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Next change for
new-look MIC?
Independence

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THE Myanmar Investment Commission is to be made independent of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development in the near future, the body's new secretary told *The Myanmar Times* last week following a reshuffle that saw it expand from 11 to 13 members.

"The MIC will become independent like the Central Bank. But we have to take time to amend the law. It will not happen immediately," said U Aung Naing Oo, a director general in the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration and commission member.

The commission will also relocate from Nay Pyi Taw to Yangon, he added.

He made the comments following a reshuffle announced on May 28 that saw Minister for Energy U Zeyar Aung replace Minister for Finance U Win Shein as head of the commission.

Minister for Tourism U Htay Aung was appointed to the new position of commission vice chair, while Deputy Minister for Finance U Maung Maung Thein and Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Daw Lei Lei Thein were also both added to the body. U Aung Naing Oo was appointed secretary in place of Minister for Finance U Kan Zaw.

While more than half of commission members are ministers or deputy ministers, U Aung Naing Oo said this would not affect the independence of the body.

"The rest are [civilian experts]. The ministers will do their ministerial work and at the same time they will carry out the work of this independent body. The details will be contained in the amended law," he said.

"Currently, the commission's expenses are covered by the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development but it will have a separate budget in the future."

MORE ON NEWS 12

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PHOTO: ZARNI PHYO

Senior Ministry of Immigration and Population officials say they have given up efforts to gather missing census data from Kachin and Rakhine states and have moved on to scanning some 11 million completed census forms in preparation for data analysis. Preliminary results are expected in August, with full figures due for release next year.

Central Bank hushes up
foreign licensing process

Local institutions kept in the dark as Central Bank invites foreign firms to confirm interest in licences that officials say could be awarded as early as September. **BUSINESS 20**

NEWS 16

On the 'Death Highway'

Will the government's response to the May 12 bus crash lead to fewer lives being lost on the notorious road?

BUSINESS 21

Stock exchange rules
submitted for approval

Insiders say prompt introduction of the regulatory framework is needed to meet the proposed October 2015 launch date.

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Page 2

online editor **Kayleigh Long** |
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THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

Beteljuice

A new survey has shed light on Southeast Asia and Myanmar's tobacco consumption habits, and on May 29 the *New Light of Myanmar* ran with this scoop of a headline: "Myanmar tops ASEAN list of betel-quid-with-tobacco consumers". In other breaking news, scientists have confirmed grass is green, the pope is, indeed, Catholic and a bear, when pressed, will admit to voiding its bowels in the woods.

The report did, however, cite some interesting figures about the uptake of cigarette smoking in urban vs rural areas and in different age groups (hint: they're all quite high), and there is a

proportionally linked regional incidence of oral cancers.

Betel chewing, more than one person has assured me, is not linked to oral cancer: Rather, it's good for the gums and one's immune system.

This is, apparently, a widely-enough held belief – particularly in rural areas where poverty is rife and access to rudimentary education is sorely lacking.

A cursory glance at the many and varied alternative uses for the lime paste ingredient is an eyebrow-raiser – as is removing your Safe Search filters (as though you haven't already) and scrolling through the Google Image results on "betel cancer".

As anti-smoking groups struggle to make their voices heard in a place where cigarettes are so cheap they practically pay you to smoke, one can't help but wonder if a stronger focus on the effects of betel could have a significant impact on the country's oral cancer burden in an already straining healthcare system.

An indecent proposal

Two of the so-called "protection of religion" bills are set to go before parliament, with details of the religious conversion bill being made public in local media last week. The four bills put forward earlier this year concerned religious conversion, interfaith marriage, monogamy and population control.

"If passed, anyone found guilty of proselytizing could face up to a year in prison", Associated Press said of the conversion bill, which was agitated for by the Association for the Protection of Race and Religion (an offshoot of the 969 movement, known by its Myanmar acronym of Ma Ba Tha).

The real question is how these laws, if [when] enacted, will be enforced. One obvious example springs to mind. Would the aforementioned very prominent group engaged in what could be called a fairly aggressive proselytisation campaign of its own be held to the same standards as those from another religion? Would it apply to the NaTaLa school system that facilitates the conversion of many young Chin Christians? Would a hapless Canadian missionary from a UFO cult (such as the one I met here in March) find himself in prison, simply for trying to spread the word and establish an intergalactic embassy near Nay Pyi Taw? What of the agnostics? So many questions.

The Corrections

Many thanks to astute *Page 2* readers Ma Thanegi and Kyaw Thu who pointed out I botched my facts in the edition dated May 19, when I wrote that President Thein Sein had copped flak over images of what was allegedly his car on the "forecourt of Shwedagon pagoda".

While that was the rumour online, upon closer inspection it would seem that it was, in fact, Shwemawdaw Pagoda in Bago – where cars are able to go up to the platform, and a carpark sits next to the trustee's office. The car is now believed to belong to the Bago



May Ka Byar
from *NOW! Magazine*.
Photo: Htet Aung Kyaw (Studio HAK)

Style
Statement
NOW!

Region Chief Minister. Just goes to show, you can't believe everything you read on the internet! ~_(ツ)_/~

#overheardintraders

Two middle-aged foreign businessmen debating whether Wirathu has "lost his edge"

Please send your #overheardintraders submissions to @TheMyanmarTimes via Twitter, or email kayleighlong@gmail.com

In brief:

Middle management employee experiences fleeting sense of guilt while waxing lyrical about the organisation's manifestly hollow and tokenistic CSR initiative

Health authorities triangulate location of patient zero in expat community chlamydia outbreak, say he's "probably somewhere near 19th St"

Once was Burma...

Archival material provided by Pansodan Gallery

Movie poster, date and name unknown. Do you know?

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Mandalay Head Office

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NLD rejects rival's proposal on joint election referendum

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THE National League for Democracy has ruled out a proposal from a senior member of the rival Union Solidarity and Development Party that a referendum on amending the constitution be conducted concurrently with the 2015 election.

USDP central executive committee member Thura U Aung Ko told reporters on May 28 that holding the referendum at the same time would save time, money and human resources. For amendments to be approved, many sections of the constitution require not only the support of 75 percent of MPs but also a majority at a national referendum.

"If we hold a referendum ... it will cost hundreds of millions of kyat and take a lot of time," said Thura U Aung Ko, the lower house representative for Kanpetlet.

"But there is an easy way to know whether our people want to make the amendments or not: Add a box

group, to build public support for constitutional change, particularly to section 436, which gives the military veto powers over reform of the constitution.

The first rallies were held in Yangon and Mandalay on May 17 and 18, while on May 27 a petition was launched.

At the same time, a 31-member parliamentary body, the Constitution Amendment Implementation Committee, is considering possible changes to the constitution. Formed by Thura U Shwe Mann on February 3, it has been instructed to submit a bill to MPs for consideration no later than six months before next year's election. Recent discussions have focused almost exclusively on section 436, with members telling *The Myanmar Times* they have agreed "in principle" to reduce the threshold for constitutional change from 75pc to 66pc, leaving a window for changes to be pushed through without military support.

While all major political groupings - even the military - appear to agree on the need for at least some constitutional change, there are deep divisions over what change is needed.

During the press conference, Thura U Aung Ko, who leads an important judicial reform committee, said many in his own party consider him a "traitor" because of his public comments on the need to amend the constitution.

Thura U Aung Ko said that within the USDP only he and party leader Thura U Shwe Mann are committed to amending the constitution.

He said he supported change because it was necessary to end the country's long-running conflicts with armed ethnic groups.

"If the constitution is not amended, we will face many difficulties in signing a nationwide peace accord, even if we manage to sign a nationwide ceasefire agreement," he said.

But he also warned that the government could create a political crisis if it ignores growing calls from both domestic forces and the international community for constitutional change.

Parliamentarian U Khine Maung Yi said it was essential that section 436 is changed and, eventually, the military removed from parliament.

"Military MPs never ask questions in the huttaw and never submit proposals. They ... never vote with their own desire, just as a group. They are one vote and it is not inconsistent with democratic principles. Each MP must have the right to vote freely and section 436 should be removed from the constitution," he said.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



A USDP member protests against constitutional change in Nay Pyi Taw on May 28. Photo: Hsu Hlaing Htun

to polling booths for the general election that will be held at the end of 2015," he said, adding that it was his personal view and not necessarily that of the USDP.

However, NLD member U Win Myint, the party's representative for Patheingyi, said the referendum should be held separately - and well in advance of the election.

"An election is an election and a referendum is a referendum. They are different and we can't hold it in the same time ... We can't mix them. His suggestion is impossible," he said. "The referendum must also be held no later than six months before the election. The election date will depend on when the referendum takes place."

Another NLD member, who asked not to be named, was similarly critical of the proposal.

"His suggestion seems like an attempt to delay the referendum. We cannot wait for [the election]," he said.

The proposal comes as the NLD launches a public campaign, together with the 88 Generation student

NLD considers legal

Warning letter to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi over comments made at rally in Man



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THE National League for Democracy has vowed to press on with its campaign for constitutional reform despite a recent warning from the Union Election Commission.

A party spokesperson said the warning letter, sent to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on May 22, was not in conformity with the law and it is considering legal action against the commission.

'This letter does not match the existing laws and also the content of the letter was wrong.'

U Nyan Win

NLD spokesperson

"It doesn't make sense. The [UEC] does not have the right to send [the warning letter]," U Nyan Win told *The Myanmar Times*.

"We are preparing a response ... I can't say [what the response is] now but I will make an official announcement as soon as possible after we have discussed with other central committee members. But I can say this letter does not match the existing laws and also the content of the letter was wrong."

The commission wrote to party leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on May 22 and warned that comments she made about the military at a recent rally, held jointly with the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, had potentially violated the constitution, leaving the party at risk of deregistration.

It specifically cited comments she made at a rally in Mandalay on May 18 in which she challenged the Tatmadaw "to prove that they don't like power".

The rally was held a day after the campaign for constitutional change was launched in Yangon at Bo Sein Hman Stadium.

As well as challenging the Tatmadaw to give up power, she urged military MPs to work together with their civilian counterparts to amend the constitution this year.

The letter said the NLD had sworn to maintain the 2008 constitution and obey existing laws when it had applied to register, and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had made a similar oath when she entered parliament. The commission warned that under section 24(a) of the Political Party Registration Law it could ban parties for up to three years if they violate existing laws and by-laws, or orders and directives issued by the UEC.

The NLD and the 88 Generation formed an 11-member joint committee to organise public rallies across the nation to build support for changes to the controversial constitution, particularly the removal of a military veto. On May 27 a petition campaign was launched.

U Nyan Win said the warning letter would not affect the petition campaign.

"We are doing these campaign activities legally and peacefully so we don't care about [the warning]," he said. "We are just focusing on our work."



A man signs a petition calling for change to

Thousands greet Daw Suu for petiti

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DAW Aung San Suu Kyi brought her calls for constitutional change to the nation's capital on May 27, launching a petition campaign in Nay Pyi Taw that will push for an amendment to section 436 and could in turn allow for more sweeping reforms.

The National League for Democracy leader, who was recently warned by the Union Election Commission (UEC) over her comments on the military's veto power, was met by thousands of enthusiastic supporters, many wearing anti-section 436 T-shirts, at five speaking stops around the capital.

"The existing constitution was drafted without wishes of people. So it needs to change," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said at the day's first stop, in Ottarathiri township.

About 1000 people gathered later in the day under a large tree in front of the NLD office in Pobbathiri township to hear Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speak for around 15 minutes. The opposition leader exchanged banter with supporters, drawing laughs from the crowd and urging changes to the constitution that she said would be necessary for a genuine democracy.

The petition campaign is a joint initiative of the NLD and 88 Generation student group that aims to build public support for amending section

436, which sets the threshold for changes to the constitution at 75 percent. The military's control of 25pc of the seats in parliament guarantees

'Whatever commitments to reform have been made, I believe this is an inauthentic democracy.'

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi



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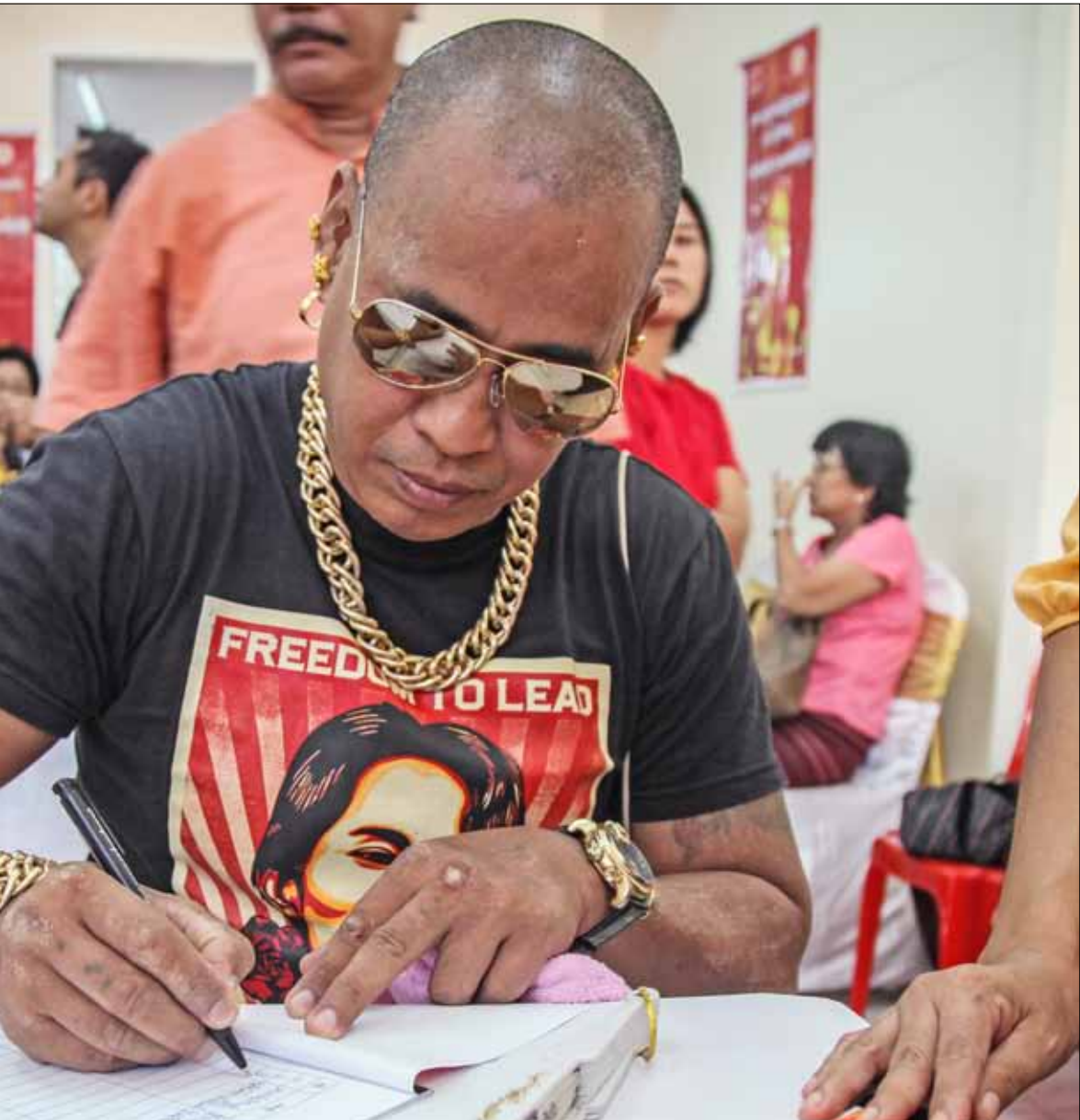
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action against UEC

delay do not “make sense”, party says, as petition campaign gets underway



section 436 of the constitution on May 28 as part of a campaign organised by the NLD and the 88 Generation. Photo: Zarni Phyo

on campaign launch in the capital

the Tatmadaw the power to veto any proposed change.

Amending section 436 is seen as crucial first step in clearing the way for further changes, including to section 59(f), which currently bars Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from being eligible for the presidency.

“Whatever commitments to reform have been made, I believe that this is an inauthentic democracy because even the desire of the people, which is fundamental to a country, can’t overpower its constitution,” she said in Ottarathiri.

The NLD rallies in Nay Pyi Taw came shortly after the UEC sent a letter to the party warning that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s challenge to the Tatmadaw to amend the constitution, made at a May 18 rally in Mandalay, came close to violating her parliamentary oath, which states that MPs must “uphold and abide by the constitution”.

The notice from the UEC, which was posted by an NLD member on Facebook on May 26, said she was “speaking outside of the boundaries of the Constitution”. The warning was signed by commission secretary U Tin Tun.

In Nay Pyi Taw, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi appeared unfazed by the warning and urged members of the military to sign the petition if they supported genuine democracy.

“Soldiers are civil servants as well. So I would like to call on them to enthusiastically sign in the petition to support to our campaign,” she said.

“I want to live peacefully. But we are struggling now because the



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks at a rally in Pobbathiri township, Nay Pyi Taw, on May 27. Photo: Hsu Hlaing Htun

situation requires it. We will try to seek desires of the people outside the parliament as much as we can and then we will complete the constitutional amendment inside the parliament,” she said.

The NLD’s campaign is not without its opponents. While the rally took place in Nay Pyi Taw’s Zabuthiri township on May 27, a group of about 10 protesters from the rival Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) demonstrated nearby.

Protest leader U Maung Maung Tun Win, who is also chair of a co-operative society in the township’s Aung Chan Thar ward, said changing section 436 would be “dangerous” for the country’s future.

“Many non-citizens are gradually

entering the country. You can see a noticeable amount of illegal Muslims in Rakhine State. They want to change section 59(f) so they can take over the presidency of our country,” one protester said.

The petition drive kicked off 24 years to the day after the 1990 elections to form a Constituent Assembly, which was to draft a constitution, the first step in a transfer of power from the ruling military. The NLD won the election in a landslide, capturing 392 out of 492 seats that were contested, however the government never honoured the results. They were formally annulled in March 2010.

The NLD’s petition campaign will run until July 12. Collected signatures will then be submitted to parliament.

Some parties likely to reject commission offer of land, cars

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AN offer of support to political parties from the Union Election Commission has divided the opposition, with some parties, including the National League for Democracy, expressing scepticism about the commission’s motives.

Last week the President’s Office confirmed that the UEC had written to President U Thein Sein seeking his support for a plan to provide land for party offices, and to allow parties to import up to five vehicles tax-free.

The commission says it made the request after consultations with the parties in which they outlined the kind of support they needed. But others suspect the offer of support could be a cover for further restrictions on their activities.

U Sai Nyunt Lwin from the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy said while the party has not officially ruled out accepting the assistance, most of its members are opposed to the idea.

They suspect that the offer is linked to a controversial draft directive on political campaigning that the UEC recently released.

“We want to be able run our party freely and some members suspect that if they accept this assistance then it will be at the cost of having to accept restrictions on political parties, such as the new campaign rules,” he said. “They think that is why the UEC is now offering these opportunities to political parties.”

The NLD also said it would not accept any material assistance offered by the commission.

“We won’t accept these rights if they offer it,” spokesperson U Nyan Win said on May 30. “I formed a political party to do politics, not for getting benefits like this.”

However, most parties welcomed the news and they said they would accept land and car import permits if they are offered.

“We will accept this support if the government is genuine. In other countries the government budget allocates funds to support political parties depending on the ratio of parliamentary representatives,” said Shan Nationalities Democratic Party leader U Sai Aik Paung.

U Han Shwe from the National Unity Party also supported the UEC plan. “The political parties requested this when they met with the UEC and the president. Some poor parties need this kind of help,” he said.

‘Some members suspect that if they accept this, it will be at the cost of having to accept ... the new campaign rules.’

U Sai Nyunt Lwin
Shan Nationalities League
for Democracy

U Saw Tun Aung Myint, head of the Kayin People’s Party, said his party would ask members whether it should accept the offer.

“In my personal view, the offer is acceptable if it is made in good faith,” he said.

UEC members could not be reached for comment last week. It remains unclear how the commission would stop people from registering a political party simply to gain access to free land and import permits.

There is historical precedent for such a problem. In 1990, 235 political parties registered to contest the poll, and commentators have noted that some did so because of offers of fuel concessions and telephone lines. Many later pulled out of the race, with only 93 fielding candidates on election day.

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Yangon a city of 8 million? Not yet, says govt

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THE Department of Population has dismissed a post-census report that 8 million people now live in Yangon, saying it has yet to release any figures.

"There are many rumours about the population list after April 10. One journal reported that the government had announced Yangon's urban population is 8 million. We deny that news. At the moment, we haven't announced any population figures yet," said U Nyi Nyi, director of the Department of Population.

According to the department the preliminary results of Myanmar's first census in more than three decades will be published in August, and the final results of the census will be published in early 2015.

He said department officials are still processing the data gathered during the census, which was conducted from March 30 to April 10 and extended through to June 10 in some regions.

"There may be many mistakes in the current list because those figures are calculated by hand. So we haven't publicised any list," U Nyi Nyi said.

The first phase of the department of population's checking process is counting the packs of census forms that are sent in to Nay Pyi Taw from all states and regions.

Once this is done the heads of the townships are called one at a time to the Department of Population in Nay Pyi Taw where 11 checking groups from the census head office are gathered.

"They first open the pack and count the census forms to know whether the numbers on the list each township official gave and the numbers of forms in the pack are the same or not," U Nyi Nyi said.

The checked packs are then signed off by both the head of the township and the department and filed in a store room in the department's head office.

"Although the department hopes the checking process will be completed in more than one month, it will probably take about two months to finish it," U Nyi Nyi said.

As of May 21, the department had finished checking census packs from Mandalay Region and Rakhine, Kachin and Kayin states, and was in the process of checking forms from northern Shan State. - *Translation by Thiri Min Htun*



Ministry of Immigration and Population officials check census records in Nay Pyi Taw on May 21. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Ministry closes book on its missing census data

Ahead of official end to collection on June 10, the ministry has given up on complete Rakhine and Kachin data

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Ministry of Immigration and Population officials have confirmed that "extended" census data collection ended last week, with populations in Kachin and Rakhine states that were left out of the original count almost certain to miss out again.

The confirmation comes despite reports that the government had reached an agreement with the Kachin Independence Army to collect data in KIA-controlled parts of Kachin State.

Though the "extended collection" will nominally continue until June 10, exactly two months after the original collection period ended, ministry officials in charge of the census said they are preparing to carry on the process without the missing data.

"We tried our best to collect in these areas, but we couldn't get [agreements] so we'll stop [trying] at the end of May," said Daw Khaing Khaing Soe, director of the ministry's census technical team.

Daw Khaing Khaing Soe repeated comments made by Minister for Immigration U Khin Yi that the KIA central committee had agreed "in principle" to allow census enumerators in KIA-controlled areas. However, conditions on the ground, including the ongoing skirmishes between the two armies, make data collection difficult in practice, she said.

A representative from the KIA could not be reached for comment last week.

The ministry will now consult with the International Technical Advisory Board (ITAB), a committee of census experts assembled by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to advise the government on the census, on the best way to address the data gaps.

She said one solution proposed within the department is to estimate the populations based on existing government data, such as lists of National Registration Card holders.

As previously reported by *The Myanmar Times*, relying on the national verification records will likely be problematic in Rakhine State, where the vast majority of Muslims born after 1990 have been given temporary ID cards rather than NRCs.

Representatives for the UNFPA and ITAB did not respond to

requests for comment last week.

The national census, which received technical and financial support from the UNFPA, was scheduled to run from March 30 to April 10. However, problems quickly arose in Kachin State, where enumerators were not permitted to enter areas controlled by the KIA, and Rakhine State, where many Muslim communities were skipped altogether because they wanted to self-identify as "Rohingya" rather than "Bengali".

'We tried our best to collect in these areas, but we couldn't get [agreements].'

Daw Khaing Khaing Soe

Census technical team leader

Both the UNFPA and the government had said in the weeks and months leading up to the census that all respondents would be free to self-identify as they wished. However, in the face of mounting pressure from Buddhist groups in Rakhine, the President's Office announced on March 29 that no one who self-described as Rohingya would be

allowed to take part.

Critics of the census say the problems should have been obvious to census organisers.

"The process was flawed and the way to rectify it is not to charge forward with guesswork and estimates for Kachin and Rakhine," said Matthew Smith, executive director of the human rights monitoring group Fortify Rights.

Mr Smith said there is a real possibility that the census could serve to drag out the peace process in Kachin and alienate many of the stakeholders.

"Kachin [people] are understandably upset with the government and the UNFPA. They've endured an abusive war for the last three years and they were effectively marginalised from the national census. The botched census will hurt relations between the government and Kachin civil society."

David Mathieson, a Yangon-based researcher with Human Rights Watch, said the inability to get data in Rakhine and Kachin states "demonstrates the failure of the government and UNFPA to consider all the security risks involved in the census."

"The government should be standing up to these extremist voices, not kowtowing to them," he said, "and the UNFPA and the donors to the census share responsibility for this unacceptable exclusion of minorities from a flawed census process."

- *Additional reporting by Ye Mon*

Youth Development Programme, Myanmar Medical Association Call for "Activity Proposal"

The Youth Development programme would like to call activity proposal from youth-led groups or organizations which can contribute implementation of the current activities targeting general young people in promoting access to adolescent health and HIV prevention information with innovative ideas.

Preference will be given to proposals submitted by youth self-help groups. For detail information, please contact to Youth Development Programme, Myanmar Medical Association, 249 Theinbyu Road, Mingalartaungnyuntownship, Yangon.

Deadline: (16 June 2014 COB), phone 01-399020

website - ydpmma.org.

CRIME IN BRIEF

Man dies after gang attack
Five men aged between 18 and 20 have been arrested and charged after allegedly beating a 19-year-old man to death in North Dagon on May 23, police say.
Ko Thu Shine Htet was punched, kicked and hit with a metal pipe by the attackers, police said. The fight is thought to have started because of a dispute over a woman.
Despite his injuries Ko Thu Shine Htet managed to return to his grandfather's house in South Dagon but later died at Thingangyun hospital.

Kayan resident dies over K1000 loan
A 40-year-old resident of Yangon's Kayan township was killed on May 25 because of a dispute over a K1000 loan.
Ko Khaing Win was stabbed to death with a sickle outside a liquor shop at 7:15pm by a 54-year-old man. He was sent to Kayan hospital and then Yangon General Hospital but later died, police said. The alleged perpetrator has been charged.

Massage parlour raided
The Investigation Unit of the Yangon Police Force raided an illegal massage parlour in Latha township on the night of May 27. Inside they found around 10 employees as well as pillows and other massage accessories.
The raid was lead by sub inspector U Han Myo Aung. Latha township second administrator U Kyaw Soe said he will file a complaint at the township court.

Men charged over alleged kidnapping
Two men have been charged after allegedly kidnapping a child in order to steal her earrings, which police say were worth more than US\$3500.
Daw Moe Sapel Lwin was alerted by her daughter's playmate that her daughter had been kidnapped by two men on motorcycles in Mingalardon township.
When she went to alert the officials, Daw Moe Sapel Lwin was told that police had found her daughter. Yan Paing aka Paing Gyi, 32, and Tun Lin Kyaw aka Kyat Kalar, 32, were found to have kidnapped her in order to steal her earrings, which were valued at K3.5 million. - *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Khant Lin Oo*



Actor Zhang Jinlai greets fans in Mandalay. Photo: Than Naing Soe

‘Journey to the West’ star meets fans in Mandalay

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CHINESE actor Zhang Jinlai, who is best known for his role as Monkey King in the 1986 television series *Journey to the West*, met fans in Mandalay last week as part of a state-sponsored tour of Myanmar.
Journey to the West was originally a classical Chinese novel written in the 16th century that tells the story of a Chinese Buddhist monk who went on a pilgrimage to India during the Tang dynasty.
“Because the Monkey King actor came here, the Myanmar China Friendship Association will carry out more work in Mandalay,” said U Po Myint who works for the Mandalay division of the China Myanmar

Peace Association, one of the tour’s sponsors.
One attendee, who asked not to be named, said they believed the tour is part of Chinese efforts to present a softer image at a time of heightened tension with ASEAN states – particularly Vietnam – over territorial disputes in the South China Sea.
“There’s something in the background of this China Myanmar Peace Association and the Monkey King actor coming to Myanmar. Because there is opposition to the Chinese in Vietnam and they are trying to prevent Chinese opposition here,” said the attendee.
Zhang Jinlai’s tour is also sponsored by the ASEAN Centre and the Chinese embassy in Myanmar.
- *Translation by Khant Lin Oo*

FDA expands staff on huge budget rise

Body plans to triple staff numbers to 300 and open laboratories at 14 more border trade locations



DOUBLE the budget, triple the staff – the Food and Drug Administration means business. Starting this year, the FDA will redouble its efforts to protect the country from substandard imported food, medicines and cosmetics, and will also improve the standards of locally produced goods.
A separate government department in its own right since April 2013, the FDA has offices in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay. Six more branch offices are already operating, and laboratories have been set up at four border gates to check incoming products.
“We have a capital budget of K700 million and K30 billion [US\$730,000 and \$31.25 million] for the current budget. We’ve increased our staff from 100 to 300 and are planning to buy new laboratory testing equipment,” said FDA planning department deputy director U Sein Thuang.
The 2013-14 budget was K350 million for capital and K150 billion for operating expenses, he said.
With the extra money, the FDA plans to establish branch offices in 14 districts and to set up labs at 14 more border trade zones over the next three years.
“In the past our department did not have enough staff or testing equipment to meet our responsibility for issuing health recommendations for locally manufactured food,

or import-export goods and health certifications,” said deputy director U Zaw Win. “Now we can do more quality control work. But we still have a shortage of experts because doctors and specialists don’t wish to join our department.”
Consumer Protection Association chair U Ba Oak Khaing welcomed the increased budget for the FDA. In the past the body could not work effectively because of budgetary issues.
BILLION KYAT
30
Total operating budget for the FDA in 2014-15, double the K15 billion budget of the previous financial year
“Now they have more money and support from the government so I think they can take more responsibility for ensuring food safety,” he said.
He said the funding should be focused on building labs and increasing staff in border trade areas, particularly on the Chinese border.
“Many famous brands are not safe to eat,” he said. “Our association discovered two or three well-known food products that do not meet our country’s minimum standards and have passed on the information to the FDA.”

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Children sit on teak logs on the outskirts of Yangon. Photo: AFP

Ministry, FFI to overhaul community forestry scheme

Changes will focus on enabling community forest managers to generate income from legally harvested timber

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THE Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry and Flora and Fauna International have embarked on a year-long project to overhaul community timber rules in an effort to fight poverty – and possibly boost timber exports.

The project will support the amendment of regulations so timber from the forests can be sold by communities. Under current rules, there are tight restrictions on how timber from community forests can be used, and timber exports are banned completely.

“The time is right to review the regulations governing community timber. The project will therefore help clarify the rights and responsibilities of community forest managers who want to sell their products legally,” FFI said in a statement.

The project is funded by the European Union’s Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEG-T) program, which helps countries reform their forest sector to allow buyers and consumers to know that timber was harvested legally.

In coming months researchers will visit community forests in Kachin State and Magwe, Ayeyarwady and Tanintharyi regions and interview stakeholders, including Forest Department officials, saw mill owners, furniture manufacturers and timber traders, and community forest managers, on changes they want to see to regulations.

“The results will inform the development of national policies, regulations and standards for community forestry timber legality as well as a possible future ... agreement between Myanmar and the EU” on timber exports, FFI said.

“Ultimately, improved and clarified legality standards for Myanmar timber will also help combat illegal logging by supporting a legal timber supply that local people can get involved in.”

‘There’s no political will for community forestry ... They don’t understand it at the top.’

U Win Myo Thu
EcoDev managing director

Community forests are permitted under the Myanmar Community Forestry Instruction (CFI), issued in 1995, and in 2001 the government set a target of handing over 2.27 million acres – or 1.36 percent of the country – to community forest user groups by 2030-31.

However, fewer than 120,000 acres of community forest have been established to date, and environmental

groups have argued for years that community forests will not take root without a dramatic overhaul of the CFI.

Environmental groups say community forests could support the development of a sustainable timber industry, particularly in light of the April ban on log exports.

International NGO Forest Trends said in a November 2013 report that community forests “have the highest potential to be sustainable”, and are the only forest land category in which communities have any land-use rights.

However, uptake has been disappointing and so far no known community forests have begun harvesting hardwood timber species, such as teak and ironwood, for village use.

“No government plans have included community forests as providing timber for the country’s wood sector. There is also no national certification program targeting community forests,” it said.

Mark Grindley, a program manager and technical adviser with FFI in Myanmar, said the CFI is the major barrier to uptake, as it was “targeted at meeting demands for subsistence use and re-greening degraded state forests near to villages”, rather than commercial uses.

FFI and the ministry believe the prospect of exporting timber legally to Western markets will incentivise communities to register more forests.

“[L]egal timber will be able to reach a wider and more lucrative range of markets, including in Europe, the

United States and Australia, as well as a growing number of other countries. It will also be able to command a premium from educated consumers willing to pay the costs of full compliance,” he said.

The largest obstacle is likely to be the massive market for illegally harvested timber from Myanmar, which has continued to flow across the country’s borders despite the April 1 ban.

U Win Myo Thu, managing director of the environmental NGO EcoDev, said there are a wide range of institutional hurdles that will also likely undermine reform efforts. “There’s no political will for community forestry [in the ministry]. They don’t understand it at the top and there’s very little motivation [to reform] in the operational staff,” he said.

The illegal timber trade will also likely be protected by powerful forces within the government that profit from smuggling, he said.

“That is the reality on the ground,” said U Win Myo Thu. “I’m not saying [the FFI project] will come to nothing ... but knowing how they do things in the forest department, it’s not going to [change] very soon.”

Mr Grindley acknowledged that corruption and the protection of the illegal timber trade would hinder the growth and effectiveness of community forestry. “Of course we will not get there overnight and, in the early stages where we are now, the presence of illegal timber in the market will diminish the incentive for compliance.”

Ministry rules out plague after rat deaths in delta

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THE Health Ministry is reassuring Ayeyarwady Region residents that the deaths of thousands of rats was not due to plague. Ministry officials say the rats appear to have died of hunger following a surge in their birth rate accompanied by food shortages.

Nearly 2000 rat deaths were recorded between May 21 and 26 in three townships, Pathein, Danubyu and Lemyethna. Only one species of rat, *mus musculus*, was involved. “Because the deaths occurred near people’s homes, there were fears of plague and we were called in to investigate,” said epidemiologist Dr Phyo Phyo Kyaw.

Plague is a bacterial disease

transmitted by fleas normally associated with rats, though person-to-person and airborne transmission is also possible. Plague manifests as fever, headache and painfully swollen lymph nodes. The disease progresses rapidly, and without antibiotic treatment leads to pneumonia, with a death rate in excess of 50 percent. The last outbreak occurred in 1973, according to ministry records.

But laboratory tests on the rats found in Ayeyarwady Region show there has been no new plague outbreak.

“The samples examined were not infected with plague, and we did not discover any other species affected. But we are still waiting to see what happens in this area over the next 14 days to see if anyone goes down with fever,” Dr Phyo Phyo Kyaw said on May 27.



Dead rats on a plastic sheet in Pathein’s Shaw Phar village. Photo: Supplied

Department of Agriculture Planning deputy director Daw Nyo Nyo Thin suggested the cause of death was instead related to the climate and a scarcity of the cereals that make up the rats’ diet.

“The mice originally lived in paddy fields and ate paddy. The hot weather led to an increase in birth rate, and then to food shortages in the fields,” she said.

Unable to find food in nearby houses, some of the rats fought each other. “We checked their stomach contents. We discovered no poison, but their stomachs were full of charcoal and hair,” said Daw Nyo Nyo Thin.

She added that international experts have been invited to help the ministry diagnose other possible causes of death.

Disease a threat as Kachin displaced wait for shelters

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A LOCAL humanitarian group has warned that families recently displaced by fighting in southeastern Kachin State are at risk of illness because refugee camps are unable to provide even basic housing, with some refugees forced to sleep on the ground because of overcrowding.

U Zaw La, a priest who heads the Kachin Baptist Convention-run refugee camp in the Man Waing Gyi area of Mansi township, said the families, some of whom have already been displaced once before, need better accommodation before the arrival of the rainy season.

The refugee camp was built by the United Nations Refugee Agency after clashes between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army erupted in mid-April.

It is one of five camps in the town that are collectively hosting about 6000 refugees, U Zaw La said.

"Rain was leaking into our bedroom last night. Some people got sick because they were sleeping on the floor," said La Hpai La Raw, 35, who fled Kaw Ngu Yan village with his five children last month.

He said one person from their village died in the fighting in April, while two people died in the nearby village of Maw Swe.

KBC camp nurse Daw Nan Raw said some refugees are suffering



A child stands in front of tents in the Kachin Baptist Convention camp in Man Waing Gyi on May 27. Photo: Wa Lone

from diarrhoea, which is common in refugee camps during rainy season.

Many of the IDPs fled from the Lagat Yang and Khaung Khay refugee camps, which were situated between the KIA and Tatmadaw lines. They were abandoned when heavy fighting erupted in the vicinity of the camp.

Like La Hpai La Raw, nearby villagers also fled their homes, taking shelter in Man Waing Gyi. About 140 displaced families are living with relatives in the town, rather than the refugee camps, U Zaw La said.

The camps receive assistance from UNHCR, UNICEF, World Vision, Save

the Children and other NGOs.

A Tatmadaw official in the area said further outbreaks of fighting were unlikely but land mines remain a threat.

"We are taking care of security and there will be no more fighting. However, we have had to warn locals about the threat of land mines," said Lieutenant Colonel Kyaw San Oo from the No 88 Light Infantry Division, who led the week-long offensive against KIA soldiers launched on April 11.

At least 30 soldiers from both sides were killed or injured in the clashes.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs (UNOCHA) said in its humanitarian bulletin for April that at least 2700 people were displaced by the fighting, most of whom were already IDPs. An unconfirmed number also fled across the border into China.

UNOCHA said a needs assessment conducted on April 24-25 found between 300 and 400 households were in need of temporary shelters, while camps were overcrowded and had little space for additional shelters.

"Humanitarian organisations are trying to identify safe and appropriate new sites for accommodating the newly displaced," it said.

- Translation by Khant Lin Oo

Cultural heritage set for global recognition

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WIDELY used in Myanmar as a natural cosmetic, thanakha could soon be receiving global recognition, with officials indicating they plan to nominate it for inclusion on a UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage.

The nomination comes after Myanmar ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in early 2014. Official recognition is expected to come through in October, after which Myanmar can nominate cultural heritage for inclusion.

"If we have chance to register, Myanmar thanakha will be first on the priority list," said U Kyaw Thiha, a deputy director with the Department of Archaeology and National Museum.

In preparation, the first capacity-building workshop for intangible cultural heritage was held from May 19-24.

"We discussed the [intangible cultural heritage] most likely for include and made a priority list for nomination," U Kyaw Thiha said.

Myanmar will become the 160th party to the convention, which is a UNESCO treaty adopted in 2003 that entered into force in 2006.

While thanakha is likely to be the first Myanmar cultural icon included on the list, U San Win, a retired director general of the Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library said there were many other possibilities.

He suggested *nat pwe* (animist spirit festival), the Taunggyi balloon festival, neck rings of the Padaung, Chin facial tattoos, Myanmar traditional harp and bronze sculpture as others that could be approved for inclusion in future.

Myanmar ratified the World Heritage Convention in April 1994. While it does not currently have any sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List, three ancient Pyu cities were nominated for inclusion in 2013.

6000

Number of IDPs in the five camps set up in the Man Waing Gyi area of Kachin State's Mansi township



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Religion activists call for tougher punishments on forced conversion

Maximum two-year jail term contained in draft religious conversion law released on May 27 is not strong enough, advocates say

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RELIGIOUS reformers have expressed dissatisfaction with punishments in a draft religious conversion law, arguing that those found guilty of forced conversion or other offences in the law should face up to 10 years in prison.

The controversial draft, which was proposed in 2013 by the Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion and compiled by a 12-member commission, stipulates a maximum two-year penalty. The draft was published in state media on May 27, with the commission inviting public feedback.

U Aye Paing, a legal adviser to the religious protection committee, which is better known by its Myanmar acronym of Ma Ba Tha, told *The Myanmar Times* he will submit proposals to the government to impose jail terms of five to 10 years for these proposed offences. His call was supported by Dhammacakka U Mg Mg, who is a senior member of the committee.

Some civil society and political leaders have already objected to the draft. The existing text calls for a

two-year jail sentence for insulting, demeaning, destroying or misusing religion.

"How can the mindset of a person wishing to change his or her religion be measured? The law must be practical, and the current draft is unreasonable," said High Court lawyer U Ko Ni, a legal adviser to the National League for Democracy.

Another lawyer, U Khin Zaw, said the draft resembled an existing law that provides for legal action against those who demean Buddhism.

