



INSIDE NEWS
In Kungyangon,
voters fight back

INSIDE TIMEOUT
Guarding the garden



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PHOTO: ZARNI PHYO

Up in smoke: \$130 million in seized drugs torched

Officials promised to ramp up their efforts to end the scourge of drugs at a ceremony last week to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, as figures from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) show that opium cultivation and production of heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants continues to rise.

NEWS 4

Pathein to protest minister's sacking

Hundreds expected to turn out this week for protest against firing and arrest of former minister U San Sint.



IN DEPTH 6

Verification program divides Rakhine State

Rakhine groups say it's essential for peace and stability; Muslims fear it will weaken their claims for citizenship.

INVESTIGATION 19

Oil fields highlight land policy failures

Thousands of farmers have been given land use rights inside two oil fields, in violation of land laws – and now they could be forced to leave.

BUSINESS 23

Investors abandon Sittwe economic zone

Conflict in Rakhine State has claimed another victim – an economic zone near the state capital Sittwe to be built by Chinese and South Korean investors.

IN DEPTH 30

Who wins from condo law?

Revisions to draft could see definition of a condominium expanded but most are still likely to miss out on strata title.

NLD tops 3 million signatures

Campaign to remove the military's veto on constitutional change by amending section 436 has garnered the support of more than 3 million, a figure set to rise significantly before the campaign ends on July 19. **NEWS 3**

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Page 2

online editor **Kayleigh Long** |
kayleighlong@gmail.com



THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

To the moon and back

A photo that emerged last week of renowned actress Chan Mi Mi Ko in the sort of khaki fatigues favoured by male municipal electricity board employees attracted a range of negative comments online when posted by reputed news outlets Myanmar Celebrity and Myanmar Cute Girl. Upon doing some further research, it would seem Chan Mi Mi Ko is very much the blushing bride, fresh from her June 9 wedding to U Soe Tun Shein, chair of Myanmar National Prosperity Public Company (MNPPC) and a central executive member of the Finance Requisition & Control Committee at the Myanmar Federation of Mining Association.

Something that seems to have escaped English-language media outlets, and has not been investigated anywhere near thoroughly enough by local publications, is the claim U Soe Tun Shein made at their wedding: for their honeymoon, the pair would enjoy a sojourn on the moon. While that sounds like a joke, it was reported that the pair will undergo six months' training before seeking clearance in the US for their space mission. The return tickets are rumoured to cost US\$15 million apiece.

Soft robotics

A limited-release book about the erotic adventures of a man-robot hybrid soared in popularity last week, with many sharing the link for its PDF download online after the announcement came that the authorities had decided to recall it -

proving, once again, that the best way to make people want something is to ban it.

The book, entitled *The World of the Romancebots* is the second offering from author Aung Yin Nyein, with his first called *Self Sexual-Pleasure* - though please note I can't vouch to the accuracy of the translation on that title. Either way, it sounds like a bona fide page-turner. Aung Yin Nyein moved to defend his latest body of work, hitting back at those who would have him painted a smut-peddler:

"I can say one thing! The World of the Romancebot' is not erotica. I would ask those who condemn Romancebot one question: Did you choose only the erotic pages to read? You cannot judge it without reading the whole book," he said.

Regardless of this, moral panic and pearl-clutching ensued, with columnist Sithu Aung Myint expressing disdain for the book's exploration of extramarital relationships and "unnecessary" amount of explicit detail.

"There are an increasing number of crimes in the country. Some crimes are inhumane and cruel. Some are rape upon under-aged and some child abuse. At this time comes this book when people are full of fear of those crimes," Sithu Aung Myint wrote in *The Irrawaddy*.

I would suggest it might be something of a reach to conflate the perceived upswing in the incidence of sex crimes (which, arguably, is down to improved reporting mechanisms and not symptomatic of broader moral decay) with the release of a nerdy

pulp novella about a horny half-man-half-robot. That said, the release of randy housewife hit *50 Shades of Grey* reportedly brought about a surge in the number of people requiring the help of the emergency services to free themselves after experiments with handcuffs went horribly awry - so maybe the moral panic is somewhat justified.

However, given the relatively

"This is because the drug dealers are rich and are able to persuade all the authorities, including the lawyers."

Police Major Khin Maung Thein of the Myanmar Police Drug Enforcement Division explains why drug dealers escape prosecution during a DVB Debate on June 21

limited prevalence of cyborgs in Myanmar, it's probably not anything to worry about and perhaps, as the author says, if you read the book properly it could be that he's the second coming of Asimov.

Taking a more considered approach, Deputy Information Minister U Ye Htut said he would familiarise himself with the material before passing judgment.

Additional reporting by Lun Min Mang (Haokip)

In brief:

- Untalented child "probably not worth" the private school fees
- Ceasefire process "going really well" despite recent clashes in Shan State, insists consultant
- Claims day notices section in *New Light* actually coded Triad messages
- 40 percent of conversations held at Union about domestic staff, study finds

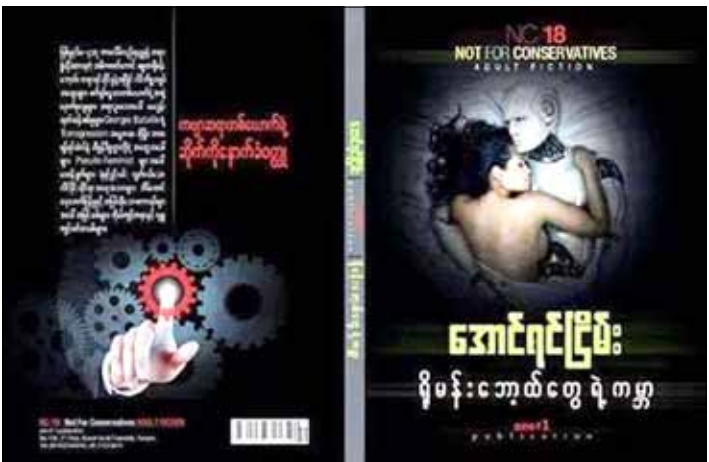
Next week:

Atmosphere in office "somewhat tense" after staff member discovers senior management's blatantly misleading online dating profile



Girl band "The Supermodels" from *NOW!* Magazine.
Photo: Lin Tun (Leopard)

Style Statement
NOW!



The 'Romancebots' cover

Once was Burma...

Archival material provided by Pansodan Gallery

PAPER MONEY. The Japanese pay for Burma's produce and labour in Nipponese currency notes, varying in value from Rs.10 to 1 cent (= 2 pies). These are printed in portable presses which are carried round by Japanese troops and business men. It is very doubtful if there is any check by the Japanese government on the issue of these notes.

This then is the story of the ruthless ruination and exploitation of a once prosperous and happy little country. These are the simple facts. Japanese Co-prosperity means the exploitation of occupied countries in order to benefit Japanese industrialists and the poverty stricken millions of overcrowded Japan.

Excerpt from exile British publication *Burma To-Day*, August 1944

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Thura U Shwe Mann speaks during a Union Solidarity and Development Party meeting on October 16, 2012. Photo: AFP

Thura U Shwe Mann courts ethnic leaders over divisive electoral debate

El Ei Toe Lwin
eieitoelwin@gmail.com

PYIDAUNGSSU Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann has promised to carefully consider the objections of ethnic parties to proportional representation before supporting any changes.

He made the pledge during a meeting with ethnic MPs and members of the National League for Democracy, which also opposes switching from first-past-the-post to propositional representation.

“He said he will consider the views of ethnic minorities. We hope he can stick to what he said but we don’t have high hopes,” said Sai Boe Aung, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Muse from the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP).

Thura U Shwe Mann asked to meet representatives of parties opposed to proportional representation at the end of the parliament session on June 25, ahead of a planned debate on the topic.

U Aung Zin, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from the National Democratic Force (NDF), submitted a proposal on June 5 to change the voting system to proportional representation for Pyithu Hluttaw seats.

However, Thura U Shwe Mann kept the proposal under wraps after the National Brotherhood Federation, an alliance of more than 20 ethnic parties,

sent him an objection letter.

The strong feelings of ethnic minorities were evident when the issue was discussed in the Amyotha Hluttaw earlier this month following a proposal from NDF representative Daw Khin Waing Kyi.

The proposal to change to proportional representation in the upper house was approved with the support of Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) MPs following three days of vigorous debate. After the vote, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint formed a commission to investigate the possibility of switching to a proportional voting system but five NLD representatives appointed to the body have already quit.

‘[The speaker] said he understands [changing the] system could damage the role of ethnic parties.’

U Tun Aung Kyaw
Ethnic Rakhine MP

“[The speaker] said he understands [changing the] system could damage the role of ethnic parties and lead to a deterioration in the peace process,” said U Tun Aung Kyaw, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party.

“But at the same time he said he will allow discussion of the NDF proposal out of respect for the rights of MPs. It means the issue will be debated in the Pyithu Hluttaw soon,” he said.

NLD representative U Win Myint insisted that the party was “ready to reject” proportional representation and believed that those trying to change the system were targeting the NLD.

“They believe the NLD will lose most seats in the 2015 election if they can change the system. I say wait and see who will win in 2015,” he said.

Ethnic parties also perceive the issue as a competition between the USDP and the NLD but warned that they should not be the victim of a fight between the two ethnic Bamar parties, and asked both sides to consider the impact of any change on ethnic minorities.

Meanwhile, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi appears to be using the issue to get closer to her ethnic counterparts. On June 23 she invited MPs from ethnic parties to Nay Pyi Taw’s municipal guesthouse, where many representatives stay while the parliament is in session, to discuss ways to deepen cooperation in future.

CONSTITUTION

Petition drive hits 3 million signatures

NLD says it is pleased with the level of public support for amending section 436, with three weeks remaining in its petition campaign

SANDAR LWIN



sdlstar@gmail.com

A PETITION calling for the removal of the military’s veto over constitutional change has garnered more than 3 million signatures, organisers said last week.

The petition, which demands amendments to section 436 of the constitution, was launched in Nay Pyi Taw on May 27 by the National League for Democracy and the 88 Generation student group. It was preceded by a series of large public rallies organised by both groups, the first of which was held in Yangon on May 17, aimed at building public awareness and support for the campaign.

NLD general secretary U Nyan Win said that as of June 27 more than 3 million people had signed the petition.

The petition is scheduled to continue through to July 19 and the number of signatures is likely to grow considerably before counting wraps up later this month. He said the party had received sheets of signatures that it had yet to count and add to the tally.

