

# HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION



## Minister seeks deal with Malaysia on migrants

PAGE

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PHOTO: AFP

Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Aye Myint will seek an agreement with Malaysia to enable undocumented Myanmar migrant workers to register and work in the country legally, a senior official said last week. The minister led a delegation to Malaysia on September 9, about a week after the country launched a crackdown on illegal workers which has already seen thousands detained.

### NEWS4

Calls for clarity over downtown land deal Former owners of a 34.7-acre site in downtown Yangon have called on government departments to come clean on the details of a development deal agreed with private companies.

### PROFILE 6

## One man's journey from Kachin to the US army

Ko Sin Naw Wa Lapai had no idea what the future held for him when he fled Myanmar in June 2006. More than seven years on, he serves in the United States army – but his thoughts are never far from Kachin State.

### **BUSINESS 26**

## Ongoing conflict leaves dam projects in limbo

A China-backed company has been forced to suspend feasibility studies on six hydropower dams in Kachin State because of ongoing conflict between the KIA and the Tatmadaw.

### PROPERTY 32

## Sales slow as govt ponders action

Agents say property sales in Yangon have slowed after the government indicated it is considering changes to land-related taxes in a bid to rein in soaring prices.

## THE PULSE 44

## Film festival fever

Film-lovers in Yangon are bracing for a smorgasbord of international and local movies, with five festivals set to kick off this week.

## We must avoid 'reckless' reforms

Thura U Shwe Mann has told political leaders in Shan State that reforms – including constitutional amendments – should not be rushed, but also committed to devolving more powers to regional governments and self-administered areas. NEWS 3





The local lowdown & best of the web

### Myanmar food tough to stomach

Burma Superstar, a popular San Francisco restaurant that serves Myanmar food, closed temporarily last week after officials linked it to an E. coli outbreak.

The San Francisco Health Department is investigating 14 cases, nine of which affected people who dined at Burma Superstar on August 16 or 17.

There have been no fatalities and there have been no new cases since this exposure date," the SFDPH said in a statement.

#### **Basketball diplomacy: round two**

NBA Hall of Famer and former Chicago Bull Dennis Rodman has flown to North Korea for a visit with supreme leader Kim Jong-Un. It is his second trip to the isolated country, and it is believed Rodman is the only American known to have met Kim since he

inherited leadership in 2011. Upon returning from his first visit,

Rodman referred to Kim as a "friend" and "an awesome kid". The admiration is mutual, with Kim

Jong-Un being a major basketball fan. Rodman's return is part of a bid to ensure the release of detained American citizen Kenneth Bae, a former tour operator and undercover missionary. Rodman announced his intention to appeal for the release via Twitter, asking that Kim "do me a solid and cut Kenneth Bae loose".

"I'm gonna try and get the guy out... It's gonna be difficult.

#### **Duke of Pornwall**

British parliament has been left redfaced after revelations that over 1300 MPs, Lords, and Parliament staffers used state computers to access raunchy content more than 300,000 times in the last year. This comes amid furore over Prime Minister David Cameron's proposal to introduce mandatory filtering of online smut using an opt-out 'pornwall".

The Parliamentary Network records, obtained by Huffington Post UK in a Freedom of Information request, showed visits varied wildly from month to month - from more than 100,000 last November to just 397 in June.

#### Cat mayor in recovery

The feline mayor of Talkeetna, a small town in Alaska, is resting up and receiving medical attention after being mauled by a loose dog on August 31.

Stubbs, a 16-year-old orange tabby, suffered a punctured lung, a deep gash on his side and a badly fractured sternum. A crowdsourced fund to aid his recovery was established, and his owner said the outpouring of generosity had been overwhelming.

"I'm getting cards and calls from Australia to Germany to fricking London to all over the lower 48," said Stubbs' owner, Lauri Stec, who remains optimistic he will recover and resume office.

"He's a freaking tough boy," she said. Stubbs has held his nominal mayoralty since 1997.

## When Myanmar was Burma...

Archival material provided by Pansodan Gallery

#### BURMESE MONKS NOT PRO-JAP

In spite of their claims to be Buddhists, the Japanese have never revered the Sangha of monks which, with the Buddha and the Dhanma, form the three great objects of reverence to Burnese Buddhists. On the contrary, they have often ignored and ridiculed the monks, and on occasion have forced them to carry out duties not entirely in keeping with their dignity and status. nd status

In an effort to keep as far from the Japanese s possible, Buddhist monks have been leaving more important centres of religion, such as Rangoon, Mandalay and other large towns. Moreover, when out of reach of the Japanese, they are not afraid to preach to the people that the Japs are not their friends, but their nemies

The monks have always wielded a powerful influence over the masses. Already there is a move afoot in Burma for the protection of the monks, whose hardships and sufferings are the subject of open comment. Burmans, fearing the deterioration of their religion, are in a mood to sympathise with this movement.

Excerpt from British-run Burma To-Day, May 1944

## ၱတစ်နေ့တာပင်ပန်းနွမ်းနယ်မှုကိုမြေမျောက်ဖို့ နှစ်နှစ်ခြိုက်ခြိုက်အိပ်စက်နိုင်ဖို့ လိုအပ်ပါတယ်

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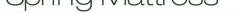


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## NLD to propose changes to protest law

THE National League for Democracy will propose during the next hluttaw session that section 18 of the Law on Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession be reviewed, party leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said last week.

Section 18 contains the penalties for violations, such as protests held without permission, which include up to two years' imprisonment.

"One of our NLD representatives will put forward a proposal during the next session," she said on August 30.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said section 18 "prohibits citizens' right to protest peacefully" and she is confident that other MPs will agree to review the law.

There appears to be at least some bipartisan support for changes to the law. which was approved in late 2011.

In March, the Union Solidarity and

Development Party's Thura U Aung Ko said provisions in the peaceful protest law do not conform with section 354(a)of the constitution, which gives citizens the right to freely express their beliefs.

Since the law was enacted, between 70 and 100 people have been charged under section 18, said U Ye Aung from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. "We believe there could also be more cases that we don't know about," he added.

Most recently, about 20 people who protested for the abolishment of section 18 in Yangon on August 27 were also charged under the section.

'We demonstrated to abolish section 18 but we have been charged under this section," said protester Ko Kvaw Nav Win. - Win Ko Ko Latt, translated by Zar Zar Soe



Activists take part in a peace demonstration in Yangon on September 21, 2012. Photo: Kaung Htet

## U Shwe Mann urges patience on reforms

Changes should be considered carefully and "reckless" decisions avoided, speaker tells ethnic leaders amid debate over constitutional reforms



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MYANMAR needs to carefully consider the long-term impact of proposed reforms and ensure it does not make "reckless" mistakes, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said last week during a tour of Shan State.

"If we go ahead with our own desire without thinking about the future, in the end we can miss the goal," he said on September 4 at a public meeting in Laukkai in northern Shan State.

While he did not speak specifically about constitutional amendments, the speaker appeared to be addressing ethnic demands for federalism.

He urged patience and said that every country has to develop its own individual political structure.

"Democratic countries have to exercise democracy in a way that matches their history and culture. They don't all practise democracy the same way. At the moment our country is using this particular form at this time but everything is always changing. We are seeking to amend or change the laws

and bylaws," he said. "As we are implementing democratic reforms we always study the existing laws as well."

Thura U Shwe Mann was joined on the tour by the heads of parliamentary committees and hluttaw representatives from the areas he visited. The aim of the tour was for the speaker to meet residents and political groups and discuss their needs and priorities for the reform process

He began the trip with a public address in Taunggyi on September 2 before proceeding to Kengtung the following day. On September 4, he met members of the Kokang Self-administered Zone's Leading Body in Laukkai, while another public meeting was held on September 5 in Lashio. He met a range of political and armed groups, including members of the United Wa State Army.

In his meetings the speaker discussed the distribution of more power to state and region governments and self-administrated zones and regions, budget allocation, tax income allocation and resource sharing - all issues closely linked to calls for a federal system.

Shan State Minister for Forestry and Mines U Sai Aik Paung told The Myanmar Times that during a meeting with Thura U Shwe Mann he proposed that state and region governments receive



Thura U Shwe Mann in Laukkai on September 4. Photo: Supplied/Union Daily

50 percent of the budget in 2014-15.

"If this happens then transportation, education and health problems can be resolved and the Union Government will have less headaches," said U Sai Aik Paung, who is also chairman of the Shan Nationalities Development Party (SNDP) and a member of the Shan State Hluttaw.

"I think it's possible for states and regions to get 50pc if the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw wants it to happen.

"I also discussed federalism with

Thura U Shwe Mann ... He said he accepts federalism but he explained that the system should be appropriate for the history of the country and should start in phases – maybe it can't happen completely at once. We agreed with him.

"Some parts of federalism - decentralisation and power sharing - we have already gained to some extent. For example, the state government is now able to directly hire nurses and teachers.'

U Sai Paung Nap, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative who joined with Thura U Shwe Mann, said the tour could bring some "instant benefits" for residents, while ethnic political parties, the Shan State government and leading bodies of self-administered zones and regions were also encouraged.

"Especially in Kunlong and Hopang, residents told him about their difficulties and he fixed some problems immediately as much as he could because ministers and local authorities were also present," U Sai Paung Nap said.

"It is expected that the speaker will continue his tour to Rakhine State ... after his Shan State trip finishes."

The Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Kunhing in Shan State, Daw Nan Wah Nu, told The Myanmar Times that locals welecomed the frankness with

which they could speak with Thura U Shwe Mann. "People were never allowed to meet directly and discuss issues openly with senior officials like this before," she said. - Translated by Zar Zar Soe and Thiri Min Htun

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## Govt, KIO technical teams to hold talks

### **EI EI TOE LWIN** eieitoelwin@gmail.com

PEACE talks between the government and the Kachin Independence Organisation are expected to resume in mid-September, sources in a peace facilitation group say.

'We will be able to confirm the date after the meeting of technical teams," said U Hla Maung Shwe of the Myanmar Peace Center.

Technical teams from the government and the KIO will meet next week to discuss topics in advance before union level peace talks resume.

'We invited the KIO technical team to meet on 16-17 September in Myitkyina. Soon afterward, union-level peace talks will restart this month," said peace facilitator U Hla Maung Shwe.

At talks in Myitkyina at the end of May, the two sides reached a sevenpoint agreement but KIO did not sign a ceasefire. Although fighting reduced in intensity following the talks, clashes have occurred in the northeast part of Kachin State since about mid-August, Kachin news sources said.

General Sumlut Gam, leader of the KIO delegation, told the Kachin News Group that the May agreement "included reducing military conflict, but it was not a ceasefire". He also accused the Tatmadaw of not abiding by the agreement.

"The agreement has to be obeyed by both sides. We will follow it as much as possible, but the government attacks could affect talks."

Residents have expressed fears of escalation as a result of the recent clashes. "We have urged both sides not to delay in resuming talks. People don't want the peace process stalled because of minor clashes. Delay could undermine the agreement we reached," U Lami Gun Ja, a peace facilitator with the Peace-talks Creation Group (PCG), told The Myanmar Times.

"Nobody wants to hear the crack of gunfire," he added.

The government has pledged to hold a nationwide ceasefire ceremony at the end of October and that will only be possible if there is progress in its talks with the KIO.

"Both sides may meet again at the end of this month. They will focus mainly on a nationwide ceasefire accord and on the seven points they agreed on at the last round of talks, said PCG member U San Aung.

U Hla Maung Shwe said the government had adhered to all of the ceasefire agreements reached so far with armed ethnic groups. The KIO is the only major group yet to sign a ceasefire, although a number of smaller ethnic armies are also holding out.

"Some groups accepted it and some are still thinking," said U Hla Maung Shwe. "We will also clearly explain the process to the KIO."

at 9:00cm



## **Residents call for** clarity over land deal



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A GROUP of Botahtaung township residents have accused two government departments of impropriety over a controversial property development on land confiscated from them two decades ago.

The residents have protested repeatedly over the confiscation, accusing the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development (DHSHD) and Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) of improperly entering into contracts with four companies - Yuzana, Ruby Dragon, Eden and Wah Wah Win - to develop the site, which occupies almost 35 acres of prime downtown real estate.

U Myint Maung, a dispossessed land owner who has led the campaign for restitution, said neither department was willing to take responsibility for the land deal, the terms of which have never been made public.

"When we asked who allowed the companies to build on our lands, the companies said it was DHSHD. And then later they said that they are working under the permission of YCDC. When we spoke to a YCDC official, he said it has no contract with the companies and they are even preparing to sue them," said U Myint Maung.

"But I think YCDC has taken too long to prepare the case because there are already a dozen buildings going up at the site and no charges yet," he added.

YCDC spokesperson U Myo Swe meet with us. "We won't stop trying to get would not confirm whether the comto the president about 10 times," he mittee is considering legal action but our lands back," he said. "We want said. "At first, we just wanted to get answers." - Additional reporting by said the case would be examined by our land back. But then we noticed Soe Than Lynn a new 30-member committee it has pageant.

formed to investigate land disputes in Yangon.

"There is no solution yet. Now YCDC formed a complaint section and this section will be managed by a committee of YCDC officials. That committee will take care of this Botahtaung case. That's all I can say for now," he said.

The 1.51-million-square-foot (34.7acre) site was confiscated from residents in 1994 by the military regime for a national development project. The residents still have 90-year land grants issued in 1923 to prove their ownership.



The size of the disputed land in Yangon's Botahtaung township

Fenced off and overgrown with weeds, it sat abandoned for almost 20 years until construction work began in January.

"There was no compensation, no notice. We were told that the lands were nationalised," U Myint Aung said. "And there was no national-level project - until January."

Another resident, U Tin Oo, said work stopped but then restarted again in April.

"We protested once a month since April and we reported our desire to get back our land to the relevant government departments. We've written the government departments' sloppy management and so we also want them to take responsibility for their mistakes."

Several companies involved in the deal refused to comment last week, while Yuzana owner and Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Htay Myint told The Myanmar Times that the dispute did not concern his company.

"This is a problem between DH-SHD and the residents of the ward. It's not related to our company. We can't and won't get involved in resolving this problem," he said.

"We will start our development projects after the problem is fixed."

But the residents have also accused one of the companies of fencing off the site in downtown Yangon to foil a planned protest on September 10.

"Wah Wah Win company started fencing the disputed compound on September 5. I think they are trying to block us from entering as we have permission to protest against the project on [September 10]," resident U Myint Aung told The Myanmar Times on September 6.

U Myint Aung was one of about 70 people who came to the site to protest the building of the fence. They called on officials from Wah Wah Win to discuss the dispute with them but were rebuffed.

Resident U Maung Maung Tin said neither the government departments nor the companies involved had made any effort to speak with them

"All we ask for now is to get a chance to talk ... But whenever we went to the companies, they refused to meet us. If they really have nothing to hide over this project, they should

## Beauty queen wins four prizes in Belarus

### **MOH MOH THAW**

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MYANMAR beauty queen Khin Wint War arrived home over the weekend after snaffling four awards and a top-20 finish in the Miss Supranational pageant in Belarus.

The 19-year-old university student received the Miss Internet award at the ceremony in Minsk on September 6, as well as the People's Choice award and two prizes from beauty pageant websites.

She was beaten in the overall competition by Mutya Johanna Datul from the Philippines, while contestants from Mexico and Turkey finished second and third respectively. Altogether, 94 women took part in the pageant, which has been held annually since 2009.

But Myanmar eyes were all on Khin Wint War, who was due to arrive back in Myanmar on September 8.

Her win in the Miss Internet category was particularly surprising given voters had to pay by credit card, which few people in Myanmar have access to.

Votes could be submitted between September 2 and 6, with 10 votes costing US\$5. Khin Wint War received 3600 votes, ahead of the contest from Thailand, who received less than 2000 votes.

She wrote on her Facebook page that she had not expected to win the prize and was shocked at the strong support from her Myanmar supporters.

"Online payment systems are not developed much yet in Myanmar. On the other hand, in other countries everybody has a credit or debit card. That's why I dare not expect many votes from Myanmar," she wrote.

"I love all my Myanmar fans. I promise I will be a Miss Myanmar who serves her country dutifully and responsibly."

Her awards and top-20 finish was all the more notable given she was the first Myanmar participant in the competition.

However, she attracted controversy for donning a swimsuit during the contest, with some Facebook users attacking Khin Wint War for betraying traditional Myanmar values. Other web users defended the model, saying she was just following the

## rules of the international beauty

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## Minister to seek migrant labour deal in Malaysia



NOE NOE AUNG TIM MCLAUGHLIN

A MINISTRY of Labour delegation will travel to Malaysia this week to propose a program to register undocumented migrant workers in Myanmar, a week after hundreds were detained in a nationwide crackdown launched by the Malaysian government.

The delegation, scheduled to depart on September 9, will be led by Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Aye Myint.

Department of Labour director U Myo Aung, who will also travel to Malaysia with the delegation, said the government hoped to reach an agreement with Malaysia on registering undocumented migrant workers.

"We [have] realised that solving problems each time they occur does not work. We need some policies to protect our workers there so we want to focus on negotiating an agreement," he told *The Myanmar Times* on September 7.

He hinted that a temporary ban on sending migrant workers to Malaysia through legal channels that the government announced in June could be lifted after this week's visit. "After we check the conditions in Malaysia, we'll [allow] workers to go there if everything is fine for them," he said.

Malaysia's home affairs minister was quoted as saying last week that more than 2400 undocumented migrants have been arrested in 40 raids since the operation began on September 1.

More than 550 of those detained are Myanmar nationals but the Malaysian embassy in Yangon said last week it expects that number to climb as the sweeps continue.

The three-month operation is aimed at rooting out and deporting some 500,000 illegal workers – mostly from Bangladesh, Myanmar and Indonesia – who live in Malaysia and survive on low-paying jobs.

U Myo Aung said he did not think the government could do anything to help detained illegal workers because of the Malaysian government's policy.

"From their side, the Malaysian government did their job and the workers are illegal so yes, they have the right to arrest them. They arrest every illegal worker – not only those from Myanmar but also from Indonesia, Vietnam, India and other countries," he said.

Thailand agrees to

extend workers' visas



Suspected illegal foreign workers sit on the ground during an immigration raid operation shortly after midnight on September 1 outside Kuala Lumpur. Photo: AFP

Pranom Somwong, a representative of the Worker Hub for Change and Network of Action for Migrants in Malaysia, said the sweeps are mostly focusing on Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang and Johor, which have been identified as "hubs" for undocumented workers.

The Malaysian embassy estimates that there are 100,000 illegal Myanmar workers in Malaysia. There are another 300,000 documented workers, while about 3000 Myanmar nationals apply each month for Malaysian work visas.

The visit will be the second that Myanmar officials have made to Malaysia in recent months because of concerns over the safety of migrant workers.

Many workers are lured to Malaysia by brokers and employers with the promise of relatively high-paying jobs but after arrival find themselves working in poor conditions for low wages with their passports being held by their employers.

"Workers find themselves caught between potentially unscrupulous employment agencies and the risk of being arrested by immigration authorities," said Ms Pranom.

Charles Hector, a lawyer and human rights activist in Malaysia who has worked extensively with Myanmar workers, described the crackdown as misguided because it targets workers instead of the employers and broker agencies that force them out of legal jobs.

He said many workers arrive in Malaysia legally but quit their jobs and lose their status as documented workers when they find conditions and pay far below what they expected.

He said another problem stems from workers being offered long-term contracts only to have them quickly terminated by employers looking to save money or operate off the books. "The question is: How did they be-

come undocumented?" said Mr Hector. The Myanmar embassy in Kuala Lumpur could not be reached for comment last week, with repeated phone calls going unanswered.

## Govt needs help with drug fight: US official

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THE United States is "hopeful" Myanmar can meet a 2019 drug elimination target but believes it cannot make progress against narcotics on its own, a senior State Department official said last week.

"Having a clear timeline or goal is good for the government and all the other parties," William R Brownfield, assistant secretary of state for international narcotics and law enforcement affairs, said at a September 6 press conference at the US embassy.

He said that the government needs to learn from the past, identify why it could not meet the original 2014 deadline and then make some "adjustment and modification" to its strategies.

While Mr Brownfield said the Myanmar government is "unable" to tackle the country's drug problems on its own, his September 4-6 visit was mostly limited to meetings with government officials, including ministers in the President's Office, the minister for foreign affairs and the chief of the Myanmar Police Force. He also held discussions with civil society groups and some ethnic minority leaders, but there were no talks with government officials from Shan State, which accounts for 98 percent of Myanmar's drug production, or armed ethnic groups.

"I represent the US government so I met only with government officials," Mr Brownfield said.

He said he is aware of the "complexity" of Myanmar's drug problem. He highlighted the importance

of "genuine" alternative development options for farmers who grow poppy, adding that it was not realistic to just give them seeds for legal crops. He also said he would welcome effective cooperation between China and Myanmar on drug issues.

"I believe there has been dialogue between the two countries."

Mr Brownfield also stressed that the focus of his visit was not limited to the fight against illicit drugs, with broader discussions held on law enforcement-related issues, including greater engagement between the US and the Myanmar Police Force.



### A Leading Faucet & Shower Manufacturer



MYANMAR migrants in Thailand holding expiring visas have been granted a lifeline, with the Thai and Myanmar governments reaching an agreement that will let them extend their stay past the earlier four-year limit.

A representative from the Thai Ministry of Employment, who asked not to be named, confirmed that the agreement had been reached but said neither side could reveal the specifics "at the moment".

He said an official announcement outlining the new program will be released on September 11 or 12.

The decision came after several meetings between the Department of Employment and their counterparts in the Thai government.

As *The Myanmar Times* reported last month, the first of hundreds of thousands of visas issued to Myanmar workers under a program since 2009 have expired in recent weeks.

The program is based on a memorandum of understanding signed in 2003 but not implemented until 2009. After the visas expire the workers are required to return to Myanmar for several years before being allowed to return.

Migrant rights' advocates say the lack of a provision for extending the visas has left migrant workers at risk of extortion and exploitation.

The Migrant Workers Rights Network says a black market has already sprung up for fake passports and visas, and migrants who buy the documents often take out loans from local organised crime rings.

The Ministry of Employment representative declined to say what measures would be taken to ensure migrant workers are aware of any changes to the existing system. – *Bill O'Toole* 



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## 6 News

## FEATURE

## From a Thai prison to the US army, Kachin man never far from home

After fleeing Myanmar in 2006, Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai endured many ups and downs before finding his calling in the US army



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WHEN he left home on June 10, 2006, Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai felt only uncertainty for the future. He had resolved to leave Myanmar three days earlier, after arguing with a police officer who had charged his parents for conducting missionary activities in Yangon's North Dagon township. But he had no qualifications or job prospects and was unsure what to expect as an illegal migrant in Thailand.

"I was full of fear," Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai, 27, told *The Myanmar Times* in a recent interview. "I was scared when I thought of all the possible things that could happen to me, especially going to jail."

Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai's sense of foreboding was well founded. Only three days later, he was arrested by Thai police. He was stripped, searched and had his possessions taken from him, including his shoes and belt. He spent the next three months in a fetid prison cell with four other men.

"They treat us bad, especially if they know you are from Burma," he said.

'I always think what happens if my parachute doesn't open ... I pray to God every time before I do a jump.'

Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai

"We never had sufficient food; hunger always accompanied us. The five of us just sat around the communal plate, and when the food dropped in we would fill our stomachs as fast as possible."

Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai was deported back to Myanmar in October 2006 but immediately crossed the border into Thailand and made his way to Malaysia, where he survived by

washing dishes in a Chinese restaurant and waiting on tables. "Sometimes there was no work. I

would sleep in the stairwell of an old apartment, or on the sidewalk near a shopping mall," he said. "They were the most miserable times of my life. But they made me stronger."

That strength eventually took him to the other side of the world. After being recognised as a refugee by the United Nations Refugees Agency, he was resettled in the United States in January 2009 and became a US citizen. He enlisted into the military and today attends North Carolina's Campbell University, where he is majoring in homeland security.

Of course, this did not happen immediately; the Kachin man from Myitkyina first washed dishes and cars in Florida while attending night school, eventually earning his high school certificate. For nine months he also worked in an envelope factory.

But the army was a natural fit. Coming from a family of soldiers, Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai always loved the idea of joining the military. His uncle was a captain in the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), while his grandfather served in the Kachin Rangers section of Detachment 101 of the US Office of Strategic Services during World War II.

Enlisting, however, was not straightforward for a recent immigrant with only a Myanmar high school degree. "It was like I had to start my education over again," he said "But being a soldier was one of my dreams and I just wanted to make my dream come true."

In October 2010, Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai failed the multiple-choice armed forces entrance test known as the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery. However, three months later he retook and passed the test, becoming a member of the 27<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion's 161<sup>st</sup> Engineer Support Company – despite its name, an airborne combat unit – in November 2011.

To prove himself he ran with a 36-kilogram (80-pound) backpack and jumped from a helicopter at more than 365 metres (1200 feet). "Before I did [airborne training], I was like, 'I can do it.' But when it really happens, it's not like that. I always think what happens if my parachute doesn't open or something like that. I pray to God every time before I do a jump ... Everyone goes silent before a jump." Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai serves with the 27th Engineer Battalion's 161st Engineer Support Company. Photo: Supplied

While he has encountered difficulties – ranging from racism to food and not understanding army rules – Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai wears his grey army uniform with pride five days a week, taking care not to do anything that could harm the image of the US armed forces.

"You can't be arrogant. You need to act nicely when you are in uniform," he said. "Even when we talk, we have to be very polite, especially to women.

"It's not like you can use your power just because you are uniform or in the army, like the way you can in Myanmar."

Two years after he arrived in the

US, fighting broke out between the government and the KIA. The conflict peaking in December 2012 when the Tatmadaw bombed Kachin targets and for weeks it was the only thing he and other Kachin immigrants talked about. They watched the news and did their best to find out what was happening. For a while Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai feared the worst. "I felt really sorry at that time. I thought they were going to wipe the Kachin out," he said.

Inevitably, his comrades and superiors in the army asked about his perspective on the fighting. "I explained to them that we don't hate each other but we hate the dictatorship and the government. We have different states with different culture and languages. That's not the thing that we hate – we hate the rulers."

He questions the reforms initiated by President U Thein Sein and particularly whether he can exercise control over the Tatmadaw.

"He ordered [the army] not to attack Kachin. But his men even launched air strike. Why is that? Maybe his men don't respect him and don't follow his orders," he said.

For Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai and many other Kachin, the war has generated new respect for the current KIA leadership. "I don't say that I admire them because I'm Kachin. In the past there were many bad people in the Kachin leadership who oppressed lowranking soldiers while they enjoyed luxury items, people who would even sell Kachin State for their own benefit. But today's leaders are really fighting for equality and federalism. I respect them.' Even before the conflict, however, Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai's homeland had never been far from his thoughts. The Kachin flag - red and green with two crossed white swords - covering one wall in his room in North Carolina serves as a daily reminder of his heritage. Seven years after leaving Myanmar, and having pledged his allegiance to the US, Ko Sin Wa Naw Laphai still harbours dreams of returning to Kachin State. The profile picture on his Facebook page - an important link with those he left behind in Myanmar – is a photo of KIA soldiers praying in the jungle. Below it are the words, "They are truly freedom fighters. I hope I can join them one day."



## Acrimony ahead of Intha Day

Ethnic Intha accuse political party of using festivities planned for November at Inle Lake to further party interests

#### **CHERRY THEIN**

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THE Intha of Inle Lake are preparing to mark Intha Day in early November - but the new celebration is already coming under fire from locals, who complain they were not consulted over the date.

society organisations in Civil Nyaungshwe and Inle Lake - led by the Justice Movement for Community (JMC), Gone Saung Maung Mae and National Good Governance Individual (NGI) groups - are preparing for the three-day event, which is scheduled for early November and will celebrate the Intha's traditions, culture and customs.

The final day, however, will be dedicated to discussions on when Intha Day should be celebrated in future.

In ha Day was set as the day after the full moon of Tazaungmone - November 3 this year - to honour the Inn National Development Party's successes in the 2010 election, in which it won five seats in national and state legislatures. Civil society groups say, however, that some in the Intha community are unhappy that the date was chosen without consultation.

JMC member U Tin Hlaing Win told The Myanmar Times at Inle Lake's Kyungyi Myaut village that the groups had little choice but to hold the event in early November this year but will seek to shift it to a different day in future.

There is disagreement between the political party and the community. We are now discussing the issues. It is essential to negotiate to get [agreement] from both sides," he said.

Because of the conflict between the In ha party and the community the date for the event is yet to be finalised. The party has proposed it be held from November 3-5.

be involved.

said.

be a celebration for all Intha people.

success but it concerns all Intha," he

participate in the country's national

politics and because of this we can

ensure there is more development for

the Intha community. Having political

representatives means we can raise

ise and work together for our develop-

ment ... We don't need to differentiate

based on parties or political ideology."

the day should be marked in the fu-

ture, civil groups said the event will

"I just wish all Intha would organ-

Along with the manner in which

our voices," he said.

"Our party has a great chance to

Inn National Development Party member Ko Yea Aye described the dispute as a misunderstanding. He said the party will form a working

## 'It is high time that **Intha work together** ... We want other ethnic groups to see that we are united.'

**Daw Yu Hlaing** Justive Movement for Community



"The Intha have no traditional costumes for formal occasions. We designed a traditional jacket and Shan He said the party is not trying to control the event and Intha Day will trousers but the Shan stole them for their own. We need to invent a new de-"It is true that the Intha Day is to sign to make our Intha race distinct," mark the day when our party achieved U Tin Hlaing Win said.

"Each weaving business at Inle Lake can propose a design. The regional government, ethnic heads and community will vote on the best design on the last day of the event."

Daw Yu Hlaing Thin from JMC said organisers hope the debate around traditional dress will encourage the area's traditional weaving businesses to produce quality products so they can compete in local and international markets.

"Other groups make fun of the Intha, saying we can only plant tomatoes and beans, and sleep so much that our heads are flat," she said. "It is high time that all Intha work together for the development of the community. We want other ethnic groups to see that the Intha are united.

"Given the recent political changes in our country, we need to encourage people to shake off their fear and participate in community development. We have been influenced by the authorities for many years and it is time it stopped.

"For me, working to design our own traditional dress is a kind of politics. We will listen to the voices of all In tha and respect their choice."

Daw Su Myat Mon from NGI said that regardless of when the event is held she expects thousands of Intha to take part.

"Although the country is transitioning to democracy, this event will help us see whether it is real or not," she said. "If we can do it freely, we will be encouraged to lobby for many other issues to the regional and union governments."

## 'Big Zaw' recovering from successful operation

## **YAMON PHU THIT**

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DOCTORS in Singapore have successfully completed an operation that experts say was needed to save the life of Myanmar's tallest man.

The September 3 operation, on Ko Win Zaw Oo, removed a cancerous growth from his hypothalamus, a small structure near the pituitary gland.

The disorder had resulted in excessive production of growth hormone, causing Ko Win Zaw to grow to a height of 7 feet 8 inches, or 2.33 metres. He will now stop growing, a hospital spokesperson said.

Despite the success of the operation, which was conducted at Singapore General Hospital, Ko Win Zaw Oo will continue to need treatment, Dr Khin Maung Win, president of the Save Win Zaw Oo group, said at a press conference on September 4.

His growth hormone levels will need to be monitored, and the operation may have caused side effects such as diabetes insipidus, a condition characterised by excessive thirst and the excretion of excess urine, and hyperphagia, excessive hunger or increased appetite.

The surgery was conducted through the nose, Dr Khin Maung Win said. The pituitary gland tumour and the tumour in the hypothalamus were removed successfully during the sevenhour procedure, which cost more than S\$70,000 (US\$55,000).

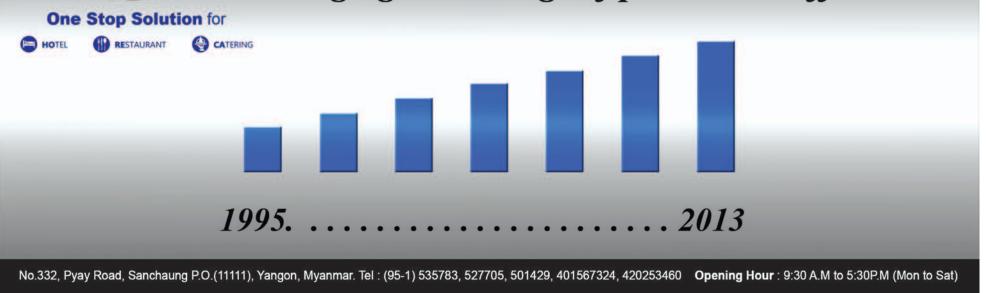
"The experts in Singapore estimated he would have died within two years without this treatment," said Dr Khin Maung Win.

Ko Win Zaw Oo will undergo further treatment in Singapore and will have to take medication for the rest of his life.

Ko Win Zaw Oo comes from Htone Pauk Chaing village in Magwe Region's Natmauk township. After his case was reported in local media, a group of doctors worked to raise money to pay for treatment, forming the Save Win Zaw Oo group.



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## The end of the autocrat era



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WHILE Cambodia's political situation remains unpredictable, an almost identical post-election impasse in Malavsia now nears resolution.

It has taken more than three months, and involved a lot of conciliation and not a little crow-eating by both sides. It has also bruised the reputations of the nation's top leaders but overall it has proven worthwhile.

Now, a similar post-election tango is being danced in Phnom Penh, as Prime Minister Hun Sen and his opposition counterpart Sam Rainsy tussle for power.

Given the way it could act as a template for Cambodia, it is worth looking more closely at how Malaysia's political stand-off played out peacefully without injuries, loss of life or military involvement.

In its 13<sup>th</sup> general election, held shortly before the one in Cambodia, Malaysia's ruling National Front coalition, helmed by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), lost ground - yet won re-election.

Its winning margin, in percentage terms, was about the same as that claimed by the Cambodian People's Party in the July 28 election.

As is now happening in Cambodia, there then followed strenuous opposition complaints in Kuala Lumpur about the conduct of the election and there were heated allegations of cheating, voter fraud and all the rest.

After judicial evaluation of opposition petitions, however, the result was upheld and the National Front settled back into governing the nation with a new cabinet and a somewhat chastened Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Of course, the opposition continued protesting, as they do in these situations around the world, but finally they stopped in KL on August 31 - the anniversary of Malaysia's independence.



Cambodian policemen pull barbed wire as they block a street during a training exercise for potential protests in Phnom Penh on September 1. Photo: AFP

On that auspicious date, the opposition, led by the charismatic but deeply flawed Anwar Ibrahim (you see how the parallels with Cambodia are almost scary), agreed to work with Najib's team for the good of the nation.

Of course, Anwar played to the ground by insisting that his side maintained its "strong objections about the validity" of the May polls, but he signalled that it was now time to move

"We are prepared to put aside our differences for the sake of the nation's well-being and future," he said.

While this took some pressure off Najib, the PM remains vulnerable to an internal coup and he was not helped when a book about his predecessor, Abdullah Badawi, was recently published.

Put together by two Singaporebased academics, James Chin and Bridget Welsh, Awakening: A Critical Assessment of the Badawi Years is a compendium of essays and interviews written by political analysts.

That it was published in Singapore and launched by Anwar's daughter, Nurul Izzah, herself a vociferous opposition MP, caused much gnashing of teeth among UMNO loyalists.

But what really got their knickers in a twist were Abdullah's revelations about his predecessor, Mahathir Mohamad, who remains revered by most of the party faithful, but is reviled by the Anwaristas.

Among other things, Abdullah accused Mahathir of relentlessly urging him to push ahead with grandiose megaprojects that he felt would bankrupt the nation.

Abdullah resisted, relations soured and then plummeted catastrophically after the 2008 election when the Front under Abdullah, like the CPP under Hun Sen in July, lost its two-thirds majority.

The knives came out and Mahathir quit the party in disgust, saying he would only reioin after Abdullah stepped down, which happened less than a year later - leaving Mahathir's acolyte, Najib, to take over.

But Najib himself fared no better in this year's election and the Front lost more seats and even came second in the popular vote.

So the PM may be destined to follow Abdullah's fate, while the latter enjoys some payback via the new book, which slams Mahathir left and right.

It is a piquant scenario that Hun Sen might want to examine if he is not to emulate the demise of Abdullah and possibly Najib.

Clearly, the days of autocratic leaders like Mahathir Mohamad, Lee Kuan Yew, Ferdinand Marcos, Than Shwe and Suharto entrenching their hold on power for decades are now over.

## Zoo, safari park school tours launched

#### **PYAE THET PHYO** pyaethetphyo87@gmail.com

EXPLORE the forest - from the comfort of the nation's capital. That's the program being offered by the Htoo Foundation for outstanding students from eight Nay Pyi Taw high schools. Launched on August 29, the study tours of the Safari Park and zoo will benefit 50 students and five teachers from each school. Students from Basic Education High School 18 in Dekkhinathiri township were the first to take part.





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The second tour was arranged for BEHS 1 in Lewe township on September 4. Five Zabuthiri township high schools and one high school in Pvinmana township have been listed for future trips.

"The study tours will help the students acquire knowledge. Most parents in Nay Pyi Taw are civil servants and can't spare the time to visit the park, so we've arranged this program." said U Khin Myint, chief of the administrative office at Nay Pyi Taw's zoo. "We are giving priority to schools

that are located far from this park. But in future, we will arrange tours for

Students from BEHS 18 Dekkhinathiri feed elephants at Nay Pyi Taw Zoo on August 29. Photo: Pyae Thet Phyo

government departments and organisations as well," he said.

He said the cost of the study tour program is being shared between the zoo's administrative office and the Htoo Foundation, with the approval of Department of Basic Education 2.

The Safari Park is a major national attraction, featuring hundreds of mammals and birds. The zoo has 323 mammals from 36 species, as well as 40 reptiles and 165 birds.

"It is a very good program. Most people don't have enough time to visit.

It isn't just for students - teachers can share the knowledge we acquire," said a teacher from BEHS 18 Dekkhinathiri. Htoo Foundation was established by Htoo Group of Companies in the wake of Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe

## Thousands enrol in program for school drop outs

## **EI THAE THAE NAING**

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ALMOST 10.000 disadvantaged children who have left school are getting a second chance at formal education each year under a program aimed at tackling Myanmar's high school dropout rates.

The Ministry of Education and United Nations Children's Fund launched the non-formal primary education (NFPE) program in 2007-08 in five townships in Bago and Ayeyarwady regions and Mon and Rakhine States. It has since expanded to 80 townships, catering to students aged 10 to 14 who have left formal schooling at the primary level.

Classes take place in the evening, from 4pm to 6pm.

"We invite students who want to attend the non-formal primary education (NFPE) program and then we test them to see what level they are at, as we offer two levels for NFPE students," said Daw Ni Lar Oo, the principal of the Basic Education Middle School 14 in Mingalardon township, which has offered the NFPE program since 2012.

"There are monthly exams and a special syllabus for NFPE. We have to cover all the subjects within a limited time frame," she said.

The lower level of the NFPE program is equivalent to grades one to three, while the upper level is equivalent to grades four and five. After completing the upper level of the program students can join a middle school.

"Students only need to attend two years of the NFPE program to finish primary school and then they can directly join middle school," said Daw Ni Lar Oo.

About 8000 students were enrolled in this year's July intake. Of the 9000 who took part in the program last year, two-thirds completed either level 1 or level 2, officials say.

The classes are taught by high school graduates, who are paid K40,000 a month and given additional teacher training.

NFPE level 2 student Mg Kvaw Zin Aung, 14, said that the program had rekindled his dream to become a doctor. He said he quit primary school because he needed to earn money to support his family.

"I am happy to attend the program because it means I'll have a chance to continue my education at school after I finish the course. I work as a shepherd in the morning and I can attend classes in the evening," he said.

However, the program is not

## Dr Tu Ja tests political waters

Former Kachin Independence Organisation deputy leader tries a second time to form a political party



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KACHIN politician Dr Tu Ja says he is confident the Union Election Commission will approve his application to form a political party, despite the commission blocking a similar request in 2010 because of his links to the Kachin Independence Organisa-

The former KIO vice chairman applied to the commission for per-

'It is quite different from 2010 ... I believe this time they will approve my application to form a party.'

> Dr Tu Ja Former KIO deputy leader

mission to form the Kachin State Democracy Party (KSDP) on August 28. If it is given the green light, the party will begin preparations to contest the 2015 general election, he told The Myanmar Times last week.

"I submitted the application along with 17 members to the commission office in Nay Pyi Taw ... We followed the commission's rules and I expect that it will make a decision by the middle of September," Dr Tu Ja said.

Prior to the 2010 general election Dr Tu Ja resigned from the KIO to form the Kachin State Progressive Party. However, the commission refused to approve his application because of his links to the KIO, which was at the time in tense negotiations with the military government over transforming its armed wing, the Kachin Independence Army, into a Border Guard Force under the Tatmadaw.

As a result, there was no major Kachin party to take on the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), and the seats were mostly split between the USDP, National Unity Party and Unity and Democracy Party of Kachin State.

Dr Tu Ja then tried to contest the Pyithu Hluttaw seat of Mogaung in the 2012 by-elections as an independent candidate but voting was can-



Dr Tu Ja. Photo: Staff

celled because of fighting between the Tatmadaw and KIA.

However, Dr Tu Ja said he believes the commission will approve his application this time because both the government and KIO have committed to the peace process.

"It is clear that both sides are willing to get peace and have talked about peace. It is quite different from 2010. We can see some progress

in their relationship so I believe that this time they will approve my application to form a party," he said.

He said another reason for his confidence is that the party only has members in government-controlled areas, so it is harder to draw any link between it and the KIO.

However, the decision to register a party has drawn criticism from some Kachin, who say they were not consulted over the decision.

"It is different from when he tried to form the party in 2010. Then he held discussions with Kachin people before submitting the application to register the KSPP. The party was formed according to the public's desire," said U San Aung, a resident of Myitkyina township and civil society activist.

"We are going to wait and see whether he stands for the people," he said, adding that Myitkyina residents "really have no idea whether the UEC will approve the party or not".

Dr Tu Ja dismissed the criticism as politically motivated.

"Some people want to have the party's registration blocked," he said. "It's not unusual that they have a different point of view ... but we agreed to establish this party in cooperation with people who share our values and ideas.'



only designed to help children catch up with their former classmates in state schools. As many of the children who attend NFPE classes dropped out of school because of poverty, students are also taught vocational skills that they can use to generate income, said U Aye Kyaing, a retired director of the Department of Basic Education 1 who is assisting with the program.

Project manager U Tun Kyi said combining vocational and formal education gives students the option of work or further study after they complete the NFPE program.

Of the 80 townships, 35 are supported by UNICEF, 29 by community groups and 16 by the Ministry of Education. Each township has an average of six schools, although it varies between townships. Most are in urban areas.

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## Confusion over travel restriction c

Tourism leaders applaud the Ministry of Home Affairs' decision to ease restrictions on travel - but the process for visiting newly opened up



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TOURISM industry leaders have urged the government to get its act together on the rolling-back of travel restrictions, which have kept much of the country off limits for decades.

In January, the Ministry of Home Affairs removed bans on travel to some areas of Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Shan and Kachin states. Industry sources, however, say that tourists trying to reach these areas are still being turned back because of confusion over the rules.

"It appears that the Ministry of Home Affairs issued the updated list of destinations but it was not recognised by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism," said a spokesperson for a leading Yangon-based travel agency.

## Opening up: Myanmar's new travel destinations

#### FREE TO TRAVEL

Bago Region: Than Daung\* Chin State: Mindat, Kanpetlet Kachin State: Myitkyina, Bhamo, Shwegu, Mogaung and Mohnyin Kayah State: Loikaw Kayin State: Myawaddy

Rakhine State: Mrauk U, Kyaukpyu, Munaung, Ramree, Ann, Kyauktaw, Sittwe, Pauktaw, Myebon, Minbya, Rathedaung, Gwa, Taunggoke and Thandwe

Shan State: Tachileik, Muse, Yengan (Ywangan), Lawksawk (Yatsauk), Ho-pong, Kutkai and Namhkam

#### **OPEN BUT SOME RESTRICTIONS APPLY**

**Chin State:** Tiddim, Ton Zang, Falam, Tlangtlang and Haka

Kachin State: Putao, Machanbaw, Mansi, Momauk and Waingmaw Kayah State: Demoso and Hpruso Kayin State: Kawkareik and Hlaingbwe

#### STILL OFF LIMITS WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION Kachin State: Hpakant Mandalay Region: Mogok

\*Cannot stay overnight

"As a result there have been a lot of arguments and confusion among agents and tourists. The two ministries need to collaborate more closely for the future of our tourism industry," he said.

