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Presidential adviser sues 13 farmers for trespassing

CB Bank chairman and presidential advisory committee member U Khin Maung Aye is embroiled in a land dispute in rural Pyin Oo Lwin, where he has asked police to press charges against 13 farmers for cultivating land that was confiscated from them in 1996 for a coffee plantation. **NEWS 4**

NEWS 3

Hluttaw told to restart debate on bill to remove MPs

The election Commission has sent a letter to speaker Thura U Shwe Mann asking him to resume discussions on a bill that would allow constituents to remove their MP, which representatives argue could create instability.

NEWS 7

People's Park centre scaled back

Public opposition has prompted municipal authorities to instruct a developer to reduce an unfinished handicrafts centre in Yangon's People's Park from three to two levels.

NEWS 24

NGOs issue fresh warning over draft association law

International groups have warned that the draft law breaches international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**BUSINESS 27**

Airline tie-up plans await green light

A proposed deal that would see Japan's All Nippon Airlines buy a 49 percent stake in domestic carrier Asian Wings - often linked to tycoon U Tay Za - was revealed earlier than anticipated and is yet to receive regulatory approval.

IN PICTURES

PHOTO: THIRI

A flyover begins to take shape

It's a welcome sight for Yangon's beleaguered commuters: the Shwegondaing overpass is beginning to take shape. Work began on the north-south flyover in December 2012 and is expected to finish by the end of this year, according to developer Capital Development Ltd, which is working with Japan's JFE Engineering Corporation on the project. The 420-metre, four-lane bridge is expected to cost K13 billion, or about US\$13.4 million.

Workers stand on a column on the Shwegondaing flyover on August 27.



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THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

online editor **Kayleigh Long** |
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The font that launched a thousand ships

The creator of the much-maligned Comic Sans font has spoken out against critics, advising that they "get a hobby". Typographer Vincent Connare said that he created Comic Sans in 1995 when working on a Microsoft comic program. The program featured a dog character called Rover, forbear to the ever-annoying and rarely helpful Clippie the paperclip. He found the deployment of Times New Roman in the dog's speech bubbles incongruous. "Dogs don't talk like that," he said.

With this in mind, he went on to create Comic Sans. Speaking with font.com, Connare said he was proud of the fact that Twitter's head designer announced that the majority of its server space is used by complaints about airlines, ComicSans and Justin Bieber.

Dunkin' Donuts in hot water

Human Rights Watch has called on the independently-owned Thai franchise of Dunkin' Donuts to withdraw an advertisement for its new "Charcoal Donut", calling the promotion "bizarre and racist".

The campaign features Dunkin' Donuts Thailand CEO Nadim Salhani's teenage daughter with her hair in a 50s-style beehive and her face painted black, save for bright pink lipstick. The accompanying slogan on the posters and TV commercials reads "Break every rule of deliciousness".

While the ad has proved controversial, Nadim Salhani said he didn't see it as a big deal. "Not everybody in the world is paranoid about racism," said Salhani. "I'm sorry, but this is a marketing campaign, and it's working very well for us."

Soldiers' wills made available online

Some 280,000 wartime wills and personal letters from soldiers are slated for an online release ahead of next year's WWI centenary, as part of an initiative from the UK's Ministry of Justice. The original documents that survived are preserved in 1300 boxes inside a temperature-controlled warehouse in Birmingham, and have been carefully digitised. Members of the public will be able to search the database for a will left by serving soldiers between 1850 and 1986, from the Boer War to the Falklands, for an access fee of £6. All soldiers were required to complete wills before going to the front line so that their estate could be dealt with in the event they lost their life.

No mountain Htoo high

An expedition to Myanmar's remote Gamlang Razi in Kachin State is reportedly around a week away from reaching the summit, according to a satellite phone dispatch from expedition leader Andy Tyson.

A topographic map from 1945 drawn by the US and Russia indicates Gamlang Razi could stand as much as 90 feet taller than Mount Hkakabo Razi, which is currently considered the highest mountain in southeast Asia. A sophisticated GPS device will be placed at the summit, in order to ascertain whether or not this is the case. The expedition is sponsored by the Htoo Foundation.

The company's billionaire chairman Tay Za, once branded a "notorious henchman" by US Treasury, is no stranger to high-altitude adventures, having narrowly survived a helicopter crash in Kachin in February of 2011.

When Myanmar was Burma...

Archival material provided by Pansodan Gallery

Rangoon Celebrates Thingyan In Big Way

Enthusiastic Crowds Indulge In Orgy Of Water-Throwing

THE Thingyan Festival has been celebrated in Rangoon during the past four days with an enthusiasm that has hardly ever been surpassed.

All communities of the city, including the weaker sex, mingled in the common sport of dousing each other with water. This went on from dawn to sunset each day, increasing in tempo and fervour as the hours and days wore on.

A feature of this year's celebrations was the spontaneous support given by members of the Anglo-Burmese community. Anglo-Burmans, in company with their Burmese friends, toured the highways in trucks and buses, throwing water and inviting water to be thrown on them.

Article from *The New Times of Burma*, April 17, 1947

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NOW!

Khin Yu Pa for NOW! magazine. Photo: Pyae Han (Color Max)

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Activist Daw Naw Ohn Hla to appeal sentence

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ACTIVIST Daw Naw Ohn Hla plans to appeal a two-year jail term handed down for organising an illegal protest against the Letpadaung copper mine in Monywa. She was found guilty of inciting unrest and sentenced on August 29 – just three days into the trial – after refusing to cooperate with the proceedings, her lawyer said.

“The trial started on August 27 but the next day she refused to come to court and the police used force to bring her there. She did not say anything during the trial. On August 29, the judge announced the punishment for her,” said U Robert San Aung, a member of the Lawyer’s Network who assisted Daw Naw Ohn Hla.

He said he plans to submit an appeal against the verdict next month, adding that he was disappointed that the judge had allowed undercover intelligence officers to take photos in the courtroom while the trial was taking place.

“The judge did not stop them from

taking photos even though I don’t think they should be allowed to do so,” he said.

Police arrested Daw Naw Ohn Hla and nine other women during a protest on August 13. The nine others were released after signing a guarantee to not reoffend.

However, Daw Naw Ohn Hla was charged with incitement under section 505(b) of the Penal Code.

Residents said they believed the sentencing was a warning from the government to stop their campaign against the mine but vowed to continue pushing for an end to the project – and the release of Daw Naw Ohn Hla.

“We are conducting a protest campaign in the project area to mark the nine-month anniversary of the government crackdown on us [in November 2012]. We also urge them to release Daw Naw Ohn Hla. We will continue to push the government until she is released,” said U Aung Than Myo of Tone village.

On November 29, 2012, police broke up a protest camp with incendiary smoke grenades in a pre-dawn



Naw Ohn Hla waits in a police cell during her trial in Monywa. Photo: Han Win Aung

raid, leaving almost 100 – including many monks – injured.

Another activist, Ko Han Win Aung, whom police have also accused of instigating unrest, said he was not surprised by Daw Naw Ohn Hla’s sentence.

“We and also Daw Naw Ohn Hla have spent many years in jail. We stand for the interest of the people. We’ll continue to struggle against this project.

“Police told me they charged her because she called for the amendment of the 2008 constitution,” he said. “It’s unfair and the government should not do this.”

Attempt to close ‘Times’ parent company ‘bizarre’

THE editor-in-chief of *The Myanmar Times* has dismissed an attempt by major shareholder Dr Tin Tun Oo to wind up its parent company, Myanmar Consolidated Media, as “bizarre”.

The winding-up notice was published in state-run media as a creditors’ winding-up.

Ross Dunkley, who co-founded the company in 2000 and is also its managing director, said it was unclear why Dr Tin Tun Oo would want to shut down a profitable company.

However, he confirmed that the company’s foreign investors have been attempting to find a new partner to purchase Dr Tin Tun Oo’s 51 percent stake, which he acquired in 2005.

“What is he asking for? We simply don’t know. The action initiated by his lawyer is strange. We are mystified why Dr Tin Tun Oo would attempt to wind up the company,” Mr Dunkley said.

“I can only describe their actions as bizarre.

“MCM Ltd has been trading profitably for years, so why would this man seek to make a problem for the company at a time when he knows very well that we are attempting to find a buyer to take his shares?”

Mr Dunkley said that if the attempt to close the company is successful about 350 people would lose their jobs.

“I would have thought that cooperation at this time would yield the best result. I don’t see a rush of enquiries from people wanting to partner up with him, so why should he interfere with my legitimate attempts to keep the company stable and a going concern and to protect the welfare of the 350-odd staff we directly employ here.

“This is most peculiar. I just hope Dr Tin Tun Oo comes to his senses and allows this whole thing to progress to its logical conclusion, to a time when Dr Tin Tun Oo has been paid out handsomely prior to new investors being introduced into the company.

“After all, he hasn’t done too badly until now.” – *Staff writers*

Election commission pushes hluttaw to decide on ‘recall’ bill

Commission asks speaker to resume debate on bill that would allow constituents to remove their MP



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THE Union Election Commission has asked Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann to resume discussion on a proposed bill that would give constituents the chance to remove their parliamentary representative.

The Pyithu Hluttaw decided on August 23 to suspend discussion of the bill until the end of the year, when a recently formed constitutional review committee is expected to finish its work.

The decision came at the end of a heated debate between elected representatives, who said the bill would make it too easy for constituents to

remove an MP, and military MPs, who argue that to not pass the law is unconstitutional.

The bill, proposed by the commission last August, could result in MPs being unseated if a mere 1 percent of voters in their constituency opposed them, as specified in section 396(b) of the constitution. A similar provision was included in the 1947 and 1974 constitutions.

But MPs told *The Myanmar Times* last week that the election commission has written to Thura U Shwe Mann and said it believes that the debate should continue. It argues that just as all citizens have the right to vote for their choice of representative, they also have the right to “recall” their elected representative under section 369(b) of the constitution.

During the debate on August 23, Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee

member U Soe Moe Aung said the committee believed that section 396(b) of the constitution and section 10(j) of the Union Election Commission Law should be reconsidered.

“The committee found that fixing a minimum of 1pc of the original voters is a negative rather than positive approach for a country practising parliamentary democracy,” he said.

In other democracies, the barrier for recall is much higher. According to the report, in the US state of California a recall vote requires action by a minimum of 12pc of the voters, while in some other US states it is as high as 40pc.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Maung Toe said that a minimum of 1 percent was too easy to get. “Every MP knows it is not suitable,” he added.

Military MPs disagreed, however,

with Colonel Tint San accusing U Maung Toe of violating section 130 of Pyithu Hluttaw Bylaw, which states that no one shall break the provisions of the constitution.

Another military MP, Colonel Myint Ko Ko, said the 1pc was just to initiate an investigation into the conduct of an MP.

Colonel Myint Tint San said a process was needed to recall MPs to ensure there were checks and balances on the three branches of power. He said the constitution granted parliament the right to impeach members of the government and judiciary.

Representative U Ba Shein said the constitutional review committee was likely to propose a higher percentage of voters sign a petition to initiate the recall process rather than remove the provision completely.

– *Translated by Thiri Min Htun*



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Government targets tax collection to cool soaring land prices

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THE Ministry of Finance plans to tighten collection of stamp duty in a bid to rein in Myanmar's soaring land prices, officials said at a press conference last week.

"We can't control the price directly but we can control it with tax," Minister for the President's Office U Soe Thein said at the press conference in Nay Pyi Taw on August 23. "As I have said before, the government can't say how much land should be sold for. But the price won't rise as much if there is a tax."

Currently, buyers have to pay tax equivalent to 37 percent of the price paid for the land: 30pc for sales tax and 7pc for income tax.

Collecting the tax, however, inevitably proves harder than imposing it. In an effort to ensure buyers pay their fair share, the government has instructed state and region governments to set per-square-foot prices for various types of land and release

the rates to the public.

The Yangon Region government has already set its rates but is yet to release them, officials said.

"Stamp duty is partly intended to control land prices and it is important that the state collects all the taxes it is entitled to," Deputy Minister for Finance U Maung Maung Thein said.

"If the state and region governments set standard prices ... the department can collect the real amount of stamp duty so land prices can be controlled," he said.

The government has also established a "Land Price Watch Group", headed by Thura U Thauang Lwin, to tackle the problem.

U Soe Thein said it will also amend some sections of the Revenue Law but there are unlikely to be changes to the amount of tax levied.

"Some sections of the Revenue Law need to be amended and we are planning that now ... but we are going to charge tax as usual," U Soe Thein said.

He added that land prices in



Employees at work in a real estate agency in Yangon. Photo: Ko Taik

Myanmar were surging because of both government and private projects, citing the example of Dala township, which is across the river from downtown Yangon.

"We have an example near us.

In Dala, working class people are struggling because of land speculators, even though the government has no project there. The land price surged after the department surveyed the land there because people

heard rumours that the government is going to build a bridge with the help of [South] Korea," he said.

"We can't control these kinds of situations."

— Translated by Thiri Min Htun

CB Bank boss sues farmers over dispute



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THIRTEEN farmers are facing jail terms in Pyin Oo Lwin township as part of a land dispute involving CB Bank chairman U Khin Maung Aye, an adviser to President U Thein Sein.

The farmers from Kyin Ga Naing village have been charged with trespassing and mischief causing damage to another's property by a staff member of U Khin Maung Aye, who bought about 120 acres in the village in 2006. They face a potential jail term of two years and three months.

The farmers will next appear in court on September 3 and say they plan to fight the charges, which were filed in the name of U Khin Maung Aye's assistant, U Ko Ko Lwin. He alleges that the farmers started illegally cultivating the land, which was originally taken from them in 1996, in December 2012.

Defendant U Kyaw Shwe, 48, said he worked some of the disputed land because he needed money for his children's education.

"I was charged in February 2013, two months after returning to my land.

I will go to court when my turn arrives. In the meantime I am still working the land. I will keep farming right up until the judge imprisons me, if that happens," U Kyaw Shwe told *The Myanmar Times* as he planted sesame last week, his hands and bare feet covered in mud.

Another farmer, U Htay Win said 13 of the 35 people in the village whose land has been confiscated have so far been charged. He said the land should have been given back to the farmers long ago because it was never developed as the company that originally confiscated it had promised.

"They seized our farmland 18 years ago and they have still done nothing. We can see empty land but we can't do

'We can see empty land but we can't do anything with it. So we decided that if they aren't going to use it then we will.'

U Htay Win

Kyin Ga Naing village farmer

anything with it. So we decided that if they aren't going to use it then we will," he said.

He said that thousands of acres in Pyin Oo Lwin have been confiscated for agricultural projects but are being held by private companies that have no intention of using them for agriculture.

"In recent years, businessmen have bought large amount of lands in Pyin Oo Lwin because many city people want to buy land here, which has caused prices to go up and up," he said.

The dispute in Kyin Ga Naing village dates back to 1996, when more than 90 acres were confiscated by a private firm for a coffee plantation that never eventuated. It was then resold to U Khin Maung Aye, who is also chairman of KMA Group of Companies and a member of the National Economic and Social Affairs advisory committee, in 2006. At the same time, U Khin Maung Aye purchased additional land, taking his holdings to 120 acres.

The farmers said they have never recovered from the loss of their ancestral land in the 1990s.

"My family's living was destroyed," U Kyaw Shwe said. "I was unemployed all of a sudden and became a labourer in the other areas far away from our village. But now my daughters are outstanding students at their school and if I want to keep sending them I need more money."



CB Bank chairman U Khin Maung Aye. Photo: Supplied/MasterCard

U Htay Win said, "One day we went to our farmland to work and we weren't allowed onto the land. There was no notice, no compensation."

In March, the farmers tried to register ownership of the land but were told by the township Settlements and Land Records Department that it could not be registered while there was a dispute over ownership.

"But later the village administrator told us that U Khin Maung Aye had got permission to register the land. I don't understand. The officer stopped us from applying [for ownership] because we are in dispute. But [U Khin Maung Aye] is in a dispute too," U Htay Win said.

U Ko Ko Lwin, who filed the charges on behalf of U Khin Maung Aye, said

the CB Bank chairman was able to register the land even though there was an ownership dispute because he had a recommendation letter from the township administration office.

"If the farmers didn't know that their land had been sold to someone, it is because of a communication breakdown with their administrator."

He said the company had pressed charges after asking the farmers to stop cultivating the land in December 2012.

"But they didn't stop so I charged them as a representative of chairman [U Khin Maung Aye] at Pyin Oo Lwin court," he told *The Myanmar Times* on August 30.

He said U Khin Maung Aye was the legal owner of the land and confirmed that he bought it from the owner of the coffee plantation in 2006. He said U Khin Maung Aye wanted the land for "gardening".

"The original businessman already got all the ownership documents from the government [in 1996]. And [U Khin Maung Aye] bought the land from him legally. He also got the ownership documents so that he can use them for gardening," U Ko Ko Lwin said.

"We can't do anything without permission from government. The farmers keep saying that their land was confiscated by [U Khin Maung Aye]. This is wrong."



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MPs tackle judicial reform with writ bill

2013 Writ Petition Bill aims to protect rights of citizens and strengthen the judiciary, a parliamentary committee member tells MPs



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PARLIAMENT has taken the first steps toward legislating on a constitutional principle that could strengthen respect for the rule of law.

The Pyithu Hluttaw decided on August 26 to open discussions on the 2013 Writ Petition Bill that aims to protect the rights of citizens and strengthen the judiciary.

"The Writ Bill is not derived from

the Union Judiciary Law. It is a separate law contained in the 2008 constitution that represents a great opportunity for citizens and the Union Supreme Court," said Thura U Aung Ko, chairman of the Pyithu Hluttaw Legal Affairs Committee.

According to his presentation, a citizen or a group of citizens has the right to file a writ of habeas corpus before the Union Supreme Court if they have been wrongly arrested or unjustly detained. The Supreme Court would have the power to summon a citizen wrongfully arrested for questioning and possible release.

Related legal measures are the writs of prohibition and certiorari.

"Citizens have the right to file a writ of prohibition to the Supreme Court if they lose fundamental human rights due to wrongful arrest and to be released.

The Writ of Certiorari gives the Supreme Court the power to erase unfair judgments made by its subordinate courts if the complainant can show just cause," said Thura U Aung Ko.

"The main point to be amended is the fact that the decision on the Writ of Certiorari is taken by a single judge. If the judge dismisses the writ, the right awarded by the constitution will be lost."

The Legal Affairs Committee has already discussed the Writ Petition

Bill with members of the Pyithu Hluttaw's Rule of Law, Stability and Peace Committee and its Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, as well as officials from the Union Supreme Court and the Union Attorney General's Office.

Thura U Aung Ko said the bill also contained another important provision - that Supreme Court decisions are not made by a single judge.

"We discussed [with the Union Supreme Court] that decisions should be made by three judges at least. Even two judges is better than one," Thura U Aung Ko said.

One lawyer told *The Myanmar Times* that most writs filed to the

Supreme Court in the past have been rejected almost immediately, and in some cases lawyers have been deregistered within hours of filing them.

"Whenever I have filed a writ they were always rejected within about two hours," said U Sein Hla, a lawyer from Mandalay.

"I think the one judge who was assigned to do a preliminary examination of the writs did not even read them. Other lawyers have also struggled like me," he said.

Representatives say the Writ Petition Bill will be discussed at the next session of parliament, which is expected to begin in October.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe

BUDDHIST DAY



U Wirathu leads Mandalay celebrations

U Wirathu releases fish into the Mandalay moat to mark Buddhist Day on August 26. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

SI THU LWIN

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U WIRATHU led celebrations to mark the 52nd anniversary of Buddhist Day in Mandalay last week.

The controversial monk, from Masoeyin Monastery, organised a ceremony to release 50,000 fish into the moat around the city's royal

palace on August 26.

Other events, which were organised by a monk-led civil society organisation founded to "defend nationalism and [Buddhist] religion", included offering food to monks and donating blood.

"We offered food to more than 300 monks at the eastern entrance of Maha Myat Muni Pagoda in this morning and

in the afternoon we donated blood at the National Blood Bank," said a monk from the organisation.

National Buddhist Day was proposed by then-Prime Minister U Nu on August 17, 1961, when he signed legislation making Buddhism the state religion. It was the first time in 50 years that the day had been marked.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe

Thousands take to streets of Thandwe

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AMID a heavy security presence, thousands of people marched peacefully in Rakhine State's Thandwe township last week to mark Buddhist Day.

The August 26 march came following recent religious violence in the area, with sources in Thandwe saying it was organised by a civil society organisation established to defend nationalism and religion.

"Religious leaders of four religions held a meeting on [August 24] before holding the ceremony peacefully on August 26. Local authorities allowed the event and took responsibility for security," said U Win Nang, chairman of the NLD's Thandwe branch.

Monks and laypeople gathered at the Laymyathnarkone *Dhammayone* (a community hall for religious purpose) at 9am, where monks preached sermons. After 1pm, monks went around the town to accept offerings of food.

"We are now on the Bayintnaung Road," U Win Nang told *The Myanmar Times* at 4pm. "It rained a lot - 400 monks are wet and also Buddhist people are offering some items to monks, it seems very [positive]."

"There are 30,000 people on the road, along with security forces. The event will end at 5pm. We haven't faced any problems so far. Just celebrating Buddhist Day should not cause any problems, although some people are worrying about it," he added.

Thandwe resident Ko Win Han Thein said he was concerned about the motives of some people involved in the ceremony.

"We are watching the event because violence could happen at any time. We are worried about having problems because of the ceremony - some who can instigate [unrest] are in this group. They [Buddhists] sing religious songs and those can instigate some kind of problem," Ko Win Han Thein said.

"We gather information to pass on to the local authorities," he said, adding that he believed the security presence was not adequate for the number of people participating in the march.

National Buddhist Day was first proposed on August 17, 1961, when then-Prime Minister U Nu signed legislation making Buddhism the state religion. Last week was the first time in 50 years that the day had been marked, with similar ceremonies held in Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw (see related story left).

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M/F-5

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M/F-2

Web Developer

PHP, My SQL, Drupal(CMS), HTML, CSS, HTML5, CSS3, JQuery, Javascript ကောင်းစွာအသုံးပြုနိုင်သူ၊ C Panel, Web Hosting ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာကို နားလည်သူ၊ Web Developerနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ အတွေ့အကြုံရှိသူကို ဦးစားပေးမည်။

M/F-2

Driver

အသက် (၂၅-၄၅) အတွင်း၊ ယာဉ်မောင်းအတွေ့အကြုံ (၃)နှစ် အထက်ရှိပြီး ယာဉ်မောင်းလိုဏ်စင် အနက်ရှိရမည်။ ရန်ကုန်မြို့အတွင်း ကျွမ်းကျင်စွာ သွားလာနိုင်ပြီး၊ ယာဉ်စည်းကမ်း၊ လမ်းစည်းကမ်း လိုက်နာနိုင်ရမည်။

M-1

Cleaner

အသက် (၁၈) နှစ်အထက်ဖြစ်ရမည်။ ရန်ကုန်မြို့နယ်တွင် နေထိုင်သူကို ဦးစားပေးမည်။ လျှောက်ထားလိုသူများသည် CV Formနှင့်အတူ (မိတ်ဆက်ခံယူ) ရုပ်ရှင်ထောက်ခံစာ၊ ခုံခန်းထောက်ခံစာ၊ မှတ်ပုံတင်မိတ္တူ ပညာအရည်အချင်းဆိုင်ရာ မိတ္တူများနှင့်တကွ လာရောက်လျှောက်ထားနိုင်ပါသည်။

F-1



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YCDC scales back People's Park project after scrutiny

Nature World told to demolish top floor of three-storey handicrafts centre opposite Shwedagon

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YANGON City Development Committee has ordered the developer of a controversial handicrafts centre in People's Park to demolish the third floor of the uncompleted building.

The project, which fronts U Wisara Road and is opposite the western stairway of Shwedagon Pagoda, has sparked complaints because of its proximity to Shwedagon and the opaque manner in which a large amount of public parkland was awarded to the company.

Developer Nature World Company said it would redesign the 186 by 42 metre (620 by 140 foot) building based on a two-storey layout and is hopeful that it can still be completed by the end of the year. Construction work began in August 2012 and is about 60 percent complete, the company said.

"Initially we got permission to build a three-storey building here using a traditional Myanmar design but now we have to demolish the third floor. The relevant authorities told us to remove it," Nature World deputy general manager U Maung Maung said.

"They said there were various reasons why they had instructed us to decrease the height of the building. We are going to draw a new design for it," he said, adding that the project had caused problems for YCDC because members of the public had questioned why it had given Nature World permission to use the land.

Another company official said the decision to reduce the height of the development was not related to planning laws that ban high structures in the vicinity of the pagoda.

"We have decided to give priority to the wishes of the relevant authorities and the public and remove the third floor," Nature World general manager U Aung Naing.

"If you look from Pyay Road you can't even see the building. YCDC told us to remove the third floor when it was nearly finished. While this will cost our company money we agreed because it is also what people want us to do," he said.

U Aung Naing declined to reveal how much the company paid for the lease. He also refused to respond to rumours



The unfinished handicrafts centre in People's Park. Photo: Shwegu Thitsar

that the company is Chinese.

YCDC's Department of Garden and Playground Parks approved Nature World's application to build the centre in 2009, under former mayor U Aung Thein Linn, the company said.

The details of the deal, including how much the company paid for the rights to the land, have never been made public. When *The Myanmar Times* contacted YCDC last week, officials from several departments attempted to evade questions about the project.

The Department of Garden

'We have decided to give priority to the wishes of the relevant authorities and the public.'

U Aung Naing
Nature World general manager

and Playground Parks declined to comment on the contract or the decision to remove the third floor, directing inquiries instead to YCDC's Department of Engineering (Building).

However, U Nay Win, assistant head of the Department of Engineering (Building) and head of the Department of Administration, said the deci-

sion came from the committee's parks department.

"That project was awarded by the Department of Garden and Playground Parks and that department also told the company to remove the third floor. Our department just records the cases so you should ask the Department of Garden and Playground Parks," U Nay Win said.

Another official from Nature World, marketing manager Daw Aye Aye Aung, said the contract was partly a favour to the company from YCDC for helping to clean and upgrade People's Park after Cyclone Nargis.

Nature World is one of four companies, including Happy Zone, Yamona and Yay Hlwar Gyi, that lease land in People's Park for businesses. It holds the rights to more than 70 acres.

While the handicrafts centre project appears set to continue, the project's opponents can take some consolation in the length of the lease, which U Maung Maung said is only five years.

"The lease is for five years but we have to sign a contract every year. When the term ends, we have to negotiate again," U Maung Maung said.

Daw Moh Moh Lwin from the Yangon Heritage Trust, which has previously criticised the project, declined to comment on the decision. "The project was criticised because this is a public place and it is in a green area. I don't want to comment on it because it is the decision of YCDC."

Some residents said they

were unconcerned about parkland being used for a handicrafts centre. "I always send my children to People's Park. I think having a shopping centre there will be good because we can shop when we take our kids there," said Ko Nay Myo, a driver from Sanchaung. — *Translated by Thiri Min Htun*

MP protests over USDP property development deal



AMYOTHA Hluttaw representative U Phone Myint Aung is leading a campaign against a Union Solidarity and Development Party plan to develop a condominium in South Okkalapa township.

The parliamentarian and residents from South Okkalapa protested in front of Yangon's City Hall on August 18 over Yangon City Development Committee's decision to give the party planning approval for the project.

"I have sent a message to mayor [U Hla Myint]: 'You are wrong,'" U Phone Myint Aung told *The Myanmar Times* the following day.

The 0.39-acre site on corner of Waizayandar and Thitsar roads was formerly a community-owned park. The Union Solidarity and Development Association was granted the rights to the land in 2002 in unclear circumstances and it then passed the ownership rights on to the USDP after the party was

formed in 2010, media reports said.

The party has now signed a deal with a private construction firm to develop a condominium on the site, with half of the apartments in the building to go to the party.

However, South Okkalapa residents applied in January to have the site transferred back to community ownership, arguing that the association cannot give the land to the party.

"If the place is owned by the USDA, it should only be allowed to construct buildings related to the association. Other [groups] should not [be involved]," U Phone Myint Aung said.

It was the third application submitted to protest over the issue, with the previous two applications rejected by police.

"Residents want to get that land back," U Phone Myint Aung said.

A similar dispute erupted in Wetlet, Sagaing Region, earlier this year over a 50-acre site that was given to the USDA by community leaders. As *The Myanmar Times* reported in July, residents argue that the land should be returned to the community now that the USDP has replaced the USDA. — *Translated by Thae Thae Htwe*

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Views

Religious diversity: Dialogue trumps violence

ARCHBISHOP CHARLES MAUNG BO AND BENEDICT ROGERS

TWO years ago, President U Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met for the first time. That meeting heralded the beginning of a new era for Myanmar, which has led to the release of hundreds of political prisoners; more freedom for civil society, political activists and the media; preliminary ceasefires with almost all the ethnic armed resistance organisations; and the opening of Myanmar to the world.

There is much to be thankful for. For the first time in decades, there is talk of democracy and peace. While there is still a long way to go, at least the dreams of change that had once been but a distant desire now appear a more realistic possibility.

True peace and real freedom, however, hinge on an issue that has yet to be addressed: respect for Myanmar’s ethnic and religious diversity. Unless and until a genuine peace process is established with the ethnic nationalities, involving a nationwide political dialogue about the constitutional arrangements for the country, ceasefires will remain fragile and will not result in an end to war.

The most urgent need is to stop the war in Kachin State and move toward a meaningful dialogue with the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO). But real peace will be achieved only when the guns fall silent and are put away across the whole nation; when people can return to their homes without fear; and the people of Myanmar enter into a dialogue with each other and with the government in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

A distinct but interrelated and equally urgent challenge that must be addressed is religious harmony. The past year has seen shocking violence against Muslims in Myanmar, starting in Rakhine State in June 2012 but spreading to Meiktila, Okkan, Lashio and other towns and cities. The violence and anti-Muslim propaganda has highlighted a deep-seated issue in Myanmar society: how to live with our deepest differences. No society can be truly democratic, free and peaceful if it does not respect – and even celebrate – political, racial and religious diversity, as well as protect the basic human rights of every single person, regardless of race, religion or gender.

A year on from the first wave of violence in Rakhine State, at least 130,000 people are displaced. They are living in conditions that the United Nations has described as “dire”. They are at grave risk of disease and malnutrition. They live in fear. Now, during the monsoon season, the humanitarian crisis grows. Whatever the politics of their status in the country, these are human beings who should be treated humanely. In Buddhism, the principles of *metta* (loving kindness) and *karuna* (compassion) apply to all living beings. In Christianity, the same principles exist: “Love your neighbour as yourself” and “Love your enemy.” The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is precisely that – universal.

The non-government organisations, faith-based groups, government officials and United Nations agencies that have tried to provide help to the marginalised deserve our recognition and appreciation. But there is an urgent need for much, much more. We appeal to the government to allow unhindered access to camps for the displaced in Rakhine State and



Muslims sit near their destroyed homes after riots in Okkan north of Yangon in April. Photo: AFP

ensure security for aid workers who feel threatened. We also appeal to donors, in Myanmar and internationally, to help provide the aid required. Many lives are at risk.

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, as detailed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is perhaps the most precious and most basic freedom of all. Without the freedom to choose, practise, share and change your beliefs, there is no freedom. Other basic rights, such as freedom of expression, assembly, association and movement, hinge to some extent on freedom of conscience.

So when we hear people attacking

We call on everyone who has a position of influence to use their voice to speak out against religious hatred and intolerance.



those of other religious beliefs – physically or verbally – or using religious platforms to preach hatred, we are deeply saddened. Such hate speech is completely contrary to the teachings of the great religions of the world, completely contrary to Buddhism, which is the majority religion of Myanmar, and completely contrary to principles of human rights and respect for humanity. We therefore urge the authorities to take action to prevent the spread of further hatred and intolerance. We defend the right to free speech but not when it includes incitement to violence. We therefore urge the authorities to prosecute anyone found inciting violence and we urge religious leaders to discipline their clergy and lay adherents.

We call on everyone who has a position of influence – in politics, in religion, in the media, in education and in civil society – to use their voice to speak out against religious hatred and intolerance. In schools, there is a need

to ensure that the religious and ethnic diversity of Myanmar is taught accurately and celebrated. The curriculum for religious education should ensure a fair and balanced understanding of all the religions of Myanmar. No one should ever be forced to change their religion, for such a practice is a serious violation of human rights. Religion and faith are matters of personal freedom and conscience.

These principles that we have set out apply to everyone, whether they are Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, animist or holding another belief. The crisis over the past year has particularly impacted the Muslim community and we grieve for the

Muslim brothers and sisters, and all the people of Myanmar, to engage in a frank, peaceful and respectful exchange of views. Our Muslim brothers and sisters should tell us sincerely what is in their hearts. What is their interpretation of their religion and their agenda? Only through interaction and education can misunderstandings be overcome. Inter-faith dialogue is needed in Myanmar now more than ever, at every level: between religious leaders, to set the tone, but perhaps more importantly at a grassroots level. What are the dreams, ideals and values that unite us, the people of different religions? Are there religious teachings, customs and practices that cause misunderstanding but which – if properly understood – can be respected and celebrated and contribute to the wider community?

Violence, discrimination and hatred are not solutions. To treat Muslims in the way they have been treated in Myanmar over the past year is no different to the way radical Islamists treat minorities in places such as Pakistan or Egypt. Indeed, such behaviour is likely to provoke the attention of radical Islamists outside Myanmar and may already have done so. Extremism breeds extremism. As Martin Luther King said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” The best way to prevent further violence is to combat intolerance. The best way for any of us to share our beliefs is through the way we live our lives but dialogue is also essential. Through talking, getting to know each other and discovering that what we have in common is bigger than what divides us, we can build a Myanmar based on shared dreams, mutual respect and unity in diversity. In so doing, we can put decades of strife and conflict behind us.

His Grace Archbishop Charles Maung Bo is the Catholic archbishop of Yangon. Benedict Rogers works for the human rights organisation Christian Solidarity Worldwide, and is author of *Burma: A Nation at the Crossroads*.

US continues engagement with Tatmadaw

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THE United States has taken further steps to expand military-to-military engagement with Myanmar.

Members from the US Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) held meetings with 20 officials from the Tatmadaw and the Ministry of Defence in Nay Pyi Taw on August 28-29, the US embassy in Yangon said.

“Dialogue between the United States and Burmese armed forces provides a mechanism to share lessons, identify challenges, and illustrate US military traditions and doctrine – the respect and defence of human rights and a civilian-led government,” US ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell said in a statement, referring to Myanmar by its former name.

“This exchange is part of our bilateral efforts to promote human rights awareness and the values and activities of a modern, disciplined and respected military that acts according to international norms.”

The DIILS is a Rhode Island-based organisation of military lawyers that works for the US Department of Defense. The delegation was led by Captain Robert Sanders, the director of DIILS and a US Navy lawyer. The

Myanmar side was led by Major General Ye Aung, the Judge Advocate General of the Tatmadaw, and included Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

The engagement program was announced last month when Ben Rhodes, deputy national security adviser for strategic communications and speechwriting, visited Myanmar from July 30-August 1.

The DIILS visit to Myanmar coincided with a meeting between US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Minister for Defence Lieutenant General Wai Lwin – the first bilateral meeting of US and Myanmar defence chiefs in more than 20 years, the Department of Defense said.

Mr Hagel was attending the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting in Brunei. The American Forces Press Service quoted a senior defence official as saying that the meeting was a “sign of changes and the Obama administration’s very positive engagement with the Burmese, [as well as] recognition of the reforms that have been underway in that country and progress that’s being made on human rights”.

While he applauded Myanmar’s reforms, Mr Hagel also stressed that Myanmar needs to completely sever its military ties to North Korea.

Ko Win Zaw Oo to undergo surgery in Singapore this week

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MYANMAR’S tallest man, Ko Win Zaw Oo, is to undergo surgery in Singapore this week, his doctors have announced. The decision comes after Ko Win Zaw Oo, 7 feet 8 inches tall, was examined by doctors in Singapore to establish the precise cause of the disorder that led him to grow so tall.

Ko Win Zaw Oo will have the operation on September 3 in Singapore General Hospital, Dr Myat Thu Min, a spokesperson for the group leading the effort to ensure he gets treatment, said on August 29.

“Ko Win Zaw Oo’s current situation is good. The hospital now needs to make the necessary preparations, such as finding a longer operating table,” he said.

The diagnosis has shown that the cause of the disorder is the production of excessive growth hormone because of a tumour in the hypothalamus, a small structure connected to the pituitary gland, the team said in a statement.

“There are two ways to cure this syndrome – drug therapy or surgery,” said Dr Khin Maung Win. “If we choose drug therapy, the expense will be at least K6 million a month. We can’t afford it.”

Ko Win Zaw Oo, 36, comes from Htone Pauk Chaing village in Magwe Region’s Natmauk township.

He has agreed to the operation but experts warn there may be side effects.



Ko Win Zaw Oo is examined by a doctor in Yangon last month prior to his departure for Singapore. Photo: AFP

The operation could result in diabetes insipidus, a condition characterised by excessive thirst and the excretion of large amounts of severely diluted urine, and hyperphagia – excessive hunger or increased appetite.

The group is still raising money to fund the operation, the cost of which has not yet been established. Dr Khin Maung Win has pledged to cover the shortfall if sufficient funds cannot be raised and his team has also pledged to provide follow-up care to Ko Win Zaw Oo after the operation.



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DRAGONAIR

Child rights offices to open in each township



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A NETWORK of children's welfare hubs is to be rolled out in each township over the next five years as part of a government initiative to improve implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Department of Social Welfare is to open or expand 66 offices next year in key townships, with all 330 townships scheduled to receive such facilities by 2019, deputy director general U Tun Tun Oo said.

"We will prioritise townships in border areas and those recognised as having particular child welfare issues," he said.

The centres will allow INGOs and NGOs to work alongside the department on implementing the convention, collecting data, protecting children from abuse and carrying out other welfare activities.

"We need more research into the situations and issues affecting children ... and this means we need more collaboration at a civic level to ensure work is happening at the grassroots," Yangon Region Minister for Social Affairs U Myint Thein said at a workshop on child rights last month.

The offices will be managed by the



A teacher leads a class at a rural primary school. Photo: Kaung Htet

social welfare department and the government will fund their establishment and operation with assistance from NGOs.

Myanmar ratified the convention in 1991 and enacted a child law in 1993. However, U Tun Tun Oo said there were still "many gaps" in implementing the convention, which he attributed to "poor communication and budgetary issues". He said the government "appreciates the help NGOs provide" in meeting Myanmar's international commitments and improving the welfare of children.

"We also suggest non-registered NGOs become registered so that they can work freely under the law. We are

ready to help and give recommendation for registry process," he said.

Fifty-one offices that have already been established by international NGOs - including UNICEF, Save the Children and World Vision - under a Township Committee on the Rights of the Child program introduced earlier this year will be integrated into the new government-led program.

The committees include the township administrator as well as representatives from a range of government departments, including social welfare, health, education, immigration and sport. The police force, judiciary, and local and international NGOs are also represented.

Government lobbies delta administrators over new reform plan

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GOVERNMENT officials have asked local administrators from seven townships in Ayeyarwady Region to cooperate with the president's 30-month "people-centred development" plan unveiled on August 9.