“I don’t know the exact number [of signatures]. We are still gathering signature sheets,” U Nyan Win said. “I’m pleased with the amount of signatures we have got so far.”

Under article 436 of the 2008 constitution, constitutional amendment proposals require the support of at least 75 percent of MPs in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and, in almost all cases, a national referendum. As the military holds 25pc of all seats, it gives it a veto over constitutional change.

88 Generation leader Min Ko Naing said the number of signatures to

date was “not very important” as the campaign is not yet finished.

He said the 88 Generation was not as involved in the collection of signatures as the NLD is, and was mostly focused on “the policy” of constitutional change.

The petition campaign has attracted the support of many celebrities, who are encouraging members of the public to sign on.

“We are going from village to village collecting signatures,” said Kyi Phyu Shin, a film director who is volunteering for the campaign.

“I hope we can finish on July 15 so that we can announce the results on July 19,” he said.

Signature collection sheets have also been emailed to migrant workers in foreign countries, who can scan or photograph the completed sheets and send them back.

Those who sign the petition are required to give their name, father’s name, age, National Registration Card number and contact address.

But NLD members have also acknowledged that many of those signing the petition don’t clearly understand the constitution or section 436.

Ko Pyi Kyaw Sint, an executive committee member of the NLD branch in Pyin Oo Lwin, told *The Myanmar Times* that this unfamiliarity with the constitution was slowing the campaign down.

“People join the NLD because they love it, but they don’t know anything about politics ... This is a source of weakness in the campaign,” he said.

The constitution was drafted by Senior General Than Shwe’s military regime and approved at a nationwide referendum in 2008. The commission tasked with overseeing the referendum, led by former chief justice U Aung Toe, said more than 24 million people, or 93.2pc of those eligible, voted in support of the constitution.



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IN BRIEF

'Romancebots' author facing obscenity charge

Police have filed an obscenity charge against the author of a controversial new novel that some are describing as pornography.

Author Aung Yin Nyein has sparked a storm of controversy with his sexually explicit novel, *The World of the Romancebots*, which has since been withdrawn from the market.

Police in Thingangyun township said they had filed a charge against the author under section 292 of the Penal Code, which relates to the sale, hire or distribution of an obscene book. If found guilty Aung Yin Nyein could face up to three months' prison.

Aung Yin Nyein has defended the novel, posting on Facebook that it is "not erotica" and questioning whether critics were judging *World of the Romancebots* without reading the whole book.

While hard copies of the book are no longer available - except at high prices on the black market - PDF versions were quickly made available online for curious readers. The author also courted controversy with his first novel, *Self Sexual-Pleasure*. - *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Khant Lin Oo*

State to offer scholarships to poor students

Poor families are to receive educational and medical help, the President's Office has announced, under a new program aimed at lifting families out of poverty.

According to the June 20 announcement, a group has been formed within the office to draw up detailed plans to support students and patients from poverty-stricken families, including the criteria by which recipients are to be selected, the size of the scholarships and the nature of the medical programs.

Minister for the President's Office U Thein Nyunt will chair the committee, with fellow Minister for the President's Office U Hla Tun as his vice chair. Other members include the deputy ministers for border affairs, social welfare and revenue, and the director general of the President's Office. The committee will also work with state and regional governments and civil society, the order said. - *Sandar Lwin*

Buddhist group to plant trees along highway

A religious group will plant 1000 wide-canopied rain trees along a section of the Yangon-Mandalay Highway, a spokesperson said last week.

The trees, which are to be supplied by the Forestry Department, will be grown from Pyigyitagon roundabout to Tada Oo roundabout at 25-foot (7.6-metre) intervals, said U Hla Win, the head of a missionary group affiliated with U Theik Kha, the sayadaw of Taung Salin Thihe Thit Monastery in Mandalay.

"When Sayadaw U Theik Kha travels for missionary work, he has noticed that not all the plants that grow along Yangon-Mandalay Highway are alive. However, most of the rain trees are alive. That's how he got the idea to grow rain trees there," U Hla Win said, adding that they will be planted in mid-July.

Sayadaw U Theik Kha has also attracted the support of other Buddhist monasteries and the environmental NGO Sein Young So.

"As a first step, we will grow 1000 rain trees. If the sayadaw is willing to grow more and if we have donors, we will keep on growing them [elsewhere in] Mandalay Region," U Hla Win said.

Sein Young So members will water the rain trees during the year to ensure they survive the hot weather. - *Than Naing Soe*

Prisoner committee to consider lobbying for release of monks

YE MON

yeemontun2013@gmail.com

MEMBERS of a committee formed to assess political prisoners say they plan to examine the case of the five monks detained during the raid on Mahasantisukha Monastery in Tarmwe township on June 10.

The five monks have been charged based on a complaint from the Ministry of Religion with disobeying rules of the Buddhist clergy and defaming religion.

5

Monks disrobed and charged after the June 10 raid on Yangon's Mahasantisukha Monastery

"We feel suspicious whether there were hidden political motives [in the raid]. This is the question, and we believe five monks in the case were detained unfairly," said U Nyo Tun from the Former Political Prisoner Society.

"The government claims the monks were arrested for a religious offence ... We feel the authorities have acted without justification," he said.

However, given the irregular schedule of the scrutiny committee's

meetings, U Nyo Tun said he is unsure when he will be able to raise the issue.

"I heard the minister [U Soe Thein] is so busy, and he calls the meeting when he needs," said U Nyo Tun.

The five monks arrested in the raid were U Ottara, U Panyasara, U Thanedara, U Nandiya and U Tejinda.

The committee says there are 33 confirmed political prisoners in jail, while hundreds more are facing politically motivated charges.

Whether or not the committee recommends the monks for release, U Nyo Tun's comments suggest the uproar over the controversial raid is far from over.

The raid has already claimed one scalp, with Minister for Religious Affairs U San Sint sacked on June 19 for failing to heed instructions from the president to resolve the dispute over the monastery in a peaceful manner.

Some influential monks have threatened to protest in the streets against the decision to raid the monastery.

U Nyo Tun said that aggressive police actions like the raid and subsequent arrests could damage Myanmar's reputation abroad.

"The government's unjustified detention has hindered the relaxation of foreign sanctions and is seen [in] contempt by the international community. The authorities should be cautious as the mishandling of this case might be harmful to the country's dignity," he said.



U Ottara (left), a monk disrobed and charged after the raid on Mahasantisukha Monastery,

CORRUPTION SCANDAL

Protests planned for detain

Hundreds expected to join planned protest in support of sacked Minister for Religious Affairs U San Sint



CHERRY THEIN

t.cherry6@gmail.com

SUPPORTERS of former minister for religious affairs U San Sint announced plans to protest in Patheingyi this week over his recent sacking and arrest, as debate raged on Facebook as to whether he is a victim of a government plot.

Residents from seven Ayeyarwady Region townships are expected to

join the June 30 protest in the state capital, which is scheduled to start at 10am. Officials are expected to give approval for the protest on June 29, organiser U Tun Tun Oo said, adding that more than 500 people are likely to participate.

"We will protest whether they permit it or not because we want to send message to the president to reconsider the case," U Tun Tun Oo said.

"We feel that the way [U San Sint] was treated was unfair and an abuse of human rights. It is impossible to make him look like a criminal before he is found guilty."

The protest is thought to be the first held in support of a former general organised by members of the public. However, it is not the first to focus on U San Sint: When he was put forward for the minister for religious affairs position by President U Thein Sein in January 2013, Ayeyarwady Region residents protested and signed positions against the appointment, calling for him to be allowed to remain speaker of the regional parliament.

U San Sint's supporters also want clarification on where the former minister is being held, U Tun Tun Oo said. "We heard that he is detained at the

Ministry of Home Affairs but they confirmed he is not. Then there were rumours he is in Yamethin or Pyinmana but we have no idea exactly where he is."

While state media has not reported on the case, other than to print a notice from President U Thein Sein announcing his sacking on June 19, the story has been extensively covered in private print publications.

On social media, supporters and opponents of the former minister have engaged in fierce debates over the case, but much of the information cited in their arguments remained unconfirmed.

Facebook user Pyi Thu Arr Nar, whose comments had been widely shared on the social networking site last week, said sympathetic media coverage had made many forget about U San Sint's misdeeds.

These included being notorious for bullying his soldiers while in the military and for using rude language toward monks at Shwedagon Pagoda.

"He is a Trojan horse ... What I want to know is, who is the Greek army?" Pyi Thu Arr Nar posted.

Artist U Khin Maung Htwe said U San Sint's dismissal was a political trick linked to next year's election.

"It is like a game of cards ... Now U San Sint lost the game," he said.

However, much of the focus has centred on U San Sint's comments criticising the June 10 raid on Mahasantisukha Monastery, which is the subject of an ownership dispute

MPs agree on religious affairs minister replacement

PARLIAMENT confirmed the elevation of U Soe Win from deputy minister for religious affairs to the minister post on July 24, despite rumours members would object to President U Thein Sein's nominee because of his alleged past links to corruption.

MPs confirmed the appointment on June 25, with U Soe Win replacing U San Sint, who was sacked by the president six days earlier for his handling of the Mahasantisukha Monastery controversy and subsequently charged with corruption.

U Soe Win, who was previously the deputy minister for religious affairs, was a controversial choice be-

cause of his previous role as director of the Ministry of Information's News and Periodicals Enterprise. In 2010-11, K800 million disappeared from the coffers of the *New Light of Myanmar*, and three employees were subsequently put on trial. While it happened on his watch, U Soe Win was never charged.

Under the 2008 constitution, MPs have few grounds to reject a person nominated to a senior government post by the president. It states that a nominee "shall not be refused by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw unless it can clearly be proved that the person concerned does not meet the

qualifications of the Union Minister". Grounds for disqualification include a criminal conviction, links to an illegal organisation or foreign governments, and insolvency.

Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Hla Swe, who had indicated he may object to U Soe Win's appointment, did not attend the session.

Questioned about his non-attendance later, he said, "I did not reject [the nomination] because I didn't want to."

- *Ei Ei Toe Lwin, translation by Thiri Min Htun*



arrives at court for a hearing in Yangon on June 20. Photo: AFP

ed U San Sint

in the Ayeyarwady Region capital Pathein on June 30

‘[U San Sint] is a Trojan horse ... What I want to know is, who is the Greek army?’

Pyi Thu Arr Nar
Facebook user

between the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and a prominent sayadaw. Seven monks were detained following the raid and five were charged and disrobed.

