We have taken these actions without any monetary return over the past 30 months because we believe that this is a long-term project with significant benefits for the region.

The project aims to create employment opportunities to alleviate poverty in the Dry Zone, where there are severe resource limitations. The development of the Industrial Park will also provide an opportunity for industries presently operating within Mandalay to relocate to a modern park, thus alleviating environmental and social issues within Mandalay city.

I would also like to specifically address the two main issues raised in your articles: compensation and environmental problems.

In terms of compensation, Myanmar is stifled by this issue and we took the view that we are here to alleviate poverty in this area by creating more employment opportunities as well as upgrading the local people's skills. It is a difficult location to start with because the lack of water, electricity, telecommunication and road

connections.

In regards to MMID's compensation to the farmers, the whole process was properly recorded and documented in our prospectus. However, there may be some dissenting farmers who formed less than 6 percent of the total and the laws will apply for cases like these.

On the other hand, we are also aware that there are land speculators and on hearing certain groups are developing sites they start to buy up the surrounding land and in the process inflate prices to an unrealistic extent. They have even instigated some of the farmers not to accept any offers. These are the commonly known facts but never reported.

In terms of the environmental concerns, we are probably the first Myanmar group to initiate an environment report and to openly address these issues. We are determined to ensure that our Myohta Industrial Park will be a liveable city.

Mandalay Myohta Industrial Development Public Company's chairman and his management team are fully committed to take steps towards the overall objectives outlined above. In our management team, Peter Rousseau is tasked with the governance of our environmental issues. We are aware that we have not perfected it yet but it is the beginning and more positive

comments and constructive suggestions from all quarters would certainly help this country towards environmentally friendly reforms as well as bringing in more investments that mean job opportunities.

While we are unable to please everyone, as long as the majority of the people benefit in a sustainable way, we should move on. This country needs more success stories and we hope that this is one of them.

**Frankie Tan**  
Chief financial officer, MMID

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### Dear editor,

Since Nathalie Johnston is based in Myanmar, I am astonished that she should remark in her article "Guggenheim plays it safe with Asian artists" (April 8-14) that one artist was commenting upon the "decay of Myanmar's ancient temples and the lack of care and consideration paid to them".

Everywhere you look the pagodas and temples old and new are so spruced up they dazzle blindingly with gold, tiles and mirrored mosaics. I rather think the artist was commenting upon too much "care" lavished upon them with gold, and not the other way around. For example, have a look at Kaunghmudaw Pagoda of Sagaing: the huge dome used to be a lovely, pristine white and now its covered with gold paint.

And I'm left wondering if Ms Johnston has ever been to Bagan with its thousands of "repaired" temples... or even been to a pagoda.

**Ma Thanegi**

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### Dear editor,

A short note to point out that the correct name for what you have referring to as "Minder Ground" – particularly in the Timeout section of the April 8-15 issue – has been known as "Maidan Grounds" since the days before World War II. I remember that the word is of Indian origin and named by the British.

**A reader**

**Editor's note:** There are several names in common use. Minder Ground is used by most companies that promote events at the site, while the official name is Myoma Ground.

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

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# IP law to be submitted to next session of parliament

By Aung Shin

MYANMAR is on the verge of adopting a law to protect intellectual property, thus helping to resolve a major concern of investors.

And to help mark the country's intent to enact an IP, or intellectual property, law, ASEAN members have elected the head of Myanmar's IP association,

**‘One of the first questions foreign investors have is: does Myanmar an IP law?’**

Daw Tin Ohnmar Tun, president of ASEAN IPA for a two-year term.

Dr Moe Moe Thwe, a director in the Ministry of Science and Technology, said the law could be enacted in June. Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* at the ASEAN IPA international conference

at Yangon's Inya Lake Hotel on April 6, she said: "The drafting is about 80 percent complete, and we hope parliament can approve it in June."

Daw Tin Ohnmar Tun said at the conference the law was essential for increasing foreign investment and trade.

"One of the first questions foreign investors have is: does Myanmar have an IP law or IP protection act? Myanmar is the last ASEAN country to pass an IP law. We have a trade registration law and criminal laws, but we don't yet have an IP protection law. We soon will. We have more IP members than other ASEAN countries, but we have to do a lot more to raise awareness throughout the country."

Dr Moe Moe Thwe said the drafting of an IP law had begun in 2004, in consultation with concerned organisations, and had been repeatedly amended. "This is the 10<sup>th</sup> draft," she said. "We believe the draft is in conformity with ASEAN and international standards."



## Low-cost flights launched to Singapore

By Yu Yu Maw

FROM downtown Mandalay to Singapore for US\$95 – a new airline is offering cut-rate fares plus ground transportation, starting April 5.

There is a catch – actually, more than one. The price does not include commercial taxes, which will be added. Customers pay extra for baggage over the 10-kilogram limit, must take their own in-flight food, and there is a cancellation fee.

Golden Myanmar Airlines is offering Mandalay-Yangon-Singapore flights,

with the Yangon-Singapore leg costing \$60 one-way.

"The price quoted is an average, and we'll add tax. Passengers will have to pay beforehand to get the lowest price," said Daw Myat Thandar U, assistant general manager of the airline. She did not say how much higher the fare could get for those who pay later, but did say the airline would provide free transportation from Mandalay International Airport to the centre of the city.

The daily route uses a 180-seat Airbus A320. Passengers must pay cash and the fee for cancellations or changes to

the schedule are charged \$30.

In January, Golden Myanmar sold shares to the public at K10,000 each, and is part-owned by its employees. Its major backer is U Khin Maung Aye of KMA Group of Companies. The airline bill itself as a low-cost carrier, with fares about half what other airlines charge.

The Singapore offer marks GMA's first foray into the international market, and the company says it will add flights to Bangkok once they acquire another aircraft. Eventually they say they hope to fly to the Middle East, Europe, Japan, South Korea, Australia and the United States.

## Follow Indonesia on military role: activist

Yangon School of Political Science teachers, students study transition to democracy

By Nan Tin Htwe

STUDYING the Indonesian political system – and researching how the country made the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy – has convinced well-known Myanmar academic Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint that the Tatmadaw should stay out of politics.

"My opinion just got stronger," the co-founder of the Yangon School of Political Science said last week after returning from Indonesia. "There are some people who say it's good to have the military in politics in some situations. I thought it was true. But I fully understand now that the military should stay out of politics."

Together with four board members and two students from the school, Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint travelled to Indonesia from March 24 to 30 as a part of the "Transition and Youth Engagement" program, which was funded by the British Council in Yangon.

YSPS was founded in November 2011 to give political science knowledge to the country's youth. Since then the school has trained more than 400 people in political

science, transition studies and international relations in Yangon and Bago regions, and Rakhine, Shan, Kachin and Kayin states.

The visit to Indonesia was Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint's first official study trip to explore and learn about political transitions and its challenges. The group met members of Indonesian political parties and civil society groups, as well as former military officers and individual scholars.

Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint said that his group

commit crimes.

"To become a strong democracy, it's not appropriate for the military to be in it," he said. "The question is, how are we going to [remove the military]?"

Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint also said that the experience showed him that there's a need to have positive relations with the military and for the public as well to have knowledge on the real role of military. He stressed the need for capacity building; for example, to develop the police force and

**‘I fully understand now that the military should stay out of politics.’**

chose Indonesia because of its history of military involvement in parliament, and the military's role in its transition to democracy.

Myanmar's military, said Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint, should stay out of politics and its only duty should be to protect the country from outsiders enemies. The fact that the military has a judicial system that is not in line with international standards makes it "hard to control" when members of the military

to differentiate between the different roles of the military and police.

"What happened in Meiktila is an example of police force not being strong enough," he said. "Then, the military got involved. Every time something like this happens, the military thinks that they need to get in."

However, Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint said it was evident that despite its relatively strong democratic institutions Indonesia still has problems,

including corruption and widespread poverty.

"Here we don't even have strong institutions, in terms of the hluttaw, political parties and civil society," he said.

"A lot of things need to be done in Myanmar and all political parties and civil society organisations need to start thinking about the military's involvement in politics", Ko Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint said.

The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus, a Jakarta-based non-government organisation that works to promote human rights, peace and reconciliation in Myanmar, described its discussion with the YSPS delegation as "impressive".

"We shared our concerns over the military's continued role in politics and the fears that it will not withdraw anytime soon, especially because of the lasting ethnic conflicts across the country, including recent sectarian unrest in the centre of the country and in Rakhine State, and ongoing conflicts with non-state armed groups in Kachin and Shan states, and other areas," caucus president Ms Ibu Eva Kusuma Sundari said in a statement.

## Study seeks new water resources

YANGON City Development Committee is working with Shwe Taung Development Company and a South Korean firm to develop new water resources for Yangon.

While YCDC supplies 150 million gallons of mains water a day to the city, many residents continue to rely on groundwater, or lack access to clean water.

The government-supplied water comes from Gyobyu, Hlawgar, Phugyi and Ngamoyeik reservoirs but Shwe Taung chairman U Aik Htun said new options were being explored to expand supply. Shwe Taung will work with Korea Water Resources Corp, also known as K-water, on the project.

"We're doing a study on potential new sources of water resources and surveying how to ensure there is enough clean water for Yangon. Although we already have several main water sources, we need more to cope with future demand," U Aik Htun said.

"We found another new water source in the Bago Yoma ... so we have to consider how to transport it to Yangon city," he said.

The survey will take about one year and after a new water source is identified it will be developed collectively by the three partners.

"We can start supplying water within four or five years of finishing the survey," he said.

Water shortages are most acute in Yangon's summer, which runs from March to May, when even those residents connected to the main supply have difficulty accessing water.

"We have had the Ngamoyeik connection since 2010 but we still don't get enough water in summer. We always have to wait until midnight to be able to pump the water up, so instead we normally get it from the tube well," said Daw Tin Ni, a housewife from North Dagon's ward 45.

– Kyaw Hsu Mon



# Challenges ahead of 2014 census

BANGKOK - As Myanmar conducts a pilot of its first national census in three decades, activists and experts have cited a number of challenges ahead of the actual count in 2014.

At the time of the last official census on March 31, 1983, the population of Myanmar was 35,442,972. Current estimates put today's figure at well over 60 million, including 135 recognised ethnic groups.

"The logistical and security challenges to the process are immense," said Mr David Scott Mathieson, a senior researcher with Human Rights Watch (HRW) who has focused on Myanmar. "Just accessing some of the isolated and persecuted populations will be a huge undertaking, especially in areas where conflict has raged for decades, particularly in Kachin State and, most problematically, in Arakan State."

In addition to requiring access to conflict-affected areas of the country, census organisers must also work at overcoming some residents' longstanding distrust of the state. There could also be funding problems, activists say.

In Kachin State, the government and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), which has been fighting for greater autonomy for the past six decades, resumed fighting in June 2011 following the collapse of a 17-year ceasefire.

Recent estimates by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) put the number of displaced at more than 80,000 people.

A recent report by human rights investigator Mr Tomas Ojea Quintana to the UN Human Rights Council cited continued allegations in Kachin of "attacks against civilian populations, extrajudicial killings, sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, as well as torture".

Meanwhile, in Rakhine State, communal violence between Rohingya Muslims and mainly Buddhist Rakhine in 2012 left more than 115,000 displaced, government estimates show.

## Census, not citizenship

Some 800,000 Rohingya,

## Mandalay townships surveyed for pilot census

By Khin Su Wai

A TRIAL census has been conducted in two Mandalay townships ahead of a national census next year, the country's first in more than 30 years.

The trial census was carried out from March 30 to April 10 in 20 townships. In Mandalay Region, 10 enumerators, or data collectors, and two auditors conducted the pilot in Chan Aye Thazan and Mogok townships, said U Thaung Zaw, the head of Mandalay Region's Department of Immigration and Registration.

During last week's trial run, enumerators visited five sample areas in each of the townships.

Among the residents surveyed in Chan Aye Thazan township was U Hti Aung, a 77-year-old retired government official. Although he has lived in the area since 1970, he said it was the first time he had ever participated in a census.

"I have 13 members in my family but most of them are away at a pagoda festival. When they visited to ask about the census, there were only five people here," he said, adding that enumerators had told him

an ethnic, linguistic and Muslim minority, live in Rakhine State; they are de jure stateless under Myanmar law. They have long lacked decent health care, social services and education, and faced state-sanctioned persecution, including targeted restrictions (like family size) and requirements such as unpaid forced labour for security forces, according to activists.

Myanmar authorities consider them undocumented immigrants and do not recognise them as citizens or as an ethnic group. They are generally referred to as Bengalis.

The country's last two official censuses in 1973 and 1983 did not list them as part of the population.

The government includes the Rohingya in official family registries and gives



Enumerators collect data for a pilot census in Mandalay's Chan Aye Thazan township last week. Pic: Khin Su Wai

the date of the official census and requested all family members be present.

"They asked many questions, including whether I own a bicycle or other form of transport. There were so many questions—it took about 40 minutes, I think," he said.

them temporary registration cards. However, such documents do not mention place of birth and are not considered as evidence of birth in Myanmar.

Mr Mathieson is hopeful the number-counting exercise could have a positive impact. "In many ways the upcoming census could improve the human rights situation, in that it will recognize the citizenship of many people and grant them rights long denied, including stateless people in the eastern and northern borderlands and, hopefully, Rohingya Muslims long denied citizenship."

But U Nyi Nyi, deputy director of the Department of Population, the government agency carrying out the census, was clear the census is about numbers alone. He sent IRIN, the UN's news service, a presentation that

the pilot census will be used to identify possible problems enumerators and auditors may have when gathering data for the national census, which will be conducted on March 29, 2014.

Myanmar's most recent census was in 1983, when

indicated everyone within the country's borders on census night – March 29, 2014 – will be counted, whether or not they are a citizen. The only people to be excluded from the count are staff from foreign embassies and consulates.

"This is major step for our country and will allow us to better determine development programs for our country," said U Nyi Nyi.

The census is not intended to determine anyone's legal status, said Lin Yanming, acting officer-in-charge of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) office in Myanmar, which is working with the government to conduct the census.

Nevertheless, human rights and good governance are related, said Mr Christophe Lefranc, technical adviser on population and development at UNFPA in

the population was about 35.4 million. It is now thought to be more than 60 million.

A proposal to conduct a national census was approved by the Pyithu Hluttaw in March 2011, during its first session.

– Translated by Thit Lwin

Bangkok. "Having accurate and reliable data on the population can help promote good governance and appropriate development decision-making, improving the well-being of the general public."

Mr Alan Lopez, professor of global health and head of the School of Population Health at the University of Queensland, said: "It is very difficult to see how a country can adequately plan for basic services such as health care, educational facilities and aged care without detailed knowledge of population size, dynamics and distribution."

Mr Yanming added that the census will help monitor the country's progress on reaching Millennium Development Goals as well as provide baseline indicators for the post-2015 sustainable development

goals, which are yet to be set.

## Challenges

One of the key challenges is a lack of expertise, as most of the civil servants who worked on the 1973 and 1983 censuses are now retired. There is also little awareness among the population about the census and reaching areas where there is fighting is a concern.

In Kayin State, where armed groups have been at war with the government for more than 60 years and hundreds of thousands remain internally displaced, community workers say residents have almost no knowledge of the census, but also worry about possible abuses.

"A census is not inherently bad, but, due to our past experiences working with the villagers, local military officers could use the population numbers to carry out abuses – such as arbitrary taxation and forced labour," said Saw Albert, field director of the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG).

"When the government has more information about villagers, it is easy for them to target them," he added.

Another concern is that the census can be used as a tool to manipulate the numbers of people who support the Union Solidarity and Development Party in the 2015 general election.

At the other end of the country, reaching indigenous populations in northern Shan State bordering China, as well as other border communities, is a "major logistical challenge", said Mr Mathieson, noting that few people in the mountainous, isolated regions even speak Burmese, the language in which the census will be conducted.

The estimated total cost of the census is US\$58.5 million, of which the government and UNFPA have committed \$20 million.

The pilot census, ahead of the 2014 nationwide census, was scheduled to take place in 20 of the country's 330 townships from March 30 to April 10 and involves face-to-face interviews and some 41 questions.

Preliminary findings from the nationwide count next year are expected in July 2014, with final results in early 2015. – IRIN

## UEC vows free, fair election in 2015 Universities sign agreement

UNION Election Commission chairman U Tin Aye has vowed to oversee free and fair election in late 2015.

He made the comments during a meeting with Myanmar's 56 registered political parties at the commission's office in Nay Pyi Taw on April 8.

"Political parties should talk about issues concerning the election and other general issues openly," U Tin Aye said.

He said the commission is trying to correct voting rolls and ensure only those eligible cast advance votes – two of the major complaints in elections held in 2010 and 2012.

He said the commission will also

ensure candidates have enough time to campaign and will review election-related rules and regulations and make necessary amendments.

U Tin Aye said the commission is also arranging to conduct voter education in ethnic minority languages.

An official from the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party who attended the meeting said the commission should cooperate with ethnic NGOs and cultural associations on the voter information literature.

The pledge to crack down on advance voting was welcomed by parties still smarting over the thousands of advanced votes

received by Union Solidarity and Development Party candidates in the 2010 election.

"It is not normal for one candidate to have tens of thousands of advance votes," an official from the Chin Development Party said.

He also said that elections should be held on Saturday instead of on Sunday so ward and village-tract election commissions did not "have an excuse" to let Christians vote in advance.

"Ward and village tract election sub-commission took advantage of the fact the election was on a Sunday and allowed this wrongful advance voting [in 2010]," he said.

– Win Ko Ko Latt

By Yhoon Hnin

AS part of its program to cooperate with international centres of learning, Yangon University has signed an agreement with Thailand's Thepasatri Rajabhat University on the study of small- and medium-sized businesses and rural development.

The agreement was signed on April 9. It covers joint research, exchange of information on education, student exchange and a range of other activities.

Yangon University rector Dr Tin Htun said: "The

research program will gather data on rural development and the [small and medium enterprise] sectors. The two universities will cooperate in interdisciplinary research to gain maximum advantage for our two universities and our two countries."

He added: "Thai students are studying our language at the University of Foreign Languages in Yangon, and Myanmar students will study Thai."

Yangon University has launched cooperation programs with universities in Korea, Germany and Japan.



# April power cuts ‘not bad’, says MOGE official

By Soe Sandar Oo

NATURAL gas supply from the Yadana oil and gas project used for domestic electricity generation will not be greatly disrupted, a Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise official said on April 3. However, exports to Thailand and supplies for compressed natural gas filling stations will be cut back by the scheduled maintenance, which will finish on April 13, the official said.

“The onshore natural gas used by factories owned by Ministry of Energy stopped operating from April 5 to 13, which means 24 million cubic feet of gas a day can be provided to the Ministry of Electric Power, and a further 1 million cubic feet to MOGE,” he said.

He added that the maintenance was planned to be completed sometime between November and March but the government asked to delay the work until examinations finished.

“If we cannot finish the maintenance now then monsoon will arrive. The weather at sea is dangerously unpredictable during monsoon and maintenance cannot be completed then,” he said, adding that the work could not be delayed until after monsoon.

A spokesperson for the Yangon Electricity Supply Board said the power station in Ahlone township mostly relies on natural gas to generate electricity, so the nine-day maintenance period is creating a temporary power shortage when demand is high because of the hot weather.

“We are generating about 330 megawatts of electricity less than usual so there will be some shortages but it’s not too bad,” he said. “After maintenance is finished it will go back to normal.”

Industrial zones were warned in late March that they would not be supplied with any electricity during the maintenance period, he added.

An announcement on the Ministry of Energy’s website said the Yadana project, which has been running for 15 years, has already yielded about 51 percent of its expected total production.

The gradual depletion of the gas reserves under the seafloor are creating a depression where the platform is anchored, and the maintenance aims to solve the problem, the announcement said. The Ministry of Energy and MOGE are partners in the Yadana project, which is operated by France’s Total. The project sits between blocks M5 and M6, which are south of Ayeyarwady Region. When the project started flowing in 1998, it produced about 900 million cubic feet of gas a day.



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann speaks during a seminar on taxation held at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Yangon last week. Pic: Ko Taik

# Hluttaws urged to reform tax

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

PARLIAMENTARIANS have been urged to reform the nation’s taxation regime to bring more revenue to the government and allow it to spend more money on developing the nation.

Pyithu Hluttaw speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and several business associations discussed tax reforms at a finance workshop at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) building in Yangon on April 9.

Many in attendance at the seminar suggested that a convenient way to boost revenues would be to lower income and commercial taxes but increase levies charged on property, industrial production, hotels and tourism.

U Shwe Mann said the Ministry of Finance and Revenue has set a taxation target of K2.2 trillion (about US\$2.5 billion) during this fiscal year, with commercial and income tax expected to provide most of the funds. But he urged the ministry to collect data on which sectors or people do not pay tax. He added that several

ministries need to submit laws for the parliament to consider.

“I would like the law to be clear and close to reality so that it benefits taxpayers, the government and the country,” he said. “We need to make sure that regulations and notifications that follow the law are also clear – they are equally important,” he said.

U Shwe Mann said some policies in the recent past have not been submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. They were only submitted to the cabinet and ministries and then issued as notifications, which is against the idea of the constitution, he said.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the laws must be acceptable and suitable for everybody.

“Taxation is vital to our country’s future. We have to think about what kind of society or country we want when we levy tax,” she said. “If we can fill this blank, we will continue to put forward legislation ... [so that the] executive body and everybody can participate. This legislation concerns us all and we need to build up the culture of taxation in our country if we want to reform.”

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi added that taxation officials have a

responsibility to show people that taxation is for the people. At the same time, the government has to provide the necessary equipment and experts to enable the ministry to do its job of collecting tax, she said.

“This meeting shows that everybody can propose or suggest what they think in reforming the taxation system,” she said.

U Zayya Kyi Nyunt, director of the Internal Revenue Department, said the department had already started reforming its taxation regime since April last year.

Before then, the department levied tax from people who earned as little as K30,000 a month, and levied taxes at rates between 5 percent and 30pc. But since April the department only draws taxes from people earning at least K100,000 a month, and taxes from 2 to 20pc, he said.

“We have reduced the tax rate and widened the tax base. But this is not fixed – we will adjust as the situation demands,” he said.

The department plans to implement a self assessment system, value-added tax or a goods and services tax instead of levying commercial tax, as per suggestions from international

financial institutions, he said.

U Zayya Kyi Nyunt said the department also plans to build a large tax office in April 2014, prepare a data centre to give taxpayers and identification number and train staff.

“When we go to self assessments it will be difficult to cover the whole country, so we will start with the large taxpayers,” he said.

U Myint Soe, chairman of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, said taxation needs to be easy to understand and clear.

“If citizens find it hard to follow the law, then the government needs to change it. I would like to suggest that taxpayers should be given ID numbers, which respects their dignity and helps the government to gather more revenue,” he said.

Dr Win Myint, secretary of the Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association, said some organisations remain untaxable – and some cronies shelter behind these bodies to avoid paying tax.

“I have heard that up to 80pc of people in the trading business don’t pay any tax – that’s a serious leakage of potential revenue.”

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE  
COMING TO MYANMAR SOON

A photograph of a white Range Rover Evoque parked in front of a modern building with large glass windows at night. A man in a dark coat is standing near the entrance of the building. The car is positioned in the foreground, angled slightly towards the right.

The Land Rover logo, consisting of a green oval with the words 'LAND ROVER' in white, and the tagline 'ABOVE AND BEYOND' in white text below it.



## Central Bank law to be delayed until June

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

MYANMAR'S Central Bank is soon to become autonomous. The law to change its status is likely to be adopted when parliament sits again in late June, observers say.

A draft Central Bank Law was approved by parliament in late March and passed to the President's Office. However, the President's Office returned the draft to parliament, where it will be resubmitted when parliament sits again.

Under the new law, the Ministry of Finance and Revenue will no longer control central bank policy. The Central Bank itself will set monetary policy, in collaboration with the ministry, which sets fiscal policy, said U Maung Maung Soe, secretary of the Hluttaw Banks and Monetary Development Committee.

According to the Central Bank's website, the main objective of monetary policy is to maintain macroeconomic stability in the economy while promoting domestic savings. The bank uses interest rate policy as its main monetary policy instrument, while reserve requirements and open market operations are

also used to a certain extent.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Ti Khun Myat, of Kut Kai constituency, said: "The law will help the bank make fast and independent decisions to handle the monetary market."

Representative U Win Oo, of Yebu constituency, said: "The Central Bank needs to be autonomous. It has to keep an eye on the country's economic situation on a daily basis and make rapid decisions."

The bank also has to be prepared to allow domestic banks to undertake more international banking services, he said, adding that the law could be updated over the next few years.

Daw Tin Nwe Oo, of the National Democratic Force, said: "The Central Bank needs monetary economists when it establishes monetary policy, but there are no experts who influence the monetary market in Myanmar."

"Nowhere else in the world does a military man serve as the chairman of a central bank. In order to be truly independent, the chairman should be qualified and experienced in international banking," she said.

• Related coverage P.17

## Huawei looks to earn faith of United States

SHENZHEN, China – Chinese tech giant Huawei said last week that it hoped to "solve the challenges and problems" it has in the United States after Washington labelled it a security threat last year.

Chief executive officer Guo Ping said the firm posed no risk to the United States, which in October said it and another Chinese telecoms firm, ZTE Corp., should be barred from contracts and acquisitions, adding it "cannot be trusted" to be free of influence from Beijing.

"Since we have never sold key equipment into the United States networks, there is no possibility for Huawei to pose a security threat to the United States," Guo told a news conference at its Shenzhen headquarters.

"There has never been any incident on our products threatening the cyber security of networks," he said, adding that Huawei products are used in more than 140 countries.

"I believe one day we could potentially solve the challenges and problems in the US," he said, adding that this could be achieved with "the spirit of sincerity, openness and transparency".

The United States' distrust of Huawei stems from what is seen as an increasingly assertive China that is pouring money into building up its military and, US defence officials have warned, its ability to potentially use high-tech means to disrupt US communications or information systems.

Huawei, founded by a People's Liberation Army engineer Ren Zhengfei in 1987, has denied any ties with the Chinese government and called the October congressional report "an exercise in China-bashing".

Ren, a secretive figure who declines media interviews, set up the firm with just a few thousand dollars and built it into a US\$32-billion business.

It has risen to become the world's second-largest provider of carrier network infrastructure after Sweden's Ericsson.

Guo comments came as the firm released its full-year earnings report, which showed it enjoyed a 32.76 percent rise in net profit to 15.4 billion yuan (\$2.5 billion) in 2012, while revenue grew 8pc to 220.2 billion yuan.

It also said it expects compound annual growth in revenue of 10pc over the next five years.

Ren's daughter Cathy Meng, who is Huawei's chief financial officer, told reporters at the news conference she was confident of the company's growth, attributing to its "deep inside understanding" of the industry.

Huawei saw a jump of 7.2pc in revenues in Asia-Pacific excluding China, a 4.3pc increase in the Americas and a growth of 6.1pc in Europe, Middle East and Africa.

China remained the company's biggest market, where it saw growth in revenue of 12.2pc to 73.6 billion yuan. – AFP



A man looks at notices pinned to a board outside the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration one-stop investment shop in Yankin township last week. Pic: Thiri Lu

## DICA opens one-stop shop

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

ONE-STOP service for investors has arrived. Investors who had to grapple with red tape in five or more separate ministries can now get everything done at the new Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

DICA opened on April 10 at 1 Thitsar Road, Yankin township, Yangon.

Representatives of the ministries of agriculture and irrigation, environmental conservation and forestry,

mines, industry, and fisheries and livestock will be available to discuss their various laws, rules and regulations.

"The process for Myanmar nationals and foreigners alike was rather complicated and required several documents. In liberalising investment policies, we are creating an investor-friendly environment," said U Aung Naing Oo, deputy director general of the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

"We addressed this situation when we drew up the rules and regulations for

foreign direct investment, and decided we needed a one-stop service," he said.

Investors also had to surmount hurdles in the form of the Directorate of Trade for trading services, the customs department for customs clearance, and immigration for visa extensions.

DICA will also spare Yangon-based investors the cost of travelling to Nay Pyi Taw, said U Aung Naing Oo.

According to its website, even before it opened DICA had already registered 69 companies and extended 39

more, starting last October.

"This is the first experience for us and for all ministries, so we will likely have weaknesses. I welcome suggestions from the media and the public," said U Aung Naing Oo.

He added that the establishment of DICA could help reduce corruption by cutting down on contacts between business people and bureaucrats in several different departments.

"Without direct contact, corruption will automatically reduce," he said.