Highlighting the confusion, the government only formally announced that tourists could enter and exit Myanmar at four land crossings on the Thai border on August 28

Thai border on August 28. The new rules announced at the start of this year appear to have opened up vast swathes of the country to permit-free tourism, however. Only a handful of tourism destinations still require a permit, including Mogok in Mandalay Region (see related story right) and Hpakant in Kachin State.

A spokesperson from state-run Myanmar Travels and Tours (MTT) under the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism confirmed some of the changes but not all.

In Chin State, which previously could only be visited with a permit and government guide, tourists can visit Mindat and Kanpetlet townships without prior permission, while they can also visit Tiddim, Ton Zang, Falam, Tlangtlang and Haka but require approval to go beyond the town limits.

"Any travel to Paletwa and Matupi townships in Chin State still needs prior permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs," the spokesperson said.

"Previously, tourists were not allowed to visit Kayah State but now they can visit Loikaw without permission. Tourists are also allowed to visit the city areas of Demoso and Hpruso but need to apply for permission to go outside those areas."

Industry stakeholders said that while the changes are "important" for the sector the manner in which they had been announced is problematic.

The managing director of one major travel agency in Yangon said tourists would still not be able to visit some of the newly open towns because travel to the destination still required permission.

"For example, tourists are allowed to travel to Hpa-an and Myawaddy but you need permission to travel outside of Kawkareik town. This is quite strange because the only way for tourists to reach Myawaddy is by passing through Kawkareik," he said.

"I don't understand the changes at all. The system is too complicated."

He said the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism needs to improve its communication, adding that its website is not up to date and the information is not reliable for agents or foreign visitors.

The ministry's official website (http://www.myanmartourism.org/) does not yet list the changes under its "Directives for Restricted Areas" page, although on a separate section of the site it has republished the Ministry of Home Affairs' January notification.

"When we checked the restricted areas list on the [Ministry of Hotels and Tourism] website, it was very out of date compared to the Ministry of Home Affairs' list," the managing director said.

"Myanmar tourism is booming and it is becoming a major source of income for our country. The ministry website should be updated with the freshest and most reliable

information but at the moment I think there is a lack of collaboration and coordination between the two ministries regarding this issue." One foreign visitor from Germany

said he encountered the inconsistencies in the travel ban changes when visiting Hpa-an in July.

"I know Myawaddy is open to tourists to visit without [prior] permission but the immigration officer here said I am not allowed to go without permission," he said. "I don't want to waste my time and finally I decided to go Mawlamyine instead. To be honest, the immigration process is really complicated and not transparent."

Nevertheless, industry leaders are upbeat about the changes and said they could have "huge" potential benefits for growth in the sector.

"It is like a window of opportunity for the industry," said U Win Tin, managing director of Journeys Nature and Cultural Explorations, which runs Putao Trekking House in northern Kachin State. "Lifting the requirement that tourists get permission to visit Mindat and Kanpetlet townships is particularly good for the industry."

U Phyoe Wai Yar Zar, chairman of the Myanmar Marketing Committee and managing director of All Asia Exclusive Travel, said the country would benefit from having more travel products to promote.

"Travel to these more remote and hilly regions was somewhat restricted previously," he said. "Border crossings between Thailand and Myanmar have been opened one after another over the last few months."

Among the companies eyeing growth on the overland route between Myawaddy and Yangon is Khiri Travel. General manager Edwin Briels said the company is delighted with the relaxation and preparing new packages to take advantage of the changes.

"Giving tourists the possibility to enter or leave Myanmar overland through Myawaddy and hopefully also Three Pagoda Pass will certainly have a big influence on tourism, especially in Mon and Kayin State," he said.

But despite the relaxation, some exciting potential destinations remain on the banned list, including the former hill station of Thandaung, 21 kilometres (13 miles) east of Taungoo on the border of Bago Region and Kayin State.

Frank Janmaat, managing director of Light House Hospitality, which runs the Royal Kaytumadi Hotel in Taungoo, said Thandaung is only open to tourists during the day. The town is considered a prospective ecotourism site, and is home to waterfalls, caves and local wildlife, including elephants.

"It is open to foreigners during the day [but] they cannot stay overnight," Mr Janmaat said. "No changes there vet."



The view of downtown Loikaw, in Kayah State, from the top of Taung Gwe Zedi. Photo: C

## After 10 years, Mogok se

#### SHWE WAR LWIN

shwewarlwin.mmt@gmail.com

THE mountain town of Mogok is gearing up for a tourist rush. But while foreigners can now visit the town, which is famous for its ruby mines, gem market and cool climate, locals say its single hotel and lack of other tourism infrastructure mean it is not yet ready for

more than a trickle of visitors. "Tourists are very interested in visiting this town," said Ko Thaung Naing Oo, an information officer with the Myanmar Tour Guide Association. "We expect many tourists will visit in the coming peak season [from October through April] so it is important to prepare."

The number is likely to be relatively small initially, however, as foreign visitors are still required to get prior permission from the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism.

Travel to Mogok has been allowed

## Visiting the land of rubies

How to get there: Mogok is about 200 kilometres (124 miles) north of Mandalay. With no airport, visitors have to negotiate winding mountain roads to reach the town, which is 1170 metres above sea level. Buses from Mandalay cost about K8000 one way, while a seat in a share taxi is about K15,000. Where to stay: There is only one licensed hotel in town, Golden Butterfly. Standard rooms range from US\$60 to \$85 a night, while family rooms range from \$100 to \$130.

only sporadically since 1995-96 when a decades-old outright ban was lifted. Just a year later Mogok was back on



the blacklist but it reopened to tourists again from 2000 to 2003.

Even during those periods, however, it was notoriously difficult to get permission, while multi-day packages departing Mandalay often cost in excess of US\$500.

Now, however, travel permits cost only US\$40 and can be acquired within three or four days through state-run travel agencies, such as Mandalay Travels and Tours. Tourists must give the name of a registered tour guide who will accompany them to Mogok when submitting the application.

Ko Thaung Naing Oo said the requirements mean more trained guides are needed to assist tourists who want to visit Mogok, which is about 200 kilometres (124 miles) north of Mandalay.

"The most important thing is local tour guides – it is preferable if they are native because they will know more

## hanges

destinations remains unclear



t to open up

a tour guide in Mandalay Region.

the town," he said.

from Mandalay.

hristopher Davy

## Boost for tourism as border crossings with Thailand open

#### **ZAW WIN THAN** zawwinthan@gmail.com

THE tourist industry received another boost last month with the announcement that four cross-border checkpoints had been opened as entry and exit points for foreign visitors

Tachileik-Mae Sai, Myawaddy-Mae Sot, Kawthoung-Ranong and Htee Khee-Sunron, all on the border with Thailand, have now been designated as international entry and exit points, for Thais and nationals of other countries, the Ministry of Immigration and Population announced.

These checkpoints were opened on August 28 especially to promote border tourism between Myanmar and Thailand. I am sure this will attract more tourist arrivals to Myanmar through the border crossings," said a ministry spokesperson.

Myanmar citizens with Thai visas will also be able to cross into Thailand at these points.

The ministry said those who enter or depart from the border checkpoints can then enter or leave the country from either the border checkpoints or international air-



People cross the Friendship Bridge linking Myawaddy and Mae Sot. Photo: AFP

ports at Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay. The rules for visa extensions remain unchanged.

The government said the relaxation of travel restrictions has been made possible by its political reforms, particularly efforts to reach peace agreements with

ethnic minority groups. The stage now appears to be set for rapid and continuous growth in the tourist industry.

Yangon-based travel companies hailed the announcement. Daw Su Su Tin, managing director of Exotissimo Travel, told The Myanmar

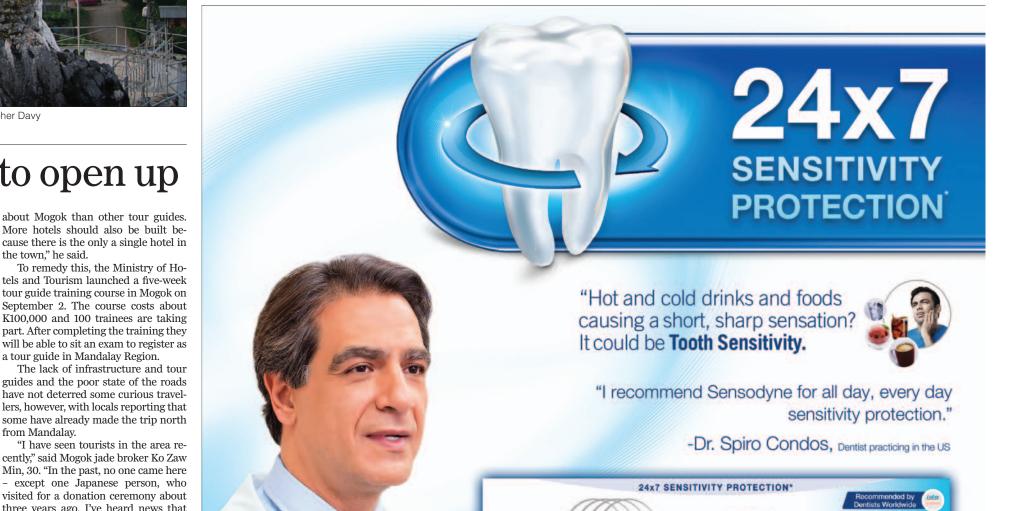
Times that the company was planning new programs to take advantage of the opportunities in overland travel.

"Visitors can also save money by entering the checkpoints. I am sure this will attract more visitors," she said.

SB Chetry, managing director of Journeys Nature and Culture Explorations, said, "This is indeed good news for the industry. Tour operators can add new border entry package programs. People normally consider Myanmar an expensive destination, but now we can create cost-effective package programs through the border checkpoints."

Tourist arrivals through border checkpoints rose sharply in the first seven months of the year, figures from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism show. From January 1 to the end of July, 95,468 tourists entered the country via the border, up from just 18,616 during the same period in 2012.

The decision to open the checkpoints was made after talks between President U Thein Sein and Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in April in Brunei on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit.



three years ago. I've heard news that the authorities have opened the area up for tourists and I think tourists want to see how the gem industry works."

"I have seen tourists in the area re-

Mogok was established in the 13th century and has been famed for its rubies for more than 500 years. Mining activity in Mogok has declined significantly over the past five years, however, and Ko Zaw Min said the town is not as busy as before.

"I think that's why they have allowed tourists to come here now" he said.

In addition to viewing ruby mines and the market, other attractions in the Mogok area include Daw Nan Kyi mountain, Phaung Daw Oo and Paw Daw Mu pagodas, items associated with the famous monk known as Mogok Sayadaw and a cemetery with the remains of British soldiers who died in World War II.

- Translated by Win Thaw Tar



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\*Brush twice daily for continuous protection. Sensodyne is a registered trademark of GlaxoSmithKline Group of Companies

**ETHNIC POLITICS** 

## SNDP sets lofty goals for 2015, despite competition

#### **THAN NAING SOE**

thennaingsoe@gmail.com

THE Shan Nationalities Democratic Party is setting ambitious goals for the 2015 general election, aiming to win 80 percent of the seats it contests.

Party leaders say they expect a stronger showing in Shan State in 2015 and will also expand into Shan-dominated areas of Mandalay Region and Kachin and Kayah states – provided the election is "fair and square".

The party, which is also known as the White Tiger Party, holds 22 seats in the upper and lower houses of the national parliament, as well as 36 regional seats. It contested more than 150 seats in national and regional constituencies.

Chairman U Sai Aik Paung said the party has grown significantly since the 2010 election, and he believes its goals are achievable.

"We grew a plant in 2010 and it has grown up so we are now reaping what we have sown," he said. "If the 2015 general election will be fair and square, we believe the White Tiger Party will win ... 80pc of the seats we contest."

But leaders from the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), which won the second-largest number of seats in the 1990 election, warned that the SNDP is no longer the only Shan party in the game and will face increased competition in 2015.

"The Shan people want us to take part in the 2015 election," said SNLD general secretary U Sai Nyunt Lwin, adding that the SNDP will have "revise" its expectations for the election if his party takes part.

The SNLD was disbanded after its leaders refused to contest the 2010 general election. However, the party re-registered in 2012 and has opened a number of offices in Shan State.

While they appear set to face off against each other, the SNDP and SNLD have also discussed the possibil-



Shan Nationalities Democratic Party MPs walk along a corridor in parliament in Nay Pyi Taw on July 31. Photo: Boothee

ity of merging but are yet to reach an agreement.

U Sai Aik Paung said the SNDP will, however, avoid contesting areas of Shan State where other ethnic minorities have a strong presence, such as in the Palaung, Danu, Pa-O and Wa self-administered areas.

It expected to contest about 40 townships in Shan State and has already identified about five potential candidates in each township. "In Muse, more than 20 young people are getting ready to contest the 2015 election. They have the potential to be leaders in the future so we need to encourage and guide them," U Sai Aik Paung said.

The SNDP will also seek to expand its presence beyond Shan State, to Kachin and Kayah states and Mandalay Region. "We will contest in Kachin state, like Mansi, Momauk and Myitkyina, where

we definitely expect to win. But we

won't take part in some areas where the Red Shans are strong," U Sai Ai Pao said, referring to a Shan ethnic minority who live in Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

"In Mandalay Region, we will compete for the position of minister for Shan affairs by campaigning in Mogok and Pyin Oo Lwin townships," he said.

The party is also planning campaigns in two townships in Kayah State where the majority of residents are Shan.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe

## Ethnic parties battle electoral hurdles in search for unity

#### EI EI TOE LWIN

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ELECTORAL rules and disagreements over ideology are complicating ethnic parties' efforts to join forces, though some progress has been made.

Parties representing Chin, Shan and Rakhine voters have long been engaged in talks aimed at uniting their parliamentary strength through mergers. But practical difficulties abound.

"We face some difficulties in discus-

sions over a merger because of the directive of the Union Election Commission (UEC)," said Salai Ceu Bik Thawng, general secretary of Chin National Party (CNP).

The UEC ruled in June that if political parties unite to form a single party the original parties must be abolished. It also stated that MPs who represented the initial parties will be required to inform the commission whether they wish to represent the new party, or to stand for election as independent candidates.

Parties considering a merger are concerned about the potential impact of starting fresh with a new party and abandoning the identity they have built up since the 2010 election – and in some cases even longer.

"According to the UEC, we have to pass through three stages to merge, of which the last stage entails the dissolving of our party. This could be confusing, and lead to a loss of votes," said Salai Ceu Bik Thawng.

"On the other hand, the Chin people want only one Chin Party in order to show unity. If we can't agree to merge, they might not vote for us.

Merger talks between the CNP and the Chin Progressive Party (CPP) have been continuing for 18 months, so far without success. "We have reached 70 percent agreement to unite, but some issues remain on the table," said Salai Ceu Bik Thawng. Some members oppose a merger, which would entail giving up the

party's distinctive name and logo.

U Sai Aik Paung, chairman of the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP), told *Mizzima* on August 12 that the UEC ruling had ended attempts to unify three Shan parties into a single body.

"Most party members do not want to dissolve the SNDP, which is popularly known as the White Tiger Party," he said.

The SNDP has engaged in merger talks with both the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) and the Tai-Leng (Red Shan) Nationalities Development Party. But ideological differences also pose a barrier, with attitudes toward the 2008 constitution a particular problem.

"How can we merge when we don't share the same ideology? A merger would also mean we have to give up our name and logo," said SNLD chairman U Khun Htun Oo, whose party won the second-largest number of seats in the 1990 election but boycotted the

'A merger would mean that we have to give up our name and logo.'

> U Khun Htun Oo SNLD chairman

2010 vote and re-registered in 2012.

In Rakhine State, however, two ethnic parties have agreed to give up their original party names and register as the "Rakhine People's Party", the heads of the both parties said last week.

Arakan League for Democracy (ALD) chairman U Aye Thar Aung invited officials from the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) to negotiate a possible union back in 2011. The RNDP was formed in 2010 and won 35 seats in the 2010 election, while the ALD contested the 1990 election, boycotted the 2010 vote, but reregistered earlier this year.

"We invited the RNDP to cooperate," U Aye Thar Aung said. "We want to act in unison for the development of



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#### Marketing Executive

ရုပ်ရည်အသင့်အတင့်ရှိ၍ စကားပြောပြေပြစ်သူ၊ တက္ကသိုလ်တစ်ခုခုမှ ဘွဲ့ရရှိထားသူ၊ လမ်းညွှန်စာအုပ်ထုတ်ဝေရေး လုပ်ငန်းအတွေအကြုံရှိသူ (သို့) ကြော်ငြာရောင်း အတွေအကြံ့ (၂)နှစ်ရှိသူ။ \*နယ်ခနီးသွားနိင်ရမည်

ဝန်ထမ်းအလိုရှိသည်

#### Web Designer

#### M/F-2

M/F-2

Photoshop ကျွမ်းကျင်သူ၊ HTML, CSS, Responsive Design Layout, CSS3, HTML5, Jquery, Illustrator, Software များကို ကောင်းစွာအသုံးပြုနိုင်သူ၊ C Panel, Web Hosting ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာကို နားလည်သူ၊ Web Design နှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ အတွေအကြုံရှိသူကို ဦးစားပေးမည်။

#### Web Developer

#### PHP, My SQL, Drupal(CMS), HTML, CSS, HTML5, CSS3, Jquery, Javascript ကောင်းစွာအသုံးပြုနိုင်သူ၊ C Panel, Web Hosting ပိုင်းဆိုင်ရာကို နားလည်သူ၊ Web Developer နှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ အတွေအကြုံရှိသူကို ဦးစားပေးမည်။

#### Cleaner

အသက် (၁၈) နှစ်အထက်ဖြစ်ရမည်။ ရန်ကင်းမြို့နယ်တွင် နေထိုင်သူကို ဦးစားပေးမည်။

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#### M/F-5

Rakhine State. Rakhine people want to see our parties unite and this was also a factor."

However, U Aye Thar Aung admitted that it "was not an easy task".

"We had to give up our party name to follow UEC instructions. It took a lot of discussions to get this result," he said. "The chairmen and vice chairmen of both parties have already agreed to register under the new name soon."

RNDP chairman Dr Aye Maung agreed that several issues had to be resolved before the merger, including the new party's name and policies.

U Hla Maung Cho, deputy director of the UEC, said: "We issued our ruling to clarify the situation among the political parties. We didn't push any party to dissolve. Parties have to discuss among themselves if they want to merge or not, if they agreed to do so, they must dissolve their original parties."



Wilmar International Limited, headquartered in Singapore, is today Asia's leading agribusiness group.

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- (1) Accounts/Finance Executive/Manager
- (2) HR/Admin Executive/Manager
- (3) Government and Media Relations Executive/ Manager
- (4) Sales/Marketing Executive/Manager
- (5) Technical Engineers
- (6) Management Trainees

## **JOB VACANCY**

## (1) Accounts/Finance Executive/Manager Job Responsibilities:

- Handle full set of accounts, including general ledger, accounts receivable, accounts payable, fixed assets and inventory
- Prepare monthly management reports
- · Monitor Accounts receivables, inventory and payables.
- Perform various reconciliations such as bank reconciliations
- · Handle audit and tax queries
- · Process staff expenses claims and reimbursement
- · Ad-hoc duties as assigned
- Job Requirements:
- At least a Degree in Finance/ Accountancy/ Banking, Commerce or equivalent
- At least 5 year(s) of working experience in the related field

## (2) HR/Admin Executive/Manager

- Job Responsibilities:
- Handles the full spectrum of HR functions (C&B, Recruitment, Staff Relations, Training) etc
- Handle payroll administration including payroll calculation and payroll processing activities
- · All general office administration duties
- Government liason
- Job Requirements:
- Degree in Human Resources/Business Administration or related discipline
- Minimum of 3 years of relevant HR experience
- · Good knowledge of local employment laws
- Excellent communication, interpersonal skills and ability to interact with all levels of the organisation
- Good command of both written & spoken English and
   Myanmar

- Communicate key messages of the Company in public disclosures, press releases, presentations to the media
  Monitor media coverage of the Company. To report
- Monitor media coverage of the Company. To report and recommend solutions to management on potential media issues
   Ich Paquiromente:
- Job Requirements:
- A good Degree, preferably in Mass Communications / Business/ Finance or equivalent
- At least 3-7 years' of relevant working experience in communications or journalism
- Strong understanding of communications impact, government and media relations
- · Knowledge of government policies
- Excellent in relationship-building skills, interpersonal skills and strong analytical skills
- Good command of both written & spoken English and Myanmar
- A self-driven and dynamic individual and highly committed, organised and matured
- Good network established with the government and local/international media

### (4) Sales/Marketing Executives/ Manager

II Job Responsibilities:

- Manage marketing and sales of FMCG
- Develop and implement sales plan to accomplish growth targets
- Achieve a high level of market penetration through wide coverage of sales activities
- Develop marketing strategies for new products and identify new business opportunities for growth
- Lead and motivate sales team to achieve targets
- Ensure all subordinates adhere to company policies and procedures
- Ensure timely and effective implementation of trade marketing activities

- At least 4-6 years' of FMCG sales & marketing experience, preferably with a leading FMCG Company
- Strong leadership qualities with good communication and interpersonal skills. Able to communicate well with people from all levels.
- Solid commitment to sales and customer service with good interpersonal and follow-through skills with a high level of initiative
- Able to converse fluently, read and write in English is a plus
- · Strong analytical mind with high level of maturity
- A highly committed, self-driven, organised and dynamic individual

## (5) Technical Engineers

Job Responsibilities:

- To manage an engineering project Job Requirements:
- At least a degree holder or above in Chemical/ Mechanical/ Civil Engineering
- At least 1-3 years of experience in production, construction or maintenance of chemical or food industry.
- Good command of spoken English. Able to converse fluently in Chinese would be a plus.
- Knowledge of AutoCAD software for engineering drawing
- · Able to work in a fast-paced and volatile environment
- Possess good interpersonal and communication skills
- Dynamic and humble and has a positive working attitude
- · A good team-player

## (6) Management Trainees

 Management Trainees will be attached to various departments within the Company and undergo onthe-job training to provide them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes.

- · A good team-player
- Dynamic and humble and has a positive working attitude

(3) Government and Media Relations Executive/ Manager Job Responsibilities:

- Act as the primary government/media contact for the Company; respond to government/media queries and develop consistent responses; organize and engage government officials and the media at company events
- Accountable for sales performance, costs and collection
- · Act as interface to customers on day-to-day basis
- Responsible for building and developing new clients and business activities for the company as well as maintaining strong relationships with our existing clients
- · Spend 70% of your time in the field with the sales team
- Prepare and submit sales reports.
- Job Requirements:
- A good Bachelor's degree

### Requirements:

- Fresh graduate with a good degree from a reputable university
- Willing to travel overseas for further training
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## Anger as army destroys paddy fields

Tensions escalate over two land disputes in Nay Pyi Taw's Lewe township after soldiers destroy 2.5 acres of paddy in late August

#### **PYAE THET PHYO**

pyaethetphyo87@gmail.com

THE Tatmadaw has incensed residents in Nay Pyi Taw's Lewe township by destroying 2.5 acres of paddy owned by local farmers and threatening to charge a man who took photos of the incident. In a separate incident in Lewe town-

the aseparate incident in Lewe township two days earlier, soldiers upped the ante in a dispute with farmers by fencing off 231 acres of disputed land.

In both cases the soldiers said they were acting on the instructions of their superiors.

The order to destroy the fields, which had been planted one-and-ahalf months earlier, prompted a tense confrontation between farmers and soldiers on August 30, as police and administrators looked on. the field straight away," said Ko Ye Win Aung, who lost 0.75 acres. "The group comprised one high-ranking official and one warrant officer class II. Thirteen soldiers destroyed our paddy fields with three ploughs. The high-ranking official had a knife ... so I didn't dare

"When I heard about it, I rushed to

say anything. We just watched them." Police officer U Tin Maung Aye said he had gone to the scene because he was concerned that the military's actions would spark a riot. Thapyaepin village-tract administrator U Khin Maung Than was also present.

"When I arrived there the soldiers were ploughing over my land. I asked the captain not to destroy my fields but he just said he was following the orders of his superiors. I know that what they did is not right but there's no way for me to respond," said Ko Nyunt Win from Khitaye village.

Neither of the two officers threatened the farmers, although the regiment's commanding officer later threatened to charge one resident, Ko Ye Win Aung, for taking photos of the soldiers destroying the fields.

"We just took the photos so that we had a record of what happened," said U Hla Tun, who lost 1.2 acres.

It was unclear why the fields were ploughed over, although farmers suggested it may have been retaliation for a May 22 ceremony at which about 200 area farmers began cultivating land confiscated by No 414 Regiment.

They erected signboards repeating the military's statement to parliament that the "Tatmadaw will return seized farmlands to farmers". The farmers then negotiated with local officials to farm 50 acres of the disputed land but the fields destroyed on August 30 were not owned by the regiment, they said.

"We are just following the orders of our superior," Captain Zaw Min Htike said.

The regiment seized the 420 acres in Thapyaepin village tract in 2005, ostensibly for the expansion of military buildings. Since then, however, the farmers have continued to work the land by paying the military 12 baskets of paddy per acre or K20,000 per acre for other crops.

On August 28, soldiers from No 6 Military Control Command erected a fence around 231 acres of farmland in Pyangaungyi village tract after refusing to negotiate with farmers, who are calling for the land to be returned.

"When we asked them to stop the fencing work, Captain Wai Yan Soe said that they were following the orders of their superior," said farmer Ko Nay Lin Aung. "We have submitted a complaint letter to the commander at No 6 Military Control Command on August 31. We are optimistic it can be resolved."

But the commander of No 6 Military Control Command, Major Min Htike, said he was also acting under instructions.

"I have suggested to the farmers that they submit an official complaint letter to me to settle this problem through the proper legal channels," he said.

The land was seized in 2005 for the expansion of the military compound. - Translated by Zar Zar Soe



## **IN PICTURES**

Mandalay City Development Committee says its new tow truck has removed 90 cars parked illegally in the city's downtown area since going into service on June 28, a rate of about 10 a week. On June 28, two areas – 84<sup>th</sup> Street, between 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> streets, and 78<sup>th</sup> Street, between 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> streets – were dsesignated no parking zones. – *Si Thu Lwin* 



## Post: Assistant Manager Qualifications

- Any gender
- Age between 25-40 years old
- Business related Master degree holder and CPA holder
- Foreign business degree holder (Both Master and Bachelor degree)
- -. M.A(English) degree with at least 3 years work experience

### Requirements

Myanmar Nationality Only

## Police install CCTV to combat abuse claims

#### **SI THU LWIN**

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CONCERNS about alleged police brutality during the interrogation of suspects has prompted five police stations in downtown Mandalay to install security cameras in interrogation rooms and police duty rooms to increase transparency.

The security cameras will also be rolled out to police stations in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, as well as remaining stations in Mandalay, a police official said.

"We aimed to clear up the public's doubts about police use of force. On instructions from senior officials, we installed the cameras to ensure transparency and to allay any suspicion that torture may have been used," said Police Major Khin Maung Yee in Mahar Aung Myay township on September 4.

The public and family members of alleged offenders can watch police interviews from the duty officer's office and they can also watch replays of video recordings, he said.

"We still have to decide whether video records will be saved at police stations or will be forwarded to the regional police force office," Pol Maj Khin Maung Yee told *The Myanmar Times*.

If more funding is allocated officials will extend the practice to other stations in Mandalay Region, he added.

An experienced advocate from Mandalay, who asked not to be named, said it would not become clear until suspects – or their relatives and legal representatives – ask to see the recordings whether the police are genuine in their intentions.

"Generally, installing the cameras is a good idea. But it should not be just a public relations exercise," he said.

In July, 12 homosexuals arrested near Mandalay's moat accused police of physically and verbally abusing them after they were taken into custody.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe



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## **News** 15

## **Airport SIM** card rental hike draws fire



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MARKET forces or monopoly pricing? That's the question foreign visitors are asking after a local company dramatically increased the cost of renting a SIM card at Yangon or Mandalay airport.

The SIM cards now cost US\$10 a day, up from \$2 a day, and foreign visitors say they have few options because of the lack of other short-term rental services or temporary SIM cards.

American tourist Phil, who visited Myanmar in July, said the fee was "excessive ... There really should be a more economical option."

"When they quoted the price, all I could do was laugh and walk away."

He suggested the service was targeted at business travellers making short visits rather than tourists.

"I imagine they would not hesitate to pay \$10 a day. And perhaps that's why the price is set that high."

The airport rental service is a joint venture between Yadanarpon Teleport, state-run Myanma Posts and Telecommunications and local firm Blue Ocean.

The rental fee hike was introduced earlier this year because some customers were returning damaged SIM cards, and sometimes not returning them at all, said U Tin Ko Ko Win, the general manager of Blue Ocean.

Blue Ocean has to pay K20,000 to Myanma Posts and Telecommunications to replace lost SIM cards, he said.

The \$10 a day includes rental of a cheap handset, whereas previously these were rented separately. Blue Ocean has also scrapped the \$50 deposit for a SIM card and instead takes a scan of the customer's passport.

Ma Pwint Nwe Aung, managing director of Gracious Vacation, the outbound division of Radiant Travels and Tours, said that the increase was surprising given the cost of buying SIM cards has dropped dramatically since the rental service was launched in 2011. "I think it should be lower," she said last week.

Just a few years ago SIM cards cost more than K1 million (\$1035) but have gradually declined to about K100,000 (\$104).

While SIMs can be rented privately, they are generally not available for short periods. Compounding the problem for visitors, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology recently announced it had stopped producing temporary SIM cards, which were sold for K25,000-K30,000 and came with K20,000 credit.

"Tourists shouldn't think that they're paying a lot and the locals are getting off easy ... Some locals are paying a lot as well," he said.

Mr Rathjen said the government was not overly concerned about the country's appeal to "the backpacker set", which is the group most likely to be turned off by the price. "Honestly, probably all ASEAN countries prefer the business traveller set ... They spend more money per trip and have a greater economic impact than the backpackers.

"When Telenor and Ooredoo start putting out cheap, local SIM cards I think the price will go down. Not because of government policy, just general market forces."

Until then, tourists still do have another option: go without a SIM card. Polish visitor Dag Dagmara said she was happy to give up her mobile phone for a few weeks. "When I arrived in October I bought a temporary SIM card for \$20," she said. "When it was used up, I decided I didn't really need to be contactable all the time." - Additional reporting by Bill O'Toole

Policeman accused of shooting superior SI THU LWIN sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com

> A POLICE second lieutenant allegedly shot and killed his superior in Mandalay last week after being rebuked for arriving late to work. The police lieutenant was shot

twice at the Mandalay Region Police Force Office on September 2 and died at the scene.

The second lieutenant is in custody but charges have not yet been

laid, a spokesperson from the police force office said.

The spokesperson said the second lieutenant had arrived late to a shift and was acting "abnormal-

ly" when the shooting happened at about 11pm. "The deceased police lieutenant was waiting with patrol constables for the second lieutenant

so they could go on night patrol," he said.

'The second lieutenant did not

arrive on time so the constables went ahead. The police lieutenant rebuked the second lieutenant for being late when he arrived and he responded by shooting the lieutenant."

The 49-year-old lieutenant served in the criminal investigation section of the Mandalav Region Police Force Office. He leaves behind a wife and two school-age daughters.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe





U Tin Ko Ko Win brushed off the criticism by saying that the liberalisation of the telecom sector will soon kill off demand for his company's service anvwav.

"Later I think this business of renting phones at the airport will disappear because Telenor and Ooredoo will sell very cheap SIM cards in Myanmar," he said.

U Aung Myo Oo, a director of travel company Asia's Green Myanmar, said he thinks the rental fee is fair.

"I think \$10 a day is just a small amount for foreign tourists and businessmen," he said.

Jeremy Rathjen, vice president of Thura Swiss Consultancy, said the increase is not about ripping off foreign visitors but represents the "general market condition" for telecoms products.

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## Social security revamp waits on bylaws

Bylaws required to bring the Social Security Law into effect are expected to come into force by April 2014, a ministry official says



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A NEW law aimed at revamping the Social Security Board is expected to come into effect by April 2014, a Ministry of Labour director general says.

The Social Security Law was approved by parliament and enacted in August 2012 to replace the Social Security Act 1954. Bylaws have been sent to the President's Office for approval and could be enacted this month, Social Security Board director general U Yu Lwin Aung said.

He said he believed that the new law would be more effective than earlier legislation, which did not meet standards set by the International Labor Organisation.

'We have sent these bylaws to President U Thein Sein for approval. We hope it will happen this month," U Yu Lwin Aung said.

However, U Yu Lwin Aung said implementation of the law will likely be delayed until early 2014 as the department is still digitising records for the 630,000 workers who are already Social Security Board members.

It will also issue "smartcards" featuring fingerprints and photos to members in an effort to combat fraud.

"The new cards will allow us to check immediately through our database if the person is up to date with their payments. At the moment we treat workers if they have a labour card and don't check whether the card is valid," he said.

U Yu Lwin Aung said the new law would bring a number of benefits for Myanmar workers but stressed that it only applied to those who are registered and paying monthly fees to the Social Security Board.

Members will be required to pay 6 percent of their salary to the board in exchange for a range of services, including insurance and pension, while employers will contribute 7pc.

"For example, in the new Social Security Law maternity leave will be set at 14 weeks, two more than before, and the basic salary will increase to K30,000 [a month]. Companies will also need to give compensation equivalent to 10 times a worker's salary if they are injured in the workplace," he said.

It is unclear, however, whether the new law will encourage more workers to join the Social Security Board. Many have been automatically signed up to the program by their employers, with the amount automatically deducted from their salary.

A number of current members who have used the system said they hope the new law will make the process more efficient. U Lwin, 50, who works for a foreign company, said that when he had



eye surgery last year it was "difficult and complicated" to get compensation from the Social Security Board. Eventually he received FEC135 to cover five weeks' medical leave.

"Before I had my operation I had to take medical leave from my employer with the recommendation from the social welfare branch office. I first went

to the township government clinic to get approval and then after that I went to the labour hospital for a check-up. I then had to go back to the township clinic to get them to sign a form," he said. "The process needs to be changed to make it easier for members."

Ma Thet, a 30-year-old accountant, said she had twice benefited from the board's maternity support program. She agreed that the process should be made simpler but said members - particularly in the private sector - need to be taught how the payment process works.

much more familiar with the system so they can more easily get the recommendation from the department," she said.

Free internet at bus terminal Internet-starved travellers can now access a free Wi-Fi network at Yangon's Aung Mingalar bus terminal, Yangon City Development Committee says. U Nyan Tun Aung, deputy head of the committee's Customs Department,

said the free internet was launched last month as part of an upgrade of the terminal aimed at improving passenger comfort and convenience.

Travellers can use the free Wi-Fi for travellers at the bus arrival hall," U

The recently opened arrival hall was

built through a joint project between YCDC and Myint & Paing Company.

cided that there should be [internet] services in the arrival building," said Myint & Paing director U Thaw Zin

India donates \$1m to Rakhine

announced on September 3.

India has contributed US\$1 million for the reconciliation process in Rakhine

State, the country's embassy in Yangon

The money will be used to build 10 schools in four townships in the state.

India's ambassador to Myanmar, Gautam Mukhopadhaya, handed over

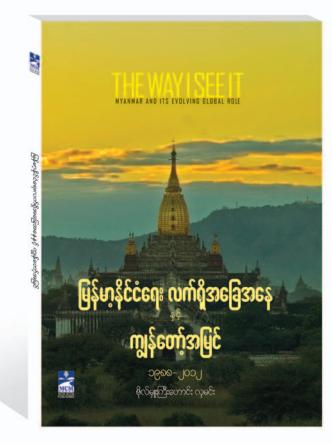
"We wanted this project to reach international standards so we de-

Nyan Tun Aung said.

Aung. – Thiha

'It seemed like government staff are

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> the money to the deputy minister for border affairs, Major General Maung Maung Ohn, and Rakhine State government officials acting on behalf of Chief Minister U Hla Maung Tin.

The announcement follows a commitment made by India's external affairs minister in December to donate money toward the promotion of religious tolerance, communal harmony, peace and reconciliation between the two communities affected by the conflict in Rakhine State.

The Ministry of Border Affairs subsequently submitted a proposal for funding to build 10 schools in Sittwe, Maungdaw, Kyauktaw and Minbya townships.

"India hopes the contribution will advance government and international efforts to restore communal harmony and promote education," the statement said. – Cherry Thein

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ကိုယ်စားလှယ်ဈေး

## Landslide-hit Chin State village to be relocated



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HUNDREDS of residents have abandoned a landslide-hit village in Chin State's Falam township because of fears there will be further slides, people in the area told The Myanmar Times last week.

Five homes in Zar Lai village were damaged in a landslide on August 23. the Relief and Resettlement Department said. Since then, about 75 households have fled the village and they are likely to be resettled at a new site about 16 kilometres (10 miles) awav.

U Zone Hle Htan, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative from Chin State, said in a letter to the parliamentary Victim Care Committee on August 28 that up to 90 households have been affected by the landslides.

A private school teacher from Falam, who frequently visits the affected area, said most of the community's residents have moved to Falam and are staying with relatives.

"Zar Lai village was seriously affected by landslides. Almost all families living at the village have relocated, even though no further landslides have occurred," he said.



Residents walk through the landslide area in Falam township. Photo: Chinworld

families is planned near Lon Pi village, which is about 6 miles [9.6 kilometres] from Falam. But negotiations between the villagers and township authorities are continuing.

"We have never witnessed landslides like these before - and people in the town said they did not recognise the danger signs, although a few said the stream between Lai Zo and Zar Lai seemed to have more water in it than usual."

U Nay Aung, a clerk from the district administration office in Falam, confirmed that plans were underway to move the village to a new site.

We are still selecting the new lo-"A new village for the affected cation," he said. "The chief minister

visited Falam vesterday [September 4] and said he hoped to put the village near Lon Pi village, which will be about 10 miles [16 kilometres] from Zar Lai village.

"Geologists are examining the landslides at Zar Lai but we believe it's unsafe to stay there because the ground is cracked in many places.'

The teacher said many of the villagers did not want to leave Zar Lai because it would mean abandoning the nearby farmland.

"Farmland is like gold for villagers," he said. "It's not easy to find good farmland in hilly regions, and they will also have to find good pastures for their cows."

## **Dental student** wins international research prize

#### YAMON PHU THIT yamon89@gmail.com

A DENTAL student who received an international prize for studying the potential of an eco-friendly mouthwash said he hopes the award will encourage more Myanmar students to undertake original research.

Mg Ye Htut Oo, a final-year student at Yangon University's School of Dental Medicine, was awarded second place in a regional dental research competition. He received the award at a ceremony held in Thailand from August 20-23.

"Students in our country are a bit unfamiliar with doing research," Mg Ye Htut Oo said. "[In Thailand] I saw that students from other countries are used to doing research ... [It] is critical for our studies and we need to focus more on it in Myanmar."

Mg Ye Htut Oo was beaten to first place by a participant from Indonesia in the competition, which was organised by the US-based International Association of Dental Research.

Mg Ye Htut Oo's research focused on the clinical effectiveness of mouthwash made from the bark of the neem tree (Azadirachta in*dica*) on plaque-induced gingivitis. an inflammation of the gum tissue caused by bacteria.

Neem bark is widely used in Myanmar and elsewhere in Southeast Asia as a traditional medicine.

Forty-five people took part in the study, which saw half given a chlorhexidine-based mouthwash, which is widely used around the world to reduce dental plaque and oral bacteria. The other half were given a neem-based mouthwash.

## '[Research] is critical for our studies and we need to focus more on it.'

Mg Ye Htut Oo Prize-winning dental student

All participants used the products twice a day for three weeks and Mg Ye Htut Oo said the results showed there was significant potential for expanding use of neem mouthwash, as it was shown to be just as effective as chlorhexidine. The neem mouthwash was also found to be more effective in reducing tooth stain.

Mg Ye Htut Oo said he hoped his research would prompt more studies to focus on the efficacy of neem, which he described as a costeffective and eco-friendly oral care solution for patients.





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## **NLD** leader backs recall bill suspension



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NATIONAL League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has stepped into the row on the bill to recall - or remove - hluttaw representatives by defending the decision to suspend debate on the draft law.

Last week, the Union Election Commission, which proposed the bill, asked Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann to resume debate on the draft legislation. Members of parliament had earlier agreed to postpone a vote on it until at least the end of the year.

The bill would provide for the recall of sitting members on the basis of complaints from only 1 percent of the voters in their constituency. Though this is stipulated by section 396(b) of the constitution, opponents - including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi – say the percentage of voters required to launch the motion should be increased.

"From my point of view, 1pc is too small. A presidential election can be won by just a narrow margin of 1pc," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is also head of the Pyithu Hluttaw Rule of Law, Stability and Peace Committee, told the media on August 30.

She questioned why the election



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks at a press conference. Photo: Win Ko Ko Latt

commission was requesting prompt action. "I'd like to know why they can't wait just three months," she said.

The commission said it has already received recall petitions about four sitting members, and pointed out that the constitution not only stipulates that 1pc of voters is enough to initiate a recall action, but also states, in section 397, that Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shall enact the necessary laws. There is no constitutional provision for the suspension of debate on the bill.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative for

Hsipaw U Ye Tun, from the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party, said he accepted the commission's view, adding that suspending the debate could undermine the constitution and public faith in the parliament.

Representatives say it is not constituents holding them accountable that is the problem.

"I don't object to the bill," said U Maung Toe, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Minhla. "But the figure of 1pc should be reconsidered."

– Translated by Thiri Min Htun

## Yangon to go car-free on September 22

#### **AYE NYEIN WIN** ayenyeinwin.mcm@gmail.com

MOTORISTS are being strongly urged to keep their cars in the garage on September 22, which has been designated as a "no drive day"

for private vehicles. U Hla Thaung Myint, chairman of the education and disciplinary subcommittee of Yangon Region's Supervisory Committee for Traffic Rules Enforcement, said the reason is to reduce fuel use.

He said black plate cars will be forbidden from driving from 6am to 3pm in most townships within Yangon. However, he said motorists who ignored the ruling would only be verbally warned.

"Last week, we held a meeting and suggested the idea to the minister that private cars not be allowed to drive on that day," he said.

"There are fewer cars on the road on Sundays, which is why we chose this day. And we will only issue warnings to motorists who drive on September 22.

"This is also a test - we want to see if the public is willing to accept this plan. If it works, we would like to do this more often."

The ban on private cars does not include Shwe Pyi Thar, Hlaing Tharyar, North Dagon, East Dagon or South Dagon, nor some types of vehicles. "Cars with red [taxis], yellow [Ministry of Religious Affairs], white [diplomatic] and blue [tourism] licence plates will not be affected."

The concept of car-free days has a long history in Myanmar. About 50 years ago Myanmar held "dry days" for military vehicles, also with the aim of reducing fuel use.

"Since 2001, the government has set a 'dry day' for all government officials every second Sunday," U Hla Thaung Myint said. "Departments and ministries took action against state employees if cars were used on these days unless they were given prior notice."

## 'This is a test – we want to see if the public is willing to accept this plan.

**U Hla Thaun Myint** Yangon Region traffic official

Motorist Ko Thaung Htut said he backed the plan but worried how it would affect business owners.

"I have heard that this is a test to see if motorists will follow this ruling and that no punishments will be handed out. But this is going to affect businesses, who will have to use taxis, which is costly and timeconsuming.