The plan aims to expand provision of electricity and clean water and provide jobs through the development of small and medium enterprises. It also targets greater consultation in the decision-making process at the township level, including input from civil society and respected community leaders.

The program was outlined to township administrators from Maubin, Pyapon, Myaungmya, Bogale, Labutta, Patheingyi and Hinthada at a meeting in Patheingyi on August 21.

Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development deputy director Daw Than Than Thwe said the plan also focuses on the development of the agriculture and tourism sectors.

She also collected feedback and proposals from each township administrator to submit to the government for consideration.

Maubin township administrator U Aye Thaung told *The Myanmar Times* that he welcomed greater central government support for township development planning.

"We are happy to know that they will help us. They asked our priority needs, the things that can be resolved quickly. For Maubin we proposed allocating funds to prevent riverbank collapse," he said.

"We also know that providing 24-hour electricity in every township is a top priority for government. We

'[The government] asked our priority needs, the things that can be resolved quickly.'

U Aye Thaung
Maubin township administrator

are expecting they can increase the amount of electricity given to Ayeyarwady Region.

"This meeting shows they are becoming more transparent about their decision making."

Local non-government organisations were also invited to the meeting, which will be replicated across the country so the central government can collect information, proposals and feedback to guide planning.

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DRAGONAIR

Opposition to Shan return plan

Refugees and civil society groups say it is too early for families displaced in 2002 to return to eastern Shan State

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THE proposed resettlement of a group of Shan refugees living in a camp in northern Thailand will require extensive preparatory work if it is to succeed, a number of Shan organisations say.

Residents of the Kone Kyaw temporary refugee camp north of Chiang Mai in Thailand's Wane Hai township were told during a visit by police from Myanmar and Thailand in July that they would be resettled to Mone Htar village in Mongton township, eastern Shan State.

Camp chief U Sai Lyan said that four days later he was asked by the Tatmadaw's tactical operations commander from Mongton township how many people were staying in the camp. He was told the army needed to know the number so it could begin building new houses ahead of the planned return.

But the plan faces opposition from the refugees, civil society group and the refugees, who all say it is too soon for refugees to return.

"The situation in the region isn't stable," said Captain Sai Main, an assistant spokesperson for the Restoration Council of Shan State and its armed wing, the Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA).

He said the area had previously been a battleground for Tatmadaw and SSA-South troops and is still covered in land mines.

"There are still tensions between the Wa and government armies. The government should offer assurances that the livelihoods, transportation, health and education of the [refugees in Kone Kyaw village] will be looked after before resettling [them]. If it does not, they will have difficulty living there," he said.

While agreeing with RCSS/SSA concerns, U Sai Lyan said many in the camp feel caught between the Shan army and the government.

"We don't want to be in a situation where we have to live according to the desire of the government and the Shan State Army. They use us as a pawn, sending us wherever they want. We don't want to be used as a pawn to show the country is stable before the 2015 election."



Shan children use laptop computers in the Thai border village of Kone Kyaw, which is home to about 400 refugees displaced by fighting in Shan State in 2002. Photo: Supplied/MT

U Sai Lyan said any proposed relocation should be discussed with Shan civil society groups and the refugees first.

"There are some Shan civil society groups that help us. They should consult with them. Or they should consult with us, the refugees," he said.

In 2002, a month-long battle between the SSA and the Tatmadaw

'I just thank God that I haven't lost my mind yet - I've certainly lost everything else.'

Daw Parla

Shan resident of Kone Kyaw village

displaced 636 people from Pan Kankaw, Pan Hawk, Hway Yauk and Pan Mai Sone villages in Mongton. They later settled across the border in Kone Kyaw, an ethnic Shan village. While some of the original refugees have left the area and are staying with relatives, more than 400 remain in Kone Kyaw and are not recognised by Thailand as refugees.

One refugee in the camp told *The Myanmar Times* that she would not return to Myanmar "if I was given an aeroplane".

"I've been here for 10 years. I walked over dead bodies all the way to the Thai border to get here and was so afraid," said 70-year-old Daw Parla, who is originally from Hway Yauk village. "Now we are safe here and I don't believe [the government and Shan] are making peace. All the armed forces are the same. I don't believe any of them. If there is fighting, the residents suffer. I just thank God that I haven't lost my

mind yet - I've certainly lost everything else."

On August 9, six Shan civil society groups collectively released a statement detailing their concerns about sending refugees living in Thailand back to Mone Htar.

The statement said that an initiative of the Norwegian Peace Council, the Myanmar Peace Support Initiative, scrapped a similar proposal in August 2012 due to continued fighting and the large number of uncleared mines in the area. The statement also expressed uncertainty about who would fund the construction of homes for the refugees if international donors were not willing to support the resettlement program.

The resettlement program was also discussed at the first union-level meeting between the RCSS/SSA and government peace negotiators in Taunggyi in January 2012.

- Translated by Thiri Min Htun

BRIEFS

UNDP to begin surveying local governance

International experts are to launch a year-long survey of the country in support of the government's programs to help local communities.

UNDP Myanmar's nationwide mapping program to identify local governance status and community needs will start in September in Mon and Chin states, said the agency's country director, Toily Kurbanov.

The mapping program is a part of the government's plan to strengthen local governance and provide "people-centred" services.

"The idea of local governance mapping is to collect information as to what sorts of services have been made available in all parts of the country, what are the capacity gaps and how those gaps can be filled," said Mr Kurbanov, adding that UNDP was working closely with the government on the methodology of the study.

"If everything goes according to the schedule ... local governance mapping for the all of Myanmar should be over by August or September next year," he said.

- Sandar Lwin

Group heads to Australia on heritage study trip

A group of 12 urban planners, architects and academics is visiting Australia for a five-week course aimed at strengthening efforts to conserve and enhance Yangon's heritage buildings.

The group includes officials from the Yangon City Development Committee, Mandalay and Yangon universities and the Ministry of Construction, as well as private sector architectural firms. The group will return to Myanmar on September 20.

"The course aims to strengthen the technical skills and knowledge of the participants, focusing on developing skills which can be applied to conserving and enhancing the historic buildings of Yangon," said a spokesperson for the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), which is funding the trip.

"It will provide the participants with exposure to the latest thinking about best practices in built heritage conservation and management," the spokesperson said.

The course is being delivered in Brisbane by the University of Queensland and Conrad Gargett Riddell, an Australian design and heritage consultancy firm, and includes a field trip to Sydney.

An additional sixth week will be held in Yangon after the Australian component has been finished.

- Thomas Kean

Myanmar to assist G20 on development policies

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MYANMAR'S presence at next year's G20 summit will help the grouping develop more effective development policies, a representative of host country Australia said during a recent visit to Myanmar.

The 2014 G20 summit will be held in Brisbane in November 2014. As the ASEAN chair, Myanmar is invited to attend as an observer at the event, which brings together leaders from 19 of the world's largest economies, along with the European Union, to

discuss global economic issues.

"Myanmar's presence will provide an excellent opportunity to get feedback from a low-income country which is the recipient of international assistance on whether the things that are being done in the development sphere are really the kinds of things that need to be done from the point of view of recipient countries," said Richard Andrews, assistant secretary of international policy and engagement for Australia's G20 taskforce.

Mr Andrews led a team from the Australian Prime Minister's Office to Myanmar earlier this month to discuss

Myanmar's role at the G20 with officials in Nay Pyi Taw.

Minister for Finance U Win Shein is expected to attend and an invite has also been extended to President U Thein Sein, Mr Andrews said. U Thein Sein visited Australia for three days in March but has not yet confirmed whether he will make another visit for the G20.

The G20 was formed in 1999 and its importance has grown since the 2008 financial crisis. Since 2011 the group has met annually. This year's summit will take place in September in St Petersburg, Russia.

While more inclusive than the G8, the G20 is still criticised by those who believe that the group is too limited in its membership.

"[The] great risk is that you only have the big countries present only interest of the big countries," Mr Andrews agreed.

In this regard he said he was hopeful that Myanmar would provide a useful alternative perspective, particularly on Southeast Asia.

"[Myanmar's presence] will ensure that both the views of ASEAN can be inputted into the G20's deliberations and that ASEAN is kept well informed about what is going on in the G20."

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Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint (right) presents an award to archaeologist Tampawaddy U Win Maung. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Artists, civil society groups receive prizes

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THREE civil society groups and five artists from Mandalay Region have been recognised with awards from President U Thein Sein.

Awards were given to the Byamasore Free Funeral Service Society, the Mingun Home for the Aged and Malun Market's rice donation team at the August 27 ceremony, which took place at Mandalay City Hall.

Archaeologist Tampawaddy U Win Maung, who was given a prize for his contribution to the understanding of traditional architecture, said that previously the state only recognised the efforts of its civil servants.

"We supported them with practical skills but no one knew it," U Win Maung said. "There are excellent people in both government departments and the private sector. I'm glad the new government has recognised both."

Along with U Win Maung, U Sein Myint was recognised for his golden embroideries; Shwe Sin Academy for gold leaf production; U Kyaw Khin for gem paintings; and U Ba Nyein for lacquerware.

The winners from Mandalay Region were nominated by the regional government.

"I'm proud for the groups and people who won awards," Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint said.

— Translated by Thiri Min Htun

Unions back teacher fired over '88 ceremony

Teachers call on Department of Education to reconsider decision to sack Nay Pyi Taw teacher Daw Soe Soe Khaing for attending the August 6-8 event in Yangon



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A UNION for university teachers in Mandalay has joined its counterparts in Yangon in condemning the sacking of a Nay Pyi Taw teacher, who was forced to resign last month for attending an event to mark the 25th anniversary of the 1988 uprising.

The Maha Aung Myay township university teachers' union called for an investigation into the firing of Daw Soe Soe Khaing from a high school in Zabuthiri township and said the case highlighted the need for improved transparency in the Education Department.

The department dismissed Daw Soe Soe Khaing, a teacher of 18 years, on August 15 for taking five days' leave without permission, not informing superiors where she planned to travel and attending a political event.

She initially resigned following

pressure from her superiors but the Education Department later fired her after she told journalists she had been forced to resign for attending the 88 Generation-organised event, held in Yangon from August 6-8.

'There are many cases where teachers have been fired unfairly.'

U Thet Naing Oo
Assistant lecturer
Mandalay Distance University

Because she was fired she can no longer hold a government position and will not be eligible for a state pension.

Daw Tin Nwet Yi, a senior member of the Maha Aung Myay union, which was formed in June 2012, said that the punishment handed out to Daw Soe Soe Khaing was out of proportion to any infraction she

committed. Daw Tin Nwet Yi said she also attended the same event but faced no disciplinary action.

"This order is very severe and we believe this punishment should be reconsidered," said Daw Tin Nwet Yi, who is also a lecturer from the Mandalay University of Foreign Languages. "Civil servants have to make a lot of sacrifices ... She should not be treated like this."

Teachers' unions in Yangon have also issued statements describing the punishment as excessive and calling for Daw Soe Soe Khaing's reinstatement.

U Thet Naing Oo, an assistant lecturer from Mandalay Distance University and member of the Maha Aung Myay union, said the ministry had a history of unfairly firing teachers it believed were troublesome.

"Similar cases occurred in 2003 and 2005. In 2003, U Zaw Min Lwin got fired because he joined Daw Aung San Suu Kyi when she was coming back from Mogok. In 2005, Dr Aye Aung was fired for causing problems during a ministerial tour," he said. "There are many cases where teachers have been fired unfairly in this way."

Arrival station opens at Yangon bus terminal

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THE first phase of a plan to upgrade Yangon's main highway bus terminal – a new arrival station for passengers – will open on September 1, a Yangon City Development Committee official says.

The new station will become the main pick-up and drop-off points for passengers, said YCDC official U Nyan Tun Aung. It will be able to accommodate 30 buses at a time and will include a separate area for hiring taxis, which U Nyan Tun Aung said would be much more convenient for passengers. He said CCTV cameras would also make it safer than the main terminal.

After dropping passengers off at the new station, buses will then continue to the main Aung Mingalar terminal. Passengers will still be able to board and disembark from buses at the main terminal as before.

The upgrade of the highway bus station was launched in late 2012. Roads inside the main Aung Mingalar bus station are still being improved but U Nyan Tun Aung said all work is expected to finish before the Southeast Asian Games open on December 11.

About 2000 buses are based at Aung Mingalar, with 500 to 600 services departing each day for destinations in upper Myanmar, including Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay.

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Free mobile clinics help contain TB

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EACH time Mandalay's free mobile medical clinic offers its tuberculosis screening service to residents, five to 10 patients are diagnosed with the disease.

The good news, say doctors who run the clinic, is that diagnosis means doctors can help treat and prevent the spread of the disease.

Tuberculosis specialists in upper Myanmar and doctors from the Department of Health in Aung Myay Tharsan township, Mandalay Region, have conducted five free medical screenings for tuberculosis in various wards around Mandalay since January, most recently on August 19.

"The reason is to give medical service for those who can't afford medical treatment in hospitals and clinics," Dr Kyi Shwe told *The Myanmar Times*.

Under the state-sponsored program, health officials have provided



A doctor with a state-supported mobile medical team examines a patient in Mandalay on August 19. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

free medical care in mobile clinics in the Naung Kwal, Daw Na Bwar, Oh-bo, Min Tae and Shwe Laun Gyi wards. Residents from nearby wards can also visit these mobile clinics, Dr Kyi Shwe said.

The township's health department also helps patients with extension medical treatment.

"Without treatment, an infected person can pass on the disease to 10 to 15 people in a single year so we are giving free medical check-ups ... with a fixed X-ray machine to reduce the infection

rate," Dr Kyi Shwe added.

He said the mobile clinic sees an average of 120 to 150 patients during each session. Doctors also screen for other respiratory diseases.

Daw Htar, a mother from the Shwe Laung Gyi ward, said her child's coughing has concerned her for a long time.

"It is doubtful that it is tuberculosis," she said on August 19. "But I can't afford to go to the clinic so I am grateful for this free medical service." – Translated by Zar Zar Soe

'It's doubtful that it's tuberculosis but I can't afford to go to the clinic so I am grateful for this free medical service.'

Daw Htar

Shwe Laung Gyi ward resident

Corruption driving use of child soldiers



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CHILD soldier recruitment in Myanmar persists because of corruption, weak oversight and impunity, an international organisation said last week.

"An absence of effective national monitoring mechanisms, coupled with significant legal and practical obstacles to hold military personnel criminally accountable for underage recruitment are other factors which contribute to this practice," Richard Clarke, director of Child Soldiers International told *The Myanmar Times* by email.

In a press release issued on August 27, the group urged the government to act on the recommendations of the UN Security Council Working Group to end underage recruitment.

"The UNSCWG expressed deep concerns about the continued recruitment and use of child soldiers in violation of international law by all parties to the armed conflicts, as well as the continued abductions of children," the statement said.

It added that the Tatmadaw and

government-controlled Border Guard Forces – as well as non-state groups – continue to recruit children, despite the Ministry of Defence agreeing to end the practice last June.

The Security Council group also urged the Tatmadaw to end the use of incentives and civilian brokers and also to investigate and prosecute military officers and civilians for child abuse.

Calling for UN access to areas where child soldiers might be present, the group says the child soldier issue should be included in ceasefire and peace agreements, perhaps with the involvement of the Myanmar Peace Center.

"Child soldiers' issues need to be fully incorporated throughout peace agreements being negotiated with non-state armed groups and in the mechanisms aimed at monitoring their implementation so that the recruitment and use of children is considered a violation of the ceasefire agreement," Mr Clark said.

However, the peace centre's U Hla Maung Swe said that issues like child soldiers can be discussed only when government and non-state armed groups begin political dialogue. "I think it's impossible to discuss it during ceasefire agreements or the trust-building process."



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Plaintiff asks to drop charge against activist Bauk Jar

Judge still yet to decide whether negligent homicide charge filed against Kachin activist can be withdrawn



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A CHARGE of negligent homicide against Daw Bauk Jar could be withdrawn at the request of the plaintiff but the activist will still face two other less serious charges, her lawyer said last week.

The National Democratic Force member and land rights activist was arrested on July 18 at her home in Myitkyina and appeared in a Hpakant township court on July 31 to face the charges, which are related to the death of a man in 2009.

Her lawyer, U Myint Thwin, said the deceased man's wife, Daw Kai Am, agreed to withdraw the negligent homicide charge, filed under section 304(a) of the Penal Code, on the opening day of the hearing.

The judge has not yet approved the request to withdraw the charge, which carries a potential seven-to-10-year jail term.

"The chief township lawyer and

chief township police officer signed this agreement [to withdraw the charge] and put it to the township court judge to approve. But [Daw Bauk Jar] still has to face two other charges," U Myint Thwin said. "She is still being held at Kamaing police station."

The three charges are being heard separately. Daw Bauk Jar appeared in court on August 22 and will next appear on September 2.

The other charges were filed under section 33 of the Myanmar Excise Act and section 41 of Myanmar Medical Council Act. If found guilty she faces six months' imprisonment for the first charge and a five-to-10-year jail term for the second.

U Myint Thwin said Daw Bauk Jar would plead not guilty and expects to be exonerated. "She was treating sick villagers in poor areas because one of her siblings is a physician and the other nurse. So it's not really unusual that they would find medicine in her house," he said.

Daw Bauk Ja was previously charged under section 304(a) prior to the 2010 general election, in which she stood as a candidate for the Pyithu Hluttaw seat of Hpakant.

However, the plaintiff, Daw Kai Am, agreed to withdraw the case in 2010, U Myint Thwin said.

A friend of Daw Bauk Jar's, Daw Dai Sway from Sai Taung village in Hpakant, said she believed the case was a "trap" and the charges were politically motivated.

'They have been waiting for the right time to take action against [Daw Bauk Jar].'

Daw Dai Sway

Friend of Daw Bauk Jar

"I think if she won in the 2010 election or 2012 by-election I think they would use this incident to dismiss her [from parliament]. They have been waiting for the right time to take action against her over this case," she said.

But Police Lieutenant Kyaw Hlaing, the head of Kamaing police station, said police have the right to open a case against a person at any time if it has not already been resolved.

"When we checked the file [into the 2009 death], we saw the cases have not yet been closed according to police procedure. Because [Daw Bauk Jar] did not face these charges, we charged her again when we found her. We followed the law and have evidence, both witnesses and objects," he said.

Daw Dai Sway said she is optimistic of a positive outcome.

"She is in good health. We expect she will not face serious problems as a result of these charges."

In the November 2010 election, Daw Bauk Ja competed against U Ohn Myint from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). She lost and submitted a complaint to the Union Election Commission but later agreed to withdraw the suit. She had planned to contest the 2012 by-election in Hpakant but it was called off due to fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army.

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Heavy rain triggers landslide in Chin State

A landslide triggered by heavy rain has destroyed five houses in Chin State's Falam township, an official of the Relief and Resettlement Department said last week.

Director U Chun Hre said 22 people were left homeless by the August 23 landslide but no casualties were reported.

"It happened in the area between Lai Zoe village and Zar Lai village in Falam township about 4:05pm. Five families lost their houses in the disaster. The victims have been provided with relief items, including rice and construction materials," he said.

Landslides are most common in mountainous areas of Rakhine, Chin, Shan and Kachin states and Tanintharyi Region, while areas along the Ayeyarwady River are prone to erosion.

Disaster risk reduction experts say there are a number of indicators of a potentially impending landslide, including smaller slides, leaning trees, visible open spaces between windows and frames, new cracks in plaster, tiles or foundations, and the sudden appearance and rapid expansion of cracks on road pavements or other surfaces.

— Aye Sapay Phyu

Nay Pyi Taw

Telecoms law sets two-year deadline for regulator

An independent telecommunications commission will be established to regulate the telecoms sector within two years under the version of the Telecommunications Law approved by parliament last week.

MPs finalised nine sections of the draft law on which the lower and upper houses had not reached agreement through a vote on August 27, as well as a number of other recommendations from the Joint Bill Committee. The bill will now go to the office of President U Thein Sein, who has 14 days to sign it into law or send it back with recommended changes.

However, the latter appears unlikely given the changes agreed last week received the support of Deputy Minister for Communications and Information Technology U Thaung Tin, who was present at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session.

The independent commission will be headed by "an appropriate union-level leader", MPs agreed at the session.

U Thaung Tin said the liberalisation of the telecoms sector and greater private competition meant that an independent regulator will be needed to stand between the private sector and the ministry.

"Most other countries have a similar independent regulator. Two years will be long enough to establish the Myanmar Independent Communication Commission," he said. — Soe Than Lynn, translated by Zar Zar Soe

Yangon

Four charged over grisly killing

Four men have been charged with murder after a woman was brutally killed in Twante township in July, apparently over a land dispute.

The men were charged in the Yangon's southern district court on August 14.

Police allege that one of the men hired the other three to kill Daw Sein Than for K5 million.

The woman was found decapitated in a betel nut field on July 15. It is thought she was killed sometime after her husband, U Kyi Maung, left their home in Tan Phyu Yone village to buy fertiliser in Yangon's Kyeemyindaing township that morning.

The suspects were arrested two days later. Police say they believe the motive was a dispute over farmland. — Aung Kyaw Min

Flood-hit Myawaddy still waiting on aid

Rejecting media reports of 'thousands' of aid workers, residents of a Kayin State township tell a different story

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MORE than one month after floodwaters devastated Kayin State's Myawaddy township, residents say there is still no accurate death toll, no official list of the missing and no support for many affected families.

Four days of heavy flooding in the last week of July left 60 percent of Myawaddy township underwater. At least 30 people died and thousands were displaced, some newspapers reported. But residents are criticising coverage, saying they have received much less assistance than has been reported.

U Aung Win Hlaing from the National Democratic Force office in Myawaddy said recent reports in local journals describing support given to refugees in affected areas were incorrect.

"Some journals said there were enough food supplies, with K15,000 given to each family along with other food. But actually, that's totally different than what we received," said U Aung Win Hlaing.

He said that refugees from the township's Myay Ni Gone quarter, close to the Thai border, received two 1-litre bottles of purified water, two cups of canned fish, three small packets of Mama instant noodles and a small basket of rice per family.

"If some families received the support [described in the journals], there were only a few," he added.

U Aung Win Hlaing said the media had misreported cleanup efforts as well.

"Journals said there were thousands of volunteers working to clean up Myawaddy ... but even in Myawaddy's downtown, there are many schools covered with mud. Students have had to clean up themselves to be able to study."

More people died than the officially reported toll of three, he said, adding that an official damage



Flood victims receive food relief from volunteers at a relief camp in Myawaddy on August 1. Photo: AFP

estimate had not been announced.

"We need effective, timely help in flooded area. I don't think the government lied but at the same time we didn't get the support promised."

One Myawaddy resident, U Hla Htut, said that while local NGOs and donors offered what help they could, many families were left without support.

"Though local donors came to help us, it wasn't enough. I worked as a volunteer in flooded area and know there were many who did not receive any support," U Hla Htut said.

He said floodwaters were as deep as 3 metres (10 feet) in downtown Myawaddy, and even deeper in lower-lying areas.

"As the water rose up all at once, people moved to higher places. A manager and a worker from Sein Nagar guest house fell from the roof and died in front of us. Many are still missing, but there's still there's no announcement of the number of missing or dead," U Hla Htut said.

A tea-shop owner near the Myawaddy-Mae Sot Bridge described the moment in which the

flood destroyed his business.

"We lived in the tea shop. When the water rose up, we had to stay on the roof. All my furniture and equipment for the tea shop were floating," he said.

He has since replaced some of the damaged equipment, he said. He also felt the media had mishandled reports of the flood's aftermath.

"When we read reports of the supplies being given to us in the news, we felt they were wrong. We had no idea which organisations were bringing supplies where. There hasn't been much transparency."

Balloon rides set for take-off in MDY



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EAGER adventurers will soon have the chance to go up, up and away over Mandalay in a hot-air balloon starting this October, a newly launched company says.

Oriental Ballooning plans to launch the service on October 25, with daily, pre-sunrise services through to at least the end of March – weather permitting.

“There was no balloon flight service in Mandalay before,” said spokesperson Ma Ni Ni Khaing. “This will be the first time. Visitors can enjoy Mandalay and surrounding areas from a perspective they’ve never had before.”

Oriental Ballooning is a subsidiary of Amata Group, which also owns Amata Resort and Spa at Ngapali beach and Amata Garden Resort at Inle Lake.

Oriental Ballooning anticipates interest in the unique experience can only rise and hopes to expand operations to Bagan and Inle Lake “very soon”, Ma Ni Ni Khaing said, adding that the company is waiting for Department of Civil Aviation approval to launch in those areas.

In Bagan, Oriental Ballooning will be taking on the long-established Balloons over Bagan service. In March, two companies linked to businessman Serge Pun – First Myanmar Investment Company (FMI) and Yoma Strategic Holdings – bought a 75 percent stake in Balloons over Bagan’s parent company, Shwe Lay Ta Gun Travels and Tours Company.

Ma Ni Ni Khaing said Oriental Ballooning is also considering offering the service in a number of other locations across the country. “We are inspecting Pindaya in Shan State and a few other destinations as part of plans to expand our services in the near future,” she said.

“The demand is really high from European markets as well as from Asian markets. We hope visitors will find this service highly enjoyable.”

The company has six balloons, two of which can carry four people each and four of which can carry eight people. Those concerned about safety will be relieved to know the balloons were made by the UK’s largest and longest-established balloon manufacturer, Cameron Balloons. Each is inspected and maintained by certified balloon inspectors working to standards set by the UK’s Civil Aviation Authority.

Ma Ni Ni Khaing added that the company has also hired experienced British pilots holding UK commercial balloon pilot licences. Flights will cost US\$320 per person, which includes insurance through an international provider.

Riots leave hundreds homeless

MUSLIMS displaced by the latest eruption of religious violence picked through the charred remains of their shattered homes as police patrolled the streets on August 26, amid concern over spreading unrest.

Hundreds of people were made homeless after about 1000 anti-Muslim rioters rampaged through villages in Sagaing Region’s Kanbalu township on the evening of August 24, setting fire to Muslim-owned properties and attacking rescue vehicles with catapults.

“It is going to be very difficult to rebuild our houses again. Some people are taking refuge in nearby homes or with relatives,” said 40-year-old Muslim U Aung San, who was displaced by the unrest.

U Myint Naing, a local MP for the National League for Democracy, said that about 220 people who had lost their homes had taken shelter in a school.

“They had been living peacefully for many years and this is the first time they saw violence,” he said, adding that the situation was now calm.

U Than Nyunt, deputy secretary of Mandalay’s Committee for the Prevention of the Creation of Riots, described the situation as “calm” on August 27.

“About 50 houses were burned down and 48 families and 220 people are homeless. One person was injured but not seriously and no deaths were reported,” he said.

Attacks against Muslims – who make up at least 4 percent of the



A Muslim man inspects the debris of his burned house in Htan Gone village on August 26, two days after some 1000 anti-Muslim rioters rampaged through villages in Kanbalu township. Photo: AFP

population – have exposed deep rifts in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, overshadowing widely praised political reforms since military rule ended in 2011.

Legislators from ASEAN warned in a statement that Myanmar was “on the precipice of widespread inter-communal conflict” and is not doing enough to stop hate speech.

“The deep underlying tensions are

clear for all to see and we feel that the authorities are not reacting sufficiently to what is developing into a perilous situation in Myanmar,” said Indonesian MP Eva Kusuma Sundari of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights.

A photographer in Kanbalu said that clashes had ended in the early hours of August 25 but fires sparked

by the riots burned until later that evening.

Some 250 police were deployed in the area as well as military personnel, he said.

The state-run *New Light of Myanmar* said the situation was “normal” by the morning of August 26 and authorities were making arrangements to open camps for those who lost their homes. No injuries have been reported.

The report said 12 people had been arrested in relation to the unrest, which began after a Muslim man was detained on suspicion of attempting to rape a Buddhist woman on August 24.

A crowd of about 150 people and three Buddhist monks gathered at the local police station demanding that the accused be handed over to them, the Ministry of Information said on its website.

When the authorities refused, the mob attacked Muslim property and the crowd grew in size and ferocity as the night went on.

The destroyed homes were sited beside a railway line in the village. After the authorities initially brought the situation under control, about 1000 people descended on the area at around 1am on August 25 and tried to reignite the fires.

They used catapults to shoot at security forces, who responded by firing into the air, sources said. Some members of the mob also tried to stop fire engines from collecting water to fight the blaze. – *AFP with Phyo Wai Kyaw*

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A rare spoon-billed sandpiper in the Gulf of Mottama. Photo: Staff

Tour guides study up on bird life

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TOUR guides and enthusiasts in Mandalay took part in a bird spotting classe last week as part of an initiative to offer a more diverse range of activities to foreign visitors and improve knowledge about the country's ornithological heritage.

The project, led by non-government groups Chan Myae Thu Kha and the Myanmar Bird and Nature Society, is aimed at meeting the growing demand for bird-watching activities from foreign tourists interested in learning more about the country's wildlife.

The first training was held from August 30 to September 1, with more than 50 people paying K10,000 to take part.

"Myanmar's tourism industry is improving and there are many who come especially to see birds," said Chan Myae Thu Kha secretary Ko Si Thu Win.

There are an estimated 1096 bird species in Myanmar, at least six of which are endemic.

Some enthusiastic bird watchers, known as twitchers, travel the world in search of rare and unusual bird species, but the project is also aimed at promoting Myanmar's bird life to foreign visitors with a more casual interest.

"Some tourists are not actually birdwatchers, but they may ask tour guides about the birds they see. If the tour guides can explain more about the birds it will improve not only our country's value as a destination, but also the guides' reputation," added Ko Si Thu Win.

Tour guide Ma Chaw Mu-yar Win said prior to the class that she was excited to have the opportunity to learn more about Myanmar's bird life.

"This is the third time I will attend a birdwatching training class," she said. "I love birds. I'm not aiming to be an expert but I want to be able to explain a bit about the birds we see during our tours to clients. I think it will help me gain a good reputation as a tour guide." - Translated by Win Thaw Tar

Women MPs call for review of draft marriage law



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A NUMBER of prominent women MPs have spoken out against a draft marriage law written by senior Buddhist monks, saying more research is needed to ascertain whether it is needed.

The law, which sparked an international outcry when it was unofficially released in June, would place restrictions on marriage between Buddhist women and men of other faiths. However, Buddhist leaders say they have collected 3 million signatures of support for the law, which primarily targets marriages between Buddhist women and Muslim men and comes amid a wave of rising anti-Muslim sentiment.

While some monks have said they will tell people in their township not to vote at the next election for hluttaw representatives who do not support the draft law, women MPs told *The Myanmar Times* they would not be cowed into voting for the law if it is submitted to parliament.

"Frankly I don't support the new law. Instead of imposing a new law, why not revitalise the old laws that were introduced to protect women? It is more practical," said Daw Phyu Phyu Thin, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Yangon's Mingalar Taung Nyunt from the National League for Democracy.

Only MPs and government



Buddhist monks attend a conference in Yangon Region on June 13 at which a version of the draft marriage law was released to journalists. Photo: AFP

ministries can submit legislation to parliament under Myanmar's standing orders, and so far none have committed to submitting the monk-drafted marriage law.

Daw Phyu Phyu Thin also

'Why not revitalise the old laws that were introduced to protect women?'

Daw Phyu Phyu Thin
NLD representative

expressed concern over the motivation for the law and said legislation should be drafted rationally rather than emotionally.

"We should consider human rights, women's rights and international standards. I am also not sure whether the new law would work if it was introduced because there are many old laws that are supposed to protect women that have failed to work in practice," she said.

A number of women MPs pointed to Myanmar's 1954 Buddhist Women Special Marriage and Succession Act as an example of legislation that could be amended if the rights of Buddhist women are in need of further legal protection.

Daw Nyo Nyo Thin, a representative for Bahan in the Yangon Region Hluttaw, said amending an existing law rather than introducing new legislation could reduce the likelihood of a "misunderstanding" between Buddhists and Muslims.

She said the current version of the draft is contradictory and unclear in some parts. It could also prompt ethnic minorities to complain that the government and politicians

are only concerned about the rights of ethnic Bamar women and not women from ethnic minorities.

"For example, they can ask why the law doesn't also protect Bengali women in Rakhine State," she said.

"People misunderstand the 1954 law [because they think it encourages women to marry foreigners] but it actually just helps women who marry foreigners. There are many examples of how it protected Myanmar women" who married foreign men by enabling them to inherit assets, she said.

While some have argued that the new proposed law would stifle the right of Buddhist women to marry whoever they want, Amyotha Hluttaw representative Daw Khin Wine Kyi said MPs would need to consider the broader context of the draft and also solicit feedback.

"Generally speaking, if the law supports the peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups and religions, and if it is reasonable and reliable for Buddhist women, I will support it. But [introducing a law] takes time and we need feedback from all," she said.

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Dated: 2nd September, 2013

RCSS calls on govt to lift game on drugs



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THE government has so far failed to implement drug eradication programs promised during peace talks with the Shan State Army-South, the armed group's anti-drugs team said last week.

"We have made agreements on [anti-drug] policies but there have been difficulties in implementing them," said Lt Col Sai Harn, who heads the Anti-Narcotics Committee in the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), the political wing of the SSA-South.

He said the main problem was communication with local officials, who have refused to cooperate with the RCSS on anti-narcotics activities despite the group having an agreement with the central government.

"No matter how much we want to, we can't do anything if the government doesn't want to cooperate," Lt Col Sai Harn said.

The committee released a report, *Journey of RCSS Anti-Narcotic Activities*, on August 26 that said cooperation on drug eradication has been one of the most important points in the peace discussions.

"Despite making agreements, cooperation on implementation could not be achieved in reality," the report said.

The report urges the government

to immediately take stronger measures to tackle drug production and trafficking rather than wait until the peace process has concluded. The RCSS said inaction will cause further suffering for the people of Shan State.

In October 2012, the government's Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC), the RCSS and the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) reached a nine-point drug control agreement during a meeting in Tachileik, eastern Shan State.

The agreement covered the conducting of joint assessments, the provision of technical assistance and drug education, and the exchange of information.

The government and RCSS agreed to conduct a joint needs assessment of poppy growers in Mong Nai and Mong Pan townships to identify alternative development solutions. However, Lt Col Sai Harn said the RCSS was stopped from entering Mong Pan by Shan State government officials.

"The state government said they didn't know about it and can't allow us [to enter Mong Pan]," he said.

Lt Col Sai Harn said he believes the state government does not want the RCSS to enter communities and meet local villagers. "Maybe they think we will disturb their governance," he said.

RCSS secretary Major Sai Seng Wan said the incident showed there is "no communication between the state government and CCDAC". "It makes it difficult for us to work," he said.

Lt Col Sai Harn said the Tatmadaw also needs to be involved in the anti-



Seized illicit drugs are burned at a government-organised ceremony in Yangon on June 26. Photo: Boothee

narcotic fight, particularly by exerting more control over state-backed border guard forces and militias that are allegedly involved in the trade.

"Militia groups are involved in drug trafficking. We have confirmed information. The Tatmadaw need to control them, as it is the one overseeing these militias," he said.

In 1999, Myanmar unveiled a 15-year master plan to eliminate all drugs in Myanmar. While the country initially made progress on eradicating opium poppy fields, poppy plantation and trafficking of other drugs have increased in recent years, according to UNODC. Earlier this year the government announced it had pushed back the drug elimination deadline to 2019.

Southern Shan State, where the RCSS/SSA-South is most active, accounts for about 50 percent of poppy cultivation in Myanmar, according to UNODC.

While the issue is being given greater consideration than in previous years, Lt Col Sai Harn said the government is not working hard enough to reach its drug elimination targets.

"If they continue like this, their aim will not be achieved," he said.

In June, the RCSS was awarded the "Golden Eagle Award" by the Thai police force and its anti-drugs organisation for co-operation with Thailand on anti-drug efforts.

‘Gang’ members arrested over MDY stabbings

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POLICE in Mandalay say nine people have admitted responsibility for a spate of stabbings in the city's moat area.

District and regional police questioned the suspects at about 6pm on August 22, after which they confessed to being involved in six stabbings, a spokesperson for the regional police force office said.

The spokesperson said there was no motivation for the attacks. He said the nine suspects were members of a "criminal gang".

"We will investigate whether there are any other people involved in these cases. We are working hard to eliminate this kind of criminal activity in the city," the spokesperson said.

On July 14, a man named Ko Sithu Aung was stabbed in front of Yadanarpon Zoo on the northern side of the moat, while Ko Sai Thiha and Ko Aung Ko Lwin were attacked the same day on 80th Street between 9th and 10th streets. Ko Myo Thura Oo was attacked on the western side of the moat between 14th Street and 15th Street on July 27.

They suspects also admitted responsibility for stabbings in other areas of the city, the spokesperson said.

The nine men will be charged with voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons and face jail terms of 10 years.

– Translated by Zar Zar Sae



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TB project set for \$55m increase



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THE Ministry of Health will expand its tuberculosis program in an effort to reach an additional 500 drug-resistant TB patients during 2013, ministry officials say.

The care and treatment services will be given to additional multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) patients at TB centres in 38 townships before the end of this year, Dr Thandar Lwin, program manager of the National TB Program, told *The Myanmar Times*.

The expansion is part of the MDR-TB plan updated in 2012 based on the five-year National Strategic Plan for TB Control (2011-2015), she said.

"We are starting in 38 townships, and an additional 30 townships will be reached in 2014. By the end of 2015, about 100 townships will have MDR-TB facilities covering 42 per cent of the population," she said.

The plan aims to eventually enable treatment of nearly 10,000 MDR-TB cases in 100 townships.

According to health ministry data, nearly 500 patients have enrolled and received treatment from July 2009 to August 2012. The expansion will reach 500 additional patients.

The ministry estimates that it costs US\$5000 to treat and manage a patient with multidrug-resistant TB, as successful treatment normally takes around two years. The



A patient hold a government-issued tuberculosis book. Photo: Aye Zaw Myo

expansion into 100 townships will cost an estimated \$55 million, of which \$41 million is yet to be raised.

The treatment services will include diagnosis, second-line anti-TB and ancillary drugs, socioeconomic support, supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

The multidrug-resistant strain emerged as a result of underinvestment in basic TB control, including the use of poor-quality or

counterfeit medication, improper treatment of patients and the transmission of drug-resistant strains.

The National TB Program conducted a pilot project in cooperation with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the WHO from 2009 to 2011 to treat 275 patients, achieving a cure rate of 71 percent, Dr Thandar Lwin said.

"According to the pilot project, the cure rate is higher than in other countries," she said.

"But this is just a pilot project and only a handful of patients were involved. Patients received intensive care, with both hospital- and home-based care. However, now it's time to expand and a lot of patients will enrol. Therefore, we are not sure what the outcome will be," she said.

In a statement on August 22, MSF said that new approaches and treatment regimens are critical to improving care.

Patients must take up to 20 pills a day, and endure eight months of daily injections, yet only about half have a chance of being cured, the group said, citing global statistics. The drugs have side effects ranging from debilitating nausea, vomiting and skin rashes to deafness, renal failure and psychosis, it said.