## China's Xi says 'ultra-high speed' growth period probably over

BOAO, China – China's President Xi Jinping said on April 8 the days of "ultra-high speed" growth in the world's second-largest economy, which many hope can spur a global recovery, are probably over.

"I don't think we will be able to sustain an ultra-high speed of economic growth and it is not what we want either," Xi told about two dozen foreign business figures on the southern island of Hainan.

"Still it is possible for us to sustain a relatively high speed of economic growth," he added. "The Chinese economy is in good shape."

China has recorded annual average growth of 9.9 percent since the country began opening up its economy, he said, describing the feat as "rarely seen in the history of world economic development".

Factors such as urbanisation, continuing industrialisation and the modernisation of agriculture were cause for optimism regarding the future "upward trajectory" of the economy, he said.

But he did not elaborate on what his terms regarding growth rates meant in exact figures.

Xi became president last month after

ascending to the leadership of the ruling Communist Party in November. He was speaking at a meeting held as part of the Boao Forum for Asia, an annual gathering of political and economic leaders.

Beijing has been involved in a series of rows with the European Union and

**'I don't think we will be able to sustain ultra-high speed growth.'**

United States over issues ranging from trade disputes to cyberspying, and Californian technology giant Apple was recently repeatedly condemned in Chinese state media.

During the Boao event, Zein Abdalla, president of PepsiCo, told Xi of "rising concern" among foreign investors "about increasing restrictions on the types of investment we can make", citing agriculture in particular.

But Xi said China would "protect the lawful rights and interests of foreign-invested companies" and "ensure their rights to equal participation

in government procurement and independent innovation".

"China will never close its door to the outside world," he added. "Now that we have opened this door we will not close it, not for now and not in the future."

"China will keep its door open to foreign investors and likewise we also hope that foreign countries will further open the door to Chinese investors."

China's huge annual trade surpluses have seen it accumulate the world's largest foreign exchange reserves.

The economy grew at its slowest pace in 13 years in 2012, with gross domestic product expanding 7.8pc in the face of weakness at home and in key overseas markets. Its target for 2013 is 7.5pc, the same as last year's.

Xi said the figure was lower than in previous years, "partly due to our efforts to control the speed of economic growth and speed up the transformation of the growth model".

"We will shift the focus of economic development to quality and efficiency," he added.

China's leaders have repeatedly vowed to retool the economic model to emphasise consumer demand as the key growth driver rather than investment and exports. – AFP



# Leading local banks prepare for joint ventures

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

DOMESTIC banks are preparing for joint ventures with foreign lenders, several banks reported last week, even though they will not be allowed until the Central Bank of Myanmar is made independent.

A spokesperson at the deputy director general level of the Central Bank in Nay Pyi Taw said joint ventures would be allowed once the Central Bank Law was enacted by parliament and the bank is made autonomous. However, parliament will not sit again until late June. The spokesperson added that bank officials are already writing the rules and regulations for when the law, which was returned to parliament by the President's Office for review, is passed by parliament.

"Our rules and regulations need to protect domestic banks but at the same time we need to open up to international banking because our banking sector has been left behind for 50 years," he said. The Central Bank will approve foreign banks in four stages, he said: representative offices, joint ventures, subsidiaries and wholly owned branches.

The Foreign Investment Law enacted in November 2012 November – and later supplemented by rules and regulation – allows foreign companies in some sectors up to 80 percent.

"When the Central Bank approves joint ventures, the ownership ratio will be up to the companies to determine," the spokesperson said.

Cooperative Bank (CB) managing director U Pe Myint said some banks, mostly from Asia, have already approached CB to seek joint ventures in preparation for when they are allowed.

A spokesperson for Myanma Apex Bank's foreign banking department confirmed that the bank has also been approached by foreign partners interested in a tieup but added that no decisions had been made regarding partners as yet.

"The readiness for joint-venture banking and preparations will be subject to each bank's needs," he said.

Kanbawza Bank's vice chairman, U Than Lwin, said domestic banks must prepare to either cooperate or compete with foreign banks because foreign banks will be allowed into the market soon.

"Foreign banks entering Myanmar is not a shock. In the past few years we have seen an expansion in the number of banks and domestic banks will still be able to do some services, such as retail banking, even when foreign banks arrive," he said.

He added that while domestic banks cannot compete in terms of technology or capital, being able to offer services such as retail banking are methods that will allow them to survive. However, he said said the Central Bank should also relax some requirements, such as the amount of paid up capital required to open each new branch, to allow domestic banks to expand more quickly.

U Than Lwin said the leading banks have from 40 to 103 branches, while smaller domestic lenders have as few as two branches and cannot expand further because they lack the capital.

"But we want to have foreign banks working here too and can cooperate through joint ventures or partnerships, which can bring many benefits to both parties," he added.

There are 24 representative offices registered with the Central Bank, mostly from Southeast Asian nations but including Japan, South Korea and India.

Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency's commercial officer Ko Tun Tun said there are four South Korean banks with representative offices in Myanmar, adding that a fifth – Korea Exchange Bank – was likely to join soon.

"As far as I know, they will likely to come to Myanmar through a joint venture in 2014."

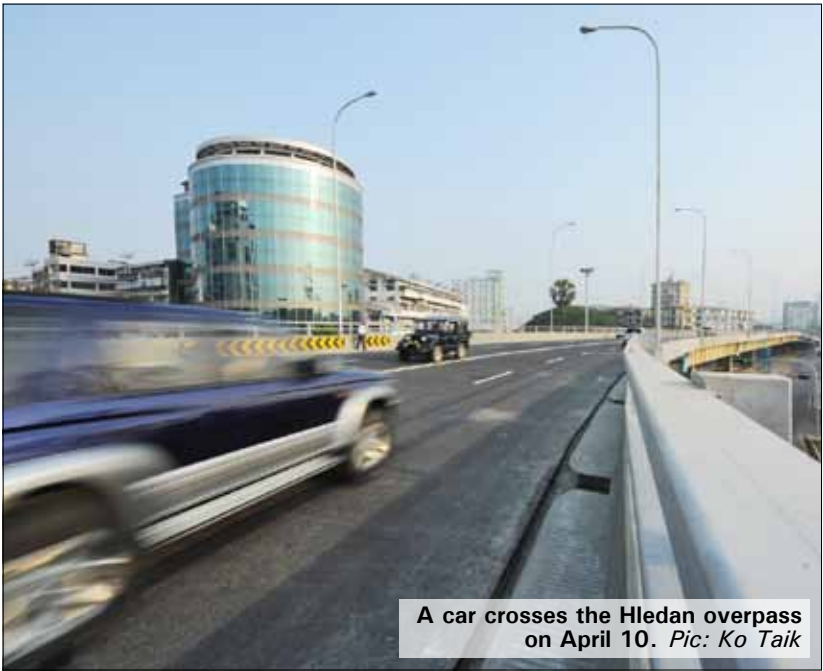
# After 13 months, Hledan overpass opens

By Htar Htar Khin

THE long wait is over, at least for drivers using one of Yangon's many bottleneck junctions. As of 6am on April 10, after a 13-month period of construction, constriction and congestion, the Hledan overpass finally opened to traffic.

In advance of the formal grand opening scheduled for the first week of May, the four-lane, 2507-foot-long overpass will carry up to 60 tonnes of vehicles throughout the day. It was built by the Shwe Taung Development company at a cost of K14.487 billion.

One down, two to go and more to come. While for drivers condemned to worm their way through the construction works for future flyovers at Bayintnaung Bridge and Shwegondaing junction the end is not yet in sight, the city plans at least two more major flyovers – at 8-mile junction in Mayangone township, and Myaynigone junction in Sanchaung township. Both projects are scheduled to start within the year, but no details are available yet.



A car crosses the Hledan overpass on April 10. Pic: Ko Taik

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**CORRECTION:**  
In our March 18 edition (Issue 670) we made an error in a report headlined "New energy policy: govt", where we misquoted Daw Sane Sane, the central executive member of the Renewable Energy Association Myanmar, as saying that the government should not decentralise power provision in off-grid areas.  
Daw Sane Sane said: "The government should assist off-grid areas using a decentralised system that will encourage independent power producers from private and civil society sectors to bring electricity to those areas. And state and non-state bodies should abide by the rules and regulations laid down by the government." We apologise for any confusion caused by this error.



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Competition in Mandalay's cement market is strong as the dry season, when most building work is done, comes to a close. In this picture construction workers in Yangon pour concrete at a site. Pic: Yadanar

## MDY's cement market heats up

By Khin Su Wai

THE annual building season in Mandalay may be slowing down as the monsoon approaches but the battle to be the nation's number one cement is heating up, with new brands challenging more established products in the fight for market share.

Established brands such as AAA, Tiger Head and Myanmar Elephant all made strong sales during the dry months when the building industry is busiest.

"We supply 8000 bags or 400 tonnes a day but it is not enough for the market," said U Khin Maung Soe, sales manager of Tiger Head cement. "We distribute for both retail and wholesale because we have not linked with any particular development projects like other cement companies - and sometimes we can't meet

demand. But customers tend to stick to a brand when they trust it," he said.

U Maung Maung Oo, an agent for Myanmar Elephant Cement, said the company built a new factory in December 2012 and saw a 25 percent increase in sales over the past 12 months. "We have seen a surge in demand," he said.

The national cement market has traditionally relied on imports but he said Mandalay's market had recently chosen domestically produced products, adding that brand loyalty is strong.

"Last year, a cement brand from Yangon entered the industrial zone where we are based but they closed up within a short period," U Maung Maung Oo said.

The wholesale price per bag for Myanmar Elephant is about K5200 and the retail price is

K5400. He added that Elephant brand cement from Thailand costs about K6400 a bag.

He added that demand for cement for the future looks strong because there are so many construction projects in the city.

Myanmar had just three or four cement factories before 1988 but there are now about 15 factories? which are collaboratively operated by the government and the private business sector. Most of the factories have the capacity to produce about 1000 tonnes a day.

In addition to domestic brands, foreign brands are imported from China or Thailand.

The most famous import brand is Elephant, some 1.9 million tonnes of which was imported last year, said the managing director of SCG Trading Company, which

produces Elephant Cement, Mr Soontornpol Veerapavati during a press event in Yangon last year. He added that the company expected to export more than 2 million tonnes of cement to Myanmar this year.

In addition to competition from Thailand, Mandalay's cement producers sometimes are challenged by Yangon cement makers. However, U Khin Maung Soe from Tiger Head cement said transportation costs are a major deterrent for cement makers from the south to enter into Mandalay market.

"Last year, we saw Green Dragon enter the market but now it has disappeared," he said.

Another new brand Ngweyi Pearl is also now available in the Mandalay market, and more are expected, he said.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe

## Farmers ask for early crop loans, delayed repayments

By Myat May Zin

RIGID lending practices are driving down produce prices and costing farmers money, they say. Both banks and informal lenders demand repayment of the money they lend to farmers in the country's major rice production areas immediately after the harvest, forcing farmers to go to market straight away at the same time instead of waiting until prices rise.

U Mya Kan, a farmer from western Bago Region, told *The Myanmar Times*: "Not only Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank, but also informal money agents demand

repayment of their loans at the same time after the harvest."

"That means all the farmers have to sell their produce at the same time and can't wait for a better price. And farmers have to borrow from informal moneylenders to plant paddy when the banks are late in coming through with loans in time for the next crop," he said.

Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank offers loans to farmers for three seasons, summer, rainy-season and winter crops. But they only lend to farmers who have already repaid the last loan. This drives farmers to borrow from moneylenders who charge higher interest, said farmers

from Bago and Ayeyarwady regions.

"Last year I borrowed money in late August, but I had to start preparing my fields in May for ploughing and sowing in June. I couldn't wait for the bank, and had to borrow from a moneylender at an interest rate of 20 percent. I managed to repay the loan from what Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank lent me in August, but I lost a lot in interest payments," said U Mya Kan.

U Thein Aung, secretary of Myanmar Farmers' Association, said loans provided by Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank covered less than half the total production cost.

"A farmer needs at least K200,000 an acre, but the bank offers only K80,000 an acre, rising this year to K100,000. Farmers never have time to rest. After they harvest the winter crop [usually pulses], they have to start preparing their land for planting rainy-season crops in May. If they can't borrow from the bank then, they face higher interest charges - as well as the risk of bad weather and natural disaster," he said.

U Tin Myo, who farms 15 acres in Danabyu township, said: "Normally farmers have to borrow K2 million from the informal sector. Some farmers are paying interest on every crop."

Earlier this year, the government announced plans for a land registration project that could lead to long-term loans becoming available to farmers during 2013.



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# Sawmills see reduction in pre-Thingyan timber sales

By San Yamin Aung

BUILDERS are using less wood from timber mills to construct Thingyan pandals and the trend is having a direct and negative effect on local timber suppliers and sellers, they say.

U Win Thein from the Kyantaingaug sawmill and trading company, said his sales have fallen by 50 percent year-on-year from 2012. He attributes the loss in revenue to construction companies using a combination of “rented” wood from their own suppliers to build pandals, rather than buying *Inkanyin* wood from sawmills, traditionally the wood of choice for pandal builders.

“There is usually an increase in the sale of *Inkanyin* for construction, but there has been no upswing this year,” said the owner of a timber shop in South Okkalapa township.

“Most are hiring wood and iron from the construction sites ... instead of buying

Workers build a stage in front of City Hall for Thingyan festivities last week. Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing



wood,” he said.

Another owner of a sawmill and timber shop in Dagon township said the use of iron posts in large-

and medium-sized pandal construction has also become more popular. As a result, he said, builders are mixing materials and

using less wood.

“Starting from last year, pandal construction with iron posts has led to diminishing timber

sales,” he said. “The sale of *Inkanyin* reached a peak in 2009 and 2010 but has fallen steadily since.”

Cost may be another

reason for the decline in sales: *Inkanyin* sells for between K580,000 (US\$670) and K600,000 (\$700) a tonne, he said. A large pandal requires up to 30 tonnes, say builders.

To make up for the cost of construction, pandal builders often charge contractors an extra fee for the cost of the timber.

Ko Khin Mg Lwin, from Min Shwe Sin construction, said his company mostly uses wood to build pandals, but when there is a need to reinforce the strength of the pandals, they mix materials. Using only steel is also expensive, he said.

To save additional money, most construction companies are renting timber from suppliers and then selling it back to shops after Thingyan if the wood is not too badly damaged.

“If we use 10 tonnes, we can only sell back about 7 tonnes because the rest is too badly damaged,” a pandal constructor said.

Builders say each pandal costs about K10 million (\$11,500) to construct.

# Palaung group calls for pipeline halt

By Soe Sandar Oo

REPRESENTATIVES of the Palaung ethnic group in Shan State have asked the government to halt work on the Myanmar-China oil and gas pipeline project, which they say is negatively affecting their communities.

The pipeline is being built by South-East Asia Pipeline Company, which is 50.9 percent owned by an affiliate of China National Petroleum Corporation. The pipeline crosses more than 793 kilometres of land within Myanmar’s borders. Work on the project started in September 2011.

Activists made the call at a press conference at Yangon’s Royal Rose restaurant on April 9.

Ma Lay Kwal, a Palaung (also Ta’aung) said communities had seen no benefits since the project started in 2010 but more than

550 households, in 51 townships, have had their land confiscated. She said that although many have received compensation for the land, the amount paid was inadequate or not paid in full.

“The compensation is supposed to be about K600,000 an acre but only 30 percent of the Ta’aung communities received the full amount,” she said. “Some were paid K300,000 and others in far-flung townships were paid as little as K20,000-30,000 an acre,” she said.

A report prepared by the Ta’aung Students and Youth Organisation in November 2012 and titled “Pipeline Nightmare” said the increased military presence in the area to provide security for the pipeline had severely affected Ta’aung people, especially women. The report noted increased drug use in the area since the arrival of large

numbers of Chinese construction workers.

The construction workers were accompanied by 26 new military patrols, with 10 or 12 soldiers each.

Ma Lay Kwal added that the Chinese workers were aggressive in their interactions with local women.

“We are not used to being teased by men or having them grab us by the hand, which is what has happened a lot. Young Ta’aung women get very upset by this kind of bad behaviour,” she said.

The Shwe Gas Pipeline is a large-scale energy infrastructure project that will result in the laying of two pipelines between Kyaukpyu in Rakhine State to Ruili in China’s Yunnan Province. The pipelines will carry crude oil and natural gas, helping China to cut out the slow Malacca Strait in

shipping oil from the Middle East.

Ko Mine Myo Aung, a member of the Ta’aung Students and Youth Organisation, said the added security was a serious infringement on the freedom of Ta’aung people to move.

“There are about 19 checkpoints between Nantun and Maimaw township in northern Shan State,” he said. “We have to report on this issue now or the pipeline’s operators will not respect our people in the future. Political parties and other organisations are ready to cooperate with us but they cannot get beyond the edge of town,” he said.

Ko O’ Lar, a member of the Myanma-China Pipeline Watch Committee, which was organised in 2011, said he feared the risk of armed conflict along the route of the pipeline.

“I’m really worried about what will happen if there is

conflict between ethnic groups and the government near the pipeline – and I want to know how government will solve that kind of problem,” he said.

He added that he was also worried the Chinese military would step in to protect the pipeline.

The pipeline’s operator, China National Petroleum Company (CNPC), told Palaung representatives that they would bring experts and technicians to the area, and solve problems with ethnic groups.

But Ko O’ Lar said the visits had never happened.

He added that an explosion near Kyaukme during pressure tests in November last year had made residents nervous.

“This pipeline will cross through the middle of Myanmar – and any explosions would not be good for the country’s image.”

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## Hong Kong's small businesses vanishing with soari

By Kelvin Wong

**H**ONG KONG – Over the past decade, car-repair shop owner Benny Chan has seen more than 70 percent of his small-business peers disappear as his Hong Kong neighbourhood fills up with high-end Western bars and Japanese restaurants.

"Rents here are going up multiple times," said Chan, who's been in business since 1985 in the Tai Hang area, just east of the ritzy Causeway Bay shopping district. "We'll all be out of here in the next four to five years."

Rents are climbing in neighbourhoods near Causeway Bay and Hong Kong's other prime shopping districts, known for luxury stores that attract free-spending tourists from mainland China. That is squeezing out mom-and-pop shops, congee and noodle vendors and other small businesses like Chan's as developers and landlords seek to profit from the trend.

"There's only a limited supply of good spots and the rents are super high" in major shopping districts, Joe Lin, Hong Kong-based senior director for retail services at CBRE Group Inc, said in an interview. "It's natural that restaurants and some retailers would find these fringe areas with an equally hip, high-spending crowd more attractive."

Shops in Causeway Bay fetch an average US\$2630 (HK\$20,417) a square foot a year, the highest in the world, according to a November report by broker Cushman & Wakefield. For a 500-square-foot (46-square-metre) shop, that is an annual rent of \$1.32 million. Across the harbour in Tsim Sha Tsui, retailers including Dolce & Gabbana and Chanel pay \$1547 a square foot annually. Retail rents in the Central business district, where banks including Goldman Sachs and UBS AG have offices, are \$1856 a year.

Developers are taking advantage of the opportunity. Soundwill Holdings, a mid-size local builder, last year completed a 163-unit apartment building in Tai Hang and has begun work on another. A block away, the

company has plans for a 65,000-square-foot project with Henderson Land Development, controlled by billionaire Lee Shau-kee.

"It's only a 15-minute walk from the world's most expensive shopping location," Soundwill executive director Dickson Lau, referring to Tai Hang's proximity to Causeway Bay, said in an interview at the 37-storey tower. "With all the new restaurants and apartments, there'll be a huge upgrade in the standard of living in this area."

Shares of Soundwill, which owns 20,000 square feet of retail space on Causeway Bay's Russell Street, have risen almost 11-fold since early 2009, after profit tripled in the period. Lau said the group expects rental income to double this year from 2012.

To the west of Hong Kong's Central business district, in the historic areas of Sheung Wan, Sai Ying Pun and Kennedy Town, mom-and-pop shops also are being pushed.

"To open here is risky, but so far we're doing good," said Jerome Spitzer, whose Metropolitan restaurant in Sai Ying Pun replaced a neighbourhood grocery in March, adding to his three French restaurants in Central. Serving Nicoise salads and *tarte tatin*, the restaurant's facade resembles the Art Nouveau metro station entrances of Paris.

"Business is good if you're already an existing operator in Central," said Spitzer, whose French Creations group also runs a fifth restaurant in Happy Valley near Causeway Bay. "But to open another new one there – the rent is just crazy."

Monthly rents for ground-level shops in the up-and-coming fringe areas have risen "multiple times" in the past five years to about HK\$40 to HK\$60 a square foot, according to Helen Mak, Hong Kong's head of retail services at broker Colliers International.

Still, at upwards of HK\$720 a year a square foot, they remain well below those in top shopping districts such as Causeway Bay, she said.

Tina Sin, a flower seller in her 60s who operated a shop in Tai Hang for almost 30 years, was evicted three



Pedestrians walk outside Times Square shopping mall in the Causeway Bay district of Hong Kong in November. Rising rents in such areas are squeezing out mom-and-pop stores and other small businesses as developers and landlords seek to profit from the trend. Pic: Bloomberg News

months ago after both adjacent stores gave way to a sushi restaurant and a bar. She found another spot in the area – a 50-square-foot stand with no cover that is about half the size of her original business – at the same rent.

"The new landlord is an old neighbour who's

an automobile-repair shop on the same street as Sin's old florist spot, moved his business to Sai Wan Ho, near the eastern end of Hong Kong Island, when his landlord doubled the rent to HK\$30,000 a month in 2011.

"There wasn't even room for negotiation," said

a square foot, while the site was acquired at about HK\$8000 a square foot.

Many properties that aren't bought by developers are owned by private investors who made their fortunes elsewhere, such as in the manufacturing boom in the 1970s, the stock market rally in the

city's busiest shopping areas to slow for a second straight year in 2013 as mainland Chinese tourists cut spending on luxury goods and the global economic outlook remains uncertain.

Average prime shop rents in Hong Kong may rise 8pc this year, down from growth of 9pc a year earlier and 27pc in 2011, said Los Angeles-based CBRE, the world's biggest

commercial realtor. New York-based Cushman sees rents gaining about 5pc this year, according to Michelle Woo, Hong Kong-based senior director of retail transaction services.

"The drop in luxury and big-ticket purchases has impacted overall retail sales," said Woo. "We're seeing a pullback in the expansion of this sector in the second half because of the slight shift in shoppers' spending patterns."

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who took over last month, has vowed to crack down on extravagant spending by officials in a bid to show his government's commitment to rooting out corruption, a declaration that could deter mainlanders shopping for gifts in Hong Kong.

Still, analysts are predicting retail will beat

trying to look out for the community," said Sin. "But he also told us that when someone comes in with a good offer for the building, he'll sell it, and that'll be the end for us."

Others were not as lucky. Chung Wing-Ho, who ran

Chung. "To double the rent basically means asking us to leave. The margin for our business isn't very high to begin with."

Henderson Land, Kerry Properties and New World Development are among the companies with projects in the Sai Ying Pun area. Kerry in 2010 completed Island Crest, a 488-unit luxury and retail development on a site it bought from a government agency that spent years buying out owners of 30 dilapidated residential buildings, some constructed more than half a century earlier.

New World, controlled by billionaire Cheng Yu-tung, will this year begin selling a nearby residential project with about 100 units. The company said last year it expects to market the project at about HK\$14,000

1980s and the real estate surge during the past few years, according to Stanley Poon, chief operating officer at the commercial-property arm of Centaline Property Agency, the city's biggest closely held realtor.

Simon Wong, whose family owns two six-storey residential walk-up buildings more than 40 years old in the Sheung Wan district, last year replaced a grocery-selling tenant on the ground floor with a wine retailer, doubling the rent.

"It's just evolution," said Wong, 29, who helps manage a trading business his grandfather founded almost 40 years ago. "It's sad for the old tenant, but we have hardly raised the rent in the past. We're just catching up to the trend."

Real estate brokers are expecting rental growth in

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residential and office as the best-performing Hong Kong property market this year, amid government curbs on home prices and a shrinking financial-services industry that's damping demand for prime office space.

Shares of landlords with large shopping-mall portfolios, including Wharf Holdings and Hysan Development, will probably outperform those of residential developers such as Sun Hung Kai Properties and Hongkong Land Holdings, the biggest office landlord in Central, said BNP Paribas SA analyst Lee Wee Liat.

Even so, not all retail properties would fare equally well. Some luxury-brand shops are beginning to move from street level into less-expensive shopping malls as rents rise.

"There'll be a retail migration to the second-best space," said Lee, who estimates current mall rents to be about a third of street-level rents in the same area. "There needs to be a narrowing in the gap between the two, and this will be good for the landlords."

Hong Kong is now the most expensive place to buy a home among major global cities, after prices more than doubled in the past

four years, according to Savills. That has prompted government measures seeking to curb a property bubble.

The value of retail shop-ownership transactions rose 78pc to HK\$85 billion last year from 2011, extending a record, according to Centaline, which began collecting data in 1996.

While a retail boom and government curbs on the home market have shifted individual investors' attention toward shops in busy areas such as Causeway Bay over the past three years, those funds are now starting to move into the fringe areas, according to Centaline's Poon.

"So many individual investors have gone into these older areas to look for what they think are bargains, and that pushes up the prices a lot," he said. "And, of course, after paying higher prices, they have to raise the rents."

That means the transformation of the fringe areas will continue to accelerate.

"Tai Hang used to be mostly just neighbourhood eateries and craft shops," said Chan of Benny Motors. "There's no way we can afford to stay here now that there are all these high-end restaurants."

— Bloomberg News

# Naing Group to renovate Blazon into showcase office

By Htar Htar Khin

NAING Group has started renovating four floors of the former Blazon department store on U Wisara Road in Kamaryut township, an executive director with the company said last week.

U Htet Naing Oo, executive director of Naing Group's property development wing, said the company will use the site as a one-stop property development office. He said the renovation is expected to be finished by the middle of the year.

"The former Blazon department store occupied four floors and the other 10 floors are residential apartments," he said. "Naing Group took over the four floors from Creation Myanmar Company, which previously operated Blazon Department Store. We're hopeful the renovation will be completed by June," he added.

U Htet Naing Oo said the ground floor will showcase Naing Group's high-end projects and models of Yangon's landmarks; the second floor will have layouts of different interiors; and the upper two floors will be used to host seminars, meeting rooms, the executive director's office and Naing Group's board of directors.

He added that the lower floors should be completed in May, with the upper floors to follow later.

He said the renovations are being done with guidance from Singaporean designers and will resemble the Urban Redevelopment Authority



Naing Group's new showcase and office at the site of the former Blazon Department store on U Wisara Road. Pic: Thiri Lu

showcase in that nation. "We've been working with interior designer Mr Keen and the plan is to make it similar to Singapore's URA," he said.

"We want to showcase all of the company's big development projects in Yangon, as well as the landmarks of Yangon. But it is also the company's office," U Htet Naing Oo said.

He said the company needed the site because its former office was too small, adding that the Blazon building will be more convenient for clients.

"Our former showroom on Bo Yar Nyunt Street in Dagon township was too small and had limited parking. The new office has at least 20 parking spaces," he said.

"What we want to reflect here is the condo lifestyle that you can see in Singapore as well as the small office, home office ideas that we want to introduce to our customers," he added.

U Htet Naing Oo would not disclose the cost of renovating the site nor how much Naing Group had paid Creation Myanmar to secure the rights.

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For ACCOR

Dated: 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013.



## India using drones to fight rhino poachers

GUWAHATI, India – India said last week it is deploying drones over a reserve to safeguard the rare one-horned rhino from poachers, the first time the country has employed aerial technology to protect wildlife.

The unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) gives patrols a new strategic advantage with an eye in the sky, allowing access into previously unreachable areas and a safe view of illegal activities on the ground.

“This is the first time in India that the UAV technology is being used for protecting the wildlife,” Assam forest minister Rockybul Hussain told reporters in the state’s main city of Guwahati on April 8.

“The presence of the UAVs will also serve as a deterrent to poachers since they now know the parks are being monitored both on the ground and from above.”

The drones are being flown over the Kaziranga National

Park, 200 kilometres (120 miles) from Guwahati, in the northeast of the country, park officials said.

The UAVs are light enough to be launched by hand, taking images of the ground below with a still or video camera.

Kaziranga has been fighting a long battle against rhino poachers who kill the animals for their horns, which fetch huge prices in some Asian countries.

At least 21 rhinos were killed last year by poachers in Kaziranga while another 15 have been reported dead this year.