The draft law would require applications to change religion to be submitted to an examining body chaired by the township head of the Department of Sasana Affairs. The other

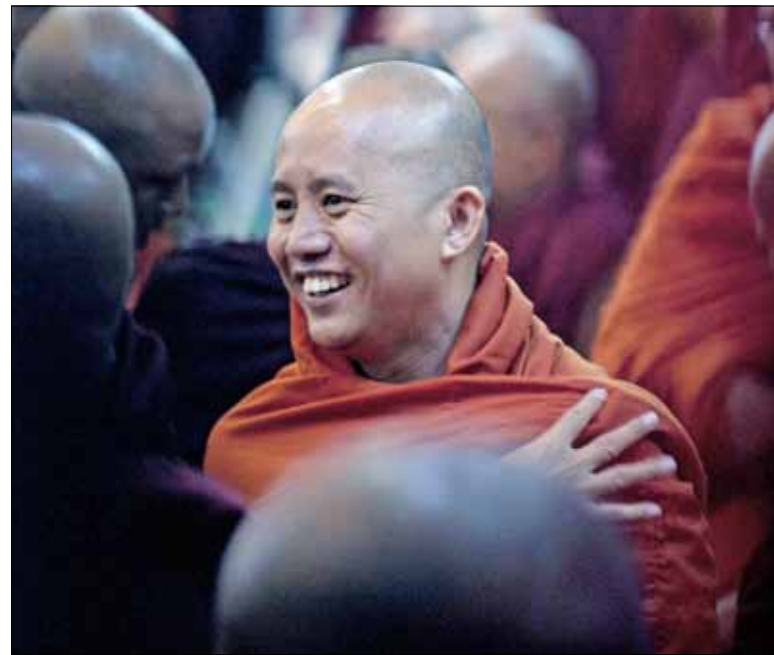
members would be the township staff officer of the Immigration and National Registration Department, the township deputy head of the administration department, two community leaders, the chair of the women's affairs federation and the township education officer.

This body would determine whether influence had been brought to bear on the applicant and the applicant's understanding of the new religion before permitting a change to their registration card. The director of Equality Myanmar, U Aung Myo Min said that if the law is introduced, membership of the examining body should not be limited to Buddhists, but that it should be a multi-religious panel.

U Ko Ni said that while it might be easy for an applicant wishing to become a Buddhist, no obstacles should be placed in the way of a Buddhist wishing to join another religion. Stopping someone from converting of their own free will would be "an abuse of freedom of religion, and would be against the constitution," he said.

U Khin Zaw added that there should be a superior body, above the township level, to act in the event of a dispute.

Other legal experts also highlighted an apparent contradiction with section 16, which makes it illegal to forbid



U Wirathu, a leading member of the Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion, smiles during a meeting of Buddhist monks in June 2013. Photo: AFP

or disturb anyone wishing to change religion. "If the [township] examining body forbids someone to change their religion by not following the set criteria, will the law punish the examining body?" said U Ko Ni.

He said the draft law was un-

necessary and should be replaced by legislation banning hate speech and promoting a peaceful multi-religious community, like that in place in Singapore.

'How can the mindset of a person wishing to change his or her religion be measured? The law must be practical.'

U Ko Ni
High Court lawyer

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IN DEPTH

Myanmar's silent men

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REPORTERS seeking information from government ministries know that the task is fraught with “ifs”. If they can find a phone number and if the phone call goes through and if someone does answer and if it is indeed the correct person, chances are they will get a gruff brush-off.

All the ministries in Nay Pyi Taw have official spokespersons, as part of changes to improve transparency and media relations initiated by President U Thein Sein, but few, if any, actually speak to the press. Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Htut says attempts to encourage these spokespersons to engage with the media have largely failed due to a continued wariness of the press and a lack of access to high-level discussions.

‘Ministry spokes-people ... are still afraid of the press.’

U Ye Htut
President’s Office spokesperson

U Ye Htut, who is also a spokesperson for the President’s Office, said that seven training sessions organised by the ministry last year have had little impact in changing the mentality of the appointed spokespeople, leaving journalists seeking official comment with few options.

“They [ministry spokespeople] are still reluctant to talk to the press,” U Ye Htut said. “They are still afraid of the press.”

This reluctance, he said, comes from a fear of being misquoted or misrepresented. But they are also given little access themselves to high-level meetings that take place within their ministries and as a result have little information to give to the media and cannot speak with confidence on policy issues.

For most of those appointed to speak to the media in Myanmar’s 30 ministries, the spokesperson position is secondary to their main role in the

ministry. U Kyaw Soe from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, for example, also serves as principal of the telecoms training centre.

The tight-lipped Ministry of Defence had a responsive spokesperson for a few brief weeks last year. However, he changed phone numbers and then stopped taking calls entirely. An unfortunate young woman in Yangon ended up with his previous phone number and found herself apologising to reporters who flooded her with inquiries about the Tatmadaw.

U Ye Htut is one of the few who regularly talks to the press. He became the President’s Office spokesperson in 2013 when the position was created but over the past year the scope of his job has widened. He has become the de facto spokesperson for the entire government.

He has been appointed media focal point on a number of key events and issues, including this year’s chairing of ASEAN and violence in Rakhine State.

The unwillingness of spokespeople to carry out their jobs has become a consistent complaint among journalists. Many find themselves repeatedly calling U Ye Htut or resorting to less conventional methods, like attempting to reach him on Facebook chat. They are also forced to seek interviews from other ministry officials who are not authorised to speak to the press, which results in a large number of unattributed comments.

“Every single ministry should have a spokesperson,” said U Thiha Saw, who is deputy chief of the Myanmar Journalists Association and member of the Press Council.

“They [the government] came up with a list, but when you call those numbers there is no answer,” he said.

Ko San Yu, Mandalay-based editor for *Modern* and *Kumudra* journals, said that he believed the lack of functioning spokespeople made it challenging to produce balanced news. The public ultimately lose out as a result.

“The lack of spokespersons means we face a lot of difficulties. There is no accuracy, no balance in our news. If there is no accuracy and no balance readers will not believe the news we cover,” said Ko San Yu.

Shallow earthquake hits China border

A SHALLOW earthquake with a magnitude of 5.9 hit the Myanmar-China border area on May 30, the US Geological Survey said, with Chinese reports saying 29 people had been injured, five of them seriously.

The epicentre was in China’s Yunnan Province, 65 kilometres (40 miles) southeast of Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State, USGS said, estimating the quake’s depth at 10km.

Shallow earthquakes can often cause greater damage than more powerful deep ones.

Chinese state media said the tremor hit Yingjiang county. “Tremors were strongly felt in the county seat, where local residents rushed to open areas,” state-run Xinhua said.

“Police have been sent to the township of Kachang, which is close to the epicentre,” it added, citing lo-

cal publicity officials.

Xinhua put the magnitude at 6.1, citing China’s earthquake authorities.

Many people posting on Sina Weibo – China’s version of Twitter – said the shaking lasted between six and eight seconds.

USGS graded it as a seven on its “Shakemap” scale, saying that shaking would have been “very strong” and expecting “moderate” damage. – *AFP*



U Soe Myint of Htone Bo village sits on a bed at Pyin Oo Lwin Central Hospital on May 27, a day after he and four others were beaten by a group of nine men. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Five beaten over Pyin Oo Lwin land

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FOUR men from Pyin Oo Lwin are recovering in hospital after they and another person were beaten and tied up in an attack that police believe is linked to a land dispute in the area.

Five residents from Pyin Oo Lwin’s Htone Bo village received a phone call asking to meet to discuss the land dispute at 10am on May 26. They agreed to meet at a house in the village but were then asked to go to a nearby coffee plantation, after which they were set upon by nine men.

Police have arrested three men in

connection with the incident.

“After we arrived they beat us with sticks and hit us again after they tied us with rope to a pillar,” said village farm association head U Nyunt Swe. While they were beating them, the men spoke on the phone to another individual, who police say may have coordinated the attack.

“I received injuries all over my body,” said resident U Soe Myint. “We will resolve this through the legal system and ensure those nine people and the organiser are brought to justice.”

The head of the Htone Bo village administration office said three people were arrested near the house

where the beatings took place.

“They said they are from Yangon’s Thingangyun township. We asked who had put them up to this and they said it was a woman. We have handed them over to the police,” administrator U Kyaw Lin said.

Constable Than Htike from Wetwun Police Station said he was confident that the attack was related to a local land dispute. “We are now conducting our investigation and have opened a case against nine defendants,” he said.

The nine individuals have each been charged with four offences.

– *Translation by Khant Lin Oo*



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An artist's rendering shows the planned aquarium at Kandawgyi Park, which will replace the Freshwater Fish Garden. Photo: Supplied

Aquarium hits a snag on tree-cutting permission

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THE construction of a US\$15 million aquarium is being held up because Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) has yet to give permission for trees at the site in Kandawgyi Park to be cut down.

"For the building, some trees which can be moved will be moved, but some are very old and immovable

... For this, we have requested YCDC" for permission to cut them down, said U Sai Moe Kyaw, the manager of the Freshwater Fish Garden, which currently occupies the site.

"If we are allowed, we'll cut them down and pay the tax. We are waiting permission but YCDC hasn't replied yet. I hope to hear back this week," he said.

The aquarium project is being managed by Surbana International Consultants Pte Ltd, which opened an office in Yangon in April, in partnership with the Myanmar Aquarium Company, which won a tender for the site in November 2013.

The 5-acre (2 hectare) site, in Bahan township, is currently home to the Freshwater Fish Garden, which opened in 2005.

It features two waterfalls, a stream, 23 in-ground fish tanks and 24 glass fish tanks. More than 12,700 freshwater fish are displayed, including 26 native species, 30 Asian species, seven African species and eight Latin American species.

The Fresh Water Fish Garden is managed by YCDC's Department of Gardens and Amusement, as well as the Department of Livestock and Fisheries.

However, it is being demolished

to make way for the sleek two-storey building designed by Surbana, which has described the new aquarium as "the most anticipated tourist destination in Yangon".

— Translated by Hein Htet Aung

CONTINUED FROM NEWS 1

"The administrative work is carried out by the staff from that ministry now but later it will have its own staff"

The state-run *New Light of Myanmar* reported on May 30 that the reformation of the MIC was designed to attract more foreign investment.

It is the third major change to the commission since U Thein Sein became president in early 2011. The commission was firstly reformed that year and headed by Minister for the President's Office U Soe Thein. He was replaced by U Win Shein in 2013.

Under the military government the commission was seen as a tool of the regime and had almost no independence. Under U Thein Sein's government it has been given greater freedom, but still operates according to guidelines provided by the President's Office.

Last year it was told to prioritise manufacturing investment in an effort to create more job opportunities. In 2013-14 it approved investment of US\$4.1 billion, of which about 45 percent, or \$1.9 billion, was in manufacturing. Total investment was almost three times the \$1.4 billion approved in 2012-13.

Japan to consider rebuilding bridges along key trade route

Survey of four bridges in Mon and Kayin states could lead to low-interest loans to cover rebuilding costs



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THE Japanese International Cooperation Agency is conducting environmental and social impact surveys around four key bridges in Kayin and Mon states that need rebuilding to boost trade with Thailand and other ASEAN countries.

Once the surveys are complete JICA say it will consider a loan to cover the construction costs, provided the government agrees to cover the environmental and social costs.

"The present bridges need to be

rebuilt. So we will survey the likely impact on the public from the project," said U Saw Win, the environmental adviser from E Guard Environmental Services, which has been contracted by JICA to conduct the surveys.

The limited budget of the Ministry of Construction's Public Works department has so far prevented vital repair work being carried out on the 115-metre Naung Lon bridge in Kayin State's Hpa-an township, the 400m Gyaing bridge and the 870m Gyaing bridge in Kayin State's Kawkaik township, the 430-metre long Attran bridge in Mon State's Kyaikmaraw township.

"The Japanese government will decide [whether to fund construction] depending on the data. We can't

say exactly whether they will give a loan. Compensation for the impact area is not related to JICA and the Myanmar government will be responsible for this," said U Aye Thiha, managing director of E Guard.

The Gyaing bridge in Kawkaik township is on the main highway

that connects Yangon to Mae Sot on the Thai border, a vital trade artery. Built in 1999, it has since weakened and can now only safely manage 20-tonne trucks, down from 45 tonnes. After being rebuilt the bridge is expected to take 60-tonne trucks.

Two town bypasses, at Thaton in Mon State and Kyar Kalay in Kayin State, are also in need of repair and have been included in the project.

Improving the highway to Thailand is considered important preparation for the introduction of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by the end of 2015. A large number of reforms are required from many countries in the 10-member ASEAN bloc and the government has acknowledged that it is unlikely to meet the deadline.

1815

Total length, in metres, of the four bridges that JICA is considering providing funding to replace

Indonesian experts visit for bilateral media dialogue

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FREEDOM of the press is essential to the progress of democratisation, a joint Indonesian-Myanmar media conference was told last week. Organised by the Indonesia Press Council and Myanmar's ministries of foreign affairs and information, the dialogue was held on May 28-29 at Inya Lake Hotel in Yangon.

Ito Sumardi, Indonesia's ambassador to Myanmar, congratulated Myanmar on its reform process and expressed appreciation for the opening-up of media freedom in the country.

But deputy information minister U Ye Htut said there were many challenges ahead, including the risk of what he called a monopolised media.

"It is not enough just to pass a law, because awareness and people-to-people contact represent another milestone toward media freedom," he said, adding, "We should learn from others how to get the freedom of press right. We need more comments, criticism and suggestions for state or private media from readers."

U Ye Htut said the government was encouraging media freedom in line with UNESCO guidelines on enacting media law for the development of the country, preserving journalistic ethics and developing public service media.

Participants discussed the promotion of media responsibility and freedom, and how these contribute to democratisation, with an emphasis on how to gather and share news concerning conflict-sensitive issues so as to avoid a negative impact on social cohesion.

Ninok Leksono, a member of the Indonesia Press Council, said the Indonesian press was upgrading itself amid questions about its independence. "So far, our role as a watchdog has been done quite successfully, but much remains to be done," he said.

Mr Ninok, who is also rector of Multimedia Nusantara University, said Indonesian media were reconsidering the meaning of freedom of the press in their coverage of politics, the economy and social issues. The media served as the fourth pillar supporting democratisation, with the power to sound the alarm over abuses of power and corruption.

"Today the problems and dynamics of society are too complex for the press to digest. In many cases, issues are beyond journalists' comprehension," he said.

Another member, Muhamad Ridlo Eisy, said Indonesia had advanced from "pseudo democracy" to real democracy. The freedom of communication, expression and information was based on the declaration of human rights incorporated as an amendment to the constitution.

The press council had been established as an independent institution to protect the self-regulation mechanism, which promoted mass communication and journalistic activities including the seeking, obtaining, storing, processing and disseminating of information in printed or electronic media. "Media freedom is your freedom, and it is important to use it right," he said.

Parliament to consider religion laws

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TWO controversial “protection of religion” bills drafted by a newly formed commission will be submitted to MPs during the current session of parliament, the deputy chair of the commission says.

Before being submitted the bills will be published to allow the commission to get public feedback.

“Two bills – concerning religious conversion and population control – have already been submitted to the president. We will publish these bills in state newspapers to get suggestions from the public and then we will forward them during the current parliament session [so MPs can] discuss them,” said committee member U Maung Maung Htay, a deputy director at the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

‘We will forward all feedback to the president.’

U Maung Maung Htay
Bill-drafting commission member

President U Thein Sein forwarded four controversial bills – concerning religious conversion, interfaith marriage, monogamy and population control – to the parliament for approval on February 25. The four drafts were written by a monk-led group called the Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion, which is closely linked to the “969” movement.

But two days later, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U Shwe Thura Mann sent the drafts back to the government to be rewritten.

In response, the president set up a 12-member commission on March 7, headed by Deputy Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, to draft the religious conversion and population control bills by June 30. The commission includes representatives of the Ministry of Immigration and Population, Ministry of Religious Affairs, the president’s legal advisory team, and other government bodies.

The draft religious conversion bill was published in state newspapers on May 28 along with a request for public feedback. The bill states that a Myanmar citizen who wishes to change their religion must get approval from a registration body. Forced conversion can result in a punishment of up to two years’ imprisonment.

The protection of religion bills, including the religious conversion law, have been the subject of significant public criticism, with some groups arguing that the requirement to get approval from a registration body would harm religious freedom.

The status of the interfaith marriage and monogamy laws, which were not submitted to the commission formed by President U Thein Sein, remains unclear. However, when sending them back to the government Thura U Shwe Mann recommended they be drafted by the Attorney General’s Office.

Some MPs have criticised that president and parliament for “playing volleyball” with the drafts, which some have described as a “weapon” to advance political interests before the 2015 election.

A draft interfaith marriage law has attracted the most controversy. The law would ban Buddhist women from marrying men of other faiths, and has been criticised by both local and international rights groups. In May, more than 100 civil society groups denounced the proposed law, warning its introduction would be “a disgraceful act that would invite international ridicule”.

The Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion responded by issuing a statement in which it called the groups “traitors”.

U Maung Maung Htay said he was aware of the criticism from the civil society groups but said the commission had done its best to draft the bills with respect for international standards and the 2008 constitution.

“They rejected the bill before knowing the contents,” he said. “I hope that people will accept the bills after seeing them in detail.”

He said all feedback would be welcomed. “We will forward all feedback to the president but a final decision will be made by parliament,” he said.



Members of the Lawyers’ Network protest outside the former Small Claims Court on May 28. Photo: Zarni Phyto

Lawyers’ Network to battle MIC over Yangon court tenders

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MEMBERS of the Lawyers’ Network have protested against a government decision to lease two court buildings to private companies and have threatened to sue the Myanmar Investment Commission.

About 50 lawyers from the network walked from the High Court on Maha Bandoola Park Street to Small Claims Court on Strand Road during the May 28 protest.

Following an invitation for tender, the investment commission leased the Small Claims Court building to Flying Tiger Engineering Company to run as a hotel. The High Court building was awarded to Tun Foundation Bank to run as a museum.

Lawyer U Ko Ni said it was not appropriate to change a legal building into a hotel and the decision may have violated section 20 of the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law.

“The section says you cannot change the original structure and form of an ancient heritage

building and violators face one to seven years in jail. If they change [the Small Claims Court] into a hotel, a court of law will become bathrooms, toilets and bedrooms,” U Ko Ni said.

It was the second protest the network has staged against the proposed development. The first took place in October 2012 but the lawyers said they had received no response. The lawyers say they will apply to file charges under the Specific Relief Act.

“The Small Claims Court was an important building in the history of the Myanmar judicial system. We should preserve our heritage buildings,” said lawyer U Kyee Myint.

“We waited for a response from MIC but have heard nothing so we have decided to prosecute the MIC.”

MIC member U Aung Naing Oo said he was unaware of the allegations but denied any impropriety. He said the tender had been open and transparent, with the call for expressions of interest published in state newspapers, and there had been no objections submitted at the time against the proposed tender.

“MIC acted in accordance with the

law. If the lawyers want to object, they should have done it when we invited tenders,” he said. “In other countries heritage buildings are converted into hotels in the interests of the country.”

U Thaug Htike, managing director of Flying Tiger, said the deal to turn the court into a hotel would net the government significant income. Under the project, the company has agreed to a one-off US\$14.4 million payment as well as 7 percent of annual income over 70 years, after which the hotel will revert to state ownership. He said the project is 30pc completed and should be finished in 2016.

“We are working not only for the benefit of our company but also to develop our country,” he said, adding: “We will never stop the hotel project.”

In contrast, little work appears to have been undertaken at the High Court on the planned conversion to a museum.

U Thein Tun said last week that although Tun Foundation Bank won the tender it has still not signed a contract for the project. He said the bank had decided to postpone the project because of the protests.

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Anti-hate speech campaign comes to Mandalay

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A NEW anti-hate speech campaign is gaining momentum in Mandalay, where about 25 volunteers handed out pamphlets last week.

The *Pan Sagar* (flower speech) campaign encourages people to refrain from hate speech and more carefully consider the consequences of their actions.

It was launched in Yangon in April by prominent blogger Nay Phone Latt.

"The reason we are doing this is so that we do not have unnecessary problems because of offensive language while we are transitioning to a democratic country," said volunteer Ko Nyi Nyi Kyaw.

"Our message to all citizens, including parliamentary representatives and government officials, is, 'Please watch your tongue.'"

The volunteers gave out the pamphlets at the corner of 25th and 66th streets at about 5pm on May 23.

The leaflets describe hate speech as an "unfortunate" by-product of freedom of speech that has had a visible impact on Myanmar and its society.

"If hate speech reaches a dangerous level, we are seriously worried that it would create a big obstacle on the road forward for our country."

The pamphlet distribution has been conducted six times in Yangon and Mandalay. Activists say they plan to expand it to other parts of upper Myanmar.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Warnings over development drain on water resources



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SURROUNDED by yellow containers, a woman checks to make sure each is completely filled with water. Her source? A pipe from a World War II-era oil well, which people in her village and others in Sidoktaya township, Magwe Region, rely on to quench their thirst.

The problem? The water is not clean.

"This is the way villagers collect drinking water every day," said U Nyunt Win, a member of the Organic Agro and Farmer Affair Development Group in neighbouring Pwintbyu township.

Speaking at a gathering of water stakeholders in March to mark World Water Day, U Nyunt Win said efforts to harness the area's water supply for national benefit had resulted in less water security for residents.

Before 2000, he said, many residents in Sidoktaya and Pwintbyu relied on the Mone creek, which flows between the two townships, for water. But after two dams were built, 31 villages were relocated up a hill, about 700 feet (213 metres) above water. Because of their distance from the creek, about 10 villages now rely on unclear water from the oil well for drinking.

"One person from each family has to devote a lot of time to collecting water every day. Old people or families who can't collect water themselves have to pay K500 for a bucket [about 4 gallons]."

Areas farther downstream from the multipurpose dam have also suffered as a result of its construction. About 50,000 acres of farmland lost access to



Bago Region residents carry buckets filled with water from a delivery truck during shortages in 2010. Photo: Christopher Davy

water from the creek, leaving farmers dependent on 7000 tube wells to irrigate their crops. Additionally, while the dam was built to provide irrigation to water-deprived Magwe Region fields, the irrigation canals along which the water is distributed are heavily silted, reducing its beneficial impact.

The situation in Sidoktaya is but one example of Myanmar's precarious water situation and the impact of development without careful planning.

The government is taking some steps to address the country's water woes. At the World Water Day event, it unveiled a draft water use policy written by the National Water Resources Committee, set up last July and chaired by vice president U Nyan Tun.

Committee member Daw Khin Ni Ni Thein said the draft policy had been sent to the president's office and would be submitted to parliament. "After that we will invite public suggestions. That process will run from May to November."

According to the draft policy, the country's principle waterways - the Ayeyarwady, Sittoung, Thanlwin and Chindwin rivers, along with major tributaries the Myittha, Mu, Zawgyi, Panglaung, Samon, Myitnge, Mone, Mann, Salin, Yaw and Mindon - create an internal renewable freshwater resource of 1082 cubic kilometres of water each year, resulting in a vast, rich supply with a wide drainage area.

The document also states, however, that the country's growing population, rapid urbanisation, and the push toward industrialisation and economic development mean demand is increasing rapidly. The report's authors called for an integrated management approach, one that will bring together all concerned sectors and authorities and allow truly sustainable development.

One factor, the group said, is the impact of a global issue: climate change. Today Myanmar's monsoon season is about four days shorter than it was in 1980, according to meteorologist U Tun Lwin, and that means nearly one-third less water in the cycle.

"Monsoon rainfall, which is the main water source for our rivers, has dropped 30 percent. Groundwater resources are also threatened by global warming if global temperature rises even 1 Celsius," he said.

According to a global warming scenario from UK's Hadley Centre, temperatures in Myanmar could rise 5C by the end of this century, U Tun Lwin said. And already global warming and sedimentation are combining to affect freshwater resources, particularly in the delta region.

Halting the degradation of forests in these watershed areas is one important way to fight the impact of climate change and declining water supplies, said U Ohn, chair of the Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association.

"[The increased damage caused by] environmental disasters such as floods and cyclones are clear evidence of the impact of deforestation. Erosion because of deforestation can result in sedimentation in the river. When erosion becomes worse, soil quality is totally ruined. And forests are crucial for good climate, which is important for

the water sector," U Ohn said.

Agricultural, residential and industrial water users increasingly have to compete with power projects to hold onto their existing water supplies. About 70pc of total power generation in 2013 came from hydropower, said U Hla Baw, chair of the Global Water Partnership for Southeast Asia. He added that there is still nearly 10 times that potential - an estimated 46,099 megawatts - available.

But competition and shortages are not inevitable. As the draft policy states, only around 5pc of the nation's water wealth - about 56 cubic kilometres - is currently being used because of Myanmar's current usage policies and its financial and technological limitations.

5%

Amount of Myanmar's water resources, which total 56 cubic kilometres, that is currently being used

While the current usage balance is overwhelmingly tilted toward farming - 91pc agriculture, 6pc domestic and 3pc industrial - U Hla Baw said demand for domestic and industrial usage will rise in the future as the country develops, meaning that better approaches need to be developed.

"The challenge is to balance freshwater maintenance and power generation," he said.

Daw Khin Ni Ni Thein said that integrated water management can help reduce poverty and promote stability, becoming a positive force for good in the country's development.

"If water management is not considered in Myanmar's reform process, it will negatively impact on other political and economic reforms."

For the people of Sidoktaya and Pwintbyu, the negative impact of the dam on the Mone creek is a constant burden, and one that, according to U Nyunt Win, the government has not taken any steps to rectify.

And so, buckets filled with the only water she can access, the Sidoktaya resident prepares to shoulder her unsafe burden and make yet another trip back home from the well.

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Monsoon progress stalls

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A LOW pressure area in the Bay of Bengal has slowed the progress of the monsoon, which is now expected to reach all parts of the country during the first week of June.

The monsoon has been stuck in central Myanmar since May 20 and unable to advance because a depression in the Bay of Bengal moved to India, taking the monsoon winds with it.

“That affected the monsoon advance,” said Department of Meteorology and Hydrology deputy director U Kyaw Lwin Oo. “The monsoon season is now forecast to start across the whole country about June 5”

The monsoon advanced to the southern part of Myanmar on May 17 and the delta, including Yangon, on May 20.

Following last week’s lull, U Kyaw Lwin Oo said monsoon intensity will revive to moderate strength during the first week of June.

The Ayeyarwady delta, Tanintharyi Region, Mon and Rakhine states, and northern Myanmar are all expected to receive 6 to 8 inches (15-20 centimetres) of rainfall between May 28 and June 5, while central Myanmar is forecast to receive up to 2 inches (5cm) of precipitation.

The department said a low pressure area may form over the Bay of Bengal in June and further intensify into a depression. If this occurs, it would give a boost to the intensity of the monsoon.

The department’s forecast for June states that offshore monsoon intensity will be moderate to strong, with above-average rainfall expected in Ayeyarwady and Tanintharyi regions and Rakhine State. Below-average rain is expected in lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magwe regions.



IN PICTURES

PHOTO: AFP

Shigeru Iwasaki, chief of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces’ Joint Staff, pours water on a Buddha image at Shwedagon Pagoda on May 28, during the first visit to Myanmar by Japan’s highest-ranking army officer since World War II. The Japanese military’s top officer held meetings with his Myanmar counterpart, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, and President U Thein Sein during his four-day trip.

Rakhine civil society to monitor INGOs

First civil society-based “watch committee” formed in Sittwe, with more to be set up across the state to scrutinise activities of aid organisations



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RAKHINE civil society groups have formed a committee to scrutinise the activities of foreign humanitarian operations in Sittwe, activists said last week.

More than 40 civil society groups agreed to form the 22-member “watch committee” at a meeting in the state capital on May 26, said Ko Tun Lin from the Rakhine Social Network.

“They [aid groups] said they come here for development projects so we will watch to see whether their aid

goes to the right places,” he said.

The watch team comprises members of the local free funeral service society, blood donation groups, pagoda volunteer groups and the Rakhine Women’s Network, as well as Buddhist monks.

It was formed based on a proposal passed by the Rakhine State Hluttaw in April. Similar bodies have already been set up in Minbya and Buthidaung townships, with one to be formed in each township in the state.

Committee member and prominent monk U Pannasarmi said UN agencies and INGOs should make public the terms of their memorandums of understanding with the government and what projects they are undertaking.

“They should be transparent not only with the government but also

with the Rakhine people,” he said.

He said foreign aid groups had “neglected” the Rakhine people and distributed disinformation about them.

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

‘INGOs should be transparent not only with the government but also with the Rakhine people.’

U Pannasarmi

Sittwe watch committee member

spokesperson Pierre Péron declined to comment on the watch team because the UN and its partners were not invited to the meeting at which it was formed.

However, he reiterated that UN agencies are committed to working closely with ethnic Rakhine leaders to exchange information and stop misconceptions developing about their activities.

The establishment of the watch group follows the formation of the Emergency Coordination Committee (ECC) in mid-April. Comprising representatives from the humanitarian community, Rakhine civil society, and the regional and national governments, the committee has the power to stop UN agencies and INGOs from operating in the state and

also vets each project.

The committee was formed in response to violence targeting aid groups in late March that forced them to temporarily withdraw from the state. While 26 UN agencies and INGOs that were previously operating in the state have since returned, UNOCHA says they are operating well below their previous capacity.

Mr Péron said barely 50 percent of the 363 staff based in Sittwe prior to the attacks have returned.

U Pannasarmi said the watch committee was needed to avoid further conflict.

“Now that INGOs have returned and are starting their activities, we need to watch what they are doing to ensure there is no repeat of the earlier conflict,” he said.

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Legal aid group targets reform of judiciary

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A LEGAL aid network has pledged to submit proposals for judicial reform to hluttaw before the end of the year, its president has told *The Myanmar Times*, in an effort to speed up change in the legal system.

The goals would be to strengthen oversight and the rule of law, as well as to combat corruption and excessive delay in resolving cases, said U Hla Ko, president of the Myanmar Legal Aid Network.

"There are always mistakes in legal cases, and under the current system there is no way of correcting them. There is no system of monitoring the judicial sector," he said.

He said he would submit the proposals, which are now being reviewed by a team of lawyers, to President U Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who leads a rule of law committee in parliament.

"At the state and regional level courts there seems to be no provision for rectifying judicial error, or addressing complaints. And I found that the oath administered to hluttaw members and the president is not administered to Supreme Court judges," said U Hla Ko.

He also criticised judicial delays. "If I want to ask a question in court, the lawyer for the other side will argue against it. The court hears both sides on the question. This could be done in a matter of minutes, but the court can take weeks to decide whether the question can be asked or not."

The judicial system also suffers from a widespread perception of corruption. While occasionally action is taken – a judge in Rakhine State resigned last October after an inquiry was launched into allegations that she had taken bribes and misused authority – there are many more cases where notoriously corrupt judges go unpunished.

Lawyer Khin Mg Than said there was one well-known judge in Mandalay who lawyers referred to as "Yar" (K10 million) because of the large bribes the judge accepted.

U Hla Ko also expressed concern about the training and background of judges appointed to senior positions in the judiciary.

"After independence, a judge would have a legal degree, but would also need decades of experience before being appointed. Their record would be examined beforehand to ensure they had enough experience and faced no accusations of bribery. But these days, the high court has four appointed judges with a military background. There is no special training for judges, and rote learning seems to all that is required," he said.

In response to a question from parliamentarian U Thein Nyunt, Minister for Home Affairs Lieutenant General Ko Ko told the hluttaw earlier this year that police had investigated three cases of alleged bribery involving the judiciary over the previous 12 months.



A sign on the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw section of the Yangon-Mandalay Highway warns motorists not to exceed 60 miles (97 kilometres) an hour. Photo: Staff

Bus crash prompts unpr response – but will it imp

In the aftermath of the May 12 crash, the government has banned a bus line, threatened sanctions against owners and

ON May 12 a bus lurched out of Nay Pyi Taw at around 6:30pm under an early monsoon season downpour and pulled onto the Yangon-Mandalay Highway.

Behind the wheel was a 34-year-old driver, who colleagues said was a 15-year veteran of the bus industry, but was driving with a suspended licence following a crash last year. He was also at the tail end of marathon driving session that started more than 12 hours earlier, at 2am.

Passengers – a cross section of the Myanmar citizens who rely on the country's extensive bus network, including Nay Pyi Taw-based civil servants, a construction worker from Yangon and monk from Mandalay – settled into a familiar routine.

The interior lights dimmed and many watched a TV as the bus rolled south toward Yangon.

Others dozed, expecting to be wakened at the 115 Mile rest stop by the hissing of air brakes and announcement of a bus attendant, where they would file off the bus to eat and sip tea.

But about half an hour after departure the routine was broken when the driver lost control of the bus as it was crossing the Wetlet railway bridge.

It careened off the road, ploughing through a distance marker, a set of concrete barrier blocks and a safety railing before plunging off the bridge and slamming into the sodden ground 45 metres (148 feet) below.

Ko Chan Myay, assistant driver on the bus, rushed to open the emergency exit located on the roof of the bus and pull passengers out of the wreckage.

The wreck was the most severe he had witnessed in his seven years on buses. The windows were shattered and the impact had torn through the image of the London skyline that decorated the body of the bus.

"I have never seen an accident like it," he told *The Myanmar Times*.

Ten men and four women were killed. Another 29 were injured,

including the driver.

The accident fed into local perceptions that have seen the road dubbed "The Death Highway". From January to April of this year, there were 147 serious accidents on the highway, killing 57 and injuring 262, according to official statistics. The May crash came one month after a fiery collision between a bus and a car claimed 12 lives. In 2013, 259 accidents occurred on the road, with 113 people killed and 627 injured.

'There is no process in all of this – no deliberation in decision-making, no cost-benefit analysis.'

Sean Turnell

Macquarie University economist

As stories of the crash filled the pages of news journals and pictures of the wrecked bus circulated through social media, officials scrambled to defend the road's safety record and laid much of the blame on reckless drivers and the bus companies that fail to properly train them. They have announced changes aimed at decreasing the hazards of the highway while restoring the confidence of drivers and passengers shaken by the recent string of crashes.

Days after the accident the Nay Pyi Taw Council announced it had banned Yarzarmin, the company operating the bus that crashed on May 12, from using the road. It was an unprecedented step.

"This closure could help decrease accidents and ensure respect for rules and regulations," Nay Pyi Taw District

Supervisory Committee for Traffic Rules Enforcement chair U Saw Hla, a member of Nay Pyi Taw Council, said of the decision to bar Yarzarmin.

Despite the tragic frequency with which lives are lost on the road, the most recent crash has clearly struck a nerve. U Kyaw Lin Oo, an independent political commentator who has closely followed the reaction to the bus crash, said that he believed the response was due in part to the number of individuals killed in the April 12 and May 12 crashes.

"In [most of the previous] crashes, maybe one or two people have died. But this time the death toll was very high," he said.

He added that the relatively high compensation given to passengers and their families also heightened public interest in the accident.

Others have pointed out the location of the crash, just miles from the showpiece capital that is playing host to ASEAN this year, as a reason for the government's swift response.

When announcing the ban on Yarzarmin, Nay Pyi Taw Council officials cited statistics that showed almost two-thirds of accidents on the highway in 2013 were caused by human error, with another 24pc attributed to mechanical failure. Just 1pc were attributed to the condition of the road.

The driver of the bus has been charged with four offences – causing death by negligence, causing grievous hurt, causing hurt and rash driving – despite police who investigated the crash admitting that he was not speeding. Drinking was also ruled out as a factor.

Fatigue appears the more likely cause: Government spokesperson U Ye Htut said the driver had been on the road almost continuously since 2am on the morning of the crash, when he departed Myawaddy for Yangon. After stopping in Yangon he left for Nay Pyi Taw at about 8am.

But questions continue to surface over the quality of the road.



TIM MCLAUGHLIN HSU HLAING HTUN

Completed in 2009 following an astonishingly short construction period, the 366-mile (589km) road is almost entirely concrete. Commissioned by the previous military government, it was built without foreign expertise, creating what experts say is a dangerous driving surface.

"The curves are not designed for ease of steering. The 'waviness' of the surface indicates that the foundations were not built properly, which causes uneven subsidence beneath the surface," Masahiko Tanaka, head of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Myanmar, which carried out a study on the road's condition, wrote in a June 2013 op-ed published by *The Myanmar Times*.

Basic safety elements found on highways in other countries – roadside reflectors, signs warning motorists of upcoming turns, adequate lighting and rumble strips to alert drivers that they are veering off the road – are conspicuously absent.

Though local media often pegs the cost of the road at around US\$1 billion, Sean Turnell, a Myanmar-focused economist at Sydney's Macquarie University, said it would be difficult to know the true amount spent.

"Proper costings of this road will always be difficult, especially since some of it was built for consideration 'in kind' by crony firms whose main focus was always the concessions they could yield from such projects," Mr Turnell said.

As a result of this latest crash, government outlay on the highway is set to rise further. On May 19, President U Thein Sein visited the highway along with Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin and said the road should



ecedented rove safety?

promised an expensive expansion of the Nay Pyi Taw highway

be enlarged from four lanes to six. Days earlier, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint had told reporters that the road would be doubled to eight lanes.

But Mr Turnell cautioned against a quick-fix made without sufficient forethought and planning.

“The big problem of course is that there is no process in all of this – no deliberation in decision-making, no cost-benefit analysis,” he said.

113

Number of people killed in car accidents on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway in 2013

Other experts say that while road improvements would make travel safer, focusing solely on infrastructure would address only a piece of the problem.

Roy Ben Eliezer, managing director

at Yangon's Interdisciplinary Centre for Road Safety (ICRS), said that while poor road conditions are an issue, the skills and habits of drivers and the safety of vehicles also need to be addressed to fully combat the problem.

The easing of imports has seen an increase in newer, safer buses and cars making their way onto Myanmar's roads but Mr Eliezer said proper driving training is still severely lacking.

“This is a silent epidemic,” said Mr Eliezer, who has helped to train members of Myanmar traffic police as well as local drivers. “People do not pay attention until [an accident] comes knocking on your door.”

Safety programs in schools and increased training of drivers of all ages could significantly improve road safety, according to Mr Eliezer, who said he “refused to believe” that poor roads alone were to blame.

“You have a responsibility. Not just for your life, but for the lives of others on the road,” he said.

Where does the decision to upgrade the road come from, then? Faced with a problem as entrenched as bad driving habits, the government and private companies, he said, “face difficulty knowing where to begin”.

President Obama warns against South China Sea ‘aggression’

UNITED States President Barack Obama warned last week that the United States was ready to respond to China's “aggression” toward its neighbours at sea but said Washington should lead by example by ratifying a key treaty.

In a wide-ranging speech on foreign policy to US military cadets at West Point on May 28, Mr Obama said that the US should shun isolationism and that its military must be prepared for crises.

“Regional aggression that goes unchecked – whether it's southern Ukraine, or the South China Sea, or anywhere else in the world – will ultimately impact our allies, and could draw in our military,” he said.

But Mr Obama emphasised caution on any decision to use force, adding that “American influence is always stronger when we lead by example”.

“We can't try to resolve the problems in the South China Sea when we have refused to make sure that the Law of the Sea Convention is ratified by the United States – despite the fact that our top military leaders say that the treaty advances our national security,” Mr Obama said, not naming China directly as he diverted from his prepared text.

“That's not leadership; that's retreat. That's not strength; that's weakness,” he said.

‘If Burma succeeds, we will have gained a new partner without having fired a shot.’

President Barack Obama

Senators of the rival Republican Party have refused to ratify the treaty, saying that the UN convention would override US sovereignty.

Tensions have been rising for months between China and its neighbours at sea, with Vietnam on May 27 accusing Beijing of ramming

and sinking one of its fishing boats in the South China Sea.

Japan and the Philippines also have tense disputes at sea with China. Japanese commentators have voiced concern that the US failure to prevent Russia from annexing Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in March sent the wrong signal to China.

In another reference to policy toward Asia, Mr Obama again cited the democratic reforms in Myanmar as a success story.

The administration upon entering office in 2009 opened a dialogue with the then military-ruled nation, whose relations with the US have improved dramatically.

“Progress there could be reversed. But if Burma succeeds, we will have gained a new partner without having fired a shot,” Mr Obama said.

Myanmar has freed political prisoners, eased censorship and welcomed foreign investors, but human rights groups have voiced alarm over violence against Muslims, particularly in Rakhine State.

- AFP

Conservationists push for Ramsar listing for eastern Gulf of Mottama

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THE Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association is pushing for an area of wetlands in the Gulf of Mottama in Mon State to be internationally recognised as a unique natural habitat.

The group recently held public awareness workshops in Kyaikto and Bilin townships in collaboration with the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry and the World Wildlife Fund to allay local fears that conservation work equates to a land grab.

“I believe if the area becomes a Ramsar site, the region will see more development through ecotourism,” Daw Saw Mon Theint, BANCA's executive director, said.

Ramsar sites are named in honour of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an inter-governmental treaty signed in 1971 in the city of Ramsar, Pakistan.

To be designated as such, an area must contain a representative, rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type.

BANCA wants a significant part of the Gulf of Mottama to be designated but for now is pushing for a smaller section that it says is crucial to the survival of an endangered bird species.