"The side effects from the treatment were strong and it was really difficult to manage. I felt dizziness, pain in my buttocks from all the injections and problems with my hearing. I felt nauseous when I smelt cooking, found myself easily getting angry, constantly weak and tired, always having diarrhoea, and experiencing hallucinations," Ko Min Naing Oo, a cured MDR-TB patient, was quoted as saying in the statement.

With an estimated 300,000 sufferers, Myanmar is one of 22 countries that the WHO considers as having the highest TB burden in the world.

According to WHO estimates, about 8900 people are newly infected with MDR-TB every year. However, as of the end of last year, only 800 patients were receiving treatment.

Campaign launched to cast 333-tonne copper bell

DONORS in Ayeyarwady Region's Myaungmya township are calling for donations to cast what they say will be the world's biggest bronze bell.

At an estimated cost of K7 billion (about US\$7 million), the bell would be more than three times heavier than the one at Mingun.

Members of the bell-casting committee plan to hang it in Myaungmya's Myatigon Pagoda when the bell is complete.


Committee member U Nay Myo Zaw told *The Myanmar Times* that the 333-tonne bell will be named Dhammsakay.

"We wish to cast the world's biggest bell because we believe that it will ensure the pagoda lasts until the arrival of the next Buddha," said Sayadaw Mya Sein Yaung.

He said he hoped the new bell becomes as world-renowned as the Mingun bell, which at 66,666 viss, or about 100 tonnes, is the world's third-largest, and the Dhammazedi Bell, which was lost in the Yangon River in the early 17th century.

"Hopefully, the new bell will be well known also," Sayadaw Mya Sein Yaung said.

— Cherry Thein



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a Japanese governmental organization responsible for implementing Official Development Assistance (ODA) in developing countries such as Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans and Grant Aid, Myanmar Office is seeking qualified Myanmar nationals for the posts of Programme Assistant and Administrative Assistant for its expanded works in Myanmar.

(1) Programme Assistant
Job Description: The Programme Assistant will work closely with Programme Officers and be responsible for:-

- assisting in planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation of development Projects and Programs
- organizing Seminars and Workshops
- undertaking public relations activities
- assisting in data collection, compilation, data analysis and writing reports
- handling operation and logistic matters

Eligible candidate for Programme Assistant should possess following qualifications;

- university graduate
- fluent in English (reading, writing, speaking)
- age less than 45 years
- ability to build good relationship with Myanmar governmental offices
- ability to work in a team
- more than 5 years of working experience in the organization/s
- good computer skills and knowledge of Word, Excel & Power Point

(2) Administrative Assistant
Job Description: The Administrative Assistant will work closely with respective Japanese Staff and Administrative Officer and be responsible for:-

- assisting in administrative and general affairs of the office including security management, property management, document management and office management
- handling in operation and logistic matters to support Programme Section
- assisting in Office IT's infrastructure and technology management

Eligible candidate should possess following qualifications;

- university Graduate
- fluent in English (reading, writing, speaking)
- age less than 40 years
- ability to work in a team
- more than 5 years of working experience in the organization/s
- good IT skills and knowledge of Word, Excel & Power Point (having experience in Computer Networking will be advantages)

Duration of assignment: From September 2013 to 31 March 2014 (negotiable), yearly renewal upon satisfactory performance

How to apply: Qualified and interested persons are requested to send the applications with updated C.V, educational credentials and references to JICA Myanmar Office, Room 701, 7th Floor, Sakura Tower, No. 339, Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, not later than **5:00 p.m., September 13, 2013.**

Note: Only short listed candidates will be contacted for subsequent interviews.

Yangon to get reprieve from monsoon in early October

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THE monsoon is expected to start receding from Myanmar from about September 20, with the rain in Yangon to let up around the first week of October, weather forecasters say.

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) announced on August 28 that the rainy season would recede from the northern part of the country between September 20 and 25, and from the central area by end of the month. The monsoon will continue to recede southward and will withdraw altogether from the country in the first 10 days of October.

The last monsoon rains in the delta area are expected to occur before October 5.

It comes after Yangon experienced its heaviest single-day rainfall for August, with the department's Kabar Aye station recording 5.63 inches (143 millimetres) in the 24 hours to 9:30am on August 23. Kayan township in Yangon Region also achieved a new maximum precipitation record the same day, with the 7.28 inches (185mm) recorded beating the old record of 5.12 inches (130mm) set in 2002.

The strong monsoon conditions in mid-to-late August have caused flooding in Yangon and other parts of the country. U Kyi Win, regional fire chief for Yangon, said more than 2700 people from Shwe Pyi Thar township had been relocated because of heavy rain on August 22 and 23.

"Three relief camps were



Residents walk through floodwater in Shwe Pyi Thar township on August 23. Photo: Supplied/Myanmar Police Force

opened in Shwe Pyi Thar. Some schools in Hmawbi township were also temporarily closed because of flooding on that day," he said on August 26.

More rain is forecast until the monsoon withdraws, with Ayeyarwady, Bago and Yangon regions and Kachin and Rakhine states expected to have above-average rainfall.

Two low-pressure areas have also been forecast for the Bay of Bengal in September and the department expects three in total by the end of the

late monsoon season, about October 10.

U Tun Lwin, former director general of the department and founder of the Tun Lwin Foundation, which promotes weather and climate awareness among the public, said at least three depressions were forecast in the Bay of Bengal from mid-September to December.

"Less rain in the period August 28 to September 3 will reduce flood potential," he said on his Facebook page on August 28.

Mandalay rice reserves sold to keep prices down

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MANDALAY Rice Wholesale Centre has been selling off reserves since August 22 in an effort to bring down prices, centre chairman U Thein Zaw says. About 40,000 bags have been put up for sale, with more than 2000 sold within five days.

"Yangon has been selling its rice reserve over the past year but this is the first time rice reserves in Mandalay have been sold," U Thein Zaw said, adding that the sale - both wholesale

and retail - was aimed at "cooling down" the rising price.

So far, he said, the strategy seems to be working.

"After the reserve sale began, the price stabilised sharply in five days," he said. "The price of varieties produced in other parts of the country has fallen by K1000 a bag."

The wholesale centre is selling a bag of *ehmeta* for K17,400, with the majority of buyers coming from the Mandalay, Tada-U, Shwebo and Wetlet areas.

As of August 26, rice varieties were selling for anywhere from K19,000 a

bag - for the *zeya* variety - to K38,000 for varieties such as *manaw*, *ayeyarmin* and *ma jan taxw*.

One Mandalay rice trader said the recent price rise had been driven by a decline in yields due to drought in Shwebo, the main rice-growing area in Sagaing Region. He said significant exports to China, which had driven up demand in local markets, was another factor.

"The rising price was mainly caused by high demand rather than short supply," another trader said. "The heavy floods in Ayeyarwady have

been cited as a factor but the price was rising before this happened."

He added that the sale of the reserves has kept the price of high-demand rice varieties from rising further but not resulted in any price drop.

U Thein Zaw said it was difficult to predict what would happen to prices next.

"We have to wait and see what happens when the harvest starts," he said, adding that he believed farmers will plant more *manaw*, *ayeyarmin* and *ma jan taxw* because of the high prices.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe

Companies sponsor job fairs to lure expats

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MYANMAR'S business leaders are taking steps to reverse the "brain-drain" of talent to other countries by sponsoring and taking part in regional job fairs.

The goal, say those organising the fairs, is to highlight the country's progress in recent years and encourage some of the country's talent to come back and contribute.

The Career Development Consultancy (CDC), a branch of Myanmar Marketing Research and Development (MMRD), held its first Myanmar Jobs Fair at the Peninsula Excelsior Hotel in Singapore from August 17 to 18, and plans to hold similar events in Thailand and Malaysia in the coming months.

CDC director U Lin Kyaw Tun said another job fair will be held in Thailand within two months.

"Our aim is for Myanmar workers who want to participate in the development of our country [to be able to return home to work]," he said. "We are trying to give the best service for them."

Twelve companies participated in the event, including City Mart Holdings, Coca-Cola Pinya Beverages, Kanbawza Bank, Ooredoo, Nokia Siemens Network, Fonterra, Capital Diamond Star Group, Schneider Electric, Forever Group, AA Medical, Myanmar Brewery and MMRD.

Almost 3000 people attended the fair and almost 200 people were hired, U Lin Kyaw Tun said, adding that there was significant interest in the advertised job openings.

"It is a good opportunity for skilled Myanmar workers to work back in Myanmar and to discuss [what] opportunities there are," he said.

The event featured a video presentation from U Aung Tun Thet - a member of the Myanmar Investment Commission and an economic adviser to President U Thein Sein - in which he explained changes in the country and why skilled workers should come home.

"I also worked abroad for more than 20 years but I have come back to my home," he said. "Our country has a lot of good opportunities for you, especially in education."

CDC also plans to hold a job fair in Malaysia and a second event in Singapore but dates have not yet been set.

Government to propose five Ayeyarwady dams in 2014-15



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A GOVERNMENT department has proposed building five small dams - all less than 3 metres (10 feet) high - on the Ayeyarwady River that it says could "open a new age in river transport" by maintaining water levels during the dry season.

The proposal, however, is contingent on parliament support, said U Thaung Lwin, director of the Ministry of Transport's Department of Water Resources and Improvement of River System (DWIR). If approved, work on the low head dams would begin in 2014-15.

"We aim to build [the dams] but we are still analysing the most suitable place," U Thaung Lwin said. "We will implement the project when the Hluttaw approves it ... We hope to be able to build [the dams]."

U Thaung Lwin said the department is considering five dams in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magwe regions, including at Chauk, Pakokku, Myinmu, Singu and near Mandalay's Inwa Bridge. He said the dams could be used to slow the flow of the river when the water level is high and this would have a tangible impact on levels during dry season.

"It can open a new age for river transport because the surface of the

river would increase up to 20 feet (6.1m) during summer, which would allow ships, tug boats and passenger vessels to travel on the vessel," he said.

"In Mandalay, the surface of the Ayeyarwady is 4 feet to 6 feet [1.2m to 1.8m] during summer. If there are low head dams, the depth of the river can be 20 to 28 feet."

The department says there are 46 sites on the Ayeyarwady and 37 on the Chindwin River that are difficult to pass when water levels are low.

It estimates that it would cost K82.1 billion (about US\$84.6 million) to build the dams and dredge the rivers to improve transport.

Between 2001-02 and 2011-12, the department spent about K2.3 billion (\$2.4 million) on improvements to the Ayeyarwady and Chindwin rivers, including more than K738 million (\$760,000) combating river bank erosion. The work followed a master plan devised by a Dutch firm written in 1986 with World Bank funding.

However, the proposed dams will be closely scrutinised by civil society groups, including those that successfully lobbied for the suspension of the Myitsone Dam on the Ayeyarwady River in 2011.

"I'd like the Ayeyarwady River to flow freely from its origin. I don't mean that we should not build dams. But if we do, they should be built so that they have the smallest possible impact on the environment," said prominent environmentalist Daw Daewi Thant Sin.



The Irrawaddy Princess II river boat travels on the Ayeyarwady River in upper Myanmar. Photo: Boothee

Environmentalist Ko Myo Ko Ko, director and founder of Point environment group, agreed.

"Dams should only be built after carefully studying the likely impact on the environment. And the wishes of residents should also be considered," he said. "Personally I think it's best to let nature take its course."

But U Thaung Lwin said the dams would have numerous benefits aside from improving transportation. He said they would also

protect against flooding and allow more water to be distributed to agricultural and industrial areas, and could also be designed to generate electric power.

The electricity would be generated using bulb turbines and could have a combined capacity across the five proposed sites of as much as 960 megawatts, according to the department. The cost of installing these turbines has not been included in its initial budget estimate.

- Translated by Thiri Min Htun

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The Peace Ark arrives in Yangon on August 28. Photo: Aye Nyein Win

Chinese hospital ship arrives in Yangon to offer treatment

CHINESE medical staff are to provide free treatment to Myanmar patients this week.

The Chinese hospital ship *Peace Ark* docked at Thilawa port, Yangon, on August 28 and will offer free treatment to local residents and military personnel, including outpatient service, surgical treatment and health checks, until September 2.

The 178-metre (558-foot) ship is equipped with 300 beds, 20 intensive care units and eight operating theatres staffed by 102 medical staff, of which 48 are doctors.

Medical teams will visit local communities, primary schools and orphanages to provide health checks and treatment.

“This trip is intended to increase goodwill between China and Myanmar, as well as between the Chinese and Myanmar navies,” said the ship’s commander, former Rear Admiral Shen Hao.

The ship’s personnel will also offer Chinese traditional medicine.

The *Peace Ark* has already visited five countries and treated about 18,700 people, he said. The ship departed Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, on June 10 and has already visited Brunei, Maldives, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. After leaving Myanmar, it will go on to Indonesia, Cambodia and the Gulf of Aden before joining an expanded meeting of the Defence Ministers of ASEAN and participating in humanitarian aid and disaster relief exercises involving military medical experts.

The ship will return home to China on October 6. – *Aye Nyein Win*

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Yangon hospital patients to move to new building

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PATIENTS at Yangon General Hospital's old wing will soon transfer to a new building on Pyay Road to allow renovations to take place, a senior doctor from the hospital said last week.

The hospital's superintendent instructed a number of wards to start moving in October to the new building, which is a refurbished Ministry of Energy office, said Dr Chit Soe, a consultant physician at the hospital.

"The orthopaedic ward, gastroenterology medical unit and surgery wards, liver medical unit and surgery wards - altogether nine wards - have been instructed to transfer," he said.

Ministry of Health spokesperson U Sein Win said the new hospital has 550 beds and will be transferred to the ministry from a private donor on September 2.

"We will start to install the

medical equipment in the hospital in September," Dr Chit Soe said.

The government has made renovating Yangon General Hospital one of its showpiece health sector reforms and the project has the strong backing of National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

However, Dr Khin Maung Swe, secretary of the hospital's renovation committee, told *The Myanmar Times* that progress has been slower than expected because of a lack of funding and coordination.

Additional new hospitals need to be built to shift patients out of the 1500-bed hospital. In February the Ministry of Health agreed to construct a new hospital building within one year to allow all patients to relocate from Yangon General Hospital.

He said Australian technicians agreed to draft the master plan for the overhaul five months ago but the committee has still not heard back from them.



People walk in front of Yangon General Hospital last week. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

The government, meanwhile, has also not yet allocated enough funding to the renovation, Dr Khin Maung Swe said.

"I think we won't be able to actually start the renovation plan for at least one more year," he said.

The hospital renovation committee includes Ministry of Health representatives, hluttaw representatives and outside experts.

While the hospital building's structure is generally solid, one problem already identified is damage to its floors. Myanmar Engineering Society vice president Daw Si Than, a member of the renovation committee's engineering subgroup, said the damage had been caused by overcrowding in the wards.

"Each ward should have 50 beds but we can see there are double that number in each ward," she said.

Daw Si Than said more tests needed to be conducted for a full assessment of the building's condition but these will be noisy and can only be completed after the patients are transferred elsewhere.

Yangon General Hospital is spread over a 35-acre compound and includes three medical wards, three surgical wards, trauma and orthopaedic wards, and 24 specialist departments for inpatient care.

Red Shan leaders lobby Quintana over war

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LEADERS of the Red Shan ethnic group gave United Nations special rapporteur Tomas Quintana an open letter explaining the human rights issues they face when he visited Myitkyina last month, a senior member of the Tai-Leng (Red Shan) Nationalities Development Party said last week.

Red Shan leaders U Sai Wai, U Tin Myint and U Than Htuu presented the letter to Mr Quintana at Myitkyina airport on August 15. The Red Shan mostly live in southern Kachin State and Sagaing Region.

"They said Mr Quintana seemed surprised to meet them. The letter included three points: that the conflict in Kachin State should stop; that the Shan ethnic minority are innocent victims, caught between the Kachin armed groups and the Myanmar army; and that the Shan should be involved in the peace process," said U Sai Saw Tun, the Tai Leng party's secretary.

Mr Quintana mentioned the meeting in a statement released on August 21 at the end of his 10-day visit.

"I also met with members of the large Shan community living [in Kachin State], and listened to how they had been affected by the ongoing conflict. It is vital that the ceasefire and political negotiations in Kachin State also address the concerns of this group," Mr Quintana said.

The meeting with the UN official is the latest step in a campaign by Red Shan leaders to ensure their group, which has long been overshadowed by the Kachin, is afforded equal rights in Myanmar's changing political system.

Prior to the meeting Red Shan leaders had met an official from the United States embassy in Yangon, U Saw Saw Tun said.

"Shan Leaders also met [UN envoy] Vijay Nambiar on August 27," U San Wai said.

Committee to examine controversial voting rights bill

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UPPER house MPs have agreed to send a proposed amendment to electoral laws that would strip temporary identity card holders of the right to vote to the bill committee for assessment.

Some MPs, however, argue the change, which would allow only National Registration Card holders to vote, form a political party or stand for election, is "discriminatory" in nature and a thinly veiled attempt to disenfranchise Muslims.

"I don't think this is an issue of illegal immigration. It's about denying the rights of citizens in Rakhine," he said.

The bill was submitted to the Amyotha Hluttaw by U Aye Maung, chairman of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP). He told *The Myanmar Times* that the amendment does not target Muslims but is designed to protect the Rakhine people from illegal Bengali immigrants. "[The Bengalis] can live and work peacefully ... but they should not be allowed to vote," he said.

The 168-member hluttaw approved the proposal by 107 votes, but even some of those who voted to discuss the bill said they did not necessarily support it.

"My vote does not mean I agree with the law. I support holding a discussion [on it] because I think this issue needs to be discussed," said Tatmadaw representative Brigadier General Kyaw Lwin Oo.

Prominent USDP representative and former Tatmadaw colonel U Hla Swe spoke out passionately against the changes, declaring the current election law "free and fair".

"It dares to accept the [citizenship] of those who can work for the interests of the country, whoever they are," he said, adding that disenfranchising immigrants would only lead to more unrest.

"There should certainly be a means for races like Chinese and Bengali who have struggled for years in our country to [to have full voting rights]. If they will not get those rights, the possible results are unrests and riots."

He said the current debate should be handled carefully, adding that the recent ethnic violence across the country had been exacerbated by the spread of disinformation. "No news media was brave enough to report the true facts during the Bengali affairs [of the past year] ... This issue is very hot and they don't want to get hatred from the public."

He pointed out that "Bengalis" have a long history of participating in Myanmar politics. He cited the example of U Razak and Ye Baw Ko Htwe, who are honoured as martyrs along with General Aung San

every July 19. He argued that as General Aung San welcomed them into his cabinet, those who say they love General Aung San should share his values toward Muslims.

It is unclear, however, how many of U Hla Swe's colleagues share his views, which he stressed were his alone and not those of his party.

U Win Htein, a National League for Democracy representative from Meiktila who is often referred to as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's right-hand man, told *The Myanmar Times* that it would be "premature" to dismiss the bill outright.

He said that if the amendment is examined and found to be discriminatory, the NLD will not support it. However, he said many of the points raised by U Aye Maung concerning the Bangladesh border are worthy of consideration. "There are many new arrivals from Bangladesh everyday," he said.

U Shwe Maung, however, insisted that the RNDP proposal has no legal basis.

"It is not only a human violation; it's a violation of [Myanmar's] fundamental citizenship rights. MPs should try to expand the people's rights, not take them away."

‘[The law] dares to accept the [citizenship] of those who can work for the interests of the country, whoever they are.’

U Hla Swe
USDP Amyotha Hluttaw MP

"They are trying to reject the rights of Muslims ... all MPs who understand the constitution will object [to this proposal]," said U Shwe Maung, a Union Solidarity and Development Party member who identifies as Rohingya, the controversial Muslim minority group who live mostly in northern Rakhine State.

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By Shangri-La

More warnings over draft association law

Association Law drafted by parliament contravenes Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other conventions, international groups warn

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INTERNATIONAL legal experts and human rights organisations have warned that a draft law that would ban unregistered NGOs and leave their members liable to imprisonment breaches human rights conventions.

The groups say that the current draft, which Myanmar-based organisations are also seeking to amend, breaches the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international conventions.

The International Center for Not-For-Profit Law (ICNL) recently expressed concern over the proposed law, while Human Rights Watch (HRW) on August 26 accused the government of trying "to keep its stranglehold over civil society".

HRW said the legislation would lead to a clampdown on civil society and vowed not to register if it is approved.

"The passage of this law in its current form would be a hugely damaging blow to Burmese civil society. It would be an unmitigated disaster for reform and participatory development efforts. It's about as bad an outcome as you can get regarding civil society, bar none. This is a five-alarm fire which could basically burn down the nascent civil society sector in Burma," said Phil Robertson, deputy director for Asia at HRW.

Under the draft, which was released to the public on July 27, NGOs must apply to a central committee for permission to register. Critics say it gives the authorities the right to refuse applications without explanation and allows no right of appeal. Organisations would have to renew their registration every five years and the government could shut down any organisation deemed to be in breach of as-yet-unspecified regulations.

Any organisation, whether Myanmar or foreign, that does not register will be illegal and its members will face a fine, a three-year prison term or both. Legal and human rights organisations say this provision is a clear breach of international conventions that enshrine freedom of association.

Government officials insist the new law, which will replace a 1988 Association Law imposed by the State Law and Order Restoration Council, is aimed at encouraging the development of civic society in Myanmar but critics say it will have the opposite effect.

"Under international law, the ability of CSOs to register as legal entities



President U Thein Sein speaks to civil society leaders during a meeting in January in which he asked them to cooperate with the government. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

does not mean that individuals can be required to register in order to exercise their freedom of association," said a recent ICNL report.

"As the UN special representative on human rights defenders stated in her report to the UN General Assembly: '[R]egistration should not be compulsory. NGOs should be allowed to

'[This law] is about as bad an outcome as you get regarding civil society, bar none.'

Phil Robertson
Deputy Asia director
Human Rights Watch

exist and carry out activities without having to register if they so wish."

While NGOs in Myanmar are already obliged to register under the 1988 law, it has rarely been enforced under the new government. Instead, restrictions on organisations have mainly been applied through the 1908 Unlawful Associations Act, which allows the government to prosecute members of blacklisted organisations, as well as anyone found assisting them.

Myanmar non-government groups are similarly concerned about the draft legislation and have been lobbying MPs for drastic changes, including registration becoming a voluntary process.

On August 15, about 80 civil society leaders from across Myanmar met scores of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw representatives in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss the draft.

While the plan to replace the existing 1988 law was welcomed, many expressed serious concerns about the draft - including parliamentarians.

"The bill should offer incentives, such as funding or international links, to associations so that they want to register, rather than threatening to punish those who don't," said U Zaw Myint Maung, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Kyaukpadaung. "The bill should not have any punishments at all."

88 Generation leader U Ko Ko Gyi was equally critical. "We don't see any section in the bill that will protect organisations," he said.

In a bid to reassure civil society leaders, U Tin Maung Oo, secretary of the Pyithu Hluttaw Public Affairs Management Committee, which drafted the bill, said their concerns would be considered by parliamentarians.

"Please believe us. We will discuss

the clauses about punishments in the bill," he said.

Mr Robertson said that if the law is enacted without major amendments then international organisations and donors could be forced to leave the country, harming the communities that they would otherwise have assisted.

"The draft association law is all about controlling and gagging NGOs, not about regulating them, and I'd be surprised if international NGOs play along."

"The hardest burden will fall on community groups and grass-roots civil society associations who are organising to defend their interests in instances when outsiders, like those trying to seize land, are bearing down on the village. You can bet those influential interests will use this law to destroy opposition to their projects in the community."

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BRIEFS

US narcotics and law enforcement official to visit

A senior United States official will visit Myanmar this week to discuss security reform and anti-narcotics efforts, the State Department announced.

William R Brownfield, assistant secretary of state for international narcotics and law enforcement affairs, will meet senior government officials, including the ministers for foreign affairs and home affairs, during the September 4-6 trip, which is part of an 11-day regional tour that also takes in the Philippines, Thailand and Japan.

He will use the visit to "highlight Burmese and US commitment to joint efforts on counternarcotics and rule of law reforms", the August 29 statement said.

"[Mr Brownfield] will emphasise the importance of

the Burmese government's commitment to security sector reform and adherence to internationally recognised human rights," it said. - Nan Tin Htwe

EgyptAir gets Myanmar rep

Myanmar Aviation Centre is to represent EgyptAir, centre general manager Daw Swe Swe Lwin told *The Myanmar Times* on August 29.

Myanmar travel agencies used to buy tickets from Egypt Air online, but now the Myanmar Aviation Centre will represent the airline, she said. The centre already represents Tiger Airways, Kenya Airways, Condor and other airlines.

"We expect a lot of people from Myanmar in the Hajj seasons," Youssef Gad, EgyptAir's district manager for Thailand and Southeast Asia, said last week. - Ei Ei Thu

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Business

Shrimp farmers chase European dreams

Improved market access leads to Rakhine shrimp farm resurgence though declining yields remain a concern



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FORMER shrimp farmers in Rakhine State are restarting long-dormant businesses following encouraging rule changes in the European Union, though many claim yields have diminished because of environment degradation and illegal fishing.

The EU announced improved market access for Myanmar fishery exports in June through its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), fuelling resurgence in the industry, shrimp farmers say.

U Kyaw Aye, a former shrimp farm owner at Sittwe in Rakhine State, said some are already starting to prepare their farms for next year.

"I used to have nearly 150 acres of shrimp farms," he said. "I stopped all of them maybe eight years ago, because we were not catching a lot of shrimp. When production was down, we faced difficulties continuing."

Sanctions against the country, he said, forced many to give up their

farms over the last decade.

"Other countries held sanctions against the Myanmar economy for a long time, so Myanmar exporters lost out on market access. When exporters lost the market they could not buy the raw products from the farmers. This was the one of factors involved in the loss of our businesses."

The country's recent political reform led to the removal of EU sanctions in April and the GSP announcement in June, creating opportunities which have many shrimp farmers hoping to start fresh. But they are also finding the economy is not the only landscape that is changing, with recent manmade environmental impacts making traditional techniques unworkable.

Farmers in Rakhine State raise shrimp by making pools into which tides carry breeding shrimp every six months. This method keeps costs low, since the shrimp do not need feeding.

But yields from these traditional methods are declining rapidly, according to U Maung Nyein, who runs 40 acres of shrimp farms in Amyint Kyunn village in Sittwe township.

Some 15 years ago farmers could catch about 30 viss (48kg or 108 pounds) per acre this way, but over the past eight years or so yields have dropped to about 5 viss per acre, a level he says is financially unviable for farmers.

Ko Aung Aung Naing, coalition facilitator for Pyoe Pin's Fisheries Project, organised by the Department for International Development (DFID), said several factors have contributed to the depletion of shrimp along Rakhine State's coast.

"It is not only that sea resources are down. Mangrove depletion is also causing the drop in shrimp," he said, adding widespread use of improved nets by unlicensed fishermen contributed to the depletion.

According to U San Kyaw Hla, vice chairman of the Sittwe Fisheries Federation, 124 boats are licensed by the Department of Fisheries to operate off-shore in Rakhine State, though he



A shrimp farmer dries out his catch near Sittwe, Rakhine State last week. Photo: Myat Nyein Aye

said up to 200 may be operating without licenses.

U Awin, a former shrimp farmer in Amyint Kyunn village in Sittwe township, said that while mangrove depletion removes shrimps' natural breeding ground, those that do breed are often caught by these boats before they are able to make their way into the pools.

All these reasons leave farmers no longer able to depend on nature to provide their farms with shrimp, U Maung Nyein said. Instead, farmers need to buy young shrimp to get their farms started.

"When we started shrimp farming over ten years ago, we didn't need to use the small shrimp because we got

all our shrimp from the sea," U Maung Nyein said. "We have to change our farming methods, like using better technology or small shrimp."

He added, however, that many will find the start-up costs of buying small shrimp prohibitively high.

"I have to pay K1.2 million for 200,000 small shrimp. That is for 40 acres. Some farmers cannot afford that amount of money because their business was down for so long."

U Maung Nyein called on the Department of Fisheries to offer specific loans and technical support to farmers looking to get back into the shrimp industry.

But while U Maung Nyein never stopped farming even during the lean

years and was recently rewarded when the price of shrimp increased rapidly in 2013 to K5000 per viss, U Awin and many others gave up on the industry entirely.

"At the former production rate we could live easily. When production fell, we decided to stop our business because we had to find other work," U Awin said.

U Awin added farmers who borrowed from the government in the past will have difficulty doing so now because they will not be able to show evidence of a functioning business. But he said it will not stop him from trying.

"We can't borrow money from the government," he said, "but we hope to get assistance from them."

'At the former production rate we could live easily. When production fell, we decided to stop our business because we had to find other work'

U Awin
Shrimp Farmer

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Free-trade fallout

BUSINESS 30



Siam's concrete plans

PROPERTY 32

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Singapore Dollar	K760	K763
Thai Baht	K30	K30.5
US Dollar	K972	K972



An Asian Wings Airline flight sits on the tarmac at Yangon International Airport. Photo: AFP

Airline tie-up plans await okay for take-off

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PLANS for Japan's largest airline to acquire a stake in Myanmar's Asian Wings Airways for US\$25 million are still to receive government approval, the Myanmar company's chief executive has stated.

Information about All Nippon Airways (ANA) Holdings' move into the Myanmar airline business leaked ahead of schedule last week, causing a hastily-assembled press conference in Yangon where company officials confirmed the plans but cautioned it awaited formal approval from government authorities.

Company representatives also denied that prominent Myanmar tycoon U Tay Za, who is often associated with the airline by industry insiders, is a shareholder in the business.

"We just worry about mistakes from leaking inappropriate news to the public right now, because [our plans] are being reviewed at a national level," said Asian Wings chief executive U Kyi Win at a Yangon press conference last Wednesday.

ANA plans to invest \$25 million for a 49 percent share of Myanmar's Asian Wings, though formal approval is not expected for some months, according to company officials.

"We realise that [Asian Wings] is currently small, but we're talking about the future," said ANA Airways public relations senior manager Nomura Ryosei.

ANA's press release shows U Tay Za is not a shareholder at Asian Wings, as it claims the airline is 60pc owned by U Lwin Moe and 40pc by U Than Oo.

"We completed a survey and through the survey did not find any evidence U Tay Za was associated with Asian Wings Airlines," Mr. Nomura told *The Myanmar Times*.

He added this finding had cleared the way for the investment.

U Tay Za was added to a United States blacklist in October 2007.

Mr Nomura said the planned deal highlighted growth opportunities in the Myanmar market, adding that though there are eight airlines in Myanmar and possibly more on the way, ANA is aiming for first-mover advantage with its tie-up plans.

"The acquisition of the stake in

Asian Wings represents the first investment in a Myanmar-based commercial carrier by a foreign airline," the firm said in a press release.

Asian Wings launched flights in early 2011, and is currently flying 13 domestic routes with three planes. It aims to begin international flights in October, the release said.

U Kyi Win said the joint venture expects to fly a total of ten A320 planes by 2018.

Asian Wings majority owner U Lwin Moe declined to reveal planned additional investments by ANA, but said the two firms hoped to formalise the joint venture by the end of 2013.

"We have been discussing the deal with ANA for a year," he said, adding the firm intended to launch international flights in October 2014.

ANA currently flies three times weekly from Tokyo's Narita airport to Yangon, but plans to introduce seven flights per week on the route at the end of September.

Asian Wings registered as a Myanmar national private company on September 2010.

Government officials declined to discuss the approval process for the deal when contacted.

BRIEFS

MoneyGram sets up cash transfer services in Myanmar

International remittance company MoneyGram is setting up its money transfer service in Myanmar in partnership with three domestic banks, according to a press release.

The firm is cooperating with Asia Green Development Bank, Tun Foundation Bank and Myanmar Citizens Bank to offer its international money transfer services, the release said.

"Our money transfer services will be offered in 10 of Myanmar's 14 states [and regions] giving consumers access to affordable remittances," said Grant Lines, MoneyGram senior vice president of APAC, South Asia and Middle East.

"It's an important step for MoneyGram as we increase our global footprint and make our services available to more customers worldwide."

Presently money transfers can only be received in Myanmar and not sent abroad, the release said. Company officials did not return request for comment on plans to allow outbound transfers to be sent from Myanmar.

The move follows rival Western Union's partnership with several Myanmar banks, which formally launched on January 13 of this year.

– Jeremy Mullins

Still, U San Aung said traders are hoping prices will continue to increase in September, after prices rose at the end of August due to increased demand from India after rain damaged that country's crop last month.

Prices are also reliant on the exchange rate with the rupee, he said. The Indian currency weakened about 9 percent against the kyat over the past year to trade at K14.3, meaning Indian buyers have less purchasing power.

– San Wei Naing, translated by Thiri Min Htun

US companies express Myanmar optimism: Survey

American businesses operating in Southeast Asia are keen to expand within Myanmar, though there are a significant number of constraints, according to a report compiled by the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore.

The chamber's annual ASEAN Business Outlook Survey interviewed some 475 American firms doing business regionally – including 14 from Myanmar – with the goal of measuring market sentiment in Southeast Asia.

Fully 100 percent of American firms surveyed in Myanmar plan to expand within the country, though challenges remain, according to the report.

Of the Myanmar respondents, "62 percent of respondents report dissatisfaction with the country's customs agency and none report satisfaction with any government agency," the report said.

It added many respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with ministries handling matters such as finance, taxation and the central bank.

Corruption was claimed as the largest hurdle to business identified by ASEAN-wide respondents, though 43pc of Myanmar-based respondents claimed it was a problem compared with highs of 80pc for Indonesia. Myanmar respondents were more likely to point to poor infrastructure, a lack of laws and regulations, and high housing costs as concerns in the survey.

However, respondents were keen to take advantage of strengthened ties within the region.

"The vast majority of respondents – 93pc – expect ASEAN's importance to their companies to continue to increase over the next two years," it said.

Myanmar was included in the report for the first time this year.

– Paul Scheicher

Bean prices await Indian bounce

Domestic prices for *matpe* (black gram) declined by nearly a third in August compared year on year as demand for the bean waned in Myanmar's main *matpe* export market of India, according to traders at Yangon's Bayintnaung Wholesale Commodity Trading Centre.

Matpe exports generated large returns for traders in previous years, but margins have been squeezed by price decreases in 2013, according to trader U San Aung.

"The current *matpe* market has been turning in less profit, and we have to be very careful how we trade," he said, adding that returns on *matpe* prices were being outpaced by goods such as onions, chillies and potatoes.

Matpe prices stood at K498,000 per tonne in late August 2013, a 30 percent decline on highs of K649,000 in the same month last year, said U San Aung.

While it is not unusual for prices to fluctuate significantly over the course of the year, this year's drop has been unusual in its severity, he said.

Trouble frothing between Myanmar Brewery partners

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MYANMA Economic Holdings Ltd (MEHL) is attempting to take control of Myanmar Brewery Ltd from its Singapore-based joint venture partner Fraser and Neave, according to a release by Fraser and Neave on the Singaporean stock exchange.

Military-run MEHL submitted a notice to Fraser and Neave stating its intention to seek arbitration regarding a potential claim under the joint venture agreement, which would allow MEHL to force the sale of Fraser and Neave's stake to the Myanmar firm, the release said.

"[Fraser and Neave] maintains that there is no basis for MEHL to give that notice," it said, adding the firm "has engaged lawyers and intend to vigorously resist the claim".

Myanmar Brewery is the brewer of popular domestic brands Myanmar

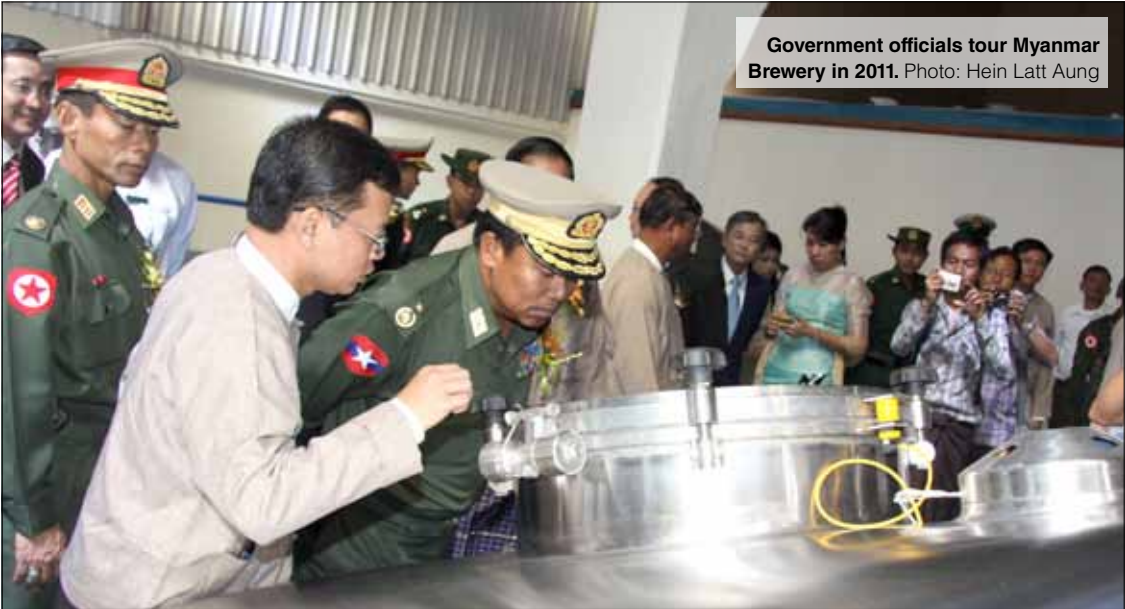
Beer and Andaman Gold. Fraser and Neave owns 55 percent of the brewery, with the remaining 45pc share held by MEHL.

Fraser and Neave said in the release it is still assessing the financial impact of the potential dispute.

The partners initially formed Myanmar Brewery in Yangon's Mingalardon township in 1995.

Thai Beverage, owned by billionaire Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi, purchased control of Fraser and Neave last year for US\$2.2 billion. Fraser and Neave subsequently sold its share in Asia Pacific Breweries – the firm behind Tiger Beer – to its former partners in Dutch firm Heineken, though held on to its stake in Myanmar Brewery Ltd among other businesses.

Both Fraser and Neave and MEHL declined to comment on the basis for the arbitration notice when contacted by reporters last week.



Government officials tour Myanmar Brewery in 2011. Photo: Hein Latt Aung



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The Fine Print Legal & tax insight



Commercial tax – like VAT, but not quite

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THE most important taxes businesses deal with in Myanmar are income tax and commercial tax. Very simply put, commercial tax is levied on a company's revenue, whereas income tax is levied on what is left from the revenue after business expenses have been deducted.

Commercial tax is similar to the VAT of other jurisdictions, but there are two important differences: Unlike in the case of VAT, services are not generally subject to commercial tax. And it is not always possible to offset input with output tax.

Commercial tax applies to the sale of goods by a domestic manufacturer, and to the resale and the import of goods. There is no commercial tax on the export of goods with very few exceptions. Services are only subject to commercial tax if they are listed in schedule 7 to the Commercial Tax Law.

