



MYANMAR TIMES

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OVER CONTROVERSIAL
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PHOTO: BOOTHEE

After 10 years,
couple say 'I do'

Tin Ko Ko and Myo Min Htet fell in love a decade ago. They live together like any other couple, cooking dinner, doing the washing - and occasionally fighting. But they are about to do something special, something unheard of Myanmar. In early March, they will become the first gay couple to marry in public, in front of family and friends.



Sights trained on military veto

Members of the newly formed Constitutional Amendment Implementing Committee say they will seek to remove the military's grip on constitutional change in a bill that the committee will put to parliament in mid-2015. NEWS 3



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THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

When Myanmar was Burma...

Archival material provided by Pansodan Gallery



Japanese occupation-era “Basic Japanese Lessons” by Saya Kyaw, exact date unknown.

Great news for stamp fans
While not everyone is thrilled about the upcoming census and its taxonomy of Myanmar’s ethnic groups, there’s good news on the horizon for one minority: stamp collectors. Yes, February 24 is widely predicted to be a red-letter day for philately fans, with a new issue of FIVE NEW STAMPS going on sale to mark the census-taking process.

The special stamps are valued at K200 each, and will be available at Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay general post offices from 9:30am.

Mol blanks sect: damning indictment on religious freedom in Myanmar, say analysts
Two members of a UFO-based religious sect wrapped up their second visit to Myanmar last week, after their efforts in trying to attain permission to hold a public information session came to naught.

The pair of Raëlians, as they are known, had reached out to Ministry of Information deputy spokesperson U Ye Htut in order to hold their

gathering, but had no response.

Raëlism, a fringe religion some might label a cult, began in 1973 when a Frenchman named Claude had an encounter with extraterrestrials called the Elohim.

Following this chance meeting Claude, a former motor sports journalist and race-car driver, changed his name to Raël (meaning “messenger”) and began to spread the word that humans were created by a race of sentient beings from outer space.

Page 2 met with the Raëlian “guides”, who confirmed that they also applied over a year ago to the Myanmar government to establish an embassy in-country. While the religion reportedly counts some 85,000 followers worldwide, there is – as yet – no embassy on earth. The specifications for this facility were outlined by the Elohim, requiring at least a 1km sq plot of land as well as sovereign airspace for UFOs to land (once world peace is attained). Again, they have not yet received a response.

Still, this has done little to shake the resolve of the gentle Raëlians, who plan on doing everything by the

book. “We plan to hold [our lecture] once we make sure that we are not illegal”, said Dan, Raëlian Guide for Myanmar.

Three Raëlian tomes have been published as free e-books in Myanmar language, in a translation job that was reportedly commissioned by a Japanese member around the summer of ‘97. “The Messages Given by the Extraterrestrials” has had over 3000 downloads, while “Let’s Welcome the Extraterrestrials” and “Yes to Human Cloning” have proven slightly less popular.

More on this next week.

The right to bear alms
A knife-wielding monk was arrested while collecting alms near Kyaik Kasan Pagoda on February 20, after being reported by onlookers. Aung Than (U Pyin Nya Thiha) was interrogated by police, township-level authorities, and a monk from the religious disciplinary committee. It was found he was not carrying the appropriate monk ID card, Mizzima reported on February 20. He was disrobed before being charged by Thingyan Gyun Township Police Force under section 19 (c) for illegal possession of arms as well as 295/295a for defaming religion, and is set to face court.

Potato Fries flammable, still delicious
In a controlled scientific experiment conducted in *The Myanmar Times* offices on February 22, it was confirmed that reports originating on social media that Oishi Beer Match™ Potato Fries share certain qualities with candles are, indeed, accurate. For science’s sake, we also tested Oishi’s other popular offering, the choco-filled Pillows. While they certainly catch a flame, they don’t burn anywhere near as well as the Potato Fries.

Please see the news section for the full story on the FDA investigation into the snacks.

From the mailbox
A Denmark-based internet activist contacted *The Myanmar Times* (along with, presumably, every other media outlet on earth) last week, to vent her outrage over the summary execution of a Copenhagen Zoo resident – a perfectly healthy 18-month-old giraffe named Marius who was shot with a bolt gun on February 9, dissected and fed to lions, while schoolchildren looked on in horror. The rambling email called for the zoo’s scientific director Bengt Holst to resign. Holst reportedly considered the giraffe surplus to requirement, and its death was in order to prevent inbreeding at the zoo.

“I know the giraffe is a nice-looking animal, but I don’t think there would have been such an outrage if it had been an antelope, and I don’t think anyone would have lifted an eyebrow if it was a pig,” Holst said.

While he may have a point there, one would have thought the logical course of action might have been to transfer the creature to another facility rather than instilling an entire grade class with a lifelong cognitive association between zoos and fresh baby giraffe entrails. Either way, Yangon Zoo is looking pretty good by comparison – which is nice.

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Next week: Major, credible scientific study finds majority of tourists dress like they’re on safari.

Committee to target military veto

Constitutional Amendment Implementing Committee told to submit bill to parliament no less than six months before 2015 general election



EI EI TOE
LWIN

eieitoelwin@gmail.com

A PROMINENT Union Solidarity and Development Party member says the new constitution committee will focus on removing the military's veto on constitutional change.

Secretary U Aye Mauk told *The Myanmar Times* that the Constitutional Amendment Implementing Committee would focus its attention on section 436, which requires more than 75 percent of MPs to support an amendment for it to be approved. The military holds 25pc of all seats, effectively giving it a veto.

"We must discuss first how we can

amend section 436 because it will be difficult," he said. "We will implement it according to the desire of the people."

He said he expected the military to support changes but the committee would first negotiate between all sides.

"If they are the people's Tatmadaw, they will look after the interests of the people ... The results of our discussion will reflect the desire of the military and each and every political party."

On February 16, the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) released a statement saying it would cooperate with the 88 Generation to amend section 436. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi told reporters last week it was important to study how constitutions can be amended in other countries.

"The current government often uses the phrase 'international standard'. So we should study carefully whether [section 436] meets

international standards," she said.

While the military has not commented officially on the committee, Tatmadaw MP Lieutenant Colonel Saw Shwe said it was up to parliament to decide.

"We are now in parliament according to the needs of the 2008 constitution. If they don't need us, we don't have to stay [in parliament] anymore," he said.

On February 18, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann instructed the committee to submit a bill to amend the constitution to parliament no less than six months before elections scheduled for late 2015.

The speaker told MPs on February 18 that the committee should make chapter 12 of the constitution, which outlines the process for amending the document and includes section 436, its top priority.

He also said the bill should ensure the Tatmadaw's role conforms to democratic norms and gives more autonomy to states and regions.

In a surprise move, he also instructed them to review the process of selecting the president and two vice presidents, and to consider whether the president, vice president and Union Government ministers should have to resign from their party and as MPs if they are appointed to the government, as currently required.

Under the current presidential electoral college system, elected MPs in the upper house, elected MPs in the lower house and appointed military MPs each select one presidential candidate. The president is selected by a vote in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, or combined upper and lower houses, with the two other candidates becoming vice presidents.

Thura U Shwe Mann said the

review team should meet at least once a week while the parliament is in session and once a month at other times in order to prepare the constitutional amendment bill.

The 31-member committee was formed on February 3 to implement the findings of a 108-member review committee that submitted a report to parliament on January 31.

Lower house representative Daw Dwe Bu said section 436 should be amended "urgently" to enable MPs to discuss other necessary amendments without fear of the military veto.

"If we don't amend the 75pc rule, we will always have to discuss [changes] with military MPs. We will always fail if they don't agree with us," she said. "If we change it so that we only need 60pc or even 70pc, we don't need to negotiate with them for every single point."

— Translation by Thiri Min Htun

IN PICTURES

PHOTO: BOOTHEE

Excessive speed has been blamed for an accident in which a bus careened off a rail overpass onto a train line in northern Yangon last week. Driver U Aung Ko Ko, 29, died instantly in the crash, which occurred about 1:40am on February 20 in North Okkalapa township. Five people were injured in the crash. "There were no passengers; the other people on the bus were all bus conductors who were travelling home together," said Inspector Hlaing Win Aung. — *Aung Kyaw Min*



IN BRIEF

FDA takes second bite at Oishi chips

A photo of a flaming bag of potato chips on social media has prompted a Food and Drug Administration investigation into snack-maker Oishi, officials say.

After a photo of Oishi chips in flames caused a stir on Facebook last week, with numerous users weighing in with opinions, the FDA "inspected their ingredients in detail", said Dr Khin Saw Hla, deputy director of the administration's Yangon branch.

"We approved this brand as being safe for consumers, but it was found that the snacks can burn like candles," she said. "Thai products also burned [to ashes] but did not go up in flames. So we can say the cause of the flame was the oil [used in the product]."

The results have been reported to Nay Pyi Taw and the FDA plans to conduct a more thorough analysis.

"If we discover this product is an unhealthy and dangerous food for consumers we will take action such as banning it from the market," she said.

Oishi manufacturer Myanmar Liwayway Food Industries declined to comment last week. — *Shwe Yee Saw Myint*

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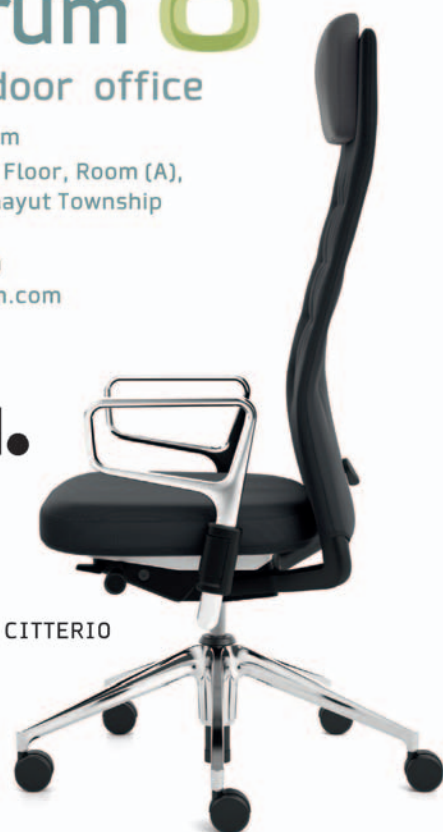
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IN BRIEF

Military MPs silent, research reveals

Military members of parliament have asked only two questions in the past six hluttaw sessions, a research organisation has found. Open Myanmar Initiative, a non-profit research and educational organisation, was formed by members of 88 Generation Peace and Open Society Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, as well as researchers, IT technicians and others in July 2013.

Under the 2008 Constitution, 25 percent of hluttaw seats are occupied by military officers appointed by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The only two of them to raise questions in parliament, says the study, were Major Myat Moe and Major Min Ye Htwe.

More than 300 civilian MPs, almost half the total, also did not ask questions during the sessions being studied.

In addition to counting parliamentary questions, the Open Myanmar Initiative's research study *Approach to Hluttaw by Numbers* analysed the ratio of ethnic group members and gender participation.

It also revealed that running costs during a hluttaw session are K20 million a day. The 440 sitting days over the six sessions cost the country almost K8.8 billion kyat.

— Kyaw Phone Kyaw

NLD rep threatens to sue journal

The secretary of the Pyithu Hluttaw's Rule of Law, Stability and Peace Committee says he plans to sue a local journal unless it apologises for allegedly quoting him without speaking to him personally.

In a recent issue, *Monn Tat Nay* reported committee secretary U Win Myint had told it that "officials of British Army will invite Myanmar Tatmadaw officials to make study tours in Britain and try to persuade them that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi should be elected as president".

The quote appeared in an article titled "British Army will help the presidency for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi".

"I said absolutely nothing about it," U Win Myint told reporters on February 18. "I never knew about this journal and I wasn't asked for this news nor did I reply to any [interview request]."

The National League for Democracy representative for Patheingyi said the article was intended to create political unrest. He will take legal action if an apology is not forthcoming, he said.

The journal's editor, Ko Aung Thant, confirmed that he didn't personally speak to U Win Myint.

"If he [U Win Myint] contacts us, we might respond ... [but] he hasn't said anything to us about it yet," Ko Aung Thant said. "If we're wrong, we have to apologise." — Hsu Hlaing Htun, translation by Zar Zar Soe

Government wins out on protest law reform

But proposed changes will limit power of police officers to reject protests

EI EI TOE LWIN

eieitoelwin@gmail.com

THE push for reform of the peaceful protest law has been largely squashed by the government, with a watered-down amendment bill submitted to parliament on February 19 following negotiations between the executive and legislature.

Proposed amendments submitted during the eighth session by influential USDP representative Thura U Aung Ko would have removed punishments from the law and required only that demonstrators inform the government of a planned protest.

Under the current law, demonstrators are required to seek permission from the township police chief with a recommendation from the township administrator, and face up to one year in jail if found guilty of holding an illegal demonstration.

Thura U Aung Ko said the changes were needed to protect citizens' right to peaceful assembly but predicted a "strong struggle" over the issue, which divided not only the government and parliament but also his own party.

After negotiations between the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Attorney General's Office and the Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee, Thura U Aung Ko submitted an amended bill to parliament on February 19.

Thura U Aung Ko said the latest proposed amendments were an improvement on the original law but agreed that the negotiations with the government had removed many of the desired changes.

The changes would include a halving of the maximum jail term for violations, from one year to six months, and a requirement that protest applications can only be rejected on "reasonable" grounds.

"I believe these amendments can help protect civil rights to some extent," Thura U Aung Ko told reporters. "Police officers also cannot refuse to give permission without a reasonable reason. If they do, we will include a section in the by-laws stating that the government must take action against [the officer]."



Farmers protest in East Dagon in June 2013. Photo: Zarni Phyo

"If demonstrations create hatred between national races or people of different religions, then the office can reject it. If not, they must give permission," he said.

He warned the government that the parliament would be watching closely to ensure that the law is implemented correctly.

"We will watch how it is implemented for maybe three or six months," he said. "If government officials don't change their mindset during this period, I will try again to [pass more amendments]."

Not all MPs are in favour of

'If government officials don't change their mindset, I will try again.'

Thura U Aung Ko
USDP representative

a laissez-faire approach to protests. Opposition representative U Thein Nyunt of Thingangyun said he supported the February 19 amendments and agreed with Thura U Aung Ko's proposal to remove jail terms completely. However, he said demonstrators should still be required to seek permission for protests in order to "control extremists".

"People demonstrated in front of the Chinese embassy and burned its flag. We have to prevent these types of actions [that are not in our] national interests. Some want to take advantage of the law for political reasons," U Thein Nyunt said.

Speaking to reporters during the eighth session, Thura U Aung Ko said both the government and bureaucracy oppose his amendments because they are "afraid they will have trouble controlling demonstrations".

He said he expects demonstrations to increase in 2014 and 2015, particularly if the government cannot properly resolve "complicated issues" such as land grabbing, violations of human rights and the lack of rule of law.

New foreign investment rules with cabinet

SANDAR LWIN

sdsandar@gmail.com

NEW rules for the Foreign Investment Law will be issued in the coming weeks, the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development said last week.

Directorate of Investment and Company Administration director general U Aung Naing Oo said the ministry had finished the revision, which is likely to result in more restrictions on foreign investment, particularly in the services sector.

"Some business sectors have been [taken off the list] and some have shifted [categories]," he said.

"The changes will come out around the end of this month ... The central aim is to improve the rules."

The revision was prompted by complaints that the rules were contradictory in some sections and that they included restrictions that were not mentioned in the law.

The Foreign Investment Law was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, or national parliament, on November 2, 2012. The law stipulated that the rules, which provide detail on the law, be issued within 90 days, and they were enacted on January 31. However, ministry officials said this meant the process was rushed and they have not had enough time to ensure clarity.

The current rules create five categories for business sectors, ranging from those that allow 100-percent foreign-owned businesses to those in which investment is not permitted. Other categories allow investment as a joint venture with a local partner, with approval from the relevant ministry or with approval from the ministry and a requirement to conduct an environmental impact assessment and social impact assessment.

"We had to rush to issue the present rules. We had to do them and the by-law within 90 days after the law was enacted," a ministry official said in November, when the review was first announced. "We worked with the ministries to improve the rules but the ministries were also rushed to complete it on time."

Another DICA official, who asked not to be named, said the cabinet has seen the new draft rules and made some comments.

"The investment promotion section is finalising [the rules] based on cabinet's comments."



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ANALYSIS

A reality check amid the hype

HENRICH DAHM



henrich.dahm@gmail.com

MYANMAR used to be a mostly unknown – or at least forgotten – country, located right between two of Asia's major tourist destinations: India and Thailand. Put off by boycotts, travel restrictions and currency controls, just a few hundred thousand people would travel here during the high season.

Myanmar has gone from bust to boom in just a few years. But there are signs that the tourism boom is already slowing down. Though the official tourism data still shows impressive growth for 2013, the reality may be more complex.

Recent worldwide press coverage of outbreaks of violence and human rights abuses around the country has done its damage. Especially for middle-class Asian travellers, safety and security are major factors in the choice of destination. For most tourists the three Ss – “safety, security and sanitation” – are essential elements of the tourism experience. Without them, the tourists won't come. In all three areas Myanmar scores extremely low and any bad news will have a negative effect on arrival numbers.

Another major concern is that Myanmar is quickly adopting a reputation of being overpriced. Tourists regularly complain that the country's hotels are difficult to book, often full and poor value for money. The effect is that tourists shorten their trips or in some cases stay away. Many tourist operators complain that at current price levels they face difficulties selling tours, especially to the price-sensitive European market.

While it's economically understandable, the high prices are a short-sighted move. In the 1990s, Vietnam went through a similar phase and considerably damaged its reputation.

The biggest dilemma is a mismatch

between the type of tourists Myanmar wants and those who are eager to explore the country. Like the economy as a whole, the tourism industry is still largely catering to the high and low ends of the market, with limited space for those at the middle level. The middle market faces challenges on everything from room rates to reliable transport and what to eat. There is not much hope that things will change quickly.

In contrast, Myanmar is a perfect match for adventure-seeking visitors. Backpackers and flashpackers are the leaders in discovering new destinations and activities and play an important role in shaping a country's image. Currently, the main problem is the lack of cheap accommodation. This could easily be improved if the government allows

Myanmar must find better strategies that allow all strata of society to participate in the tourism boom.

homestays, which are technically illegal under current law. Though the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is working on new regulations, there is no focus on developing homestays for the low-end market.

So the choices are limited and the authorities need to concentrate on those groups of tourists that fit the current conditions best and are most likely to offer real potential for market growth. The way forward is to focus more on the quality of tourist arrivals rather than the quantity. It is not about looking at numbers of arrivals, but the amount of money per arrival and how it is distributed around the country. Some players in the tourism industry suggest that Myanmar should concentrate on

developing its luxury market. By being selective and attracting the well-heeled Myanmar will gain most.

The goal of the Myanmar Tourism Master Plan 2013-2020 is not only to maximise income generation but also to ensure that the social and economic benefits of tourism are distributed equitably. While there may be positive benefits for the country as a whole, the average person will profit little from a strategy that focuses only on the luxury market. These high-end tourists are anxious to see “how the other half lives”, but most of the money will go to international tourism chains or big local hotels, which are certainly not owned by the poor and offer few job opportunities for the unskilled.

Myanmar must find better strategies that allow all strata of society to participate in the tourism boom. Increasing the involvement of local communities, especially the poor, in the tourism value chain can contribute to the development of the economy and poverty reduction. There are many niche markets that provide better opportunities for inclusive tourism growth, such as cycling and religion- and community-based tourism.

Myanmar is fortunate that the challenge is one of strategically selecting the right niche markets as opposed to attempting to find reasons for people to visit the country. It needs to identify, package and properly present the unique attributes and experiences of this incredible country to the right market segments and international markets. Considerable work will have to be done in order to ensure that the full potential of these segments can be realised. If Myanmar invests in this sector and understands and caters to these groups, it may reap decades of benefits for its people.

Henrich Dahm is an independent development expert based in Yangon who specialises in tourism development, value chain analysis and business development. He has 20 years of experience in Southeast Asia.

Industry concer



ZAW WIN THAN

zawwinthan@gmail.com

MYANMAR welcomed more a “record-breaking” 2 million visitors last year but rising travel costs associated with a shortage of hotel rooms could hamper future growth, industry experts have warned.

Nevertheless, Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung told *The Myanmar Times* he was upbeat about the 2013 result and forecast more of the same this year.

“The year 2013 was a successful year for the tourism industry in Myanmar,” he said in a recent interview. “We received more than 2 million visitor arrivals from January to December in 2013, which is a record-breaking [number].

“In 2014, we will endeavour to get 3 million visitor arrivals,” he said, adding that Myanmar's chairing of ASEAN during 2014 should help boost the totals.

The nation is scheduled to host between 300 and 500 meetings of the regional bloc this year, from minister's summits on down to smaller working groups.

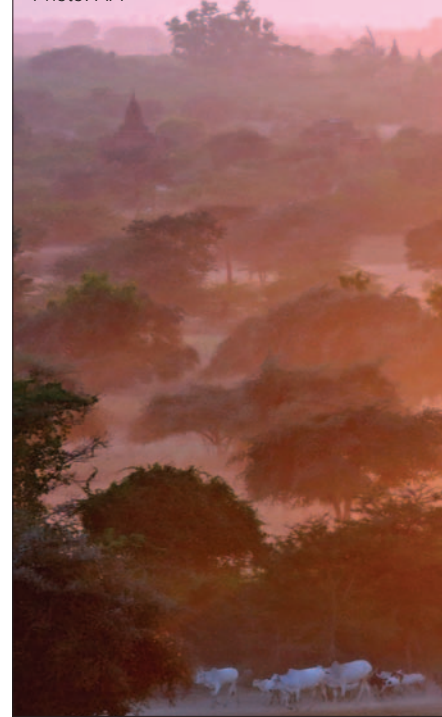
From January 1 to December 31, 2.04 million foreign visitors entered the country, with 885,476 arriving by air, 6086 by water and more than 1.15 million by land through border checkpoints. This was almost double the foreign visitors that arrived the previous year.

Visits through Yangon, the main gateway for Western tourists, jumped

44%

Increase in visitor arrivals through Yangon International Airport in 2013

Cattle are escorted past an ancient pagoda at Bagan. Photo: AFP



44.81pc on 2012, tourism ministry statistics show, with 803,014 foreign tourists arriving via the country's largest city and primary international air gateway last year.

Of these, 550,178 visitors – or around 69pc – were from Asian countries and 157,840 from Europe. France provided the largest number of European visitors with 33,250, followed by the United Kingdom and Germany.

Business visa arrivals jumped 32.28 pc, from 114,456 in 2012 to 151,320 in 2013, while social visa arrivals rose 20.61pc, from 37,778 to 45,556.

Visits by foreign individual travellers, or FITs, through the Yangon gateway jumped 25.10pc, from 234,727 in 2012 to 293,648, while package tour arrivals grew a relatively sluggish 8.26pc.

Daw Su Su Tin, managing director of Exotissimo Travel Myanmar, said this FIT growth was “likely to continue in the 2014-2015 season”, which begins in October.

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ns over tourism growth



Last year also saw a rise in another important category: daily average spending, which Daw Su Su Tin said was up 20-30pc on 2012.

Frank Janmaat, group general manager of Amata Hotels and Resorts, said the rise in spending was not positive and showed Myanmar has become an expensive destination, largely because of hotel costs and

transportation. A number of foreign tour operators have even taken Myanmar off their programs because of the skyrocketing prices, he said.

"It is difficult to sell your client that for the same price you can get two nights in a 5-star hotel in Bangkok or one night in a 3-star hotel in Yangon," he said. "As long as the hotel owners do not take responsibility for

the future of tourism in Myanmar we will be back to our 2008 number of arrivals very soon."

He recommended policy changes to take the pressure off hotel chains and help diversify the types of accommodation available.

"New destinations need to be promoted and some local rules changed to allow visitors to stay overnight [through homestay programs]," he said. "Our marketing efforts should diversify to the less-developed rural areas, which can offer interesting tourist products. This is not only important for the development of these areas but will relieve the pressure on the more [popular] destinations."

U Phyo Wai Yar Zar, head of Myanmar Tourism Marketing - formerly known as the Myanmar Marketing Committee - said the shortage of hotel rooms at major tourist destinations and the lack of a well-trained workforce would be the major challenges for the sector in coming years.

He agreed on the need to promote new destinations to relieve the pressure on popular sites such as Bagan and Inle Lake.

"Accessibility to the remote and emerging destinations is getting easier," U Phyo Wai Yar Zar said. "However, we need to have better coordination between the relevant ministries and regional governments in order to ... develop the off-the-beaten-track destinations."

According to ministry figures, as of January 31 Myanmar had 923 licensed hotels and approximately 34,834 rooms.

No changes at the top for Shan State Army

NAN TIN HTWE
nantin.htwe@gmail.com
TIM MCLAUGHLIN
timothy.mclaughlin3@gmail.com

LIEUTENANT General Yawd Serk has retained his position as chair of the Restoration Council of Shan State and Shan State Army-South following a vote by almost 200 RCSS officials and Shan community leaders at the group's headquarters in Loi Tai Leng on February 13.

Lt Gen Yawd Serk had earlier said he planned to step down but all of the five nominees to take over the leadership pulled out at the last minute, citing reasons ranging from poor health to lacklustre fundraising abilities. The nominees were put forward by the Election Commission eight days prior to voting.

Lt Gen Yawd Serk, who has led the SSA-South since its formation in 1996, received 147 votes. A solitary member voted against him, while another 51 votes were invalid. He will serve at least another four years at the helm of the group.

Major General Sai Yi, 57, who was one of the five others nominated for the post, was quoted by the Shan Herald Agency for News as saying that he believed Lt Gen Yawd Serk was the "most suitable" person to lead.

Maj Gen Sai Yi said Lt Gen Yawd Serk's efforts to build the SSA-South following the break-up of the Mong Tai Army in 1996 and his involvement in the peace process meant he should continue in the leadership role.

During the group's Shan National Day celebrations at Loi Tai Leng on the

Thai border on February 7, Lt Gen Yawd Serk said he intended to step down to make way for the "future generation". He later joked that he hoped to return to being a farmer.

But putting Lt Gen Yawd Serk out to pasture never appeared a truly viable option. Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* earlier this month, several RCSS members expressed doubt that anyone else would be capable of running the organisation.

Lt Gen Yawd Serk's decision not to nominate for the leadership appears to have been for show. With no clear successor or serious challenger, the result was a foregone conclusion and not quite the "democratic" vote that the group insisted.

Nevertheless, U Min Zaw Oo from the Myanmar Peace Center welcomed the news of Lt Gen Yawd Serk's re-election, commenting that he is a leader eager to see the country attain peace.

"[Chief peace negotiator] U Aung Min personally sent him a letter congratulating him on his re-acceptance of chairmanship," U Min Zaw Oo said.

1

Number of Shan State Army-South officials and community leaders who voted against Lt Gen Yawd Serk

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MYANMARTIMES

Managing Director, Editor-in-Chief MTE & MTM

Ross Dunkley
rsdunkley@gmail.com

Chief Operating Officer – Wendy Madrigal
madrigalmcm@gmail.com

EDITORIAL

newsroom@mmtimes.com

Editor MTE – Thomas Kean
tdkean@gmail.com

Editor MTM – Sann Oo
sannoo@gmail.com

Chief of Staff – Zaw Win Than
zawwinthan@gmail.com

Editor Special Publications – Myo Lwin
myolwin@myanmartimes.com.mm

Features Editor MTE – Douglas Long
dlong125@gmail.com

Business Editor MTE – Philip Heijmans
pheijmans13@gmail.com

World Editor MTE – Bridget Di Certo
bridget.dicerto@gmail.com

The Pulse Editor MTE – Whitney Light
light.whitney@gmail.com

Sport Editor MTE – Tim McLaughlin
timothy.mclaughlin3@gmail.com

Chief Sub Editor MTM – Aye Sapay Phyu

Business & Property Editor MTM –

Tin Moe Aung

Timeout Editor MTM – Moh Moh Thaw
mohthaw@gmail.com

MCM BUREAUS

Mandalay Bureau Chief – Jeremy Mullins

News Editors (Mandalay) –

Khin Su Wai, Phyo Wai Kyaw

Admin Manager (Nay Pyi Taw) – Hsu Hlaing Htun

ONLINE

Online Editors – Kayleigh Long, Thet Hlaing
kayleighelong@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHICS

Head of Photographics – Kaung Htet

Photographers –

Boothee, Aung Htay Hlaing, Thiri

PRODUCTION

production@myanmartimes.com.mm

Art Directors – Tin Zaw Htway, Ko Pxyo

Assistant Head of Production – Zar Ni

MCM PRINTING

printing@myanmartimes.com.mm

Printing Manager – Htay Maung

Factory Administrator – Aung Kyaw Oo (3)

Factory Foreman – Tin Win

SALES & MARKETING

advertising@myanmartimes.com.mm

National Sales Director – Jesse Gage

Deputy National Sales Directors –

Chan Tha Oo, Nay Myo Oo,

Nandar Khine, Nyi Nyi Tun

Classifieds Manager – Khin Mon Mon Yi

classified@myanmartimes.com.mm

ADMIN, FINANCE & SYSTEMS

Chief Financial Officer – Mon Mon Tha Saing
finance@myanmartimes.com.mm

HR – Khine Su Yin, Han Oo Khin

Publisher – Dr Tin Tun Oo, Permit No: 04143

Information Technology Manager –

Kyaw Zay Yar Lin

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

Circulation & Distribution Director –

Stuart Alan Becker

distmgr@myanmartimes.com.mm

ADVERTISING & SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES

Telephone: (01) 253 642, 392 928

Facsimile: (01) 254 158

administration@myanmartimes.com.mm

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Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd.
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Head Office: 379/383 Bo Aung Kyaw Street,
Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar.
Telephone: (01) 253 642, 392 928
Facsimile: (01) 392 706

Mandalay Bureau: Bld Sa/1, Man Mandal Housing,
35th Street, between 70th and 71st streets, Yan
Myo Lone Quarter, Chan Aye Thar San Township.
Tel: (02) 65391, 74585.
Fax: (02) 24460
Email: mdybranch@myanmartimes.com.mm

Nay Pyi Taw Bureau: No. 10/72 Bo Tauk Htein
St, Yan Aung (1) Quarter, Nay Pyi Taw-Pyinmana.
Tel: (067) 23064, 23065
Email: capitalbureau@myanmartimes.com.mm

Views



A child eats a snack in a camp for displaced Rakhine people in Mingan village near Sittwe in May 2013. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

Rescuing the people of Rakhine from the abyss

Rakhine politicians must focus on ensuring stability to allow the state's economy to flourish



SITHU AUNG MYINT

newsroom@mmtimes.com

THE recent assassination attempt on two Rakhine political leaders in Kuala Lumpur has become a hot news item. While it is not yet known who the two gunmen were, or which organisation they are tied to, it is widely believed, including by Malaysian officials, that the attempt was committed by people from Myanmar. Regardless of who was involved, it is clear that the tensions and conflicts between two different societies in Rakhine State have now spread outside our borders. What has happened in Rakhine? What has caused these troubles? Let's look at how we can resolve these seemingly irreconcilable conflicts through improving the prosperity of Rakhine State.

There is still unrest in Rakhine

As everyone knows, there has been no resolution to the conflicts between Rakhine and Muslim Bengalis that have left more than 100 dead, thousands injured and more than 4000 Rakhine and 100,000 Muslims displaced. In Thandwe, there have also been conflicts between Rakhine and Kaman Muslims.

Recently, Myanmar workers torched fuel tanks and other property at a pipeline construction site because of a conflict between local workers and a Chinese company. A clash between police force members on patrol and Bengalis in Maungdaw's Du Chee Yar Tan village is the freshest outbreak of violence, and a Rakhine police sergeant is missing,

presumed dead. Later, a fire broke out in Du Chee Yar Tan West village. On President U Thein Sein's instructions an investigation team is looking into these two incidents.

At the same time, Rakhine people have continuously demanded the expulsion of international aid organisations from the state. They have also staged demonstrations in Sittwe and Mrauk Oo calling on the government to ban white card holders from voting and to properly implement the 1982 Citizenship Law. To summarise, Rakhine remains at boiling point.

Are there any positive signs?

There are actually many good signs for Rakhine. Ethnic Rakhine people have become united in a way that is unprecedented in recent history. Recently, for example, two Rakhine political parties announced plans to merge before the 2015 election. Kyaukpyu now has 24-hour electricity supply for the first time because of public demands and the state is being wired up to the national electricity grid. When completed, residents will no longer suffer from extensive blackouts or have to pay unreasonably high prices for electricity from diesel generators. In addition, the deep sea port and special economic zone at Kyaukpyu can bring many potential economic opportunities.