While many members of the public are sympathetic to U San Sint because of his opposition to the raid, Yangon businessman U Soe Moe Aye, 50, said he believed the former minister “got what he deserved”.

He said U San Sint’s case was not unique and governments in Myanmar have often used the fig leaf of corruption to remove someone who does not agree to toe the line.

However, that is no reason to be sympathetic, he said.

“We do not know all the details ... but I am very sure that [his supporters] are just making this case into a soap opera,” he said.

“If you have to say whether he is good or bad, I bet his bad deeds are

more. At the risk of stereotyping, most army men are corrupt.”

Nevertheless, interest in the case remains high. One resident in Maubin township said he planned to join the protest out of curiosity rather than any strong feelings for the former minister.

“The present political climate is getting interesting. The actors in the plot are debating each other and I’m curious to see who will be the winner,” said civil servant U Than Htike Aung, 40.

The decision to protest comes after MPs agreed to amend the peaceful protest law, with advocates of the changes saying they would make it harder for local officials to reject applications.

Heritage listing to protect Pyu cities

CHERRY THEIN
t.cherry6@gmail.com

THE listing of three ancient Pyu cities as World Heritage sites will help to ensure they survive the threats posed by development, an official involved in the process said.

The World Heritage Committee, meeting in Qatar on June 22, granted endangered status to the remains of the Pyu cities, which include palace citadels, brick Buddhist stupas and burial grounds. Parts of the ancient cities have not yet been excavated.

Sri Ksetra in Bago Region’s Pyay township, Hanlin in Sagaing Region’s Shwebo township and Beikthano in Magwe Region’s Taungdwingyi township were recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for their unique historical and cultural status.

The brick-walled and moated cities of the Pyu were built by a culture that flourished for more than 1000 years, between 200 BC and 900 AD, according to UNESCO.

U San Win, an archaeologist who led the team that drafted the nomination dossier for the cities, told *The Myanmar Times* last week that the importance of the sites was not widely known, even in Myanmar, and this made international recognition all the more important.

“We had a very hard time in the past because the government and public weren’t really interested in culture. We tried to negotiate with the local authorities to remove development projects and plantation, or even garbage near the sites,” said U San Win, a former director general in the Ministry of Culture who has led the push for the cities to be listed since 1998.

He said listing was both prestigious and difficult to attain.

“We expected at best we would have to wait another two years to be listed,” he said, since experts from the International Council for Monuments and Sites had recommended a two-year wait after an assessment visit last year.

Development near the sites will be restricted, but agencies can operate tourist attractions outside the zone,

management,” he said.

He also warned that UNESCO could withdraw the listing if its standards are not maintained.

The government will receive technical and material assistance from UNESCO for the cities’ preservation. Myanmar ratified the World Heritage Convention in April 1994.

Ba Bwa Thar, an amateur archaeologist and historian, said the three listed cities are the most significant of



A worker carries material excavated during a dig at the ancient Pyu city of Sri Ksetra in Bago Region’s Pyay township. Photo: Supplied

he said, adding that it would be necessary to raise public awareness of the country’s cultural heritage by offering training programs. “Local residents can protect the sites better than we can, as well as taking advantage of greater job opportunities from site

the 32 Pyu-era sites around the country. He said he hopes listing would encourage further study of the period.

“Pyu structures are priceless for finding out more about the history of the country and the foundations of our contemporary society,” he said.

Myanmar better prepared after Nargis, deputy minister says

AYE SAPAY PHYU
ayephyu2006@gmail.com

MYANMAR is becoming more disaster resistant, attendees at the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangkok were told last week.

“With the wake-up call of Cyclone Nargis, we accelerated building capacities for disaster risk management, covering risk reduction to emergency response and recovery,” said Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Phone Swe.

At the conference more than 3000 regional delegates adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and Pacific 2014. It calls on governments to build up the resilience of local communities to disasters by enabling them to work more closely with local authorities. And it

states there needs to be a strengthening of voluntary, youth and civil society participation in disaster risk planning.

U Phone Swe described to the conference the progress Myanmar had made so far. “We organise disaster response drills and simulation exercise at all levels with community participation. We also note the importance of a community response mechanism and the strength of a youth force in disaster management,” he said.

The declaration also highlighted the importance of creating a stronger disaster risk reduction strategy, the so-called “HFA2” after 2015.

The existing Hygo Framework for Action (HFA) is a global agreement on disaster risk reduction signed by 168 countries including Myanmar since 2005 for a period of 10 years.

Currently Myanmar’s disaster risk reduction planning is based on the 2012 Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction and U Phone Swe acknowledged it not been fully implemented.

“Some of the priority projects of the Action Plan have been implemented, some are initiated and some are under implementation. Some priority projects are yet to be taken up,” he said.

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Police inquiry may breach media law, says press council



YE MON

yeemontun2013@gmail.com

SPECIAL Branch officers have broken media laws by questioning newspaper executives about their publications, budgets and staff, a Press Council official says. The accusation comes as the officers, citing national security, have approached a number of media industry figures.

Police Lieutenant Nyi Nyi Than, of the Yangon Region Special Branch, said the force had to seek information relating to the financial status of the media industry. "These were just discussions, not interrogations," he added.

'This act is an offence against the law. It is a disgrace to our freedom, human rights and democracy.'

U Kyaw Min Swe
Chief editor, *The Voice Daily*

Ko Aung Soe, editor of *The Voice Daily* newspaper, told *The Myanmar Times* that Special Branch had asked him about the paper's circulation and other background information.

"Some journals are successful businesses and some are not, and they asked me why those that are not continue to publish, and where their financing comes from," he said.

Ko Aung Win Tun, chief of the administration department of *Unity*, said he was asked about the paper's profits, losses, expenses and sources of income. "I was also asked about

the editorial team and journalists. They asked me the name of the publisher, the journal's current position and the number of staff," he said.

U Kyaw Min Swe, chief editor of *The Voice Daily*, wrote on his Facebook page that daily newspapers operating at a loss had long been under scrutiny from Special Branch. "In my opinion, this is insulting to our standards and prestige. I assume that this act is an offence against the law. It is disgrace to our freedom, human rights and democracy," he said.

Special Branch had failed to inform the Interim Press Council about its activities as it should have, said council member U Thiha Saw. Under media law, article 21 of chapter 8 states if a journalist were suspected of a breach of ethics, the aggrieved party shall have the right to complain to the council first. Special Branch had violated this law, he said.

"We have a complaints committee. If they want to do something, they can write to the committee, but they did not. We are going to ask them why," he said, adding that even the former military regime had confined itself to asking about newspapers' politics.

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun said last week that the ministry had invited the media to discuss their operations, including the question of why some newspapers succeeded and some did not.

But U Kyi Myint, of Myanmar Lawyers Network, said, "SB deals with national security, and this is none of their business."

Special Branch has reportedly invited representatives from *The Voice Daily*, *Thandaw Sint Journal*, *Unity*, *Popular* and *Myanmar Post* for discussions, and that invitations would also be extended to all Yangon-based papers, including *The Myanmar Times*.

The Press Council released a statement on June 25 expressing its concern and calling on the government to reveal who ordered Special Branch to target publications and why.

Citizenship program reinforce

Government uses carrot of possible citizenship to encourage Muslims to agree to "Ben

BILL
O'TOOLE



botoole12@gmail.com

THIRD time lucky or doomed to fail? That's the question observers of Rakhine State are asking after the Ministry of Immigration on June 15 launched its latest program - "citizenship verification" - aimed at encouraging Muslims in Rakhine State to register for some citizenship rights.

The proviso is that they list their ethnicity as "Bengali" rather than "Rohingya", and the program is reinforcing the already clear divisions over the issue, both within the state and more broadly.

While the program is being touted by the government as the first step for thousands of Muslims living in Rakhine to obtain limited citizenship rights, the perception among at least some Muslims in Rakhine is that accepting the Bengali tag will take them further away from the prospect of citizenship. They argue it suggests they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

But some are still likely to take up the government's offer, just as some Muslim households in Rakhine State agreed to participate in the census without listing their ethnicity as Rohingya.

Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* from a registration center in Myebon township on June 26, a Ministry of Immigration spokesperson said more than one-sixth of the 3000 Muslims in the Myebon area had applied to register. The figure could not be independently confirmed last week.

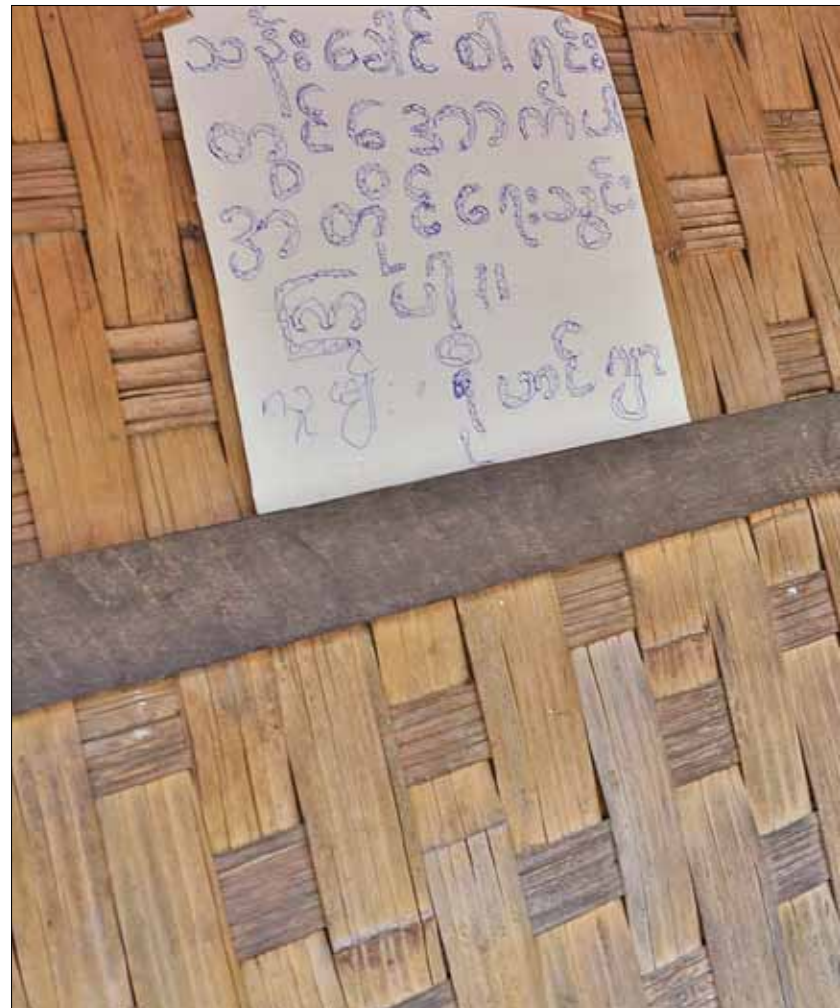
The spokesperson said there would be no compromise on the question of ethnicity.