There is a distinction, which is probably not found anywhere else in the world, between the initial sale by the domestic manufacturer of goods and subsequent sales by resellers. If, for instance, B, a wholesaler, buys beer from manufacturer A in order to sell it to supermarket C, the sale from A to B is treated differently from the sale from B to C. In fact, the sale from B to C is a "trade", which, interestingly, is consid-

ered to be a service.

The tax rate for trade (ie, the sale from B to C), as for the other services listed in schedule 7, is 5 percent. The tax rate for the initial sale by the manufacturer (ie, the sale from A to B) is usually also 5pc. However, the initial sale of goods listed in schedule 1 (mostly agricultural products and other goods considered to be essential) are tax exempt. Furthermore, there are higher rates for the initial sale of luxury goods listed in schedule 6: 100pc for cigarettes; 50pc for other tobacco products, betel chewing preparations, alcoholic beverages, teak and other hardwood logs; 30pc for jade and other precious stones; 25pc for certain cars; 10pc for petrol, diesel oil and jet fuel; 8pc for natural gas.

Beer is listed in schedule 6. The commercial tax rate for the initial sale from A to B is therefore not 5pc, but 50pc. The subsequent sale from B to C, however, is taxed at 5pc. The tax base is the turnover of the sale.

Commercial tax is also charged on the import of goods. The tax rate is 5pc with the exception of luxury goods listed in schedule 6 which are subject to a higher rate. There is no exemption for "essential goods". The tax base is the "landed costs" which is the total of customs duty and 1.05 times the CIF value. It is important to realise that customs duty applies in addition to commercial tax; these are two separate taxes.

Commercial tax is not charged on the export of goods with the exception

of the export of teak and other logs and cuttings (50pc of the turnover), jade and other precious stones (30pc), natural gas (8pc) and oil (5pc).

Only services listed in schedule 7 are subject to commercial tax (at 5pc of the turnover). Apart from trade, these are in particular the design and renovation of buildings, insurance, brokerage, agency services, legal advice, accounting, advertising, cinemas, services in the tourism sector, passenger transport, sale of food and drinks, entertainment, vehicle maintenance, beauty and fitness services, printing, computer-assisted design and data input.

.....
 Thinzar Khine and Sebastian Pawlita are with Polastri Wint & Partners in Yangon.

Myanmar on the right track: OBG

SOUKAINA SBIGHI, PR REP, OXFORD BUSINESS GROUP
 ssbighi@oxfordbusinessgroup.com

MYANMAR'S recent reform initiatives are propelling the domestic economy on a significant growth trajectory, according to consultancy firm Oxford Business Group.

Although infrastructure bottlenecks and real estate prices are still a deterrent, the modernisation of the banking sector, opening up of the telecoms industry and the liberalisation of the insurance sector are all expected to play a vital role in the evolution of the economy, said its Myanmar Editorial Manager Michael Nesbitt.

"The entrance of global players such as Coca-Cola, Unilever as well as many smaller more versatile firms shows that investor confidence is on the rise," he said in a press release.

Mr Nesbitt met with Minister of the President's Office

U Soe Thane in the process of conducting research ahead of the planned release of its report, *The Report: Myanmar 2014*, discussing concerns related to foreign investors.

The report aims to provide a detailed analysis of Myanmar's macroeconomics, infrastructure, banking and developments in other sectors, the release said.

U Soe Thane said the new foreign investment law offers guarantees against the nationalisation and termination of investment during the permitted period, adding it also allows for transfer of the entitled foreign capital to the investor on the expiry of the term of the contract.

He added that the sanctions are not entirely under Myanmar's control, but reform initiatives will continue.

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ANALYSIS

Free trade at any price?

Myanmar faces a series of tough choices ahead of initiatives for a more integrated ASEAN

EDWIN VANDERBRUGGEN

GEOGRAPHY has its downsides too. Myanmar is wedged in between China and India, two BRIC countries that are among the world's largest manufacturing centres. As a member of ASEAN, Myanmar is required to eliminate nearly all its import duties by 2015 as part of the Asean Economic Community initiative. In addition, Myanmar has to abide by a strict schedule of reduction of import duties under the "AFTA Plus" agreements, the free trade agreements that ASEAN concluded with China, Japan, Korea, India and Australia/New Zealand. For example, by 2015 Myanmar needs to allow imports from China at zero percent duty, except goods on a limited "sensitive list" which follows a slower reduction schedule.

That is a scary prospect for Myanmar's domestic producers of products like vegetable oils, cement, fruit and a whole range of other products. Many of the foreign competitors of such local producers are much better financed, have better technology and have massive production capacities. With the import duties gone, and not to jeopardise its reputation as a reliable treaty partner, Myanmar can only soften the blow with measures which are allowed under the country's WTO commitments and other Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

There are three major ways in which Myanmar can protect its domestic producers while still remaining compliant with its FTAs: It can impose additional duty at the border-gate on top of the normal customs duty in case of dumping; or subsidies; or safeguards.

Who is dumping products in Myanmar?

Four of the five biggest importing countries into Myanmar are also major and frequent defendants in anti-dumping investigations around the world. Generally put, the WTO recognises that a country such as Myanmar is allowed to protect itself from dumping by levying more duty at the border if three conditions are met: products are imported into Myanmar at a price that is lower than the "normal value"; there is injury to Myanmar's domestic producers; and a causal link can be seen between the two. "Normal value" is defined in a complex agreement (Agreement on the Implementation of Art. VI of GATT) and a body of case law. In its simplest form, to calculate a "normal value" one takes the price of the product in the home market of the exporter, adds transport costs, insurance, taxes and the like, and compares that with the import price.

In practice, domestic producers file an application with their government's appropriate agency based on their own country's anti-dumping regulations. The application basically shows that their market share is shrinking, that they are in trouble and that cheap imports are increasing hand over fist. The government can then open an investigation into whether there is in fact dumping and, subject to certain conditions, impose an anti-dumping duty which is in line with WTO law.

Myanmar does not have such regulations or agency yet, but it is high on the list of priorities of the Ministry of Commerce. With 2015 just around the corner, time is of the essence.

Countervailing subsidies

Under WTO rules (notably the GATT Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures), countries can impose some extra duties for products whose export is being subsidised in the country of origin. A "subsidy" in this sense must contain three



Workers toss a watermelon at Thirimingalar market in Yangon's Hlaing township. Fruits are one product that may face more competition from foreign goods as trade barriers decrease. Photo: Boothee

basic elements: (i) a financial contribution (ii) by a government or any public body within the territory of a Member (iii) which confers a benefit. If a foreign government provides financial benefits such as free assets, low cost loans or price support to companies that export to Myanmar, Myanmar would be allowed to neutralise the effect by imposing extra duties on the relevant products.

Of course, those countries will rarely agree that there are indeed subsidies. Major cases before the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body illustrate this. The Large Civil Aircraft case, also referred to as "Airbus versus Boeing", spurred several complaints and retaliatory actions, many of which centred on the question whether or not the government in effect provided subsidies.

Safeguards

Safeguards are much simpler to use than dumping or subsidies measures, and Myanmar will likely focus on these first. Under the WTO Safeguards Agreement, and to a different extent under the ASEAN FTA (Art. 6 par. 1), Myanmar would not have to prove that someone is dumping, or that subsidies are provided in the home country of the exporter. The concept of safeguards is simply that when domestic producers are being seriously injured by imports, it should be possible even for members of an FTA to give their domestic producers some temporary protection. The WTO limits the time period of such a safeguard from 1 to 8 years, with frequent reviews, but the shorter periods are more common. The ASEAN FTA is vague, only indicating that a measure is put in place "for such time as may be necessary to prevent or remedy such injury".

Countries might retaliate. They could levy their own higher duties on products from Myanmar. In fact, they are allowed to do so under WTO rules. That might potentially hurt Myanmar exports in fuel, edible oils, and fruits and vegetables. But here is where Myanmar's relative small export base is actually an advantage. Myanmar rarely has major import market share with any particular trade partner, with a few exceptions. That makes retaliation less likely.

Imports from China are a special case. Myanmar can only use safeguards measures under the

ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement during the transition period, which starts from the date of entry into force of the agreement up to five years after the date of completion of tariff elimination or reduction for a particular product. If safeguard measures are off the table, Myanmar would have to turn to anti-dumping action.

Myanmar's To-Do List

Starting from scratch, Myanmar has quite a lengthy to-do list in terms of trade remedies, and little time to do it in. The practical challenges for Myanmar are staggering. Implementing a trade remedy policy whilst completely overhauling the Sea and Land Customs Act of 1878 and strengthening enforcement is a tall order.

First priority, as the Ministry of Commerce is keenly aware, is preparing and issuing the appropriate regulation for measures to counteract dumping and subsidised products, and a framework for safeguards. The regulation will have to be WTO and ASEAN compliant, else the countries concerned could launch complaints with, for example, the WTO when Myanmar takes steps to curb imports. For example, due process must be assured in the domestic regulation. As the government is presently preparing a more general law on competition, it might be a good idea to combine the effort.

The next step would be to create government bodies to handle dumping or safeguards requests from companies or industry organisations. Often, the investigative body is separate from the decision-making body. For example, in Vietnam investigations are done by the Vietnam Competition Administration Department, while the decisions are actually evaluated by the Council for Handling Anti-Dumping Cases. In Myanmar, one could envisage an investigative body which is a special task force between the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the Ministry of Commerce (MOC). Part of an investigation is sending out questionnaires to importers, exporters and domestic producers and digesting the replies. You need trained accountants to extract the right details for that job, of which the MOF has quite a few. The MOF also has the necessary customs data. The MOC, on the other hand, is perhaps better placed to determine whether domestic industries have been injured.

The third step relates to the private sector. Myanmar's producers need to be made aware of how they can protect themselves with anti-dumping, anti-subsidy and safeguard measures. The system works far better when the industries themselves are watching out for their interests, as Vietnam found out a few years ago. While Vietnam had only raised three trade remedy proceedings by 2011, Indonesia conducted 89 anti-dumping investigation cases, and Thailand did 56. The government does not have to impose measures in every case. For example, rather than protecting producers, the authorities might consider that consumers should have these products at a lower price. Or, the government might not want to make moves "against" an exporting country which is also a major investor into Myanmar.

Edwin Vanderbruggen is a partner with legal advisory firm VDB Loi in Yangon.



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

Sr.	Title and level	Duty Station	Position	Deadline
1.	Planning and Budget Officer (LICA 6)	Yangon	National	2 September 2013
2.	Senior Policy Officer (LICA 8)	Yangon	National	15 September 2013

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

China's debt-fuelled growth outlives Bo Xilai

Credit-financed construction projects continue in Chongqing following trial

TOM HANCOCK

FALLEN Chinese politician Bo Xilai may have been ritually consigned to political history at his trial this week but the country's leadership has yet to abandon the debt-fuelled economic policies he epitomised.

Bo, who mounted a feisty defence at his five-day trial, won plaudits for his transformation of the southwestern megacity of Chongqing, where he became the city's top official in 2007, funded by billions in loans from state-controlled banks.

His fingerprints are visible everywhere in the sprawling metropolis, from a new light rail system that snakes across its undulating hills, to more than 3000 kilometres (1900 miles) of motorways and 48 new bridges government documents say were built during his tenure.

Chongqing's expansion began with China's "Develop the West" campaign to promote growth in the vast and relatively poorer region in the late 1990s.

Bo's supercharged version of a growth model followed by cities across China – funded by loans using land as collateral – made it the country's joint-fastest-growing region in 2011, with an annual GDP rise of 16.4 percent, according to official statistics.

Liabilities held by government financing vehicles in Chongqing swelled by 184 billion yuan (\$30 billion) under Bo, according to an analysis by Dow Jones newswires – around US\$1,000 for every man, woman and child in the municipality, which ranks among the biggest cities in the world.

Bo's economic policy could be summarised as: "Take enormous amounts of money from the central government, you spend it, making your city a better place and making yourself a hero in the process," said James McGregor, chief of greater China operations for consultancy APCO Worldwide.

Bo and Chongqing's government "went full-speed ahead on re-doing

the city, which happened all over China – and now they've got to figure out how to pay for it", he added.

Spending included 34 million square metres (366 million square feet) of subsidised housing for Chongqing's poorer residents, part of populist policies Bo touted as an attempt to reduce the wealth disparities that have soared in China in recent decades.

"Bo demolished old houses and gave people new ones, which were bigger," middle-aged Chongqing resident Zhang Renliang said. "He had good connections – he was able to make things happen."

"Chinese governments... are the world's largest property developers," said Chen Gong, chairman of Beijing Anbound Information, a Chinese think-tank that advises local officials, adding: "They build skyscrapers, town squares, roads and bridges and amass huge amounts of debt."

Some have touted a party plenum this autumn as a possible opportunity for reforms that could leave behind the Chongqing model followed by Bo.

Nonetheless Chen said: "There will be some proposals, but it will just be a matter of slogans. I don't think leaders have a way to change, because of the huge power of special interest groups." – *AFP*

'Chinese governments ... build skyscrapers, town squares, roads and bridges and amass huge amounts of debt.'

Chen Gong
Advisor to local officials

Indian land reform met with suspicion

TRUDY HARRIS

INDIAN business groups warned that a land reform bill passed by the lower house of parliament could jeopardise investment that is desperately needed to kickstart the stuttering economy.

The contentious land acquisition bill is intended to give farmers fairer compensation for their land sought for development, and replace a 119-year-old law framed by India's British colonial former rulers.

The bill passed through the lower house late Thursday last week, hailed by the government as a fair balance between improving landowners' rights and streamlining the process of purchasing land for industrial projects.

But business groups warned the bill would send the cost of projects "sky-high" and stall investment in manufacturing, infrastructure and housing at a time of decade-low economic growth.

"The industry feels that the cost of acquiring land for the industrial projects and the realty sector will go sky-high, which is something not desirable when India is facing an economic slowdown," said the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM) in a statement.

The new bill, which must now be passed by the upper house and be approved by the president, stipulates that landowners must be paid up to four times the market value of land in rural areas

and two times the value in urban parts.

It also states the need for rehabilitation and resettlement of people who have been displaced by property purchases.

ASSOCHAM secretary general DS Rawat said a separate requirement in the bill to obtain consent from 80 percent of landholders before going ahead with a purchase "will be very difficult, if not impossible".

Land acquisition is a politically charged issue in India, and land seizures for industrial projects have sparked bitter clashes between farmers, tribal groups and state authorities.

Huge investments, including construction of a \$12-billion plant by South Korean steel giant POSCO in eastern India, have been delayed, sometimes for years.

India's economy is growing at its slowest pace in a decade while the rupee has fallen to record lows in the last few weeks.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry said the new bill failed to streamline antiquated rules for buying land, warning that the process would instead now be "stretched by four to five years".

The land bill comes as the Congress party attempts to push through key reforms ahead of elections to kick-start the economy and douse accusations of policy paralysis after almost a decade in power. – *AFP*

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HOUSE OF THE WEEK**Room to stretch out**

If you want plenty of indoor space for a home office, a library, or an exercise room, and a small but pleasant yard, this may be the house for you. At 3600 square feet it has four double bedrooms and two more multi-purpose rooms that would do nicely for a variety of pursuits. Also, a living room on the ground floor sits next to a lovely dining room and kitchen.

All the floors are finished, with the kitchen and dining room in tile and the rest of the house in parquet. The home comes with a full complement of seven air conditioners, along with a television and a landline. In fact, the house is completely furnished with quality items, relieving future renters of any concern there.

The grounds are nicely flowered, though there is not all that much room for outdoor activity; the large house takes up nearly all of the lot.

— Ei Thae Thae Naing

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Bahau Township
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Contact : Estate Myanmar
Company Ltd
Phone : 09 73114860,
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Mandalay developers cut share prices

Price drop comes as firm targets farmers as potential shareholders in its industrial park project

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THE developer of a planned 10,000 acre industrial park in Mandalay has reduced the price of shares in the venture to K10,000 after failing to meet initial fundraising goals, but says it is on track to begin work at the site early next year.

Mandalay Myotha Industrial Development Public Company managing director U Tun Tun Aung said the decision to cut the price of shares from K100,000 was not because of a shortage of investors.

Instead, he said, the company wants to make shares in the venture more affordable for the public, adding that the lower price enabled 150 area farmers to purchase shares.

"We are a public company so we want the people involved in this project," he told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

Mandalay Myotha Industrial Development Public Company is the investment vehicle for the Myotha Industrial Park, an industrial, commercial and

housing development that supporters say will transform the region and bring significant economic benefits.

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

It includes three five-year phases, with the first phase expected to see about 2000 acres developed. The company says that when it is completed the park will create hundreds of thousands of jobs and require investment of more than US\$600 million.

Shares in the public company went on sale in early April for K100,000. However, the public company reduced share prices by 90 percent to K10,000 from the beginning of June.

The company closed its share offering in Mandalay on July 27 and is lobbying potential investors in Nay Pyi Taw until August 27. It is also working with consultants in Singapore to explore "other fundraising avenues".

U Tun Tun Aung insisted that development was still on track to begin next year.

"I am sure we will have enough funds to start this project ... Buildings

will go up in March of 2014," he said.

"This is a huge project. It's good for the country, good for the farmers and good for our company."

One potential stumbling block in the development of the park appears to have been overcome, with almost all land compensation claims now settled.

Mandalay Region's Minister for

lands are far from the project and we have allowed them to continue their cultivation.

"We will try to strike a bargain that satisfies everyone."

However, not all are happy with the process. Farmers say the project comprises 10,000 acres of farmland owned by more than 1300 farmers from 13

'I am sure we will have enough funds to start this project ... Buildings will go up in March of 2014'

Dr Tun Tun Aung
Mandalay Myotha

Electricity and Industry U Myint Kyu said the development committee of the Mandalay Myotha Industrial Park had settled claims with 90pc of farmers with land inside the project area.

"Land negotiations are nearly complete," he said. "The remaining farmers who we have not finished negotiating with are still farming because their

villages but only 900 acres are held by farmers with full proof of ownership documents. The remaining land is held by farmers without documentation, several sources said.

Farmers said the company paid K2 million (about US\$2100) an acre to landowners with legal ownership papers but those without the documents

were paid crop compensation of about K500,000 an acre.

"Before the farmers were able to accept the compensation, project officials required them to provide fingerprinted and signed documents stating that they legally held the land," Sayadaw U Pinn-yar Thiri from Tae Pin Monastery, who has been assisting farmers in the land compensation process, told *The Myanmar Times*.

"But even after that they were only paid K500,000 an acre because they could not provide ownership documents. Although the farmers did not want to accept the payment, they were pressed by township administrators to make them sign."

Some of the farmers who have not finished negotiating with the company started planting sesame, peanut, corn and cotton once the monsoon rains arrived.

"We have yet to reach an agreement for land compensation so we are still cultivating," said farmer Ko Kyaw Soe from Than Bo village in Ngar Zon township. "We did not accept the company's offer of compensation so we are continuing to grow crops on our land."

— Translated by Zar Zar Soe

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Dated: 2 September 2013

Thai firm cements Myanmar plans

MYAT NYEIN AYE myatnyeinae11092@gmail.com

THAILAND-BASED Siam Cement Group announced plans to build a major cement factory in Myanmar, claiming it will be able to produce some 1.8 million tonnes per year when operational in 2018.

The 12,400 million baht (K374 billion or US\$386 million) factory will be located to Mawlamyine in Mon State due to the supply of limestone and water access to Yangon, the firm said in a press release.

"This project is the company's major investment to support growth of cement-building materials business in Myanmar and ASEAN next to a recent announcement to construct cement plants in Indonesia and

Cambodia," said its president and CEO Kan Trakulhoon.

Increased construction efforts are leading to an anticipated 10 percent growth in Myanmar's cement demand annually over the next five years, the release said, adding the market currently demands some 4 million tonnes of cement annually. Although the firm primarily produces cement, it is also keen to expand its business lines in Myanmar, Kan Trakulhoon said at an SCG exhibition in Bangkok earlier this month.

Showcasing home decorations and home designs at the expo, he also said the firm aims to export packaging paper and plastic.

TALEA DE CASTRO



A man uses his mobile phone in Talea de Castro, Oaxaca State, Mexico. Photo: AFP

Forgotten by telecoms, Mexico town runs its own cell service

LEFT out by telecom firms like the one owned by billionaire Carlos Slim, a remote Mexican mountain village now runs its own mobile phone network to communicate with the outside world.

Tucked away in a lush forest in the southern state of Oaxaca, the indigenous village of Villa Talea de Castro, population 2500, was not seen as a profitable market for companies such as Slim's America Movil.

So the village, under an initiative launched by indigenous groups, civil organisations and universities, put up a perch-like antenna on a rooftop, installed radio and computer equipment, and created its own micro provider called Red Celular de Talea (RCT) this year.

Now, restaurant manager Ramiro Perez can call his children and receive food orders on his cellphone at a cheap price in this village dotted by small homes painted in pink and yellow.

The local service costs 15 pesos (US\$1.2) per month – 13 times cheaper than a big firm's basic plan in Mexico City – while calls to the United States, where many of the indigenous Zapoteco residents have migrated, charge a few pennies per minute.

"I have two children who live outside the village and I communicate with them at least two or three times per week," Mr. Perez, 60, told AFP.

Before, Mr. Perez had to use telephone booths where he paid up to 10 pesos (\$0.75) per minute.

The coffee-producing village installed the network with the help of Rhizomatica, a non-profit with US, European and Mexican experts who aim to increase access to mobile telecommunications in com-

munities that lack affordable service.

In a statement, Rhizomatica, a civil group named Redes and a town official said they hoped that a telecom reform pushed through Congress by President Enrique Pena Nieto to open the market will "break the obstacles" that prevent the development of such community-based projects.

"Many indigenous communities have shown interest in participating in this project and we hope that many more can join this scheme," the statement said.

‘Many indigenous communities have shown interest in participating’

Press release from Rhizomatica

The equipment used in Talea, which was provided by California-based Range Networks, includes a 900MHz radio network and computer software that routes calls, registers numbers and handles billing. Calls to the United States are channelled via a voice over internet protocol (VoIP) provider.

The village received a two-year-permit from the Federal Communications Commission to have the right to test the equipment.

When a cellphone user arrives in the village, a text message automatically appears saying, "Welcome to the Talea

Cellular Network (RTC) – to register, go to the radio with this message."

There is one catch: phone calls must be limited to a maximum of five minutes to avoid a saturation of lines.

Israel Hernandez, a village resident and one of the volunteers who helped set up the system, said the network uses the radio-electric spectrum that "telephone (service) providers refuse to use because it is financially unviable".

Slim's Telcel is part of his America Movil empire, which controls 70 percent of Mexico's mobile phone market and has 262 million subscribers across Latin America, but never made it to Talea.

Alejandro Lopez, a senior town hall official, said the village had approached big telecom firms but they had required 10,000 potential users as well as the construction of a path where an antenna would be erected and a lengthy power line.

"Despite some technical problems, because we are in a test period, the project has been a success" with 600 villagers signing up since the service opened three months ago, Lopez said.

Buoyed by the system's success, the village has decided to buy its own equipment that will allow RCT to run 35 lines simultaneously and plans to install in the coming weeks.

The next step, RCT volunteer Mr. Hernandez said, is to form cooperatives with other indigenous villages to request concessions from the Mexican government in order to resolve "this lack of free frequencies for cellphone communications in the country's rural communities." – AFP

WASHINGTON

Zoos rethink role as matchmaker for endangered species

LIKE an online dating site for endangered species, many zoos use computerised matchmaking to mate animals in captivity in hopes of saving some of the world's most vulnerable creatures.

The tools of the trade range from frozen panda sperm to genetic databases to ultrasounds for hefty rhinoceroses.

But like dating everywhere, it gets expensive, complicated and doesn't always work.

After more than three decades of efforts, some experts are taking a fresh look at modern-day breeding tactics. Zoos, they say, cannot keep pace with the high costs of shipping animals from one facility to another, as the loss of wild habitat pushes more and more creatures to the brink of extinction.

A movement to improve captive breeding began in the late 1970s when scientists realised that some zoo-held baby giraffes, gazelles and deer were more likely to die if inbred.

"That really caused a sea change in zoos because they realised they had to be better at managing captive populations," recalled David Wildt, head of the Center for Species Survival at the Smithsonian National Zoo.

Today, survival plans exist for more than 500 species, including cheetahs, Asian elephants and black-footed ferrets.

The genetic data of captive specimens is fed into computers so scientists can determine the most diverse matches for each individual.

Sometimes the plans work. China's giant panda breeding program has also been "extraordinarily successful," said Mr. Wildt.

Beijing maintains a core population of captive pandas and rents some out to mate in zoos around the world, with the caveat that the animals must eventually return home.

"They only have one shot per year," said Pierre Comizzoli, a research scientist who works with the solitary bears at the National Zoo in Washington.

The 220-250 pound (100-114 kilogram) pandas rarely manage the position needed to conceive naturally so zoo experts resort to artificial insemination.

"We have to anaesthetise the male and then stimulate the male under anesthesia and that is the way that we get the semen," Mr. Comizzoli explained. Then, they have to wait the entire three-to-five month gestation period to see if the female was even impregnated.

Most years, the attempts have failed. One panda cub born in 2005 at the National Zoo has survived to adulthood. This year experts for the first time used samples from two different bears, including one from a San Diego zoo.

A so-far healthy baby giant panda was born on August 23 though its paternity will remain a mystery until the DNA tests come back. A second cub emerged stillborn a day later.

For other species, like the critically endangered Sumatran rhinoceros, inbreeding is now the only option left, US zookeepers say.

In the wild, as few as 100 remain in Indonesia and Malaysia. The females ovulate only if a potential mate is nearby – which isn't always the case.

A Cincinnati Zoo team began working with Sumatran rhinos in the 1990s and finally succeeded in getting a pair to breed

in 2001, producing the world's first calf born in captivity in 112 years.

Now, that zoo's sole female, Suci, is sexually mature. Her only potential mate in captivity in the United States is her brother, Harapan.

An attempt to mate the siblings is expected to begin soon.

"We are in a really tough spot and we just don't have any other options," said Terri Roth, vice president of conservation and science. "Unless Indonesia were to capture more animals... we don't have the genetic diversity that we need."

Roth said she and her fellow scientists have spent more than 30 years trying to protect the wild rhino population and to improve their captive breeding program but said both efforts "haven't succeeded as we hoped". Cost is a key obstacle. Maintaining a pair of Sumatran rhinos in Cincinnati ran up to \$263,000 in 2011, she said. But the larger problem is the rapid loss of animals in the wild due to deforestation and poaching.

Costs are high for breeding small animals, too. Mr. Wildt said his facility spent a quarter of a million dollars in a single year to breed 40 black-footed ferrets.

Chemistry can also be an obstacle. Sometimes animals, especially cheetahs and other big cats, just don't agree with the computer match-up.

"There is a lot of discussion going on in the zoo community in North America and I think also in Europe about the fact that genetic management programs that have been in place now for over 30 years are not achieving their goals," said Wildt. – AFP



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World

WORLD EDITOR: Douglas Long | dlong125@gmail.com

MANILA

Aquino scraps China visit

PHILIPPINE President Benigno Aquino has called off a visit to China this week at Beijing's request, Manila said on August 29, as the two nations wrangle over maritime disputes.

Mr Aquino had announced on August 28 that he would make a 12-hour trip to Nanning on September 3 to attend the China-ASEAN Expo trade fair and business conference.

"The president has decided not to proceed ... taking into consideration China's request for the president to visit China at a more conducive time," foreign affairs spokesman Raul Hernandez said in a statement.

Asked why China made such a request, Mr Hernandez said, "Maybe you can ask China."

Mr Hernandez reiterated the Philippine position that "bilateral relations can advance despite differences", an apparent reference to the festering dispute over the South China Sea.

While it did not directly comment on Mr Aquino's aborted trip, the Chinese foreign ministry said in a faxed statement to AFP in Beijing that there were "difficulties" in ties and urged Manila to take steps to remove "the disturbance".

It did not say what "the disturbance" was.

"China has always cherished the traditional

friendship between the people of China and the Philippines and has attached great importance to developing bilateral relations," the statement said.

China claims virtually all of the South China Sea, up to the coasts of its neighbours, including the Philippines. The Philippines has said that China's claim infringes on its own maritime territory.

Tensions between China and other claimants to the sea, particularly the Philippines and Vietnam, have escalated in recent years amid a series of Chinese political and military actions to assert its claims to the waters.

The Philippines earlier this year said it had applied for its dispute with China to be arbitrated under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a 1982 treaty signed by both countries.

China has rejected the Philippines' call for UN arbitration, insisting on bilateral negotiations with its smaller neighbour.

The annual Nanning exposition, which began in 2004, is intended to strengthen economic ties between China and the Association of South-east Asian Nations, of which the Philippines is a member. - AFP

MINYA

Egypt's Copts suffer church attacks

MOHAMAD ALI HARISSI

COPTIC Christians in the upper Egyptian city of Minya are managing to restrain their anger despite a wave of devastating attacks on their churches and institutions by enraged Islamists.

Tensions are still running high more than two weeks after the attacks in the city some 250 kilometres (155 miles) south of Cairo, but there have been no calls for vengeance nor any fiery rhetoric.

"I say to the Islamists who attacked us that we are not afraid of their violence and their desire to exterminate the Copts," said Botros Fahim Awad Hanna, the archbishop of Minya.

"If we are not hitting back, it is not because we are afraid but because we are sensible," he said.

Enraged by a bloody crackdown mid-August on protests in support of ousted president Mohamed Morsi in Cairo, Islamists lashed out at Coptic Christians in Minya, accusing them of backing the military that toppled the head of state.

The Copts, who account for some 10 million out of Egypt's population of 80 million, had

already suffered persecution in recent years. But they say they have never such a systematic campaign as this.

"We were expecting a violent reaction but not on this scale, which suggests it was well prepared," the archbishop said.

In the greater Minya province, where Christians account for about one-fifth of the 5 million population, Christians say they have suffered systematic and coordinated violence since mid-August.

According to Human Rights Watch, more than 40 churches have been attacked in Egypt since August 14, when the security forces launched a bloody crackdown against demonstrations demanding the return of Mr Morsi, who was toppled by the military on July 3.

The attacks have been concentrated in Minya and Assiut in central Egypt, where attackers torched 11 and eight churches respectively, the US-based rights group said.

Islamists accused Egypt's Copts of throwing their weight behind the military coup that removed from power the Muslim Brotherhood, of which Mr Morsi is a member.

At the ruins of St Moses

Church in Minya, Bassam Youssef, a Copt, despaired at the sight of the rounded building with its clock tower, now ravaged by fire.

"Some 500 extremists attacked the building and set it on fire," Mr Youssef recalled.

"We did not expect such violence."

Not far from St Moses Church, Um Saleh watched over what is left of the Coptic school, which was also set alight.

"We heard them calling for jihad [holy war] and we rushed out of the area, terrified," she recalled.

From one of the windows of the school, it is possible to see the scorched dome of the Prince Theodore Church. Several metres away, a Coptic orphanage had also been burned.

"May God forgive you despite what you have done," reads a slogan daubed on the walls of the orphanage, now empty of its young wards.

At the headquarters of the Jesuit Brothers Development Association in the town, Father Biman is working to clear the debris after the attacks.

Fire destroyed the library, a nursery and the offices but spared the nearby church of Saint Mark, which has stood there for 125 years.

"I am very angry," Mr Biman said, before regaining his composure. "I also have compassion for the attackers, who have been brainwashed." He points to his T-shirt, which has a slogan on it calling to spread love around the world.

Maria Hanaa, an official at the Jesuit association, sees the attacks as a direct result of the community's antipathy toward Mr Morsi.

"We demonstrated against president Morsi, and it is the first time we did it, and we paid the price," she said. - AFP



Coptic Christians on August 27 walk inside Amba Moussa Coptic Church in Minya, Egypt, following attacks by Islamist assailants. Photo: AFP



IN PICTURES

Palestinian protestors kick an Israeli army vehicle in the West Bank town of Hebron, on August 29.

LONDON

Britain rejects US

GUY JACKSON

BRITISH lawmakers have rejected their government's call for military strikes against the Syrian regime, leaving the US to look elsewhere for international partners while reserving the right to act alone against Damascus.

The British House of Commons voted on August 29 to defy Prime Minister David Cameron's bid to win support for military intervention over the Syrian regime's suspected use of chemical weapons against its own people.

Speaking in Manila on August 30, US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel insisted Washington is still seeking an "international coalition" to take action against the Syrian regime.

"Our approach is to continue to find an international coalition that will act together," Mr Hagel told a news conference.

Mr Hagel said Washington respected the British parliament's stance rejecting participation in any punitive strikes against Syria's regime.

"We are continuing to consult with the British as with all of our allies. That consultation includes ways forward together on a response to this chemical weapons attack in Syria," he said.

The British parliament's decision also came after the failure of an improbable 11th-hour effort by British diplomats to win UN backing for action against Bashar al-Assad's regime at a meeting of the permanent members of the Security Council.

"It is clear to me that the British parliament, reflecting the views of the British people, does not want to see British military action. I get that, and the government will act accordingly," Mr Cameron said.

His government was defeated by just 13 votes in the House of Commons in its bid for a "strong humanitarian response" to the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime.

'It is clear to me that the British parliament, reflecting the views of the British people, does not want to see British military action.'

David Cameron
British Prime Minister

That, combined with deadlock at the United Nations, appeared to effectively sound the death knell for the idea of a broad-based Western military coalition, although other American allies might still participate.

Caitlin Hayden, a National Security Council spokeswoman,

said US President Barack Obama's decision-making "will be guided by what is in the best interests of the United States."

"He believes that there are core interests at stake for the United States and that countries who violate international norms regarding chemical weapons need to be held accountable."

Earlier, envoys from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States - had met at UN headquarters in New York.

The 45-minute meeting was the second since Britain proposed a draft resolution to permit "all necessary measures" to protect Syrian civilians after a suspected chemical weapons attack last month. But none of the envoys commented as they left.

Reports late last week had suggested that a Western strike was imminent, but questions have been raised about the quality of the intelligence linking Mr Assad to the attack.

The White House reached out to US lawmakers, with the president's top aides briefing congressional leaders in a 90-minute conference call.

Some members of Congress voiced support for limited surgical strikes, while urging the administration to continue consulting closely with the Congress.

Nancy Pelosi, the minority leader in the House, said she agreed with House Speaker John Boehner that "there needs to be more consultation with all members of Congress and



UN rights chief Pillay blasted by Sri Lanka

WORLD 40

Kremlin cops confiscate Putin panty painting

WORLD 43



More work needed to fulfill King's dream: Obama

WORLD 42



vehicle during a demonstration in support of the controlled Israeli enclave called H2, in Gaza. Photo: AFP

Syria plans

additional transparency into the decision-making process and timing, and that the case needs to be made to the American people". "It is clear that the American people are weary of war. However, Assad gassing his own people is an issue of our national security, regional stability and global security. We must be clear that the United States rejects the use of chemical weapons by Assad or any other regime," she said. US warships armed with scores of cruise missiles were converged last week on the eastern Mediterranean, and US military officials have said they are ready to launch a powerful barrage against regime targets in Syria. Mr Assad's ally Russia has blocked all attempts to toughen international sanctions against Damascus or authorise outside force to punish or unseat the regime. Syria, meanwhile, is in the 29th month of a vicious civil war in which more than 100,000 people are credibly reported to have died. As the standoff continued, a team of UN inspectors were investigating reports that last month's gas attack outside Damascus killed more than 350 people, including women and children. Mr Assad remained defiant in the face of the Western threats. "Syria will defend itself in the face of any aggression," state television cited him as telling a visiting delegation of Yemeni politicians. He vowed that any attack would result in "victory" for the Syrian people. His regime has denied using chemical weapons and blamed "terrorist" rebels. - AFP

PESHAWAR Pakistan to retry doctor who helped CIA

A PAKISTANI official on August 29 overturned the 33-year jail term handed down to a doctor who helped the CIA track al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden and ordered a retrial, a lawyer and an official said. Shakeel Afridi was arrested after US troops killed the terrorist leader in May 2011 in the town of Abbottabad, where Mr Afridi had set up a fake vaccination program in the hope of obtaining DNA samples to identify the al-Qaeda leader. He was convicted in 2012 for treason over alleged ties to the militant group Lashkar-e-Islam and not for working for the CIA, for which the court said it did not have jurisdiction. But angry US lawmakers saw the sentence as retaliation for his role in bin Laden's capture and last year threatened to freeze millions of dollars in vital aid to Islamabad. Then-secretary of state Hillary Clinton denounced Mr Afridi's treatment as "unjust and unwarranted". Mr Afridi was also fined 320,000 rupees (US\$3500). He was found guilty under the tribal justice system of Khyber district, part of Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal belt. The appeal, filed by Mr Afridi's brother Jamil through lawyers, said the allegations were "false, concocted and without foundation". "The Commissioner of Peshawar has set aside the decision of the Assistant Political Agent of Khyber agency and ordered the retrial," Mr Afridi's lawyer, Samiullah Afridi, said on August 29. A government source who was present during the appeal hearing in the office of Peshawar's commissioner confirmed the account. "The Commissioner after hearing the appeal by Dr Shakeel Afridi has ordered the retrial," the official said on condition of anonymity. Samiullah Afridi said he argued that the assistant political agent was not authorised to pass such a long sentence, no proper trial was held and his client was not given an opportunity to defend himself. Shakeel Afridi was not present in the court during his trial and could not argue in his own defence, officials said after his conviction. Under the tribal system, he would not have had access to a lawyer. The appeal also said Mr Afridi had "no association" with Lashkar-e-Islam. Lashkar-e-Islam, led by warlord Mangal Bagh, is widely feared for kidnappings and extortion in the tribal district of Khyber, where Mr Afridi worked for years. The appeal, filed on June 1, 2012, said Mr Afridi was kidnapped by Lashkar-e-Islam in 2008 and ordered to pay 1 million rupees (\$10,660). The tribal court had said that Mr Afridi paid 2 million rupees to the faction and helped to provide medical assistance to militant commanders in Khyber.

The militants have denied any links to Mr Afridi, saying they fined him for overcharging patients and have threatened to kill him. Troubled ties between the United States and Pakistan have not recovered since they sank to all-time lows after the killing of bin Laden by US commandos in a raid on his compound. Pakistan reacted furiously to what it called a violation of its sovereignty over the attack. It insisted it knew nothing about bin Laden's whereabouts. - AFP



Pakistani surgeon Shakeel Afridi attends a malaria control meeting in Khyber tribal district July 22, 2010. Photo: AFP

BRIEFS

Panama City
N Koreans end visit to Panama over seized ship
North Korean diplomats concluded a two-day visit to Panama on August 29 to discuss the status of the crew of a North Korean freighter caught with a shipment of undeclared Cuban arms. "The meeting was positive and we are moving forward," Panamanian Security Minister Jose Raul Molino said. Mr Molino said, however, that any resolution of the North Korean crew's case must be in keeping with "the norms of the Panamanian legal process". During the visit, the North Korean delegation met with the 35 members of the crew of the *Chong Chon Gang*, which was seized July 10 as it was passing through the canal from the Atlantic side. Authorities discovered a shipment of Cuban arms, including two MiG-21 fighter jets, air defence systems and command and control vehicles. On August 28, the security ministry said a panel of UN experts had reported preliminarily that the shipment violated UN sanctions against North Korea.