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

“It is not [practically] possible to designate all 400,000 acres [of wetlands] as a Ramsar site [immediately] because it is a large area. So we will [first] propose 80,000 acres in Kyaikto and Bilin townships where the endangered spoon-billed sandpiper hibernates,” she said.

At least half of the world's spoon-billed sandpiper population spends its winters in the area.

“For the next step we will organise a workshop with all stakeholders from government departments

and public representatives this year. After we have approval from the state government to regard that area for conservation, we will submit that proposal to the MOECAF,” Daw Saw Mon Theint said.

Myanmar's only existing Ramsar site is the Moeyingyi wetlands, situated in Bago Division, about two hours north of Yangon.

The site covers 100 square kilometres (40 square miles) of wetlands, making it a safe haven for vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species.

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Views

Measuring poverty is more than tweaking data



DANIEL KOSTZER

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SHERLOCK Holmes coined the phrase, "There's nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact." Obvious facts tend to prevent people from thinking and reasoning due to the plain way in which they are presented. Obvious facts hide the nuances of reality and induce people to jump to unsophisticated and rapid conclusions.

In the article "Data tweaks change face of poverty", published recently in *The Myanmar Times*, it was argued that it would be advisable to change the methodology used in past poverty surveys and recalculate existing poverty data gathered in 2009 and 2010 in what was known as the Integrated Household Living Condition Assessment II.

25.6

Percentage of the population below the poverty line, according to a 2010 UN-government assessment

This survey was undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development with the support of several other agencies. The report is available on the UNDP website and the raw data that was gathered is available upon request to UNDP and MNPED. This data was shared not only with the World Bank, which was a participant in the technical committee of IHLCA I and II, but also with various researchers from around the globe who requested it.

First of all, the announcement of an official change in the poverty line is the prerogative of national authorities. There is therefore no new poverty line. Second, it is important to remember that people's lives do not change as a result of data tweaks. People's lives change as a result of effective and responsive policies.

Reviewing the methodology of poverty measures is a regular and necessary practice. It is good that such discussions are taking place. However, such reviews should involve all technical stakeholders – particularly national authorities. The "original" figure of 25.6 percent of people living under the poverty line was the result of sound technical decisions made by those who participated in the supporting technical committee of the IHCLA. This group comprised 18 institutions. They included representatives of the government, academia and development partners.

The first proposal mentioned in the article was to drop 300 "inconsistent" respondent data from the 2009 survey. Respondent data can't be simply dropped. Discarding respondent data is normally based on technical grounds and a clear methodology to deal with inconsistent data sets, and that is precisely what was done in the 2009 survey. Moreover, 300 respondents in a sample of 18,900 respondents will not make a significant difference.

In the original survey, the poverty line was defined at K376,151 a year after averaging the results of two comparative surveys to reduce variations arising from seasonal impacts. The re-calculations that are proposed in the article bring the poverty line up to K440,345 a year. This represents a 17pc difference. The reasons behind this difference are not due to right or wrong decisions, but rather to two key assumptions.

The first change of assumptions is to increase the number of daily calories of a minimum food basket from 2100 to 2300. This change represents a 9pc difference. Caloric intake has been the subject of academic discussions since the beginning of the 20th century. There is a wide range of alternatives between the 2800 calories that is often used for middle income countries and the 1800 calories that is considered a minimum for survival.

The second change in assumptions is also the subject of theoretical and practical discussions and the path that is suggested in the article is even more contentious. Research on caloric food intake shows that there are notable variations that depend on age and gender, and in more sophisticated research, on the work individuals do. It is not the same to be a farmer or to work in an air-conditioned office. In this respect many studies show that in a family with a male and female couple and two children total consumption is 3.25 units.

In the IHLCA survey the adult equivalence ratio that was used amounted to 3.3 units of consumption for a four-member family. The revisited numbers in the article amount to a full 4 units of consumption, implying a 21pc difference.

These methodological decisions, plus some regional variations in prices, explain an apparent increase in the headcount of the poor. The previous calculation in the IHCLA was not "wrong", and the suggested calculations are not "right". They both have the level of relativeness that a binary indicator, such as poor versus non-poor, will always have. Does this mean that somebody who's spending K450,000 a year is doing well? Of course not. There are many other issues involved.

A more relevant question for Myanmar's future that was not raised in the article but was mentioned in the IHCLA report was that most of those who were not found to be below the poverty line were still very close to it. This means that a large portion of the population remains very vulnerable to income and production shocks. A simple positive or negative fluctuation of the price of rice, gasoline or transport could change the poverty line from 25pc to 50pc.

While the fact that much of the population is clustered around the poverty line is grim, this concentration makes it possible to tackle poverty more efficiently through inclusive and universal social policies aiming for better livelihoods.

Poverty is not a natural problem. It has solutions that require political will, resources and social commitment. It is the construct of a society, not a government alone. The economist and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen dedicated his book in 1973 to his daughters, hoping that they would find less poverty regardless of the way it is measured.

Daniel Kostzer is the senior economist of UNDP in Myanmar and has extensive experience in Asia and Latin America. The views expressed in this article do not represent the views of UNDP.

Fighting the threat of terrorism in Rakhine

A Bangladeshi border guard keeps watch on a jetty on the Naf river in Teknaf on June 13, 2012. Photo: AFP

Conditions in Muslim communities are ripe for the spread of terrorism – and co



SITHU AUNG MYINT

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ON May 17, at the 52-mile border post in Maungdaw township, northern Rakhine State, several border guard police were attacked by an armed group that had illegally entered Myanmar from Bangladesh. Four police were killed and another was injured. The police officers' weapons were also taken in the ambush.

This is obviously a worrying development. But how did this clash start, and is it likely that the problem will grow bigger? What should we do to ensure this problem does not spread elsewhere in Rakhine State?

The wounded police officer told the media that the patrol was ambushed and he didn't know how many attackers were in the group or what they were wearing. All he could say was that the group returned to Bangladesh after the incident.

It is important to recognise that these troops were easily overwhelmed for two reasons. First, they were new recruits who had just been posted there after a two-month training program and were relatively unprepared for such an attack. Also, their weapons were not good enough to fight back. The Myanmar Police Force needs to take steps to ensure this is not repeated in the future.

Myanmar has asked Bangladesh for a meeting to discuss the attack because

the armed group entered from the Bangladesh side. These talks will likely take place soon.

Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Htut, who is also a spokesperson for President U Thein Sein, said the attack should not prompt significant concern because the armed group is not strong; it only has the ability to stage ambushes.

He added that Bangladesh has, over the course of many years, arrested terrorists operating from its territory and cracked down on groups staging attacks against Myanmar. He said he believes Bangladesh will respond to the incident appropriately because a stable border is in the interests of both countries.

Hatred, poverty, lack of education, hopelessness and human rights violations help to propagate terrorism.

What we should be more concerned about, he said, is the possibility that such acts of terrorism could generate more hatred between the Buddhist and Muslim communities, which are already incredibly divided. This could lead to further instability. U Ye Htut is right. Most important is to ensure terrorism does not enter into and breed in Rakhine State.

Examples across the world – in Palestine, Afghanistan and parts of Africa – show he is right to be concerned. In these places, hatred, poverty, lack of education, hopelessness and human

rights violations help to propagate terrorism. For the Bengali Muslim community in Rakhine State – known as Rohingya Muslims outside Myanmar – these are all facts of life.

There is clear hatred between the Rakhine and Bengalis. Following outbreaks of violence in Rakhine State in 2012, more than 100,000 Muslims have been forced to live in refugee camps. They are completely dependent on international assistance and live in abject poverty.

Most Bengalis are uneducated because their access to formal education has been restricted.

They are also hemmed in, in the north of Rakhine State. Since the government issued temporary ID cards, or white cards, to them, they have not been allowed to travel to even other states and regions in Myanmar, let alone go abroad to work. Even within Rakhine State they cannot travel freely.

When they resort to leaving Myanmar by boat, just a few people reach their destination. Most die on the water. Those that do not die and instead reach a foreign shore inevitably fall into the hands of human traffickers.

They are also facing human rights abuses and discrimination, as regularly pointed out by the international community.

Conditions in the Muslim community make it a prime target for those seeking to propagate terrorism. If we want to stop this from happening, we need to take steps to address those factors that can encourage people to turn to terrorism – the hatred, poverty, lack of education and human rights violations. The government, Rakhine community leaders, and ordinary Rakhine and Bengalis need to do this together. It is essential that both communities participate in measures to stave off the threat of terrorism.

The other important issue here

Views



After July presidential poll, Indonesia may retreat inward



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BY far the largest member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Indonesia hosts 42 percent of the region's population. The distance from one end of the archipelagic country to the other is further than from Yangon to Tokyo.

Despite these gargantuan attributes, Indonesia has traditionally resisted, at least publicly, the notion that it is the region's yard master and cracker of heads of last resort.

Even today, after arguably becoming ASEAN's most forward-looking and democratic nation, it still shuns using the moral force earned through its astonishing gains over the past 15 years in the ways many observers would wish.

Given its size and relatively recent emergence from half a century of dictatorial military rule, it is nothing short of a miracle that Muslim-majority Indonesia is now a stable and flourishing multi-party democracy. It is unquestionably a better example for Myanmar than any other country in the region.

the 2012 ASEAN summit in Phnom Penh, when ministers failed to issue a final communiqué for the first time in 45 years.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa promptly jetted off around the region's capitals and knocked sense into his petty-minded colleagues and got them to sign a belated statement.

Then, in April, there was the bombshell announcement that Jakarta would support its ASEAN colleagues in countering Beijing's aggressive attempt to grab most of the South China Sea. Noting that China's nine-dash line includes waters around its own Natuna Islands forced Indonesia to get off the fence and tell Beijing to back off.

Then, on May 23, after signing an accord with Manila to peacefully delineate their long-contested maritime border, President Yudhoyono called it "a model" deal for other claimants, most pointedly Beijing.

Recently, in another sign that its wallflower stance is thankfully wilting, Jakarta told Thailand's new military junta that it wants to see democracy restored – and pronto.

"Indonesia calls on the armed forces of Thailand and the various relevant civilian elements to work together in an atmosphere of reconciliation to quickly restore the political situation," Marty said.

While these signs are all laudable, many observers wonder whether they will continue after Indonesia's July 9 presidential election, especially given the differing and rather inward-looking nature of the two contenders.

The favourite, Jakarta governor Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, will fight former general Prabowo Subianto of the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra).

The lean and invariably smiling Jokowi, 52, is viewed as clean, trustworthy and not part of the old political elite.

In contrast, the pugnacious Prabowo, 62, although accused of human rights abuses and corruption, remains a dynamic and canny strategist who has already cut deeply into Jokowi's early lead.

For all their differences, they have one thing in common: Neither is very interested in foreign affairs.

Jokowi's focus will remain on the affairs of the common man and on bolstering his well-earned reputation as a local Mr Fixit, rather than on exerting a firmer hand on regional matters. Prabowo's knock-em-down robustness and more outward-looking nationalism may offer more allure to those wanting Indonesia to be the sheriff of ASEAN, but his tainted reputation will likely stymie that prospect.

So, whoever wins, it appears that at least in the near term, Indonesia may regrettably witness a return to its former wallflower days – and the region will be much the worse for it.



Indonesian presidential and vice presidential candidates Joko Widodo (centre) and Jusuf Kalla wave to the press in Jakarta on May 22. Photo: AFP

operation is needed to ensure violence does not take root

concerns the media. Journalists and editors must not exaggerate the recent attack. Given the wounded policeman couldn't say how many people were in the armed group or describe their appearance, media groups shouldn't jump to conclusions – such as that the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation was responsible – or speculate openly on where the attackers were trained. Doing so can create further hate and unnecessary problems not only in Rakhine but across the country.

As an extension of that, it is essential that the authorities do not confirm baseless rumours, passing them off as the truth.

While there has been awful violence in Rakhine State, it has not reached the level of southern Thailand or China's Xinjiang Province. In order to ensure it never does, the government must work together with both communities to address those factors that could encourage people to turn to terrorism.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



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Business

Foreign bank licences underway



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THE Central Bank of Myanmar has taken the first step to allow foreign banks to operate in Myanmar, in a process some local bankers say has been kept quiet from them.

Officials from large foreign banks told *The Myanmar Times* they were required to follow non-disclosure measures, one reason why the Central Bank of Myanmar's request for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from foreign banks only came to light on May 29 – one day before the EOIs were due.

"We sent letters to all [foreign] representative offices to reply with expressions of interest, which means they are interested in applying for a licence to open here," said a Nay Pyi Taw-based Central Bank official, who declined to be named due to the issue's sensitivity. The official declined to disclose further information about the process.

The notice states that up to 10 foreign banks will be allowed to set up one branch, requiring a minimum paid-in capital of US\$75 million. The process is to be completed by the end of September, according to *Reuters*.

A new Financial Institution Law is also in the works, with a review by the Attorney General's office recently completed, and is expected to be implemented during the permissions process for foreign banks, the Central Bank official said.

35

Number of representative offices of foreign banks. Many are thought to be actively looking for a licence to operate



A Central Bank employee counts money. Photo: Staff

Some 35 different foreign banks have opened representative offices in Myanmar, with particular interest from Asian countries such as Japan, Korea and Singapore. They are currently prevented from engaging in many banking activities in the country.

Yangon representatives of several large foreign banks declined to directly discuss the licensing process with *The Myanmar Times*, claiming they had agreed to non-disclosure measures, but confirmed the process requesting expressions of interest in licences finished on May 30.

The introduction of foreign banks remains a controversial issue, with some saying it will improve Myanmar firms' access to capital and others claiming foreign firms will out compete local banks.

Kanbawza Bank vice president U Than Lwin said some of Myanmar's leading banks began preparing for the introduction of foreign banks some four or five years ago, but added he was concerned about insufficient information from the central bank.

"We need to know how the central bank will manage to protect local banks, but they have not announced this to us yet," he said. U Than Lwin added it is unsure what role foreign banks can play as the Financial Institution Law that is to govern the conduct of foreign banks is not yet complete.

Many Myanmar businesspeople say they welcome foreign banks.

U Hnin Oo, vice chair of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, said it is positive the government is looking at interest from foreign banks.

Myanmar's interest rates could drop in line with international standard rates with the introduction of foreign banks, he said. U Hnin Oo added foreign banks can also accept different types of collateral and offer more types of loans.

The introduction of foreign banks could also significantly shake up the sector, according to experts.

Sean Turnell, associate professor in economics at Australia's Macquarie University and author of *Fiery Dragons*, a book on Myanmar's financial history, said that the introduction of foreign banks to Myanmar would be "an unmitigated 'good'".

"Allowing foreign bank entry is a way of 'leap-frogging' some of the existing constraints and problems of the existing financial structure, and introducing new technologies, methods,

skills – as well as critical capital for the financing of Myanmar's economic progress," he said.

Mr Turnell said that while foreign banks may "cherry-pick" some of the best customers, providing difficulties for local institutions, it could also force local banks to expand into serving those who previously without banking access.

The introduction of stiff foreign competition may also force consolidation among Myanmar's many smaller financial institutions, professionalise the banking industry, and supply capital that strengthens non-crony business, he said. – *Additional reporting Jeremy Mullins*

For related opinion column "A cautious approach to foreign banks is best" see page 28

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Stock exchange rules needed to meet 2015 target



ZAW HTIKE

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RULES governing the planned Yangon Stock Exchange have been submitted to the Attorney General, as insiders push for their adoption to meet an October 2015 launch target.

Myanmar has long had an over-the-counter exchange in the Myanmar Economic Bank building on Sule Pagoda Road with two listed companies, but trading rarely occurs and the exchange is not modernised.

The rules submitted to the Attorney General will establish a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which will be responsible for licensing brokers, dealers, underwriters and the Yangon exchange itself, said Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre (MSEC) managing director Inami Shigeto.

The rules are just one set of regulations that will be required to launch a modern exchange, following the passage of the Securities Law in 2013.

“At the moment we have a law but no authority to govern,” said Mr Inami.

While current facilities at MSEC can provide for small-sized transactions and hand delivery of shares, there is much to do if a modern paperless exchange is the goal, he said, adding he was not sure if it could be in time for the October 2015 target set by the government.

‘We want MAPCO to emerge as a big and strong company on the international marketplace.’

U Ye Min Aung
MAPCO managing director

A securities and exchange law for an eventual modern exchange was first drafted in 1995, and approved by the Attorney General’s office in 1997. However, the Asian financial crisis the same year derailed the plans and the project was suspended until recently, he said.

The current Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre lists only two public companies, Forest Products Joint Venture Company (FPJVC) and Myanmar Citizens Bank, both of which are part government-owned.

Trading is a relatively rare occurrence as FPJVC consistently pays high dividends of 30 percent, meaning few are interested in selling shares, while shareholders of Myanmar Citizens Bank are also reluctant to sell, according to MSEC executive director Daw Tin May Oo.

“There are no sellers and many buyer, so trading happens once or twice a year,” she said.

Myanmar has over 100 public

companies, in which shares can be bought and sold by Myanmar citizens over-the-counter, often at the company’s headquarters itself. Not all public firms maintain an active share market, though. Mr Inami said that while the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) currently has oversight, the SEC could play a part in governing public companies – after the latest round of rules are passed.

Several public companies are known to be interested in listing on the eventual modern exchange.

“AGD Bank and Myanmar Agribusiness Public Company (MAPCO) could be good candidates for the Yangon Stock Exchange, but we cannot commit to anything for sure at the time as the criteria for listing has not yet come out,” he said.

While many Myanmar firms may be interested in the access to capital the exchange will bring, Mr Inami said the process of listing will force companies to disclose their true financial statements. This may cause problems with firms who have not paid requisite taxes as their books will be open to scrutiny.

Independent economist U Hla Haung said that many companies keep four or five different sets of financial records to avoid taxation, and the trend has continued even though some firms have transitioned to public companies.

He added that common practice among current public companies is to fix the price of their shares, with shareholders receiving value through dividends.

“These kind of things should be administered by the authorities properly,” he said. “With this trend I don’t know how the coming stock market will be successful, though it is a must for developing the country’s economy.”

Deputy finance minister U Maung Maung Thein said he was concerned about public companies selling shares without any proper disclosure, urging firms to eventually list, at a May 24 signing ceremony for MAPCO to prepare for the eventual stock market.

It will not be easy to get everything ready to list on the exchange, said U Ye Min Aung, MAPCO managing director.

“We began preparing last year to list. We want MAPCO to emerge as a big and strong public company on the international marketplace,” he said.

“There are many challenges ahead. We are trying to build our corporate governance, finances and management regulations to be in line with the international standard,” he said.

Myanmar is the last member of ASEAN without an exchange. While many of the region’s exchanges have been successful, others have launched with little activity. Cambodia officially opened the doors on its exchange in 2011, though it took a year before the first company listed.

The Myanmar government has been keen to make sure the Yangon Stock Exchange is a success, according to Mr Inami, adding MSEC had been requested to make sure at least five companies are ready for the launch – one more that initially joined the Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange in Vietnam when it launched in 2000.



A betel farmer tends his plantation in Mandalay Region. Photo: Kyaw Ko Ko

Betel farmers hit by the wind

KYAW KO KO
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STRONG winds are being blamed for a betel leaf shortage on plantations in Mandalay Region’s Kyaukse township, according to farmers.

The gusts are the latest setback for betel farmers, who have also faced floods in recent weeks, said grower Ko Min from Kyaukse’s Thamandalin village.

“Betel prices have risen a bit because there is a shortage of leaves in the market,” he said, but added the cost to farmers outweighed any benefit from the restricted supply.

“Our plantations are quite damaged, as we have little time to get ready for the winds,” he said.

An excessive of demand hit betel leaf prices during the winter, and Kyaukse’s growers claim to have insufficient capital to rebuild after the winds.

Growing 1000 leaves costs around K1.8 million, said Ko Min. With prices up for bamboo staking and coconut fronts for sheltering nearly double last year’s K250 per husk, profit margins are being squeezed.

“Our output can’t cover our costs. It won’t be good if the weather continues like now,” he said.

The cost of growing betel is in large part driven by the yield of leaves per tree. Leaves can be plucked year-round, though must be staggered for the plant’s health. Traditionally betel leaf prices decrease in the rainy season, but currently prices have increased due to the shortage.

Ko Min said yields have dropped about 20pc with the start of the rainy season.

Betel currently sells wholesale for about K3500 a viss (1.63 kilograms), from recent lows of about K1500, while the price for retail is about K5500 a viss.

– Translation By Thiri Min Htun

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Time, not interest, key for farm loans

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FARMERS often prefer convenient loans rather than prioritising lower interest rates, according to experts.

Access to capital remains a common complaint in the domestic agricultural sector, which is often stymied by a lack of timeliness and too much corruption, said U Thein Myint, retired Myanma Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) general manager.

Although state-run MADB is the country's largest small-scale lender and offers farmers some of the lowest interest rates, farmers often turn to microfinance and unregulated money lenders despite higher interest rates.

Farmers are keen to get loans before planting and harvesting, and

often require large principals rather than low rates, said Doubell Chamberlain, managing director of Cenfri, at the Financial Inclusion Roadmap conference earlier this month.

"Farmers don't care about the interest rate," he said, adding that receiving money before planting and harvesting is the main concern.

MADB loans often arrive after cultivation has already started, leading many to turn to high-interest informal money lenders, said Mr Chamberlain.

Slow dispersal of loans and corruption complications often inhibit agricultural lending, according to experts.

MADB's operations are still largely manual rather than digital, and it is slow upgrading operations given the firm is state-owned, said U Thein Myint.

Corruption is also difficult to root out, particularly when it occurs on a small-scale level in the villages, he added.

Still, the MADB - which is under

the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation - has more than 200 branches and provided loans of more than K1 trillion (US\$1 billion) last year, he said. "The interest rate with MADB is also really cheap," he said.

Amarnath Samarapally, lead analyst at Microfinance Information Exchange (MIX), said it is crucial to solve the problem of farmers getting too far into debt by taking overlapping loans at different interest rates.

Central Bank of Myanmar officials said in April that it will form a Financial Institutions Supervision Department to act as a credit bureau to determine who is receiving several loans using the same piece of collateral, for instance.

The Making Access Possible survey, from Cenfri and UNCDF and presented at the forum, shows 3.4 million farmers are excluded from MADB lending due to an inability to prove the right to use the land they farm, while 17pc of farmers borrow from money lenders, often at higher interest rates.



A farmer tends to his fields. Photo: Staff

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items, ice cream, milkshakes, frozen confections, hot and cold ready-to-eat, fruit and whole grain based cereal, dried fruits, fruit jams, jellies, spread, curds, and preserves, juices, soft drinks, electric appliances (including kettles, coffee makers, espresso maker and coffee grinders), house wares, non-electric appliances and related items (including hand-operated coffee grinders and coffee mills, non-electric drip coffee makers and non-electric plunger-style coffee makers), insulated coffee and beverage cups (made of metal, plastics and/or ceramics), collapsible cup carriers and caddies, non-paper coasters, insulated vacuum bottles cups, tea cups and mugs, glassware, dishes, plates and bowls, trivets, storage canisters, paper and non-paper coffee filters, furniture, clocks, toys, books, musical recordings, t-shirts, caps, sweatshirts, jackets, aprons and other clothing items, in class 42.

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State farm lender lowers interest rates

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STATE-OWNED Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) – the largest small loan lender in the country – will lower interest rates on loans to farmers to stimulate growth next month, according to officials.

The rate will drop from a current 8.5 percent to 5pc in June, MADB Mandalay Region manager Daw Khin Pyone Yi said.

“We will provide new loans to the farmers who have fully paid their old debt,” she said.

“We want farmers to pay back as quickly as they can so that we can provide new loans for the new cultivation season as quickly as possible.”

The bank lent K67 billion for last year’s monsoon paddy cultivation, and plans to increase the amount to K73 billion this year, according to officials. MADB plans to begin providing loans to farmers as quickly as possible and is aiming to start in the last week of June.

Daw Khin Pyone Yi said that not all farmers have managed to repay their debts.

Some farmers in Kyaukse, Wundwin, Yamethin and Thazi townships have yet to repay their loans and have until the end of May to clear them, otherwise they are liable for fines of K1 per K 100 outstanding for a month.

The bank has provided maximum loans of K 100,000 per acre for monsoon paddy, and it provides agriculture loans three times a year: pre-monsoon, when the monsoon paddy is planted and when the winter crop is harvested.

MADB claims it had a non-performing loan rate of 1.87pc for its 2013 lending, with K1.2 billion remaining outstanding.

No CNG price hike: ministry

Pledge to not raise price of natural gas for at least three months follows state media reports to the contrary



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THE Ministry of Energy says there will be no price rise for compressed natural gas (CNG) for at least three months, appearing to contradict state media claims that a price rise is imminent.

Taxi drivers are particularly vocal in their opposition to the increase, it would both be passed on to riders and squeeze profit margins.

Such a move cannot happen quickly, said U Hla Win Htay, general manager of the CNG department of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) under the Ministry of Energy.

“We can change the price if parliament confirms, but I can’t say in advance it will change,” he said. “But I can say the CNG price will not change within three months.”

The latest round of price rise fears came after a report in a government newspaper *The Mirror* suggesting an increase was being considered from June 24th in line with similar market-based price increases for petrol and diesel. Unlike petrol and diesel, CNG prices are set by the MOGE.

In June 2013 the ministry denied there would be a price increase, however in August 2013 it



A worker fills up the tank on a CNG vehicle. Photo: Staff

posted a notice on its website confirming that a price rise was being discussed, though no increase materialised.

“I had heard the CNG price will change at the end of this month, and I’m worried about it,” said one taxi driver in Yangon.

Currently the price of CNP is K273.25 per pound, making it significantly cheaper than other fuels such as petrol or diesel.

Myanmar has been a leading natural gas producer, but the government has previously said that the reserves are decreasing.

“The ministry said they are still collecting the data [about a possible price decrease]. But I think they spread rumours among the people and if the people don’t complain, they will change the price. But most people can’t accept this. So the ministry waits,” said

taxi driver Ko Aung Tin Htut.

According to the *Mirror’s* report some people had petitioned the Ministry of Energy with a letter recommending the CNG price rise in line with petrol and diesel.

“I had heard CNG prices will double. At present, there are many taxis on the road. So we will have little chance to exist, given our family household expenses,” said taxi driver Ko Wai Linn.

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Canada's Manulife joins growing insurance fray



SHWEGU THITSAR

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MANULIFE Financial Life Company from Canada became the 13th foreign insurance company to open a Myanmar representative office last week, said Daw Tint Tint Aye, an official with state-run Myanma Insurance.

“The earliest [foreign insurer] was a Japanese firm in 1996. Now there are 13, with the latest being Manulife Financial,” she said.

Manulife – the largest life insurance firm in Canada – operated in Myanmar from 1903 to 1942, before leaving during World War II.

“We’re convinced Myanmar is on the threshold of a great opportunity,” said Indren Naidoo, Manulife’s executive for the region that includes Myanmar, according to

Bloomberg. “Myanmar has a real opportunity here in terms of catching up with the kind of growth and development we’ve seen in other parts of this region.”

Worldwide, Manulife manages some US\$584 billion.

Although there are now 13 foreign firms with local representative officers, they are restricted from working with local companies or offering insurance.

Deputy Minister of Finance and Revenue U Maung Maung Thein said that while the number of representative offices for foreign insurers is increasing, they still require permission before they can begin work.

“Local private firms offering insurance only opened recently, and their experience is not enough [to compete with international firms],” he said. “If foreign firms are allowed now, it could damage local private companies – they still need time.”

Along with Canada’s Manulife, there are representative offices from

Singaporean, American, Japanese, Korean, Hong Kong and German insurance firms.

Although domestic private insurance firms already in operation may be wary of competition, some say the opening of the representative offices has benefited the industry.

“Officials from foreign companies get many requests to teach insurance classes, and this also gives them the opportunity to build relationships with local companies,” said U Than Zaw, managing director of Ayeyar Myanmar Insurance company.

U Than Zaw said foreign firms may be sizing up potential partners when the doors are opened to them.

“They are gaining opportunities to work. They might be deciding which companies they should work with when there is permission,” he said. “For our company it is also advantageous to have our staff trained by foreign experts.”

– Translated by Hein Htet Aung

COMMENT

Best for young expatriates to start their financial planning early

ANDREW WOOD

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THE younger expat community is growing in Myanmar, attracted by the opportunities on offer in the fastest-growing global region. This trend reveals a more prevalent integration of expats into local communities. They have left their welfare states behind and are catapulting into the future with enthusiasm. But what provisions must they make for the financial challenges they will face in the future? The encounters of a more independent lifestyle create the responsibility of taking care of their own long-term financial independence.

The earlier you start to make sound financial plans for your future the better prepared you will be for the tests ahead. Despite your revolutionary streak there will also be a relatively naïve side when it comes to personal financial planning. For many this translates into deferring planning until tomorrow; but tomorrow never comes and that sense of security creates complacency leaving expats exposed.

Start with long-term planning for financial independence. The earlier you begin the easier it will be to achieve your goals. You have a longer period to accumulate the wealth you require. Deferring until later will result in your having less time, making it daunting.

Many do not realise the level of wealth they require to sustain their golden years. Inflation plays havoc with the cost of living, almost invisibly as it happens so slowly. It is like gaining weight – you hardly notice until you get on the scales. For example an annual income requirement of US\$30,000 today translates to \$99,400 in 30 years, at a 4 percent inflation rate.

It is in your own interest to create a budget for yourself so you appreciate where your money goes and can manage some savings. Every expat is different so it is pointless to create a specific budget for all, although you need to take common elements into account. These include rent, utilities, food, local

travel, medical and other insurance, additional expense during visa turnarounds, clothing, possible holidays and entertainment.

This last item is probably the most flexible. You need to make sure this does not run out of control. Probably sticking to the monthly budget you set is best. When you have created the budget you should have a little money left at the end of your month rather than a little month left at the end of your money. If you have set a sensible entertainment budget you need to monitor it and if you spend it all by mid-month, punishing yourself by staying home will be a way to ensure that you spread it farther in future months.

You may also need to deal with education debt back home. It is tempting to defer this until later when you feel you can afford it. The old adage of clearing debt before you save is also relevant in all walks of life. Here it is often best to apply some of your disposable income to this liability.

If you then take part of your disposable income and invest it in an international structured savings vehicle it will be like sending yourself an invoice each month and when you get used to treating this as a commitment

you will be surprised at how it magically becomes just another regular bill which you know you need to pay. The trick is not to overstretch what you can save.

Some expats ask me how they would deal with a change of country. This can be tricky unless you tackle the challenge pragmatically. It can also be exciting. If you set yourself up properly now with a bank account in a tax haven and create an international investment vehicle in a tax haven it will not matter where you move to.

Beyond that the complexities often run to the local community and economy. Housing is cheaper in Bangkok but more expensive in Singapore than in Yangon. Some are surprised that housing is drastically more expensive in India than many other places. There are many aspects to consider when moving country. Having your finances in order will mean you have less issues to face.

Remember failing to plan is actually planning to fail.

Questions to the author can be directed to PFS International on +66 2653 1971 or emailed to enquiriesmyanmar@fsplatinum.com



A counting machine churns through Euro bills. Photo: Staff

BRIEFS

MG distributor to open its Yangon showroom in June

Domestic firm LS Auto Company has begun importing cars from English branded, Chinese owned MG (Morris Garages) Motor.

The brand began in 1924 in England, and was purchased by China's Nanjing Automotive Group in 2005.

"The qualities of cars are the same, whether they are produced in Shanghai or England," said U Zaw Htoo, a consultant from LS Auto. "We will give the best customer service to customers." The firm's Yangon showroom will officially open in June. The firm intends to provide three-year warranties, as well as instituting a hire purchasing system through KBZ bank.

LS auto has imported models between K15.6 million at the lower end to the MG 750, which retails for K38 million. - Aye Nyein Win

Laos solar enterprise sets up shop

Sunlabob, a Laos-based rural renewable energy enterprise, finalised a partnership to enter Myanmar last week.

The enterprise will partner with Yangon-based sustainable energy firm Relitec, Sunlabob CEO Andy Schroeter said in a statement.

"Sunlabob's experience implementing rural, off-grid renewable energy throughout the developing world will complement Relitec's on-the-ground knowledge of the local Myanmar market," he said.

Sunlabob was established in 2001 in Laos and has since spread to several other countries. - Jeremy Mullins

Yoma strengthens tower share

Yoma Strategic Holdings increased its share of Myanmar tower company joint venture Digicel Myanmar Tower Company to 25 percent, from the previous 8 pc, according to a statement on May 28. Yoma, a Singapore-listed, Myanmar-focused firm chaired by Serge Pun, and its partner Digicel announced in December 2013 it had been awarded a contract to provide telecommunications towers for Ooredoo.

Yoma's stake in the joint venture comes through YSH Finance, which is 80pc owned by Yoma Strategic and 20pc by Myanmar public company First Myanmar Investment Company.

Digicel was an unsuccessful bidder for one of two Myanmar mobile operator licences last year, which were won by Norway's Telenor and Qatar-based Ooredoo. - Jeremy Mullins

Pirates in possible Thai ship attack

A Thai tanker is thought to have been hijacked on its way from Singapore to Indonesia, the International Maritime Bureau said May 31, following a number of pirate attacks in Southeast Asian waters.

The diesel oil tanker MT Orapin 4, with 14 crew aboard, lost contact with its owner after departing the city-state on Tuesday, IMB's Kuala Lumpur-based Piracy Reporting Centre said.

It was heading to Pontianak on Indonesia's Kalimantan.

"It's a possible hijacking," said the centre's head Noel Choong, adding that pirates recently had attacked a number of vessels in the area, usually to siphon off cargo. - AFP

Pressure on Malaysia Airlines CEO

Malaysia Airlines' workers union called last week for the struggling carrier's top managers to step down, adding to pressure with the fate of Flight MH370 still unknown almost three months on. The union will urge the government not to renew the contract of MAS chief executive Ahmad Jauhari Yahya, believed to be expiring in September, said the union's executive secretary Jabbarullah Kadir.

Two other senior managers should also resign to revive the loss-making state-controlled national carrier's fortunes, he added.

"Their business plan to turn around the airline hasn't worked. For us they totally failed to carry out their duty," Mr Jabbarulla. - AFP

Little long-term harm from coup?

NYAN LYNN AUNG

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THAILAND'S recent political coup has so far caused little long-term damage to the country's investment in Myanmar, though may slow progress in the short-term, according to analysts.

Many large Thai businesses have been actively considering investing in Myanmar - in oil and gas, banking, manufacturing, consumer goods and the hospitality industry.

"Existing investment is likely to grow rather than drop. But new firms are unlikely come here immediately," said Daw Tin Tin Htwe, senior advisor at the Parami Energy Group of Companies.

Poor infrastructure, political instability and steep property prices are currently larger concerns for potential Thai investors in Myanmar at present, she said.

"[Potential investors] are more concerned about Myanmar's expensive real-estate market and religious conflicts," said Daw Tin Tin Htwe.

Thailand was the second-largest approved investor in Myanmar as of the end of April 2014. Some 73 Thai projects had been permitted, worth

about US\$10 billion, or 21.7 percent of total foreign investment in Myanmar. China was the largest with \$14.2 billion in approved investments, and Hong Kong third with projects worth about \$6.5 billion, according to figures from the Directorate of Investment and Corporate Administration (DICA).

Thailand's junta chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha on May 30 ruled out elections for at least a year to allow time for political "reforms" in his first televised national address since the army takeover on May 22. The army's move followed months of debilitating protests against the government of former premier Yingluck Sinawatra, who was turfed from office by the courts for abuse of power just weeks before the remainder of her government's leadership was ousted in the coup.

Prominent Thai investments in Myanmar include in offshore petroleum production, consumer goods and food production.

Larry Jagan, a Southeast Asia analyst, told *The Myanmar Times* that, apart from the extraction industries, other Thai foreign businesses have not been investing in large-scale projects - unlike China and Japan.

Investors from other countries have had the benefit of institutional support, particularly Japan.

Still, experts say they have seen little immediate impact on Thai investment in Myanmar from the coup.



A child poses with Thai soldiers. Photo: AFP

"I think it won't have any effect on Myanmar's investment sector and the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community. But there might be a hard impact on the free flow of services and migrant labour issues," said U Kyaw Soe Thein, director of ASEAN's Economic Community Department.

The Dawei SEZ is one prominent project championed by several Thai and Myanmar political figures. The project in Myanmar's Tanintharyi

Region aimed partly to provide a port terminal on the Andaman Sea for Thai production

"Successive Thailand governments have insisted that Thailand's involvement in Dawei is 'private' and not government to government. So it's economic considerations that will have an impact on Thailand's enthusiasm or otherwise in Dawei, irrespective of whether the Reds or Yellows control the government," Mr Jagan said.

- Additional reporting by AFP

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Dated: 2 June 2014

OPINION

A cautious approach to foreign banks is best

JOE BARKER-BENNETT

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THE government needs to be very careful about when and how foreign banks are let into the country. Banking is one of the key industries in any country and affects the long term future development of a country. They risk allowing the country's banking industry to be dominated by foreign banks, with key decisions made in London, Singapore, Beijing, Tokyo or New York, which will have an impact on Myanmar. This is the case in Bangladesh where the cream of the country (corporate and citizenary) bank with foreign banks, making huge profits, while the local banks are left to pick the crumbs and riskier business off the table.

In the region, ASEAN countries, such as Malaysia and Thailand continue to be very protectionist

‘It is a bit like entering the ring to fight Mike Tyson in his prime with your hands tied behind your back.’

of their banking industry and as a result local lenders dominate the markets. That means key decisions are made locally, and not overseas, and thus the countries' banks have much greater flexibility dealing with times of economic crises and recession. Foreign banks tend to overreact and cut lending and risk overnight when these things happen. This happened in Eastern Europe in the recent financial crises and destroyed many good local businesses.

It should never be forgotten that foreign banks' main reason for opening branches in Myanmar is to make as much money as possible, with profits repatriated. They will play to dominate the market.

After years of isolation and lack of investment the banking industry in Myanmar is only now starting to develop and modernise and cannot now compete with foreign banks, because of their capital, technology, experience, global connections and know-how. It is a bit like entering the ring to fight Mike Tyson in his prime with your hands tied behind your back.

The question to be asked is, what would be the benefits of foreign banks coming in to the country now?

Will it bring in extra foreign investment into the country? Probably not as business goes where there is opportunity, irrespective of the banks in the market. This we are

already seeing with major investments coming into Myanmar: Ooredoo, Telenor, Coca-Cola, Carlsberg.

Will they lend money to local SMEs? Almost certainly not as it is not profitable. In countries like the UK the government is trying to force banks to lend to SMEs, without much success.

They bring in foreign capital, but most will initially be lent to foreign companies.

Long-term it will help improve technology and will help develop banking skills, but the foreign banks will initially poach the best talent from the local banks.

It should be borne in mind that modern banking is all about technology, and with modern technology these banks can bank the entire country, both personal and corporate, from one single location.

Thus we would recommend great caution in when and how foreign banks are allowed to enter Myanmar, as it is vital for the long term future of Myanmar to have a strong and vibrant local banking industry.

Remember the countries around Myanmar still have very protectionist policies about foreign banks for this very reason.

.....
Joe Barker-Bennett is a consultant at Tun Foundation Bank. Tun Foundation Bank and The Myanmar Times share the same majority owner.

The Fine Print**Legal & tax insight**

A look at the Competition Bill

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ACCORDING to the Constitution of 2008, the Union must “prevent acts that injure public interest through monopolization or manipulation of prices by an individual or group with intent to endanger fair competition in economic activities”. The 2013 Telecommunications Law contains a chapter on anti-competitive practices in the telecom sector. However, there is no general law prohibiting unfair competition and the abuse of monopolies as of today.

The draft of a competition law (“Competition Bill”), published on May 11, 2014, will, if enacted, change this. In line with similar legislation in other jurisdictions, it prohibits acts of unfair competition and the creation of monopolies through abusive means. It introduces a control mechanism whereby mergers and acquisitions require the approval of a newly formed competition commission.

If the bill is enacted as drafted, the government must form a competition commission charged with, amongst others, investigating suspected acts of unfair competition, specifying thresholds considered to indicate a monopoly, and ordering enterprises monopolising the market to reduce their market share.

The commission must, in turn, form an enquiry committee with the power to subpoena witnesses and experts, search buildings and

premises and confiscate evidence according to the directions of the commission.

The bill, if enacted, will prohibit entrepreneurs from creating monopolies by controlling prices, inducing a scarcity of supply, or restricting opportunities to buy and sell. A merger control clause will prohibit mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures and other forms of collaboration if these acts would lead to one company controlling more than 30pc of the market or a group of companies controlling more than 50-75pc.

The bill lists specific acts of unfair competition. Amongst others, entrepreneurs are prohibited from deceiving consumers by using names, logos or other identifying characteristics of competitors.

The bill furthermore prohibits the unauthorized use or revelation of business secrets of competitors as well as the breach of security measures and the persuasion of employees of a competitor in order to obtain a business secret. Special protection is accorded to business secrets of state-owned organisations.