But the reality is quite different

Due to shortages of job opportunities, many thousands of Rakhine have been forced to leave the state to go and work in Yangon and other cities. Many have also gone to Malaysia to work as labourers. According to U Aye Thar Aung, chair of the Arakan League for Democracy, nearly 80,000 Rakhine are working in Malaysia. Although it is a Muslim-majority country and some Myanmar people have been killed there, they want to continue working in Malaysia rather than come back because of the lack of job opportunities in Rakhine State. There are also

thought to be more than 300,000 Rakhine working in Thailand.

Despite beautiful beaches, rich fisheries and hefty natural gas reserves, Rakhine is the second-poorest state in Myanmar. Rakhine people are stuck in poverty. Rakhine leaders have to try to rescue their people from the abyss and create well-rounded development. This is their main duty.

How can we achieve development?

Stability is vital for the development needed to pull the Rakhine people out from poverty. Currently the state is experiencing unrest and unless the situation is stabilised there won't be any development. Foreign investors, in particular, will stay well clear. When it comes to stability, Rakhine people immediately point to the Bengali issue as the source of their difficulties.

The most important thing to realise is that the Rakhine people are not in poverty because of the Bengalis.

The first thing that should be noted is that the issue is not new. The tension between the two societies has existed since the time of the former military regime. Steps need to be taken to reduce the tension immediately. As Rakhine political leader U Oo Hla Saw has said, this is the duty of the present Rakhine leaders.

The most important thing we should realise is that the Rakhine people are not in poverty because of the Bengalis. On the Bengali issue, it is still unclear whether they are citizens

or whether they are eligible for citizenship or whether they are stateless or refugees. They have neither governing power nor offensive weapons in their possession. They are just a large group of people. They have been living under the Myanmar government and have no economic strength and no ability to harm the Rakhine people.

What do we do for the Bengalis?

The future of the Bengalis is in the hands of the government, parliament and Rakhine leaders. But to some extent we can say they will remain on Myanmar soil – likely Rakhine State – as long as they have no opportunity to go somewhere else. As long as they remain in Rakhine, the two societies need to live together peacefully and avoid conflict.

When Rakhine erupts in flames, it does not affect just the people of the state. It is a blow for the entire country. None of us should simply accept it.

We should be aware that the security officials posted in conflict-prone areas of the state are mostly ethnic Rakhine, which tends to further inflame the conflict and cause misunderstandings with the international community.

Security should be completely taken over by the central government. The ethnic Rakhine security forces should instead be assigned as border guards to protect the state and Rakhine people. We should make sure the Bengalis who are allegedly suffering from human abuses are given proper protection.

Stability and tranquility are vital to ensure Rakhine State moves forward and emerges from the current crisis. The Rakhine leaders who were attacked recently in Malaysia should think carefully about what is best for the people of Rakhine State. Will they choose to retaliate, to fight fire with fire? Or will they seek to end the conflict between the two societies, which has only plunged the Rakhine people deeper into poverty?

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Views

Myanmar firms not alone on sanctions list



ROGER MITTON
rogermitton@gmail.com

WHEN people in this region talk about economic sanctions imposed by the United States, they invariably assume the discussion is about Myanmar.

It comes as a shock when they learn that similar sanctions are imposed by Washington on most other Southeast Asian nations.

The Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list, compiled by the US Treasury Department, identifies individuals, companies and organisations that Americans are banned from doing business with.

During the long period of military rule, many major Myanmar businesses were blacklisted and so naturally that draconian state of affairs became a focus of public and media attention.

Few bothered to notice that hundreds of other companies and individuals were similarly blacklisted

in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

No one seemed to be taking to the bully pulpit to angrily ask when all these Indonesian companies and Malaysian organisations and Thai businessmen were going to be free to deal with their US counterparts.

Even, you'll notice, mythically clean Singapore has lots of blacklisted companies, although many, like Htoo Trading and Max Singapore, are off-shore units of their Myanmar parents.

That is hardly surprising, given that Myanmar's Directorate of Investment and Company Administration recently revealed that Singapore edged out Hong Kong, South Korea

Singapore has become the regional hub for dodgy companies, diverse conmen – and shady Myanmar politicians and their business cronies.

and Japan as the country's top investor last month.

What is surprising is how Singapore has become the regional hub for dodgy companies, diverse conmen, football fixers, bent casino kingpins – and shady Myanmar politicians and their business cronies.

In past years, this country's SDN-listed generals, along with their financial sidekicks, used Singaporean banks, insurance companies and hospitals habitually – and still do.

The republic remains happy for blacklisted companies to set up branch offices and conduct their global affairs from Shenton Way and other elite financial addresses.

There are no questions asked. It is good business, and the welcome extends not only to frauds and cheats from Myanmar, but to those from around the world.

Last year, France's former budget minister, Jérôme Cahuzac, was nabbed for money laundering and tax fraud after admitting he kept undeclared bank accounts in Singapore.

Like the Cayman Islands, Singapore's reputation as an offshore haven for crooks garners relatively little attention, except when a big shot like Cahuzac or football's global match-fixer, Dan Tan, gets caught.

But as one Singaporean banker said, "We are the new Switzerland for



U Tay Za. Photo: AFP

stashing away undeclared assets. You can open an account with just your passport and then deposit large sums with no problem."

The situation in Singapore, while perhaps the most acute, is replicated in all those other countries around the region that also host scores of SDN-listed businesses.

So Myanmar need not feel so bad – and indeed, as a practical matter, most of its sanctions have been removed after the government of President U Thein Sein introduced its dramatic reforms and liberalisation measures.

It is now assumed, perhaps naively, that the remaining sanctions will go once the constitution is amended to make Daw Aung San Suu Kyi eligible for the presidency after next year's elections.

Recent soundings, however, suggest that the chances of such a constitutional change being made before the elections are becoming less likely by the day.

At the end of last month, the Constitutional Review Joint Committee recommended greater devolution of authority from Nay Pyi Taw to the states, but pointedly did not advise changing Article 59(f).

That article bars individuals from becoming president if their spouse or children hold foreign citizenship and thus it disqualifies Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. If the committee's advice is followed and she is barred, Washington has signalled that its sanctions will remain.

So what, you may rightly say. The corresponding sanctions will also remain on Singapore and the rest of this region and they have proved pathetically ineffective.

The threat of maintaining sanctions on Myanmar if Daw Suu is not allowed to run for president will not work.

A better reason must be found – and fast.

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THE Islamic school in Thaketa township's Manpya quarter first opened its doors to students in 1958.

For decades it aroused little controversy, until early 2013, when renovation work began on the ageing structure. Almost immediately, rumours began swirling through the predominately Buddhist neighbourhood that the school was being converted into a mosque.

Workers appeared to be expanding the school, residents said. New support beams were added to the dated structure and digging began on a small pool outside. "When they [the school's backers] renovated the building it was no problem but they kept adding to it, and it started to look more and more like a mosque," one resident told *The Myanmar Times* at the time. "And that's a big problem because we do not want a mosque on this street."

Al-Haj U Aye Lwin, the chief convener of Myanmar's Islamic Centre, which organises inter-faith dialogues and outreach programs, would later explain that the pool was for students to wash before touching the Quran – the standard procedure for handling the holy text. Eight government bodies had already approved the renovation plan before work got underway, according to U Than Tin, the head of the school's management committee.

For residents, however, the renovations were alarming. On the night of February 17, 2013, shortly after work started, a group of people ransacked the building and other Muslim-owned shops, smashing windows and breaking furniture. A similar incident occurred the following night. Twenty police officers were dispatched to quell the growing tensions and a group of Buddhist monks stood guard to ward off further destruction.

A day later, on February 19, the school was closed. The 180 students who had studied there have not returned. U Than Tin said he hopes the school will be able to reopen this month – almost exactly one year after it was forced shut.

The school's closure came at a time of significant tension between Buddhists and Muslims – shortly after two outbreaks of violence in Rakhine State, and a month before conflict would engulf Meiktila, where many of the victims were students from an Islamic school.

Al-Haj U Aye Lwin said he believes the majority of non-Muslim citizens do not oppose Islamic schools and that the closure in Thaketa was the work of a few "radicals and ultra-nationalists". For many Buddhists, though, the schools are an unknown quantity, and they serve as the perfect target for those hoping to stir up anti-Muslim sentiment.

Muslim education: From madrasas to makhtabs

The official figure for Myanmar's Muslim population – about 4 percent of the total – dates from the 1973 census and the true percentage is widely believed to be much higher. A census to be undertaken by the Myanmar government in conjunction with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in March and April is expected to give a much more accurate indication of the Muslim population.

The exact number of Islamic schools currently operating is also difficult to determine.

In Yangon alone, Al-Haj U Aye Lwin estimates that there are more than 300 *makhtabs* – schools attached to mosques where students study part-time in the evening after attending secular government schools during the day.

A Ministry of Defence survey of religious institutions carried out in 1997 by the military government found that there were 759 madrasas, or full-time Islamic schools, in Myanmar. Of these, 111 were listed as being located in Yangon Region, but it is unclear whether this data made any distinctions in classification between different types of Islamic schools.

Madrasas in Myanmar are



predominantly all-male boarding schools where students study for 10 or more years. After completing their studies many travel abroad to further their education.

The schools are managed by a headmaster, who oversees funding and other school-related activities. There is also a support committee, composed of respected leaders and businesspeople. Funding for the schools mainly comes from local donors, according to U Kyaw Soe, general secretary of the All Myanmar Moulvi Organization.

'How can [students] lead without knowing history, geography and the basic concepts of politics?'

U Myo Win
Smile Education founder

Need for reforms

Leaders in the Muslim community say sweeping overhauls need to be made to update the curriculum being taught at Myanmar's madrasas, which Al-Haj U Aye Lwin described as "outdated".

Most of Myanmar's madrasas follow the Deobandi school of thought, which has its roots in neighbouring India. Al-Haj Aye Lwin described it as "quite conservative on certain issues", such as not letting women enter a mosque and very strongly advocating for women to keep veiled in public.

Students at full-time madrasas would benefit from secular studies, such as computer and English-language training, Al-Haj U Aye Lwin

said. "The entire syllabus should be revised."

U Myo Win, who founded Smile Education and Development Foundation in 1999, said the current system does not teach students to think critically.

"We need dialogue, we need discussions," said U Myo Win. He said reforms are urgently needed to shape the next generation of leaders in the Muslim community, which stands at a critical juncture because of Myanmar's liberalisation and the threat of communal tension.

"These schools are not really teaching civic education, civic consciousness, geography, history," he said. "How can [students] lead without knowing history, geography and the basic concepts of politics?"

One Islamic school official was blunter in his assessment, expressing concern that students at madrasas are "completely cut off from the secular world's education system".

Like a number of individuals interviewed for this article by *The Myanmar Times*, the official asked not to be identified by name. The official also did not want the location of their school to be identified as they feared that speaking to the media would bring unwanted attention.

The low-profile nature of the Islamic education system was noted by Mohammed Mohiyuddin Mohammed Sulaiman in his case study on the sector in the 2008 book *Dictatorship, Disorder and Decline in Myanmar*.

"Every Muslim is aware that madrasas are being closely and monitored by the regime, and they behave the safest way possible," he wrote.

One issue likely to impede reform is the strong influence that school leaders and teachers retain in the Islamic community. While some are open to the idea of change, there is likely to be resistance.

"We have started discussions. But we have a long way ... to go. We need time," said Al-Haj U Aye Lwin.

Inside Islamic schools and the push for reform

Myanmar's Islamic schools face many threats, from violent mobs to suspicious neighbours and capricious local officials. But experts say the outdated and mostly conservative curriculum is just as dangerous, and schools are urgently in need of reform to bring students into the 21st century, write **Myat Noe Oo** and **Timothy McLaughlin**

The language of instruction in schools is also a problem – and one that has divided Myanmar's Muslim community since the 1930s, when a schism emerged over whether to adopt Myanmar or Urdu, which was used in Islamic schools in India.

Though schools in upper Myanmar often teach Arabic and translate texts into Myanmar, most in lower Myanmar and Yangon tend to teach Urdu instead, and then translate some lessons into Arabic. A smaller number of schools in and around Mawlamyine in Mon State teach Persian.

In addition to the logistical issues – such as teachers from upper

Myanmar hoping to teach in Yangon being forced to take Urdu training courses before being hired – the choice of language also has a serious

759

Number of madrasas, or Islamic schools, in Myanmar, according to a 1997 Ministry of Defence survey

impact on students' understanding of the Quran.

"Arabic is not properly taught," Al-Haj U Aye Lwin said. "They need to teach Arabic as a language with full proficiency skills: reading, writing, listening, spoken. Only then will they [students] be able to grasp the true meaning of what the Quran's message is, what the sayings of the Holy Prophet are."

Despite the imperfect curriculum, teachers say they are pushing students hard to understand the text properly.

"I want the students to be perfect Islamic scholars," one teacher told *The Myanmar Times*. "I want them to be promoters of racial and social harmony and [to] serve the good of the country."

External threats

Islamic school officials say intimidation by local authorities and denial of building permits for schools is a regular problem in the sector. The US State Department has also aired these complaints in its annual *International Religious Freedom Report*.

This intimidation is facilitated by the fact that the state's rules for the Islamic education sector appear to be largely unwritten, and can be changed or applied unevenly at the discretion of the authorities.

According to Mohammed Mohi-uddin Mohammed Sulaiman, "There seems to be no clear-cut rules and regulations for what a madrasa can do or cannot do in Myanmar. All rules and laws change from time to time."

Meanwhile, Muslim schools face more direct threats. Simmering anti-Muslim sentiment has boiled over in Myanmar during the past 18 months and the schools have not escaped the violence. In March 2013, a madrasa in Meiktila was targeted by a mob of Buddhist residents, who killed more than 20 students and four teachers.

Through the use of pamphlets and social media like Facebook, the Muslim system has been the targeted by anti-Muslim commentators. One teacher said that their school had been accused of "promoting hate speech that disregard local traditions and belief".

"Hate campaigns are still going on," said Al-Haj U Aye Lwin.

Ko Aung Kyaw Oo, 22, studies in Mawlamyine township, where the stickers of the ultra-nationalist, pro-Buddhist "969" movement are regularly and prominently displayed. He said that continued rumours of anti-Muslim violence made him uneasy about attending an Islamic school.

"We feel afraid," he said. "We are worried what will happen when we are in school. I want to study religious education in peace and safety."

Muslims in Rakhine deprived of right to legal assistance

BILL O'TOOLE
botoole12@gmail.com

THE Rakhine State and union governments are attempting to block Rohingya Muslims' access to legal assistance, human rights defenders have complained. The move is effectively stripping the group of what little protections they still have under the constitution and existing laws.

The difficulties Muslims in Rakhine State face in accessing legal assistance has been well documented internationally. In his testimony before the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, the UN special rapporteur for Myanmar, Tomás Quintana, said he had received credible reports "of the ongoing intimidation of lawyers by state officials, including lawyers in Rakhine State seeking to provide legal counsel to Muslim defendants".

The International Commission of Jurists, meanwhile, said in a recent report that most lawyers – even those among the non-Rohingya Muslim population – are unwilling to represent Rohingya clients.

"One of the lawyers who spoke with the ICJ said no one at his firm dared to take up the defence of a Muslim in Rakhine State accused of murder, as they feared that the authorities could not protect them from retaliatory violence by Buddhists," the group said in its December 3 report, *Right to Counsel: The Independence of Lawyers in Myanmar*.

U Hla Myo Myint, a lawyer and human rights advocate based in Yangon, experienced these difficulties first-hand when he agreed to represent Rohingya activists U Kyaw Hla Aung and U Cho Myint, who were arrested in July 2013 for allegedly inciting violence against state police forces.

When he tried to visit his clients shortly after their arrest, U Hla Myo Myint arrived in Sittwe to find his hotel surrounded by an angry crowd of protesters, who proceeded to hound him for his entire stay in Rakhine State.

The demonstration never turned violent but U Hla Myo Myint said members of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) and

local monks joined hands around the courthouse so that he could not represent his clients at their trial.

While he has visited Sittwe 10 times since taking on the case, U Hla Myo Myint said he has not yet been able to meet U Kyaw Hla Aung. A former lawyer, he is considered a Rohingya community leader and his case has attracted considerable international attention.

Convinced a fair trial in Rakhine State will be impossible, U Hla Myo Myint last month began petitioning the Union Government to transfer U Kyaw Hla Aung's case to a Yangon court but is yet to receive a response.

"It's not only one case. There are many cases in Rakhine State – in Thandwe, Sittwe, and Maungdaw ... every district court and township court. The RNDP wants to influence every case involving Rohingya people."

'We cannot speak freely on this issue.'

Remaining Political Prisoners Scrutiny Committee member

RNDP chair U Aye Maung could not be reached for comment last week.

The difficulties in advocating for Muslim prisoners extend beyond the borders of Rakhine State, however. One member of the Remaining Political Prisoners Scrutiny Committee, who asked not to be named, said he and other civil society members of the committee have repeatedly raised the issue of Rohingya activists at the group's meeting. Government representatives have responded that the issue is "too sensitive" to address.

The committee member told *The Myanmar Times* he knows of at least five cases where Muslim activists are facing charges but said the number "could be much higher". He said that while he wants to directly address the legal abuses in Rakhine, he feels unable to because of the likely backlash from Buddhists. "We cannot speak freely on this issue."



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Tourists push to save street dogs from culling

SHWE YEE SAW MYINT
poepwintphyu2011@gmail.com

NORWEGIAN visitor Francisca Makin first came to Myanmar 10 years ago to research sustainable tourism. Returning in 2012 with her friend Kjetil Hasselegaard, she travelled to a monastery in Mandalay, where the pair found many hungry and diseased stray dogs.

"We have always tried to help animals if they are sick, so we decided to take three puppies to the vet. We discovered that the support infrastructure for street animals is non-existent. In Norway, most dogs are pets and live a very happy life. So we decided to start our organisation to help animals who did not have anyone else to help them," said Ms Maiken.

"Our goal was originally to start a shelter or mobile clinic. We believe the best way to help is through a spaying or neutering program, where the dogs are sterilised, inoculated against rabies and then released where they live. If a clip is put on the dog's ear, it can be monitored so you can see which other dogs need help," said Ms Maiken, who said such programs had produced good results in neighbouring countries.

Her organisation would also provide an alternative to the current official practice of poisoning strays. "Killing stray dogs does not solve the problem," said Ms Maiken, adding that it merely cleared a territory for other dogs to take over.

She also said the poison is much more expensive than a shot of rabies vaccination, which costs K500-K700. Killing the dogs is also cruel and not worthy of a Buddhist country, she said.

"We talk to many people and we know most Myanmar are against [killing stray dogs]. We understand this is a traditional practice but neighbouring countries coped with it in a more successful way," Ms Maiken said. "When locals and tourists get very upset because of the poisoning, this is not the right way."

Government 'not serious' about meeting rabies target: official

Despite pledging to eliminate rabies by 2020, the government and international community are putting few resources into tackling the issue and health experts say cases are heading up, not down



**SHWE
YEE SAW
MYINT**

poepwintphyu2011@gmail.com

EXPERTS have questioned whether Myanmar can meet a pledge to eliminate rabies by 2020 without a dramatic increase in support along with policy changes.

Myanmar and other countries in the region set the 2020 target under the South East Asia Rabies Elimination Strategy, which is supported by the World Health Organization and World Organization for Animal Health, known as OIE.

While neighbouring countries have made significant progress in tackling the disease, Myanmar has lagged behind, recording 250 human rabies cases each year at public hospitals. But the real figure is likely to be more than 1000 cases a year, said Dr Chit Soe, a professor and consultant physician at Yangon General Hospital. Rabies is almost 100-percent fatal by the time symptoms appear.

"Each year 60 patients die of rabies each year at Yangon General Hospital. Most patients are bitten by stray dogs but some are bitten by other animals," he said.

"We promised in Vietnam ... to eliminate the disease in Myanmar by 2020," he said. "But human rabies cases are much higher here than in neighbouring countries."

In Thailand, just a handful of people died last year, while Malaysia has successfully eradicated the disease, he said.

Myanmar's progress is hampered by a lack of coordination and funding. The country lacks both a national rabies control program and has a limited number of dog population management activities.

This has resulted in a dog population explosion; while a 2003 survey estimated that Myanmar's dog population would be 3.4 million in 2011, it has now increased to more than 5 million.

Dr Kyaw Naing Oo, a deputy



A dead dog lies on the pavement of Bo Aung Kyaw Street in December after being poisoned by YCDC. Photo: Boothee

director in the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, said the government is "not serious" about controlling the disease.

The cases will increase. We have even seen rabies spread not only through dogs but also cattle, horses, buffaloes, goats and cats," he said.

"We have no support for rabies vaccines from the government. In 2013 we got support from the OIE's regional vaccine bank, which provided around 200,000 doses of rabies vaccine. But we are not sure about future support."

He said the government should launch a mass dog vaccination program in conjunction with an education program in order to bring the disease under control.

The Ministry of Health also provides 30,000 vaccine doses to public hospitals. Most human rabies cases are reported in densely populated states and regions, such as Ayeyarwady, Bago, Mandalay, Mon, Sagaing and Yangon.

But not all of those bitten receive treatment in time. Yangon resident Daw Pu said that when her husband was bitten on the foot 11 years ago by a rabid dog, he could not find a vaccine dose because it was a public holiday and all pharmacies were closed. Instead he just got the wound stitched up.

"One month after he was bitten, my husband felt an itch where he had been bitten," Daw Pu told *The Myanmar Times*.

That night, he began speaking incoherently and was afraid of water. The next morning he stopped breathing.

"We were born the same year, the same month and the same day, but he died aged 45 and now I am 56," she said. "If he was vaccinated as soon as he was bitten by the dog, I believe he would still be alive."

MILLION

5

Estimated number of dogs in Myanmar, well in excess of the 3.4 million predicted by 2011

"While there's a lack of data we know that rabies is still a public health problem ... and we know

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Quintana calls for new Maungdaw investigation

TIM MCLAUGHLIN
timothy.mclaughlin3@gmail.com

UNITED Nations rights envoy Tomás Quintana says he is not satisfied with a government investigation into alleged violence in Rakhine State's Maungdaw township last month and has reiterated a UN call for an independent and impartial investigation.

Mr Quintana, the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, said that despite the government's repeated assurances that no one was killed during a January 13-14 police raid in Maungdaw's Du Chee Yar Tan village he has received information that human rights violations took place.

This includes "allegations of the brutal killing of men, women and children, sexual violence against women, and the looting and burning of properties", he told reporters at Yangon International Airport on February 19.

"So far," Mr Quintana said, "the domestic investigations have failed to satisfactorily address these serious allegations."



Tomás Quintana speaks to the media on February 19. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

the Myanmar authorities.

The violence reportedly took place when armed police and Rakhine Buddhist residents raided a Muslim Rohingya village while searching for a missing police officer, Sergeant Aung Kyaw Thein.

The government says Sgt Aung Kyaw Thein was attacked by Muslim residents of Du Chee Yar Tan and is the only serious casualty of the violence. His body has not yet been recovered.

Reports of the incident were first detailed by the NGO Arakan Project and reported by Associated Press. While the exact number of deaths still remains unclear, the UN and Thailand-based group Fortify Rights have reported the number to be about 40.

Mr Quintana has been on Fortify Rights' international advisory board since 2013. Matthew Smith, Fortify Rights' executive director, told *The Myanmar Times* Mr Quintana had "absolutely no input" on the group's work on Rakhine State-related issues.

In the past, Mr Quintana has been accused of bias toward the Muslim Rohingya population. He was again met by protesters during his visit to Rakhine but said that he appreciated being able to meet with members of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party to discuss the accusations.

His overall assessment of the conditions in Rakhine remained bleak, call-

ing the Muslim Aung Mingalar ward a "ghetto in the heart of Sittwe".

Mr Quintana's six-day visit was his ninth to Myanmar since he was appointed. It was the first time he was allowed to visit Laiza in Kachin State, the headquarters of the Kachin Independence Organisation and its armed wing, the Kachin Independence Army.

Mr Quintana said that being allowed to visit Laiza was a "good gesture" by the government. He also visited an IDP camp for individuals displaced by a Tatmadaw offensive in 2011.

Looking back on his term, which ends in May, Mr Quintana said he hoped he had used his position to improve human rights conditions for people inside Myanmar. He said he believed he set a "clear and visible human rights agenda" that would be pursued by members of the government, international community and civil society organisations.

Mr Quintana will present his full findings to the Human Rights Commission on March 17.

Prisoners in Thailand send complaint letter

In message to MP they say they're under-counted and under-served by embassy, and overworked by Thai guards

HSU HLAING HTUN
hsuhlaininghtun.mcm@gmail.com

PRISONERS from Myanmar currently serving sentences in a prison have sent a letter of complaint to an MP in which they accused the Myanmar embassy in Thailand of not looking after them as the constitution requires.

The letter, sent to Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Thein Nyunt on December 25, says the embassy has understated the number of Myanmar prisoners in Thailand. The letter says more than 10,000 Myanmar citizens are currently behind bars in Thailand, more than three times the embassy's figure of 3000.

It also says Myanmar prisoners get less medical treatment and are forced to work longer hours than other prisoners, though they are allowed phone calls.

"After reading the complaint letter, it is found that the Myanmar embassy has little contact with prisoners," U Thein Nyunt, the representative for Thingangyun, told the media on February 14 following a session of parliament.

"The list [of prisoners] in the report is different from the real situation. We will send this letter to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to find out the real list.

"Myanmar prisoners have to work more than Thai inmates, but they get less food," U Thein Nyunt said. "For physical fitness, they don't get the opportunities that Thai prisoners get. Their medical treatment is not the same as the Thai inmates. The worst thing is that they don't have much contact with the Myanmar embassy."

According to section 380 of the constitution, the state is obligated to protect the rights of citizens abroad, a responsibility that falls to its embassies, U Thein Nyunt said.

"The Myanmar embassy is diligent in asking for tax but its performance on citizens' rights is not good and it hasn't been reporting the real situation of our citizens. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a responsibility to ensure those embassies protect our citizens."

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brigadier General Kyaw Zan Myint defended the government's record, pointing out that 688 prisoners had been amnestied as of 2013 because of the government's repeated requests.

He added that the Thai government does not usually grant amnesties to those convicted of murder, or drug and corruption offences.

"We have sought the release of Myanmar prisoners in Thailand as well as continuously given health and social aids to them," Brig Gen Kyaw Zan Myint said.

‘The Myanmar embassy ... hasn’t been reporting the real situation of our prisoners.’

U Thein Nyunt
Lower house MP

9
Number of times UN special rapporteur Tomás Quintana has visited Myanmar since being appointed in May 2008

President U Thein Sein tasked the Myanmar Human Rights Commission and senior religious figures with investigating the violence following repeated calls by the UN and other members of the international community.

Mr Quintana said that he would wait to see the results of the commission's investigation. But he warned that if it fails to meet international standards he will push the UN Human Rights Council to "establish a credible investigation to uncover the truth of what happened" in collaboration with

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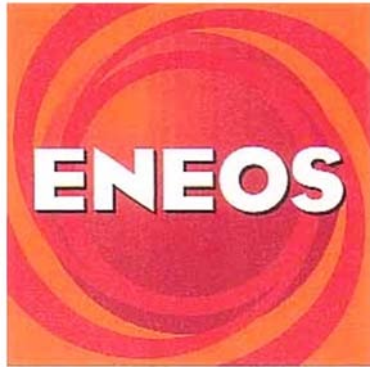
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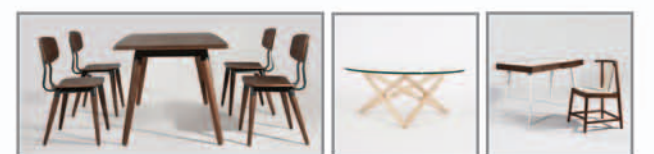
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IN BRIEF

Fibre-optic line installed at Yangon University
Yangon University's internet capabilities have received a boost with the installation of a fibre-optic connection. The line was installed by Myanmar firm Merry Mesh following a tender in December, deputy rector U Kyaw Naing said.

The fibre-optic line, which replaces an earlier ADSL connection, is available to users in the university's libraries and Convocation Hall.

Merry Mesh managing director U Soe Aung Kyi said the installation process took two months and his company is training university staff to manage the connection.

– Aung Kyaw Min

Work to begin on first weather radar next month
A radar weather station is to be set up in Kyaukpyu township, Rakhine State, next month, the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology says. The station will be one of three donated by the government of Japan.

U Kyaw Moe Oo, deputy director general of the department, said last week that the first station would be established in Min Pyin village and will be operational by July 2015.

"The radar station in Yangon is planned to start in September, and stations are expected to start operating in Yangon and Mandalay in June 2016 and 2017 respectively," he said.

The stations, which have a range of 400 kilometres (250 miles), can assist disaster preparedness.

The US\$40 million project is one of seven announced last year by the Japanese embassy in Yangon.

U Kyaw Moe Oo said the donation covered the three radar stations as well as 30 automatic weather observation systems for use in 2015. – Aye Sapay Phyu

First female engineers graduate from maritime university
In a first for Myanmar Maritime University, 78 female engineers have been granted degrees. Rector U Myint Lwin said the occasion, which marked the university's eighth graduating class and saw 490 students awarded degrees, was particularly special because only men have received degrees in the past.

"We started using equal practice regardless of gender four years ago and there have been outstanding female students," U Myint Lwin said.

Among the graduates awarded special honours were Ma Tin Yadandar Htun, who earned a gold RINA Myanmar Shipyard award, together with a K100,000 prize, and Ma Li Li Htun, who was awarded a gold medal from Hutchison Port Holding Hong Kong, along with US\$1000 in prize money.

– Shwegu Thitsar

Twelve sites to get traffic cameras
A system of CCTV cameras is being put in place in the hope of easing Yangon's traffic congestion. The first cameras were set up at 8-Mile junction on Pyay Road last December and will now be extended to 12 other junctions.

Information from the cameras about the number of vehicles waiting for a green light will be used to regulate traffic flow.

The idea comes from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which hopes to resolve congestion without building any more flyovers. "We've earmarked the locations and asked the government to confirm. The cameras will also help with security. But we still have to build the control centre," said an official from Yangon's traffic police.

Selected locations include the junction of Pyay and Bargayar roads, five junctions in Tarmwe, the front of Bayintnaung and Bogyoke markets, Yangon International Airport, the east gateway of Shwedagon Pagoda and the front of City Hall.

– Aye Nyein Win



The Pyin Oo Lwin bypass under construction ealier this month. Photo: Maung Zaw

Pyin Oo Lwin bypass set for June completion

MAUNG ZAW KYAW KO KO
newsroom@mmtimes.com

Chinese border.

"After it opens we will not allow large cars to drive in the city. It is very dangerous to have such large vehicles in the downtown," an official from the Pyin Oo Lwin district General Administration Department said.

The 20.5-kilometre (12.75-mile) Union Road is 13.2 metres (44 feet) wide. It begins near Anisakhan airport and rejoins the highway near the Asia World tollgate.

– Translation by Win Thaw Tar

Survey finds more dolphins

KHIN SU WAI
jasminekhn@gmail.com

A WILDLIFE survey of the Ayeyarwady River has found 68 dolphins – 18 more than researchers found in the same location last year. The Department of Fisheries and a team from the Wildlife Conservation Society conducted the survey of the population of the critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphin from Mandalay to Bhamo in southern Kachin State.

"This doesn't mean that more dolphins were born. We spent more time on the survey this year. We found 14 dolphins at Bhamo and Sinkan Bridge compared to five last year," WCS deputy project manager U Kyaw Hla Thein said last week.

They divided their time on the six-day survey between three zones: Mandalay to Kyaukmyaung; the third defile of the river to Shwegu; and the area around Bhamo and Sinkan Bridge.

"We found 28 dolphins at the third defile and Shwegu this year, but there were 38 dolphins in 2010 and 2011. And we found 22 dolphins at Mandalay-Kyaukmyaung, a protected area. The number of dolphins in the protected area is stable," he said.

"Now all the dolphin population in the protected areas are found in Mingun due to the emergence of a sandbank," he said, adding that the dolphins like to congregate beside the sandbanks.

The researchers found both dead dolphins and baby dolphins in the protected area. In 2013, five dolphins were found to have died either from old age or illegal fishing methods.