"They need to accept that they are Bengalis," he said. "If they didn't accept themselves as Bengalis they can't make the [citizenship verification] registration."

This is not the first time the ministry has attempted such a program. Previous efforts, in November 2012 and then one year later, just before the SEA Games, stalled because Muslim communities refused to cooperate, the spokesperson said.

A number of Muslims in Rakhine told *The Myanmar Times* that they did not expect this year to be any different.

"People here always refuse to be



A Muslim woman sits in the doorway of her house in Sittwe township on April 1 shortly

registered" as Bengali, said a Muslim community organiser in Sittwe, who did not want to be named.

"After two years of crisis I have no trust in the government," said U Aung Win, a Muslim activist based in Sittwe. "They will never give us full citizen rights."

U Khin Maung Myint, a member of the National Democratic Party for Development, a political party that describes itself as representing the Ro-

hingya, expressed a similar sentiment.

"They're trying to make every Rohingya in Rakhine State into an illegal immigrant," he said. "It has nothing to do with citizenship."

U Khin Maung Myint, who is based in Yangon, said he and other Muslim civil society groups have been warning the Ministry of Immigration that the citizenship verification program is flawed since the first attempt in 2012. He said it is "wrong" that Bengali is the only ethnicity offered.

"We told [The Ministry of Immigration] that the form is wrong from the very beginning, our people do not want to participate."

Several observers, including U Khin Maung Myint, said the process will only make the already tense situation in the state worse.

"The authorities are essentially coercing the Rohingya to identify as Bengali, hanging access to citizenship over their heads, and it's bound

18%

Muslims in Myebon township who have registered for the citizenship verification program, according to the government

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gali” ethnic designation – but so far there are few takers



before the arrival of census enumerators. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

However, Rakhine groups say the program is crucial for bringing peace and stability to the state. "It's a necessity. Because it is the government's obligation to implement the 1982 Citizenship Law, I support their implementation," said U Aye Maung, a parliamentarian from the Rakhine

"We would like to engage in practical issues," he said, "not fictional ones." — *Additional reporting by Nandar Aung and Ye Mon*

Ma Ba Tha pledges political independence

“The interfaith marriage law is not designed to help groups get votes



A senior Buddhist monk talks during an event to mark the first anniversary of the founding of Ma Ba Tha in Yangon on June 21. Photo: AFP

‘The interfaith marriage law is not designed to help groups get votes in the 2015 election.’

Ashin Dalwiyedar Biwuntha
Ma Ba Tha member

“Those objecting to the interfaith

However, several prominent Ma Ba Tha members, including deputy leader Sitagu Sayadaw, U Wirathu and U Parmaukkha, have been vocal critics of the raid and lent support to five monks who were subsequently charged.

Sangha committee rules on 70 monastery ownership disputes

The appeals are heard by a 15-member sub-committee of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee. Members are drawn from the State Central Working Committee, which comprises 400 monks, including the 47 members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka.

U Nyanissara, a monk who holds

"In general, arguments happen when monks put personal possessions ahead of the Buddha's teachings," he said. — *Aung Kyaw Min*

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Head Office : No. 04-05, Building (A), Bo MyatHtun Condo, Corner of Maharbandoola Rd and Bo Myat Htun St, Botahtaung Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. T : +951-297045, 297606, 396787, 3v98844, 8610444, 8610455 F : +951-297606 E : mkt.xenoncoltd@gmail.com

MYANMARTIMES

Managing Director, Editor-in-Chief MTE & MTM
Ross Dunkley
rsdunkley@gmail.com
Chief Operating Officer – Wendy Madrigal
madrigalmcm@gmail.com
Deputy Chief Operating Officer – Tin Moe Aung
tinmoeaung.mcm@gmail.com

EDITORIAL
Editor MTE – Thomas Kean
tdkean@gmail.com
Editor MTM – Sann Oo
sannoo@gmail.com
Chief of Staff – Zaw Win Than
zawwinthan@gmail.com
Editor Special Publications – Myo Lwin
myolwin286@gmail.com

Features Editor MTE – Douglas Long
dlong125@gmail.com
Business Editor MTE – Jeremy Mullins
jeremymullins7@gmail.com
World Editor MTE – Fiona MacGregor
fionamacgregor@hotmail.co.uk
The Pulse Editor MTE – Whitney Light
light.whitney@gmail.com
Sport Editor MTE – Tim McLaughlin
timothy.mclaughlin3@gmail.com

Chief Sub Editor MTM – Aye Sapay Phyu
Business & Property Editor MTM –
Tin Moe Aung
tinmoeaung.mcm@gmail.com
Timeout Editor MTM – Moh Moh Thaw
mohthaw@gmail.com

MCM BUREAUS
Mandalay Bureau Chief – Stuart Alan Becker
stuart.becker@gmail.com
News Editors (Mandalay) –
Khin Su Wai, Phyo Wai Kyaw
Nay Pyi Taw Bureau Chief – Hsu Hlaing Htun
hsuhlainghtun.mcm@gmail.com

DIGITAL/ONLINE
Digital Division Director – Bridget Di Certo
bridgetdicerto@gmail.com
Online Editors – Kayleigh Long, Thet Hlaing
kayleighelong@gmail.com, thet202@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHICS
Director – Kaung Htet
Photographers –
Boothee, Aung Htay Hlaing, Thiri

PRODUCTION
zarnicj@gmail.com
Art Directors – Tin Zaw Htway, Ko Pxyo
Assistant Head of Production – Zarni

MCM PRINTING
uhtaymaung@gmail.com
Printing Manager – Htay Maung
Factory Administrator – Aung Kyaw Oo (3)
Factory Foreman – Tin Win

SALES & MARKETING
ads.myanmaretimes@gmail.com
National Sales Director – Jesse Gage
jesse.m.gage@gmail.com
Deputy National Sales Directors –
Chan Tha Oo, Nay Myo Oo,
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Classifieds Manager – Khin Mon Mon Yi
classified.mcm@gmail.com

ADMIN, FINANCE & SYSTEMS
Chief Financial Officer – Mon Mon Tha Saing
monmonthasaing@gmail.com
Deputy HR Director – Khine Su Yin
khinesu1988@gmail.com
Publisher – Dr Tin Tun Oo, Permit No: 04143

Director of IT/System –
Kyaw Zay Yar Lin
kyawzayarlin@gmail.com

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
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Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd.
www.mmtimes.com

Head Office: 379/383 Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar.
Telephone: (01) 253 642, 392 928
Facsimile: (01) 254 158

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

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

Mandalay, Imphal flight launch delayed

ZAW WIN THAN
zawwinthan@gmail.com
BILL O'TOOLE
botoole12@gmail.com

THE launch of a planned air route between Mandalay and Imphal in northern India has been delayed while logistical details are finalised with Indian authorities, a Golden Myanmar Airlines official said last week.

Managing director U Aung Gyi said the twice-a-week service was originally due to launch on June 27. Golden Myanmar is offering the flights in co-operation with Indian company KB Enterprises.

“We postponed it until further notice,” U Aung Gyi said. “[When it launches] we will operate two charter flights a week and passengers will get visas on arrival in Imphal.”

The delays are thought to be related to immigration rules for incoming passengers.

“We will definitely launch the Mandalay-Imphal flight after some preparations for the issuing of visas on arrival for Myanmar passengers,” he said, adding that visa on arrival at Imphal would only be available for Myanmar citizens and other nationalities would have to get a visa in advance.

Sailas Thangal, deputy chief of

mission at the Indian embassy in Yangon, said the Indian government supports the route expansion and hopes there will be enough passengers flying between Imphal and Mandalay to make it “commercially viable”.

“This is all part of our [project] to [improve] connectivity between India and Myanmar,” he said. “I hope [flights] will start very soon and it will be satisfying for all of us.”

However, he said the details of who would qualify for visa on arrival are still being finalised.

“I don’t know if they’re going to include a wider range of passengers [for visa on arrival]”

While Imphal is not a major tourism destination, U Aung Gyi said there are significant “people-to-people” links between Mandalay and several states in northeastern India, including Assam and Manipur, of which Imphal is the capital.

“Some Assamese have relatives in Mandalay so this new route will be very useful for people from the two cities.”

Imphal’s airport was upgraded to international status in late 2013 and is being rapidly expanded as part of plans to turn it into a regional hub, with flights to Thailand and Singapore as well as Myanmar.



Workers at the Essar port construction site in Paletwa, Chin State, in January. Photo: Supplied/The Kaladan Movement

India stands by controversial Kaladan transport project

Civil society groups call for clarity over long-promised environmental impact assessments on river, road project

BILL O'TOOLE
botoole12@gmail.com

AN INDIAN embassy official has reaffirmed the country’s commitment to a long-delayed infrastructure project that will connect Chin and Rakhine states with northeastern India, despite community objections and concerns.

However, he also revealed that no environmental impact assessments are likely to be conducted for the project, despite Myanmar government officials promising in 2012 that these assessments would take place.

The Kaladan Multi-Model Transit Transport Project aims to create a combined highway and waterway route to transport goods from India’s landlocked northeastern states into the Bay of Bengal through Chin and Rakhine states.

“The idea is to provide connection in the most isolated parts of [both] countries,” said Sailas Thangal, deputy head of mission at the Indian embassy in Yangon. “It will have enormous benefit for the people living on the river.”

Not all stakeholders are convinced. A group of civil society organisations based in western Myanmar and collectively known as the Kaladan Movement say they have been pushing the governments of both countries for answers on the Kaladan Multi-Model Transit Transport Project since work began in 2008.

“The Kaladan Movement has made

public recommendations to the governments of Burma and India in previous statements and reports ... but have never heard a direct response to our recommendations by anyone from the Ministry of Transport,” Salai Bawi Pi, country program officer of the Chin Human Rights Organization, told *The Myanmar Times*.