The bill prohibits the “bullying and threatening” of consumers and competitors. Furthermore, entrepreneurs must not use false information in order to defame competitors, or interfere with other businesses which are carried out in accordance with the law.

The bill also prohibits unfair and deceptive advertising measures and sales promotions. In particular, entrepreneurs must not

compare their goods or services with similar goods or services of competitors, imitate other advertisements, or give misleading information regarding the price, amount, quality or other characteristics of the goods.

“Discriminatory practices” – an example would be a boycott – are likewise prohibited under the bill. Furthermore, entrepreneurs must not sell products at a price below production costs if their intent is to reduce the competitiveness of other businesses.

Entrepreneurs with a dominant position in the market are prohibited from abusing it: In particular, they must not impose unfair terms and conditions on their business partners, offer different terms and conditions in similar circumstances, or cause harm to consumers by demanding unreasonable prices or restricting production or distribution levels.

The commission may also define other practices considered unfair competition.

The commission has the power to impose administrative sanctions (warning, administrative fine, suspension of the business for a limited period of time, blacklisting) on non-compliant entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, non-compliance may, according to the bill, lead to imprisonment of up to 5 years and a fine of up to K7 million. The bill does not deal with civil suits by competitors or consumers.

.....
Sebastian and Thitsar are consultants with Polastri Wint & Partners Legal & Tax Advisors.



JOB WATCH



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CHALLENGING JOB OPPORTUNITIES

JOB DESCRIPTION / ROLE PROFILE

Job Title : Business Development Manager
Department/Location : Business Development Team / Business Unit
Report to : Senior Management

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES / RESPONSIBILITIES

Business Development Planning

- Attend industry functions, such as association events, forums and conferences, and provide feedback and information in the form of written reports on the market and trends
- Present to and consult with mid and senior level management on business trends with a view to developing new services, products, and distribution channels
- Identify opportunities for campaigns, services, and distribution channels that will lead to an increase in sales & revenues
- Utilize knowledge of the market and competitors, identify and develop the company's unique value propositions and differentiators
- Target and develop a network of influential internal and external contacts within the government and key project stakeholders

Business Development Execution

- Execute business development strategy for assigned accounts
 - Contact business targets on a regular basis
 - Identify potential clients' needs & requirements
 - Explain company offerings and set-up in person meetings
 - Deliver capabilities presentations
 - Coordinate new business pitches
 - Prepare proposals and formulate business offerings
 - Establish and negotiate budgets

Client Retention

- Present new products, services, and opportunities to enhance existing relationships and/or build new ones
- Actively target and build prospective client relationships
- Support the retention of existing businesses particularly during re-tender times and new tender opportunities in order to enable the pursuit of new leads to potentially expand existing business
- Identify and target influential people inside the client, customer and third party organizations and build positive long term working relationships

Management & Research

- Submit weekly work progress in the form of reports and ensure data is precise & accurate for real time reporting
- Ensure all team members represent the company in the best light
- Present business development training and mentoring to business developers and other internal staff
- Directly engage with appropriate teams internally to develop targeting strategies for new opportunities
- Work with Management in determining appropriate business targets
- Track progress against targets on an ongoing basis, and ensure these are aligned with corporate goals. Take necessary action with Senior Management to refocus efforts if targets are not being met or no longer aligned with corporate goals

EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, SKILL & COMPETENCIES

- Professional degree qualification, MBA is desired but not essential
- At least 5 years working experience in the field of business development. Preferable experience and knowledge in the oil & gas or the energy sector
- Effective oral and written communication skills both in English & Myanmar Languages is a must
- Strong training, coaching & conceptual skills
- Independent, objective, decisive and result-oriented
- Positive and persuasive minded, willing to travel locally and overseas
- Energetic, intelligent, creative and a highly dynamic character with a strong sense of initiative

Candidates should submit their resume together with academic certificates, a recent passport sized photograph, copy of labour registration card and copy of national registration card. Applications should be addressed to:

Contact Email : hradmintwo@myintassociates.com.mm
Contact address : Myint & Associates Co., Ltd.
84-85, Hlaing Myint Moh Lane#1, 10th Quarter, Hlaing Township, Yangon
Tel : (95-1) 507 100, 521 003, 516 896, 505 077
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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

PROVISION OF A NEW CORE BANKING SYSTEM



Yoma Bank wishes to select and have implemented a new core banking system on a fixed price basis. Vendors who have a suitable solution and experience in implementation of CBS should contact the Bank and obtain a copy of the RFI.

Listed below is the contact for requesting a RFI, obtaining additional information concerning the RFI and returning the completed RFI.

Completed responses to the RFI should be delivered before 15th July 2014.

CBS Project Manager

Yoma Bank

FMI Center

Room 606-610, Level 6

380 Bogyoke Aung San Road

Pabedan Township

Yangon, Myanmar

Phone : + 95-9-500-2743

Email: cbs@yomabank.com

Fax :+ 95-1-246-844

Suppliers that are successful in the RFI process will be invited to participate in the RFP process which will take place in **September 2014**.



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Vacancy Announcement International Management Group (IMG)

International Management Group (IMG) is an International Organisation implementing EU-funded projects supporting the reform process in Myanmar. IMG has a vacancy for a **Language Assistant** to work with the "Support to the Reform of the Myanmar Police Force" project team.

This is a full-time position based in the IMG Yangon office. The position supports international experts in the delivery of training activities by proving oral and written translation. The successful candidate may be required to travel from time to time to support the project. The cost of any official travel is covered by IMG.

Duties and responsibilities:

Translate documents, working papers, letters, reports etc from Myanmar to English, and English to Myanmar;

Provide oral translation English to Myanmar, and Myanmar to English during meetings and training activities;

Provide support to the project team in organizing the logistics for training activities.

Required skills:

Excellent English and Myanmar language skills, both written and spoken

Good teamwork skills;

Ability to work under supervision;

Have good computer knowledge and skills in Microsoft office, including Myanmar typing skills.

Interested and qualified persons are invited to send a letter of application and CV to the IMG e-mail address: vacancy-myanmar@img-int.org. The closing date for applications is **8 June 2014**.

Job Watch

MYANMARTIMES

HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION



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Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Jeremy Mullins | jeremymullins7@gmail.com

Idle industrial land draws ministry ire at Mandalay roundtable

KHIN SU WAI

jasminekkin@gmail.com

INDUSTRIAL land is too often not developed, instead falling into the hands of land speculators, according to deputy industry minister U Thein Aung.

High property prices are discouraging investment in industrial projects, and U Thein Aung told a Mandalay industrial roundtable that he had examined the state of industrial zones, particularly in Ayeyarwady Region's Htinthada and Myaungmya zones.

"I went to Ayeyarwady Region to check the industrial zones ... I found there are no transactions or industrial businesses. It looks like [investors] store land to sell at higher prices," he said.

'I went to Ayeyarwady region to check the industrial zones ... I found there are no transactions or industrial businesses.'

U Thein Aung
Deputy Industry Minister

With land prices - particularly in Yangon - rapidly rising, U Thein Aung said that difficulties securing property sites makes it difficult for Myanmar to attract international investors.

"Can this problem be solved or not?" he said, adding that high land prices are a complex issue that may involve many different tiers of government to solve.

Making more industrial zone land available for SME development was a major topic at Mandalay meetings on SME development held in November and again on January 24.

"We are writing the SME law and creating SME policy to submit to the hluttaw," said U Thein Aung.

"After receiving support from the hluttaw, we will actively develop the SME industry. We will look at how we develop and support SMEs, and a main factor is that land prices should be reasonable," he said.

Mandalay division electric power and industry minister U Kyaw Myint said many people simply use industrial land for trading, but avoid paying requisite taxes by not properly transferring land to the new owner.

"Often we find the certification shows a different land owner than a businessman who wants to use the land as collateral," he said.

Officials from Myingyan industrial zone said the site formerly

made cars, but work has largely been discontinued and new projects have been slow to take over the idle land plots and factories. Currently several factories produce groundnut oil, but this industry faces stiff competition from Chinese imports and its future remains somewhat uncertain.

U Hla Myo Naung, a businessman for Meikthila industrial zone in Mandalay region, said there are many loom businesses operating on the zone's 385 acres, though an additional 90 plots are currently sitting empty.

Changing faces of China



MYAT
NOE OO

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THE property market in Yangon's Chinatown is rapidly changing, as its streets become famous for late-night beer shops and a range of stores popular among foreign tourists, expats and Myanmar people alike.

The area to the southwest of Sule Pagoda in Latha township has been a centre of Myanmar's Chinese community since at least 1824, when the Guangdong Guanyin temple was known to be standing. Although later destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt by 1872 during the British colonial period.

While Chinatown, or Tayote Tan in Myanmar language, has seen many different changes over the last 200 years, it has taken on a new light in the nightlife circuit, as its beer shops and restaurants become popular hangouts for foreigners and locals.

"Chinatown is becoming a tourist attraction," said U Maung Aye, a central executive member of the Myanmar Real Estate Service Association.

"Lots have Chinese people have always lived there, but now a lot of foreigners have started renting here, partly because they cannot buy land," he said.

"Of every 10 houses, at least three are now rented by foreigners. The environment is changing and many

'If foreign businesses displace Myanmar citizens' businesses, that is not okay.'

Ko Lin Bo Bo
Latha township resident



Shops in Yangon's Chinatown area in Latha township vend their wares. Photo: Zarni Phyo

tourists like this place."

U Maung Aye said current asking prices have increased substantially to about K30 million a month rent for the best street-level locations. Although sellers are trying to hook buyers, many prices have climbed too high for much of an active market, though renting is brisk particularly for shop fronts on the popular 19th Street, he said.

Phoenix real estate agent Ko

Tun Tun said business in the area is booming, with many restaurants opening shops and some hotels following suit.

Although the area is particularly well known for its restaurants, it is also home to shops ranging from gold vendors to grape sellers. Chinese snacks are still readily available, and a potpourri of goods is on display.

Latha township resident Ko Lin

IRD eyes income tax from property rentals

MYAT NYEIN AYE

myatnyeinaeye11092@gmail.com

YANGON aims to increase the number of people paying taxes on income generated from rental properties, according to Ministry of Finance Internal Revenue Department (IRD) spokesperson U Hla Htay Oo.

Government coffers are missing out on revenue, as only about 10 percent of landlords currently pay taxes, he said.

"It's really rare that owners who rent out apartments, condos, houses and land pay taxes to the department when they rent out their property," he said.

The Internal Revenue Department is planning to better enforce tax collection on rental income, in an effort to generate more state income.

The Income Tax Law stipulates that landlords must pay taxes when their rental income is above K2 million a year, said IRD Director U Kyaw Kyaw

Property income for Myanmar citizens is taxed starting at 2 percent and

increases progressively to 25pc, with top rates charged on income above K30 million, according to U Kyaw Kyaw. Income from an undisclosed source is also taxed at 30pc.

Many landlords are unfamiliar with the law and with the requirement to pay taxes, says Ko Htun Htun, owner of Phoenix real estate agency. "Some landlords avoid tax by residing overseas," he said.

Recent government moves to increase awareness of tax obligations would likely improve tax collection efforts, he added.

People engaged in property transactions already have to pay agent and contract fees, so are not much inclined to pay tax as well, said Daw Moh Moh Aung, general secretary of Myanmar Real Estate Service Association.

Myanmar has also pursued a number of initiatives in the last year to attempt to improve collection of property tax transactions, aiming to generate more state income and slow what some describe as an overheated property market.



IN PICTURES

A man uses a cellphone in front of a Beijing construction project. After years of boom that have seen prices rocket, the prospect of a bust is looming over China's vast property sector, with authorities hoping to avoid a meltdown. *Photo: AFP*

“Allowing foreign banks is a way of ‘leap-frogging’ some of the existing constraints and problems of the existing financial structure.”

— Sean Turnell, economics professor

Activist Somaly Mam
resigns after past queried
WORLD 38

town’s property



Bo Bo said for the most part he welcomes the foreigner influx. “Chinatown is located downtown and is a central spot for transportation. I have no complaints because Bangkok is also like this,” he said. “As the country develops, more foreigners will come.” However, he is concerned that the area may gentrify, with larger investments from foreigners opening

restaurants and shops pushing out long-term residents. “If foreign businesses displace Myanmar citizens’ businesses, that is not okay,” he said. Still, Ko Lin Bo Bo said he expects the area to keep its unique feel, adding that even as the area becomes more popular it has remained fundamentally the same, protected in part by heritage restrictions.

Zone plan falling back

NOE NOE AUNG
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THE Yangon zoning plan is behind its originally completed target date, as consultations are set to stretch into June. A draft plan has been put together, and is being reviewed by officials from the Ministry of Construction, Yangon Heritage Trust, consultants and developers. Department of City Planning and Land Administration deputy director U Toe Aung said suggestions from the public and experts will be taken into account before the final plan is implemented - though he is not sure if the next meeting will be open to the public. “We have not decided yet whether we are inviting the public to the next workshop or not,” he said. The goal is to submit the plan to the Yangon Regional Hluttaw this year, though officials had initially hoped to have the consultation process wrapped up by the end of May. The next workshop will be held on June 10, focusing on urban land use and high-rise buildings. The plan provides for 11 zones

and five specific categories of buildings divided by height. The categories are up to four storey, up to six storey, up to 12 storeys, buildings 317 feet high (95.1 metres) and buildings up to 317 feet high (125.1 metres). U Toe Aung previously said the plans had been shown to MPs and developers. “We will show our plans to the public as well and ask for suggestions. We can only submit the proposal after finishing all these steps,” he said at the last public workshop in March. Ministry of Construction director general of public works Daw Hlaing Maw Oo said it is important Yangon has green areas and heritage buildings, not only high-rises. However, developers have commented at previous workshops that the plan is overly restrictive. Particular care has been taken that high rises do not block views of Shwedagon Pagoda. The zoning plan is one part of the Strategic Urban Development Plan of greater Yangon, which is being implemented by the Yangon Regional Government, with support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



Finding room to grow

It’s rare to find a sprawling house in Yangon. Even when there’s room for a yard, all too often the land is paved and the house is built vertically. This week’s house is located off Min Ye Kyaw Swar Road in Ahlone township, sitting on a huge 20,250 square foot compound. Naturally, the place isn’t cheap, running at US\$12,000 a month. With the dollars comes a long list of

amenities. The main house is two storeys, while there is a garage and a security building as well. But the house itself isn’t the selling point. The highlight is the well-maintained lawns and gardens, perfect for an outdoor garden party. The house boasts two master bedrooms, two single bedrooms, a living room, dining room, shrine room and nice kitchen. The home does not come fully

furnished. – Tin Yadanar Htun
Location: Min Ye Kyaw Swar Rd, Ahlone Tsp
Price: \$12,000 per month (negotiable)
Contact: Estate Myanmar Real Estate Agency
Phone: 09-43118787 09-73114860

Hotline: 687 800

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used in respect of "Class 16: Paper goods and printed matter; namely tests, booklets, books, newsletters, certificates, manuals, guides, pamphlets, posters, rosters, reports, vouchers, summaries and papers pertaining to education, educational testing, skills and abilities assessment, and career guidance".

Reg.No. IV/3066/2007

used in respect of "Class 41: Educational services, test administration services and test programs; creating, administering, scoring and reporting Internet-based, paper based and computer based language proficiency tests; services consisting of or related to measuring skills, abilities and learning; test scoring and test scoring reporting services, conducting seminars and workshops, all in the field of educational testing, educational instruction, vocational and career guidance services, English language proficiency evaluation, teacher and student evaluations and assessments".

Reg.No. IV/3067/2007

used in respect of "Class 42: Providing use of non-downloadable on-line software for an Internet-based language proficiency test; development and administration of an Internet-based language proficiency test; Conducting research and studies with respect to education, educational practices, educational testing and test theory".

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Khine Khine U, Advocate

LL.B, D.B.L, LL.M (UK)

For Educational Testing Service

#205/5, Thirimingalar Housing, Strand Rd., Yangon.

Dated. 2 June 2014

Got something to say?
The Myanmar Times



newsroom@mmtimes.com

Apple dances to new tune with Beats deal

IF Wall Street struggles to see the logic in Apple's \$3 billion deal for Beats Music, it may look across the river to Brooklyn, hometown of Beats co-founder Jimmy Iovine.

Apple's biggest-ever acquisition includes the maker of high-end audio equipment and a streaming music service, but more importantly, the talent of Beats brains Dr. Dre and Iovine.

The wild card in the deal could be Mr. Iovine, 61, a Brooklyn native and son of a longshoreman who started in the business by cleaning studios and later was a recording engineer for John Lennon and Bruce Springsteen, before becoming a producer.

"He's a real music guy and well-liked by artists," one industry executive told AFP.

"He is old-school. He didn't come out of management school, but had music in his blood, and artists connect to that," said the executive, who asked not to be identified.

Mr. Iovine, a producer for U2, Dire Straits, Stevie Nicks, Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers, and Patti Smith, is seen by some as a visionary for recognizing the trend of on-line streaming and subscriptions - and away from Apple's model of purchasing individual songs on the internet.

"The way to find out what's really going on in music is to talk to record producers," Iovine said in an interview at the 2013 Grammy Awards, where he was recognized for his contributions to the industry.

"They have their pulse on everything. They live in the recording studio. They have the feel of the artists."

Mr. Iovine was key in helping persuade Apple chief Steve Jobs in 2002 to launch the iTunes store, according to several accounts of Apple's history.

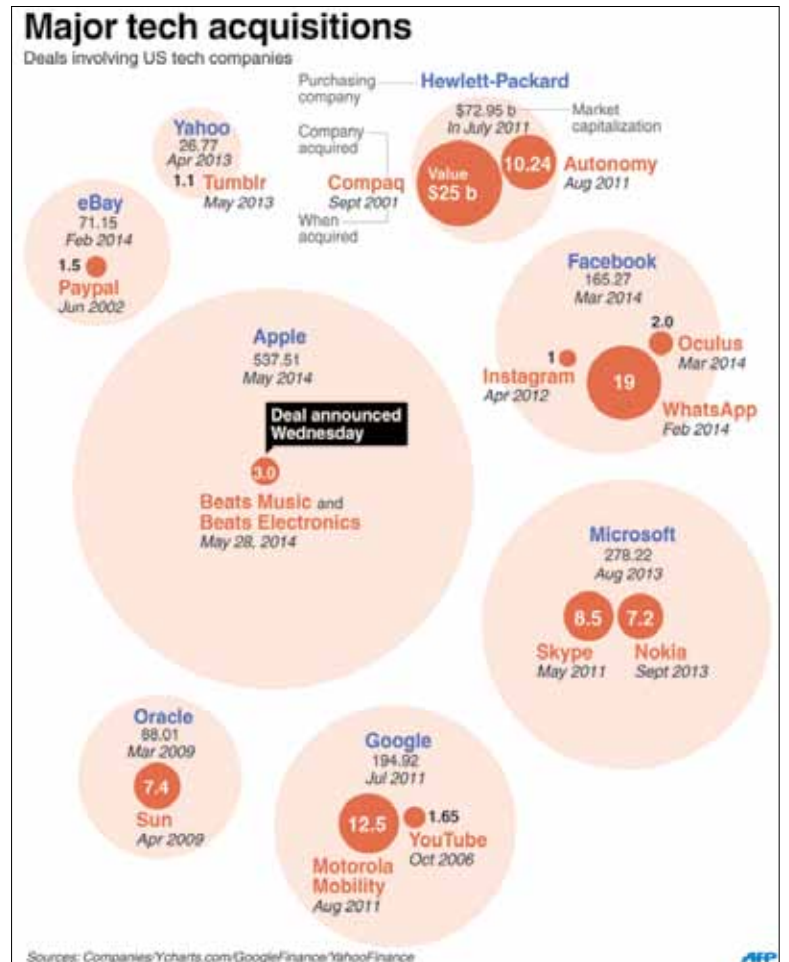
Yet for some, Apple's tie-up with a company best known for its high-end headphones is a mismatch.

"The deal seems to be out of line with Apple's history of acquisitions of technology, and we struggle to see the value," said Bank of America-Merrill Lynch analyst Scott Craig in a research note.

The private company research firm PrivCo said in a research note that Apple may have been "star-struck" and as a result "is substantially overpaying" for Beats.

The analysis claims Beats is "practically a 'virtual company' with only a few dozen employees focused on a celebrity driven market" and "little to no original intellectual property".

Other analysts see more harmony in the deal for Apple, a pioneer in



digital music but which appears to have been overtaken by the successful models of streaming services like Pandora, Spotify and others.

The news comes after Spotify's announcement that it had 40 million users, including 10 million paying customers, and Pandora had over 76 million listeners while leading the ad-supported model.

"Apple believes it's acquiring a leading team - headlined by Jimmy Iovine, Dr. Dre [Andre Young] and Ian Rogers - that can help Apple improve and launch new services," said Morgan Stanley's Katy Huberty.

Amit Daryanani at RBC Capital Markets said the acquisition can help Apple improve its music strategy.

"In our view, the iTunes music strategy, which has been challenged recently, could benefit from the new hires," Mr. Daryanani said in a note to clients.

"Notably, Iovine was one of the first industry executives to anticipate the download business decline and advocate for subscription and streaming services as music's future."

Trip Chowdhry, analyst with Global Equities Research, said Beats can help Apple improve its

iTunes Radio, which he called "a total disaster" while Beats offers "one of the best streaming music experiences".

He said that Beats has just 250,000 subscribers "but with Apple's power in distribution [iOS devices and AppStore], subscription to Beats' music streaming service can easily grow to 20 million subscribers within the next 12 to 18 months".

Others say Beats could help Apple deliver wearable and smart-home products based on Beats designs.

"If Apple is buying Beats purely for its headphones or music subscription business, then Apple is making a mistake," said Forrester Research analyst James McQuivey in a blog post.

"However, there are those of us who still believe that Apple hasn't thrown in the towel. And why would it?" he said.

"There are still many consumer markets to dominate - entire markets like wearables and home automation tech and even in-car experiences ... Apple still has the smarts, the brand, and certainly the money to make a run for any of those things, if not all of them." -AFP

Redlink will expand free Wi-Fi locations in Yangon and Mandalay

AUNG KYAW NYUNT
aungkyawnyunt28@gmail.com

REDLINK will expand free Wi-Fi in parts of Yangon and Mandalay, starting with Yangon's University of Medicine 1 in July, says U Myo Myint Nyunt, the company's assistant general manager for sales and marketing.

The service will later be extended to the University of Mandalay, Mandalay Airport, the University of Yangon

and Yangon Railway Station, he said.

Last December, Redlink provided free Wi-Fi to Shwe Dagon Pagoda and Yangon International Airport, and earlier this year to Yangon University of Foreign Languages and restaurants and places of entertainment around Kandawgyi.

U Myo Myint Nyunt said, "We want people to use the internet widely. Users can access world and local news. We would like to see usage increase." He added that internet

speed could decrease if the number of users increases. "We are trying to raise the speed above 256 kbps." Between 500 and 1000 people can use free internet, at speeds ranging from 256kbps to 512kbps. Redlink has also invited shopping malls to contact it in order to provide the service to shoppers.

Redlink, which has operated in Yangon and Mandalay since 2008, is to expand its service to Bagan, said U Myo Myint Nyunt.

Gadget Round-up

by Myo Satt



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Ooredoo builds 100 towers as launch looms

JEREMY MULLINS
jeremymullins7@gmail.com

MOBILE operator Ooredoo has built about 100 cell towers with hundreds more in the pipeline ahead of its expected launch in the third quarter 2014, according to CEO Ross Cormack. The Qatar-based telco expects to have about 30 percent population coverage at launch, particularly in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw but also other areas, he said during a press update in Yangon on May 25.

Although the firm claims to have about 100 towers up in the air, it has started work on 400 and expects to have 1000 by the end of the year, he said.

Securing local government permission to build individual towers is not simple, particularly given the number of towers to be built, with Ooredoo, Telenor and Myanma Posts and Telecommunications all looking at builds in Myanmar.

“All the planning authorities have been deluged with more paper they’ve seen in their lives,” he said.

“Yes, there have been some hiccups in the process, but we’re learning how to run the process properly. We’ve had some starts and stops but everything I think is running smoothly today.”

‘Yes, there have been some hiccups in the process ... but everything I think is running smoothly today.’

Ross Cormack
Ooredoo CEO

Getting permission for each tower is not simple. The builder must find a landowner, determine whether a tower can be built on the land, sign a conditional contract for a lease, then go to the regional authority such as Yangon City Development Committee and apply for a permit.

“The process is very complicated,” said Mr Cormack.

1000

Number of cell towers Ooredoo has promised to build by the end of the year

Towers generally sit on a concrete base measuring ten by ten metres square, with a depth of 2 metres and a tower between 30m and 80m on top, he said, adding the most common tower is 60m high.

A full tower costs about US\$100,000, though prices can be less if they sit on rooftops.

Ooredoo has inked deals with two independent tower companies, Pan Asia Towers and Myanmar Tower Company, to build towers.


The firm has also built some 1200 kilometres of backhaul fibre, with several hundred more kilometres due by the end of the year, he said.

It has data centres in Yangon and Mandalay, and expects its data centre in Nay Pyi Taw to be complete in the next two to three weeks.


Ooredoo has already completed an interconnect test call with Telenor, and is in negotiations with incumbent operator (MPT) about interconnecting. - Additional reporting by Aung Kyaw Nyunt

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(Reg: No. IV/4866/2014)

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WHERE NATURE MEETS SCIENCE

World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

KIEV

Chechen rebels spark fears of widening Soviet conflict

UKRAINE claimed it had regained control of swathes of the separatist east on May 30 even as Washington expressed concern over the appearance of fighters from Russia's war-ravaged region of Chechnya among the insurgents.

The rebels for their part dismissed speculation of a rift in their ranks after a dozen local militants were evicted from their seat of power in Donetsk by a military brigade comprised largely of Chechens and other Russians from the volatile North Caucasus.

Both Kiev and its Western allies have long accused the Kremlin of choreographing a seven-week insurgency that has shaken Ukraine's foundations, a charge that Russian President Vladimir Putin denies.

But the recent appearance among the separatists of trained gunmen from Chechnya, a mostly Muslim region that fell under Kremlin control following two post-Soviet wars for independence, has fuelled fears of the conflict being transformed into a proxy war involving elements from other unstable regions of the former Soviet Union.

Ukraine's acting defence minister said his forces were in high spirits despite the downing of a military helicopter on May 29 by the rebels that killed 11 soldiers and a general.

"Our armed forces have completed their assigned missions and completely cleared the southern and western parts of the Donetsk region and the northern part of the Lugansk region

from the separatists," Mykhailo Koval told reporters.

Pro-Russian militants seized about a dozen towns and cities in the two eastern industrial regions in response to the popular ouster in Kiev of a Kremlin-backed president.

Rebels in control of the Lugansk and Donetsk government buildings have declared independence and are seeking a merger with Russia like that accomplished by Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula of Crimea in March.

Ukraine's acting defence chief said his soldiers intended to push ahead with their so-called "anti-terrorist operation" despite demands by Moscow for all military activities to come to an immediate halt.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said he was encouraged by signs that Russia was pulling its troops back from Ukraine's eastern border.

But he said the appearance of Chechens in Donetsk and Lugansk was a dangerous new development that Moscow should quickly address.

"There is evidence of Russians crossing over, trained personnel from Chechnya trained in Russia who've come across to stir things up, to engage in fighting," he said.

Chechnya's strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov has denied sending his fighters into Ukraine, but added that he could not account for the actions of all Chechens. The Kremlin has steered clear of the topic to this point.

- AFP

LUCKNOW

Gang-raped cousins found hanging, after police 'apathy'

TWO teenage girls have been found hanging from a tree in a northern Indian village after they were gang-raped by five men, police said on May 29, in a brutal attack highlighting the country's poor record on sexual violence.

Police have arrested one man over the attack on the cousins, aged 14 and 15 and from the lowest Dalit caste, who were discovered hanging on the morning of May 28 in Budaun district of Uttar Pradesh state.

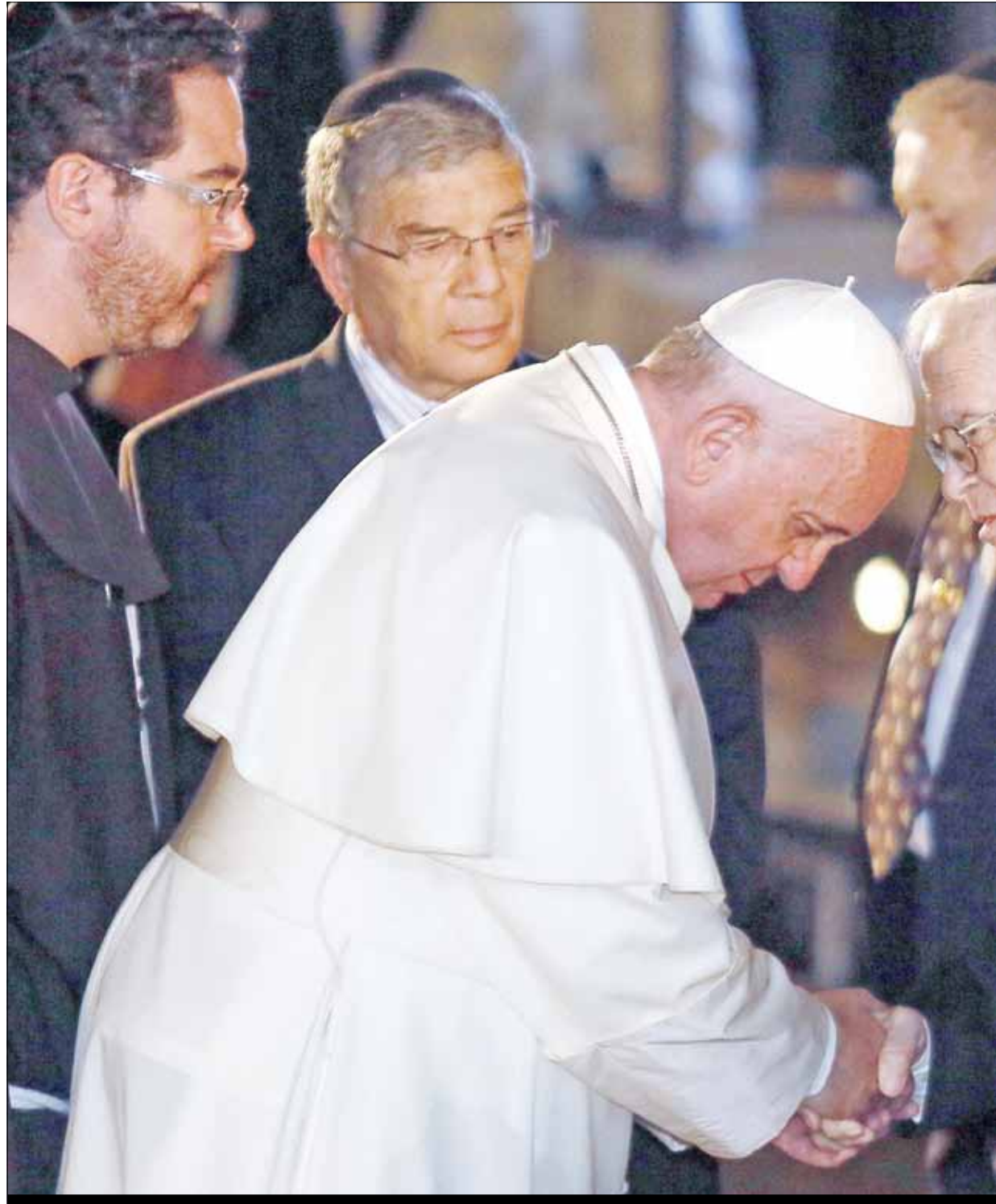
A post-mortem report indicated the cousins hanged themselves late on May 27 after being attacked, police said. The girls were attacked after walking into a field to go to the toilet

because they didn't have one in their home, local media reports.

The girls' families and other villagers accused police of failing to act after the bodies were found.

The families belong to the Dalit caste, previously known as "untouchables", considered on the lowest rung of India's social hierarchy system.

Officials said police had arrested one suspect after the girls' relatives registered a complaint against five men for gang-rape, murder and child sexual abuse, but added local police officers have also been suspended from duty for their initial apathy over the crime. - AFP



BANGKOK

EU condemns Thai junta

THE European Union has voiced "extreme concern" about political detentions and censorship in Thailand, as the military junta chief met officials and began to set out plans for the country's future.

The EU, a key trade partner of the Southeast Asian nation, said on May 29 that only a clear plan for the country's return to democracy could allow its "continuous support" after the Thai military seized power the week before and set about rounding up political figures, academics and activists.

"We are following current developments with extreme concern," the EU foreign affairs head Catherine Ashton said in a statement.

"We urge the military leadership to free all those who have been detained for political reasons in recent days and to remove censorship," she added.

The junta on May 29 added nearly 50 more names to the upward of 250 people it has summoned, having held scores of people without charge at secret locations for up to a week.

Authorities have curtailed civil liberties under martial law and imposed a nightly curfew.

A week after seizing power, Thailand's coup leader General Prayut Chan-O-Cha met central and regional officials and laid out three stages that he envisioned for the country before it could be returned to democratic rule, without giving a timeframe.

The country would stay under "special law" during the first phase and then later set up a national assembly and "reform council", according to army spokesperson Sirichan Ngathong.

Only then would the country start the process of preparing for elections, she said.

Thailand has seen 19 actual or attempted coups since 1932.

The regime freed some 30 people, including Niwattumrong Boonsongpaisan, who was caretaker premier at the time of the coup, on May 29, a day after releasing leaders of the "Red Shirt" movement allied to the ousted government.

It has instructed all those set free to refrain from discussing politics under threat of prosecution in a military court.

Senior members of their rival

protest movement as well as former premiers Yingluck Shinawatra and Abhisit Vejjajiva have also been held and since released.



People protest during an anti-coup rally, at Photo: AFP

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French vintners seek to woo SE Asia’s drinkers with wine

WORLD 41

Lessons to be learned from Everest tragedy

WORLD 44



Twist as ‘honour’ death widower reveals previous murder

WORLD 45



IN PICTURES

PHOTO: AFP

Pope Francis takes the hand of Holocaust survivor Moshe Ha-Elion at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial museum in Jerusalem on May 26. On May 29, the Holy See announced that Israeli President Shimon Peres and his Palestinian counterpart Mahmud Abbas will pray for peace at the Vatican on June 8. Despite expectations Francis would steer clear of the thorny politics of the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict during his three-day trip to the region, he invited the pair to his home for a “heartfelt prayer” for peace. The meeting “will take place on June 8, during the afternoon”, a date “accepted by both parties”, the Vatican said.

BEIJING



Photo: AFP
Security forces stand behind the accused wearing orange vests on trucks during a mass sentencing in Ili prefecture, northwest China's Xinjiang region on May 28.

Three face execution after mass ‘terror’ trial

AUTHORITIES in China’s mainly Muslim Xinjiang mounted a mass sentencing in a stadium for 55 people on offences including terrorism, state media announced on May 28, as Beijing pressed a crackdown on escalating violence.

About 7000 people and Communist Party officials in Ili prefecture attended the “mass gathering for public sentencing, public arrests and public criminal detention, punishing a group of violent terrorist criminals in accordance with the law”, official news agency Xinhua said in an online report.

Judicial officials at the stadium issued punishments for crimes including murder, separatism and organising, leading or participating in a terrorist group, as well as harbouring criminals and rape.

Three were sentenced to death for using hatchets and other weapons to murder a family of four last year “using extremely cruel methods”, the report said.

At the stadium, police also announced the formal arrests of 38 suspects and detained another 27.

Photos showed armed officers guarding the premises, and the accused crammed into backs of lorries wearing orange vests and bent forward to face the ground as helmeted security forces stood over them.

The event was intended to demonstrate authorities’ “resolute determination crack down on the ‘three forces’ of violent terrorism”, Ili’s deputy party chief was cited as saying, referring to separatism, extremism and terrorism.

China used mass trials in the 1980s and 90s to try to combat the rise in crime driven by the social upheavals that accompanied the country’s dramatic Reform and Opening economic overhaul, but the practice later faded.

Beijing at the weekend vowed a year-long crackdown on terrorism following a string of attacks blamed on militants from Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur minority, with violence in recent months increasingly targeting civilians and spreading elsewhere in China.

Last week five suspects killed 39 people and wounded more than 90 in a car and bomb assault on a market in the regional capital Urumqi.

On April 30, the final day of a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the region, attackers armed with knives and explosives killed one person and wounded 79 at an Urumqi railway station.

In March knifemen killed 29 people and wounded 143 at a railway station in the southwestern city of Kunming, an incident dubbed “China’s 9/11” by state media. – AFP

’s latest rights breaches

A fugitive former cabinet minister arrested by soldiers who swooped on a press briefing a day earlier was brought before a military court on



Victory monument in Bangkok on May 28.

May 28 to acknowledge charges of denying an order to report to the junta, and of “provocation”, police said.

If convicted, ex-education minister Chaturon Chaisang could be imprisoned. He had used a press conference to criticise the coup minutes before being detained.

Following a threat of a crackdown on social media, Facebook users on May 28 reacted with alarm to rumours of a “block” of the popular site.

After an outcry on the internet, the army interrupted national television to deny it had blocked Facebook after the site briefly went down.

But the military has warned against small but persistent daily anti-coup protests, mainly in the capital Bangkok.

Army spokesperson Winthai Suvarere said authorities should prosecute demonstrators and could use tear-gas against the rallies, although he added they would “avoid violence”.

The current political turmoil centres on the divisive figure of Thaksin Shinawatra, Ms Yingluck’s older brother, who was deposed as prime minister by royalist generals in a 2006

coup and now lives in self-imposed exile to avoid prison for a corruption conviction.

His opponents in the establishment, military and among the Bangkok middle classes view the entire Shinawatra family as corrupt.

Anti-Shinawatra protesters staged nearly seven months of protests before the May 22 coup in an attempt to rid the country of the family’s influence.

At least 28 people have died in related violence.

Mr Thaksin, a billionaire tycoon-turned-politician, has broad support among the urban working class and rural communities in the north and northeast, particularly for popular policies including providing nearly free healthcare.

He or his allies have won every election in the country since 2001.

Thailand has been rocked by increasingly severe political division and street protest since he was deposed in 2006.

More than 90 people were killed and hundreds injured during Red Shirt protests in 2010 that ended with a crackdown by soldiers firing live rounds. – AFP

DAMASCUS

Air raid death toll nears 2000

BARREL bombings and other Syrian government air raids on rebel districts of Aleppo and surrounding areas have killed 1963 civilians since January, including 567 children, a monitoring group said on May 30.

A total of 283 women were also among those confirmed killed in the air strikes, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights which relies on a network of medics and activists on the ground for its reports.

The Britain-based monitoring group said the victims it documented were killed between January 1 and May 29 in rebel-held areas of the northern city and the surrounding countryside.

Control of Aleppo, Syria’s former commercial hub, has been divided since a rebel offensive in 2012.

Government aircraft launched a bombing campaign against rebel-held districts in the east in mid-December, frequently dropping shrapnel-packed barrel bombs.

The use of the munitions, which are unguided and cannot be directed

against military targets, has been condemned by the international community and human rights groups.

The figures came as another report said that three years of civil war in Syria have had a disastrous effect on the economy, plunging half the population into poverty.

“Squandering Humanity” was produced by the Damascus-based Syrian Centre for Policy Research in conjunction with the UN Development Programme and the UN Palestinian refugee agency.

It says the conflict is creating “economies of violence that flout human rights, civil liberties, poverty rights and the rule of law”.

New elites “trade illegally in weapons, commodities and people, while often engaged in pillage, theft, kidnapping and exploitation of humanitarian assistance”.

In the end, “Syria has become a country of poor people afflicted by a ruinous decent into poverty,” the report says.

– AFP

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for **Siam Kubota Corporation Co., Ltd.**
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E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 2 June 2014

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Reg.No.IV/3061/2007

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Reg.No.IV/3062/2007

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Khine Khine U, Advocate
LL.B, D.B.L, LL.M (UK)
For **Educational Testing Service**
#205/5, Thirimingalar Housing, Strand Rd., Yangon.
Dated. 2 June 2014

PHNOM PENH

Garment worker activists sentenced

A CAMBODIA court has given suspended sentences to 23 activists and garment workers arrested during a protest crackdown amid rising concern over a textile industry that supplies a host of Western brands.

The defendants had been in custody since early January when police opened fire on protesting textile factory workers who were calling for a minimum wage of US\$160 a month to make clothes for brands including Gap, Nike and H&M.

They were sentenced to between one and four-and-a-half years in prison for charges relating to the unrest by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court on May 30. The court suspended the remainder of the terms, meaning the 23 were able to walk free.

At least four civilians were killed in January's unrest, while a 16-year-old

boy who was wounded is thought to be missing according to activists.

“While we welcome the release, we regret that they were convicted,” said activist Am Sam Ath of local rights group Licadho.

The case has deepened concerns over the forceful reaction of strongman Hun Sen's regime to protest.

On May 26, representatives from brands including H&M, GAP, Puma and Levi's, along with the IndustriALL Global Union, met senior government figures to discuss the situation.