U Kyaw Hla Thein said overfishing and illegal methods had impacted on the unique cooperative fishing practices between local fishers and dolphins.

The conservation society makes regular surveys and also conducts educational activities along the river. They try to persuade the fishing community to help look after the dolphins and to refrain from illegal and harmful fishing methods.

To support these efforts, the Department of Fisheries has formed a group of "Irrawaddy dolphin fishermen", comprising around 50 locals, who are given support to continue the cooperative fishing practice rather than switch to illegal fishing, which generally uses a battery to stun the fish.

GETTING MEDICAL TREATMENT IN SINGAPORE – THE BEST DECISION I MADE

Singapore has been one of the most popular destinations for Myanmar people. Singapore is known as one of the best places for shopping, education, and even job opportunities. One thing that most of us are not aware of, is that Singapore is also one of the best places to get medical treatments, especially for serious conditions.

We sat with U Ram Dass, Chairman of Pharmaceutical Products Ltd., who can attest to the quality of the medical services that Singapore has to offer.

Q: Good morning, U Ram Dass, thank you for spending time with us to talk about your healthcare experience in Singapore. Can you give us a quick background on the specific health problem that you had sought treatment for in Singapore?

U Ram Dass: I suffered from paralytic stroke in 2006, and I also have diabetes and hypertension.

Q: Before having your medical treatment in Singapore, did you explore seeking treatment in other countries?

U Ram Dass: No, I did not. I had treatment only from Myanmar Hospital since I suffered from paralytic stroke.

Q: What made you decide to seek treatment in Singapore?

U Ram Dass: My doctor suggested for me to go to Singapore for medical treatment. My relatives who are also familiar with Singapore's advanced medical facilities and services recommended that too. I did feel better after I followed their advice.

Q: Which hospital in Singapore did you go to? Why did you choose that hospital / medical facility?

U Ram Dass: I chose Raffles Hospital because they have Myanmar doctors and nurses, so communication is easy. They also helped in arranging for my visa, air tickets, and other logistics arrangements. Not having to worry about the logistics arrangements allowed me to be more relaxed and less stressed when I

went there for the treatment.

Q: How was your overall experience with them?

U Ram Dass: It was overall a wonderful experience. They treated me very well, and took the time to clearly explain to me the situation and the treatment. I actually went to Singapore to treat my paralytic stroke, but the doctors told me that I may also have skin cancer. After undergoing the medical tests, they confirmed that I do have skin cancer at an early stage. So now, I am undergoing treatment for skin cancer at Raffles Hospital. It really shows how Singapore hospitals care a lot about their patients, and I am lucky to be experiencing it.

Q: Can you tellus about the type of treatment you had from Singapore? How different was it from the previous treatments you had?

U Ram Dass: Yes. Difference is huge. Based on my experience, Singapore hospitals do not give high dosage in terms of medicine I need to take. They allow your body time to adapt to the medication before increasing the dosage. They also perform thorough medical investigations before making recommendations on what treatment has to be done. The doctors in Singapore explained everything to me clearly, making me feel more reassured and confident

about undergoing the treatment.

Q: Will you recommend to other people to get health treatments in Singapore? Why?

U Ram Dass: Yes, definitely. This is because Singapore has the latest medical technologies and devices. The most advanced technology from the US is available in Singapore less than a month after launching in the US so you don't need to go to the US for medical treatment.

Q: Any other message you wish to impart to Myanmar people who will read this, and could probably be in need of medical treatment abroad?

U Ram Dass: Yes, as I mentioned earlier, Singapore is for everyone. Regardless of which country you are from, they will take care of you. For us here in Myanmar, we know Singapore as the best country for education, shopping, and work. But I want to tell everyone that it is also the best place for treatments. So if you are seeking medical advice and attention, I highly suggest that you consider Singapore. Seeking healthcare in Singapore has been one of the best decisions I made in my life, you can make it yours too.

Raffles Hospital
Email: enquiries@raffleshospital.com



Weekly Specials!

20.02.2014 to 05.03.2014

BEST CHOICE

UFC
ICE Coffee
6's x 180ml

Ks.
2,050
1,850

LACTASOY
Soy Milk Sweetened
6's 300ml

Ks.
1,750
1,580

DUTCH LADY
UHT Milk
-Chocolate
-Full Cream
-Low Fat
-Strawberry
6's 250ml

each/Ks.
3,880
3,500

MALEE
100% Fruit Juice
-Orange (Sainampung/
Mandarin/ Tangerine)
-Apple/ Grape
-with Mixed Fruit
-Pomegranate with Mixed Fruit
1Ltr

each/Ks.
1,950

EVA
Juice
Non-Alcoholic Sparkling
-Apple/ White Grape
750ml

each/Ks.
2,980
2,700

COCA COLA
-Coke Original
330ml

Buy 6's can @
Ks.2,100

SPRITE
330ml

Buy 6's can @
Ks.2,100

POKKA
Pulpy-C
-Pineapple
240ml

Ks.
520
450

-Lychee
240ml

Ks.
580
520

SUNKIST
Sparkling/ Orange
330ml

Buy 6's can @
Ks.1,950

SPRITE
-1.25Ltr

Ks.
700
650

COCA COLA
-Coke Original
1.25Ltr

Ks.
700
650

-Light Coke
1.5Ltr

Ks.
1,900
1,800

VIVOS
Aloe Vera Drink
1.5Ltr

Ks.
1,950
1,750

QUEEN
Squash/Orange (M)
750ml

Ks.
1,550
1,450

FOOD STAR
Dee Do 10% Fruit Juice
-Orange
-Orange Mix
-Grape Mix
-Melon Mix
1Ltr

Buy any 1 bot,
Get 5% Off + Ball Pen.

VERA
Aloe Vera Drink
-Lychee
-White Grape
6's x 320ml

each/Ks.
2,450
2,200

SHOON FATT
Vidory Assorted Biscuits
(Pink/ Green)
800g/ 700g

Ks.
3,700
3,450

HUP SENG
Cream Crackers
700g

Ks.
4,400
3,950

WHITE CASTLE
Butter Cookies
454g/ 681g

Ks.
3,550
3,000

WHITE CASTLE
Butter Cookies
454g/ 681g

Ks.
5,150
4,380

HUP SENG
Sugar Crackers
428g

Ks.
1,400
1,250

ORION
Choco Pie
-6's 168g

Ks.
1,150
1,050

ORION
Choco Pie
-12's 336g

Ks.
2,150
1,980

AMICO
Layer Cake
-Orange
-Chocolate
-Strawberry
-Butter
24's 432g

each/Ks.
1,720
1,550

OVALTINE
Sandwich Cookies with
Chocolate Malt Cream
360g

Ks.
1,700
1,600

EURO GUSSEN
Crispy Wafer
-Milk Cream
-Filled with Chocolate Cream
(Blue/ Red)
300g

each/Ks.
1,600
1,500

HUP SENG
Kerk Deluxe Sandwich Cracker
-Cheese
-Peanut Butter
-Chocolate
10's 230g

each/Ks.
1,750
1,580

MONDE VOIZ
Cracker Creamy
-Butter
-Chocolate
288g

each/Ks.
1,400
1,250

JELE
Beautie Jelly
-L Glutathione + Zinc
-Vitamin A, C, E
-Black Currant
-Gojiberry
-Collagen + Vitamin C
-Fiber + Chlorophyll 3's 450g

each/Ks.
1,150
1,050

MEIJI
Hello Panda Biscuits Cream
-Chocolate
-With Strawberry
-With Milk
50g

each/Ks.
780
700

REDONDO
Luxury Cream Wafers Stick
-Cappuccino
-Cookie & Cream
400g

each/Ks.
3,200
2,880

TRIKO
Salted Pumpkin Seed
150g

Ks.
1,950
1,750

AUNG HTIKE TAN
Preserved Steam Plum with Honey
200g

Ks.
950
850

TRIKO
Jelly Coconut
-Lychee
-Fruity Assorted
280g

each/Ks.
900
800

QUEEN
Strawberry Jam
580g

Ks.
1,700
1,650

UFC
Whole Rambutan In Syrup
565g

Ks.
1,950
1,750

SUNFLOWER
Jasmine Tea
454g

Ks.
7,200
6,480

GREEN LAND
Sugar Special
1kg

Ks.
900
800

FRESH FOOD

USA WASHINGTON
RED APPLE
(170- 200g)

pc/Ks.
500
450

USA POMEGRANATE

100g/Ks.
480
432

WATER MELON
(5kg-8kg)

pc/Ks.
2,400
2,050

THAI DURIAN
(2kg- 3kg)

pc/Ks.
7,800
7,000

USA SUNKIST ORANGE
VALENCIA
(250g-300g)

pc/Ks.
600
550

EMBORG
Chicken Franks Skinless
10's 340g

Ks.
1,680
1,500



Exclusively Available @
marketplace
by City Mart

BAXTERS
Strawberry Jam
340g

Ks.
4,880
4,400

CARMAN'S
Dark Choc Cranberry & Almond Bar
35g

Ks.
780
700

JOHN WEST
Pink Salmon
105g

Ks.
2,800
2,520

SEAEAGLE
Smoked Salmon Presliced
100g

Ks.
8,650
7,780

BEST CHOICE

DANA
Fine Sugar
1600g

Ks.
1,500
1,350

BONCAFE
Instant Coffee Brazilian Aroma
Freeze Dried Gold
100g

Ks.
4,400
3,950

SAN REMO
Spaghetti No.5
500g

Ks.
1,520
1,350

GOLDEN MOUNTAIN
Oyster Sauce
660g

Ks.
1,200
1,080

SAN REMO
Paste Sauce
-Bolognese & Mushroom
500g

Ks.
3,400
3,050

CALSOME
Instant Cereal
-10's 250g
-20's 500g

Ks.
850
780

NONG SHIM
Instant Noodle

Price range from,
Ks.650 to Ks.1,050

THREE LADY
-Masaman Saba
-Mackerel/Chuchee
190g

each/Ks.
700
620

READY
Fish Assorted (Promotion Pack)
6's Set

Ks.
4,680
4,200

TVO
Soya Bean Oil
1Ltr

Ks.
1,800
1,700



Ks.
1,700
1,520

BIRDAY
3 In 1 Coffee Super Creamy
30's 528g

Ks.
2,800
2,600

SHIN SHIN
Instant Rice Vermicelli
-Sesame Chicken
-Abalone Chicken
5's x 55g

each/Ks.
750
680

CP
Chinese Chicken Sausage
220g

Ks.
1,900
1,700

SQUID
Fish Sauce (Glass)
730ml/ 700ml

Ks.
1,100
1,000



Ks.
4,980
4,500

GOLD LABEL
Tempura Flour
150g

Buy 3 pkts,
Get 10% Off.

THA BAR WA
Organic Paw San Hmwe Rice
-2kg
-5kg
-10kg

Buy 2 kg,
Get Spoon & Fork 1set

Buy 5 kg,
Get a Phone Bag

BABY CORNER

GAIN IQ
Milk Powder Intelli Pro
900g

Buy 2 tins, Get a free
Gain IQ Musical Map.

JOHNSON
Toiletries Gift Set (L)

Ks.
8,600
7,700

SOFTLOVE
Baby Diaper L/ XL
New & Improved M/L/XL
12's

Price range from,
Ks.3,100 to Ks.3,650

HUGGIES
Baby Diaper Dry
42's (M)/ 38's (L)/
34's (XL)/ 30's (XXL)

each/Ks.
13,700
12,300

15%
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Weekly Specials!

20.02.2014 to 05.03.2014

CLEAN & FRESH

LAFFAIR

Shower Scrub Gel
-Seaweed
-Apricot
-Green Tea
700ml

each/Ks.
8,400
7,140

LUX

-Shower Cream Magical Spell
-White Impress
550ml

each/Ks.
3,850
3,450

DENTISTE PLUS

White Toothpaste Night Time
100g/ 160g

Ks.
4,300
3,880

Ks.
5,900
5,300

SENSODYNE

Toothpaste Mint
-Fresh Mint Gel
150g

each/Ks.
3,850
3,270

LAFFAIR

Hair Serum
100ml

Ks.
4,200
3,550

SCHICK

Exacta 2.Razor
-System (3 Cartridges)
-Refill
2's

Ks.
1,450
1,300

Ks.
850
750

REVLON

-Colorsilk Hair Color
-Whitening Body Lotion
500ml

Ks.
4,650
4,180

Ks.
5,900
5,300

NIVEA

Men Facial Foam
100g

Ks.
3,280
3,280

Ks.
3,450
3,450

WHISPER

Sanitary Napkin Ultra Clean Wings Day
-8's -15's

Ks.
1,300
1,150

Ks.
2,500
2,250

ARIEL

Detergent
-Powder 800g

Ks.
9,000
8,100

LAFFAIR

-Liquid 3kg

Ks.
9,000
8,100

KIWI

Kleen/ Mr Muscle 3in 1
Floor Cleaner Refill
800ml

each/Ks.
1,750
1,600

Ks.
1,750
1,600

OKI

Detergent Cream
-Green
-Super White
1kg

Ks.
1,400
1,250

Ks.
1,550
1,350

BSC

Essence Fresh & Soft Softener
650ml

each/Ks.
600
520

Ks.
600
520

ELAN

Dishwash Liquid
-Lemon 500g
-with Pump
1.3kg/ 2kg

Ks.
680
680

Ks.
2,500
2,500

CITY VALUE

Wet Wipes
2 x 80's
3 x 10's

Ks.
1,150
1,050

CITY VALUE

Wet Wipes
2 x 80's
3 x 10's

Ks.
4,050
3,650

LITIAN BEIBEI

Bathroom Tissue (Full)
3ply 10Roll

Ks.
3,800
3,400

Ks.
3,800
3,400

OKAY

Toilet Cleaner
960ml

Ks.
1,350
1,220

RANGER SCOUT

Insect Killer Spray
-Odorless/ Lemon
550ml

Ks.
2,200
1,980

OK

Naphthalene Ball
6's 130g/ 670g

Ks.
2,100
1,900

Ks.
2,100
1,900

SPECIAL ELECTRIC OFFER

BUTTERFLY

Portable Gas Cooker
No.268

Ks.
13,700
12,700

MD

Table Fan
12 In
FT-30-8NS

Ks.
20,500
18,000

MIDEA

Rice Cooker
MTR-18D

Ks.
21,500
19,300

FARFALLA

Hot Plate Single
FHP-3103S

Ks.
23,000
21,200

PHILIPS

Toaster
HD-4815

Ks.
23,200
21,900

PHILIPS

Coffee Maker
HD-7450

Ks.
32,500
30,800

MIDEA

Air Cooler
AC-120G

Ks.
61,500
56,500

SUMMER HOLIDAY SPECIALS

BEACH TOYS

6's/ 12's/ 21's

each/Ks.
3,000

BEACH CAR

5's/ 7's/ 12's

each/Ks.
4,500

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Gift Voucher

Gift Voucher

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NLD, 88 Generation to focus on changes to 2008 constitution

WA LONE

walone14@gmail.com

THE National League for Democracy and the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society group have launched a joint bid to change the way Myanmar amends its constitution. But one observer has already said their effort is doomed to failure.

A parliamentary committee has been set up to submit a bill on amending the Constitution no later than six months before elections scheduled for next year, with particular focus on the process of constitutional amendment.

The aim of NLD/88 Generation cooperation is to change the current requirement that amendments are supported by more than 75 percent of all representatives in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. In some cases they also need approval from more than half of those eligible to vote in a nationwide referendum.

NLD spokesperson U Nyan Win said the 75pc requirement was "completely unfair".

"We have to rethink the need for a referendum as well," he said.

Contentious issues in the current constitution include the role of the Tatmadaw in politics and the eligibility of candidates for the presidency. The current constitu-

tion would bar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from the presidency.

Ko Pyone Cho, one of 88 Generation's leaders, said, "The 2008 constitution is one of the biggest barriers to the democratic transition. We have to find a better way to amend it."

But U Ye Tun, a Shan Nationalities Democratic Party representative in the Pyithu Hluttaw, or lower

'The 2008 constitution is one of the biggest barriers to the democratic transition.'

Ko Pyone Cho
88 Generation leader

house, said the NLD/88 Generation move was just for political effect. Union Solidarity and Development Party MPs, who hold around 50pc of seats, as well as the military MPs, would not approve the NLD proposal. "So it's impossible to amend [that section of] the constitution."

Controversy in MDY over section 59(f) rallies

SI THU
LWIN

sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT officials in Mandalay have been accused of bias in their handling of rallies concerning proposed amendments to Myanmar's constitution.

Township officials allowed a rally in support of a section of the constitution that bars Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from the presidency to take place at a football field on February 11, while relegating a protest in favour of constitutional change to, in the words of organisers, a small area "beside a ditch".

The event at the football field in Aung Myay Thar San township, in front of the city palace, was also allowed despite the city's mayor saying last month that similar events would not be allowed on its sporting grounds.

On January 26, Mayor U Aung Maung said the city's football fields, which are currently being upgraded, would no longer be allowed to hold trade exhibitions and music concerts because they damage the surface.

"The mayor couldn't even uphold the policy for a single month," said one Mandalay writer, who asked not to be named.

Meanwhile, officials forced organisers of a protest on February 9 calling



Participants stand during an event to show support for section 59(f) of the constitution held at a football field in Mandalay on February 11. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

for amendments to the 2008 constitution, including the abolition of section 59(f), to hold their event in the modest environs of Shwe Ta Chaung canal on 86th Street.

"It shows there is partiality within the government. They gave permission for an event supporting [59(f)] to be held at a football field, while we were just granted permission to protest beside a ditch," said politician U Thein Aung Myint, who took part in the February 9 event.

Journalists who covered the rally in support of section 59(f) criticised the organisers - Mandalay-based political group Wunthanu Sanay Youth Team - for trying to manipulate reporting of the event.

The journalists were told that if they wanted to cover the protest they would have to wear lanyards with cards carrying messages in favour of keeping section 59(f) as it currently stands.

"The organisers asked us to wear cards [in support of 59(f)]. As journalists we neither support nor object to the constitution and just go there to take information. Over the loudspeaker, they also told us we could only interview authorised officials," said Ko Tun Win, editor-in-chief of *Shwe Mandalay* journal.

"Because of [these issues], nearly 80 percent of reporters left the field before the event ended."

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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Lawyers aim for bar association

KHIN SU WAI
jasminekhin@gmail.com

AN ORGANISING committee has been tasked with establishing a bar association for lawyers within a year following a workshop in Nay Pyi Taw organised by the Pyithu Hluttaw's Committee for Rule of Law, Peace and Stability.

Lawyer U Aung Soe Oo said the proposed bar association would be able to judge eligibility of prospective lawyers, enable further legal study and encourage the upholding of rule of law in Myanmar.

The new committee will comprise 60 members and will meet on March 15, with the goal to form the bar association within one year.

"We will all try to form the bar association and make it independent. The higher positions for this would be elected," U Aung Soe Oo said, adding the organisation would not replace existing legal groups. "It doesn't mean there is no need for the current lawyers' networks and law associations."

The February 13-15 workshop was led by Committee for Rule of Law, Peace and Stability chair Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. It brought together lawyers from every part of Myanmar, as well as representatives from the UK-based International Bar Association and bar associations in Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong and the United States.

The workshop was also attended by lawyers from the National League for Democracy, the Union Solidarity and Development Party and other political parties.

Police stop protests against U Ohn Myint as pressure builds

Numerous protests rejected by police as president reportedly tells minister to apologies over comments

SI THU LWIN
sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com
YE MON
newsroom@mmtimes.com

POLICE in Mandalay on February 16 stopped a protest by a former political prisoner calling for Union Minister U Ohn Myint to be sacked and charged over recent comments to villagers in Magwe Region.

Ko Aye Thein was forced to stop his protest at City Park on 26th Street after about 10 minutes. He said the minister for livestock, fisheries and rural development had "made threats and spoken insulting words to the public", which had harmed public belief in the government.

"I demand he be dismissed from his post and charged under sections 294, 505(b) and 506 [of the Penal Code]," said the ex-political prisoner Ko Aye Thein, referring to the charges for obscenity, incitement and criminal intimidation.

While police stopped the protest, they did not arrest Ko Aye Thein and he has not yet been charged.

In a foul-mouthed tirade that was caught on video and later released to the public, U Ohn Myint told villagers in Pauk township's Thityarkaut village that he would throw the government's critics in jail and was "brave enough to slap anyone in the face".

The comments sparked outrage and another government minister was forced to front parliament. He promised an investigation into the incident.

Numerous protests have taken place calling for the sacking of



Police negotiate with former political prisoner and solo protester Ko Aye Thein (right) on February 16. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

U Ohn Myint, although in a number of areas, including Pyin Oo Lwin and Pauk, police refused to grant permission for the demonstrations.

Ko Aye Thein had also applied to the Chan Aye Thar San township police force for permission but was denied. The police argued that the application was "based on a personal opinion without clear evidence" and could hurt the reputation of U Ohn Myint.

The protest may cause public annoyance, police said, while also pointing out the applicant is a resident of Thabeikkyin township, not Chan Aye Thar San.

But the decision appears to have been influenced by senior police force officials. "We rejected it because our superior didn't allow us to give approval," Police Major Ohn Myint from the township police office told *The Myanmar Times*.

But while Chan Aye Thar San police said it was up to the government to take action over the case, Minister for the President's Office U Aung Min said he believed the public should choose minister U Ohn Myint's fate.

'This case has not harmed our government and we don't need to make any decision - only the people can decide.'

U Aung Min
Minister for the President's Office

"This case has not harmed our government and we don't need to make any decision - only the people can decide," he told local media. "U Ohn Myint should try to change his mindset and I think he will change - one day."

Media also reported that President U Thein Sein had ordered U Ohn Myint to return to Thityarkaut village and apologise.

Meanwhile, police in Magwe Region blocked an application to demonstrate from Thityarkaut residents on February 13.

Resident Ko Nay Win Soe said police had argued the demonstration would cause conflict between the government and public and lead to disorder.

"We are very disappointed the police denied our application," he said.

— Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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US-funded restoration work begins at Mandalay monastery

SI THU LWIN
sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com

FOREIGN experts and historians from the Ministry of Culture are working together to restore the historic Shwenandaw Monastery. Known colloquially as Shwe Kyaung Gyi, it is one of the last surviving buildings from Mandalay Palace and the Myanmar monarchy.

Funding for the operation, which began this month, comes from the United States Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP).

"We have [provided] US\$500,000 for restoration works to preserve the original structure of Shwe Kyaung Gyi," US ambassador Derek Mitchell said on February 14 at a ceremony to launch the project. He said the work would take around two years to complete.

"This is an historic collaboration between the United States and Myanmar," said Jeef Aleen, director of the World Heritage Fund.

The project was announced in July when U Than Swe, the deputy minister for culture, and Mr Mitchell

met experts and historians at Mandalay National Theatre and visited the monastery.

According to historical records, King Thibaw moved Shwe Kyaung Gyi outside Mandalay Palace in 1883, inadvertently saving it from the destruction that befell the rest of the palace during World War II. Its structure differs from that of other traditional monasteries and featured 150 major wooden pillars, 54 decorative carved wooden pillars and five brick staircases.

— Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Tourism body to collect Bagan entrance fees

EI EI THU



91.eieithu@gmail.com

ENTRANCE fees for the Bagan tourism zone will soon be collected by the Myanmar Tourism Federation, with part of the proceeds going toward developing Myanmar tourism and the Bagan region, federation joint secretary general U Khin Aung Htun said last week.

Fees are currently collected by the Ministry of Culture but the federation is negotiating with the government to take over responsibility.

"We will begin collecting fees no later than October 1. It could be sooner depending upon our discussion with the government," U Khin Aung Htun said.

MTF will pay 85 percent of the proceeds to the government, while 5pc will go toward Bagan regional development projects and the remaining 10pc will be used to ensure Myanmar is promoted at international travel forums and conferences.

On average, more than 1100 tourists a day have visited Bagan so far this year and zone entrance fees, which increased from US\$10 to \$15 in July

2013, bring in millions of dollars in revenue each year.

U Myo Oo, deputy director of the Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, said talks with the MTF began in January.

"An agreement for the MTF to collect fees could come in April."

About 120,000 foreigners visited Bagan in 2011-12, rising to about 188,000 the following year.

Tourism industry leaders said the arrangement would ensure more money is invested in services at Bagan, one of the leading archaeological sites in Asia. "When MTF collects Bagan zone entrance fees, it will help to improve services in Bagan like security and cleaning, and contribute to the maintenance of important sites and pagodas," said U Thet Lwin Toh, the vice president of the Union of Myanmar Travel Association.

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Average daily number of foreign visitors at Bagan since the start of 2014

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Apology to Dr Khin Moe Moe

I, Ross Dunkley, the Managing Director of Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd hereby offer my sincere apologies to Dr Khin Moe Moe, who was my fellow director at MCM Ltd for nine years until today.

I regret the incident that took place more than a year ago at the offices of *The Myanmar Times*. I understand this may have caused distress to Dr Khin Moe Moe and I wish to apologise to the good doctor, her family, friends and colleagues for any embarrassment, pain and suffering.

In addition, I do apologise for the news, cartoon and announcements published in *The Myanmar Times* in both languages a year ago. It was never my intention to defame Dr Tin Tun Oo and Dr Khin Moe Moe and I sincerely regret the misunderstanding that arose from that. I thank them for accepting graciously my apology.

I wish Dr Khin Moe Moe and her husband Dr Tin Tun Oo and all of their family the very best in the future and thank them for the genuine good will they have shown over this matter and in the nine years we have worked together as directors of Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd.

ဒေါက်တာခင်မိုးမိုးသို့ ရိုးသားစွာ တောင်းပန်ခြင်း

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လွန်ခဲ့သည့် တစ်နှစ်ကျော်ကာလက မြန်မာတိုင်း(မ်) ရုံးပရဂျက်အတွင်း၌ ကျွန်တော်က ဒေါက်တာ ခင်မိုးမိုးတို့အပေါ်

ပြုမူခဲ့သော အပြုအမူနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍လည်း စိတ်မကောင်းဖြစ်ရကား နောင်တကြီးစွာ ရမိပါသည်။

ထိုဖြစ်ရပ်ကြောင့်လည်း ဒေါက်တာခင်မိုးမိုး ပူဆွေးသောကရောက်ခဲ့ရမည်ကိုလည်း ကောင်းစွာ နားလည်စာနာမိပါသည်။

ထိုထိုသော အကြောင်းကြောင့် ကျွန်တော်သည် ဆရာဝန်ကောင်း တစ်ဦးလည်းဖြစ်သူ ဒေါက်တာ ခင်မိုးမိုးနှင့်တကွ

၎င်း၏မိသားစုဝင်များ၊ ရောင်းရင်းမိတ်ဆွေသူငယ်ချင်း များနှင့် လုပ်ဖော်ကိုင်ဖက်များအားလုံးကို ဖြစ်ခဲ့ရသော

စိတ်ကသိကအောက်ဖြစ်ခဲ့ရမှုနှင့် သောကရောက်ခဲ့ရမှု တို့အတွက် မှန်ကန်သော စိတ်စေတနာ အရင်းခံဖြင့် တောင်းပန်အပ်ပါသည်။

၎င်းအပြင် လွန်ခဲ့သောတစ်နှစ်ခန့်က မြန်မာ၊ အင်္ဂလိပ် နှစ်ဘာသာဖြင့် ထုတ်ဝေသော မြန်မာတိုင်း(မ်) သတင်းစာများတွင်

ထည့်သွင်းဖော်ပြခဲ့သည့် ဒေါက်တာ တင်ထွန်းဦး၊ ဒေါက်တာခင်မိုးမိုးတို့နှင့် ပတ်သက်သည့် သတင်း၊ ကာတွန်း၊

ကြေငြာချက်များနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍လည်း အနူးအညွတ် တောင်းပန်အပ်ပါသည်။

ကျွန်တော်သည် ထိုဖော်ပြချက်များကို သင်တို့နှစ်ဦး၏ဂုဏ်သိက္ခာ ကျဆင်းရန်ရည်ရွယ်၍ လုပ်ဆောင်ခဲ့ခြင်းမဟုတ်သည့်အတွက်

စိတ်မကောင်းကြီးစွာ ဖြစ်မိပါသည်။ ယခုကဲ့သို့ကျွန်တော်တောင်းပန်သည်ကိုလည်း သဘောထားကြီးစွာ နားလည်လက်ခံပေးသည့်

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ပတ်သက်၍လည်း ၎င်းတို့ဘက်မှ ကောင်းမွန်သော စိတ်ထားဖြင့် သဘောထားကြီးပေးခဲ့မှုများအပေါ် အလွန်အမင်း ကျေးဇူးတင်ရှိပါသည်။

မြန်မာကွန်ဆိုလိဒိတ်တက် မီဒီယာလီမိတက်တွင်လည်း ကိုးနှစ်တာကာလတစ်လျှောက်

သင်တို့နှင့် ကောင်းမွန်စွာ လက်တွဲလုပ်ကိုင်ရသည့်အတွက်လည်း ထပ်လောင်း ကျေးဇူး ဥပကာယတင်ရှိပါသည်။

Sincerely



Ross Dunkley

Editor in Chief & Managing Director

Yangon, 24 February 2014

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CORRIGENDUM

Trade Mark “” and “” Cautionary Notice was published dated. February 17, 2014, page 35 4th and 5th column appeared in last para line 3 “For Sergio Rossi S.p.A” to do correction to “For POMELLIATO S.p.A”.

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L

for **HLT Domestic IP LLC**

P. O. Box 60, Yangon

E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm

Dated: 24 February 2014

Crowding blamed for prison violence

THIRTY inmates at Pyinmana Prison have been charged following a riot on February 15 that prison officials have blamed on overcrowding. The prison was holding 282 inmates, more than four times its capacity of 62.

Police Major Than Myint from the Pyinmana township police force said the prisoners who allegedly incited the unrest, which resulted in two people being treated for injuries, will each face eight charges. “We charged them that day and transferred some prisoners to Yamethin Prison to avoid further violence,” he said.

The riot erupted after a murderer who was being moved to another cell shouted that he had been mistreated by wardens, police said. Other prisoners who were also serving heavy sentences started a fire with clothes and newspaper pages in an attempt to damage their cells, police said. More than 100 police from the district police force and members of the fire brigade managed to regain control of the situation after four hours. Seventeen shots were fired in the process.

Following the unrest, 178 inmates were transferred to Yamethin Prison. — *Hsu Hlaing Htun, translation by Zar Zar Soe*

Police seize spor

TOE WAI AUNG

linhhtet.lt@gmail.com

POLICE say two men suspected of “brutally” attacking a taxi driver and a passenger with a baseball bat in Yangon in the early hours of February 17 have absconded to Magwe Region.

Following an investigation police seized a Nissan Fairlady car in Yangon's Taw Win Cherry Housing at about 2:50pm on February 19. Police are seeking two men who are believed to have fled to Magwe's Pakkoku township.

The two men were allegedly part of a group that forced a taxi to stop near the 6.5-mile bus stop on Pyay Road by surrounding it with their sports cars. The group had been driving adjacent to the taxi along the road at about 1:15am but the motive for the alleged attack is unclear.

One of the taxi's three passengers got out of the car to speak to the young men who had blocked the car and was beaten by an individual with a baseball bat. Four other men beat the taxi driver, who is from Dagon Seikkan township.

While the taxi driver was able to recall the licence number of one of the sports cars, police said the plates were fake. “Children of rich families normally drive those sports cars,” an officer from Hlaing township police station said, adding that they were continuing to investigate the incident.

Both of the injured men were later treated at Yangon General Hospital. The taxi driver sustained injuries to his shoulder, hand and head, while the passenger was hurt on the thigh and elbow.

The taxi's bonnet, left side and rear



A Toyota taxi that was damaged by a group of

were all badly dented, and nearly all the windows were smashed out.

If located the five men are expected to face four charges.

— *Translation by Thiri Min Htun*

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A photograph of a white vehicle, possibly a van or truck, with a severely damaged rear window. The window is shattered, with glass fragments visible around the edges. Through the broken window, the interior of the vehicle is visible, showing a dark figure, possibly a person, sitting in the driver's seat. The vehicle is parked on a dark surface, and the background is dark and indistinct.

men on Pyay Road in the early hours of February 19. Photo: Supplied/Myanmar Police Force

While attempting to dislodge the cart his oxen were spooked, causing the driver to fall from the driver's seat. He was then run over and killed by the runaway cart. – *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Thiri Min Htun and Thae Thae Htwe*

He said many patients fail to take TB medication regularly because of side-effects, while others self-medicated. Effective medication is scarce and expensive.