"But it's a Sunday and it's not all day so I think it can be managed. As for me, I won't be using my car that day."



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## Delays for Yangon loop air-con train plan

### SHWEGU THITSAR

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YANGON rail commuters' wait for air-conditioned carriages is set to continue, after officials announced that a plan to introduce them on the city's circle line has been delayed because some stations need to be upgraded.

In the meantime, Myanma Railways will use the Japanese-built air-conditioned train, which has four carriages, between Yangon and Kyaikto in Mon State on the weekends. The service, which began on September 7, departs Yangon at 6:25am on Saturday mornings and leave Kyaikto at midday the following day. Tickets on the 4-and-a-halfhour route will cost K3500 for locals and US\$10 for foreigners.

The announcement came after Yangon Central Railway Station deputy station master U Ye Shan said the trains would soon be put into service on the circle line.

"We're planning to run an airconditioned circle train as soon as possible. Each of the four cabins seats 62 passengers. The train has been doing two test runs daily for the past week," he told *The Myanmar Times*.

He said that some of the platforms will need to be upgraded to handle the new trains.

"The train doors are not aligned with the platform at ... Yangon Station, and there are two other stations where the platform needs adjusting."

The train will also not stop at every station. "Trains that stop at Yangon Station won't stop at the adjacent Pha Yar Lan station, for example," U Ye Shan said.

But the improved service comes with a hefty price-tag for commuters used to paying K100 for a return ticket. Passengers will be charged K300 for a one-way trip.

The likelihood of paying more for air conditioning is leaving some commuters cold. "I think K300 is a little expensive because most people who take the train are working class. The K100 ticket we buy now can be used as a return ticket," said Ma Ei Yupar, who commutes from Kyeemyindaing to downtown Yangon.



Commuters ride the city circle train in South Okkalapa. Photo: Christopher Davy

"Some workers from Hlaing Tharyar have to change at Thamaing. A K300 ticket would be too much, though not for the middleclass commuters," she said.

U Khin Maung Tun, who has been taking the train from Hledan to downtown Yangon for 10 years, said, "It's better to have air conditioning but I'd like to know if there is a monthly season ticket and how much you can save. Now the ticket costs K100 both ways, but you can pay just K1700 for a month. I always buy a monthly ticket."

– Translated by Thiri Min Htun

## Distillery responds over waste water

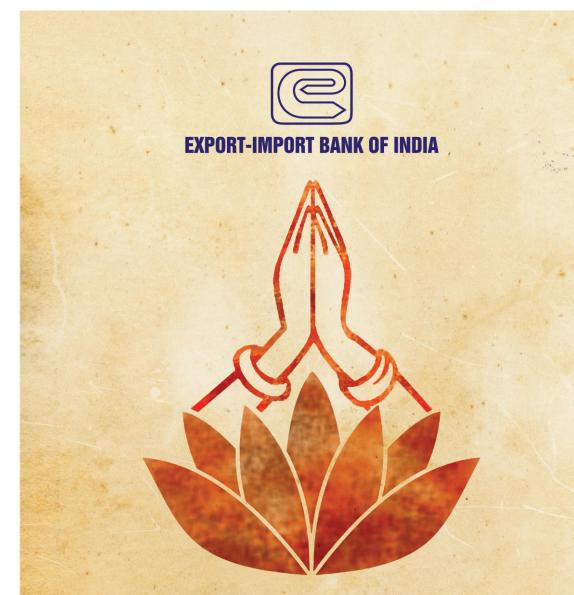
SHWE Bayinma distillery in Sagaing Region has inaugurated a K300 million scheme to cleanse its waste water. After complaints from surrounding residents, the company announced on September 1 that it had installed a water purification system at its factory in southern Shwebo township.

The factory produces a colourless liquor that has no brand name but is colloquially known as *Kant Kaw Oo* or *Shwe Bayinma*. "MWEP company of Yangon built the plant for K300 million to treat 25,000 gallons of polluted water a day," said manager U Yan Myo Kyaw.

MWEP managing director U Khin Maung Win said effluent from the distillery was 30 times as dirty as household waste. The new plant would now cleanse the waste water to international standards, he said.

U Htay Hlaing, a consultant with the distillery's management company, said that during the 27 years the distillery had been operating, its waste water had been discarded into nearby lakes.

Recently residents have complained that the waste was damaging the environment and producing an "unbearable" stench. – *Kyay Mohn Win, translated by Thiri Min Htun* 



## Villagers flee latest clashes in Kachin State



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RECENT fighting in northern Kachin State has displaced more than 100 civilians in Machanbaw township's Mu San village. Aid workers say residents of the small village, between Machanbaw and Putao, have fled into the jungle to escape fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army.

They say the IDPs are in a perilous position because the monsoon weather has made it virtually impossible to deliver aid to the area.

Along the roads there is the constant risk of landslides, while flooding on the nearby Malikha River means it is passable only by larger vessels, of which there are very few.

Reverend Tu Seng, a senior member of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) based in Machanbaw township, said his organisation became aware of unknown and they are supposed to be in the jungle," it said.

The township authorities are working with the Tatmadaw to send aid to the displaced using the army's larger motorboats, which can safely navigate the river, Rev Tu Seng said.

He expressed concern, however, that sending more troops to the area could destabilise the situation further.

Conflict in Kachin State has declined since the government and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), the political wing of the KIA, resumed peace talks in February. The area around Laiza, the site of much of the fierce fighting in late 2012, is largely peaceful. However, clashes have still been reported in the north, with Mu San only the most recent example.

'The fate of the 100 villagers is still unknown and they are supposed to be

## Begins operations in Yangon Date: 9th September, 2013



Export-Import Bank of India House No. 54/A, Ground Floor, Boyarnyunt Street, Dagon Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Email: eximyangon@eximbankindia.in the displaced villagers when a small group arrived in Machanbaw by boat on September 3 – a perilous journey that Rev Tu Seng said the KBC would not undertake because of the strong currents and flooding on the Malikha.

He estimated that it would "take some time" – perhaps several weeks – for KBC workers to reach the displaced. "We want to reach the people as soon as possible," he said.

The Kachin Peace Network is also aware of the displaced villages. It issued a report on September 3, based on information provided by its members in Putao and Machanbaw, that said there had been "heavy fighting" between Tatmadaw light infantry battalion 137 and the KIA's 7<sup>th</sup> battalion between August 29 and September 3.

"The local villagers have had to abandon rice paddy fields and fled ... The fate of the 100 villagers is still

## in the jungle.

### **Kachin Peace Network**

The clashes in the Mu San area come as the government and KIO prepare to hold a further round of peace talks later this month.

But Daw Khon Ja of the Kachin Peace Network said the events in Mu San cast serious doubt on whether the drawn-out peace talks would succeed. She said she was also concerned about the possibility of further conflict as the dry season approaches. "You can talk about peace, but if you don't change how you act on the ground it will never happen," she said.

Spokespersons for the Ministry of Defence and the KIA could not be reached for comment last week.





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Tourist police patrol at U Bein Bridge in Amarapura. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

## Two arrested for harassing tourists at historic bridge

#### **SI THU LWIN**

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TWO men who annoyed groups of local and foreign tourists at U Bein Bridge in Mandalay Region's Amarapura township have been arrested.

"The two men have been detained for annoying visitors and we will transfer them to the relevant police station," said Police Sergeant Htoo Htoo Aung, an officer with the tourist police force who is posted at the bridge.

He declined to say whether they had been charged and if so under which section.

"The two men disturbed me and a friend when we were relaxing on the bridge ... So we informed the police who were guarding the bridge," said a 19-year-old student from Mandalay.

Two foreign tourists who were present also reported the two men to the tourist police.

In an effort to deter anti-social behaviour and criminal activity, eight police force personnel have been posted on the bridge since April 1.

"This is the first time we have had to take action against anyone for annoying visitors," Pol Sgt Htoo Htoo Aung said.

U Bein Bridge is a popular tourist spot about 16 kilometres (10 miles) south of Mandalay. Built about 1850 and made almost entirely from teak, it spans Taungthaman Lake.

The lake is especially crowded during the Buddhist months of Waso and Wargaung - around July and August in the Western calendar - when the waters of Taungthaman Lake are at their peak.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe

## Govt dismisses report on casualties in Kachin



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A GOVERNMENT spokesman has rubbished reports that more than 1000 Tatmadaw soldiers were killed during an offensive against the Kachin Independence Army in late 2012.

The figure was quoted on August 27 by the Shan Herald Agency for News, which said it had obtained the figure from a leaked Tatmadaw report.

Presidential spokesman U Ye Htut declined to comment on the report on the grounds that he does not respond to "nonsense".

The KIA could not be reached for

comment last week.

The casualties were allegedly sustained between September and December as the Tatmadaw's North Eastern Region Command attacked the Kachin Independence Army. Neither side has released casualty figures for the fighting, which broke out in June 2011 and reached its peak at the end of 2012.

According to the SHAN, the leaked report quoted remarks made by Brigadier General Aung Soe, head of North Eastern Command, in a meeting held in Lashio in February. During his speech, Brig Gen Aung Soe said the Tatmadaw had deployed 10 infantry divisions against the KIA. "The army has lost more than 1000 men due to lack of experience," he reportedly said.

However, he added that Tatmadaw had successfully occupied all the targeted outposts and strongholds by

"intensive use of heavy weapons and air support". During the fighting, the Tatmadaw denied using air strikes, saying that helicopters were carrying question papers for matriculation exams. Later. BBC footage of apparent air strikes was circulated on the internet.

U Khun Sai, editor-in-chief of SHAN, told The Myanmar Times by phone that he had received the report last week from "inside the government" but gave no other details.

The leaked report quoted orders issued by Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to "annihilate" the KIA's 4th Brigade, which is based in Shan State; clear all armed groups from along the Nawnghkio-Namhkam highway; establish strongholds along the Thanlwin's west bank; and improve security for the gas pipeline and Shweli hydropower plant.

## **IN PICTURES**

Natkadaw, or spirit medium, Marmi No channels the nat spirit Ko Gyi Kyaw at the Yadanar Gu festival at Amarapura in Mandalay Region on August 28. The festival began a week after the country's largest nat festival, at Taungbyone in Madaya township, and ran for seven days. - Si Thu Lwin





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## BRIEFS

#### Court to rule on murder charges this week

Yangon's Northern District Court will this week decide whether 23 men should stand trial over the killing of a 32-year-old man in a clash between rival gangs.

The court will rule on September 10 whether there is enough evidence for the men to be charged with murder.

U Kyaw Min died in an alcohol shop in North Okkalapa township after being stabbed during the fight between the gangs.

The men were arrested and charged in Yangon's Eastern District Court but the case was transferred to the Northern District Court for security reasons. – Aung Kyaw Min

Airport shuttle bus service begins

Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann in San Francisco.

"I told him about my plan to offer something similar in Yangon. He said he warmly welcomed it and this gave me the strength to try and make it happen in Yangon.

The company plans to roll out similar operations in other big cities in Myanmar in future, he said.

While the service is door-to-door, customers must register their flight time and number at least 24 hours before arrival through the company's website, www.yangonairportshuttle. com. – Lwin Mar Htun

### Muslim jailed for rape attempt

A court in Kanbalu township has jailed a Muslim teenager for seven years for the attempted rape of a Buddhist

#### tingy

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## ABOUT LLOYD'S

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Shuttle buses ferrying travellers between Yangon's airport and downtown area launched on September 1, a company spokesperson said last week.

We have five shuttle buses with 14 seats each," said U Kyaw Kyaw, an adviser to Yangon Airport Shuttle, the company behind the venture. "One of the buses also has the capacity to carry wheelchairs, which can be pushed on directly."

The door-to-door service costs US\$5 a person for foreigners and K3500 for Myanmar nationals. A taxi between the airport and the downtown area typically costs from K8000 to K10,000 but seats up to four people. Prior to getting involved in the project, U Kyaw Kyaw ran shuttle buses in San Francisco for 10 years. He said he was encouraged to return home and pursue his idea for a similar service in Yangon when he met Pyidaungsu

woman that triggered recent religious unrest, an official said on September 5. Hundreds of people were left homeless after about 1000 anti-Muslim rioters tore through villages in Kanbalu in Sagaing Region on August 24, torching Muslim property.

The rampage started after a mob surrounded a police station to demand the suspect be handed over after he allegedly tried to rape a 25-year-old Buddhist woman.

A township court on September 4 sentenced 18-year-old Ko San Min Oo to seven years in jail, a local police officer said, asking not to be named. "He was sent straight to Mandalay

prison," the officer said, adding the situation was "calm" in the area.

Some 325 Muslims are still sheltering at a school after their homes were set ablaze during the unrest, the policeman added. – AFP

## 'Serious abuses' on Thai fishing boats: ILO

THE International Labour Organization last week Monday warned of "serious abuses" in the Thai fishing industry – a major global supplier – such as forced labour and violence.

About 17 percent of the mainly undocumented Myanmar and Cambodian fishermen surveyed by the ILO were forced to work under threat of financial penalty, violence or denunciation to the authorities, the UN agency said on September 2.

Thailand – the world's third largest fish exporter by value, with sales worth around US\$7 billion a year – is under international pressure to respond to reports of fishermen forced to work as virtual slaves under brutal conditions.

"This study does find serious abuses within the sector. The vast majority of workers were in irregular status and thus more vulnerable to exploitation," said ILO senior program officer Max Tunon.

While 10pc of respondents reported being severely beaten while on board boats, more than a quarter said they worked or were on call between 17 and 24 hours a day.

The average wage was 6483 baht (\$200) a month among the sample of 596 people, while only one of the migrant fishermen had a work permit. The survey found seven children under 15 years old and 26 teenagers aged 15-17.

Conditions for fishermen on long-haul vessels were worse than for those who regularly returned to shore, the survey found, with a quarter reporting having been deceived or coerced into working at sea.

Mr Tunon said the study focused on those in short-haul boats, with those trapped at sea "in the worst conditions" not necessarily included.

"It would be expected that if we interviewed just people at sea for a long period of time the picture would look worse," he said.

The report said the fishing industry as a whole – which includes lucrative fish and shrimp farming and packaging sectors – accounts for around 1.2pc of Thailand's economy.

But declining fish stocks have pushed boats farther out to sea in search of catch, increasing their fuel costs.

"With pressures on seafood suppliers to reduce costs by every means available, a race to the bottom on labour costs has been created for the Thai seafood industry," the report said. "When coupled with the increased vulnerability of undocumented migrant workers to forced labour, an enabling environment for such abuses to become systematic now exists."

The ILO said an estimated 50,000 shortfall in the number of fishermen required by the industry was "both a cause and an effect of the abusive labour practices" in the sector.

It said complications in the registration process hampered access to work permits, while there was "inadequate access to justice" for migrant fishermen, but noted that Thailand had introduced a number of new initiatives to try to coordinate its response to abuses in the sector.

Both the European Union and United States, which are major markets for Thai seafood products, have vowed to jointly combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Thailand has languished toward the bottom of the annual US human trafficking report and must improve its efforts on combating forced labour or face relegation next year – which could trigger cuts in non-humanitarian and non-trade American aid.

International firms are also



Migrant labourers work on a Thai fishing boat in Sattahip in Thailand's Rayong province. Photo: AFP

becoming more wary of association with suppliers who may use forced labour and trafficking, the ILO said. It cited a petition of almost 100,000 signatures demanding that

Walmart adopt higher standards after the US retail giant was linked to a Thai seafood firm at the centre of accusations of "abusive labour practices". – *AFP* 

## **BRIEFS**

#### Nay Pyi Taw Ayeyarwady hardest hit as mangrove forests disappear

Myanmar has lost half of its mangrove forests, with Ayeyarwady Region the worst affected, the deputy director of forestry says.

Charcoal production has decimated mangrove forests in the delta, with 84pc of the original area destroyed, U Zaw Win said.

Meanwhile, Taninthari Region and Rakhine State have lost 42pc and 27pc of their mangrove cover respectively, with fish and prawn farms mostly to blame. Mangrove forests, which grow along shorelines, play an important role in protecting against erosion and disaster risk reduction.

U Zaw Win said the government has recognised the importance of rehabilitating depleted mangrove forests but has no coordinated plan on the issue. He said there is also a lack of enforcement of laws that restrict the cutting of mangrove forests for firewood and charcoal production.

However, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has agreed to support a four-year project aimed at redeveloping Myanmar's mangroves, he said. The project is a joint initiative with the government and will begin in November, although many details are yet to be agreed on. – Pyae Thet Phyo, translated by Zar Zar Soe



#### Bangkok Journalists' association signs exchange agreement in Thailand

A Myanmar Journalists Association delegation has signed an agreement with its counterpart in Thailand that will see closer cooperation between the two groups, including annual media exchanges.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by Thai Journalists Association president Pradit Ruangdit and Myanmar delegation leader U Aung Hla Tun on September 4, the *Bangkok Post* reported.

Mr Pradit described the signing of the agreement as an historic moment for the media associations, while U Aung Hla Tun, a correspondent with the Reuters news agency, said he was delighted to help forge closer ties, the newspaper reported. – Thomas Kean

# Business

## Ayeyarwady hydro dams in limbo

Ongoing conflict in Kachin State and an uncertain legal situation hold back development plans



**JEREMY MULLINS** 

ONGOING violence and Myanmar's incomplete legal framework are preventing the restart of development at six planned hydropower dams on the Ayeyarwady River in Kachin State, even after US\$1 billion has already been invested, said an official at the firm developing the dams.

The Upstream Ayeyawady Confluence Basin Hydropower (UACBH) Company - which is majority-owned by state-run China Power Investment Corporation - is also the firm behind the controversial Myitsone hydropower dam, which was suspended by President U Thein Sein in 2011 over environmental concerns following

opposition from figures such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. UACBH managing director Li

Guanghua revealed last week the firm spent a total of \$1 billion on work so far in Myanmar, of which \$330 million was on building Myitsone and the other \$670 million on feasibility studies for the remaining six planned hydropower dams.

Although Myitsone was halted by presidential decree, the company will not proceed on its other six projects unless the security situation in Kachin State and the Myanmar legal climate are improved, Mr Li told The Myanmar Times on the sidelines of the Mvanmar Energy Investment Summit 2013 in Yangon last week.

"The peace talks [are the first issue to be resolved]. We're waiting for peace to be achieved in that area," he said. The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) is in conflict with the Tatmadaw in much of the northern state.

The company also wants to ensure



The 790-megawatt Yeywa hydropower dam seen in operation in Mandalay Region, on a different river than the planned UACBH dams. Photo: Manthar Lay

there is a stronger legal system in place governing foreign investments before proceeding.

"The foreign investment law has just been issued, and we're waiting for [more] detailed regulation to come to the public," he said.

U Maw Thar Htwe, director general of the Department of Hydropower Implementation, claimed the company had halted work primarily due to a flare-up in the fighting last year.

"The company had been building bridges, roads and other infrastructure to develop the projects. But work has stopped because of security problems," he said.

Mr Li added further regulations including regulation on investment. environment, and energy projects will assist UACBH with ensuring it can proceed with its investments without facing stoppages.

Permission to restart Myitsone, which is slated to eventually cost \$8 billion, may be some time away, he said, adding that once the benefits were explained it would be easier to convince the public it is in Myanmar's interest to proceed.

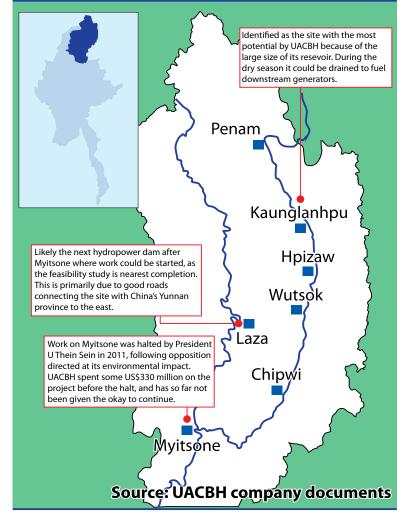
He claimed the electricity generated from the hydro dam will be earmarked for either the Chinese or the Myanmar market depending on domestic demand.

The firm has taken over compensation efforts for the relocated villagers from the government, aiming to fairly compensate villagers, he said.

"Otherwise these people want to return to their former sites. This is also not good for the whole Mysitone project," he said.

Although Myitsone is the only hydro dam where development had begun, Mr Li said, of the six others, the Laza project on the Malikha River is the next likely candidate after Myitsone - not for reasons of its viability, but because it is easier to reach.

"We were almost finished the feasibility study there," he said. "The good road makes it convenient to reach



Laza. It's difficult to reach the other sites, so the feasibility study has not proceeded so smoothly.

He pointed to the Kaunglanhpu site as having the largest potential, due to the possibility for creating a large reservoir to draw from. This reservoir could also be drawn from to increase generation at the downstream projects in the dry season, increasing the viability for them all, he said.

However, the road is currently limited that far north, he said, meaning it is some time before Kaunglanphu can be begun.

U Maw Thar Htwe said that a smaller-scale Chipwinge hydropower project capable of generating 99 megawatts was also near completion in Kachin state, but had been halted last year due to conflict between the KIA and the Tatmadaw.

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## Banking on kyat trading

### **BUSINESS 28**



## Yangon market eyes tax move

### **PROPERTY 32**

Exchange Rates (September 6 close)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1275	K1280
Malaysia Ringitt	K292	K295
Singapore Dollar	K755	K760
Thai Baht	K30	K30.5
US Dollar	K970	K971

## Experts fret 2015 Yangon stock exchange deadline

Myanmar market plans 'pressed for time'

MYANMAR is running behind schedule for starting a stock exchange by 2015 after delays in getting the legal framework in place, said an executive at Japan Exchange Group, which is assisting on the project.

"We're pressed for time," Koichiro Miyahara, senior executive officer at Japan Exchange, said in an interview in Tokyo last week. He said the late approval of a capital markets bill has delayed the project, and it is up to the Myanmar government as to how fast it can set up related organisations such as a securities regulator. Japan Exchange's predecessor Tokyo Stock Exchange Group and Daiwa Securities Group were chosen last year to help Myanmar set up a stock exchange.

"Like any other modern economy, Myanmar needs a capital market to allow companies to raise funds," said Moe Thuzar, a Singapore-based research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. "It is more important to ensure that appropriate regulatory and operational infrastructure is in place" rather than meet an arbitrary deadline, she said.

Myanmar President U Thein Sein signed the Securities Exchange Law on July 31. The legislation sets rules that include the establishment and operation of a securities regulator to oversee trading activity.

Mr Miyahara, who is in charge of Japan Exchange's contribution to the project, said he had expected the bill to be passed at the start of 2013 and the delay will shorten the time for developing the bourse by about a year. His company will make "every effort" to complete the work on time, he said.

Regulations still need to be developed under the law to outline how the exchange will function, said U Maung Maung, director general at the Central Bank of Myanmar. The government will begin working on infrastructure such as buildings and software for the bourse next year and it will begin operating in 2015, Deputy Finance Minister U Maung Maung Thein said at a briefing on Aug. 23.

Japan Exchange and Daiwa's research unit, both based in Tokyo, have completed a report on the framework for the exchange, including plans for its functions and system infrastructure, Mr Miyahara said. They will submit the document this month to the government of Myanmar.

The Securities Exchange Law does

not say whether foreigners will be allowed to trade on the bourse.

Jim Rogers, chairman of Rogers Holdings in Singapore, and Mark Mobius, executive chairman of Templeton Emerging Markets Group, are among investors who see opportunities in the country over time.

"It'll take time for Myanmar, but Myanmar definitely is going to get more and more investment," mainly in infrastructure, said Mr Mobius, who manages US\$53 billion. He has indirectly invested in the nation through companies listed in Singapore and Thailand. About eight companies may be listed when the exchange opens, according to Shigeto Inami, managing director of Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre, a joint venture between state-owned Myanma Economic Bank and Daiwa Institute of Research Ltd, a unit of Japan's second-largest brokerage.

Other frontier Southeast Asian

## 'Like any other modern economy, Myanmar needs a capital market ... to raise funds.'

Moe Thuzar Research fellow

economies have opened stock exchanges in recent years, with mixed results. Trading on the Cambodia Securities Exchange began last year and it currently has one company listed, according to its website. The twostock Laos Composite Index has risen 30 percent since its bourse started trading in January 2011.

"If you look at Cambodia and Laos, the stock exchanges haven't been a great success," said U Thura Soe Paing, managing director of All Myanmar Investment Partners, a Yangon-based investment and business advisory company.

"What I hope an establishment of a stock exchange will drive forward is the development and installation of business standards."

– Bloomberg

## China, ASEAN talk up trade, gloss over dispute



From left to right: Laotian Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong, Myanmar President U Thein Sein, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Cambodian PM Hun Sen and Thai PM Yingluck Shinawatra attend the China-ASEAN Expo last Tuesday. Photo: AFP

trillion by 2020, according to Chi-

Mr Li called for an upgraded ver-

#### SU PHYO WIN

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PRESIDENT U Thein Sein said Myanmar aims to boost trade ties with China as it prepares to Chair ASEAN next year.

"China has invested nearly US\$14 billion in our country. Last year, bilateral trade hit \$6.5 billion," he said.

"But [Myanmar's] contribution to total ASEAN trade is too low so we need to promote trade links," he said at the 10<sup>th</sup> China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning, China, last week.

U Thein Sein added next year Myanmar, as Chair of ASEAN, will seek to engage with the world's second largest economy.

Chinese premier Li Keqiang downplayed simmering territorial disputes between ASEAN and China at the expo last week, instead stressing a "common destiny" and trade figures that could double to \$1

## Guangxi and Myanmar plan agricultural cooperation

sion of the free trade deal between the two sides and insisted that "dis-

nese state media.

the two sides and insisted that "disruptive factors" should not get in the way of regional cooperation, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

But Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea – believed to sit atop vast deposits of oil and natural gas – even waters close to the coasts of its neighbours, and has been increasingly assertive over the issue in recent years.

"We have also noticed that there exist some disruptive factors in the region that are against stability and development, but they are not mainstream," he said according to a transcript of his speech.

"The Chinese side maintains that the South China Sea disputes are not an issue between China and the ASEAN, and they should not and

MYANMAR and China's Guangxi province aim to simplify cross border investment particularly in agriculture, signing an agreement at the 10<sup>th</sup> China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning last week to cooperate more closely on areas of shared concern.

SUPHYOWIN Similar growing conditions in the two locations means it is logical that agricultural investment more

will not affect the overall China-ASEAN cooperation."

ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei have often-overlapping claims to parts of the South China Sea, and Taiwan also claims it all.

The dispute has rumbled on for decades, but Beijing's actions to support its claim in recent years have raised concerns with its neighbours, particularly Hanoi and Manila.

China rejects international arbitration, preferring to deal with the issue on a one-to-one basis while maintaining it has sole territorial rights.

Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung was present at the trade fair, but Philippines president Benigno Aquino did not attend after Chinese authorities imposed conditions on the trip, Manila said, signalling they were related to the territorial row. – Additional reporting AFP

often extends across the border, said Guangxi Zhoung Autonomous Region governor Chen Wu.

"One company from Guangxi is already testing types of rice and corn in Myanmar," he said.

"There's also lots of other sectors where it's time to cooperate, including border affairs, travel, education and health."

## List of local energy partners grows to 154 – and counting

#### **AUNG SHIN**

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A MINISTRY of Energy list of domestic companies allowed to partner with foreign firms on energy exploration and production projects has grown to 154 companies.

The list, which is compiled by the ministry's Energy Planning Department, now includes companies backed by prominent tycoons U Tay Za, U Aik Tun, U Yan Win and U Nay Win Tun – owners of Asia Green, Shwe Taung, A-1, and Ruby Dragon respectively.

The September 2 update is the first official release by the ministry concerning domestic energy companies, which will play an integral role in the nation's energy sector in years to come as a local company must be involved in every onshore and offshore exploration project, except deepwater offshore blocks. A retired Ministry of Energy official said the list was dominated by big business.

"All the listed companies are owned by cronies or ministry-related people," he said. "It means fewer chances for young businesspeople. Those cronies are always overwhelming business in Myanmar.

"It is very important to see more transparency in energy-related investment with the ministry," he said.

President U Thein Sein reshuffled the ministry in August, moving minister U Than Htay and deputy minister U Htin Aung to other ministries. "U Than Htay was in the ministry for more than 10 years," the retired official added. "It is clear that the president shifted the minister and his deputy from their positions because of the lack of transparency, which has not been solved yet."

However, Daw Khin Khin Aye, a director at the Energy Planning Department, said the ministry had no control over which companies register.

"We just announced the registered local companies. The ministry does not get involved in the business relations between domestic and foreign companies," she said on September 6.

"Foreign companies can find and choose domestic partners how they like and we will not play any part in this." A Myanmar energy consultant said he believed only 10 companies on the Energy Planning Department's list had any relevant experience in the energy sector. He said many of the others were involved in other business sectors, such as construction or commodity trading.

The consultant said that while only six Myanmar companies were involved in the sector before 2011, the number has grown steadily since and will continue to expand because of the ministry policy on local involvement.

In January this year the ministry announced it was tendering 18 onshore blocks, adding a further 30 offshore blocks in a separate tender in April.

Daw Khin Khin Aye said 26 companies had submitted 53 final proposals for the 18 onshore blocks by August 23, with the winners to be announced in the first week of October.

The final deadline for submitting proposals for the 30 offshore blocks is November 15, with the results expected to be announced in December or early 2014. Twelve foreign companies – from South Korea, China, Japan, India, Thailand and Vietnam – are already involved in offshore exploration and production in the Gulf of Mottama and off the coast of Tanintharyi Region and Rakhine State.

Myanmar Investment Commission statistics to February 2013 show that foreign companies have invested nearly US\$14.4 billion in Myanmar's oil and gas sector.

## Interbank kyat trading planned for next year



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INTERBANK currency trading in kyat is set to commence in early 2014 to combat the threat of rapid currency fluctuations, an official at the central bank's Foreign Exchange Management Department said last week.

"This plan is intended to control the inflation of the kyat and the central bank has already started practising it by accepting loans and deposits in kyat at very low interest rates," the official said, who declined to be named.

The central bank last month formed the Yangon Foreign Exchange Market Committee with banks authorised to trade in foreign currency in order to set up the interbank forex spot market, he said.

A second aim of the plan is to offer a live exchange rate available through the central bank's website and via telephone, he said, adding that the rate will potentially change every minute.

"Nobody can monopolise the market anymore. It has become transparent and liquid," he said.

Domestic banks also participate in daily foreign exchange auctions with the central bank, the result of which is a daily floating rate that is posted on the bank's website and used as a yardstick; domestic banks are allowed to trade dollars within a 0.8 percent bracket around the daily rate.

However, the kyat has been largely stable against the US dollar due to the influx of dollars moving into the country, appreciating slightly since July, he said.

The spokesperson said US dollar inflows into Myanmar were growing fast to facilitate foreign investment, pay for goods exported by Myanmar, pay for hotel rooms and other hospitality services and through remittance transfers made

by Myanmar working abroad. The dollar has been trading against the kyat at about K970-974, although it trimmed to about K966 by September 5 – a trading range of less than 1pc.

U Pe Myint, managing director of public Co-operative Bank, said the domestic banks do not have the full range of electronic infrastructure international banks use to link banks and deal in currencies.

He said a few larger banks in Myanmar are preparing to upgrade their electronic infrastructure in anticipation of increased interbank trading.

'Nobody can monopolise the market anymore. It has become transparent and liquid.'

> Foreign exchange official Central Bank of Myanmar

"The market has only just started and we are preparing more electronic infrastructure to run 100 percent [of the time]," he said.

At the same time, he said banks are practising their kyat trading through offering interbank loans at an annual interest rate of 4pc.

"But it doesn't have a great effect because banks want to accept outside depositors that pay about 8pc interest rate," he said.

U Than Lwin, vice president of Kanbawza Bank, said interbank kyat trading depends on the central bank, which has many plans for the future but is dealing with an immature forex market.

"We are preparing for an international forex market that can run 24 hours a day."



A vendor holds gold pieces at a Yangon shop. Photo: Zarni Phyo

## Gold price shows high volatility

MYAT NYEIN AYE

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DOMESTIC gold prices fluctuated rapidly in the past week in line with international trends, shop owners in Yangon said last week.

U Zaw Aung, owner of Take Sein gold shop, said, "The price changed rapidly within a week or so, rising

## or falling by K10,000 a tical [0.576 ounces] because the international market was in turmoil."

The commodity was trading for about K717,000 a tical in Yangon last Monday.

U Htay, owner of Shwe Kyin gold shop and a central executive committee member of the Myanmar Central Gold Entrepreneurs Association, said political events in Syria were to blame for the international price rise, which saw gold increase from about US\$1300 an ounce on August 28 to \$1395 by September 2, although it had since fallen to \$1370.

"As soon as there is global political tension, the gold price goes up suddenly, which pushes up the price in Myanmar."

## BRIEFS

### **Global competitiveness scored**

Myanmar ranked 139 out of 148 countries surveyed in the World Economic Forum's annual Global Competitiveness Report 2013 released last week.

Access to finance and policy instability are cited as the most problematic factors for doing business in the country, followed closely by corruption, the report shows.

Few Myanmar respondents pointed to crime and theft or restrictive labour regulations as being problematic. The country scored highest compared internationally in market size and labour market efficiency, finished 79<sup>th</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> respectively in the categories.

Switzerland, Singapore, and

Finland are ranked as the three most competitive countries in the report, while Chad is ranked as the least competitive nation. – Jeremy Mullins

#### Myanmar unaffected by Toyota's vehicle recall

Toyota's vehicle recall Domestic car owners are unaffected by a large vehicle recall initiated by Japan's Toyota Motor Corporation

last week, Myanmar dealers say. The world's biggest automaker has recalled some 370,000 vehicles worldwide due to glitches that make them stop mid-journey, affecting Crown, Mark X and various Lexus models built in Japan, a Toyota spokesperson said.

U Soe Htun, the owner of domestic dealer Farmer Auto, said the recalled models are not the same as those generally sold in Myanmar.

"Lexus vehicles in Myanmar come from the Middle East and Canada directly to our country," he said. "Besides, I think Toyota is mostly recalled newer cars, while our market is mostly older models."

However, some dealers said they were unaware there is an international recall of the brand, and are unaware how it would function if it affected Myanmar.

"I have never heard of anyone recalling cars from Myanmar, and we have no chance to complain if we face problems. We bought used cars, so we have no guarantee," said ASE Auto owner U Khant Win.

- Aye Nyein Win/AFP



The Fine Print Legal & tax insight

Working with Myanmar's commercial tax

#### THINZAR KHINE thinzar@pwplegal.com SEBASTIAN PAWLITA sebastian@pwplegal.com

COUNTRIES with a VAT system have a mechanism in place aimed at preventing the accumulation of VAT over the value chain. The idea behind it is that ultimately only the end-customer should bear the burden of VAT. Transactions between businesses should be VAT neutral.

The commercial tax system in Myanmar – which in many aspects resembles VAT – also allows the offset of tax charged in incoming invoices ("input tax") with tax charged in outgoing invoices ("output tax"). However, the offset is limited to certain transactions.

A domestic manufacturer can offset

the commercial tax paid when purchasing or importing raw materials and semi-finished goods with the commercial tax charged to the buyer of the finished goods. Furthermore, a reseller can offset the commercial tax paid when purchasing or importing goods with the commercial tax charged to the buyer when reselling the goods.

Apart from these transactions, it is not possible to offset input with output tax. In particular, services companies are prevented from obtaining a credit for commercial tax charged in incoming invoices and from issuing certificates that could be used by their recipients to obtain a commercial tax credit. An exception is, of course, trading companies: "Trade" is considered to be a service under schedule 7 to the Commercial Tax Law, but a trading company can, as a reseller, offset input tax on inventory purchased with output tax on inventory sold.

The limits on the offset of commercial tax is something that foreign sellers have to bear in mind when calculating the price of machinery, equipment, construction material and other goods that they intend to sell to companies in Myanmar. If, for instance, a foreign manufacturer of machines sells its products to a factory in Myanmar, this factory has to pay 5 percent commercial tax when importing the machines (unless it happens to enjoy an exemption, eg under the Citizen Investment Law) without the possibility to offset the amount with output tax as the machines are not "raw materials and semi-finished goods". As a result, the factory's costs for the machines increase accordingly.

Further limits on the offset of commercial tax are contained in schedule 6: Domestic manufacturers and importers of luxury goods listed in this schedule may not offset commercial tax paid when purchasing or importing raw materials or semi-finished goods, or when importing the luxury goods, with commercial tax charged to the buyer. As an exception, such an offset is possible in the case of petrol, diesel oil and jet fuel according to notifications 323/2012 and 543/2013.

The upper limit on any offset is the amount of output tax. It is not possible to claim a refund of the excessive amount if the input tax is higher than the output tax.

Example: Domestic beer manufacturer A purchases raw materials from X, a trader of agricultural products, for

105 (net price 100 plus 5pc commercial tax). A produces the beer and sells it to wholesaler B for 330 (net price 220 plus 50pc commercial tax). B resells it to supermarket C for 378 (net price 360 plus 5pc commercial tax). A cannot offset commercial tax paid to X with commercial tax collected from B as beer is listed in schedule 6. From the commercial tax in the amount of 110 paid by B to A, B can offset 18 with the commercial tax paid by B to C. B cannot claim a refund of the remaining amount as the Commercial Tax Regulations states that "the offset amount shall not exceed the tax due on the resale of goods".

Sebastian Pawlita and Thinzar Khine are with Polastri Wint & Partners Legal & Tax Advisors.

### www.mmtimes.com

## JAKARTA

## Indonesian outlook grim following trade deficit

INDONESIA'S trade deficit unexpectedly hit a record high in July, data showed last week, heaping pressure on policymakers to shore up the economy which is facing a grim future as investors flee.

The news came as a closely watched survey showed manufacturing activity in Southeast Asia's biggest economy had sunk to a 15-month low in August.

Indonesia – like other global emerging markets – has been hammered by huge outflows of foreign cash over the past month on expectations the US Federal Reserve will begin to wind down its stimulus program.

Official figures showed Indonesia's trade deficit rose sharply to US\$2.31 billion in July from \$847 million in June, compared with economists' forecasts that it would dip to \$353 million.

The deficit in July was "the highest in Indonesia's history", Suryamin, the head of the Central Statistics Agency who goes by one name, told reporters.

"Exports dropped because the price of commodities dropped," Mr Suryamin said. Demand for key commodities such as coal and palm oil have been hit by a slowdown in key market China.

It adds pressure to the country's current account, which in the April-June quarter widened to a \$9.8 billion deficit, the biggest shortfall since the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s.

Adding to the government's woes was news that an index compiled for HSBC showed manufacturing activity fell to a 15-month low in August and was now shrinking.

The purchasing managers index hit 48.5 last month from 50.7 in July, marking the fourth straight month of decline, Anything below 50 points to contraction and anything above indicates growth.

Equally as worrying, the survey shows new exports business contracted for the third month in a row, while a decline in total new orders was the first recorded since May 2012, HSBC said.

Jakarta's stock market closed down 2.24 percent after the data was released, while the rupiah weakened to 10,950 to

## [The trade deficit was] "a nasty and badly timed surprise"

Robert Prior-Wandesforde Credit-Suisse economist the dollar from 10,920.

It has already lost about 12 percent against the dollar this year.

Emerging economies from Indonesia to Brazil have seen a huge flight of capital as dealers repatriate to the US expecting the Fed stimulus – which has fuelled an investment spree in developing countries for the past year – to dry up. And among countries to suffer the most are those with big current account deficits.

July's deficit was "a nasty and badly timed surprise", Credit-Suisse economist Robert Prior-Wandesforde said, adding that the central bank needed to do more.

Bank Indonesia has already hiked interest rates 1.25pc since June to 7pc in a bid to shore up the economy and support the ailing rupiah. Monetary tightening tends to increase the value of currencies.

However, its job will be made all the more difficult after inflation in August came in at a four-year high of 8.79pc owing to the effects of a reduction in subsidised fuel prices as well as seasonal spending for the Muslim holiday of Eid.

Investors are also jittery due to a slowdown in Indonesian growth, which slipped to 5.81pc in the second quarter, the first time it has fallen below 6pc since 2010. – AFP

## Hong Kong to fend off Shanghai surge

HONG Kong's de facto central bank warned that the city must not "sit on its laurels" if it wants to remain a global financial centre after plans for China's first free trade zone were revealed.

Draft proposals for the free trade zone (FTZ) in Shanghai, seen by AFP, showed that the zone goes beyond greater liberalisation of trade to take in investment and financial services – including free currency convertibility.

"It is no good for Hong Kong to sit on its laurels and just hope or pray that other financial centres do not or cannot catch up," Hong Kong Monetary Authority chief executive Norman Chan told a financial summit in the city on Friday.

"There is no room for complacency," he added.

When asked by AFP if he feared Shanghai could surpass Hong Kong as a financial hub, Mr Chan defended its powerhouse status.

"Hong Kong is already a world-class financial centre and has a leading edge in the offshore renminbi business," he said.

"It is important that we continue to upgrade our platform in facilitating renminbi businesses and we will be able to maintain a competitive edge over time."

As pro-democracy campaigners in Hong Kong push for universal suffrage by 2017 and anti-Beijing sentiment increases, Mr Chan said the city's economy was "well positioned" to withstand political tensions.

"We have taken sufficient measures to enhance the risk management of the banking system. Our banks are well positioned and well prepared to withstand future shocks, from whatever source," he said.

Mr Chan underlined the crucial importance of financial market infrastructure to a city's economic success.

The draft FTZ plan for Shanghai said the new zone would support the establishment of foreign and joint venture banks and welcome privately funded financial institutions.

At present, China's banking sector is overwhelmingly dominated by state-run institutions.

Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997, when it was handed over by Britain, but maintains a semi-autonomous status with its own separate legal and financial systems. – AFP

## Singapore takes Asia's forex crown

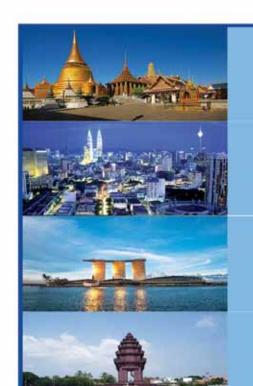
SINGAPORE overtook Japan as Asia's biggest foreign–exchange centre for the first time as trading surged in the past three years, the city's central bank said, citing a survey by the Bank for International Settlements.

The city's average daily foreignexchange volume increased 44 percent to US\$383 billion as of April from \$266 billion in the same month in 2010, the Monetary Authority of Singapore said in a statement last week. The average interest-rate derivatives volume climbed 6pc to \$37 billion over the same period, the highest in the region after Japan, it said.

"Singapore has definitely established itself as a hub for foreign exchange trading," said Khoon Goh, a senior currency strategist at Australia and New Zealand Banking Group in Singapore. "Part of this emergence is due to the increasing importance of Asian currencies, and Singapore's time zone is well-suited for that."

The increase in ranking places Singapore just behind Britain and the United States in the \$6.67 trillion global currencies trading market, according to the Bank for International Settlements or BIS. The city's foreign-exchange market expanded as the government offered incentives to boost its financial markets, which also led to a surge in the nation's fund management industry, where more than 500 asset managers oversee about \$1.1 trillion. "Our growing strength in foreign exchange is a key complement to the development of capital market and asset management activities," Jacqueline Loh, deputy managing director at the Monetary Authority of Singapore, said in the statement. Currencies trading in Singapore is still about one-seventh the total size of Britain and less than a third of the US's. Britain has some 41pc of global market share, followed by the US with 19pc. Singapore has a 5.7pc share, followed by Japan's 5.6pc and Hong Kong's 4.1pc, according to BIS. - Bloomberg

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## LONDON Vodafone unwinds its empire

Mobile giant sells American stake in the biggest deal in a decade

VODAFONE Chief Executive Officer Vittorio Colao has cemented his legacy as the man who shrank the world's biggest mobile-phone company and cleansed it of past excesses.