A 2012 census in the park put the number of the rhinos at 2290 out of a global one-horned rhinoceros population of 3300.

Park warden N. K. Vasu hailed the maiden flight of the drones as an important milestone in the fight against rhino poaching.

“We hope this new technology will go a long way in effective surveillance of the park,” he said. – AFP



Adelie penguins in Commonwealth Bay, Antarctica, in a file photo taken on January 16, 2012. Telemedicine is enabling medical specialists in Texas to treat patients at the research stations operated by the United States thousands of kilometres away in Antarctica. Pic: EPA

## Telemedicine’s long reach, from Texas to Antarctica

By Sarah Halzack

WASHINGTON – When the doctors at University of Texas Medical Branch are reading an ultrasound, examining an X-ray or evaluating an echocardiogram, the patient they are treating is not necessarily right in front of them.

Instead, the patient is often in one of the farthest-flung corners of the Earth: a scientific research station in Antarctica.

Using telemedicine, Galveston, Texas-based physicians provide treatment to scientists and support staff who would otherwise have access to only basic medical care. With the help of videoconference technology and specially designed medical instruments, doctors can diagnose heart attacks, inspect a lesion or even provide psychiatric counselling to National Science Foundation workers from thousands of kilometres (miles) away.

“We can really be virtually looking over their shoulder,” said Scott Parazynski, director of UTMB’s Center for Polar Medical Operations.

Although telemedicine has been practised for decades, a burst of innovation in recent years has greatly improved its quality: Higher video and image resolution help lead to more accurate diagnoses, while more efficient use of bandwidth has led to more reliable connections. And the increased adoption of electronic medical records allows documentation to be shared more easily and quickly.

The way that telemedicine technology is being applied in Antarctica offers a window into its potential to reshape health care in less remote parts of the world.

The capabilities of the health facilities at

the United States’ three Antarctic research stations are limited.

“They can treat most primary care issues and some emergencies, at least in terms of initial stabilisation,” said Michael Montopoli, the chief medical officer at NSF’s division of polar programs.

But they are not equipped to give CT scans or MRIs, nor do they have a surgical centre or postoperative facilities.

Telemedicine can help fill the gaps. A secure video conference can allow a specialist to talk to the patient and on-site caregiver to assess symptoms. The same technology can also be used to have a specialist coach an on-site specialist through a highly skilled procedure such as an echocardiogram.

**‘We can really be virtually looking over their shoulder.’**

A new array of tools can also help the remote doctor work as if she is in the exam room. Stethoscopes equipped with microphones enable a far-away doctor to instantly hear a patient’s heart or lungs. Special ophthalmoscopes, which come with a light source and a camera, allow the doctor to see inside a patient’s eye in real time.

Polycom, the maker of the telemedicine products used by UTMB and NSF, has made this set of equipment fit inside a case small enough that it could be stowed in an overhead bin on an airplane.

Telemedicine capabilities have been influential in how NSF health centres deliver care.

“It’s allowed us to make critical decisions about either treating the patient there at the clinic or launching

a medevac operation,” Montopoli said.

The difference between those two courses can be important, not only for a patient’s health but also for a client’s bottom line.

Leaving Antarctica can be an outright odyssey: Flights are limited because it is often so cold that airplanes cannot function. In winter, the surface of the ice runway at McMurdo Station requires special preparation to accept aircraft.

And those are just the obstacles to departing a coastal facility. Travel out of the inland South Pole station is sometimes nearly impossible.

Accordingly, Montopoli said a medical evacuation from Antarctica can cost “several hundred thousand dollars.”

In America’s rural areas, it can often be difficult for residents to get access to medical specialists. As the Affordable Care Act extends health insurance to millions of Americans who previously did not have it, experts say that shortage is likely to be felt even more acutely.

Polycom and UTMB say telemedicine could help meet the swell in demand.

“The financial incentive is going to be there,” Parazynski said, for his hospital and other health providers to increase their telemedicine offerings.

In fact, UTMB pediatricians already use telemedicine technology to serve children in rural areas.

Oliver Black, systems analyst services manager at UTMB, said telemedicine could also be used in the future to monitor patients with chronic conditions in their homes.

Still, there are obstacles to more widespread use of telemedicine. A telemedicine consultation is not typically billable in the same way an office visit would be, which can create difficulties for doctors wishing to practice this way.

And there are some aspects of an in-person doctor-patient interaction that telemedicine can not quite replicate.

“You’re relying on the person on the scene to pick up on the subtle changes in facial expression,” Parazynski said. “And you miss out on touch.”

Technologists and practitioners say they still see room for innovation that would also further telemedicine’s reach. Advancements in surgical robotics, for example, could make it possible for operations to be done from afar, rather than just consultations and examinations.

– The Washington Post

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# Crisis deepens on Korean peninsula

SEOUL – The United States has warned North Korea it is skating a “dangerous line” with an expected missile launch that could start a new cycle of escalating tensions in a region already on a hair-trigger.

South Korean and US forces remained on heightened alert on April 11 with both experts and officials suggesting a launch was likely in the build-up to April 15 birthday celebrations for the North’s late founder Kim Il-Sung.

“North Korea... with its bellicose rhetoric, its actions, has been skating very close to a dangerous line,” US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel said on April 10.

“Our country is fully prepared to deal with any contingency, any action that North Korea may take or any provocation that they may instigate,” Hagel added.

South Korean intelligence says the North has prepared two mid-range missiles for imminent launch from its east coast, despite warnings from ally China to avoid provocative moves at a time of soaring military tensions.

The South Korea-US Combined Forces Command has raised its “Watchcon” status from 3 to 2 to reflect indications of a “vital threat”, while the South’s national police force has also been placed on heightened terror alert.



North Korean artists performing at a theatre in Pyongyang on April 9 during events celebrating the anniversary that day of late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il succeeding his father and North Korean founder Kim Il-sung as the nation’s leader in 1994. Pic: EPA/KCNA

launches, involving shorter-range SCUD and Rodong missiles.

The crisis on the Korean peninsula has intensified almost

Incensed by South Korean-US military exercises, Pyongyang has accused Washington and Seoul of preparing an invasion

in Pyongyang on April 5 they had until April 10 to consider evacuation and followed that with a similar warning to foreigners in

in North Korea saw no need to leave, and added that it saw no risk to EU citizens in the South.

Although those warnings were largely shrugged off, there is growing global concern that sky-high tensions might trigger an incident that could swiftly escalate.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned against escalating the crisis and stressed that Moscow and Washington were cooperating closely.

“On North Korea we have no differences with the United States,” Lavrov told journalists after meeting US counterpart John Kerry on the sidelines of a G8 foreign minister’s meeting in London on April 10.

“One just shouldn’t scare anyone with military manoeuvres and there’s a chance that everything will calm down,” Lavrov said.

The mid-range missiles mobilised by the North are reported to be untested Musudan models with an estimated range of up to 4000 kilometres (2,485 miles).

That would cover any target in South Korea and Japan, and possibly even US military bases on the Pacific island of Guam.

Japan, whose armed forces have been authorised to shoot down any North Korean missile headed towards its territory, has deployed Patriot missiles in its capital as a pre-emptive defence measure. – *AFP*

‘North Korea... with its bellicose rhetoric, its actions, has been skating very close to a dangerous line.’

Some media reports have quoted Seoul government and military sources as saying Pyongyang might be preparing “multiple

daily since the North carried out its third nuclear test in February and was promptly slapped with toughened UN sanctions.

and threatened dire retaliation ranging from artillery barrages to nuclear strikes.

The North told foreign diplomats

South Korea to get out ahead of a possible “thermo-nuclear” war.

The European Union said the seven EU countries with embassies

headed towards its territory, has deployed Patriot missiles in its capital as a pre-emptive defence measure. – *AFP*

## Syrian rebels in new weapons plea

LONDON – US Secretary of State John Kerry and other G8 foreign ministers were on April 11 meeting for a second day of talks in London focused on Syria after rebels again appealed for weapons.

The ministers began their talks on April 10, soon after Syrian opposition leaders met Kerry about their repeated calls for arms to fight the Syrian regime forces.

The talks on April 10 with members of the opposition Syrian National Coalition included its prime minister Ghassan Hitto.

The United States said it was mulling ways to step up help for Syria’s rebels. Kerry held talks with

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in a bid to find common ground with a key ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on ending the conflict.

However, overshadowing the discussions was a statement on April 10 by the head of Syria’s jihadist Al-Nusra Front pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, which raised Western doubts about arming the rebels.

A top State Department official confirmed that, during a lunch hosted by British Foreign Secretary William Hague, the Syrian opposition leaders renewed appeals for lethal aid but Kerry “didn’t promise anything”.

Hague later called the talks “very productive” and stressed the Syrian coalition’s executive arm “will have a vital role to play in delivering governance, services and support to the Syrian people”.

The US and EU are providing non-lethal aid such as communications equipment and are beginning to distribute food and medical supplies to the Free Syrian Army, but have stopped short of providing weaponry.

The announcement by the Al-Nusra front is likely to bolster assertions by Assad’s regime that it is fighting “terrorists” who want to impose an Islamic state.

The April 10 talks had focused on ways of changing Assad’s calculations about the outcome of the conflict which is in its third year and has cost some 70,000 lives.

“We need to have this continuing conversation which is why we are going back to Istanbul,” a US official said, referring to Kerry’s plans to attend a Friends of Syria meeting on April 20 in the Turkish city.

The Group of Eight rich nations are Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States. Britain, which holds the rotating chairmanship of the group this year, will host a leaders’ summit in Northern Ireland in June. – *AFP*

## Malawi issues scathing attack on Madonna

BLANTYRE, Malawi – Malawi has launched a stinging attack on US pop icon Madonna, 54, accusing her of expecting “gratitude” and VIP treatment during a visit earlier this month to her charity projects in the southern African country.

It was “strange and depressing” that the singer seemed to want “Malawi to be forever chained to the obligation of gratitude” for having adopted two Malawian children, said President Joyce Banda’s government on April 1.

“Kindness, as far as its ordinary meaning is concerned, is free and anonymous,” it added in a four-page statement. “If it can’t be free and silent, it is not kindness; it is something else. Blackmail is the closest it becomes.”

For the first time, the superstar was

denied use of the VIP section at the airport on the trip and had to use the ordinary passenger section.

She was visiting schools her charity has built in central Malawi with her four children, including Malawian-born David Banda and Mercy James.

Madonna’s fame did not mean she had to be given “state treatment”, and

‘Kindness... is free and anonymous.’

she was “like any other visitor” not on an official invitation, said the highly critical statement.

Referring to Madonna’s charity work, the government said she urgently needed to learn “the decency of telling the truth”.

“For her to tell the whole world that

she is building schools in Malawi when she has actually only contributed to the construction of classrooms is not compatible with manners of someone who thinks she deserves to be revered with state grandeur,” it said.

“The difference between a school and a classroom should be the most obvious thing for a person demanding state courtesy to decipher.”

Madonna two years ago abandoned a US\$15 million girls’ academy, saying she would instead build community schools to accommodate more students.

The star’s philanthropy manager Trevor Neilson said he was a “bit surprised” by the criticism.

“We will continue to fund programs that support children in Malawi, a country where millions of children suffer every day,” he added. – *AFP*

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## Climate researchers issue prediction for bumpier flights

PARIS – Flights will become bumpier as global warming destabilises air currents at altitudes used by commercial airliners, climate scientists warned last week.

Already, atmospheric turbulence injures hundreds of airline passengers each year, sometimes fatally, damaging aircraft and costing the industry an estimated US\$150 million, scientists said.

"Climate change is not just warming the Earth's surface, it is also changing the atmospheric winds 10 kilometres (six miles) high, where planes fly," said study co-author Paul Williams of the University of Reading's National Centre for Atmospheric Science in southeastern England.

"That is making the atmosphere more vulnerable to the instability that creates clear-air turbulence," he told AFP by email on April 8.

"Our research suggests that we'll be seeing the 'fasten seatbelts' sign turned on more often in the decades ahead."

Turbulence is mainly caused by vertical airflow – up-draughts and down-draughts near clouds and thunderstorms.

Clear-air turbulence, which is not visible to the naked eye and cannot be detected by satellite or traditional radar, is linked to atmospheric jet streams, which are projected to strengthen with climate change.

The study authors used supercomputer simulations

of the North Atlantic jet stream, a strong upper-atmospheric wind driven by temperature differences between colliding Arctic and tropical air.

The jet stream affects traffic in the aviation corridor between Europe and North America – one of the world's busiest with about 300 eastbound and westbound flights a day.

They found that a doubling of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere from pre-industrial levels, predicted within 40 years, would cause turbulence to be 10-40 percent more forceful at typical cruise altitudes.

"Turbulence strong enough to make walking difficult and to dislodge unsecured objects is likely to become twice as common in transatlantic airspace by the middle of this century," said Williams.

"As well as making flights bumpier and less comfortable, this could also increase the risk of injury to passengers and crew" – especially in winter when Northern Hemisphere clear-air turbulence is thought to be most intense.

The study, published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, said planes already spent about one percent of their cruise time in strong clear-air turbulence.

Frequent flyers have reported bumpiness to be on the rise, but this is the first study to actually measure the projected impact of climate change, said the authors. – AFP

## Immersion language teaching celebrates success in the US

VENICE, California – Susan Wang couldn't speak English when she arrived in California from Taiwan, aged 16.

Now 49, she heads a school offering US children a similar experience, plunging them into a Chinese world.

And her school is part of a rapid expansion of "immersion" Mandarin language programs in the United States, helped notably by Beijing providing low-cost native-speaker teachers to cash-strapped US educational institutions.

Pupils as young as five at her Broadway Elementary School in Venice, west of Los Angeles, take classes entirely in Chinese, in a project so successful that it is moving to a new campus.

"The single most exciting thing has to be watching the kids learn and how they learn, and how fast they pick up another language, it's just amazing," she told AFP.

"I didn't speak English when I came, so when it comes to dual language and language learning ... it's something close to my heart," she added.

Chinese immersion programs are not new in American schools. But China's rapidly expanding world role has fueled growing demand for Mandarin language skills, mirroring Washington's diplomatic pivot across the Pacific.

Mandarin teaching has expanded nationwide during the last decade, in



A student reads a book in Chinese at Broadway Elementary School in Venice, California. China's expanding world role has fuelled demand for Mandarin language skills in the US. Pic: AFP

contrast to other foreign languages which have steadily decreased, shows data compiled by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL).

"Mandarin is really taking off ... Chinese was one of the few languages that increased, most other language offerings decreased, including French, German, and Japanese," Nancy Rhodes of Washington-based CAL told AFP.

Beijing's education ministry is also helping, by sending native-speaker teachers effectively for free to work in US schools.

"Schools are of course experiencing huge budget cuts, so the offer of free or low cost native-speaker teachers from China to

teach language classes really looks good," said Rhodes.

California has been in the forefront, both geographically and historically, ever since huge numbers of Chinese workers helped build the US railroad system. San Francisco and Los Angeles have the biggest Chinese communities in the US after New York.

Traditionally, families with one or both parents from Chinese backgrounds have put children into Mandarin-language schools to bolster their cultural "heritage" or ability to communicate with grandparents back home.

But increasingly parents cite economic and career-prospect reasons for having their offspring able to speak Chinese.

"I wanted them to have the opportunity to be able to leave the US if they wished to go and seek employment somewhere else," said Julie Wang, an Australian who came to the United States when she was 25.

"I did that myself ... I came out here. I think it's a great opportunity for them

to experience different cultures, different ways of life, not just the one that they grew up in," she added.

In the classroom at Broadway, the linguistic immersion is total. The walls are plastered with pictures and signs entirely in Chinese, the text books are in Mandarin, and the teacher will not accept a word of English.

While some children have a Chinese parent or grandparents, the eager faces around the room are from all backgrounds, from African American and white Caucasian to Latino youngsters.

Many don't speak a word of Mandarin when they arrive. "At the beginning it is difficult," said kindergarten teacher Carol Chan, adding at first she has to use a lot of gestures, visual aids – and a lot of games.

"I use a lot of pictures and ... a lot of music. It is difficult because they don't understand a word I'm saying. But through physical language and gestures, they really catch on. And they're having fun with me too!" – AFP

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Briefs

France assets order

PARIS – France’s Social-ist government said on April 8 it had ordered ministers to declare their assets publicly within days, as it seeks to limit the damage from a tax fraud scandal involving former budget minister Jerome Cahuzac

Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault announced that ministers would have until April 15 to publish details of their assets as part of a package of new financial transparency mea-sures.

Cahuzac has been charged with tax fraud af-ter admitting to having an undeclared foreign bank ac-count.

Manning case ruling

Fort Meade, Maryland – The US government must prove that army private Bradley Manning know-ingly helped al-Qaeda and oth-er American foes by hand-ing over secret documents to WikiLeaks, a judge ruled on April 10.

The order by Judge De-nise Lind at a preliminary hearing makes it more dif-ficult to convict Manning of “aiding the enemy,” the most serious charge he fa-ces.

Manning has denied aid-ing the enemy, which would carry a life sentence.

Complaints dropped

CAIRO – Egyptian Presi-dent Mohamed Morsi has ordered the withdrawal of complaints filed against journalists for publishing rumours about him, said a statement posted on the presidency’s Twitter ac-count on April 10.

During his campaign for the presidency last year, Morsi committed himself to guaranteeing media freedoms, promising not to “prevent anyone from writ-ing”. – AFP

Church head slams Morsi over clashes

CAIRO – Egypt’s Pope Tawadros II accused President Mohamed Morsi of “negligence” over his response to deadly clashes last week outside Cairo’s Coptic cathedral, the worst sectarian crisis since the Islamist took power in June.

Morsi telephoned Tawadros after the violence on April 7, which saw crowds pelt mourners with stones after they emerged from a funeral service for slain Copts.

Shocking television images showed police fire tear gas at St Mark’s Cathedral – symbol of the Coptic community, which has long complained of discrimination and been the target of frequent attacks by Muslims.

Morsi “promised to do everything to protect the cathedral but in reality we don’t see this,” Tawadros told the private ONTV channel in a call-in on April 9.

When asked why, Tawadros said he believed “it comes under the category of negligence and poor assessment of events.”

Two people died in the April 7 clashes, which erupted after the funeral service of four Christians killed in a gunbattle with Muslims in a town north of Cairo in which one Muslim also died.

Tawadros said the church had never in its history witnessed such an attack.

“This flagrant assault on a national symbol, the Egyptian church, has never been subjected to this in 2000 years,” Tawadros said.

He called on authorities to take a strong position against such kinds of attacks.

“There has to be a clear stance from the state... because matters now have crossed the limits of freedom of expression and have reached a level of chaos,” he said.

After the attack, Morsi said: “I consider any attack on the cathedral an attack against myself,” and proposed to revive the defunct Justice and Equality Committee, which was established to look at promoting citizenship and equality.

Tawadros said the “committees and the groups, we have had enough of them. We want action and not just words. Committees are formed every day but there is no work taking place on the ground.”

Earlier, Hani Sobhi, a young Copt, explained that live television coverage of the funeral service during which Morsi’s Muslim Brotherhood was booed had been the spark for the violence.

“Inside the cathedral we chanted ‘Down with the Brotherhood rule’ and that was aired live on television. At the exit, the people were ready and waiting for us,” he said. – AFP



A distressed woman sits amid rubble in the southern Iranian town of Shanbeh on April 9 after it was shattered by an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale. At least 37 people were killed and 800 hurt by the earthquake, state television said. It quoted officials as saying a nuclear power plant at Bushehr, about 100 kilometres from the epicentre of the tremor, was not damaged. Pic: EPA

Attack on UN convoy kills 12

JUBA – Five Indian peacekeepers and at least seven UN civilian workers were killed on April 9 in an ambush in South Sudan, officials said, in what the UN secretary general says could be a war crime.

Two hundred attackers took part in the raid on a UN convoy at Gumuruk in the country’s troubled Jonglei state, UN peacekeeping spokeswoman Josephine Guerrero told AFP.

“It was a deliberate and targeted attack,” Guerrero added.

The civilians included two workers for the UN mission in South Sudan and five civilian contractors, the UN said.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the UN Security Council condemned the attack in separate statements and called on South Sudan’s government to “swiftly” bring the perpetrators to justice.

Ban “recalls that the killing of peacekeepers is a war crime that falls under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court,” said his spokesman Martin Nesirky.

Nine people were injured and Ban said some are in “critical” condition.

The volatile eastern state of Jonglei has been the scene of widespread ethnic conflict since South Sudan became independent in July 2011, with bloody battles between rival tribes, including the Dinka, Lou Nuer and Murle people.

An Indian soldier was shot and wounded in Jonglei in March amid high tensions about an imminent government crackdown on rebels, while the army shot down a UN helicopter in December by mistake, killing all four Russians on board. – AFP

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Dated: 15 April 2013



# Car bomb wreaks havoc in Syrian capital

DAMASCUS – A huge suicide car bomb ripped through the heart of Damascus on April 8, killing at least 15 people, as Syria refused to allow in a UN team to probe the alleged use of chemical weapons in protest at its broad mandate.

State media said 15 people were killed and more than 50 wounded after the blast which littered a central street with dead bodies and the carcasses of charred cars.

“Terrorists detonate car bomb between Sabaa Bahrat Square and Shahbinder Street,” the state broadcaster reported, pointing to an apparent suicide attack.

State television broadcast scenes of devastation as huge plumes of thick black smoke billowed around buildings, partly obscuring them.

The footage showed bloodied bodies with limbs askew and chunks of flesh strewn on the streets, with bystanders draping clothes or cardboard boxes over them.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 15 civilians and four soldiers were killed in the blast, which also wounded more than 60 other people. In all, at least 71 people died in violence throughout the country on April 8, the monitoring group said.

The attack near the Syrian central bank was not immediately claimed by any group.

“We say to those behind these attacks that the Syrian people... will move forward to crush these armed terrorist gangs,” Prime Minister Wael al-Halaqi said, speaking to media at the scene.

On March 21, a huge explosion ripped through a Damascus mosque killing at least 49 people, including a key pro-regime Sunni cleric. And a month earlier, on February 21, at least 83 people were killed in a series of bombings in the city.

The foreign ministry, meanwhile, said that Syria will not accept a chemical



The scene of the deadly car bomb explosion which rocked central Damascus in front of the Central Bank (right) on April 8. Pic: AFP

weapons team, as proposed by UN chief Ban Ki-moon, to probe the alleged use of chemical weapons.

Ban has “suggested a supplementary mission allowing the mission to deploy throughout Syrian

territory, which is contrary to the demand Syria made to the United Nations,” a ministry official said, cited

by state news agency SANA.

He said “Syria can not accept such manoeuvres on the part of the UN secretariat general, bearing in mind the negative role that it played in Iraq and which cleared the way to the American invasion” of that country in 2003.

Syria had specifically requested “a neutral and honest technical team to visit the village of Khan al-Assal” in the northern province of Aleppo, the official said.

Ban said earlier on April 8 that a UN inspection team was in Cyprus and ready to deploy to nearby Syria.

Syria asked for the investigation into its allegation that the opposition had used chemical weapons in Khan al-Assal on March 19. The rebels charge that it was government forces that deployed the munitions.

Syria’s conflict, now in its third year, is believed to have killed more than 70,000 people. – AFP

# Iraq quietly marks decade since fall of Baghdad

BAGHDAD – Iraq on April 9 quietly marked a decade since US-led forces took control of Baghdad, sealing the ouster of Saddam Hussein’s brutal regime.

Remembered the world over for the iconic images of Iraqis pulling down a statue of Saddam in central Baghdad’s Firdos Square – helped in no small part by an American military unit – the fall of the capital is a far more emotive day in Iraq than the anniversary of the invasion itself weeks earlier.

The day the statue fell on April 9, 2003, Saddam’s vaunted army had largely melted away and was seen as defeated and demoralised.

But the sense of elation felt by many Iraqis that

day, at seeing a dictator who had ruled for more than two decades fall, was matched by a feeling of bitterness among others who felt their country had been occupied by a foreign power.

Those divisions in how April 9 is seen within Iraq have spurred the government to eschew any formal commemorations, and unlike in previous years, only the autonomous northern Kurdistan region marked the occasion with a public holiday, rather than the entire country.

“Despite all the problems of the past decade, the overwhelming majority of Iraqis agree that we’re better off today than under Hussein’s brutal dictatorship,” Prime

Minister Nuri al-Maliki wrote in the *Washington Post*.

“Iraqis will remain grateful for the US role and for the losses sustained by military and civilian personnel that contributed in ending Hussein’s rule. These losses pale by comparison, of course, to those sustained by the Iraqi people.”

Though the war itself was relatively brief – six weeks after foreign troops invaded, then US president George W. Bush infamously declared the mission accomplished – its aftermath was bloody and fractious.

Caught between Shiite militia groups and Sunni insurgents, US and

coalition forces paid a heavy price: some 4800 foreign troops died in Iraq, more than 90 percent of them American.

Iraqis suffered even more.

Britain-based organisation Iraq Body Count recently estimated at least 112,000 Iraqi civilians died in the decade after the invasion, while thousands of soldiers and policemen were also killed.

And along with the still-present violence, the country continues to suffer from near-constant political crises typically attributed to a stalled reconciliation process.

Ministers appeared to take a key step in that process this month, however, by unveiling

sweeping reforms of laws barring those with links to Saddam’s regime from participating in public life.

The draft amendments to the De-Baathification law, however, are likely to face strong opposition in parliament, which needs to approve the proposals.

Last week’s anniversary also came at a significant political juncture in Iraq, barely 10 days ahead of provincial elections, the country’s first polls since US troops withdrew at the end of 2011.

The credibility of the vote has been drawn into question as a result of still-high bloodshed – a dozen candidates have been killed – and by a cabinet decision for a partial postponement

that means only 12 of the country’s 18 provinces will go to the polls.

Though markedly less powerful than in their 2006 and 2007 heyday, militant groups – particularly al-Qaeda front group the Islamic State of Iraq – also remain capable of mounting mass-casualty attacks, and often target Shiite Muslims and the security forces in a bid to destabilise the country.

The violence is often blamed on political disputes between Maliki, a Shiite, and many of his erstwhile partners in Iraq’s unity government, allowing militants to exploit divisions on the ground which give them room to manoeuvre.

– AFP

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Dated: 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

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Dated: 15 April 2013

# Kenya’s new leader vows to promote unity, growth

NAIROBI – Uhuru Kenyatta pledged to be a president for all Kenyans as he was inaugurated as the East African nation’s fourth leader on April 9.

The 51-year-old son of Kenya’s first president, Jomo Kenyatta, told thousands of people gathered at a stadium in the capital that his government will seek to boost jobs and spur economic growth to help foster peace and unity.

Kenyatta takes office while having to defend himself against charges of crimes against humanity for allegedly fuelling ethnic violence that marred elections in 2007. He is due to face trial at the International Criminal Court in The Hague in July.

Kenyatta took 50.07 percent of ballots cast on March 4, enough to avoid a runoff with outgoing Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who was defeated twice before, in

1997 and 2007. In the last election, ethnic clashes led to 1100 deaths.

The court charges “will remain a key source of uncertainty and could disrupt government functioning,” the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit said in a statement on its website on April 9. “Although the defendants have promised to cooperate with the court, the cases will also complicate foreign policy, as most Western nations maintain a policy of having only ‘essential’ contact with ICC suspects.”

In a speech at the inauguration, President Yoweri Museveni of neighbouring Uganda congratulated Kenyans for “the rejection of the blackmail by the International Criminal Court and those who seek to abuse this institution for their own agenda.”

– Bloomberg News







# Big French force targets Islamists' base in Mali

GAO, Mali – A French force of 1000 soldiers was early last week sweeping a valley thought to be a logistics base for al-Qaeda-linked Islamists near the Malian city of Gao, an *AFP* journalist accompanying the mission said.

Operation Gustav, one of France's largest actions since its intervention in its former colony, involves dozens of tanks, helicopters and aircraft, said General Bernard Barrera, commander of the French land forces in Mali.

"We surrounded the valley north of Gao, which we believe serves as a logistics base for jihadist groups, and we began to search methodically," Barrera, who is based in Gao, the largest settlement in northeastern Mali, said on April 8.

The city, 1200 kilometres (750 miles) from the capital Bamako, was a stronghold of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), one of the Islamist militias which occupied the north until French-led forces dislodged them in January.

It suffered the first suicide bombings in Mali's history in February and has been the scene of deadly clashes between French-Malian forces and jihadists during the previous two weeks.