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Business

Oil block winners en route

Winning bids likely to consist of largest oil firms in the world

AUNG SHIN

koshumgtha@gmail.com

AFTER three months of waiting, the winners in the offshore oil and gas bidding competition are finally set to be announced next month, the Ministry of Energy said.

U Htay Aung, the ministry's chief staff officer, told *The Myanmar Times* on February 19 that the choice would be announced before the fiscal year ends on March 31.

Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) invited tenders for 30 offshore blocks in April, attracting interest from a total of 75 international oil and gas firms, but after the ministry released a pre-qualified list of 61 com-

30

Offshore blocks up for grabs with winners to be announced sometime before April

panies in July, only 30 produced proposals.

"The evaluation of the final proposals was done last December, but the final decision will be made at the minister level, or the president," said MOGE director U Than Min.

Top oil and gas firms in the running include global giants such as Chevron, Total and Shell.

MORE ON BUSINESS 30

Electricity issues to threaten



ZAW HTI KE

zawhtikemjn1981@gmail.com

WITH another summer approaching, Yangon industrial estates are again facing the prospect of massive power outages that owners expect will cost industrialists hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit, while hurting the commercial capital's efforts to bolster an investor-friendly reputation.

In the summer months of March to May 2013, factories had as little as three hours of electricity a day, and for the first two weeks of May suffered complete and continuous power outages.

The Yangon Electricity Services Board (YESB) is currently able to supply factories with 18 hours of electricity every day, but when city use spikes in the hottest months, factories are unable to access the 3500 to 4000 electric units they need daily to operate - Yangon's 31 industrial zones require on average a daily supply of 250 megawatts, with 80 megawatts consumed by the sprawling Hlaing Thuryar zone alone.

"Power shortages cause industry to fall down," said U Myat Thin Aung, chairperson of the Management Committee for Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Estate at Yangon's largest industrial zone in Hlaing Tharyar township. "Last May, the amount of electricity provided for Yangon's industries was sometimes zero."

In May 2013, the power shortages were so intense that the 100 or so frozen seafood factories that require constant access to electricity to keep products frozen were forced to shut down for up to two weeks, resulting in hundreds of tonnes of food being left to spoil.

Other factories meanwhile were forced to limit production hours to times when electricity supply was available.

A single day of production lost at a medium-sized frozen seafood factory



A worker at a shrimp factory in Yangon walks past an industrial cooling system. Photo: Boothee

is valued at losses of about \$2200, U Hnin Oo, vice chair of the Myanmar Fishery Federation, said.

"I would try to run my factory by generating electricity myself using diesel, but I don't think I can survive long doing that," U Tun Aye, owner of Shwe Yamone frozen fish factory in Hlaing Tharyar industrial estate, told *The Myanmar Times*.

"If we don't have electricity, we have to struggle even to survive - we cannot speak of extending the business," he said, adding that his company would have to limit its production schedule in anticipation of blackouts this year.

To make matters worse, businesses in the industrial zones now worry for

their reputation as blackouts this year will impact newly signed export deals they have with countries in the European Union following the lifting of trade tariffs in July.

"Factories still need to upgrade to become competitive, and to do that they need electricity," Myanmar Fishery Federation vice president U Hnin Oo said, adding that several seafood factories in Yangon are now eligible to export to the EU.

U Hnin Oo, of the Myanmar Fishery Federation, said that the electricity issue would not only hinder production but also stifle growth as the market depends on improving its operations as well as its technical capabilities.

"Myanmar's products need to be better quality, but if we don't have reasonable electricity it is very difficult to take advantage of the EU market," he said.

Though the electricity issue is widespread - with nearly 80 percent of the population of Myanmar going with no access at all - economists believe that Myanmar's power supply woes will have grave affects on the economy if something is not done soon.

"Right now, although the government is inviting FDI [foreign direct investment], it cannot promise to provide a reasonable amount of electricity. This will be a barrier for most foreign investors who do not want to have to generate their own electricity," U Hla Maung,

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Fish exports set for big losses

BUSINESS 29



Yangon rental prices on the rise, again

PROPERTY 32

Exchange Rates (February 21 close)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1335	K1345
Malaysia Ringitt	K290	K297
Singapore Dollar	K770	K780
Thai Baht	K29.5	K30.5
US Dollar	K981	K984

n big industry Foreign bank licences coming

The govt is confident that banking regulations will not get in the way of foreign banks making an early entrance into the market despite dire need for upgrades



sumed above 5000 units, drawing ire from factory owners.

“In some countries, heavy electricity users get a discounted rate, but here those users already have to pay more, even though we don’t get 24-hour supply,” said U Myint Zaw, vice president of the Myanmar Industrial Association.

U Nyo Min, chair of the Myanmar Fishery Products Processors and Exporters Association, said that electricity currently comprises 20pc of his seafood factory’s total expenditure, but facing a power shortage, that figure grows to 60pc.

“If we don’t have a reasonable amount of electric in the coming summer, I have to cut down the working hours,” he said. “We are struggling to survive.”

In October, the YESB invited local and international companies to a roundtable discussion geared toward enticing additional electricity suppliers into operation.

Those companies suggested they could get the job done if the government release compressed natural gas (CNG) resources, but this was denied due in part to a CNG export commitment with Thailand and China.

However, five local start-up independent power providers (IPPs) promised to deliver the additional electricity by establishing commercial diesel generators.

In principle, the agreement would see additional power given to Yangon’s 31 industrial estates before March, but the IPPs have since reneged on the deal, said U Myat Thin Aung,.

“From the factories’ perspective, we want to start buying additional electricity provided by IPPs during the coming summer months because we do not have reasonable electricity from MOEP [Ministry of Electric Power],” he said.

The IPPs were offering electricity deals at the rate of K150 per electric unit, twice the going rate for state-provided electricity from MOEP.

YESB chairperson U Aung Khaing did not respond to requests for comment and would not provide contact details for the IPPs.

Minister of Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe predicted 2014’s electricity demands would outpace past years with demand in some areas slated to rise to 2370MW – 715MW above the current maximum electricity production level of 1655MW.

AUNG SHIN
koshumgtha@gmail.com

THE Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) will likely name the first group of foreign banks to be given independent operating licences by July as they prepare to bring in financing experts to narrow down the selection, a Central Bank official said.

A deputy governor of the Bank, who requested not to be named as they are not authorized to speak to the media, told *The Myanmar Times* on February 18 that they will choose no less than five banks, but only after hiring a team of foreign consultants to help them decide which should be offered the coveted licences.

“We are now still in the stage of hiring foreign consultants and after that we will go on to the selection process together,” said the CBM official, adding that they will call for consulting proposals next month, while the process of selecting foreign banks will take about three months.

Banking officials had previously intended to allow foreign players in the market through a tiered plan that entailed allowing them to only be able to sign joint-venture deals with local banks this year, before opening the market completely in 2015.

Experts have said that foreign banks would have likely waited out the market and run their businesses independently next year rather than engage in risky joint ventures in 2014.

At the end of last year, the Central Bank reneged on its original plan and told the media that it would permit

between five and 10 banks to enter the market as wholly foreign owned entities this year.

Local bankers have said that opening the market too early would result in many local banks being forced out of business in the face of modern services that would be offered from foreign banks.

“We have to permit foreign banks and, actually, we would like to grant licences to all foreign banks, but the local banks fear that process, so only a limited numbers of foreign banks will be allowed in the beginning,” said the CBM official.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) last year has said allowing foreign banks into the market is an important part of developing the financial sector, but urged Myanmar not rush its decision.

The Central Bank is collaborating with several international finance institutions to modernise regulatory framework in the banking sector, while making improvements to its capacity to supervise it with new technologies, though some experts worry that the current laws would need to

be updated in order to uphold modern banking practices.

“We are now finalising updates to the old financial institution law, but we can permit foreign banks into the country with current financial institution law,” the Central Bank official said.

Other experts, meanwhile, heralded the government’s decision to allow foreign players into the market.

“We are aware that the government is assessing the viability of different foreign banking operation models for Myanmar. We consider this a positive development as the Myanmar government has demonstrated a keen desire to develop sound economic policies and financial reforms,” said Tina Singhsacha, chief representative of Standard Chartered Bank Myanmar.

“It is clear that the authorities have made it a priority to improve the local financial services sector so that the country can quickly draw level with other ASEAN economies.”

A total of 35 international banks have representative offices in Myanmar.

‘It is clear that the authorities have made it a priority to improve the local financial services sector.’

Tina Singhsacha
Chief representative, Standard Chartered Bank Myanmar

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Telecom tower deals signed

Land issues could disrupt building country's first nationwide network, say experts

AUNG SHIN

koshumgtha@gmail.com

BOTH of Myanmar's foreign telecommunications operators announced last week that they have chosen contractors to help build the necessary towers as part of their multi-billion-dollar networks, an undertaking experts maintain will have substantial challenges.

Following the issuing of licences to Norway's Telenor and Qatar-based Ooredoo earlier this month, both companies have chosen partners to handle the construction of their telecom towers. Telenor will work with Apollo, while Ooredoo has made agreements with Digicel and Yoma Strategic Holdings.

These companies will then subcontract to local firms, Daw Thiri Kyar Nyo, a public relations manager at Ooredoo Myanmar, said at the Second Myanmar Telecoms Infrastructure Summit in Yangon on February 17 and 18.

"They can choose whichever partners they like [to work with]," said Daw Thiri Kyar Nyo.

"[Building the network] is a very big project. We can't go into every detail ... But we have chosen partners who are reliable as we have to focus on other work."

But experts said many issues related to tower construction remain unclear, particularly as the rules for the Telecommunications Law are yet to be enacted.

John Adler, chair of Ericsson Myanmar, described the infrastructure rollout as "unknown territory" not only because of the regulatory landscape but also the government structure, land rights, duties and taxation, access and security.

"The regulations must be clear," he said. "Right now, telecom tower companies are hunting [for] land. But it is quite a big country ... and we can't start our operations before the finalisation of the telecom regulations is completed."

Current rules for land use and construction permits made the challenge similar to "rolling out a network on Mount Everest", one industry lawyer said.

Construction permit procedures mean authorities will be overwhelmed by the volume and tight deadlines of applications to build towers, he said.

"There are so many administrative issues, all because this is ... an unprecedented project in Myanmar. In my view, we need a 'silver bullet': One solution for all the issues in one go," said Edwin Vanderbruggen from VDB Loi.

"One regulation, carefully connecting existing laws and rules for all states and regions, covering land use, titling, construction, registration and security special for network infrastructure."

Despite the concerns, Deputy Minister for Communications and Information Technology U Thaung Tin said 2014 would be a massive year for the sector as the new entrants look to make a splash.

"The liberalisation of the sector will give more opportunities for investment ... [and] 2014 will be the year of [project] execution and implementation [for the] private sector," he said in his keynote address at the event.

Fish exports set for 15% drop



MYAT NYEIN AYE MYAT NOE OO

POOR investment prospects and production could lead to a US\$100 million shortfall in estimated fisheries exports this year, industry experts said.

Fishery exports during the 2012-13 fiscal year totalled about \$650 million worth of fish being sold to China, Thailand and as far as the Middle East and US, according to government data. This year however, experts believe that figure will fall 15 percent to about \$550 million, well short of the industry's revenue target of \$700 million.

"Not only is income down, but so is export tonnage. We have earned only about \$400 million in revenues so far this year and based on that we will not meet last year's number," said U Toe Nandar Tin, treasurer of the Myanmar Fisheries Processors and Exporters Association of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

In the first ten months of the fiscal year, 280,000 metric tonnes of fish exports generated \$451.13 million worth of revenue, according to the Fish Inspection and Quality Control Department Division of the Department of Fisheries. The figure falls short of the same period last year when income



Fish are displayed for sale last week at a night market in downtown Yangon. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

was \$84 million higher, while total fish production reached 308,000 tonnes.

Myanmar Fisheries Federation adviser U Han Tun said the problem stems from a lack of fishing equipment, leading to lower production and higher local prices. At the same time, fish farmers lack capital to

expand their operations and investors are showing no interest in the sector, which also suffered from poor transportation, electricity supply and inadequate banking systems.

"Investors come and look at our farms and they like what they see. But

they don't invest," said U Han Tun.

Within the fisheries sector, only soft crabs and eels exported cross-border to China were showing a rise in export volume and income. Fish and shrimp bound for Japan, China Hong Kong, Vietnam and the US meanwhile attracted limited demand.

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More effective laws needed to fight money laundering



AYE THIDAR KYAW

ayethidarkyaw@gmail.com

EFFECTIVE laws to crack down on money laundering will get Myanmar out of the bad books of the inter-governmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and encourage more international investment, experts said.

A report issued last year by FATF, a global body set up to track down terrorist financing and money laundering, put Iran and North Korea at the top of a list of countries it

labelled "high-risk" and "non-cooperative" that also included Myanmar as it either had no applicable laws, or its laws did not comply with international standards.

But U Thura Zaw, a senior investigator with the Financial Investigation Unit, said parliament might enact money laundering and counter-terrorist financing laws as early as this month.

"FATF has recognised our performance, but we still need further progress," he said.

FATF said Myanmar has not made sufficient progress in implementing its action plan and should continue to address deficiencies, including criminalising terrorist financing and establishing procedures to identify and freeze terrorists' assets.

FIU sources said the government had

seized about US\$200 million in 70 cases of money laundering over the past 10 years, though the illicit activity is still rampant.

Police Captain U Myint Soe said FIU was confident Myanmar would be struck from the FATF blacklist soon.

Economist Sean Turnell, associate professor at Macquarie University, Australia, said illegitimate funds could be laundered through property development, adding that the most prominent money launders in Myanmar would be repatriating funds sent offshore under the military regime now that those funds could be profitably reinvested here.

Policing money laundering must take place at the point of entry of the illicit funds into the financial system, he said.

CONTINUED FROM BUSINESS 26

International oil and gas companies had sent 42 proposals for shallow-water blocks and 22 deep-water blocks in the final stage, said U Than Min.

"The government seems to be taking these important bids seriously," said U Kyaw Kyaw Hlaing, chair of the oil and gas service Smart Group of Companies.

The companies have to invest at least US\$3 billion after production-sharing contracts are signed with MOGE, after which the winners will get 30-year licences to explore and produce oil and gas offshore, he said.

Seven international oil and gas companies are already conducting exploration, while production projects are already in place for 18 of the total 51 offshore blocks.

Industry experts put annual revenues earned from Myanmar's oil and gas industry at \$4 billion, though the government has never released official figures.

Last year, the Ministry of Energy ruled that foreign firms had to work with at least one local partner in the exploration and production of oil and gas, both onshore and offshore.

The surge in foreign interest promoted growth in the number of Myanmar companies registered with the Ministry of Energy. A total of 162 local companies have been registered as of early this year.

Currently the country has a total of 104 onshore and offshore blocks, in which 18 international oil and gas companies are in operation in 33 onshore and offshore blocks.

Local oil and gas firms form new association

AUNG SHIN koshumgtha@gmail.com

LOCAL energy companies seeking a bigger share in the exploration and production of the country's oil and gas resources have formed MOGSS, the Myanmar Oil and Gas Services Society, the group announced at a press conference last week.

The formation of the group comes at a time when international energy giants are poised to enter the Myanmar energy market with the government already announcing the winners of a tender to explore 18 onshore blocks, while those to be awarded exploration and production rights for 30 offshore blocks are expected to be announced shortly.

"The international energy giants are coming. After contracts for those onshore and offshore blocks are signed, the international oil and gas companies will have to invest at least US\$2-3 billion over the next three years. We have to get a bigger share of the oil and gas service industry," said U Kyaw Kyaw Hlaing, chair of MOGSS.

The international companies will get 80 percent of the oil and gas industry service in Myanmar, while local companies take the rest, he said.

"There are about 20 Myanmar companies and one foreign company in MOGSS. We are reviewing membership requests from five other foreign companies," said U Aung Ye Soe, secretary general of MOGSS.

MOGSS will promote responsible and modern business practices and support the entry of young engineers with industry knowledge into the business, he said.

IN BRIEF

Gold price in Myanmar reacts to global markets in steady upturn

Driven by a global production slowdown, the rising price of gold on the global market has been matched by an uptick in local prices, industry experts said.

Following a 4 percent rise over the past two weeks, a tical (one tical equals 0.576 ounces) of gold last week sold for K690,000, said U Htay of Shwe Kyn gold shop.

"The rise in the local price is directly tied to the world price. The main reason for the rise is the scarcity of raw gold. Demand now exceeds supply, and production is weak," he said.

A slowdown in African gold mines had also contributed to supply shortages, said U Kyaw Win of U Htone gold shop.

— Myat Nyein Aye and Myat Noe Oo



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

Sr.	Title and level	Duty Station	Position	Deadline
1.	Programme Assistant(LICA-3)(Re-advertised)	Yangon	National	7 March 14
2.	Operations Associate (LICA-4)	Yangon	National	7 March 14
3.	Finance, Budget and Reporting Analyst (LICA-5)	Yangon	National	7 March 14
4.	Programme Associate (LICA-4)	Yangon/Naypyitaw	National	7 March 14

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 work environment with 250 national and international colleagues.

All applications must be made through the UNOPS E-recruitment System. Please go to <https://gprs.unops.org> and click on the post that you are interested in applying for. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact UNOPS directly on the numbers below.

For any queries please do not hesitate to contact UNOPS at 95 1 657 281-7 Ext: 147

PROFILE



Kim Bunsoscheat sits behind his desk at Aceda MFI Myanmar Co's office in Yangon. Photo: Thiri Lu

Lessons from Cambodia: from capitalism to caution

Aceda MFI Myanmar CEO Kim Bunsoscheat spots the difference

BRIDGET DI CERTO

bridget.dicerto@gmail.com

WHEN Kim Bunsoscheat arrived in Myanmar in September 2012, he was struck first by the similarity in culture between his new home and his own country, Cambodia.

The difference for the chief executive and managing director of Aceda MFI Myanmar Co Ltd was in the regulatory environment.

"We can say it is not the same as Cambodia," he said. "In Cambodia, you have a free market, but here in Myanmar the government has only just reformed so they need to study a lot about this before they release a free market [economy]."

Mr Bunsoscheat is a career credit banker, having begun work with Aceda in Cambodia in 1996, later becoming branch manager in Poipet, Banteay Meanchey province, in 2005 before being relocated to head operations in Myanmar.

Aceda MFI Myanmar was issued an operating licence in February last year, opening their doors for the first time in June with offices in Yangon and nearby Bago Region.

"The [Myanmar] government is trying to encourage microfinance. Always when we read the newspaper there are announcements about

how to reduce poverty in society," Mr Bunsoscheat said. "MFIs play a very important role in that. They encourage bringing economy to the rural areas."

But the expansion of microfinance in Myanmar is under tight government control, with restrictions placed on everything from number and location of offices, to interest rates and loan amounts.

Interest rates are set at 2.5 percent per month for all microfinance institutions, cumulative annual interest rates are set at 30 pc and loan sums are capped at the K500,00 – the equivalent of about US\$500.

"So it is not a competitive market [in Myanmar] because if you compare competitive markets it is usually about the capital, but the capital is too small here," he said.

While 189 licences have been granted to microfinance institutions and start-ups so far, Mr Bunsoscheat said government restrictions on interest rates and loans recently introduced would make it hard for new players to become profitable.

"We have done lots of research and have [bigger operations] in Cambodia and Laos so at the moment profit is not a problem for us in Myanmar," Mr Bunsoscheat said, adding that profits made elsewhere

were currently keeping the Myanmar operation in the black.

"In the future there could be a problem, because usually we strike a relationship with a client and then can expand their loans to small or medium size. But the \$500 limit currently in place scratches the usual prospects for expanding an MFI operation into a commercial bank through issuing incrementally larger loans to customers.

"It is not the same in Cambodia – there is no limit on the interest rate and no limit on the loan size the institution can provide or the sort of client from society who can take a loan," Mr Bunsoscheat said.

Even the responsible ministry is different between the two countries, which Mr Bunsoscheat said share a similar battle in tackling poverty and increasing development. While Myanmar has tighter control over the microfinance sector, it was easier to start operations here than Cambodia, Mr Bunsoscheat said.

"Here initial capital is \$30,000 in Cambodia for MFI it is \$2.5 million. Here undertaking is \$15,000 and in Cambodia it is around \$700,000," he said, adding that this was in line with the government's ambition to roll MFI access out to the most rural areas of Myanmar.

The Fine Print

Legal & tax insight

A spoken word for taxation in telecoms

SEBASTIAN PAWLITA

sebastian@pwplegal.com

YI YI MON

yimon@pwplegal.com

TO put things very simply, there are three layers of players involved in the building of a modern mobile phone network in Myanmar. The network operators, Telenor and Ooredoo and other joint ventures or other forms of cooperation entered into by Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) and Yatanapon with foreign telecom companies, outsource the building of the infrastructure to tower companies. They lease land, buy equipment, build the towers and lease them to the network operators.

The tower companies, in turn, outsource the site design and the building of the towers to construction companies. These construction companies sometimes also sell the equipment.

Tower companies and construction companies, if incorporated in Myanmar, are subject to 25 percent income tax on their profits. The tax base is the profit as shown in the annual audited financial statements drawn up according to the Myanmar Accounting Standard (which is the same as IFRS).

The present policy of the tax authorities seems to be to allow the tower companies to depreciate the towers, thus reducing their income tax burden. This is not a matter of course. As such, the leasing of land and buildings does not entitle the taxpayer to a depreciation allowance. However, the tax authorities seem to consider the business of the tower companies to consist in the provision of services rather than the leasing of real estate.

Recipients of a service provided by a company incorporated in Myanmar have to withhold 2pc from the service fee and pay it to the tax authorities. The service provider can credit the withheld amount toward his income tax liability after the end of the financial year. The network operators therefore have

to withhold 2pc from the amounts invoiced by the tower companies. The tax authorities seem to require this withholding also during tax holidays in which the tower companies are exempt from income tax. The tower companies should be able to obtain a refund of the withheld amounts after the end of the financial year.

In contrast, the tower companies should not be obliged to withhold 2pc from the rental fees paid by them to the landowners as a pure lease which is not linked to the provision of services by the lessor, and should not trigger withholding tax.

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has discretion to grant several tax benefits. The most important ones for tower companies are an exemption from income tax for five years and an exemption from customs duties and commercial tax on the import of equipment.

The exemption from customs duties and commercial tax is available for equipment that is imported during the construction period. The five-year exemption from income tax starts with the beginning of commercial operations, as soon as the construction period is over.

The question is: If a tower company builds 500 towers and leases them to a network operator in 2014, and builds another 1500 towers and leases them in 2015, when does the construction period end and commercial operations start?

The tower company should discuss this matter with the MIC. It appears that present policy is to let the tax holiday start in 2014, no matter if more towers are built thereafter. An exemption from customs duty and commercial tax on the import of equipment may, however, be granted in both 2014 and 2015, provided that the total investment amount is broken down and brought into the country in instalments.

Sebastian Pawlita and Yi Yi Mon are consultants with Polastri Wint & Partners Legal & Tax Advisors.

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Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Philip Heijmans | pheijsmans13@gmail.com

PHNOM PENH

Construction imports up in Cambodia

CAMBODIA spent more than US\$414 million on imported construction materials to meet increasing demand in the local construction and property sectors last year – a rise of 7 percent compared to 2012.

According to officials and industry insiders, the increased value of imports reflected steady growth of the construction and property sectors. They also suggested that the improving numbers were evidence that both local and foreign confidence continued to be high when it came to investing in the property sector, despite some domestic turmoil in the wake of national elections.

Cambodia's disputed election results in July of last year have continued to incite protests and some violence, but appear to have had little effect on business confidence or economic growth, which has remained steady.

Ken Ratha, spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce, said the increase in imported construction materials was a sign that the property sector was seeing renewed growth, while the overall construction sector was continuing to move in a positive direction, particularly in the areas of residential property developments in the boreys on the outskirts of Phnom Penh.

Mr Ratha added that construction companies were making large-scale domestic investments due to increased demand for better housing.

"Due to residential-sector growth, both local and overseas investors are injecting more capital into the construction sector," Mr Ratha said.

He added that a corresponding development was the establishment of increasing numbers of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as large-scale enterprises, all of which were boosting the property sector.

"The important thing is that investment in the sector is now shared by both local and foreign companies," he said.

Meanwhile, deputy general director of the Construction Department of the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning & Construction Lao Tip Seiha recently said that Cambodia's strong economy was the major contributing factor in terms of increased investment in the construction sector.

According to government data, the ministry approved 1641 projects covering a total area of 7.5 million square metres, and a total value of \$2.8 billion in 2013, or an increase of 31pc year-on-year.

In 2012 1694 projects were approved, with a total area of 6.5 million square metres and total investment of \$2.1 billion.

"Obviously, the construction sector has seen remarkable growth, particularly in Phnom Penh, which has seen a lot of construction of condominiums and apartments, and residential and office space," Tip Seiha said.

Socheat Yutharo, marketing and sales manager of K Supply, a construction equipment and materials company, said K Supply's imported products had risen between 25 and 30pc in 2013 compared to 2012 due to increased orders from existing customers.

– The Phnom Penh Post



A nighttime view of Pansodan Business and Residential Tower in downtown Yangon. Photo: Boothee

Yangon rentals on the rise, for now

The new supply of mid- and top-tier condos on the way could finally offset costlier rental prices, experts say



MYAT NYEIN AYE BRIDGET DI CERTO

RESIDENTIAL tenants in Yangon may have to pay as much as 60 percent more in rent in 2014 than just two years ago, as quality apartment units are still in short supply as the number of tenants looking for modern accommodation continues to grow, experts said.

Even with prices for rent growing at an exponential rate now for the fifth straight year, realtors are confident that it is only a matter of time until the bubble that has formed in the city's skewed property market will burst as a slew of new high-end developments in the pipeline are slated to be finished within two years.

"We know that the high rental fees are caused by the lack of equality between rental demand and supply," said Daw Moh Moh Aung, general secretary of the Myanmar Real Estate Service Association, adding that land prices have generally grown by 50pc since 2012. "Even though there are a lot of condos to rent, tenants are looking to rent spaces that can accommodate both residential and office-space purposes," she said.

In turn, she said, tenants will be looking to rent on the high-end side of the spectrum with an eye in particular for international

standard housing – something that is still scarce in Yangon.

The current rise in rental prices is concentrated in trending neighbourhoods in Yangon such as Kyauktada and Lanmadaw townships, the Sule Pagoda area and Strand Road, as well as Bahan, Kamaryut and Mayangone townships, said U Khin Maung Aye, a senior agent of Shwe Kan Myae real estate agency.

With land and apartment sales prices on the rise, he said that a luxury condominium now sells for K300,000 per square foot, while standard apartments are selling at K200,000 per square foot, more than 50pc higher than 2012 prices.

Daw Myat Thu, of Moe Myint Thaw Dar real estate agency, said that condos on Sule Road, Pansodan Road and along the waterfront are now renting for anywhere between K1.5 million and K2.5 million for 14.4 sq m (1600 sq ft), compared to K1 million to K1.5 million two years ago, she said, adding that tenants of luxury condos on Pyay Road, 7 and 8 miles in Mayangone township and Inya Road in Kamaryut township are

paying even more at K4.5 million.

Nevertheless, there are several mid- to high-tier projects currently under construction that will add much needed supply to the market and with any luck, bring down prices, experts said.

Such projects included Shwe Taung Group's 194-unit Malikha Project in Thingangyun, while Crystal Residences at Junction Square will include a 21-story building filled with condominiums.

"At that time, rental fees will begin to decrease, but if [the new constructions] do not come through to answer the high demand, rental fees will continue to grow," she said, adding that she estimates demand for rental units to outweigh supply by 50pc.

But with more demand at a higher standard, developers are having to tack on amenities to create the city's first Grade A units – something Yangon has never seen before – and the result has been higher prices.

"International standard condos must have car parking, shopping malls, fitness centre, resort and spa facilities, full furniture and a lift," she said, adding that these are the sorts of amenities drawing the attention of the growing number of Myanmar-riche. "Previously in Yangon, a contractor will put in just a lift and call it a condo apartment."

Modern serviced apartments in today's market are rented for as little as \$4500 per month, she said, while the recently opened Shangri-La Towers at Kandawgyi Lake are asking between \$6500 and \$15,000 per unit.

According to a December 2013 report by local financial advisory firm New Crossroads Asia (NCA), there are a total of 1600 condominium units in Yangon spread over a total 300,000 square metres. According to the same data, there has been a 414pc increase in land costs in Yangon since 2009.

Historically, developers looking to cater to the strong demand for modern residential and office space in Yangon have been met by resistance in the form of stringent and unclear development laws as well as a lack of transparency in construction and redevelopment tenders, a problem still faced by many investors today.

"The situation is extreme," Richard Emerson, country manager for international realtor Savill's, said with regard to current rental prices.

"Rents started increasing dramatically in 2012 and this is obviously a basic supply and demand feature," he said, adding that prices are disproportional to those of other countries in the region and are bound to equalise.

"But there is considerable supply scheduled for the next two to three years."

Indeed, ambitious construction projects in Yangon include the \$94 million Star City project across the Bago River will bring more than 9000 units, while the HAGL Centre in Bahan township and the Pyidawthar Project will bring another 2800.

"Whether anyone will occupy all of these [apartments] is another matter," Mr Emerson said.

\$4500

Going rental rate for a modern serviced apartment in downtown Yangon

“Rents started increasing dramatically in 2012 and this is obviously a basic supply and demand feature.”

— Richard Emerson, country manager at Savill's

Students seek EU degrees in Malaysia

WORLD 41

Thilawa SEZ share sales, land leases set for April



ZAW HTIKE

zawhtikemjn1981@gmail.com

MORE than US\$21 million worth of shares of the anticipated Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) will go on sale to the public next month, while land leasing for the SEZ will go forward in the final weeks of April, the holdings firm for the project has announced.

Two million shares of the Myanmar Thilawa Special Economic Zone Holdings Public Ltd will help to raise the necessary funds to begin build the first phase of the project, while additional funds will be picked up through the issuance of early leasing contracts.

“We are going to work with the minimum amount of initial capital possible, that is, the proceeds of 2.14 million shares valued at more than \$21 million,” said UMFCCI and Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings chair U Win Aung, adding that more shares may be issued in the future to cover costs if needed.

“Our aim is to reinvest the money into development,” he said.

With regards to property leasing, he would not state what land in the SEZ would cost though U Win Aung reassured that “the price would be much cheaper than in other local industrial zones”, adding that his firm has already received several letters of intent from companies in the garment, food processing and manufacturing sectors.

According to the current SEZ law, lease agreements can be signed for up to 70 years.

The 2400-hectare zone, which broke ground in November, is about 25 kilometres south of Yangon along the



Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Set Aung and Japan's Vice Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry Mr Nobuhiko Sasaki shake hands after signing an agreement to develop the Thilawa SEZ on December 21, 2012. Photo: Boothee

Yangon River in Thanlyin and Kyauktan townships.

The zone is being developed by a Japanese consortium as a 39pc shareholder with participation from Mitsubishi, Marubeni and Sumitomo corporations, and locally run Myanmar

Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), who have 41pc of the shares. An additional 10pc of the project belongs to the Thilawa SEZ management committee, while the remaining shares belong to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Japan will provide ¥20 million (US\$3.28 billion) for the related infrastructure, electrical systems, ports and transportation.

Economist U Hla Maung said that because the standing investment offer only pertains to construction, as opposed to manufacturing products for retail, it would be difficult to predict potential yields as some potential investors may consider spending elsewhere.

“Myanmar investors in local public companies don't receive much in dividends even now,” he said.

MILLION

\$21

Value of new shares to be offered in the anticipated Thilawa Special Economic Zone

Construction halts on Old Bagan hotel

NYAN LYNN AUNG

29.nyanlynnnaung@gmail.com

THE government has ordered the owners of a hotel in Old Bagan to halt the unapproved construction of a planned annex, authorities said.

U Naing Win, director of the Ministry of Culture's department of archaeology, said that the Aye Yar River View Resort Hotel started building the annex before receiving planning permission for the local authorities.

“We have ordered the hotel to cease construction. If they continue, we will take legal action,” he said.

The hotel did not respond to a request from *The Myanmar Times* for comment. The Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) said the matter was being handled at the regional level.

The Ministry of Culture issues permits for new construction in the Bagan historic zone only after a review determining whether it would infringe on any of the historic structures in the area.