In November 2009, just over a year after taking the helm, the former McKinsey and Company partner said that his mission was to "solve" Verizon Wireless. While the venture with Verizon Communications - now the biggest US mobile-phone company - was a source of billions in profits, it was out of his control because Vodafone held just 45 percent. This week, he did it, getting US\$130 billion in the biggest deal in a decade.

"It's a great asset; it's an asset with a fantastic team managing it," said Mr Colao. "We got the value that a good asset deserves."

The stake's sale fits with the 51-year-old surfer's mantra, according to a person close to him, who asked not to be identified recounting private conversations: "Ride the wave, don't try to dominate it. Otherwise, it'll kill you."

It took Mr Colao five years in office to clinch the Verizon Wireless deal, a wait that paid off as Vodafone held out for \$130 bil-



Vodafone CEO Vittorio Colao. Photo: Bloomberg



lion, \$30 billion more than the New York-based company was said to have proposed at the start of this year by people familiar with Verizon's plans.

"Colao has deep strategic perspective, and he's also very energetic when it's time to execute, make decisions and push for deals to get done," Francisco Roman, chairman of Vodafone's Spanish unit, said hours before the deal was announced.

In his five years as CEO, Mr Colao has unwound the globe-spanning empire his predecessors built, emphasising profitability over maintaining Vodafone's size. As he cut holdings in France, Japan, Poland and China and focused on getting out of what Vodafone did not control, China Mobile usurped it by revenue in 2010. Today Vodafone trails the Chinese carrier by revenue and subscribers.

Under the Italian native's tenure, Vodafone stock has risen 40pc, adding about 20 billion pounds to the Newbury, England-based company's market value. The shares have gained more than 20pc since March 5, when Bloomberg News reported that the two companies were seeking to resolve the partnership this year.

Mr Colao's reputation as a shrewd dealmaker stems partly from his disposal of Vodafone's 44pc stake in French mobilephone firm SFR to majority owner Vivendi SA. He said jokingly to Bloomberg in 2010 he planned to send the then-Vivendi CEO Jean-Bernard Levy a fountain pen for Christmas to sign the check. Eight months later, he walked away with more than \$10 billion.

war that gutted wireless rates in France.

A year later he told investors he'd lost 208.000 subscribers in the first two months of 2012 and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation would drop as much as 15pc in 2012. Mr Levy stepped down as CEO in June that year after failing to revive the firm's stock from a nine-year low and amid strategy differences with the board.

Mr Colao "struck the deal to sell SFR and what happened a year later was the company started to collapse," said Robin Bienenstock, an analyst at Sanford C Bernstein in London. Miscalculations were the major reasons why the board asked Levy to go, a person familiar with the company's decision said, asking not to be named discussing confidential talks. - Bloomberg

### The 2011 sale came at the top of the market, just before a price

## India's oil firms urged to step up

### PENELOPE MACRAE

INDIA'S foreign minister told energy firms to be more adventurous in searching for global oil supplies as a report warned of a likely large rise in the country's fuel import needs.

Oil imports already make up 75 percent of consumption, a dependence which has caused India's current account deficit to soar and prompted a crash in the value of the rupee.

Import dependence is set to rise to at least 90pc within two decades, according to a study by global consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) released last week.

"There will have to be a

that has to come from within the Indian psyche," Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid told

an energy conference last week. Mr Khurshid said he had recently visited conflict-racked Iraq as well as Saudi Arabia to push energy ties and found "nothing stood between them and our opportunities" except "our unwillingness to be a little adventurous".

India in 2012 was the world's fourth-largest energy consumer at 563 million tonnes of oil equivalent (mtoe), around a fifth of the consumption of heavily industrialised China with 2,735 mtoe, the report noted.

Mr Khurshid admitted rival

resources" in securing overseas

But he added India was still held in high esteem in many parts of the world, giving "us an opportunity to go there and fulfil our dreams".

China, with its deep pockets and energetic diplomacy, has been beating bureaucratic India to the punch in the quest to lock in long-term supplies in Asia, Africa and Latin America, energy analysts say.

Since oil is India's biggest import, the plummeting rupee and higher oil prices are raising its import bills.

The forecast rise in oil dependence will only further increase "India's vulnerability" to

## BRIEFS

### Russia latest to scale back issue

Russia failed to raise as much money as planned at a government bond auction, joining nations from India to Taiwan in missing borrowing targets as investors keep away from emergingmarket assets.

The Finance Ministry in Moscow sold 6.07 billion rubles (US\$182 million) of its so-called OFZ notes due May 2016 after offering 13.6 billion rubles, according to a statement on its website. Russia cancelled an auction last week as only one bidder took part. – Bloomberg

## French mull spending cuts

France's Socialist government is hinting it may appease discontent at tax rises by putting more stress on spending cuts in its fight to control the budget and boost growth. The latest signs came with a new reform of the pension system, which was headed for a huge deficit by 2020, that raises charges for business and workers but has been widely criticised as a weak compromise. - AFP

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sense of adventure in us [to China has "moved ahead of us, external oil price shocks, PwC seek energy assets abroad] and they've come with much more said in the report.- AFP

COPS (COPS)

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

1. Senior Policy Officer (LICA 8)

2. Programme Associate (LICA 4)

Duty Station	Position	Deadline
Yangon	National	15 September 2013
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The benefit package for the above positions includes an attractive remuneration, 30 days annual leave and 10 holidays per year, medical insurance, learning and development opportunities and a challenging working environment with 200 national and international colleagues.

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.

If you have further queries, please contact 95 1 657 281-7 Ext: 149

#### Nobel-winning economist dies

Ronald Coase, the British-born US economist who was awarded the Nobel prize in 1991, died last week in Chicago, the University of Chicago announced. He was 102.

Coase, who studied at the University of London and London School of Economics was famed for his 1960 article "The Problem of Social Cost", was the basis for the famous Coase Theorem. It suggests that well-defined property rights could overcome non-market forces. – AFP

THE rate of increase in Chinese property prices picked up pace in August as some local governments eased market controls, a survey showed last week

The average price of new homes in 100 major cities rose 8.61 percent year on year to 10,442 yuan (US\$1700) per square metre, according to the independent China Index Academy (CIA).

Prices rose 7.94pc in July, according to the CIA, which is owned by Soufun Holdings, China's largest real estate website operator.

Month on month, prices were up 0.92pc, marking the 15<sup>th</sup> straight month of growth and accelerating from July's 0.87pc.

The academy said the acceleration came on the back of looser policies in some cities, including Wenzhou in the eastern province of Zhejiang and Wuhu in neighbouring Anhui province, which helped release pent-up demand.

"Land prices continued to go up," further driving up new home prices, it added. Beijing led the rise in average new home cost among the 10 biggest Chinese cities in August, with the price surging 22.49pc year on year and 3.22pc month on month to 29,395 yuan per square metre, the CIA data showed. In Shanghai, it was 28,979 yuan per

square metre, up 1.07pc from July and 7.71pc higher than a year ago.

Property prices are a sensitive issue in China and authorities have sought for more than three years to control their rise.

Measures have included restrictions on purchases of second and third homes, higher minimum downpayments, and taxes in some cities on multiple and non-locally owned homes.

But China has recently signalled it might not take further tightening steps owing to concerns about slowing economic growth, replacing its previous rhetoric about regulating the property market and promoting "stable and healthy development" of the sector.

New properties are the most important part of China's real estate market. – *Bloomberg* 

## London 'fryscraper' melts Jaguar

Area residents complain of property damage from concentrated sun rays magnified by building

A BRITISH property developer said it is investigating after sun rays reflected from its half-finished London skyscraper melted parts of several cars, including a luxury Jaguar.

Londoners have been shielding their eyes from the blinding glare bouncing off 20 Fenchurch Street – nicknamed the "Walkie Talkie" because of its flared shape – while several drivers complained that the beams have melted parts of their vehicles.

Local businessman Martin Lindsay said he was distraught when he returned to his parked Jaguar XJ near the glassy tower in London's financial district to find the car's panels had warped along one side, while the wing mirror and Jaguar emblem on the front of the car had melted.

"On the windscreen, there was a note from the construction company saying 'your car's buckled, could you give us a call?" Lindsay told the BBC. He "could not believe" the extent

of the damage, he added.

Located in London's financial district, the tower has now been unofficially renamed the "Walkie Scorchie", while others are dubbing it a "fryscraper".

As a crowd of sweating journalists and photographers gathered outside the skyscraper last Tuesday, a reporter even managed to cook an egg simply by placing the frying pan in direct sunlight.

Developers Land Securities and Canary Wharf Group have apologised to Mr Lindsay and paid for the damage to his Jaguar, while three car parking spaces near the tower have been taken out of use.

Angry local shopkeepers also say the so-called "death ray" has blistered their paintwork, singed holes in doormats and caused their tiles to smash.

The developers said in a statement, "We are taking the issue of light reflecting from 20 Fenchurch Street seriously, and are looking into the matter as a priority."

They later said a temporary scaf-



A view of the new "Walkie Talkie" tower, at left, in central London last week. At right a television crewman films a man sunbathing in a shaft of intense sunlight reflected from the building's glass windows. Photos: AFP

fold screen would be erected at street level within 24 hours.

"We are also continuing to evaluate longer-term solutions to ensure

this issue does not recur in future," they added. Physicists have suggested that the concave shape of the "Walkie

Talkie" is responsible for the problem, focusing sunlight into a concentrated beam.

The Times newspaper said that temperatures near the tower exceeded 45 degrees Celsius last week. The developers said the phenom-

enon was caused by "the current elevation of the sun in the sky", and that as Britain heads into autumn the problem should disappear.

"It currently lasts for approxi-

mately two hours per day, with initial modelling suggesting that it will be present for approximately two to three weeks," they said.

The 37-floor office block is due to be completed in March 2014.

The design has met with mixed reactions in London, with some complaining that its squat shape is a blot on the city skyline. -AFP





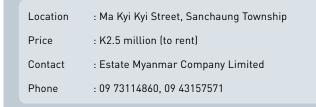
## A brand new chance

Fresh offerings are often snapped up quickly in the Yangon market, and this week's apartment in Sanchaung township will likely be no different. Well-connected to major roads and located near the downtown core, a resident in Moe Myint San Condominium faces less commuting time than from many of the new properties entering the market further afield.

The apartment itself is on the second floor, consisting of two double bedrooms and one master bedroom. The dining room and kitchen are fully partitioned, and there is a handy extra room on the kitchen that can serve as a pantry. Large windows allow for maximum use of natural light, creating a lively atmosphere in the apartment.

Located in an up-and-coming neighbourhood, the apartment is peaceful but vibrant. Construction has just been completed, so new tenants can rent immediately.

- Ei Thae Thae Naing





## Yangon market tepid ahead of govt action



Mr.

myatnyeinaye11092@gmail.com

YANGON'S real estate market showed signs of cooling last week as rumours of government plans to stabilise prices through increased property or transaction taxes put a damper on speculation, according to some industry insiders.

"The frequency of real estate sales decreased by 50 percent in the last few days compared with a month ago," said U Ko Min Min Soe, a senior agent at Mya Pan Thakhin real estate agency.

"I think it's because the government plans to stabilise prices in the real estate market, and buyers and sellers don't want to sell their land or house rashly," he said.

U Soe Thein, a minister for the President's Office, said on August 23 that regional governments were considering methods to slow the increase in property prices, such as creating a property tax.

Currently there is a 30pc tax on property purchases where the buyer cannot prove his or her income, with a 7pc stamp duty. Buyers that can prove their earnings are required to pay only the 7pc duty.

Although agents said housing and land sales slowed considerably, interest in the rental market continues to be buoyant.

"Our agency hasn't received many clients for sales recently – nearly none. We're only getting rental clients these days," said Daw Ma Myat Thu from Moe Myint Thaw Tar real estate agency.

Widespread property speculation in Yangon Region, as well as Mandalay and Dawei in Tanintharyi Region, have created bubbles of artificially high prices.

In Yangon, outlying areas that have traditionally been vastly cheaper, have borne the brunt of speculation with prices doubling or tripling within two years.

However, Daw Ma Zin Myo Naing from Shwe Yi San real estate agency, said some areas have dipped sharply since U Soe Thein's comments. She said areas far from downtown that had seen plenty of interest from speculators were the most affected by recent declines.

Dala and North Dagon townships had witnessed particularly high fluctuations in price in the fortnight since the minister's remarks, adding that some properties in North Dagon had fallen by 20-30pc in price, she said.

Daw Moh Moh Aung, general secretary of the Myanmar Real Estate Services Association, said the spike in prices in Dala township came from speculation following reports of a bridge being built to link it with downtown Yangon, but had little basis in its

'Our agency hasn't received many clients for sales recently – nearly none. We're only getting rental clients these days.'

> Daw Ma Myat Thu Real estate agency

#### present value.

"Price increase should depend on the reality of what foreign investment or industrial projects will do," she said.

"Land prices in Dala township are not increasing as normal, and I expect prices will drop a bit once the reality sets in that the bridge will not be built for a while."

Some realtors said they applauded government moves to cool the runaway sector.

U Ko Min Min Soe said stable prices are necessary for development projects to proceed.

"People are piling into popular areas for speculative reasons," he said. "The prices are not under control [in these circumstances] and continue to increase."

However, Daw Moh Moh Aung said it would be difficult to control Yangon's prices due to the influx of foreign interest in the city.

## Saudi princess buys large Swiss estate

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## Middle Eastern money flows to historic estate

A SAUDI princess has bought a historical Geneva estate that once belonged to a former Swiss president for 57.5 million Swiss francs (US\$62 million), media reported last week.

Princess Latifa Bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who is 54 and a daughter of former king Fahd, bought the 18,800-square-metre (202,362-square-foot) estate from the wealthy Nordmann family that co-owns upscale department store chain Manor and the maker of Lacoste clothing.

The purchase price for the property which once belonged to Gustave Ador who served as Swiss president early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the second-highest on record in the city.

The daughter of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Dinara Kulibayeva, holds the current record after she bought a property on the posh southern shores of Lake Geneva in 2009 for 74.7 million Swiss francs.

Al Saud, who like Kulibayeva has settled nearby, has committed to "preserving the heritage", the *Tribune de Geneve* daily reported.

She joins a number of other Middle Eastern royals who already live in luxurious settings in the Swiss city. – *AFP* 

## **Telcos'** rollout challenges outlined

## **JEREMY MULLINS**

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SECURING the leases and licenses required to build thousands of cell towers is the next major hurdle for the telecoms firms setting up shop in Myanmar, according to Edwin Vanderbruggen, a partner at legal advisory firm VDB Loi, which is working with one of the telecoms firms.

With Ooredoo and Telenor expected to install up to 3000 towers annually under the strict implementation plans outlined during the bidding process earlier this year, and domestic companies MPT and YPT possibly conducting rollouts of their own, Mr Vanderbruggen said the tower build across Myanmar will be a large undertaking.

"These challenges tower over the operators right now," he said.

With up to 3000 towers expected annually from both Telenor and Ooredoo operator, it means the firms will have to sign about 10 separate leases a day, "which is already a huge challenge," he said, comparing it to MPT with about 2000 towers total in Myanmar at present.

Although tower sharing - where one company erects the tower and leases space to host several companies' equipment - will likely take place, it will not be sufficient for all of the tower sites. Thousands of separate leases will need to be secured.

On top of the challenges finding leases, Mr Vanderbruggen said Myanmar has a complex land usage situation as each type of land comes with its own rights.

"Before you can sign up with an operator or tower company to use a piece of your land and put a tower there, you need to know whether you have the right to do that or not," he said.

added many leaseholders He

cannot sublease their land, while those holding granted land often are only permitted to use it for one specific purpose, such as rice farming.

"In other words, you have to sign 10 leases a day and have to get ten lawyers to find out if the guy who is about to sign has the right to sign it," he said.

On top of the land rights, each site requires permission from a number of ministries, including Communication and Information Technology, Electric Power, Environmental Conservation and Forestry, and the Myanmar Investment Commission, he said.

"It's one of those examples of the infrastructure in terms of existing laws, regulations, processes all trying to catch up with the breakneck pace of innovation and development that the government is steering," he said.

While it is possible that the process could be streamlined with new laws or regulations in the future, Mr Vanderbruggen said that the telecoms operators had no choice but to begin the process with the current laws.

Although Ooredoo and Telenor have not formally accepted their licences, they could also face increased competition from MPT and YPT.

Mr Vanderbruggen said MPT has known there would be foreign entrants for some time, giving it time to prepare, and added plenty of international telecoms firms that did not get a licence would be interested in working with it.

"If they can raise money and they can get technology, they might not need an equity partner. It might not look like a 49 percent foreign operator who comes in," he said.

He added YPT also has a licence, but is a bit of a question market.

Officials from the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications could not be reached for comment. - Additional reporting Aung Kyaw Nyunt

## SIM draws fail to quash black market

#### AUNG KYAW NYUNT zeezee383@gmail.com

DESPITE the roll-out of K1500 SIMs which began in April, Yangon phone vendors say frustrated customers are continuing to turn to the black market for SIM cards - and in some cases, they say, the release of cheap SIMs has only encouraged their resale.

"Black market cheap SIM cards won't go away because the number of cheap SIM cards available from MPT [Myanma Posts and Telecommunications] is limited, with more demand than supply,"said U Htet Lin Kyaw, general manager of Mr Fone Telecom Center in South Okkala township.

He said the demand has even led some new SIM card owners to flip their SIMs instead of using them.

'Cheap SIM card lucky draw winners are selling [their cards] for over K100,000 because their starting capital is so little. People who win the lucky draws live in the outskirts. They are not businesspeople. So if these people don't need to use them, they sellthese cheap SIM cardson the black market to people who need them."

He added that so long as there is a lack of cheap SIM availability, the black market will remain strong.

"Although we have money, westill cannot buy K1500 cheap SIM cards at present, because I haven't won the lucky draw in my quarter ... If

operators sell all [cheap] SIM cards, the black market will disappear,"

Several other vendors agreed. "I have been using cheap SIM cards which came from China since I visited Muse [near the China border]," said Ma Thidar from Mobile Country Mobile "If people can use them like there, the black markets in Myanmar will disappear."

"I believe that if people can buy cheap SIM cards at every shop, the black market will disappear in the future," said Ma Zargyi Lin, general manager of Lu Gyi Min Mobile's head office.

Since April, the government has been selling K1500 SIM cards at a rate of 350,000 a month, though demand continues to outstrip supply.

Since

## MANILA



Dubbed the Apollo national challenge, 28,000 citizens competed **IN PICTURES** in Manilla last week to be one of two cadets who will be sent to Axe Apollo space camp in the US this December and perhaps the become the first Filipino sent into orbit. Photo: AFP



## Venezuela's 'Jurassic Park' found in oil field

UNDER the rich Venezuelan soil, paleontologists have found treasures rivaling the bountiful oil: a giant armadillo the size of a Volkswagen, a crocodile bigger than a bus and a saber-toothed tiger.

Oil companies' surveys of the soil have uncovered a trove of fossils dating from 14,000 to 370 million years ago.

Many of the 12,000 recorded specimens from different eras are now kept in a tiny office of the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research.

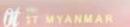
A strong smell of oil fills the room as Ascania Rincon opens the drawer of a filing cabinet to reveal the tar-stained

200 million years ago, the paleontologist explained.

About 8 million years ago, the Orinoco was formed, followed by the Isthmus of Panama (or Isthmus of Darien, which links North and South America) about 3 to 5 million years ago

The fossils found during the survevs include a featherless chicken that looked like an iguana, a 3-metre (10foot) pelican and giant sloths that lived on land 12 million year ago, unlike their modern relatives living in the trees.

But it can take years to prepare a fossil for classification. Experts needed



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femur of a giant, 6-tonne mastodon from 25,000 years ago at the end of the Ice Age.

Unfazed by the significance of the finds already made, the head of the institute's Laboratory of Paleontology is intent on realizing his next goal: locating human fossils for proof of prehistoric human life in the area.

"We are close. You have to keep exploring the area. We have already found spearheads," he told AFP. "What's lacking is reliable indication that man hunted the megafauna that we are finding. And lacking are human fossils."

Located in northern South America, Venezuela has a complex geological structure that leaves it swimming in oil deposits teeming with life preserved from so very long ago.

Most of the fossils are concentrated in a large area north of the Orinoco River where the Atlantic Ocean originated four years after its discovery to identify a saber-toothed tiger, a darling of the collection dubbed Homotherium venezuelensis.

Once a fossil is found, experts must remove the sediment, transport it, wash it and carefully compare it to existing specimens.

In September, the institute plans to announce the discovery in a remote area of the country of a new species, Mr. Rincon said proudly, without revealing the whole surprise.

Mr. Rincon's laboratory, staffed with only five researchers, has state and private support but lacks the logistical and technological resources of similar operations in other countries.

"Paleontology is fun. It seems that it has no use, but it has economic implications. With a fossil record, we can determine the age of an oil field," he said. -AFP



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# World

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## SYDNEY

## Australia's foreign aid set to be slashed

### MARTIN PARRY

AUSTRALIA'S likely next government said on September 5 it would massively slash the foreign aid budget to pay for infrastructure projects as it pledged A\$40 billion (US\$36.7 billion) of savings if it won office.

The economy was a key battleground ahead of the September 7 election, and the Tony Abbott-led conservative opposition, said it would pay down A\$16 billion of debt.

It announced A\$33 billion in proposed spending over four years and said the budget would be A\$6.4 billion better off.

The figures were part of the opposition's long-awaited policy costings, which Mr Rudd slammed for being released just two days before the election.

'The overseas aid budget is Australia's commitment to the world's poor and vulnerable, and is not an ATM for political parties in search of cash to prop up their bottom line.'

> Helen Szoke Oxfam Australia chief executive

"We will put in place the tools necessary to grow the Australian economy, to give Australian families job security. Importantly, give them more control of their lives," said opposition finance spokesman Joe Hockey.

"We are going to do this by improving the budget bottom line, by over A\$6 billion. And we're going to start paying down Labor's mountain of debt by more than A\$16 billion. The coalition has already announced over A\$31 billion of savings [over four years]. Today I'm announcing a further A\$9 billion of savings." include repealing a corporate pollution tax and another on mining profits. He pledged to introduce a paid parental leave scheme that would cost A\$5.5 billion a year.

Part of the savings include cutting the foreign aid budget by A\$4.5 billion, with Mr Hockey saying, "We can only be a more generous nation to the rest of the world if we have a strong Australian economy. And so we are reducing the growth in foreign aid by A\$4.5 billion over the forward estimates to fund essential infrastructure here in Australia."

UNICEF, World Vision and Oxfam were all quick to react, saying the cuts would come at the expense of the world's most vulnerable and cost lives.

"The overseas aid budget is Australia's commitment to the world's poor and vulnerable, and is not an ATM for political parties in search of cash to prop up their bottom line," said Oxfam Australia chief executive Helen Szoke.

More than A\$1 billion in savings over four years is forecast to come from the party's "Stop the Boats" policy, referring to its plan to turn back asylum-seeker boats and force those arriving on to welfare-for-work programs – a key election issue.

The conservatives said they would save an additional A\$1.2 billion by axing Australia's humanitarian refugee intake by 6250 places to 13,750. It would find A\$5.2 billion by sacking 12,000 public servants.

Last month, the government revealed that its budget deficit has blown out to A\$30 billion, and revenues were shrinking as the mining-driven economy grapples with a slowdown in China that has seen commodities prices tumble.

The opposition has maintained that after six years of Labor "waste", the conservatives would be better managers of the economy – something Rudd denied on September 5.

In one of his final election pitches, he championed what Labor had achieved, pointing to reforms in disability care, education, health and climate change, while steering the country through the global financial crisis.



A Syrian refugee sells mattresses and other goods at a refugee camp near Mafraq, Jordan, on September 4. Photo: AFP

### **ST PETERSBURG**

## Leaders fail to heal Syria

### **STUART WILLIAMS**

WORLD leaders at the G20 summit on September 6 failed to bridge their bitter divisions over US plans for military action against the Syrian regime, as Washington slammed Moscow for holding the UN Security Council "hostage" over the crisis.

Despite not being on the original agenda of the summit hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin outside St Petersburg, the leaders discussed the Syria crisis into the early hours of the morning over dinner amid the splendour of a former imperial palace. Mr Putin has emerged as one of the most implacable critics of military intervention against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad over an alleged chemical weapons attack on August 21, saving any such move without UN blessing would be an aggression. There was no breakthrough at the dinner as leaders, including US President Barack Obama, presented their positions on the Syria crisis, which only confirmed the extent of global divisions on the issue, participants said.

"The differences of opinions of the leaders were confirmed during the dinner," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

"Some states were defending the view that rushed measures should be taken, overlooking legitimate international institutions. Other states appealed not to devalue international law and not to forget that only the UN Security Council has the right to September 6 also warned that military strikes could spark further sectarian violence in the country, which he said is suffering from a humanitarian crisis "unprecedented" in recent history.

t rushed "I must warn that ill-cone taken, sidered military action could te intercause serious and tragic cons. Other sequences, and with an ino devalue creased threat of further sec-IN Secu-



share Mr Putin's opposition to military action, and after the British parliament voted against strikes, France is the only power to have vowed that it will join American intervention.

Mr Obama is seeking backing from Congress for military action, putting back the timetable for strikes that had been anticipated even before the two day-summit got underway on September 5.

The US president held a bilateral meeting on September

6 with President Xi Jinping of

China, who like Russia vehe-

mently opposes military action

setting out their arguments at

Even as the leaders were

against Syria.

He said Labor was "in the business of building the nation's future, whereas Mr Abbott is in the business of cuts, cuts and more cuts for Australia's future". -AFP

Mr Abbott's key policies



Joe Hockey eats a strawberry in Sydney on September 4. Photo: AFP

decide on using force."

A high-ranking source close to the talks said there was a disappointing lack of ambition at the dinner on the Syria issue, noting that Mr Putin as host was keen not to aggravate tensions further.

But a French diplomatic source said the objective of the dinner "was an exchange between the top world leaders and not to come to an agreement".

The dinner went on into the small hours of the morning, and even after a late-night opera show, Mr Putin and British Prime Minister David Cameron had a meeting to discuss the Syria situation, the Kremlin said. Number of people killed in an August 21 chemical weapon attack in Syria, according to US intelligence

tarian violence," Mr Ban said.

The Syria crisis and prospect of military intervention has overshadowed the official agenda of the summit of leaders of the world's top economies and emerging markets to stimulate growth and battle tax avoidance. Several Western states the dinner, the US ambassador to the United Nations in New York launched a lacerating attack on Russia for holding the Security Council "hostage" over its backing of Assad. "Even in the wake of the flagrant shattering of the international norm against chemical weapons use, Russia continues

sponsibilities," Samantha Power told reporters. Amid a new low in US-Russia tensions, no bilateral

to hold the council hostage

and shirk its international re-

UN chief Ban Ki-moon on



Japan calls for better ties with China

WORLD 37

**German investigators** seek charges against **Auschwitz guards** 

WORLD 40



Ohio rapist found hanged in jail cell

WORLD 43



## rift at G20

meeting has been scheduled between Mr Putin and Mr Obama, although officials have left the door open for some informal contact.

According to US intelligence, more than 1400 people living in rebel-held suburbs of Damascus were killed in the August 21 chemical weapons attack, which involved the use of sarin nerve gas.

The US says the Assad regime was responsible, a claim not accepted by Russia.

SEOUL N Korea reopens military hotline

affairs.

NORTH Korea on September 6 reconnected a military hotline to the South that was cut earlier this year at the height of cross-border tensions, Seoul's government said.

The line - one of the two remaining inter-Korea military hotlines - was disabled in late March, weeks after the North's third nuclear test. The following month, a joint industrial zone was shut down.

The North in early March cut off another line at the border truce village of Panmunjom before reopening it in July when relations showed signs of thawing.

Cross-border army hotlines in other parts of the country were severed years ago when tensions soared and have been left unrestored since then.

The latest re-establishment of the hotline paves the way for the reopening of the Kaesong industrial zone, as it is largely used to provide securitv guarantees when South Korean businessmen and workers visit the complex.

The North made the first call to the South via the hotline since March on the morning of September 6, said Seoul's unification ministry,

## **BANGKOK**

## Violence flares at Thai rubber farmer protest

RUBBER farmers clashed with security forces in southern Thailand on September 5 as protesters torched cars and police fired tear gas in the latest unrest to shake the politically turbulent kingdom, officials said last week.

More than two dozen police officers were injured and 11 protest leaders were arrested as the demonstration in Prachuap Khiri Khan province over falling rubber prices turned violent, authorities said.

Two vehicles, apparently belonging to local media, were set ablaze during the clashes, which flared after some 400 farmers tried to block a major highway to the south of the country, said provincial police commander Major General Thanet Soonthornsuk. "Twenty-five police officers were wounded. Two of them are in a serious condition after they were hit on the head by rocks," he said, adding that demonstrators had thrown acid at him. Thailand is the world's top exporter of natural rubber, and mounting anger among the kingdom's rubber farmers over their falling incomes poses a fresh challenge to Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's two-year-old government. In recent days, angry rubber farmers have blocked roads, train lines and even - briefly - the entrance to an airport in Thailand's

south, where plunging global prices for the commodity have hit the local economy hard. The region is a heartland of

the opposition Democrat Party.

Ms Yingluck's government has so far rejected demands to guarantee a rubber price of 120 baht (\$3.70) a kilogram – which farmers later reduced to about 90 to 100 baht - about 50 percent higher than the current price on world markets.

Instead, it has stuck to an offer to pay farmers 1260 baht per rai (0.16 hectares) of rubber plantation to help with production costs, along with funds to

## BRIEFS

Santiago Chilean judges apologise for Pinochet-era inaction Chile's judges issued a long-awaited apology on September 4 to relatives of those who sought missing

loved ones under the regime of dictator Augusto Pinochet, only to have courts shrug them off.

'To those who were victims of state abuse ... the time has come [for us] to ask for the forgiveness of victims ... and of Chilean society," said the Chilean Judges Association in a statement almost 40 years after the 1973 coup that toppled elected socialist Salvador Allende. Mr Pinochet then took the helm of the South

American country, remaining there until 1990.

"It must be said and recognised clearly and completely: The court system and especially the Supreme Court at that time failed in their roles as safeguards of basic human rights and to protect those who were victims of state abuse," the association said.

Chilean courts rejected 5000 cases seeking help in locating missing loved ones abducted or killed by the regime, saying they had no information about their fate. Authorities believe the Cold War-era Pinochet regime was responsible for at least 3200 killings and 38,000 cases of torture. - AFP

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which handles cross-border "Reception is still a bit

shaky, but at least the connection has been restored," a ministry spokeswoman said. It followed an agreement on September 5 at a meeting

of the inter-Korea committee tasked with reviving the shuttered Kaesong complex. The ministry spokeswoman said businessmen from the South would be able to visit the

zone - 10 kilometres (6 miles) north of the border - to check on infrastructure and facilities left dormant for months but did not give a timeframe.

In April, as tensions increased following the North's nuclear test, Pyongyang effectively shut down operations at the industrial zone by withdrawing the 53,000 North Korean workers employed at the 123 South Korean plants there. Seoul subsequently withdrew all of its managers.

The two Koreas agreed last month to work together to reopen the complex - a valued source of hard currency for the impoverished North - after Pyongyang changed tack to make a flurry of conciliatory gestures. - AFP

Mr Cameron told BBC TV from the G20 summit that Britain had further evidence of the use of chemical weapons in the attack in samples its experts had tested.

With the clock ticking down to strikes, Russia said Syria's Foreign Minister Walid Muallem would travel to Moscow for talks on September 9.

The two-and-a-half-year conflict between Assad and rebels, which began as a popular uprising, has left more than 100,000 people dead.

About one-third of Syria's pre-war 20.8 million population has fled abroad or have been forced from their homes, according to the UN refugee agency.

Speaking at a humanitarian

ers dig in their heels over their entrenched positions, Mr Ban called for unity in securing humanitarian aid for the population.

meeting hosted by Britain on

the sidelines of the G20 sum-

mit. Mr Ban called the Svrian

refugee situation "a humani-

tarian crisis of unprecedented

proportions in recent history".

try, others dig in to fight", Mr

Ban said, pointing to the need

therefore to "avoid further mili-

tarisation of the conflict and re-

vitalise the search for a politi-

proving elusive as world lead-

With a political solution

cal settlement instead".

But "as some flee the coun-

A funding shortage was also threatening to leave refugees in neighbouring countries with no food, he said, adding that stocks would run out within days in Lebanon and within two weeks in Jordan.

"The world must do everything within its powers to stop the suffering of the Syrian people. Let us use this united recognition of the problem as our starting point for focused and positive action," he said.

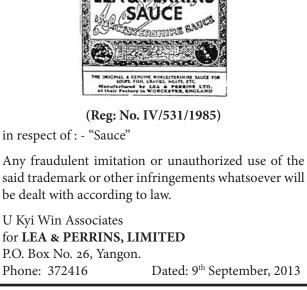
"Your support in exercising leverage on all parties to facilitate humanitarian access is critical." - AFP

boost the efficiency of rubber processing - an offer rejected by the protesters.

Thailand has been rocked by several episodes of civil unrest in recent years, with both supporters and opponents of Ms Yingluck's brother - fugitive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra taking to the streets.

In 2010, two months of demonstrations in Bangkok by the pro-Thaksin "Red Shirts" drew 100,000 protesters at their peak before being crushed in a military crackdown under a previous government.

More than 90 people, mostly civilians, were killed and nearly 1900 were injured during the demonstrations, resulting in Thailand's worst political bloodshed in decades. - AFP



## More than 200 languages lost in India

### **ABHAYA SRIVASTAVA**

MORE than 200 languages have vanished in India in the past 50 years, a new study says, blaming urban migration and fear among nomadic tribes of speaking their traditional tongues.

The extensive study, conducted throughout the country over four years and released last week, has found 230 languages have "elapsed", while another 870 have survived the test of time in richly diverse but rapidly modernising India, home to a vast number of indigenous or tribal peoples.

Ganesh Devy, who spearheaded the survey, said 480 tribal languages are among those still spoken in India, where Hindi and English are strengthening their grip in an increasingly mobile and interconnected world.

"I am concerned and alarmed that a very large number of languages have been rapidly declining in India," said Mr Devy, an author and founder of the non-profit Bhasha Trust, which seeks to preserve languages.

Mr Devy's team of 3000 volunteers fanned out across India, visiting communities in the most remote parts of the country of 1.2 billion people, to study and document living languages spoken and written today.

The team scrutinised evidence of the existence of a language, such as a community's use of folk songs and stories in their mother tongue as well as terms used for their geographical surroundings.

The team compared their findings with the results of a government



Indian children practise the English alphabet at a school in Hyderabad on June 13. Photo: AEP

census conducted in 1961, which stated that some 1100 languages existed throughout the country.

The first five of some 50 detailed volumes of the team's *People's Linguistic Survey of India* was released in New Delhi on September 5.

Mr Devy said languages of coastal communities seemed to have eroded the most over the years as traditional fishermen, whose livelihoods have declined, move inland in search of employment in cities.

"For coastal communities, hit adversely by changing sea-farming technology, a wonderfully abundant terminology for fish and waves is of no use in inland areas," he said.

Tongues are also dying out among nomadic tribes, often branded criminals by many in the past and considered at the bottom of India's caste system. Many attempt to conceal their identity, including by not speaking their traditional dialects, to "escape harassment", Mr Devy said.

Some, who abandon their nomadic lifestyle for cities, are "likely to move away from their social practices, culture and language" for fear of rejection from mainstream society, he said.

The survey found kinship terms are shrinking in most languages, reflecting erosion of strong family ties, along with terms for forms of prayer, Mr Devy wrote in *The Hindu* newspaper on September 3.

"Weakening ecological bonds are reflected in people's inability to name surrounding trees or birds [in their traditional language]," he added. There are exceptions among nonnomadic tribes, especially those enjoying economic growth in their homelands, Mr Devy said. He pointed to the state of Jharkhand, where 30 percent of the population belongs to tribes whose heritage remains strong.

About 190 tribal groups are spread throughout India, from the remote

'I am concerned and alarmed that a very large number of languages have been rapidly declining in India.'

> **Ganesh Devy** Founder of Bhasha Trust

Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Himalayas, as well as northeastern regions bordering Bhutan and China, with a combined population of about 60 million.

The strong presence of indigenous groups means India continues to enjoy a relatively rich diversity of languages despite economic development and British colonisation.

"It is only in India that despite the colonial experience of over two centuries, more than 800 languages have survived," Mr Devy said. "The high rate of language loss in India needs therefore to be seen together with the high rate of language survival."

India's constitution lists 22 official languages, with Hindi as the main official language and English – the preferred language for business and academics – given associate status.

An educated and English-speaking population has been one of the key factors behind the outsourcing boom to India. – AFP

## BANGKOK

Dunkin' Donuts pulls 'racist' ad in Thailand

DUNKIN' Donuts said it was pulling an advertisement in Thailand featuring a woman with black face make-up after a human rights group criticised it as "racist".

The US firm apologised for the "insensitivity" of the ad for its "charcoal donut", which had the slogan, "Break





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all rules of deliciousness".

"We are working with our franchisee to immediately pull the television spot and to change the campaign," Karen Raskopf, chief communications officer for Dunkin' Brands, said in a statement on September 3.

Human Rights Watch deputy Asia director Phil Robertson had criticised Dunkin' Donuts for "using racist images to sell donuts".

The image of the woman in black face make-up and bright pink lipstick caused little controversy in Thailand, however, while on social media sites there were differing views on whether the ad was racist.

Skin whitening creams abound in the kingdom, with many believing that a lighter skin reflects higher status – an image fuelled by the popularity of white-skinned models and actors on billboards and the television. – *AFP*  **Asia-Pacific World 37** 

## TOKYO

# Abe urges China tie reset

#### **HUW GRIFFITH**

JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged a reset in frayed ties with China when he met Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 summit, his spokesman said on September 6.

The meeting was the first between leaders of the two countries since relations took a nosedive last year over the ownership of uninhabited islands, in a row that has led to warnings of a possible armed confrontation.

"Prime Minister Abe explained [to Xi] about our thoughts that we should develop Japan-China relations by going back to the original point of the strategic, mutually beneficial relationship," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters in Tokyo.

A Japanese embassy spokesman in Moscow said the two leaders shook hands and spoke for about five minutes at the meeting of world leaders in the Russian city of St Petersburg.

Despite the huge economic importance of the relationship between Asia's two largest powers, the two men have not met since the hawkish Mr Abe took office in December and Mr Xi in March.

According to Chinese state news agency Xinhua, Mr Abe said he had been looking forward to seeing Mr Xi in Russia, adding, "I am eager to improve Japanese-Chinese relations".

The agency cited Mr Xi as telling Mr Abe that Beijing wants to improve ties "on the basis of the four Chinese-Japanese political documents" – a reference to agreements hammered out from the early 1970s onwards as the two countries normalised relations.

The report said Mr Xi had reiterated China's position that



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (left) and Russian President Vladimir Putin appear on a video screen at the G20 Summit in St Petersburg, Russia, on September 5. Photo: AFP

Japan must address historical grievances.

Beijing regularly charges that Tokyo has not made sufficient amends for its aggressive and acquisitive behaviour in the middle of the 20th century and that Japan plays down the extent of its wrongdoing.

Japan says it has apologised and maintains that Beijing uses history to beat its neighbour and as a rallying cry at home to distract domestic attention from problems.

Often-difficult relations between the world's secondand third-largest economies worsened significantly in September last year when Japan nationalised islands it already controlled under the name Senkakus.

Beijing says the archipelago, which it calls the Diaoyus, was illegally snatched by Japan at the close of the 19th century and demands the islands back. Official Chinese ships – including from the country's coastguard – have regularly plied the waters around the islands in the East China Sea, where they are warned off by Japan's coastguard.

The two countries' militaries have also been involved, with fighter planes scrambled numerous times, although there has been no contact.

Observers warn the island spat has the potential to turn into an armed confrontation that risks dragging in other countries in the region.

While Tokyo has been careful to maintain its public position that it was always ready for talks with Beijing, Mr Abe's administration has been resolute in saying the islands' sovereignty is not up for discussion. Beijing has rebuffed a number of apparent Japanese over-

tures in recent months, including visits by senior aides to Mr Abe.

On September 5, Qin Gang, China spokesman at the G20, said there were "difficulties between China and Japan relations at the moment" but "responsibility" did not lie with China.

"China's position on Diaoyu is clear. The islands belong to China," said Mr Qin. "The differences in views should be effectively managed through consultations. Unfortunately, China's reasonable proposals have not been met with proper responses from Japan."

Mr Qin added that relations between the two countries are "very important" but laid responsibility for improving them at Tokyo's door, saying China hopes that Japan "will take concrete measures to improve ties". – *AFP* 

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RAID

(Reg: Nos. IV/2128/1995 & IV/3189/2004)

in respect of:- "air fresheners"

# South Korean leftist MP formally arrested

A SOUTH Korean leftist lawmaker was formally arrested on September 5 on charges of plotting an armed revolt in support of North Korea.

The move came a day after parliament voted to approve the arrest of United Progressive Party (UPP) legislator Lee Seok-Ki, and he was taken into temporary detention. lines and railways.

The spy agency last month had arrested three of Mr Lee's supporters on charges of seeking to instigate an armed insurrection in support of North Korea.

Mr Lee has insisted he is the victim of a "savage and irrational witch hunt" led by the country's secret service. His party has accused the spy agency of trying to divert attention from an election-rigging scandal.

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On September 5 he was formally arrested by prosecutors.

Television showed Mr Lee shouting, "Sedition charges were fabricated!" as security agents escorted him to a van, surrounded by a crowd of journalists. He was detained at a prison in Suwon just south of Seoul.

National Intelligence Service agents had taken Mr Lee away from his office in parliament after rival political parties joined forces to vote in favour of his arrest.

Justice Minister Hwang Kyo-Ahn said on September 4 that Mr Lee in May – believing war with the North to be imminent – told his secretive leftist group to prepare for attacks on South Korea's communication The scandal has seen the arrest of former National Intelligence Service head Won Sei-Hoon for allegedly ordering agents to run an online smear campaign against Democratic Party presidential candidate Moon Jae-In.

Mr Moon was narrowly beaten in the December poll by the ruling party candidate Park Geun-Hye.

In 2002 Mr Lee was arrested and sentenced to two and a half years in prison for working with an underground political party in the 1990s. He received a presidential pardon later the same year. – AFP

materials for dressings; material for stopping teeth, dental wax; disinfectants; preparations for destroying vermin; fungicides, herbicides in class 05."

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U Nyein Kyaw B.Sc., Dip Engg., R.L., D.B.L. For Biofarma Room 007, Inya Lake Hotel 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road Mayangone Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar Tes: (951) 9662866 E-mail: nyeinkyaw@rajahtann.com Date: 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 in respect of:- "insecticides and rodenticides"

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# MOSCOW In Putin, filmmaker sees fearful leader

### **EVGENIA PISMENNAYA IRINA REZNIK**

IN 1996, Vladimir Putin was lonely and homesick after moving to Moscow to work in the Kremlin and planned to return to St Petersburg within a year, said his friend Igor Shadkhan.

"But then things began to happen very fast and suddenly Putin became president," Mr Shadkhan said. The documentary filmmaker has been dubbed "court director" by the Russian media for his series of films about Putin and his former classmates over two decades.

Now, after 14 years as president and premier, Mr Putin, 60, ended his 30-year marriage in June, and his judo mentor died last month. He is again lonely - and too scared of what will happen to himself and the country to relax his grip on power, Mr Shadkhan said.

"Many of the people in his entourage will want revenge as soon as he steps down because many of them are humiliatingly dependent on him," Mr Shadkhan, 73, said in a daylong interview in his St Petersburg studio last month. "He trusts no one, not even his own people."

Mr Putin, whose grandfather cooked for Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, rose from deputy head of the Kremlin's property department to acting president in less than three years when Boris Yeltsin resigned on December 31, 1999. Three months later, Mr Putin was elected with 53 percent of the vote and reelected in 2004 with 72pc. After serving as premier due to term limits. Mr Putin overcame the largest protests of his rule to win again in 2012 with 64pc of the poll. With the term extended to six years from four, he may stay in power until 2024.