No Islamist fighters were encountered on the first day of Operation Gustav, launched at dawn on April 7, but troops said they neutralised about 340 artillery shells and high-calibre rockets and destroyed a Toyota pick-up truck.

Ethnic Tuareg rebels seized the country's vast arid north in the chaos following a coup in Bamako on March 2012 before losing control to well-armed Islamists.

A French-led intervention quickly drove insurgents from most of their northern strongholds, but significant



French soldiers about 105 kilometres north of the Malian city of Gao on April 8 following the launch of an offensive against a suspected logistics base of Islamists. Pic: AFP

pockets of resistance remain in Gao, as well as in the fabled desert city of Timbuktu.

"We have defeated the jihadist groups further north in the Ifoghas (mountains). There are none there anymore," Barrera told reporters.

"We are now operating in north-central Mali, to break the enemy by denying it time to reorganise."

Listening to audio recordings, flying observation missions and cross-checking with information from witnesses, French intelligence officials have concluded that the forested "wadi", or dry river basin, would be perfect for concealing weapons stockpiles.

The fighters themselves, whom France believes were present just days

earlier, may have moved to another valley, under cover of a sandstorm that raged the previous two days.

Colonel Bruno Bert, who is commanding the mission, warned against complacency.

"Many times these guys have hidden themselves for hours just a few metres away from us, and then suddenly stood up and opened fire," he said.

"This isn't over. This valley is big, with many secondary wadis. We will take however long we need to complete the search."

France is to start withdrawing its 4000 troops from Mali at the end of April and plans to leave a "support force" of 1000 soldiers after elections promised for July. – *AFP*

# Matchbooks, posters aid US hunt for the world's most wanted

WASHINGTON – From the unruly areas of Pakistan to Philippine jungles and the deserts of Iraq, simple matchbooks and posters are proving an effective US tool in the hunt for the world's most wanted men.

Since its launch in 1984, the Rewards for Justice program run by the Diplomatic Security bureau of the State Department has paid out US\$125 million in rewards to 80 people for information leading to the capture of terrorists.

Pictures of the wanted men are printed on posters, matchbooks and pens with messages in local languages and dialects asking for information and providing instructions on how to hand over tip-offs or ring a hotline.

More modern methods to pass the message are also used, such as Twitter and Facebook feeds, a dedicated website, and mobile phone alerts.

Top of the program's wanted list is al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, with a reward of up to \$25 million for information leading to his capture.

The Egyptian doctor, who took over as al-Qaeda leader after US commandos shot dead Osama Bin Laden in May 2011, has been indicted for his role in the 1998 twin bombings of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

He is one of 53 people who the United States is seeking to bring before the courts for terror attacks and who now have a price on their heads.

"The genesis of this program actually came about as a result of the bombings of our embassy in Kuwait and bombings of our facilities in Beirut," Acting Assistant Director for Diplomatic Security Kurt Rice told *AFP*.

"The government after that decided we have to look for another tool to try and get information and bring these people to justice."

Last month Alabama-born Omar Hamami, dubbed the rapping jihadist, became one of five Americans on the list, wanted for ties to the al-Qaeda linked Shebab insurgents evading capture in Somalia.

Despite the dangers, the rewards can be tantalisingly huge in impoverished countries.

One informant earned \$30 million for leading the US to Uday and Qusay Hussein, the sons of late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Thanks to the tip-off, the two were tracked down in July 2003 by a secretive special operations task force sent in to capture them in northern Mosul. A four-hour firefight ensued, in which both men were killed.



Ayman al-Zawahiri, who tops the US list of wanted terror suspects, at an undisclosed location in Afghanistan on November 8, 2001. Pic: EPA/Ausaf newspaper

Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, the 1993 bomber of the World Trade Center, was caught after someone picked up a matchbook bearing his picture in Pakistan and tipped off the US embassy in Islamabad.

Yousef, the nephew of the self-confessed architect of the September 11, 2001 attacks Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, was arrested by Pakistani forces in 1995 and extradited to the US. He was tried and sentenced to two life sentences.

"This program is fairly simple, it's fairly elegant, it saves lives," said Rice. "All we are trying to do is give people an outlet, because people intrinsically often just want to help."

"We're giving them the ability in a safe, very secure manner to provide us information so we can

get these people off the streets."

He stressed that a

confidentiality is key to protecting the identities of the informants. "We've given this money out, and that obviously makes them a target wherever they are in the world," he said.

The size of the reward depends on how critical the information is to the wanted person's capture.

A group of Filipinos in 2007 shared in a \$5 million reward for helping to find one of the high-ranking leaders of the Islamic Abu Sayyaf, Khadaffy Janjalani, and then identify his body after he was killed in a shoot-out with Philippine forces.

While the Diplomatic Security bureau cannot provide physical protection for informants, it has helped relocate some people to safer places, including to the United States.

Since 2001, the program has also focused on prevention as well as tracking down those already accused of terrorist acts.

"We would rather save lives than solve crimes. Of course solving the crimes is critical to us, but if we can stop, if we can prevent that's fantastic," Rice said.

– *AFP*

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Dated: 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

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Dated: 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013



# Tributes, criticism for the ‘Iron Lady’

LONDON – Former prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the controversial “Iron Lady” who dominated a generation of British politics and won international acclaim for helping to end the Cold War, has died after a stroke. She was 87.

World leaders on April 8 paid tribute to Britain’s only woman premier, whose polarising 11 years in office saw her take on trade unions, go to war in the Falklands and wield her signature handbag against the European Union.

Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II said she was saddened by Thatcher’s death as Prime Minister David Cameron recalled parliament for a special tribute session, while mining union leaders and Irish republicans said she left a disastrous legacy.

“Today we lost a great leader, a great prime minister and a great Briton. Margaret Thatcher didn’t just lead our country – she saved our country,” said a sombre Cameron, who cut short a trip to European capitals and flew back to London after the news of her death broke.

Her spokesman Lord Tim Bell said on April 8 she had “died peacefully following a stroke this morning.” She was staying at the Ritz Hotel in London when she died, he added.

Red white and blue Union flags flew at half mast over Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament and the prime minister’s Downing Street official residence, while mourners left flowers outside Thatcher’s house.

Britain announced plans for a ceremonial funeral this week of the kind given to Princess Diana, although it is a step short of a full state funeral accorded to monarchs and World War II premier Winston Churchill.

Wearing a black tie in a sign of mourning, Cameron said in a speech outside Downing Street that “we can’t deny that Margaret Thatcher divided opinion”, but hailed her “lion-hearted love of this country.”

The former Conservative Party leader was the 20th

## The Thatcher years (1979-1990)

In power for 11 years, 6 months and 24 days, Margaret Thatcher enshrined the political conservatism and triumphant economic liberalism of the 1980s



### PIONEER

On May 3, 1979 she became the 1<sup>st</sup> woman prime minister in the history of the UK



### IRON LADY

...When confronted with a **hunger strike** (1981) by ten members of the Irish Republican Army, including **Bobby Sands**, elected an MP in the Westminster parliament



...With her response after Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in 1982. She sent an armada and won them back within 3 months



...When challenged by the unions, after she emerged victorious from a year-long conflict (1984-85) dominated by a **strike by coal miners**



...By obtaining a **rebate** on Britain’s contribution to the European budget (1984)



...Faced with the **IRA**, despite a **bomb attack** on her Brighton hotel



### ANTI-COMMUNIST

She met Mikhail Gorbachev in 1984, describing him later as a man she could “do business with”



### LIBERAL

Like her friend, US president **Ronald Reagan**, she set in train a programme of **privatisations** in line with her free-market economic philosophy



### ATLANTICIST

Side by side with the US she committed Britain to a war with Iraq after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait



### EUROSCEPTIC

Her Europe policy was **contested** even within her own Conservative party and led to her political downfall in 1990



### THE END

Leaving 10 Downing Street on Nov 28, 1990

AFP

century’s longest continuous occupant of Downing Street, from 1979 to 1990.

Right-wingers hailed Thatcher as having hauled Britain out of the economic doldrums but the left accused her of dismantling traditional industry and destroying the fabric of society.

The once formidable Thatcher suffered from dementia in recent years – her illness becoming the

with US president Ronald Reagan which helped bring the curtain down on Soviet Communism. She also fiercely opposed closer political ties with Europe.

President Barack Obama said the United States had lost a “true friend”, and Russian leader Vladimir Putin hailed her as a “brilliant political figure”.

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, whose

Two former US presidents also remembered the legendary British premier, with George H. W. Bush saying she was “a leader of rare character” and Bill Clinton hailing her as an “iconic stateswoman” who lived a “remarkable life”.

Pope Francis praised Thatcher’s “promotion of freedom” and said he was “saddened” by her passing.

Britain’s 86-year-old

night before the funeral and will be taken through the streets on a gun carriage to the cathedral.

British newspapers reported that the former premier had herself requested not to receive a state funeral, knowing that it would prove divisive.

Reaction to her death was mixed in Britain.

“It’s a crying shame, she’s a good woman,” said law firm

‘Today we lost a great leader, a great prime minister and a great Briton.’

subject of a film starring Meryl Streep, who hailed her on April 8 as a “pioneer for women”.

Thatcher was told by doctors to quit public speaking a decade ago after a series of minor strokes. She was last in hospital in December for a minor operation to remove a growth from her bladder.

On the world stage, Thatcher in the 1980s built a close “special relationship”

good relations with Thatcher played a part in ending the Cold War, said she would live on in “memory and in history”, while Helmut Kohl, the father of Germany’s 1990 reunification, praised her “love of freedom”.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel called Thatcher an “extraordinary leader”, and French President Francois Hollande declared she had left a “profound mark” on Britain.

queen, who shared weekly chats with Thatcher during her time in power, was “sad to hear the news of the death of Baroness Thatcher,” Buckingham Palace said.

Thatcher will receive a ceremonial funeral with military honours at St Paul’s Cathedral in central London this week, although the date has not been confirmed, Downing Street said.

Her coffin will rest in the Houses of Parliament the

employee Alan Whiteford in London.

But the coal miners’ union defeated by Thatcher in the 1984-1985 strike issued a statement saying “good riddance”.

In the south London neighbourhood of Brixton, sworn enemies of the former Iron Lady held a street party to celebrate the news.

Holding placards saying “Rejoice – Thatcher is dead”, about 200 people gathered in

the neighbourhood, a hotspot of alternative culture, and toasted her passing by drinking and dancing to hip-hop and reggae songs blaring from sound systems.

“We’ve got the bunting out at home,” said Clare Truscott, a woman in her 50s wearing a sparkly beret and holding a homemade sign reading “Ding dong, the witch is dead”.

“I’m from the north, where there were no jobs, where the industry was rapidly disappearing, and her policies ensured it went more quickly.”

Thatcher was born Margaret Hilda Roberts on October 13, 1925 in the market town of Grantham, eastern England, the daughter of a grocer.

After grammar school and a degree in chemistry at Oxford University, she married businessman Denis Thatcher in 1951 – who died in 2003 – and became the mother of twins, Carol and Mark, in 1953.

She was first elected to the House of Commons in 1959 and succeeded former prime minister Edward Heath as opposition Conservative leader in 1975 before becoming premier four years later.

Her enduring legacy can be summed up as “Thatcherism” – a set of policies which supporters say promoted personal freedom and broke down the class divisions that had riven Britain for centuries.

Pushing her policies through pitched Thatcher’s government into a string of tough battles, while she also had to deal with unexpected setbacks.

When Argentina invaded the remote British territory of the Falkland Islands in 1982, Thatcher dispatched troops and ships, securing victory in two months.

In 1984 Thatcher survived an Irish Republican Army bombing at a hotel in Brighton.

Gerry Adams, leader of the Sinn Fein republican party, said she had played a “shameful role” in the troubles in Northern Ireland.

– AFP

## Bitter memories in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES – Argentines offered bitter reflections on Margaret Thatcher on April 8, portraying the late former British prime minister as a warmonger who prolonged the Falkands War for political ends.

Several Argentine veterans of the 1982 conflict that provided Thatcher with one of her career’s defining chapters reacted with delight at news of her death from a stroke in London.

“God bless the day that that terrible woman has died,” said Domenico Gruscomagno, 71. “She was an odious person. In order to win elections in Great Britain, she waged war.”

Mario Volpe, leader of the Malvinas (Falklands) War

Veterans Center, accused Thatcher of ignoring an opportunity to broker a peace deal with Argentina’s military junta before her infamous decision to approve a strike on the *Belgrano* battleship at the height of the conflict.

“Let’s say that she will not be remembered as someone who contributed anything to peace,” said Volpe.

The sinking of the *Belgrano* in 1982 came as the Organisation of American States had tabled a peace plan. The strike claimed the lives of 323 Argentine sailors, almost half the 649 Argentine fatalities in the 74-day war. The British toll from the conflict was 255.

For Volpe, the veteran who came home with a

punctured lung and serious shoulder injury, “by deciding to continue the conflict by sinking the *Belgrano* (May 2, 1982), Thatcher put herself on the same level as (Argentine military dictator Leopoldo) Galtieri.”

“She was an aggressive, Iron Lady,” said engineer Rene Miranda, 69. But “Galtieri waged a very unfair war as well because he sent our boys to war when they did not even know how to use a rifle, and the military higher-ups put them out front” to die.

London has held the Falklands since 1833 but Buenos Aires says this is an occupation and the British residents are colonial implants with no right to self-determination. – AFP

## Praise from the Chinese media

BEIJING – Margaret Thatcher was an “outstanding” leader who wisely compromised over Hong Kong’s future, Chinese state media said on April 9, although reactions to her death in the territory itself were mixed.

During her time in power the key issue between London and Beijing was the future of the then-British colony in southern China, where Britain’s lease on the New Territories area of Hong Kong was to expire in 1997.

The signing of the Joint Declaration between Britain and China in 1984 which began the handover process was recognised as a key concession she made to Beijing, the state-run *Global Times* said in an editorial.

“We can say that she made her biggest compromise as prime minister in this issue,” it said.

The editorial added: “The complicated political environment in which she held her role, a golden era for politicians, made her outstanding.”

In Hong Kong itself, liberals who led a long fight to entrench a semblance of democracy before the handover expressed ambivalence about Thatcher’s legacy.

“I didn’t think she had done the best to protect Hongkongers’ interests during Sino-British talks,” Democratic Party chairwoman Emily Lau said.

“One couldn’t help getting angry. Britain had ruled Hong Kong for more than

100 years, but it did not give democracy to Hong Kong even when it was planning to hand it over to China,” she told the *South China Morning Post*.

Others said Thatcher had done the best she could for Hong Kong.

Former lawmaker Selina Chow, who was present at the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, told *The Standard* newspaper that Thatcher “strived to find a balance for both Britain’s and Hong Kong’s interests”.

Former Hong Kong government number two Anson Chan, a respected figure who supports universal suffrage, said Thatcher “laid a solid foundation” for the territory’s continuing prosperity.

– AFP



## 'New challenges' threaten Asia: Xi

BOAO, China – Chinese President Xi Jinping said last week that Asia faced “new challenges” to its stability and warned no one should be allowed to throw the region into chaos as tensions mounted over North Korea.

Xi, delivering a speech at an annual international forum on the southern Chinese island of Hainan on April 7, did not mention the crisis on the Korean Peninsula or China's territorial disputes with Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

But he said there should be no tolerance for those who foster “chaos for selfish gains” and reiterated that China would “firmly” uphold its “sovereignty” and “territorial integrity”.

Tensions have soared in recent weeks with North Korea threatening nuclear war after the United Nations imposed fresh sanctions over its latest atomic test and the US and South Korea launched joint war games.

“We need to make concerted efforts to resolve

major difficulties to ensure stability in Asia,” Xi said.

“Stability in Asia now faces new challenges as hot spot issues keep emerging and both traditional and non-traditional security threats exist,” he added.

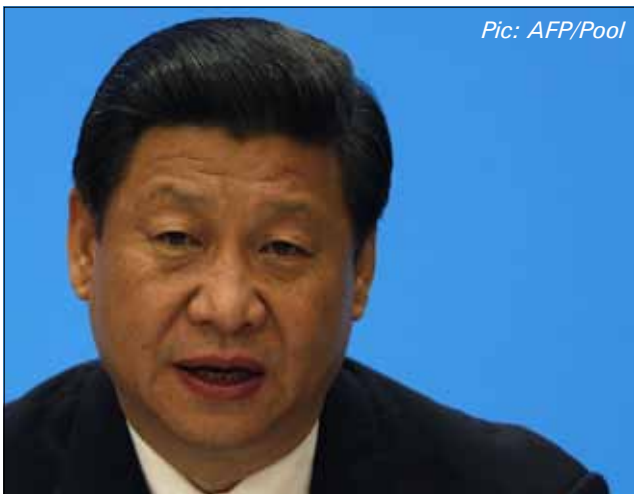
China has traditionally been North Korea's closest political ally since they fought together in the 1950-1953 Korean War and is Pyongyang's biggest trading partner.

Speaking more broadly, Xi called on the international community to push for a “vision of comprehensive security, common security and cooperative security”.

Xi said that was necessary so the world could become a stage for the pursuit of “common development”, as opposed to one “where gladiators fight each other”.

“And no one should be allowed to throw a region, even the whole world, into chaos for selfish gains,” he added.

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard echoed Xi, saying “all countries in the region share a deep interest in strategic stability”.



Pic: AFP/Pool

Chinese President Xi Jinping at a meeting with entrepreneurs at the Boao Forum for Asia on April 8.

But Gillard, who has been critical of Pyongyang, singled out North Korea, saying the Korean Peninsula situation illustrated the potential consequences of conflict.

“There, any aggression is a threat to the interests of every country in the region,” she said in her speech, hailing “the growing cooperation of all regional governments to prevent conflict on the Korean Peninsula and

to counter North Korean aggression”.

Alexander Downer, a former Australian foreign minister who listened to the speeches, said it was not surprising that Xi did not mention North Korea by name as it was not something a Chinese president would do.

“I thought he was alluding to it,” Downer added. “And I think in a very clever way,

which was very reassuring to people.”

It was Xi's first attendance at the Boao Forum for Asia since becoming China's president last month. He took over as head of the ruling Communist Party in November and now holds the country's two most powerful positions.

In an apparent reference to territorial disputes, Xi said while China would “properly handle differences and frictions with relevant countries”, it would continue to press its claims.

“On the basis of firmly upholding its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, China will maintain good relations with its neighbours and overall peace and stability in our region,” he said.

Beijing and Tokyo are at odds over small, uninhabited islands in the East China Sea administered by Japan but also claimed by China.

China is also engaged in disputes with some Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines and Vietnam over islands and reefs in the South China Sea. –AFP

### Briefs

#### Thai insurgents kill two soldiers

PATTANI – Two soldiers were killed and six security officers wounded as insurgents mounted dozens of coordinated bombing, shooting and arson attacks in Thailand's deep south, police said on April 11.

Government offices, mobile phone masts and convenience stores were among the targets of 32 attacks on the evening of April 10 in eight districts of Pattani province in the restive region near the Malaysian border.

Police said the casualties were all from a single ambush, with a car bomb aimed at security personnel responding to a shooting.

#### Indonesians protest against intolerance

JAKARTA – About 200 Christian, Muslim Shiite and Ahmadiyah leaders protested in the Indonesian capital Jakarta on April 8 against growing religious intolerance in the Sunni Muslim-majority country.

The rally of minority groups followed the demolition of a church and the closure of an Ahmadi mosque, both in Bekasi, east of Jakarta, in recent weeks after pressure from Muslim hardliners.

“Aren't we all Indonesians, why are we treated like the hated stepson?” said Guido Suprpto, a pastor from the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia.

#### Boat people reach Australian mainland

SYDNEY – Australia ordered an investigation on April 10 into how an asylum-seeker boat managed to reach one of the country's busiest ports undetected.

The rickety vessel carrying 66 Sri Lankans reached Geraldton in Western Australia and was the first such boat to reach the mainland in five years.

Australia has in recent months flown home hundreds of Sri Lankans who failed to meet refugee requirements.

#### Normal monsoon forecast in India

NEW DELHI – India's monsoon, vital to hundreds of millions of farmers, will likely be normal this year, a report said on April 8.

“So far, there is no worry signal,” D. Sivananda Pai, head of long-range monsoon forecasting at India's Meteorological Department, told Dow Jones News Wires.

The weather official's comments came the same day as the deputy state chief minister of drought-hit Maharashtra state, Ajit Pawar, apologised for suggesting “urinating” in dams could raise their water levels. –AFP

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For Hilborne, Hawkin & Co.  
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## Former Chinese minister charged with corruption

BEIJING – Prosecutors charged China's former railways minister Liu Zhijun with bribery and abuse of power on April 10 state media said, after scandals involving hundreds of millions of yuan.

State-run Xinhua news agency said the charges were filed at the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court, which has “accepted the case and will set a trial date”.

State media have previously reported that Liu, who was appointed in 2003 and sacked in 2011, faced investigation for allegedly taking payouts while handing out contracts for the rapid expansion of China's high-speed railway system.

He was expelled from the ruling Communist Party in November, a move seen

as paving the way for a trial over what state media have previously reported was alleged bribe-taking of 800 million yuan (US\$129 million).

Expulsion from the party typically precedes a court trial.

The Xinhua report did not include any figure, but cited the indictment as saying the circumstances were “especially serious”.

The indictment accuses Liu of taking advantage of his position as a government official to accept what Xinhua characterised as “financial incentives from others, which were of a huge amount”.

Under Chinese criminal law, the death penalty can be imposed for taking bribes exceeding 100,000 yuan.

–AFP

## Poultry cull ordered in Nanjing

SHANGHAI – Residents of the eastern Chinese city of Nanjing have been ordered to cull all their poultry as authorities stepped up attempts to halt the spread of the deadly H7N9 bird flu, state media reported on April 11.

Thousands of birds and livestock were to be slaughtered by midnight on April 16, the China Daily said.

The number of cases of the H7N9 strain of avian influenza rose to 33 on April 10, with nine deaths since China announced more than a week earlier that it had been found in humans for the first time.

Residents who did not comply with the regulation in Nanjing would be fined up to 50 yuan (US\$8), the China Daily said.

It added that local officials offered help to kill birds and animals and said more than 2000 were available for the task.

The newspaper also indirectly quoted an agricultural official in Beijing saying that the measure “goes too far and could cause panic”.

Shanghai has culled more than 111,000 birds, banned trading in live poultry and shut markets in a bid to curb the outbreak.

Nanjing and the city of Suzhou followed suit with bans on live poultry trade, while Hangzhou culled poultry after discovering infected quail.

In China poultry is often bought live from markets and taken home before being slaughtered, cooked and eaten. –AFP

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Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak launches the ruling National Front coalition's election manifesto in Kuala Lumpur on April 6. Pic: EPA

# Hotly awaited election in Malaysia set for May 5

KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysia last week announced a general election for May 5, setting a long-awaited date for polls tipped to be its closest as the long-ruling government seeks to hold off a surging opposition.

Speaking a week after Prime Minister Najib Razak dissolved parliament, Election Commission chairman Aziz Yusof said on April 10 the two-week official campaign period would kick off on April 20.

The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which has controlled Malaysia through coalition governments since independence in 1957, faces a formidable opposition that promises to end corruption, cronyism and authoritarian rule.

Under UMNO, multi-ethnic Malaysia became a regional economic success story while enjoying relative harmony between majority ethnic Malays and its sizeable minorities.

Najib hopes to extend the government's unbeaten run in the polls by focusing on his steady economic stewardship and a torrent of cash handouts and other sweeteners to the public.

"This election is a choice between sticking with a competent, reform-minded government and risking our prosperity on a fractious, inexperienced opposition," a spokesman for Najib

told *AFP* after the polling date was announced.

But the opposition has won support with pledges of clean, transparent governance and respect for civil liberties, enjoying unprecedented freedom to get its message past state-controlled mainstream media via the Internet.

The three-party opposition surged to its best showing in the 2008 vote, shattering the ruling regime's decades-old aura of invincibility.

Speculation over a date for fresh polls has been at fever pitch in the past

power struggle between the two men that left Malaysian politics deeply polarised.

"For Pakatan Rakyat it is the best possible chance to offer a viable alternative for democracy and a more responsible government. I think the chances of winning are very good," Anwar told *AFP*.

With a tight contest forecast, both sides have competed to lure voters with a range of electoral promises, stoking debt fears.

Najib upped the ante on April 7, pledging more cash for the poor and other handouts.

Pakatan has promised free primary-to-university education, policies to boost incomes, and other measures.

The opposition and electoral reform advocates complain the contest is not free and fair due to a system skewed in the government's favour, and have warned of outright fraud, alleging widespread irregularities in voter rolls.

But the government rejects the charges, citing recent reforms such as the introduction of indelible ink to prevent multiple voting and EC chief Aziz said anti-corruption authorities would monitor polling.

Barisan holds 135 of parliament's 222 seats and nine of Malaysia's 13 states, while the opposition has 75 seats and control of four states. – *AFP*

## The ruling National Front coalition faces the fight of its life.

two years but Najib set the stage on April 3 by dissolving parliament ahead of its expiry at the end of the month.

The UMNO-controlled Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition had romped to victory in every election before 2008, when it lost its powerful two-thirds majority.

It faces the fight of its life against the Pakatan Rakyat (People's Pact) opposition led by Anwar Ibrahim.

The charismatic Anwar was handpicked by authoritarian former leader Mahathir Mohamad as heir to UMNO but was ousted from government in 1998 and jailed in a

## VN official gets jail in land rights case

HANOI – A Vietnamese local government official was jailed for two and a half years on April 10 for the destruction of the home of a farmer who became a national hero for resisting eviction, state media said.

Doan Van Vuon became a symbol of rising public dissatisfaction over land rights after arming his family with homemade shotguns in an attempt to keep their fish farm east of Hanoi.

The rare act of defiance by the 50-year-old former soldier left seven policemen injured, but triggered a nationwide outpouring of support, with even Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung branding the eviction "illegal".

Nguyen Van Khanh, who was deputy chairman of the district where the incident happened, was given 30 months in jail for destruction of property, the *Nguoi Lao Dong* newspaper reported on its website.

Vuon was given an unexpectedly lenient sentence of five years on April 5 for attempted

murder, after prosecutors admitted the eviction had been illegal and that local authorities had acted improperly.

Three relatives were sentenced to between two and five years.

Khanh is widely seen as a scapegoat and not the mastermind of the eviction. Vuon himself asked the court to give Khanh a lenient sentence when he appeared in court last week as a witness.

Four other officials, including Khanh's boss, were given suspended sentences of between 15 and 24 months, despite Vuon's plea for the court to give them tougher sentences.

Land is a divisive issue in communist Vietnam, where it is wholly owned by the state and rights of use are not always clear or protected.

Local officials can reclaim land for vaguely defined "public interest", which experts say leads to widespread corruption. More than 70 percent of all complaints lodged with authorities nationwide concern land. – *AFP*

## Pakistan court adjourns Musharraf's hearing

ISLAMABAD – Pakistan's top court on April 9 granted former dictator Pervez Musharraf a breathing space in his battle against treason allegations dating to his time in power.

Lawyers are petitioning the Supreme Court to have the retired general put on trial for treason for subverting the constitution during his 1999-2008 rule.

Musharraf, 69, returned to Pakistan last month from four years of self-imposed exile to stand in the May 11 general election, which will mark the first democratic transition of power in the country's troubled 66-year history.

Judge Jawad Khawaja adjourned the treason hearing to April 15 to give Musharraf's lawyers time to prepare a response, rejecting their plea to put the matter off until after the election to allow him time to campaign.

"The cases are very simple in nature and the matter

that needs to be looked at is straightforward enough," the judge said.

Musharraf has been approved to stand as a candidate in the remote northern area of Chitral, although a lawyer has vowed to contest that decision. He had been rejected in three other seats.

Musharraf has said he came home to "save" nuclear-armed Pakistan, which is afflicted by an economic malaise and near-daily attacks by the Taliban and other militants.

But the retired general has had a muted homecoming and in addition to the treason allegations faces a host of other legal challenges.

He has been bailed over the 2007 killing of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and a Baluch rebel leader in 2006, and for sacking and arresting judges during emergency rule in 2007. – *AFP*

## Thatcher made racist comments, recalls Australian FM

SYDNEY – Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr says late British leader Margaret Thatcher made "unabashedly racist" comments, recalling what she allegedly said to him about Asian immigration after she left office.

Carr said the conservative "Iron Lady", who died in London on April 8, had told him Australia could end up like Fiji "where the Indian migrants have taken over".

While Labor stalwart Carr, who has a Malaysian-

born wife, said he respected Thatcher for the boldness of her political leadership, "on 100 other things I would pick arguments with her".