“If we can approve proposals we do, and if we cannot, we don't, but the Aye Yar hotel started building before any permit was issued, so we had to stop it,” said U Naing Win.

BAMAKO

Morocco to build new phosphate mine in Mali

MOROCCO is to finance the construction of a production unit in Mali for phosphate destined exclusively for the African market, an official told AFP on the sidelines of a state visit of King Mohammed VI to the west African nation.

“Africa has more than 80 per cent of the world's reserves of phosphate and exports the raw material to other regions, notably for the production of fertilisers,” Mostafa Terrab, chief executive of Morocco's state-owned phosphate company OCP, said last week.

“But this continent also needs it ... Hence the decision of His Majesty the King to dedicate a production unit of fertiliser to Africa alone,” Mr Terrab told AFP at a meeting of business leaders and government

ministers in the capital Bamako, announcing that Mohammed VI would return to Mali to open the unit.

Morocco already invests heavily in Mali's banking and telecommunications sectors and is looking to strengthen its presence in agriculture, infrastructure, mining and energy.

“Mali and [Morocco] need to establish a cohesive economic collaboration and increase our trade for the well-being of both countries,” said Amina Benkhadra, head of Morocco's National Hydrocarbons and Mining Office.

Mohammed VI arrived in Mali last week with a large entourage of ministers and industry captains for a five-day official visit. — AFP





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SEOUL

S Korean constructors win \$6b refinery deal in Iraq

A CONSORTIUM of four major South Korean construction companies has won a US\$6.04 billion deal to build an oil refinery in Iraq, two of the companies said last week.

Hyundai Construction, Hyundai Engineering, GS Construction and SK Construction won the bid from Iraq's State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP).

Under the deal, the four firms will build the plant capable each day of refining 140,000 barrels of crude oil in Karbala, about 75 miles (120 kilometres) south of Baghdad, Hyundai Construction and GS said

in a regulatory filing.

The construction will last 54 months, the two firms said without providing a start date.

The two Hyundai subsidiaries have a combined 37.5-percent stake in the project, with GS claiming the same portion and SK Construction 25 percent.

South Korean firms have stepped up efforts in recent years to tap into the oil-rich Middle East region, seeking to build and upgrade energy infrastructure and homes.

Hyundai Heavy Industries - the world's top shipbuilder - won a \$3.3 billion order last August to build a steam power plant in Saudi Arabia after a series of similar deals in the country.

Seoul-based Hanwha Group won a \$7.75 billion deal with Iraq in 2012 to build 100,000 homes on the outskirts of Baghdad in a project aimed at addressing a massive housing shortfall. - AFP

140,000

Barrels of crude oil to be refined at the new plant each day

IN BRIEF

Colombo

Sri Lanka opposition cries foul over Chinese deals

Sri Lanka's main opposition accused the government last week of awarding contracts to a World Bank blacklisted Chinese company and said it would not honour the deals if it regains power.

The United National Party (UNP) said the government had recently awarded a contract to the state-owned China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC) for a new port city in the capital Colombo despite the World Bank move.

"The government has given this project to a company which is banned by the World Bank due to corruption," UNP spokesperson Harsha de Silva told reporters.

"We never thought that the government has been dealing with a company that has been debarred by the World Bank."

He said a future UNP government would not honour transactions with the firm.

There was no immediate comment from the CCCC, but Sri Lankan government spokesperson Keheliya Rambukwella denied any corruption. - AFP

PHNOM PENH

A Laos-backed dam planned for the Mekong River could precipitate the extinction of critically endangered Irrawaddy dolphins whose main habitat is in neighbouring Cambodia, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) warned on February 20, 2014. Photo: AFP



Laos dam plan threatens existence of rare dolphin

A DAM which Laos plans to build across the Mekong River could wipe out critically endangered dolphins in downstream Cambodia, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) warned last week.

If built, the controversial Don Sahong dam in southern Laos would be just a kilometre upstream of the main stretch of water favoured by the rare freshwater Irrawaddy dolphin, WWF said in a statement.

With an estimated 85 adults, Cambodia hosts one of the largest populations of the species - which is recognisable by its bulging forehead and distinctive blunt beak.

Conservationists have called for the suspension of the hydropower scheme, saying any restriction of the waterway will curb the number of fish swimming downstream and cut off the dolphins'

main food source.

"If the Don Sahong dam is built, it will lead to the extinction of Mekong [Irrawaddy] dolphins," Chhith Sam Ath, WWF-Cambodia's country director, told reporters.

"Dolphins are very important for Cambodia. They attract tourists, they are a national treasure."

The dolphins face several other threats from the dam, the conservation group added, explaining explosives used in its construction could damage their highly sensitive hearing which they use to navigate.

The likely worsening in water quality, an increase in boats using the river and wider habitat degradation would further pressure the population, WWF said in a statement.

Landlocked communist Laos agreed

in January to hold further consultations with neighbouring countries before it starts building the dam.

Apart from the threat to the dolphins, wider fears for the livelihoods of tens of thousands of downstream fishermen and warnings of major environmental damage have also been raised.

WWF has urged Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen to call for a moratorium on the dam at the Mekong River Commission's summit in April.

The Cambodian government in 2012 approved a dolphin protection zone in a 110 mile (180-kilometre-long) river stretch from eastern Kratie to the border with Laos.

Freshwater Irrawaddy dolphins exist in three river systems in Southeast Asia, with Cambodia hosting the largest population. - AFP

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IN BRIEF

Paris

Accor hotels books a return to profits with good 2014 outlook

French hotel group Accor, number six in its sector worldwide, returned to net profit last year and said it was confident for 2014 but did not provide target figures.

The group, the biggest hotel operator in Europe, reported a net profit of 126 million euros (US\$172.5 million), from a loss of 599 million euros in 2012 owing to the effects of divesting low-cost US chain Motel 6.

Accor, headed by a new chief executive Sebastien Bazin since the end of August, said that the results for 2013 were "solid".

In November, Mr Bazin announced a new strategy based on two core businesses: the management of hotels called HotelServices, and the manage-

ment of property called HotelInvest.

Operating profit rose by 1.9 percent to 536 million euros (\$734.43 million), slightly above the company's target of 530 million euros (\$725.60 million).

Sales, already announced, fell by 2.0 percent to 5.54 billion euros (\$7.58 billion).

Mr Bazin told a telephone press conference that in Europe the group had made firm progress in its key markets in Germany, France and Britain.

Business in emerging markets remained firm and Accor was strengthening its position as a leader in these areas.

At the end of 2013, the group had achieved savings of 37 million euros (\$50.66 million) under a program for 2013-2014 to save 100 million euros (\$136.98 million), the company said.

- AFP

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World Bank to assist MCIT with reform of laws, policies

BILL O'TOOLE
botoole12@gmail.com

A SPOKESPERSON for the World Bank said last week that the international finance body will be working with the Ministry of Communications and Technology to create and implement new laws and policies that will protect the civil liberties of consumers in the country's growing telecommunications networks.

The project is one part of the World Bank's larger Telecom Sector Reform Project, which will award the government US\$31.5 million of credit to put toward updating the nation's outdated telecom networks.

"The project will provide technical assistance to, among other things, conduct a due diligence review of laws covering privacy, data protection, cyber-crime, and access to and freedom of information,

MILLION US\$

31.5

The World Bank's budget for the telecommunications project

identify gaps, and recommend a legal and regulatory framework consistent with international good practice," said U Kyaw Soe Lynn, communications officer for the World Bank in Myanmar.

U Kyaw Soe Lynn said the World Bank and the ministry have already held two public consultations in Yangon where citizens and civil society groups discussed legal reforms. More meetings are expected by the end of this year.

U Kyaw Soe Lynn said these public consultations will inform the design of the entire program.

Despite these assurances, many civil society groups both inside and outside Myanmar are wary of the project, and say no work should go into the infrastructure until there are firm laws in place to protect privacy.

Given the former government's long history of spying on citizens, groups like the US Campaign for Burma are worried that the innovations brought by the project will make invasions of privacy even easier.

A group of 61 civil society organisations have joined forces to express their dismay over the project, and sent a joint letter to the World Bank expressing their concerns.

"The World Bank's failure to promote privacy and security reform in Burma while expanding telecom capacity will enable the Burmese government to further engage in surveillance, censorship, and other abuses," the US Campaign for Burma said in a statement.

Gadget Reviews



Bluetooth Wireless Audio Receiver (LBT-MPAR300)
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iPad transactions come to Yangon

AUNG KYAW NYUNT
aungkyawnyunt28@gmail.com

A FAST payment system involving a quick swipe of a credit card has been introduced in two of Yangon's top hotels, and could be extended further. Myanmar Citizens' Bank and 2C2P Company have together launched the iACCEPT system now in use at the Inya Lake and Strand hotels, said U Aung Kyaw Myo, founder and group CEO of 2C2P.

"If a customer wants to pay a bill [using this system], the waiter will bring this device, and they just touch their card to it," he said.

The iACCEPT hardware is on sale at Myanmar Citizens' Bank for US\$60-\$70, and can be used with iPhone, iPad and Android handsets. The system accepts both chip and magnetic strip cards.

"The challenge for this service is the internet connection. With that, it can be used even in bookshops and food stalls," he said.



Photo: Aung Kyaw Nyunt


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HUAWEI

World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

DAMASCUS

Russia says US Syria policy 'encourages extremists'

MOSCOW has accused Washington of prolonging the Syrian conflict by supporting the opposition.

Russia made the claim on February 20, as a car bomb exploded at a border crossing between Syria and Turkey as rebels battled to prevent regime forces from seizing their last stronghold in the strategic Qalamun region.

Meanwhile Syria's government media said Jordan was seeking to stir up the southern front in the country's conflict after a stalemate in peace talks held in Geneva this month.

Speaking in Baghdad, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said America's policy on Syria "encourages extremists who are financing terrorism and supplying terrorist organisations and groups with weapons".

"In the end, this will not result in anything except the escalation of the Syrian conflict," he said in remarks translated from Russian into Arabic.

Moscow is a key backer of President Bashar al-Assad's regime, which has

humanitarian groups to deliver aid across front lines and borders.

Humanitarian groups have been seeking cross-border access for some time to allow aid to be shipped directly into Syria from neighbouring countries such as Iraq or Turkey.

The resolution was submitted by Australia, Luxembourg and Jordan, and backed by Britain, the US and France.

A source in The Hague, meanwhile, said Syria was likely to miss a UN-backed June 30 deadline to destroy its chemical arsenal, possibly by months.

An Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) meeting on Friday is expected to hear calls for Syria to do more amid growing Western frustration with Damascus' perceived delays.

On the ground, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said a car bomb exploded at the Bab al-Salama crossing between Syria and Turkey.

A Turkish official told AFP six people were killed and 45 wounded, with the injured taken to hospital in Turkey's Kilis province.

In Damascus province, rebels engaged in fierce clashes with regime forces backed by the pro-government National Defence Forces militia and fighters from Lebanon's Hezbollah in Yabrud.

The town is the last remaining stronghold of the opposition in the strategic Qalamun region near the border with Lebanon.

It sits on the main highway between Damascus and the country's third city Homs, and has been a key bastion for the opposition since early in the uprising.

The battle is also important for Hezbollah, the powerful Shiite movement, which says many of the explosive-packed cars that have blown up in attacks targeting its Lebanese strongholds came from Yabrud.

In the northern city of Aleppo, eight soldiers were killed by a rebel suicide bombing at the city's central prison, the Observatory said.

And 18 rebels were killed in a dawn assault on an Alawite village in central Homs province.

Syria's government daily Al-Thawra, meanwhile, accused Jordan of trying to stir up the southern front of the uprising, where rebels say they are preparing for a spring offensive against Damascus.

It said Jordan's efforts came after the stalemate at a second round of peace talks in Geneva this month.

"As the saying goes, those who play with fire will get burned, and so what then about those who start fires," the daily wrote.

—AFP

Thousand

250

The estimated number of people across Syria awaiting humanitarian aid

been battling an uprising that began in March 2011.

It supplies the government with weapons and provides diplomatic cover at the United Nations, where officials said the Security Council were due to vote on February 22 on a resolution on humanitarian aid for Syria.

Russia, with support from China, has blocked three previous resolutions aimed at pressuring the Damascus regime since the crisis began, with an estimated 250,000 people across Syria awaiting help.

The resolution called on all parties to immediately provide humanitarian access to populated areas, including the besieged city of Homs.

It also demanded the "the immediate cessation of all attacks against civilians", such as through the use of barrel bombs, a clear reference to Syrian army tactics used in Aleppo, in the north.

And it calls for all parties, in particular the Syrian regime, to authorise

UKRAINE



IN PICTURES

Protesters catch fire as they stand behind burning barricades during clashes with violence three months into the Ukraine crisis brought expressions of grave concern from the Kremlin. Photo: AFP

Violence prom

A DAY of raging violence left dozens of people dead and turned the heart of Kiev into a war zone, but prompted Ukraine's politicians to agree to sign up to a temporary deal aimed at ending the bloodshed.

After marathon talks with President Viktor Yanukovich and opposition leaders, the European Union confirmed that a "temporary" agreement was due to be signed on February 21 in what would be a major step forward in ending the worst crisis since Ukraine's independence.

At least 60 people were killed in fierce clashes in Kiev's Independence Square on February 20, with police opening fire on protesters carrying makeshift shields while opposition medics said government snipers picked off demonstrators from rooftops.

Three EU foreign ministers and a Russian envoy flew in for emergency talks that day as the international community voiced increasing alarm about the crisis in the former Soviet state.

"The parties agreed on the initialling of an agreement to resolve the crisis," the presidency said in a

statement following a day and night of negotiations between Mr Yanukovich and envoys from Poland, Germany, Russia and France.

Under the expected terms of the pact, the country would revert back to the 2004 constitution, which would give more power to parliament and government, and less to the president.

A coalition government would also be formed soon and early presidential polls held - all key opposition demands.

There was no immediate confirmation of a deal from any of the country's top three opposition leaders.

But a senior EU diplomat in-

'The parties agreed on the initialling of an agreement to resolve the crisis'

Viktor Yanukovich
President of Ukraine

involved in the negotiations said on February 21 that a "temporary agreement" was expected.

The crisis in Ukraine flared in November when Mr Yanukovich declined to sign an EU integration deal in favour of closer ties with historical master Russia, and has evolved into a Cold War-style standoff between Moscow and the West over the future of the strategic nation sandwiched between them.

The violence of the past few days prompted the European Union to agree to impose sanctions on Ukrainians with "blood on their hands".

The United States also threatened to follow suit.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, meanwhile, spoke to presidents Barack Obama of the United States and Vladimir Putin of Russia, who have bickered openly over the crisis, by telephone.

All three called for a halt to the bloodshed that has escalated since February 18.

Kiev authorities put the death toll of the past few days at 77, but opposition medics say more than 60 protesters were shot dead by police

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Indonesia creates world's biggest manta ray sanctuary

WORLD 42

Students seek cheap EU degrees in Malaysia

WORLD 41



India's disabled people fight for their rights

WORLD 44



With police on February 20, 2014 in Kiev. The shocking scale of the concern from the West and condemnation of an “attempted coup” by

pts ‘deal’

on February 20 alone. On that day, masked protesters forced gun-toting riot police from the capital's Independence Square, claiming back what has become the epicentre of an increasingly bloody revolt against Yanukovich's pro-Russian rule. Armed with Molotov cocktails, batons and paving stones, they pushed back the feared Berkut police that had brutally reconquered the square on February 18. Police responded with rubber bullets and stun grenades, but also with Kalashnikov rifles. The White House said bluntly that it was “outraged by the images of Ukrainian security forces firing automatic weapons on their own people”. Volunteer medics, who made a makeshift morgue out of a popular hotel overlooking the square, also accused police of killing demonstrators with live rounds. “They were shot in the head or in the heart by live bullets, not by rubber ones,” said first aid worker Natalia. Ukraine's interior ministry said only that it reserved the right to use

live munitions “in self-defence”. The ministry also accused “extremists” of seizing 67 of its troops at gunpoint and holding them hostage in one of the buildings near the war-scarred square. The shocking scale of bloodshed in a strategic nation of 46 million sandwiched between Russia and the European Union prompted EU officials to slap travel bans against Ukrainians responsible for ordering the use of force. Italian Foreign Minister Emma Bonino said an agreement was also reached at an emergency EU meeting in Brussels to impose asset freezes on those with “blood on their hands”. The measures mark a U-turn for Brussels diplomats, who until February 17 had resisted Ukrainian opposition demands for sanctions. Vice President Joe Biden on Thursday warned Mr Yanukovich that the United States was ready to impose sanctions on officials guilty of ordering troops to fire on protesters. Washington has already put 20 top Ukrainian officials on a visa blacklist. - AFP

BANGKOK

Yingluck denies corruption charges

THAI Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra protested her innocence on February 20 after an anti-corruption panel filed charges of neglect of duty that could lead to her removal from office. Ms Yingluck, who has faced almost four months of mass street protests demanding her resignation, questioned why the investigation by the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) into an expensive rice subsidy scheme had apparently been fast-tracked. “I reaffirm that I am innocent of the accusations by the NACC,” Ms Yingluck said on her official Facebook page. “Even though I am accused of criminal charges and face removal [from office], which were the wishes of people who want to overthrow the government, I am willing to cooperate to establish the facts,” she added. The NACC says Ms Yingluck ignored warnings that the rice scheme was fostering corruption and causing financial losses. She has been summoned to hear the charges on February 27. Ms Yingluck urged the panel not to rush to deliver a ruling “which may be criticised by society as benefiting people who want to overthrow the government”. She noted that similar complaints against the previous administration were still under investigation. Her critics say the controversial scheme, which guarantees farmers above-market rates for rice, has encouraged corruption, drained the public coffers and left the country with a mountain of unsold stock. Ms Yingluck said she was simply trying to improve the lives of farmers. In another legal setback to the prime minister, on February 19 a civil court ordered the government not to use force against peaceful protests, limiting the authorities' scope to deal with opposition rallies that have descended into violence on several occasions. Authorities announced they would swiftly appeal the decision, saying it has



Anti-government protestors shout slogans and wave the Thai flag outside a property owned by Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in Bangkok on February 20. Photo: AFP

crippled their ability to keep order and uphold the law. “Protesters can lay siege to government offices and obstruct elections as the public has seen,” Tarit Pengdith, of the agency in charge of the security response to the crisis, said in a televised address on February 20. “That's not right,” he said, adding their work “has been stopped” by the court ruling. Sixteen people have been killed, both protesters and police, and hundreds injured in gunfire and grenade blasts linked to demonstrations. New York-based Human Rights Watch accused both sides of using live ammunition in clashes on February 18 in Bangkok's historic district in which five people were killed and dozens wounded. “Excessive force by the police and violence by groups on both sides of the political divide needs to stop to prevent this situation from escalating out of control,” HRW Asia director Brad Adams said in a statement. The government has said security forces used only rubber bullets and not live ammunition. Protesters accuse Ms Yingluck's

billionaire family of using taxpayers' money to buy the loyalty of rural voters through populist policies such as the rice scheme. Shinawatra business interests are the latest target of the demonstrators, with their firebrand protest leader calling for a boycott of several companies. “All Shinawatra businesses must collapse,” Suthep Thaugsuban said to a cheering crowd outside a building linked to the family. The opposition demonstrators want Ms Yingluck to step down and make way for a temporary unelected government that would oversee loosely defined reforms to tackle corruption and alleged vote-buying. They accuse her hugely divisive brother Thaksin, a former premier ousted in a 2006 coup and successful businessman, of running the government from overseas, where he lives to avoid a jail term on corruption charges. The country's main opposition party boycotted a February 2 election which Ms Yingluck called to try to defuse the protests. The results are not expected to be known until balloting is held in constituencies where voting was disrupted by protesters. - AFP

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MANILA

Philippines close to US troops deal as South China Sea tensions rise

THE Philippines is “very close” to completing an agreement to boost the number of US troops allowed into the country at a time of growing tension over territorial disputes with China, President Benigno Aquino has said.

“I haven’t been presented major sticking points, so I assume we are close to it,” Mr Aquino, 54, said in an interview at his office in Manila on February 19. “I won’t say that we’re a day away from it, but we’re very, very close.”

Officials from the Philippines and the United States plan a sixth round of talks in early March, after discussions hit a snag last year on issues of access and control over facilities that may be built by the US “They’re still crafting the exact language as to how to address that, but we do recognise, we do need facilities to be able to enhance our and their abilities,” Mr Aquino said.

The Philippines is locked in a dispute with China over territory in the resource-rich South China Sea, which has led to tit-for-tat comments in recent months even as economic ties remain strong. The tensions have spurred the Philippines to seek to expand military links with the US, a treaty ally, while

building a further buffer by strengthening strategic ties with countries such as Japan.

Negotiators may seek to wrap up an agreement before US President Barack Obama visits the Philippines in April as part of a trip to the region that also takes in Japan. The rapid US response after Super Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the central Philippines in November, also showed the need for a greater troop presence, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario said that month.

The US ended its permanent

‘Nobody will champion our rights if we are not able to champion our rights first.’

Benigno Aquino
President of the Philippines

military presence in the Philippines with the closing of the Subic Bay base after the lease ended in 1991. The US rotates 500 troops into the southern Philippines each year to aid in counter-terrorism operations, while 6500 come annually for exercises, said Lieutenant Colonel Ramon Zagala, a spokesperson for the Philippine military.

During the interview Mr Aquino sought to stress relations as not being a case of being “against China”, while calling for consistency from Beijing on its policies in the region. “Stability promotes trade and creates a bigger market for everybody, which enhances the ability to prosper,” he said.

The Philippines also needed to chart its own foreign policy without being dependent on other countries to solve its problems, he said. Manila has sought arbitration by the United Nations on the dueling claims in the South China Sea, a process China has said it does not recognise.

“This is our problem. We are primarily responsible for it,” Mr Aquino said of the dispute. “Nobody will champion our rights if we are not able to champion our rights first.” – *Washington Post*



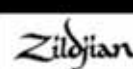
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NUSAJAYA

Students seek cheap EU degrees in Malaysia's shared campus

AT Newcastle University's medical school, students tread red-brick paths through a green campus bearing Victorian touches.

It is a scene that befits a top college in northern England, but this setting is sweltering tropical Malaysia, where select departments of several European universities have joined in a shared-campus concept to tap growing Asian demand for sought-after Western degrees.

Distance and cost concerns combine to keep many Asian students and Western universities apart.

But the shared nature of facilities in the 123-hectare "EduCity" in southern Malaysia, and resulting lower start-up costs, allows institutions to gain an Asian foothold while passing savings on to students.

Malaysian student Kanesh Rajoo pays just 60 percent of the £120,000 tuition (US\$200,000) tuition charged at Newcastle University Medical School's UK campus and saves a small fortune in British living costs.

"Because of the reputation of obtaining a recognised UK degree, I will probably have an upper hand [in Malaysia's job market] as compared to those from a local university," Mr Kanesh said while studying in NUMed's spacious library.

Multi-university concepts have been tried elsewhere with mixed success but the Malaysian government project hopes to set itself apart by cherry-picking respected individual university departments.

Colleges, meanwhile, get a slice of a growing education market in developing Asia.

Non-EU enrolment in universities in Britain grew by 20 percent to 300,000 students from 2008 to 2012, according to the British government. It forecasts 4 million students per year will seek to study abroad globally by 2024, one-third of them from China and India.

"Our ambition is to market this



Students share a joke at the EduCity campus in Malaysia where Asian scholars study for European degrees. Photo: AFP

opportunity regionally, so a big target for us is going to be the Indonesian-type market, potentially Vietnam, potentially Thailand, and of course China and India," said John McBride, CEO of the University of Southampton at EduCity.

Launched in 2011 as part of a vast Malaysian development zone, Edu City has six institutions on site including NUMed, the University of Southampton's engineering program, and various offerings by the Netherlands Maritime Institute of Technology and Britain's Reading University.

It also includes the Johan Cruyff Institute, a sports-management school founded by the Dutch football legend, plus noted primary and secondary schools such as Britain's 170-year-old Marlborough College.

At least 10 institutions, including

eight universities, are expected by 2015.

"You don't have to spend the capex [capital expenditure] required to build an entire university," said Joanne Oei, EduCity's managing director.

The government estimates buy-in costs at 20 million ringgit (\$6 million) per institution. By comparison, an unrelated Malaysia campus of Britain's Nottingham University, established in 2005, cost six times that.

Malaysia has bent rules to allow 100-percent foreign ownership in the venture and offers various tax incentives.

Built on former oil-palm plantations, EduCity has a 14,000-seat sports complex, accommodations in a 570-bed "student village", and other shared features on a campus mixing

wide green lawns with unfinished construction.

Enrolment doubled this school year to more than 1200 undergraduates, mostly Malaysian. One-fifth of all students are foreign. An eventual student body of 16,000 is targeted.

There have been teething problems, however.

Concerns have been raised about the quality of the student experience at the still relatively isolated, no-frills facility. The nearest city is about 30 kilometres (18 miles) away. Transport options are thin.

But analysts said as EduCity works on drawing in international students, it could have a solid core market in Muslim-majority Malaysia, where concerns have risen over poor-quality state-run universities and shrinking academic freedoms. - AFP

TOKYO

Anne Frank's diary copies vandalised

SCORES of copies of Anne Frank's "Diary of a Young Girl" kept in public libraries across Tokyo have been vandalised, sparking alarm amid a rightward shift in Japan's politics.

Pages in at least 250 copies of the diary or publications containing biographies on Anne Frank, Nazi persecution of Jews and related materials have been torn, the council of public libraries in the capital said on February 21.

More than a dozen books have also been damaged at libraries in two other nearby areas, media reported.

"We have complaints from five of [Tokyo's 23] wards so far but I don't yet know exactly how many libraries are affected," Satomi Murata, the head of the council, told AFP. "We don't know why this happened or who did it."

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, the US-based international Jewish rights group, said on its website it was shocked and concerned.

"The geographic scope of these incidents strongly suggest an organised effort to denigrate the memory of the most famous of the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered by the Nazis in the World War II Holocaust," Abraham Cooper, the centre's associate dean, said in a statement.

"We are calling on Japanese authorities to step up efforts to identify and deal with the perpetrators of this hate campaign."

Yasumi Iwakami, a freelance journalist who writes on social causes in Japan, tweeted there had been sporadic "delusional" arguments about the existence of a Jewish conspiracy surrounding the Holocaust.

"But violence has not presented itself to this extent before," he said, calling the incidents the "advent of crude anti-Semitism".

The spree comes amid criticism of a rightwards shift in Japanese politics under nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with a recent volley of provocative comments about Japan's wartime past that have sparked accusations of revisionism by China and South Korea. - AFP



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Ph: 0973150632

Email: law_chambers@seasiren.com.mm

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Dated: 24th February, 2014

JAKARTA

Manta rays swim in Indonesian waters where they are now protected in the largest sanctuary of its kind Photo: AFP

Indonesia protects manta rays

THE world's biggest manta ray sanctuary covering millions of square kilometres has been created in Indonesia as the country seeks to protect the huge winged fish and draw more tourists.

New legislation instituted on February 21 gives full protection to the creatures across all the waters surrounding Southeast Asia's biggest country, which for years has been the world's largest ray and shark fishery.

Protection group Conservation International hailed the "bold" move and said it was influenced by a recent government-backed review that showed a single manta ray was worth US\$1 million in tourism revenue over its lifetime.

This compares to between US\$40 and \$500 if caught and killed, the group said.

Many foreign tourists come to Indonesia every year to dive in some of the world's most biodiverse waters and manta rays are a favourite sight.

The gentle beasts have wingspans

up to 25 feet (7.5 metres), which they flap to propel themselves gracefully through the water.

"Indonesia now has the second-largest manta ray tourism industry in the world, with an estimated annual turnover of \$15 million," said Agus Dermawan, a senior official from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries.

"Given the huge area of reefs and islands in our country, if managed properly, Indonesia could become the top manta tourism destination on the planet."

Indonesia is one of the few places in the world where tourists can easily see both species of manta rays, the oceanic and reef varieties. The new legislation protects both.

Key populations can be found near the resort island of Bali, Flores island in eastern Indonesia and Raja Ampat off the northwest tip of New Guinea island.

In recent years the number of rays have declined rapidly due to voracious

demand in China – in particular for the creatures' gills – for use in traditional medicine.

The new legislation protects manta rays within Indonesia's 5.8 million square kilometres (2.2 million square miles) of ocean, banning fishing of the rays and their export.

"Tourism and fishery values of mantas are at direct odds with one another and we need to make a choice," said Tiene Gunawan, Conservation International's Indonesia marine program director.

"The economics make our decision easy: we now know that a living manta ray is easily worth at least 2,000 times more alive."

Indonesia joins countries including Ecuador, the Philippines, New Zealand and Mexico in granting full protection to their manta rays.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature classifies both species of manta ray as vulnerable. — AFP

SYDNEY

PNG camp witness tells of 'blood everywhere'

GRAPHIC witness accounts of recent violence at an Australian detention centre on Papua New Guinea describing "blood everywhere" have emerged, as Prime Minister Tony Abbott said he will not succumb to "moral blackmail" over the facility.

Mr Abbott made the comments on February 20 after violence at the Manus Island camp earlier in the week left an Iranian man dead and more than 70 injured as tensions flared among inmates about their fate under Australia's hard-line asylum-seeker policies.

Canberra has sent the head of its military-run Operation Sovereign Borders, Angus Campbell, to the island to assess security and work out what happened.

Despite the violence and demands from refugee advocates that the facility, condemned as "harsh" by the United Nations, should be closed, Mr Abbott said he would not step back from Australia's strong border protection policies.

"We will not succumb to pressure, to moral blackmail," he told reporters. "We will ensure these camps are run fairly – if necessary, firmly."

Manus Island is one of two remote Pacific camps used by Canberra in its punitive offshore detention policy, with the other on Nauru.

Under the scheme, aimed at deterring people-smugglers, any asylum-seeker arriving by boat or intercepted at sea is transferred to Manus or Nauru for



Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott speaks at the National Australia Bank's 2014 Reconciliation Action Plan launch in Sydney. Photo: AFP

processing and permanent resettlement outside Australia.

There are conflicting accounts of what sparked the riot on February 17, with claims that locals, unhappy about the camp and armed with machetes, broke in. Others say the asylum-seekers tried to escape, while PNG security guards have also been blamed.

A man who said he witnessed the violence, but who did not want to be identified, claimed PNG guards employed by the G4S security company running the centre became angry when asylum-seekers shouted insults about their country and family members.

He said the guards beat detainees with sticks, iron bars and rubber hoses.

"When they pulled them outside they started beating them with the sticks – some of them with sticks and some of them with all these hoses, rubber hoses and pipes," he told ABC radio.

An interpreter employed by the Australian Immigration Department said asylum-seekers used plastic chairs as shields when G4S guards attacked them with machetes, knives and rocks.

"Definitely, 100 percent, I stand by the statement that the local people, including some employed by G4S, they were the ones who caused this drama," Azita Bokan told Fairfax Media after flying out of Manus Island on February 19.

"There was blood everywhere. The number injured was horrific – people with massive head injuries, at least one with a slashed throat," she added, in comments that appeared to back what refugee advocates have said.

G4S said in a statement, "We take these allegations seriously, and we as a company do not tolerate violent or abusive behaviour from our staff."

But it added, "Our personnel on duty during the disturbances acted with courage, strength and determination to protect those in our care."

Both Australia and Papua New Guinea are conducting investigations. — AFP



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Tin Ohnmar Tun, Tin Thiri Aung & The Law Chambers

Ph: 0973150632

Email:law_chambers@seasiren.com.mm

(For. Domnarn Somgiat & Boonma

Attorneys at Law, Thailand.)

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Email:law_chambers@seasiren.com.mm

(For. Domnarn Somgiat & Boonma

Attorneys at Law, Thailand.)

Dated: 24th February, 2014

NEW DELHI

An Indian woman holds a placard outside the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters during a protest on February 17 in New Delhi against disability discrimination. Photo: AFP

Struggle for disability rights

TRUDY HARRIS

name@myanmartimes.com.mm

MORE than 20 families came to Shanti Auluck's home in New Delhi with their sons, keen at first to arrange a marriage with her daughter in an age-old Indian custom.

But with each visit came apologies and a change of heart. All of the families were turned off by the fact that Auluck also has a son with down syndrome.

"There was this feeling that somehow he might have a negative impact on them, that he might rub off on them. There's a lot of ignorance about disability," Ms Auluck said.

Finally Ms Auluck, a mother of two and a doctor of psychology, learned to choose her words carefully.