Seoul
Two Koreas sign deal on Kaesong committee
The two Koreas formally signed an agreement on August 29 forming a joint committee that will meet this week and is tasked with reopening and running a joint industrial park shut down in April. The initial challenge facing the 12-member committee is hammering out a schedule that will lead to the resumption of operations at the Kaesong complex. The South's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said the first meeting would take place on September 2 in Kaesong, 10 kilometres (6 miles) inside the North Korean border. The complex was established in 2004 as a rare symbol of North-South reconciliation and survived a series of crises on the Korean peninsula that saw other joint projects collapse. But operations were suspended in April when the North withdrew all its 53,000 workers at a time of heightened military tensions. Pyongyang said its hand had been forced by "provocative" South Korea-US joint military exercises.

Harare
Man charged for using Mugabe poster as toilet paper
A Zimbabwean man has been charged for allegedly using President Robert Mugabe's election campaign poster as toilet paper, local media reported on August 28. Takura Mufumisi, 26, from the southern city of Masvingo, is said to have taken the paper with him to a bar toilet. An informant reportedly spotted him tearing up the poster with Mugabe's image while inside the toilet and made a citizen's arrest. "Public prosecutor Mukai Mutumbe told the court that on July 24 this year, Mufumisi entered Landmark bar in the city with the intention to relieve himself in the bar toilets," the media report said. He has been accused of violating electoral laws. In Zimbabwe it is a crime to pull down election campaign posters. His case has been adjourned indefinitely by a Magistrate's Court. The southern African country held controversial general elections on July 31, which were won by Mugabe but were disputed by opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai. - AFP

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NEW DELHI

India arrests militant near Nepal border

ADAM PLOWRIGHT

INDIA announced on August 29 the arrest of Yasin Bhatkal, one of the nation's most-wanted men and the alleged cofounder of the Indian Mujahideen militant group, blamed for killing hundreds in a string of attacks.

Mr Bhatkal, who is believed to be in his 30s, was arrested near the porous border with Nepal and is in police custody in the northern state of Bihar, Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde said.

"He is being interrogated," Mr Shinde told reporters in New Delhi. "I cannot disclose which intelligence agencies were involved."

The banned Indian Mujahideen came to public attention in November 2007 following serial blasts in Uttar Pradesh State. It is accused of a number of attacks since, including in Mumbai, Bangalore, New Delhi and Pune.

The group is thought to head a network of homegrown Islamic militant groups that have links to the powerful Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed organisations.

Mr Bhatkal was named as a co-conspirator over an attack on the German Bakery restaurant in the western city of Pune in 2010 when a bomb placed in a rucksack killed 17 people, including five foreigners.

Reports say Mr Bhatkal was captured on CCTV footage in the restaurant planting the bomb shortly before the blast.



Leesha, who was wounded during an April 17 blast outside the state Bharatiya Janata Party office that was blamed on the Indian Mujahideen, participates in a demonstration following the arrest of Yasin Bhatkal, an alleged founder of the militant group, in Bangalore on August 29. Photo: AFP

His arrest on the evening of August 28 is another success for the Indian security forces following the detention last month of alleged top militant Abdul Karim Tunda, who is thought to be a senior member of the LeT.

It is not known if the two arrests are linked, but Mr Tunda, who was also arrested near the Nepal border, has been cooperating with police, according to newspaper reports.

Former home secretary RK Singh

said security forces had been working for years to catch Mr Bhatkal, whom he called "one of the most active terrorists in the region".

"I think we have made great strides in the past year and a half in arresting a number of [Indian Mujahideen] operatives," he told the NDTV news channel.

"Catching a trained terrorist is very difficult, and therefore I feel it is a great success."

Mr Bhatkal, from the southern state of Karnataka, was arrested in 2008 in the city of Kolkata but was able to flee after being granted bail by officers who were unaware of his identity, the *Times of India* reported.

Ajit Kumar Singh, a research fellow at the Institute of Conflict Management in New Delhi, said Mr Bhatkal's arrest would be a "big catch", but he also urged caution, saying the Indian police had a history of bungled operations.

"The intelligence agencies deserve a huge pat on their backs if they have indeed arrested the right man," he added. The fact that two alleged senior militants have been arrested near the international border with Nepal shows that the Himalayan country was serving as a "safe haven to them", he said.

Nepal police spokesman Nawa Raj Silwal said Nepalese police were not involved in the arrest of Mr Bhatkal.

The most recent deadly attack believed to have been mounted by the Indian Mujahideen came in February when twin bombs strapped to bicycles exploded in the city of Hyderabad, killing 16 people and wounding more than 100.

It was also linked to bomb attacks on July 7 at Bodh Gaya, a UNESCO world heritage site revered by Buddhists. The blasts were suspected to have been staged in retaliation for violence against Muslims in Buddhist-majority Myanmar. Police in Karnataka confirmed that the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) had communicated Mr Bhatkal's arrest.

"The Karnataka police provided information and photographs of Bhatkal to the NIA," said the state inspector general of police, Bhaskar Rao.

Homegrown Islamic militant groups are still a relatively new menace for India, which has traditionally been targeted by groups based in or directly supported by neighbouring Pakistan.

Recruits are drawn to the message of fighting for India's economically

'The intelligence agencies deserve a huge pat on their backs if they have indeed arrested the right man.'

Ajit Kumar Singh

Institute of Conflict Management

disadvantaged Muslims and avenging religious riots such as those in Gujarat in 2002, in which more than 1000 Muslims were killed, analysts say.

As well as being banned by India, the Indian Mujahideen was labelled a "terrorist organisation" by the US State Department in 2011, which said it had carried out dozens of attacks and killed "hundreds of innocent civilians". - AFP

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BANGKOK

Asia must address food loss

AROUND 35 percent of food is lost between harvest and distribution across the Asia-Pacific region, depriving millions of nutrition, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation said on August 27.

Poor production planning, a lack of storage, weak transport systems, crop disease and parasites cause some 30pc of cereals and 42pc of fruit and vegetables to be lost before reaching consumers, the FAO said in Bangkok.

"More effort is needed to raise global awareness of the critical issue of food losses and particularly post-harvest losses, as well as food waste, which is increasing," said Hiroyuki Konuma, the FAO's assistant director for the Asia-Pacific.

"About 35pc on average is lost or wasted after harvest," he said.

He added that last year the Asia-Pacific "was home to 536 million hungry people".

Mr Konuma was speaking at the launch of a campaign to save food in the region, bringing together more than 130 participants from 20 countries ranging from Pakistan to the Philippines.

The FAO defines "loss" as food that does not make it from harvest to the market, while "waste" is food thrown away by consumers, restaurants and supermarkets - a trend that increases with greater urbanisation.

The issue remains a cornerstone of development discussions, according to MS Swaminathan, who helped shape India's "Green Revolution" that boosted crop yields.

"Food waste is also a waste of natural resources like land and water," he said. - AFP

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Heartbeat of the Nation

TAROK KOLACHE



Niaz Mohammad stands on land where houses were once located in Tarok Kolache before Americans bombed the village in 2010. Photo: The Washington Post

‘What did we win?’

A US airstrike destroyed the Afghan village of Tarok Kolache in 2010, leaving residents and observers to wonder whether the attack contributed to the overall goal of defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan

KEVIN SIEFF

IT took 50,000 pounds of American explosives to level Niaz Mohammad's village.

The village had become a Taliban stronghold, a virtual factory for bombs that killed and maimed American soldiers. At the height of the US offensive in late 2010, commanders chose what they considered their best option: They approved an airstrike that flattened all the buildings in town, more than 40, including Mr Mohammad's home.

Though no civilians were killed, the bombardment quickly became one of the most controversial attacks of the war in Afghanistan.

Three years later, the village is a sandy ruin, symbolising the gains and losses of America's longest war. A handful of villagers, among them Mr Mohammad, have trickled back. The US Army withdrew this summer from the valley where Tarok Kolache is located. The Taliban have mostly fled to other districts.

Relative peace came to Tarok Kolache, but only after it was demolished.

"What did we win in this war? We lost our homes. We lost our village," said Mr Mohammad, 47, the village's de facto patriarch and district police chief, with thick black eyebrows and a wavy salt-and-pepper beard. "The Taliban do not live here anymore, but they were only fighting in the first place because the Americans were here."

On the other side of the world, the man who decided to bomb Tarok Kolache, Army Colonel David Flynn, sits in his office at a base in Oklahoma, hoping that his "painstaking choice" has paid off.

"I think about Tarok Kolache every day," Col Flynn said. "There were no good options there."

Mr Mohammad was one of the few who have returned to his ancestral village, now only partially rebuilt. In a country still peppered with rusty

40-year-old Russian tanks and long-decayed 130-year-old British forts, Tarok Kolache already feels like another relic of war.

To compensate the villagers for the loss of their 100-year-old homes, the US military built them square, concrete rooms. But those structures – oddities in a valley of mud-baked dwellings – are already cracking. Locals refuse to live in them, so the buildings sit empty, full of wasp nests, the subject of mockery. There are still the barbed wire and blast barriers brought here to protect the US base at the edge of the village, constructed after the Tarok Kolache bombing. The base itself has since been dismantled.

Mostly, there is sand, rocks and empty space where there once were homes. Some residents received up to US\$10,000 in compensation from the US military and moved elsewhere. Some said it was too dangerous to stay in Tarok Kolache after the US base was established. Some said it still smelled like death after several Taliban members were killed. Many claimed the Americans failed to rebuild what they had promised.

"For us, it was like a deadly poison," said Abdul Hamid, a former resident who moved to the nearby city of Kandahar after the operation, claiming he was compensated for only a fraction of his property.

Mr Mohammad felt compelled to go home, though now he wonders whether it was a good idea. His family has been in Tarok Kolache for 150 years, farming acres of nearby land. The Taliban insinuated itself into the village around 2008, turning it into one of the most prolific bomb factories in Kandahar province, according to US officials. Soldiers started referring to its "house-borne improvised explosive devices", a play on "vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices", the military expression for car bombs.

Mr Mohammad and his fellow villagers say they were never supportive of the Taliban; the insurgents

had chased or scared many of them out of their homes. But he claims the series of events that ended with the destruction of his village started with the American invasion in 2001. "If the Americans hadn't come, we would still have our village," he said.

The bombing didn't kill any civilians, but it stood out for the scale of its destruction. Before and after satellite pictures released in the aftermath of the attack show a cluster of houses that seemed to vanish into the desert. Crops on nearby land were destroyed.

US officials were quick to call the operation a success. Afghan members of the US-backed government said it was tragic but necessary. Both groups pointed to the proof: The Taliban left Tarok Kolache.

‘The Taliban do not live here anymore, but they were only fighting in the first place because the Americans were here.’

Niaz Mohammad

Resident of Tarok Kolache village

"The other option was to keep patting the ground by hand, looking for IEDs," Col Flynn said. "After losing several guys, we found it wasn't worth the risk."

Col Flynn watched as the airstrike was carried out, knowing it would weaken the enemy but infuriate many locals. He thinks his decision, supported by top American commanders, was the right one.

"Leadership isn't about being the

most popular guy on the street," he said. "It's about getting the job done and improving a bad environment."

There were objections not only from Afghan civilians but also from American academics and analysts, who said it was an example of the unnecessary use of force. For some outside the military, Tarok Kolache became a symbol of the Afghan war's poor execution.

Mr Mohammad learned about the American debate over Tarok Kolache months after it began raging on blogs and op-ed pages. He asked an English-speaking friend in Kandahar city to search the name of his village on Google. He couldn't believe what he saw – a seemingly endless back-and-forth about whether Tarok Kolache's destruction was justified.

"It was amazing – I didn't know we were famous in Tarok Kolache," he said, smiling.

US officials said they tried to be systematic about compensating villagers, either rebuilding their homes or paying them to construct new ones elsewhere. But it wasn't always easy or successful.

"We ran into our own bureaucracy," Col Flynn said.

The US military had a policy of compensating all individuals equally, even though some villagers owned many homes in the village and others had only one.

Fourteen of the homes in Tarok Kolache, for instance, were owned by one man, Abdul Hamid. The US military offered to rebuild one of his structures. He objected, but to little effect. Eventually he decided to leave Tarok Kolache, moving into a small home in Kandahar city, where many former residents of dangerous districts have relocated.

The Afghan government, for its part, hasn't ignored the village, but redevelopment efforts have been uneven. Authorities built a new mosque to replace the one that was destroyed, but they did not replace

the village's school, which survived the airstrike only to be taken over by an Afghan army outpost. There are now more than a dozen children living in Tarok Kolache who have nowhere to study.

Some Afghan proponents of the bombing now wonder what the operation's long-term impact will be.

"We're worried about factional tension. We fear that with the foreign troops' departure, the locals will go at each other's throats," said Shah Mohammad, the governor of Kandahar province's Arghandab district, referring to tensions between supporters and critics of the government.

Others worry that the residents of Tarok Kolache, who were once neutral in the war, have come to sympathise with the Taliban.

"After the bombing, they've become pro-Talib. They're the strongest Taliban supporters in Arghandab," said Mr Mohammad.

The area's villages are now patrolled by Afghan army and police units scattered across Arghandab. So far, they've held off the Taliban. But top Afghan officers say the situation could easily shift. The local terrain – the dense orchards and far-flung, high-walled mud compounds – could favour the insurgents.

For his part, Col Flynn remains in touch with the American soldiers who lost their limbs in this once-hostile valley to the kind of makeshift bombs that once poured out of the village. Last month, he visited a family whose son was killed several hundred metres outside of Tarok Kolache.

Col Flynn said he still plans to fulfill the promise he made to the village's residents. One day, he'll drive there in a civilian vehicle and drink tea with the men whose homes were destroyed in the bombing of 2010.

"We'll sit down, and we'll talk about the bad times behind us"

– The Washington Post

SEOUL

UN rights panel urges N Korea to grant access

GILES HEWITT

A UN inquiry gathering harrowing testimony of human rights abuses in North Korea appealed on August 27 for access to the country, even as Pyongyang condemned its work as slanderous and provocative.

The three-member Commission of Inquiry chaired by retired Australian judge Michael Kirby last week wrapped up five days of disturbing hearings in the South Korean capital Seoul – mostly testimony from North Korean defectors.

As Mr Kirby prepared to give a final press conference on August 27, the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) launched a bitter attack on the UN panel, calling its witnesses “human scum” manipulated by the South Korean authorities.

The commentary said the commission's work would only set back recent progress toward engagement between North and South Korea after months of heightened military tensions.

The North, which strongly denies allegations of rights abuses, has refused to recognise the commission and barred it from visiting the country.

Despite the KCNA attack, Mr Kirby issued another in a long series of formal and informal appeals to North Korea to grant his three-member panel of experts access.

“We will act with respect. We seek to find facts. We will provide due process. We will have no preconceptions,” he told reporters.

“We are not a prosecutor. We are not a judge. An ounce of evidence is worth many, many pounds of insult or attack.

The best way for North Korea to respond is with evidence ... and by letting us inspect sites where abuses are alleged to have taken place.”

The commission's repeated requests for access included a formal written letter to North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, but no direct response has been received.

The Commission of Inquiry is the first United Nations expert panel to officially examine North Korea's human rights record and plans to collect witness testimony in Japan, Thailand, Britain and the

‘An ounce of evidence is worth many, many pounds of insult or attack. The best way for North Korea to respond is with evidence.’

Michael Kirby,
Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry on North Korea

“It's difficult to accept that the international community established this commission without the intention that it would lead somewhere,” he said.

Much of the testimony gathered from the dozens of witnesses who participated in the public hearings in Seoul has been documented before by rights groups and NGOs, and in books written by the individuals themselves.

Mr Kirby said he had been “greatly affected” by the testimony but stressed that it did not always amount to evidence of alleged wrongdoing.

He cited allegations of medical experiments on people with mental disabilities as one contention that could not be established.

He also said there was not enough evidence to prove the North Korean state wilfully engaged in policies that deliberately led to starvation during the famine of the mid-1990s.

“But there is, of course, a fine line between what is deliberate and what is the result of persistent and willful incompetence,” he said.

He also highlighted “believable, repeated, highly specific” testimony on the “inhumane” conditions in camps for both political and non-political prisoners, as well as the use of extra-judicial executions and torture.

In order to avoid being “just another UN report”, Mr Kirby said the commission was considering presenting its findings in a multimedia format, including video footage of the dramatic witness testimony.

“We may well be endeavouring to use some of those particular images,” he said. – *AFP*

JINAN

Bo trial reveals lifestyles of China's rich

CAROL HUANG

THE family's safes held more cash than an average Chinese might see in a lifetime. Their French villa was held through shell companies designed to avoid taxes and publicity. The son gallivanted around the world at huge expense.

The sensational corruption trial of Bo Xilai exposed the lavish lifestyle of one of China's most powerful politicians, gripping the Communist-run country where mounting inequality has stoked public discontent.

The bribery and embezzlement charges against Mr Bo – until last year the head of the megacity of Chongqing and one of China's top 25 leaders – amount to 26.8 million yuan (US\$4.4 million).

And that only touches on a few business dealings in the early part of the 64-year-old's career. Mr Bo defended himself against allegations from his wife Gu Kailai that she once saw \$80,000 in bribe money by revealing the amount of ready cash they kept at home.

“In the shared safe there were hundreds of thousands of yuan, so how could she know the money she took out was from me?” he said, according to court accounts.

The ruling party mounted an unusually open trial following its most explosive political scandal in decades.

The court in the eastern city of Jinan posted lengthy transcripts on its Twitter-like Weibo account each day – although

their completeness and accuracy could not be verified.

Mr Bo was charged with bribery amounting to 21.8 million yuan, embezzlement of 5 million yuan and abuse of power, all of which he vehemently denied during the five-day trial.

He is accused of accepting 20.7 million yuan in bribes from businessman Xu Ming, who testified for the prosecution.

The court heard that Mr Xu paid for a \$3.2 million villa in the French Riviera resort of Cannes after Ms Gu said she wanted to buy it.

The six-bedroom mansion with a pool, shaded terrace and colonnaded balconies sits in an exclusive neighbourhood overlooking the Mediterranean.

It was allegedly funded by Mr Xu through three different companies and managed by others, so that neither Mr Bo nor his family appeared on



This screen grab taken from CCTV on August 26 shows Bo Xilai standing trial at the Intermediate People's Court in Jinan Province.

Their son, meanwhile, attended top-notch schools and universities with hefty tuition fees, including Harrow in Britain, Oxford, Harvard and, from this autumn, Columbia law school in New York.

Mr Xu paid for Guagua to travel to Germany for the 2006 World Cup, as well as Italy, Latin America and Africa, and for toys such as an 80,000 yuan Segway scooter, the court heard.

Guagua charged \$50,000 to his credit card – paid off by Mr Xu – brought back a month's worth of exotic meat from Africa and in 2011 treated 40 Harvard classmates to an expenses-paid trip to China.

Official corruption is rampant across China, as the leadership has acknowledged this year while vowing to crack down. Examples of excess have been revealed in recent months, even among low-level civil servants.

A county official in the southern province of Guangdong was found to own 22 properties worth as much as 40 million yuan, at a time when homes are becoming increasingly unaffordable for many.

But far greater wealth at the highest levels was exposed by Western media last year – and proved so sensitive that the outlets' websites have since remained blocked inside China.

President Xi Jinping's family was reported by Bloomberg to have investments worth \$376 million, and the *New York Times* said former premier Wen Jiabao's relatives had controlled assets worth \$2.7 billion. – *AFP*

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COLOMBO

Sri Lanka criticises UN rights chief

AMAL JAYASINGHE

SRI Lanka ratcheted up criticism of the UN's human rights body on August 29, accusing it of repeated "vicious and baseless" allegations, as its chief visited the island to probe alleged war crimes.

'[Navi Pillay] is doing what she always does on her missions – namely, talk to a wide range of people and collect a variety of views on human rights issues in the country in question.'

Rupert Colville
Spokesman for Ms Pillay

Foreign Minister Gamini Lakshman Peiris told Navi Pillay that Sri Lanka "resents vicious and baseless positions which are incessantly repeated" against the island, which is emerging from decades of ethnic war.

"There is a perception in the country about the lack of objectivity and fairness in the treatment meted out to Sri Lanka," the external affairs ministry quoted Mr Peiris as telling Ms Pillay during talks in Colombo.

Ms Pillay began a week-long visit to Sri Lanka on August 18 after Colombo appeared to drop its public hostility toward her and the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), which has adopted two US-led resolutions against the island in as many years.

The UN rights chief had publicly called for a war crimes investigation into what the UN calls "credible allegations" that up to 40,000 civilians were killed during the final stages of the island's separatist war that ended in May 2009.

Thousands of people had also disappeared, according to UN and international rights groups.

Mr Peiris spoke of "the repeated use of baseless and arbitrary figures in respect of disappearances [that] eventually acquire authenticity in the face of the massive propaganda that is being carried out against the government of Sri Lanka".

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, who returned from a visit to Belarus on August 28, had also criticised the UNHRC of treating his Indian Ocean nation unfairly.

On August 29, Housing Minister Wimal Weerawansa accused Ms Pillay of holding "secret meetings" with activists during her ongoing fact-



Buddhist monks opposed to a visit by Navi Pillay confront police outside the United Nations office in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on August 26. Photo: AFP

finding mission.

"She broke protocol, gave the slip to her security detail and went for secret meetings in Trincomalee [in the island's northeast] to conspire against the country," Mr Weerawansa told reporters in Colombo. "She is already planning a very adverse report."

Ms Pillay's spokesman, Rupert Col-

ville, made it clear that she had not done anything wrong.

"She is doing what she always does on her missions – namely, talk to a wide range of people and collect a variety of views on human rights issues in the country in question," Mr Colville said.

Sri Lanka's Information Minister Keheliya Rambukwella had distanced the government from his cabinet col-

league Mr Weerawansa's remarks, saying Ms Pillay was free to travel anywhere and speak with anyone.

"Although there is laid-out protocol for visiting dignitaries, in this case we have made it clear that she, as the head of the human rights body, is free to go to any place and meet anybody she wishes to," Mr Rambukwella told reporters in Colombo. – AFP



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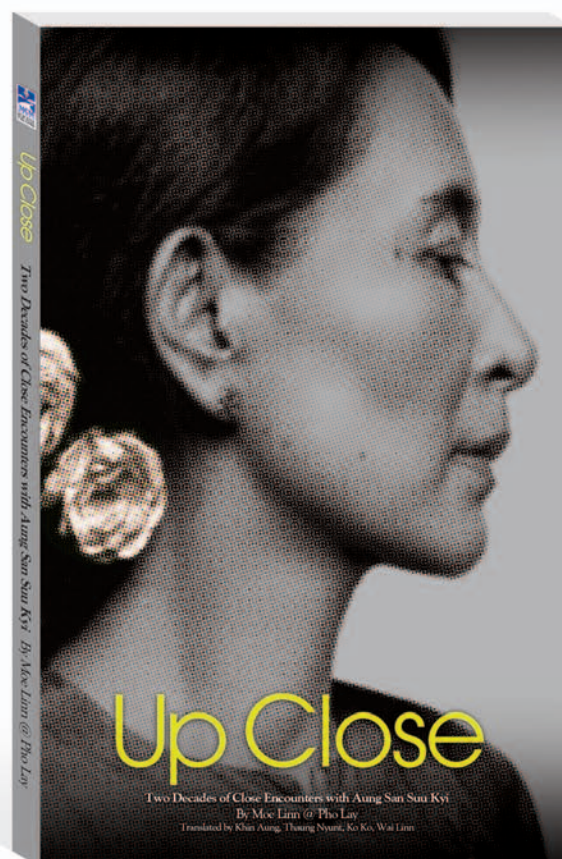
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PHNOM PENH

KR court faces strike over wages

CAMBODIAN staff at the cash-strapped war crimes trial of ex-Khmer Rouge leaders have threatened to strike over unpaid wages, an official said on August 29, after the UN chief warned the court could fold.

Proceedings against former regime leaders have been beset by cash shortages and delays, prompting UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on August 28 to appeal for international donors to step in. Some 250 Cambodian staff, including judges and prosecutors, have not been paid since June, and around 100 of them have said they would starting this week, said court spokesman Neth Pheaktra.

They will stop work "from September 1 until a solution is found and they are paid their late salaries," he said.

The tribunal has been frequently short of cash since it was set up in 2006 to push for justice for the deaths of up to 2 million people under the hard-line communist regime in the late 1970s.

The Cambodian side of the hybrid tribunal – whose top donors include Japan, the European Union and Australia – urgently needs around US\$3 million to cover costs for 2013, Neth Pheaktra said.

"The very survival of the court is now in question. Financial failure would be a tragedy for the people of Cambodia, who have waited so long for justice," Mr Ban said, according to a UN statement.

"This court has achieved important successes in prosecuting the brutal crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge regime. Yet, today, the court is in crisis," he said, adding funds have "run dry".

The court was forced to suspend proceedings for about two weeks in March after a strike over unpaid wages.

The trial has also been hit by a string of high-profile resignations amid allegations of political meddling, as well as concerns about slow progress due to the octogenarian defendants' ill health.

– AFP

KIEV

Femen moves out of ‘bugged’ Kiev office

UKRAINIAN feminist movement Femen said on August 28 it was moving out of its Kiev offices, alleging official wiretapping, a day after police said they discovered a cache of illegal weapons in a raid of its premises.

The group, known for its topless political protests, is facing a criminal probe for possession of illegal weapons after police searched its offices in central Kiev on August 27, but said its decision to move out was made earlier over alleged bugging.

The group is moving “for security reasons, since it is impossible to work there now. Everything is being listened to,” said Anna Hutsol, the head of the Ukrainian branch of the movement.

Police said they confiscated a TT handgun and a grenade from the group’s offices, while Ms Hutsol insisted that the group did not have any weapons and suggested they could have been planted in the office while activists were away.

Kiev police spokesman Igor Mikhalko said the police had launched a criminal probe into



Femen activists protest in front of the Ukrainian embassy in Brussels on August 29. Photo: AFP

illegal possession of weapons by the group, which could lead to a jail sentence of five years.

No one in the group has been charged, but the investigation continues and the women could be called in for further questioning, Mr Mikhalko said.

Ms Hutsol said the group had already decided to move out and that the police raid had “strangely coincided” with its last day in its offices.

Police questioned activists until late on August 27 before releasing them, Ms Hutsol said.

Femen’s female activists have become well-known in Ukraine and abroad for baring their breasts to protest discrimination against women and other rights violations.

The group has claimed that Ms Hutsol and other activists were beaten by special services in July in an attempt by the

government to pressure them to halt their protests, which target figures including Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The group will continue its activism in Ukraine, Ms Hutsol vowed.

“We are not stopping our activities in Ukraine. We are just moving out of the office. Now to plan and prepare our next protests, we will gather in different places.” – *AFP*

TEHRAN

Iran FM appoints first-ever spokeswoman

IRAN’S Foreign Ministry has appointed career diplomat Marzieh Afkham as its new spokesperson, the first time the Islamic republic has named a woman to the position, reports said on August 29.

With nearly three decades of service at the ministry, Ms Afkham has been director of its media and public diplomacy department since 2010, Iranian media reported.

“She is seasoned and experienced in the field of media diplomacy,” incumbent spokesman Abbas Araqchi told the ISNA news agency, announcing the appointment.

“Those who have criticism about this will understand that her expertise was the only factor in this appointment,” he added in reference to opposition voiced by members of the parliament’s ultraconservative faction.

Hojatoleslam Morteza Hosseini, a cleric from a powerful religious faction, said the clergy “might be opposed” to the employment of women to such posts.

“We decided to deliver a caution to foreign minister [Mohammad Javad Zarif] so that he appoints a man instead of a woman” as his spokesperson, Mr Hosseini was quoted as saying by the *7 Sobh* daily.

Mr Araqchi had said on August 27 that another woman, who was not named, was being groomed to become the Iran’s first-ever ambassador.

Ms Afkham’s appointment comes as moderate Iranian President Hassan Rowhani has reportedly asked officials to appoint women to high-ranking posts.

His cabinet is dominated by men, except for Elham Aminzadeh, who is the vice

president for parliamentary affairs.

During his election campaign, Mr Rowhani vowed that “discrimination against women will not be tolerated” in his administration.

Although better than those of many regional Arab countries, Iran’s laws since the 1979 Islamic revolution have been criticised as unfair to women in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance.

While women can hold key posts, including in the parliament and the cabinet, they are currently not allowed to stand in presidential elections.

Iran’s clergy, which still holds sway in the country, defends the laws, saying they are designed to protect against a Western lifestyle they believe takes advantage of women. – *AFP*

PARIS

Earthlings are really Martians, says new theory

LIFE on Earth was kick-started thanks to a key mineral deposited by a meteorite from Mars, according to a novel theory aired on August 29.

molecules – the building blocks of life – from degrading into a tar-like goo.

The idea comes from Steven Benner, a professor at the

geochemists in Florence, Italy.

“It’s only when molybdenum becomes highly oxidised that it is able to influence how early life formed,” Mr Benner said in a press release.

“This form of molybdenum couldn’t have been available on Earth at the time life first began, because 3 billion years ago the surface of the Earth had very little oxygen, but Mars did.”

In this violent epoch of the solar system, Mars was pounded by comets and asteroids, and the impacts would have caused Martian rubble to bounce into space, where they would have lingered until eventually being captured by Earth’s gravity.

Recent analysis of a Martian meteorite showed the presence of molybdenum, as well as boron, an element that would

also have helped nurture life by helping to protect RNA – a primitive cousin to DNA – from the corrosive effects of water.

“The evidence seems to be building that we are actually all Martians, that life started on Mars and came to Earth on a rock,” said Mr Benner.

“It’s lucky that we ended up here nevertheless, as certainly Earth has been the better of the two planets for sustaining life. If our hypothetical Martian ancestors had remained on Mars, there might not have been a story to tell.”

Other theories about how life began on Earth suggest that water, the key ingredient, was brought by comets called “dirty snowballs”, which comprise ice and dust left from the building of the solar system. – *AFP*

‘If our hypothetical Martian ancestors had remained on Mars, there might not have been a story to tell.’

Steven Benner
Westeimer Institute for Science and Technology

The vital ingredient was an oxidised mineral form of the element molybdenum, which helped prevent carbon

Westheimer Institute for Science and Technology in Gainesville, Florida, who was to present it at an international conference of

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WASHINGTON

King's 'dream' requires vigilance: Obama

STEPHEN COLLINSON

PRESIDENT Barack Obama challenged Americans on August 28 to enshrine Martin Luther King Jr's victory over racial oppression with a new "dream" of economic equality that he has placed at the centre of his own political legacy.

Fifty years after the "I Have a Dream" speech, America's first black president poignantly stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, where Mr King made an appearance in 1963 that changed history.

'The choice remains as it was on that distant summer day 50 years ago: Cooperate and thrive, or fight with each other and fall behind.'

Bill Clinton
Former US president

"He offered a salvation path for oppressed and oppressors alike," Mr Obama said in a ringing address, which he admitted beforehand would not match Mr King's oratory.

"His words belong to the ages, possessing a power and prophecy unmatched in our time," Mr Obama told a crowd of thousands.

Mr Obama also remembered the thousands of African-Americans who joined Mr King's March on Washington

to demand their rights and to wake their country's "long-slumbering conscience".

The president has faced some criticism for not doing more to help the African-American community, which remains plagued by poverty and barriers to advancement, but he dismissed arguments that little had changed for blacks since Mr King spoke.

"To dismiss the magnitude of this progress, to suggest, as some sometimes do, that little has changed - that dishonours the courage and the sacrifice of those who paid the price to march in those years," he said.

But as he stood below the monument honouring Abraham Lincoln, the president who ended slavery, Mr Obama also argued that much work remained to be done for Mr King's dream to be fulfilled.

"We would dishonour those heroes as well to suggest that the work of this nation is somehow complete," Mr Obama said. "The arc of the moral universe may bend towards justice, but it doesn't bend on its own. To secure the gains this country has made requires constant vigilance, not complacency."

The president then struck the sharply political themes that powered his two runs for the presidency, saying the test of progress was whether all Americans, be they white steelworkers or black custodians, could reach the middle class if they worked hard.

"To win that battle, to answer that call - this remains our great unfinished business," Mr Obama said. "No one can match King's brilliance, but the same flame that lit the hearts of all who are willing to take a first step for justice, I know that flame remains."

Mr Obama delivered his speech next to a giant bell that was salvaged from



A crowd watches a giant screen in Times Square, New York, as US President Barack Obama speaks on the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28. Photo: AFP

an Alabama church where four young girls were killed in an arson attack in 1963.

He was joined at the ceremony by former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton; revered civil rights leaders like King confidant John Lewis; and members of the King family.

Mr Carter bemoaned the "racist bullet" that claimed Mr King's life in 1968.

Mr Clinton said that it was time to open the "stubborn gates" barring wider opportunity.

"The choice remains as it was on that distant summer day 50 years ago: Cooperate and thrive, or fight with each other and fall behind. [The] march and that speech changed America. They opened minds, they melted hearts," Mr

Clinton said.

"They moved millions, including a 17-year-old boy watching alone in his home in Arkansas," he said, referring to his own memories of the event.

August 28 dawned rainy and with gray skies in Washington, a far cry from that sweltering August back in 1963.

But some of the original crowd returned for the 50th anniversary, pairing their memories with the reality of the challenges facing African-Americans today.

Edith Lee-Payne recalled how, as a 12-year-old, she was captured in an iconic photograph of the day Mr King spoke.

"It was something that didn't end on that day," she said. "People went

back to their respective communities and did what needed to be done and said what needed to be said. Still, a lot more needs to be said and done to make this a better place."

Mr King's famous refrain "I have a dream" was not in his original remarks.

But off-the-cuff, Mr King declared, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'"

The march helped set the stage for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed major forms of racial discrimination, followed a year later by the Voting Rights Act, designed to guarantee the franchise for all black US citizens. - AFP

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Dated: 2nd September, 2013

FORT HOOD

Fort Hood shooter handed death sentence by military

PHIL JANKOWSKI

A MILITARY jury sentenced a US Army officer to death on August 28 for carrying out an al-Qaeda-inspired mass shooting on the Fort Hood base in Texas that left 13 dead.

After a short deliberation, the forewoman of a jury of military officers said it was their unanimous verdict that 42-year-old Major Nidal Hasan should be executed.

“It is my duty as president of this jury to inform you that ... the court martial in closed session in a secret ballot of all members concurs to the sentences, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to dismissal from service, to be put to death,” said the forewoman, a colonel.

Mr Hasan, who elected to conduct his own defence during the trial but who called no witnesses and gave no testimony, sat in his wheelchair staring straight ahead as the verdict was read.

Under US military justice, death penalty verdicts are automatically reviewed under an appeals procedure that could take years.

It can then be appealed through the civilian courts, and any execution would have to be approved by the US president.

Death penalty verdicts are often overturned, and no soldier has been executed since 1961. Mr Hasan has nevertheless made no attempt to deny the charges, and court-appointed defence attorneys had expressed concern that he is seeking execution.

The US-born Muslim of Palestinian descent is the first member of the army to receive a death sentence since the 2005 conviction of Hasan Akbar, who killed two in an



Nidal Hasan. Photo: AFP

attack on fellow soldiers in Kuwait in 2003.

On November 5, 2009, Mr Hasan opened fire at a medical facility in the sprawling Fort Hood base in Texas that serves as a staging point for soldiers to deploy to combat zones.

Twelve of the dead and 30 of the wounded were soldiers. Mr Hasan was himself shot by a civilian police officer who responded to the attack, and he is now partially paralysed.

The court had heard that Mr Hasan was opposed to the US military’s occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, and that he had spoken online with an alleged al-Qaeda figure, radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen subsequently killed in a

US drone strike in Yemen.

Following the sentence, Mr Hasan was quickly rushed out of the military courtroom, which is in Fort Hood, to be transported back to a local civilian jail where he has been held for more than three years.

He is to be taken to military death row in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to await execution.

Seven relatives of victims slain in the shooting held back tears during the sentencing after repeatedly being warned not to make any public declarations of support or opposition to the sentence.

“We are thankful for the just verdict that has finally been rendered. However, we are also dissatisfied with the media attention to Hasan and his extremist views,” Melissa Czemmerda, the daughter of one of Hasan’s victims, Lieutenant Colonel Juanita Warman, said after the hearing.

“These types of murderers thrive on media attention. It promotes violence from other disturbed individuals seeking a platform for their sick and twisted views.”

Former Fort Hood police officer Sergeant Kimberly Munley, who was wounded in a gun battle with Mr Hasan, immediately took to Twitter to welcome the sentence.

“He will wither away to nothing in his jail cell while waiting on the appellate courts!” she wrote.

Teena Nemelka, mother of slain Private First Class Aaron Nemelka, said, “We have all heard that Hasan believes with the death penalty that he will be seen as a martyr, but I feel that he is a coward, a traitor and a murderer.” – *AFP*

ST PETERSBURG

Russian police seize Putin lingerie painting

MARINA KORENEVA

RUSSIAN police said on August 28 they had raided an exhibition and confiscated a painting that portrayed President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev lounging together in women’s lingerie.

Police said they confiscated four paintings by artist Konstantin Altunin and closed down the exhibition of his work in Russia’s second city of St Petersburg, which is set to host world leaders for the G20 summit later this month.

One of the confiscated paintings shows Mr Putin playing with Mr Medvedev’s hair. He is wearing a strappy nightie, while Mr Medvedev has cleavage bursting out of a bra and is wearing skimpy knickers.

“We received information from a citizen that the images in the museum broke the law. Police confiscated four paintings, and currently experts are examining them,” said police spokesman Vyacheslav Stepanenko.

The exhibition made explicit references to a controversial law recently passed by Mr Putin banning promotion of homosexuality among minors, although police did not specify the legal grounds for its closure.

The law, which critics say can be used to shut down any gay rights event, has prompted a chorus of international protest, and British actor Stephen Fry last month called for Russia to be deprived of the right to host the Winter Olympics in Sochi next year.

Police carrying Kalashnikov



A visitor looks at a painting by Russian artist Konstantin Altunin during an exhibition in St Petersburg, Russia. The artwork was confiscated by police on August 28. Photo: AFP

assault rifles arrived at the small privately owned Museum of Power, which opened this summer, its owner Alexander Donskoi said.

Police accused its creators of extremism, a criminal offence that carries more serious charges than the anti-gay law, Mr Donskoi said.

“We are accused of extremism. Police recommended us not to make a noise about this incident ahead of the G20, but it is scandalous. Art has nothing to do with politics,” Mr Donskoi said.

The artist Mr Altunin left Russia in fear of being arrested after the show’s closure, he said.

“After hearing that police were waiting at his home, Konstantin bought a ticket to Denmark and, as of [August 28], he is in France,” Mr Donskoi said.

One of the other paintings that was confiscated showed one of the anti-gay law’s most outspoken backers, St Petersburg lawmaker Vitaly Milonov, in front of the rainbow flag of the international Gay Pride movement.

Mr Milonov accompanied the police who raided the exhibition on the city’s central shopping street Nevsky Prospekt, Mr Donskoi said.

“After visiting the exhibition a few days ago, Milonov came yesterday evening with the police. He is behind the ban on the exhibition,” he said.