The project will see Sittwe port redeveloped and dramatically expanded so it can handle 20,000-tonne vessels, up from 2000-3000 tonnes at present. Dredging will be conducted around the port and along a 158-kilometre [98 mile] stretch of the Kaladan River from Sittwe to Paletwa in Chin State, where a jetty will be built for transferring cargo to road transport. From Paletwa, a 129km [80 mile] highway will be built to the border with India’s Mizoram state. The cost of construction – estimated at US\$120 million – will be covered by India.

India and Myanmar first signed an agreement to begin construction in April 2008. The Chin Human Rights Organization says that since then neither government has made any effort to consult or educate the thousands of Myanmar citizens whose lives will be affected by the project.

In a statement released on June 11, the Kaladan movement urged both government and their private sector partners to “take this opportunity to make public important information about the implementation of the

Kaladan project regarding its policies on human rights, indigenous rights, community consultation, environmental impact assessment, local hiring and labour conditions”.

Salai Bawi Pi said it was clear that residents had not given their consent to the project because locals in Chin State



A fisherman throws his net into the Kaladan River. Photo: Supplied

“have no idea about the route of the planned highway”.

In particular, activists say both governments need to commission an independent environmental impact assessment on the possible ecological effects of building the highway and dredging large sections of the Kaladan River.

“In 2012, in response to pressure from ... local groups, Burma’s Minister

for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung and Presidential adviser U Ko Ko Hlaing both made public statements promising that proper impact assessments would be conducted for the Kaladan project. To date it appears that this promise has not been fulfilled,” Sam Cartmell, a program officer for the CHRO, told *The Myanmar Times*.

But Mr Thangal said that an environmental impact assessment for the dredging phase of the project was unlikely to happen because those in charge of the project had deemed it unnecessary.

“To be frank, the environmental impact assessment has not been done because this is a minimum intervention. I’m not saying it has no impact, but it’s minimal.”

He said he was unsure whether an assessment would be conducted for the highway construction phase.

Delays to the project, meanwhile, have been the result of disagreements between the Indian, Myanmar and Rakhine State governments, he said.

Mr Thangal admitted that the Indian government and other groups had not done enough to reach out to communities and explain the benefits of the project and had redoubled its efforts to do so.

“We have tried to work out how we can do it in a better way,” he said. “Yes, we should have done [consultations] earlier on – it has not been done [and] now we are trying to do it.”



A police officer stands in front of a pile of burning drugs in Yangon on June 26. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Police destroy drugs worth \$130m – but production rising

WA LONE
walone14@gmail.com

THE government destroyed more than US\$130 million worth of narcotics seized in police raids to mark the 27th anniversary of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26.

The ceremony was held as the United Nations said cultivation of opium and production of amphetamine-type stimulants was growing in Myanmar and called on the international community to give more support to anti-drug efforts.

About \$9.5 million of heroin, meth-amphetamines, marijuana and a dozen other kinds of illegal drugs seized in lower Myanmar during 2013 was destroyed in Yangon. Similar ceremonies were held in Mandalay and Taunggyi, where drugs valued at \$33.15 million and \$88.09 million respectively were burned.

Representatives of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United States’ Drug Enforcement Administration and the European Union were invited to view the destruction in Yangon.

Police Colonel Win Naing said the government had extended its 15-year eradication plan introduced in 1999 for

another five years. However, almost 58,000 hectares of poppy fields, producing 600 tonnes of heroin, still remains, well above the 21,500 hectares recorded in 2006. “We will continue to eliminate these in the next five-year plan, until 2019,” he said.

Police Lieutenant Myo Thant said police had made more drug-related

‘We’ve arrested people for distribution and sales, but not the wholesalers.’

Police Lieutenant Myo Thant
Myanmar Police Force

arrests in 2013 than in previous years, especially in Yangon Region. However, he conceded that those at the top of the supply chain were able to act with impunity.

“We’ve arrested people for distribution and sales, but not the whole-

salers,” he said. According to the UNODC, drug production in Myanmar increased by 13 percent in 2013 and it remained the largest opium poppy-growing country in Southeast Asia, and the second largest in the world after Afghanistan.

UNODC said in its World Drugs Report, released the same day, that methamphetamine use continued to increase but heroin “remains a major drug of concern in several countries”, including Myanmar.

“The drug market in East and Southeast Asia is dynamic and indications are it is expanding significantly,” Jeremy Douglas, UNODC regional representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, said in a statement. “States in the region continue to struggle with the law enforcement, justice and health implications, and need to be supported by the global community.”

UNODC also called for a stronger focus on the health and human rights of all drug users, particularly those who inject drugs.

“There remain serious gaps in service provision. In recent years only one in six drug users globally has had access to or received drug dependence treatment services each year,” said UNODC executive director Yury Fedotov.

State insurer accused of short-changing crash victims



khaingsabainyein@gmail.com

TWO injured passengers who survived the deadly Yazarmin bus crash last May are demanding increased compensation, claiming that their injuries were worse than those admitted by the insurers.

State-run Myanmar Insurance last week paid compensation to 21 injured victims of the May 12 accident, which occurred on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway, killing 16 passengers. The pair say they each suffered two injuries, but the information provided to Myanmar Insurance related to only one injury, requiring less compensation than they say they deserve.

Officials from Myanmar Insurance have told the two passengers that it will ask the hospital about the apparent discrepancy between their medical records and the information given to the insurer.

“Myanmar Insurance was created to pay compensation in the event of loss. In this case, we paid the compensation according to the documents sent by the hospital. If there is a difference, they can submit a complaint to us. If the hospital confirmed that there is a disparity between the medical records and the slip sent to us, we will pay the compensation they should get,” said U Aye Min Thein, managing director of Myanmar Insurance.

“My medical records show that I injured my forearm and rib, but the slip sent to Myanmar Insurance just mentions my forearm. I didn’t get all the compensation I should get,” said Tarmwe township resident Daw Sandar Htay, who was injured in the accident. She says the difference would amount to nearly K1 million.

U Win Win Oo, whose son, Ko

Kyaw Si Thu, was injured in the crash, is also claiming his family received inadequate compensation. “Nay Pyi Taw hospital told me my son had injured his back and his head. We received K150,000 in compensation for a head injury alone. My son is still receiving medical treatment. We had to sell our cow to pay for it, and we’ve spent about K1 million,” he said.

Myanmar Insurance assistant general manager U Lwin Oo said, “Compensation is calculated according to percentages. Someone suffering a broken rib receives 30 percent

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Compensation paid to the families of passengers who died in the May 12 bus crash on the Nay Pyi Taw highway

of the amount awarded to the family of a deceased passenger, which is K3 million. Compensation starts from K150,000 and goes up to K1.4 million. In this case, 13 people have received K150,000 and one has received K1.4 million. Others received between K300,000 to K800,000.”

U Lwin Oo said the company had to pay out on the basis information provided in the “slip” recording injuries, or risk being accused of misusing state funds.

“The number of injured is 26, but we have been able to pay only 21 people because the others are still receiving medical treatment and we have to await a full statement of their injuries,” said managing director U Aye Min Thein.

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Meiktila Muslims seek permission to use mosques

SI THU LWIN
sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com

DISPLACED Muslims sheltering in relief camps in Meiktila have requested permission from the authorities to attend prayers in more of the town’s mosques ahead of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting, which began on June 29.

So far the authorities have given permission to pray in six of the town’s 13 mosques but Muslims say this is not enough.

The Myanmar Muslim Association has asked the district administration office to let them pray in other mosques that were only lightly damaged during violence in March 2013.

“If they permit it now we still have time to clean up [the mosques] and hold prayers,” said U Myo, a Muslim from the relief camp set up in a transportation and communication centre in Meiktila.

“Praying at the mosque is more meaningful than praying at the refugee camp and more pleasant. During



Muslim children read the Koran at a relief camp in Meiktila in mid-May. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

this period, we stay at the mosque the whole day and say prayers,” said U Phoe Sate, a displaced Muslim man sheltering in the relief camp situated in the district stadium.

More than 10,000 people were displaced by communal violence in Meiktila in May 2013. Of these, around one-third are still living in relief camps, of which there are five.

– Translation by Khant Lin Oo



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MPs remove punishments from NGO bill

Finalised law is the most “democratic” to date because of extensive consultations with local and foreign organisations, MP says

EI EI TOE LWIN
eieitoelwin@gmail.com

A NEW law on the registration of civil society organisations contains neither offences nor penalties, and is intended to strengthen the organisations, NGOs have been told. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw passed the law on June 25, superseding the former law, which contained penalties for violations and made it difficult for NGOs to register.

The adoption of the law follows negotiations between civil society representatives, parliament, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Union Attorney General's Office. It enables the representative of an organisation to apply for registration

either at regional level, for which the registration fee will be K30,000, or at national level, for a K100,000 fee. Organisations registered at the national level are entitled to operate throughout the country.

“The most significant fact about the new law is that we have removed all offences and punishments in order to strengthen civil society organisations,” said U Tin Maung Oo, secretary of the Public Affairs Management Committee, which coordinated the drafting of the law.

The first draft was written by the committee and the Ministry of Home Affairs and released to the public in July 2013. It sparked an outcry from civil society organisations,

particularly because it made registration mandatory and members of any unregistered group would face a fine,

‘We have removed all offences and punishments in order to strengthen civil society.’

U Tin Maung Oo
Public Affairs Management
Committee secretary

a three-year prison term or both.

International groups also criticised the draft, with Human Rights Watch warning the legislation would lead to a clampdown on civil society.

“The passage of this law in its current form would be a hugely damaging blow to Burmese civil society,” it said.

Following extensive meetings with civil society representatives, MPs agreed in October to reject the draft and rewrite it, a decision that resulted in the current version.

However, as recently as the first week of June local civil society groups were still expressing concern over some elements of the law, particularly one rule, later

removed, that would have allowed some organisations to only operate in a single township.

U Tin Maung Oo said the extensive consultations with stakeholders made the law the most “democratic” passed by parliament to date, and noted that it had been endorsed by the European Union and ASEAN. If problems emerged MPs would address them, he said. “We can amend the law after six or 12 months in the light of experience,” he said.

The ministries concerned should now enact the necessary by-laws in the next 90 days on the basis further consultations with local and international NGOs, he added.

— Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Prominent activist charged over protest

SI THU LWIN
sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com

FARMERS' Union chief and prominent activist Daw Su Su Nway is facing legal action for leading a protest against land confiscations in Pyin Oo Lwin. Township police filed the suit following a protest march of about 1500 farmers from 37 villages in the Mandalay Region town on June 16.