"I'd say 'Yes I have a son. He has a job, but he can't go into academia,'" said Ms Auluck.

For the 40 to 60 million people with mental and physical disabilities in India, discrimination and stigma are daily battles. In a country where social standing, including through marriage, is all-important, having a disability often means being relegated to the bottom of the pile.

"A lot of families keep their disabled children behind closed doors because they are embarrassed," said Ms Auluck, director of Muskaan, a training and work centre for the intellectually disabled.

A long-awaited bill introduced into parliament this month aims to give more disabled people equal rights - including access to education, employment and legal redress against discrimination.

Sonia Gandhi, head of the ruling Congress party, has promised disabled groups that the landmark legislation will be passed, seven years after India signed the UN Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

"This is a game changer," disabled rights leader Javed Abidi said, following one of the many protests and candle-lit vigils held in Delhi in recent weeks by thousands of disabled to pressure politicians to pass the bill.

But others fear the well-meaning bill, even if it is passed, will make no difference to the way in which the disabled are treated in a country where many existing laws are poorly enforced and often flouted.

Attitudes against disabled people, particularly women, are deeply entrenched, especially in poor rural areas where families are already struggling to make ends meet and where social services are few.

"This whole scenario makes [a disabled woman] more vulnerable - she is treated as a burden in the family. As a result domestic violence and sexual abuse is rampant," said Shampa Sengupta, who has worked with the intellectually disabled in the city of Kolkata for 25 years.

"Both at family level as well as the outside world, people think [disabled women are] dependent," said Ms Sengupta, who suffers chronic depression.

As a result, forced sterilisation of women, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, are still common, along with forced abortions for those who do fall pregnant, Ms Sengupta said.

In some cases, a disabled woman is married off to a man who is also "given" the woman's sister as a bride, as a way of smoothing the deal and as a favour to the over-burdened husband, she said.

Police are less likely to treat cases of sexual assault against disabled women as seriously, said Ms Sengupta, who is currently helping a family whose blind 14-year-old daughter was raped, allegedly by a neighbour.

"There is a perception that disabled

girls are worth less, so they are given less attention by police. Others are very sympathetic, offering her sweets and saying 'poor girl.' But that doesn't mean her case will be treated in the same way [as others]."

Activist Abidi, born with congenital spina bifida and confined to a wheelchair, agrees that more education is needed to change attitudes. But he said the bill was crucial to empower the disabled to take action themselves to correct society's misperceptions.

"This is the start of something. The bill may not be perfect, but nothing ever is, and we are not going to get this chance again," said Mr Abidi, referring to looming general elections that are likely to see the left-leaning Congress party booted out of power and the bill dropped.

Millions more people are classed as disabled under the bill, including those with autism and multiple sclerosis, which entitles them to government benefits. These disabled can also use the bill to fight discrimination across all areas.

"It means people with mental disabilities in particular have the right to hold a job, have the right to open a bank account, and no one can tell them 'no' because of their disability," said Mr Abidi.

Some disabled groups opposed the bill, which would replace a 1995 law, saying it has been watered down from earlier draft versions.

But Zorin Singha, who was born deaf, said the current paper was "perfect" for the country's 18 million hearing-impaired, including making captions or sign language interpreters available for all electronic media.

Mr Singha said he learned nothing when he was at school because his teachers, not trained to help deaf students, just kept telling him to speak. The new legislation gives the disabled the right to a decent education. - AFP

Post-tsunami health toll hits Japan

HEALTH complications stemming from Japan's 2011 tsunami have killed more people in one Japanese region than the disaster itself.

Data compiled by officials and police show that almost three years after the huge waves smashed ashore, 1656 people living in Fukushima prefecture have died from stress and other illnesses related to the disaster, compared with 1607 who were killed in the initial calamity.

"The biggest problem is the fact that people have been living in tem-

porary conditions for so long," Hiroyuki Harada, a Fukushima official dealing with victim assistance, said on February 20.

"People have gone through dramatic changes of their environment. As a result, people who would not have died are dying," he said.

Along with the prefectures of Miyagi and Iwate, Fukushima was one of the worst-hit parts of Japan when a huge 9.0 undersea earthquake sent a wall of water barrelling into the coast.

The waves swept more than 18,000 people to their deaths across the country and destroyed entire communities.

Fukushima was also hit with the resulting nuclear disaster after cooling systems at the Daiichi nuclear plant were knocked out, sending reactors into meltdown and forcing the evacuation of tens of thousands of people.

Almost three years on, many people remain displaced.

- AFP

GET YOUR FINGERS ON IT

the pulse

**A young gay couple in
Yangon get ready to say
'I do' in a
public ceremony –
whether family, friends or
society object or not**

Marrying men



ZON PANN
PWINT

zonpann08@gmail.com

WHOEVER arrives first after work at the little wooden cottage they call home makes dinner. Unless he is too tired, in which case they eat out. This is the normal daily routine for this couple.

Tin Ko Ko and Myo Min Htet fell in love 10 years ago, and immediately encountered barriers – rejection by family members, money problems when they first started to live together.

Now they will mark the 10th anniversary of their relationship by getting married, before relatives and friends. Theirs will be the first public gay marriage in Myanmar, though the location of the ceremony is a secret. Other gay couples have married, but preferred to do so in private because of prevailing social attitudes. The government won't stop a gay marriage, but nor is it officially allowed. Tin Ko Ko and Myo Min Htet fear protestors might crash their wedding and try to stop it. Still, they are in high spirits.

"Words can't express how happy I am. I never dreamt that he would do something great like this for our anniversary. I thank him for his surprise gift," Myo Min Htet said, adding, "I look forward to celebrating our 20th or 25th anniversary as well."

Both will wear European suits at the ceremony, signing a document to declare their fidelity before witnesses. "I am happy that I can make a difference that other people in our community have never done before," Tin Ko Ko said.

In 2004, Tin Ko Ko, then aged 28, left Yangon for a construction job in Magwe Region, where he met Myo Min Htet, an 18-year-old college student. At first they were friends, spending their days together, talking deep into the night and sharing everything. They had no secrets from each other. "Our friendship soon deepened into love. My parents thought we were friends, that we loved each other like brothers," said Myo Min Htet. "When our fondness grew, we decided to build a family and live under one roof together," he added.

"We both dress like men and behave like normal men. That doesn't provoke a reaction from people. We don't have problems with the neighbours," Tin Ko Ko said.

In their North Dagon home they have a television and a washing machine. "Every Sunday, I share the housework with him. If he cooks, I wash the clothes and sweep the floor," he said.

When they get out of work early, they go to the cinema or stroll alongside Inya Lake.

Like any couple, they sometimes fight.

"I am short-tempered and get annoyed easily. If I'm tired I sometimes shout at him. He is pretty thick-skinned," said Tin Ko Ko. "After spending years living together, we've gained a better understanding of each other.

I've come to know his likes and dislikes. I try to avoid doing anything wrong that hurts him, and he does the same," he added.

The couple plans to adopt a child. "We're both busy now, so this is for the future. He wants a boy, but I would love a boy or a

were accepting. In Buddhism, a common belief is that if a man is gay in this life it means he has sexually assaulted a woman in a past life. "They were ashamed and said they had never seen this kind of relationship before," he said.

When Tin Ko Ko's construction

‘We both dress like men and behave like normal men. That doesn’t provoke a reaction from people. We don’t have problems with the neighbours.’

Tin Ko Ko Groom

girl equally," said Myo Min Htet.

In 10 years, they have taken the rough with the smooth. When Myo Min Htet left his family, who are Buddhists, to live with Tin Ko Ko, they endured bitter reproaches from cousins over their "unnatural relationship", though his parents

work ended three years later, he returned to Yangon to find another job. Myo Min Htet followed him six months later.

"He had been doing distance learning at college. He would return to Magwe for exams, then come back to Yangon," said Tin Ko Ko.

Life in Yangon, in 2007, was hard. Both were unemployed and struggled to pay the rent. "I didn't want to become a burden to my parents, so I did odd jobs to live on. It took me years to find a decent job," he said.

Tin Ko Ko now works for Kings and Queens, a community-based organisation that works for LGBT rights, and Myo Min Tun works with LGBT healthcare at the Aye Nyein Myittar organisation.

Not many couples have their courage to struggle free from parental influences and people's deep-rooted attitudes toward gays by living well independently.

"It can come as severe blow to a boy to discover his sexual orientation at the age of 12, 13 or 14. Some parents or siblings hate to see him dressing and behaving like girl, and tie him to a post and hit him with a stick," Tin Ko Ko said.

"Some parents become more severe with their children when they are fully grown. They arrange a forced marriage with a woman. Though they obey their parents through fear, the marriage eventually breaks up. That leaves a deep scar on him and his wife," he added.

"They must have the courage of their convictions and find a decent job so they can stand on their own two feet and support their parents. Only by living well in society can we change people's deep-seated attitudes towards us," he said.

The morning sun slanted through the window of their little cottage. Tin Ko Ko finished off his chores by filling the water tank, then shouldered his bag, locked the door and walked toward Myo Min Htet, who was waiting to leave for the office with him.



Tin Ko Ko and his partner Myo Min Htet at their North Dagon home. Photos: Boothee

MANDALAY

Aunts can dance

The women of Mandalay's thriving amateur dance community hoof it early mornings at the park – and sometimes onstage



JEREMY MULLINS

jeremymullins7@gmail.com

PLENTY of performers contend for the crowd's adulation during the annual Chinese New Year festivities in Mandalay. Troupes of professional dancers visited from China to display their considerable skills, while surprisingly well-choreographed dancing schoolchildren won the favour of proud family members. But the most sustained applause of the evening followed a performance by the Yunnan Hall Gymnasium Association – the official title of an all-star group of Mandalay's many dancing auntsies.

The auntsies – mostly middle-aged and senior women who meet regularly to dance for as much as two hours a day – often perform for local events such as weddings and business openings in the city's Chinese community. Up to 100 auntsies at once will perform popular Chinese and Southeast Asian dances that resemble Western line-dancing.

They are strictly amateurs, with rich work and family lives, coming together to share their common interests. While their nieces and nephews might be inclined to do a bit of eye-rolling when their elders show off their moves, the dancers themselves clearly relish the chance

to take to the stage, and they find no lack of community support.

Held at Yunnan Hall, the annual celebration on the first full moon following the Chinese New Year is perhaps the Mandalay Chinese community's biggest event. Organisers cancelled last year's festivities due to a perceived rise in tensions between the Chinese and Bamar communities in Mandalay, but earlier this month they decided to go ahead. And for the best event of the evening, they presented the Yunnan Hall Gymnasium Association's top six dancers – chosen from the hundreds who make up about 10 local practice groups – in Xinjiang-inspired dance and costume.

Typically, the aunties practice in the early morning, mostly for exercise, said team leader Yang Yon Qing. Groups congregate in Mandalay's parks and halls every morning to practice modern dance, from simple styles to more complex cha cha and tango footwork. Festival performances are an extension of their regular meetings, she said.

"We have a different style of dance when we exercise than what you see on the stage," she said. When a performance date draws near, they focus their practice on traditional dance. While any auntie may participate in most wedding and store-opening performances, only the best make the cut for the annual New Year celebrations.

This year's six were chosen by the leader of the Yunnan Hall Gymnasium Association, who in



Amateur dancers perform for Chinese New Year celebrations in Mandalay. Photo: Jeremy Mullins

turn was selected by the Mandalay Yunnan Chinese Association. The Gymnasium Association has been running since 1996, and its predecessor groups stretch back even further.

Learning from instructional DVDs and periodic lessons from visiting professionals, the dancers began piecing together and perfecting their performance a month before the big event. "We like to entertain people and be healthy, but dancing is also our personal hobby," said Yang Yon Qing.

Their enthusiasm is evident, as is their age – the majority of dancers are in their fifties or older. Theories about for why this is. One young spectator suggested that the 6am practice sessions preclude the involvement of modern late-sleeping youth, while another said younger dancers preferred hip-hop over old-fashioned dance. Yang Yon Qing reckons younger women have their

hands full with work and family duties.

"I'm not worried about a lack of interest in dancing," she said. "As women get older and their children grow up, they like to join our group."

The six aunties who performed for Chinese New Years are a particularly dedicated bunch, but many meet every morning simply for the exercise and camaraderie. One group on 62nd Street has found a particularly scenic park for the purpose: It's shaded by trees with a fetching temple backdrop. It's also convenient. Some of the aunties' children attend a nearby school, while a local market offers a place to purchase the day's necessities.

Every morning before Mandalay begins its daily bustling, dozens of members of the 62nd Street group meet up to move in time to music that wails from speakers set up on the sidewalk. Many have the dances down pat, while others do their best

to mimic their neighbours. The mood is light-hearted and casual.

One member of the group, Daw Kyaw Sho May, said that while Chinese aunties predominate, the group is open to any person who wants fun and exercise. Some Bamar and Indian women participate, and even a few uncles have taken part in the aerobic exercises, though they seldom brave the dancing.

In contrast to the Yunnan Hall Gymnasium group, the 62nd Street dancers generally do not accept invitations to appear at events, unless it is a wedding of a dancer's family member or a request from the city's Chinese associations.

"We're here for exercise," she said. "We have busy lives, and agreeing to perform takes time to get ready and to make costumes."

Daw Kyaw Sho May said she hopes more people join the dancing aunties, as it is beneficial for health and, most importantly, quite fun.



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The downs and ups of the Irrawaddy Literary Festival



DOUGLAS LONG
dlong125@gmail.com

THE second edition of the Irrawaddy Literary Festival, held in Mandalay from February 14 to 16, produced its share of controversy. A month before the festival even started, about 50 local poets and 30 cartoonists announced plans to boycott the event for a smattering of reasons, including harbouring bitter feelings about the inclusion of authors from government-linked writers' associations. Once the festival got underway, there was grumbling among a few international authors about Htoo Trading's sponsorship of the event. One Bangkok-based writer told me that he would not have come to Myanmar had he known Tay Za was involved, and he named one other prominent author who felt the same way. These feelings were a source of minor amusement among my local friends, including a small-business owner I ran into at the Yangon Airport on the way back from the festival. Her response was typical: "Tay Za is no worse than the rest of them. To be fair, you'd have to boycott everything sponsored by a major Myanmar company." Meanwhile, the festival's opening day descended into confusion after the Ministry of Culture revoked permission for organisers to hold the event at the last minute at Kuthodaw Pagoda, forcing an abrupt change of venue to Mandalay Hill Resort. The venue switch resulted in the circulation of a rumour around Mandalay that the first day's events had been cancelled. In reality, the transfer to the hotel was made with impressive speed and adeptness, and the first round of panel discussion kicked off only about an hour behind schedule. The cancellation rumours ensured that the crowds remained small throughout the opening day. The first discussion I attended – featuring authors Douglas Kerr, Tom Vater and Duncan Jepson talking about crime writing – was held under a tree behind the hotel and attracted about a dozen people. Triple that number found their way to a talk by Mr Vater later in the afternoon. One of the main draws at the festival – and for many, the only draw – was the appearance of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on February 15. I had mixed feelings about her inclusion in the event: Sure, she's swell and all, and of course her presence was an enticement to foreign authors who attended. But it seemed unfair that only one Myanmar parliamentarian among many should be invited to the festival. Also, 10 other literary panel discussions – which, ostensibly, were what the festival was all about – could have been held in the time slots taken up by Daw Suu Kyi's two appearances. I attended the first talk, which featured Daw Suu Kyi "in conversation"

with Dame Joan Bakewell. Getting a seat in the rather small venue involved wrestling my way through an anarchic scrum of idolaters. My media pass helped me make the cut, as the National League for Democracy (NLD) security detail first allowed foreign authors to enter, followed by foreign media, followed by everyone else. I was also lucky to be white, as the NLD's Keepers of the Gate waved me into the room but stiff-armed the media-pass-bearing Thai journalist who had been standing next to me. He eventually made it inside, but only after submitting to the NLD's seating hierarchy. The "conversation" itself was rather tepid, retracing ground that has been covered hundreds of times before: How did you pass your time under house arrest? Have you read many books on politics? I thought things would heat up a bit when Ms Bakewell mentioned the "trouble in Northern Ireland" between Catholics and Protestants and asked how Buddhism applies to political life. "Here we go! Religious conflict in Myanmar!" I thought. "I don't think Christians are quite Christian in political life, are they? Buddhists are not necessarily Buddhist in political life or even in their social lives," Daw Suu Kyi responded. "There are good Buddhists and not-so-good Buddhists." That was about as controversial as it got. I didn't bother struggling my way into the "Literary Heroes and Villains" discussion that also featured Daw Suu Kyi later that same day. Instead, I remained outside and watched the event on the big video screen that had been erected near the hotel's swimming pool. This talk was marginally more interesting than the first, but, disappointingly, most references were to authors of ages long gone by: William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, George Eliot. Participant Louis de Bernières, the author of the novel *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (1994), deserved hearty applause for at least bringing the discussion into the late 20th century with his mention of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Meanwhile, the welcome and informative references to Asian literature were left to the other panelists, Chinese-born British writer Jung Chang and Myanmar Book Centre chair U Thaw Kaung. For me the highlight was Sunday: The crowds were bigger than the opening day, but the shouting mobs of Daw Suu Kyi's Saturday appearance were gone, and the attention reverted back to the participating authors and literary agents where it belonged. Some of my favourite moments of the festival occurred during my one-on-one conversations with writers like Duncan Jepson and Michael Vatikotis, and literary agents such as Marysia Juszczakiewicz, Kerry Glencorse and Kelly Falconer. At a time when foreign "experts" are flooding into Myanmar to instruct local policymakers on how to behave democratically, hold a census or kick-start the economy, it was heartening to hear the degree to which these writers and agents were actually interested in literature written by Asian authors. I didn't get the sense that they had come to the festival with the pompous goal of "teaching" the locals about writing and publishing, but instead were here to learn about Myanmar's

literary scene and take some of that knowledge back home with them. In the future, the Irrawaddy Literary Festival would do well to pour all of its resources into accommodating this kind of cultural exchange – in particular, giving authors who are little-known to the international community a rare chance to shine – rather than providing space to celebrity politicians who have plenty of other platforms from which they can speak.

Read more of Douglas Long's musings about Myanmar and beyond at latefornowhere.wordpress.com.



Duncan Jepson, Douglas Kerr and Tom Vater (left to right) speak about crime writing at the Irrawaddy Literary Festival in Mandalay on February 14.



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The Q&A

Sonny Aung Khin speaks

An interview with a hero of Burmese cuisine

DINERS seeking an authentic taste of Myanmar can't do much better than Yangon's Padonmar, a Myanmar and Thai fine-dining establishment that Sonny Aung Khin has owned and operated since 2004. Arguably one of the greatest advocates of the national cuisine, he's been developing a healthier hybrid style of classic dishes since 1990, when he and his former partner opened Mandalay Restaurant, the first of its kind in Bangkok, where he lived for 16 years before returning home and taking a job at La Padoma, as the restaurant's first owners from Belgium had called it. "I'm not a chef or a cook, but I know how to correct the cooks if the taste is off," said Aung Khin, who now presides over the Myanmar Restaurant Association, which recently fulfilled a major contract with the 2013 SEA Games. About 600 association workers relocated to build a central kitchen that catered to roughly 500 athletes. As if that hasn't kept him busy enough, Aung Khin also recently revived a Myanmar chapter of Skat International, a club for travel professionals, now in 60 countries and in its 61st year. Yangon had a chapter between 1965 and 1985. Aung Khin is president of the new iteration of 19 local members with more joining. *The Myanmar Times* caught up with the veteran restaurateur at the stately grounds of Padonmar in Dagon township.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Perfect business is perfect happiness. Actually, it's a perfect family and perfect business. But my family is already on their own and grown up in the US so I only have to worry about my business. But I

have 135 children: I have 135 staff. They are my children now. I have to worry for them, teach them, upgrade them.

What is your idea of misery?

You are miserable when your good intentions are misunderstood.

What is your current state of mind?

That's a secret.

What books are you reading, currently?

I haven't read any books for a long time. I'm so busy everyday, reading the newspapers, journals, food and travel magazines to keep up with the news and business of tourism in the country and the world.

Who are your heroes or heroines in real life?

Now you're getting political. Any leader of the country who will make the people happy will be my hero. They have to get off their high horse and get down to the root level and

'I used to play golf. Now I'm involved here, I'm almost a prisoner in my own restaurant.'

Sonny Aung Khin

Owner, Padonmar Restaurant

care for the people. That will be my hero. Not just words, but actions.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

In Yangon there are many restaurants – Japanese, Thai, Chinese, Korean, all the international food. But there is no Myanmar restaurant that can be called fine dining on the same level as those. So my aim and object is to upgrade the food, the restaurants, and I'm happy that I'm recognised for an equal standard at my restaurant. That's what I work hard to maintain and I want fellow restaurateurs to be the same. Not many people have come up to my level, only two or three, and they are also trying very hard. This is my life now: to upgrade Myanmar food. If you look on Trip Advisor, my efforts have been recognized and I'm very happy with that.

What natural talent do you wish you possessed?

In our business the natural talent we need is to understand what the customer wants. To understand what workers want and understand why they can't do what you want them to do. The talent is to understand people of all levels.

What are your favourite foods?

My favorite food is mohingar. I am very fond of Bagan. I love the city and the sites and the people. Besides my 16 years in Bangkok that's where I spent most of my time. And I love the Thai people also and it's like my second home. I love Thai food. My favourite is *tom yum koong* and *pad thai*.

What do you do for relaxation or leisure?

Nothing. Before I was fully involved in the restaurant I would play golf. But now that I'm involved here, I'm almost a prisoner in my own restau-



Sonny Aung Khin at Padonmar Restaurant, on February 11. Photo: Boothee

rant. Golf is very time-consuming. So just to talk to the customers and see them happy and not having problems, complaints – that is my biggest sport.

What is the most surprising thing you have observed?

The most surprising thing is in 2011 the new government opened up the country. Before in Europe and America, the UK, Scandinavia, they said, "Don't go to Myanmar." But now we are flooded with tourists and businessmen and we are not prepared for that. I have capacity for 300 at lunch and 400 at dinner and we're full. We don't have to promote any more.

Where and when were you happiest?

Now.

What is your most treasured possession?

This is it. My restaurant. I put all my time and love and resources into it, to make it the best of my ability.

What is your favourite motto?

I have so many mottos. Believe in yourself.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

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Living well in Myanmar

What medicine (doesn't) know about thanaka

The cosmetic might be beneficial, also might do harm

CHRISTOPH GELSDORF, MD

livingwellmyanmar@gmail.com

THANAKA is, of course, ubiquitous in Myanmar. Its use crosses ethnic and religious boundaries. Although women in most social and economic classes do apply thanaka, descriptions of its use are often essentialist. Statements such as “every Myanmar woman adores thanaka” and “the Burmese have thanaka to thank for the glowing reputation of their complexion” are common in promotional literature.

Regardless of ethnographic complexities, it's probably safe to say that thanaka in Myanmar is in parts a cosmetic, a preventative-health treatment and a tradition. Over the years, I've heard people say it cools the skin, offers sun protection, controls acne, heals wounds, treats rashes and provides nutritional supplement for babies.

It's also used medicinally to cure malaria, epilepsy, leprosy, heart disease and stomach infection. Some people think that eating thanaka and an apple at the same time can result in death.

What has medical research to say about thanaka? This is a challenging topic for a health column because the clinical data is so sparse and the cultural information is so broad. No evidence exists to refute or endorse any of the traditional medicinal uses of thanaka. Furthermore, no studies have evaluated the safety of thanaka for clinical purposes, which is typically the first step in approving medicines in countries where regulatory agencies are strong.

Biologic research is minimal. In 2010 a group of researchers from Thailand dissected the chemical components of the bark of *Hesperethusa crenulata*, which is one of the tree types used to make



Prepackaged thanaka may contain unsafe ingredients. Photo: Boothee

thanaka powder. They found active compounds with antioxidant effects, anti-inflammatory properties and mild antibacterial activity and tyrosinase inhibition (tyrosinase is needed for melanin synthesis, so blocking it could cause skin whitening). The implication is that we might have a physiologic explanation for thanaka's purported protective and therapeutic effects. However, we lack studies on humans that show an actual reduction in things like skin ageing, cancer rates and infections.

Thanaka is sold in the market both as raw wood that is prepared with water on a grinding stone and as a prepackaged, ready-to-use cosmetic that might contain additional ingredients. The marketing of the packaged version as a health product combined with the lack of a robust drug regulatory body creates safety concerns. An example comes from Fort Wayne, Indiana, the largest Karen resettlement area in the United States. In 2009 doctors noticed Karen children had dangerously high lead levels, which they eventually associated with the use of thanaka and *daw tway* (a traditional digestive aid aimed at children) imported from Myanmar and the Thai border.

In an effort to begin the process of evaluating thanaka from an epidemiologic perspective, two of my American colleagues in dermatology

and family medicine recently did a small behavioral study using statistical standards and found that the most commonly reported uses of thanaka are “sun protection”, “skin cooling” and “skin whitening”. This follows what I presume most users feel are good reasons to apply thanaka: It feels nice, it's healthy, it's fun and we've always done it.

It's possible that thanaka protects you from the sun and can act against bacteria, but from a Western medical perspective we don't have any objective evidence to know how it affects skin colour, alters skin disease or supports health in any other way. Unfortunately we also don't know if there are any harms associated with applying or ingesting thanaka, particularly considering the unregulated manner in which the consumer product is prepared and packaged. As resources for medical research become more available in Myanmar, we'll hopefully have more information, and perhaps we'll show that a long-standing traditional product can be used safely and beneficially.

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Christoph Gelsdorf is an American Board of Family Medicine physician who has a health clinic in Yangon (www.gelsdorfMD.com). He is a member of the GP Society of the Myanmar Medical Association. Reader inquiries are welcomed.

What's On



Society by Aung Naing Soe, part of “13 Outlander 2014” at Gallery 65. Photo: Min Lwin

THIS WEEK Got an event? List it in What's On! Email whatsonmt@gmail.com

ART
February 16-28 12-5pm “Yangon Through the Lens of Children” photo exhibition, Myanmar Dietta, 3rd floor, 4A Parami Road, Mayangone
February 17-March 8 10am-6pm “Sparkle 2014: Volume 1” painting exhibition, KZL Art Studio & Gallery, 184/84A Than Lwin Road, Bahan
February 17-28 9am-5pm Rare 19th-century photographs of Myanmar, Yangon Heritage Trust, 22-24 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada
February 20-25 10am-5pm “13 Outlander 2014” group exhibition, Gallery 65, 65 Yaw Min Gyi Road, Dagon
February 20-March 19 Aye Ko solo art exhibition, Bahan Art Gallery, 70 Nat Maut Lane (1), Bahan
February 25-March 7 “Tharkaytarian” painting exhibition, Summit Art Gallery, ground floor, Utopia Tower, Bogoyoke Park, Kandawgyi Lake Garden
February 25 7-11:30pm Social mixer, everyone welcome, Pansodan Gallery, 286 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada

FILM
Start times at Mingalar (2), Shae Shaung (1, 2), Nay Pyi Taw cinemas: 10am, noon, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm and 8pm. Start times at Junction Square, Maw Tin: 10am, 1pm, 4pm daily; 7pm, 9:30pm Friday, Saturday.
Nay Pyi Taw Cinema, near Sule Pagoda
Snowpiercer 2D. Directed by Bong Joon-ho.
Mingalar 2 Cinema, at Dagon Center 2, Myae Ni Gone, Sanchaung
3AM Part 2 3D. Directed by Patchanon Tummajira, Kirati Nakintanon and Isara Nadee.

Shae Shaung Cinema (1), Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada
The Monkey King 3D. Directed by Cheang Pou-soi.
Shae Shaung Cinema (2), Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada
3AM Part 2 3D.
Junction Square Cineplex, Kamayut
Jai Ho. Directed by Sohail Khan.
The Lego Movie 3D. Directed by Chris Miller, Phil Lord.
Junction Maw Tin Cineplex, Lanmadaw
The Lego Movie 3D.

MUSIC
February 24 8:30-11:30pm Live blues guitar, Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan
February 26 7-10:30pm Pizza and jazz night. Enjoy live music, pizza specials and happy hour cocktails. 50th Street Bar, 9/13 50th Street, Botahtaung

MISC
February 24 8-11pm Pub quiz night. Free entry and your chance to win free pitchers of beer or the grand prize of K30,000 of pub credit, 50th Street Bar, 9/13 50th Street, Botataung
February 25 9:45am Dance fitness. A 60-minute workout inspired by Zumba and led by a longtime hip-hop dancer. No experience necessary. K7000, five-class passes K30,000. Grace Dance Studio, Pearl Condo, corner of Kabar Aye Pagoda and Sayar San roads, Bahan
February 26 9-11:30pm Black Party, a gay social mixer for expats and locals, Flamingo Bar, Yangon International Hotel, 330 Ahlone Road
March 1 4pm Burmese language club. Practise your language skills in a group setting. All levels welcome. Pansodan Gallery, 286 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada



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BBQ Chicken (Sein Gay Har Branch)
Sein Gay Har Super Centre, Dagon Township, Yangon. 09-250613329

BBQ Chicken (Ottarathiri Branch)
Ocean Super Center, Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw. 09-250386128, 067-417621-25 Ext : 118

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

WHAT A CROCK! By Henry Quarters

ACROSS

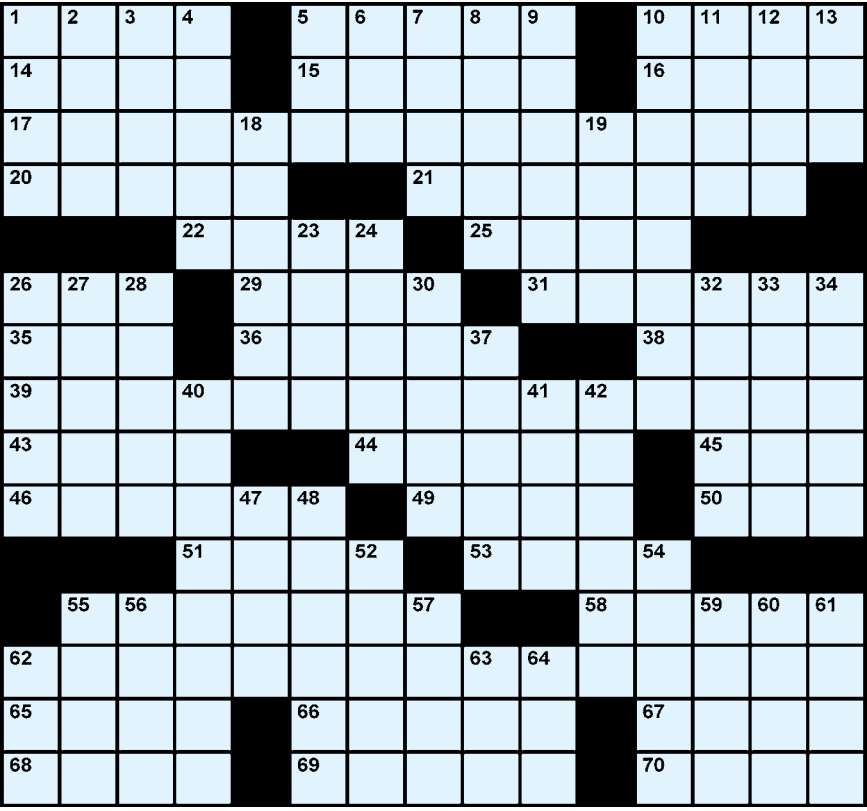
- 1 Cold War initials
5 Puts on a few pounds
10 Bell emanation
14 Dashboard dial, for short
15 "The game is ____"
16 Troll's larger kin
17 Challenging way to race
20 Auburn hair dye
21 Like the moon
22 Gem with a play of color
25 Ceylon and green, for two
26 Kramden's vehicle
29 Downwind at sea
31 American Express or Kia product
35 Nibbled on
36 They sound batty
38 Many microbrews
39 It's produced under pressure
43 Today's Persia
44 Spooky ____-fi
46 The art of film
49 Car wash supplies
50 Soak up some rays
51 Grass roots environment?
53 Application entry
55 Full or half dives
58 A nest on a cliff
62 Wall safe feature
65 Ill-fated son of Adam
66 Cognizant
67 Fencer's weapon, sometimes
68 Enjoy the banquet
69 More cunning
70 Poor grades

DOWN

- 1 Mormon state
2 Savory spice
3 CAT procedure
4 Zoo behemoth
5 It may be natural or noble
6 Back, at sea
7 Extremely small amount
8 Pitched a perfect game against
9 Not mono
10 Guiding principle
11 They often clash
12 Parabolas, e.g.
13 What to spend in Albania

- 18 Smell in "Apocalypse Now"
19 Applaud
23 Hand cream ingredient
24 Africa's Sierra ____
26 Like some training
27 Reproductive organs
28 Many a family car
30 Go inside
32 Gambler's words of lament
33 Where some pilgrims flock
34 Don't leave at the doorstep
37 Plastic-wrap brand
40 Spoiled, as food
41 Latvian capital

- 42 The boss's "echo"
47 Maxi's opposite
48 Concert settings, at times
52 Fish with a big net
54 Sought lampreys
55 Asia's largest desert
56 Revival meeting shout
57 Command to a dog
59 You can skip it
60 Slurpee rival
61 ____ out a living (just gets by)
62 Love-'em-and-leave-'em type
63 Anger
64 " ____ the ramparts ..."