Mr Shadkhan said he'd never heard of Mr Putin until 1992. St Petersburg's new government decided to make a documentary series called Power about its first democratically elected



Conversations in 2002. Photo: Igor Shadkhan

program on Stalin's forced-labour camps. "Stories about gulag prisoners tear your heart out," said Mr Shadkhan, whose Jewish grandparents were victims of Soviet repression. "You can't help weeping."

When they sat down, Mr Shadkhan told Mr Putin to "pick another director. After the gulag series, I'm unable to work on anything else."

'Stalin exterminated people out of fear because he was afraid of being betrayed if he eased his grip on power. Putin is also scared. He's a human being and has many reasons to be scared.

> Igor Shadkhan Russian filmmaker

mayor, Anatoly Sobchak, and his team of "young reformers". Mr Putin, the mayor's head of external relations, insisted on hiring Mr Shadkhan, whose award-winning shows were popular on Soviet television.

When approached, Mr Shadkhan agreed to meet with Mr Putin but made it clear he had no appetite for

Then he got a taste of the skills Mr Putin honed running a spy ring in East Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall three years earlier, Mr Shadkhan said

"I want you because I've seen Test for Adults," Mr Shadkhan said Mr Putin told him, referring to his most famous work, in which he interviews

Mr Shadkhan agreed to make the first, and as it turned out last, Power episode about Mr Putin. The 45-minute show portrays the ambitious 39-year-old as a smart, savvy and trustworthy politician with a KGB pedigree.

Later, in First Person: Conversations With Vladimir Putin, a book published two weeks before the 2000 election, Mr Putin said he used his "friend" Mr Shadkhan's documentary to reveal his KGB past to thwart would-be blackmailers.

"The tape was shown on Leningrad television, and the next time someone came along hinting about my past, I immediately said, 'That's enough,'" Mr Putin said in the book. "It's not interesting. Everyone already knows about that."

Mr Shadkhan stands by his first take on Mr Putin and still considers him a friend, he said, but worries about what he says are Mr Putin's increasing authoritarianism and failure to enact meaningful social, political and economic reforms.

"Putin is the child of the Soviet Union and that's the problem," the director said. "He's nurtured a horrible Russian phenomenon in which every functionary follows his example. His moves are often driven by mistrust, and others simply imitate his style. Authorities don't help, they attack you."

has a "deep respect" for Mr Shadkhan's opinions and work, not everything he says is "indisputable".

Mr Shadkhan said the loneliness and distrust he first sensed in Mr Putin seem only to have deepened over time.

One night a few years after they met, Mr Putin asked the filmmaker to join him at the Grand Hotel Europe. "I said yes because it seemed he didn't feel well at all," said Mr Shadkhan, who found Mr Putin, then deputy mayor, alone at a small table in the back of the hotel's restaurant with two glasses of cognac, "looking sad, even doomed".

When Mr Shadkhan asked what had happened, Mr Putin said, "Nothing; sit with me." They sat in near silence for about 90 minutes before saying goodbye. "I guess Putin just wanted company and he chose me because I'd never asked anything of him." Mr Shadkhan said.

Mr Putin isn't always melancholy, Mr Shadkhan said. Mr Putin once urged him to make a movie about Germans who donated food to families of Soviet soldiers who died in World War II. They flew to Hamburg, which Mr Putin knew well from his KGB days. He insisted on strolling through St Pauli, the city's red-light district, and roared with laughter at Shadkhan's visible shock, Mr Shadkhan recalled.

Mr Shadkhan, who last saw Mr Pu-

"I trust Putin," he said. "He's not an advocate of totalitarianism. I can't believe I made a mistake portraying him as worthy of his authority in my films."

Mr Shadkhan used a 2002 invitation to breakfast in the Kremlin to discuss his latest documentary, about a mother of three who was convicted of murdering her husband and sentenced to prison despite "a complete lack of evidence", he said.

"What will happen to the kids if their mother is sent to jail?" Mr Shadkhan asked. Mr Putin later pardoned her.

Six years later, Mr Shadkhan asked Mr Putin to pardon another mother: Svetlana Bakhmina, a lawyer for Yukos Oil who was convicted of tax evasion and embezzlement and sentenced to seven years in a penal colony. By then, Mr Putin's government had dismantled Yukos and jailed several of its executives, including Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a Putin critic who had become Russia's richest man.

This time, Mr Putin didn't respond, Mr Shadkhan said.

In 2003, Mr Khodorkovsky was arrested at gunpoint on the tarmac of a Siberian airport. The subsequent dismantling and re-nationalising of what was once Russia's largest private company showed a darker side of Mr Putin that Mr Shadkhan said he hadn't anticipated.

'That was when I realised how intolerant Putin is toward those who oppose him," Mr Shadkhan said, "and now several people are in jail for participating in anti-government protests in Moscow, Why?"

Like many Russians, Mr Putin has a complicated opinion of Stalin, the dictator who ruled from the mid-1920s until his death in 1953, the year after Mr Putin was born, Mr Shadkhan said. While Stalin defeated the Nazis in the global conflict Russia calls the Great Patriotic War, he also sent millions to die in prison camps.

In the 1992 film, Mr Putin calls the Soviet collapse a tragedy, though he admits that only "barbed wire" had held it together. In Mr Shadkhan's 2002 film about Mr Putin, Evening Conversation, the Russian leader ducks questions about the dictator with a joke: "I don't remember him." But Mr Shadkhan said, "There are things Putin respects in Stalin."

While Mr Putin doesn't share Stalin's totalitarian impulses, he does have a similar understanding and sense of fear, Mr Shadkhan said.

"Stalin exterminated people out of fear because he was afraid of being betrayed if he eased his grip on power," he said. "Putin is also scared. He's a human being and has many reasons to be scared."

But Mr Putin must overcome that fear and realise he must step down, Mr Shadkhan said.

"Russia needs a new leader to move on," Mr Shadkhan said. "Putin's gotten terribly tired. He's stopped evolving. That's the main problem. The coun-

bureaucrats, having just returned people both as children and adults Mr Putin's spokesman, Dmitry tin two years ago, said he still sympatry is changing, while Putin is not." from the Arctic to shoot a 10-part "He recruited me." thises with him and follows his career. Peskov, said that while the president Bloomberg News

# **TBILISI**

# New monument to Stalin in Georgia defaced with paint

A STATUE of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was defaced with paint less than a day after it was put up in a town in eastern Georgia, local authorities said on September 2.

Local authorities in the town of Telavi, some 100 kilometres (60 miles) east of Tbilisi, said the 2-metre-high monument to the Georgian-born communist dictator was erected without permission by local residents on September 1 and could be torn down.

"It was a surprise to us. The monument has been erected without permission from the local authorities," said Aka Sachishvili, deputy head of Telavi municipality.

"We are studying the issue and will take a decision on the statue's dismantling?

Mr Sachishvili confirmed that the statue was covered in graffiti by unknown individuals overnight.

Pictures published by local media showed the statue covered with what looked like orange paint. Slogans including "down with Stalin" were scrawled on a wall behind the statue.

Born Joseph Dzhugashvili in the Georgian town of Gori in 1878. Stalin is a deeply divisive figure in his homeland.

In 2010, pro-Western president Mikheil Saakashvili tore down a 6metre statue of the Soviet tyrant that had stood in the central square of his hometown since 1952.

In July, Georgia's culture ministry said that that statue would be erected at Gori's Stalin museum but should not be returned to its original location in the town centre.

Mr Saakashvili is serving out a lame-duck term ahead of elections in October from which he is barred on account of the end of his 10-year constitutional mandate, and some see

moves to restore Stalin's statues as an attempts by conservatives to rehabilitate the despot's image.

Stalin is accused of causing the deaths of millions of Soviet citizens in his brutal Gulag prison camps and through the forced collectivisation of agriculture.

Stalin's supporters, however, praise his role in the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in 1945. -AFP

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brake linings for land vehicles; brake segments for land vehicles; brake shoes for land vehicles; brakes for bicycles, cycles, etc.; brakes for vehicles; buffers for railway rolling stock; bumpers; bumpers for automobiles; buses; cable cars; cable transport apparatus and installations; caissons; caps; caravans; carriages; carrier tricycles; carriers for vehicles; cars; cars for cable transport installations; carts; casings for pneumatic tires; casting carriages; casting cars; chains; chains for bicycles, cycles, etc.; chairlifts; chassis; chimneys for locomotives; chimneys for ships; cleats; clips for wheels; clutches for land vehicles; coaches; concrete mixing vehicles; converters for land vehicles; conveyors; cooling fans for land vehicle engines; couplings; couplings for land vehicles; covers for vehicles; covers for baby carriages; crankcases for land vehicles; cranks for cycles; cycle cars cycle hubs; cycle mudguards; cycles; cylinders; cylinders for land vehicles; davits for boats; delivery tricycles; dining cars; dinner wagons; direction indicators for bicycles, cycles, etc.; direction signals for vehicles; dirigible balloons; disengaging gear for boats; doors for vehicles; dredgers; dress guards for bicycles, cycle, etc.; driving chains for land vehicles driving motors for land vehicles; economisers for engines of land vehicles; ejector seats; electric vehicles; engine cylinders for land vehicles; engines; engines for land vehicles; fan belts for land vehicle engines; ferry boats; flanges for railway wheel tries; fork lift trucks; frames for bicycles, etc.; freewheels for land vehicles; fuel economisers for engines of land vehicles; funiculars; funnels for locomotives; funnels for ships; gear boxes for land vehicles; gearing for land vehicles; gears for cycles; golf carts goods handling carts; hand cars; handle bars for bicycles, cycles, etc; head - rests for vehicles; seats; hoisting gear for boats; hoods for baby carriages; hoods for vehicle engines; hoods for vehicles; hooks; horns for vehicles; hose carts; hub caps; hubs for vehicle wheels; hulls; hydraulic circuits for vehicles; hydroplanes; inclined ways for boats; inner tubes; inner tubes for bicycles, cycles, etc.; inner tubes for pneumatic tires; jet engineers for land vehicles; journals; ladle carriages; ladle cars; launches; launching gear for boats; lifting cars; linings for land mine cart wheels; mirrors; mopeds; motor buses; motor cars; motor coaches; motorcycles; motors for cycles; motors for land vehicles; motor, electric, for land vehicles; mudguards; mufflers for land vehicles; non-kid devices for vehicles tires; oars; omnibuses; paddles for canoes; parachutes; patches for repairing inner tubes; pedals for cycles; perambulator covers; pneumatic tires; pneumatic tires for vehicles; pontoons; portholes; propulsion mechanisms for land vehicles; pumps; pumps for bicycles; cycles, etc.; pushchair covers; pushchairs hoods; pushchairs; radiator caps; radiators for land vehicle engines; railway cars; railway couplings; railway wheel tires; rearview mirrors; reductions gears for land vehicles; refrigerated vehicles; repair outfits for inner tubes; reversing alarms for vehicles; rims for vehicles wheels; rims for wheels of bicycles, cycles, et.c; rolling stock for funicular railways; rolling stock for railways; rowlocks; rudders; running boards; sack - barrows; saddle covers for bicycles or motorcycles; saddles for bicycles, cycles or motorcycles; safety belts for the seats of vehicles; safety seats for children; screw propellers; screw propellers for boats; screws for ships; sculls; seaplanes; seat covers for vehicles; seats; segments for land vehicle; shafts for vehicles; ships; ships hulls; ships' steering gears; shock absorbers for vehicles; shock absorbers for automobiles; shock absorbing springs for vehicles; shoes for land vehicles; side cares; signals for vehicle; silencers for land vehicles; ski carriers for cars; ski lifts; sleeping berths for vehicles; sleeping cars; sleighs; space vehicles; spars for ships; spikes for tires; spoke clips for wheels; spokes; spokes for bicycles, cycles, etc.; sports cars; springs for vehicles; sprinkling trucks; stands for bicycles, cycles; etc.; starters for land vehicles; starters, electric; steering gears for ships; steering wheels for vehicles; stern oars; strollers cover; strollers; studs for tires. suspension shock absorbers for vehicles; suspension springs; telpher railways; titling-carts; timbers for ships; tipping apparatus, parts of trucks and wagons; tipping bodies for lorries; tipping bodies for trucks; tires; tires for bicycles, cycles, etc.; tires for vehicles wheels; tires, solid, for vehicle wheels; torque converters for land vehicles; torsion bars for vehicles; traction engines; tractors; trailer hitches for vehicles; trailers; tramcars; transmission chains for land vehicles; transmissions for land vehicles, transport apparatus and installations; treads for retreading tires; treads for vehicles; tricycles; trolleys; 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vehicles; locomotives lorries; luggage carriers for vehicles; luggage nets for vehicles; luggage trucks; military vehicles;

stationery and not for medical or household purposes; bands Dated: 9th September, 2013



# BERLIN

# Auschwitz guards to face criminal probes

#### **DEBORAH COLE**

THE German office investigating Nazi war crimes said on September 3 it would send files on 30 former Auschwitz death camp personnel to state prosecutors with a recommendation to bring charges.

In a twilight bid for justice nearly 70 years on, chief investigator Kurt Schrimm said the former Auschwitz guards, now aged up to 97, should face charges of accessory to murder.

"The cases will be handed over to the respective public prosecutors' offices," Mr Schrimm said.

Mr Schrimm's Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in the southwestern city of Ludwigsburg, set up in 1958, has recommended bringing criminal charges against more than 7000 people but has no powers to prosecute suspects itself.

Instead, it sends case files to regional prosecutors who then decide whether to file charges against suspects, who must also be judged fit to stand trial by the courts.

Mr Schrimm said he could not say how many of the suspects would actu-

ally be prosecuted in the end. "It is possible that very few will remain" of the 30 potential defendants, he said.

Victims' representatives welcomed the announcement.

"These crimes against humanity must not remain unpunished," Ulrich Sander of the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime told German news agency DPA.

And the Nazi-hunting Simon Wiesenthal Center said the announcement marked "an important milestone".

"At the same time, today's positive development underscores the failure to take such measures during the past five decades, a decision which allowed thousands of the worst hands-on killers to elude justice," said the director of its Jerusalem office, Efraim Zuroff.

In an "Operation Last Chance" campaign in several German cities in July, the Simon Wiesenthal Center hung posters seeking information on the last perpetrators of the Holocaust still at large.

The German investigative office said it had initially identified 49 former guards from the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp in what was then Nazi-occupied Poland who were still alive, but nine of the elderly suspects had since died.

Thirty live in Germany and will now be subject to criminal investigation.

Another seven live abroad – including one in Israel – and the investigation against them in Ludwigsburg is still ongoing. Two people could not be found, the office said, and one had already been under investigation in the southern city of Stuttgart.

More than 6000 SS personnel served at Auschwitz, where about 1.1 million Jews, Roma, Sinti and members of other persecuted groups died in gas chambers or of forced labour, sickness and starvation.

For more than 60 years German courts only prosecuted Nazi war criminals if evidence showed they had personally committed atrocities, but since a 2011 landmark case all former camp guards can be tried.

In that year, a Munich court sentenced John Demjanjuk to five years in prison for complicity in the extermination of more than 28,000 Jews at the Sobibor camp, where he had served as a guard.

Thomas Walther, who led the

 Kurt Schrimm, head of the Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes, talks during a press conference in Ludwigsburg, Germany, on September 3. Photo: AFP

 investigation that led to Mr Demjanjuk's prosecution, hailed the Ludwigsburg announcement. "It is the first time

Majdanek in occupied Poland, in its sights. "The Central Office is also looking through the archives in Russia, Be-

first Auschwitz trials, a large number

of these people still live among us, and

many of them have led quiet lives these

last 50 years without ever being investi-

gated. That is a major, major mistake of

est investigation focused on Auschwitz,

it had other Nazi camps, including

Mr Schrimm said that while the lat-

the German justice system.'

burg announcement. "It is the first time since the 1960s that the German nation ... is going to investigate such a large number of its citizens [for war crimes] and perhaps charge them," he said. "It shows that 50 years after the

in Germany of a 92-year-old former SS officer for the murder of a Dutch resistance fighter nearly 70 years ago. Since the Nuremberg Trials in

1945-1946, around 106,000 German or foreign-born Nazi soldiers have been accused of war crimes. About 13,000 have been found guilty and around half sentenced, according to the Ludwigsburg office. – *AFP* 

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# 42 World International

# **OSLO**

# Norway's right smells power in post-Breivik poll

# PIERRE-HENRY DESHAYES

NORWAY votes on September 9 in polls likely to oust Labour Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and give right-wing antiimmigration populists a seat in government just two years after extreme rightist Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people.

With a few days to go before the first general election since the July 2011 massacre, polls pointed to a victory for Erna Solberg's Conservative Party, setting the stage for a coalition with the Progress Party, which once counted Mr Breivik among its members.

"Something extraordinary would have to happen to prevent a change of government," said Bernt Aardal, a political scientist at the University of Oslo. "Something never seen before in a Norwegian election."

According to polls, the Progress Party is the third-largest party after Mr Stoltenberg's Labour and the Conservatives, making its cooperation essential for a centre-right coalition that will also need the support of two small centrist parties, the Christian Democrats and the Liberals.

"We will not support a government in which we do not ourselves take part," warned Siv Jensen, leader of the Progress Party.

Kept from power since it formed 40 years ago, the Progress Party has gained a measure of respectability over time, even if it retains the ability to make some voters cringe.

It unequivocally denounced Mr Breivik, who claimed to be fighting multiculturalism and a "Muslim invasion", and has also toned down its rhetoric on "sneak Islamisation". Even so, it remains an advocate of very restrictive immigration policies.

Those are issues on which the two centre parties have very different views, saddling 52-year-old Ms Solberg with the probable post-election chal-

WASHINGTON



Norwegian politician Erna Solberg, leader of the Conservative Party, speaks at a press conference in Oslo, Norway, on April 29. Photo: AFP

lenge of having to reconcile the nearly irreconcilable.

The four centre-right parties agree on one thing: They want an end to the leftist policies pursued by the Labour Party during eight years in power.

**'Things are** going well in Norway, but people are tired of having the same leaders.

Johannes Bergh Institute for Social Research in Oslo

But they have yet to decide which of them should be in the new government and what policies that government should pursue - two questions that will be decided only when the relative weight of

their parties' votes is known this week. At this stage, the most likely scenario seems to be the forma-

tion of a minority government including the Conservatives and Progress Party, with the two centrist parties offering support in parliament.

"Norwav needs a new course," said Ms Solberg, focusing mainly on health, education, taxation and transportation

Meanwhile, the coalition led by incumbent Mr Stoltenberg. which has governed Norway over two terms since 2005, is a victim of power fatigue. On paper, at least, all the stars would seem to be aligned for a third term.

Norway has a flourishing economy underpinned by strong oil revenues, while its 5 million people enjoy the highest living standard in the world and are virtually shielded from unemployment.

The Norwegian state also controls the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world, which is valued at close to US\$750 billion, the result of skillful management of its ample petro-money over the years. "Things are going well in Norway, but people are tired of

having the same leaders," said Johannes Bergh, a researcher at the Institute for Social Research in Oslo. "Eight years of uninterrupted power is unusual in Norway.

Mr Stoltenberg, 54, rode on a huge wave of sympathy immediately after Mr Breivik's attacks, but he has since been weakened by critical failures in the state apparatus exposed by the tragedy

On July 22, 2011, Mr Breivik inflicted an indelible trauma on the Nordic country when he detonated a bomb near government headquarters and then opened fire on a gathering of Labour's youth wing on Utoeya Island.

An official investigation later found that the attacks could have been prevented and that Mr Breivik could have been stopped earlier had the authorities implemented security measures that had already been decided years earlier.

But Utoeya has generally remained a taboo subject in the campaign, even though some of the survivors are candidates in the September 9 election.

Even without Mr Breivik on the agenda, most commentators believe the vote is a done deal and that the small, wealthy democracy is destined for a shift to the right. – AFP

# Judge rejects release of bin Laden film info

A US judge has refused to allow the public Contreras, however, dismissed the petition learn as much as the Hollywood directors release of information divulged by the CIA in an August 28 ruling, which found that to the producers of the film Zero Dark Thirty, a judicial source said on September 4. The Hollywood movie about the hunt for 9/11 mastermind terrorist Obama bin Laden relied on information disclosed to its director Katherine Bigelow and the movie's screenwriter Mark Boal by the US Central Intelligence Agency. The names of key figures involved in the planning of the top secret mission were sought by the non-governmental group Judicial Watch, which had argued in a court filing that since they had been revealed by US intelligence, they no longer could be classified as secret. Judicial Watch in its suit in US District Court criticised the Barack Obama administration, which it said "gave the Hollywood filmmakers unusual access to classified intelligence information, including the names of CIA operatives involved in the Bin Laden raid".

were told in preparation of the movie. "The ruling that the CIA is able to hide information from the public about Zero Dark Thirty does not mean that the prosecution can hide the same information from Mr al-Baluchi's lawyers," said Mr Connell, whose Pakistani client is identified in the movie as the prisoner subjected to torture in a secret CIA prison. Mr al-Baluchi's uncle, alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, also is to be tried at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba,

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US District Court Judge Rudolph

names of four CIA officials and a member of the Navy Seal team involved in planning the raid were not included in the movie and therefore could remain secret.

"In short, Judicial Watch does not know - and outside of this suit, apparently has no way of learning - the names of these individuals," Mr Contreras said in his ruling. "That fact is strong evidence that those names are not in the public domain."

The US Justice Department had argued that making the names public would create an "unnecessary security and counterintelligence risk".

Mr Contreras issued his decision as defendants accused in the September 11, 2001, attacks await a military ruling in a similar request, expected in a hearing later this month at the Guantanamo Bay military base.

James Connell, an attorney for one of the defendants - Ali Abd al-Aziz Ali, also known as Ammar al-Baluchi - is seeking to

The other defendants are Mustapha al-Hawsawi of Saudi Arabia and Yemenis Ramzi Binalshibh and Walid bin Attash.

The five face the death penalty if convicted for their roles in the 2001 attacks by al-Qaeda militants in which hijacked planes were used to strike New York and Washington, killing 2976 people.

The defendants have been held at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre since 2006. - AFP

# WASHINGTON



Ariel Castro (centre) listens to the judge during his sentencing in Cleveland, Ohio, on August 1. Photo: AFP

# Cleveland rapist found dead

ARIEL Castro, sentenced to life in prison for holding three young women captive and raping them for a decade, was found dead in his prison cell last week, news reports said.

CBS television and other US news outlets reported that the former Cleveland, Ohio, school bus driver, who was sentenced to life in prison last month,

**CIUDAD JUAREZ** 

was found dead in his cell on September 3.

The 53-year-old Mr Castro was found hanging in his cell, and officials tried but failed to resuscitate him, according to a statement from the Ohio Department of Corrections.

At his sentencing hearing August 1, Mr Castro had insisted he was not evil but rather addicted to sex.

Despite having pled guilty to 977 charges related to his victims' brutal decade-long ordeal, including many rapes and the murder of a foetus through beating its mother, Mr Castro said he was not a violent man.

Mr Castro said he had himself been sexually abused as a child, had grown up obsessed with sex and addicted to pornography, and was a compulsive masturbator.

He said he had not plotted the three kidnappings, but had acted on impulse.

"I am not a monster. I am a normal person. I am just sick. I have an addiction just like an alcoholic has an addiction," he said. – *AFP* 

# Mexican police search for bus driver hunter

AUTHORITIES are seeking a woman accused of killing two bus drivers in northern Mexico amid claims that the murders were committed by a vigilante avenging rapes, officials said on September 3.

Local media have received an anonymous message signed by "Diana, bus driver hunter", claiming to act as "an instrument of vengeance" for the sexual abuse committed by drivers in Ciudad Juarez, a border city with a dark record of violence against women.

Arturo Sandoval, a spokesman for the Chihuahua state prosecutor's office, said the email, sent over the weekend, "has been included in the investigation".

Witnesses said a woman wearing a blonde wig shot the drivers in the head after stopping the buses last month. Mr Sandoval said prosecutors believe they were either crimes of passion or motivated by vengeance.

The drivers were working on a route used by women who work in assembly plants known as *maquiladoras* and who regularly suffer sexual abuse as they of female passengers allegedly sexually assaulted by drivers. Investigators are looking into whether the killer is among the women.

Officials are also investigating any

'While many people know about our suffering, nobody defends us or does anything to protect us.'

> **Diana** Bus driver hunter

links with an arson attack against a bus at dawn on September 3. The vehicle was set ablaze after gasoline was poured on it, said Fire Chief Ramon Lucero. The message from "Diana" stated, "My "We were victims of sexual violence by drivers who worked during the night shift at the [plants] in Juarez. While many people know about our suffering, nobody defends us or does anything to protect us," it said.

"They think that we are weak because we are women," the message said, warning that there would be more deaths.

Authorities have drawn up a profile of the suspected killer and launched an operation to find her with undercover agents in buses.

Witnesses describe her as a woman in her 50s, 1.65 metres (5 feet 4 inches) tall and with a dark complexion.

Ciudad Juarez, which lies at the border with Texas, gained notoriety in the 1990s when the bodies of hundreds of women began to appear in the desert bearing signs of extreme sexual violence.

Many of the victims were women who had come from other parts of the country to work in one of the city's assembly plants following a manufacturing boom

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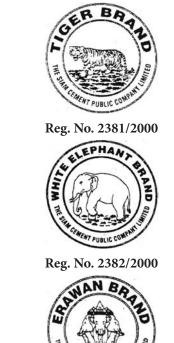
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head to their night shifts. Authorities are investigating 12 cases

colleagues and I have suffered in silence, but they can no longer keep us quiet.

e, generated by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). – *AFP* 

# WASHINGTON

# Manning files bid for Obama pardon

LAWYERS for Chelsea Manning filed a request for a pardon from President Barack Obama on September 3 following the soldier's 35-year jail sentence for the biggest intelligence leak in US history.

"Private Manning's pardon request was filed today by our office," attorney David Coombs said on Twitter.

The lawyer had indicated

his intention to seek a pardon on August 21, when a military judge sentenced Ms Manning to 35 years behind bars for her massive disclosure of intelligence including some 700,000 classified diplomatic and military documents.

Ms Manning, formerly a US Army intelligence analyst, was prosecuted as a man, Bradley Manning, but the day after

being sentenced asked to be recognised as a woman.

A separate statement released by Amnesty International on September 3 urged Mr Obama to take a sympathetic stance toward Ms Manning and grant clemency, saying the soldier's sentence was a "blight on the US human rights record". "President Obama should grant Manning clemency for

time served, protect whistleblowers, and provide accountability for crimes like those Manning exposed," Amnesty International said.

The rights group noted that Ms Manning's sentence "contrasts with the leniency given those responsible for torture and other types of grave human rights violations" revealed by the soldier's disclosures. – *AFP* 



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# The Europeans are here!

OUR FINGERS

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THE Europeans are coming – again. Nay Pyi Taw Cinema will screen this year's  $22^{nd}$  European Film Festival from September 12-22.

Organised this year by the French Embassy, the festival will also feature movies from the Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, said Ma Wah Wah Tin, a spokesperson for the embassy.

The 11 films about friendship, forgiveness, social and environmental issues, love, sport, and music, including documentaries and animated films, will be screened over the 10-day period, giving Myanmar audiences an insight into European ways of life and thought. Subtitles will be available in English.

The opening drama, from France, tells of a socialist couple in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (107 minutes) and will screen on September 12 at 6:30pm. Another French film, *The Illusionist*, (80 minutes) shows a magician and a a 95-minute docu-comedy about *Schwingen*, a traditional Swiss

form of wrestling called *Horselupf*. The UK will present two films. *Quartet*, described as a wickedly comic film about redefining old age and growing old with hope by director Dustin Hoffman (98 minutes) and a 100-minute documentary called *You've been Trumped*, which captures the cultural chasm between the glamorous, jet-setting and media-savvy Donald Trump and a deeply rooted Scottish community.

The Czech Republic offers drama mixed with comedy in *Leaving*, based on the theatre play written by Vaclav Havel, the country's former president.

Poland will give you A Wonderful Summer, about an 18-yearold girl who communicates with the spirit of her dead mother while leading an adventurous lifestyle. Something Sweet (Israel, 96 minutes) is a romantic drama about three sisters in an Israeli village.

Two films will show each day,



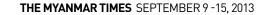
THE PULSE EDITOR: MANNY MAUNG manny.maung@gmail.com

ON

Wathann Festival organiser,s Thaidi says the festival is more popular after the move downtown. Photo: Greg Holland



"The Wathann Film Festival ... hopes to start a new wave of an independent film movement





young girl setting out on her life's journey.

*Barbara*, a 1980 love story set in East Germany (108 minutes) is followed by the comedy *Whisky mit Vodka*, in which the protagonist is a renowned actor playing the part of a problematic but beloved ladies' man.

From Switzerland come a documentary and a comedy, *More than Honey* (90 minutes) about bees, by director Markus Imhoof; and at 3:30pm and 6pm. Tickets will be handed out free at Nay Pyi Taw Cinema until 15 minutes before the screenings on a first-comefirst-served basis.

As an additional way of forging cultural links between Europe and Myanmar, the Wathann Film Festival (September 4-8), the first film festival of works by Myanmar filmmakers, presented a selection of short films before each screening. — Nandar Aung

Artist Nyein Chan Su at Wathann. Photo: Boothee



Ma Thu Thu Shein



# An intimate glimpse into Daw Aung San Su



Bizarre live performances captivate the audience at Wathann 2013. Photos: Boothee

# **Nathann**

# Film Fest celebrates independent documentary-making

Punk rock, performance art and filmmaker workshops bring diversity to third annual international festival



time another man walked absentmindedly through the crowd, holding a tray of bloody meat and yelling indiscriminately. The man then tionally made documentary films and a separate competition for documentaries made by young Myanmar directors, there was also a workshop country's largest city. For six weeks the two filmed the lives of punk musicians and their fans using hand-held cameras without government permiscollaboration among filmmakers and artists from other fields," Ma Thu Thu Shein said, adding that the aim was "to promote independent films and

nyeineieihtwe23@gmail.com

jmail.com mimed p violin. Fin

POLOGY of the President of the Union of the Republic of Bunnyland to the Bunnies." With that sentence, a man in traditional Myanmar dress began making a speech in English, a satirical skewering of his country's

developments. But at the same

painted a picture with the blood and mimed playing a piece of meat as a violin. Finally, he ran up to the stage and used the piece of meat to hit the man giving the speech.

The whole exchange – a contemporary art performance which kicked off the third annual Wathann Film Fest, held September 4-8 at Waziya Cinema in Yangon – drew big applause from the crowd.

It wasn't the only surprise at this multi-faceted festival. As well as screenings of a number of internaand film presentation hosted by the well-known Czech film school FAMU in Prague.

Southeast Asian cinema was well covered, with submissions from the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia giving insight into the lives of people in those countries.

On September 7 there was a special screening of the documentary *Yangon Calling*, by filmmakers Alexandar Dluzak and Carsten Pieflke. The hour-long documentary examines the punk rock scene in the sion, accompanying the talent to their homes and meeting their friends and families to learn more about this oftoutcast group, and the rejection and prejudice they face from society and their government.

In all, 20 documentaries were considered in the competition out of the 43 documentaries submitted, said festival director Ma Thu Thu Shein. The films were shown before a jury comprising a mix of cultural experts, both international and Myanmar.

"The festival comes as a result of

filmmaking in Myanmar" by showcasing independent young Myanmar filmmakers.

She also said that there are currently not enough opportunities to screen short films and documentaries which are artistically and independently made in this country, and that the number of cinemas is decreasing.

"The Wathann Film Fest is determined to get over these difficulties and hopes to start a new wave of independent film movement in Myanmar."

# u Kyi's daily life during her darkest years

NOW ON SALE! A new release from MCM Books by Moe Linn (aka Pho Lay)

# )CS Watched in Yangon



A still from the film, The Last Day of Summer, screened as part of Watch Docs in Yangon. Photo: Supplied

# **PAUL SCHEICHER**

ROM the salt lakes in Bolivia, the corners of Vientiane to the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, the Human Rights Film Festival - Watch Docs - brought the world to Yangon's American Center.

The 14 documentaries screened from September 5-7, portrayed the difficulties of people's lives from all over the globe, with themes varying from poverty and politics to cultural challenges and growing pains.

"When I heard about it, I got immediately attracted by the idea, as the event is something new

and exciting in Yangon", said law student Naing Lin from Dagon University.

Organisers from Polish Lech Walesa Institute said they used mostly social media to successfully drive up interest among Yangon's youth demographic.

"Now it is the time to come to Myanmar and be part of this fabulous transition", Project coordinator Bartosz Kozakiewicz said, when asked why Myanmar was chosen as a destination for the international screening. "In Poland the transition was 25 years ago and is still not finished. With our experiences we might be able to support people here through that transition".

# World's largest short film fest: Tropfest

#### LWIN MAR HTUN

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FILM MAKERS from Myanmar have been invited to take part in one of the world's largest short-film festivals.

The Tropfest Southeast Asian Regional Edition, in conjunction with the online short film platform Viddsee, is calling on Myanmar film makers to put their work forward for the 2014 Tropfest SEA festival.

The theme for this year's competition is "Rice". The winner will receive US\$10,000 and a trip to Los Angeles sponsored by the Motion Picture Association

Any film entered into the contest must be produced specifically for Tropfest, and Vidsee announced in August that the company would showcase the shortlisted finalists' films.

'We hope Tropfest SEA's showcase will enrich Viddsee's existing pool of content, narratives and perspectives from the region," said Tropfest SEA managing director Joe Sidek.

The competition is open to all citizens and residents of Southeast Asia. "As a partner in Tropfest SEA 2014

we would like to see Myanmar filmmakers contributions," said Mr. Ho Jia Jian, one of the founders of Viddsee. Tropfest was founded 21 years

ago in a cafe in Sydney, Australia, to screen a short film made by John Polson, a filmmaker, producer, director, and Tropfest's founder. It now runs internationally.

The Southeast Asian edition of the festival and competition will take place in Penang, Malaysia on 24 and 25 January 2014.

The submissions deadline is 28 October 2013.

For further information about how to submit a film and to view the films of finalists from previous Tropfest competitions, visit www.tropfest.com/ sea/

ch Docs in Yangon — interview with a director

# MANNY MAUNG

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used to get the good, art-house films during the communist era, not like the Hollywood movies now."

'It is important

ing and found himself in Russia for a film project. He came across a military cadet school by chance and the process of change. "It is important now to retain and acknowledge the values we hold

PIOTR Stasik is a giggle-girt. He finds it terribly amusing when I ask how to pronounce his name or any of his Polish colleagues' names, and he giggles again when I ask him how old he is. I can't help it. I start giggling too.

He smiles generously and tells me, "I am 37."

Stasik looks younger than the bio photos of him posted on the web. He is tanned from the European summer and appears relaxed while we sit outside the theatre at the American Center where his film The Last Day of Summer is being screened.

He tells me of how, as a child living in communist Poland, he remembers having a happy time living in his village. Stasik loved nature, reading books and of course, playing throughout the summers.

"I watched television for the first time when I was 13," he recalls. "We

"I loved the ones by Ingmar Bergman, Fedrico Fellini and Andrzej Wajda."

But with the exposure to films, came the exposure to a darker truth in his country's political progress. Communism was failing in Poland. Stasik became aware of the USSR's grip on the country and of the horrors some of his countrymen were going through.

"It felt like I lost something," he says. "I think I felt like I lost my childhood."

When Stasik was older, he became interested in sociology, graduating with a Social Sciences major from Warsaw University. He later became interested in the creative industries particularly film - finding it a unique medium in which to connect people emotionally.

Stasik later attended Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Direct-

now to

retain and

acknowledge

was mesmorised by the children who attended, hence finding some subjects for a new documentary project.

The Last Day of Summer is a memoir of Stasik's lost childhood. The three subjects are young cadets in Russia who have been enlisted into the military school. Their daily regiment involves discipline and order, and as they train to handle weapons, their young faces look hardened - but also confused.

Stasik explains the link of these young boys moving into manhood, to his own loss, "The younger boys don't know what society is doing with him and he questions why, but is obedient. The older boy in the film, he is 17 vears old but doesn't want to be an adult yet and wants to rebel."

Stasik says there is also a link of loss and transition - something Myanmar can identify as a country in dear, as we change. A lot of things are changing for the positive in this country, but we can also lose something through that change."

Stasik says of his film, "The students in the film represent something at the cusp, a moment in life where you cannot turn back. It's almost a signal."

"We need to remember this in Myanmar as the values change significantly through political change. Poland is also trying to figure out a new system of values even now, and maybe the films that I make can help people in Myanmar also consider the new values they want."

Piotr Stasik films The Last Day of Summer and A Diary From a Journey have won accolade from the Plus Camerimage International Film Festival 2010 and Krakow Film Festival 2013.

the values we hold dear, as we change,'

# **Piotr Stasik**

Poish filmmaker

# www.mmtimes.com

the pulse 47

# Travelling the easy road — using the internet as a travel guide

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lack of decent travel websites and a frustrating lack of valid travel information was a good enough reason for Marcus Allender to launch the website, Go-Myanmar. The 34-year old (soon to be 35) has managed to pool a horde of resources into one comprehensive online travel guide for the weary traveller – who for a change, wants to turn up to a destination and actually find the hotel they're looking for still exists. It's also the only travel website in the country that allows you to make online domestic tour bookings and tours.

A candid interview with Allender reveals the ins and outs of travelling around the Golden Land.

Why did you move here to live?

I was living in Kunming, Yunnan Province, in 2010 and I travelled over land with friends to Myanmar through the Ruili/Muse border crossing. It was an amazing experience, even before we crossed the border. Getting the required permits was straightforward enough, but we were told at the consulate in Kunming that the border was shut; from the start, we were travelling on a wing and a prayer. That was exciting, much in the same way as travelling through more remote parts of the country still is today.

From then on in it was sensory overload – everything was so wonderfully unfamiliar. Our car broke down four or five times between Muse and Lashio; they filled the tank with whisky bottles; in Lashio we changed our dollars into gigantic bundles of K1000 notes in the office of the local Chinese hotel kingpin, and those notes were mostly torn to shreds. And then there's the scenery in the mountainous north of Shan State, which is stunning.

Even though much of the rest of our trip was on the standard 'tourist route', there were very few other foreigners around – we tended to bump into the same people in Bagan, Mandalay, Inle Lake and so on. They were mostly middle aged French people, so, apart from the numbers, not much has changed on that front!

There was so much colour and variety, the whole place felt so untouched, and it felt like there was so much more to explore. All of these things made Myanmar one of the



A rest stop on the way from Ye to Dawei by train. Photo: Supplied

most intoxicating placing I had ever visited, and I said to myself that I would definitely come back some day. I didn't expect it to be so soon though.

#### What are your tips for dealing with local companies and how have you been able to get them on board?

Firstly, patience. As everyone who lives here knows, the pace of change in Myanmar may be fast, but nothing happens quickly. Developing a business like this means talking to – and working with – a broad range of people. It's not just hoteliers and tour companies. This kind of thing would take time back home, but with attitudes and lines of communication being what they are in Myanmar, you need to be in for the long haul.

# What's your favourite aspect of travelling in Myanmar?

No two days are the same; this is a big country with lots to see and do, with amazing ethnic and cultural diversity. People talk of 'pagoda fatigue', but I don't get that. Religion is a cornerstone of the Myanmar experience, and in many ways it makes the country what it is. I've been to Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, but this country is steeped in Buddhism in a different way – and that lends more impact to the incredible monuments like Shwedagon and those you find in Bagan and all around the country.

# Have you got any tips for travelling in this country?

Take luxury overnight buses, which are widely available to the big destinations and allow you to make the most of your trip by not wasting your daytime hours.

If someone says it isn't possible to go somewhere, don't take their word for it. A huge number of places that were previously out of reach for foreigners can now be accessed, although it may take time and patience. In my experience, the further you

go off the beaten track, the more eye-

opening the experience tends to be. Some of your tips for go-to best resources?

The lack of decent websites was one of the main reasons I started this project! But there are some great sites for individual destinations around the country, like Bagan (www.baganmyanmar.com) and the Shwedagon Pagoda (www.shwedagonpagoda.com); they're both well designed and provide great background info. In particular, the Bagan site is invaluable if you want detail on any (or all) of the temples on the plain. I'd also say that Oway.com is a good general bookings website.

For more information, visit www. go-myanmar.com

# **Upper Myanmar-palooza**

# A multi-band tour is set to hit the road with stops in multiple cities - and they're bringing cameras

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A JOINT project between a number of well-known Myanmar bands will see them head to Upper Myanmar next month to rock, bop and hip-hop their way to crowds who in the past, have had to travel to Yangon to see their favourite bands.

The band, Emperor will headline the acts which will also feature SIR (Skull in Ribcage), a collective of bands including Idiot, Wanted, Reason and Big Bag. The bands are set to play weekend shows in Mandalay, Taunggyi, Pyin Oo Lwin, Sagaing, Magwe, Pakokku and Bagan.

The tour has also bookended a pair of Yangon shows, the first at the National Theater on October 5 and then another in Yangon in December, after a planned performance at the closing ceremony of the 27<sup>th</sup> SEA Games in Nay Pyi Taw.

Organised by Myanmar Media Management (MMM), the tour is the first such endeavor for those involved, said project manager Ko Si Thu Thein. He said the tour is about more than just selling tickets and playing music – it was also about forging closer ties with others in the industry and setting out to solve the problems that plague musicians and record companies everywhere in the digital age.

"The music industry has nearly been destroyed because of pirated CDs," he said. "So when we arrive in a city, we will hold a workshop with industry folks and discuss how we can solve this problem." Along the tour MMM also plans to make a documentary in collaboration with the local music industries in each city, for future television airing.

Zaw Win Htut, Emperor's lead singer, said the tour will be an experience-builder for the bands involved, but he was also eager to place it in a broader context.

"I want to increase the skills of musicians, so we are trying to develop the music industry by sharing our experiences and knowledge as much as we can," he commented.

"We have a great industry in the

country, but it will be better if we can collaborate across genres and styles."

He said he was particularly looking forward to playing Upper Myanmar.

"We've never sung there before and some of us have personal connections. I'm from Upper Myanmar myself, so it will be exciting for to perform there." Zaw Win Htut said his band's decision to join SIR was based on invigorating the music scene.

"They are making music bravely, creating what they want to create – it will be an honour to play alongside our colleagues. We respect them."

# One more for everyone



ZON PANN PWINT

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NE person *can* make a difference. For two years now, people of modest means have been contributing to a scheme that generates charitable gifts of up to K10 million a month.

In August 2011 three men—writer Maung Thar Cho, cartoonist Aw Pyi Kyal and magazine editor Pyi Thway Naing—decided that not only rich people could be asked to donate to good causes. Their idea, called "One More", asked people to donate as little as K1000 a month at participating bookshops, tea shops and publishing houses.

"The amount is so modest that even pensioners can contribute," U Aw Pi Kyal said at an event held on August 31 at Orchid Hotel to mark the charity's second anniversary.

At the end of each month, the organisers pool together the donations received. During the first month, receipts totalled K90,500 from 905 donors, which they gave to Chan Thar Aung Buddhist convent in East Dagon. In 2012, the charity received more than K10 million each month. The trio still lead the charity and

hope they can grow the initiative.

"The country has an estimated population of 60 million, of whom about one million make a comfortable living. We thought if each contributes K1000 a month, we can alleviate hunger, provide shelters for the homeless and help poor children continue their education," commented Maung Thar Cho, who said the idea was inspired by Chinese actor Jet Li's The One



Donations for the "One More" foundation provide extra food and schooling for children. Photo: Supplied

Foundation, in which individuals are asked to contributing one dollar a month to help people in need.

One More's contributions have gone towards impecunious monastic schools, convents and monasteries and free mobile clinics at relief camps

in Kachin and Rakhine states. "One More aims to help a poor child continue his or her studies for one more year, and to eat one more meal," Maung Thar Cho said.

Aw Pi Kyal said some people were reluctant to donate because they didn't know where the money would go. "We don't have an office or employees. Donations are sent to us from different places at the end of each month and we send them directly to the places that need them," he added.