“For the first time global brands have acknowledged that they are prepared to cost in the price of higher salaries in Cambodia,” said IndustriALL general secretary Jyrki Raina in a statement the following day.

But the statement said one major brand had already slashed its

dependency on Cambodian factories by 50 percent, adding that the firms had warned they would only continue to source clothing from the country if it could provide stability, transparency and the rule of law.

Cambodia's textile industry provides clothes and footwear for many in the West and employs some 650,000 local people.

Workers have staged months of strikes and street protest demanding better safety standards and a doubling of the minimum wage to \$160 a month, or about \$8 a day. So far the government has offered them \$100.

But they found themselves on the frontline of a bloody crackdown on dissent when they began to join forces with the opposition, the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

— AFP

JAKARTA

An Indonesian protester holds a placard featuring 1997-1998 activists kidnapping during a protest against presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta on May 20. Photo: AFP

Abuse claims threaten ex-general's bid for presidency

MUGINYANTO recalls the horror of being abducted by soldiers, blindfolded, beaten and electrocuted as a student activist fighting to end the long rule of Indonesian dictator Suharto.

Sixteen years on, he can't believe the man who ordered his capture could be the country's next president.

Former general Prabowo Subianto is trying to erase human rights violations from his image as he pursues the presidency in the world's third-largest democracy.

But the voices demanding he be brought to justice are growing louder as the July 9 poll approaches.

Twenty-three activists were kidnapped in the months before the three-decade rule of Suharto was brought to an end in May 1998, when the Asian financial crisis sparked violent protests as it tore through Indonesia.

As head of the army's special forces in early 1998, Mr Prabowo admitted to ordering some of the abductions, including Mugiyanto's. He was discharged from the military following Suharto's downfall for “exceeding orders”.

But the former general denies ordering the torture.

The 62-year-old, who used to be married to Suharto's daughter, has never faced a civilian court. He also denies accusations he was involved in the disappearance of 13 activists, whose fates remain unknown.

Mugiyanto, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, hopes that by telling the story of his three-day interrogation he can educate those who know little about the ex-general's past.

“The most painful part was when I heard my friends being tortured,” Mugiyanto said, his voice quavering as he recalled sobbing uncontrollably when he heard their screams.

“I thought they were going to kill me,” the 41-year-old said.

Most Indonesians are in the dark about Mr Prabowo's past. A poll by the Indonesian Survey Institute found that less than 30 percent of respondents knew about the abductions or that Mr Prabowo was discharged from the military.

At a recent pro-Prabowo demonstration, supporters described the ex-general as “honest”, and one man said the allegations against him were all “lies”.

“His rivals are just playing dirty games. There is no problem. This is just a dirty conspiracy,” supporter Binsar Effendi Hutabarat said.

Mr Prabowo still polls a distant second to his only rival, the popular Joko Widodo who rose to fame in his stint as Jakarta governor, but he has narrowed the gap dramatically in recent months.

His Gerindra Party has a strong “pro-poor” platform that appeals to the masses. Half of Indonesia's 250 million people live below or hover around the poverty line of US\$2 a day.

And his militaristic past is seen as a plus by millions who yearn for a strong leader to follow outgoing President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, widely criticised for his indecision.

While activists are demanding Mr Prabowo's past be discussed, rights have taken a back seat in the local media's election coverage.

When asked about his rights record during a talk with foreign correspondents last year, Mr Prabowo snapped, “Do you come to us and tell us that 250 million Indonesians are all stupid?”

There have been attempts to haul Prabowo before courts in the past, but they have all failed.

In mid-May a group of lawyers filed a suit calling for an ad hoc human rights court to be established to try Mr Prabowo and others allegedly involved in the abductions, in line with a 2009 recommendation by parliament.

A push for Mr Prabowo to be tried has also come from neighbouring East Timor, where he is accused of atrocities, including the massacre of hundreds in 1983, during Indonesia's occupation. Mr Prabowo denies those allegations as well.

A Prabowo victory could prove awkward for the United States, an ally of Indonesia. He was denied a visa to the country in 2000, reportedly because of his rights record, although US officials have indicated they will work with whomever is elected. — AFP



အသစ်ရောက်ရှိလာသည့် ကားသစ်များ အတွက် အထူးအစီအစဉ်



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PHNOM PENH

Somaly Mam resigns after fabrication claims

ONE of the world's best-known anti-sex slavery activists has resigned from her foundation after questions were raised about her shocking story of being sold into a brothel as a child.

Somaly Mam, a glamorous and energetic Cambodian campaigner, boasts a string of celebrity supporters and has been named a CNN hero of the year, but recently she has been at the centre of controversy.

Her decision to step down follows an investigation by the US-based law firm Goodwin Procter into her personal history, according to a statement released on May 28 by her eponymous foundation, which did not reveal what the probe had uncovered.

"While we are extremely saddened by this news, we remain grateful to Somaly's work over the past two decades and for helping to build a foundation that has served thousands of women and girls, and has raised critical awareness of the nearly 21 million individuals who are currently enslaved today," the statement said.

Ms Mam says she was sold into a brothel as a child by her "grandfather" and repeatedly raped and abused until, after seeing a friend killed in front of her, she escaped.

But the English-language newspaper The Cambodia Daily and Newsweek magazine have reported what they say are inconsistencies in her account.

The Newsweek story, titled "Somaly Mam: The Holy Saint (and Sinner) of Sex Trafficking", said its own interviews with the activist's childhood acquaintances, teachers and local officials contradicted important parts of her autobiography.

The foundation said it had also severed links with another supposed victim of sex trafficking, Long Pros.

Ms Pros's family told Newsweek that she was never a victim of sex traffick-



Somaly Mam addresses delegates in Hanoi on February 14. Photo: AFP

ing, despite her story that as a young sex slave she was tortured with electric wires and had an eye gouged out by an angry pimp.

Another girl has confessed that her story was fabricated and carefully rehearsed for the cameras under Ms Mam's instruction, the report said.

Ms Mam is no stranger to controversy. In 2011 she allowed a New York Times correspondent to "live-tweet" a brothel raid in Cambodia, a move slammed by

other campaigners as a PR stunt.

She also takes a controversially hard-line stance that all sex workers are victims.

Her foundation said that despite its "heartfelt disappointment" it would carry on but on a "revised course".

"Our work changes lives and we remain dedicated to it," the statement said.

There are more than 34,000 commercial sex workers in Cambodia, according to a 2009 government estimate.

WASHINGTON

US tightens sanctions on N Korea as Japan announces ease-up

US lawmakers moved on May 29 to toughen sanctions against North Korea by targeting money laundering and human rights violations, voicing impatience with the hardline regime.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee approved the bill hours after Japan, a US ally that has usually championed a hard line on North Korea, unexpectedly eased sanctions after rare talks between the arch-enemies.

The House bill would create a blacklist of officials judged to be involved in human rights abuses after a damning report by a UN commission likened abuses by Kim Jong-Un's regime to those under Nazi Germany.

While the United States already maintains sweeping sanctions against North Korea, the proposed law would seek to make the totalitarian state radioactive for banks from third countries by asking the Treasury Department to consider designating Pyongyang a money-laundering concern.

The move is inspired by the freezing of US\$25 million in North Korean funds in 2005 on US money-laundering and counterfeiting charges at the Banco Delta Asia in the Chinese territory of Macau.

Hard-up Pyongyang responded furiously, refusing to comply with a denuclearisation deal until it received the funds.

The sanctions bill would also reimpose strict restrictions on export licenses that were loosened in 2008.

At that time the then-president George W Bush controversially took North Korea off a list of state sponsors of terrorism as he searched for an elusive final denuclearisation agreement.

"It has been six years since North Korea walked away from the negotiating table. The only thing that has changed since 2008 is that North Korea is closer to miniaturizing a nuclear warhead," said Representative Ed Royce, chair of the House committee.

"Our North Korea policy, frankly, has been a bipartisan failure," said Mr Royce, a member of Mr Bush's Republican Party.

Representative Tulsi Gabbard, a member of President Barack Obama's Democratic Party, said that North Korea's growing missile program posed a direct threat to her state of Hawaii.

"Strategic patience, the time for that has come and gone," Ms Gabbard said.

She was referring to the stated policy at the start of the Obama administration of waiting for North Korea to come forward before any changes to US policy.

The vote came after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, long known for his hawkish stance on North Korea, announced an easing of several sanctions including travel restrictions.

The move came after North Korea pledged during talks in Sweden to reinvestigate the cases of Japanese civilians kidnapped by the regime's spies in the 1970s and 1980s.

A report earlier this year by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service said that the sanctions bill could put the United States at odds with another ally, South Korean President Park Geun-Hye, if she sought a new push to reconcile with the North.

— AFP

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WASHINGTON

Convert hanging 'horrific'

THE case of a Christian Sudanese woman who has been sentenced to hang for converting from Islam was described as "horrific" by the United States on May 29.

High-level US officials have raised the plight of Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag, 27, with top Sudanese counterparts and US embassy officials have been attending her public hearings and will monitor the appeals process in Khartoum.

"We're concerned about this horrific case, and we've expressed that many, many, many times," State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki said.

Ms Ishag's husband Daniel Wani is a US citizen, and he told AFP on May 27 that he was trying to visit his wife in the women's jail in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman after she gave birth to their second child, a baby girl.

Ms Ishag already has a 20-month-old son, who is also incarcerated with her, rights activists say.

Born to a Muslim father, she was convicted under the Islamic sharia law that has been in force in Sudan since 1983 and outlaws conversions. She was sentenced to death on May 15.

Ms Psaki said she was unable to discuss details of the case publicly because Mr Wani has not signed a statement waiving his right to privacy.



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For the third year running *The Myanmar Times* has once again been nominated for a prestigious Asian Publisher's Award from the Society of Publishers in Asia.

Congratulations to Dr Kaung Htet for being nominated twice in the category of News Photography for his essays 'Letpadaung fury' and 'The Mansi offensive'.

We wish him the best of luck when the winners are announced on June 11 in Hong Kong.

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HONG KONG



Wine promoters speak to visitors at Vinexpo Asia Pacific in Hong Kong on May 27. Photo: AFP

France eyes new South East Asian drinkers as Chinese wine sales fall

FACED with a stalling China market, French winemakers are working to entice a growing middle class in Asia away from spirits and beer, but face big obstacles in doing so.

Chinese wine shipments and consumption fell for the first time in a decade in 2013. The drop comes as Beijing reins in luxury spending and extravagant banquets, against the backdrop of a slower economy, and an anti-graft campaign backed by President Xi Jinping to root out official corruption.

Winemakers and industry executives say that while the slowdown will not prevent people from drinking, the focus may now shift to mid-range wine and spirits.

In its 2014 outlook, trade body the Federation des Exportateurs de Vins & Spiritueux de France (FEVS)

warned that the country's global 7.6 billion euro (US\$10.3 billion) wine export industry needed to gain market share in places where a new middle class was expanding.

"The growth of our exports depend on the opening of new markets: India, Vietnam, Thailand," it said.

While "China remains the main engine of growth, the perspectives of new consumers" in Asia are increasingly important, said Guillaume Deglise, CEO of Vinexpo, which last week staged Asia's largest annual gathering of global wine and spirit producers and merchants held in Hong Kong.

To capture new markets, winemakers need to navigate Asia's "great diversity of cultures, religions, climates and consumption patterns", said Gautier Salinier, sales manager in Asia for the Plaimont cooperative of wine

producers based in Southwest France.

Vietnam is viewed as an ideal example of a market with room to grow. Its population of 90 million is increasing, while alcohol consumption is growing at 10 percent annually amid a booming tourism industry.

At roughly \$90 million, Vietnam's wine import market is currently "very modest" according to Guillaume Crouzet, director general of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) in Hanoi.

New world wines have arrived there in force in recent years, particularly since 2011 when Chilean varietals benefited from preferential tariffs.

But exporters face challenges, particularly in persuading drinkers to move away from beer and spirits and in dealing with complicated tax

regimes.

India perhaps offers the greatest potential but also the biggest obstacles. Wine consumption among its 1.2 billion population is expected to grow 30pc by 2016, according to export agency Ubifrance.

But access to alcohol and levels of excise duty differ between each of India's 28 states meaning exporters have to negotiate separately and pay taxes accordingly.

"It's a tough and complicated market," said Rajiv Singhal of trading group Ritu.

"Beyond the tax issue, traditions are hard to change. India's a former British colony with strong spirit consumption. People only really started to drink wine 15-20 years ago, helped by the arrival of Indian wines."

In Thailand a bottle of wine is

subject to six separate taxes between its arrival on Thai territory and its sale to consumers, resulting in a levy of between 500-600pc, according to the French Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok.

France is the largest wine exporter to Thailand, where French winemakers have a 35pc share of a market dominated by spirits (73pc) and beer (24pc).

In Vietnam, customs and excise duties and VAT double the price of imported alcohol, a scenario that is holding back the market, said the French Chamber's Mr Crouzet.

The industry is carefully following negotiations between the European Union and Hanoi over the signing of a free trade agreement. The next round of talks is expected to take place in June. — AFP

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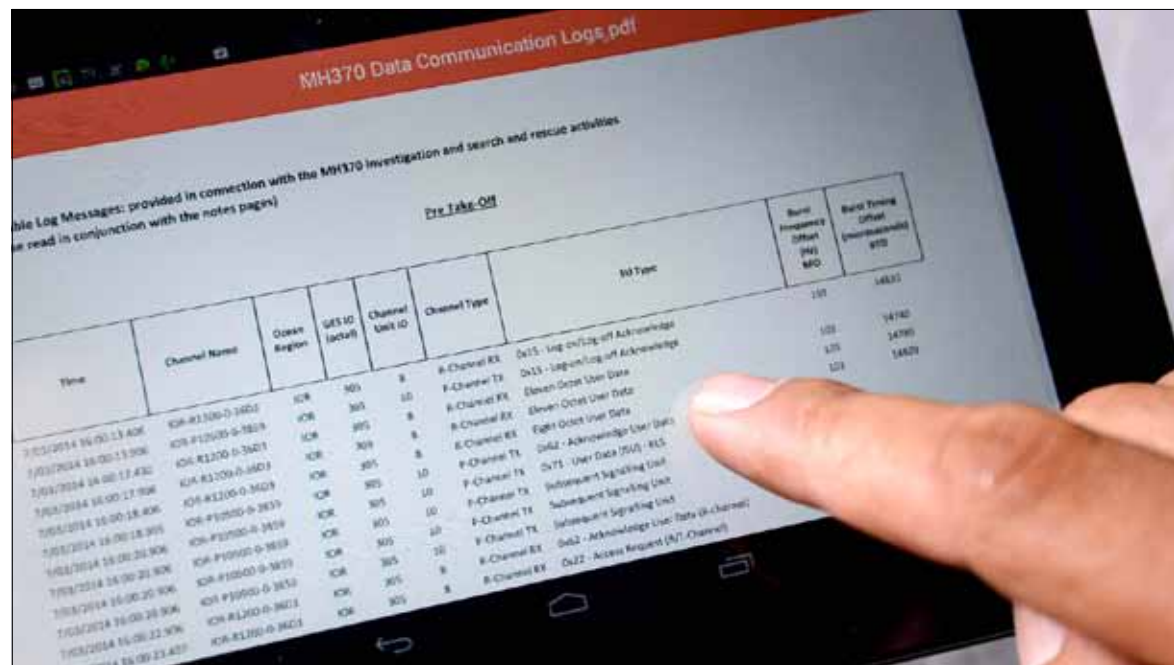
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Dated. 2nd June, 2014

SYDNEY

Data communication logs from British satellite operator Inmarsat in a photo released by Malaysia's Department of Civil Aviation on May 27 show details on missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370. Photo: AFP

Doubts missing jet ever reached Indian Ocean

AUSTRALIA has ruled out a large swathe of Indian Ocean as Flight MH370's final resting place after a lengthy underwater hunt, as a US Navy official queried whether the missing plane ever went there.

The Joint Agency Coordination Centre said on May 29 that the search in an area using a mini sub where acoustic transmissions were detected in early April was now complete.

"The Joint Agency Coordination Centre can advise that no signs of aircraft debris have been found by the autonomous underwater vehicle since it joined the search effort," JACC said.

It added that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau had advised that "the area can now be discounted as the final resting place of MH370" in an outcome that will extend the agony of relatives who are desperate for closure.

Australian ship *Ocean Shield*, which is carrying the US Bluefin-21 sub, has now left the area after scouring 850 square kilometres (340 square miles) of sea bed for the jet that vanished flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8 carrying 239 people.

The end of the underwater mission came as the US Navy's deputy director of ocean engineering Michael Dean told CNN that the pings at the heart of the search were no longer believed to have come from the plane's black box.

He said that if they were from the on-board data or voice recorders they would have been found by now.

"Our best theory at this point is that [the pings were] likely some sound

produced by the ship ... or within the electronics of the towed pinger locator," Mr Dean said.

"Always your fear any time you put electronic equipment in the water is that if any water gets in and grounds or shorts something out, that you could start producing sound."

He said it was not possible to absolutely exclude that the pings came from the black boxes, but there was no evidence now to suggest they did.

A US Navy spokesperson later said comments were "speculative and premature". JACC had no comment on Mr Dean's statements.

The US Navy pinger locator, dragged by *Ocean Shield*, was used by searchers to listen for underwater signals in the remote southern Indian Ocean in an area where satellite data indicated the plane went down.

A series of signals it picked up prompted Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott to say he was "very confident" they were from the black box.

It led to the deployment of the US Bluefin-21 on April 14.

JACC said the operation would now move to the next phase involving sophisticated equipment to scan the unmapped ocean floor, with all existing information and analysis reviewed to define a new search zone of up to 60,000 square kilometres (23,000 square miles).

A Chinese survey ship, *Zhu Keshen*, is currently mapping areas of the ocean in preparation for the commercially contracted deep sea search, which is ex-

pected to begin in August and take up to 12 months.

Scott Hamilton, managing director of US-based aerospace consultancy Leeham, said all the data would have to be re-examined "from start to finish" but he did not believe the search would be called off any time soon.

"If you mean do they stop looking for the airplane entirely and just write it off as missing forever, I would say, not yet. They need to exhaust all analysis," he said.

"I think it will be some time, perhaps years, before they completely throw in the towel."

Many relatives of those on board, who were mostly from China and Malaysia, have voiced frustration over the lack of progress and accused Kuala Lumpur on May 28 of withholding crucial satellite data.

That came after Malaysia on May 27 released a 47-page summary of communication logs from the plane recorded by British satellite operator Inmarsat, information that relatives had long demanded.

"So much time has passed and nothing has been found, so we doubt that the calculated position of the plane is correct," said Steve Wang, from a support group of relatives of the flight's 153 Chinese passengers.

Malaysia insists it is doing all it can in what is an unprecedented situation.

Relying in part on the Inmarsat data, officials believe the jet inexplicably veered off its flight path before crashing into the sea. - AFP

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WELLINGTON

'Fossil' found alive and well in NZ

A MICROSCOPIC marine creature believed to have been extinct for 4 million years has been found alive and well in New Zealand waters, researchers said on May 29.

The animal, a tentacled polyp called protulophila, forms colonies inside sea worms and first appeared in the fossil record about 170 million years ago in Europe and the Middle East, government marine agency NIWA said.

The last trace of it was in rocks that were 4 million years old, until scientists found the organism in samples from New Zealand, half a world away from its regular habitat, which were formed just 1 million years ago.

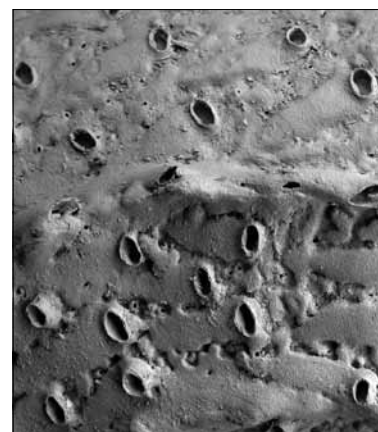
That sent researchers scrambling

to check more recent samples and sure enough the polyp turned up in sea worms collected by NIWA in 2008 near Picton, on New Zealand's South Island.

NIWA marine biologist Dennis Gordon said scientific "detective work" involving researchers from NIWA, Britain's Natural History Museum and the University of Oslo was responsible for the discovery.

"Finding living protulophila is a rare example of how knowledge of fossils has led to the discovery of living biodiversity. It's very exciting," he said.

He added that the next stage of research into the creature, which is related to corals and sea anemones, was to find fresh samples for gene sequencing.



A microscope photo shows the openings of the 'living fossil' (Protulophila) in a worm tube. Photo: AFP

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Dated. 2 June 2014



Dhamey Tenzing Norgay is the son of legendary mountaineer and Everest pioneer Tenzing Norgay Sherpa.

KATHMANDU

Everest tragedy shows need for labour change

**DHAMEY TENZING NORGAY
CURTIS S CHIN**

ISN'T climbing supposed to be one of “the” symbols of comradeship and teamwork?

During the time Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, who would have been 100 years old this May 29, and Edmund Hillary climbed Everest in 1953, everyone was involved and shared the risk, the challenges and the joys of adventure. How different it has been this year.

As the world moves on to read of the next tragedy from Asia, the loss of 16 lives in an avalanche on Everest this April 18 at the start of the climbing season is for many likely to be yesterday's news.

For us though, our deep sense of sadness remains, only made worse by the tales of family and friends whom we have grown up or worked with in the Himalayan region.

The grief and suffering of loved ones left behind – parents, spouses and in particular children – are no doubt echoed by families elsewhere here in Asia during a season of tragedies, whether the sinking of a Korean ferry or a Malaysia airliner gone missing. They also bring to mind the tragedy of a year ago in Dhaka when the multi-storied Rana Plaza garment factory collapsed, killing more than 1100 people.

The raw numbers of people who died high in the snows of Everest are much lower than those who died in Dhaka. Still, the calls for sweeping change that are emerging are as powerful, and we fear will also be soon forgotten. In Nepal, amidst small tightly knit mountain communities, the sentiment is clear. We lost just 16 people, but entire communities are devastated, and things must change.

In the wake of this disaster – the worst in the history of climbing on Everest – we are left wondering what kind of “adventure” has the pursuit of reaching the highest summit on earth become? Everest is obviously an extremely dangerous and challenging environment for all. Yet, only Sherpas died this time, and over the years, members of the Sherpa ethnic minority account for the majority of Everest fatalities.

The death of so many Sherpas this spring highlights what has gone wrong among many of those pursuing Everest these days – a breakdown of climbing values and to some extent, human values. It also underscores the growing divide between expedition members paying top dollar to summit Everest and the Sherpas – mountaineering guides who have won the respect of mountaineers everywhere, but certainly not the riches nor the opportunities taken for granted by all too many expedition members.

This year's tragedy also has brought new attention to not just mismatches in compensation and core benefits such as insurance, but also shortcomings in team work, responsibility and leadership. There is also the sad reality that despite hundreds of millions of dollars in development assistance, Nepal's mountain communities in particular remain desperately poor.

Somehow along the way, the Sherpa climbers, the deciding factor for almost any successful expedition, have also become among the most exploited.

We still hope against odds that this disaster brings about some urgently needed changes and immediate actions:

First, shifts in behaviour. For change to take place, everyone involved with Everest must embrace new responsibilities. The Sherpa climbers themselves must re-organise, re-articulate their concerns and establish a sensible “code of operation” – a code that is written by them, on their own terms. Then they must stand firmly united behind it.

16

People who died in an avalanche on Everest on April 18

Members of foreign expeditions and their leaders must lead from the front, not from behind. Their argument that their responsibility is in “providing jobs” is insufficient – a morally wrong, if not immoral, cover. Sherpas play a pivotal role in helping international climbers achieve their goals, operating in treacherous conditions and enduring disproportionate exposure to the dangers of Everest.

For sponsors of expeditions, their responsibilities do not stop with writing a cheque. They must play a more active role in evaluating how their funds are utilised and investigate the human cost involved in furthering their brand value.

Second, addressing the immediate need. The latest news is that most expeditions to Everest from the Nepal side of the mountain have been cancelled this year as a mark of respect for those who passed away and for grieving family members and loved ones.

It is difficult for us to imagine how other expeditions can morally continue this year. For those expeditions still deciding on whether to continue climbing to honour members of the Sherpa

community who lost their lives, here are our thoughts on how to genuinely honour them.

Show respect. Share the grief and show your support. Be generous and ease some of their financial burden – now that the only earning member of the family, in most cases, has passed away. Don't forget the sacrifices made by the Sherpas, those who died and those who survived. Now it's your turn – all stakeholders, including the Nepal government – to support and guide these broken families, especially the children.

Many friends and strangers have asked how to help. To respond to this, the American Himalayan Foundation out of San Francisco has established a Sherpa Family Fund to help the families of the deceased. One hundred percent of the funds raised will benefit the families of Sherpas killed or injured. After the initial flurry of pledges though, the needs will remain.

One year ago, the Dhaka disaster focused international attention on the plight of Bangladesh's 4 million garment workers and their critical contributions and role in an industry that sews brand names for companies around the world. New light was shone on the low pay, abused workers and unsafe conditions that were the dark side of a key contributor to Bangladesh's economy.

Today, significant questions remain about whether promised government and private sector actions, including changes to factory safety as well as payments to some 2500 survivors in the factory collapse have actually been made. According to media reports the Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund, set up by labour groups and clothing companies to compensate victims is far short of its US\$40 million target having raised only some \$15 million.

A year from now there may well also be a flurry of media attention paid to what has happened to the families and more critically to the business of climbing Everest on the anniversary of this latest disaster. We hope for the best, but if assessments of Bangladesh a year later is our guide, we fear that not enough will change high in the Himalaya without continued pressure on government and on themselves by the leading individuals, foundations and companies involved in the business of mountaineering.

Dhamey Tenzing Norgay is the son of legendary mountaineer Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, and co-owner of Noble Traveller, a Bhutan-based travel company. Curtis S Chin is a former U.S. Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank and managing director of advisory firm RiverPeak Group, LLC.

KUALA LUMPUR

13 arrested over gang rape by ‘40’

MALAYSIAN police have arrested at least 13 people, many of whom are related, over the alleged gang-rape of a 15-year-old girl, it was reported on May 30.

The girl was raped on May 20 for hours by a group of men in an abandoned hut in the northern state of Kelantan, local media reports said.

Police are still investigating whether her 17-year-old friend was also raped and how many men were involved in the assault after initial reports stated almost 40 took turns in the gang-rape, *The Star* daily said.

All those detained are from the same village, where the assault took place, and many are related, it reported. Those arrested include one man and his two sons.

The men are believed to have been

‘Boys are being raised in a culture where ... it is perfectly acceptable to use violence to get what you want.’

Suri Kempe
Sisters in Islam

high on drugs, and the girls were lured to the hut.

A police official when contacted declined to comment, while others could not immediately be reached.

Suri Kempe, an official with women's rights group Sisters in Islam, said the frequent number of rape cases being reported was “extremely worrying”.

“Boys are being raised in a culture where being masculine means being aggressive, and that it's perfectly acceptable to use violence to get what you want,” she said in a statement.

Almost 3000 rape cases were reported in 2012 in the Southeast Asian country of 28 million people, according to police statistics, with many of the victims aged 16 and below.

But activists say many more cases go unreported due to a continuing stigma for rape victims in the Muslim-majority country.

LAHORE

Husband of pregnant ‘honour’ murder victim, killed first wife

PAKISTAN’S prime minister on May 30 demanded “immediate action” over the murder of a pregnant woman who was bludgeoned to death outside a courthouse, as her husband revealed in a grisly twist that he strangled his first wife.

Farzana Parveen was murdered on May 27 outside the High Court in the eastern city of Lahore by more than two dozen brick-wielding attackers, including her brother and father, while police stood by. The attack came after she married against her family’s wishes for.

The brazen, brutal nature of the killing, in broad daylight in the centre of Pakistan’s second-largest city, has triggered outrage around the world.

The United States on May 29 branded the incident “heinous”, with State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki denouncing “unjustifiable acts” against women around the world, especially “violence that occurs in the name of tradition and honour, such as so-called honour killings”.

The attack also casts a spotlight on Pakistan’s controversial blood-money laws which allow relatives of homicide victims to forgive their perpetrators who, in cases such as this, are often also family members.

Ms Parveen’s husband Mohammad Iqbal, 45, told AFP on May 29 that he had killed his first wife and was spared prison because he was forgiven for the act by his son.

“I was in love with Farzana and killed my first wife because of this love,” Mr Iqbal said, adding that he had strangled her.

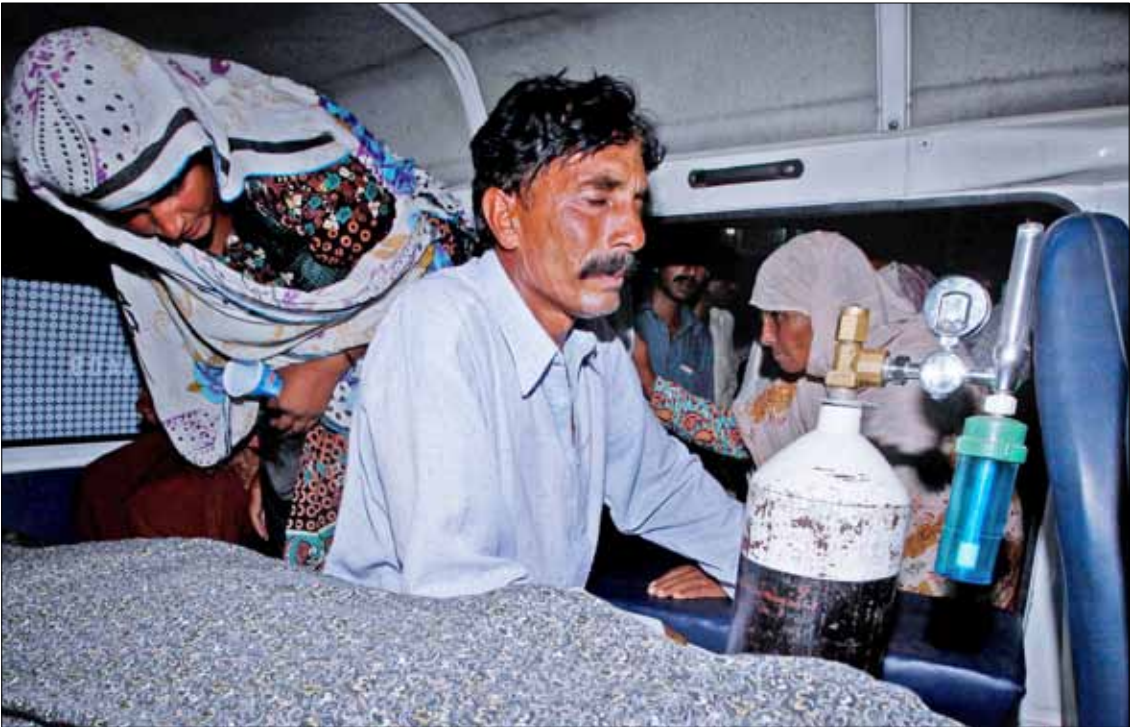
After admitting to the killing he switched off his phone and did not respond to further calls.

Zulfiqar Hameed, a senior police officer investigating the killing of Ms Parveen, said police would be filing a report to the government detailing Mr Iqbal’s past.

“Iqbal was a notorious character and he had murdered his first wife six years ago,” Mr Hameed said.

“He was arrested and later released after a compromise with his family.”

Hundreds of women are murdered by relatives in Pakistan each year supposedly to defend family “honour”, but the fact that police officers guarding the court apparently did nothing to intervene to save 25-year-old Ms



Relatives transport the body of pregnant Farzana Parveen on May 27. She was beaten to death with bricks by members of her own family for marrying a man of her own choice in Lahore. Photo: AFP

Parveen has added to the outrage over the killing.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has told the Punjab chief minister, his brother Shahbaz Sharif, to act over the “brutal killing of [a] lady in the premises of high court in the presence of police”, a statement from his office said.

“I am directing the Chief Minister to take immediate action and report must be submitted by this evening to my office,” Mr Sharif said in the statement.

“This crime is totally unacceptable and must be dealt with in accordance with law promptly.”

Ms Parveen, who was three months pregnant, had gone to court to testify in Mr Iqbal’s defence after he was accused by her relatives of kidnapping her and forcing her into marriage.

Mr Iqbal, a farmer, said he had been receiving death threats from his in-laws, and said he did not believe police were actively pursuing his wife’s killers.

“I am already upset and worried but now they are threatening to kill

‘There is absolutely no honour in honour killings.’

William Hague
British Foreign Secretary

me as well,” he said.

He said Ms Parveen’s family had initially agreed to their marriage but later changed their mind after he did not pay them a big enough dowry.

And he shed further light on Ms Parveen’s horrifying last moments.

“Five to six people were hitting her in the head, she was shouting for help, she was screaming but they killed my helpless wife,” he said. “We were in love.”

The incident gained prompt attention from the global media and international human right activists.

The UN High Commissioner for

tHuman Rights Navi Pillay strongly condemned the killing on May 28 and urged Pakistan to take “urgent and strong measures” to put an end to so-called honour killings.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague described the murder as “barbaric” and urged the Pakistani government to fully investigate it.

“I am shocked and appalled by the death of Farzana Parveen: both for the appalling manner of her death, and the unspeakable cruelty and injustice of murdering a woman for exercising her basic right to choose who to love and marry,” Mr Hague said in a statement.

“There is absolutely no honour in honour killings and I urge the government of Pakistan to do all in its power to eradicate this barbaric practice.”

Last year, 869 women died in so-called “honour killings”, according to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Conviction rates are very low due to Pakistan’s blood-money laws which allow kin to “forgive” perpetrators, usually family members in such cases.

– AFP

SYDNEY

Detention centre probe ‘stinks of cover-up’, PNG police

PAPUA New Guinea police have said an investigation into a riot at an Australian detention centre on Manus Island that left an asylum-seeker dead “stinks of a major cover-up”.

Deputy Commissioner Simon Kauba said on May 29 that the findings of the probe, carried out on behalf of the Australian government, “only hampers our on going investigations into the riot” which also left 69 people injured in February.

“Our investigations have been frustrated from day one with a complete lack of cooperation from all involved including [detention centre security firm] G4S employees as well as the asylum-seekers themselves,” Mr Kauba said in a statement.

“In fact the asylum-seekers as well as G4S officials and other service providers refused to give their statements to us and made it known that they preferred to talk only to

Australian lawyers.”

Under Australia’s tough refugee policy, asylum-seekers arriving by boat are sent to detention centres on PNG’s Manus Island or Nauru, a remote Pacific neighbour, for processing and permanent resettlement.

The 107-page review released on May 26 found Iranian asylum-seeker Reza Barati was “brutally beaten” to death in an assault led by a Salvation Army worker.

It also found that PNG police had pushed over the fence and entered the compound before opening fire after G4S, which manages the centre’s security, had left during the riot.

But Mr Kauba said an initial investigation by local police found its officers did not enter the camp before or during the riot, were not involved in the violence and did not injure any asylum-seekers.

Police believe Mr Barati’s death was the result of injuries caused by

four detention centre staff, two PNG locals and two foreigners, he added.

Mr Kauba said PNG officers fired “warning shots into the air from outside the centre” that “helped to quieten the situation”.

This contradicted the review’s findings that police fired a number of shots into residential buildings in

‘Both inquiries are determined to whitewash their respective governments and police authorities.’

Ian Rintoul
Refugee Action Coalition

the centre and that some bullets hit walls about “chest height”.

The police chief said his force’s investigation into whether an asylum-seeker – who was shot in the buttocks – had been injured by one of his officers, was being hampered by a lack of access to the detainees.

“The only way we can confirm this is if the injured man is brought forward and appropriate tests conducted to confirm the nature of the injuries sustained,” Mr Kauba said.

“Otherwise, this whole matter stinks of a major cover-up.”

Australian Immigration Minister Scott Morrison said on May 26 it was up to local police to lay charges over the violence and that the information used to prepare the report was handed over to PNG authorities.

PNG’s Foreign Minister Rimbink Pato said his government had been briefed on the report, but would not initiate any prosecutions until the

police investigation was complete.

“Ministers of the two countries agreed at the last monthly ministerial meeting to consider the recommendations from the two reports and discuss measures to prevent such incidents from happening in the future,” Mr Pato was quoted as telling PNG’s *The National* newspaper.

PNG would consider whether a coronial inquest should be set up after police released their findings, he added.

Australia-based Refugee Action Coalition spokesperson Ian Rintoul said the investigations had “degenerated into farce”.

“Both inquiries are determined to whitewash their respective government and police authorities, while any semblance of independence is trashed,” he said.

According to official Australian figures, Manus Island houses 1273 asylum-seekers while a further 1177 are being held on Nauru. – AFP

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Nay Pyi Taw: No. 10/72, Bo Tauk Htein St, Yang Aung 1 Qtr.

WASHINGTON

Snowden wants to return home to US

FUGITIVE self-proclaimed spy Edward Snowden has said he would like to go back to his homeland, as he defended his massive leak of US intelligence secrets, saying abuses of constitutional rights left him no choice.

“If I could go anywhere in the world, that place would be home,” Mr Snowden said on May 28, almost a year to the day since he revealed a stunning US surveillance dragnet mining data from phones and Internet companies around the world, including Europe.

“From day one, I said I’m doing this to serve my country. Whether amnesty or clemency is a possibility, that’s for the public to decide,” he told NBC in his first interview with US television since the scandal broke in early June last year.

And he sought to defend himself against charges led by the US administration that he is a hacker and a traitor who endangered lives by revealing the extent of the NSA spying program through the British daily *The Guardian*.

“The reality is the situation determined that this needed to be told to the public. You know, the Constitution of the United States has been violated on a massive scale,” he said.

“How can it be said that this harmed the country when all three branches of government have made

reforms as a result?” Mr Snowden asked, looking relaxed and calm during the interview in a Moscow hotel.

But top US officials laughed off the idea of a clemency. Secretary of State John Kerry said the 30-year-old former CIA employee should “man up” and return to face trial.

Mr Snowden also alleged he was not just a low-level contractor working for the CIA, as the White House has repeatedly insisted.

“I was trained as a spy in sort of the traditional sense of the word in that I lived and worked undercover overseas, pretending to work in a job that I’m not, and even being assigned a name that was not mine,” he told *NBC*.

Mr Snowden said he had worked covertly as “a technical expert” for the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency (NSA).

But National Security Advisor Susan Rice disputed his contention, replying “no” when asked by CNN if he had been a highly trained undercover spy.

Mr Snowden however blamed the United States for forcing him into exile in Russia.

“The reality is, I never intended to end up in Russia,” he said in the interview recorded clandestinely last week in Moscow.

“I had a flight booked to Cuba onward to Latin America and I was stopped because the United States



A sticker featuring fugitive US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden, partially reading “asylum”, is seen on the pavement in a Berlin street on May 26. Photo: AFP

government decided to revoke my passport and trap me in Moscow Airport,” Mr Snowden said.

“For a supposedly smart guy, that’s a pretty dumb answer, frankly,” Mr Kerry hit back.

Mr Snowden should do the patriotic thing and return to the US to face espionage charge Mr Kerry added.

“This is a man who has betrayed his country. He should man up and

come back to the US.

“The fact is, he has damaged his country very significantly. I find it sad and disgraceful.”

Mr Snowden was granted asylum by Russia in August 2013 after spending weeks holed up in Moscow’s Sheremetyevo Airport, having flown in from Hong Kong.

He says he cannot return to face trial because of the “extraordinary

charges” laid against him which would bar him from using classified information in his defence.

Mr Snowden said he had had no contact with Russian President Vladimir Putin since he was given an asylum, and denied he was being paid by the Russian government.

And he said he missed his family, colleagues and his work, insisting he was a patriot, still serving the US government.

“Sometimes to do the right thing you have to break a law,” he insisted.

“Being a patriot doesn’t mean prioritising service to government above all else. Being a patriot means knowing when to protect your country, knowing when to protect your constitution,” Mr Snowden added.

“If Mr Snowden wants to come back to the United States today, we’ll have him on a flight today,” Mr Kerry told said.

His temporary asylum expires August 1 and Mr Snowden said, “If the asylum looks like it’s going to run out, then, of course, I would apply for an extension.”

“I may have lost my ability to travel, but I have gained the ability to go to sleep at night, put my head on the pillow and feel comfortable that I have done the right thing even when it was the hard thing. I’m comfortable with that,” Mr Snowden concluded.

BAGHDAD

74 killed in Iraq’s wave of violence

A POST-ELECTION wave of attacks across Iraq, including car bombings in Baghdad and a northern city, killed at least 74 people, officials said on May 29.

The compiled death toll for May 28, with the number rising to 74 after late-night attacks, made it the bloodiest single day in Iraq in more than seven months.

It was the latest in a protracted surge in unrest fuelling fears that the country is slipping back into all-out conflict.

The wave of violence could further destabilise Iraq as political leaders jostle to build alliances and form a government following April 30 elections that left Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in the driver’s seat for a third term in power.