"I recall one conversation I had with her in her retirement where she said something that was unabashedly racist," he told Australian Broadcasting Corporation television from China on April 9.

"She warned Australia – talking to me with Helena (his wife) standing not far away – against Asian

immigration, saying that if we allowed too much of it we'd see the natives of the land, the European settlers, overtaken by migrants," he added.

Carr said: "I couldn't believe it."

"It reminded me that despite, yes, her greatness on those big questions, the role of the state, the evil nature of the communist totalitarianism, there was an old-fashioned quality to her that was entirely out of touch and probably

explained why her party removed her in the early 90s."

Carr, a former premier of New South Wales state, said Thatcher used the Pacific island nation of Fiji to illustrate her point.

"I remember one thing she said as part of that conversation. She said 'You will end up like Fiji'."

"She said 'I like Sydney but you can't allow the migrants' – and in context she meant Asian migration – 'to take over, otherwise

you will end up like Fiji where the Indian migrants have taken over'."

"I was so astonished I don't think I could think of an appropriate reply."

Carr's opposite number in Australia, Julie Bishop, called his comments graceless and demanded he immediately apologise.

"His decision to make these claims after her death is a crude attempt to slur the reputation of one of the 20th century's most outstanding leaders," Bishop said.

On April 9, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard praised Thatcher, saying she had "changed history for women" by opening the door to females taking high-powered leadership roles.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II will lead mourners at Thatcher's funeral next week, the first time the monarch will have attended the ceremony of one of her former prime ministers since Churchill died in 1965.

– *AFP*



# In Pakistan, the politics of despair

## COMMENT By James Traub

NEW YORK – Here is a sad, sad statistic for you: a grand total of six percent of Pakistanis aged 18 to 29 believe that their country is “heading in the right direction.”

Four years ago, the figure was 14pc. The next generation of Pakistanis, in short, is sinking into despair. But it's not just sad, the way it would be if 94pc of Somalis or Congolese had given up on their future. It's also extremely dangerous, because Pakistan has 185 million people, a large nuclear stockpile and an array of violent Islamist groups which are terrorising the country's own people and its neighbours.

There is something viscerally satisfying about the prospect of leaving Pakistan to stew in its own juices. Americans are feeling betrayed by a country they once viewed as a staunch ally in the war on terror.

Even Admiral Mike Mullen, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and an extremely patient interlocutor with Pakistan's leadership class, testified in 2011 that the brutal Haqqani network of the Afghan Taliban was “a veritable arm” of Pakistani intelligence and added that the country would never be a “respected and prosperous nation” unless it mended its ways. And now, with America's endless military engagement in Afghanistan scheduled to draw to a close in 2014, the United States has the chance to disengage from Pakistan as well. But the truth is that America can't actually afford to indulge that impulse.

Pakistan is the example par excellence of the hopeless predicaments that Barack Obama inherited from George W. Bush.

My personal shorthand for these snarled knots is: “You have to, but you can't.” You have to persuade Iran to end its nuclear program through blandishments and threats; you have to leave behind a government and an army that the Afghan people can believe in; you have to convince Pakistan's military and intelligence leaders that the Afghan Taliban is their enemy, not their instrument. But you can't.

So you come up with a decent-sounding-if-not-terribly-persuasive plan and send it off with a prayer. This degree-of-difficulty problem is why I've always been more sympathetic to Obama than many of his critics on both the left and right.

Bush never had a vision of US-Pakistan relations much beyond, “You're with us or against us.” Obama has tried to do better, through a combination of development assistance, democracy support and the intensely focused diplomacy of Richard Holbrooke, the



Pakistani school boys in Hyderabad on April 8 with stickers urging people to participate in a general election on May 11. The election will be the first peaceful democratic transition from one civilian government to another since the country gained independence from Britain in 1947. A recent British Council survey found that young Pakistanis are sceptical of the merits of democracy, amid higher support for Islamic and military rule. Pic: EPA

late special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The “strategic partnership” that Holbrooke forged was supposed to demonstrate a deep and abiding commitment which would not only improve Pakistan's economic and security capacity but flatter the country's leaders into greater compliance with US objectives. That didn't happen.

Holbrooke hoped that US aid, channelled through Pakistani institutions, would help bolster the civilian government and improve America's standing. That didn't happen either. The relationship cratered in 2011, either because

opened the spigot on diplomatic visas, which they choke off at moments of pique. Bilateral working groups on the economy, security, education and defence have been meeting and issuing soothing press releases. The United States, as one intelligence official I spoke to confirmed, has significantly slowed the pace of drone attacks; the Pakistani side has lowered the rhetoric. It does not hurt that Pakistan is preoccupied with national elections scheduled for May 11.

It's not only temperatures that have cooled; so have expectations. The strategic partnership is history. “There's a lot of wisdom

The Obama administration still depends on Islamabad for its exit strategy from Afghanistan, both because Pakistani intelligence continues to use Taliban proxies to destabilise its neighbour and because political reconciliation between the Afghans and the Taliban will never happen without active Pakistani engagement.

Islamabad has made a few gestures towards the reconciliation process, but nothing decisive; Afghan leaders remain extremely sceptical of Islamabad's intentions.

The United States is withdrawing one way or another and Afghanistan

well. Those working groups will keep working; aid will keep flowing.

Of course, that a growing number of lawmakers oppose that aid, and that Congress has blocked free-trade legislation that would allow Pakistan to establish so-called Reconstruction Opportunity Zones to export textiles to the United States, makes Pakistanis understandably sceptical of that claim.

If abandoning Pakistan is a bad idea (no matter how gratifying) and if at the same time Washington has little if any ability to make military and intelligence officials in Islamabad comply with US counter-terror goals, the

ultimatums about covert support for extremists (leave that to Congress) and authorising drone strikes, save in exceptional circumstances.

Obama can't do anything to make most Pakistanis stop hating America, but he can stop doing things that distract Pakistanis from addressing their own problems.

There are very few signs that Pakistan's corrupt and feudal political class is prepared to face those problems. While it's a very good thing that the regime of President Asif Ali Zardari recently became the first civilian government to serve out a full term in Pakistani history, there is no reason to expect the next government to be any less feckless than his. The only saving grace in Pakistan is that few people have fond memories of the last era of military rule: former General Pervez Musharraf, who has returned to Pakistan in the hopes of re-starting a political career, appears to have zero appeal.

Democracy in Pakistan is thus likely to survive its own persistent failure. That is a genuinely good thing.

Nothing good will happen soon; but perhaps someday Pakistan's democracy can begin to make inroads on Pakistan's despair. With low expectations and a modest investment, Washington can afford to be patient.

— Foreign Policy

(James Traub is a fellow of the Center on International Cooperation. He writes the Terms of Engagement column for *Foreign Policy*).

**It is, after all, despair among ordinary Pakistanis...which makes Pakistan so dangerous to itself, its neighbours and the United States.**

Holbrooke died in late 2010 or, more likely, because of popular fury when US forces crossed into Pakistani territory to kill Osama bin Laden, and later killed 24 Pakistani soldiers along the border. The policy failed because it could not succeed.

In recent days, I've been talking with current and former Obama administration officials who deal with the region and several things have become clear.

First, the deep freeze is over.

US military and intelligence officials are meeting regularly with their opposite number. The Pakistanis have slightly

in having a more modest relationship,” as one official said to me. “On things like the Haqqanis, our long-term goals don't align. It's better to recognise that they don't and work on what we have in common.”

In a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, Husain Haqqani, Pakistan's former ambassador to the United States (and no relation to the jihadists), suggested that the two sides admit the truth and “explore ways to structure a non-allied relationship.” That's not so far from what's happening now, though no one would dare to call it that. The chastened wisdom of 2013: “We can't, so we won't.”

will cope as well as it can with whatever support from the US and foreign donors it continues to receive.

After 2014, Afghanistan will fade away; but Pakistan will still cling to America's trouser cuffs like a tenacious burr.

What will become of US-Pakistan relations when US military involvement in Afghanistan ends? American officials have been at pains to say: We're staying.

In a recent speech in Islamabad, US ambassador Richard Olson said, not once but twice, “2014 is not 1989” – that infamous year when the Soviets packed up and left the region, and then the United States did so as

best solution may be to focus on the war on despair rather than the war on terror. It is, after all, despair among ordinary Pakistanis, not the brutality of jihadists in Waziristan, which makes Pakistan so dangerous to itself, its neighbours and the United States.

Post-2014, or for that matter starting now, Obama should give more authority to US diplomats, and less to the Pentagon and the CIA. He should push for trade legislation – which will create manufacturing jobs. And the administration should stop doing things that play into the hands of Pakistan's extremists and obscurantists, like issuing





The Pyi Daw Chit *thangyat* troupe performs in Yangon on April 7. Pic: Thiri

## Banned for years, satirical shows return for Thingyan

By Nuam Bawi

FOR decades traditional Thingyan *thangyat* performances were suppressed by the government, but this year they returned to the public eye with the Lu Htu Peh Tin Tan (The People's Echo) competition, which ended in Yangon on April 7.

The competition started on March 25 with 16 groups, and the number was whittled down to four groups for the finals on April 7, which were held at Shwe Htut Tin outdoor performance space in Tarmwe township, Yangon.

The final four groups consisted of 10 to 20 members each. The *thangyat* performers focus on providing topical information to the audience in a way that satirises politics, current events and social mores. The performances are accompanied by traditional music.

The final four groups were Pyi Daw Chit led by U Myit Tar; Kyunnote Doh The Swesone In Ar Suh led by U Kyaw Kyaw Tun; A Pyar Yeh A Ni (The Blue's Red) formed by members of the 88 Generation Students; and Academy Yin Kyay Maung led by U Khin Maung Swe

The first prize of K3 million went to Academy Yin Kyay Maung, the second prize of K2 million was taken by Kyunnote Doh The Swesone In Ar Suh, and A Pyar Yeh A Ni took the third prize of K1 million.

The People's Choice Award, determined by votes sent in via text message, was won by Shin Nyar Nay Dwe Thi Be, which did not make the finals but received 726 votes.

U Myit Tar, one of the organisers of the competition and leader of Pyi Daw Chit group, said he was involved in the event "not only to compete for the prize but also to use our own hands to open a door that was closed for a long time".

"I think we were successful in doing that," he said. "The most valuable prize for us was to allow people hear *thangyat* groups from all over Myanmar, through live broadcasts on TV and radio."

For many years the public was unable to see *thangyat* performances because they were banned by the government, but the fact that a sizeable audience came to see the final competition proved that the public had not completely forgotten about the art form.

Even so, Kyunnote Doh The Swesone In Ar Suh leader U Kyaw Kyaw Tun said the audiences are now much smaller than they were in the past, before the performances were banned.

"I'm satisfied with the audience's appreciation at the final competition, but we didn't get enormous appreciation like we did from audiences in the past," U Kyaw Kyaw Tun told *The Myanmar Times* the day after the finals.

He said he thought the smaller audience resulted from a combination of lack of exposure to *thangyat* and the early closure of businesses imposed throughout Yangon at the time over fears about potential clashes between Buddhists and Muslims.

He said the groups were very happy to get permission to perform again, but they were still required to submit to censors the material they planned to cover.

"The *thangyat* censorship board was very strict last year, and more than half the material we submitted was rejected. But this year we resubmitted some of the material that was rejected last year and everything passed. This year we were able to perform as openly as we could in the past," U Kyaw Kyaw Tun said.

## 'Kayan Beauties' wins ASEAN prize

By Lwin Mar Htun

THE Myanmar film *Kayan Beauties* won a Special Jury Award at the ASEAN International Film Festival and Awards (AIFFA) held in Kuchin, Sarawak, Malaysia from March 28 to 30.

*Kayan Beauties* was directed by Aung Ko Latt, based on a script written by Mr Hector Carosso from the United States.

The main cast members — including Nwe Ni Win, Hin Mai, Khin Mar Win and Rose Mary — were non-actors from Myanmar's ethnic Kayan community.

Aung Ko Latt said *Kayan Beauties* had been among six nominees each in two categories — Best Film Photography (Aung Ko Latt) and Best Supporting Actress (Rose Mary) — but failed to win either at the awards ceremony on March 31.

"When we didn't win I felt disappointed, but then they announced that Kayan

Beauties had won a special Jury Prize, which took me by surprise and made me feel very proud," he said.

The prize was earned from more than 100 films representing all 10 ASEAN countries screened at the festival.

"All my happiness is not only for me, but also for my country and for the Myanmar film industry," Aung Ko Latt told *The Myanmar Times*.

The movie, shot in 2008 in Kayah State, showcases the culture of that region's Kayan people, including the Padaung whose women are famous for wearing brass neck rings.

The film tells the story of three ethnic Kayan girls who travel to the city of Taunggyi in Shan State to sell handicrafts, but one of them is kidnapped by human traffickers.

Aung Ko Latt said the main purpose for making the film was to show the culture and traditions of the Kayan people.

"The other purpose was to

show that human trafficking is occurring all around the world, and it needs to be stopped," he said.

While most Myanmar films are shot quickly and on a low budget, Aung Ko Latt said he invested a lot of money in *Kayan Beauties* to ensure that it was of high quality.

"It was the first movie made in Myanmar using the Dolby Digital Surround EX surround-sound system," he said.

However, despite the fact that the film was screened last year at Aung Thapay Cinema in Nay Pyi Taw, as well as in Singapore, it has not made much money.

"We still face losses with the film. It's a bit different from what local audiences like to watch," Aung Ko Latt was quoted as saying in the Yangon-based *Nan Nat Khin* (Morning Post) journal.

"At first it didn't have any audience, but since I won the prize in Malaysia that has started to change. People are starting to contact me to buy the film for distribution.

So the important thing for artists is that they must be brave enough to make their own work and show it to audiences."

He said that if he directed another film in the future, he would work to make sure it was of international standard.

"I don't want to produce a cheap film. When you make a film you have to put a lot of effort into it, whether it's cheap or of high quality, so I would rather produce work of high quality and let local audiences see an international-standard movie."

Myanmar actor U Aung Lwin served on the international panel of judges at the film festival.

Aung Ko Latt said he would relish the opportunity to win a Myanmar Academy Award for *Kayan Beauties*.

"All artists want to win an Academy Award, but it depends on the feelings of the judges. If they say 'yes' I will be happy and if the result is 'no' I need to try harder," he said.

## Aung San movie script nears completion

By Zon Pann Pwint

THE script for a film about the life of Bogyoke Aung San was completed earlier this month, and is set to be edited in the coming weeks by a small committee of Myanmar film industry luminaries.

The script was written by a three-person team consisting of an author, a scriptwriter and a film director, who started work on the project in March 2012.

Scriptwriter U Mya Myint Mo wrote the section covering Aung San's birth in 1915, through his university years, and up to 1940; director U Kyi Soe Tun covered 1940 to 1945, including Aung San's stint as a soldier and his emergence as a leader of the Burmese nationalist movement; and writer U Chit Oo Nyo covered his political life from 1945 until his assassination in July 1947.

The draft script was distributed to members of the Bogyoke Aung San Film Executive Board on April 6. Board members — including director Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, Kyi Phyu Shin, U Zaganar and U Zaw Thet Htwe — are reading the complete script for editing.

U Zaw Thet Htwe said that the script will be edited after Thingyan water festival, with the aim of modifying it to fit the desired length of the film.

"On April 13 we will have a brainstorming session where all members of the board will throw in their ideas about which parts of the script should be removed and what should be added," he said.

Chit Oo Nyo said 1945 to 1947 were the most important years in Bogyoke Aung San's political life.

"During that time, Aung San signed the Aung San-Attlee agreement in London as well as the agreement at the Panglong Conference with leaders from different ethnic groups," he said. "He also held the People's Assembly and toured the country campaigning to achieve independence, and then he was assassinated."

Chit Oo Nyo said he read several books about Aung San while working on the script, and found that accounts of his life were often contradictory. "Some articles about him are slightly exaggerated,

unlike the biographies written by Teikkatho Nay Win, who was his personal assistant, and journalist U Pu Ka Lay, whose books portray Aung San as he really was," he said.

"I wrote the script to be historically accurate, but the chapters in his life are so dramatic."

He said Richard Attenborough's 1982 film *Gandhi* and last year's *Lincoln* directed by Steven Spielberg were based on real-life events but the stories were rendered more dramatic when combined with the art of filmmaking.

"I hope whoever is chosen as director will add great art to dramatic life of Aung San," Chit Oo Nyo said.

He said the scriptwriting process was intended to take four months but stretched to a year for various reasons.

"I had to make several trips and hold literary talks, so I couldn't spend much time on scriptwriting," U Chit Oo Nyo said.

"I think the Bogyoke Aung San Film Executive Board will have to put more effort into completing the biopic to meet the deadline. They are still in the process of pre-production."

The executive board aims to release the film by February 13, 2015, the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Aung San.

"We took a year to complete the script, and we all think this was too short for the life of our national hero," U Zaw Thet Htwe said.

"We will try to complete the biopic within the time allotted. Whether we meet the deadline depends on the smooth running of all the procedures."

The actors who have been chosen to portray Aung San and his wife Daw Khin Kyi will receive additional training in acting in May. The board must also choose an appropriate director for the film, whether from the United States, Europe or Myanmar.

So far, the executive board has received about K10 million from donors toward creating the biopic, a fraction of what will be needed to produce the feature-length film.

"We will announce the detailed expenses for the whole film after calculating the costs, and then we will raise the funds for the film," U Zaw Thet Htwe said.



Members of the Bogyoke Aung San Film Executive Board hold a meeting in Yangon on April 6 to begin the process of editing the Aung San biopic script. Pic: Supplied



# U Thant House opens for photo exhibition

By Zon Pann Pwint

FOR decades the government of Myanmar avoided expressing pride in the great achievements of two of the country's greatest sons: independence hero Aung San and former United Nations secretary general U Thant.

The people are now working hard to make up for lost time.

On April 6, treasured photographs of U Thant went on display at the U Thant House (31 Pan Wah Road, Kamaryut township), covering everything from his early life in the Ayeyarwady delta village of Pantanaw to his days at the UN.

The exhibition, which ended on April 11, marked the opening of the U Thant House, and also included a full-length portrait of U Thant by artist Nay Myo Say as well as artefacts from his life such as a pair of glasses and a coal iron.

Historian Dr Thant Myint-U, the grandson of U Thant, said there were certain photos that he found particularly interesting, including those showing his early life in Pantanaw, U Thant and U Nu walking together, and the secretary general working among world statesmen at the UN in the 1960s.

"It shows that a schoolteacher from the Ayeyarwady delta was able to become the world's top diplomat within 14 years. It's an amazing and unusual life journey," Thant Myint-U told *The Myanmar Times* in an email interview.

Artist Nay Myo Say said

he was proud to create the collage painting that was displayed during last week's exhibition.

"While I was helping U Thant's daughter, Daw Aye Aye Thant, prepare for the exhibition, a certain portrait

**'The photographs show that a schoolteacher from the Ayeyarwady delta was able to become the world's top diplomat within 14 years. It's an amazing and unusual life journey.'**

photo of U Thant caught my attention," Nay Myo Say said. "I found the photo gripping enough to change into a painting, so I made the collage portrait to present to his daughter."

"U Thant is an important person for our country. I really take a pride in offering my strength and my inspiration when we worked on the exhibition," he added.

U Thant, his wife Daw Thein

Tin, and his daughter and son lived in the two-storey house on Pan Wah Street in Yangon from 1951 to 1957, while he served as secretary in Prime Minister U Nu's office.

Over the years the building has fallen into a state of neglect, although some staff from the Ministry of Construction have been housed there at times.

"The house renovation was completed after much work. The house was in a severely dilapidated condition. We had to put in a whole new roof and many of the walls and the internal stairs had to be replaced," Thant Myint-U said.

Although the house is not open to public on a day-to-day basis, a museum is expected to open on the site in November or December.

Thant Myint-U said they have not yet started work on the museum, for which they are now consulting with top international experts on the concept and design.

"We hope it will be a state-of-the-art museum that will focus on U Thant's life and work but also on the issues that he cared about the most, like education, nation-building, peace and the environment," he said.

Thant Myint-U clarified that the U Thant House won't actually be a museum but an interactive facility, which will be attractive for kids and young people, as well as for tourists and other visitors.

The U Thant House, surrounded by a big garden on 1.5 acres, will also be a public event space with lectures and seminars.



The U Thant House in Yangon during a photo exhibition on April 6. Pic: Thiri

## Art exhibitions attract small crowds and few buyers

By Zon Pann Pwint

ART galleries in Yangon are often crowded with invited guests during opening ceremonies when new exhibitions are unveiled, but at other times they can be quiet as a tomb, with most paintings left

unsold at the end of the show.

Artist Maung Moe said visiting art galleries is not a popular pastime in Myanmar, placing the blame for the lack of interest on the poor socioeconomic conditions in the country.

"The general public has little interest in art because the entire

working population continues to endure privation. They don't often have the luxury to indulge in aesthetic appreciation," said Maung Moe.

He said people are unable turn their interest to art while struggling to keep the wolves from the door. As a result, art galleries

attract only art buyers and private collectors.

"Galleries and museums are not friendly places for the general public, and never mind buying artwork," said Maung Moe. "Someone who is grappling with poverty can't enjoy art and can't feast his eyes on the paintings."

He added that the majority of artists face an uphill struggle to continue drawing when their artwork goes unsold, and only a few famous artists are able to earn a living from sales of their paintings.

U Zaw Win, who helps run Lawkanat Art Gallery in downtown Yangon, agreed that exhibitions by famous artists sometimes attract plenty of buyers. However, price can play an important role in determining how many artworks are actually sold.

"Our biggest sale was at an exhibition by famous artist Win Pe Myint, where we sold about 40 of his sketches," he said. "The artist wanted to sell his artwork cheaply, so that common people who have a passion for art could buy the work at affordable prices."

Small sketches were priced at K50,000, and Win Pe Myint also gave one free painting to each person who bought a painting. By the end of the show, only 10 paintings were left.

"There is a small cliques of collectors dedicated to artwork by Win Pe Myint and Khin Maung Yin. They are fond of collecting their artwork," U Zaw Win said.

He said that inexpensive artwork attracts visitors, while "expensive and larger paintings get less attention", adding that a group exhibition at Lawkanat in April resulted in the sale of only one painting.

"Even though some of the artists in the exhibition were well known, their paintings did not sell because they were expensive and large," U Zaw Win said.

Maung Moe said members of the general public who are "distant from art" are unable to discern differences in style between one artist and another.

"Over half of all artists depend on the painting shops at Bogyoke Market for their sales," he said, referring to vendors at the market who buy paintings from artists and resell them to consumers at marked-up prices.

"Painting shops at Bogyoke Market pay no more than several tens of thousands of kyats for a painting that has been exhibited in an art gallery, and they pay only a few thousand kyats for an ordinary painting," he said.

Maung Moe said those who prefer collecting paintings made by talented artists usually visit galleries such as River and Golden Valley.

"But any artists have to sell their work to painting shops at Bogyoke Market because they need money to buy paint and brushes to keep working," he said.



Pic: Aung Htay Hlaing

A visitor scrutinises work by artist Nyi Nyi (Nice) at Space Art Gallery in Yangon on March 27.



# Off the deep end: making sense of the rules at Kokine Swimming Pool

By Jessica Mudditt

A TWO-TIER price system for locals and foreigners is in place at the majority of Myanmar's tourist sites, which tends to be the rule rather than the exception in developing countries.

In India, which has burgeoning middle and upper classes, tourists are becoming more vocal against the government's policy of charging foreign visitors an exorbitant 4850 percent higher entry fee to sites such as the Taj Mahal.

In Myanmar it's often difficult for foreigners to ascertain the price difference, because fees for foreigners are stated in English, while the price for locals is usually in Myanmar script. A dual pricing system also exists unofficially, whether it is higher taxi fares, inflated rent and utility bills, or pricier hotel room rates.

Many foreigners, such as Barnaby Hazzard Morris, don't mind paying more, because it's seen as a way of redistributing wealth. He writes on his blog: "It actually makes good economic sense to charge these greatly inflated rates. ... Foreigners are accustomed to prices being much higher in their home countries."

However, for Myanmar's foreign residents, regularly being confronted by the policy can be grating.

In February a notice caught my eye at Kokine Swimming Pool in Bahan township: "The Guest Members (Foreigners) Are Not Allowed To Swim From The 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013." It was signed by the executive committee, with no further details provided.

A security guard told me it was because swimming training was being conducted (this is stated in Myanmar in a sign next to it), which seemed fairly reasonable.

When I next went for a swim, I saw that a new sign had been stuck overtop the original one, saying that the pool, which is open from 6am to 8pm six days a week, would be closed to non-members from March 1 to April 30.

Although this was a blow to my new after-work fitness schedule, I was reluctant to fork out a K200,000 donation to become a member, so I began visiting various pools in Yangon (where I continued to pay more as a foreigner, and found none as lovely as Kokine).

It was therefore disappointing to learn from the friendly secretary of Kokine Swimming Pool, U Cho

Maung, that the weekday training sessions finish by 11am and continue until May 25, almost a full month after non-members are allowed to return.

U Cho Maung told *The Myanmar Times*, "We have 10,000 members – I don't want too much traffic at the pool."

About 1000 people take part in the two training periods at Kokine.

He estimates that Kokine has 30 members who are foreigners, while the number of regular swimmers in the morning is 50 to 60, and 70 in the evening.

U Cho Maung added somewhat contradictorily, "This is the most crowded time of the year because it's hot. ... That's why we close it, because it would be crowded otherwise. But it's not crowded, because our members come at different times. We have three pools, so members can swim in the other pools during training sessions."

During the interview on April 9, both large pools were all but deserted by 10am: I counted four swimmers in total.

However, rather than feeling slighted when I left, I'd learned that the pool's rules are more favourable to foreigners than locals.

A year's membership will cost a foreigner K323,000 (US\$367) - which includes the K200,000 donation (which goes towards pool maintenance), K120,000 in monthly fees and an annual fee of K3000. This is K126,000 (\$143) costlier than a local membership.

However, foreigners have two additional options that are closed to locals: swimming on a casual basis for K2000 or paying K50,000 for a three-month membership. The latter requires a guarantor letter from an employer or embassy



Pic: Jessica Mudditt

Kokine Swimming Pool in Bahan township beckons on a hot day in April.

and can only be taken out once.

Locals are only allowed to swim on a one-off basis (after May 2) if they come with a guarantor who is a member.

U Cho Maung said the reason locals can't obtain a temporary membership is because they live here, so it wouldn't make sense.

U Cho Maung is also vice president of the Myanmar Swimming Federation and said he takes an interest in pool management when travelling overseas.

"The cost of swimming in Melbourne was high – it was at least A\$20 for a swim," he said.

However, the Nunawading pool's website (where I learned to swim in Melbourne) lists the cost of a casual visit as A\$5.80.

When asked about the phrasing of the first notice that singled out foreigners, he said, "There must have been a mistake at the office."

Another oddity at Kokine Swimming Pool are the signs demarcating separate sides for male and female swimmers, which I initially assumed were meant to indicate the location of the changing rooms.

It was during my second swim at Kokine that I realised the signs are taken seriously: My husband was waved over to the other side by a lifeguard.

My husband attempted to explain that he's not a confident swimmer and wanted to stay in the same area as me, but it wasn't until he did a quick fake-drown that his point was understood and he was allowed to stay on the right-hand side.

During about five subsequent visits, I noticed men swimming on both sides of the 30-metre-long pool.

When asked about the signs, U Cho Maung said, "Now it's mixed – that was before. We just mention it as a rule."

He said the rule was created more than 10 years ago following a request from a few local women "who were scared to swim with guys".

He said the rule doesn't apply if accompanying children.

"The rule is flexible. We only mention couples, because they don't swim around properly," he trailed off while making hug motions.

"But it's more about prevention – this has happened very few times. ... It is a family pool."

In terms of price policies and the gender segregation, U Cho Maung said the rules are old and might "change very soon".

Despite the economic justifications for charging foreigners and locals disparate prices, being categorised on the basis of nationality is often an uncomfortable experience, regardless of whether you're paying more or less.

A swimmer named Moh Moh Thaw was unimpressed by the way she was treated at the Savoy Hotel's pool, where in 2010, when power cuts were severe during summer, she used to swim every weekend with her Australian husband.

"We'd buy food and drinks, but were never asked to pay to use the pool. But as soon as I went to the pool with local friends, and even though we spent more on food and drinks, we were asked to pay to use the pool. I was so angry – it's discrimination."