"I found it absolutely astonish-

ing that total individual donations reached K15 million in February, 2012 - that's K1000 from 15,833 individual donors," he said.

They divide the donation and contributed to separate monastic schools and relief camps.

"Thanks to the people of Myanmar who don't neglect their brothers and sisters, this money does make a difference to people's lives." For those who want to donate K1000 or more, keep an eye out for participating retailers, bookstores and teashops that have the "One More" signboard hung on their walls. Or to donate through a bank, visit the Asia Green Development Bank and ask to donate to the "One More" bank account.

# 'Again and Again': Recycled emotions

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MYANMAR filmmaker The Maw Naing's short *Again and Again* has hit the big screen, airing as part of the fourth International Poetry Festival Meridian Czernowitz, held from September 6-8 in the Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi.

The 13-minute film is based on the poem he composed in 2003, also called *Again and Again*. The film was set in the Nagar Glass Factory in Mayangone township, and portrays the process of glass-blowing. Something that, The Maw Naing says, reflects his philosophy that glassware is beautiful and fragile like human lives.

"I made this film in 2005. When I visited the Nagar glass factory, I found it very interesting to see many colourful glass bottles piled high one on top of the other; the way the female factory workers liquefy the glass in the furnace and how the sand has been transformed into glassware," said The Maw Naing.

"The clothes of the female factory workers are worn out and they work hard. The glass factory is very old and the fallen leaves are liberally scattered about the factory compound. It is very interesting," he added.

The Maw Naing says he feels the recycling of glass is reminiscent of the circle of life: a symbolic insight into the human experience.

"The glass factory gave a true reflection of our lives," he said.

*Again and Again* has been screened at a number of festivals internationally, receiving a special mention in 2008 when it was shown at the ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival in Berlin.





Coloured glass from the Nagar Glass Factory in Mayangone township, Yangon. Photo: Supplied

A TROPICAL island has provided a stunning backdrop for many iconic films, so it's no surprise the region's best young talent will congregate in a bit of paradise for the 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Bali Film Festival later this year.

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NANDAR AUNG

Myanmar will send three of its most exciting directors to the Indonesian island for the December 11-14 festival – the second time its filmmakers will showcase their work alongside the best of what ASEAN members have to offer.

The Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPO) will choose the top directors making documentaries, short stories and full-length films in a competition in November, the organisation's vice president U Aye Kyuu Lay said.

The festival aims to make an impact with the younger generation

# film industry.

"The winning directors will get an expenses-paid trip to the festival," he said.

and establish Bali as a centre for the

of film creators and movie buffs.

U Aye Kyuu Lay said the festival provides an excellent opportunity for Myanmar's up-and-coming directors to rub shoulders with the region's best, aiming to foster a burgeoning arts scene in Myanmar, Indonesia, and the rest of Southeast Asia.

Last year marked the first time Myanmar filmmakers participated in the event.

The hosts also intend the festival to assist Bali with its ongoing recovery from tragic terrorist attacks in 2002 and 2005, helping to restore its position as a world class resort island.

Entrants are to submit their work to the MMPO by September 15.

TEXT message or dusty tome, ebook or the

simplest chalk scrawl – reading and writing remain humanity's original and still greatest technological achievement. The miracle of the written word carries our thoughts across time and space and bridges otherwise impenetrable gaps.We write down what we would be unable to express out loud. We read to learn from those we would never be able to meet in person. Sadly, 50-plus years into the space age, the UN estimates that 775,000 people worldwide still remain illiterate. Two-

Myanmar has comparatively strong lit-

As a newspaper, we need not only readers but also a strong reading culture. Everyone needs both the ability and the freedom to have their say. In honour of UNESCO World Literacy Day – celebrated September 8 since 1965 – *The Myanmar Times* is therefore proud to present three

poems as our tribute to the vital intersec-

eracy rates - above 90 percent - as well as

a rich diversity of languages and a vibrant literary tradition. However, its citizens have for a long time had to think twice about what they commit to print.

# Poetry and prose

# celebrating International Literacy Day

# Spilt Tea

This is the land where the bottle collectors call as though asking for the bodies of your loved ones. The rain has come and with it wind that carries birds in wide circles around our homes. The scaffolding falls from the pagoda, so its mosaic mirrors reflect the storms. Fairies float above the temple on full moon days. When we step too close, the mirror breaks our reflection into the small pieces of ourselves. Hatred grows in strange ways and will not be scraped away like mould at the end of the rainy season. This is the land of closed doors and arm-crossed observers. Sometimes a feeling of fear, hanging overcast like the clouds It rains so suddenly. I am not like that. This is not like that. This is the land of legends of trees, which once grew on hills. Hate lingers like a storm. I long to scream like the rain, to know someone, who like the sun, will breathe those words away. This is the land of the careful myth. The rain falls, cars go the wrong way. Every part of me is pulled over like traffic. We are moving they say, but still there is not the feeling of movement. This is the land of embargo. Here, I learn to make loneliness my friend. To accept pain as abstract. Longing for change.

as abstract. Longing for change.

Three/Four Stops with Mr. President

'Import license for new buses will be issued again', the headlines

declared. Now in a packed bus, as we elbowed each other for an empty seat, I noticed Mr. President. Mr. President, Sir, would our poems still have to be juiced through the board of the press scrutiny? I have no idea. I've been busy with infrastructure projects. How transparent Mr. President is! Mr. President, Sir, this bus belongs to a special line! I stood aside for Mr. President a rickety seat with a missing screw. I handed the conductor a 500 Kyat note. For two VIPs! The open-chested conductor spat betel quid through the window. What an anal plague! Gimme a 100, will ya? Mr. President saw that. The passengers saw me & Mr. President. In no time we were at The Standard. Next, St. John! Next, Pegu Club! The bus sped past the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [under renovation]. Then, the National Museum! NO STANDING PASSENGERS TO BE ENTERTAINED ON CITY BUSES Mr. President gazed at the sign, swamped with standing passengers As a red light slowed the bus on Ahlone Road, our driver hurled a world of rat-fuck-sons-of-leeches at an unlicensed glossy SUV jerking under his nose. It was raining in mid-May. It was raining through the bus roof. Mr. President let out a presidential sigh. Do you write such things in your poems? If so, poetry should be part of infrastructure projects. Just as I responded, Yes, Mr. President, Sir! Long live, Mr. President! Redearth Hillock, Redearth Hillock, this is your stop! The conductor threw us out of the bus. Mr. President found himself caressing the shiny new bus stop. Are we already at Redearth Hillock? Yes. Mr. President, Sir! We are now at the brand new Redearth Hillock stop right in front of People's Park. Are these things also in your poems? If so, poetry should be part of infrastructure projects. By the time we arrived at the original Redearth Hillock, we were out of breath On our scramble for drinkable water, Mr. President & I licked each other's sweat. The following day, there were headlines about Mr. President's health. To this day it remains unclear to me if our poems have become part of infrastructure projects.

# A Long Division

A ring of a phone,

tion of language and life.

thirds are women.

a trip of a skirt and the spine rearranges itself into any number of possible complications. One bite of the wrong meal and it's like your own self is refusing to ever trust you again. For weeks, deeper workings take over. You are a traveller, one step lost from sight. Discomfort turns into bewilderment. "How did I come this way?" you ask, thinking back to when your body was not, as it is, real. You try to identify the misstep, as if there could be anywhere other than forward to go from here. Then, when there isn't, you think of all the other ways life could go wrong, all the dizzying danger of it. It is not your fragility that scares you, not your susceptibility to that swinging force from without; it's the potential, already there inside, to divide what you previously thought whole, the way your body, in injury or illness, knows how to fold down so cannily to a common denominator you didn't even know you carried. You feel like a promise has been broken and you are learning, for the first time, promises can be broken at all. In the end, all suffering becomes algebraic. As you work through it you may be surprised to find how many steps it takes to find an answer. But give weight to what you do not know; try to balance it against what you do have. And in the meantime, tell yourself that someday, eventually, you will cancel both sides. solve the equation, and forget your sickness and your body once more.

This is the land of the stirring spoons, where the sun appears only in the evening, to shine gold light over flooded streets. This is the land of the stranger's smile. You are happy to see me. We are people who see each other. People who see each other though these slippery streets, through these wordless curbs.

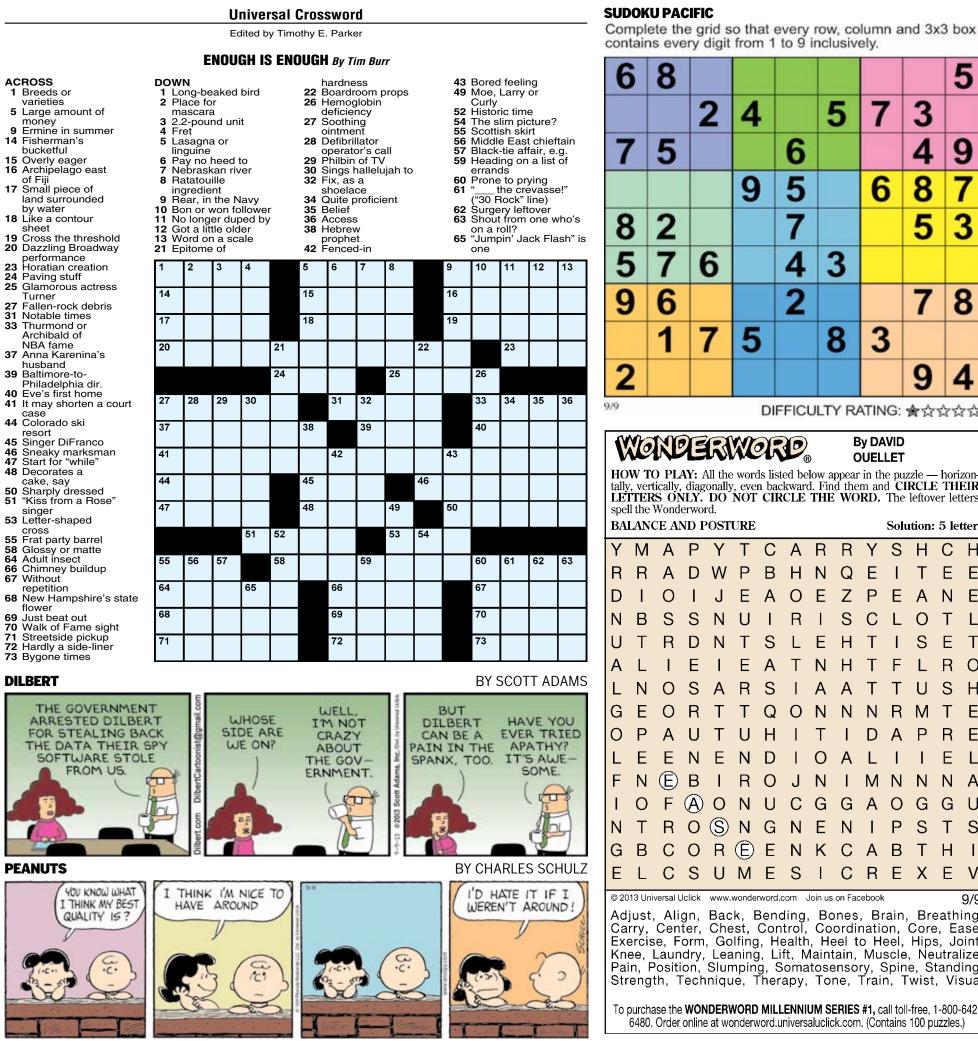
We are people who drip into this country, spilling ourselves over its cities,

hoping never to be mopped up.

— Catriona Knapman

- Moe Way, translated by Ko Ko Thett

- Wade Guyitt



# **PUZZLE SOLUTIONS**





**CALVIN AND HOBBES** 



THEN I THOUGHT, WHY WAIT UNTIL I'M A TEEN-AGER I WANT TO BE IDOLIZED NOW !! BY BILL WATTERSON

THEN YOU SHOULD PROBABLY BLOW YOUR NOSE MORE REGULARLY

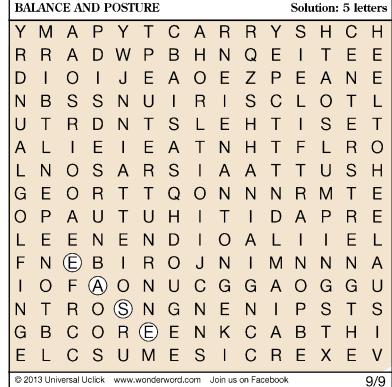
5 3 5 4 9 4 6 7 8 g 5 6 3 7 5 3 Δ 2 8 5 8 3 DIFFICULTY RATING: 會会会会会

# WONDERWORD,

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

By DAVID

OUELLET

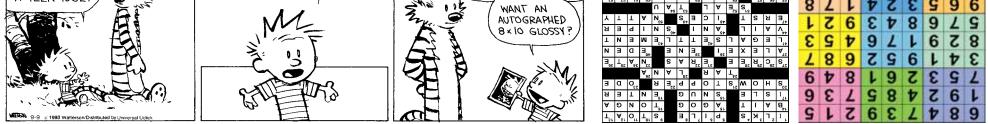


Adjust, Align, Back, Bending, Bones, Brain, Breathing Carry, Center, Chest, Control, Coordination, Core, Ease, Exercise, Form, Golfing, Health, Heel to Heel, Hips, Joint, Knee, Laundry, Leaning, Lift, Maintain, Muscle, Neutralize, Pain, Position, Slumping, Somatosensory, Spine, Standing, Strength, Technique, Therapy, Tone, Train, Twist, Visual

To purchase the WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES #1, call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at wonderword.universaluclick.com. (Contains 100 puzzles.)

Z

117



# Laugh all the way to the bank when you rent this space.

The tea break page is being re-formatted in readiness for our move to a daily cycle. It may look something like this in the future. Our market research shows that a page like this attracts a large number of readers, who loyally read it every day. Ring Khin Thandar Htay our National Sales Director to book this space permanently and laugh all the way to the bank with the extra business coming in your door.

Telephone us now on +951 392 928

# www.mmtimes.com

# Marvelling in Moroccan desserts and snacks



## phyocooking@gmail.com

itrus from oranges, grapefruits and limes are combined to make this week's refreshing Moroccan dessert. Adding a few mint leaves also give the dish a complete

and fresh aroma. Varieties of citrus – particularly

grapefruits – are the key to capturing the essence of Morocco. For the past two weeks, we have introduced Moroccan dishes full of spices, so this dish follows with an orange/citrus salad that might just refresh your mouth. It is very simple but beautiful and easy to serve at a dinner party. It would also be good after eating lots of Burmese spicy curries.

I have made Moroccan donuts as well for afternoon tea. They are easy to make and there is no need to worry about the oil, even though it is deep fried. The flour doesn't absorb the oil as much as deep frying bread in oil. I love the smell of cinnamon with the sweet flavor of this donut. It is lighter than the greasy donuts you may find in the tea shops and on the street and have just the right amount of sweetness. It is also suitable for kids and toddlers.

# ORANGE SALAD

#### INGREDIENTS: 3 oranges 2 grapofinite

- 2 grapefruits 2 teaspoons lime juice
- Fresh orange juice (or half of an orange)
  - 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon 1/4 cup mint leaves

#### PREPARATION

Peel the oranges and grapefruits and slice them into circles. Discard the seeds.

Prepare the orange juice and set aside. Then, in a separate cup, mix fresh the lime juice and orange juice together. Add 5-6 mint leaves, crushing the leaves with your hands into the juices.

Arrange the slices of citrus onto a large plate or in a bowl, sprinkling the ground cinnamon and mint leaves over the slices. Then, pour the juice over the fruit. Serve room temperature.

## MOROCCAN DONUTS (SERVES 6-8)

- INGREDIENTS:
  - 3 cups all purposed flour
  - 2 tablespoons caster sugar 2 teaspoons instant yeast
  - 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- 1/3 cup sugar icing
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1½ cups vegetable oil or canola oil for frying (minimum)



Water Library's beverages, manners run dry

Orange blossom salad. Photo: Phyo

#### PREPARATION:

Add lukewarm water into a cup, then mix the sugar and instant yeast into the water until it is dissolved. Set aside.

Sift the flour into another bowl. Add salt and mix well. Make a small well in the middle of the flour and pour the sugar mixture in slowly. Then bring the flour into the well slowly and mix. Take your time. When the mixture becomes sticky, cover the bowl with a cloth to froth and wait. Once it's ready, mix the all the flour and knead it. If you need water, just add a tablespoon of water at a time. It should be elastic.

Then make the dough. Brush with thin layer of oil and cover with a clean cloth to raise the dough. Leave it for 45 minutes or until it becomes nearly double its size.

When the dough is ready, heat the oil inside the wok over high heat. Then, break the dough into 5 cm ball-sized pieces and make it look like a donut. (Make a ball with the dough, make it long in the palm and bring the two ends into the middle to form a circle).

When the oil is ready, fry the donuts until they become golden. Turn the donuts one time during the frying. If the oil is too hot, the colour of the donuts will become too dark and the donuts will not cook all the way through. If the oil becomes too hot, turn the heat down and continue frying. Then bring it back up slowly.

When the donuts begin puff up, they are ready. Take them out and rest them on some kitchen paper to cool. Then, mix the icing sugar and ground cinnamon together, and sprinkle over the donuts.

Serve with tea or coffee.

#### TIPS

If you can get different oranges and different coloured grapefruit, it will give more flavour and a more attractive presentation to the dish.

To check if the oil is ready, place the tip of a chopstick or a wooden spatula into the hot oil. You will see small bubbles around the tip.

An additional teaspoon of instant yeast will increase the speed of raising the dough.

#### FOODIE QUOTE:

"We much have a pie. Stress cannot exist in the presence of a pie." David Marnet from Boston Marriage

NEXT WEEK: Salt and pepper squid

# Wine Review



The well-balanced character of this Bordeaux echoes on the tongue long after the last drop. Pairs superlatively with audacious red meats and dark chocolate of up to 70 percent cocoa content.



# к15,000

Souteille



# MANNY MAUNG manny.maung@gmail.com

PERHAPS it didn't help that I desperately needed caffeine. A two-day self-ban on coffee was about to come to an abrupt end as I realised my pounding headache and surly temper were the direct results of my deprivation.

"Would you like some water?" the waitress at the newly opened Water Library on Pyay Road asked. I didn't want water. "Would you like some wine?" I didn't want wine. I wanted coffee. But, said the waitress, there is no coffee, because the coffee machine was still being shipped from Bangkok.

Having stepped into the sparsely decorated white interior of the newest restaurant in town, I was looking forward to a high-end experience. At that stage, the Water Library had just had its soft-launch and was still only operating at half-capacity.

That being said, a maitre d' and five or so waiters were more than enough staff on hand for the only two people dining at lunch. After my initial shock at being told a high-end restaurant had absolutely no coffee for me to order ("Not even a threein-one?" was the desperate thought running in my head), I settled for still water and the set menu for a two-course meal (US\$35). My friend ordered the same, along with a glass of wine. considered a virtue in a fine-dining restaurant. I declined (probably not as politely as I should have), and asked instead for the grouper salad with pickles as a starter, and the Wagyu beef cheek for a main.

Now, some of you may recall my affinity for the all-important complementary bread basket. Alas, the Water Library's version it was (and not for the first time) my undoing. A complimentary batch of organic sourdough bread was served on hot stones to keep it warm, along with a side of herbed and chived butter.

My grouper salad was light and fresh, with the pickles bringing a surprising sweet-and-sour balance to the dish. But by the time the Wagyu beef came out, I could only pick at a couple of pieces, in spite of rich softness of the meat with its gravy-like consistency.

And by the end, I had recovered just enough for the complimentary petit four that gave a sweet ending to the meal – sans coffee –and convinced me to give them a second chance after the official opening.



Eschewing inessential, palatehassling flavours, this no-frills white delivers upside-yourhead crispness that facilitates drinking without thinking: Chill, disengage the cap with an anticlockwise twist and enjoy.

Score 8/10

к**13,000** 

There was one service gaffe, when waitress, speaking to my male friend, asked, "And will Madam also have the wine?" My friend, nervously clearing his throat as I scowled at him, replied, "Um, better ask Madam."

She then looked at me, paused and proceeded to say, "Madam, why don't you just go for the three-course meal?"

Remembering the days I flipped burgers for the Australian equivalent of Burger King (we call it Hungry Jack's), I wasn't so sure up-selling was



Organic sourdough bread and grouper salad. Photos: Manny Maung

# The Water Library

83/95 Corner of Manawhari and Pyay Roads, Dagon township. Tel: 01 221721, 01 214361, www. mywaterlibrary.com

D

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Food:	9
Drink:	5
Service:	7
Atmosphere:	7
C-factor:	7
alue for money:	7
Total Score: <b>7/</b> 10	

# 52 the pulse socialite

# Samsung smart phones with Myanmar language launch



Ko Zar Ni Win Htet, James and Ko Ye Min





**Sinary Beauty Contest** 

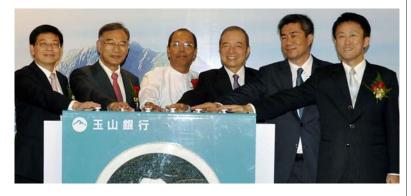


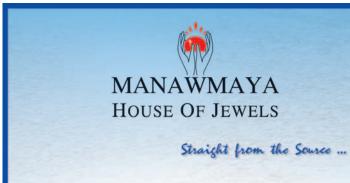
Contestant

Ma Thin Zar Aung

Aung Aung

E-Sun Bank launch ceremony







hazin, Shwe Sin and May Thein

Aye Chan Moe

Hlwan Paing







U Si Thu





Attendees

**Malaysian Food Promotion** at Traders Hotel



Dr Ahmad Faisal Bin Muhamad and Kamarudin Bin Muda



# **Pastry Corner**

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Anne and friends

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# www.mmtimes.com



nyeineieihtwe23@gmail.com

ANOTHER week, another whirlwind of air-kisses, canapes and cosmos for this Socialite! She began the week rubbing shoulders with the design crowd who descended on Junction Square for the launch of Samsung's Myanmar fonts, before hotfooting it across town for the NELC Graduation Ceremony at the ever-swanky Sedona. The My Wayz launch in Bahan proved a sedate affair, which was a welcome relief after the L'Occitane soiree at Pearl Condo. Bright young things strutted their stuff at the Sinary Beauty Contest, and the who's who of Yangon gathered in honour of MAI. Another long week on the social calendar, and a well-earned beauty sleep for this socialite. Until next time!

# My Wayz Company's office opening



U Win Naing, CY Chin and Vivien



Kang



Hyundai showroom grand opening





L'Occitane office launch







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# Cold & Flu ...? Just take Decolgen



# **NELC** graduation ceremony



Teacher Nelson

Daw Nan Htwe Nge

Decolgen can provide complete and fast relief of running and Decoigen blocking nose, fever, DECOLGEN DECOLGEN aching and flu. The complete cold formula Decolgen

# **DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES**

YANGO	N TO NAY PY	'I 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 P	I TAW TO YA	NGON		
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	
TIVII 62	1,2,3,4,3	10.00	13.00	
	ON TO MAND		Δ	
Flight W9 512	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	3	6:00	8:05	
	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	
W9 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	
W9 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	
W9 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	Z,4,0 Daily	14:30	16:40	
W9 129	1,2,3	14:45	16:40	
VVJ 123	1,2,0	14.40	10.40	

K7 224

6T 501/K7 224

Daily

Daily

14:30 16:35

14:30 16:35

MAND			
	ALAY TO YAN		
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
143/W97143	1,2,3	9:20	10:45
402/K7 223	2,3,4,5,6,7	8:55	10:55
K7 223	Daily	8:55	11:00
W9 201	4,5,6,7	9:10	11:05
W9 144	Daily	9:20	10:45
W9 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
W9 120	1,3	15:45	17:10
YJ 762	1,2,4	16:35	18:00
YH 732	Daily	16:40	18:45
W9 129	4,5,6,7	16:40	18:45
YH 728	1,5	16:45	18:10
725/W9 7752	7	16:50	18:15
502/K7 225	Daily	16:50	19:00
K7 225	Daily	16:50	19:00
W9 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
W9 511	2	17:30	19:35
W9 252	2	17:35	19:00
725/W9 7752	5	17:50	19:15
YH 730	2,4,6	18:00	19:25
YANG	ON TO NYAU	NG U	
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	Daily	6:10	7:45
YJ 891	Daily	6:10	7:30
401/K7 222	2,3,4,5,6,7	6:30	7:50
K7 222	Daily	6:30	7:50
143/ W9 7143	1,2,3	7:00	8:20
6T 401	1	7:00	8:55
W9 129	1,2,3	14:45	17:25
W9 129	4,5,6,7	14:30	17:10
501/K7 224	Daily	14:30	17:20
YH 731	Daily	14:30	17:25

NYAU	ng u to yan	GON	
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
W9 129	1,2,3	17:40	19:00
W9 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	
W9 251	2	10:30	13:25	
K7 624	Daily	10:30	13:25	
YJ 201	3	11:00	13:50	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Days	Dep	Arr		
3	14:05	17:25		
5,7	10:05	13:25		
1,2,4	10:05	12:55		
Daily	15:40	18:35		
2	16:05	19:00		
	Days 3 5,7 1,2,4 Daily	Days         Dep           3         14:05           5,7         10:05           1,2,4         10:05           Daily         15:40		

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
W9 201	4,5,6,7	7:30	9:40
K7 828	1,3,5	7:30	8:45
W9 201	1,2,3	7:45	9:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	3,7	10:00	11:10
W9 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
W9 129	1,2,3	14:45	15:55
W9 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
W9 201	4,5,6,7	9:55	11:05
W9 201	1,2,3	10:10	11:20
6T 402	1	10:50	12:00
K7 829	1,3,5	13:50	15:05
W9 120	1,3	15:00	17:10
YJ 762	1,2,4	15:50	18:00
YJ 762	6	11:50	14:00
W9 129	1,2,3	16:10	19:00
YJ 752/W9 7752	3	16:55	18:05
W9 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

Flight         Days         Dep         Arr           YH 634         1,3,4,5,7         11:25         13:25           V7 800         Duit         11.00         10.05	MYEIK TO YANGON			
	Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
1/7 000 D . 1 11 00 10 0F	YH 634	1,3,4,5,7	11:25	13:25
K7 320 Daily 11:30 13:35	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	Dep	Arr	
6T 605	5	12:25	15:00
6T 608	1	15:20	16:15

Domestic Airlines
<b>Air Bagan Ltd. (W9)</b> Tel : 513322, 513422, 504888, Fax : 515102
Air KBZ (K7) Tel: 372977-80, 533030~39 (Airport), Fax: 372983
Air Mandalay (6T) Tet : (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

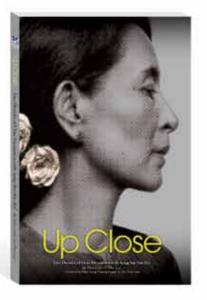
Domestic
6T = Air Mandalay
W9 = Air Bagan
YJ = Asian Wings
K7 = AIR KBZ
YH = Yangon Airways
FMI = FMI AIR Charter
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines
Subject to change without notice

Day	4 = Thursday
1 = Monday	5 = Friday
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday



K7 224

Daily





14:30 17:25

# Two decades of close encounters with Aung San Suu Kyi.

Call 392 928 now to reserve a copy personally signed by the author, Moe Linn (aka Pho Lay).

# the pulse travel 55



# **INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES**

YANGON TO BANGKOK				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
PG 706	Daily	7:15	9:30	
8M 335	1,2,3,4,7	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	
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	A
FD 2752	Daily	8:30	10:
FD 2754	Daily	17:50	19:

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			
Days	Dep	Arr	
1,3	12:20	18:35	
2,4,5,6,7	14:40	18:00	
2,3,4,6,7	14:15	17:35	
	Days 1,3 2,4,5,6,7	DaysDep1,312:202,4,5,6,714:40	

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Ar
W9 9607	4,7	14:20	16:1

YANGON TO HANO Dep Arr Davs 19:10 21:30 1,3,5,6,7

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY 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	
FD 2761	Daily	12:45	15:00	
MA	NDALAY TO K	UNMING		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
MU 2030	Daily	14:40	17:20	
	ANGKOK TO Y			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
8M 336	1,2,3,4,5	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 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	
	N MUENG TO			
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	
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 YA	NGON		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	8:05	13:15	
KAU	LA 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	
GU	ANGZHOU 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 YAN	IGON		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:35	18:10	
HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON				
Flighte	Dave	Den	٨rr	

2.4.7

11:40

13:25

VN 943

	<mark>OLKATA TO Y</mark> A	ANGON		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
AI 227	1,5	10:35	13:20	
DON	MUEANG TO N	<b>MANDALA</b>	Y	
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
FD 2760	Daily	10:50	12:15	
_				
KU	NMING TO MA	NDALAY		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
MU 2029	Daily	13:55	13:50	
AIr Asia (FU)				
Tel: 251 885, 251 886.				
Air Bagan Ltd.(W9)				

Air China (CA) Tel : 666112, 655882

Air India

Bangkok Airways (PG)

5122, 255 265, Fax: 255119 Condor (DE) Tel: + 95 1 -370836 up to 39 (ext : 810)

Dragonair (KA) Tel: 95-1-255320. 255321. Fax : 255329

Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5) Tel: 95 9 400446999, 95 9 400447999, Fax: 01 860 4051

Malaysia Airlines (MH) Tel : 387648, 241007 ext : 120, 121, 122 Fax : 241124

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SQ = Singapore Airways
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Subject to change without notice
without notice
Day 4 = Thursday 1 = Monday 5 = Friday 0 = Tursday 6 Saturday
2 = Tuesday 6 = Saturday 3 = Wednesday 7 = Sunday

# Gorillas in the midst: tourism's solemn nod to Rwanda's dark past

# **STEPHANIE AGLIETTI**

years since the 1994 genocide, has opened visitors' eyes to its past by putting its genocide memorials on the tourist

circuit, alongside its iconic mountain gorillas.

Tour operators and government officials say the aim is to enable tourists to understand the country's recent history and to appreciate the scale of the progress achieved.

In the garden of the main genocide memorial in Kigali's Gisozi district. Anne Porbadnigk, a 30-year-old from Berlin, stops in front of every commemorative plaque, listening carefully to her audioguide.

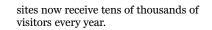
Both Porbadnigk and the friend she is with sav in order to comprehend modern Rwanda, they need to understand "not only what happened but also how the people deal with history and... how they find peace".

"Being German, we also have a very heavy history," Porbadnigk said. "When I was a child a question troubled me for years: How I can live in a country where this happened?", she said, referring to the Holocaust.

In the past 10 years, Rwanda's tourism sector has grown exponentially. The number of visitors, which stood at 27,000 in 2004, rose to 1.08 million in 2012.

Rwanda's attractions are many: endless vistas of hills shrouded in mist, a swathe of virgin rainforest, dazzling lakes and one of the world's cleanest and safest capital cities.

The mountain gorillas in the bamboo thickets of the Virunga volcanoes are the main attraction, but memorial



The tragedy and the rebuilding

The memorials themselves have been changed in the two decades since the genocide to place greater emphasis on pedagogical exhibits explaining Rwandan history through text, photos and multimedia, although some bones still remain on display.

A painful section is the exhibit that fills a room in Gisozi and consists of photographs of children massacred, accompanied by the briefest of biographies.

"Francine Murengezi Ingabire," reads one plaque. "Age: 12. Favourite sport: Swimming. Favourite drink: Milk and fanta tropical... Cause of death: Hacked by machete."

"There is no particular strategy of promoting the memorial sites," said Rica Rwigamba, who is in charge of tourism at the Rwanda Development Board. "But we think it's important for people to understand our country," she added.

"As a company -- and most companies work the same way -- we include genocide memorials in our activities mainly because we believe that it puts Rwanda into perspective," said Manzi Kayihura, managing director of Thousand Hills Expeditions and chair of the Rwanda Tours and Travel Association.

"In 10 years only two couples have opted not to go to the genocide memorial," he said.

"I think the story is about the tragedy of the Rwandan genocide and the rebuilding, the rebirth of a nation, so it puts everything into context and they appreciate how far Rwanda has come in such a short time," he went on.



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0Z 770	4,7	0:35	9:10	
KE 472	Daily	23:35	08:05+1	

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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

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BA	NGKOK TO MA	NDALAY	
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 781	2,3,5,7	7:25	8:50
	DOHA TO YAN		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 618	3,4,7	21:05	07:00+1
	NOM PENH TO		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 404	3,6	20:15	21:40
511.1.1	SEOUL TO YAN		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	Daily	18:40	22:30
0Z 769	3,6	19:50	23:25
	TOKYO TO YAI		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	1,3,6	10:30	15:30
	<b>ING KONG TO </b>		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:45	23:30

A tourist visits the Rwanda genocide memorial. Photo: AFP

# 56 *the pulse*

# **BOOK REVIEW**

# Revealing the secrets behind a Myanmar mystery novel

#### LYN SWE AYE

ERY few mystery novels in the English language are set in Myanmar. One of the select examples is The Pointing Man: A Burmese Mystery by Marjorie Douie, which has recently been made available in ebook form by The Gutenberg Project.

This book has been "lost" for almost a century. Three years before Agatha Christie penned her first mystery novel, The Pointing Man was first published in London in 1917. It must have been well enough received since an American edition was published three years later.

Yet almost nothing is known about the author. A single citation in the Library of Congress database does not even have birth or death dates. Was there a Marjorie Douie? Did she visit Burma? Did she write other mysteries?

The Pointing Man is almost certainly the first mystery set primarily in Myanmar. Published three years before Agatha Christie's first novel The Mysterious Affair at Styles, it has to be considered the first until a predecessor is unearthed. It is generally accepted that the first mystery stories known in Myanmar were adaptations and translations of the Sherlock Holmes stories, first published in the 1940s.

"The Pointing Man" of the title refers to a wooden statue, the Burmese counterpart of a cigar store Indian,

'Was there a Marjorie Douie? Did she visit Burma? Did she write other mysteries?'

which stands outside the most successful curio store in Mangadone, Burma. The owner is Mhtoon Pah, an unctuous oleaginous Burman, and the central mystery is the disappearance of his shop assistant, Absalom, "the apple of Mhtoon Pah's eye". Mhtoon Pah blames Leh Shin, a Chinaman, once his benefactor, mentor and friend, and now a ruined rival, who runs a dilapidated curio shop and opium den.

A number of British and Burmese



The Pointing Man, the Burmese iconic statue. Photo: Supplied

Archaeological Society and author of two novels. At 18, Jessica wrote a series of hunting sketches which appeared in the Cork Examiner. They proved so popular that she followed with a hunting story accepted as a series by the Irish Times.

In 1901, she married Robert Dudley Innes Auckland, by whom she had a daughter, and later divorced him. Her writing career seems to have been on hold during this period.

She resumed her literary career in 1912 at age 36, publishing her first novel, Young Mr. Gibbs. Her second marriage, to Lieutenant-Colonel Victor Rickard, a career officer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, produced a son. The Munster Fusiliers were originally formed from two East India Company regiments, and also recruited heavily in Ireland.

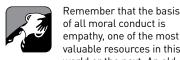
We know that the Munster Fusiliers were stationed in Yangon at the start of the Great War, so Jessica must have spent time there with her husband before 1914, providing her with the background for the Pointing Man. Lt-Col Rickard died at the battle of Aubers Ridge in 1915.

Now a widow with a son to sup-

# **WEEKLY PREDICTIONS**

SEPTEMBER 9 - 15, 2013

#### AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



of all moral conduct is empathy, one of the most valuable resources in this world or the next. An old

friend may get in touch to help resolve a misunderstanding in a social relationship: pay attention. Be aware that true love is more than mere magnetic attraction, and goes to the heart of your personality and spiritual nature.

### PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



Organise your agenda, and be ready to step into a dispute between friends to restore calm and mutual

understanding. Your best course in this matter requires flexibility, and your goal should be harmony and effective communication. In your dealings with your partner, adopt a gentle approach to strengthen your union of mutual support.

### ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19

Tolerance and patience resulting in mutual respect are the key to a lasting loving relationship. Humility,

compassion and grace will aid your progress along the path toward spirituality. The visible achievement of success begins within you. Time, your most precious commodity, can neither be reversed nor created. It is non-renewable Its effective use requires discipline, which alone can lead to success. Avoid fatty foods.

### TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20



Meditation will help you attain inner peace and help you guide others towards joy and inspiration, though some might find this

annoying. Achieving inner peace can in turn contribute to outer peace in the world. Keep a journal of your daily experience and ponder the roots of success. Mad love can take the form of ecstasy, but this is not an easy state to inhabit for long

#### GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



Learn to be comfortable with discomfort. The first step is a willingness to be uncomfortable. According to Albert Einstein, a

world-famous Pisces, "Concerns for man and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavours. Never forget this in the midst of your diagrams and equations". Hold to your direction and maintain your own philosophy even when it is

### **LEO** | Jul 23 - Aug 22



Your struggle with today is worthwhile, but you will probably lose. At best, the daily struggle brings ambiguous victories and

uncertain peace. But never fear. Self-delusion can be a sure source of comfort, as long as you can sustain it. Unlike those born under other stars, for whom almost anyone will do, the life partner of a Leo must be someone special.

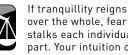
#### VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sep 22



The soul is the primal level of actuality, and the notion of a soul is too difficult for me, and probably for you, to grasp in full. The cosmic

laws of cause and effect, and certain regulations relating to off-street parking, will vitiate your control over the beginnings and ends of your undertakings. Better to turn over the resolution of the problem to your unconscious mind. In pursuit of love, esteem yourself.

### LIBRA | Sep 23 - Oct 22



over the whole, fear stalks each individual part. Your intuition can guide you beyond the

surface of conscious perception, but may not serve to validate your feelings of superiority or inferiority to others. Set your conduct by an unerring moral compass and things will probably turn out mostly not too bad in the end, with luck.

#### SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



Financial problems will disturb your mind, and social misunderstandings may take time to unravel. Success rarely derives

from spontaneous or internal combustion. All activity is creative once you have devoted special attention to doing it right, and almost any problem, including affairs of the heart, can be tackled in a spirit of emotional scientific creativity

#### SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



Robert Heinlein once said: "Always listen to experts who will tell you what can't be done and why, and then do it without

fail." Understanding the options that are available helps you plot your personal course and fulfil your dream. But do not spend too much time reading books. Politics is still the greatest and the most honourable adventure, though economics is a



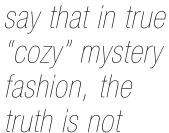
characters enter into the plot to solve the mystery of Absalom's disappearance; suffice it to say that in true "cozy" mystery fashion, the truth is not simple and straightforward.

But who was the author Mariorie Douie? After many cold scents and red herrings, including exhaustive searches of birth and death registries, probate calendars, and databases, an old pseudonym dictionary revealed that Marjorie Douie was the nom-de-plume of Jessie Louisa Rickard, a prolific Irish author who published over forty novels. Some, including The Pointing Man, found her a large reading public

Born in Dublin as Jessica Louisa Moore, she was the younger daughter of Dr Canon Courtenay Moore, then rector of Castleroch and later of Brigown in County Cork. He was the founder of the Cork Historical and

port, Jessica Rickard went back to writing for a living. And write she did – over 40 novels ranging from







There is also supporting evidence in that Mrs Rickard was married to a career military officer whose regiment was stationed in Yangon at the beginning of the Great War, and that Mrs Rickard was a prolific, successful and versatile author who also wrote mysteries under her own name, much like Ruth Rendell.

comedy (Young Mr. Gibbs) to mystery

(The Pointing Man) to suspense (The

account of her husband's regiment,

published under the name Mrs Vic-

tor Ricard, as well as Jessie Louisa

Rickard and also the pseudonym

of Marjorie Douie. She died on 28

January 1963 at the age of 86 and

is buried in Rathcooney Cemetery,

evidence that Marjorie Douie was

the nom-de-plume of Jessie Louisa

Louisa Rickard in the Cork Exam-

iner 30 January 1963 states that

Mrs Rickard is the author of The

Marjorie Douie. Also The Literary

Yearbook, 1922 lists the address

of Marjorie Douie as "c/o MRS.

Pointing Man, without mentioning

RICKARD, AYSGARTH, WAXWELL

LANE, PINNER, LONDON, N.W." In

another entry, it lists Mrs Rickard's

address as the same Aysgarth, with

a notation of Mrs Rickard as the

author of Young Mr. Gibbs, etc. and

not as an agent.

Rickard. First, the obituary of Jessie

There are several lines of

Greater Cork.

Baccarat Club) to war novels (The

*Light Above the Crossroads)* to an

(The Story of the Munsters). She

To crown it all, Jessie Louisa Rickard's obituary says that together with famous mystery writers like Dorothy L Sayers and GK Chesterton, she was a founder member of the "Detection Club", a famous British club of pioneering mystery writers.

We will never know why Jessie Rickard chose her pseudonym, but as for the identity of the author of the first Myanmar mystery novel, the case may be closed.

- Lyn Swe Aye is a freelance

writer

severely challenged.

#### CANCER | Jun 21 - Jul 22

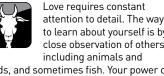


Consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds, and the expression of your individual nature should not depend on

petty banalities. Be bold in initiation and original in action as you pursue new activities and fresh realms of thought. What makes you think you will be wiser tomorrow than you were yesterday? The race is not to the swift, and the colour turquoise is not for the squeamish.

close second.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



to learn about yourself is by close observation of others, including animals and birds, and sometimes fish. Your power of perception should not be directed only at things, but also at relationships, which are ever-changing. Love unites the parts with love. You should not be motivated by dynamic purposes. The world is divided between winners and losers, so make sure you are one of them

#### AUNG MYIN KYAW

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Ministry of Education @tel:545500m 562390 Ministry of Sports @tel: 370604, 370605 Ministry of Communications @tel: 067-407037. Myanma Post & Telecommunication (MPT) @tel: 067-4Ó7007.

Myanma Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768. Ministry of Foreign Affairs @tel: 067-412009, 067-412344. Ministry of Health @tel: 067-411358-9. Yangon City Development Committee @tel: 248112.

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Central Women's Hospital ≊tel: 221013, 222811. Children Hospital ≊tel: 221421, 222807 Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital @tel: 543888 Naypyitaw Hospital (emergency) 🕾 tel: 420096. Worker's Hospital 🕾 tel: 554444, 554455, 554811. Yangon Children Hospital @tel: 222807, 222808, 222809. Yangon General Hospital (East) @tel: 292835, 292836, 292837. Yangon General Hospital (New) 🕾 tel: 384493, 384494, 384495.379109

Yangon General Hospital (West) 🕾 tel: 222860, 222861, 220416.

Yangon General Hospital (YGH) 🕾 tel: 256112, 256123, 281443, 256131

#### ELECTRICITY

Power Station @tel:414235

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Yangon International Airport 🕿 tel: 662811.

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Shipping (Coastal vessels) 🕾 tel: 382722

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Inya Lake Resort Hotel 37 Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 662866. fax: 665537.