Mr Milonov on Petersburg Echo radio dismissed the works of art as “tasteless, at the same

level as a job from a vocational college who scribbles in a toilet at a bus stop”.

But the curator for contemporary art at the Russian Museum in St Petersburg said Mr Milonov was overstepping his powers.

“Lawmaker Milonov has the right to criticise the exhibition as a visitor, but he should not express himself as if he was a prosecutor,” Alexander Borovsky said.

The exhibition, which was titled *Leaders*, also included images of Soviet leaders Stalin and Lenin, as well as a painting showing Mr Putin with a halo.

Mr Donskoi has also opened private museums of erotic art in Moscow and St Petersburg. – *AFP*

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the pulse

Portraits
of the living

U Win Tin, former political prisoner, co-founder of the National League for Democracy and author of *Human Hell*, has been honoured by having his image sculpted and portrait painted at his home in Yankin township, August 27.

The 84-year-old veteran journalist is known in Myanmar for having endured hostility from the former military government for years, as he fought an uphill battle to establish democracy in the country.

"When the country suffered at the hands of a series of military dictators, journalist U Win Tin used his pen as a weapon to fight the oppression of the military government,"

said sculptor U Kyaw Kyaw Min. "He suffered years upon years in prison. He is 84 now and I want to honour him while he is alive.

"When I asked U Win Tin for his permission to sculpt his image, U Win Tin was delighted and gave his heartfelt thanks after accepting my request," U Kyaw Kyaw said.

U Win Tin acquired the attribution "Hantharwady" after working as the chief editor at the *Hantharwady* local newspaper from 1969 to 1978. He had worked as a journalist for various newspapers since 1949.

His book, *Human Hell*, helped to reveal the brutality of prison officials and their callous disregard for their charges.

"My teeth rotted through while I was in the prison," recalled U Win Tin. "I had to eat very hot rice gruel without teeth. You can't imagine how unbearable the heat was."

"I wanted to boost his spirits by making a sculpture of him while he is still alive and I'm proud of the portrait I have made of him," U Kyaw Kyaw Min said.

While U Kyaw Kyaw Min sculpted, artists Shwe Myint, Zaw Win (Tha-htone) and Soe Paing drew portraits of U Win Tin.

"The majority of sculptors in the industry make sculptures like this for commercial reasons," said U Kyaw Kyaw. "They are on commission and are mostly of people who have already passed away.

"For example, portraits of Dagon Taryar and journalist Maung Wuntha should have been made when they were alive, so they could see people's support of them. Sculpting a portrait of someone whom you respect when he is alive is an act of emotional support," he added.

Last year, U Kyaw Kyaw Min and artist Shwe Myint made portraits of the famous cartoonist U Aung Shein. He is 85 years old and has been confined to bed.

"I sculpted beside his bed while he was lying down," described U Kyaw Min. "Words fail me how happy he was to see his portrait after I had finished."

Zon Pann Pwint



Women suffering from HIV face huge economic hurdles. Photo: Kaung Htet

"I wanted to give [women with HIV/AIDS] work so they could return to normal life."

Ma Thidar Htay

A stitch in time
saves lives

As part of an ongoing series looking at community issues, *The Myanmar Times* profiles a non-profit organisation in Yangon which helps women with HIV support themselves – and each other



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THERE are certain extraordinary women who are infected with HIV, widowed, left helpless by their relatives and, in some cases, raising children on their own. What is remarkable about them, however, is not their plight but their stoic acceptance of their condition and their hard work and dedication to live to fight another day.

"I became independent ..."

Ma Thidar Htay met her husband in Yangon in 2001 and married the same year. Two years later, her husband died of AIDS. Then she tested positive for HIV herself.

"I am the only person to be infected with this virus in my family of ten siblings," said the 38-year-old Ma Thidar Htay, who originally hails from Gangaw in Magway Region. After she told her brothers and sisters about her

status, she said some of them excluded her from the family, which left her feeling "suicidally depressed".

The messages from the rest of society weren't any better.

"The worst thing was a television infomercial about HIV that frightened me into thinking I was close to death," she said. "I was donating everything I owned, thinking I was going to die soon."

Fortunately, Ma Thidar Htay found

An intimate glimpse into Daw Aung San Su



Sculptor, U Kyaw Kyaw Min works on a clay sculpture of U Win Tin. Photo: Zarni Phyo

a counsellor who told her that she could go on living. Before counselling, she said, she was discriminating “against herself”, but after her sessions started she re-established contact with her siblings, and one of her sisters even came to Yangon to help her get to a clinic for help.

Since then, Ma Thidar Htay has been following her doctor’s instructions, taking antiretroviral therapy regularly and keeping healthy by eating well and meditating.

One of the biggest changes, she said, came in 2008 when she joined a group called Action For Public. AFP is a non-profit organisation which provides sewing skills for HIV-positive women who are widowed, lack support from their relatives and don’t have income of their own.

There, she said, she found a community of others like her. “I met fellow women who are working hard to support their families and don’t care what others say,” she said.

For Ma Thidar Htay, AFP was a lifeline.

“I became independent,” she said. “I learned sewing there. I can earn a lot of money.”

Sewing stuffed toys lets Ma Thidar Htay rent a house in Insein township. Through AFP, she and others like her who lack family support are able to build a new family together. “I attend monthly meetings where I share what I feel, and volunteer at fundraising events for HIV,” she said. The experience helped her change her attitude about both her illness and her future.

“I thought it was a fate that I can’t avoid, but later I tried to accept it and

endure stoically. And also keep from infecting anyone else.”

“They had a hard time ...”

AFP was founded in 2008 by Ma Kyi Pyar Chit Saw, who had been working at a long-term care clinic for those with HIV/AIDS which was set up in 2002 by Daw Phyu Phyu Thin, Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Yangon’s Mingala Taung Nyunt township and a long-time HIV/AIDS activist.

While volunteering at the clinic, Ma Kyi Pyar Chit Saw met many women who were HIV-positive but lacked ways of supporting themselves. In 2008 she and three friends decided to set up an independent association to help get these women back to work.

“I wanted to give them work so they could return to normal life,” Ma Kyi Pyar Chit Saw said when asked why she founded AFP.

Ma Kyi Pyar Chit Saw rallied about a dozen HIV-positive women. Some had been staying temporarily at Yay Lae Monastery near the Waibargi Infectious Diseases Hospital in North Okkalapa township. Others were recovering after receiving treatment at Thazin Clinic, which gives free treatment and health advice to HIV/AIDS patients. She then arranged for a trainer – also HIV-positive – to give sewing lessons to the group so they could learn a skill that would help them earn a living.

Initially, the group tried sewing school uniforms, but soon found they couldn’t survive on the K100 they earned for each one.

“Our association struggled along for some time,” Ma Kyi Pyar Chit Saw

said, looking back on AFP’s early days. “They had a hard time. They had to collect fabric from Mingalar market to sew school uniforms. The market sells things wholesale, giving tailors a very low price but the demand is high.

“The work was physically demanding. They had to finish a thousand uniform sets within two days. On top of this, those women had to visit the clinic regularly for treatment.”

But Ma Kyi Pyar Chit Saw said she could never reveal the group was HIV-positive to those doing business with them.

“Otherwise, they wouldn’t have received orders,” she said.

The women then tried making footwear instead, but they were unable to keep up with the demand.

The turning point came in 2009 when they started working with Pomelo, a store which sells hand-made souvenirs, toys, cards and textiles produced by disadvantaged women. Because Pomelo is a social enterprise, members are paid well, and can earn about K100,000 a month working five days a week.

The work has made a world of difference for the women of AFP, Ma Kyi Pyar Chit Saw said.

“When I first met them, they all were widowed except one woman. Now, three of them have remarried. They all follow their medical instructions carefully, take care of themselves and try not to worry too much.”

“I need to live longer ...”

Ma Htay Htay Nwe didn’t let herself get depressed after she discovered eight years ago that she was HIV-pos-



Craftwork is helping HIV positive women earn a living. Photo: Kaung Htet

itive, even though her husband, who tested HIV-positive before she did, left her alone to raise their children, one of whom is now out of town and training to become a goldsmith.

“I heartened myself because I have two children,” Ma Htay Htay Nwe said. “I need to live longer to take care of them until they become adults. I don’t let myself indulge in any destructive thoughts.”

Ma Htay Htay Nwe took a proactive approach to her illness, looking after both herself and others.

“As soon as I discovered that I had been infected, I went to Thazin Clinic and worked as a volunteer there two days a week. I sold vegetables in the weekdays and attended meetings to

gain knowledge about HIV/AIDS,” she added.

“When I worked as a volunteer at the clinic, I earned K2000 a week. After I joined AFP, my life become comfortable.”

She’s now earning a living sewing anything from stuffed toys and serviettes to clothing and bags. So far she hasn’t needed to take antiretroviral therapy.

“I am lucky that I have lived for another eight years since I discovered that I have been infected,” Ma Htay Htay Nwe said.

So what’s her secret? “I dedicate myself to working, singing loud and taking care of my two sons.”

Movie industry sees a new kind of action

LWIN MAR HTUN

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AND KO THIHA

ACTION! Angry movie actors and production staff staged a demonstration last week outside Yangon City Hall to protest against the “dictatorial” Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation.

The scene was set for the face-off when MMPO president U Luu Min ousted a rival, Daw San San Maw, who directed the August 24 demo. But other film industry workers have joined her in condemning the MMPO leadership for being secretive and arbitrary.

“The president and executive of the MMPO act in secret and don’t have an open relationship with the industry,” said Daw San San Maw, who was president of the Yangon Regional Basic Video Board until her dismissal on August 9.

The drama began when she fired a subordinate, U Ne Win, on instructions from the board members. “The next day, U Ne Win and his accomplices met the MMPO executive board members,” said Daw San San Maw. “I’m ready to explain why we fired him and to show the proof, but the executive board members did not contact me. They instructed me to restore U Ne Win, but I did not. That’s why U Luu Min fired me.” MMPO then tried to blacken her name, she said.

A demonstrator, U Win Ko, owner of Mun Htet Che Movie Production, told *The Myanmar Times*, “We want people to know about the dictatorship controlling MMPO. We can’t accept them as leaders. We want to clean them out.”

U Win Ko said the movie production business had suffered since the appointment of the new MMPO president and executive board, and new members should be appointed.

Movie production company owner Jaman said, “We don’t want to work under the system of U Luu Min. We need a president with experience who can make the right decisions.” “Movie distributors are struggling. MMPO should be solving those problems, but they aren’t.”



Protestors say the Myanmar Motion Pictures Organisation are making draconian decisions. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

“It’s a dictatorship, and we don’t want that kind of leadership.”

Ko Kyaw Kyaw often plays the role of a supporting actor in films and said the MMPO is extending its censorship regulations too discriminatively. He said the rules stipulated to supporting actors like him were not asked of main or lead actors and actresses.

“MMPO ordered us [supporting actors] not to dye our hair or wear trendy clothes. But they don’t do anything about kissing or sex scenes where famous actors are concerned. That’s why I’m involved in this demonstration.”

Movie industry workers from Mon State and Ayeyarwady Region also took part.

A film producer from Mon State, U Zaw Win, accused the MMPO of unfairness in the reselection of the Mon Regional Basic Video Board. “MMPO didn’t accept our votes,” he said.

MMPO president U Luu Min said the numbers of people involved in the demonstration did not represent the Myanmar movie industry.

“We will have more to say at a later date.”

Since March last year, MMPO ceased to be a government office and became a non-governmental organisation whose members were to be chosen by election. The first president, U Zin Wine, handed over to U Luu Min last June for health reasons.

National hero Sayadaw U Ottama to be commemorated

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AFTER years of official disapproval, the memory of independence hero Sayadaw U Ottama is to be celebrated on the anniversary of his death, September 9. The ceremony will take place at the Myanmar Convention Centre.

U Ottama died on September 9, 1939, of ill health after years of imprisonment by the British colonial authorities for repeatedly speaking out against them.

Speaking for the organisers of the event, Ko Lynn Tay Za told *The Myanmar Times*, “We would like to restore him to his place in history, as his name has almost disappeared from Myanmar history.” The group also wants to rename the Kandaw Mingalar Park as Sayadaw U Ottama Park, a move supported by the culture ministry.

Recognition of the Sayadaw has been banned by the government for decades, though informal commemorations were held by individuals and small groups.

“As the country opens up, events like this have become possible,” said Ko Lynn Tay Za.

Government ministers, ambassadors and community leaders will be invited.

Sayadaw U Ottama was born in 1879 in Sittwe, Rakhine State. As a result of his anti-British agitation, he was the first Buddhist monk to be arrested and he underwent several spells in prison starting in 1921.

At the ceremony, which marks the 74th anniversary of U Ottama’s death, a two-foot sculpture of the Sayadaw will be exhibited by the sculptor Kyaw Kyaw Min.

“The commemoration of this day has been banned since the socialist era but the military regime also banned it,” said Kyaw Kyaw Min. “I would like to display my sculptures of U Ottama as he was the first monk to help our people escape from British domination. It was his example that inspired the movement for independence.”

Admission to the celebration will be free of charge.

Film board embroiled in further controversy



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FOR the first time since becoming a non-government body last year, the nation’s film board has fined a director with a three month long ban.

The film in question is an adaption of *Ma Ma Pyone Pyone San Par* (Mrs Smile, Please Smile), a script by writer and political activist Min Ko Naing. The problem was not to do with the film’s content: Rather, the MMPO’s directorate decided to slap a ban for three months because another version was already in the works.

Director Nyunt Myanmar Nyi Nyi Aung – who didn’t know the rights of the film were currently owned by anyone else and has directed two other films based on the same story in the past – helmed his latest version, called *Hna Lone Thar Paw Kway Tek Kyel* (A Falling Star on the Heart), in collaboration with producers Mun Htet Che and with

actors Hein Wai Yan and Thet Mon Myint cast in the lead roles.

For previous versions, Nyi Nyi Aung bought the rights to Min Ko Naing’s story from Zarganar, who acted on Min Ko Naing’s behalf during periods in which Min Ko Naing was behind bars. In this case, however, Nyi Nyi Aung neglected to speak to Zarganar before filming to let him know he was intending to mount another production.

“Zarganar and Nyi Nyi Aung are very friendly and he said he will speak to Zarganar later,” said the head of Mun Htet Che production company, U Win Ko. “So, we started production.”

If Nyi Nyi Aung had mentioned his plans to Zarganar earlier, he would have learned that Zarganar had actually written a screenplay of the same story for another director, Kyi Phyu Shin, who had bought the rights to the work.

Producer U Win Ko said there was no malicious intent on Nyi Nyi Aung’s behalf.

“Ko Nyi Nyi Aung is a really great director and he has worked in the film industry for over 30 years,” U Win Ko said. “He hasn’t done anything

to earn a bad reputation at any time during those years.”

He also said that Nyi Nyi Aung did speak to Zarganar, but after filming had finished, which is when he learned of the other film’s existence. The director apologised to Zarganar, Min Ko Naing, and Kyi Phyu Shin, all of whom accepted the apology but requested that the second film not be released until later, to which Nyi Nyi Aung agreed.

U Luu Min, the president of MMPO, has told *The Myanmar Times* that if Nyi Nyi Aung provided a formal apology to the organisation and Zarganar, the board was willing to lift the ban entirely.

Zarganar has responded by saying that he did request Nyi Nyi Aung to delay the release of the film, but he was disappointment at the MMPO’s decision to enforce a ban and was surprised when media reports said he was the one who had filed the complaint.

“When the MMPO was under the government, I was always being blocked by the MMPO’s president,” he told *The Irrawaddy* on August 19. “I don’t want that to happen to someone else.”

Living well in Myanmar

SAD? Escape the monsoon doldrums with light therapy



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IN a meeting with my editor at *The Myanmar Times* last week, we discussed the feeling of – to use a non-medical term – “blah” that can sometimes arise as the rainy season drags onward. That got me thinking about Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is well known by doctors who practise in Western countries where winter season brings dreary weather and shorter periods of daylight. Although we don’t have research for seasonal depression in monsoon countries specifically, a correlation between the disease in northern latitudes and in the tropics seems likely.

SAD is defined as recurring feelings of being “down” that come on during a particular season and resolve when the season ends. While the biological cause of SAD has not been proven, the prevailing

‘If you feel these long overcast months are causing you to struggle, a home version of phototherapy may help’

theory is that decreased daylight can cause alterations in two hormones called melatonin and serotonin which regulate energy and mood. Changes in regular light patterns can even negatively affect your body’s internal 24-hour clock, called the circadian rhythm.

For Western wintertime sufferers, SAD brings on a number of depressive symptoms: sleeping more than usual; heavy, tired feelings in the arms and legs; increased appetite, especially for sweet or starchy food; weight gain; feelings of crankiness or irritability; and interpersonal difficulties such as increased sensitivity to rejection.

Interestingly, some of these symptoms differ from or even oppose those typically seen during non-SAD forms of depression, such as weight loss, decreased sleep and poor appetite. These differences lend support for the medical belief that SAD should be considered diagnostically unique.

Another distinctive feature – and good news for SAD sufferers – is the therapeutic value of light therapy. Up to 80 per cent of patients diagnosed with SAD by a doctor respond well to timed exposure to artificial light. Some psychiatrists and family physicians use light therapy to prevent SAD from recurring in people who have had it in previous seasons.

If you feel these long overcast months are causing you to struggle, a home version of phototherapy may help. Exposure to bright light for 15-30 minutes a day, particularly early in the morning, might re-establish your circadian rhythm and fine-tune your melatonin and serotonin levels.

For therapy purposes, bright light means a source measuring 10,000 lux. While watts measure how much power a bulb uses, lux is a measure of how much light a source produces. There is no easy equivalency between the two measurements, but basically you’re

looking for a light source equivalent to what your eyes would sense in full daylight. Fluorescent light is best.

Don’t stare directly at the light – you don’t want to hurt your eyes – but simply sit under the light while reading, working, listening to music or doing anything else you like. As long as the light is in your field of view, you may find the treatment makes you feel better after just four or five days, and the benefit usually lasts as long as you continue the treatment.

Possible negative side effects of light therapy are headache, fatigue, irritability and excessive sensitivity to light. If you experience any of the symptoms above, even to a moderate degree, it is best to stop treatment at once and meet with a doctor prior to attempting any further treatment on your own. Remember as well that several other factors can impact mental illness and treatment approaches – which can also include medication and behavioral therapy – so be sure any treatment is tailored to your needs.

If you are suspicious of the benefits of light therapy, however, it may interest you to know that I sometimes worked 24-hour shifts delivering babies while training to become a doctor, during which my colleagues and I never saw natural light. In our meeting room we had a light box which we switched on in the morning with the intent of re-establishing our circadian rhythm. I can’t say for sure whether light therapy really made us happier to be in the hospital, but it may reassure you to know that even doctors are willing to try it.

Christoph Gelsdorf is an American Board of Family Medicine physician who sees patients in Yangon and California. He is an honorary member of the Myanmar Medical Association. Reader thoughts and questions are welcomed.



Light and Gold (2), Acrylic on Canvas, 5'x4'. Photo: Supplied by artist

An exhibition of gold and light

Win Tint’s fourth solo exhibition from September 2-7 will feature his latest series of paintings called *Reflection*. The paintings capture the light and gold of the interior of the Shwedagon Pagoda, reflecting the quiet moodiness of a sacred space for many.

He says the use of the impasto techniques contrasted with thin pigments help create textural variation, and is surprisingly balanced by the patterns of vertical and horizontal lines that lend an abstract realism to the paintings.

Win Tint’s background as a magazine illustrator may lend to his

style of painting which combines lines, brushwork, figures and space that complement each other, to create an ambience, much as a designer does on the pages of a publication.

The choice of bold colours contrasted with pale shades shows a further development and maturity in Win Tint’s art. – *Manny Maung*

The exhibition runs from September 2-7 from 9am-5pm at the Lokanat Galleries. No. 62 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada township, Yangon.

Miss Universe calls out for entrants

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THE world is welcoming Myanmar back into the democratic fold, to the global economy, and also to the catwalk. After sitting it out for 50 years, Myanmar will field a candidate in this year’s Miss Universe competition, to be held in Moscow on November 9.

Hello Madam Media Group is inviting young women from all over the country to try their luck in a bid for the US\$10 million prize money. On September 9, Hello Madam will choose 30 women to compete for the title of Miss Myanmar, who will be crowned at the National Theatre in Yangon on October 3, and will then go on to Russia on October 20.

“Last August we received permission from the government to run the competition for 15 years. We met with

the Miss Universe Organisation, which welcomed our participation and encouraged us to join the 2013 pageant,” said Chan Lin Thu, chief project manager of the Hello Madam Media Group.

This is the first time Myanmar has entered the beauty competition since 1961, when the Miss Universe pageant was held in Florida.

“We will organise a Miss Myanmar competition every year from now on. The deadlines this year are very tight, but we’ll do our best,” said Chan Lin Thu.

The competition is open to women aged from 18 to 27 and about 5 foot 6 inches in height. Entry forms can be obtained from Hello Madam Media Group at Myanmar Gonyar Estate, Upper Pansodan St, Mingalar Taung Nyunt township, Yangon, or online from www.missmyanmaruniverse.org until the September 5 closing date.

MMO: Stickers are out, barcodes are in

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A NEW system to help protect the rights of Myanmar musicians is being introduced in the country. Myanmar Music Organisation (Central) has already produced more than 60 albums identified by barcodes rather than the old sticker system.

The aim is to strengthen copyright protection to Myanmar performers. MMO announced August 1 that they had changed their old logo sticker system into a barcode system for albums, audio CDs and digital video discs, but not for cassette tapes and audio CDs featuring voice only. Distributors are now being asked to use the barcodes to track musical works.

MMO is working with the Edwin technology company to bring about the change.

“We used to put an MMO logo sticker on each new album cover. But now music producers need to take a barcode when they apply for copyright,” said MMO spokesperson U Soe Htut Khaing.

“The barcode system gives each song

in an album its own number so songs can be identified more precisely. This will help avoid copyright disputes,” he added.

A spokesperson from Bo Bo Entertainment says that while the new barcode system might help prevent copyright disputes, it prevents producers from being able to create the album artwork ahead of time.

“We will have to first apply for the barcode, then we have to combine the cover and the code.”

The change is explained on MMO’s Facebook page. “It will make it easier to know how many albums MMO has permitted, what year they were produced and who produced them. It will also help keep track of sales, and to identify the top-selling albums.”

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The Buddhist school of rock — and reggae

YASUTO AKAIKE

B UDDHISTS priests today do not just chant sutra at funerals or memorial services in a stoic, old-fashioned way. They use the power of music – guitar, chanson and even reggae – to expound Buddha's teachings.

Whatever genre the priests choose, they have a common enthusiasm to bring ordinary people closer to Buddhism.

A concern that people are becoming more and more distant from temples apparently has prompted the priests to become more innovative in spreading their message.

"You can't take money or jewels to the next world. All you have is the way you lived in this world," Kisho Watanabe, 66, head priest at the Koyoji temple in Kamiamakusa, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, said during a recent sermon to about 60 visitors in the main hall of the temple. "If you go to heaven believing you lived a worthwhile life, your ancestors will be very pleased."

Then, Watanabe picked up his guitar to sing an original song, "*Dose Ichido no Jinsei Naraba*" ("As long as we live only once after all"). The song, accompanied by a light melody, is a tribute to life.

Watanabe also sings popular foreign songs, such as "*Besame Mucho*" and "*You Are My Sunshine*".

He began singing during his sermons about 20 years ago. His

singing and humorous, entertaining style has been gaining popularity through word of mouth. He is now known as "*Guitar Osho*" (Buddhist priest playing a guitar).

"Priests are responsible for providing complex lessons in an easy-to-understand way," Watanabe said. "Temples should make more effort [to do so]."

Meanwhile, Miruo Nakano, 74, head priest at the Kannonji temple in Ichinomiya, Aichi Prefecture, is called "*Chanson Osho*" ("Buddhist priest singing chanson"). Nakano sings chanson to reinforce the preciousness of life to people. He usually sings 10 songs after an hour-long sermon.

He became the head priest at the temple, which is his wife's parents' home, after retiring from teaching at a middle school.

Chanson Osho began practicing chanson in 2001 and began singing in public in 2004 so people attending his sermons would not become bored.

His eldest son drowned in 1970. His songs often focus on the preciousness of life.

"I hope my sermons reach people's minds and my songs touch their hearts," Nakano said. "They are actually closely connected with each other."

Tariki Echo, a duo of Buddhist priests, are more aggressive. They chant Buddhist sutras to reggae music. The pair was formed three years ago by Ippei Tatsuyama, 39, head priest at the Ryukyoji temple in Gotsu, Shimane Prefecture, and Akira Enomoto, 41, head priest at the Zengyoji temple in Kasukabe,

Saitama Prefecture.

In March last year, they released an album titled *Buddha Sound*. They perform at live events in their free time.

"We found the modulation of sutras suits reggae well," Enomoto said.

"Sutras have many positive messages, such as liberating people from earthly desires," Enomoto said. "I hope people listen to it casually, while driving, for example."

The duo will release their second album in the near future.

Behind these activities is concern over the decreasing number of opportunities ordinary people have in coming into contact with temples or Buddhist priests other than at funerals and memorial services on anniversaries of a person's death.

According to a national survey covering 600 people aged 40 to 69 carried out by the Tokyo-based Dai-ichi Life Research Institute Inc. in 2009, about 70 percent of respondents said their relationship with temples probably would decline in the future.

Noriyuki Ueda, a professor at Tokyo Institute of Technology's Center for Liberal Arts, said, "As traditional rural collectives and communities have been declining, temples are becoming more remote from people's lives today. [To cope with the situation,] I expect Buddhist priests will make efforts to bring regular people closer to Buddhism not only through music but also using other media and methods."

— *The Yomiuri Shimbun*



Buddhist priest Guitar Osho says he plays music during his sermons to help connect people to Buddhist philosophy. Photo: The Yomiuri Shimbun

Guitars hit the right note with teenagers

SHWE WAR LWIN

GUITAR sales in Myanmar are soaring as young people exposed to international rock music seek to emulate their heroes – and female musicians are leading the way, say retailers.

Store owners have reported a 30 per cent rise in Myanmar-made guitars over the past year, with the low-budget instruments, costing between K15,000 to K30,000 (about US \$15 to \$30), meeting a increasing demand from the nation's would-be pop and rock stars.

Instrument-sellers say a growing number of girls wanting to learn guitar has contributed to the trend.

"The fact that nowadays girls also love guitar is a definite factor in rising sales," said retailer Ko Arkar, who works at JM's guitar shop in Mandalay.

And while cheap Myanmar guitars from Yangon, Mandalay and Sagaing are popular with new guitarists and those on low budgets, guitar stores also report that increasing exposure to bands and performers from around the world is not only fuelling an interest in different styles of music, but also creating a demand for foreign-made instruments as well.

"Young people have always been interested in learning the guitar of course, but sales were steady in previous years," Ko Arkar said. "This year we've seen a rise in interest and sales are up in the last two years. I think that reflects the



Guitar sales are rising across the country as teens take up the tunes. Photo: The Myanmar Times

current popularity of rock music in Myanmar."

Among those buying foreign-made instruments, which retail from K60,000 upwards, Chinese

guitars are proving popular according to Ko Arkar, who says he sells over 30 international instruments a month. Chinese-made guitars that incorporate American

technology are particularly in demand, he added.

Only those with big budgets look to Japanese makers for their instruments he said, with prices for

Japan-made guitars starting at about K250,000 and rising to as much as K600,000 for top models. Yet those are proving popular too, reflecting increasing spending power among Myanmar's youth, according to the retailer.

"The difference of the price of guitars depends on the quality of the sound produced, the materials used, including the texture of the wood and the paint applied," Ko Arkar said.

"Myanmar guitars tend to be made of high quality wood, which tends not to be the case with Chinese models, but the Chinese makers often feature better technology. We haven't seen much improvement in the technology of guitars made in Myanmar, but they remain a good option for those on lower budgets."

Among Myanmar guitars, those made in Sagaing are particularly popular, said a representative of Marshel guitar shop in Mandalay. He said guitars made in Yangon were popular in Lower Myanmar, but rarely found in Upper Myanmar. However, he added, regional differences matter less than craftsmanship.

"If you want to get a good quality guitar, you have to spend more money," said the representative.

He said in Mandalay, his store sells about 20 Myanmar guitars a month and receive orders of between 200 and 300 instruments from other townships, a 30 per cent rise on last year.

WATCH DOCS IN YANGON

Between September 5 and 7, a major Polish-organised documentary and human rights festival will visit Yangon, with 14 movies being screened free of charge at the American Center.

THE Watch Docs in Yangon documentary and human rights festival kicks off this week from September 5-7, with a selection of fourteen films being screened free of charge at the American Center.

Screenings will run three days from 10am to 5:30pm and feature films from Chile to Pakistan, with topics ranging from civil rights to urbanisation.

The program will be supported by meetings at the end of screenings with top Polish film directors and leaders in the Myanmar film industry. Parallel to the festival, a practical

documentary master class will be organised as part of Solidarity Shorts International Workshops series.

Maciej Kuziemski of Lech Wałęsa Institute, who organised the festival, said the institute wanted to demonstrate the power of visual storytelling to raise timely and challenging issues.

Pawel Potoroczyn, director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, said it was an honour to be involved in the festival at such a crucial time in Myanmar's history.

"To Polish people, freedom is a value of extreme importance, which is why it was with great attention that



we observed the struggle for freedom during the recent events and changes in Myanmar. It will be our pleasure and joy to share our experience of political transformation, of striving for democracy and of building a citizen society through cultural endeavours."

Watch Docs is one of the biggest human rights film festivals in the world, since 2000 co-hosted by Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and Social Institute of Film. This year, Watch Docs in Yangon is organised by the Lech Wałęsa Institute, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Pandita Development Institute, the Helsinki

Foundation for Human Rights, the Social Institute of Film and American Center Rangoon with the support of the Solidarity Fund, under the media patronage of *The Myanmar Times*.

The project is co-financed by the Polish Development Cooperation Programme 2013 of Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Lech Walesa Institut is a Warsaw-based NGO established by a former President of Poland and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate to promote democracy and human rights through education.

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2013

SEPTEMBER 5, 2013

10AM - 12PM
Seeking Refuge, Director Andy Glynne, 20 mins
Wagah, Director Supriyo Sen, 13 mins
The Existence, Director Marcin Koszałka, 72 mins

1PM - 3PM
Mirage, Director SrdanKeca, 42 mins

The White Treasure and the Salt Workers from Caquena, Director Eva Katharina Bühler, 52 mins

3.30PM - 5.30PM
Planet Kirsan, Director Magdalena Pięta, 50 mins
Poste Restante, Director Marcel Łoziński, 14 mins
The End of Summer, Director Piotr Stasik, 34 mins

Q&A with Piotr Stasik

SEPTEMBER 6, 2013

10AM - 12PM
Ecumenopolis: City without Limits, Director ImreAzem, 93 mins

1PM - 3PM
Petition - The Court of the Complainants, Director Zhao Liang, 124 mins

3.30PM - 5.30PM
The Last Mountain, Director Bill Haney, 95 mins
Panel discussion

SEPTEMBER 7, 2013

10AM - 12PM
Phnom Penh Lullaby, Director PawełKloc, 98 mins

1PM - 3PM
Doctors, Director Tomasz Wolski, 90 mins

3PM - 5.30PM
Art of Freedom, Director MarekKtosowicz & WojciechSłota, 71 mins
The Ambassador and Me, Director Jan Czarlewski, 16 mins
Q&A with Jan Czarlewski

‘Paranoia’ lacks originality

SEAN O'CONNELL

BIG Brother – the Orwellian type, not the reality TV program – casts his long shadow over the corporate-espionage thriller *Paranoia*. Using the smart-tech devices clutched in the hands of every millennial, the omnipresent being reads emails, listens to conversations and spies on our loved ones as they relax at home, blissfully unaware they're being observed.

Knowing how methodical Big Brother tends to be, he is probably even watching this movie, desperately wishing a better one could be beamed across the screen.

"There's nothing original left," serpentine tech executive Nicolas Wyatt (Gary Oldman) tells his handsome protégé, Adam Cassidy (Liam Hemsworth), near the start of director Robert Luketic's thriller. "We're all stealing from someone."

He's right. In the case of *Paranoia*, screenwriters Jason Dean Hall and Barry Levy swipe plot twists from the film adaptations of best-selling author John Grisham's novels. Only back in the day, kinetic legal-brief thrillers like *The Firm*, *The Pelican Brief* and *The Rainmaker* helped further the careers of Tom Cruise, Julia Roberts and Matt Damon, respectively. *Paranoia* peddles Hemsworth, a chiseled hunk who doesn't offer the audience much beyond his good looks.

Hemsworth plays Cassidy, a blue-collar whiz kid from Brooklyn who dreams of climbing the ranks at Wyatt Corp., a tech giant led by a ruthless chief executive (played by Oldman with



Gary Oldman (left) and Liam Hemsworth star in *Paranoia*. Photo: Bloomberg

his usual brand of live-wire menace). When Cassidy pitches what he believes will be the country's next great mobile toy, Wyatt distracts him with a riskier offer: Take a job at rival corporation Eikon; befriend Wyatt's nemesis, Jock Goddard (Harrison Ford, quietly effective); and swipe a blueprint for Eikon's latest

cellphone before it can reach store shelves.

As Cassidy sinks deeper into the criminal quicksand separating Wyatt and Goddard, it's hard not to realise that *Paranoia* boils down to two corrupt billionaires feuding over their share of a saturated market. The FBI threatens to intervene, but we spend most of the film

wondering which mogul will successfully manipulate this impressionable corporate spy. Tell me again why we're supposed to care?

Oh, sure, Luketic occasionally reminds us that Cassidy has a sick father (Richard Dreyfuss, making the most of what little he's given) and a stack of medical bills waiting at home. But even that potentially dramatic subplot is shelved for long stretches so Cassidy can romance Emma Jennings (Amber Heard), a pretty marketing executive who turns up at the most coincidental moments.

Paranoia succumbs to formula. There's tension to be wrung from the premise, but Luketic is content to telegraph his movie's juiciest twists, concentrating instead on applying a sleek visual sheen usually reserved for shampoo commercials. *Paranoia* ultimately addresses the chasm separating the underemployed, underprivileged Generation Y from the experienced, often deceitful white-collar executives who damaged the financial landscape and made the current job market so unstable.

At the same time, the movie also illuminates the gulf separating the up-and-coming class of not-ready-for-prime-time film stars and the seasoned veterans now filling supporting roles. Watching Hemsworth wilt alongside his commanding co-stars, I couldn't help but think that some day soon, the Fords, Oldmans and Dreyfusses of this world are going to attempt to pass the baton to a generation that isn't prepared. And that harsh truth has to make some studio executives paranoid. – Bloomberg

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

HUMAN ZOO By Irma Afram

ACROSS

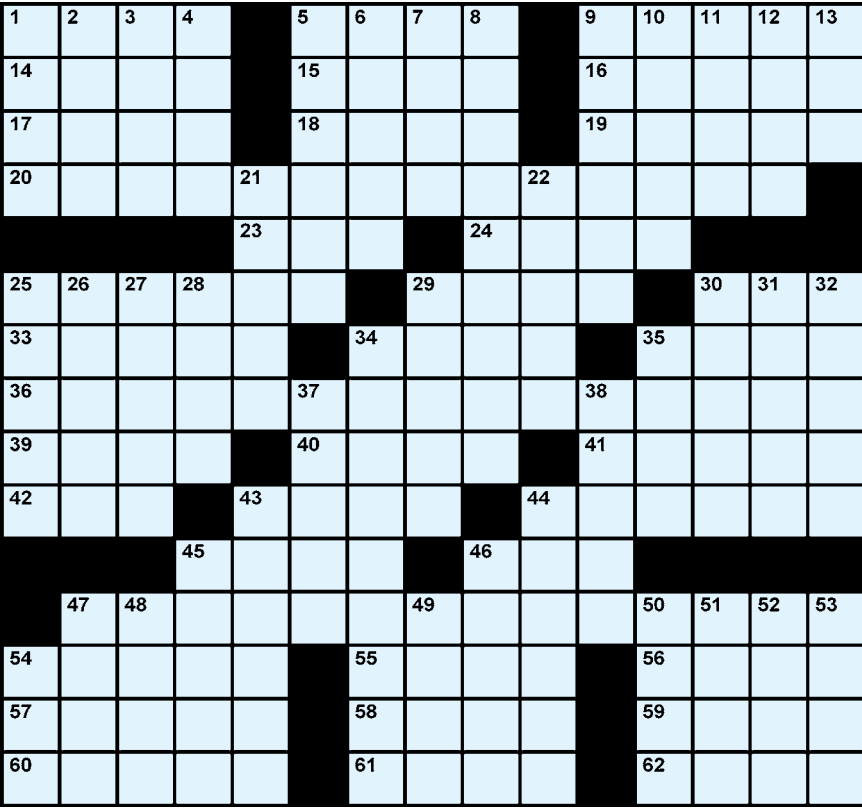
- 1 Range above tenor
- 5 Ill-fated biblical brother
- 9 Sword type
- 14 Wade across
- 15 Base for poi
- 16 Monk's wife, on TV
- 17 What red indicates in litmus tests
- 18 Calc preceder, perhaps
- 19 Get along together
- 20 John Wayne western
- 23 This, that or the other
- 24 Yarn
- 25 Begin a mountaineering trek
- 29 Ballyhoo
- 30 Toothpaste amount
- 33 Gold measurement
- 34 It's a race to break it
- 35 British noble
- 36 "That's not a knife" movie
- 39 Red, itchy skin patch
- 40 Races, as a motor
- 41 Blows one's horn?
- 42 Signs of comprehension
- 43 Kind of fountain or biscuit
- 44 Is overly attentive
- 45 Be dependent (on)
- 46 Address form?
- 47 1980 film from David Lynch
- 54 Regatta entrants
- 55 Colored eye area
- 56 Settle comfortably
- 57 Open areas of hotels
- 58 War on drugs fighter
- 59 Audio plug-ins
- 60 Crooked
- 61 Greek diner order
- 62 Endure

DOWN

- 1 Hardly around the corner
- 2 Out of one's mind
- 3 Group of three singers
- 4 Bookmaker's numbers
- 5 Be present
- 6 "Rain Man" director
- 7 Holder of a high office
- 8 Company emblems
- 9 Belmont digs
- 10 Have a dispute
- 11 Hamilton's opponent

- 12 Fall place
- 13 Whiskey variety
- 21 Too much, in music
- 22 Looked at with open mouth
- 25 African capital
- 26 "The Divine" Vaughan
- 27 Christian symbol
- 28 Every
- 29 Sesame seed and honey confection
- 30 Woodworking grooves
- 31 Narrow mountain ridge
- 32 First word after a sneeze, often
- 34 Hippie's artistic activity
- 35 Deputy on "The Dukes of Hazzard"

- 37 Oddly amusing
- 38 Complete change of course
- 43 Playground plank
- 44 Complete debacle
- 45 Fix some loose laces
- 46 Draw together, in sewing
- 47 Nursery population
- 48 Attention getter of yore
- 49 What to do at the Wailing Wall
- 50 Blue-green shade
- 51 Baby's first word, often
- 52 Egyptian snakes
- 53 Jay's home
- 54 Lamb's lament



DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



PEANUTS

BY CHARLES SCHULZ



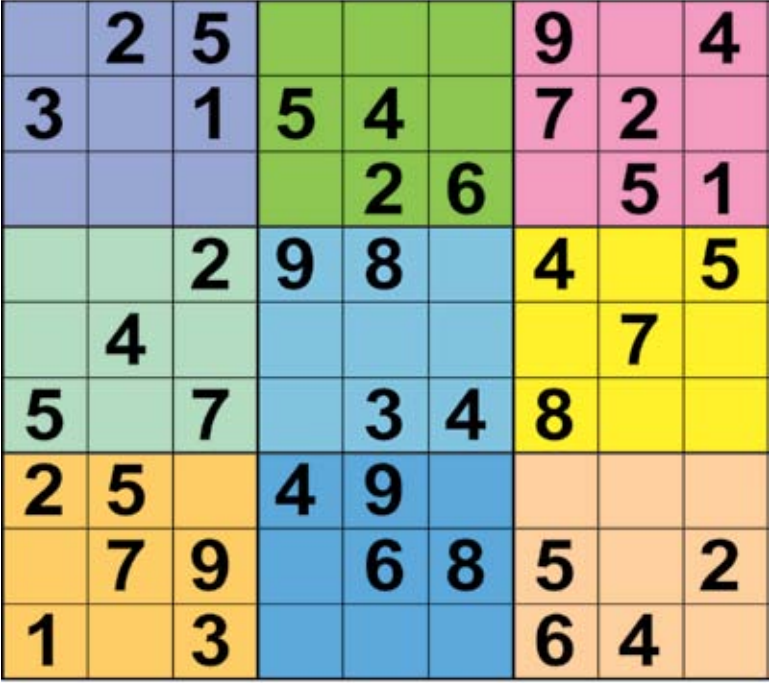
CALVIN AND HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON



SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



9/2 DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

DENNIS FARINA (1944-2013) Solution: 10 letters



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Actor, American, Arizona, Army, Banger, Bones, Brianna, Chicago, Crime, Cubs, Dennis, Drama, Dreams, Eddie, Get Shorty, Host, Jimmy, Joe, Joseph, Kind, Law and Order, Mann, Marianne, Matthew, Miami Vice, Michael, Midnight Run, Mike, Olivia, Patricia, Private, Ryan, Saving, Serrano, Sicilian, Sight, Snatch, Stage, Star, The Mod Squad, Tyler, Vegas

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A little something with saffron

PHYO'S COOKING ADVENTURE

phyocooking@gmail.com



This week's recipe is inspired once again by Morocco because I had bought a beautiful butter fish from the market and was looking to cook something different. The inspiration to stick with the Moroccan theme was further influenced by my gorgeous friend, who gave me the gift of real saffron from Egypt – so fish with saffron it is!