Police confirmed on June 23 that they had charged her under section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Procession law for leading a protest without prior approval but declined to provide further details. She faces a maximum six-month jail term if found guilty.

The Myanmar Farmers' Union, which helped organise the protest, had submitted an application to

march through the town but withdrew it after the authorities refused to give permission. The police then obstructed the procession when it set off from Pyin Oo Lwin's Nyan Taw stadium, union officials said.

“We peacefully expressed the farmers' feeling about the seized farmland to let people in Pyin Oo Lwin know,” Daw Su Su Nway said. The farmers are demanding that the issue be dealt with quickly so they can plant during the rainy season.

“On the day after the protest, the police came to the house where I was staying to summon me, but without the necessary documents,” said Daw Su Su Nway.

She said that if she is arrested she will not apply for bail or sign any undertaking to refrain from political activities.

Daw Su Su Nway rose to prominence in 2005 when she sued local officials in Kawhmu for forcing her and other villagers to work on a road construction project. She was subsequently countersued and sentenced to 18 months in prison.

In August 2007 she led demonstrations against an increase in fuel prices and was re-arrested in November of that year, after the military had crushed the protests and killed scores of civilians, and was sentenced



An official from the Pyin Oo Lwin township administration office attempts to stop Daw Su Su Nway (right) from leading a June 15 protest in the town. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

to 12-and-a-half years' jail. This was reduced by four years on appeal and she was freed in an amnesty in January 2012.

The Pyin Oo Lwin farmers have made three main demands: the restoration of seized farmlands; the resolution of farmland problems under the 2012 Farmland Law; and timely action on acts of violence against

farmers. Union members say they plan further protests if there is no response after two weeks.

The charge against her comes after Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann announced on June 18 that parliament had approved changes to the peaceful protest law that would mean officials can no longer ban demonstrations

without proper justification. The changes are likely to be welcomed by human rights groups and activists, who argued that the previous law was unworkable, although it remains unclear how closely local officials will adhere to the amended law. — Translation by Zar Zar Soe

MORE ON NEWS 16

12.5

Length of jail term, in years, that Daw Su Su Nway received for her role in 2007 protests against fuel price increases

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Maritime University grads missing out on jobs: MP

THAN HTOO
thanhtoo.npt@gmail.com

SOME graduates from Myanmar Maritime University have complained that they are unemployable despite studying for five years because they are unable to attain a new internationally required qualification.

U Myint Htun, a representative on the Amyotha Hluttaw's Committee of Public Complaints and Appeals, said in parliament last week that Bachelor of Engineering graduates majoring in Marine Electrical Systems and Electronics have not been able to get jobs on ships since the International Maritime Organisation passed the Manila Convention in 2010, which made it mandatory to hold an additional Electro Technical Officer (ETO) qualification.

“Although the students ... spend five years learning the subjects prescribed by Myanmar Maritime University, they become jobless after graduating,” U Myint Htun said.

Deputy Minister of Transportation U Han Sein said it would be both expensive and difficult to set up the training centre, estimating the cost at about K800 million (about US\$829,000).

He said it would also be difficult to get qualified staff because they can earn higher salaries in the private sector.

“There is difficulty in getting qualified lecturers like an experienced chief engineer, a high-voltage certified electrical engineer, an electronic engineer and a certified computer engineer to teach at the training centre,” he said.

For now the ministry plans to send graduates who major in Marine Electrical Systems and Electronics to ETO training centres abroad.

Meanwhile, two private training bodies, the Myanmar Maritime Engineer Association and the Uniteam Marine Training Centre, plan to open training centres in Myanmar but are waiting for study materials to arrive, he said. — Translation by Leanne Aung



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A flock of sarus cranes gathers at Indawgyi Lake. Groups of more than two or three of the birds are rare in northern Myanmar, according to Flora and Fauna International. Photo: Bjorn Olesen/FFI

New bird sightings reported at Inle, Indawgyi lakes

PYAE THET PHYO

pyaethetphyo87@gmail.com

ABOUT 50 bird species were recorded for the first time at Inle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in 2013-14, its administrator reported last week.

"We knew these species were in Myanmar but they had not yet been recorded in the Inle area," sanctuary administrator U Sein Tun said, adding that they were spotted between April 2013 and March 2014.

Altogether 255 woodland birds and 90 wetland birds have been spotted at the sanctuary.

A bird-watching tower, or "hide", overlooking the lake was used to record new bird species. Bird watchers also walked through the sanctuary to find new species.

U Sein Tun said more discoveries

are likely as research programs grow – and not only birds.

"There are many kinds of species in this area that we haven't recorded yet," he said.

50

Bird species spotted for the first time at Inle Lake in 2013

"The new [bird] species we have now recorded are the result of collaboration between our sanctuary

and local and foreign bird experts. We expect to also find more rare fish species that are endemic to Myanmar and rare orchid species."

To date 59 fish species, three turtle species, 94 butterfly species, and about 25 amphibian and reptile species have been recorded at the lake.

Although the new sightings appear to suggest wildlife in the sanctuary is thriving, the surrounding area remains under great threat, according to environmental experts.

One of the country's premier tourist attractions, Inle Lake now covers less than half the area it once did, and is threatened by silting linked to deforestation of its watershed and shores.

In 2010, a severe drought sent water levels to a record low. High silt levels mean that this year some parts

of the lake will dry up once the rainy season is over.

Inle Wildlife Sanctuary covers 215.28 square miles (557.57 square kilometres) and is located in southern Shan State's Nyaungshwe township.

Meanwhile experts from Flora and Fauna International said they were "excited" by the discovery of an unusually large number of sarus cranes at Indawgyi Lake, which is in Kachin State's Mohnyin township.

Nine individuals were spotted at the lake, which is Myanmar's largest freshwater body, during a recent survey, the group said.

Sarus cranes are the tallest flying bird and can grow up to 1.8 metres (5.9 feet) in height. While they have been frequently recorded in Rakhine State and the Ayeyarwady delta, FFI

said they are "very rare" in northern Myanmar, and normally only seen in groups of two or three.

"Finding this large group of sarus crane in Indawgyi area has shown us that this species, which is classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, is still safe in the Indawgyi area. We hope to see more in the future," U Ngwe Lwin, coordinator of FFI's terrestrial conservation program, said in a statement.

FFI plans to undertake a sarus crane survey to gain greater knowledge and help determine the threats to the species. It will then work with the wildlife sanctuary and local communities to ensure the species prospers at Indawgyi Lake, which is the country's largest freshwater body.

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Police push for remote monitoring of buses

Proposed system would see buses tracked by global positioning system and drivers monitored for tiredness and reckless driving along highway

AYE NYEIN WIN

ayenyeinwin.mcm@gmail.com

IN their latest attempt to reduce accidents on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway, traffic police officials are encouraging bus lines to install tracking devices that could monitor their drivers remotely via a control centre.

The idea, which was suggested to the police by the company that makes the device, B Smart Telematics Myanmar, would mean any bus being driven recklessly or at high speed could be identified in a police control centre and intercepted soon afterward. It would record how long a driver has been behind the wheel and in a worst-case scenario provide data on the driver's actions leading up to an accident.

"We use a global positioning system [GPS] linked to satellites. If the bus installs this system, the owners can know the personal details of drivers and other data from their vehicles. We can also control the

drivers ... and review and analyse the accidents," company director Ko Aung Nyi Nyi Maw said.

Bus companies, which will be able to rent the equipment from the company to install in their buses, will not be forced to enter the scheme, however. The cost of the equipment and installation has not yet been disclosed.

An uninterrupted, high-bandwidth internet connection running the length of the highway will also be required for the system to work. While the police have asked the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to install such a connection, the schedule for implementation is unclear.

"We welcome this system because it can reduce accidents. We want all highway buses to be fixed with it but we will not force them," said U Nay Win, the commander of the highway police force.

Accidents, deaths and injuries on the highway have risen sharply in 2014 and have almost eclipsed last

year's total already.

Between January and June 23 there were 226 accidents, in which 90 people died and 427 were injured.

In 2013 there were 259 accidents, in which 113 people died and 622 were injured.

An estimated 12,000 vehicles use the Yangon-Mandalay Highway each day, including about 700 express buses.

The last serious crash on the highway occurred on May 12. Fourteen passengers were killed and 29 injured when their bus plunged off a 45-metre-high [147-foot] bridge between Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon.

In response to criticism of the road condition, Nay Pyi Taw Council officials later cited statistics showing that 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.

Teachers unhappy at new evaluation system

KHIN SU WAI

jasminekhn@gmail.com

THE Myanmar Teachers' Federation has rejected the Ministry of Education's new evaluation system for teachers, which will be used to decide on promotions and transfers, describing it as "authoritarian" because it does not also apply to senior ministry and university officials.

The new evaluation system is "peer to peer" meaning that teachers on the same level, rather than managers, assess performance.

It features 10 categories for assessment including "management skills", "administrative skills" and "industriousness", with each ranked from zero to 10.

However, the federation is unhappy because it will not be used for those holding the positions of director general, rector or deputy rector.

Senior teachers have also expressed concern that it could cause suspicion between colleagues.

Sai Khaing Myo Tun, secretary of the Yangon University Teachers' Association, said the system will create "misunderstanding"

between teachers because they will worry that others will give them low marks.

U Zaw Naing, the secretary of the Yatanarpon University Association and an MTF member, said he thought it was a ploy to hold up promotions.

"This evaluation system has been introduced because [the Ministry of Education] doesn't want teachers to get a promotion," he said.

The ministry's position is that once the quota at a certain level, such as professor, is full there can be no more promotions.

But U Zaw Naing said that since they are teachers not administrators it does not matter how many members of faculty are promoted.

"What they say [in the Ministry of Education] is that there are no vacancies at the top level," U Zaw Naing said.

"But if the teacher has the required length of service and qualifications then [the Ministry of Education] must give promotions to teachers. That's how it works internationally."

The Ministry of Education could not be reached for comment last week.

Classification of prisoners a colonial-era relic, says govt

Deputy minister says giving privileges to political prisoners and monks would violate constitution



EI EI TOE
LWIN

eieitoelwin@gmail.com

THE government has ruled out a return to a colonial-era system under which some categories of prisoners would receive better conditions in prison – but advocates say it is needed because of continuing crackdowns on monks and political activists.