‘Being categorised on the basis of nationality is often an uncomfortable experience.’

"The temporary membership is aimed at NGO and embassy staff, who might be in Yangon for three months," he said.

However, as Myanmar continues to open up and allow foreign investment to flow in, this "one size fits all" definition of a foreigner might be unrealistic, if unpalatable.

When asked why foreigners pay almost double the amount of local membership fees, U Cho Maung said that the rule has been in place for about a decade.

"This committee has always done it this way because foreigners' salaries are higher. There are many reasons, but this is the main reason."



The first sign of trouble. Pic: Jessica Mudditt

## Documentary takes in-depth look at the making of ‘The Shining’

By Ann Hornaday

IN an era when Audience is king – when movies can get made on the strength of a Kickstarter campaign and an amateur effort like *Fifty Shades of Grey* becomes as big a hit as the *Twilight* books that inspired it – there's a certain sense to be found in the existence of the film *Room 237*, if not in its substance.

Rodney Ascher's documentary about the 1980 Stanley Kubrick horror film *The Shining* and five obsessive viewers with elaborate ideas about its hidden meanings belongs to a postmodern wave

of film consumption, wherein spectators are increasingly emboldened to short-circuit conventional criticism and even a filmmaker's stated aims and take the wheel of cultural discourse themselves.

The testifiers of *Room 237* are nothing if not tireless in convincing us that they hold the golden ticket to Kubrick's deepest motivations.

ABC News correspondent Bill Blakemore elegantly links the director's strategic positioning of Calumet Baking Powder cans in the Overlook Hotel's pantry to prove that *The Shining* – which was based on Stephen King's 1977 novel – is an allegory

for the European genocide of Native Americans. History professor Geoffrey Cocks notices the typewriter Jack Nicholson's character uses to not write his novel in the film and finally deduces that *The Shining* is Kubrick's *cri de coeur* about the Holocaust.

Playwright Juli Kearns harbours an abiding fascination with the window in the hotel manager's office, which opens – at least figuratively – to myriad architectural impossibilities, which she has neatly catalogued in a series of carefully drawn maps. Artist John Fell Ryan specialises in screening *The Shining* backwards

and forwards simultaneously to elicit buried synchronicities, and Jay Weidner is convinced that Kubrick made the film as an apology for his role in staging the Apollo 11 moon landing.

It would all be insufferable had Ascher not made the brilliant decision to stage *Room 237* not as a talking-heads documentary but as a montage of Kubrick's own films, using snippets of *The Killing*, *Lolita*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Eyes Wide Shut* and others to illustrate what his subjects are saying off-camera.

What might have been a tiresome stew of obsession, projection, Freud, Jung and continuity errors

re-purposed as conspiracy fodder instead becomes a hypnotic homage to a cinematic master whose absence is all the more palpable for his fans' desperate attempts to revive them: resurrection by interpretation.

*Room 237* turns out to be about many things, including how we process history, human evil and our own mortality. But perhaps there are buried meanings in *Room 237* itself, which at its most touching and profound seems suffused with unresolved grief. Kubrick died too soon in 1999 at the age of 70. As *Room 237* attests, at least we'll always have his movies to kick around. – *The Washington Post*





Su Myat Noe Kyaw @ Vitoria Hospital New Clinic Launch



Ko Htin Lin Aung, Ma Su Lin and Ko Ye Lin @ Nilfisk Auto Product Launch



Ma Lin Lin @ Skechers Footwear Shop Opening



Mr Vincent Leung, Daw Thuzar Mwe, Ms Susan Chua and Ms Zann Lee @ Skechers Footwear Shop Opening



Michelle @ The Rich Gems Promotion



Wut Hmone Shwe Yee @ Just Beyond Product Launch



Daw Cho Cho Htun @ The Rich Gems Promotion

Su Myat Noe Kyaw @ Mon Precieux New York Fashion Show



U Kyaw Thu receives a donation @ Air KBZ Donation



Thaw Myo Naung and Thae Haw Zar @ Samsung Mobile Shop Opening



Designer Mo Hom @ Mon Precieux New York Fashion Show



U Zar Ni Win Htet @ Samsung Mobile Shop Opening



Daw Khin Myint Myint @ Vitoria Hospital New Clinic Launch



Pyay Ti Oo @ Vitoria Hospital New Clinic Launch



Guest, Ko Min Min, Ko Soe Moe and Ma Win Win Tint @ City Mart Staff Party



City Mart staff @ City Mart Staff Party



Dr Aye Mya Thet and Ma Yin Myat Thu @ Revital New Actor Press Conference



Dr Than Naing and Dr Aye Mya Mya Tin Sein @ The Rich Gems Promotion



L Sai Ze @ Revital New Actor Press Conference



Ma Mee Nge and Sweety @ The Rich Gems Promotion



Tin Moe Lwin @ Nilfisk Auto Product Launch



Yu Thandar Tin and Khine Thazin Ngu Wah @ Skechers Footwear Shop Opening



SOCIALITE  
WITH NYEIN EI EI HTWE



SOCIALITE has been thinking a lot about fashion lately, particularly about what to wear during the upcoming Thingyan water festival — so she was thrilled to attend the Mon Precieux New York Fashion Show at Governor's Residence on April 1. The next day she was at Park Royal Hotel for the Revital New Actor press conference, and then she continued to South Okkalapa Township for a donation ceremony by Air KBZ. On April 4 Socialite joined the City Mart staff party at Myanmar Convention Centre, and on April 5 she poked her head in at the Just Beyond product launch event at Park Royal Hotel. The fun just never stops for Socialite, and the next day she made her presence felt at the opening of a Samsung handset shop on Bo Aung Kyaw Road before hightailing it to The Rich Gems promotion sale on U Wisara Road and the Sketchers footwear shop opening on Inya Road. She ended the week at the opening of a new medical centre at Victoria Hospital. Well, that's all for now — Socialite wishes you all a fun and safe Thingyan water festival, and don't forget to protect your skin from harmful ultraviolet rays with sunscreen or, better yet, by donning fashionable clothing!



R Zar Ni and One @ Just Beyond Product Launch



Chit Thu Wai @ Just Beyond Product Launch



Nan Su Kay Swan @ Mon Precieux New York Fashion Show



Yadana Mai @ Revital New Actor Press Conference



Ma Mya Mar Lar Han and Ma Wai Thit Lwin @ Just Beyond Product Launch



A Thin Cho Swe @ City Mart Staff Party



Daw Sann Mu and Dr Aye Tun @ Vitoria Hospital New Clinic Launch



U Kyaw Swar Lin @ Samsung Mobile Shop Opening



U Moe San Aung @ Air KBZ Donation



Soe Thu @ Just Beyond Product Launch



Awn Seng and Nan Khay Mar @ Just Beyond Product Launch



Ko Myo Sint Aung, Mr Littipong Kidmuntangdee and Mr Klidsada Boonleartnirun @ Nilfisk Auto Product Launch



Htet Htet @ Samsung Mobile Shop Opening

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## DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Days	Flight	Dep	Arr
<b>YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW</b>			
MON	UB-A1	07:45	08:45
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00
TUE	UB-A1	07:45	08:45
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00
WED	UB-A1	07:45	08:45
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00
THUR	UB-A1	07:45	08:45
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00
FRI	UB-A1	07:45	08:45
	UB-B1	11:30	12:30
	UB-C1	16:00	17:00
SAT	UB-A1	08:00	09:00
SUN	UB-A1	15:30	16:30

<b>NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON</b>			
MON	UB-A2	09:15	10:15
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30
TUE	UB-A2	09:15	10:15
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30
WED	UB-A2	09:15	10:15
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30
THUR	UB-A2	09:15	10:15
	UB-B2	13:00	14:00
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30
FRI	UB-A2	09:15	10:15
SUN	UB-B2	13:00	14:00
	UB-C2	17:30	18:30
SAT	UB-A2	10:00	11:00
SUN	UB-A2	17:00	18:00

<b>YANGON TO MANDALAY</b>			
MON	YH 917	06:10	08:30
	YJ 891	06:10	08:15
	6T 401	06:20	08:25
	YH 909	06:30	08:10
	K7 222	06:30	08:40
	YJ 001	08:00	08:55
	Y5 131	08:00	09:00
	YJ 201	10:00	11:25
	YJ 761	11:00	12:55
	YH 727	11:15	13:25
	K7 622	12:00	13:25
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	16:25
	YH 731	15:00	17:10
	YJ 891	06:10	08:15
	YH 917	06:10	08:30
	6T 401	06:20	08:25
	YH 909	06:30	08:10
	K7 222	06:30	08:40
	Y5 131	08:00	09:00
	8M 6603	09:00	10:10
	YJ 761	11:00	12:55
	YH 729	11:15	14:15
	K7 822	11:30	12:55
	YJ 201	12:00	13:25
	K7 622	12:00	13:25
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	16:25
	YH 731	15:00	17:10
	YH 891	06:10	08:15
	YH 917	06:10	08:30
	6T 401	06:20	08:25
	YH 909	06:30	08:10
	K7 222	06:30	08:40
	Y5 131	08:00	09:00
	YJ 751/W97751	10:00	11:55
	YH 737	11:15	13:25
	YJ 201	11:00	12:25
	K7 622	12:00	13:25
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	16:35
	YH 731	15:00	17:10
	YJ 891	06:10	08:15
	YH 917	06:10	08:30
	6T 401	06:20	08:25
	YH 909	06:30	08:10
	K7 222	06:30	08:40
	YJ 001	08:00	08:55
	Y5 131	08:00	09:00
	8M 6603	09:00	10:10
	YJ 761	11:00	12:55
	YH 729	11:15	14:15
	K7 226	12:00	13:25
	YJ 201	12:45	14:10
	YH 731	15:00	17:10
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	16:35

FRI	YJ 891	06:10	08:15
	YH 917	06:10	08:30
	6T 401	06:20	08:25
	YJ 211	06:30	07:55
	YH 909	06:30	08:10
	K7 222	06:30	08:40
	YJ 001	08:00	08:55
	Y5 131	08:00	09:00
	YJ 751/W97751	10:45	12:40
	YH 727	11:15	13:25
	K7 824	13:00	14:25
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	16:35
	YJ 791	14:30	15:55
	YH 731	15:00	17:10
SAT	YJ 891	06:10	08:15
	YH 917	06:10	08:30
	6T 401	06:20	08:25
	YH 909	06:30	08:10
	K7 222	06:30	08:40
	K7 244	06:45	08:10
	YJ 911	07:00	09:15
	YJ 001	08:00	08:55
	Y5 131	08:00	09:00
	YJ 201/W97201	07:30	08:55
	YJ 761	11:00	12:55
	YH 729	11:15	13:25
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	16:35
SUN	YH 731	15:00	17:10
	YJ 891	06:10	08:15
	YH 917	06:10	08:30
	6T 401	06:20	08:25
	YH 909	06:30	08:10
	K7 222	06:30	08:40
	YJ 201/W97201	07:30	08:55
	Y5 131	08:00	09:00
	8M 6603	09:00	10:10
	YJ 751/W97751	09:00	10:55
	YH 737	11:15	13:25
	K7 622	12:00	13:25
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	16:35
	YH 731	15:00	17:10

<b>MANDALAY TO YANGON</b>			
MON	YH 910	08:10	10:15
	YJ 892	08:30	10:25
	YH 918	08:30	10:25
	6T 402	08:45	10:45
	K7 223	09:00	11:05
	Y5 132	09:30	10:30
	YJ 002	11:00	11:55
	YJ 202	14:30	15:55
	6T 502/K7 225	16:50	19:00
	YJ 762	16:35	18:00
	K7 623	16:40	18:05
	YH 728	16:45	18:10
	YH 732	17:10	19:15
	YH 910	08:10	10:15
	YH 918	08:30	10:25
	YJ 892	08:30	10:45
	6T 402	08:45	10:45
	K7 223	09:00	11:05
	Y5 132	09:30	10:30
	6T 502/K7 225	16:50	19:00
	YJ 762	16:00	17:55
	YJ 202	16:30	17:55
	K7 623	16:40	18:05
	YH 732	17:10	19:15
	8M 6604	17:20	18:30
	YH 730	18:00	19:25
	K7 823	18:00	19:25
WED	YH 910	08:10	10:15
	YH 918	08:30	10:25
	YJ 892	08:30	10:25
	6T 402	08:45	10:45
	K7 223	09:00	11:05
	Y5 132	09:30	10:30
	YJ 002	11:00	11:55
	YJ 202	15:30	16:55
	K7 623	16:40	18:05
	6T 502/K7 225	16:50	19:00
	YH 732	17:10	19:15
	YH 738	17:25	18:50
THUR	YH 910	08:10	10:15
	YH 918	08:30	10:25
	YJ 892	08:30	10:25
	6T 402	08:45	10:45
	K7 223	09:00	11:05
	Y5 132	09:30	10:30
	YJ 002	11:00	11:55
	K7 227	15:50	17:15
	6T 502/K7 225	16:50	19:00
	YH 732	17:10	19:15
	YH 732	17:10	19:15
	YJ 202	17:15	18:40
	8M 6604	17:20	18:30
	YH 730	18:00	19:25

FRI	YH 910	08:10	10:15
	YH 918	08:30	10:25
	YJ 892	08:30	10:25
	6T 402	08:45	10:45
	K7 223	09:00	11:05
	Y5 132	09:30	10:30
	YJ 002	11:00	11:55
	YJ 212	11:30	12:55
	YJ 792	16:10	18:15
	6T 502/K7 225	16:50	19:00
	YH 728	16:45	18:10
	YH 732	17:10	19:15
	K7 825	17:40	19:05
SAT	YH 910	10:40	12:45
	YH 918	08:30	10:25
	YJ 892	08:30	10:25
	6T 402	08:45	10:45
	K7 223	09:00	11:05
	YJ 201/W97201	09:10	11:05
	Y5 132	09:30	10:30
	YJ 002	11:00	11:55
	YJ 912	12:10	14:25
	YJ 762	16:35	18:00
	YH 732	17:10	18:35
	6T 502/K7 225	16:50	19:00
SUN	YH 730	17:10	18:35
	YH 910	08:10	10:15
	YH 918	08:30	10:25
	YJ 892	08:30	10:25
	6T 402	08:45	10:45
	K7 223	09:00	11:05
	YJ 201/W97201	09:10	11:05
	Y5 132	09:30	10:30
	6T 502/K7 225	16:50	19:00
	K7 623	16:40	18:05
	YH 732	17:10	19:15
	8M 6604	17:20	18:30
	K7 823	17:20	18:45
	YH 738	17:25	18:50
	YJ 752/W97752	15:50	17:15

YANGON TO NYAUNG U				
MON	YJ 891	06:10	07:30	
	YH 917	06:10	07:45	
	6T 401	06:20	07:40	
	YJ 141/W97141	06:45	08:05	
	K7 222	06:30	07:50	
	YH 909	06:30	08:55	
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	17:20	
	YH 731	15:00	17:55	
	TUE	YJ 891	06:10	07:30
		YH 917	06:10	07:45
		6T 401	06:20	07:40
		K7 222	06:30	07:50
YH 909		06:30	08:55	
YJ 141/W97141		06:45	08:05	
	YH 711	10:30	12:50	
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	17:20	
	YH 731	15:00	17:55	
	WED	YJ 891	06:10	07:30
		YH 917	06:10	07:45
		6T 401	06:20	07:40
K7 222		06:30	07:50	
YH 909		06:30	08:55	
K7 242		06:45	08:05	
	YJ 141/W97141	06:45	08:05	
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	17:20	
	YH 731	15:00	17:55	
	THUR	YJ 891	06:10	07:30
		YH 917	06:10	07:45
		6T 401	06:20	07:40
K7 222		06:30	07:50	
YH 909		06:30	08:55	
YJ 141/W97141		06:45	08:05	
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	17:20	
	YH 731	15:00	17:55	
	FRI	YJ 891	06:10	07:30
		YH 917	06:10	07:45
		6T 401	06:20	07:40
		K7 222	06:30	07:50
YH 909		06:30	08:55	
K7 242		06:45	08:05	
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	17:20	
	YJ 791	14:30	16:40	
	YH 731	15:00	17:55	
	SAT	YJ 891	06:10	07:30
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K7 222		06:30	07:50	
6T 501/K7 224		14:30	17:20	
SUN		YJ 891	06:10	07:30
	YH 917	06:10	07:45	
	6T 401	06:20	07:40	
	K7 222	06:30	07:50	
	YH 909	06:30	8:55	
	6T 501/K7 224	14:30	17:20	
	K7 224	14:15	16:25	
	YH 731	15:00	17:55	



Turkmenistan
desert reveals
old mysteries

By Igor Sasin

MARY, Turkmenistan – Over four millennia ago, the fortress town of Gonur-Tepe might have been a rare advanced civilisation before it was buried for centuries under the dust of the Kara Kum desert in remote western Turkmenistan. After being uncovered by Soviet archaeologists in the last century, Gonur-Tepe, once home to thousands of people and the centre of a thriving region, is gradually revealing its mysteries with new artefacts being uncovered on every summer dig.

The scale of the huge complex that spans some 30 hectares can only be properly appreciated from the air, from where the former buildings look like a maze in the desert surrounded by vast walls. Just 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the celebrated ancient city of Merv outside the modern city of Mary, the ruins of Gonur-Tepe are an indication of the archaeological riches of Turkmenistan, one of the most isolated countries in the world.

Around 2000 BCE, Gonur-Tepe was the main settlement of the Margush or Margiana region that was home to one of the most sophisticated, but little-known Bronze Age civilisations. The site – which until the last century was covered by desert and scrub – was uncovered in Soviet times by the celebrated archaeologist Viktor Sarianidi who, at the age of 84, is about to spend another summer working on the site. “I remember so well my joy when I first encountered this archaeological Klondike. A sensation right under your feet,” the Russian professor said.

Every digging season at Gonur-Tepe yields new discoveries showing the quality of the craftsmanship of the Bronze Age artisans in the town, which at the time would likely have been home to thousands of residents.

The town’s craftsmen could mould metal, make silver and gold trinkets, create materials for cult worship and carve bone and stone.

“It’s amazing to what extent the people possessed advanced techniques. The craftsmen learned how to change the form of natural stone at a high temperature and then glazed it so that it was preserved,” said archaeologist Nadezhda Dubova.

“This year, Gonur has given us another surprise, a fantastic mosaic,” she said, noting that such an object predated the standard era of mosaic-making in Greek and Roman antiquity.

The ruins of Gonur-Tepe are the centrepiece of a network of towns and settlements in the delta region of the river Morghab that flows through Turkmenistan from its source in Afghanistan.

Gonur-Tepe is a three-hour drive from the provincial centre of Mary – two hours along a bumpy asphalt road that passes former collective farms that have now fallen into disuse, and then another hour-long slog through the desert scrub.

Mary, 380 kilometres from the capital Ashgabat, is a typical Turkmen provincial city, home to 200,000 people and largely built in the Soviet style with a railway connection and low-rise apartment buildings.

Some 30 kilometres (19 miles) outside Mary lies the other great glory of the region – the great ruined city of Merv, whose importance goes back to the time of the Achaemenid Persians and reached a peak under Turkic rule in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Merv went into terminal decline after it was sacked by the Mongols in 1221 in a deadly conquest that left tens of thousands dead. Its ruins are as deserted as those of Gonur-Tepe.

Its greatest treasure is the still preserved mausoleum of the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar under whose rule Merv was a city of 200,000 people and briefly one of the most heavily populated settlements in the world. – AFP

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr	Days	Flight	Dep	Arr				
YANGON TO BANGKOK				YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR				YANGON TO TOKYO				SINGAPORE TO YANGON				THUR CA 905 13:00 13:15							
MON	PG 706	07:15	09:30	MON	8M 501	07:50	11:50	MON	NH 914	21:30	06:40+1	MON	SQ 998	07:55	09:20	MU 2031	13:30	14:00	FRI	MU 2011	08:35	11:30	
	8M 333	08:20	10:05		AK 1425	08:30	12:45	WED	NH 914	21:30	06:40+1		3K 585	09:10	10:40		MU 2031	13:30	14:00	SAT	CA 905	13:00	13:15
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		MH 741	12:15	16:30	SAT	NH 914	21:30	06:40+1		8M 6231	09:10	10:40		MU 2031	13:30	14:00		MU 2031	13:00	13:15
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		AK 1421	16:45	21:00						8M 232	13:25	14:50			13:00	13:15	SUN	CA 905	13:00	13:15
	PG 702	10:30	12:25		8M 501	07:50	11:50						MI 520	22:10	23:35			13:30	14:00		MU 2031	13:30	14:00
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		AK 1425	08:30	12:45						Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		MH 741	12:15	16:30					TUE	MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	PG 704	18:20	20:15		AK 1421	16:45	21:00						SQ 998	07:55	09:20								
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		MH 743	16:55	21:10						3K 585	09:10	10:40								
TUE	PG 706	07:15	09:30		AK 1425	08:30	12:45						8M 6231	08:55	10:25								
	8M 333	08:20	10:05		8M 501	07:50	11:50						VN 943	11:40	13:25								
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		MH 741	12:15	16:30						8M 232	13:25	14:50								
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		AK 1421	16:45	21:00						MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	PG 702	10:30	12:25		THUR	AK 1425	08:30	12:45					Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	TG 302	14:55	16:50		MH 741	12:15	16:30					WED	SQ 998	07:55	09:20								
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		AK 1421	16:45	21:00						3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	PG 704	18:20	20:15		FRI	AK 1425	08:30	12:45					8M 6231	08:55	10:25								
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		8M 501	07:50	11:50						8M 232	13:25	14:50								
WED	PG 706	07:15	09:30		MH 741	12:15	16:30						MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	8M 333	08:20	10:05		AK 1421	16:45	21:00						Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	8M 335	08:40	10:25		THUR	AK 1425	08:30	12:45					3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	TG 304	09:50	11:45		MH 741	12:15	16:30						8M 6231	08:55	10:25								
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	TG 302	14:55	16:50		SUN	AK 1425	08:30	12:45					MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	8M 331	16:30	18:15		MH 741	12:15	16:30						Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	PG 704	18:20	20:15		AK 1421	16:45	21:00						SQ 998	07:55	09:20								
	TG 306	19:45	21:40		MH 743	16:55	21:10						3K 585	09:10	10:40								
THUR	PG 706	07:15	09:30										8M 6231	09:10	10:40								
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	8M 335	08:40	10:25										MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	TG 304	09:50	11:45										Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	PG 702	10:30	12:25										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	TG 302	14:55	16:50										8M 232	13:25	14:50								
	8M 331	16:30	18:15										MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	PG 704	18:20	20:15										8M 234	20:30	21:55								
	TG 306	19:45	21:40										MI 520	22:10	23:35								
FRI	PG 706	07:15	09:30										SQ 998	07:55	09:20								
	8M 333	08:20	10:05										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	8M 335	08:40	10:25										8M 6231	09:10	10:40								
	TG 304	09:50	11:45										8M 232	13:25	14:50								
	PG 702	10:30	12:25										MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	TG 302	14:55	16:50										Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	8M 331	16:30	18:15										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	PG 704	18:20	20:15										8M 6231	08:55	10:25								
	TG 306	19:45	21:40										VN 943	11:40	13:25								
SAT	PG 706	07:15	09:30										8M 232	13:25	14:50								
	8M 333	08:20	10:05										MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	8M 335	08:40	10:25										Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	TG 304	09:50	11:45										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	PG 702	10:30	12:25										8M 232	13:25	14:50								
	TG 302	14:55	16:50										MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	8M 331	16:30	18:15										Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	PG 704	18:20	20:15										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	TG 306	19:45	21:40										8M 234	20:30	21:55								
SUN	PG 706	07:15	09:30										MI 520	22:10	23:35								
	8M 333	08:20	10:05										SQ 998	07:55	09:20								
	8M 335	08:40	10:25										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
	TG 304	09:50	11:45										8M 6231	08:55	10:25								
	PG 702	10:30	12:25										VN 943	11:40	13:25								
	TG 302	14:55	16:50										8M 232	13:25	14:50								
	8M 331	16:30	18:15										MI 518	14:20	15:45								
	PG 704	18:20	20:15										Y5 234	15:35	17:05								
	TG 306	19:45	21:40										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
YANGON TO DON MUENG													8M 232	13:25	14:50								
MON	FD 2752	08:30	10:20										MI 520	22:10	23:35								
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40										SQ 998	07:55	09:20								
	FD 2754	17:50	19:35										3K 585	09:10	10:40								
TUE	FD 2752	08:30	10:20										8M 6231	08:55	10:25								
	FD 2756	12:50	14:40										VN 943	11:40	13:25								
	FD 2754	17:50	19:35										8M 232	13:25	14:50								
WED	FD 2752	08:30	10:20									</											



# Ghetto's final hours revealed in diary

By Gwen Ackerman

JERUSALEM — "People are suffocating because of the smoke. All shout for help. Many, almost everyone, call upon God, 'God show your power, have mercy on us.' God is silent as a sphinx and does not reply."

These were the final words from a makeshift diary scribbled on both sides of five pages of graph paper by an unidentified young woman hiding in a bunker as the Nazis closed in on what remained of the Warsaw Ghetto.

The diary runs from April 23, 1943, and ends 17 days later on May 10. It is the first real glimpse into the daily lives of about 40,000 Jews hiding in bunkers as the ghetto burnt above them and the Jewish underground fought the Germans, scholars said as it was shown to Bloomberg by Yad Vashem staff.

"We hear so much about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising from the fighters' point of view," said Havi Dreyfus, a senior lecturer at Tel Aviv University and the head of Yad Vashem's centre of research into the Holocaust in Poland. "Here we have a Jewish youngster telling us important information, the experience that was common to tens of thousands of Jews."

The writing of the young woman reminds the reader of a much more famous diarist — Anne Frank, whose book *The Diary of a Young Girl*, first published in Dutch in 1947, details her life hiding in a secret annex for more than two years to escape the Nazis.

"It's interesting when you juxtapose the two teenaged women with radically different Holocaust experiences," said David Silberklang, senior historian at Yad Vashem's International

Pic: Yad Veshem



The Chief Rabbi of Israel, Yitzhak Herzog (centre), stands in the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto after the uprising.

Institute for Holocaust Research. "Their stories end the same way, in death."

Frank was in hiding with her family for two years in relatively quiet conditions that allowed her to think about boys and her appearance "in the midst of terror", he said. The Warsaw teenager, on the other hand, wrote with "death staring her in the face, amid stench and smoke and suffocation".

The final German attempt to wipe out the remainder of Jews living in the ghetto started four days before the Warsaw diary started. The Germans, facing fighting groups and ghetto inhabitants barricaded in bunkers, began systematically burning down the ghetto. For almost a

month, the Jewish fighters battled the Germans in what was the first popular uprising in a city in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The girl's diary is the first real evidence that the entire remnant of the ghetto supported the uprising, said Silberklang, who also edits the journal *Yad Vashem Studies* in which an English translation of the diary appeared.

"Our defence is the greatest possible silence and stillness," the young woman writes. "We had always believed we should hide well."

Then later: "Tra-ta-ta-ta, boom! The enemy fires his machine guns and lobbs grenades at the bunker. ...

The people inside summon courage and calmly look death in the eye."

The diary includes a detailed sketch of the bunker, where the beds were, where the inhabitants cooked. It gives a description of how order was kept and rations divided up. At one point, the young woman tells how when electricity was gone and inhabitants could no longer cook the food rations, children fainted from hunger, only to be revived by a rapidly diminishing store of onions.

"It exposes many aspects of life during the uprising that we were not aware of," said Dreyfus. "The self aid. The fact that the bunker accepted others who

didn't have shelter. How the atmosphere changed as things got worse. Her diary makes us understand better what the uprising meant not just to the fighters but to those staying in the bunkers. It tells us what unbearable means."

About 6 million European Jews were killed in the Holocaust during World War II as the Nazis ran a campaign across Europe that included random executions, plunder and death camps.

The diary may be one mentioned by an engineer architect who wrote in his memoirs that he found the diary of a 14-year-old girl in the ruins. If it is though, part of it has been lost, according to a paper published by Dreyfus.

Silberklang said one name in the diary matches one in the archives and so the writer may be from that family. There isn't enough detail in the diary to be 100 percent sure.

Silberklang called the descriptions in the Warsaw Ghetto diary "very gripping, moving and deeply depressing."

"We know what happened in the end. We see everything closing in. No air, no hot food for days. The stench is unbearable," he said. "This young woman had a sense of history. It's as if she said to herself, 'I don't know if I will survive, but I will write this so someone will know what happened.'"