In Baghdad’s deadliest attack, a suicide bomber detonated a vehicle rigged with explosives in the mainly Shiite neighbourhood of Kadhimiyah in north Baghdad, killing at least 16 people and wounding 52, security and medical officials said, on condition of anonymity.

Three other car bombs blew up in the Amin, Sadr City and Jihad districts, costing 20 more lives. Four others were killed in shootings and bombings in and around the capital.

In Mosul, one of the most violent areas of the country, twin car bombs set off by suicide attackers killed 21 people, including 14 soldiers and police, in the west of the city.

Also in Nineveh province, of which Mosul is the capital, two other attacks left two people dead.

No group immediately claimed responsibility, but Sunni militants including those linked to the jihadist Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant often set off coordinated bombings across Baghdad and other major cities.

A spate of other attacks in Kirkuk and Salaheddin provinces, both north of Baghdad, left eight people dead while shelling in the militant-held city of Fal-lujah, a short drive west of Baghdad, killed three more.

IT’S BACK!

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The river workers





TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ZARNI PHYO

MANY people make their living along the banks of the Yangon River. There are the ferry operators, the shipping dock workers, the fishermen. Then there are the divers.

In this photo essay, I chose to highlight this unusual subculture and the struggle of the men who search for things the river has swallowed. Sometimes they are hired to find lost property. Sometimes they dive for buried treasure – old objects made of bronze and other semi-precious materials salvaged from ship wrecks.

On a large project, a diver can often get K5,000,000 to K6,000,000, but the number of days he has to spend diving varies widely, as does the sort of treasure that the polluted waters give up. All the men who do this work range from age 20 to 50. They work the river during the day and return to their homes at night. Diving is a career.

For these photos, I spent two months shooting in locations in many spots along the river in February and March 2014.



Photo captions

- 1. Workers on a sunken ship get ready to dive and strip it of valuables.
- 2. Women walk at Pansodan Jetty in the early morning.
- 3. Workers at the Port Authority use a sander to remove rust from a ship.
- 4. A ferry to Dala passes a cargo ship at night.
- 5. People come to strip parts from boats at a ship graveyard near Dala.
- 6. A diver submerges while working on a wreck in the Bago River.
- 7. A captain strives to save his sinking boat after it collided with a wreck in the Bago River.
- 8. Day labourers prepare dinner on the shores of the Yangon River.
- 9. A shipwreck beached near Tun Tay canal.
- 10. Time runs out for a wrecked boat.
- 11. Day labourers take a rest and watch TV on a ship.
- 12. Labourers carry out maintenance on a fishing boat.
- 13. Workers build a temporary ship boardwalk.



Arts festival to mark World Environment Day



Artist Khin Than Phyu speaks about her work. Photo: Staff

ZON PANN PWINT
zonpann08@gmail.com

TO develop environmental awareness through art, a group of artists, poets and environmentalists will host a festival called Green Future from June 5 to 7, coinciding with World Environment Day, at the Institut Français de Birmanie.

Artists Khin Than Phyu, Yee Yee Myint and Lae Phyu Pyar Myo Myint, together with six other artists, will exhibit paintings, photographs and installations.

Writer and artist Khin Than Phyu has held a Green Future festival every year on World Environment Day since 2011, when she became aware of the impact of deforestation on climate change.

"In 2011, the United Nations declared the International Year of the Forest, which sparked my interest in forest conservation. I started to be more aware of the importance of

environmental conservation through books and the internet. I myself have endured the increasing heat every year. I then started to engage in environmental activities," she said.

"I want to get the message across to people through art that environmental conservation is important. Every year, I try to be alert to messages from the UN and try to share them with visitors to the exhibition through talks," she added.

Khin Than Phyu will speak at the event, as will U Ohn, chair of Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation (FREDA), artist Phyu Mon, cartoonist Aw Pi Kyal and artist and activist Grace Swe Zin Htike.

Khin Than Phyu said she will speak on the themes of "Water for Life" and "The Global Day for the Environment".

"Everyone knows how important water is, but most don't have knowledge about climate change. But the harsh lessons of 2008's Cyclone

Nargis have taught the people to get into the habit of listening to the weather reports and made them fear ultraviolet rays," she said.

She believes art is an effective way of promoting awareness because paintings, photographs and installations not only have entertainment value but also provide information.

"I think paintings on any subjects can attract viewers. Especially, paintings and photographs that depict green trees or green forests can stimulate a love of nature and a passion for growing trees," she said.

The festival is open to the public and entry is free.

On June 5, U Ohn will speak at 1pm and Aw Pi Kyal at 3pm. On June 6, Grace Swe Zin Htike will speak at 10am and Khin Than Phyu at 12pm. Poetry readings by 18 poets will take place at 2:30pm. On June 7, artists Phyu Mon and Khin Than Phyu will speak at 10am and 12pm, followed by a youth discussion at 2:30pm.

What's on

ART

MAY 30-JUNE 8 "It's a Long Way" group show. TS1, between Lanthit Jetty and Kaing Dan No 1 Jetty, Oo-Pa-Sa Street, Seikkan

FILM

JUNE 4 *Voice of Social Change* documentary film premiere about the Polish dissidents who brought down communism in 1989. Opening of related art and photo exhibitions. Welcome speech by Polish Ambassador Jacek Perlin. Pansodan Scene, 144 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 6:30pm

JUNE 15-19 Human Rights, Human Dignity International Film Festival, featuring 15 documentary films, eight short films and four animations. Visit www.hrhdiff.org. Junction Square Cinema, Karmayut, and Waziya Cinema on Bogyoke Aung San Road.

Start times at **Mingalar (1,2)**, **Thwin**, **Shae Shaung (1,2)** and **Nay Pyi Taw** cinemas are 10am, noon, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm and 8pm.

Start times at **Junction Square** and **Maw Tin** are 10am, 1pm and 4pm daily and 7pm and 9:30pm on Friday and Saturday.

Start times at **Mingalar San Pyan** are 10am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm.

Nay Pyi Taw Cinema, near Sule Pagoda *Godzilla 3D*. Directed by Gareth Edwards. The infamous monster fights evil creatures who threaten human existence.

Mingalar 2 Cinema, at Dagon Center 2, Myae Ni Gone, Sanchaung *Make Me Shudder 2 3D*. Directed by Poj Apirut. A Thai horror-comedy involving a gang of university students and paranormal events.

Shae Shaung Cinema 1, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada

JUNE 2 - 8

Got an event?
List it in What's On!
Email: whatsonmt@gmail.com

X-Men: Days of Future Past 3D. Directed by Bryan Singer. Wolverine is sent to the past in a desperate effort to change history and prevent the end for both humans and mutants.

Shae Shaung Cinema 2, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada
Make Me Shudder 2 3D.

Junction Square Cineplex, Kamaryut *The Amazing Spider Man 2 3D*. Directed by Mark Webb. Peter Parker faces Electro and Harry Osborn returns. *Godzilla 3D*.

Junction Maw Tin Cineplex, Lanmadaw *Godzilla 3D*.

Mingalar San Pyan Cineplex, Phone Gyi Street and Anavrahta, Lanmadaw *Godzilla 3D*.
X-Men: Days of Future Past 3D.

MUSIC

JUNE 2 Live blues. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 8:30-11:30pm

MISC

JUNE 3 Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada, 7pm-late

JUNE 5 Tipsy Travel Talk Thursdays. Discuss alternative travel in Myanmar over drinks. Off the Beaten Track Café, Kandawgyi Oo Yin Kabar, Kandawgyi Park, Mingalar Taung Nyunt

JUNE 5-7 Green Future art & environment festival to celebrate World Environment Day. See full program online. Institut Français de Birmanie, 340 Pyay Road, Sanchaung



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Pressing questions with Shwe Zan Myo Hein

The RUN YGN clothing shop owner dishes on hip-hop and fashion

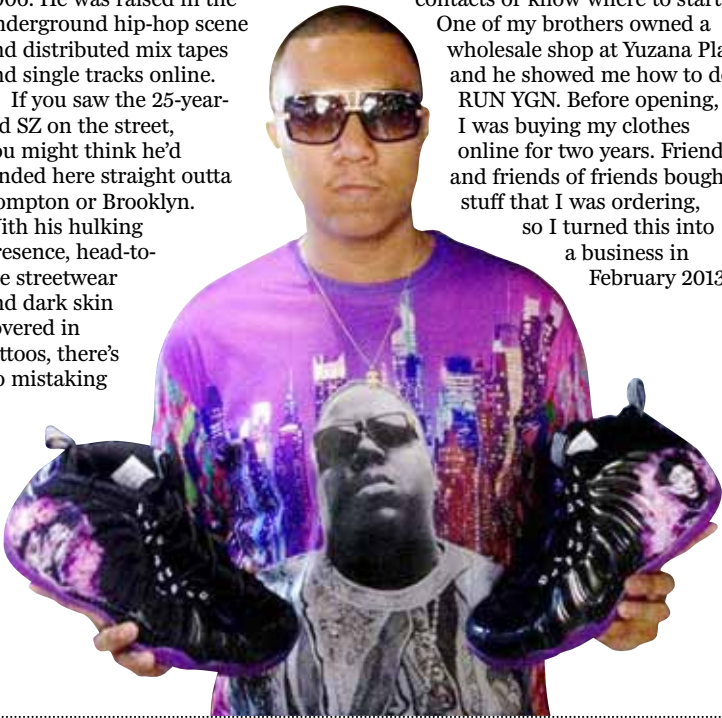
LWIN MAR HTUN

lwinmarhtun.mcm@gmail.com

LOCAL Hip Hop musician Shwe Zan Myo Hein (also known as SZ) opened the hip-hop fashion store RUN YGN on February 14, 2013, and since then the brand has become very popular with young hip-hoppers.

When he was 14, SZ became interested in hip-hop music, and it's become a passion and a way of life. Even though his family didn't want him to pursue a musician's life, against their wishes he started writing and performing in 2006. He was raised in the underground hip-hop scene and distributed mix tapes and single tracks online.

If you saw the 25-year-old SZ on the street, you might think he'd landed here straight outta Compton or Brooklyn. With his hulking presence, head-to-toe streetwear and dark skin covered in tattoos, there's no mistaking



what kind of music he's crazy for. He's famous for his old school rap style; You won't see love songs on his 2012 album *Phyit Chin Yin Phyit Aung Loke (Do What You Want)*.

The Myanmar Times sat down with SZ recently to discuss his transition from artist to entrepreneur.

How did you go from hip-hop artist to fashion-shop owner?

As a teenager, I was interested in fashion and always dressed well. I prepare my outfits to suit the place. So I already had an idea to open a hip-hop fashion shop when I started doing music, but I didn't have any contacts or know where to start.

One of my brothers owned a wholesale shop at Yuzana Plaza and he showed me how to do RUN YGN. Before opening, I was buying my clothes online for two years. Friends and friends of friends bought stuff that I was ordering, so I turned this into a business in February 2013.



Check it. Photo: Supplied

How is business?

When I opened this shop, there were no hip-hop fashion shops. I was lucky. Even though it's located between apartment buildings, I've got regular customers. I'm not afraid of any challenge because this business is a first in Myanmar. Lots of young people want to launch this kind of shop, but they need to think about whether they can do it long-term and how to improve their brand, and so on.

What do you think of the Myanmar fashion scene?

I don't want to judge other people because that's their right and they can wear anything they would like to. For me, when the people see me they can see I'm a rapper. I like that kind of perfect fashion. No need to overdo it, just need to match within a style.

What items do your customers want?

Our shop brand RUN YGN logo shirt is what most customer want, and that item is sold out. Now we've ordered more shirts. Our brand shirts are a

mix of Myanmar cultural designs and a logo sign. So, people can see our shirt comes from Myanmar and it's not a copy.

Where are the clothes from? How many times you go abroad to shop?

Many countries have this kind of logo RUN LA, RUN BKK and so on. So I wanted to make one in Yangon also. I thought of the idea for our brand shirt and my friend made the design and we produced them in China. Other hip-hop fashions come from abroad (Bangkok and Europe) and I go abroad once a month to shop.

Are you still doing music?

Yes, I can't live without hip-hop. Even if I can't write new songs, I'm always checking who is popular, updates from local and foreign artists. All my time is going into the shop, and I'm planning to open another RUN YGN store in Yangon. I'm not stopping music or this shop because I love hip-hop. I'll always do these two things, until the end of my life. I'm happy to do both.

On the Yangon music scene, who or what are you excited about?

On the hip-hop scene, there are a few really good new generation artists. In the mainstream, real hip-hop is rarely seen on stage, and that's a problem depending on show organisers, producers and audiences. As a fan, I listened to both local and foreign artists. Nowadays, audiences listen only to local hip-hop, and people follow and copy that style. Some musicians that say they are hip-hop aren't really. It's more like R&B.

As a hip-hop artist, who are your influences?

There's too many. I can't name them all. But one thing is for sure: I don't like white rappers. My favourites are only black guys. Meek Mill is my idol, and I opened RUN YGN inspired by his thinking and lifestyle. When I like an artist, I don't only listen to their music. I research their background, how they grew up, what they think, what they wear, all of it.

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BEIJING



Tea and wine have more in common than you'd think, according to a newly opened exhibition in Beijing. Photo: AFP/Wang Zhao

The leaf and the grape, not so distant cousins?

SEBASTIEN BLANC

ONE is alcoholic and the other teetotal, but wine and tea are not such remote relatives in their rituals and cultivation, according to a newly opened exhibition in Beijing.

They are both symbols of conviviality and lifestyle, have been consumed for thousands of years and come from "trees of life" – the bush and the vine – that have been revered and mythologised in different cultures for millennia.

"Tea was a medicine at first and it was saved by Buddhism. And the wine of antiquity would have disappeared if it wasn't for Christianity," said Jean-Paul Desroches, curator of the *Tea and Wine: A Shared Passion* exhibition at the Yishu 8 gallery, on the site of Beijing's former Sino-French University.

He based the exhibition on a long-forgotten Tang dynasty Chinese text, the *Chajiu lun* or "dialogue of tea and wine".

tea, which was supported by the Buddhists and was a symbol of serenity.

"Tea and wine have a totally parallel history," he said.

"The main tools of tea are bowls, and they only exist through an art form that uses fire, ceramics. Wine needs tools of its own to be savoured and they only exist through an art form that uses fire, glass or crystal."

Teas come in multiple colours – red, green, yellow, black, white – as do wines, and the characteristics of a vineyard are as essential to the taste of a wine as those of a garden to tea.

Similarly connoisseurs deploy a language of fruits, tannins and finishes when they compare different varieties. And just as white wine is generally drunk earlier than a red, green tea is consumed earlier than fermented tea.

Wine, though, came of age around the eastern Mediterranean, while southern China claims to be the birthplace of tea.

There, in Yunnan province, Li Minguo grows *puer*, one of the "grand crus" of tea.

A culture as rich as those surrounding wine in Europe has grown up in the mountains abutting the Mekong basin, she said.

"Good wine and good *puer* tea both need a special environment, rich in biodiversity," she said.

"And when quality is part of the mix, they can be preserved, aged and classed

according to their vintages. In that they are very similar."

Moreover, she said, "*Puer* tea can also be compared to wine in that it grows on large trees. Their roots are very deep and their branches very old."

As with great Bordeaux of exceptional vintages, the price of old *puer* tea rises with time and has soared at auctions in China.

Wine in France and tea in China "both have 2000 years of history," said Sophie Kessler, who runs the Chateau Calissanne in the hills of Aix-en-Provence in France and came to Beijing to promote it.

Among the artefacts at the exhibition, which opened earlier this month, is a ceramic pillow dating back to the Northern Song dynasty of 960-1127.

It bears the inscription, "Nothing beats wine for dispelling fear, but a drink of tea will make your mind clear."

WASHINGTON

Iconic US author, poet Maya Angelou dies at 86

ROBERT MACPHERSON

MAYA Angelou, the beloved African-American author and civil rights activist renowned for a searing memoir charting her childhood in the racially segregated South, died Wednesday. She was 86.

Angelou is best known for the first installment of her memoirs *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the first non-fiction bestseller by an African-American woman.

A friend of slain civil rights hero Martin Luther King, she was widely respected in the United States and abroad as a strong voice for both black people and women.

Her son Guy Johnson said his mother "passed quietly in her home" in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and expressed thanks that "her ascension was not belaboured by a loss of acuity or comprehension".

"She lived a life as a teacher, activist, artist and human being. She was a warrior for equality, tolerance and peace," he said.

President Barack Obama led the tributes, hailing Angelou as "one of the brightest lights of our time – a brilliant writer, a fierce friend and a truly phenomenal woman".

Former President Bill Clinton, who invited Angelou to give a reading at his 1993 inauguration, said America had "lost a national treasure".

"The poems and stories she wrote and read to us in her commanding voice were gifts of wisdom and wit, courage and grace," Clinton said in a statement.

Angelou's close friend television icon Oprah Winfrey spoke of Angelou's "unshakeable calm, confidence and fierce grace".

"She will always be the rainbow in my clouds," Winfrey said.

Angelou had reportedly been in poor health and had cancelled a scheduled appearance in Texas where she was to have accepted an honour later this week.



In this April 18, 2008 file photo, Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Rodham Clinton (right) holds the hand of Dr Maya Angelou during a conversation in front of an audience at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC Photo: AFP

Finding her voice

"Listen to yourself and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God," she wrote in what would become her last message on her @DrMayaAngelou Twitter account, posted on May 23.

Born Marguerite Annie Johnson on April 4, 1928, in Saint Louis, Missouri, Angelou experienced hardship from an early age – her parents' breakup, racial segregation and, at the age of seven or eight, rape at the hands of her mother's boyfriend.

The traumatic impact of the sexual assault and its aftermath – her attacker was murdered – saw Angelou retreat into a self-imposed silence for six years, a period where she first began writing.

"I thought, my voice killed him; I killed that man, because I told his name. And then I thought I would never speak again, because my voice would kill anyone," she wrote.

She moved to San Francisco during World War II to study dance and acting, where she also held down a number of odd jobs –

including a stint as the city's first black female cable car conductor – to support herself and a baby son.

In the early 1950s she briefly married a Greek sailor named Anastasios Angelopoulos. She tweaked his surname to come up with her own professional name, which she first used as a calypso dancer.

The same decade found Angelou on the stage, performing in off-Broadway theater and in a touring production of *Porgy and Bess*. At the same time she became increasingly involved in the nascent civil rights movement, getting to know many of its key figures.

Living in Africa

In the 1960s she travelled abroad, spending much of that tumultuous decade in Egypt and Ghana.

Upon returning to the United States, the African-American author James Baldwin encouraged her to put pen to paper with her remarkable life story – encouragement that led to the publication of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which covered the first 17 years of her life.

A small library of books and poems would follow, as well as a screenplay (the 1972 Swedish-American drama *Georgia, Georgia*) and an Emmy-nominated turn on the breakthrough US television miniseries *Roots* in 1977.

Angelou's recording of one of her most famous poems, *On the Pulse of the Morning*, at Clinton's 1993 presidential inauguration went on to win a Grammy award.

Angelou made her debut as a director with the 1998 film *Down in the Delta*, about a young big city drug addict dispatched to the ancestral home in rural Mississippi where she discovers her family roots.

She also published cookbooks and, in 1996, narrated a Sesame Street children's film titled *Elmo Saves Christmas*.

Barack Obama presented Angelou with the nation's highest civilian honour, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in 2011. – AFP



Tea and wine: better with age. Photo: AFP/Wang Zhao

Written in ink brush more than 1000 years ago by a certain Wang Fu, it was among the manuscripts discovered in the early 20th century in the caves of Dunhuang, long a stop on the Silk Road.

Four copies are preserved at France's national library and two at the British Library.

Wang Fu imagined a conversation between tea and wine, each drink boasting of its merits and mocking the other, until a third beverage joins in.

Water tells them that all living things need it, and without it, they would be nothing, ending the argument.

'Totally parallel history'

It is an "ancient Chinese contest", explains Desroches, between "wine, which was supported by scholars and was a symbol of intoxication, including poetic intoxication, and



IN PICTURES

A child plays with a hula hoop during Open Day at the British International School Yangon on May 24. Photo: Thiri Lu



WASHINGTON
Bill Murray’s deadpan marriage advice
A young American’s bachelor party got unexpected sage advice from a last-minute guest: comic actor Bill Murray.

Murray, who lives in Charleston, SC, was dining with friends in the city over the weekend when a member of a separate group at the restaurant invited the actor to say something to the soon-to-be groom.

After first declining, a local newspaper reported, Murray – star of films such as Caddyshack and Lost in Translation – obliged with some smiles for the groom, whom he did not know.

“You know how they say funerals are for the dead, not for the living?” Murray asked on video obtained by deadspin.com. “Bachelor parties are not for the groom, they’re for the unmarried.”

After some laughs from the crowd of about 20 young men from Boston, Murray, a twice-married father of six, was asked how men can know they are with the right partner.

“If you have someone that you think is the one ... take that person and travel around the world. Buy a plane ticket for the two of you to travel all around the world and go to places that are hard to go to and hard to get out of,” he said.

“And ... when you land at JFK, and you’re still in love with that person, get married at the airport.”



LONDON
I’m ‘touchy-feely’, Rolf Harris tells UK sex assault trial
Australian entertainer Rolf Harris admitted being a “touchy-feely” person and said he was “sickened” by his affair with a teenage friend of his daughter, as he started giving evidence Tuesday in his sexual assault trial in London.

The 84-year-old artist said the teenager had been “flirtatious and coquettish” with him.

Taking the witness stand at Southwark Crown Court, Harris sang part of his hit “Jake the Peg”.

Harris is accused of 12 counts of indecent assault against four female complainants, aged from seven or eight to 19, between 1968 and 1986.

Seven of the counts relate to his daughter’s friend, who claims Harris assaulted her over several years, dating back to when she was 13 and coming out of a shower during a trip to Hawaii.

But the television presenter insisted their relationship only began when she was an adult.

He said she was 18 when they had their first intimate encounter and she was staying at his house. He said she seemed to “invite” him by shaking off the duvet to reveal her bare legs.

LONDON
Tracey Emin’s unmade bed to fetch £1 million

Tracey Emin’s unmade bed artfully littered with condoms, cigarette packs and underwear is expected to fetch around £1 million (US\$1.7 million) at auction.

“My Bed” cemented Emin’s notoriety when it was shortlisted for the 1999 Turner Prize, although the British artist lost out to future Oscar winner Steve McQueen, who directed 12 Years a Slave.

The bed was later bought by wealthy art dealer Charles Saatchi, who is selling it at Christie’s auction house in London on July 1.

It has been priced at between £800,000 (US\$1.3 million) and £1.2 million (\$2 million). All proceeds from the sale will help subsidise free entry at the Saatchi Gallery in London and its free education programme for schools.

Emin was a leading light of the group dubbed the Young British Artists, along with Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas.



LONDON
Horror legend Christopher Lee, 92, releases metal album
Horror film legend Christopher Lee, who turned 92 on May 27, is celebrating the milestone by releasing a heavy rock mini-album entitled *Metal Knight*.

The *Dracula* actor is a long-time devotee of heavy metal – a genre partly inspired by the sort of horror films he starred in – and has already several album releases under his belt.

“I associate heavy metal with fantasy because of the tremendous power that the music delivers,” said Lee, who possesses a booming, classically-trained bass voice.

Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi presented the *Lord of the Rings* star with the Spirit of Metal prize at the Golden Gods Awards in 2010 for his services to metal music.

In December, he became the oldest performer ever to place in the US Billboard singles chart with his record “Jingle Hell”.

Metal Knight, to be released on June 2, features four tracks and three alternative edits.

Guests arrive at the World Music Awards at Monte Carlo Sporting Club on May 27 in Monaco. 1. Israeli musician Asaf Avidan. 2. Belgian singer-songwriter Stromae 3. Puerto Rican pop star Ricky Martin 4. Israeli-born French singer-songwriter Tal. Photos: AFP/Valery Hache

Carving for gold

Yangon to host culinary art competition

NANDAR AUNG
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BREAKING into the international big time could be worth US\$1000 for a local chef. That’s the top prize in the Myanmar Culinary Art Challenge at Yangon’s Myanmar Convention Centre between June 18 and 20.

The competition is organised by Bangkok Exhibition Services (BES) and arranged locally by the Myanmar Chefs’ Association.

“Two years ago, the idea that this international event could come to Myanmar was just a dream. In this competition you can get lots of experience by competing with other international chefs,” said Oliver E Soe Thet, a 53-year-old German who has been working in Myanmar as a chef since 1995, and is also co-organiser and chair of the Myanmar Chefs’ Association.

“We want to prove that Myanmar chefs can work to international standards and to teach them to judge international competitions,” he added. Myanmar chefs can compete free of charge, and 100 have already registered. Chefs need to compete in cooking, pastry and also carving.

Certificates for gold, silver and bronze and diplomas will be awarded, and five participants will be selected to compete in the Pattaya Culinary City Cup 2014 on August 18 by passing classes in hot and pastry cooking.

Also on the horizon are the Myanmar National Barista Championship (MNBC) and the AHRA-ASEAN Bartenders’



Pumpkin: not just for jack-o-lanterns. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Competition on June 18 to 20, as well as a food safety seminar presented by the Food Science & Technology Association Myanmar. That will be the first-ever premium international food and hospitality trade event to take place in Myanmar.

An international exhibition for food and drink, hotels, restaurants, bakery and food service, equipment supplies and services will also take place.

“This is the first time in Myanmar. There will be more than 250 exhibitors from 29 countries, including 20 percent from Myanmar. About 30pc of the exhibits will concern hotels, and the rest will be food and drink products,” said Khin Maung Htun, vice chair of the Myanmar Restaurant Association. More information and registration details can be found at www.foodandhotelmyanmar.com.

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Drawing out the artist in you

A multi-media artist offers art and culinary classes for the rest of us

BRIDGET DI CERTO
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BEENA Shah knows a thing or two about cooking. And drawing. And ceramics. And sand painting.

She bubbles over with artistic talent that, lucky for the rest of us, she's more than willing to share.

Professionally trained in multiple media, Ms Shah, an India native, began teaching cooking and art classes in Yangon in 2010, having moved to the city with her husband 12 years ago.

"My mother was also an artist," Ms Shah said, explaining her inclination toward the arts. Her CV is a long list of higher degrees and international training with masters of the arts. Having lived abroad in Tanzania and Vietnam before arriving in Myanmar, Ms Shah has developed a truly multicultural flair in her art and cooking.

Now she teaches art and cooking classes in her beautiful apartment that overlooks Shwedagon Pagoda. Her students are "between 3 and 60 years old", she said with a smile.

"When I first [came to Yangon] it was very difficult to get the materials I needed," she said. She recounted having to smuggle art supplies into the country from India and Thailand. "But now I can get everything here."

Ms Shah teaches all levels of class, from very beginners to A-level candidates about to sit exams, and a variety of media, including drawing, acrylic painting, water colours, ceramics and sand.

"Any kind of art you want to do, you can do it here," she said. She flicked through a student's scrap book - an absolute beginner who progressed from hesitant



Beena Shah, master of arts. Photo: Bridget di Certo

first sketches to sophisticated illustration.

"Everyone starts with shading, and you practise and then can start drawing," she said.

The classes are small, and Ms Shah provides all the materials necessary for the work. She is a patient and encouraging teacher, very proud of her students' achievements. Classes are organised on a flexible schedule and held inside her apartment conveniently located at Shwegondaing Junction.

In addition to art classes, Ms Shah teaches twice weekly cooking classes.

The cuisine is Indian, with some Burmese dishes, and strictly vegetarian. At each class, she demonstrates a six-course set menu with a starter, dip, soup, salad, entree, bread and, often,

a dessert. She provides a recipe guide for each dish.

All of the ingredients used in the cooking she finds in local markets. Ms Shah makes everything including cottage cheese, yoghurt, chilli paste and roasted cardamom powder herself, and she shows students how they can make ingredients that most expats would purchase ready-made in a store.

The cooking classes last a little over an hour, with students participating in the cooking and - most importantly - the eating of the finished products.

During the class I attended, alongside a restaurant owner and an NGO worker, we learned how to make roti - an Indian flat bread - from flour, milk and water and how to make cottage cheese by heating milk and adding vinegar. The menu also featured a classic dhal and a quick-and-easy recipe for cardamom ice-cream.

Ms Shah's calm and straightforward teaching manner makes the miraculous seem possible for her students, who range from working mothers to single expats to other restaurant owners hoping to learn the secrets of her culinary flair.

Ms Shah's philosophy is, "If people like to learn, they can learn anything."

After just a month, or about eight classes of art or cooking lessons, beginner students will have mastered the basics, Ms Shah said.

Classes cost K10,000 and include all the materials necessary for art and cooking. Art students keep their finished works and cooking students are treated to one of the best Indian meals available in Yangon.

For enquiries contact beena.shah.1993@gmail.com

Brazil seizes spoiled food from World Cup hotels

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazilian health officials have raided hotels that will host visiting World Cup teams, including England and Italy, and confiscated expired food such as shrimp and salmon from their kitchens.

"The checks were carried out as part of our drive to see food safety codes enforced as part of a round of inspections being undertaken given the close proximity of the World Cup," Fabio Domingos, head of inspections at Rio de Janeiro state consumer protection agency Procon, told AFP last week.

Teams are due to begin arriving next week for the World Cup, which kicks off on June 12. About 600,000 foreign fans and 3.1 million Brazilians are also expected to descend on the 12 host cities.

Procon said its inspectors had found 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of expired shrimp, salmon, margarine and pasta at the Hotel Portobello, which will house the Italian delegation in Mangaratiba just west of Rio.

Domingos said the shrimp had expired in early April.

The inspectors also removed another 24kg of food that had no date labelling.

An inspection at the Royal Tulip Hotel in Rio, where England will stay,



How old is that sausage anyways?

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

uncovered some 2kg of out-of-date salmon, butter and ham.

A further inspection saw 20kg of food junked at Rio's Sheraton Hotel.

Among items dumped at the swanky establishment which will host four World Cup teams - reigning champions Spain, Belgium, Argentina and Ecuador - were 1.4kg of foie gras.

Domingos said care was taken to ensure the food thrown away was disposed of properly.

"The products found are immediately doused in detergent and other chemical products so they cannot be re-utilised," he told AFP.

Procon said other hotels would be checked as "teams and fans are all consumers, and we are acting for their benefit".

It said hotels must tell government officials why they have out-of-date food on the premises within 15 days or face a fine.

Inspectors also checked Rio's Hotel Caesar Park, where Holland's squad will be based, but found nothing amiss in its kitchen.

Procon also visited restaurants, bakeries and shops as part of its crackdown and has cited eight establishments so far for irregularities which saw 218kg of food thrown away.

Many of the 32 teams competing at the World Cup will bring their own food, and some will even have their own chefs.

Procon said customs at airports would monitor what food was imported as well as its quality.

'The products found are immediately doused in detergent.'

Fabio Domingos

Head of Inspections, Procon

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

JUNE 2 - 8, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



Due to your pessimism, you will have no way to provide the business world with a glimpse of the future. See yourself the way you want to be - with new, desirable behaviour patterns replacing the old bad habits. Enrich your everyday experiences by seeing for yourself. Brainstorm and you may just get a brainwave.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



Your own hypersensitive psyche is your greatest enemy. Resist your inclination to retreat from reality. Your superior intuition and creative vision may become strong, and you will recognise your own integrity. Going with the flow is more comfortable than fighting the current, but you won't get toward your goals this way.

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19



Acting on inspiration, you often throw yourself into new ventures without fully examining the risks involved. There will be battles on your way to the goal. By forcing yourself to face new and frightening challenges, you should push yourself to be mindful and form good habits. Learn to be clever in action and communication.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20



Split-second decision-making isn't good for business, but you should speed up your commercial action plan. You tend to be obsessed by emotional tension at the same time because you're stubborn. Communication could face trouble. You can't always trust close partners in a joint venture, and you might feel disappointed in yourself.

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



You cannot stop feeling drugged and sleepy during the day, and you might lose trust in your conscience. You should come up with an alternative. Remind yourself that confidence comes from small, step-by-step successes. A little stress of responsibility can be stimulating and motivating. Get rid of the source of the tension and think simply.

CANCER | June 21 - July 22



Rate others as you think they would rate themselves, and rate yourself as you think others would rate you. You're in a healthy and positive state of mind and social favours will come to you. Listen to the tone of voice, gestures, body language and emotions of others to discover your own way of thinking about how to get ahead. Empathy is essential.

LEO | July 23 - Aug 22



Being confident is one of the keys to getting what you want in life. You will be alert and ready to tackle any project. Your mental strength will motivate you to act with a brave spirit. Pay attention to what others are saying all the time to build balance and trust in all relationships. Emotional doubt is to let things fall apart before understanding.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sept 22



As you brainstorm, don't expect every idea to be useful and practical, but think of the many ways you can create change. You must believe you have the power to create the success you want because the belief will give you the power. Know that constructive agreement is necessary to get mutual understanding. Otherwise small doubts will set fires all the time.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

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LIBRA | Sept 23 - Oct 22



Creativity can solve almost any problem, but the creative act of defeating a bad habit by originality is the best. Bad habits are a dirty poison that must be rid of as soon as possible. Start with a refreshed mind and substitute the old with optimism and ideas. Critique yourself and bring up your emotional level and relationship standards.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



You may prefer to lurk behind the scenes where you can rule from the intuitive realm. You are sure to be entrepreneurial in drive and dedication, but you seek not to expose yourself in your quest for success. Hidden chances and opportunities may occur wonderfully, and you must be courageous to make the right risk for prosperity. Don't be stupid for greed.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



Discover how many changes you can make in what you see. Know that belief is neither logical nor quantifiable. It is emotional and even spiritual. Your belief must be communicated through your expectations. So be very watchful about the thoughts you think because what you send out is going to influence what you can get done with other people.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



Golden experiences may open your lucky door, and your mind should be calm and strong to show your true identity and morale. Trust is built gradually, and balance is a must to maintain your pleasant nature and an optimal environment. Otherwise people will complain. Make your history beautiful and remarkable by giving friendships priority.

A taste of tapas

food

Conjure the Mediterranean with small dishes of sausages and beans

VEGETARIAN TAPAS-STYLE BEANS

Serves 6

- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tin red kidney beans
- 3 onions
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- ¼ tsp sweet paprika
- 4 fried small chillies
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Handful coriander leaves

Prepare the tomatoes and cut them into small pieces. Slice the onions.

Drain the beans and wash them with water. Drain well.

Add the oil to the frying pan and heat on high, and fry the onions until they become transparent. Add the cumin and garlic. When the aroma of the garlic comes out, add the chillies and sweet paprika and fry for one minute.

Add the tomatoes to the pan and ¼ cup of water. Bring to a boil. Then turn down the heat and simmer 20 minutes. Add the beans. Simmer 5 minutes more.

Add salt to taste. Garnish with parsley and serve.

PHYO ARBIDANS
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N Sydney, I loved to dine at tapas bars and indulge in small dishes of sausages and tomato sauce. The choice of sausage in Yangon is very limited, and I haven't seen chorizo – which would be nice in this week's recipe – at any market.

But, I found some European sausages and some local premium sausages. That'll do. Serve this dish with rice or tortillas for a yummy meal.

In the recipe, you could substitute local *pae ka ti par* beans for the kidney beans. However, you would need to soak the beans overnight in water and boil them. You can get dried *pae ka ti par* at the supermarket. Some wet markets sell already boiled ones by weight. They are wider and flatter than kidney beans.

I have also made a vegetarian version with different spices. Pork and fennel seeds are good match. Vegetable dishes need something more spark, so I have used cumin seeds. Enjoy.



TAPAS-STYLE SAUSAGE, BEANS AND TOMATOES
Serves 6

- 200g smoked pork sausages
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tin red kidney beans
- 3 onions
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp thymes leaves, fresh or dried
- ¼ tsp sweet paprika
- 2 red small chillies
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Handful parsley leaves

Pat dry the sausages with kitchen paper. Poke them with a fork gently.

Prepare the tomatoes and cut them into small pieces. Slice the onions. Halve the chillies and discard the seeds.

Drain the beans and wash them with water. Drain well.

Add the oil to the frying pan and heat on high, then fry the onions until they become transparent. Add the fennel seeds, garlic and chillies. When the aroma of the garlic comes out, add the sweet paprika and fry for one minute.

Add the tomatoes to the pan and ¼ cup of water. Bring to a boil. Then turn down the heat and simmer 20 minutes. Add the sausages and thyme and simmer 5 minutes more. Add the beans. Simmer 5 minutes more.

Add salt to taste. Garnish with parsley and serve.



Photo: Zarni Phyo

Restaurant Review



Servers “flame da prawns” at your table. Photo: Zarni Phyo



Manhattan Fish Market
Ground floor, MMG tower,
44/56 Kannar Road, Botahtaung,
Yangon
Open 10am-11pm

Restaurant Rating
★★★★★

Food	6
Beverage	7
Service	7
Value for money	6
X-factor	7

Fish 'n' kitsch comes to town

WHITNEY LIGHT
light.whitney@gmail.com

TALKING about the recently opened Manhattan Fish Market – the 50-plus restaurant chain's first Myanmar franchise – the question on many people's minds seems to be, “Why ‘Manhattan’?”

Although the Malaysian entrepreneurs behind it claim that the recipes and atmosphere are inspired by New York's old Fulton Fish Market, the menu and dining experience is more suburban family diner than most establishments in that historic district.

Times Square is a better reference point – a fun, kitschy homage that's built on artifice. Inside the restaurant there are faux New York street signs. The high-ceilinged, air-conditioned space is airy and noisy with the din of music, grills and chatter. Servers wear uniform T-shirts that say “licence to flame” – a reference to the restaurant's novelty aspect, which is an at-the-table blow-torch finish on the Manhattan Flaming Prawns.

With its modern digs and large windows facing the Strand, the Fish Market is a comfortable place for casual lunches and dinners, hearty portion sizes and greasy fingers. On a recent holiday the place was hopping with both young couples and families.

The fish seems mostly to be cooked from frozen and pre-prepared. A simple plate of fish and chips (dory fish, two pieces for K5800) was edible but on the soggy and oily side. The grilled salmon on a bed of potatoes, onions and celery (K9000) was only slightly overdone, but the potatoes were coated in a sticky sweet barbecue sauce.

A starter of garlic herb mussels (enough to share, K5800) delivered succulent-enough seafood drowned in an overly thick sauce made creamy by unidentifiable means. The accompanying “baguette” had more in common with puff pastry and tasted of having been deep-fried.

On the brighter side, the salads are prepared with crisp leaves and the caesar (K3800) was as good as one could hope for from a bottled dressing. The signature citrus-mint smoothie (K1500) is a refreshing, subtly sweet icy shake with plenty of fresh mint, and the menu lists many more tantalizing blender drinks and desserts. No alcohol is available, though; perhaps it's Prohibition.

The flavours aren't bright or bold, and the batter isn't crisp. Still, you won't find anything terribly unsatisfying here. Like the tourist traps of Manhattan, you'll either love it or avoid it entirely.



Mya Myo Chel, Khine Thazin Aung and Seinn Witt Yee



Marie Ditlevsen

Myanmar Consolidated Media staff party

MCM's Mandalay staff party was held at the Rising Venus Hotel on May 24. Stuart Alan Becker, Mandalay Bureau Chief, hosted the party and our CEO, Wendy Madrigal, editors and managers from Yangon also joined the party. The celebrations included an exciting lucky draw event.



Big prize winner



Lwin Kyawt Kyawt San



Piet Schutter



Aung Moe and Han Sein



Kyaw Zin Than



Phyo Wai Kyaw and Sann Oo



Stuart and Yada



Naing Zaw Myo and Mounng Kee Aung

Business Support Services Fair

On May 24, the SME Center, the Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association and GIZ hosted a one-day business fair at the Co-operative Business Center. Around 20 organisations presented their services to the local SMEs that visited their booths and attended presentations.



Kathy Oo and Ju Ju



Marketing team



Kellie



Trixie



Pyae Pyae



Garrett



Lin Htet Aung



Newsroom team



Dorothy Guyot

Moe Myanmar Language Centre opening

When in Myanmar, speak in Myanmar. And one always learns faster with the smile and enthusiasm of a great teacher. On May 25, Moe Chit celebrated the opening of her Myanmar Language Centre, which provides individual and group lessons for all levels. Saya John Okell, author of the course Burmese by Ear, was the guest of honour.



Min Thu, Hamza and Ryan

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John Okell and Moe Chit



Andreas



Jesse



Photos:
ima/Emmanuel Maillard
imaphotodesign@gmail.com

Pop-up house party and reggae night

Same-same Saturday party in Yangon but different? An exclusive pop-up house party took place in a villa on Parami Road while the wooden terrace of Kandawgyi Park transformed for the night into an open-air dance floor.



Min Nyi Tun, Sandar Win, Sandar Mya Tunt



Abdelrahman Hassan, Katie O'Dwyer and Raul Torres Branco



The ambassador's staff

HE Ambassador of Brazil



Daw Khin Aye, Daw Win Win Ye and Daw Nang Sein Sein

ALANA Shoe Paradise opening

ALANA Shoe Paradise opened its second outlet on May 25 at the Sky Walk shopping mall in Mandalay. Customers received a 15 percent discount on all items until May 30. Over 30 customers attended the event. Actress Aye Myat Thu, singer Connie and many famous models performed a show while wearing Taiwan-brand ALANA shoes just outside the shop.