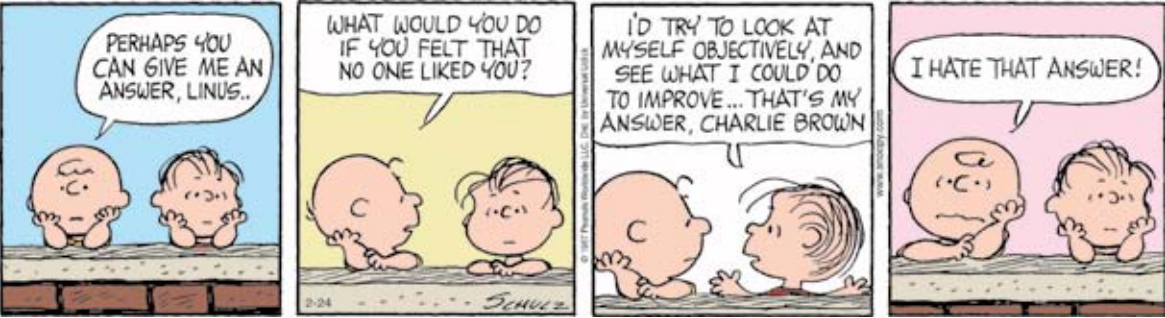
DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



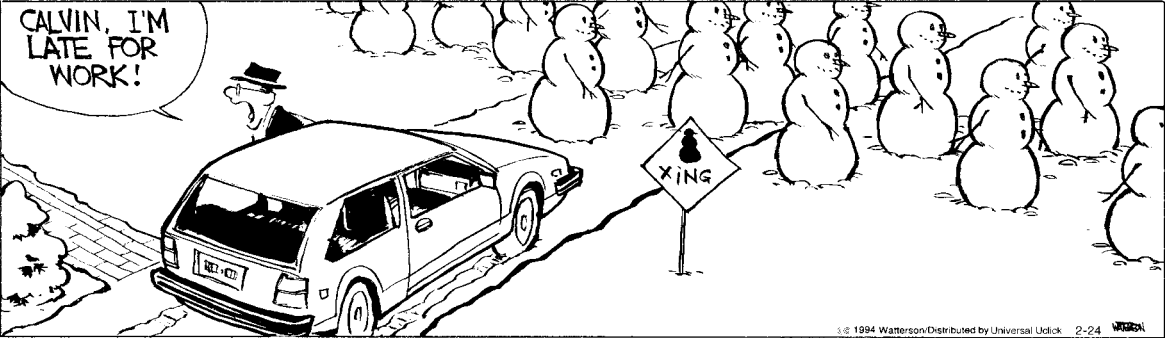
PEANUTS

BY CHARLES SCHULZ



CALVIN AND HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON



SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



2/27

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

'CAPTAIN PHILLIPS'

Solution: 7 letters



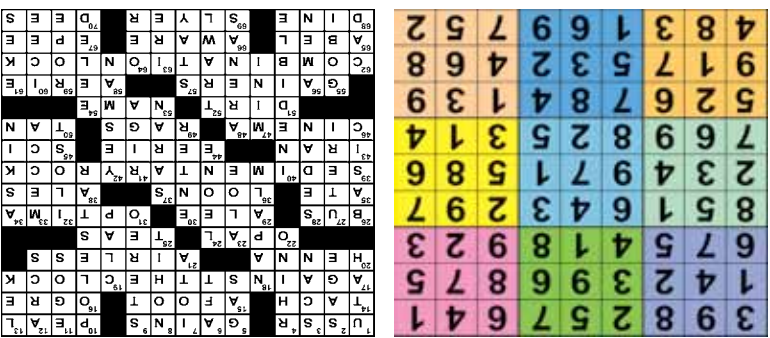
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2/24

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P H Y O ' S C O O K I N G A D V E N T U R E

Cauliflower power

Recipes to celebrate the season of an underrated vegetable

SINCE last week I've been cooking with chicken again, but this time I grilled it myself. Winter is going to be over soon, and so before all the beautiful cauliflowers have gone I've made a few recipes to celebrate this versatile and hearty vegetable.

Both recipes should be served as a warm salad. They are healthy recipes, so good for weight watchers. The second recipe is inspired by Indian cauliflower dishes. I don't really want to eat big heavy, spicy curries, so I've created a lighter salad with fewer spices.

BBQ CHICKEN AND CAULIFLOWER SALAD
SERVES 4

450-500g cauliflower
2 12oz tins chickpeas
2½ tbsp olive oil
1½-2 tbsp lemon juice
Zest of 1 lemon
1 red onion
Handful coriander
Salt
2 green chillies
500g chicken breasts
1 tsp salt

1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tbsp oil

Drain and rinse chickpeas. Slice onions thinly and soak in water at least 5 minutes. Squeeze and set aside. Wash cauliflower and cut into big chunks. Thread on skewers. Wash chicken and discard skin. Drain well. Slice thinly and marinate with salt, pepper and ground coriander. Keep in fridge 1 hour. Tip: Marinate meat in a glass bowl for best results. Marinate chickpeas with olive oil and lemon zest. Brush oil on chicken strips and grill over medium heat. Turn chicken and keep brushing with oil. When cooked through, let cool. Meanwhile, grill cauliflower until soft. When chicken and cauliflower are just warm, add to a bowl with chickpeas. Add onions, coriander leaves and lemon juice. Salt to taste. Add more lemon if you prefer a tangier taste. Serve warm.

CAULIFLOWER SALAD
SERVES 4

450-500g cauliflower
2½ tbsp olive oil

1½-2 tbsp lemon juice
1 red onion
1 tbsp black mustard seeds
2 tsp turmeric powder
Salt

Slice onions thinly and soak in water at least 5 minutes. Squeeze and set aside. Wash cauliflower and cut into big chunks. Boil water to blanch cauliflowers. When it starts to boil, add one teaspoon salt and reduce the heat to medium-low. Boil cauliflower until slightly soft. Refresh in ice water and drain. Add oil to a frying pan on medium heat. Add turmeric powder and black mustard seeds to sauté. Add cauliflower and coat well with oil and spices. Transfer to a big bowl and add onions, lemon juice and salt. Mix well. Salt to taste. Serve with grilled meat or as a side dish.

TIP:
When you're handling red onions, cut off the top and bottom, then soak in water and peel off the skins. Slice and soak in water again for 5 minutes, then wash and drain. Squeeze well. This will get rid of the onion gas and leave you with a crunchier and milder vegetable.



BBQ chicken and cauliflower salad. Photo: Phyo

Cook-it-yourself Thai BBQ perfect for a dinner with friends

NANDAR AUNG
nandaraung.mcm@gmail.com

BLUE Galaxy offers European, Chinese and Korean foods at a fair price, but its specialty is Thai BBQ. The restaurant has been open one year, and it is regularly full of customers who come for this dish that you cook at the table yourself.

Lots of tables provide plenty of room to bring a group of friends here. Total seating is about 40 people inside and over 100 outdoors. Blue neon lights decorate both areas.

The restaurant also offers a special buffet on Saturday and Sunday nights. From 6 to 10pm, dinner is K9000 per person. It's a deal, but be prepared for a crowd. The buffet includes European and Chinese food, a dozen kinds of barbecue, sides, salads and dessert, plus cocktails and soft drinks.

On the menu, the Thai BBQ is offered in 40 different variations,



Cooking meat and vegetables on the gas-heated steamboat. Photo: Nandar Aung

including pork, beef, chicken and seafood. Curries with rice make up the rest of the menu.

Our party started off with a bowl of soup (K2000) made with chicken bones, ginger, lemon grass, tamarind, kaffir lime leaves and galangal. It was salty, sour and delicious, whetting our appetite for the main meal.

We started to feel hungry just

by watching other diners around us enjoying the BBQ. A waiter arrived just in time with a gas cooker, a jar of suki soup and a dome-shape steamboat made of bronze – in the middle, on top of the dome, you roast your meat, while the soup keeps warm in the trough around the edge. Also provided was a dipping sauce for the meat, made of ground garlic, tamarind, green chilli and coriander.

The price of the complete set depends on what you order. We paid K2000 for the soup, plus K2400 for two plates of thin slices of pork, K2800 for beef and K1500 for vegetables.

We also ordered a seafood *tom yum* soup (K4500), which is better eaten with rice. The seafood was fresh and generously portioned. We had fish, squid, crab, lobster, prawns, blood cockles and more. But it was too salty and heavy with gravy.

The suki soup was by far our favourite. The soup is spicy, so we also

consumed a pretty large number of quail eggs to quell the heat. And with all the salt and sauce and garlic, we were left feeling quite thirsty.

On that note, there is also a well-stocked bar of wine, cocktails and beer. Overall, it's a great place for a relaxing social dinner with friends or a slow and romantic date.

Blue Galaxy

14 Moe Kaung Road, Yankin township, Bauk Htaw

Food	10
Beverage	8
Service	9
X-factor	7
Value of money	9

Total Score: **8.6**/10

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Reservation : 01-211430, 01-212704
Ngwe Saung : 042-40341, 09-5200613
Email : reservation.eskala@gmail.com

NUXE cosmetic products launch



Guests Ma Sandar Ko Ye Thu Aung and Ma Khin Thinzar Aung

Yoon Mi Mi Ko's birthday party



Nawarat, Yoon Mi Mi Ko and Ma Tin Tin Win Ko Tin Ko Ko

Ikon Mart Valentine Party



Ko Zarni, Aellex Yeo and Ko Naung Naung Latt Yadana and office staff

Mann Yadanarpon airlines launch



Alvin Law U Zaw Min



Hitachi Dealer convention



Mr Ohsugi



Mr Hiroki



Ma Su Htet Aung



MOH MOH THAW

mohthaw@gmail.com

MINGALABAR, fans of Socialite! This week was special. It had two memorial events, Union Day and Bogoyoke Aung San's birthday, which fell on February 12 and 13 respectively. Then there was another special event, though not of our culture: Valentine's Day. Socialite kicked off the week with the launch of Mann Yadanarpon airlines at Sedona Hotel on February 11. The same day she attended a Hitachi dealer convention at Traders Hotel. On February 12, she enjoyed KBA's dinner party at Golden Duck and attended a new product launch by Ever Seiko. She took part in Yoon Mi Mi Ko's birthday party at Mya Yeik Nyo Hotel on February 13. She had a blissful time at the Irrawaddy Literary Festival, where she watched the presentation of the Myanmar translation of the Israeli bestselling novel *The Soul Bird*, by Michal Snunit. The same day, she celebrated Valentine's Day at Ikon Mart. On February 15, she was at the NUXE cosmetic products launch. On February 18, she attended the grand opening of the DFM showroom and service center.

KBA's dinner party



U Ne Win, U Min Lwin, U Thant Zin and U Kyaw Sann Oo



U Soe Win and Ko Zaw Htet Naing

Dongfeng Motor showroom grand opening



U Aung Win and U Soe Soe Lwin



U Khin Maung



Mr Wada and Mr Toshihide Ano

Irrawaddy literary festival



U Hein Latt



Michal Snunit



Israeli ambassador and children

Ever Seiko product launch



Aerial Thuta and guest



Yoon Wadi Lwin Moe



Soe Myat Thuzar, Myat Kaythi Aung and Daw Aye Aye Thwe



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- Black Pepper Crab
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Lunch from 11:00am until 2:30pm.
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DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 833	2	7:00	8:10
FMI A1	1,2,3,4,5	7:30	8:30
Y5 777	1,2,3,4,6	7:45	8:25
FMI A1	6	8:00	9:00
FMI B1	1,2,3,4,5	11:30	12:30
FMI A1	7	15:30	16:30
FMI C1	1,2,3,4,5	16:30	17:30

NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
FMI A2	1,2,3,4,5	8:50	9:50
FMI A2	6	10:00	11:00
YH 834	2	13:00	13:55
FMI B2	1,2,3,4,5	13:00	14:00
FMI A2	7	17:00	18:00
Y5 778	1,2,3,4,6	17:30	18:10
FMI C2	1,2,3,4,5	18:00	19:00

YANGON TO MANDALAY			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	2,5	6:00	7:40
YH 909	1,3,4,6,7	6:00	7:40
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	8:05
YJ 901	Daily	6:10	7:35
YH 917	1,3,4,6,7	6:10	8:30
Y5 234	Daily	6:15	7:30
6T 401	Daily	6:20	8:25
YH 833	2	7:00	9:10
W9 201	Daily	7:30	8:55
8M 6603	2,4,7	9:00	10:10
YJ 751/W9 7751	5,7	10:30	12:25
YJ 761	1,2,4,6	10:30	12:25
YJ 211	5,7	11:00	12:25
YJ 201	2,3,4	11:00	12:25
YJ 601/W9 7601	6	11:00	13:05
YH 737	3,7	11:15	13:25
YH 727	1	11:15	13:25
YH 729	6	11:15	14:15
W9 251	2,5	11:15	12:40
YH 737	5	11:30	13:40
YH 729	2,4	11:30	14:30
YJ 003	3	11:30	12:55
6T 807	7	11:30	12:55
6T 807	1	12:00	13:25
W9 129	Daily	15:00	16:55
YH 731	Daily	15:00	17:10
6T 501	Daily	15:30	17:30
W9 211	Daily	15:30	16:55

MANDALAY TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 901	Daily	7:50	9:55
YH 909	1,3,4,6,7	7:40	9:45

Y5 233	Daily	8:10	9:25
YJ 891	Daily	8:20	10:15
YH 918	1,3,4,6,7	8:30	10:45
6T 402	Daily	8:45	10:45
YH 918	2,5	9:10	11:05
W9 201	Daily	9:10	11:05
W9 144	Daily	9:20	10:45
Y5 132	3,5,6,7	9:30	10:30
YH 834	2	12:00	13:55
YH 832	4,6	12:30	13:55
6T 808	7	13:15	15:15
YJ 212	7	15:00	16:55
6T 808	1	13:45	15:45
YJ 212	5	15:00	16:55
YJ 202	2,4	15:30	16:55
YJ 202	3	16:00	17:55
YJ 762	1,2,4,6	16:05	17:30
YJ 602/W9 7602	6	16:20	17:45
W9 120	1,3,6	16:30	17:55
YH 728	1	16:45	18:10
YH 738	5	17:05	19:00
W9 129	Daily	17:10	18:35
YH 732	Daily	17:10	19:15
W9 211	Daily	17:10	19:15
8M 6604	2,4,7	17:20	18:30
YJ 752/W9 7752	5,7	17:20	18:45
YH 738	3,7	17:25	18:50
6T 502	Daily	17:50	19:55
YJ 004	3	18:00	19:25
YH 730	6	18:00	19:25
YH 730	2,4	18:15	19:40

YANGON TO NYAUNG U			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	7:20
YH 917	2,5	6:00	8:25
YH 909	1,3,4,6,7	6:00	8:25
YH 909	2,5	6:10	7:45
YH 917	1,3,4,6,7	6:10	7:45
YJ 901	Daily	6:10	8:20
W9 141	Daily	6:15	7:35
6T 401	Daily	6:20	7:40
6T 351	1,2,3,4,6,7	6:30	7:50
W9 143	Daily	7:15	8:35
YJ 601/W9 7601	6	11:00	12:20
YH 731	Daily	15:00	17:55
W9 211	Daily	15:30	17:40
6T 501	Daily	15:30	18:20

NYAUNG U TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 891	Daily	7:35	10:15
YH 917	1,3,4,6,7	7:45	10:45
W9 141	Daily	7:50	10:40
YH 918	2,5	8:25	11:05

YH 910	1,3,4,6,7	8:25	9:45
YJ 901	Daily	8:35	9:55
W9 144	Daily	8:50	10:10
YH 910	2,5	9:35	10:55
6T 351	5	10:50	13:55
W9 211	Daily	17:55	19:15
YH 732	Daily	17:55	19:15
6T 502	Daily	18:35	19:55

YANGON TO MYITKYINA			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 833	2	7:00	10:35
YH 831	4,6	7:00	10:35
YJ 201	2,4	11:00	13:50
YJ 201	3	11:00	14:20
W9 251	2,5	11:15	14:10

MYITKYINA TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 834	2	10:35	13:55
YH 832	4,6	10:35	13:55
YJ 202	2,4	14:05	16:55
YJ 202	3	14:35	17:55
W9 252	2,5	16:05	19:00

YANGON TO HEHO			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	8:50
YH 917	2,5	6:00	9:55
YH 909	2,5	6:10	8:40
YH 917	1,3,4,6,7	6:10	9:35
W9 141	Daily	6:15	8:20
6T 401	Daily	6:20	9:20
6T 351	1,2,3,4,6,7	6:30	8:45
W9 201	Daily	7:30	9:40
YJ 751/W9 7751	5,7	10:30	11:40
YJ 761	1,2,4,6	10:30	11:40
YH 505	3,4,6,7	10:30	11:55
YH 737	3,7	11:15	12:40
YH 727	1	11:15	12:40
YH 505	2	11:30	12:55
YH 737	5	11:30	12:55
YJ 201	3	11:00	12:10
W9 203	Daily	11:00	12:10
W9 119	1,3,6	11:15	12:25
6T 807	7	11:30	13:50
6T 807	1	12:00	14:20
W9 129	Daily	15:00	16:10
YH 731	Daily	15:00	16:25
6T 501	Daily	15:30	16:40

SITT WE TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 511	1	12:05	13:55
YH 511	5	13:05	14:55
6T 606	Daily	13:35	15:00
6T 612	4,6	16:15	17:40

HEHO TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 141	Daily	8:35	10:40
YH 910	2,5	8:40	10:55

6T 352	Daily	9:00	11:10
YJ 891	Daily	9:05	10:15
YH 918	1,3,4,6,7	9:35	10:45
6T 402	Daily	9:35	10:45
YH 918	2,5	9:55	11:05
W9 201	Daily	9:55	11:05
YH 505	3,4,6,7	11:55	14:00
W9 204	Daily	12:25	13:35
YH 505	2	12:55	15:00
6T 808	7	14:05	15:15
6T 808	1	14:35	15:45
W9 120	1,3,6	15:45	17:55
YJ 762	1,2,4,6	15:20	17:30
YJ 212	5,7	15:45	16:55
YH 728	1	16:00	18:10
YH 738	3,7	16:40	18:50
W9 129	Daily	16:25	18:35
YH 731	Daily	16:25	19:15
YJ 202	3	16:45	17:55
6T 501	Daily	16:55	19:55
YH 738	5	17:50	19:00

YANGON TO SITT WE			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 511	1	10:30	12:05
6T 605	Daily	11:15	13:15
YH 511	5	11:30	13:05
W9 309	1,3,5,6,7	11:30	12:55
6T 611	4,6	14:30	15:55

SITT WE TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 511	1	12:05	13:55
YH 511	5	13:05	14:55
6T 606	Daily	13:35	15:00
6T 612	4,6	16:15	17:40

YANGON TO MYEIK			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 633	1,3,5,7	7:00	9:15

MYEIK TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 634	1,3,5,7	11:25	13:25

YANGON TO THANDWE			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 141	Daily	6:15	9:35
6T 351	1,2,3,4,6,7	6:30	10:00
YH 511	1	10:30	13:05
YH 505	3,4,6,7	10:30	13:10
6T 605	Daily	11:15	12:10
YH 505	2	11:30	14:10
W9307	2,4	11:30	13:50
W9 309	1,3,5,6,7	11:30	13:50
YH 511	5	11:30	14:05

THANDWE TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 141	Daily	9:50	10:40
6T 632	1,2,3,4,6,7	10:15	11:10
6T 605	Dailys	12:25	15:00
6T 632	5	13:00	13:55
YH 512	1	13:05	13:55
YH 506	3,4,6,7	13:10	14:00
W9 307	2,4	14:05	14:55
W9 309	1,3,5,6,7	14:05	14:55
YH 512	5	14:05	14:55
YH 506	2	14:10	15:00

Domestic Airlines

Air Bagan Ltd. (W9)
Tel : 513322, 513422, 504888, Fax : 515102

Air KBZ (K7)
Tel: 372977-80, 533030-39 (Airport),
Fax: 372983, Hot Line: 373766

Air Mandalay (6T)
Tel : (Head Office) 501520, 525488,
Fax: 525937. Airport: 533222-3, 09-73152853.
Fax: 533223.

Asian Wings (YJ)
Tel: 951 516654, 532253, 09-731-35991-3.
Fax: 951 532333

Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5)
Tel: 95 9 400446999, 95 9 400447999,
Fax: 01 860 4051

Yangon Airways(YH)
Tel: (+95-1) 383 100, 383 107, 700 264,
Fax: 652 533.

FMI Air Charter - Sales & Reservations
Tel: [95-1] 240363, 240373 / [+95-9] 421146545

Domestic

6T = Air Mandalay

W9 = Air Bagan

YJ = Asian Wings

K7 = AIR KBZ

YH = Yangon Airways

FMI = FMI AIR Charter

Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

Subject to change without notice

Day	4 = Thursday
1 = Monday	5 = Friday
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday

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INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 706	Daily	7:15	9:30
8M 335	Daily	8:40	10:25
TG 304	Daily	9:50	11:45
PG 702	Daily	10:30	12:25
TG 302	Daily	14:55	16:50
PG 708	Daily	15:20	17:15
8M 331	Daily	16:30	18:15
PG 704	Daily	18:20	20:15
Y5 237	Daily	18:05	19:50
TG 306	Daily	19:45	21:40

YANGON TO DON MUENG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4231	Daily	8:00	9:45
FD 2752	Daily	8:30	10:20
FD 2756	Daily	12:50	14:40
FD 2754	Daily	17:35	19:25
FD 2758	1,2,3,4	20:55	22:50
DD 4239	Daily	21:00	22:55

YANGON TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 509	1,2,6,7	0:25	5:00
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25
8M 233	5,6,7	14:00	18:25
Y5 233	Daily	10:10	14:40
SQ 997	Daily	10:25	14:45
3K 586	Daily	11:40	16:20
MI 517	Daily	16:40	21:15
TR 2827	1,6,7	15:10	19:35
TR 2827	2,3,4,5	17:10	21:35
3K 588	2,3,5	19:30	00:10+1

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 501	1,3,5,6	8:55	12:55
AK 1427	Daily	8:30	12:50
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30
MH 743	Daily	16:00	20:15
AK 1421	Daily	19:05	23:20

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	2,4,7	8:40	13:15
CZ 3056	3,6	11:35	15:50
CZ 3056	1,5	17:40	22:05

YANGON TO TAIPEI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7916	1,2,3,5,6	10:50	16:15

YANGON TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2012	1,3	12:20	18:20
MU 2032	Daily	14:40	18:00
CA 906	2,3,4,6,7	14:15	17:35

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 9607	4,7	14:30	16:20

YANGON TO HANOI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:25

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:10

YANGON TO DOHA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 619	Daily	7:30	11:15

YANGON TO PHNOM PENH			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 403	1,3,6	8:35	12:30

YANGON TO SEOUL			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:50	8:50
KE 472	2,3,4	23:35	07:45+1

YANGON TO HONG KONG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	1,2,4,6	01:10	05:35

YANGON TO TOKYO			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	Daily	22:10	06:45+1

YANGON TO SIEM REAP			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 401	1,3,6	8:35	10:45

YANGON TO GAYA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 601	1,3,5,6	9:00	10:20

YANGON TO DHAKA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 061	1,4	19:30	20:45

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 2982	1,2,4,6	9:50	12:00
TG 2984	3,5	19:35	21:45
PG 710	Daily	14:15	16:40

MANDALAY TO DON MUENG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2761	Daily	12:50	15:15

MANDALAY TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	14:40	17:20

NAYPYIDAW TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 722	1,2,3,4,5	19:45	22:45

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 336	Daily	11:55	12:40
TG 303	Daily	8:00	8:45
PG 701	Daily	8:50	9:40
TG 301	Daily	13:00	13:45
PG 707	Daily	13:40	14:30
PG 703	Daily	16:45	17:35
TG 305	Daily	17:50	18:45
8M 332	Daily	19:20	20:05
PG 705	Daily	20:00	21:15
Y5 238	Daily	21:10	21:55

DON MUENG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4230	Daily	6:30	7:15
FD 2751	Daily	7:15	8:00
FD 2755	Daily	11:35	12:20
FD 2753	Daily	16:20	17:05
FD 2757	1,2,3,4	19:35	20:25
DD 4238	Daily	19:25	20:15

SINGAPORE TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
SQ 998	Daily	7:55	9:20
3K 585	Daily	9:10	10:40
8M 232	Daily	13:25	14:50
TR 2826	1,6,7	13:10	14:30
MI 518	Daily	14:20	15:45
TR 2826	2,3,4,5	15:00	16:30
Y5 234	Daily	15:35	17:05
3K 587	2,3,5	17:20	18:50
8M 234	5,6,7	19:25	20:50
MI 520	1,2,6,7	22:10	23:35

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	8:05	13:15

KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AK 1426	Daily	6:55	8:00
MH 740	Daily	10:05	11:15
MH742	Daily	13:50	15:00
8M 502	1,3,5,6	14:00	15:00
AK 1420	Daily	17:20	18:25

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CZ 3055	3,6	8:35	10:35
CZ 3055	1,5	14:40	16:40
8M 712	2,4,7	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	8:25	11:40
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	13:00	13:15
MU 2031	Daily	13:30	14:00

CHIANG MAI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 9608	4,7	17:20	18:10

HANOI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:35	18:10

HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 943	2,4,7	11:40	13:25

DOHA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 618	Daily	21:15	06:29+1

GAYA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 602	1,3,5,6	11:20	14:30

PHNOM PENH TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 404	1,3,6	13:30	14:55

SEOUL TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	2,3,4	18:30	22:30
OZ 769	3,6	19:30	23:40

TOKYO TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:45	17:15

HONG KONG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:50	23:45

DHAKA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 060	1,4	16:15	18:30

BANGKOK TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 2981	1,2,4,6	7:45	9:00
TG 2983	3,5	17:30	18:45
PG 709	Daily	12:05	13:25

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2760	Daily	10:55	12:20

KUNMING TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2029	Daily	13:55	13:50

BANGKOK TO NAYPYIDAW			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:15	19:15

International Airlines

Air Asia (FD) Tel: 251 885, 251 886.									
Air Bagan Ltd.(W9) Tel : 513322, 513422, 504888, Fax : 515102									
Air China (CA) Tel : 666112, 655882.									
Air India Tel : 253597~98, 254758. Fax: 248175									
Bangkok Airways (PG) Tel: 255122, 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									
Myanmar Airways International(8M) Tel : 255260, Fax: 255305									
Silk Air(MI) Tel: 255 287~9, Fax: 255 290									
Thai Airways (TG) Tel : 255491~6, Fax : 255223									
Vietnam Airlines (VN) Fax : 255086, Tel. 255066/ 255088/ 255068.									
Qatar Airways (Temporary Office) Tel: 379845, 379843, 379831, Fax: 379730									
Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BG) Tel: 371867~68, Fax: 371869.									
International									
FD & AK = Air Asia									
TG = Thai Airways									
8M = Myanmar Airways International									
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines									
PG = Bangkok Airways									
MI = Silk Air									
VN = Vietnam Airline									
MH = Malaysia Airlines									
CZ = China Southern									
CI = China Airlines									
CA = Air China									
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NH = All Nippon Airways									
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MU=China Eastern Airlines									
BR = Eva Airlines									
DE = Condor									
AI = Air India									
BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines									
Subject to change without notice									
<table><tr><td>Day</td><td>4 = Thursday</td></tr><tr><td>1 = Monday</td><td>5 = Friday</td></tr><tr><td>2 = Tuesday</td><td>6 = Saturday</td></tr><tr><td>3 = Wednesday</td><td>7 = Sunday</td></tr></table>		Day	4 = Thursday	1 = Monday	5 = Friday	2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday	3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday
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1 = Monday	5 = Friday								
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday								
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday								

PARIS



Marina Bay and the skyline of the Central Business District of Singapore at dusk. Singapore is 25th in a recent ranking of best cities for expatriates' quality of life. Photo: William Cho

Singapore and Dhaka poles apart in survey

Two cities represent the best and worst quality of life Asia can offer

SINGAPORE on Wednesday topped an international survey of the best cities in Asia for expatriates while Dhaka was named the worst. Japan took all the other spots in the Asian top five, with Tokyo in second place followed by Kobe, Yokohama and Osaka, according to the annual ranking by the Mercer consulting group. Worldwide, Vienna, Zurich and Auckland were named as the best places to



Mohinga and htamane for sale at Kyaik Khauk Pagoda festival. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

A vendor's life

What would a festival be without the goods and treats?

NANDAR AUNG
nandaraung.mcm@gmail.com

EVERY month of the year, the people of Myanmar celebrate festivals of pagodas and traditional culture. It is the custom of most families to make sure they attend those that are close to their hometown. A pagoda festival commemorates a major event in that particular site's history. It is a tradition that's been practised through the ages.

In recent history, the festivals have also developed another feature – travelling bands of itinerant food and goods vendors moving their portable kitchens and workshops around the country from one festival season to the next, providing the snacks and souvenirs that fuel the celebrations. The vendors depend on the festivals for their livelihood, but to some extent the reverse is also true. What would a festival be without these men and women who feed the crowds?

In this trade, it is often veteran vendors who hand down the knowledge of how to prepare the customary foods from generation to generation. Some would call them migrant workers, since they move from one place to another, making

their own way with a family in tow or alone.

At the Kyaik Khauk Pagoda festival, held February 7-15 in Yangon, most sold *mohinga* and *htamane* and other traditional handmade products such as furniture, household goods made from cane, silver or mud, homespun cloth and thanaka. The sales started in the early afternoons and continued through the night.

Khin Win Sein is a travelling vendor from Latpadan, Mawlemyin region, who takes great pride and joy in her longtime family business. She enjoys the moving around the country, she said, and is obsessed by her work as though it were a hobby.

At 35 years old, she has a 23-year-old daughter with her on the road and a 13-year-old son at home, but she is still selling *htamane* (a specialty food made of glutinous rice, oil, sesame and groundnut) and *kauk njin kji dauk* (sticky rice cooked in a green bamboo tube). She's been making these foods since she was 12 years old, learning from her father.

"I learned to make the food in the old way – relayed from generation to generation. If it is delicious to me, other people will find it delicious too. I make the food without thinking about how much it costs or what I

will charge," she said. "My children will benefit if my name is passed between my customers. I always tell my kids: Make the food delicious. Don't worry about the profit."

She broke a bamboo cane using an old cutter quickly for a customer, explaining to me how she gets the best taste from the cane and how to preserve its freshness. She wore a faded longyi and buttoned-down jacket over additional layers of warm clothing. Her dark brown skin is wrinkled seemingly beyond her years. Her hands are rough and her thumb is much bigger and rounder than her other fingers from breaking bamboo with her bare hands. She had travelled to the festival with her husband and daughter 160 kilometres (100 miles) from Latpadan to Yangon.

Her income in a day is more than K100,000, but after expenses, not much is left. She is happy so long as it is enough to care for her whole family.

Her next target is the Kyaik Wine Pagoda festival, which will be held in Mayangone township, Yangon. After that she will go back to her hometown until Thadingyut (September to October) comes around, and she will be on the road again.



A painting by Thun Lwin Tun for "13 Outlander 2014" at Gallery 65. Photo: Min Lwin

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

FEBRUARY 24 – MARCH 2, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 – Feb 18



You might feel challenged by money matters. You would do well to remain defensive in a calm and quiet way. If you can convince yourself to open up to the world, you will find it much easier to continue on your current path. It can be beneficial to spend time around good-natured and generous people, but you must also learn how to capture the attention of others.