— Bloomberg News



A monument over the bunker at 18 Mila Street, Warsaw. Pic: Yad Veshem

## Events Flash

### Re-Please #2

An art exhibition titled "Re-Please #2" will be held at Monsoon Restaurant (85-87 Theinbyu Road, Botahtaung township, Yangon) from March 29 to April 30. The show will feature the work of two artists from Myanmar and nine artists from Thailand, focusing 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, will be held at Gallery 65 (65 Yaw Min Gyi Road, Dagon township) from April 1 to 30.

### 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)

"Imagination is more important than knowledge," Albert Einstein once said. Don't be afraid to use your creative capabilities to define the problems you are facing before taking the next step. Think logically, and your complementary activities will make your heart satisfied.

### Pisces

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

The basic principle to follow for a successful relationship is humility coupled with a honeyed tongue. Flexibility should be your main tactic for expanding your social circle. You should learn to lead up, lead across and lead down in order to get along with everyone. Easy promises are not suitable in your personal relationship.

### Aries

(March 21 - April 19)

Take steps to achieve your potential for a great life ahead of you, and don't forget to discover the best way live it. Treat yourself as the spiritual treasure that you are. Cultivate the light of your knowledge to ensure that it shines brightly in meritorious performance. Learning and thinking must work together to support your emotional affairs.

### Taurus

(April 20 - May 20)

Be an active participant in real-life dramas. Treat problems as opportunities to which you can apply your analytical powers. Pay close attention to your emotions in your love life, but understand that no one can fully comprehend the true nature of love. Physical language can provide a clue to the degree of the love felt by others.

### Gemini

(May 21 - June 20)

Let wisdom denote the pursuit of the best ends by the best means. A wonderful, surprising message through an unexpected channel of communication will change your love life for the better and put your profession on the right track. Irresponsibility will never lead to pleasure or satisfaction in love. You and your partner must learn to pay more attention to one another.

### Cancer

(June 22 - July 22)

Learn to face the truth in any given situation. Use your skills and right actions to improve your social position, which will be sure to put infinite riches within your reach. Nothing in the world can take the place of

persistence, which you need because heavy responsibility will soon be on your shoulders.

### Leo

(July 23 - Aug 22)

Nothing is to be feared as much as fear itself. Use your communication skills to get a clear view of the colours of your social competition, and use wisdom to uncover the truth about the best means of reaching your destination. Cultivate a life filled with courage and determination. Taking responsibility will help build your self-esteem.

### Virgo

(Aug 23 - Sept 22)

Careful listening can reveal unseen problems. Knowing how and when to listen is crucial to any relationship and very important for leadership, so keep your ears open at all times, especially when things seem to grow quiet. Let curiosity be your guide to finding out what your honey-mate wants and needs from you.

### Libra

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)

Social circumstances can seem overwhelming, and you should distance yourself from the crazy, erotic manners of others. Keep careful track of your money. Turn yourself into a student of emotions, and recognise that life, love and suffering are all intertwined. Gird your mind with strength and live a healthy lifestyle to make your life's journey pleasant and enjoyable.

### Scorpio

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Nobody is a winner in any argument, and nobody harbouring a high degree of intolerance can be considered a good leader. Individuals must have the courage to take responsibility for their right or wrong decisions according to the circumstances. Develop your habit of linking with old friends, especially those with good personalities but poor fortune.

### Sagittarius

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Believing in your capabilities is very important when it comes to standing up for yourself and achieving your plans to make a lasting impact. Following your own decision-making process is better than taking things as they come along. Being in the right place at the right time cannot be guaranteed. Emotional desire must be suited to social rules.

### Capricorn

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Don't be afraid to assert yourself when it comes to pursuing your goals and standing by your personal beliefs. Be proud of the way you work and seek genuinely optimistic people as your friends. Make enthusiasm a daily habit. Everything is in constant flux, so make your own rules and take a new direction accordingly.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw,  
4th Floor, 113, Thamaing Bayan Road, Tamwe Township,  
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**"SCHOLAR** Teaching Organization" founded with ME,BE and Master Degree holder with 12 years experience in teaching field.Role and Responsibility: Making the students develop problem solving skills, critical thinking skills & I.Q and E.Q enriching skills,Int'l School (ILBC, Total, MISO, ISY, PISM, Horizon,ISM,network,C ISM,MIS,MLA,ES4E,D SY RV). All grades, All Subjects .....Singapore MOE Exams (AEIS, S-AEIS exam IELTS, TOFEL. Tr.Htet :09-215-0075, 09-401-600705, Tr.Bryan : 09-420-070692.

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**YOUNG LEARNERS** English: Young learners (Age 6-14) (Starters, Movers, Flyers, KET, PET)One to One, Special Class & Home. Adults learners (Age above 16). Sa Ya Zaw Myo Win, Ph: 09-730-26906.

**TEACHERS** who have got Teaching experien ce in Singapore,Grade 10,11 & Int'l School, GCSE, SAT, IELTS, TOEFL, Sayar Bryan, ME (IT) 09-42 007 0692, Sayar Htet : 09-21 50075, Sayar Min Aung (B.E ,IT) : 09-492-80490

**SUMMER ENGLISH** Classes (11 March -May 31) for ages 6-12 y.o. Monday - Friday 9am to 12noon. Fees: USD200 for the whole course including materials. Register early as places are limited. Call 09-450-032598, 09-730-97836 for more information.

**ENGLISH** classes for Cambridge Young Learners - Starters/ Movers/ Flyers/ KET and PET. Also available Business English for Absolute Beginners (Adults), Reading classes for 6-10 y.o,

Ph: 09-540-8223, 09-730-95975.

**UVSV** Hygiene kits, FirstAdKitsforEmergency Areas with Fair price and fast delivery. Ph -09-516-3209, 09-507-4207

### For Sale

**ORIGINAL** 3DS Game Cartridge (Spirit Camrea: The Cursed Memoir) - 20000 Kyats, Original 3DS Game Cartridge (Kid Icarus: Uprising) - 20000 Kyats. Ph: 09-507-9980"

**DELL**, Acer, ASUS, Laptop Core i3, i5, i7 Ph : 09-450-039844

**ACER** 4775 Intel Core i5 Ram 4GB H.D.D 750GB Graphic nvidia 1GB Green Colour Price : 400000. Ph : 09-450-039844

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**IPHONE** 4G 32GB Black. Price : 300000, iPhone 4G 16GB Black Price : 250000, iPhone 3GS 32GB Black, Price : 150000, iPhone 3GS 16GB Black, Price: 120000, Samsung Galaxy S3 White, Price : 320000, (All Phone is Official Unlock). Ph : 09-450-039844

**IPAD** 4 32GB + 4G White iPad Mini 64GB Black, iPad Mini 16GB Black, iPad 1 64GB + 3G. Ph : 09-501-6694.

**ACER** 4775 Intel Core i5 Ram 4GB H.D.D 750GB Graphic nvidia 1GB Green Colour Price : 400000. Ph : 09-450-039844

**IPAD** 4 32GB White + 4G (10 Month Warranty) Price : 570000. iPad 3 64GB White Wifi (8Month Warranty) Price: 460000. Ph : 09-501-6694.

**ACER** 4775 Intel Core i5 Ram 4GB H.D.D 750GB Graphic nvidia 1GB Green Colour Price : 400000. Ph : 01-248076.

**IPAD** 4 32GB White + 4G (10 Month Warranty) Price : 570000. iPad 3 64GB White Wifi (8Month Warranty) Price: 460000. Ph : 09-501-6694

**IPAD** 4 32GB White 4G iPad 3 32GB White Wifi iPad Mini 64GB Black WiFi. Ph : 09-501-6694

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**IPAD** 4 32GB White 4G iPad 3 32GB White Wifi iPad Mini 64GB Black WiFi. Ph : 09-501-6694

730-65958, 09-50 6-1232.

To Sell - Original 3DS Game Cartridge (Spirit Camrea: The Cursed Memoir) - 20000 Kyats- Original 3DS Game Cartridge (Kid Icarus: Uprising) - 20000 Kyats. Ph: 095079980"

**DELL**, Acer, ASUS, Laptop Core i3, i5, i7 Ph : 09-450-039844

**ACER** 4775 Intel Core i5 Ram 4GB H.D.D 750GB Graphic nvidia 1GB Green Colour Price : 400000. Ph : 09-450-039844

**95% NEW IPHONE** 5 64GB Black Official Unlock With Original Box & Accessories. Price : 720000. Ph : 09-450-039844

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**IPHONE** 4G 32GB Black. Price : 300000, iPhone 4G 16GB Black Price : 250000, iPhone 3GS 32GB Black, Price : 150000, iPhone 3GS 16GB Black, Price: 120000, Samsung Galaxy S3 White, Price : 320000, (All Phone is Official Unlock). Ph : 09-450-039844

**IPAD** 4 32GB + 4G White iPad Mini 64GB Black, iPad Mini 16GB Black, iPad 1 64GB + 3G. Ph : 09-501-6694.

**IPHONE** 4S 64GB White iPhone 4S 32GB Black, iPhone 4G 32GB Black, iPhone 4G 16GB Black (All Phone is Official Unlock) Ph : 09-450-039844

**ACER** 4775 Intel Core i5 Ram 4GB H.D.D 750GB Graphic nvidia 1GB Green Colour Price : 400000. Ph : 09-450-039844

**IPAD** 4 32GB White + 4G (10 Month Warranty) Price : 570000. iPad 3 64GB White Wifi (8Month Warranty) Price: 460000. Ph : 09-501-6694.

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## Property

### HousingforRent

**HLAING**, (647), # 8-C, Inya View Condominium, Pyay Rd, Yangon. Ph: 09-4200-35206, 09-4200-767665. (No Agents).

**BAHAN**, University Avenue, compound 85 by 120, 3 MB, 1 reading room, living room, dinning room, kitchen, servant quarter, BBQ house in the garden, ph, 3AC. Ph: 09-513-7802, 534542.

(1)**MAY LIKHA** housing, driving to Yankin Center (20minutes). 2700 Sqft 2 RC, 3 MBR, 2BR, USD 4000.

(2) **Golden velley**, 2100 Sqft, 2RC, 1MBR, 3BR, Fully furnish, USD 4000. (3)**Inyar Rd**, 1 RC, 6400 Sqft, 2 MBR, 1 SR, Fully furnish, USD 5000. (4)

**Near Thai Embassy**, 2100 Sqft, 3MBR, 1SR, USD 5000. (5)**Aye Yeik Mon housing**, Driving to Hlaingtharyar (25 minutes) 2 RC, 3MBR, 1 SR, USD 2300. (6)

**Near Inya Rd**, 3RC 6 MBR, Fully Furnish . USD 10000. Ph: 09-4921 4276.

**A P A R T M E N T** at Pearl Condo Minium Block-B, K a b a y e Pagoda Road, Sqft 1750, 1MB, 2BR, 4AC, Fully furnished, Heater, Ext ph. 2500 USD. Contact 09-516-4684, 09-514-1315.

Junction, Thirimon Plaza 3rd Flr, 1200 sqft. Hall Type, Internet Access with High Speed (3MB, Unlimited plan) Good for Office (or) Training Room, 500 USD per month (with internet access) 350 USD per month (without internet access) Ph:09-5076408

**CHAN THAR GON YAUNG** Executive Condominium, 1650 Sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, Maid (1), Aircons (4), Full furnished, Skynet Satellite System, Water Heaters, Phone, Internet, 24 Hours Electricity, Amazing Serenity & Satisfactory Facilities, Very Nice RIVER VIEW from Master Bedroom! Swimming Pool, Tennis Court, Convenience Store & Club Resturant! Ph: 09-732-24316

(1)**PANSOEDAN ST**, Condo, 1250 Sqft, 2 BM, 1760 USD per month. (2)**Near Park Royal Hotel**, (for office), 1200 Sqft, Hall type, 850 USD per month. (3)**Than Lwin St**, 1250 Sqft, 2 RC, 3 MBR, 5882 USD. (4)

**Near Sedona Hotel**, 2 RC, 5 MBR, 5882 USD (5)**Near Inyar Lake**, 2 RC, 3 MBR, 3529 USD (6)**Inya Rd**, 2 RC, 3 MBR, 5882 USD. Ph: 09-492-14276, 09-421-177 105.

**OFFICE SPACES** and Retail Spaces at 2 great locations: Kabaye Pagoda Rd & Pyay Rd. To find out more pls call: 09-732-50365.

**KAMAYUT** : Baho St.3 storey. 7MBR. unfurnish ed- USD\$12000. fully furnished- USD\$15000, suitable for office use too. pls call 09-520-0654

**HousingforSale** **SANCHAUNG**, 12.5' x 55', 2 Flr, 1 A/C, 1 ine ph. 350 Lakhs. Negotiable. Ph: 09 5012 801, 519 268

**MAYANGONE**, 9 miles Bonyarna Lane (50"x 70") garden with including house (3700 Lakhs) no agent please. Ph: 09-503-6519, 09-421-029911.

**HLAING THARYAR**, 129(A), 18 ward, Thakin Pholagyi 5 St 20'x 60' (Price- Negotiable), (Near to Shwe Yin Aye Market & bus stop) Ph:09-43129221, 09-731-35807

**M I N G A L A R** Taungnyunt ; (506/1), Kyi Taw Housing, Kyi Taw St,(14'x55'), Corner Rm 5th Flr, 2 Bedrooms, 2 Balcony, porcelain floor, Toilet. Price - 340 lakhs. Ph: 09-421-111893

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**TO FOREIGNERS**, TAXI service with an English speaker. Feel free to ask by yourself. Ph: 09-517-9125

**NYAN MYINT THU** Car Rental Service : 56, Bo Ywe St, Latha Tsp, Ph: 246551, 375283, 704335, 09-2132778. Email: [colwinkyi@gmail.com](mailto:colwinkyi@gmail.com), [nyanmyintthu@gmail.com](mailto:nyanmyintthu@gmail.com)

**NEAR PARK ROYAL** Hotel, Apartment 1250 Sqft, 2MBR, 1SR, fully furnish, USD 2000.

(2)**Near Yangon University**, 1100 Sqft, 1MBR, 1SR, no furnish, USD 1200. (3)**Near UNDP**, Apartment, 750 Sqft 2 flat, Hall type, USD 1200. (4)**Near Park Royal Hotel**, for office, 1200 Sqft, Hall type USD 800. (5)**Pan Soe dan St**, condo, 1250 Sqft, 1MBR, 1SR, 1725 USD. 09-4211 77 105.

**OFFICE** : Bayint Naung

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09 421 177105, [Power7may@gmail.com](mailto:Power7may@gmail.com)





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## Employment

### UN Positions

**IOM** Int'l Organization for Migration is seeking **Senior Admin & Finance Assistant** in Myawaddy, Kayin State: Academic Background in Business Administration or related field. 3 years of progressive experience in related field. Excellent computer skills in MS office and Excel. Pls submit application to IOM Mission in Myanmar - Yangon. 12<sup>th</sup> Flr, Traders Hotel : 223, Sule Pagoda Rd, Yangon. Email: iomyangon@iom.int.

**IOM** Int'l Organization for Migration is seeking (1) **Community Health Supervisor** in Mawlamyinegyun Sub-Office, Ayeyarwaddy Region: University degree in Medicine, preferably with advanced studies in public and/or community health. Should have both public health and medical background. 3 years experience in community based health programmes (preferably in the field of Maternal & Child Health, Primary Health Card, health promotion) with an INGO, LINGO, UN agency. Good command in English. Competent in MS Excel, Word processing, & PowerPoint. (2) **Finance Assistant** in Mawlamyine, Mon State: Myanmar national. University degree in Accounting with 2 years related experience. Excellent computer skills. Pls 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 and further documents are not required at this stage) to Int'l organization for Migration, 12<sup>th</sup> Flr, Traders Hotel : 223, Sule Pagoda Rd, Kyauktada, Ph: 252560, 375601, Email: hryangon@iom.int, Closing date: For (1) 26 April 2013, For (2) 22 April 2013.

### Ingo Positions

**HelpAge** International - the only global network striving for the rights of disadvantaged older people, was established in 1983 and now consists of more than 75 affiliates in 50 countries, and a secretariat in London. We have 6 regional centers expanding the globe and 7 national programmes. Together, these link with 300 more organizations globally. The Chiang Mai-based East Asia/Pacific Regional Office works with more than 40 affiliates and partner organizations on over 30 projects throughout Asia. HelpAge established its office in Yangon, Myanmar in 2008 and has been actively involved in the Post Nargis-related disaster recovery programs working in partnership with affected communities, local NGOs and other INGOs. The focus of our efforts since 2003 (with the establishment of the Myanmar office in 2008) has been on integration and welfare of older people in the programmes of the government and relief organizations on the ground. We are currently implementing projects to reduce poverty and vulnerability amongst older people and their families in Ayeyarwaddy Delta, the Central Dry Zone, and Kayin/Mon States. HelpAge is expanding its communications work in Myanmar and is seeking **Advocacy and Communications Manager** and **Communication Officer** to support the team in all areas of communications, advocacy and publicity.

**HelpAge** Myanmar is seeking qualified & experienced Myanmar nationals for the following two positions:-  
**Job Title: Advocacy and Communications Manager** (1 Post) Location: Yangon Qualification: / competencies Essential: Bachelor's degree in journalism, communications or other related field. At least 4 years' work experience in communications or publishing, preferably with an international organisation. Myanmar language fluency & high proficiency in English writing & speaking. Excellent organizational and time-management skills, with an ability to prioritize effectively and meet deadlines. Clear writing skills and an ability to tailor writing style to audience & project brief. Excellent networking and interpersonal skills. Ability to work effectively with culturally diverse team members from various disciplines, and in a fast-paced team environment. Strong IT skills including MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Creative Suite. Flexible approach to working outside normal office hours, particularly when called upon to support country teams or meet deadlines. Ability to manage document filing and analyze, organize and integrate detailed information clearly, quickly, and consistently. Desirable: Master's degree in related field. Desktop publishing, graphic design and related IT proficiency. Experience development media relations. Publishing or editing experience. Job Title: **Communications Officer** (1 Post) Location: Yangon. Qualification: / competencies Essential: Bachelor's degree in journalism, communications or other related field. At least 1 year work experience in communications or publishing, preferably with an international organisation. Myanmar language fluency and high proficiency in English writing and speaking. Excellent organizational and time-management skills, with an ability to prioritize effectively and meet deadlines. Clear writing skills and an ability to tailor writing style to audience & project brief. Excellent interpersonal skills. Ability to work effectively with culturally diverse team members from various disciplines, and in a fast-paced team environment. Strong IT skills including MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Creative Suite. Flexible approach to working outside normal office hours, particularly when called upon to support country teams or meet deadlines. Ability to manage document filing and analyze, organize and integrate detailed information clearly, quickly, and consistently. Desirable: Desktop publishing, graphic design and related IT proficiency. Publishing or editing experience. Applicants should submit their Application letter, current CV with complete contact details & 3 professional referees and copy of any testimonials in a sealed envelope address to U Htwe Din, HR and Admin. Manager, HelpAge Myanmar, No. 10, Kanbawza Ave., Shwetaunggya Ward One, Bahan Tsp., Yangon or email to hr.helpagemyanmar@gmail.com. Deadline for all applications: 2 May 2013. (Encouraged early submission of application as candidates can be hired before the deadline) Only

short listed candidates will be invited for interview. Date 11-4-2013

**SOLIDARITES** Int'l is seeking (1) **Administrative Officer** in Monywa, Sagaing Region: 2 years experience in INGO or private organization. Fluent in English & Myanmar. Knowledge of MS office. Good at both in English Myanmar typing skill. Pls submit application (CV, Cover letter, references) to: hr.solidarites.mm@gmail.com & copy to: mon.admin@solidarites-myanmar.org or in hard to Ei Ei Phyu at Solidarites Int'l Dry Zone office: 130, Zaw Ti Ka St, Yankin, Aung Thu Kha Ward, Monywa, Sagaing Region. Closing date: 30.4.2013.

**SOLIDARITES** Int'l (SI) is seeking **Logistics Manager** in Monywa/ Sagaing Division: 3 years experience in Logistics field with INGO/ NGO. University Degree or Diploma (preferably in Logistics Or related proven experience in similar area.). Knowledge of IT management & MS office. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to: Logistics Coordinator, Yangon Logistics Unit - Solidarites Int'l office: 44-A, Tharyarwaddy Lane, Bahan, or per email: recruitment@solidarites-myanmar.org

**SOLIDARITES** Int'l (SI) is seeking (1) **Administrative Supervisor** in Myebon, Rakhine State: Academic background in Management, finance or accounting studies. Fluent in English & Myanmar. Computer knowledge: MS Windows XP/7, MS Office. (2) **Agriculture Supervisor** in Myebon, Rakhine State: Agriculture degree, 2 years professional experience in INGO. Good level in English. Good computer skills. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to HR Department Solidarites Int'l/ Or drop application on an envelope at Solidarites Int'l office: 44(A), Tharyarwaddy Lane, Bahan, Yangon or email: hr.solidarites.mm@gmail.com, Mye.admin.super@solidarites-myanmar.org and cc: to rks.adminassist.stw@solidarites-myanmar.org. Closing date: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

**SOLIDARITES** Int'l (SI) is seeking **Agriculture Officer** in Myebon, Rakhine State: 1 year experience in INGO. Humanitarian values & strong motivation for work with Int'l Humanitarian Organization. Understand the knowledge of English, Computer & reporting skills. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to the attention of: HR Department Solidarites Int'l/ Or drop your application on an envelope at Solidarites Int'l office in U Outta Ma Rd, Thae Tan Qtr, Myebon. or per email to mye.admin.super@solidarites-myanmar.org, hr.solidarites.mm@gmail.com, cc: to rks.adminassist.stw@solidarites-myanmar.org. Closing date: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

**MEDECINS** Sans Frontieres is seeking **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. Excellent command of English. 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. Email: msfch-rangoon-web@geneva.msf.org, Ph: 502509, 526194. (Pls send in Microsoft Word or PDF format & clearly mention the job title in subject if you apply online. Closing date: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

**MEDECINS** Sans Frontieres is seeking **Midwife** - 2 posts in Sittwe, 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 & references to: MSF-Holland/ AZG (Yangon Coordination). No.62A, Bawdiyeiktha-Thanlwin Rd, Bahan, or through msf.h.myanmar.recruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 21<sup>st</sup> 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 & Community-Led Total Sanitation methods. Computer literacy in both Myanmar & English. Applications (including CV & references) 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 (10<sup>th</sup> Standard passed). Fluent in Kokang & Myanmar (reading & writing). Fluent in Palaung or Myaung Zee (Pae Zu) is more eligible. 1 year experience. (2) **Asst Field Logistician** for the "Maternal & Child Health Program" in Kokang Self-administered Zone, Northern Shan State: Basic Education (high school) level passed. Prior experience in logistic and warehouse keeping preferred. Good computer skills. Good language skills in Myanmar & local languages such as Kokang. Pls enclose C.V, copies of testimonials (references) & passport photo to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office, 19B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin. Tel: 578353, Email: amda@mpmt.net.mm Closing date: 25<sup>th</sup> 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. Fluent in Myanmar & English. 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, Sagaing 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 experience in civil engineering. Knowledge of the Dry Zone & 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. Closing date: 19.4.2013

### Local Position

**CHARLTONS** Legal Consulting Limited practice covers a wide range of corporate transactions including corporate finance, restructurings, capital markets, securities, funds and M&A. We offer interesting work and excellent prospects. Now we are seeking (1) Legal Translator (Myanmar to English/ English to Myanmar): University degree holder in relevant field or higher diploma in translation or languages 2 years experience of translating legal documents from Myanmar to English and vice versa preferred. Familiar with legal terms and regulations. Fluent in English and Myanmar. Good knowledge of MS Office applications. Experience in translation of listing prospectuses and similar documents is an advantage. (2) Legal Research Assistant/ Paralegal: University degree holder in law, 2 years experience with research work preferred. Experience in conducting in-depth legal research and compile, information, Fluent in English and Myanmar. Good knowledge of MS Office applications. (3) Accountant: University degree holder in accounting or related field, 3 years experience in related field preferred. Fluent in English and Myanmar. Good knowledge of MS Office and Excel. Pls send a full CV (clearly identifying the post you apply) to Head of Management, Charltons Legal Consulting Limited, 116-A, Inya Rd, Kamayut, Yangon. Email: myanmar@charltonslaw.com

(1). **OFFICE MANAGER** (or) **Office Admin** 1

Post: Graduate (Foreign graduate preferred but not necessary). Good in English. Comfortable with computers and have working knowledge of Microsoft Office. Be extremely well organized. Efficient at executing tasks. Able to multi-task. (2). **Marketing** - 1 Post: Graduate (Foreign graduate preferred but not necessary). Good in English. Result oriented; must be able to make things happen, meet set targets. Must enjoy and natural at selling and explaining products/ services. Able to cold call potential customers and go out on marketing campaigns (mostly will be within Yangon). Any experience of education related marketing will be looked at favorably or have a passion for education. Other terms, applicable for both posts: 6 working days per week. 3 month probation period during which salary will be 20% lower than agrees salary. Pls submit application CV, 2 passport photo with necessary documents to HR Dept: 380, 10 th flr - FMI Center, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Pabedan, Closing date: 30-4-2013.

**WE** are currently seeking (1). **Sales & Marketing Executive** - M/F 1 Post: Any graduate, Good command of English, Software skills. (2). **Customer Service Executive** - M/F 1 Post: Any Graduate, Good command of English, Software skills. (3). **Data Entry** - M/F 1 Post: Any graduate, Excellent software skill, Good typing skill (Myanmar, English). (4). **Driver** - M 1 post: Age 30 ~ 50. Pls submit application letter with personal details, qualification details, along with copies of related documents, 1 passport photo to Vinco Int'l Shipping Co., Ltd.: Rm.902, 9th Flr, Strand Rd, Ahlone Tower, Ahlone. Ph: 212707, 09-4200-74913 or via email bduvinco@gmail.com Closing date: 30th April, 2013.

**RISK Management & Assurance Analyst** 2 Posts: Tertiary qualifications in Accounting, Finance, Commerce (or) Economics. Membership with professional, Accounting (or) Auditing Associations. Skill requirement: Ability to perform end to end financial & operational reviews. Sound understanding of Risk management framework, Audit methodologies & process improvement principles. Fluent English must be able to write review findings present to senior management in English. Comprehensive computer skills (Accounting Software, MS office Word, Excel, PowerPoint). Able to type Myanmar and English. Minimum working experience professional experience in either accounting Auditing (or) related positions. Pls submit application with detail & complete curriculum vitae, 2 passport photo with necessary documents to HR Dept 380, 10 th flr - FMI Center, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Pabedan. Closing date: 30-4-2013.

**APPLE ION** Co., Ltd is seeking (1) **Manager** - 1 post (2) **Marketing Executive** - 2 posts (3) **Marketing Staff** - 5 posts (4) **Driver** - 1 post (5) **Web designer** - 1 post. Position (1 to 4) are for Real Estate services and all applicants must be graduated and good in health, self-motivated and active to work in less of supervision. Driver must possess valid driving licence and able to drive with good skill in Yangon

area. Positions (2 and 5) are for web developing and on-line services. Male or female are welcome for all position (except Driver post) & age between 25 ~ 40. Relevant experience and expertise will be good advantage. Selected candidates will be offered good salary plus good commensurate package & other benefits depend on performance. Pls submit to via email: Saisimonsai@gmail.com

**SUPER LUCK** Construction is seeking (1) **Account Executive**: B.Com/Dip in L.C.C.I Level III, Age under 45, 3 ~ 5 years experience in construction sector, Good in English (reading & writing), computer literate, able to use internet/email/ fax, Microsoft Office, Skilful in computerized accounting. Able to prepare financial situation report (2) **Administration Clerk**: Any graduate, Age under 45, 3 years experience in a related field, Fluent in English for speaking, reading and writing, Computer literate, able to use internet/email/ fax, Microsoft Office, Able to travel and work. 139, Damazedi Rd, Bahan. Ph: 09-430-32729.

**NETSYS SOLUTIONS** 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 graduates 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. 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, 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, 3 years experiences in Machinery field, Good communication skills (written & 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 & other relative documents to (45/46), Bahosi Development,

Wadan St, Lanmadaw, Ph: 09 43073537, 09-431-07758, Email: 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/F 2 posts (9). **Driver** - M 3 posts (10). **Driver-In Charge** - M 1 post. For 2 & 6: Graduate in any discipline, 1 years experience. For 3, 4 & 5: Graduate in any discipline, 2 years experience. For 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 Da80, 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, Able to travel, 5 years experience in poultry farming, fluent in English (Writing memos, letter, reports, Computer proficiency. Pls submit CV detailing experience & skills to 17(F), Aung Theikdi Rd, Aung Tha Pyay Yeik Thar, Mayangone. Ph: 09-505-3488, 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.