Yuzana Hotel 30, Shwegondaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, tel : 01-549600, 543367

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in Mawlamyinegyun, Ayerwaddy: Must have a client-oriented & resultorientated mindset & uphold the programme valuesof caring partnering innovating, demonstrating compe tence & working for positive change. 2 years progressively responsible experience in working with commu nity based health programs with an INGO, LNGO, UN agency. Ability to undertake travel out of Mawlamyinegyun town to villages. Pls submit CV to IOM Mission in Myanmar-Yangon, 12th Flr. Traders Hotel, 223, Sule Pagoda Rd, Yangon, Email: iomyangon@iom.int, Tel: 252560, 254008

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language skill. Computer knowledge. (4)VatSan Project Coordinator -1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: Relevant university Relevant 5 years water, degree. experience in water, hygiene & sanitation State): field. Computer literacy Excellent in English Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri.NavPviTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@ gmail.com. THE INT'L HIV/AIDS Alliance is seeking to hire a driver to be use of Microsoft Office based in Yangon Excellent knowledge & experience in driving and car maintenance. Major responsibilities & tasks : Driving according to the (4)daily defined schedule. Regular cleaning and maintenance of the Alliance vehicle. Make deliveries as requested. Complete the daily mileage & fuel record book. Conditions of work: Full time position. The driver will be expected to work a shift system. Pls forward CV to the Executive Director Int'l HIV/AIDS Alliance 12/F, Pyi Thu St, 7 miles, Mayangone, Yangon or admin@alliance.org. mm & ao.alliancemm@ gmail.com by September 2013. MEDECINS 19 Sans Frontieres -Holland (AZG) is seeking **Field Administrator** 1 post in Sittwe, Rakhine Project: University Degree. Good computer skills (Microsoft Office). Reasonable level of English. Working experience in book-keeping or administrative position. PIs send application letter CV & Head position. Pls send application letter, CV & passport photo, copies years of education qualifications

& references to: HR Coordinator, MSF-Holland/ AZG (Yangon Coordination), 59, Aye Yadanar St, Thirigon Villa, Thingangyun, Yangon. Closing date : 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013. WORLDVISIONMyanmar is seeking(1) Area Development Program Manager (Re-Open) in Thayetchaung, Coastal Region: University Region: University Bachelor Degree in Social Studies & Masters Degree in Development/ Public Administration/ Business Administration/ Policy Studies would be an advantage. 5 years experience. Competent in use of Microsoft Office. Excellent command of Myanmar & English & knowledge writing. (2) excellent in report writing. Program Finance Coordinator (Re-Open) in Chauk, Magway Region & Tarchileik, Shan (East) State Konkyan, Shan (North) State : Any graduate in Accounting/ Finance or related subject. 3 years experience in the field of finance in commercial or public institutions. Good knowledgeofcomputerize accounting. Ability to communicate in English

# community development (2)Cashier preferred. cum Bookeeper (Re-Open) in Seikphyu, Magway Region & Konkyan, Shan (North) Universitý Bachelor Degree in accounting/ finance or related subject. 2 years experience as Cashier or in the field or finance and In the field or finance and administration. Working knowledge of Microsoft Word & Exce. (3) **Design**, **Monitoring & Evaluation Facilitator** in South Dagon, Yangon Bachelor University Degree in any discipline. Competent in

computer programs including Word, Excel & Power Point. 2 years of progressive experience in project programming monitoring. Development Facilitato in Dagon Seikkan, Yangon University Bachelor Degree in any discipline. Working experience in community development or related field in 1 year. Competent in used of Microsoft Word. Good command of Myanmar & English. Pls submit resume (clearly identify the post you apply) by post to HR Department, World Vision Myanmar or in person to applicat ion drop-box at (18), Shin Saw Pu Rd; Ahlone, Sanchaung PO or send to myajobapps@wvi.org Closing date : September 11.2013

MEDECINS Sans Holland Frontieres ZG) is seeking Project Mechanic post in Maungdaw, NRS Project, Rakhine State: Higher education in Maungdaw, in car mechanics. experience mechanics. car Proven experience in supervising and training staff. Excellent command of English. Pls send application letter, CV, passport photo, copies of education qualifications & references to: HR Coordinator, MSF-& references to: HR Coordinator, MSF-Holland/ AZG (Yangon Coordination), No.59, Aye Yadanar St, Thirigon Villa, Thingangyun, Yangon. Or through rakhine-esd-recruiting@oca.msf. org. Closing.data 12 org, Closing date : 12 September 2013. SOLIDARITES is seeking SOLIDARITES is seeking (1) Civil Engineer Supervisor - 1 post in Kanpetlet, Chin State: Civil Engineer Degree (B.Tech or B.E) & 3 years of professional experience in civil engineering (especially in Cash for work activity). Experience in Chin State Experience in Chin State will be an added value. Practice of engneering software (e.g. AutoCAD). (2)Agriculture Supervi sor in Myebon, Myanmar: Agriculture degree & 2 years of Myebon, professional experience in INGO. Specific in INGO. Specific technical knowledge paddy cultivation farming systems Rakhine region. & Good level in English & computer skills. (3) Construction Manager

letter, references) by hand to the automotion of: Solidarites Int'l office, Yangon : 44A, Thomarwaddy Lane, Bahan, Yangon). You can also send application by email to hr solidarites mm@gmail.com Closing date: for (1) 15.9.2013. (2) 16.9.13. (3) 19.9.13 FOOD & Agriculture Organization in seeking (1)National Project Manager - 1 post in Myikyina (Kachin State) with extensive travel to the field & occasionally Yangon: (2)to Livelihood Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist - 1 post in Sittwe, (Rakhine State) with extensive travel to the field & occasionally to Yangon: A university degree in agriculture environ mental science, deve lopment or other related fields is desired; Fluency in Myanmar & excellent working knowledge of English. (3) 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 Kachin State would be preferable. Proven experience in emergency project. Excellent command of Myanmar & English. Knowledge of local language is an asset. (4)National Consultant Agronomist 1 post Sittwe, (Rakhine with extensive State) traveĺ Rakhine in State as required: university Advanced degree in Agronomy or a related field & or a related tield & 10 years experience in agriculture sector. Specific experience in Rakhine State would be preferable. Proven experience in posi-experience in posi-situations. post Excellent sommand of Myanmar & English. Knowledge of local of local (Rakhine, Knowledge languages (Rakhine, Bengali) is an asset. Master office software packages as well as statistical software (i.e. SPSS). Pls submit (Mvanmar) Nationals application in working, clearly indicating on the sealed envelope the Post Title & Duty Station, to FAO Representation in Myanmar [Attent Asst: ion: Representative (Admini stration)]. Seed Division Compound, East Gyo Gone, Insein, Yangon. Closing date: September, 2013. 10

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

Experience in preparing monthly, quarterly & annual financial reports. (3)**PMER Coordinator** post in Nay Pyi Taw Bachelor's degree. For all posts : Effective English language skill & Computer knowledge. Computer knowledge. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Pyi Taw, Or Nav mrcshrrecruitment@ gmail.com

Employment

(compulsory) & skill in AutoCAD (optional) is an asset. Pls submit application (CV, cover

## **Local Positions** INTERNATIONAL developer & construction company is seeking : Senior consultant (full-time or part-time) : be familiar with the Rangoon land and real estate market; be familiar with the process of land and real estate transactions; familiar with the relevant government land development, construction & trading of relevant laws and regulations; have certain contacts and relationship with YCDC and government; fluentin English communication skills, speaking Chinese is preferred. development manager and sales manager. Job requirements: familiar with Rangoon traffic route and real estate route and real estate market; understand the relevant government land and property land and property transactions related laws and regulations; familiar with land transaction and leasing, at least more than one year working experience in real estate company; fluent in English or Chinese communication skills Contact : 09-4500-11027, 09-8634099, 01-667618, email braver2013ww@gmail

com HOANG Anh Gia Lai (HAGL) is seeking (1)Senior Finance Manager 2 post: Master degree or Certificated professional accounting (CPA) or ACCA. 5 years of experience Age under of experience. Age under 45. (2) Accountants: 10 45. (2) ACCOUNTAINS: 10 posts : B.Com or LCCI Level 3 or equivalent qualification. 2 years of experience. Age under 35. (3)Import & Expert **Executive** - 3 post : University graduate. 3 years experience. Age under 40. (4)Sales & Marketing Manager - 2 post : Graduated from University of Accounting or in relevant subjects or in relevant subjects 5 years of experience. Age under 45. (5) **Sales** Age under 45. (5) Sales & Marketing Executive - 10 posts: University graduage. 3 years of experience. Age under 40. (6)Lawyer - 2 post: University graduate in relevant subjects. Sufficient knowledge in Investment Law in Investment Law, Property Law. 3 ~ 5 years experience in relevant job. Age under 40. (7)**Translator** 

40. (7)Translator - 1 post: University

graduate. Excellent

English. Pls send CV with a recent photograph (4x6cm), a cover letter in English & copies of qualification certificates to Hoang Anh Gia Lai Myanmar Company Ltd : 192, Kabaraye Pagoda Rd, Bahan, Yangon, Myanmar, Yangon, Myanmar, Email: mayphyu.hagl@ gmail.com; sandar. hagl@gmail.com.by16<sup>th</sup> sandar. September 2013 OURS is a Dubai based Construction Company office opening is looking Yangon for smart Managers who has 8 to 10 years

Managerial Experience in a Construction related Business. Also require experienced **Civil** engineers, Forman & Supervisors for construction. Technical qualification in Civil engineering will be an added advantage for all posts. Excellent salary & benefits for right candidates. email details to eurovarghese@ hotmail.com or ph.09-732-34659 **ARADIOGRAPHER** with

B.Med. (Radiography) with some experience is urgently required at a private clinic in Lashio. Salaray + commission + housing facility will be provided. Interested candidate can enquire at 09-502-6602. WE are looking for qualified **Driver** for personal vehicle of personal vehicle of Diplomat who lives in Pun Hlaing Golf Estate. The applicant must have 3 years of driving experience without any criminal case and non-smoking. For more information, pls contact 01-527142~144 during office hour. DATABASE Technician 1 post : 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. Time sheet, Payroll, etc. is preferable) etc. is preferable) Self energetic & good communication skill. Interested candidates can apply the CV with 3 recent photos, Education and other qualifications certificates, Recommen dation letters from previous employer(s), NRC card, Labor card, registration card Police station recommendation

station recommendation & family member card. Closing date: 15<sup>th</sup> Sept 2013. United Engineering Co., Ltd. Corner of Wayzayantar & Yadana Rd., Thingangyun, Yangon, Tel: (951) 571878, 571877, 57132 SECRETARY - M/F 1 post : Any graduate,

post : Any graduate, Proficient in Microsoft office. Certificate holder of Secretarial Courses is preferable, Good command in English is an added advantage,

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, Py 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 development land 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 land & property transactions related laws & regulations Familiar with land 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. D SERVICE (Myanmar) Co.,Ltd. We are JV with

Denso (Thailand) & specialized in fuel injection pumps & air cons. We are looking for a position for **Sales & Marketing** (Automobile & Marine parts):Experienced require. Must speak English. Contact : Aung Htun Oo : 01 240363, 240373, 09-731-91492. Email: aunghtun oo@ Email: aunghtun.oo@

Email.com gmail.com Coreign REQD. in Limited Foreign Company, salary as per 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 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, Emai ID: zmtcool@gmail.com, jyoti.b227@gmail.com jyoti.b227@rediffmail.

Com YOUNG Investment

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. of INTER group 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 & able to multi-tasks, Able to work independently, organized, process-oriented & able oriented a to work under pressure, Computer torate, Excellent skills in Myanmar & English. Pls submit detailed (CV) in person or by email, stating you're current & expected salary, date of availability, reason for leaving & a recent 1st Flr, 6 miles, Pyay Rd, Hlaing, Yangon, Tel: 09-731-0 5353, 09-731-05340 Email: hr@

Experience in 2 years

in related field Must

icononline.net . **FOREIGN** manufacturing company in Myanmar is lookingfor(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, years experience. Proficiency in the English, Good communication skills, Leadership skills & Problem solving Computer literate. (2) Sales Executive / Sales Executive - M/F 3 Posts : Graduated, Must have relevant knowledge and experience in Hotel Sales & Marketing field. ProficiencyintheEnglish. Computer literate. (3). **HR Assistant** - M/F 1 Post : DBA/ DHRM, Graduate, 2 years experience in HRM field. ProficiencyintheEnglish. Computer literate. (4). 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,

Society is seeking(1) <b>Training Officer</b> (Water Safety) 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw (HQ) with frequent travel to program area: High school level & must Hinish Water Safety (TOT)	& Myanmar effectively. (3)Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Facilitator in South Dagon, Yangon: Any graduate. Competent in use of Microsoft Office. 2 years	in Sittwe: Civil Engineer Degree; B.Tech (Civil) or B.E (Civil). 3 years of professional experience in INGO. Knowledge of the Rakhine State. For all posts : Good level in Carlish Crustleat	years experience. (8) Receptionist - 1 post: University graduate. 2 years experience. (9) HR Executive 1 post: University graduate. 2	stro skil as	ood personality with ong communication ill, Sound experience Secretary to DD in a medium to	Group is looking for Executive Secretary - F 3 Posts : Any graduate plus M.B.A or M.P.A or D.M.A is prefer.	Educational Certificate & others testimonials to HR Department not Later than 15 September, 2013.
Training with Grade-A.	of progressive experience in project programming	in English. Excellent experience in finance computer skills & accounting field			Vacancy	Announcement (	Urgent)
2 years experience in training or other related field. (2) <b>Resources</b>	& monitoring. Pls submit resume to HR				e following job vacar	ncy is available and the	qualified applicant may
Mobilization Officer 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw:	Department, World Vision Myanmar : (18), Shin Saw Pu Rd, Ahlone,	Dear Valued Customers,			th September 2013.	HR Department of Golden	Hill Tower, not later than
Bachelor's degree. Experience in Marketing	Sanchaung PO or send to myajobapps@wvi.org	ACT			nief Engineer ob requirement :	(1) post (M)	
over 2 years. (3) Commu nity Based First Aid	Closing date : September 11, 2013.	Please be advised that ASH	UNA Indian	1	<ol> <li>Strong leadership</li> </ol>	skill.	
(CBFA) Officer - 1 post in Sittwe: Bachelor's	WORLD VISION	<b>Restaurant</b> will temporary be cl	osed with effective	2	2. BE (Mechanical/E	, ,	
degree of Health or other relevant degree.	Myanmar is seeking(1) Community Develop	from 1st September 2013.			<ol> <li>Proficient in Englis</li> <li>Being familiar with</li> </ol>	sh four skills. n automation systems of th	e hotel is desirable
Experience in related	ment Facilitator (Food Program) (Re-Open) in	Reopening date will be announced	later	5	0	experience in the similar re	
field. Experience and/or knowledge in Red Cross	Konkyan, Shan (North)	Reopening date will be almounted	later.	6		sonal & communication ski	lls.
CBFA methods & tools, community preventive	State & Chauk, Magway Region: University	Thank you for your patro	onage over the years.	7	7. Able to work unde	er pressure.	
health care & basic life	Bachelor Degree in any discipline. Prior		shoka Management		olden Hill Tower	ando Dd Bohon T/S Van	aon Myonmor
support/ advanced first aid. Effective English	experience of working in		Brittin		· ·	goda Rd, Bahan T/S, Yan ntact to : Ms.Zopari (Sr.H	

# **NAY PYI TAW Nothing but 'love' for China's SEA Games help**

#### **SU HLAING TUN**

hsuhlainghtun.mcm@gmail.com

MYANMAR will owe China nothing but "love" for the technical assistance it is providing for the opening and closing ceremonies of 27th Southeast Asian Games in December, according to U Yan Naing Oo, director general of the Ministry of Culture.

Chinese technicians will assist in the choreographing and planning of the SEA Games opening and closing ceremonies that bookend the 11-day regional sporting event. Some of the technicians aiding Myanmar helped arrange the spectacular opening ceremony at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"We don't need to pay China for their technical support. There is no 'give and take' and there are no ties because their assistance is pure good-

will," said U Yan Naing Oo, speaking to a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw on September 2.

"China is our good friend who gives us a hand when we really need it. It is just love that we have to pay back to them."

China will also provide technical equipment for the ceremonies, including projectors, LED lights and an audio system.

A spokesperson from the Chinese Embassy in Yangon said that the final figure on the cost of the assistance was still unknown.

"At the 27th SEA Games, we will use technology that will create an unprecedented performance for the Myanmar people," said film director Zinyaw Maung Maung, who is working with the Ministry of Culture on the ceremonies.

While expectations for the opening and closing ceremonies have risen given China's support, there are concerns that assistance from Myanmar's massive neighbour will influence the opening and closing ceremonies, normally used as a showcase for the host country's traditional culture.

But U Yan Naing Oo said that people should not worry and that the "firm footing" of Myanmar culture would ensure it was not lost or diluted.

In addition to the opening and closing ceremonies, an official from the Chinese government said China has provided training equipment for Myanmar athletes and sent 28 Chinese coaches to Myanmar to aid in preparation. Over 200 Myanmar athletes have also travelled to China for training. - Translated by Zar Zar Soe

# **Myanmar dominates pre-SEA Games karate event**

#### **KYAW ZIN HLAING**

kyawzinhlaing91@gmail.com

NAY Pyi Taw's Wunnathehti Indoor Stadium on August 28 and 29 hosted a two-day karate invitational tournament that pitted competitors from five nations against each other.

The event was aimed at providing Myanmar's karate team with a measure of international experience ahead of the 27th Southeast Asian Games, which kick off in the

capital on December 11.

The invitational event saw 24 entrants from Myanmar test their skills against 62 competitors from Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. Myanmar's athletes claimed a haul of 7 gold medals, 6 silvers and 7 bronzes, ahead of Thailand (t3 gold, 3 silver and 6 bronzes), Malaysia (3 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze), Vietnam (1 gold, 1 silver and 5 bronze) and Laos, which won one silver and 2bronze medals.

Myanmar won gold medals in the

75-kilogram, 61kg, 60kg and 55kg and also took golds in the kata men's

team and female individual events. Myint Maung Maung, who won

the 55kg kumite event, told The Myanmar Times, ' "I was able to study the strengths and weaknesses of my opponents. I'm ready for the SEA Games and have been practicing hard."

"I want to dedicate my gold medal to my mother.

- Translated by Zar Zar Soe





Australia's Fawad Ahmed (C) celebrates with teammates Shaun Marsh (L) and Shane Watson (R) on August 31 in England, Photo: AFF

# MADRID



# **Real Madrid's Gareth Bale deal is back** say spending has gone too far in a tim

N a time of general economic crisis and with the football authorities trying to crack down on reckless spending, Real Madrid's incredible outlay of a reported 101 million euros (US\$133.5 million) for Gareth Bale to many seems absurd

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger described the bid as a "joke", whilst new Barcelona boss Gerardo Martino claimed it showed "a lack of respect" given the current economic climate.

However, Bale's signing is merely the latest in a string of "galactico" signings Real president Florentino Perez has made during two spells in charge of the club aimed at simultaneously boosting Madrid's success on the field and commercial revenue off it.

Deloitte's latest Money League report showed that Real had become the first football club to generate more than 500 million euros a year, whilst Forbes ranked Los Blancos as the most valuable sports team in the world last

again in the financial results for the next two seasons as new and improved shirt sponsorship and kit supply deals with Fly Emirates and Addidas worth 29 and 31 million euros a year respectively take effect.

Real have now topped the charts when it comes to club earnings for eight consecutive years and age-old rivals on the field Barcelona have become their closest competition as the Catalans' own commercial revenue boom has seen them occupy second place for the past four years.

Barca's revenue for 2011-12 was 483 million euros, but what is striking is just how far ahead the Spanish duo are from their competition on the continent.

English champions Manchester United come closest (395.9 million) but are more than 100 million euros behind Real, whilst Champions League holders Bayern Munich are nearly 150 million euros back (368.4 million).

Madrid and Barca's advantage

# **Io beer logo for Muslim Ah**

CRICKET Australia has agreed to a request by Muslim leg-spinner Fawad Ahmed not to wear the sponsorship logo of beer brand VB because of his faith's ban on alcohol.

Pakistan-born Ahmed, who became an Australian citizen in July after his application was fast-tracked. did not have the brewer's logo on his shirt during his international debut in last week's T20 matches against England.

Mike McKenna, Cricket Australia's executive general manager for operations, said on September 2 the player first raised the issue when he was selected for the Australia A tour of Britain in June.

"Fawad expressed discomfort with

the conflict this created for him, due to his religious beliefs," he said.

"Cricket Australia and Carlton United Breweries (CUB) are respectful of Fawad's personal beliefs and have agreed with his request to wear an unbranded shirt.

"CUB have been a long-standing partner of Australian cricket for more than 17 years and Fawad was thankful for their understanding of his personal situation."

South African batsman Hashim Amla, also a Muslim, is another player in a similar situation and has been permitted not to wear the logo of Cricket South Africa sponsor Castle, a beer company, on his kit.

The sensitive issue also reared

up in English football with striker Papiss Cisse pulling out of Newcastle United's pre-season tour this year, saying he was not prepared to promote the club's sponsors, moneylending company Wonga.

But the Senegal international has since donned a Newcastle shirt featuring the logo after talks with the club and Islamic teachers.

Ahmed, whose rapid rise has made him a hero to some in Australia's immigrant communities, impressed in his second T20 match for Australia on Sunday, returning three English wickets for 25 runs.

His performance was timely after he took none for 43 on his debut during the first T20 last week. - AFP month with an estimated value of US\$3.3 billion.

Indeed in 2011-12 Madrid's income rose by 7 percent to 512.6 million euros with commercial revenue - the sector to benefit most by big name signings growing by 9pc.

That figure will rise significantly

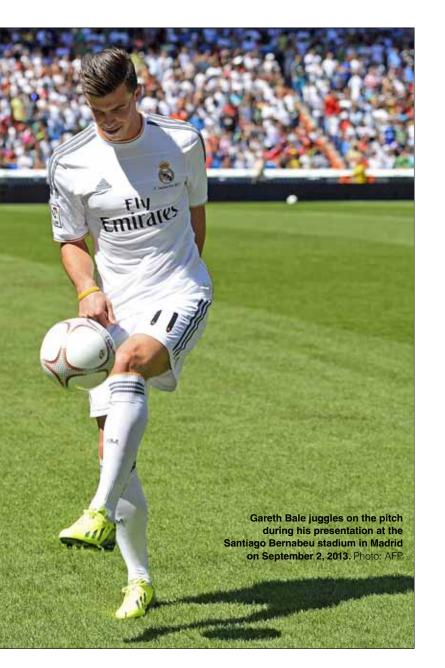
# 'It doesn't bother me as long as the club that is buying has the money to pay for

it.'

**Michel Platini** UEFA president comes from the fact that they are able to sell their domestic television rights individually, rather than the collective selling of rights that is the norm in England, Italy or Germany,

As a result the duo receive around 140 million euros each, nearly half of the overall rights received by Spanish clubs. This explains why, whilst Real and Barca possess the top two places, there is no other Spanish team named in the Deloitte's top 20 compared to England's seven, Italy's five and Germany's four.

Unlike the Bundesliga, La Liga is also not particularly fan-friendly when it comes to ticket prices. However, while other Spanish clubs have understandably noted a dip in attendance during the financial crisis, the significant tourist traffic Real and Barca attract have allowed them to continue selling out while charging top dollar



# ed by booming revenue, but critics e of economic downturn

prices for individual games.

And due to their revenue, Real are unlikely to be put off future transfers like Bale due to UEFA's Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations.

Rather than the established order of big clubs with huge revenue streams, FFP is likely to be more of a challenge for nouveau riche clubs such as Manchester City who posted a record-breaking 237 million euro loss in 2010-11.

"It doesn't bother me as long as the club that is buying has the money to pay for it. If Real Madrid had bought three players for 30 million euros no one would have said anything," UEFA president Michel Platini told French newspaper *L'Equipe* last week, speaking of Bale's transfer. Worryingly from a competitive point of view on the field, FFP is therefore likely to allow the rich to get richer and prevent those further down the chain from competing.

Each of the last six Champions League finals have contained one of Barca, United or Bayern, whilst Barca have reached six consecutive semifinals and Madrid the same stage in each of the last three years.

Perez is hoping Bale can be the final piece to finally get Real over the line to their  $10^{\rm th}$  European Cup.

Should he do so, the Welshman will have gone a long way to repaying the club's faith in him, and will also help Madrid's money making machine continue to surge ahead of the rest. – *AFP* 



for an unconfirmed world record fee



**Ground-and-pound:** Ashley Byrne (top) of Australia and Trevor Kristoffer of the United States fight on August 31 during the MMA World Series at Yangon's Thuwunna Stadium. Photo: Kaung Htet

# **NEW YORK**

# Nadal admits Federer US Open clash may never happen

RAFAEL Nadal believes that facing Roger Federer at the US Open might have to remain just wishful thinking after the worrying decline of the Swiss superstar continued in New York last week.

Federer, the winner of a record 17 Grand Slam titles, fell to Spanish 19<sup>th</sup> seed Tommy Robredo 7-6 (7/3), 6-3, 6-4 in the fourth round, his earliest exit from the US Open in 10 years.

It also doomed hopes for a potential quarter-final match with 12-time major winner Nadal in what would have been the first meeting of the pair's 31-match rivalry at Flushing Meadows.

"To be honest, it's going to be great if we were able to play a final because I felt that in our rivalry for so many years we were able to play in all the best scenarios, stadiums, around the world," said Nadal, who reached the quarter-finals with a 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-3, 6-1 win over Philipp Kohlschreiber.

The two men have played four finals at the French Open, three at Wimbledon and one at the Australian Open.

"We played the rest of the finals in the Grand Slams. So probably the rivalry deserves to have that match here in the US Open on the biggest court in the world," added Nadal.

"But it didn't happen. That doesn't mean it cannot happen in the future. We'll see. Hopefully. But is true that we are getting older, so the chances are less today than five years ago."

Nadal is only 27 but Federer has already turned 32.

Federer had made 36 consecutive Grand Slam quarter-final appearances before being upset by Ukrainian Sergiy Stakhovsky in the second round at Wimbledon this year, having not departed a major before the last eight since the 2004 French Open.

The September 2 defeat also made this the first year since 2002 that he has not made a Grand Slam final.

It came out on Louis Armstrong Stadium where he had not played since 2006 as organisers relegated him from the showpiece Arthur Ashe arena following a four-hour rain suspension to the day's schedule.

Nadal, the US Open champion in 2010, took his 2013 record to 57 wins against just three defeats and his perfect hardcourt form to 19 victories since his return in February from a seven-month injury layoff.

As he looks forward to a clash with Robredo for a semi-final spot, he insisted that he had never got caught up in the hype surrounding a potential match-up with Federer.

"For two times we were one point away [from meeting in New York]. But it is always the same, no? You [the media] make the confrontations before the draw.

"When the draw is coming and in the first round you always talk about quarter-finals. To be in the quarterfinals you need to win four matches. That's not easy for anybody."

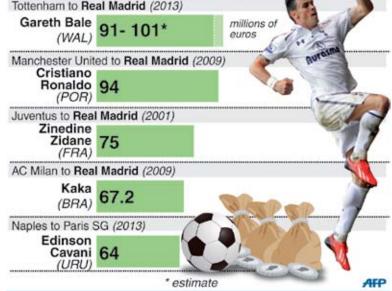
Robredo, meanwhile, defeated Federer for the first time in 11 meetings and believes it would be foolish to write off the former world number one, who has now sunk to seven in the world, his lowest level for more than a decade.

"Roger, when he was number one, compared to the Roger right now, he doesn't maybe have the same confidence," said Robredo.

"Obviously he's the same player and he plays unbelievable, but I knew that if I had a few more chances, maybe he will have a little bit of doubt." – AFP



drid (2013)



Roger Federer plays a forehand to Tommy Robredo at the US Open on September 2 in New York City. Photo: AFP

# Sport

# Chinese support for SEA Games pours in

SPORT 62

# On the road to Brazil

IROSLAV Klose and Cristiano Ronaldo stole the limelight on a busy night of World Cup qualifying fixtures on September 7 that saw several European nations edge closer to a place at the finals in Brazil.

Veteran Klose set Germany on the way to a 3-0 win against neighbours Austria which keeps them firmly in control of Group C, while Ronaldo netted a hat-trick as Portugal came from behind to triumph 4-2 in Northern Ireland.

Reigning world champions Spain eased to a 2-0 win in Finland, while Italy are just one more victory away from qualifying for the finals after a 1-0 defeat of Bulgaria in Palermo, but it was not all plain sailing for the big boys, with the Netherlands having to scramble to draw 2-2 in Estonia.

Germany were far too strong for Austria in Munich with the 35-year-old Klose setting them on their way with the 68<sup>th</sup> international goal of his career.

That saw him equal Gerd Mueller's German record for the most goals scored for his country, before Bayern Munich pair Toni Kroos and Thomas Mueller got the other goals for the hosts on the night.

Germany are now five points clear of Sweden, who won 2-1 in the Republic of Ireland with Johan Elmander and Anders Svensson getting their goals after Robbie Keane had put the home side in front.

"We did our homework, we knew how Austria would play and we took the sting out of them," said Germany coach Joachim Loew, whose team will qualify on September 10 if they win in the Faroe Islands and Sweden fail to win in Kazakhstan.

Portugal are still two points clear of Russia at the top of Group F, but having played a game more, after winning an eventful game in Belfast.

In a match that featured three red cards, Northern Ireland twice led before Real Madrid man Ronaldo scored three times in 15 minutes late on to move him above the great Eusebio in his country's list of all-time leading scorers on 43.



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (L) scores against Northern Ireland in Belfast on September 6. Photo: AFP

Russia had earlier swatted aside group whipping boys Luxembourg 4-1, with Alexander Kokorin of Dynamo Moscow scoring a brace, to keep automatic qualification in their own

hands. Spain are now three points clear at the top of Group I with just two games remaining after Jordi Alba and Alvaro Negredo struck either side of half-time in Helsinki while France, in second, saw their goal drought continue with a 0-0 draw in Georgia.

"It was a very difficult game because they were very compact and we found it difficult to find spaces," Spain boss Vicente del Bosque admitted afterward.

Italy's single-goal win against Bulgaria in Sicily means they need only beat the Czech Republic on Tuesday to book their ticket to Brazil from Group B.

Behind them, the race for second

and a prospective play-off berth remains open, particularly after Armenia won 2-1 in the Czech Republic.

The Netherlands saw their perfect record in Group D come to an end, however, in their 2-2 draw in Estonia.

Arjen Robben put the Dutch ahead early on, but a stunning double from Konstantin Vassiljev turned the game on its head and the Oranje needed a last-gasp Robin van Persie penalty to spare their blushes.

Meanwhile, England took control of Group H thanks to their 4-0 defeat of whipping boys Moldova which featured a brace from Manchester United's Danny Welbeck.

England lead the section on goal difference from Montenegro, who drew 1-1 in Poland, with Ukraine a further point back in third.

Ukraine hammered hapless San Marino 9-0 and England must go to

Ukraine on September 10 without Welbeck, who is suspended.

"The booking for Danny Welbeck has overshadowed the night, that's for sure," England manager Roy Hodgson said.

Elsewhere, Belgium are on the brink of qualifying from Group A after a 2-0 win in Scotland coupled with Croatia's 1-1 draw in Serbia left them five points clear at the summit.

Also in that group, Real Madrid new boy Gareth Bale was an unused substitute as Wales lost 2-1 in Macedonia.

Switzerland are still four points clear of Norway atop Group E despite a remarkable 4-4 home draw with Iceland, for whom Johann Gudmundsson scored a hat-trick, while Group G leaders Bosnia-Herzegovina lost 1-0 at home to Slovakia, allowing Greece to join them there with a 1-0 win in Liechtenstein. -AFP

# BRIEFS

# Sydney

# Streaker jailed for Australian match dash

A man who disrupted the final game of the State of Origin rugby league series in Australia by running naked onto the field for a dare was jailed for three months on September 5.

New Zealander Wati Holmwood was sentenced for streaking in front of 83,000 stadium fans and a television audience of 4.2 million during the final moments of July's Origin decider in Sydney.

His lawyers argued for a non-custodial or suspended sentence but magistrate Christopher Longley imposed a jail term for the flasher, who also streaked during a club rugby game in 2011.

## Yangon

#### Women's national team opens AFF Championship

Myanmar will open the ASEAN Football Federation Women's Championship when they take on Laos on September 10 in Yangon looking to avenge last year's heartbreaking penalty kick loss to Vietnam.

Myanmar has drawn into Group B for the first stage along with Laos, the

Philippines, Indonesia and Japan (U23). Group A includes Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Jordan and reigning champion Vietnam.

Myanmar will face the Philippines on September 14, Indonesia on September 16 and Japan (U23) on September 18.

– Kyaw Zin Hlaing, translated by Zar Zar Soe

## Seoul

## S Korea says impractical to share Games with North

South Korean organisers of the 2018 Winter Olympics on September 4 rejected the idea of sharing the skiing events with North Korea as unrealistic.

The organising committee in Pyeongchang, the host city 180 kilometres (112 miles) east of Seoul, said in a statement that holding skiing events on both sides of the border would be unrealistic for legal and logistical reasons.

The statement came a day after North Korea's International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Chang Ung suggested that the North's Masik ski resort could host some Olympic events.

Masik resort is one of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's pet projects. – AFP







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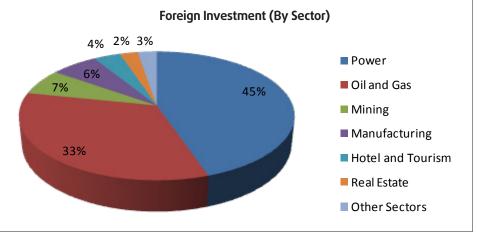
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FOREIGN INVESTMENT (31/7/2013) (BY COUNTRY) ( US \$ in million )				
Sr. No	Particulars		Permitted Enterprises	
		No.	Approved Amount	%
1	China	49	14188.829	33.04
2	Thailand	66	9979.443	23.23
3	Hong Kong	52	6404.213	14.91
4	Republic of Korea*	79	3018.205	7.03
5	UK*	60	3045.434	7.09
6	Singapore	90	2358.946	5.49
7	Malaysia	44	1034.785	2.41
8	France	2	469.000	1.09
9	Vietnam***	6	511.186	1.19
10	India	9	283.100	0.66
11	Japan	36	273.423	0.64
12	The Netherlands	7	249.136	0.58
13	USA	15	243.565	0.57
14	Indonesia	12	241.497	0.56
15	The Philippines	2	146.667	0.34
16	Russia Federation	2	94.000	0.22
17	Australia	14	99.246	0.23
18	Austria	2	72.500	0.17
19	Panama	2	55.101	0.13
20	United Arab Emirates	1	41.000	0.10
21	Canada	16	41.883	0.10
22	Mauritius	2	30.575	0.07

	FOREIGN INVESTMENT (31/7/2013) (BY COUNTRY) ( US \$ in million )					
Sr. No	o Particulars Permitted Enterprises					
51.110		No.	Approved Amount	%		
23	Germany	2	17.500	0.04		
24	Republic of Liberia**	2	14.600	0.03		
25	Denmark	1	13.370	0.03		
26	Cyprus	1	5.250	0.01		
27	Macau	2	4.400	0.01		
28	Switzerland	1	3.382	0.01		
29	Bangladesh	2	2.957	0.01		
30	Israel	1	2.400	0.01		
31	Brunei	3	4.273	0.01		
32	Sri lanka	1	1.000	0.00		
	Total	584	42950.866	100.00		

Source: Union of Myanmar Chambers of Commerce and Industry (August 30, 2013)



Source: Union of Myanmar Chambers of Commerce and Industry (August 30, 2013)







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# A closer look at SIM City

Ross Cormack, senior representative for Ooredoo Myanmar, speaks to The Myanmar Times' Tim McLaughlin about his company's future in Myanmar

There is a sense in Yangon that Telenor is ahead of Ooredoo in rolling out its plans for Myanmar. Where does Ooredoo stand as of today? Do you feel as though the company is in any way behind? Is there a sense of urgency given the numerous deadlines that the Myanmar government has laid out?

We are on track to meet our obligations within the timeframe the Myanmar government has laid out, and certainly don't feel in any way behind Telenor in terms of our progress made to date. Our management team is focused on establishing our business and ensuring that we will deliver the best possible experience and a wide range of life-enriching services to the people of Myanmar. Ooredoo is very experienced in rolling out telecoms networks in emerging markets and we are using this experience and best practices here in Myanmar.

Following up on that, at the moment it seems any mention of the Myanmar telecoms seems to pit Telenor against Ooredoo. How accurate is this description? Is there much interaction between the two companies? Are there thoughts that you may have to cooperate in some capacity in the future? We believe that competition is healthy for our industry and both MPT and Telenor will be strong competitors of Ooredoo. We also see competitors as potential partners as there are

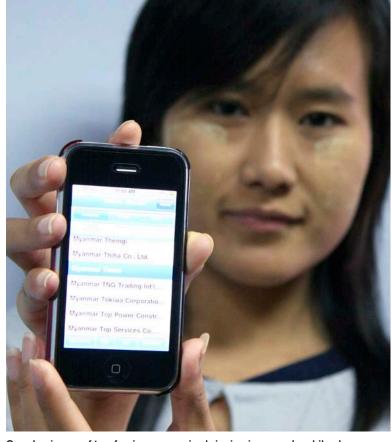
many ways that we can work together to reduce costs and improve efficiencies for the benefit of consumers. We welcome the chance to work constructively with the incumbent and other telecoms operators to develop a world class next generation network in Myanmar for the benefit of all.

The Telecoms Bill passed parliament on Tuesday. This is obviously key legislation for Ooredoo. Have you had the chance to look at the law? If you do you have any opinions on the law?

A: We are yet to have the opportunity to review the draft bill but look forward to having the opportunity to do so shortly. We think the development of the industry and the establishment of a stable legislative environment is critical to the long-term success of the telecoms sector in Myanmar. We continue to be encouraged by the progress the government has made and will continue to support the country's transformative advancements.

When Ooredoo was announced as a winner in June, there was some anti-Muslim sentiment that was expressed across social media and perhaps most notably in an article published by *The New York Times*. Is this something Ooredoo is concerned about? There are cultural sensitivities associated with any multinational company like Ooredoo entering a new market and this particular issue is a risk which affects both the country and international investors as they work to support and advance the development of Myanmar. Ooredoo does not get involved in politics in any of its markets and our focus is on providing the best experience for the people of Myanmar. We are excited about the opportunity to grow and develop alongside the people of Myanmar as we introduce our life-enriching services to the country.

A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2013



Ooredoo is one of two foreign companies bringing increased mobile phone connectivity to Myanmar. *Photo: Staff* 



A Myanmar Times Special Report

VESTMENT

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# CONTRACTOR A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2013

# Unlocking the country's economic potential: the four keys

Consultants from McKinsey and Company outline four key economic requirements

# DOAN NGUYEN HANSEN, FRASER THOMPSON , NANCY SHAH, LUKAS STREIFF

'NVESTORS from around the world are looking at Myanmar's economy with interest. The CEOs of many multinational corporations flocked to Nay Pyi Taw in June for the World Economic Forum gathering, anxious to explore the potential for growth and new business opportunities. But how big is that potential likely to be? The answer depends, of course, on how Myanmar manages its ambitious transformation agenda. If well managed, it is possible the economy could quadruple to over US\$200 billion by 2030, creating 10 million new jobs and lifting as many as 18 million people out of poverty.

This transformation will be far from easy to achieve. The nation embarks on its journey with some important advantages - its abundant natural resources, its location at the heart of one of the world's most dynamic regions, and the current wave of interest from investors and international goodwill. But these advantages will count for little unless Myanmar gets all the fundamentals right. It needs to reassure international investors that the political system and economic management are stable and there is clear rule of law. It needs to invest heavily in its infrastructure, education and vocational training systems, without which the nation could be short of 13 million skilled workers by 2030.

This is already a demanding reform agenda. However, it can be argued that Myanmar should also give special attention to four other major shifts that could be the keys to unlocking its full economic potential: a structural pivot towards manufacturing; a move from rural communities to cities; the need to leapfrog to a digitally - enabled economy; and a move from isolation to connectivity with the global economy.

Myanmar needs to reduce the overwhelming dominance of agriculture if it is to fulfil its economic growth potential. While other Asian economies have moved away from agriculture, a sector that accounts for only 12 percent of GDP in Thailand, and 10pc in China, in 2010 it still generated 44pc of Myanmar's GDP. Agriculture tends to be one of the least productive sectors in most economies and the fact that it accounts for so much of Myanmar's economy explains why average nationwide productivity is so low.

In a year, the average worker in Myanmar adds only \$1,500 to the economy, some 70pc less than in other Asian countries where many small-scale and subsistence farmers have already moved into higher-paying jobs in growing manufacturing and services sectors. If properly supported, Myanmar's manufacturing sector could grow to around \$70 billion by 2030 and create up to 6 million new jobs - by far the highest potential of any sector according to analysis by McKinsey.

This is not to say that agriculture should be neglected - quite the opposite. For agriculture to be Myanmar's second - largest sector in 2030, a productivity revolution is needed to boost yields, increase quantities of higher value crops - and raise farmers' incomes. Increased investment in irrigation systems, farm machinery, transport and cold-chain infrastructure, and farm management systems will all be critical.

The second shift - from rural communities to cities - will be an inevitable consequence of economic development and Myanmar needs to be prepared. If Myanmar achieves its economic potential, we estimate that about one-quarter of the population will live in large cities with more than 200,000 people by 2030, double the share today. Myanmar's large cities alone would be home to 10 million more people compared with 2010 - the equivalent of two new cities the size of Yangon or 10 new cities the size of Mandalay.

By 2030, the number of large cities is likely to increase from 10 to around 25. To cope with this huge potential influx of people, Myanmar's cities are going to have to invest heavily in infrastructure. To reach the standard of infrastructure that we observe in other Asian economies, we estimate that close to \$146 billion, comprised of \$121 million in investment cost and \$25 million in maintenance, will be necessary.

Rural areas, too, will need much



Pedestrians stroll through downtown Yangon. Photo: Staff

today's under-developed economy to a modern, technology-enabled economy. Today, the banking network and retail sector are limited. By moving straight to online banking and e-commerce, Myanmar could avoid the time and cost of building numerous physical banking branches and stores. Using the internet and mobile phones could also help Myanmar to provide health care, education and government services to millions of people in remote areas relatively quickly.

Technology could be a powerful tool for combating poverty and achieving inclusive growth. Again, large-scale investment will be necessary. We estimate that \$45 billion is needed to put the necessary telecommunications infrastructure in place. Ooredoo, one of the winners of the recently awarded telecommunications licence, expects to invest up to \$15 billion over the next two years and has committed to providing at least one free access point in public schools, universities, libraries, and hospitals, and to setting up 15 mobile health clinics by the end of 2016.

Finally, Myanmar needs to

recently announced that it will be adding 1000 in-house jobs in the country and setting up a formal training academy similar to one the company currently operates in Thailand. To attract the foreign investment it needs, Myanmar needs to put in place a targeted strategy and develop an environment that is explicitly business-friendly. We see three priorities: establishing and embedding rule of law; developing a level playing field that limits preferential treatment for domestic firms; and simplifying and standardising processes to make it easier for companies to do business.

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Although foreign investors will need to play a considerable part, the remaining \$480 billion of investment needed will have to come from domestic savings. To mobilise those savings, which Myanmar's Asian neighbours have seen as crucial to fuelling growth, will require a much stronger and broader banking system.

This is a monumental agenda with many challenges. But if Myanmar delivers on the fundamentals and simultaneously drives these four shifts, it could achieve one of the most rapid economic transformations the world has seen. Seize the day and this could be Myanmar's moment.



A farmer at work in a village near Yangon. Photo: The Myanmar Times

improved infrastructure not only to support their communities but to get produce to market in the nation's growing cities and for export. Overall, Myanmar needs to invest around \$320 billion in infrastructure between now and 2030. Of this total, \$180 billion is likely to be needed in real estate, \$80 billion in water and utilities, and \$60 billion in transportation. The third vital shift we believe is necessary is a technological one. Myanmar needs to fully capitalise on the digital age that is helping other developing economies to grow faster than ever before. Effectively using the internet, broadband and mobile communications could help Myanmar to leapfrog from

reconnect to the global economy through trade, investment and people. It cannot go it alone. It will need international investors to help meet the very large investment challenge that it faces. Taking all the pieces of the economic development jigsaw together, Myanmar needs \$650 billion by 2030, of which some \$170 billion will need to come from abroad - and not just for hard infrastructure such as roads, ports and telecoms but in soft infrastructure such as skills through vocational programs and on-the-job training. Companies coming to Myanmar

Companies coming to Myanmar have much to offer in the training arena. Telenor, another winner of the telecommunications licence, Doan Nguyen Hansen is a partner at global management consultancy McKinsey & Company. Fraser Thompson is a senior fellow at the McKinsey Global Institute. Nancy Shah and Lukas Streiff are McKinsey consultants. They are among the authors of the new report of the McKinsey Global Institute, Myanmar's moment: unique potential, major challenges. It is available at: mckinsey.com/ insights/asia-pacific/myanmars\_ moment 5 www.mmtimes.com

# Filling the void

While Myanmar's large, low-cost labour base has made it attractive for manufacturers, the country lacks workers capable of filling skilled positions.