Aye Myat Thu



Ko Sann Htut and Ma Zin Min

Brazilian Film Festival opening

Organised by the Embassy of Brazil in Yangon, the second edition of the Brazilian Film Festival kicked off on May 29. A selection of six movies were screened free of charge over four days at Nay Pyi Taw Cinema.





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DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
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	16:45	17:45	

NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
FMI A2	1,2,3,4,5	8:50	9:50	
FMI A2	6	10:00	11:00	
FMI B2	1,2,3,4,5	13:00	14:00	
FMI A2	7	17:00	18:00	
Y5 778	1,2,3,4,6	17:30	18:10	
FMI C2	1,2,3,4,5	18:05	19:05	

YANGON TO MANDALAY				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 233	1,6	6:00	7:25	
YJ 211	5,7	6:00	7:25	
YJ 201	2,3,4	6:00	7:25	
K7 222	Daily	6:30	8:40	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	8:30	
Y5 234	Daily	6:15	7:30	
6T 401	Daily	6:20	8:25	
W9 201	Daily	7:30	8:55	
K7 266	Daily	8:00	10:05	
K7 642	Daily	8:30	12:20	
8M 6603	2,4,7	9:00	10:10	
K7 844	Daily	11:00	14:10	
YH 727	1	11:00	13:10	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	13:10	
YH 729	4,6	11:00	14:00	
YH 729	2	11:00	14:00	
W9 251	2,5	11:15	12:40	
K7 226	2,4,6	13:00	14:25	
6T 501	Daily	14:30	16:30	
YH 731	2,6	14:30	16:40	
W9 129	Daily	15:00	16:55	

MANDALAY TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 918	4	7:50	10:40	
Y5 233	Daily	8:10	9:25	
YH 918	Daily	8:30	10:25	
6T 402	Daily	8:45	10:45	
W9 201	Daily	9:10	11:05	
W9 144	Daily	9:20	10:45	
Y5 132	3,5,6,7	9:30	10:30	
K7 267	Daily	10:20	12:25	
K7 823	2,4,7	11:25	14:25	
K7 643	Daily	12:35	16:25	

YJ 203	2	13:55	15:20
YJ 235	6	15:20	16:45
YJ 235	1	15:45	17:10
W9 120	1,3,6	16:30	17:55
YH 728	1	16:30	17:55
YH 732	2,6	16:40	18:45
K7 227	2,4,7	16:50	18:15
6T 502	Daily	16:50	18:55
YH 730	2	17:45	19:10
YJ 204	4	16:55	18:20
W9 129	Daily	17:10	18:35
YH 738	3,5,7	17:10	18:35
W9 211	Daily	17:10	19:15
8M 6604	2,4,7	17:20	18:30
YH 730	4,6	17:45	19:10

YANGON TO NYAUNG U				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 917	1,2,3,5,6,7	6:10	7:45	
YH 917	4	6:10	8:35	
W9 141	Daily	6:15	7:35	
6T 401	Daily	6:20	7:40	
K7 282	Daily	6:30	7:50	
W9 143	Daily	7:15	8:35	
6T 501	Daily	14:30	17:20	
YH 731	2,6	14:30	17:25	
W9 211	Daily	15:30	17:40	

NYAUNG U TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 918	1,2,3,5,6,7	7:45	10:25	
W9 141	Daily	7:50	10:40	
6T 401	Daily	7:55	10:45	
YH 918	4	8:35	10:40	
W9 144	Daily	8:50	10:10	
K7 283	Daily	10:40	12:00	
YH 732	2,6	17:25	18:45	
6T 502	Daily	17:35	18:55	
W9 211	Daily	17:55	19:15	

YANGON TO MYITKYINA				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 201	2,3	6:00	8:50	
YJ 211	5,7	6:00	8:50	
YJ 233	1,6	6:00	8:50	
YH 828	2,6	7:00	10:00	
K7 642	Daily	8:30	10:50	
W9 251	2,5	11:15	14:10	
YH 826	4	14:00	16:40	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 829	2,6	10:00	12:25	
K7 643	Daily	14:05	16:25	

YJ 204	4	15:30	18:20
W9 252	2,5	16:05	19:00
YH 827	4	16:40	19:05

YANGON TO HEHO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 201	3	6:00	11:00	
YJ 201	2	6:00	12:55	
YH 917	4	6:10	9:30	
YH 917	1,2,3,5,6,7	6:10	9:15	
W9 141	Daily	6:15	8:20	
6T 401	Daily	6:20	9:20	
K7 222	Daily	6:30	9:30	
W9 201	Daily	7:30	9:40	
W9 203	Daily	11:00	12:10	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	12:25	
YH 727	1	11:00	12:25	
W9 119	1,3,6	11:15	12:25	
6T 501	Daily	14:30	15:40	
YH 731	2,6	14:30	15:55	
W9 129	Daily	15:00	16:10	

HEHO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 141	Daily	8:35	10:40	
YH 918	1,2,3,5,6,7	9:15	10:25	
6T 402	Daily	9:35	10:45	
YH 918	4	9:30	10:40	
K7 283	Daily	9:45	12:00	
W9 201	Daily	9:55	11:05	
K7 267	Daily	11:10	12:25	
W9 204	Daily	12:25	13:35	
YJ 203	2	13:10	15:20	
YJ 203	4	13:20	18:20	
K7 829	1,3,5	13:50	15:05	
YJ 213	5,7	14:50	16:00	
YJ 203	3	14:55	16:05	
YJ 235	1	15:00	17:10	
K7 845	Daily	15:15	18:10	
YH 728	1	15:45	17:55	
W9 120	1,3,6	15:45	17:55	
6T 501	Daily	15:55	18:55	
YH 732	2,6	15:55	18:45	
YH 738	3,5,7	16:25	18:35	
W9 129	Daily	16:25	18:35	

YANGON TO SITTWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 607	1	11:15	12:40	
6T 611	2,3,4,6,7	11:15	12:40	
6T 605	5	11:15	13:15	
K7 422	Daily	13:30	15:25	

SITTWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 612	2,3,4,6,7	13:00	14:25	
6T 608	1	13:00	15:00	
6T 606	5	13:35	15:00	
K7 423	Daily	15:40	17:00	

YANGON TO MYEIK				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 633	1,3,4,5,7	7:00	9:15	
K7 319	Daily	7:00	9:05	
6T 707	Daily	7:45	9:45	

MYEIK TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 634	1,3,4,5,7	11:25	13:25	
K7 320	Daily	11:30	13:35	
6T 708	Daily	12:10	14:10	

YANGON TO THANDWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 141	Daily	6:15	9:35	
6T 605	5	11:15	12:10	
6T 607	1	11:15	13:50	
K7 422	Daily	13:30	14:25	

THANDWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 605	5	12:25	15:00	
6T 608	1	14:05	15:00	
K7 422	Daily	14:40	17:00	

YANGON TO DAWEI				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 707	Daily	7:45	8:55	
YH 633	1,3,4,5,7	7:00	8:25	

DAWEI TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 708	Daily	13:00	14:10	
YH 634	1,3,4,5,7	12:15	13:25	

YANGON TO LARSHIO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 201	3	6:00	12:05	
YH 729	2,4,6	11:00	13:00	

LARSHIO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 213	5,7	13:45	16:00	
YH 730	2	16:45	19:10	
YH 730	4,6	16:45	19:10	

YANGON TO PUTAO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 233	1,6	6:00	9:45	

PUTAO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 234	6	10:00	16:45	
YJ 234	1	10:00	17:10	

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 9607/ YJ 7607	4,7	14:20	16:10

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 706	Daily	6:15	8:30
8M 335	Daily	7:40	9:25
TG 304	Daily	9:50	11:45
PG 702	Daily	10:30	12:25
TG 302	Daily	14:55	16:40
PG 708	Daily	15:20	17:15
8M 331	Daily	16:30	18:15
PG 704	Daily	18:25	20:20
TG 306	Daily	19:45	21:35

YANGON TO DON MUENG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4231	Daily	8:00	9:45
FD 2752	Daily	8:30	10:20
PG 2756	Daily	12:15	14:05
FD 2754	Daily	17:50	19:35
FD 2758	Daily	21:30	23:15
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
Y5 233	Daily	10:10	14:40
SQ 997	Daily	10:25	14:45
3K 586	2,4,6	11:20	15:50
TR 2827	1,6,7	15:10	19:35
TR 2827	2,3,4,5	17:10	21:35
3K 588	1,3,4,6	19:15	23:45

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 501	1,3,5,6	8:55	12:55
AK 1425	Daily	8:30	12:50
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30
8M 9506	Daily	12:15	16:30
8M 9508	Daily	15:45	20:05
MH 743	Daily	15:45	20:05
AK 1421	Daily	16:45	21:00

YANGON TO BEIJING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 716	3,7	23:50	0550+1

YANGON TO GAUNGZHOU			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 711	2,4,7	8:40	13:15
CZ 3056	3,6	11:25	16:15
CZ 3056	1,5	17:30	22:15

YANGON TO TAIPEI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7916	1,2,3,5,6	10:50	16:15

YANGON TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 906	Daily	12:15	15:55
MU 2012	3	12:20	18:20
MU 2032	1,2,4,5,6,7	14:50	18:20

YANGON TO HANOI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:30

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:15

YANGON TO DOHA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 919	1,4,6	7:40	11:10

YANGON TO PHNOM PENH			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 403	3,6	16:50	19:15

YANGON TO SEOUL			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:35	9:10
KE 472	2,3,4	23:35	8:05+1

YANGON TO HONG KONG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	1,2,4,6	01:10	05:45

YANGON TO TOKYO			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	Daily	21:45	06:50+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	3,5,6	7:00	8:20

YANGON TO DHAKA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 061	1,4	19:45	21:00

YANGON TO INCHEON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 7702	Daily	23:35	8:05
8M7502	4,7	0:35	9:10

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 710	Daily	14:05	16:30

MANDALAY TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 233	Daily	8:05	14:40

MANDALAY TO DON MUENG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2761	Daily	12:45	15:00

MANDALAY TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	14:40	17:30

MANDALAY TO GAYA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 603	4	11:10	12:15

NAYPYIDAW TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 722	1,2,3,4,5	19:30	22:30

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 303	Daily	7:55	8:50
PG 701	Daily	8:50	9:40
8M 336	Daily	10:40	11:25
TG 301	Daily	13:00	13:55
PG 707	Daily	13:40	14:30
PG 703	Daily	16:45	17:35
TG 305	Daily	17:50	18:45
8M 332	Daily	19:15	20:00
PG 705	Daily	20:00	21:30

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	11:10	11:45
FD 2753	Daily	16:35	17:20
FD 2757	Daily	20:15	20:55
DD 4238	Daily	19:25	20:15

SINGAPORE TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
SQ 998	Daily	7:55	9:20
3K 585	1,3,4,6	9:10	10:45
TR 2826	1,6,7	13:10	14:30
8M 232	Daily	13:25	14:50
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	2,5	17:05	18:35
MI 520	5,7	22:10	23:35

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 905	3,5,7	19:30	22:50

KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AK 1426	Daily	6:55	8:00
MH 740	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 9505	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 502	1,2,3,5,6	12:50	13:50
8M 9507	Daily	13:30	14:40
MH 742	Daily	13:50	15:00
AK 1420	Daily	15:05	16:15

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CZ 3055	3,6	8:40	10:25
CZ 3055	1,5	14:40	16:30
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

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.
Nok Airline (DD) Tel: 255050, 255021, Fax: 255051
Tiger Airline (TR) Tel: 371383, 370836~39 Ext: 303

KUNMING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2011	3	8:25	11:40
CA 905	Daily	10:45	11:15
MU 2031	1,2,4,5,6,7	13:30	14:00

HANOI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:50	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 918	3,5,7	20:30	6:15+1

GAYA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 602	3,5,6	9:20	12:30

PHNOM PENH TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 404	3,6	20:15	21:40

SEOUL TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	2,3,4	18:45	22:35
OZ 769	3,6	19:50	23:45

TOKYO TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:00	15:40

HONG KONG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:45	23:30

DHAKA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 060	1,4	16:30	18:45

INCHEON TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 7701	Daily	18:45	22:35
8M 7501	3,6	19:50	23:25

BANGKOK TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 709	Daily	12:00	13:20

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2760	Daily	10:50	12:15

KUNMING TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2029	Daily	13:55	13:50

GAYA TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 604	4	13:15	16:20

BANGKOK TO NAYPYIDAW			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:00	19:00

International	
FD & AK = Air Asia	
TG = Thai Airways	
8M = Myanmar Airways International	
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BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines	
TR = Tiger Airline	
Subject to change without notice	

Day	4 = Thursday
1 = Monday	5 = Friday
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday



Zwegabin Hill, Kayin. Photo: Staff

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

THRU-WAY By Jill Pepper

ACROSS

- 1 Gives guns to
- 5 Hospital areas
- 10 Denominational offshoot
- 14 500-sheet unit of paper
- 15 Native American of Alaska
- 16 Banned spray
- 17 Sax range
- 18 Beast of burden
- 19 Pitchfork piece
- 20 Whatever it takes
- 23 Cornfield invaders
- 24 Writer Joyce Carol
- 25 Female pheasant
- 28 Shocked reaction
- 30 Teen tribulation
- 31 Start a garden
- 33 Bioelectric swimmer
- 36 Popular hymn (with "In")
- 40 See 31-Across
- 41 Coin-flip call
- 42 Annoying smell
- 43 Ages on end
- 44 Largest West Indies city
- 46 Famous San Antonio mission
- 49 Dewy-eyed
- 51 How encores are given
- 57 Way in for miners
- 58 Lost color
- 59 Part of a donkey serenade
- 60 "Can't complain"
- 61 Like Mary's flock
- 62 Dublin's land
- 63 New-garment attachments
- 64 Clear wrap
- 65 Tampa's team

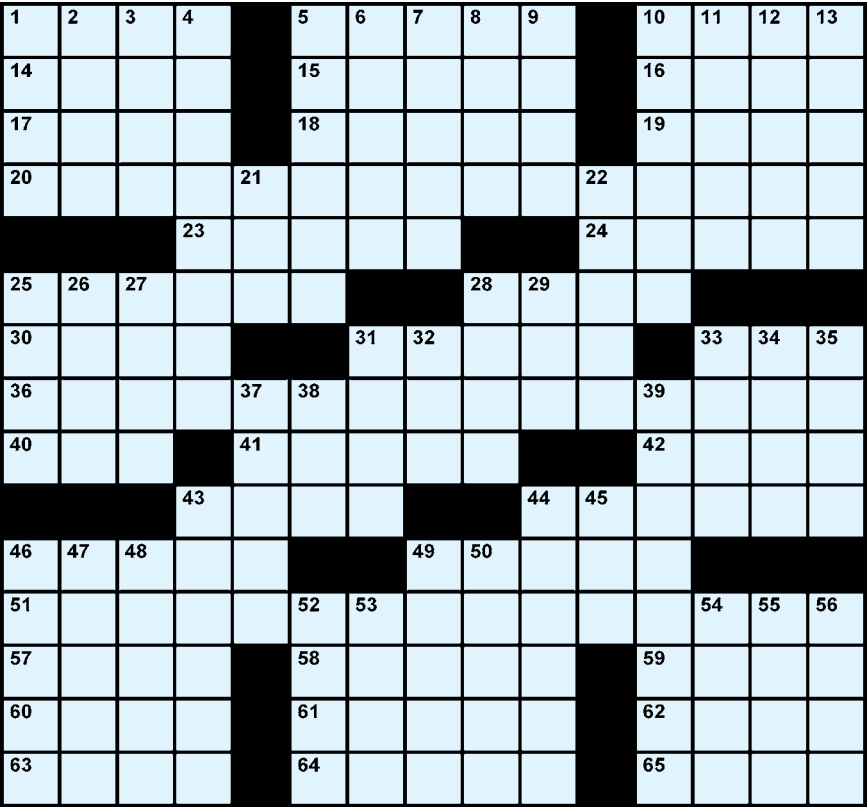
DOWN

- 1 Saudi, for one
- 2 Depend (upon)
- 3 College major
- 4 Sloppy kisses
- 5 Bit part
- 6 Grant permission for
- 7 Rises on hind legs
- 8 "Bell" or "waiter" starter

- 9 Collar insert
- 10 Ancient Persian ruler
- 11 "Silas Marner" novelist
- 12 Kayak's relative
- 13 Difficult expeditions
- 21 Target of refinement
- 22 _____ Rica
- 25 Butter bits
- 26 Sonic boomerang
- 27 Again
- 28 Chatters
- 29 Nonspecific amount
- 31 Pot pie veggies

- 32 Old Ford model
- 33 Collection of Scandinavian myths
- 34 Black, to poets of old
- 35 Small constellation
- 37 Ecstatic exclamation
- 38 Suffix for "Hallow"
- 39 When many thanks are given
- 43 Acts over-the-top
- 44 Far from obvious
- 45 "_____ Maria"
- 46 Toward the ship's rear

- 47 Groucho's "tattooed lady"
- 48 Imitating
- 49 Low point
- 50 Basketball venue
- 52 Some vehicles in sci-fi movies
- 53 Rolling rock?
- 54 Highlight at The Met
- 55 It turns "a one" into "none"
- 56 Salon offerings



DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



PEANUTS

BY CHARLES SCHULZ



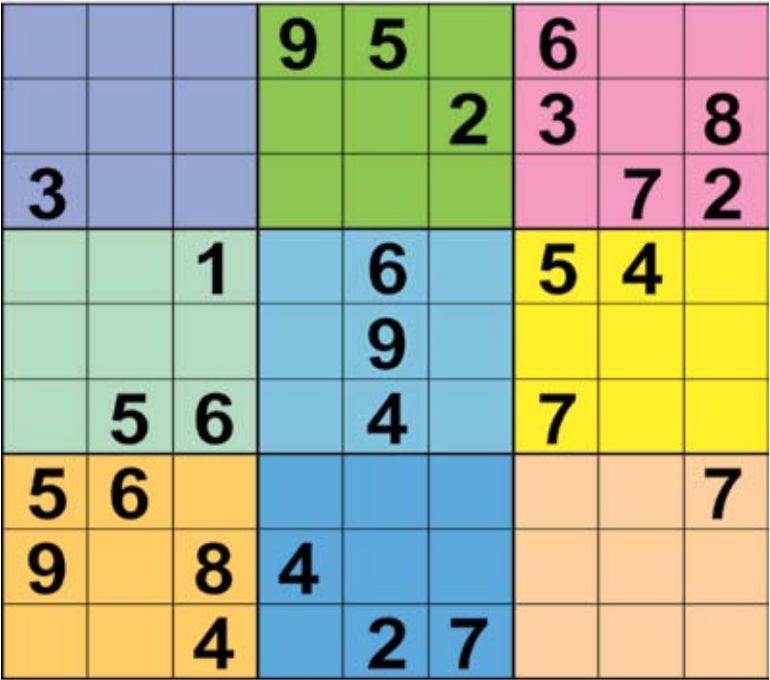
CALVIN AND HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON



SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



6/5

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

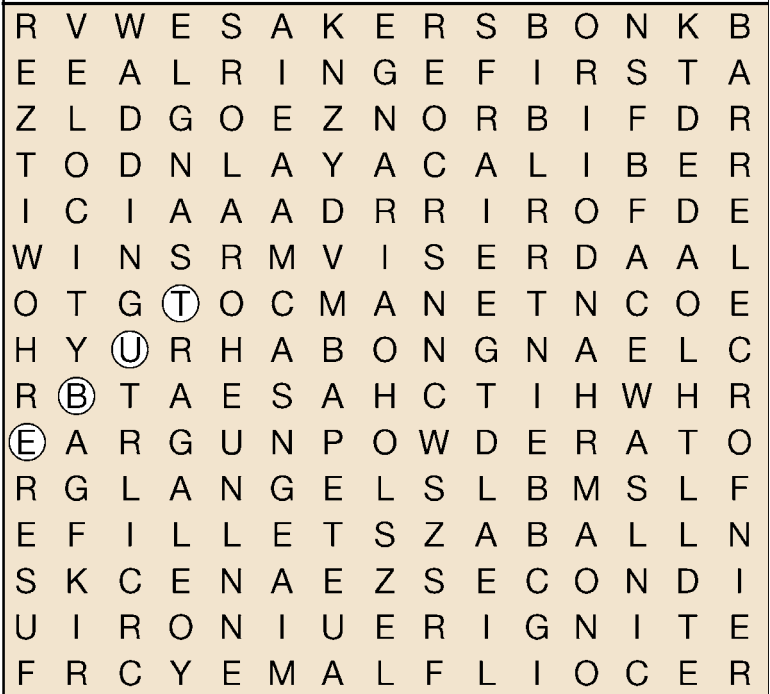
WONDERWORD

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.

18TH-CENTURY CANNONS

Solution: 9 letters



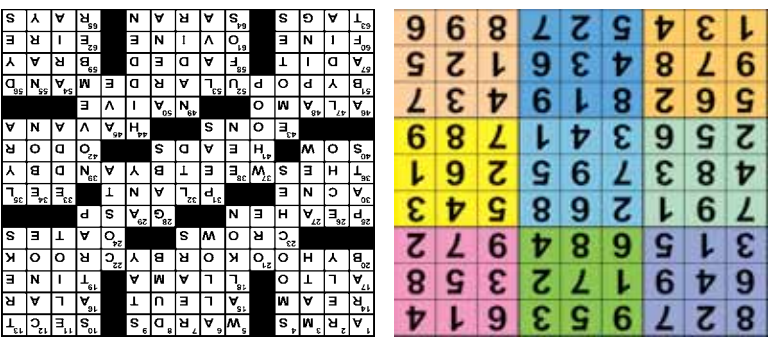
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6/2

Aim, Angels, Angle, Astragal, Ball, Barrel, Base, Basilisk, Bore, Bronze, Caliber, Cast, Chamber, Charge, Chase, Clean, Commander, Cone, Face, Fillets, Fire, First, Flame, Fuse, Gunpowder, Hand, Howitzer, Ignite, Iron, Knob, Loaded, Loading, Mortar, Muzzle, Naval, Neck, Range, Recoil, Reinforce, Ring, Saker, Second, Traynes, Tube, Velocity, Wadding, Water

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birds with One stone? If so conduct your meeting at Mary Chapman School for the Deaf "Holding a meeting means donating the Deaf children" Rooms available: (1). Air con room for 25 person per day kyats50,000 (fifty thousand) (2). Air con room for 50 person per day kyats80,000 (eighty thousand) (3). Hall for 100 person above per day kyats100,000/ (one hundred thousand) Reservation please! Mary Chapman School for the Deaf : No. 2, Thantaman St, (Near American center), Dagon Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: 01-221872, 01-218342, 01-218343. "Those whose see what God sees... find ways to help the HELPESS"

Training

WEB Development & Design Training Sat & Sun - 5:00 ~ 7:00pm. Contact: 09-4211-44937



We provide the following Training, CISCO, CCNA, CCNP, MICROSOFT, MCSA, MCSE, LAB, EC-COUNCIL CEH, SECURITY ADMIN. www.facebook.com/imcscompany, 09-4500-16040.

Public Notices

WEARE pleased to inform you that Delegation of the European Union will move to its new office premises, effective as of Monday 31 March 2014. The new address and contact information of the Delegation of the EU are as follows: EU Delegation Myanmar, Hledan Centre - Corner of Pyay Road and Hledan Rd, 6th Flr, Kamayut, Yangon, Myanmar. Telephone: +95 (1) 2305650. Fax: +95 (1) 230 56 51. In the context of its move, the EU Delegation will be closed on Thursday 27 March (public holiday) and on Friday 28 March 2014. Last but not least,

Property

Housing for Rent

MWEA TOWER, Shwe Dagon Pagoda Road, Between Yawmingyi & Nawadae Street. Dagon Township, 1850 sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, Fully furnished and decorated Free high speed wifi One auto phone, Basement car park, Rate per month 40 lakhs. Contact: 09-515-1865

DAGON SEIK KAN, Yuzana Garden city, 2 bed rooms, 4th floor, B block, # 1 road, 150 lks, please contact 09-4480-45381, 09-4210-4486, 09-2500-78808

LARGE commercial building just steps from traders hotel, opposite FMI center. Total of 5000 sq ft X 5 floors for lease. Completion in November, please contact for details. jasonwongjp@gmail.com, 09-4211-02223

MODERN Properties/ Condos for rent/ sale. No agency fee, properties screened by foreign agent. www.rivers-realestate.com, jasonwongjp@gmail.com, 09-4211-02223

A CONDO of 1450 sqft to rent with 3 fully furnished bedrooms and air-cons. Washing machine, fridge and internet will be provided. Price : 18 lakhs (1,800,000) + agent fees (not exceeds than a month payment) contact: 09-732-05178

50TH Street, middle block, 1st floor (25'x60'), Hong Kong style 2 floor, Pazundaung Tsp, 5 bed rooms, 2 western toilets, full teak wood floor, tilling floor kitchen and bathrooms, air-con, landline phone. Call: 666604, 09-507-6284.

YANKIN, (1) Yankin Centre, 1750 sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, 4AC, 15 Lakhs (2) Shweohnpin Apartment, 1200 sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, G Flr, 3 AC, 13 Lakhs (3) 6 miles, 32 Avenue, 8000 sqft, wood house. 35 lakhs. Moureen: 09-518-8320.

(1). **KAMAYUT**, Inya Rd, 1Acre, Two Storey Nice European Style house, 3MBR, 1SR, maid room, Ph line, Aircon in all rooms, Generator, Ceiling Fans, Big wide Lawn, US\$ 9000 per month. (2). **Bahan**, Golden Valley, 0.5Acre, Single Storey house, 1 MBR, 2 SR, Ph line, Aircons, Big wide Lawn, US\$5000 per month. (3).

Kamayut, 5 Mile, Pyay Rd, 0.25Acre, 3 Storey New house, 5 MBR, 1 SR, Ph line, 10 Aircons, Big wide Spacious balcony, Wooden Flr, big wide windows in all rooms, Garden, US\$ 7500 per month (Nego:), Ph: 09-731-30141.

(1). Near Park Royal hotel, Bo Yar Nyunt St, 800sqft, 2 flat, 3 SR fully furnish, 1600 USD (2). Near Sakura tower, 1250 Sqft, with lift, 1 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 2100 USD. (3). Pansodan St, near Ruby Mart, 1250 Sqft, 1 SR, part of furnish, 1600 USD. (4). China town, 1500 Sqft, 1 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 3500 USD. (5). Near Union bar, Strand Rd, 1200 sqft, 1 MBR, 2 SR, 2500 USD. (6). Near Indian Embassy, 1300 Sqft, 2 MBR, 1 SR, fully furnish, 2500 USD. 09-4921-4276, 09-4211-77105

(1). Near MICP park, 3000 Sqft, 1 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 4500 USD. (2). 9 Mile Ocean condo, 1800 Sqft, 1 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 2500 USD. (3). Near Hle Tan center, 2000 Sqft, 2 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 2000 USD. (4). Near Taw Win center, 1250 Sqft, 2 Flat, 1 MBR, 2 SR, 2500 USD. (5). Golden Valley, 2 RC, 6500 Sqft, 2 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 5000 USD. (6). Yankin housing, 7500 Sqft, 7 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish 12000 USD. (7). Parami Rd, 1 RC, 5600 Sqft, near MICP Park, 1 MBR, 2 SR, 6000 USD. (8). 7 Mile, 2 RC, 7500 Sqft, 2 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 6000 USD. (9). Yankin center, 1250 Sqft, 1 MBR, 2 SR, fully furnish, 2500 USD. Ph: 09-4921-4276, 09-4211-77105

KAMAYUT, 25x55 newly condo with fully furnished to let in Hledan Centre at Hledan Junction. No need to pay monthly service charges (not including electricity and water) and a free fixed car parking for one. 25 lakhs or 2500\$ per month. contact 09-732-05178

CLASSIC STRAND Condo, 3 bed 2 bath, modern design/decor, wide open layout, 1550 square feet, 8th floor corner unit river view. \$3600/month. Strand Road, 5min walk to Hilton/Center Point offices. jasonwongjp@gmail.com, 09-4211-02223

CLASSIC STRAND Condo, 2200 sqft commercial/residence for sale or rent. 3rd floor, wide open layout, 14 foot ceilings. Gym, cafe, facilities. Prime downtown location, close to strand hotel/union bar. jasonwongjp@gmail.com 09-4211-02223

CENTRAL CITY Residence minutes from Park Royal, marble/ hardwood premium fittings, modern design. 4 rooms 3 bathroom (2 master w/ attached bath) 1955sqft Starting from \$3800/ month unfurnished. jasonwongjp@gmail.com, 09421102223

Housing for Sale
RUBBER Lands for Sales (1) Between Bago Hantharwaddy Airport and Main Rd. Rubber Lands - 300 Acres (including rubber plants aged 5 years) (2) Near Bago Hantharwaddy Airport Rubber Lands - 60 Acres (including Required Official Documents) Contact - 09-2540-88487, 09-4523-36822

CLASSIC STRAND Condo, 2200 sq ft commercial/residence for sale. 3rd floor, wide open layout, 14 foot ceilings. Gym, cafe, facilities. Prime downtown location, close to strand hotel/ union bar. Great value psfjasonwongjp@gmail.com 09-4211-02223

CHAUNG THA (Near Patheingyi), Brick 25' x 50' on 40' x 70' of Land, with well, 300 gallon water tank, Septic tank, Solar power, 200m from beach, 500m from village, 390 Lakhs/ US\$ 39000. Call 09-4250-10128, Email: howwww@gmail.com, akhinmoeato@gmail.com.

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Ph: 09 4921 4276, 09 4211 77105, E-mail : power7may@gmail.com
web site : www.power7realestate.com

Employment

UN Positions

THE UNITED Nations World Food Programme, is seeking (1) **Admin Assistant** GS-4 Magwe (2) **Drivers** GS-2 Yangon 2 Posts. For more information, pls visit to <http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals>. Please Email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org <<mailto:wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org>> COB 11 June 2014.

THE UNITED NATIONS World Food Programme, is seeking (1) **Logistics Assistant** (Tally) SC-2 Magwe. For more information, please visit to <http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals>. Please Email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org <<mailto:wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org>> COB 12 June 2014.

(1) **WASH Engineer** 1 post (2) **EOC Officer** 1 post (3) **Project Officer** 1 post (4) **Field Assistant** 1 post Application process: Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com For more information & application, please visit to www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Pls mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

Ingo Positions

OUR company is one of the reputable carrier and container service provider companies. Now, we are seeking motivated, experienced and dedicated candidate for the position of : (1) **Assistant Accountant** (1) post. (2) **HR and Admin Assistant** (1) post. Job Location : Yangon, Starting Date : As soon as possible. Required Qualification and Skills: Post (1) Must be B.Act., ACCA or LCCI (Level III). Excellent written and spoken English. Good computer skills in MS office and knowledge in accounting software. Good interpersonal skills and willing to work with team. Able to work independently with sense of initiative. Minimum three years experience in related fields. Post (2) Must be graduate. Good written and spoken English. Good interpersonal skills and willing to work with team. Able to work independently with sense of initiative. Minimum two years experience in related fields. Recommendation letter from current or previous jobs is essential for both positions. Interested candidate who meets above mentioned requirements, please send your updated CV with application letter to : Fortune Shipping Co., Ltd. (Interasia). Admin Department, Rm 811, 8th floor, La Pyayt Wun Plaza, 37, Alarpya Pagoda Road, Yangon. Email: admin@fortuneshippingltd.com. Application should be submitted not later than 15th June 2014. Only short listed candidates will be contacted and please do not enclose your original document with your application, as they will not be returned to you. **MYANMAR** Red Cross Society is seeking **Deputy Manager** (Admin & Finance) 1 post in Hpa-An Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre Hpa-An, Kayin State: Myanmar National. University degree. 3 years experience in a similar field. Effective English language skills. Effective Computer knowledge.

Understanding of the Red Cross Movement & willingness to actively promote Red Cross fundamental principles. 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. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 6-6-2014.

MYANMAR RED Cross Society is seeking (1) **Program Support Officer** 1 post in Naypyitaw. Application process: Pls send your application letter, CV & related documents to (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com. For more information & application, please visit to www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply. Closing date : 3.6.2014.

Local Positions

(1) **PERSONAL Secretary** - M/F 2 posts : Excellent in Speaking and written English. Good knowledge of international humanitarian organization. Must be interesting real estate. Age between 25 to 35 years old. (2) **Japan (or) Korean**, (Excellent 4 skills) - M/F 2 posts: Age between 25 to 35 years old. Must be interesting real estate. (3) **Computer** - M/F 3 posts : (Word, Excel, Photoshop, power point) Age between 20 to 35 years old. Contract Address: 16, U Aung Myat St, near Thien Phyu car driving range. Mingalar Taunmyunt, Ph: 09- 4921-4276, 09-4211- 77 105.

NS BluescopePte Ltd manufactures premium, high quality & technologically advanced coated steel, building components and building systems through a network of manufacturing facilities in Asia. Myanmar Branch Office is looking for (1) **Marketing & Communications Manager** : Primary responsibility is to develop and implement marketing strategies & communication plans for NS Bluescope in Myanmar. Develop & execute marketing strategy & brand building development plan. Develop, initiate & execute strategic & tactical market communication activities. Develop and deliver marketing materials for local market. Provide primary corporate communications with major customers, stakeholders, industry bodies & media in Myanmar. The ideal candidate : Bachelor's degree in Marketing/ Communication or Architecture, Engineering or Construction related technical course. 5 years relevant experience in building materials, construction and/or steel industry Competency and experience in business development, customer service, event management, & development of communications materials. Supervisory/ Management skills. Good computer literacy. Good command of English and Myanmar. (2) **Technical Support Engineers** : Provides technical support to customers, project owners, architects & engineers. This position is a key link to communicate, coordinate & provide feedback between customers and industry professionals & NSBS. The ideal candidate: Bachelor Degree in Engineering, Architecture or Science. 2 - 3 year experience in building materials,

construction and/or steel industry. Experience with product technical specification and customer service. Good computer literacy. Good command in English and Myanmar. Applications with CV, covering letter, copy of Identity, other qualifications and documents should be sent in by email to khin.thu@bluescopesteel.com or in person. No. 301, Pyay Rd, Diamond Condo A, Kamayut Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 01-1221343, 09-4480-18719, 01-2306223. www.bluescopesteel.com.

LOOKING for a Violin Teacher. 09- 2540-08146, 01-572177.

PRIME Agri Technologies (Myanmar) Ltd is seeking : (1) **Agri Team Member** - 20 posts in Heho, Shan State : Must have agricultural experience and greenhouse farming experience. Bachelor Degree holder or Diploma in Agriculture. Fluent written and oral communications skill in both Myanmar & English. Able to work under pressure, hardworking & self-directed. Can use Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power point and Outlook). (2) **Project Engineer** 2 Posts in Yangon : Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical Power). Must have good computer skill (Auto CAD, MS Office, etc..) & good command in English. Strong working experience at MEPE, ESE, or YESB in electrical transmission and distribution and/or power generation. Proven practical experience in troubleshooting T&D problems in the field. 5 years experiences in related fields. (3) **Junior Engineer** 2 posts in Yangon : Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical Power). Good computer skill and good command in English. Basic knowledge on electrical circuits, substation equipment, modern communication & networking. 1 or 2 years experiences in related fields. Pls send detailed resume stating current salary & expected salary together with a recent photo & references to : sshaw@prime-agri.com or Suite 101, 1st Flr, BLAZON Tower, Uwisara Rd, Kamayut, Yangon. Ph: 01-536922, 09-4201-88606. Closing date : 15, June 2014

FOOD & BEVERAGE Co., looking for **HR & Admin Manager** : 3 years relevant working experiences, preferably in the F&B industry. Degree/Diploma in human resources management, Good command of spoken & written English. Oversee the day to day admin & operational matters. Must have good people management skills. Must be able to motivate the staff and conduct training programs. Interested candidates, please state your expected salary and email resume to : naychimgt@myanmar.com.mm **ADVERTISING** Agency, looking for an aggressive and outgoing **Female Marketing Services Executive** : 2 years sales or marketing experiences. Good command in spoken & written English. Responsible for marketing the company's services. Must be able to organize and manage events independently. Must be able to maintain excellent customer services to key client contacts. Interested candidates, please state expected salary and email resume to naychi-mgt@myanmar.com.mm **"EXPATRIATE** family seeks **housekeeper/cook**. Must speak

English, accommodation provided. Excellent salary and benefits. Please call (0)1-504-776 between the hours of 10 to 12."

UNIEXCEL LTD. (International trading firm) is seeking for **Marketing Assistant** - M/F, Single, any graduate, having experience of 2-3 years in marketing, good communication in English and Burmese. Interested candidates contact:- jogeshwar.maini@uniexcelgroup.com. tw: Mobile: 09-255-723375, Ph: 01-371374. **SALES ENGINEERS** wanted (1) **M & E** - M 1 post (2) **Civil** - M 1 post (3) **AutoCAD** - M 1 post. Must fluent in English, Driving license for 1 & 2. Minimum 2 years experience. Good salary. Call : 09-4210-29415.

GOLDEN SPIRIT Co., Ltd (Alco/ Bev) is seeking (1) **Brand Manager** - Any graduate, 2 years experience in liquor field. Good in English. Able to travel in anywhere. (2) **Sales Manager** - M/F - Any graduate, 2 years experience in liquor field. Able to travel in anywhere. (3) **Sales supervisor** - Any graduate, More than 2 years experience in liquor field. (4) **Marketing Manager** - M/F : Any graduate, More than 2 years experience in liquor field. Good communication skills. (5) **Marketing Supervisor** - M/F : Any graduate, More than 2 years experience in liquor field. (6) **H.R Supervisor** - M/F : Any graduate diploma or certificate in H.R or Business administration is preferred. Or experienced in liquor field (H.R). 2 years experiences. Good in English. Computer knowledge. (7) **Accountant** - M/F : B.Com or LCCI Level (III) certificate. 2 years & above experience. Able to do stock controlling and auditing. Excellent

to join our Myanmar practice. Myanmar nationals admitted to int'l bars are also welcome to apply. Training will be provided. Applicants may email to kim@kcyangon.com & submit their curriculum vitae.

GLOBAL WAVE Technology is seeking (1) **Admin Staff** - F 2 posts (2) **Data Entry** - M/F 2 posts (3) **Sales Assistant** - F 2 posts (4) **Service Technician** - M 2 posts. (5) **Web Designer** - M/F 1 posts (6) **Graphic Designer** - M/F 1 post (7) **Driver** - M 2 posts. Pls submit CV to Rm 303, AKK Shopping Mall, 3rd Flr, Thingangyun Market, Laydaukkan Rd, Thingangyun Yangon. Ph: 01-560067, 01-560068.

WE INVITE applications for experienced **English teacher** (Native speaker) to provide English language training to our hotel guest contact staff. Please send email to HR Dept (thandarye.myl@chatrium.com) for more details."

EXPERIENCED translators wanted (full-time): (1) English, Karen & Burmese 1 post. (2) English, Chin & Burmese 1 post. (3) English, Burmese 1 post. Please submit a cover letter and cv to hr@linguamyanmar.com. For more information on Lingua Myanmar, visit our website: www.linguamyanmar.com.

OKKAR THIRI Co., Ltd. is seeking (1) **Receptionist** : Bachelor degree, 1-2 years experience in Administration, Good English, Able to use computer, Microsoft application, Hard working (2) **Sales Representatives** : Bachelor degree, Strong customer & service orientation, Good negotiation skill, Reach sales target, Good in English, Able to use computer, Microsoft application. Pls send

communication and interpersonal skill. Able to find new suppliers from overseas & communicate well. Experience & knowledge in international trade is a advantage. Proficient in MS office & using Internet. Pls send application and Resume with educational and relevant documents to No (2), West Maykha Lane (1), Mayangone, Yangon. Ph: 01-655593, 655594, 664285, Email : fgil.service@gmail.com **WE ARE** seeking: (1). **Native English teacher** who is experienced in teaching English to young children for weekend classes. (2). An experienced **Chinese teacher** is required for weekend classes. You will be responsible for lesson planning, outlining your own teaching students and finding the materials. Interested applicants, please call 09-4308-4360.

(1) **CAN speak English** (4 skill) - M/F 5 posts: Working experience at least 2 year, can communicate with the Embassy. Age 20 ~ 30 years old. Must interest real estate business. (2) **Can speak Chinese** (4 skill) M/F 5 posts. Age 20 ~ 30 years old. (3) **computer** - M/F 3 posts : (word, Excel, photo shop) Phone: 09- 4201-14749, 09-4211- 77105.