LEO | July 23 – Aug 22



Consistency and persistence will lead to valuable results. Taking responsibility for your own actions can change the outcome considerably. A new beginning must always be preceded by impressive and enthusiastic change. Understand that suggestions are always worth receiving, even when they are unreasonable or cannot be pursued.

PISCES | Feb 19 – March 20



What could be better than finding someone who is as faithful and devoted as you are? A strong desire to love and be loved can result in an overflow of emotions. Mystery is important, but being evasive will lead to disaster – make sure you know the difference. Be ready to act according to your best nature for a long time to come. Unexpected good fortune will lead to an easier and happier life.

VIRGO | Aug 23 – Sept 22



Patience is a tree whose roots are very bitter but whose fruit is very sweet. Cultivate the desire to make someone else happy, easy and comfortable, and love every minute of it. Even if your social promises are untrustworthy, you should take great pains to keep your word on financial commitments. Self-management is essential for maintaining a healthy and strong position.

ARIES | Mar 21 – Apr 19



Expecting too much too soon will only build hopes that can come crashing down all too easily. You might be completely misunderstood by those who do not take the time to truly get to know you. Failing to acknowledge the accomplishments of others might lead to confrontations. Make sure your intentions are not misrepresented by your actions. Open your eyes to the dark side of your personality.

LIBRA | Sept 23 – Oct 22



The words that come out of your mouth are the result of your passion. If you learn to expect less, you will feel like you have so much more. Success occurs when you become happy with the way you will be remembered by history. A strong human spirit is able to maintain faith even in the deepest darkness. Love and sex must be based on the joining of two hearts.

TAURUS | Apr 20 – May 20



Never come on stronger or more obstinate than you really are. Be flexible enough to remain patient with the impulsive nature of others. Generosity will deepen your most colourful social relationships. You have nothing to worry about except always being honest. Once the fight is over, don't ever take action to reignite the conflict. If you can't be a true leader at heart, at least be a true leader in manner.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 – Nov 21



You must define your various psychological states to play different roles in your social circle and to develop your intellectual power. Balance is the key to serenity. Love that is content with friendship and the self will produce generous impulses. Know that self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control, when taken together, can lead to greater sovereign power. Learn to appreciate each minute of your time.

GEMINI | May 21 – June 20



Allow yourself to revel in your true and best self, and make sure you don't change anything purely for the benefit of others – your local community will just have to accept you at face value. Be wary of anything that is created in haste, and take whatever time you need to build power and knowledge for a better future. Don't confuse generosity with love. Remember that jealousy will do you no good.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 – Dec 21



Spontaneity is the name of game when you play with close partners and friends. Notice how an abundance of small pebbles can create many ripples on the lake. Never allow your determination to wane, and be sure to keep your promises and speak reasonably. Never depend solely on the strength of your social position, but instead stand on the basis of your own strength.

CANCER | June 21 – July 22



Strike when the iron is hot, but also understand that it can sometimes be advantageous to put things off. New ideas will have to be introduced slowly into your world, but do not allow others to play games that could lead you astray. Go beyond self-importance to start your self-transformation. Social and family agreements will freshen your mind, giving you the courage to take risks that will lead to positive change.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 – Jan 19



Everything has a beginning, middle and end. To make the right decisions in love, learn more about the different expressions of the flowers in the garden of life. You must put your words into action in order to understand the hearts and minds of others. It is easier to change the question than the answer. Any transition is merely a bridge to help you get to where you're going.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

4th Floor, 113, Thamaing Bayan Road, Tarmwe township, Yangon.
Tel: 09-731-35632, Email: williameastel@gmail.com

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Brazil 56, Pyay Road, 6th mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 507225, 507251. email: Administ.yangon@itamaraty.gov.br.

Brunei 17, Kanbawza Avenue, Golden Velly (1), Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 566985, 503978. email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm

Cambodia 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 549609, 540964. email: RECYANGON@mptmail.net.mm

China 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 221280, 221281.

Danmark, No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 01 - 9669520 - 17.

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France 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 212178, 212520, email: ambaf.rance.rangoun@diplomatie.fr

Germany 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 548951, 548952, email: info@rangun.diplo.de

India 545-547, Merchant St, Yangon. Tel: 391219, 388412, email: indiaembassy@mptmail.net.mm

Indonesia 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Rd, Yangon. Tel: 254465, 254469, email: kukygn@indonesia.com.mm

Israel 15, Khabaung Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il

Italy 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. Tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang.mail@esteri.it

Japan 100, Natmauk Rd, Yangon. Tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643

State of Kuwait Chatrium Hotel, Rm: 416, 418, 420, 422, 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe Tsp, Tel: 544500.

Lao A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 222482, fax: 227446, email: Laoembcab@mptmail.net.mm

Malaysia 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 220248, 220249, email: mwkyangon@mptmail.net.mm

Nepal 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. Tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb@mptmail.net.mm

Norway, No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 01 - 9669520 - 17 Fax - 01- 9669516

New Zealand No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2305805

Netherlands Diplomatic Mission No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2305805

North Korea 77C, Shin Saw Pu Rd, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 512642, 510205

Pakistan A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange)

Philippines 50, Sayasan Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 558149-151, Email: p.e.yangon@gmail.com

Russian 38, Sagawa Rd, Yangon. Tel: 241955, 254161,

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia No.287/289, U Wisara Rd, Sanchaung. Tel : 01-536153, 516952.

Serbia No. 114-A, Inya Rd, P.O.Box No. 943, Yangon. Tel: 515282, 515283, email: serbemb@yangon.net.mm

Singapore 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 559001, email: singemb_ygn@sgmfa.gov.sg

South Korea 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr

Sri Lanka 34 Taw Win Road, Yangon. Tel: 222812,

Switzerland No 11, Kabaung Lane, 5 ½ mile, Pyay Rd, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 534754, 507089.

Thailand 94 Pyay Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 226721, 226728, 226824

Turkish Embassy 19AB, Kan Yeik Thar St, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 662992, Fax : 661365

United Kingdom 80 Strand Rd, Yangon. Tel: 370867, 380322, 371852, 371853, 256438,

United States of America 110, University Avenue, Kamayut Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 536509, 535756, Fax: 650306

Vietnam Bldg-72, Thanlwin Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 511305

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IOM 318 (A) Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel - 01-210588, 09 73236679, 0973236680, Email- iomyangon@iom.int

UNAIDS 137/1, Thaw Wun Rd, Kamayut Tsp. Tel : 534498, 504832

UNDCP 11-A, Malikha St, Mayangone tsp. Tel: 666903, 664539.

UNDP 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739.

UNFPA 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029.

UNHCR 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. Tel: 524022, 524024.

UNIAP Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. Tel: 254852, 254853.

UNIC 6, Natmauk St., Bahan, tel: 52910-19

UNICEF 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, Kyauktada. Tel: 375527-32, unicef.yangon@unicef.org,

UNODC 11-A, Malikha Rd., Ward 7, Mayangone. tel: 01-9666903, 9660556, 9660538, 9660398. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org

UNOPS Inya Lake Hotel, 3rd floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. Tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279.

UNRC 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE Tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator),

WFP 5 Kan Baw Za St, Shwe Taung Kyar, (Golden Valley), Bahan Tsp. Tel : 2305971-6

WHO No. 2, Pyay Rd, 7 Mile, Mayangone Tsp, Tel : 650405-6, 650416, 654386-90.

ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Tsp. Tel: 225258.

FAO Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673.

General Listing

ACCOMMODATION-HOTELS

Asia Plaza Hotel
YANGON

No. 277, Bogyoke Aung San Road, Corner of 38th Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: (951) 391070, 391071. Reservation@391070 [Ext] 1910, 106. Fax : (951) 391375. Email : hotelasiaplaza@gmail.com

Avenue 64 Hotel

No. 64 (G), Kytewine Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 09-8631392, 01 656913-9

Chatrium Hotel
40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe. tel: 544500. fax: 544400.

Clover hotel

No.7A, Wingabar Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : (951) 546313, 430245. 09-731-77781~4. Fax : [01] 546313. www.cloverhotel.asia. info@cloverhotel.asia

Clover Hotel City Center

No. 217, 32nd Street (Upper Block), Pabedan Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : 377720, Fax : 377722 www.clovercitycenter.asia

Clover Hotel City Center Plus

No. 229, 32nd Street (Upper Block), Pabedan Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : 377975, Fax : 377974 www.clovercitycenterplus.asia

Confort Inn

4, Shweli Rd, Bet: Inya Rd & U Wisara Rd, Kamaryut, tel: 525781, 526872

Eden Palace Hotel
No. (356/366), Kyaukkasan Rd, Tamwe Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 542826, Fax: 545650 Email: reservation@edenpalacehotel.com

GRAND PALACE HOTEL

M-22, Shwe Htee Housing, Thamine Station St., Near the Bayint Naung Point, Mayangone Tsp., Yangon Tel : 522763, 522744, 667557. Fax : (95-1) 652174 E-mail : grandpalace@myanmar.com.mm

GREEN HILL HOTEL

No. 12, Pho Sein Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon Tel : (95-1) 209299, 209300, 209343, 209345, 209346 Fax : (95-1) 209344 E-mail : greenhill@myanmar.com.mm

Green Paradise Hotel

7, Yeik Tha (1) St, Waizayandar Housing, Tamwe Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-566727, 1222635 09-4200-33335, 09-4200-33337. Email : greenparadisehotel.mynld@gmail.com www.greenparadisemyn.com

Hotel Yangon

91/93, 8th Mile Junction, Tel : 01-667708, 667688.

Inya Lake Resort Hotel

37 Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 662866. fax: 665537.

MGM Hotel No (160), Warden Street, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. +95-1-212454-9. www.hotel-mgm.com

PANDA hotel

No. 205, Corner of Wadan Street & Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon. Myanmar. Tel: (95-1) 212850 ~ 3, 229358 ~ 61, Fax: (95-1) 212854. info@myanmarpandahotel.com http://www.myanmarpandahotel.com

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33, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd, Dagon tsp. tel: 250388. fax: 252478. email: enquiry.prygn@parkroyalhotels.com parkroyalhotels.com.

Royal White Elephant Hotel
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Savoy Hotel
129, Damazedi Rd, Kamayut tsp. tel: 526289, 526298,

Sedona Hotel
Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yankin. tel: 666900.

Strand Hotel
92 Strand Rd. tel: 243377. fax: 289880.

Summit Parkview Hotel
350, Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp. tel: 211888, 211966.

Traders Hotel
223 Sule Pagoda Rd. tel: 242828. fax: 242838.

Winner Inn
42, Than Lwin Rd, Bahan Tsp. Tel: 503734, 524387. email: reservation@winnerinnmyanmar.com

Windsor Hotel No.31, Shin Saw Pu Street, Sanchaung. Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 95-1-511216-8, www.hotelwindsoryangon.com

Yuzana Hotel

130, Shwegondaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, tel : 01-549600

Yuzana Garden Hotel

44, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Tsp, tel : 01-248944

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8, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 6506 51~4. fax: 650630.

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Ministry of Education ☎tel:545500m 562390
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Myanma Post & Telecommunication (MPT) ☎tel: 067-407007.
Myanma Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs ☎tel: 067-412009, 067-412344.
Ministry of Health ☎tel: 067-411358-9.
Yangon City Development Committee ☎tel: 248112.

HOSPITALS

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

POST OFFICE

General Post Office
39, Bo Aung Kyaw St. (near British Council Library). ☎tel: 285499.



INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Yangon International Airport ☎tel: 662811.



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80-A, Inya Rd, Kamayut Tsp. Tel: 512380, 511252
Beauty Bar by La Source
Room (1004), Sedona Hotel, Tel : 666 900 Ext : (7167)
LS Salon
Junction Square, 3rd Floor. Tel : 95-1-527242, Ext : 4001
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No. 13/13, Mya Sandar St, Chanaye Tharzan Tsp. Tel : 09-4440-24496. www.lasourcebeautyspa.com

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Public Notices

AUSTRALIA AWARDS Scholarships Information Session: The Australian Embassy invites all interested persons to attend an information session on the Australia Awards Scholarship program. Full details about the application process will be explained and answers given to all your questions. Venue: Sedona Hotel, Yangon Date: Saturday 22 February 2014. Time: 10am - 12pm & 2pm - 4pm. Further information Website: www.australiaawards.gov.au, Email: australiaawards.myanmar@dfat.gov.au, Phone: 01 25 18 10 (Ext 116)

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Employment

Ingo Positions

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MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking **Project Officer** 1 post in Sagaing Tsp : Myanmar Nationality. University graduate related to health/ social science, management or other relevant subject. 1 year experiences in project management with experience in planning. Effective Computer knowledge (Especially MS Office). Effective English language skill. Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Pls send application letter, CV and related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office. Yazathingaha Rd., Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date : 25-2-2014.

ASSOCIATION for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan) is seeking **Township Officer** 1 post in Yangon (Shwe Pyi Thar or Dala Township): University graduate, two years of field experience, preferable in NGO/INGOs. Good knowledge of English, Computer & Reporting skills. Pls send A letter of application, An updated Curriculum Vitae including 1 recent passport photo to: Programme Coordinator, No.65, Kyaikwine Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon, Ph: 01-9661712, Email: aarmyanmar@gmail.com Closing date: 2 March 2014.

TERRE des hommes Italia is seeking (1) **Logistician**: Diploma or Bachelor degree in related field. Experience in a similar position for an NGO/INGO for 3 years. Strong communication skills (Myanmar & English). (2) **Agronomist** degree in Agriculture. 3 years experience with INGOs in food security and/or rural development projects. Specific technical knowledge in horticulture & farming systems in Dry Zone; ideally familiar with hydroponic technology. Fluent in English. Good computer skills. Pls submit application with completed information about current job and expected salary incl. CV, photo, references by email or by postal service to Terra des Homms Italia Main Office: 36/A, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan, Yangon. Tel: 527563, Email: hr.tdhit.mya@gmail.com, Closing date : 28th of February 2014.

TERRE des hommes Italia is seeking **THE Int'l Rescue Committee (IRC)** is seeking **Senior Officer Agriculture** 1 post in Myebon & Minbya, Rakhine State: Bachelor's degree in related field (agriculture). 4 years experience in working in the field of agriculture and/or livelihoods; experience working in humanitarian/ conflict areas preferable. Skilled in Excel, Word software. Pls submit a Cover letter & CV to the HR Department, email at: MaiMyaMyintZu.Tin@rescue.org or by delivery to the IRC office : Int'l Rescue Committee (IRC), No.33/A, Natmauk Lane Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Quarter, Bahan, Yangon Closing date : February 28th 2014. .

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MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking **Branch Reporting Officer** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw : Myanmar National. Any graduated. 3 years experience. Effective computer knowledge (Especially MS Office). Effective English language skill. Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Pls send application letter, CV and related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd., Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking (1) **Project Officer** 1 post in Yangon : University degree, Strong English language skills, 1 year relevant experience. Must be proficient in software such Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint & Internet access. (2) **Community Safety & Resilience (CSR) Coordinator** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw : University Degree or advanced education, certificate in health/ social science, management or other relevant subject. 3 years of experience. Effective both Myanmar & English Languages skills. Effective computer knowledge. (3) **Asst Coordinator** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: Any graduate. 3 years programming experiences in protection programme or projects (NGO/INGO experience would be an asset). Strong computer skill.

Good language skills in Myanmar and English. Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd., Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date : 25.2.2014.

Local Positions

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STAR LIGHT Star Bright International premium pre-school is seeking (1) **School Admin Executive** - 1 Post (2) **Class Teacher** - 1 Post (3) **Assistant Teacher/ English teacher** - 1 Post (4) **Cleaner** - 2 Post (5) **Gardener** - 1 Post (6) **Driver** - 1 Post. Please email to pyi@slsb-preschool.com or call 09-312-4780

FPT MYANMAR is seeking (1) **Java Software Engineer** - 1 year experience working as a IT man or software engineer. Programming language: VBA, Java/ Linux/ Oracle. Good English communication. Have Japanese skill is a plus. (2) **Japanese Interpreter** - can translate from English to Japanese & vice versa; TOEFL > 450, Japanese > N2 or equivalent. Excellent Computer skill in using MS Office and other software necessary for work. Good skill in analysis, forecast, solving problems and preventing risk. Have basic knowledge of IT is plus. (3) **Bridge Software Engineer** - Solid knowledge/skills (1-3 years experience): Cloud Systems such as Amazon AWS. Content Distribution network, Linux installation, maintenance & upgrade skills. Network configuration including router configuration. J2EE application server installation and configuration. System monitoring and alerts. Japanese : N2. Good English communication, reading, writing. We offer the attractive salary. Closing date: 16.3.2014. Pls send CV via email: ngocvt8@fpt.com.vn to get more details. Contact us: Ms.Ngoc (Mob: 250675565; Tel: +95 1 218223) 60/A Pyidaungzu Yeiktha St, Dagon tsp, Yangon, Myanmar

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SAVOY HOTEL, Yangon is urgently looking for (1) **Human Resources Assistant** - 1 ~ 2 years experience, good English & good personality (2) **Guest Relation Manager** - 3 ~ 4 years experience, very good English, good personality (3) **Bar Supervisor** - 2 ~ 3 years experience, good English and good personality (4) **Driver** - 3 years experience (5) **Security** - M 2 post, 2 years experience (Casual) (6) **Door Girl** - F 2 post, good personality (Casual) Application letter by email to generalmanager@savoyhotel-yangon.com or 129, Dhammazedi Rd, Yangon. Tel: 526298, 526289. Pls mention the desire position on the application letter.

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ROSA KHUTOR

Free spirits slip into Sochi mainstream

THEY'RE the free spirits of snowboarding and freestyle skiing, the ragamuffin rock and rollers whose brash gatecrashing of the Olympics shook up the long-standing sobriety of the Winter Games.

But with corporate sponsors recognising the market value of the sports to an audience weaned on the X-Games, the drive toward professional standards both on the runs is hard to resist.

Sochi Olympic snowboard slopestyle champion Sage Kotsenburg may look every bit the typical snowboarder, revelling in his laid-back, happy-go-lucky attitude, but to perform the tricks he did in winning gold takes serious dedication and training.

And for Canadian snowboard cross silver medallist Dominique Maltais, that is exactly what brought her the medal she so craved after winning bronze in Turin in 2006 but missing out at her home Games in Vancouver four years ago.

"It was the hardest time in my life," she said of missing out in Canada.

"I just took the decision to take my life into my hands and just try to improve myself and get myself faster. That's what I did over the last four years. I was on a mission. 'Everything I was touching or eating was to be a better athlete.'

"I have such a great team around me that helped me a lot to improve myself in every aspect: mentally,

physically, equipment."

Yet for some people, there is a happy medium to be had between the professionalism of top-level sport and the free-spirited roots of their discipline.

"We definitely take our sport very seriously but it is a very fun sport," said men's freestyle skiing slopestyle silver medallist Gus Kenworthy of the United States.

'I just took the decision to take my life into my hands and just try to improve myself and get myself faster.'

Dominique Maltais

Snowboard cross silver medallist

"Technically you could say we've been training toward this since we were really young kids, but all we were actually doing was just going out and skiing with our friends and learning these new tricks.

"There are definitely guys that are in the gym dieting and doing stuff like that and there are definitely guys that

are just partying and having fun."

For the bronze medallist in that same event, American Nick Goepper, what differentiates their sport from others is that it is both a hobby and a profession.

"When slopestyle skiers are done competing, we go out the next day and go skiing for fun," he said.

"We would hit the same course tomorrow and work on our own personal style and our own flavour and all our different tricks.

"NFL players, I don't know if they go out on an off day and smash into each other."

For Canadian halfpipe snowboarder Crispin Lipscomb, the drift towards professionalism is not a change for the better.

"There is a change in the way the game is played because ... it's more and more pressure for [athletes] to deliver some high-level work," he said.

"I've noticed the change in the 12 years I've been doing this discipline at this level, where it used to be driven by the peer group. You'd do a run for the high five at the bottom.

"[Now] the focus is shifting from the fun of the sport into the delivery of the highest level."

Not everyone, though, has abandoned their roots, as Swedish slopestyle skier Henrik Harlaut proved when hurtling down the

mountain with his ski pants dropping down to his knees to expose colourful underwear.

"I have a group of friends and we all do everything different from the other people," he said.

"Yeah, [I party] whenever I feel like it. It's all fun, you're just having the best time every day so I'm stoked."

— AFP



Gus Kenworthy competes in the men's freestyle skiing slopestyle qualifications at the Rosa Khutor Extreme Park on February 13. Photo: AFP

MIAMI

Dolphins sack two in wake of scathing bullying report

THE Miami Dolphins sacked an assistant coach and a physical trainer on February 19 in response to a scathing report on bullying in the team's locker room.

Jim Turner, the coach in charge of offensive linemen, and head athletic trainer Kevin O'Neill were both relieved of their duties, the NFL team said in a statement.

The move comes after a 144-page report by independent investigator Ted Wells found that offensive linemen Richie Incognito, John Jerry and Mike Pouncey directed intimidating behaviour at teammate Jonathan Martin and others.

Martin left the team late last October and later claimed Incognito bullied him with threats of violence and voice mails that included racial slurs.

"The language and behavior as described in the Ted Wells report are against the core values of our organisation," Dolphins owner Stephen Ross said. "After receiving the report, I conducted my own internal review of the facts to determine the appropriate steps for our organisation.

"Jim Turner and Kevin O'Neill are good people who care a great deal about their profession and the

players whom they serve, but both exhibited poor judgment at times which led me to this conclusion," Ross said.

The owner added that he had been in contact with Martin, and was also planning a partnership with the New York University School of Law on a "broader effort to address conduct in sports."

Dolphins head coach, Joe Philbin, also said the behavior by some of his players and staff as outlined in the Wells report was "disappointing and unacceptable."

"It is not possible for a team to accomplish its goals when the

'It is not possible for a team to accomplish its goals when the fundamental values of respect are violated.'

Joe Philbin

Miami Dolphins coach

fundamental values of respect are violated," Philbin said. "That ultimately rests on my shoulders and I will be accountable moving forward for making sure that we emphasize a team-first culture of respect towards one another."

The Dolphins finished last year's season with an even record of 8-8, finishing third in the AFC East division. The team failed to make the postseason for the fifth consecutive year. — AFP

AUGUSTA

Scott hopes for Aussie bounce after Masters win

ADAM Scott has yet to decide if kangaroo will be on this year's Masters Champions Dinner menu but he has high hopes Australian golfers keep things hopping at Augusta National.

The 33-year-old broke the Australia curse last year, sinking a 12-foot birdie putt on the second playoff hole to become the first Aussie to win the green jacket symbolic of Masters supremacy, capturing his first major title.

"Hopefully every Aussie that's there will appreciate not being asked whether it will be them this year," Scott said last week in a conference call ahead of the April tournament, the annual first major of the golfing season.

"Hopefully the shackles are off and we're going to have a host of Aussies up there in the champions locker room and serving dinners in the future."

Scott, who has spent six weeks resting in the Bahamas ahead of his return to the US PGA Tour this week in Florida, will be making his 13th appearance at Augusta after his best-ever season.

And in time-honoured tradition he will host his fellow Masters winners at a dinner before this year's championship begins.

"I'd like to serve something that everyone will really enjoy and nothing too crazy so that they won't," Scott said.

"But probably no surprise to anyone, there's definitely going to be an Australian theme toward every part. Whether that means they are eating kangaroo, I'm not sure yet, but we'll see."

Scott, currently number two in the world, also spoke of a growing feeling in the game that top-level golf is no longer defined by Tiger Woods, with more depth in the game meaning a greater number of major winners is likely.

But he dismissed the notion that Woods, 38, has become less of a factor at majors despite the 14-time winner not winning one of the top four events since the 2008 US Open.

"I don't necessarily think it's that Tiger is not a factor. He certainly is a factor. He's the number one player in the world and he's always there or thereabouts. He's on a dry spell at the moment and that's what happens in a career.

"Jack Nicklaus had a run like that and he's still the greatest player of all time. It wouldn't surprise me that Tiger comes and wins again this year, but there's my generation of player feeling like their time is now, so they have got to take advantage of it."

Woods, whose most dominating era was more than a decade ago, continues to chase the all-time major win record of 18 set by Nicklaus, but faces a new generation of major champions such as England's Justin Rose, the reigning US Open champion, and Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, already a two-time major winner, aged 24.

"The way it has been shared around a little bit lately – you've seen my generation of player and the Justin Roses who have got to that level where they have put 10 or 12 years experience in the bank – they have raised the level of their own game over the last couple years and believe it's their time to do it," Scott said.

Back on the course, Scott said he would not mind Augusta National leaving bare the spot at the 17th fairway where the Eisenhower Tree stood until the famed century-old pine was removed last weekend, a victim of an ice storm.

"It will be part of Augusta history forever. Whether they replace it or not, it was a pretty tight hole, so from a golfing standpoint, I kind of think seeing a little bit more of the fairway will be a nice thing," he said. — AFP



Jonathan Martin speaks to the media in Miami, Florida, during a press conference last year. Photo: AFP

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Mae happy with slow giant slalom

10

Thailand's Vanessa Vanakorn competes during the women's alpine skiing giant slalom at the Rosa Khutor Alpine Center on February 18. Photo: AFP

Thailand's Vanessa Vanakorn competes during the women's alpine skiing giant slalom at the Rosa Khutor Alpine Center on February 18. Photo: AFP

"I respect a lot of what she does with music and she has a great personality," she said, adding, "I wouldn't trade my gold medal for 10 million records sold." —*AFP*

Dated: 24th February, 2014

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Sport

Thai skier happy
in last place in Sochi

SPORT 67

Bowling Federation to field team for 2015 SEA Games

KYAW ZIN HLAING

kyawzinhlaing91@gmail.com

THE Myanmar Bowling Federation began the process of selecting athletes for the national team with a qualifying tournament in Yangon earlier this month.

The team will compete in the 28th Southeast Asian Games to be hosted in Singapore next year, where bowling will be included after being left off the roster at last year's Games in Nay Pyi Taw.

Thirteen male bowlers and 13 female bowlers will be selected for the primary team. These athletes will be relocated to Nay Pyi Taw's Gold Camp where they will undergo training before the SEA Games open on June 5.

Myo Aung, general secretary of the Myanmar Bowling Federation, said that the Federation will hire a foreign coach to lead the team to Singapore.

A back-up team comprised of 12 male bowlers and eight female bowlers will remain in Yangon for training.

According to Myo Aung, the squads from Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand will pose the greatest challenge to the Myanmar team.

Potential team members say they are confident in their own skills and say that with proper training and equipment they will be able to compete on the international stage.

"There is no difference between Myanmar athletes and foreign athletes in the sport of bowling," said bowler Tint Shwe Oo, who was on hand for the first selection matches held on February 12 at Asia Point Bowling Centre.

He said that the team's mission would be simple: "We will try our best to win."

RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil counter-attacks on crime as World Cup looms

A STRING of violent attacks against police in "pacified" Rio de Janeiro slums shows that Brazilian organised crime is not going down without a fight as the World Cup looms.

With the football extravaganza less than four months away, and despite aggressive efforts to clean up the favelas, violent crime remains a problem.

Launched in 2008, Rio's Police Pacification Units (UPP) have been tasked with wresting control of the city's crime-ridden slums from drug gangs.

The program has led to sharp falls in homicide rates in the favelas and across Rio as a whole.

However a spate of recent incidents suggests drug gangs are refusing to go quietly.

On February 2, a 28-year-old police officer Alda Castilhos was shot dead.

On February 16, traffickers opened fire on police in Rio's largest favela, Rocinha, leaving two officers injured as they dived to take cover.

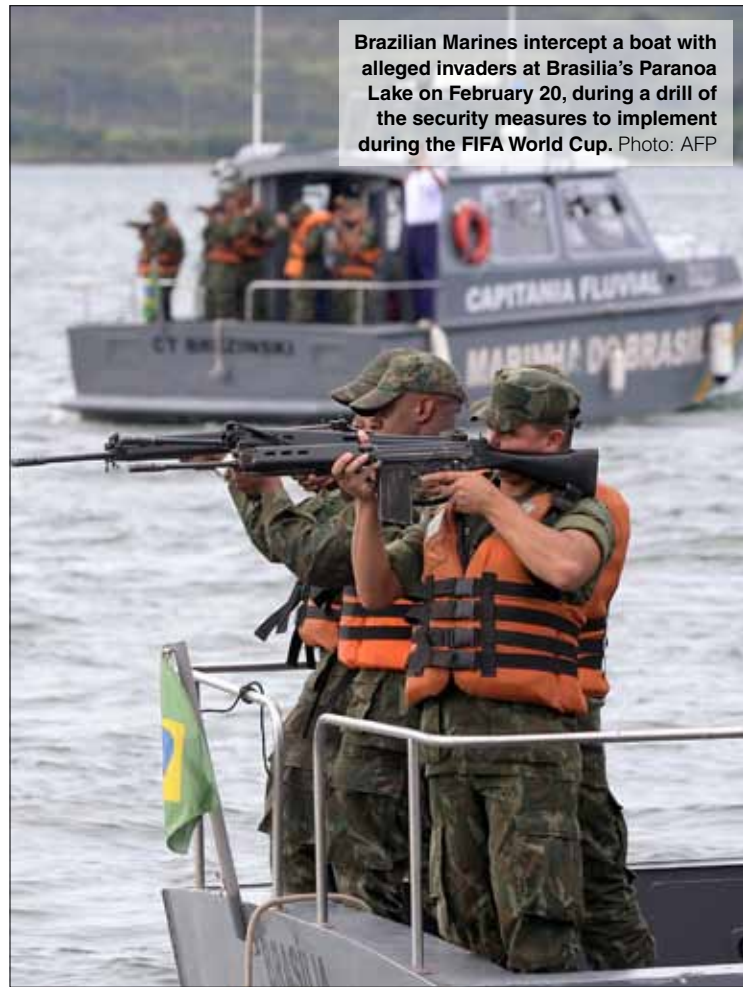
Rio state's interior minister, Jose Mariano Beltrame, has launched a counter-attack and told AFP he "will not shrink" as he cranks up a pacification process launched with the World Cup and 2016 Olympics in mind.

"We were never under any illusions that the ringleaders who have dominated the favelas for more than 30 years would give up easily," Beltrame said.

He adds pacification is "an enormous challenge [which] is not progressing as quickly as we could wish".

Beltrame says the traffickers are fighting to hang onto ill-gotten gains but insists that "their attacks reinforce our determination to bring peace to the area".

To date, 36 UPP have been set up in 252 favelas home to 1.5 million people with total strength of more



Brazilian Marines intercept a boat with alleged invaders at Brasilia's Paranoa Lake on February 20, during a drill of the security measures to implement during the FIFA World Cup. Photo: AFP

than 9,000 officers.

In six years, homicides in those slums have plunged 65 percent and 48pc in Rio as a whole.

Some observers say the rise in recent violence can be put down to the presumed killing by police of Amarildo de Souza, a 47-year-old bricklayer and family man.

He disappeared in Rocinha last July 14 after being questioned at a

UPP post over suspected drug trafficking.

"The implication of police torpedoed the credibility of the UPP project. What happened Sunday is a show of the criminals' strength," says public security specialist Paulo Storani.

"The traffickers are not fools. In the Amarildo affair they saw a moment of weakness regarding (slum)

pacification," adds Jose Augusto Rodrigues, expert on urban violence at the University of Rio (Uerj).

"As they cannot reconquer lost territory they are doing what they did in 2010 in creating a climate of instability and insecurity," says Rodrigues.

"It's blackmail on their part to force the government to backtrack on pacification," she added, seeing the new violence as a warning to police.

Weekly news magazine *Epoca* sees a political plot, however, in the form of a manoeuvre by a former state governor who would like to recapture the post in October elections.

Epoca this week published an exclusive spread entitled "The sabotage against the UPP".

The weekly accused the politician in question of indulging in "threats, spying and drawing up dossiers to discredit the policy of pacification".

Epoca says the politician has conspired with the former head of the civilian police, said to be close to hard right militias who control some favelas not in thrall to drugs traffickers.

The officer was handed a 28-year jail term in 2010 for protecting mafia-style groups running a slot machine racket, but remains at liberty pending a definitive sentence ruling.

Beltrame refused to comment on the issue but Rodrigues said for his part that "the *Epoca* investigation [appears] well-documented and very plausible".

Rodrigues adds that current Rio governor "Sergio Cabral lost popular support following [last June's] Confederations Cup.

"He has become very fragile and that exacerbates the situation."

Even so, Rodrigues believes the UPP are there to stay as the process is "irreversible".

He explains, "Nobody has the political means to end it - the whole population is behind it." - AFP

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