A Moroccan fish stew had been on my to-do list for some time and it works well with the texture of butter fish. My sick husband said this stew was the best comfort food and he even forgot to ask for his Vegemite toast.

Butter fish is a river fish and Myanmar people call it *nga myin*. If you can't find it, try to get *nga tan* – but *nga myin* will provide the best results. It might be a little expensive, but it is also worth it.

MOROCCAN-STYLE FISH STEW

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)

- 700 grams butter fish (*nga tan* or *nga myin*) or any white fillet
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 onions diced
- 2 cloves crushed garlic

- 1 large green chilli
- 1 tablespoon ginger, grated
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 5 ripe tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 orange
- ½ teaspoon saffron (optional)
- Handful coriander leaves
- 2½ cups fish stock



PREPARATION

Fillet the fish and remove the bones. Then cut the fish into 5-7cm cubes and make the fish stock with bones.

For the fish stock, use 3 cups of water and add the fish bones into the pot and boil for 30 minutes. Discard the bones.

Set aside.

For the fish steak cubes, marinate the cubes with ¼ teaspoon of each of the spices (ground coriander, cinnamon and cumin).

Cut each tomato into six pieces. Heat olive oil in a pot over medium heat. Sauté the onions. When they become transparent, add garlic and ginger. When the aroma comes out, add the saffron and all the remaining spices as well as the tomato paste. Fry the mixture for 2 more minutes.

Then, add the tomato slices and mix in. Add 2½ cups of fish stock (if you need more stock, add more water) into the pot. Turn the heat down and cook for 15-20 minutes. Add the zest of an orange into the pot. Salt for taste.

When the onion melts into the soup and the skins from the tomatoes are wilted, add the fish cubes. Make sure to cover the fish cubes under the liquid. Squeeze the juice of an orange into the mixture as well. Cover the pot for another five minutes. When the fish is cooked, garnish with coriander leaves and sliced chilli.

Now you have fish stew!
Serve over couscous or rice.

OKRA (LADY FINGER) TAGINE

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)

- 650-700 grams okra
- 2 tomatoes (diced)
- 2 small onions/ shallots (sliced)
- 2 tablespoon parsley
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 tablespoons olive oil

PREPARATION

Cut the top and bottom ends of the okra and evenly slice into about a



Okra tagine. Photo: Phyo

half centimetre width. In a non-stick frying pan, fry the onions in olive oil over medium heat. When they become transparent, add the diced tomatoes and fry for 1 minute. Then, add parsley, black pepper and the okra and fry them together for a couple of minutes.

Add 3 tablespoons of water into the pan and cover with lid. Salt for taste. When the okra are soft (if needed, add more water) remove the lid, turn the heat up and fry until they are sizzling. Then sprinkle a pinch of cinnamon powder over the okra.

TIPS FOR THE FISH STEW

You can add some almond flakes

into the fish stew.

If you can't get saffron, use 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder and 1 teaspoon of paprika.

For the fish stock, the head or tail or bones of any fish will do the same job.

For the ground spices, if you can't get crushed spices, just crush the whole spices.

FOODIE QUOTE:

"Good food ends with good talk." Geoffrey, from Northern Exposure

NEXT WEEK

Moroccan desserts

Malaysia truly Latin America at La Boca

DOUGLAS LONG

dlong125@gmail.com

THE ringing endorsement by *Time Out Malaysia* clinched it: The magazine's 2013-14 guide to restaurants, bars and clubs had rated the margaritas at La Boca Latino Bar and Restaurant among the best in Kuala Lumpur. My wife and I would be dining there for lunch.

Yes, margaritas at lunchtime: There was plenty of shopping on the agenda during our visit to KL, and La Boca's prime location just outside Pavilion KL megamall made it the perfect afternoon antidote for the inevitable retail overload.

The restaurant was small but inviting: The walls were decorated with vibrant paintings meant to evoke the

dynamism of Latin America, and even the menu was a feast for the eyes, combining colourful graphics with helpful descriptions of the food and drinks.

Eight pages of the menu were dedicated to beverages, alcoholic and otherwise. As expected, we went with frozen margaritas (28 ringgit; US\$9.50). They were as excellent as advertised, and the flawless blend of tequila, triple sec, lemon juice and ice was perfectly suited to the sweltering tropical afternoon. From the first sip, I had no doubt that in-house mixologist Felipe meant it when he said he was dedicated to creating drinks with "heart and soul".

Food choices included tapas, salads and Argentinean-style barbecue,

as well as selections from Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba and Uruguay.

I opted for a taste of Mexico in the form of beef fajitas (34 ringgit), served on a sizzling skillet with tortilla bread, guacamole, sour cream and salsa on the side. There were enough ingredients to fill four tortillas. The succulent meat had been marinated with coriander, paprika and cumin, and seared with onions and peppers. I savoured every blissful bite.

My wife went for the Brazilian fare, ordering the seafood moqueca (46 ringgit) – salmon and prawn in creamy coconut sauce topped with toasted coconut flakes, and served with steamed jasmine rice and honey-glazed butternut squash.



Moqueca is traditionally cooked as a whitefish stew, but La Boca has re-envisioned the dish as a Southeast Asian-style curry. My wife loved the rich, garlicky flavor, and especially enjoyed the combination of fresh grilled prawn and thinly sliced salmon.

The La Boca experience left us both extremely satisfied. While the bill was substantially higher than we would normally pay for lunch in Yangon, we were willing to splurge on well-prepared Latin American food, which remains a relatively marginal cuisine in Myanmar.

However, the value-for-money category took a small hit due to the fact that chips and salsa were not served gratis along with the mains. They had to be ordered as a side dish, at the hefty price of 9 ringgit for a few chips and minuscule bowl of sals

La Boca Latino Bar and Restaurant

C3.10.03 Pavilion KL, 168 Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Food:	9
Drink:	10
Service:	8
Atmosphere:	9
X-factor:	9
Value for money:	7

Total Score: 8.6/10



Latin American authenticity at Malaysia's La Boca restaurant. Photo: Douglas Long

Wine Review

RED WINE

Red Mountain
Rose D'Inle 2012

Fresh and fruity with a pale pink glow, this medium-bodied wine is surprisingly refreshing. It is also a testament to the success of the growing viticulture scene in Myanmar.

Score

7/10

₹9,600

WHITE WINE

Red Mountain
Estate 45 White
Muscat

This fortified wine is another surprise out of the country. It's a mix between port and sherry and very sweet. Best sipped and eaten with some old cheese like parmesan.

Score

7/10

₹15,600

Toshiba new products launch**Samsung lucky card for Sea Games campaign**

Ko Kyaw Swa and Mr Sermkhun Kunawong

Moe Min



Ma Soe Yu Wai

Maung Maung Aye



Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein

A Lin Yong

T-MAX Mobile handsets launch

T-MAX staff members



Son Pong



U Maung Maung



U Wallace

EJ Galla wine launch @ the Chatrium

Savitri Ramyarupa, Ma Su Su Tin and Bhongbhichibhitakburi

Turiki Embasser-Macdonal



Ko Thaw Tar Tun, Sweety and May Zin



Khin Wint Phyu, Aye Thitsar Myo and Shwe Yee Win

CDC press conference

Jessica Myint Thin and Ko Lin Kyaw Tun



Ma Nilar Myint, Ko Saw Moo Ge, Ma Htike Shwe Yee Oo

The Pansodan Scene party

Paul Vrieze, Alyssa Rumlow, Samantha Michaels



Maria Fulwiter, Rani Robelvs and Ali Fowle

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THERE’S never a need to worry Socialite wouldn’t be able to make every event she needed to attend this past week. She flitted about and zipped around Yangon to make an appearance at the Toshiba new products launch at the Park Royal hotel. She maneuvered around a few different product launches and lucky draws before settling at the EJ Galla wine launch at the Chatrium hotel August 24. In between she bowled a few rounds at the Right Track Bowling Alley and made it to a friend’s birthday at the new arts venue, the Pansodan Scene.

The League @ the Right Track Bowling Alley



Joe Holloway, Will Lowe, Oliver Belfitt-Nash, Ben Durie



Abdel Rahman Hassan, Chris Larkin

Finolex new products launch



Ma Tin Tin Ei



BK Sethi



U Tun Tun



Ma Nilar Phyto, Ma Khin Su Kyi and April

Kandawgyi Palace hotel’s ‘Thank You’ party



U Win Oo Tan



Sue and Sale group members



Ma Thi Thi Myint and Ma May Myat Thaw



Jehan Wick and U Aye Min Oo

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Headache

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BIOGESIC

DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 401	1	7:00	7:55
FMI A1	1,2,3,4,5	7:30	8:30
FMI A1	6	8:00	9:00
FMI B1	1,2,3,4,5	11:30	12:30
FMI A1	7	15:30	16:30
FMI C1	1,2,3,4,5	16:30	17:30

NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
FMI A2	1,2,3,4,5	8:50	9:50
FMI A2	6	10:00	11:00
FMI B2	1,2,3,4,5	13:00	14:00
FMI A2	7	17:00	18:00
FMI C2	1,2,3,4,5	18:00	19:00

YANGON TO MANDALAY			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
WV9 512	3	6:00	8:05
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	6:10	8:15
YH 917	Daily	6:10	8:40
Y5 234	Daily	6:15	7:30
6T 401/K7222	2,3,4,5,6,7	6:30	8:35
K7 222	Daily	6:30	8:40
YJ 201	4	6:30	8:25
K7 626	1,5	6:45	8:10
K7 226	2,4	6:45	8:10
YJ 201	1,2	7:00	8:25
YJ 211	5,7	7:00	8:25
YJ 143/W97143	1,2,3	7:00	9:05
WV9 251	Daily	7:00	9:05
6T 401	1	7:00	9:40
YJ 761	6	7:00	8:55
YH 833	1,7	7:30	9:10
WV9 201	1,2,3	7:45	9:10
YH 831	3,5	8:00	9:40
8M 6603	2,4,7	9:00	10:10
YJ 751/W9 7751	3,7	10:00	11:55
YJ 761	1	10:30	12:25
WV9 251	2	10:30	11:55
K7 624	Daily	10:30	11:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	7	10:30	12:25
YJ 201	3	11:00	12:25
YJ 761	1,2,4	11:00	12:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	5	11:00	12:55
YJ 601/W9 76016		11:00	12:25
YH 737	3,7	11:15	13:25
YH 727	1,5	11:15	13:25
YH 729	2,4,6	11:15	14:15
YH 731	Daily	14:30	16:40
WV9 129	1,2,3	14:45	16:40
K7 224	Daily	14:30	16:35
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	14:30	16:35

MANDALAY TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 233	Daily	8:10	9:25
YJ 892	1,2,3,4,5,6	8:30	10:25
YH 918	Daily	8:40	10:45
YJ 143/W97143	1,2,3	9:20	10:45
6T 402/K7 223	2,3,4,5,6,7	8:55	10:55
K7 223	Daily	8:55	11:00
WV9 201	4,5,6,7	9:10	11:05
WV9 144	Daily	9:20	10:45
WV9 201	1,2,3	9:25	11:20
Y5 132	3,5,6,7	9:30	10:30
6T 402	1	10:00	12:00
K7 227	2,4	10:35	12:00
K7 627	1,5	10:55	12:20
YJ 202	1,2,4	11:30	12:25
YH 834	1,7	12:00	13:25
YH 832	3,5	12:30	13:55
YJ 762	6	12:35	14:00
K7 845	2,4,7	12:50	16:00
YJ 202	3	15:30	17:25
WV9 120	1,3	15:45	17:10
YJ 762	1,2,4	16:35	18:00
YH 732	Daily	16:40	18:45
WV9 129	4,5,6,7	16:40	18:45
YH 728	1,5	16:45	18:10
YJ 725/W9 7752	7	16:50	18:15
6T 502/K7 225	Daily	16:50	19:00
K7 225	Daily	16:50	19:00
WV9 129	1,2,3	16:55	19:00
K7 625	Daily	17:10	18:35
8M 6604	2,4,7	17:20	18:30
YH 738	3,7	17:25	18:50
WV9 511	2	17:30	19:35
WV9 252	2	17:35	19:00
YJ 725/W9 7752	5	17:50	19:15
YH 730	2,4,6	18:00	19:25

YANGON TO NYAUNG U			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	Daily	6:10	7:45
YJ 891	Daily	6:10	7:30
6T 401/K7 222	2,3,4,5,6,7	6:30	7:50
K7 222	Daily	6:30	7:50
YJ 143/ W9 7143	1,2,3	7:00	8:20
6T 401	1	7:00	8:55
WV9 129	1,2,3	14:45	17:25
WV9 129	4,5,6,7	14:30	17:10
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	14:30	17:20
YH 731	Daily	14:30	17:25
K7 224	Daily	14:30	17:25

NYAUNG U TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 891	Daily	7:45	8:15
YH 917	Daily	7:45	10:45
YJ 143/W9 7143	1,2,3	8:35	10:45
YJ 143/W9 7143	4,5,6,7	8:05	10:45
K7 222	Daily	8:05	11:00
K7222/6T 401	2,3,4,5,6,7	8:05	10:55
6T 401	1	9:10	12:00
YH 732	Daily	17:25	18:45
6T 502/K7 225	Daily	17:40	19:00
WV9 129	1,2,3	17:40	19:00
WV9 129	Daily	17:25	18:45
K7 225	Daily	17:45	19:00

YANGON TO MYITKYINA			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 211	7	7:00	9:50
YJ 211	5	7:00	9:50
YJ 201	4	6:30	9:50
YJ 201	1,2	7:00	9:50
K7 844	2,4,7	7:30	11:05
WV9 251	2	10:30	13:25
K7 624	Daily	10:30	13:25
YJ 201	3	11:00	13:50

MYITKYINA TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 202	3	14:05	17:25
YJ 211	5,7	10:05	13:25
YJ 202	1,2,4	10:05	12:55
K7 625	Daily	15:40	18:35
WV9 252	2	16:05	19:00

YANGON TO HEHO			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	Daily	6:10	9:35
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	6:10	9:00
6T 401/K7222	2,3,4,5,6,7	6:30	9:30
K7 222	Daily	6:30	9:30
YJ 761	6	7:00	8:10
6T 401	1	7:00	10:35
WV9 201	4,5,6,7	7:30	9:40
K7 828	1,3,5	7:30	8:45
WV9 201	1,2,3	7:45	9:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	3,7	10:00	11:10
WV9 119	1,3	10:30	11:40
YJ 761	1,2,4	11:00	12:10
YJ 751/W9 7751	5	11:00	12:10

YH 727	1,5	11:15	12:40
YH 737	3,7	11:15	12:40
K7 826	2,6	11:45	13:00
WV9 129	1,2,3	14:45	15:55
WV9 129	4,5,6,7	14:30	15:40
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	14:30	15:40
K7 224	Daily	14:30	15:45
YH 731	Daily	14:30	15:55

HEHO TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 892	1,2,3,4,5,6	9:15	10:25
YH 918	Daily	9:35	10:45
6T 402/K7223	2,3,4,5,6,7	9:45	10:55
K7 223	Daily	9:45	11:00
WV9 201	4,5,6,7	9:55	11:05
WV9 201	1,2,3	10:10	11:20
6T 402	1	10:50	12:00
K7 829	1,3,5	13:50	15:05
WV9 120	1,3	15:00	17:10
YJ 762	1,2,4	15:50	18:00
YJ 762	6	11:50	14:00
WV9 129	1,2,3	16:10	19:00
YJ 752/W9 7752	3	16:55	18:05
WV9 129	4,5,6,7	15:55	18:45
YH 731	Daily	15:55	18:45
YH 728	1,5	16:00	18:10
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	16:00	19:00
K7 224	Daily	16:00	19:00
YH 738	3,7	16:40	18:50
K7 827	2,6	17:25	18:40

YANGON TO SITTWE			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 611	2,4,7	11:00	12:25
6T 605	5	11:15	13:15
K7 426	Daily	12:30	13:50
6T 607	1	12:30	13:55

SITT WE TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 612	2,4,7	12:45	14:10
6T 612	3,6	13:15	14:40
6T 606	5	13:35	15:00
K7 427	Daily	14:05	15:25
6T 608	1	14:15	16:15

YANGON TO MYEIK			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
K7 319	Daily	7:00	9:05
YH 633	1,3,4,5,7	7:00	9:15

MYEIK TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 634	1,3,4,5,7	11:25	13:25
K7 320	Daily	11:30	13:35

YANGON TO THANDWE			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 605	5	11:15	12:10
6T 607	1	12:30	15:05

THANDWE TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 605	5	12:25	15:00
6T 608	1	15:20	16:15

Domestic Airlines

Air Bagan Ltd. (W9)
Tel : 513322, 513422, 504888, Fax : 515102

Air KBZ (K7)
Tel: 372977~80, 533030~39 (Airport),
Fax: 372983

Air Mandalay (6T)
Tel : (Head Office) 501520, 525488,
Fax: 525937. Airport: 533222~3, 09-73152853.
Fax: 533223.

Asian Wings (YJ)
Tel: 951 516654, 532253, 09-731-35991~3.
Fax: 951 532333

Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5)
Tel: 95 9 400446999, 95 9 400447999,
Fax: 01 860 4051

Yangon Airways(YH)
Tel: (+95-1) 383 100, 383 107, 700 264,
Fax: 652 533.

FMI Air Charter - Sales & Reservations
Tel: (95-1) 240363, 240373 / (+95-9) 421146545

Domestic

6T = Air Mandalay

W9 = Air Bagan

YJ = Asian Wings

K7 = AIR KBZ

YH = Yangon Airways

FMI = FMI AIR Charter

Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

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1 = Monday	5 = Friday
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday

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INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO BANGKOK				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
PG 706	Daily	7:15	9:30	
8M 335	Daily	9:00	10:45	
TG 304	Daily	9:50	11:45	
PG 702	Daily	10:30	12:25	
TG 302	Daily	14:55	16:50	
PG 708	Daily	15:20	17:15	
8M 331	1,5,6	16:30	18:15	
PG 704	Daily	18:20	20:15	
Y5 237	Daily	18:05	19:50	
TG 306	Daily	19:45	21:40	

YANGON TO DON MUENG				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
FD 2752	Daily	8:30	10:20	
FD 2754	Daily	17:50	19:35	

YANGON TO SINGAPORE				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
MI 509	1,6	0:25	5:00	
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25	
Y5 233	Daily	10:10	14:40	
SQ 997	Daily	10:25	14:45	
8M 6232	Daily	11:30	16:05	
3K 586	Daily	11:30	16:05	
MI 517	Daily	16:40	21:15	

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
8M 501	1,3,6	7:50	11:50	
AK 1427	Daily	8:30	12:50	
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30	
MH 743	Daily	15:45	20:00	

YANGON TO BEIJING				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
CA 906	2,3,4,6,7	14:15	21:55	

YANGON TO GAUNGZHOU				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
8M 711	4,7	8:40	13:15	
CZ 3056	3,6	11:20	15:50	
CZ 3056	1,5	17:40	22:15	

YANGON TO TAIPEI				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
CI 7916	1,2,3,5,6	10:50	16:15	

YANGON TO KUNMING				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
MU 2012	1,3	12:20	18:35	
MU 2032	2,4,5,6,7	14:40	18:00	
CA 906	2,3,4,6,7	14:15	17:35	

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 9607	4,7	14:20	16:10	

YANGON TO HANOI				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:30	

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:10	

YANGON TO DOHA				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
QR 619	1,4,5	8:15	11:15	

YANGON TO PHNOM PENH				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
8M 403	3	16:50	19:15	

YANGON TO SEOUL				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
OZ 770	3,4,6,7	0:35	9:10	
KE 472	Daily	23:35	08:05+1	

YANGON TO HONG KONG				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
KA 251	1,2,4,6	1:10	6:00	

YANGON TO TOKYO				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
NH 914	1,3,6	21:30	06:40+1	

YANGON TO KOLKATA				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
AI 228	1,5	14:05	15:05	

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 782	2,3,5,7	9:30	11:55
MANDALAY TO DON MUENG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2761	Daily	12:45	15:00

MANDALAY TO KUNMING				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
MU 2030	Daily	14:40	17:20	

BANGKOK TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
8M 336	Daily	6:15	7:00	
TG 303	Daily	7:55	8:50	
PG 701	Daily	8:50	9:40	
TG 301	Daily	13:00	13:45	
PG 707	Daily	13:40	14:30	
PG 703	Daily	16:45	17:35	
TG 305	Daily	17:50	18:45	
8M 332	Daily	19:15	20:00	
PG 705	Daily	20:15	21:30	
Y5 238	Daily	21:10	21:55	

DON MUENG TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
FD 2751	Daily	7:15	8:00	
FD 2753	Daily	16:35	17:20	

SINGAPORE TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
SQ 998	Daily	7:55	9:20	
3K 585	Daily	9:10	10:40	
8M 6231	Daily	9:10	10:40	
VN 943	2,4,7	11:40	13:25	
8M 232	Daily	13:25	14:50	
MI 518	Daily	14:20	15:45	
Y5 234	Daily	15:35	17:05	
MI 520	5,7	22:10	23:35	

BEIJING TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	12:40	13:15	

KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
AK 1426	Daily	6:55	8:00	
MH 740	Daily	10:05	11:15	
8M 502	1,3,6	12:50	13:50	
MH742	Daily	13:30	14:40	

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
CZ 3055	3,6	8:40	10:30	
CZ 3055	1,5	14:45	16:35	
8M 712	4,7	14:15	15:50	

TAIPEI TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
CI 7915	1,2,3,5,6	7:00	9:55	

KUNMING TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
MU 2011	1,3	8:20	11:30	
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	12:40	13:15	
MU 2031	2,4,5,6,7	13:30	13:55	

CHIANG MAI TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 9608	4,7	17:20	18:10	

HANOI TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:35	18:10	

HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
VN 943	2,4,7	11:40	13:25	

BANGKOK TO MANDALAY				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
TG 781	2,3,5,7	7:25	8:50	

DOHA TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
QR 618	3,4,7	21:05	07:00+1	

PHNOM PENH TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
8M 404	3	20:15	21:40	

SEOUL TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
KE 471	Daily	18:40	22:30	
OZ 769	2,3,5,6	19:50	23:25	

TOKYO TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
NH 913	1,3,6	10:30	15:30	

HONG KONG TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:45	23:30	

KOLKATA TO YANGON				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
AI 227	1,5	10:35	13:20	

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
FD 2760	Daily	10:50	12:15	

KUNMING TO MANDALAY				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
MU 2029	Daily	13:55	13:50	

International Airlines

Air Asia (FD)

Tel: 251 885, 251 886.

Air Bagan Ltd.(W9)

Tel : 513322, 513422, 504888, Fax : 515102

Air China (CA)

Tel : 666112, 655882.

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Tel : 387648, 241007 ext : 120, 121, 122 Fax : 241124

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Tel : 255260, Fax: 255305

Silk Air(MI)

Tel: 255 287~9, Fax: 255 290

Thai Airways (TG)

Tel : 255491~6, Fax : 255223

Vietnam Airlines (VN)

Fax : 255086. Tel 255066/ 255088/ 255068.

Qatar Airways (Temporary Office)

Tel: 01-250388, [ext: 8142, 8210]

KATHMANDU

Street murals show Nepal in living colour

Nepal's capital has been given a facelift thanks to a team of artists who painted dozens of elaborate and metres-high murals on walls, some depicting social issues like child trafficking.

Gone are political flyers, movie posters and other advertisements slapped on some of Kathmandu's drab walls – in their place are colourful paintings, some up to 25 feet (7.6 metres) high.

Some 60 artists have been involved in the project called Kolor Kathmandu which began in January and culminated August 22 with the launch of a book of photographs on the murals.

“Kathmandu used to be a city of art and culture,” said Yuki Poudyal, director of the project.

“But when I returned home after five years studying in the United States, I saw that it was bombarded with posters and negative visuals,” she said.

The artists targeted the walls of public and private buildings in a months-long project that featured 75 murals on religious and abstract themes but also some of Nepal's problems including caste discrimination.

Poudyal said the artists, from some 20 countries, have tried to represent Nepal's 75 districts in the paintings so that Kathmandu residents can “know stories from different parts of the country”.

One mural shows girls – displaced from their families during the annual flooding that occurs in Banke district on the Indian Nepal border – falling into the hands of human traffickers.

Poudyal, who studied sociology at St Lawrence University in New York State, said she launched the project after drawing inspiration from street art in US cities like Philadelphia.

“Art like this was limited to the Western world. But now we have introduced it in Kathmandu,” she said.

The project received financial backing from Prince Claus Fund, a Dutch charity. Permission was gained from the buildings' owners before the artists started work on their murals, some of which took two weeks to complete.

“Curiosity is a hallmark of street arts and murals. People would stop and watch the artists working,” Poudyal said.

She said the murals also appear to have impressed the poster boys who slap flyers on walls around the city as well as graffiti artists, who have left the murals alone.

“Not a single mural

King's dream still relevant, in Atlanta and in Asia

CURTIS S CHIN

AS living standards have risen across the Asia-Pacific region, Koreans, Japanese and now Chinese have increasingly been joining the ranks of world travellers – with much of Southeast Asia, now including Myanmar, on their destination lists.

Tourists from China made some 83 million international trips in 2012, up from 10 million in 2000, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization. For travellers to the US capital Washington DC, the name Martin Luther King Jr is likely to be of particular interest, as will the statue and surrounding plaza built to honour him in this city of monuments.

King is of course the iconic African-American civil rights leader who fell to an assassin's bullet on April 4, 1968. The late Nobel Peace Prize laureate is back in the news this year as the United States commemorates the 50th anniversary of his historic "I Have a Dream" speech.

That speech – delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963, to more than 250,000 people during the landmark March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom – was a defining moment of the American civil rights movement and for King.

His is a name that Asian students of world history, including young people from Myanmar, should recognise.

But how about the name Lei Yixin? Lei is the sculptor from Hunan Province in China who was chosen, though not without controversy, to create the 9-metre-tall (30-foot-tall) stone statue of the late civil rights leader that stands at the center of a US\$120 million Martin Luther King Jr Memorial in Washington which opened two years ago.

He too is back in the news as repairs, under Lei's watchful eyes, have been made to remove one of two inscriptions from King that had been carved into the stone memorial. The now-removed inscription had appeared on the north face of the three-storey statue and had been paired with a quote on the south face that reads, "Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope."

The offending inscription, "I was a drum major for justice, peace and righteousness," was removed in early August, with work following to smooth out the stone where the quotation once appeared. The inscription was a paraphrase of a sermon that King had delivered two months before he was assassinated in 1968, and its awkward shortening of what King had actually said was criticised for distorting the tone and meaning and making the civil rights leader sound arrogant.

"Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice," said King, at Atlanta's



Martin Luther King after orating his speech, "I Have a Dream" in 1963. Photo: AFP

Ebenezer Baptist Church. The complete quote continues, "Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter."

I found the Chinese characters for the sculptor's name at the base of the statue of King during my own visit to the memorial. But imagine if a visit to the work of this once obscure Chinese sculptor was added to the itineraries of the throngs of Asian visitors – particularly from mainland China, but perhaps one day from Myanmar – now increasingly replacing the European and Japanese tourists of yesteryear.

From Bagan's temples to Italy's boutiques, nations around the world are witnessing Asia's, and particularly China's, economic rise in the form of tens of thousands of new visitors. Large numbers of Chinese who had once dreamed of travelling abroad now have the opportunity and money to do so, much as earlier decades saw Japanese and Korean tourists join the ranks of global travellers.

How fitting it would be if Lei's sculpture were to help bring the late civil rights leader's message of equality, social justice and empowerment to Asia's leaders, as well as to the growing number of increasingly globe-trotting tourists from China and other Asian countries.

This is particularly true amid ongoing sectarian and religious tensions

in Myanmar and territorial disputes between China and its neighbors in the South China Seas.

"I have a dream," King preached from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, before a massive statue of a seated President Lincoln, "that one day this nation will rise up, live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'"

He continued: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."

King's message still has relevance today to those struggling for greater economic freedom and opportunity, whether in Atlanta or in Yangon.

Beyond the T-shirts, key chains and expensive luxury items from name-brand designer boutiques, let's hope that King's message of peace and empowerment becomes one added souvenir brought back from the United States to visitors' home countries – whether Myanmar, China or elsewhere.

Curtis S Chin is managing director of advisory firm RiverPeak Group, and served as US Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank (2007-2010) under presidents George W Bush and Barack Obama.

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

SEPTEMBER 2 - 8, 2013

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



It's very important to look at the bigger picture right now. Life has just sent you one

of those inevitable curve balls that you will have consider and get over. Don't let the situation spiral out of control. Just step back and let it wash over you, but remember the hard lesson learned this week.

LEO | Jul 23 - Aug 22



Do you sometimes feel yourself under pressure to perform? Don't build up unrealistic

expectations of yourself. Act spontaneously and don't feel you have to plan every facet of your life just now. You'll find yourself straying from your plans anyway as you seek more enjoyment in the unexpected surprises in life.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



Set yourself some personal, professional and spiritual goals this week and have the

courage to act on them. Never neglect the people that come your way in life. You may need to let go of your ego and lay your cards out to get some understanding in a relationship.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sep 22



Anger is not a way to solve a problem, but knowledge is certainly power. Exert your knowledge this week

and allow others to see the value you have to bring to the table. That way, you'll be full of golden ideas that light the path towards achieving big. You should maintain faith and trust in love.

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19



Positive thinking is optimal and so long as you're thinking this way, think big. A problem will resolve

itself but make sure to keep track of any factual of formal records and photocopy anything that may be contested in future. In the area of personal relationships, you may be a bit heartsick from that inescapable disease called love.

LIBRA | Sep 23 - Oct 22



Fear is a state that prevents you from hearing your intuition. To listen to your intuition is

to be aware of your entire experience and not just on your conscious perceptions of things. Good communication will help clear your emotions so start listening and talking.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20



Steer away from the obvious mistakes of the past and use them to your advantage for the

future. Make a balance between work and personal life: You're concentrating on one or the other too much and it may create rifts in relationships. Perhaps seek out meditation to try and bring about some work/life balance.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



You may find it impossible to make a strong statement or decision on

something without little nagging doubts and reservations coming across. One of the best ways to properly evaluate a situation is to research and do your homework. Start researching!

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



Undertake caution and some responsibility in your financial affairs. Pay more attention to

your expenditure and perhaps make the difficult decisions on money matters next week. Family relationships are on the mend this week and will be harmonious. Enjoy and take your time with people who are close to you.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



When someone disagrees with you, you don't have to immediately start revising what you

just said. They may have a wealth of knowledge to support their argument, but so do you. Believe in the things that are important to you and any blockades in the way will be cleared.

CANCER | Jun 21 - Jul 22



The rainbow is more beautiful than the pot at the end of it because the pot

never turns out to be quite what you expected. Recognise yourself living now and make decisions with mindfulness as you enjoy the fruits of your labour in the next few days.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



The more abstract the question you ask, the more impossible it is to get in touch with

your feelings. Observe and allow yourself to reach out to others. All you want is to be loved, but that depends entirely on whether you're allowing yourself to be loved.

Miley's twerking dance officially enters lexicon

"TWERKING," the raunchy dance that set tongues wagging when enthusiastically performed by Miley Cyrus at the MTV awards, is one of the new terms to make the latest Oxford dictionary update.

The former Disney child star, now 20, left audience members gob-smacked when she bent over and gyrated provocatively with singer Robin Thicke on his song "Blurred Lines".

The moves, borrowed from US hip-hop culture, have been colloquially known as "twerking" for around 20 years, but the term has now received official recognition after being included in the latest revision of Oxford Dictionaries Online, lexicographers revealed August 28.

"By last year, it had generated enough currency to be added to our new words watch list, and by this spring,

we had enough evidence of usage frequency in a breadth of sources to consider adding it to our dictionaries of current English," explained Katherine Connor Martin, from Oxford Dictionaries Online.

"There are many theories about the origin of this word, and since it arose in oral use, we may never know the answer for sure.

"The current public reaction

to 'twerking' is reminiscent in some ways of how the twisting craze was regarded in the early 1960s, when it was first popularised by Chubby Checker's song, 'The Twist,' she added.

Other new words recognised by the English language gatekeeper include "selfie", for a self-photograph taken on a mobile phone, online currency "Bitcoin" and "hackerspace". - AFP

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FLEET 24Seven : Fully maintained operating leases (self drive). New left hand drive Pickups, Commercials, Trucks & Refrig. Trucks. www.fleet24seven.com

VIRGINLAND Tours: Visa Services. Worldwide Air Ticketing. Worldwide Hotel Reservation. All Kind Transportation Rental. Inbound & Out bound Tour Operator. Tour Guide Services. Ph: 01-8610252, 09-512-3793, 09-520-2643

NYAN MYINT THU Car Rental Service : Ko Nyan Myint Win Kyi (MD) - No 56, Bo Ywe St, Latha, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: (+95)01-246551, 01-375284. Hp: (+95)09-2132778. il: nyanmyintthu1983@gmail.com, nmt@nyanmyintthucarrental.com, colwinkyi@gmail.com. Web: www.nyanmyintthucarrental.com

Training

WEB DEVELOPMENT & Design Training Sat & Sun - 3:00pm-5:00pm. Contact: 09-4211-44937

IELTS/SAT Teacher Training Are you a native speaker of English? Do you want to become a IELTS/ SAT English Teacher? We train you practically. 757, 3rd Flr, Lanmadaw (in Chinatown). theinhhtikesan01@gmail.com 09-513-9298

Want to Buy

CHERRY QQ3 (Taxi). Pls contact: 09-4211-31257

WE want to buy Marine Generator operation and maintenance manual books and Marine main engines operation and maintenance manual books (B&W or Yanmar Or UEC, etc...). Pls contact 09-518-4314

EMBASSY of Pakistan intends to purchase 1 x car sedan model 2013 automatic (not higher than 2000 cc) for official use. Sealed bids are invited from interested parties at the following address:- "Embassy of Pakistan Diplomatic Quarters Pyay Rd, Yangon

BUY & EXCHANGE used Apple Iphone Samsung HTC Sony Huawei Used Laptop notebook Netbook macbook pro & table ipad etc... contact -09-517-8391

SUPER CUSTOM : Model 99,2000. Ph: 09-518-8320.

USED APPLE IPHONE Samsung HTC Sony Huawei Used Laptop notebook Netbook macbook pro and table ipad etc... contact : 09-517-8391

Property

Housing for Rent

DAGON TSP (1) Royal Yawmin Gyi Condo, 1900 Sqft, M1, S2, FF, Wifi Internet, Swimming Pool, Car Parking, US 4800 (2) Royal Rose Condo, 900 Sqft, M1, S1, FF, Wifi Internet, Swimming Pool, US 1600. Ph: 09-7316-9678, 09-3104-2325.

GOLDEN VALLEY, (1) Than Lwin St, 5600 Sqft, 5 MR, 2 SR, 2 RC, 8500 USD. (2). 4200 Sqft, 3 RC, 3 MR, good for office, 4000 USD. (3). near ISY school, 1 RC, 4200 Sqft, 2 MR, 2500 USD. (4). near ISY school, 2700 Sqft, 2RC, 1 MR, 2 SR, 2200 USD. (5). near USA Embassy, 4200 Sqft, 2 RC, 3 MR, 1 SR, 7000 USD. Ph: 09-4201-14749

BAHAN, (1). Near Japan Embassy, 1200 Sqft, 2MR, fully furnish, 2500 USD. (2). Near Kandawgyi park, 2200 Sqft, 1 MR, 2SR, fully furnish, 2500 USD. (3). Inya Rd condo, 2500 sqft, 2 MR, fully furnish, 3500 USD. (4) University avenue, pen house, 4000 Sqft, 2MR, 2SR, fully furnish, 4000 USD. (5) Near UNDP, 1200 Sft, 1 MR, 2SR, fully furnish, 1600 USD. Ph: 09-4921-4276.

OFFICE space for rent : 1200 sqft @ Orchid Hotel, 9000 sqft @ Orchid Hotel (City Hall). Pls contact : 01-399930 ext 131, 09-731-26377, 09-4015-23218. Add : Orchid Hotel, 91, Anawrahta Rd, Pazundaung.

AHLONE, 331 Strand Rd, Ahlone. It is 3 bedroom 2 bathroom, 1900 square feet, 8th floor penthouse condominium. \$2700/ month. Furnished at tenant's request. , jasonwongjip@gmail.com

CONDO, Pho Sein Condo, 1750 sqft, fully renovated, 2MBR, 1 BR, 4 aricons, No agent pls. Owner : 09-4480-13139, 09-540-8745.