# TIM **MCLAUGHLIN**

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LACK of high-level management skills in Myanmar is creating a major problem for foreign companies looking to recruit local talent.

As demand for management level workers increases, human resources is now the top concern for companies alongside the country's aged infrastructure. uncertain legal frameworks and continued conflicts.

The ASEAN Business Outlook Survey 2014 published this month by the American Chamber of Commerce found that 71 percent of the 475 business leaders from US companies investing in ASEAN were dissatisfied with the availability of trained personnel. Myanmar had the highest level of dissatisfaction within the 10

nation bloc.

The World Economic Forum's 2013-2014 Global Competitiveness Report released on September 4 listed an inadequately educated workforce as the fourth most problematic factor for doing business in Myanmar. In "extent of staff training" Myanmar ranked 146 out of 148 countries surveyed, ahead of only Burundi and Mauritania.

"The biggest constraint is going to be human resources," said Tina Singhsacha, chief representative of multi-national finance company Standard Chartered Bank in Myanmar which opened its Yangon office in February 2013.

"What is more worrying is when local companies share with me that they have [similar] trouble," she said.

Myanmar's higher-level education system has been crippled by the previous military regime, which shuttered universities and choked off funding, diverting much of it to the country's defence budget.

Traditionally hotbeds for political unrest and uprising, universities faced strict regulations and closures imposed by the government as it looked to limit students from congregating.

A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT INVESTMENT

Yangon University, once a prestigious education hub in Southeast Asia, was systematically dismantled by the government beginning in 1962, when the university's student union was demolished government troops. Only this year did the government announce plans to allow 300 undergraduates to return in December. Another 300 undergraduates will be offered places at Mandalay University.

In addition to the fractured education system, many Myanmar nationals with the means to leave the country did so, opting to take jobs and look for better opportunities abroad.

While Myanmar's large, lowcost labour base has made it attractive for manufacturing, particularly in the consumer goods and garment industries, and has been highlighted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as one of its strengths, the country lacks



Young men check vacancy announcements as at an employment agency in Yangon. Photo: Thein Tun Oo

those capable of filling skilled positions. There is now a sense that Myanmar is filled with team players, but team leaders are a rare commodity.

Ms Singhsacha's concerns were echoed by Bob Ellis, a partner at professional services company KPMG based in Thailand.

"That is right up there with our biggest challenges," said Mr Ellis, commenting on the difficulty of finding skilled employees. KPMG opened its Yangon office in November 2012.

Mr Ellis said that while many Myanmar staff hired by KPMG were "very diligent and eager to learn", most lacked the experience to put their degrees and skills learned in a classroom to practical use".

In the short term, companies have looked to recruit Myanmar nationals living abroad, hoping the country's reform process and economic potential would help lure them back to their home country. The policy has worked for some companies.

Conglomerate General Electric, which has also cited difficulties In Myanmar finding adequate highlevel employees, appointed U Zaw Win (Andrew Lee) as its Chief Country Representative in Yangon. U Zaw Win was raised and educated in the United States.

"Myanmar people want to come home if the conditions are right," said Ms Singhsacha, who added one of Standard Charterer's key employees is a Myanmar national who returned from Singapore.

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# CONTRACTOR A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2013

# Weighing it up

Human Rights Watch senior researcher Lisa Misol discusses key questions as to whether potential investors should remain cautious about doing business here

# FIONA MACGREGOR

newsroom@mmtimes.com

As Myanmar opens up to foreign investors after decades of sanctions, what are the positive things that investors can contribute to in terms of improving human rights here? The influx of investment in Burma [the name used by Human Rights Watch] carries many serious risks, but there are also opportunities for companies to improve human rights practices and help advance needed changes. For example, we've urged the foreign companies that won a major telecommunications tender to press the government to bring the country's laws into line with international standards. This would be beneficial for business and for society, since legal reforms would help the companies avoid complicity in abuses such as illegal surveillance and censorship while also protecting the right to free of expression and privacy in Burma.

## What are the most important human rights issues anyone looking to invest in Myanmar needs to be aware of?

Each company needs to evaluate the particular risk profile it might face in Burma. That said, some of the key issues that businesses need to consider include poor rule of law; major disputes over land ownership and tenure; government disregard of community concerns in approving investment projects, which in turn generates tensions and protests; ongoing repression, including government crackdowns on protestors; weak labour protection; abuses by public security forces; the considerable economic role of the military and other vested interests: and pervasive corruption. In some areas of the country, sectarian violence or ethnic armed conflict are additional factors that raise human rights risks.

### Are there businesses that may seem innocuous, but have a human rights toll that might not be immediately obvious? If so, how can would-be investors address that?

Land-grabbing is one of the major human rights problems in Burma today, so businesses that acquire or use significant tracts of land can be embroiled in human rights abuses, for example if they lease or buy land that was previously seized illegally. Plantation agriculture and tourism are two of the sectors that come to mind, and that most people would not expect to be risky. What businesses need to do is very carefully assess if there are any land disputes and either commit to resolving them fairly, if that is possible, or decline to move forward. They also need to be transparent about their actions so that local communities and others can raise any concerns before they boil over.

## As a small-to-medium business owner considering investment here, what are the most important things I can do to ensure I help improve human rights rather than contribute to abuses?

All businesses that are considering investing in Burma, no matter their size or industry, should conduct "human rights due diligence".



An area near the controversial Myitsone dam. Photo: Boothee

expectations from their home governments, the institutions that provide financing or support (which can include private banks or international financial institutions such as the World Bank) and the public at large. A global company's reputation and its access to funding and insurance are potentially on the line. This should give these companies an added incentive to carry out human rights due diligence, so they can avoid a backlash later. We also call on home governments and international financial institutions to mandate that companies undertake human rights due diligence for projects receiving support, particularly in a high-risk environment such as Burma, as an essential step to identify and address possible problems before they arise. Lack of community consultation, consent or benefit in governmentapproved investment projects is indeed a major risk factor in Burma. Affected communities have no effective means to secure adequate

are concerned about repressive laws and tactics, which potentially expose them to complicity in abuses. And they should act with the utmost transparency, for example by publicly reporting on their risk assessment for their projects in Burma, as well as their policies and procedures to address human rights issues, and inviting comment.

## There are some major international investors in Myanmar who simply do not prioritise human rights. How can I compete with them while ensuring the integrity of my own business?

Responsible investors, no matter what country they are from, recognise that running roughshod over community concerns, worker rights and other human rights issues is ultimately very costly. Several major investment projects are on hold or have experienced delays, as well as incurring huge added expenses because

# Running roughshod over community concerns, worker rights and other human rights issues is ultimately very costly." - Lisa Misol, Human Rights Watch

This refers to carefully assessing the potential human rights risks, determining whether they are avoidable, and then developing a plan to prevent abuses and deal with any problems that might nevertheless arise. The process can be fairly simple or very complex, depending on the situation. But it needs to be taken seriously and should be done at the outset - to inform the decision of whether to invest - and kept up-to-date if the investment goes forward.

compensation or to ensure that the government uses the proceeds to promote socio-economic development and reduce poverty. When people seek to stand up for their rights by staging peaceful protests against investment projects, the government frequently responds with abusive factics, including

of protests over land rights and environmental concerns.

Looking around the country, it seems almost inevitable that somewhere along the supply chain businesses will end up purchasing goods or services from a company that does not meet international human rights standards. Does that mean it is simply not a good idea to invest in Myanmar just now or is it acceptable to have lower standards at this stage of the country's development? One of the major challenges for investors is that many of the established local businesses are private companies that established a foothold thanks to close ties to the country's military. A number of them have been linked to alleged corruption, money-laundering, sanctions-busting and other illicit activities as well as human rights abuses. Investors need to carefully vet potential partners (including suppliers). They can also take an

active role to encourage responsible practices through their value chain, such as by including human rights provisions in contracts and monitoring compliance.

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# So what is the best way to vet candidates?

There is no single source businesses can consult to know which potential partners to avoid. The United States government maintains targeted sanctions on certain individuals and companies it has linked to abuses or corruption, but unfortunately it has not kept its list up-to-date. Foreign companies often consult their home governments seeking information on local companies. They tend to overlook other informed sources, including lawyers and nongovernmental organisations that work with communities, who will often know whether companies have been the subject of complaints. In this case, too, being transparent makes good business sense: If an investor is willing to publish the names of its local partners (including suppliers), as well as its human rights policies, members of the public or informed outside observers can follow up to share any relevant concerns. Being ethical and forthright can pay real dividends for companies operating in high-risk environments, as they are better able to overcome suspicion, build trust and successfully engage in long-term success.

#### This is a frontier market and I'm keen to start business (

### Are there certain types of business that I should avoid entirely if am concerned about human rights?

Some of the most sensitive investments are in the so-called extractives sector, which refers to oil, gas and mining activities, as well as large-scale infrastructure projects. These have frequently been associated with serious abuses in Burma and remain major flashpoints for controversy.

I work for a multinational company and have been asked to look into Myanmar as a potential market: What are the key human rights issues affecting Myanmar in particular that I need to take into consideration? Burma presents many

opportunities, as well as pitfalls, for potential investors. For multinational companies, an added issue is that they often face certain requirements or

arresting and prosecuting them under repressive laws. A growing number of protesters have been sentenced to jail time in recent months

Faced with this situation, companies need to take concrete steps to avoid harming communities. They should conduct due diligence to understand the risks and seriously weigh if the proposed project can be carried out responsibly. They also should undertake thorough consultations with affected communities to seek to understand and address potential points of friction on an ongoing basis. Companies also should engage with the Burmese authorities to make clear that they

rather than later. Can I not just start business operations now and address human rights issues once my business is established? Deferring action on human rights risk is a strategy that can backfire – and badly. The time to start thinking about human rights is before an investment decision is made, as part of the overall assessment of a potential project. That allows a company to make an informed decision about whether to move forward. It also gives the company an opportunity to set up adequate safeguards to avoid human rights problems and develop a robust approach to deal fairly with any issues that do arise.



# Is the flood of FDI dollars sweeping anyone off their feet?

Global brands are making deals, profits are soaring and the country's GDP is surging. But with all the fuss in the media about "the new Myanmar", how is the gold rush playing out for the average citizen? Reporters Aung Kyaw Nyunt in Yangon and Aung Ye Thwin in Mandalay hit the streets to find out.



### Dr Khin Maung Htwe

Veterinarian and resident of Mandalay I welcome foreign investment in Myanmar. I hope investors will act in the people's interest in areas where the government is not able to do so. But if things remain as they used to be, people's lives won't improve. For instance, foreign investment has begun to flow in, but so long as old regulations continue to apply, nothing will happen. Investors should be allowed to do business according to international laws and practices, and the laws should be amended to allow this. But investors do not always have the best interests of the people in mind.

# Ma Phyo Phyo Oo

25 years old, student and resident of Dagon Seikkan township, Yangon As well as studying at university, I teach students in middle school. I have been looking forward to more pre-schools opening to cater to the children of foreign workers. The future of children's education is bright. Foreign investors pouring in is bound to bring rewards and will lead to developments socially, economically, politically and educationally. There will be many more job opportunities compared to now.





**Ma Aye Thinza Cho** 20 years old, student and resident of Thanlyin township, Yangon As I am a distance education student, I am looking for a job. The economy will improve because foreign investors are coming in. There will be more and better job opportunities. Education for the children will improve and there will be a lot of other changes for the better in our country. I think foreign investment is good for us. The time has come for us to achieve our goals.

Ko Aung Kyaw Myint 35 years old, a resident of Bahan township, Yangon

Foreign investors are in the exploratory stages now. They just come and then return to their countries. One project, the Thilawa jetty, could be really beneficial for the people if the investment money comes. Even the Japanese prime minister came to visit the jetty, and it's in a strategic location in Yangon. But it is necessary to be transparent to the people. We have a lot of natural resources. If investors take people's needs into consideration, we will welcome them.



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# CONTRACTOR OF THE SPECIAL REPORT OF THE SPEC

# When helping hands are tied

Laws restricting social welfare groups continue to hamper the nation's development

MYA KAY KHINE

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MERGING social welfare groups must engage in a dangerous dance. They want to help as many people as they can, but without government permission – and many are unwilling to apply for it, due to what they call overly restrictive rules – they are forced to operate under the radar, always worried that if they overstep the boundaries they will be found out and shut down.

Due to 1988 regulations governing the formation of political parties, non-government organisations and other associations, social welfare groups in Myanmar cannot operate without official permission.

But while a draft of a new bill governing NGOs was discussed in the hluttaw in August, many NGOs and citizens argue that it will still remain too difficult to register a social aid organisation even under the proposed bill.

As a result, the social aid sphere remains dominated by two types of organisations: large INGOs, who operate in Myanmar with government permission; and, at the other end of the scale, small local organisations, often volunteer-based, mostly unregistered, many of which use social networks like Facebook to organise themselves and depend on private donors from foreign countries to meet operating costs. The two types work toward the same end – helping the people – but do so in very different ways. "There are so many sectors that need to be developed in

Myanmar," said Saw Wah Eh Htoo, advocacy coordinator and interim communications manager for World Vision Myanmar. "But social welfare is necessary for the development of the country, so it cannot be left behind." Since launching legal operations

in the country in 1993, World Vision Myanmar has opened 42 branches in 11 different states and regions. According to its *Annual Report* for 2012, it spends over \$US18 million here each year – the majority in the health and education sectors – with Home Affairs. As many are afraid that investigations will disrupt their current works, they must keep their operations discreet."

One such clinic opened last month in a township on the edge of Yangon. The head of the clinic and his staff of volunteers spoke to *The Myanmar Times* on condition of anonymity, because they work at a government hospital and do not want either their clinic or their careers to be endangered by their actions being made public.

They did not attempt to register the clinic with the government, they said, because the current laws make the process so prohibitively difficult. They added that their superior

# "Social welfare is necessary for the development of the country, so it cannot be left behind."

- Saw Wah Eh Htoo, World Vision Myanmar

funding provided by support offices in 16 countries, including Myanmar.

Smaller local organisations, however, have more limited budgets and face a more difficult choice: Try to register, in the hopes of government approval and the benefits it brings, but risk being turned down; or skip the process entirely and just get to work. Many have opted for the latter.

"It's not difficult [to register] for the education sector aid but it's so difficult in the healthcare sector," said a retired government official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "For example, you can open your own clinic with approval from the Ministry of Health, but for a free clinic you need to apply to at their hospital told them – that if they want to do social welfare, thay should serve at government hospitals in remote areas although this would have meant they would be separated from their families. The clinic head said the opening

of the clinic was a long-held desire. "When I was a seventh-grade

student, my father got Hepatitis B. Our family was devastated. So out of sympathy, I want others to be more aware of this disease. I made contact with partners on Facebook and we opened a goodwill clinic offering lowcost treatment in August this year. We focus on treating Hepatitis B."

The clinic does not offer free treatment, as that would be considered a still-greater breach of previous experience organising a rice offering group for monasteries on Sagaing Mountain.

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"When I came back to Myanmar, I helped make this [rice-offering] group successful by connecting monks with donors who live in foreign countries. In July 2013, the doctor who is now head of the goodwill clinic asked for help to open this clinic. I joined him to help fulfill my dream."

The coordinator's dream – to help set up a goodwill clinic – is shared by many would-be organisations, but it's also one that is not easily attained, due to the hurdles that remain in place.

But for all their differences, such group may draw encouragement from the experience of organization like World Vision, which, prior to 1993, was also forced to operate here without official permission.

Alter all, big things do start small.

the law. Instead, it offers treatment and advice at low costs. One volunteer doctor described the goodwill approach to healthcare as "When I do

being "needed for social welfare" but added it is "so difficult" to operate without official government backing. While charges are kept affordable for patients, they not nearly high

enough to meet the clinic's operating expenses, even with the nine doctors – who work two per day in turn – and four to five nurses volunteering their time and services at no charge.

"We talk with patients first and then we encourage them to get tested for Hepatitis B and prevent [the disease from spreading]," the volunteer doctor said. "After we talk to them, we help them as much as we can. If we aren't able to help them, we find volunteers to donate."

Financial backing comes from a variety of donors living abroad. The clinic's donor coordinator, who also lived abroad for several years, had

- HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION



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# Taking stock of public companies

A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2013

An increasing number of public companies have formed in the past year - but their motivations can be far more complex than simply selling shares to the public



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MALL-SCALE investors are beginning to buy and sell shares in Myanmar's public companies, even though the planned stock exchange is two years away from launching.

Dozens of public companies are approved to operate in Myanmar following eased restrictions in 2012, and many are actively selling shares to the public through stalls in supermarkets, advertisements in newspapers and direct door-todoor marketing.

The public's enthusiasm for investment in stocks comes as Myanmar moves to formalise its securities market. It passed the Myanmar Securities and Exchange Law in August, but is still some time away from forming a Securities and Exchange Commission to license brokerages and underwriters and launching the planned Yangon stock exchange.

U Aung Thura, CEO of Thura Swiss, a Myanmar firm which offers a subscription-based database of public company information, says without an exchange to trade shares on, most buyers and sellers deal directly with the companies themselves.

"You can sell [shares] back to the company, and often that's what's happening," he said. Shareholders who would like to sell their shares go to the public company's trading centres, and the company itself often does the matchmaking with buyers.

"Most companies work that

way," he said. "The secondary market is quite an over-thecounter market."

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Some of the public companies interviewed by The Myanmar Times claim to make dividend payments to their shareholders, while others say this is still some vears away.

Although there are currently about 85 public companies in Myanmar, U Aung Thura said that a large number were pro forma public companies - companies that are fundamentally private firms but chose to become public for various reasons rather than firms actively seeking to sell shares.

He pointed to First Myanmar Investment Company (FMI), Mandalay Myotha Industrial Development (MMID) and Myanmar Agribusiness Public Company (MAPCO) as active share issuers, with thousands of shareholders each.

An official at MAPCO said the firm became a public company because it had a large number of initial shareholders who were keen to tap capital investments from shareholders.

"There were 73 members of the Myanmar Rice Federation who founded MAPCO. We established the public company to gain public interest," he said.

"Now we have two or three thousand shareholders."

The firm is currently building a modern rice mill as a joint venture with Mitsui and Company of Japan



Exchange Centre in Yangon. Photo: Aye Zaw Nyo ALD' / ALY / WA

in Twante township southwest of Yangon, and has exported rice to Japan and Ivory Coast.

Despite the millions brought in from shareholders, the official said, "The biggest problems [for a Myanmar firm] is access to capital and getting funding."

The MAPCO official said the firm may eventually list on the Yangon exchange, though it would be some time before a decision is made.

Ministry of Finance Deputy Minister Maung Maung Thein said that there would likely be less than 10 firms on the Yangon exchange when it launches.

"Not all the current public companies are adequately structured to be listed on the stock exchange," he said at a press event in Nay Pyi Taw last week.

"Registering as a public company is just the first step of the process. That's why we are going to support them with technical knowledge in areas such as corporate structure, auditing and

prospectus writing," he said.

Shares of two public companies at the Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre can be purchased from the second floor of the Myanmar Economic Bank on Sule Pagoda Road in downtown Yangon. However, industry sources say the exchange sees low sales volumes as the two firms make high dividend payments, resulting in few shareholders willing to sell their stocks.

To become a public company, a firm must submit a prospectus to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), have a minimum of seven shareholders, a K500 million minimum capital investment, and submit annual reports. Private firms have a maximum of 50 shareholders.

U Aung Thura said there are a number of reasons firms become public companies. Some want to expand their business, and raise capital by issuing shares, he said, adding "these are companies that have some vision for the future".

Others are pro forma public companies with the minimum seven shareholders, including a wealthy individual as the main shareholder. Still others transition from private firms to public companies for succession reasons or because the government is beginning to show a preference for public companies when awarding contracts, according to U Aung Thura.

Some public firms say disclosure requirements such as submitting annual reports to DICA has required a degree of adaptation, while others claim the nature of their industry demands accountability.

Golden Myanmar Airlines is the first public airline in Myanmar, but its CEO Andrew Stephen said airline businesses have to be tightly regulated, regardless of whether the firm is public or private.

"[The law] has lots of things we have to - and should - comply with," he said. "There's no room for people who choose not to do so."







# To invest or not to invest?

The managing partner of Polastri Wint & Partners gives the low down on foreign investment laws

# ALESSIO POLASTRI alessio(@pwplegal.com

NE of the most popular questions I have been asked by foreign investors over the last two years in Myanmar is, "Do you think it is too early to invest in Myanmar. Should I invest somewhere else or is Myanmar a good place for investments?" Personally, I don't have an answer to such a query, mainly because I am a lawyer, not a businessman. Therefore, I leave this question to people more qualified than myself.

At this stage, I can only share my experience as a legal consultant assisting international investors in Myanmar, and, specifically, provide an example of two separate business tycoons who asked the same types of questions and came up with their own results. On a no-name basis, both are wellknown investors who have achieved outstanding results in several countries, including emerging

# markets.

They actually did not ask me straight away whether it "was too early to invest in Myanmar or not". But they elaborated upon one question separately, with four main queries. What astonished me about their questions was the logic and the types of questions: Their questions were identital and in the same order, despite the totally different backgrounds of the two tycoons.

The first one was, "How politically stable is the country?" In this regard, discussing this issue with them has been very helpful to understand what "stability" is for a businessman. Usually political stability means the chance to see the same person (or group of people) in change over several, consecutive years. What they actually meant was different - they were asking from a more economically oriented point of view and were inquiring about the next 15 to 20 years. "Is there a party in the political landscape of Myanmar which is planning to



Flight attendants greet passengers on an international flight of Golden Myanmar airlines last month. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

close the country down again, and if yes what are the chances that that party winning the elections?" My answer is, "Well, no". We have no such threat that I can see right now in Myanmar. Whoever wins the general election in 2015, I believe, shall carry on the reforms commenced by the present government.

The second question was related to the fiscal regime. Surely, Myanmar is not a country with high fiscal pressures. Amongst ASEAN countries, Myanmar is slightly below average with a terrific tax holiday package for those who invest under the umbrella of the Foreign Investment Law. In addition, the government seems keen to increase the number of double taxation agreements with third countries, thereby enhancing the appeal of Myanmar from this perspective. The third question is, "What are labour costs and what is the local availability of construction materials?" This is something that, once again, I prefer to leave to third party people with local experience in relevant industries. I am not aware of the cost of local employees (other than for secretaries and lawyers) not to mention cement and other raw materials. Most likely, investors expect lower prices. However, after conducting market research, both tycoons, together with other foreign investors, told me that these costs would not represent a serious issue.

The final question, which was also probably the least expected, was "How are the people of Myanmar?" In my personal view, the judgment is very positive, being that the people are honest, trustworthy and hard-working.

Therefore, after evaluating all four factors, the tycoons gave

Myanmar 3.5 out of 4 marks – scoring less than "4" given that the price of cement shocked at least one of them. They are both now looking for opportunities in Myanmar and are eager to invest.

If we apply the criteria used by companies instead of those adopted by self-made men, we realise that the approach is more academic in understanding whether a country could be a good spot for investments. The approach to a new market by executive managers of multinationals is more static and foreseeable.

Their questions were focused on foreign assumptions, how to protect potential investments against nationalization and, generally, the situation of the legal system of Myanmar.

It is hard to state on a general basis whether Myanmar is ready for investments or if investors should wait. But if they wait, what they should wait for? I believe that the real question is, "How much risk can an investor bear?" or, "Does this investment have a proportional return compared to the risk I would bear?"

No doubt that Myanmar is still a very challenging country to do business. Even the government is still trying to give to itself a structure and to get organised. But several laws have been approved (certainly more than expected) and this is giving positive signals to foreign investors. Progress made so far is still a small amount of the huge workload that it is expected over the next several years. So, huge steps have been taken, but the path seems to be very long: Rome was not built in a day. Finally, no matter what investors think about whether Myanmar is ready or not, surely it is not too early to be in Myanmar to develop business relationships, to understand the local culture and to "put on the radar" the most influential local companies or businessmen you may team up with one day. In the meantime, let us allow the government to complete its "Coliseum" and we will see that Rome cannot be built in a day, but - in the case of Myanmar - possibly in few years.



Workers carry baskets of gravel in Yangon last month. Photo: AFP

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# In conversation with YCDC

A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT INVESTMENT

As the country's largest city, and recipient of the majority of economic investment, Yangon is poised for great change. U Toe Aung as deputy head of the Department of City Planning and Land Administration for Yangon City Development Committee has a unique perspective on the decisions that will determine the city's direction

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#### How do you see the foreign investment climate in the next two years?

These days, investors are in the preliminary phases of their engagement with Myanmar. They are just coming to check things out. They want to learn about the Myanmar market, but they are not really investing yet, so there is still some uncertainty about how the investment climate in Myanmar will develop over the next two years. However, the country has great potential in terms of manufacturing and other sectors, including tourism, hotels, industrial estates, real estate and transportation, as well as a wealth of natural resources, so foreign investors are likely to seek to overcome the current challenges.

What are the specific areas you think need to be addressed? Yangon city is leaning heavily toward the manufacture of food, fabricated metal products, rubber and plastic products, clothes, wood products, basic metal, and the repair and installation of machinery and equipment. However, the business environment of Myanmar's manufacturing sector is not yet in a stable condition. A lot of factories have closed in the existing industrial zones following financial losses due to a sudden downturn in demand and/or higher costs of raw materials, fuel, shipping, land rental etc.

With the relaxation and gradual lifting of economic sanctions and progress in the reduction and elimination of tariffs among ASEAN countries after 2015, competition among foreign companies is expected to increase. That will mean



existing domestic industries may struggle to compete in terms of technology and skilled labour supplies. Small and medium enterprises (SME) with less than 50 employees account for nearly 80 percent of manufacturing businesses here. It is particularly necessary to extend measures to support SMEs that have weak business structure.

A large part of the industrial land in the existing industrial zones is now going unused, making it difficult for investors to find reasonably priced land. The government has not yet developed a mechanism that will promote the sale and purchase of the rights to use land.

The existing industrial zones also have problems with infrastructure, including unreliable power supplies and poor roads and drainage which impact on factories' operational capacity. The industrial zones need stable power supply and enough YCDC pipe water supply.

The number of business establishments in the service sector has increased in recent years. According to BES, more than 60pc of business establishments in the service sector were founded after 2000, but the service sector commonly faces problems of strong business competition and skilled labour shortages. In addition, a lot of hotels report that frequent power shortages are causing problems. The demand for hotel rooms has pushed up prices in recent years, but the quality of service has not always lived up to the increased prices. As more hotels are built, it is expected that the competition will ensure either the quality of service is improved or prices are cut accordingly.

Banks, which are currently competing only against other domestic banks, will start to face outside competition in 2015, when foreign banks will be allowed to start operating in Myanmar. This is another sector where a skilled workforce will be necessary. It is also expected that a stock exchange market will be established in Yangon, possibly with support from the Tokyo Stock Exchange, while supporting domestic banks need to be able to compete with the forthcoming strong foreign banks.

MORE ON 15





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# Making the right call

A poor telecommunication system still holds the country back - but with major advances on the horizon, shortterm pain could bring long-term gain for investors

# **FIONA MACGREGOR** newsroom@mmtimes.com

S\$200 for a SIM card; painfully slow internet connections; electricity supplies that frequently fail even in major cities: You don't have to be a financial analyst to work out why the current state of the telecommunications industry in Myanmar's is holding up development and putting off potential investors.

With even the special allocation K1500 cards exchanging hands for over \$100, there are certainly entrepreneurial sorts making money from the current system. However, on a larger scale, the lack of access to modern communications is a major headache for those looking to set up business in Myanmar.

Everything from basic communication to the lack of opportunity for online training is having an impact on how businesses operate, say international investors.

"A lot of foreign investors have their headquarters elsewhere and it causes difficulties and frustrations if they can't rely on teleconferencing and other communications," said Jeremy Rathjen, vice president of Thura Swiss consulting in Yangon.

"One area that is particularly affected is tourism, because people can't access booking references [online] and this impacts services. There's also been interest for a few years from companies who would like to set up call centres

here, because of reasonable labour costs and a relatively high level of English, but that's just not been possible because of the telecommunication situation," he added.

CONTRACTOR A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2013

This week, a major international telecommunications conference will take place in Nay Pyi Taw. Myanmar Connect 13, which will be opened by U Myat Hein, Union Minister, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, will bring together the MICT, MPT, PDT, Yatarnapon Teleport Company, and the two foreign telecommunications companies who have been awarded licences to operate in Myanmar, Qatar-based Ooredoo and Norway's Telenor Myanmar.

The event, which comes after parliament approved the telecommunications bill at the end of last month, is being billed as the "first time the

international winners of the new

telecommunication licences will

have the opportunity to outline

partners". In light of the evident

challenges posed by Myanmar's

investors within Myanmar and

"These two companies are

operating under the thumb of the

government to a large extent and

quickly, or risk losing their licence

will be expected to reach their

agreed [coverage] targets very

just what these plans are.

politics, economy and environment,

internationally are keen to find out

their plans to their peers and



Yangonites speak over their phones in the downtown area. Photo: Ko Taik

and they have a lot of work to do in terms of building up staff, setting up offices and so on, but I think people believe they will do it," said Mr Rathjen.

And it will be good news for business when they do, according to analysts. The link between telecommunication access and a successful economy is clear.

According to financial services giant Deloitte, "GDP growth rates can be linked to penetration rates, with an improvement of ten percent in penetration typically driving about 1.2 per cent in GDP growth?

Given the remarkably low levels

network infrastructure is first to be developed are likely to be the recipients of foreign investment and economic growth. This will be crucial during the next one to two years as access to foreign capital will be vital to building vibrant economic centres," Deloitte notes.

But the international telecom companies seem confident they won't leave rural areas behind. A spokesperson for Telenor said they would pull on experience elsewhere in Asia in creating services for Myanmar.

"We will leverage Telenor's experience in Asia to develop tailored services for consumers state-run Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications.

One thing is certain however. Whoever is investing it, there's a lot of money needed.

According to Deloitte, thousands of kilometres of fibre infrastructure and 15,000 towers must be installed to meet basic coverage targets. The cost of that development alone is estimated at \$4 billion.

Under the 15-year license deal, Telenor and Qatar-based competitors Ooredoo are required to put down a \$200 million performance bond before their licences are issued. If they fail to deliver the agreed investment and services, which include providing voice services across 75pc of the country and data services across 50pc within five years, they will lose their bond money.

A Telenor spokeswoman said more details would be revealed once plans were finalised, but said the company aimed to launch services within eight months of signing a licence agreement with the government, and added the company plans to achieve over 90 per cent network coverage across Myanmar within five years. Ooredoo has said it expects to achieve 84 per cent voice and date coverage over the same period.

As for the all-important cost question, Telenor is reported to be planning a fee of K25 (\$0.03) per minute for calls, while Ooredoo is understood to be looking at K35 (\$0.04) per minute for on-net calls and K45 (\$0.05) per minute for off-net calls.

of mobile penetration and internet access sitting at just one percent, the potential for telecom-related growth in Myanmar is impressive.

"GDP growth rates can be linked to penetration rates, with an improvement of ten per

cent in penetration typically driving about 1.2 per cent in GDP growth."- Deloitte

But with mobile phone and internet services already heavily centred around Yangon and Mandalay, and telecom firms saying terrain in parts of rural Myanmar poses considerable challenges to infrastructure construction, is there a risk more remote parts of the country will be left behind in Myanmar's budding telecommunication revolution?

"Areas of the country where

in Myanmar and including our operations in Thailand, where we have a strong brand and market position ... and also drawing from key learnings in India where Telenor has established an advanced distribution system to deliver services to people living in remote and rural areas," the spokesperson added.

Mr Rathjen said, "Most of our clients are based in the big cities anyway, but I don't think it's a problem to start in the cities and move out from there. It's the only strategy that makes sense."

In August it was reported that the Norwegian firm is to invest \$2 billion in developing services in Myanmar, less than many analysts had predicted.

"It is going to be less than what e invested in total in Pakistan Some [analysts] have used Pakistan as a benchmark and implied that it could be as much as what we invested in Pakistan, but it will not be," Jon Fredrik Baksaas told Reuters. While the company insists it has yet to release an exact figure, if the reports are even vaguely accurate, the sum would be considerably less than the \$15 billion over 15 years pledged by Ooredoo during the bidding process. Meanwhile it is yet to be clarified what level of infrastructure investment will be provided by local operators Yatanarpon Teleport Co and the joint partnership between military-owned Myanmar Economic Corporation and



Meanwhile both companies have said they will charge K1500 (about \$1.53) for SIM cards with the possibility of some mobile contracts coming with a free SIM. And those eye-wateringly expensive \$200 SIM cards? Investors arriving in Myanmar over the next few months will almost certainly just have to pay that price for claiming their stake in an emerging market. But at least they can do so in the knowledge that their costly communication investment will soon be a relic of Myanmar's isolated past a consignment to the history books that can't come soon enough for foreign investors and Myanmar citizens alike.



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# Jaded: Mining in Kachin reveals Myanmar's black heart

CONTRACTOR OF CONTRACT A MYANMAR TIMES SPECIAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2013

The latest peace agreement between the government and the Kachin Independence Organisation provides the opportunity for Myanmar to put an end to a long-running tragedy and reform the ways in which its natural resources are exploited, making them for the benefit, rather than the detriment, of its people

# NIGEL FINCH

OCAL lore has it that sometime in the 13th century a Yunnan trader travelling through what is now Hpakant township in Kachin State picked up a boulder to balance the load on his mule. When it was broken open, the rock revealed a centre of vivid green material. Since then the Chinese have been captivated by this mineral and for several centuries the Yunnan government funded many unsuccessful expeditions to find the source of this fascinating green gemstone.

It wasn't until 1784, when Emperor Qianlong extended the Chinese border to absorb what is now Northern Myanmar, that Chinese miners discovered the source of jadeite and established a trade route that up until World War II had transported enormous quantities of "Imperial Jade" to Beijing. Today the trade route has moved to Hong Kong, the Western interface to China, where record prices continue to be set for jadeite, an obscure silicate of aluminium, sodium and silicon.

Hong Kong auction houses continue to attract the interest of not just jewellery collectors but movie stars, drug barons and growing numbers of Chinese millionaires, all frantically driving the price of this rare and valuable form of jade to a level where it now competes with diamonds as the most precious stone in the world and is revered across the East as the Stone of Heaven.

A recent Hong Kong auction set a new record price of HK\$106.2 million (US\$13 million) for a necklace made of 23 flawless quality jadeite beads, the largest of which measured just 2 centimetres in diameter.

While jadeite deposits are



entire mountains one stone at a time. The work is dangerous and the environmental legacy left by this largely unregulated activity is leaving behind a brutalised landscape of mountains reduced to rubble. But this pales in comparison to the human cost of this activity and the treatment of Myanmar workers, who are attracted to these mines in the hope that their labour will bring them, and their families, wealth and a better life.

The jade mines of the Hpakant region have been described as a medieval vision of hell. For the hundreds of thousands of workers lured into the back-breaking work of digging for jadeite, the reality is that this is a place of poor fortune, terrible illness and ruined lives.

Dust and disease plague workers as they are exposed daily to harsh and unsafe conditions, often forced to work by ruthless and violent of the miner's identification card. Some estimate that as many as 500,000 workers in Hpakant are paid this way, consuming as much as 10 grams of pure heroin each day. For most this routine proves to be lethally addictive. Compounding the problem is that the addicts are also having unsafe sex with prostitutes who are forced to work in nearby brothels, creating a catastrophic HIV problem in the mines.

As many as nine out of 10 addict workers in the mining district are HIV-positive, but few live long enough to develop AIDS. The "Jade Disease" of backbreaking labour, chronic drug addiction and heroin overdose usually takes their lives before this otherwise preventable disease can take hold. Myanmar has the highest rate of HIV infection among drug users in the world and this will continue as long as this terrifying practice exists on such an

The government of Myanmar now has the opportunity to ... show the world its leadership

can exercise values such as compassion, justice and wisdom; the very gualities that jade

endeavouring to take steps to curb the distribution of jadeite in world markets. On August 7 of this year, US President Barack Obama issued an Executive Order prohibiting the importation into the United States of any jadeite mined or extracted from Myanmar. While this will clearly bring further attention to the issue and dampen demand for imperial jade across the West, what is driving this humanitarian disaster is the insatiable appetite for jadeite from the East, especially China.

The mines of Kachin State have unleashed a curse on the people of Myanmar, subjecting them to appalling human rights violations and exposing the land to environmental degradation. The mines also act a source of fuel for a brutal war between the government and the 8000-strong rebel Kachin Independence Army (KIA) who rely on the jade mines, as well as the government's attempt to secure KIA-controlled areas around many of the lucrative energy projects in Kachin State. There is much controversy surrounding these projects, the majority of which have the backing of the Chinese government, including the \$20 billion China Power Investments Corporation's construction of the Myitsone Dam and hydroelectric power project on the Ayeyarwady River. From an economic perspective, the controversial aspect is that Chinese companies are the ones who will benefit from the construction and the electricity produced by the dam will be primarily for the Yunnan region of China, which means the project delivers little utility benefit to the people of Myanmar.

the fighting until 2011. Fighting

subsequently broke out as a result of

Concerned with border stability and protecting its major investment projects in the area, China facilitated a series of "closed door" negotiations between the KIO and the government of Myanmar earlier this year, which resulted in the KIO signing a tentative peace agreement in May 2013. For the Myanmar government, developing an equitable agreement over Kachin's vast natural resources will ultimately lie at the heart of securing enduring peace in the North.

Meanwhile the international community is eagerly awaiting permission and assistance in accessing this difficult and remote location to gauge the extent of the humanitarian disaster and to rapidly provide intervention to the thousands of affected persons who have been caught up in this vicious Dickensian nightmare.

The government of Myanmar now has the opportunity to lay bare this dark heart and show the world its leadership can exercise values such as compassion, justice and wisdom; the very qualities that jade is said to represent in Confucian teachings. Given the tragic cost of this struggle to the people of Myanmar, the government must work at developing the economic, legislative and social reforms that can act against the inhumane work practices that exist and allow for greater transparency in the way that all resource and energy projects, not just jadeite mining, are regulated, governed and taxed - in ways that benefit the people of Myanmar.

overlords. Disappearances and industrial scale. timber

The UN and the World Health for independe

timber and gold, to fund their fight for independence from Myanmar's

found elsewhere in the world – notably Guatemala, Japan, Russia, Canada and, in the US, California – Myanmar remains the primary source of top-grade material with the mines of the Kachin State in northern Myanmar containing the most important deposits of jade in the world.

In some of the most inaccessible terrain on the planet, large clearings have been torn through the jungle canopy to reveal the earth so that thousands of labourers can dig the compacted soil and smash apart boulders in a furious hunt for precious green stone. Aided by excavators and jackhammers, most of the work is handled by pick and shovel as teams of men dismantle

deaths are a common occurrence and this threat overhangs anyone who would think of stealing. For most, the futile situation becomes so unbearable that they take solace in the heroin shooting-galleries that exist alongside the lawless mining districts of north-east Myanmar. For less than the cost of a beer, an injectionist administers the Golden Triangle's purist drug directly into the vein of a miner, with the shooting gallery delivering as many as 800 separate injections from the same dirty needle. Large quantities of heroin are provided by the mine owners who pay their addicted miners with a daily fix from the shooting gallery, which is diligently administered by the injectionist upon the production

Organization have declared the Myanmar jade mines a disaster zone and are powerless to help as they are denied access to bring humanitarian aid into this region. There have been allegations directed to both the Myanmar and Chinese governments that the humanitarian groups are continually prevented from accessing this region, as both governments continue to deny the extent of human exploitation that exists solely to support the jade connoisseurship by China and the exploitation of this trade route that ultimately yields billions of dollars each year.

The international community is well aware of the magnitude of this horrific problem and is control of the periphery Kachin State.

The internal conflict with those in Kachin State is the world's longest running civil war and began in 1948 after the country attained independence from the United Kingdom. Up until 1994 the communist rebel group, the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), has existed virtually independent from the government by building a regional economy based on smuggling, heroin and jade trade with China.

The Myanmar army won an offensive in 1994 gaining control of the jade mines from the KIO and securing a peace agreement with the rebel group which ended Nigel Finch is an Associate Professor at the University of Sydney Business School and a member of The Sydney Southeast Asia Centre.



#### **CONTINUED FROM 11**

## What are the greatest challenges for investors and how can those be overcome?

The main challenges for investing in Yangon are the increase in land prices, lack of comprehensive land use and zoning regulations.

Land prices in Yangon area have skyrocketed over the past year. Investing in land by buying and selling or speculation is a lucrative business which can turn profits of more than 50pc within a short period. Land prices have broken world records due to pervasive speculation. For example, the announcement of the Strategic Urban Development Plan for Greater Yangon has had the unintended consequence of attracting speculators, and land prices have risen astronomically as a result. Foreign investors will be put off from investing in Myanmar due to the country's sky-high land prices, and a lack of foreign capital and know-how may, in turn, prevent Myanmar from developing. Price controls may be an effective solution to bring prices back down to earth.

There is a pressing need for the government to draft a comprehensive policy on land management and a comprehensive land law. To draft these requires careful study and inclusive consultation with civil society. farmers, private sector companies and other stakeholders. Any policy must also provide fair and transparent mechanisms for handling land conflicts when they arise, and balance interests for national food security, economic development and the rights of all citizens. The comprehensive land law is not only to protect the rights of farmers. It needs to consider controlling the land price, formulating a stable land market and avoiding land speculation which is a negative impact for development. Issues to be considered include: increasing taxes for land not properly used; government reclamation of land where proposed projects do not begin as scheduled; property tax which reflects current land prices; development plans for all urban areas; and land being set aside

by the government as a "bank" for future development. The government should have the power to take private land in order to develop public projects but must compensate for the acquisition of private property in reasonable market price.

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Lack of comprehensive land use and zoning guidelines is also one of the main challenges for investors in Yangon. Without clear zoning plans investors cannot propose projects that meet land-use requirements. This leads to delays in getting approval from authorities.

Detail zoning plans with clear rules and regulations need to be prepared. To achieve this, experts from YCDC, the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development (DHSHD) of the Ministry of Construction, Mandalay Technological University, the Association of Myanmar Architects, Yangon Heritage Trust and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have joined together to form the Yangon City Comprehensive Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design Review Working Committee.

The committee's aim is to bring sustainable development to Yangon City, including integrated and uniform zoning policies, while preserving its distinct character, including the lakes and important historic buildings and monuments, and also enhancing quality of life.

How important is YCDC's role in creating an investor-friendly situation in Yangon? The most important things the By law one-stop service for special economic zones should be adapted to serve local enterprises, especially small and medium businesses, which also need start-up capital at low interest rates.

YCDC is also improving the overall development of the city in

terms of government-promulgated laws, by-laws, orders and guidelines, to create a more investor-friendly environment.



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government can do to support investment are to improve the rule of law and to ensure transparency and consistency in policies. Improving infrastructure is also very important.

A key question for foreign companies looking to invest is: Is the legal framework of the host country transparent? YCDC is now working to improve transparency in all of the areas relating to invest in development projects. In collaboration with JICA, YCDC has already formulated the Strategic Urban Development Plan of Greater Yangon and reviewed priority projects where local and foreign investors can do businesses.

The Foreign Investment Law and



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- သွေးချိုတိုင်းတာမှုရလဒ်ကို mg/dl (သို့) mmol/L ဖြင့် ဗော်ပြပေးနိုင်ခြင်း၊
- သူတပါးအား သွေးစက်နှင့်ထိတွေ့ပေကျံမှုမရှိစေသော အဆင့်မြင့်နည်းပညာ၊
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