(1) **BUSINESS Development Manager** - M/F 1 Post in Yangon. (2) **Asst Business Development Manager** - M/F 1 Post in Yangon. (3) **Asst: HR Manager** - F 1 Post in Yangon. (4) **Admin Officer** - M 1 Post. (5) **Executive Secretary** - M/F 1 Post. (6) **Chief Accountant** - M/F 1 Post (7) **Driver** - 3 Posts. Pls submit an application letter with updated resume, clear details of qualification, a passport photo, a copy of NRC & labor registration card, work experience to date, contact Ph & other related & supportive documents to Myanmar Offshore Ltd, HR Department, No.77, Pyi Htaung Su Avenue Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Email: ssa@myanmaroffshoreltd.com; tps@myanmaroffshoreltd.com;

**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, 10th flr. FMI Center, Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Pabedan, or email: yinwaihun85@gmail.com. Pls indicate Mitsubishi Service Station clearly on your application. Closing date: 30-4-2013.



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THE ESSENTIALS

EMBASSIES

UNITED NATIONS

ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, Chatrium Hotel, Room 425, 40 Natmauk Road, tel: 544500 ext. 425 fax: 549593

FAO Myanmar Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein, tel: 441672, 441673 fax: 441561

ILO Liaison Officer Rm (M1212-1220), 12 Fl-A, Traders Hotel, 223, tel: 242 393, 242811. fax: 242594.

IOM 12th Flr, Traders Hotel, 223, tel: 252560 ext. 5002

UNAIDS Rm: (1223-1231), 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 252361, 252362, 252498. fax: 252364.

UNDCP 11-A, Malikka St, Mayangone tsp. tel: 666903, 664539. fax: 651334.

UNDP 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029.

UNHCR 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. tel: 524022, 524024. fax 524031.

UNIAP Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 254852, 254853.

UNIC 6, Natmauk St., BHN tel: 52910-19

UNICEF 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, KTDA. tel: 375527-32, fax: 375552 email: unicef.yangon@unicef.org, www.unicef.org/myanmar.

UNODC 11-A, Malikka Rd., Ward 7, MYGN. tel: 666903, 660556, 660538, 660398, 664539, fax: 651334. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org www.unodc.org./myanmar/

UNOPS Inya Lake Hotel, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279.

UNRC 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), fax: 292739, 544531.

WFP 3<sup>rd</sup>-flr, Inya Lake Hotel, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 657011-6 (6-lines) Ext: 2000.

WHO 12A Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 250583.

ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Township. Ph: 225258.

FAO Myanmar Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673. fax: 641561.

Australia 88, Strand Road, Yangon. tel: 251810, 251797, 251798, 251809, 246462, 246463, fax: 246159

Bangladesh 11-B, Than Lwin Road, Yangon. tel: 515275, 526144, fax: 515273, email: bdootygn@mpmail.net.mm

Brazil 56, Pyay Road, 6<sup>th</sup> mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 507225, 507251, 507482. fax: 507483. email: Administ.yangon@itamaraty.gov.br.

Brunei 17, Kanbawza Avenue, Golden Velly (1), Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 566985, 503978, fax: 512854 email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm

Cambodia 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 549609, 540964, fax: 541462, email: RECYANGON@mpmail.net.mm

China 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 221280, 221281, 224025, 224097, 221926, fax: 227019, 228319

Egypt 81, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 222886, 222887, fax: 222865, email: egymbyangon@mpmail.net.mm

France 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 212178, 212520, 212523, 212528, 212532, fax: 212527, email: ambaf.rance.rangoun@diplomatie.fr

Germany 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 548951, 548952, fax: 548899 email: info@rangun.diplo.de

India 545-547, Merchant Street, Yangon. tel: 391219, 388412, 243972, fax: 254086, 250164, 388414, email: indiaembassy@mpmail.net.mm

Indonesia 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 254465, 254469, 229750, fax: 254468, email: kuckygn@indonesia.com.mm

Israel 15, Khabaung Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il

Italy 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang.mail@esteri.it

Japan 100, Natmauk Road, Yangon. tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643

Embassy of the State of Kuwait Chatrium Hotel, Rm: No.416, 418, 420, 422, 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe Tsp, Tel: 544500.

North Korea 77C, Shin Saw Pu Road, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. tel: 512642, 510205, fax: 510206

South Korea 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr

Lao A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. tel: 222482, fax: 227446, email: Laoembcab@mpmail.net.mm

Malaysia 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 220248, 220249, 220251, 220230, fax: 221840, email: mwkyangon@mpmail.net.mm

Nepal 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb@mpmail.net.mm

Pakistan A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Road, Yangon. tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange) fax: 221147, email: pakistan@myanmar.com.mm

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# The Essentials

<b>EMBASSIES</b> <b>Australia</b> 88, Strand Road, Yangon. tel : 251810, 251797, 251798, 251809, 246462, 246463, fax: 246159 <b>Bangladesh</b> 11-B, Than Lwin Road, Yangon. tel: 515275, 526144, fax: 515273, email: bdootygn@mpmail.net.mm <b>Brazil</b> 56, Pyay Road, 6 <sup>th</sup> mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 507225, 507251, 507482. fax: 507483. email: Administ.yangon@itamaraty.gov.br. <b>Brunei</b> 17, Kanbawza Avenue, Golden Velly (1), Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 566985, 503978, fax: 512854 email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm <b>Cambodia</b> 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 549609, 540964, fax: 541462, email: RECYANGON@mpmail.net.mm <b>China</b> 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 221280, 221281, 224025, 224097, 221926, fax: 227019, 228319 <b>Egypt</b> 81, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 222886, 222887, fax: 222865, email: egymbyangon@mpmail.net.mm <b>France</b> 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 212178, 212520, 212523, 212528, 212532, fax: 212527, email: ambaf.rance.rangoun@diplomatie.fr <b>Germany</b> 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 548951, 548952, fax: 548899 email: info@rangun.diplo.de <b>India</b> 545-547, Merchant Street, Yangon. tel: 391219, 388412, 243972, fax: 254086, 250164, 388414, email: indiaembassy@mpmail.net.mm	<b>Indonesia</b> 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 254465, 254469, 229750, fax: 254468, email: kuckygn@indonesia.com.mm <b>Israel</b> 15, Khabaung Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il <b>Italy</b> 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang.mail@esteri.it <b>Japan</b> 100, Natmauk Road, Yangon. tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643 Embassy of the <b>State of Kuwait</b> Chatrium Hotel, Rm: No.416, 418, 420, 422, 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe Tsp, Tel: 544500. <b>North Korea</b> 77C, Shin Saw Pu Road, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. tel: 512642, 510205, fax: 510206 <b>South Korea</b> 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr <b>Lao</b> A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. tel: 222482, fax: 227446, email: Laoembcab@mpmail.net.mm <b>Malaysia</b> 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. tel: 220248, 220249, 220251, 220230, fax: 221840, email: mwkyangon@mpmail.net.mm <b>Nepal</b> 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb@mpmail.net.mm <b>Pakistan</b> A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Road, Yangon. tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange) fax: 221147, email: pakistan@myanmar.com.mm	<b>Philippines</b> 50, Sayasan Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 558149-151, fax: 558154, email: p.e.yangon@gmail.com <b>Russian</b> 38, Sagawa Road, Yangon. tel: 241955, 254161, fax: 241953, email: rusinmyan@mpmail.net.mm <b>Serbia</b> No. 114-A, Inya Road, P.O.Box No. 943-Yangon. tel: 515282, 515283, fax: 504274, email: serbemb@yangon.net.mm <b>Singapore</b> 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. tel: 559001, fax: 559002, 559922, email: singemb_ygn@sgmfa.gov.sg <b>Sri Lanka</b> 34 Taw Win Road, Yangon. tel: 222812, fax: 221509, email: slembassy.yangon@gmail.com, info@slembyangon.org, www.slembyangon.org <b>Thailand</b> 94 Pyay Road, Dagon Township, Yangon. tel: 226721, 226728, 226824, fax: 221713 <b>United Kingdom</b> 80 Kan-na Road, Yangon. tel: 370867, 380322, 371852, 371853, 256438, 370863, 370864, 370865, fax: 370866 <b>United States of America</b> 110, University Avenue, Kamayut Township, Yangon. tel: 536509, 535756, 538038, fax: 650306 <b>Vietnam</b> Building No. 72, Thanlwin Road, Bahan Township, Yangon. tel: 511305, fax: 514897, email: vnemb_myr@cybertech.net.mm <b>Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia</b> No.287/289, U Wisara Rd, Sanchaung Tsp. tel : 01-536153, 516952, fax : 01-516951	<b>UNITED NATIONS</b> <b>ILO Liaison Officer</b> Rm (M1212-1220), 12 Fl-A, Traders Hotel. 223, tel: 242 393, 242811. fax: 242594. <b>IOM</b> 12th Flr, Traders Hotel, 223, tel: 252560 ext. 5002 <b>UNAIDS</b> Rm: (1223-1231), 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. tel: 252361, 252362, 252498. fax: 252364. <b>UNDCP</b> 11-A, Malikka St, Mayangone tsp. tel: 666903, 664539. fax: 651334. <b>UNDP</b> 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739. <b>UNFPA</b> 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029. <b>UNHCR</b> 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. tel: 524022, 524024. fax 524031. <b>UNIAP</b> Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel.tel: 254852, 254853. <b>UNIC</b> 6, Natmauk St., BHN tel: 52910-19 <b>UNICEF</b> 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, KTDA. tel: 375527-32, fax: 375552 email: unicef.yangon@unicef.org, www.unicef.org/myanmar. <b>UNODC</b> 11-A, Malikka Rd., Ward 7, MYGN. tel: 666903, 660556, 660538, 660398, 664539, fax: 651334. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org www.unodc.org./myanmar/ <b>UNOPS</b> Inya Lake Hotel, 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279. <b>UNRC</b> 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), fax: 292739, 544531. <b>WFP</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> -flr, Inya Lake Hotel, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 657011-6 (6-lines) Ext: 2000. <b>WHO</b> 12A Fl, Traders Hotel. tel:250583. <b>ASEAN</b> Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Township. Ph: 225258. <b>FAO</b> Myanmar Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673. fax: 641561.
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# Emergency Numbers

Ambulance ☎tel: 295133. Fire ☎tel: 191, 252011, 252022. Police emergency ☎tel: 199. Police headquarters ☎tel: 282541, 284764. Red Cross ☎tel:682600, 682368 Traffic Control Branch ☎tel:298651 Department of Post & Telecommunication ☎tel: 591384, 591387. Immigration ☎tel: 286434. Ministry of Education ☎tel:545500m 562390 Ministry of Sports ☎tel: 370604, 370605 Ministry of Communications ☎tel: 067-407037. Myanmar Post & Telecommunication (MPT) ☎tel: 067-407007. Myanma Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768. Ministry of Foreign Affairs ☎tel: 067-412009, 067-412344. Ministry of Health ☎tel: 067-41358-9. Yangon City Development Committee ☎tel: 248112.	Yangon Children Hospital ☎tel: 222807, 222808, 222809. Yangon General Hospital (East) ☎tel: 292835, 292836, 292837. Yangon General Hospital (New) ☎tel: 384493, 384494, 384495, 379109. Yangon General Hospital (West) ☎tel: 222860, 222861, 220416. Yangon General Hospital (YGH) ☎tel: 256112, 256123, 281443, 256131.
<b>ELECTRICITY</b> Power Station ☎tel:414235	
<b>POST OFFICE</b> General Post Office 39, Bo Aung Kyaw St. (near British Council Library). ☎tel: 285499.	
<b>INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT</b> Yangon International Airport ☎tel: 662811.	
<b>YANGON PORT</b> Shipping [Coastal vessels] ☎tel: 382722	
<b>RAILWAYS</b> Railways information ☎tel: 274027, 202175-8.	

<b>HOSPITALS</b> Central Women's Hospital ☎tel: 221013, 222811. Children Hospital ☎tel: 221421, 222807 Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital ☎tel: 543888. Naypyitaw Hospital (emergency) ☎tel: 420096. Worker's Hospital ☎tel: 554444, 554455, 554811.
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# Indonesia fears shuttlecock shortage

JAKARTA – Badminton-crazy Indonesia is concerned a deadly bird flu outbreak could claim an unlikely victim – the shuttlecock – officials said April 9 after the government banned imports of Chinese duck feathers.

Jakarta is to halt the import of all Chinese poultry products, including dried duck feathers used to make shuttlecocks, after the new H7N9 bird flu strain killed seven people and made 24 ill in eastern China.

The Indonesian Badminton Association (PBSI) said the decision could lead to a dearth of shuttlecocks as 40 percent of those used in the country are imported from abroad, mainly from China.

"I hope the ban won't last long as I'm afraid that it will have an impact" on the supply of shuttlecocks, PBSI spokesman Ricky Subagia told *AFP*, adding professional players in the country mainly used shuttlecocks from China.

Indonesia is a former badminton powerhouse but has seen its fortunes on the international stage wane, with Chinese shuttlers now dominating the sport.

Deputy Agriculture Minister Rusman Heriawan confirmed on April 9 that Indonesia had decided to halt the import of all poultry products from China.

A second agriculture ministry official said Indonesia imported dried duck feathers and several other Chinese poultry products. He added the ban was not in place yet but would come into force soon.

No cases of H7N9 have been reported in Indonesia but officials said they were stepping up monitoring of poultry deaths and influenza-related illnesses in humans.

The country has been the hardest hit by the H5N1 strain of bird flu, with 160 fatalities reported between 2005 and 2012 out of more than 365 deaths worldwide, according to World Health Organization figures.

The WHO said on April 8 there was no evidence that H7N9, which China revealed just over a week ago had been found in humans for the first time, was spreading between people. – *AFP*



Tian Houwei of China eyes a return against Xue Song of China in their men's singles final at the Yonex Australian Badminton Open in Sydney on April 7. Pic: *AFP*

## China is the future for boxing : Arum says

MACAU – Boxing was banned in China under Mao Zedong because it was deemed too Western and too violent.

But if top promoter Bob Arum gets his way – and he usually does – the country will be the future of the sport.

"For any serious business person... it's a country of 1.4 billion people and it's a country that's emerging economically to be a real super power," said Arum, founder and chief executive of Las Vegas-based Top Rank promotions.

"It's a country where people are just starting to have the opportunity to sample what we in the West are used to, like professional boxing.

"I think if it's done right, this will be the

premier audience for the sport of boxing in the world," Arum, 81, told reporters after staging a night of boxing at the grandiose The Venetian hotel-resort in the casino haven of Macau.

Arum has lumped his bets on China's two-time Olympic champion Zou Shiming, who was making his professional debut on April 6. Top Rank estimated 300 million people in China would tune in live to watch the 31-year-old flyweight.

Zou defeated the unknown Mexican Eleazar Valenzuela on a unanimous points decision in their four-round non-title bout. The home hero reportedly picked up a cool US\$300,000 for his trouble.

The Zou-Valenzuela match-up got top billing even over a WBA/WBO world title fight.

"If it's done right, only if it's done right," Arum said of his undisguised ambition of tapping into China's vast population and their growing wealth.

"You can't give them junk, you have to give them quality and do it in a sensational place like The Venetian arena.

"You have to put the event on free television so it reaches the biggest possible audience in China, which is what we did here. It was on *CCTV-5*, it was on all the regional networks, it was on the Internet portal.

"So we reached everybody, and that is what we will continue to do. That's what we are going to do this summer, when we do another outstanding card here. "Zou Shiming is going to have a six-round fight and we are going to do two title fights.

"It will be a card that is really interesting and fan-friendly, and don't insult the people: do it at a high level."

Arum, whose fighters include Manny Pacquiao and three-time world champion Miguel Cotto, added: "People here want to see and feel what we do in Las Vegas, on the biggest possible stage, a Pacquiao fight and so forth.

"And that's what we gave them tonight. It cost a lot of money to do all those lights and all that sort of stuff, but that's part of the experience. And the people in China deserve that experience."

Writing in his column for British tabloid *The Sun* on the eve of Zou's professional bow, the boxing promoter Frank Warren conceded that "it seems the sport has chanced upon an untapped but ridiculously lucrative new market".

"Initially it will be dependent upon Zou delivering between the ropes," Warren wrote.

"But with Hall of Famer Bob Arum pulling the promotional strings, he is primed to hit the outside lane to a world-title challenge as early as 2014." – *AFP*

## Hansen to guide All Blacks

WELLINGTON – All Blacks coach Steve Hansen will oversee New Zealand's Rugby World Cup title defence in 2015 after being given a two-year contract extension, the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU) said on April 10.

Hansen was initially appointed for a two-year term in late 2011 after serving as assistant coach under Graham Henry when the All Blacks won the showcase tournament on home soil.

NZRU chief executive Steve Tew said Hansen had proved a success in the top job and deserved a shot at steering the team to back-to-back world titles in England.

"He had an outstanding first year as head coach and his coaching and leadership helped the team build on its exceptional legacy," Tew said.

New Zealand won 12 of their 14 Test matches during Hansen's first season in charge, claiming the Rugby Championship, Bledisloe Cup and a three-Test series against Ireland, as well as retaining their number one world ranking.

Hansen said he was excited at the prospect of defending the World Cup and wanted to create a blend of experience and fresh talent that would keep the All Blacks ahead of their challengers.

"We have to keep growing both our leadership experience so that we have more players who can make good decisions in the big moments, and we need to grow our game so we stay in front rather than allowing others to catch up," he said. – *AFP*



China's Zou Shiming reacts after beating Mexico's Eleazar Valenzuela during their flyweight bout at the 'Fists of Gold' boxing event in Macau on April 6. Pic: *AFP*



# Barca, Bayern into last four

PARIS – Barcelona needed a 71st-minute Pedro Rodriguez strike to qualify for the Champions League semi-finals at the expense of Paris Saint-Germain on April 10, while Bayern Munich also progressed after proving too strong for Juventus.

After drawing 2-2 in last week's quarter-final first leg in Paris, Barcelona went behind for the first time in the tie when Javier Pastore struck shortly after half-time, but the introduction from the bench of Lionel Messi lifted the Catalans, and Pedro struck to level the scores on the night and make the final aggregate score 3-3.

While Barcelona advance to a sixth consecutive Champions League semi-final on away goals, Bayern were comprehensive winners against Juventus, with Mario Mandzukic and Claudio Pizarro netting in the second half to give the Bavarians a 2-0 victory on the night and a 4-0 triumph on aggregate.

Coming into the second leg, Barca held the upper hand thanks to their two away goals in Paris, but the absence of Messi from their starting line-up handed their opponents a psychological advantage.

The Argentine suffered a hamstring injury in the first

leg and was only deemed fit enough for a place on Barcelona's bench at kick-off.

As he nervously looked on, PSG played exceptionally well in the first half and were unlucky not to score on several occasions, with Victor Valdes making crucial saves to deny Lucas and Ezequiel Lavezzi.

The Ligue 1 leaders did score five minutes into the second half, though, Pastore finishing past Valdes after linking up superbly with former Barcelona forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

The home side were missing the inspiration of Messi, and the Camp Nou was given a huge lift when he replaced Cesc Fabregas in the 62nd minute.

Even when far from fully fit++, Messi's mere presence can make the difference, and he helped create the decisive goal less than 10 minutes after coming on.

Messi accelerated towards the Paris penalty area and laid the ball off for David Villa, who teed up Pedro to power a shot beyond Salvatore Sirigu.

"We're very happy," said Pedro. "PSG are great rivals and it took us a while to get into our rhythm at the start."

"Messi was the catalyst. We changed after he came on and we have to thank him for that."



Bayern Munich striker Mario Mandzukic scores against Juventus during the UEFA Champions League quarter final second-leg football match at the Juventus Stadium in Turin on April 10. Pic: AFP

PSG coach Carlo Ancelotti added: "I thought we played well. We caused Barca problems, but Messi is a fantastic player and can find a solution for his team even when not fully fit."

Bayern travelled to Turin in a strong position thanks to their 2-0 first-leg victory, and with the wind in their sails after clinching the Bundesliga title in record quick time last weekend.

Andrea Pirlo came close from a first-half free-kick and Fabio Quagliarella

tested visiting 'keeper Manuel Neuer early in the second half as Juve sought a way back into the tie.

But they were left with too much to do when Mandzukic headed in from close range on 64 minutes.

Bayern then put the seal on a 4-0 aggregate victory when Bastian Schweinsteiger set up substitute Pizarro to make it 2-0 on the night in injury time.

"It wasn't easy to motivate the players four days after winning our national title,"

admitted Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes.

"We struggled in the first 20 minutes, but slowly took control of the match. We were much better in the second half and deserved to go through."

"We have no regrets," said Juve 'keeper Gianluigi Buffon. "We played as well as we could, but it just wasn't enough."

Bayern and Barcelona complete an all-German and Spanish semi-final line-up after Borussia Dortmund and Real Madrid clinched

their berths in the last four on April 9.

Madrid lost 3-2 to Galatasaray in Istanbul, but progressed 5-3 on aggregate, while Dortmund beat Malaga 3-2 in dramatic circumstances to win by the same score on aggregate.

Trailing 2-1 going into stoppage time in Germany, Dortmund appeared to be heading out, but Marco Reus and Felipe Santana both scored at the death to take the Bundesliga side through to Friday's semi-final draw. – AFP

# Tiger roars into Masters seeking end to major drought

AUGUSTA – Tiger Woods, favored to win this week's 77th Masters and take his first major title since 2008, says he would have won a couple more Masters crowns the past few years had he putted better.

World No. 1 Woods, a 14-time major champion chasing the all-time record of 18 major titles won by Jack Nicklaus, has not won the Masters since taking his fourth in 2005 and has not won any major since the 2008 US Open.

But Woods has won three times this year, his 77 career titles only five shy of Sam Snead's all-time record, and has displayed clutch

putting skill in triumphs at Torrey Pines and last month at Doral and Bay Hill.

"I feel comfortable with every aspect of my game," Woods said. "I feel that I've improved and I've got more consistent and I think the wins show that."

Except for last year when he shared 40th, Woods has been a contender at Augusta National since he last won a green jacket, finishing sharing third in 2006, second in 2007 and 2008, sharing sixth in 2009 and sharing fourth in 2010 and 2011 when his infamous sex scandal and injuries hampered his bid.

Asked if he would have had a couple more Masters victories had he simply putted better over the undulating greens of Augusta National, Woods replied, "Absolutely."

"I was there ball-striking-wise a few years through that stretch where I hit it pretty well, but just didn't make enough putts. I was there on Sundays with a chance, and unfortunately just didn't get it done."

"You have to make your putts. You have to make the majority of the putts inside 10 feet and you've got to be just a great lag putter."

Woods said his 2005 triumph, which came when he beat Chris DiMarco with a birdie on the first hole of a playoff, felt like a long time ago.

"I put myself in the mix every year but last year," Woods said. "It's not like I've been out of there with no chance of winning this championship."

"Not real happy with the fact that I haven't won more. I've been in the mix and just haven't gotten it done."

"But the whole idea is to give myself opportunities and as of right now I'm tied for second on the all-time win list here, so that's not too bad, either."

There's a sense that his top rival this year will be Rory McIlroy, who played the past two weeks to round his game into shape, particularly his swing. A second-place effort at last week's Texas Open boosted McIlroy's confidence.

"When I don't play my best, it's when I get into bad habits in my swing," McIlroy said. "Whenever my golf swing is where I want to

be, that's when I produce results and that's what I've seen has started to happen over the past few weeks."

The Northern Irishman, who saw Woods vault past him to take the World No. 1 ranking last month for the first time since October 2010, hopes to add a green jacket to a major haul that includes the 2011 US Open and 2012 PGA Championship.

He's not worried that Woods is showing his best form in years.

"Doesn't make a difference to me at all," McIlroy said. "I'm here to concentrate on myself and play my game and try to shoot the best score that I can. It really doesn't matter what anyone else does."

"If I can do that, I know I'll have a good chance."

Defending champion Bubba Watson, who has not won since taking last year's Masters, considers Woods the man to beat.

"If you're No. 1 in the world, I think you should be the favorite," Watson said. "It would be kind of

weird if he's the underdog and he's No. 1 in the world. He's playing the best. That's all you need to look at."

The last time Woods won back-to-back events just ahead of Augusta as he has this year was in 2001 when he won Bay Hill and the Players Championship before a Masters win completed the "Tiger Slam" of four major triumphs in a row.

"We all know what he is capable of doing," Australian Adam Scott said. "He has got the runs on the board for that."

"(But) he is far from running away with it. He has returned to No. 1 but that is just a number. It's not a foregone conclusion."

Three-time Masters winner Phil Mickelson hopes to make a charge as well, having won earlier this year at Phoenix and taken the green jacket in 2004, 2006 and 2010.

"Even at times where he has not played his best, you know what he's capable of, and so you're always looking at his score," Mickelson said of Woods. – AFP



## Wrestlers finish third

By Kyaw Zin Hlaing

THE Myanmar Wrestling Federation took third place on in a pre Southeast Asian Games tournament held April 5 to 7 in Yangon.

Myanmar wrestlers collected one gold medal, eight silver medals and 20 bronze medals at the six nation's event that

included around 100 athletes from the ASEAN region. 36 from Myanmar participated.

Me Kyaw Aungwon Myanmar's only gold with a first place finish in the 120-kilogram Greco Roman event.

Vietnam finished first collecting 16 gold medals. Singapore placed second with three gold medals, one silver medal and five bronze medals.



## A tradition unlike any other

Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland tees off during a practice round at the 77<sup>th</sup> Masters golf tournament at Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, on April 9. See page 47 for more coverage. Pic: AFP



## Double fault: Pakistan, NZ in court debacle

By Aung Si Hein with AFP

PAKISTAN tennis officials are protesting against a referee's decision to award a Davis Cup tie to New Zealand because of an unplayable court surface at a neutral venue.

The Asia Oceania group II tie was played at the Pun Hlaing Golf and Country Club after the International Tennis Federation (ITF) declared the security situation in Pakistan was not conducive to host the second round matches.

Pakistan were leading 1-0 on April 5 after Aqeel Khan defeated New Zealand's Artem Sitak 7-5 3-6 6-2 7-5 and Pakistan's Aisam-ul

Haq Qureshi was leading in the second singles when Sri Lankan referee Ashita Ajigala stopped the match.

"Some spots the ball would hit and it would just roll along the ground. Some spots the ball would hit and bounce over your head," New Zealand Davis Cup tennis captain Alistair Hunt told New Zealand news website [www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz) on April 10.

The main issue was an area by the baseline that Mr Hunt described as, "about an inch deep and half a foot wide."

The referee declared the tie abandoned and awarded it to New Zealand as the courts were Pakistan's responsibility, a decision Pakistan Tennis

Federation president Kaleem Imam said was unjust.

"We are devastated at the decision," Imam told AFP. "If the surface had any problems why didn't the referee tell us before the tie started, or why did he allow the first match to go on."

The ITF confirmed that it had received an appeal from Pakistan on April 11.

"The Davis Cup Committee will be considering both Pakistan's appeal and the report of the ITF referee (about the court being unplayable) in making their decision," an ITF spokesman said.

A tennis coach at the Pun Hlaing Golf and Country Club, U Aung Myint told *The Myanmar Times* that he had previous doubts

about the playing surface, but the Pakistani side and the Tennis Federation of Myanmar technical director Robert Davis were eager to hold the match in Yangon.

"Since the practice days before the tournament, I had doubted that the lawn at our tennis court was ready for hosting very big international event like the Davis Cup," he said.

"I think Robert Davis was very eager, so the referee agreed to play here. If Pakistan selected to use our courts, they should have arrived earlier to examine them but they only arrived on March 30."

Mr Davis rejected these claims and stood by the facility.

"Pun Hlaing is an excellent 5 Star facility and has two of the

best lawn turf courts in Southeast Asia," he said. "The courts were holding up very well. Credit to the turf crew at Pun Hlaing."

Mr Davis added that the New Zealand side had been displeased since arriving in Myanmar.

"The New Zealand captain [Mr Hunt] was complaining about everything from the first day. Traffic, the possibility of snakes, club and facilities. Is this good sportsmanship?" he said.

Pakistan has been forced to play their home ties on neutral venues since 2010 after all international sports were suspended in the country following terrorist attacks on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore in March 2009.

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