KYAUKTADA, 194, 33 St (Upper), Service Apartments: 3rd/ 4/5 Flr. Fully finished, Furniture, Air com & TV satellite. Suitable to rent for foreigner. Ph: 09- 730-94644, 09-731-57992.

SANCHANG, Ma Kyi Kyi Condo, 2400 sqft, 2 MB, 2 BR, 4 A/C, 25 Lakhs. Maureen : 09-518-8320

MAYANGONE, 8 Mile, MTP Condo, 1500 sqft, 2 MB, 3 A/C, Ph. 20 Lakhs. Maureen : 09-518-8320

CONDO for rent : Near British Council on Strand Road, Fully-furnished Condo Excellent River View 1500 sqft, 1 MB, 2 BR, 5 A/C, Ph. 25 Lakhs. Ph: 09-730-60078.

APARTMENT for Leasing Dagon, Samone St, 3 Flr, 139sqm, 1MBR, 1 BR, 4A/C, USD 1800/month, Fully Furnished Ring: Colliers int'l Myanmar on 09-4210-32600 or 09-4210-14128.

NEAR YUZANA PLAZA, Aung Thapayae St, 1100 square feet, 1 MBR, 2 common rooms, parque, floor tiles & wall tiles , fully decorated and line phone, 2 nd floor. also suitable for office & foreigners. ph: 09-516-7767, 09-517-0481, 09-401-538760

BAHAN, Moe Myint San Condo, 2400sqft, 5 A/C, Ph, skynet, f.f. 25 Lakhs (2) **Pearl Condo**, 1500 sqft, p.f, 4 A/C, 15 lakhs. Ph: 09-518-8320. **SERVICED** Apartments

& Office Accommodation to rent on behalf of Landlords. Pls contact : Ron Chaggar : 09-313-36099, Hsu Sandi : 09-4210-14128 at Colliers International Myanmar Leasing Department.

OFFICE SPACE for Rental: Pansondan Tower, Pansondan (Central) Block, 1700 Sqft, 2 service lifts, Hall Type, Monthly Rental US\$ 4000. Ph: 09-731-54071, 01-514-802, 530-756

FOREIGNERS : A modern compact 2650 sq.ft floor area single-storied 3 bedroom house, with two gate entrances, spacious lawn, garden and compound on 0.4 acre plot of land, situated in quiet locality within walking distance from International School and only 3 miles from downtown Yangon. If interested pls contact ph : 537061, 703493, 09-511-9421. No brokers please.

Housing for Sale

LANDS for sale suitable for making Industrial buildings in large area. Buyers can Contact Us on 09-4500-59037. (There is no pay for Agents & Third party ... Warmly welcome the buyers.

LASHIO : Ward 12, 2 Acres Land including the main house and 2storey building. In downtown and Very Good place for business. Price: negotiable. Ph: 09-517-1377, 09-515-8738

MAYANGONE, 8 Mile, MTP Condo, 1500 sqft, 2 MB, 3 A/C, Ph. 3000 Lakhs. Maureen : 09-518-8320.

LANMADAW, (25'x50') 12th St, the whole 8 unit (lift). For Hotel, Education, Ph: 09-566-1037.

CORNER LAND 36 ft x 43 ft and house - 1 billion ks. (10,000 Lakhs) (negotiable) - On Insein Road, near Hledan (near DaNuPhyu Daw Saw Yi Restaurant), Kamayut, a good place for business. Complete documentation of the land, with water, electricity & 1 landline phone installed. Ko Ye : 09-4201-01705. email: j.xylar@gmail.com

BEACH LAND for sales - 30 min by boat from Ngapali in St Andrews bay - Maung Shwe Lay village. 3.5 acres - possible to extend - suitable for hotel or private villa. 100 meter beachfront. Send email for more information: edwinbriels@gmail.com or call 09-731-99668 (English) or 09-4500-03312

MAYANGONE, 9 miles, Bonyarna Lane (50"x 70"x 65"-n) garden with including house (3700 Lakhs) no agent please. Pls call owner : 09-730-28726.

Want to Rent

SANCHANG, Ma Kyee Kyee St, Moe Myint San Condo: 28' x 75' (2100 sq.ft) 2nd flr. 2 MBR, 2 BR, 4 A.C. water heater, furnitures. Price: 23 lakhs. Ph: 09-730-27267, 09-730-52266.

LANMADAW, 12 St, The whole 8 unit (lift). For hotel, education. Ph: 09-566-1037.

NEED SIMPLE HOUSE with at least 4 bedrooms, 2 toilets & if possible, near to public transportation. Occupancy in November. Willing to pay 8 lakhs. Contact Ha Min Shwe at 09-4201-212 65.

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Employment

UN Positions

EMBASSY of the Republic of Korea is looking for an efficient employee to work at Ambassador's Residence. The applicant must be: Good in both written & spoken English, self-motivator. University degree holder, in support service is required. 2 years experience in Maintaining facility. Advantage to the applicant with the experience of serving meal. Qualified male applicants are strongly encouraged to apply. Interested candidates should send updated CV, recently taken photographs, educational documents with cover letter to No. 97, University Avenue, Bahan no later than 15 September 2013. For more information, pls feel free to contact 01-527142-144 during office hours.

UN Positions

IOM Int'l Organization for Migration is seeking **Health Programme Adviser** 1 post in Yangon, Myanmar & **Community Service Provider** 1 post in Thaton, Mon State. Pls submit an application letter and an updated CV with a maximum length of 3 pages including names and contact details of 3 referees (copies of certificates and further documents are not required at this stage) to: Int'l Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission in Myanmar - Yangon Office, 318-A, Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon, Email: hryangon@iom.int, Application deadline: 5 September 2013.

Ingo Positions

MEDECINS Sans Frontiers - Holland (AZG) is seeking **Logistics Assistant** - Supply 1 post in Yangon: 10th Standard passed. Basic computer skills. Can drive car or motorbikes. Basic English. Pls send application letter, CV & passport photo, copies of education qualifications & references to: HR Coordinator, MSF-Holland/ AZG (Yangon Coordination) : 59, Aye Yadanar St, Thirigon Villa, Thingangyun, Yangon. or through msfh.myanmar.recruitment@gmail.com, Closing date : 9th September 2013.

MEDECINS Sans Frontieres - Holland (AZG) is seeking (1) **Personal Assistant** - 1 post in Yangon: 10th standard pass. Good English level. Fluently in local & Myanmar languages. Good computer skills. (2) **Lab Technician** - 1 post in Yangon: University degree (B.P.Sc or B.Med. Tech) or Diploma in Paramedical Sciences/ Medical Technology or Minimum Grade I or II (2 years/ 1 year training in National Health Laboratory). Basic command of English. (3) **Cough Officer** (Infection Control Facilitator) - 1 post in Yangon: 10th Standard Pass. Good command of Myanmar & English language. Basically knowledge of Disease such as TB, HIV etc. Pls send application letter, CV & passport photo, copies of education qualifications & references to: Project Coordinator, MSF-Holland/ AZG (Yangon Project Office), 15(C), Aung Min Khaung St, Kamayut, Yangon. Or through yangon@oca.msf.org, Closing date : 9th September 2013.

WORLD VISION Myanmar is seeking (1) **Health Special** in National Office, Yangon: Bachelor of Medicine & Surgery or Bachelor

of Community Health. Must have high level of knowledge and skills in specific issues regarding Maternal, Newborn, Child Health issues. Excellent skills in English & Myanmar. (2) **Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Facilitator** in Hlegu, Yangon: Bachelor University Degree in any discipline. Competent in use of Microsoft Office. 2 years of progressive experience in project programming & monitoring. Good command of Myanmar & English & report writing skill is desirable. Pls submit resume (clearly identify the post you apply) by post to HR Department, World Vision Myanmar or in person to application drop-box at No(18), Shin Saw Pu Rd, Ahlone, Sanchaung PO or send to myajobapps@wvi.org Closing date: September 6, 2013.

MYANMAR RED Cross Society is seeking (1) **Community Based First Aid (CBFA) Officer** - 1 post in Sittwe: Bachelor's degree of Health or other relevant degree. Experience in related field. Experience and/or knowledge in Red Cross CBFA methods & tools, community preventive health care & basic life support/ advanced first aid. Effective English language skill. Computer knowledge. Red Cross volunteer are preferable. (2) **VatSan Project Coordinator** - 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: Relevant university degree. 5 years experience in water, hygiene & sanitation field. Computer literacy (Myanmar & English). Excellent in English language. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

FOOD and Agriculture Organization in seeking (1) **National Project Manager** - 1 post in Myikyina (Kachin State) with extensive travel to the field & occasionally to Yangon: Good experience in implementing emergency projects with field experience in Myanmar. Good managerial skills; a university degree in agriculture environ mental science, develop ment or other related fields is desired; Fluency in Myanmar and excellent working knowledge of English. (2) **Livelihood Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist** - 1 post in Sittwe, (Rakhine State) with extensive travel to the field & occasionally to Yangon: Extensive skills in Monitoring & Evaluation of agriculture projects. Good experience in implementing emergency projects with field experience in Myanmar; Good managerial skills; a university degree in agriculture environ mental science, deve lopment or other related fields is desired; Fluency in Myanmar & excellent working knowledge of English. Pls submit (Myanmar Nationals application in working, clearly indicating on the sealed envelope the Post Title & Duty Station, to FAO Representation in Myanmar [Attention: Asst: FAO Representative (Admini stration)]. Seed Division Compound, East Gyo Gone, Insein, Yangon. Closing date: 10 September, 2013.

FOOD and Agriculture Organization is seeking (1) **National Consultant - Agronomist Junior** 1 post in Myitkyina, (Kachin

State), with extensive travel in Kachin State as required: Advanced university degree in Agronomy or a related field & a minimum of years of experience in agriculture sector. Specific experience in Kachin State would be preferable. Proven experience in emergency project. Excellent command of Myanmar & English. Knowledge of local language is an asset. (2) **National Consultant - Agronomist** 1 post in Sittwe, (Rakhine State) with extensive travel in Rakhine State as required: Advanced university degree in Agronomy or a related field & 10 years experience in agriculture sector. Specific experience in Rakhine State would be preferable. Proven experience in post disaster situations. Excellent command of Myanmar & English. Knowledge of local languages (Rakhine, Bengali) is an asset. Master office software packages as well as statistical software (i.e. SPSS). Pls submit (Myanmar Nationals) application in writing, clearly indicating on the sealed envelope the Post Title & Duty Station, to FAO Representation in Myanmar [Attention: Asst: FAO Representative (Admini stration)]. Seed Division Compound, East Gyo Gone, Insein, Yangon. Closing date: 10 September 2013

SOLIDARITES Int'l (SI) seeking **Rural Infrastructure Manager** in Myebon, Rakhine State: 3 years of professional experience in INGO. Knowledge of the Rakhine State & the project area is considered as an advantage. Very good reporting skills. Good level in English. Excellent computer skills (compulsory) & skill in AutoCAD (optional) is an asset. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to HR Department Solidarites Int'l/ Or drop your application on an envelope at Solidarites Int'l office : 44 A, Tharyarwaddy Lane, Bahan, Yangon or per email: hr.recruitment.mm@gmail.com, cc: to sit.hr.tech@solidarites-myanmar.org, Closing date: 20th September 2013.

MYANMAR RED Cross Society is seeking (1) **Monitoring & Reporting Officer** - 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: 3 years of relevant experience. (2) **Finance Officer** - 1 post in Sittwe: CPA or B.Com/ B.Accounting, LCCI III (or) other equivalent accounting degree. High level of computer skills in MS Excel & MS Office. 3 years professional experience in finance & accounting field. Experience in preparing monthly, quarterly & annual financial reports. (3) **PMER Coordinator** - 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: Bachelor's degree. For all posts : Effective English language skill & Computer knowledge. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head

Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw, Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

WORLD VISION Myanmar is seeking (1) **Cashier cum Bookkeeper** (Food Program) in Waingmaw Tsp, Kachin State: University Bachelor Degree in Accounting/ Finance or related subject. 2 years experience as Cashier or in the field of Finance and Administration. Working knowledge of Microsoft Word & Excel. (2) **Field Coordinator** (Food Program) in Konkyan, Northern Shan State: University Bachelor Degree in any discipline. 2 years experience, preferably in commodity management & logistics. Proposal writing skills & computer literacy. (3) **Project Engineer** (Food Program) in Konkyan, Northern Shan State: University Degree in Civil Engineering or equivalent. 5 years experience in community development construction activities including water Development, school construction, road renovation, health infrastructure development, etc. Computer skills including Auto CAD. (4) **HEA Division Assistant** (Humanitarian & Emergency Affairs Division) in Yangon: University Degree. 2 years administrative & secretarial experience in HEA related field. Must have outstanding office skills & competent in use of Microsoft Office applications. Pls submit resume (clearly identify the post you apply) by post to HR Department, World Vision Myanmar or in person to application drop-box at (18), Shin Saw Pu Rd, Ahlone, Sanchaung PO or send to myajobapps@wvi.org Closing date: September 4, 2013.

MYANMAR RED Cross Society is seeking (1) **Water and Sanitation Officer** - 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw (Head Quarter) with frequently travel to program sites : Bachelor degree or Engineering. 2 ~ 3 years experience in Community Mobilization in Myanmar relation to water & sanitation project. Effective English language skills, Computer knowledge. (2) **Wash Manager** - 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw (Head Quarter) with frequently travel to program sites. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

MEDECINS du Monde (MDM) is seeking **Medical Doctor** (IIIV) 1 post in Moegaung, (Kachin State): MBBS (with valid medical registration: Sama). 1 year experience as a medical doctor in the field of HIV. Fluent in English. Good computer skill especially Microsoft Office package. Pls submit CV and a cover letter to MDM Country Coordination Office, Yangon : 47(B), Po Sein St, Bahan, Yangon.

Ph: 542830, 09-731-71002, Email: office.mdmmyanmar@gmail.com

Local Positions

DATABASE Technician (1) post. Requirements: BCSc. BE (IT) or Any graduate with IT Diploma or Equivalent to Diploma in IT field (Microsoft Office, Photoshop etc) and Dip. or Certificate holder of Database Training (Microsoft Access and SQL Database). At least 3 years experience in IT field. (Database experience in Staff Data. Timesheet, Payroll, etc. is preferable) Self energetic & good communication skill. Interested candidates can apply the CV with 3 recent photos, Education and other qualifications certificates, Recommendation letters from previous employer(s), NRC card, Labor registration card Police station recommendation & family member card. Form Closing Date: 15th Sept 2013. United Engineering Co., Ltd. Corner of Wayzayantar & Yadana Rd., Thingangyun Tsp., Yangon, Tel: (951) 571878, 571877, 57132

SECRETARY - M/F 1 post : Any graduate, Proficient in Microsoft office, Certificate holder of Secretarial Courses is preferable. Good command in English is an added advantage. Good personality with strong communication skill, Sound experience as Secretary to BOD in a medium to large company. Pls submit an application letter with updated resume detailing your experience, knowledge, skills, expected salary, together with 2-referees and other supported documents to HR. And pls refer to HR for the details. Swe Swe Aung - HR Manager, Organization: Myanmar Offshore Ltd : 77, Pyi Htaung Su Avenue Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon, Ph: 09-731- 89577

INTERNATIONAL developer & construction company is seeking (1) **Senior consultant** (full-time or part-time) : Be familiar with the Yangon land & real estate market, Familiar with the process of land and real estate transactions, Familiar with the relevant government land development, construction & trading of relevant laws & regulations, Have certain contacts & relationship with YCDC & government, Fluent in English communication skills, speaking Chinese is preferred. (2) **Development manager & sales manager** : Familiar with Yangon traffic route & real estate market, Understand the relevant government land & property transactions related laws and regulations, Familiar with land transaction and leasing, at least more than 1 year working experience in real estate company, Fluent in English or Chinese communication skills. Contact: 09-4500-11027, 09-863-4099, 01-667618

D SERVICE (Myanmar)

Co.,Ltd. We are JV with Denso (Thailand) and specialized in fuel injection pumps and air cons. We are looking for a position for **Sales & Marketing** (Automobile & Marine parts): Experienced require. Must speak English. Contact person: Aung Htun Oo : 01 240363, 240373, 09-731-91492. Email: aughtun.oo@gmail.com

REQD. URGENTLY in Limited Foreign Company, salary as per experiences & market standard. Designation: **GM or AVP**. Experience: 14+ yrs. Age: No bar Salary: As per industry standards. Nationality: Indian (Preferred) / Other with English Speaking & Writing Skills. Responsibility: To develop Commodities Trading to Myanmar. Competencies: Must have experience of dealing in Bulk Commodities. Preferably import into Myanmar. Note: The candidate will not from agri - trading background (eg. dealing in Rice, beans, pulses etc.) Contact details: 09-500-2025, 01-371374, 371375, 393227, Email ID: zmtcool@gmail.com, jyoti.b227@gmail.com, jyoti.b227@rediffmail.com

YOUNG Investment Group is looking to employ skillful people for the following position: **Executive Secretary** - F 3 Posts : Any graduate must M.B.A or M.P.A or D.M.A is prefer. Experience in 2 years in related field. Must be Good personality. Prefer well experienced in secretarial field. Proficient in the use of Microsoft office & English 4 skills. Good interpersonal skills and presentational skills. Young Investment Group Co., Ltd : 647 (A), Pyay Rd, Kamayut. Ph : 01-526626, 01-512528.

INTER group of companies is an int'l management consulting company is looking for **Data Entry/ Document Control** F 1 post: Any graduate or equivalent degree holder, Efficient to extend new market with sale target, DTP, Good interpersonal, pleasant personality and co-ordination skills, Self-motivated, team-oriented and able to multi-tasks, Able to work independently, process-oriented & able to work under pressure,

Computer literate, Excellent written & verbal communication skills in Myanmar and English. Pls submit detailed (CV) in person or by email, stating you're current & expected salary, date of availability, reason for leaving and a recent passport photo to 7(D), 1st Flr, 6 miles, Pyay Rd, Hlaing, Yangon, Tel: 09-731-0 5353, 09-731-05340 Email: hr@icononline.net. Pls state the Job Title that you are applied for in the subject of your email.

FOREIGN manufacturing company in Myanmar & looking for high calibre persons to fulfill the following position. (1). **Translator** : Secondary education or above, Fluent in English or Chinese. We pay good remuneration & benefit. Interested candidates, please send full resume & salary expected to belows email address for interview. antony.sui@universal72.com. hk antony.emc@gmail.com EMC Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

SUMMIT Parkview Hotel is seeking (1). **Duty Manager** (Front Office) - M/F 1 Post : Graduate, 2 years experience, Proficiency in the English. Good communication skills, Leadership skills & Problem solving. Computer literate. (2). **Sr. Sales Executive / Sales Executive** - M/F 3 Posts : Graduated, Must have relevant knowledge and experience in Hotel Sales & Marketing field. Proficiency in the English. Computer literate. (3). **HR Assistant** - M/F 1 Post : DBA/ DHRM, Graduate, 2 years experience in HRM field. Proficiency in the English. Computer literate. (4). **Receptionist** - M/F 3 Posts : Age under 25, Proficiency in the English. Computer literate. (5). **Porter / Driver** - M 3 Posts : 1 year in related field is more preferable, Good ability to speak in English. Pls submit an application letter, C.V with a recent photo, copies of NRC & Labour Registration card, Educational Certificate & others testimonials to HR Department not Later than 15 September, 2013.

EXOTISSIMO Travel is seeking (1) **German Tour Operator** : 1 year experience in tourism related field, Excellent communication skills, Strong sales & customer service focus, Possess

computer proficiency, Able to speak, read and write in German, Ability to work under pressure. (2) **Domestic Ticketing Staff** : 1 year experience in tourism or airlines, Good knowledge of flight information & ticket policies of airlines, Excellent organization skill, Proficient in MS office, Preferable detailed oriented person. (3) **HR Assistant** : Diploma/ certificate in HRM, 1 year of relevant experience, Strong interpersonal and communication skills, Proficient in MS office, Willing to learn & positive attitude, Great organizational & time management skill (4) **Airport Assistant**: Able to speak English, Familiar with int'l & domestic airlines in Myanmar, Good organizational skill, Location near to airport will be advantage. Pls send a detailed resume with recent photo & other relevant documents to HR Manager at 147, Shwe Gone Dine St, West Shwe Gone Dine Ward, Bahan, Yangon, Email: memecho@exotissimo.com

FOREIGN garment manufacturing is seeking (1). **Factory Manager** (2). **Assistant Manager** : Secondary education or above, Fluent in English or Chinese, 5 years or above experience in garment business, Know-how in HR, Shipping & Accounting procedure, (3). **HR Supervisor** : Secondary education or above, 3 years or above experience in Recruitment, Pay - roll & Office administration, English Or Mandarin speaking (4). **Shipping** : Secondary education or above, 3 years or above hand on experience in related industry, English Or Mandarin Speaking, (5). **Account Supervisors** : University holder in accounting or related field, 3 years or above experience, English or Mandarin speaking, For 3, 4 & 5: Good knowledge of MS office & Excel (6). **Cutting, Sewing & Packing Supervisor** : Secondary education or above, 5 years or above experience in garment fields. We pay good remuneration & benefit. Pls send full resume & salary expected to ida@winner-gp.com for interview. SDI Manufacturing Co., Ltd: Plot 40, Ngwe Pin Lae Industrial Zone, Hlaing Tharyar.

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CHICAGO

Marathon ups security after Boston bombings

CHICAGO Marathon organisers and city officials on August 29 announced new procedures designed to improve security in the wake of the deadly Boston Marathon bombings in April.

The race on October 13 will mark the first major marathon in a US city since two bombs went off near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three people and injuring more than 200.

The Chicago event draws some 45,000 participants and 1.7 million spectators annually.

Starting this year, all registered runners must pick up their own participant packets, which include their event-issued bib numbers and other race-related and promotional material. In past years, individuals could pick up packets on behalf of others.

As in years past, the start and finish line areas in Grant Park will be closed to general spectators, but officials stressed that this policy would be strictly enforced and only those with competitor bibs or race credentials will be allowed.

All individuals entering Grant Park on race day will have to go through one of four designated security and bag screening checkpoints.

Spectators are discouraged from carrying bags into the park, and runners will only be able to carry a clear plastic event-issued bag, designed to speed security screening.

Spectators were urged to support runners from other parts of the course, and meet runners after the race at the designated Runner Reunite Area in Grant Park's Butler Field.

The Chicago Marathon announcement came on the same day that a US grand jury in Boston indicted a college friend of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev for lying to police during the investigation.

Robel Phillipos, 19, was charged with two counts of making false statements to police during a probe into the April 15 attack.

Two weeks earlier, two other friends of Tsarnaev pleaded not guilty to charges of impeding the investigation.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev has pleaded not guilty to 30 counts, 17 of which are punishable by death, in the Boston attack while his older brother Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the accused mastermind of the attack, was killed in a police shootout. - AFP

CHICAGO



Anthony Dixon (24) of the San Francisco 49ers dives for a touchdown on August 29 in San Diego. Photo: AFP

NFL settles historic suit

THE National Football League has reached a settlement worth US\$765 million in a lawsuit filed by more than 4,500 former players over concussion injuries.

Under the landmark agreement - announced on August 29, one week before the start of the 2013 NFL season - the league and NFL Properties will contribute \$765 million to provide medical benefits and injury compensation for the retired players or their families.

The league will also fund medical and safety research and cover litigation expenses as part of the deal.

Former US district judge Layn Phillips, the court-appointed mediator who helped forge the deal, said a trial would have been costly, long and difficult to address on a case-by-case basis, with the outcome uncertain for either side.

"This is a historic agreement, one that will make sure that former NFL players who need and deserve compensation will receive it, and that will promote safety for players at all levels of football," Phillips said of the deal, which is still pending court approval.

"Rather than litigate literally thousands of complex individual claims over many years, the parties have reached an agreement that will provide relief and support where it is needed at a time when it is most needed."

The settlement will include all players who have retired by the date it is approved, whether they

were part of the lawsuit or not.

A federal court in Philadelphia was hearing the case brought by plaintiffs who included former Dallas Cowboys running back Tony Dorsett, Super Bowl-winning quarterback Jim McMahon and the family of Pro Bowl linebacker Junior Seau, who committed suicide last year.

Under the settlement's terms, the NFL made no admission of liability or deficiency on the part of the league, or that injuries were caused by playing American football.

Phillips said the deal was not an admission by the NFL that it hid information on the long-term impact of field hits on the health of players, something that ex-players had claimed in some of the lawsuits.

"It doesn't mean that the NFL hid information," he said.

"It does not mean that the plaintiffs' injuries were caused by football. On the other hand, it doesn't mean that the plaintiffs wouldn't have been able to prove their case."

NFL executive vice president Jeffrey Pash said it was more important to provide help to players sooner even as they faced fighting against that very thing in court.

"We thought it was critical to get more help to players and families who deserve it rather than spend many years and millions of dollars on litigation," Pash said.

The NFL Players Association, which represents active players, reacted cautiously.

"All of the plaintiffs involved are part of our player community, and we look forward to learning more about the settlement," the union said in a statement.

Christopher Seeger, the lead attorney for the plaintiffs, said the "extraordinary agreement" would do the most important thing - get help to those who need it.

"This agreement will get help quickly to the men who suffered neurological injuries," Seeger said. - AFP

MILLION

\$765

Amount the National Football League will pay to players for concussion injuries

There will be a fund of \$675 million to compensate former players or their families who have suffered cognitive injury such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease, with \$75 million more for basic medical exams. Other money will go to research and legal expenses.

The NFL would pay half of the settlement over three years and the other half over the following 17 years.

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia to host Asia vs Europe golf event

TOP players from Europe and Asia will face off every two years in a new team golf event in Malaysia styled after the Ryder Cup, officials said on August 26.

The US\$4 million EurAsia Cup, to be administered by the Asian Tour and European Tour, will pit 10 golfers from each region against each other in a three-day matchplay format that tees off next March 28.

It will be held at the Glenmarie Golf and Country Club near Kuala Lumpur.

Officials said it was hoped the event could spark a new and exciting intercontinental rivalry of the sort that has made the Ryder Cup such a popular and passionate competition and, to a less extent, the Presidents Cup.

"I believe the EurAsia Cup will create a fiercely fought contest for supremacy where players from both continents will compete against each other in the true spirit of the game and display the values of golf, which are integrity, honesty and perfection," Asian Tour Chairman Kyi Hla Han said.

The Ryder Cup is a biennial team competition between American and European golfers, while the Presidents Cup puts the Americans up against an international team, minus European players.

Charlie Tingey, director of EurAsia Golf, an entity formed by the two tours to launch the competition, said it is hoped the tournament will "catapult" more Asian golfers onto the world stage.

The Asian Tour is banking on rising stars like Kiradech Aphibarnrat and popular veterans like Thongchai Jaidee, both from Thailand, to help raise the game's profile in the region.

Tingey brushed off concerns that the competition could struggle to attract top European golfers due to its timing.

It comes a month before the Masters in the US, when many players stay closer to home to hone their games for that premier event.

"This is a tournament run by the tours. There is no perfect date. We do expect the full support of the players," he said.

The Asian team will comprise the leading four available players from the final 2013 Asian Tour Order of Merit, the top three available players based on the world golf rankings and three captain's picks.

Europe will feature the leading four available players from the final 2013 Race to Dubai rankings, the four highest-ranked available players and two captain's picks.

Players on the winning team will pocket \$300,000 each while the runners-up will take home \$100,000 each.

- AFP



IN PICTURES

Sparring partners: Aikido athletes demonstrate their skills during an exhibition on August 24 in Yangon. Photo: Greg Holland

SYDNEY

Banned Essendon coach says time to move on

BANNED Essendon coach James Hird on August 28 accepted some responsibility for a record fine slapped on the team and said it was now time to move on for the good of the game.

The top Australian Football League side was on August 27 hit with the biggest fine in the sport's history, US\$1.8 million, and Hird was suspended for 12 months for bringing the game into disrepute.

The punishment arose from a drug supplements scandal that has overshadowed the season. As well as the hefty penalty, the Melbourne-based Bombers were kicked out of this year's finals series.

Hird, considered one of the greatest Aussie Rules players of the modern era, had initially denied any wrongdoing and took Supreme Court action against the league and its boss Andrew Demetriou.

But he has backed down and admitted he should have known more

about what was going on.

"I am deeply sorry for what happened at our football club in 2012. I do take a level of responsibility for what happened," said Hird.

"From my point of view, it's disappointing not to be coaching next year. But I should've known what was going on. I should've done more and I'm very disappointed that I didn't."

The sanctions followed a six-month investigation by the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA), which included more than 13,000 documents, into Essendon's 2011-2012 supplement program.

It found that Essendon either allowed players to be given substances that were prohibited by the AFL Anti-Doping Code and the World Anti-Doping Code, or that the club was unable to determine whether players were administered prohibited substances.

Hird said it was now time to move on.

"I'm so glad this has finished. And that the game can move on and our players can move on. It's been a very trying time for everybody," he said.

AFL Commission chairman Mike Fitzpatrick on August 27 expressed his distress at a saga which dragged on for nearly seven months.

"The AFL Commission shares [AFL fans'] anger and frustration that the 2013 season has too often been dominated by headlines we'd rather not see," he said in announcing the penalties.

"The issues involved in the Essendon Football Club's supplements program are deeply disturbing."

There have already been casualties at the club as a result of the scandal with chairman David Evans and chief executive Ian Robson having resigned.

As well as Hird's ban, football manager Danny Corcoran was suspended for six months while assistant coach Mark Thompson was fined A\$30,000.

- AFP

SINGAPORE

IOC candidate says it's Asia's turn

WOULD-BE IOC boss Ng Ser Miang said the Olympic body would benefit from having an Asian leader and pledged a new era for the organisation as the race for the presidency enters the home straight.

The Singaporean supermarket chief and diplomat told AFP that the 119-year-old International Olympic Committee (IOC) needs a “different perspective” as it heads into an age where the world’s most populous region will play a far greater role.

The 64-year-old Ng is considered a strong contender among the six candidates vying to replace Belgium’s Jacques Rogge as IOC president in a vote in Buenos Aires on September 10.

The IOC, founded in 1894 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, has had seven European presidents and one American, with Rogge in charge since 2001.

“The IOC has become very global and I think for the IOC it’s also important to have a different perspective, in this case coming from a very important part of the world,” the Chinese-born Ng said in an interview.

He added, “I hope so!” When asked if it was time the IOC had an Asian leader.

“But I think it’s important not just symbolically but for the values they can bring to the table as well, when we talk about universality, different

value systems, different cultures, different ways of looking at issues and challenges,” said Ng, “which also means that you have different solutions, coming from different angles and different perspectives. I believe that’s going to be very, very useful to the movement and very important to the movement in future.”

Ng is one of two candidates from Asia, along with Taiwan’s CK Wu, head of the International Boxing Federation. But he played down fears that the

‘The IOC has become very global and I think for the IOC it’s also important to have a different perspective.’

Ng Ser Miang
IOC presidential candidate

two were harming each other’s chances by competing for regional votes.

“I’m happy that we have very strong candidates,” said Ng, Singapore’s non-resident ambassador to Norway.

Germany’s Thomas Bach is touted as the front-runner, followed by Ng and Puerto Rican banker Richard Carrion. Ukrainian pole-vault great Sergey Bubka and Denis Oswald of Switzerland are the other hopefuls.

Ng has strong credentials as an existing IOC vice-president with a successful business career, after starting out as a bus entrepreneur and now heading Singapore’s biggest supermarket chain.

He also chaired the inaugural Youth Olympic Games, in Singapore in 2010, and was a driving force behind the city-state’s rise from sporting backwater to regional centre with Formula One in its portfolio of events.

Wearing an electric blue tie and a humble manner, and sitting in his office near Singapore’s new Sports Hub, an under-construction complex which includes a 55,000-seat national stadium, Ng said he



Ng Ser Miang speaks during an interview at his office in Singapore on August 26. Photo: AFP

could bring similar acumen to bear on the IOC.

He proposed containing the huge costs of putting on Summer and Winter Olympics, which currently rule out many cities, and better risk assessment to protect hosts from financial difficulties.

Russia’s Sochi is estimated to be spending US\$50 billion on next year’s Winter Olympics,

while Rio de Janeiro is already under pressure over its hosting of the 2016 Summer Games.

“We have to review the Games bids process, despite scales and complexities of the Games. At the same time [we are] reviewing sports programs as well. We have to make sure they continue to be exciting, to be relevant,” said Ng.

He added, “Organising the Games is very complex. It’s huge... but definitely it’s time that we have a major review of this and see how we can move forward.”

Ng also pledged to work more closely with sports federations, national Olympic bodies and sponsors to try to tap their “huge resources” and raise partnerships to a more “strategic level”.

He said he would hold half-day meetings with each of the 115 IOC members and then a group retreat to chart the way forward on “hot-button issues” such as the Games’ size and scale, which sports are contested, doping and illegal betting.

And to raise efficiency he plans to delegate projects to IOC vice-presidents and members, and review the body’s staff and internal operations.

Ng has also placed youth at the heart of his strategy, with ambitious plans to roll out 80 “Olympic youth development centres”, many in poor countries, over the next eight years.

“We really have to make sure that the Olympic Movement becomes part of everyone’s daily life and starting with the youth is very important,” he said. – *AFP*

SAN ANTONIO

Ex-scoring champ McGrady retires from NBA

TWO-TIME league scoring champion Tracy McGrady, a member of the playoff runner-up San Antonio Spurs last season, announced his retirement from the National Basketball Association on August 26.

The seven-time all-star McGrady also played in the Chinese Basketball Association last season for the Qingdao Eagles.

“Thank all of you who have supported me over 16 NBA seasons, 7 All-Stars and countless exciting moments. Retiring from NBA,” McGrady said on Twitter.

In April, McGrady left China and signed with the San Antonio Spurs. He appeared in six playoff games for the Spurs who lost in the NBA finals to the Miami Heat.

The 34-year-old McGrady was the ninth overall pick in the 1997 draft out of high school. In 2001, he was named the NBA’s most improved player.

McGrady averaged 19.6 points, 5.6 rebounds and 4.4 assists in 938 career games with Toronto, Orlando, Houston, New York, Detroit, Atlanta and San Antonio. – *AFP*



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Sport

NFL settles landmark concussion lawsuit

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BRIEFS

London

England makes apology after Ashes celebrations

England's cricketers have issued an apology for any offence caused during their celebrations of their Ashes series win over Australia at the Oval on August 25.

The statement, released on the England and Wales Cricket Board's website, followed allegations that England players urinated on the pitch hours after the series had ended on Sunday night in a 3-0 win for the home side.

The allegations arose following eye-witness accounts from Australian journalists, who were still in the ground while England celebrated their win.

Los Angeles

Vonn to resume skiing after knee rehab

Lindsey Vonn is scheduled to take part in the US Ski Team's upcoming training camp in Chile, six months after reconstructive knee surgery.

A US Ski and Snowboard Association spokesman confirmed Vonn was slated to participate in training in Portillo, Chile.

Vonn, a four-time overall World Cup champion, two-time world champion and 2010 Olympic downhill champion, suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament and torn medial collateral ligament in her right knee in a crash at the Alpine Skiing World Championships in Schladming, Austria, in February.

New York

Mets' Harvey sidelined with tear in elbow

New York Mets star pitcher Matt Harvey has a partially torn elbow ligament and is likely out for the remainder of the season, the Major League Baseball team said.

The all-star right-hander said on August 26 an MRI has revealed the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow is partially torn.

Harvey earned his first career all-star nod with a sensational first half in which the right-hander posted a 7-2 record with a 2.35 earned run average and a National League-best 147 strikeouts through 19 starts. - AFP

Duval lives Grand Slam dream

Seventeen year-old Haitian overcomes violence and near-tragedy to reach one of the biggest stages in tennis, the US Open

VICTORIA Duval is just 17 but has already experienced the heart-stopping terror of being held hostage by gunmen and almost losing her father in the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

So, on August 27, defeating former champion Samantha Stosur in the first round of US Open first felt tame by comparison, the tension of squandering three match points understandably trivial in the great drama of her young life.

The world number 296 claimed a 5-7, 6-4, 6-4 win over the 11th-seeded Australian, her first victory at a Grand Slam, 12 months after her only other major appearance when she was defeated in New York by Kim Clijsters.

But it was the backstory, relayed by Duval with the giggly pitch and enthusiasm of a girl who has yet to abandon her affection for SpongeBob SquarePants, which seduced the Flushing Meadows crowd.

The Duval family decamped from the violence-racked Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince to the US after Victoria, who had been born in Miami, had a pistol shoved in her face when she was held hostage by a kidnaper gang at the age of seven.



Victoria Duval. Photo: AFP



Victoria Duval returns a shot to Samantha Stosur of during their match on August 27 in New York. Photo: AFP

But her gynaecologist father, Jean-Maurice, stayed behind to run his medical practice while mother Nadine, a former ballet dancer, built a new life in Atlanta with Victoria and her two brothers.

Jean-Maurice was in Port-au-Prince when the 2010 earthquake struck, killing around 250,000 people.

The family home collapsed on top of him, leaving him with a shattered vertebrae, broken legs, arms and ribs as well as a punctured lung as he was pinned beneath the rubble.

He was so convinced he was going to die that he scratched around in the darkness, grabbed his mobile phone and managed to call his wife to tell her he loved her and his children.

But against all the odds, he clawed his way free.

Jean-Maurice was eventually airlifted to safety and eventual recovery in the US, a mission of mercy organised by family friends and well-wishers in Georgia.

"If it wasn't for them, my dad defi-

nately wouldn't be here today. Not everyone just pays US\$30,000 to fly a helicopter to save someone," said Duval.

"They're amazing people. I mean, they're angels. We couldn't have found better people."

"They wouldn't let planes in because there was no runway. But this was the only plane they actually let in Haiti. My dad, they found him after 11 hours in the rubble. It was incredible. I don't know how he managed."

Duval is reluctant to discuss the day she and her cousins were held at gunpoint in Haiti where kidnappers once ran riot.

"We were held hostage. It's not a good memory, so I try to forget as much as I could about it. I don't remember too much of it anymore, which is great," she said, preferring to concentrate on how she can now help her injured father.

Although he escaped the quake, he has needed a series of surgeries which have prevented him from resuming his medical career.

Duval is already guaranteed

\$53,000 for making the second round, a windfall which, in the circumstances, is timely.

"He's improving so much. Emotionally it was hard at first. But he's as happy as he's ever been. He had a couple surgeries that helped take the pain away. We're just so happy that, you know, he's in a good state of mind right now. He's just here with us. So it's incredible."

In her August 27 match, Stosur, 12 years older than her opponent, was seemingly cruising to victory when she led by a set and was up 3-0 and 4-2 in the second set.

But the Australian had to save a match point in the ninth game of the decider.

Duval, roared on by a packed Louis Armstrong court, squandered two more match points before taking victory on her fourth chance with a sweeping forehand.

Stosur was undone by 56 unforced errors and 10 double faults.

"I'm not a sore loser, but I certainly helped her," said Stosur. -AFP

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