The 1894 Prison Act classifies prisoners according to three levels – A, B and C – under which they receive different standards of food, accommodation and treatment. State leaders and ministers fall into the A category, politicians and “educated persons” are classified as B, and everyone else is lumped into the C category.

The classification system was revoked in 1964 by General Ne Win's regime, and on June 23 Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun told the Pyithu Hluttaw that the government had no plans to reinstate it. All prisoners would be treated equally under a draft prison law recently sent to the Attorney General's Office, he said.

“To classify prisoners as in the 1894 law is a discriminatory policy of colonialism. Classifying prisoners like this is not in accord with democracy and the current constitution,” the deputy minister said.

He added that the ministry had drafted the law in consultation with local and foreign legal experts to replace the four prison laws currently in use. The bill will be submitted to parliament after getting approval from the President's Office.

The deputy minister was speaking in response to a question from U Thein Nyunt, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Thingangyun, who said that because the classification system was removed monks have been forced to disrobe before being interrogated by police.

He cited the case of five monks from Mahasantisukha Monastery who were forced to disrobe after their arrest on June 10.

“In the B category [of the 1894 act], there are some provisions that allow monks to be imprisoned without harming their dignity,” U Thein Nyunt said.

U Thein Nyunt's proposal also received support from some former political prisoners outside parliament.

U Tun Aung Kyaw, a political activist who received a life sentence in 1975 for anti-government activities, said political prisoners could read books and access proper health care under the old classification system but after it was annulled they were subject to higher levels of torture and abuse.

“Those who are saying that the classification system is not needed any more have never faced the bitter experience of prison. A person who has not been a political prisoner can't understand,” said U Tun Aung Kyaw, who founded the All Burma Students' Democratic Front.

U Bo Kyi from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners agreed that there is a need to classify prisoners according to their status and offence. He said the government cannot justify removing the classification by citing section 347 of the constitution, which states that each citizen shall “have equal right before the law”, because the charter “is not in accord with democracy.”

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun



Ko Hein Htet (left) and Ko Myo Nyunt Oo listen to a Buddhist sermon at Insein Prison on June 22 together with other prisoners and staff. Photo: Shwegu Thitsar

Jailed celebrities to lead party for first Insein graduates

SHWEGU THITSAR

khaingsabainyein@gmail.com

JAILED celebrities are planning on holding a celebration for two fellow inmates at Insein Prison who recently passed their matriculation exams, becoming the first to graduate from within Myanmar's prison system.

Eighteen-year-old Ko Hein Htet – also known as Tayote Gyi – and Ko Myo Nyunt Oo, 19, who goes by the name Ko Myo, became the first inmates to pass the final high school exam since a formal study program was introduced at the prison in 2010. The rare good news from Yangon's Insein Prison, where the two are serving five-year jail terms for robbery, has raised spirits and plans are under way for a celebration to honour their achievement.

The two young men plan to study economics at the University of Distance Education next year and will also tutor students sitting matriculation exams next year.

“A number of celebrities in prison want to take part, including singer Kaw Maing, actors Ye Taik and Phone

Shan and sports car driver Mya Thauang Ngway. So we are planning on holding a great celebration,” said warden U Kyaw Htay, who was instrumental in setting up the education program.

The celebrities are serving sentences of various lengths for crimes ranging from drug possession to human trafficking and forging house ownership documents.

U Kyaw Htay, who is also a deputy director in the Corrections Department, said he hoped the festivities would encourage more inmates to take part in the study program.

While many are learning the

basics of reading and writing for the first time, seven inmates sat this year's matriculation exams. Currently 121 inmates are enrolled.

U Kyaw Htay said that the news of the exam success had spurred donations from well-wishers. Shwe Than Lwin donated K500,000 to each of the young men on June 22, while individuals have provided books valued at K500,000 to bolster the prison's education efforts.

“These two students are the first in Myanmar to pass their matriculation exams while studying in jail. We have to try harder to attract more outstanding students to study,” he said. “There are 10 children who will sit matriculation exams this year and [Ko Hein Htet and Ko Myo Nyunt Oo] will help them.”

The pair were jailed after being found guilty of stealing K164 million from a house in Insein township. They have so far served more than two years, and with sentence reductions have only 13 months left on their term.

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

121

Number of Insein Prison inmates enrolled in formal schooling



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FEATURE



Photo Caption: Photo: AFP

Residents ride a farm vehicle down the main road in Kungyangon, Yangon Region, earlier this month. Photo: Zarni Phyo

In the delta, scorned voters hit back

Broken election promises in rural Kungyangon township offer a salutary lesson for candidates contesting next year's vote

WALONE

walone14@gmail.com



WHEN you enter Kungyangon, a delta town at the southern end of Yangon Region, the first thing that greets you is a huge signboard, announcing that construction company Zaykabar has a contract to maintain the main road to the town, in cooperation with the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).

It's the kind of sign you might see anywhere. But it has particular significance in Kungyangon, because Zaykabar's founder, U Khin Shwe, is the local USDP member for the Amyotha Hluttaw, or upper house.

While he portrays himself as a regional benefactor, locals have a different story to tell – and one that should make politicians campaigning in next year's election pause before making promises to voters.

Many residents told *The Myanmar Times* last week that they voted for the business tycoon in the 2010 election because of pledges he made while visiting the underdeveloped villages of Kungyangon in the months

leading up to the vote. As his convoy rolled through nondescript villages like Thongwa, Paygone, Taw Gyaung, Melzaliwa and Pauk Taw, the USDP candidate promised money to improve roads, drainage, education and health-care, to implement solar power projects and to make religious offerings.

In an area still recovering from the effects of Cyclone Nargis, and in which many villages, despite their proximity to Yangon, lack electricity and roads, the promises were received with optimism.

"When U Khin Shwe canvassed for votes here, he said that if he became a member of parliament he would spend K8 million to fix the road in our village," said Ko Than Zaw Oo, 39, from Malzaliwa.

Now the optimism has turned to anger. Since the election – which U Khin Shwe won with 173,208 votes, more than four times that of his nearest rival – little has changed.

"He has never even come back to see us again after he became a member of parliament," said U Aye Kyaw, one of the leaders of Thongwa.

For many in the township, the closest they get to their representative is through Zaykabar's agent, who oversees the road upgrade contract that the company received after U Khin Shwe's victory.

However, some residents are fighting back. On June 2, U Khin Shwe made his third visit to Kungyangon since the election to "introduce" U Pyone Mg Mg, husband of actress Khin Thidar Htun and head of the Myanmar Equestrian Federation, to residents.

He said U Pyone Mg Mg would be the USDP candidate for the township's Pyithu Hluttaw, or lower house, seat in the 2015 election, when the current representative, U Lun Thi, is expected to retire.

Four days later, residents from eight villages drafted a petition and sent it to USDP chair Thura U Shwe Mann, the speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, calling on the party to choose a local as its candidate in the 2015 election.

"We will not vote if they choose U Pyone Mg Mg because he is closely related with U Khin Shwe and he is not from around here," said U Kyaw Aye.

It is unclear whether U Khin Shwe, whose seat also covers neighbouring Kawhmu and Twante townships, acted with permission from party leaders, as the USDP is yet to announce who it will nominate to contest seats in the 2015 election.

The Myanmar Times called U Khin Shwe repeatedly last week for a response to the accusations but he did not answer.

U Htay Win, a member of the USDP township committee for Kungyangon, declined to comment on U Pyone Mg Mg standing for election.

However, he rejected accusations that U Khin Shwe had neglected residents. He said the businessman had upgraded the Kungyangone-Dala road out of his own pocket, had supported religious activities in several villages and donated an ambulance to the Kungyangon Red Cross Society. On June 2, when he visited with U Pyone Mg Mg, he also made a donation to the town's high school.

"U Khin Shwe did a lot of good things but some people want to attack him personally," U Htay Win said.

In an interview with *Mizzima* in September 2010, U Khin Shwe said

locals supported him because he had helped rebuild many pagodas in the area damaged during Cyclone Nargis. He rejected suggestions he had bought votes.

"I have already spent a lot on them. I need only to appear before them," he said, before promising to give residents whatever they need after he is elected.

"If they need paddy cultivation, I will work for it. If they need a bridge, I will build a bridge for them. If they want roads, I'll give roads to them. There is no summer rice cultivation here. So, I shall give them the water needed to grow rice in summer."

‘[U Khin Shwe] has never even come back to see us after he became a member of parliament.’

U Aye Kyaw
Thongwa village leader

U Khin Shwe, who is originally from Mon State, is one of four hluttaw representatives in the township.

The current Pyithu Hluttaw representative, U Lun Thi, 73, is a former energy minister who grew up in Kungyangon, attending the local high school before entering the Defence Services Academy. He served in artillery units, rising to lieutenant colonel, and was principal of the Artillery Training School when he was promoted to the government in 1997.

In contrast to their Amyotha Hluttaw representative, residents said they were "impressed" by U Lun Thi because he made few promises but implemented a number of development projects both before and after being elected.

"U Lun Thi is a real Kungyangon local. He helped put solar electricity

in our village," said U Kyaw Aye.

However, sources close to U Lun Thi confirmed he is likely to step down at the end of his current five-year term and not contest next year's election, when he would be 75.

The anger of Kungyangon residents appears to have been heightened by what is happening next door, in Kawhmu township, which has been represented in the Pyithu Hluttaw by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi since she won the seat in the April 2012 by-elections.

Despite having a punishing travel schedule, the National League for Democracy leader makes a point of regularly visiting her constituency.

"Usually Daw Aung San Suu Kyi comes to meet with the people of her constituency every month, unless her schedule is particularly busy," said U Htay Win, the party's joint secretary for Kawhmu township.

Like many delta areas, both Kungyangon and Kawhmu were badly hit by Cyclone Nargis. The storm destroyed and silted up drainage channels and as a result farmland in the area is regularly damaged by flooding.

In Kungyangon, farmers from 20 villages have so far lobbied without success for money to re-excavate the main drainage canals because they can't afford to do it themselves. Meanwhile, in Kawhmu, the ministry has dug the main drainage channel.

"We saw what they were doing in Kawhmu," said Ko Than Zaw Oo, shifting his gaze to hide his disappointment.

There's no suggestion that the drainage work was the result of the influence of local MPs; indeed, U Khin Shwe also represents Kawhmu.

However, for residents in Kungyangon, it is a reminder of the promises made before the 2010 election.

Asked what he wants to say to U Khin Shwe, Ko Than Zaw Oo made a clicking sound to show his frustration. "Come back again," he said, before adding, "But you will never get anything from us at the next election."