RIGHT Myanmar Travels Urgently requires **tour staff** if you have following skills. Female (Under 25), Use internet, email & microsoft word, can speak and write basic English. Pls submit your CV through our email - rightmyanmartravel@gmail.com

WIRED MEDIA Co., Ltd is seeking (1) **Senior Media Buyer** - F 3 posts : 2 years experience in related field, Proficient in Computer (Microsoft Office- Word, Excel, Power Point) & Internet, E-mail (2) **Secretary & Public Relation (PR)** - F 2 posts : Age 25 ~ 35, Can speak English & Thai language. (3) **Driver** - M 5 posts : Specialist in Car Driving, Serving and Maintaining. Good Interpersonal skill. Good communication skill, Over 1 year experience. Pls submit to 8, Nguwar (3) St, ward 5, Myakanthar Villa, Hlaing, Yangon. Ph : 01-505724, 538552, 09-4500-53498. Closing Date : 13-6-14

GO GO UP Co., Ltd is seeking (1) **Travel Operation Manager** 1 post : Well versed in CRS used in the industry like abacus, Amadeus, Established network of contacts with domestic hotels, airlines, transport and tour operators, Experience with setting up a tour agency preferred, Independent, hands-on and self-motivated team player, Knowledgeable and passionate about travel industry with excellent customer service, Must be able to speak/read/write English fluently, 3 years of experience in established travel agency, managerial experience would have an advantage, Able to work on weekends & holidays when needed. (2) **Reservation Executive** : Good English language skill, Experience in reservation/ tour work, Able to handle group and individual reservation, Highly motivated, resourceful, open minded and trust worthy, Preferable degree or diploma related to the post, 2 years experience with reservation department. Pls submit a detailed updated CV with a recent passport photo via online gogoupmm@gmail.com

AMD, the leading & prospective company is seeking (1) **Sales Executive / Sales Engineer** (Medical) - M/F 10 posts : Any graduate, Sciences Degree is preferable, Age 22 ~ 30, Able to travel (2) **Engineer** (Water Treatment) - M/F 10 posts : ME/BE/ B.Tech (Mechanical/Electrical/Mechantronic), Age 25 ~ 35, Able to travel (3) **Receptionist/Office Secretary** - F 3 posts : Any graduate, Age 20 ~ 30. For all posts : Computer knowledge, Microsoft office applications, Good spoken & written English, 1 year experience. Pls bring CV with recent photo, NRC copy & relevant documents to 39/B, Thazin lane, Ahlone (Opposite to Central Women Hospital). Ph: 218437, 218438. Email: amd@yangon.net.mm / amdstaff@optusnet.com.au

EXECUTIVE Personal Assistant to CEO (Manager Level) USD 500- 700 : Must have experience in foreign/JV company, Professional, tactful and discreet, with ability to communicate effectively to all levels within the organization, Ability to handle daily traffic email & to prioritize list of those reply that have to be made by CEO personally, Must have widely knowledge about Engineering based operation, supporting and trading sectors, Must have excellent skills in English & Microsoft Package, Able to work under pressure, Candidate must be over 30. Pls send CV & a cover letter, including your salary expectations, to Email: thelondoner007@gmail.com.

GENERAL MANAGER : Any graduate with higher Degree of MBA in management field preferable M/F Age 35 ~ 40 years. 5 years experience. Fluent in English. Proficient in Microsoft Office. Able to plan & implement the good marketing strategies & able to achieve sales targets. Computer literate. (2) **Admin Manager** - Any degree with diploma/ certificate in HR & Administration Management in business administration. Age 25 - 35. 4 ~ 5 years of experience. Good knowledge in HR policies, practices & organization development. Computer proficiency. Good in English. (3) **Personal Assistant** : Age 20 ~ 25 years, Using a variety of software packages, such as Microsoft Word, Outlook, Power point, Excel, Access, etc., to produce correspondence & documents & maintain presentations, records, spreadsheets & data bases; devising & maintaining office systems; booking rooms and conference facilities; using content management systems to maintain and update websites and internal databases; attending meetings, taking minutes and keeping notes; managing and maintaining budgets, as well as invoicing; liaising with staff in other departments & with external contacts; ordering and maintaining stationery & equipment; sorting and distributing incoming post; and organizing and sending outgoing post; liaising with colleagues and external contacts to book travel & accommodation; No 172, Anawrahta Rd, Kyauktada. Ph: 389277. **AMARA GROUP Co., Ltd**, are currently looking

for (1) **Finance Manager** - 5 years experience : 1 post, (2) **Chief Accountant** - 5 years experience : 1 post, (3) **HR Manager** - 5 years experience : 1 post, (4) **Purchaser** - 2 years experience : 1 post, (5) **Personal Manager** - 5 years experience : 1 post, (6) **Sales & Marketing** - 2 years experience : 4 posts, (7) **Admin Officer** - 2 years experience : 1 post, Be part of a young dynamic team & contribute to the hotels success with your expertise & experience. We look forward receiving CV in English to amaragroup.mmw@gmail.com. Ph: 663347, 652191.

MYANMAR FIBER Optic Communication Network Co., Ltd (MFOCN) is seeking **account Manager** : Act as a lead point of contact to your specific customers, build & maintain strong & long term customer relations; ensure timely solutions to customers; communicate smoothly with the internal & external stakeholders; forecast & track key account metrics. Qualifications : BA/BS degree or equivalent; be passionate, proactive, with high team work spirit; 2+ years of account management; strong listening, negotiation & presentation abilities; proven abilities to manage multiple tasks at the same time; attention to details. Add : FG-54, Song Hnin Thazin Rd, FMI City, Hlaing Tharyar, Yangon. Ms Yin Yin: 09-4026-17058.

PARKWAY Cancer Centre is seeking (1) **Medical Doctor** - F 1 post : M.B.B.S Graduate with SA MA registration, 2 years experience in medical field, (2) **Accountant** F 1 post : A degree from university preferably accounting & marketing background. LCCI level 3, Age above 35, For all posts : Good communication in English, 2 years experience, Able to use computer, internet and Microsoft application with excellent skills. We welcome the candidates who are trust worthy, self-motivated & outstanding, willing to learn and able to focus on work, be polite & hospitality, able to communicate in courteous manners and must have positive working attitude. Pls submit CV with recent photocopy of relevant certificates & documents, describe working experience from graduation till present and expected salary. Ps submit CV with relevant certificates, documents, recommendation letter attach and documents, & expected salary. Park way Cancer Centre Rm G-07, G Flr, Diamond Center, Pyay Rd, Kamayut. Tel: 532- 438, 532-447, 09-513- 6584

WE ARE looking for (1) **Admin Executive**: 2 years relevant experiences, Provides admin support to MD, Have good organizational skill with the ability to problem solve, pay attention to detail and deliver work to a high standard, Excellent interpersonal skills with a good command in both spoken & written English. (2) **Operations Manager** : 2 years relevant working experiences in the tourism & car rental industry, Fluent in English, Oversee the day to day operations of the transport department, Must have good people management skills, Must ensure that all vehicles are properly maintained and serviced. Pls state your expected salary and email resume to : naychimgt@myanmar.com.mm

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skill in computer. (8) **Merchandise** - Age 18 ~ 25 years. (9) **Promotion Girls' Leaders** (PG Leaders). Pls send detailed up date CV with 1 recent passport photo, with necessary documents : clearance recommendation letter by authorized person of previous organization to S-19/02, Byo Phyu Rd, Aung Stadium (North), Mingalar Taung Nyunt. Closing date : 2nd week of June 2014.

EXPERIENCED domestic helper available. Know how to cook, ironing, washing, cleaning, etc. Tel: 09-3157-5765.

KELVIN CHIA Yangon Ltd is a foreign legal consultancy firm. We are looking motivated and committed individuals who are able to work and be based in Mandalay to join us as **Lawyers** who will work on a variety of corporate & commercial matters & transactions in Myanmar. If you are a Myanmar-qualified lawyer with strong English language skills, you are invited to apply

CV with relevant certificates, documents attach to frontoffice.mgr@okkarthiri.com and No.4(A) Pyay Rd, Hlaing, Yangon.

FUTURE GIFT Int'l Ltd is a Trading Company representing Europe prominent brands for Myanmar, looking for (1) **Procurement Assistant** (International Trade) M/F (Male is preferable) 1 post : Age around 27 years with Bachelor degree. 2 years relevant working experience is required. Good command of English is a must. High level of communication & interpersonal skill. Able to find new suppliers from overseas and communicate well. Experience & knowledge in international trade is a advantage. Proficient in MS Office & using Internet. (2) **Procurement Executive** (International Trade) - M/F (Male is preferable) 1 post : Age around 27 years with Bachelor degree. 1 years relevant experience. Good command of English. High level of

TOKYO

Japan coach Jones targets World Cup quarters

JAPAN have ditched their emotional baggage and will make a bid for rugby history by reaching the quarter-finals of next year's World Cup, head coach Eddie Jones told AFP.

"That's the only reason you play in the World Cup," the former Australia coach said in an interview. "If you don't want to make the finals, there's no use going. You might as well not compete."

"We want to make the quarter-finals."

Japan, who will host the 2019 edition, have consistently fallen short on the big stage. Despite dominating Asian rugby, their only World Cup win came against Zimbabwe back in 1991.

But Jones, whose 'Brave Blossoms' booked their place in England by thrashing Hong Kong 49-8 at the weekend, insisted, "We want to go there and win every game."

"This team are on the verge of doing something really good for Japanese rugby," he said.

"Japan needs it because they host the 2019 World Cup. They need a vibrant national team."

Japan faces South Africa, Samoa, Scotland and the United States in a tough Pool B.

"There's always a chance for upsets," said Jones defiantly. "If you win a couple of games, there is a chance to make the quarter-finals."

After winning the Pacific Nations Cup for the first time under former All Black John Kirwan, Japan caught stage fright at the 2011 World Cup.

Their target of two group wins crumbled to dust as they were beaten by hosts New Zealand, France and Tonga before drawing 23-23 with Canada.

"To say you want to win two games means that you're going to lose two games," shrugged Jones. "We want to go there and win every game."



Japan's national rugby union coach Eddie Jones looks on during a warm-up session prior to an Asian Five Nations match against Hong Kong in Tokyo on May 25. Photo: AFP

Jones, restored to full health after suffering a stroke last October, pulls no punches about Japan's frailties at previous World Cups.

"Definitely Japanese rugby's always had an inferiority complex," said the 54-year-old, who took the reins after the last edition in New Zealand.

"Japan hasn't won a World Cup game for [over] 20 years. When they

get to the big stage, they get intimidated quite easily, particularly by the bigger, physical sides."

"We're trying to encourage the players to have the confidence that the way we play will stand up under any conditions."

Jones has stamped his own style on the Japan team since taking over from Kirwan, and believes last year's first-ever win over Wales in Tokyo is

evidence of the side's improvement.

"We beat Wales last year - admittedly Wales without some of their best players, but we stood up to them physically and didn't take any rubbish and that was a big step forward," he said.

"There are some good signs but the World Cup is going to be the barometer."

Japan's players begin their punishing daily training at 5:00am in a bid to get a jump on their rivals.

"We're still a team that struggles to play the 80 minutes at the tempo we want to play," said Jones.

"Because we are small we do get tired and we can only build that up by training harder than any other team, to get a head-start on the rest of the world."

He added, "The Kiwis rely a lot on athleticism and JK [Kirwan] picked a lot of foreigners in the team, which suited his style of rugby."

"We've tried to develop a more Japanese style. There's not too many six-foot three, 110-kilogram players in Japan. We've got to play smart rugby because we physically can't go out there and bash the opposition. We've got to out-think them."

Jones tipped his "very special" back three of Kenji Fukuoka, Yoshikazu Fujita and Ayumu Goromaru to shine.

"The left winger Fukuoka is lightning, he's as quick as [South Africa's] Bryan Habana and he's going to be seriously hard to contain at the World Cup," he said. "Our right wing Fujita has something of [New Zealand's] Israel Dagg about him."

Jones was famously denied the World Cup as Australia coach by Jonny Wilkinson's extra-time drop goal in 2003. He paid tribute to the England great, who will retire on Saturday.

"I've seen too much of Jonny," he joked. "He's a real role model and been a special player for the world. I can still clearly see that field goal now!" - AFP

SYDNEY

Ponting calls for swift action on corruption

FORMER Australia captain Ricky Ponting has called for swift action on cricket's corruption crisis, saying there is nothing worse for the game than the shadow hanging over it.

Ponting said match-fixing and other rumours had circulated for years and he pleaded with the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption watchdog and individual boards to act quickly so players and fans could have full faith that what happens on the field was legitimate.

"We've all been aware of a certain amount of corruption in the game for a long time now and there's always just been a bit of smoke, there hasn't been much fire around it," he said on May 28.

"But like a lot of other big issues in our games, whether it's drugs or whatever, the sooner the governing bodies can get to the bottom of these issues and actually start making an example of some of the people they know are in the wrong and they know are guilty, the better off we're all going to be."

"There is nothing worse than having that [corruption] tag around, the worry about the integrity of cricket, and that is what every governing body would be fearing and a lot of the players. It takes away a bit from the game they love," he added.

Ex-New Zealand batsman Lou Vincent and his former Sussex teammate Naved Arif were last week charged with fixing in English county cricket. Vincent faces further charges dating to the 2011 and 2012 Champions League.

The most high-profile cricket fixing scandal in recent years led to the jailing of three Pakistan Test cricketers - then-captain Salman Butt, Mohammed Asif and Mohammed Aamer in 2011.

Pakistan leg-spinner Danish Kaneria is also serving a life ban imposed in 2012 by the England and Wales Cricket Board for spot-fixing in a county match.

Ponting said he doubts Australian players were involved in match-fixing.

"I have no worries at all," he told Australian Associated Press. "Certainly anyone that I've played with in Australian or Tasmanian teams, I can't see how it will impact on any of us - who I know, anyway."

He added that Australian players were well-educated about corruption and he did not think they were so vulnerable.

"Probably where we're a bit different to the other countries ... is we're very well-paid in Australia for what we do," said the 39-year-old, who retired from all forms of cricket late last year and is now involved in sports management.

"It seems to me, a lot of the targets, if you like, are guys who probably haven't been paid that well during their careers." - AFP

COLOMBO

AFC defends 'consummate hosts' Maldives

ASIA'S football body has defended the Maldives as "consummate hosts" after they came in for criticism over logistical problems at the AFC Challenge Cup.

Afghanistan said the Indian Ocean state was a good holiday destination but a poor place for a football tournament after several of their players were hurt in a bus crash.

Skipper Haroon Fakhruddin, one

of those hurt in the accident, also said players from land-locked Afghanistan found it hard travelling around the archipelago by sea.

The Maldives has also been hit by a row over ticketing after brawls broke out among fans who, unable to secure seats, accused officials of selling tickets on the black market.

But Windsor John, deputy general secretary of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), said the

Maldives' unique challenges were testament to the region's great diversity.

"The AFC encourages all member associations to host AFC tournaments or centralised qualifiers and each nation will present its own particular challenges when it comes to organisation and logistics," John told the AFC website.

"This should not necessarily be seen as a negative and more a

reflection of the great diversity of environments and culture that makes Asia such a fascinating place.

"The Football Association of the Maldives has been the consummate hosts."

Last week, the AFC warned the Maldives risked being suspended from international competition if the country's anti-corruption commission pursues a probe into the ticketing affair. - AFP

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AFC defends Maldives in hosting row

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BRASÍLIA

Brazil prez gambles on Cup

BRAZILIAN President Dilma Rousseff has a lot riding on the World Cup, whose final match will be played less than three months before she stands for reelection.

In a country where football and national identity are closely linked, the tournament's success or failure could decide her political fate.

The nation's mood has shifted since 2007, when Brazil was chosen to host the Cup and Rousseff's popular predecessor, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, was presiding over a buoyant economy.

The World Cup was supposed to prolong the boom-time by leaving a legacy of infrastructure across the sprawling South American country - roads, airports, subways and more.

But fast-forward to 2014 and Brazilians don't seem so sure about the tournament, or their government.

Despite the national passion for football, 66 percent now say the World Cup will do more harm than good.

Brazil has been hit by a wave of strikes and protests against the more than US\$11 billion being



A mural depicts Brazilian football star Ronaldo, painted by Brazilian street artist Paulo Consentino in Sao Paulo. Photo: AFP

spent on the tournament.

Last year, protests drew a million people during the Confederations Cup.

Recent protests have been smaller and it remains to be seen whether they will regain momentum when

the World Cup kicks off on June 12.

Rousseff's popularity has had ups and downs in recent months; the latest poll, released by Ibope on May 22, found 40pc of Brazilians planned to vote for her - a three-point increase from April.

But her top rivals also gained ground.

Social Democratic Senator Aécio Neves - recently backed by football legend Ronaldo - registered 20pc support, a six-point gain.

Socialist Eduardo Campos was at 11pc, a five-point gain.

Brazil has a run-off system, and if no candidate wins more than 50pc on October 5 a second round will be held on October 26.

As the top contenders emerge, many think Rousseff's fate is tied to that of the national team.

The *selecao* will bring national euphoria to the land of football if they win a sixth World Cup. A loss, on the other hand, could unleash bouts of malaise.

But analysts say World Cups do not decide Brazil's elections.

Failing to win the cup did not defeat incumbent Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1998. Winning in 2002 did not stop Lula from storming to victory.

And he and Rousseff, his chosen successor, won their votes in 2006 and 2010 despite the team's World Cup defeats.

"The World Cup is one thing and the election is another. But this time, the World Cup is happening here," said Andre Cesar, head of consulting firm Prospectiva.

"If the government loses control, if the protests return, if there are incidents or failures, it will weaken [Rousseff] heading into the elections.

Rousseff has said as much herself. Much has changed as the growth rate of the world's seventh-largest economy has fallen from 6pc in 2007 to a forecast 2pc this year.

"In 2007, the cup was the consecration of a golden era. Today the perception is that there are a lot of promises on infrastructure and transport projects that were never fulfilled," said Ricardo Ribeiro, an analyst at MCM Consultores.

"Let's just say our love of football didn't justify our spending on stadiums," Chico Alencar, an opposition lawmaker from far-left party PSOL, told AFP. - AFP

Ex-footballers train youth players

KYAW ZIN HLAING

kyawzinhlaing91@gmail.com

A GROUP of Myanmar football legends hosted an intensive month-long workshop for youth players that wrapped up in Yangon last week.

During the training session, believed to be the first of its kind in Myanmar, youth footballers selected from teams across the country trained under former national team players including Soe Myint, Ngwe Tun, Yin Min Aung and U Aung Kyaw Moe.

Fifty-two players trained for four weeks at the Than Thu Mar football field, focusing on fitness and improving techniques. The young athletes were honoured at a graduation ceremony on May 28.

"We are so happy teaching this class as former football players," said Kyi Lwin, a former national player who served as a trainer at workshop.

"This is my first experience and our group has planned to hold this kind of workshop in other regions and states."

Kyi Lwin said that it is difficult for young players to balance training and school but believed that athletes could do both with proper management.

"Though these workshops, we believe there are new athletes of the future," he said.

The training was held with the support of Coca-Cola.



A trainee practises ball handling skills at a workshop in Yangon. Photo: Supplied

IN PICTURES

A whole new ball game: The Yangon Fighting Roosters took on a team from Bangkok in what might have been the first official game of Australian Rules football played in Myanmar. The Fighting Cocks - a mixed team of Australians, Americans, Brits and Canadians - performed valiantly against the well drilled Thai expat side but eventually lost 81-24. Photo: Stuart Deed



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A Myanmar Times special advertising section, June 2014



Building blocks pave the way for joint venture

In latest expansion, JJ-Pun opens high-tech construction materials factory

A joint venture between JJ-Pun and Hong Kong-based Tiostone opened its factory doors on May 29, with senior executives from Jebsen &

Jessen (SEA) on hand to witness this newest endeavour of the Myanmar branch of their international manufacturing and distribution operations.

"We would like to have more factories from your group," said keynote speaker U Nyan Tun Oo, Yangon Region Minister for Electricity and Industry. "We want factories not only like this one but

der Schulenburg were joined by Myanmar business magnate Serge Pun, chair of local joint-venture partner SPA Group, to open the 10,000-square-metre factory.

Mr Pun said SPA joined forces with Jebsen & Jessen in 2011 because of shared common values. "We're very excited about doing things together with Jebsen & Jessen."

Led by JJ-Pun's managing director

'We're very excited about doing things together with Jebsen & Jessen.'

- Serge Pun, SPA Group

we want to see electronics, electrical and chemical factories for our country and we warmly welcome you to start in that field."

JJ-Pun Tiostone will produce environmentally friendly high-grade brick products to any specification, allowing great leaps forward in the construction business.

Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) chairman Heinrich Jessen and executive vice chairman Fritz Graf von

Philipp Hoffmann, the ribbon-cutting ceremony took place against the backdrop of a new brick-making machine from Masa Company of Germany. Mr Schulenburg said the Tiostone deal was an example of how JJSEA, and JJ-Pun locally, work to bring the best products in the world to where they're needed most.

"We introduce state-of-the-art technology into the country and we invest in manufacturing," he said.



Attendees examine some of the different shapes and sizes of concrete paving blocks produced by the Masa machine at the May 29 opening of the JJ-Pun Tiostone operation in Dagon Seikkan township. Photo: Zarni Phyo

JJ-Pun fields 'tremendous interest' in Myanmar



Philipp Hoffmann
Managing Director, JJ-PUN

As managing director, Philipp Hoffmann was one of two original staff members when JJ-Pun began operations in 2011. Originally he was the "Jebsen & Jessen" half of the joint venture, but he says he and everyone else in the company now consider themselves part of a united JJ-Pun team.

Describe JJ-Pun's operations.

JJ-Pun engages in distribution, engineering services and now, with the new JJ-Pun Tiostone joint venture, also manufacturing opportunities. Our focus is on technology that offers added value to our customers, in areas such as Agrichemicals, Cables, Chemicals, Communications, Construction Materials, Healthcare, Lighting Solutions, Material Handling, Pumps and Turf & Irrigation.

What benefits do you offer international companies looking to establish a market presence here?

Since we have been in ASEAN for more than 50 years, we have built a wide network and expertise reaching more than 20,000 customers in the region. Our integrated business platform enables our partners to deal with us efficiently and hence makes us a potential partner to access ASEAN as a whole or in our case Myanmar with our in-depth market knowledge and network.

willingness to open up to new business.

Judging from the number of buildings going down and coming up, my guess is that construction materials is a good business to be in right now. Is that your most exciting sector?

It is definitely a very exciting sector to be in with enormous growth opportunities, looking at the infrastructure requirements that Myanmar has in the years to come. However, all our business sectors

that it stands as a constant part of what we should do.

Just to give you an example of our commitment, in Southeast Asia 150,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions have been offset since Jebsen & Jessen achieved carbon neutrality in 2011.

You're bringing in state-of-the-art cranes and so forth for materials handling. How important is worker safety?

The health and safety of our employees matters the most to JJ-Pun. We follow international safety regulations and this is being enforced in all operations persistently. In many ways we can be a role model for local

contractors as we uplift their safety standards to match our expectations.

How did the lighting project in Mahabandula Park come about?

With our partner for Lighting Solutions, Philips Electronics, we have been in close discussion with YCDC on the development of the light-up of the independence monument and the park itself. This project was very special for us and we were very proud to be involved in that project in the heart of the city and especially at such an historical site.

We're also excited to be installing

MORE ON PAGE 4

'Within JJ-Pun we are ONE company, consisting of both Jebsen & Jessen and Serge Pun & Associates.'

Are you approaching these companies or are they coming to you?

I am glad to say that it happens both ways. We approach business partners who fit into our identified growth areas in which we believe we can add value to both the market and also our business partners, but also get approached by companies who heard about us in the market.

We experience a tremendous interest in Myanmar. Our company was one of the early ones to enter the market.

What's the common thread across your 10 different business units?

The spirit of a family group with focus on entrepreneurship and

are related to it one way or the other and hence are equally exciting going forward.

What improvements does JJ-Pun's healthcare technology bring to patient care?

We work with the government as well as the private clinics and hospitals and offer state-of-the-art technology and after-sales services to improve the workflow and quality of Myanmar's healthcare environment.

Talk to us about environmental responsibility as the country shifts into high economic gear.

Environmental responsibility is a core part in our behaviour. Our vision of corporate responsibility is



TEAM SPIRIT: Left to right, Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) chairman Heinrich Jessen, SPA chairman Serge Pun, JJSEA executive vice chairman Fritz Graf von der Schulenburg, and JJ-Pun managing director Philipp Hoffmann. Photo: Zarni Phyo



Tech 'jumpstarts rise'



Fritz von der Schulenburg

Executive Vice Chairman,
Jebsen & Jessen (SEA)

As executive vice chairman of Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) and a member of its executive board, Fritz Graf von der Schulenburg is responsible for emerging markets, including Myanmar, as well as developing relations with new technology partners. Based in Singapore, Mr Schulenburg says he's energised by the atmosphere in Asia and excited by the opportunities it offers.

What sectors do you see as growth sectors in Myanmar and how will JJSEA, through JJ-Pun, move to meet those needs?

First, we were convinced that Myanmar as a country would open up and would set the floor for an exciting social, cultural and economic journey. It is in our DNA to try to be within the first comers when such historical opportunities arise in our region, SEA. Second,

we were struck by Serge Pun's friendly and open offer to collaborate and were impressed by his personal, and his SPA Group's, entrepreneurial success.

Our views have not changed over the years but have been proven right many times since then. There are many growth sectors in Myanmar today. With JJ-Pun we follow a strategy of flexible response to business opportunities. The main sectors we serve today are healthcare equipment supply, chemicals distribution, industrial infrastructure projects and construction. Within the potential of the latter sector we have recently decided to set up a joint venture with the Hong Kong-based Tiostone Group and to manufacture bricks locally, which for us is an important upstream step into the value chain of our Myanmar engagement.

How do J&J joint ventures in other countries around Asia relate to what you're doing in Myanmar?

We do indeed entertain several JV engagements in the SEA region. Usually we support 50:50 shareholding constellations

'SPA brings local market expertise and we bring the diversity of 8 different business units'

because we believe in equal but complementary contributions. Generally our partner represents the technology and product innovation part, while we take care of the operations leveraging on five decades of customer relations in the region and of our industrial and

distributional expertise.

There is no ASEAN model as such, though; each joint venture follows its own specific rules and structures. Here our partner SPA brings the local market expertise and we bring the diversity of our 8 different business units.

How does high-tech fit in to the developing world?

While our early roots in Asia are trading-based, Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) emerged over its history into a conglomerate of industrial, engineering and distribution activities. Our value proposition to technology partners is therefore

technology indeed helps jumpstart the rise out of poverty.

From a business perspective, do you look forward to the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community bringing closer ties in Southeast Asia?

There is still a long to-do list on the agendas of the many different governmental authorities and institutions. However we will see the AEC coming and its economic integration will strengthen the region as a globally rewarded common market.

ASEAN to my knowledge will learn from the challenges the European Community is still undergoing and will design its own community, tailor-made to the complementary joint interests of its member nations but also to its cultural, social and economical differences.

As a company and as a player in the economical environments of the ASEAN countries we will benefit from the expected closer ties with suppliers, local partners and customers.

What's exciting about working in this part of the world?

With our founding fathers' roots from Denmark and Germany, we try to build our value proposition on combining the best of both worlds, leading into a "one world" approach.

Personally I am excited about living and working in this part of the world. Born and raised in the international environment of a family in the foreign diplomatic service, and with my own professional career purely in international business, I may be open by nature for new cultures and surroundings.

The Asia I am living and working in however stands for an open-arm attitude towards foreigners, and I felt accepted and integrated into its community from day one onward.

Last but not least we recognise and appreciate the people of Myanmar's willingness to open up for foreign investments and for partnering in business at eye level. It is especially exciting to participate in the dynamic development process this country offers all interested individuals and corporate entities today.



Employees gather for a group photo at the JJ-Pun Tiostone opening on May 29 in Dagon Seikkan, Yangon. Photo: Zarni Phyo

ONE of the newest departments in JJ-Pun, Lightning Solutions offers sustainable and highly energy efficient lighting solutions for homes, workplaces, offices and public areas since 2013. The team proudly supports Myanmar's growing urban, economic and social development by providing world-class lighting technologies to everyone.

In cooperation with strong technology partners, such as world leading lightning solutions manufacturer Philips Electronics, the team ensures energy efficiency through innovative products such as top-quality Light-Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs, which achieve significant cost savings while relieving the current energy infrastructure at the same time. The vast portfolio covers indoor as

well as outdoor products, ensuring the right equipment for any environment. In 2014 the team already managed several important projects in commercial as well as industrial sectors, providing professional lighting solutions to major customers such as the Sule Shangri-La Hotel and the Myanmar Brewery in Yangon.

While JJ-Pun's Lighting Solutions department provides high-quality lighting products, they are much more than simple distributors. As solution providers, the team works hard to solve any and every of their customers' needs, from the very early design stages all the way to implementations and product maintenance, therefore providing the full cycle of lighting solutions.



Through close partnerships with city development committees, JJ-Pun also helps to bring new light to historical buildings and monuments (in this picture: Mahabandula Park in Yangon's city centre).

JJ-PUN

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PHILIPS



JJ-PUN started its healthcare business in 2012. Working together with world-class technology partners, such as Philips, Analyticon or Convatec, the department had its first major breakthrough in 2013, when they won a Ministry of Health tender for the supply of 135 defibrillators. Today a constantly growing team of professionals led by General Manager Dr Ni Ni San provides products and service to the needs of Myanmar's healthcare industry, covering medical, laboratory and consumables to supply



government, private and diagnostic laboratories and hospitals across the country.

During the South East Asian Games, JJ-PUN provided and installed 120 state-of-the-art units



of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) for ambulances and mobile clinics, ensuring top-quality equipment in case of emergencies. In terms of clinical education activities, JJ-PUN supported the ministries of health and defense with basic life support and hemodynamic monitoring workshops in 2013, inviting renowned critical care specialists from the United States to Myanmar.

JJ-Pun's biomedical engineers are the backbone of the team, satisfying the needs of each and every customer



and helping with installations, maintenance and service of the equipment after sales. Additionally the department employs clinical application specialists, who are ready to support end-users with knowledge and trainings, in order to optimise individual workflows.

Together with their strong technology partners, the whole healthcare team is now looking forward to maintaining their dynamic growth throughout 2014, starting the year with yet another milestone, the installation of top-quality central monitors in the Intensive Care and Coronary Care Unit of Yangon's General Hospital for the Ministry of Health.



Despite a number of high-profile guests, the star of the show at the JJ-Pun Tiostone factory opening ceremony on May 29 was this machine, made by Masa Company of Germany, which produces custom-designed paving stones, concrete blocks and waterfront blocks to prevent erosion along Myanmar's rivers. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Jebsen & Jessen 'truly ASEAN'

CHAIRMAN of Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) and a member of its executive board, Heinrich Jessen is responsible for four of eight regional business units. Under his guidance the company has expanded its presence in ASEAN nations, including a 2011 joint venture with Serge Pun & Associates (SPA) that brought the company into Myanmar. As Mr Jessen explains, Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) had long been interested in expanding into the country, but it was a personal acquaintance with Serge Pun that gave them the confidence to get the ball rolling.

How did you first meet Serge Pun and what does he bring to the partnership with Jebsen & Jessen?
Serge Pun and I have participated on numerous occasions at the ASEAN 100 Forum. In late 2010 we discussed the possibility of forming a joint venture in Myanmar. For Jebsen & Jessen entering Myanmar was part of a strategic desire to fulfil our pan-ASEAN coverage so as to truly provide an integrated and complete regional platform to our customers and our technology partners. In Serge Pun and his groups SPA, FMI and Yoma we found a long-established, deeply rooted, multi-industry partner with a robust track record, an impressive growth vision, and, most important of all, high integrity and strict corporate governance principles.

How does JJ-Pun and its operations in Myanmar fit into the company's larger vision?
The role of JJ-Pun is twofold: to bring the JJSEA group's existing product and services platform to Myanmar; and to actively look for new business opportunities that lie outside of the scope of our business units but share similar industrial characteristics. JJ-Pun Tiostone is the first such "new" venture as its activities are not part of our group's existing portfolio.

JJ-Pun is a 50-50 joint venture between JJSEA and SPA. It is therefore a full member company of both JV partners and enjoys the network and benchmarking opportunities of



Heinrich Jessen
Chairman, Jebsen & Jessen (SEA)

both groups. Corporate back-office support is provided by JJSEA from Singapore whereas local market access is facilitated by SPA. Jebsen & Jessen SEA, headquartered in Singapore, is the ultimate shareholder. JJSEA is a member of the Jebsen & Jessen Family Enterprise which consists of four independent groups, one headquartered in Southeast Asia, one in China, one in Germany and one in Australia. All four groups are managed and owned separately with only the family shareholders being common.

JJSEA is an ASEAN-based industrial group. Our HQ is in Singapore and we

'It was clearly the right decision to enter the market.'

operate 8 business units across 9 out of 10 ASEAN countries. The business units are frontline-autonomous and back-office integrated, all reporting to a three-member executive board in Singapore.

How did you make the decision to enter the Myanmar market? What was, and is, attractive about doing business here?

As it was our strategic desire to widen our ASEAN footprint beyond the 6 countries that we were already active in for several decades, Myanmar had been on our radar screen for a while. We had already for several years been supplying into Myanmar but

this was typically for sporadic, one-off projects managed by our companies in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. It was a similar situation in Cambodia. When we established a legal entity in Cambodia in 2010 with a team based in Phnom Penh we saw that business picked up swiftly. We believed the same would happen in Myanmar, especially in partnership with the SPA Group. This is also what happened and, looking back, it was clearly the right decision to enter the market.

What are the challenges for Myanmar as you see them? On the flip side, what sectors of the economy are most interesting to you?

I believe the key challenge is managing the growth. This goes for our company but also for the government and indeed society at large. Right now everyone is pushing ahead to build and grow and progress and this is both understandable and also very positive. But it is important that the rapid development and changes are buttressed by strong risk management fundamentals, support infrastructure and proper procedures. If they are neglected, growth pains can emerge - for governments and society such growth pains can include phenomena such as growing inequality, increased crime, transport bottlenecks and electricity brown-outs. For companies, they can include inadequate accounting discipline, insufficient understanding of legal risks, financial overleveraging, inability to hire qualified personnel and inflationary tendencies in setting salaries and promoting staff. We saw this in all the countries we operate in at different times, and I believe we will see some of this in Myanmar in times to come as well.

I believe the government in Myanmar is very much aware of these risks. This is why investment in infrastructure (roads, power, construction, etc) as well as education and skills development are critical. Those sectors in the economy that are linked to these investments will be particularly interesting for us in the next few years as we can offer products and services that are relevant in all of them.

What's unique about Jebsen & Jessen, whether globally or in Southeast Asia specifically? What are the roots of its business model, and where do its values come from?

Jebsen & Jessen is unique as a family enterprise in that we have strict ownership and management rules that deal with the tricky issues of succession, fairness, allocation of decision-making power, etc that often lead to dysfunction in family businesses. We are also unique in that we are one of the very few groups that are truly ASEAN, not just with subsidiaries in each ASEAN country but, more importantly, having a truly integrated back-office deployed throughout the region allowing for considerable economies of scale, as well as frontline expertise which our local competitors cannot afford because they do not have multiple country subsidiaries across which their costs can be shared. Finally we are unique because we have found a "best of both worlds" formula between being corporate on the one hand (world-class ERP system, market leadership in our activities, strict corporate governance) and being entrepreneurial on the other (decentralised management organisation, fast decision-making, strong appetite for investment).

JJ-LAPP CABLE

BRANDS THAT POWER THE INDUSTRY

Borne out of a joint-venture between Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) and Lapp Holding Asia, we manufacture within the region, providing the finest German cable technology to our local customers in Myanmar. Our inventory in the region is worth millions of dollars, equipping industry players with a broad range of highest standard cable solutions.

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ÖLFLEX*
Power and control cables



UNITRONIC*
Data communication systems



ETHERLINE*
Data communication systems for Ethernet technology



HITRONIC*
Optical transmission systems



EPIC*
Industrial connectors



SKINTOP*
Cable glands



SILVYN*
Protective cable conduit systems



FLEXIMARK*
Cable marking systems



The Tsingtao, China, office of Jebsen & Co, far left, in 1898.

A history of Jebsen & Jessen

A pioneer in Asian business for over a century



On March 1, 1895, with a notice in the *China Mail*, cousins Jacob Jebsen (1870-1941) and Heinrich Jessen (1865-1931) established in Hong Kong a humble trading partnership. Initially Jebsen and Co. started operations as agents of the M Jebsen Shipping Company, run by Jacob's father. Little did they know their company would come to span the 20th century – and the globe.

When Jacob and Heinrich were born the Chinese Opium Wars had only just ended, putting Hong Kong into British hands and freeing up trade. Though the cultures were different, and the journey long (up to six months to travel from Europe to China), the distances between East and West were overcome by the forward-thinking attitude the company adopted from the 3rd-century creed of the Chinese philosopher Mencius: "Within the four seas, all men are brothers."

The principle served well all

concerned. As agents, Jebsen and Jessen gained a sizable fleet of 14 steamers under the M Jebsen name, while Michael Jebsen now needed to work with only one point of contact rather than several suppliers. The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce gained a founding member; local businesses gained reliable shipping options via a company which refused to traffic in opium; Manchester cotton and German engineering gained new markets. Jebsen and Co opened offices in Shanghai and Gaungzhou then, in 1909, Hamburg.

While the 1911 Revolution overthrew 2000 years of empire in China, it also pushed the company into exploring new vistas – from New York to New Guinea.

But dark days were to come, to the world and the company. While Jacob Jebsen's birthplace, Aabenraa, is today considered part of Denmark, it was at that time part of Germany. When World War I broke out, Jacob, still in

Hong Kong, had his accounts blocked and was unable to leave – then was interned for two years behind barbed wire while his company was liquidated.

With all M Jebsen's ships destroyed, there looked to be little hope of rebuilding. But word came in slowly from old employees, and the company got to work meeting post-war demand, this time in Canton. (Aabenraa, it turned out, moved as well – a League of Nations-sponsored referendum redrew the borders of Germany and Denmark, and new passports – as well as war reparations – were promptly issued).

Heinrich Jessen passed away in 1931; his counterpart, Jacob Jebsen, died a decade later in 1941. It was the end of an era. But the company was capably passed along to its heirs, with Michael Jebsen and, later, brother Hans Jacob Jebsen carrying the company post-war.

Exciting developments followed in rapid succession. Colour film to Hong

Kong in 1952; Volkswagen cars in 1953; Porsche sports cars (designed by the son of the Volkswagen's creator) the next year; travel agency arrangements for Lufthansa starting in the 1960s – success followed success as Jebsen & Jessen brought the world's goods to an eager market.

In 1963 political instability in China and Hong Kong again pushed the company to new shores. Already running liaison offices in Southeast Asia, AP Jessen, one of three Jebsen & Co partners, took on the challenge of a new undertaking: sister company Jebsen & Jessen Southeast Asia. It shifted into manufacturing and engineering works, in tandem with the industrialisation of the region. Later it made major steps into environmentally friendly packaging products. (It also provided the necessary equipment for Singapore's first-ever colour TV broadcasts, for the World Cup final in Munich won by West Germany.)

Between 1989 and 1996, JJSEA

grew 300 percent. In 2003, having steered the company through 40 years of business, founder and chair AP Jessen retired, to be succeeded by Heinrich Jessen, current chairman.

In 2009 JJSEA launched an ambitious "Double-in-Five" plan through organic growth and acquisitions. One way this strategy is paying off is through its expansion into new markets, with JJ-Pun, a 50-50 joint venture with Serge Pun and Associates, opening in Myanmar in 2011.

Active in nine of 10 member nations, with 78 facilities in place, 4300 staff and 20,000 customers, JJSEA's values can be seen in its "three mackerels" insignia. Derived from the heraldic crest of Aabenraa, the image was chosen to represent the company because the mackerel does not naturally float – it must always keep swimming, even to stay in place. It's a sign of the way Jacob and Heinrich's endeavours continue to make waves today.



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JJ-Pun's pump department supports customers through the entire water cycle, from household equipment to large industrial applications.



A joint venture between Jebsen & Jessen (SEA) and Demag Cranes & Components (Germany), we engineer, manufacture and maintain cranes and other material handling products, offering a wide range of products, relevant to a host of applications. We pride ourselves with highest certified quality, intelligent design and solid craftsmanship.

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water fountains on scenic Kandawgyi Lake in close cooperation with YCDC.

Any other projects the team is particularly proud of?

We have completed quite a number of projects across our different business units and all have required the full effort of our very motivated JJ-Pun team. Another project that I am particularly proud of is the introduction of sustainable Crop Science products together with Bayer Crop Science where we educate farmers and dealers to enhance the livelihood of all people involved.

What does community development mean to JJ-Pun?

Giving back to society is one of the core values in the markets we operate in. Therefore we have started an initiative called "Meet a need" where we support communities through humanitarian and environmental activities. It's not only about investment, but also requires our staff to participate actively. That ranges from building kindergartens to planting mangrove forest.

Now that you have been in Myanmar for three years could you give us a sense of what "joint venture" really means to JJ-Pun?

Within JJ-Pun we are ONE company consisting of both Jebsen & Jessen and Serge Pun & Associates.

The spirit is being one company and both shareholders are standing behind this philosophy.