A woman rides a bike down the main road of Kungyangon. Photo: Zarni Phyo



IN PICTURES

Staff at Myanmar Brewery Limited marked World Blood Donor Day on June 20 by donating to Mandalay's blood bank. The company's staff have donated more than 10,600 bottles of blood since a corporate social responsibility program was established in 2006. Further donations were organised in Yangon, Pathein, Pyay and Taunggyi to mark the day.

PHOTO: SI THU LWIN

Another attack on traffic police

Officer in Pyin Oo Lwin treated for injuries after motorist allegedly slashed him with a sword

THAN NAING SOE
AYE NYEIN WIN
newsroom@mmtimes.com

A TRAFFIC policeman is recovering from injuries sustained when a 19-year-old man allegedly attacked him with a sword outside a high school in Pyin Oo Lwin, the latest in a series of attacks against traffic officials.

Police Sergeant Kyaw Kyaw had asked the man to move his car because it was blocking other vehicles, local officials said.

After the man attacked him with the 74-centimetre (29-inch) weapon outside Basic Education High School 2, Pol Sgt Kyaw Kyaw suffered a cut to his left hand.

"When the policeman told the driver not to park there, he replied that he regularly stopped in that spot and could not move anywhere else. Then he attacked the policeman with a sword," said Police Captain Win Kyaw Yi.

The man has been charged with the assault and with holding an illicit weapon.

The incident is the second this

month, after Police Lieutenant Nay Linn Htun was injured in a knife attack on June 9 while stopping cars and motorcycles for traffic infringements in Yangon's North Dagon township.

The owner of a motorbike that Pol Lt Nay Linn Htun stopped later returned to the area and stabbed the officer, injuring him under his left arm.

Eight other attacks on traffic police were recorded between January and the end of May.

Traffic police announced last week that their members are being equipped with batons and tasers to ensure they can protect themselves against attack.

"We have already distributed 200 truncheons and 18 tasers," said Police Lieutenant Colonel Linn Htut. "But they will only them when their lives are in danger."

He said this was no guarantee of safety, noting that Pol Lt Nay Linn Htun had access to a taser when he was attacked. "That group of police had a taser but it was not possible to use it because it was too short to be effective [against the knife-wielding assailant]," Pol Lt Col Linn Htut said.

CRIME IN BRIEF

Wooden elephant statues seized

Three men have been charged with smuggling elephant figures allegedly made from illegally harvested teak.

U Myo Naing, U Phoe Ko and U Aung Mya from Tharyarwady township in Bago Region were stopped with 20 teak elephant figures in Taikkyi township at about 2:20pm on June 22.

Man stabbed in fight over driving tractor

A man has been stabbed during a fight while driving a tractor in Yangon last week.

U Naing Lin Tun, 33, allegedly stabbed U Kyaw Zay Ya, 33, who was driving a tractor at around 10:30am on June 22, during a dispute over who would get to drive the vehicle.

U Kyaw Zay Ya suffered cuts to his arm, while Ko Naing Lin Tun has been charged.

Marital dispute leads to suicide

A South Dagon resident killed himself last week after a dispute with his wife, police say.

U Aung Kyaw Lwin, 36, hanged himself in his bedroom with plastic rope on June 23. Police officers said he had been fighting with his wife earlier in the day and he killed himself after she had left the house. The cause of the dispute is unknown.

Attempted motorbike robbery foiled

Two men have been caught after an alleged attempted motorbike robbery in Mingalardon township.

U Thein Oo, 34, and Ko Twel, 18, allegedly stopped U Taung Koont, 51, at knifepoint as he was travelling from Kome Ta La Baung village to Htaukkyant on June 21.

Ko Twel drove away on the motorbike, while U Thein Oo threatened U Taung Koont, before fleeing the scene on foot, police said.

U Thein Oo was captured by police with the assistance of locals. Ko Twel was later apprehended at his home. - Toe Wai Aung, translation by Khant Lin Oo

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Kanbalu residents charged

MG ZAW

newsroom@mmtimes.com

FARMERS demanding the return of land they say was seized from them are being prosecuted by the company that took it. MFF company is prosecuting 11 residents of Pazi Lay and Chaungthar villages in Kanbalu township, Sagaing Region, according to Pazi Lay village administrator U Win Bo.

Residents said more than 1000 acres of farmland from the two villages were seized by MFF in 1997 and then rented out to tenant farmers.

"They took our land and then rented it to others. We are just farmers, not rebels. Why we are being prosecuted? We will try to take back our land. They took it from us and they have to give it back," said U Win Bo.

The land supports crops such as pigeon pea and green mung bean, they said.

"The company made a show of activity for a while after seizing the land, but then rented it out," said one of the farmers being prosecuted.

Farmers held a "harrow battle" in April as an effort to take back their lands. On June 4, the company brought mischief charges against 11 farmers under section 427.

The farmers said they would issue an eviction notice to the current tenants and were prepared to file a counter-suit if they did not leave the land.

A parliamentary investigation commission has concluded that the land allocated to MFF for seasonal cultivation in Kanbalu township included farmland owned by 51 farmers that is now rented to tenant farmers. It recommended the company be forced to give the land back to its original owners.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Pyin Oo Lwin farmers call for speedy return of disputed land

SITHU LWIN

sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com

FARMERS and land rights activists in Pyin Oo Lwin are calling on the government to speed up a program to return confiscated but unused land to its original owners.

Figures from the Mandalay Region administration office show the military has agreed to return 7,432 acres of farmland that it has confiscated. However, local activists say almost 200,000 acres of farmland has been confiscated in the region, the majority in the Pyin Oo Lwin area.

Farmers also say the return of confiscated land is being held up by lower-ranking officials who do not want to give it back.

"The government gave that land to investors to do plantation projects but those projects were not successful," said U Aung Htay, from the group Facilitators Network with ILO. "When the projects had no success, they didn't give back those lands to the farmers - they sold them off to other people."

On June 15, about 1500 farmers marched through Pyin Oo Lwin demanding the return of the land. The Myanmar Farmers Union (MFU), which helped organise the protest, had submitted an application to march through the town but withdrew it after the authorities refused to give permission.

The police then obstructed the procession when it set off from Pyin Oo Lwin's Nyan Taw stadium, union officials said.

"We peacefully expressed the farmers' feeling about the seized farmland to let people in Pyin Oo Lwin know," Daw Su Su Nway said.

The farmers, from different villages in Pyin Oo Lwin township, are demanding that the seizures be dealt with quickly so they can plant during



Farmers protest longstanding land confiscations in Pyin Oo Lwin on June 15. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

the rainy season.

One farmer from Kyauk Phyar Do village, whose land was confiscated by the Defence Services Signals and

Electronics Training School in 2002, said their calls for a settlement had been ignored.

"We submitted letters to senior officers of the state eight times but there has been no settlement so far," said U Khin Maung Than, adding that more than 130 acres was seized from 30 farmers.

"After that they leased those lands to farmers again. The commander-in-chief of the defence services said that the lands seized by the military will be given back to the original owners. But, lower ranks have done nothing to date."

Speaking at a ceremony returning land seized from farmers in Yay Nan Thar village in Madaya township, the head of the Pyin Oo Lwin district administration office said tens of thousands of acres of land would be returned.

"The seized farmlands that the military doesn't need for projects are now being given back to the farmers so they can grow there. But they need to wait to some extent. They must apply to have ownership documents first," said U Aung Zaw Latt.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

1500

Number of people who took part in the June 15 protest in Pyin Oo Lwin

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Dated: 30 June 2014

Car owners threaten to sue over CNG

Seventy-three drivers have waited more than a year for permission to install compressed natural gas in newly imported vehicles



AYE NYEIN WIN

ayenyeinwin.mcm@gmail.com

A GROUP of taxi drivers have threatened to sue the Ministry of Energy unless it gives them permission to install compressed natural gas, or CNG, in their cars.

The drivers imported new cars under an overage car substitution program. While the ministry no

longer approves applications for new CNG conversions, it had previously stated that new cars imported to replace vehicles equipped with CNG could also use the gas, which is many times cheaper than petrol or diesel.

The 73 drivers from Yangon and Bago regions bought import permits from the owners of CNG-equipped Hilux buses that were handed in for substitution. They then imported cars but more than a year after applying to install CNG the owners are yet to get the green light. The ministry says it no longer supports

installing CNG in taxis because it wants to use the fuel for buses instead.

On June 10, the drivers protested outside the Ministry of Energy office in Thaketa township to voice their displeasure.

"This is the result of the ministry's failings," said driver Ko Kyaw Myint. "We will wait and see for another two weeks. If not we plan to sue the ministry."

Another driver, Ko Kyaw Hlaing Soe, said he was facing substantial losses because of the ministry's policy change.

"We have already bought our taxis and have been waiting nearly one year," he said. "We will keep pushing until the ministry allows us to put CNG in our cars."

Despite the ministry's preference for using CNG on buses, it has shown some flexibility. In February, 130 disgruntled taxi drivers denied CNG held a press conference in February, after which 57 were given permission.

"One month after our press conference the ministry allowed CNG in 57 cars but another 73 are still waiting," Ko Kyaw Hlaing Soe said.

The ministry has advised the taxi drivers to import a bus and apply again.

"We did not stop giving approval for CNG. It's just that we now prioritise public transport. If the drivers want to change to buses, we will give permission as soon as possible," said U Hla Win Htay, general manager of state-run Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise. He added that the case had been reported to the minister.

However, Ko Kyaw Hlaing Soe said the suggestion was impractical.

"If we buy a bus it will just cost us much more money," he said.

IN DEPTH

Struggle on the Strand

PHYO WAI KYAW

pwkyaw@gmail.com

HLAING KYAW SOE

hlaingkyawsoe85@gmail.com

THE name Strand Road may evoke a sense of grandeur, but for many who live along this stretch of tarmac beside the Ayeyarwady River in Mandalay life is a constant struggle.

Some manage to earn a bit of money as a day labourer, often unloading goods from ships berthed on the river. Others are not so lucky.

Many rely on the largesse of Ayeyar Myittar Organisation. Based in Thanlyek Hmawtaung ward, you can be sure that by noon on any given day a small crowd will have gathered outside of its office. People of all ages, from children to the elderly, come with pots and bowls in their hands, all in need of a free meal.

"Most people here are transients and day labourers," said U Shan Gyi, deputy chair of the organisation's Thanlyek Hmawtaung office. "If they have a meal for free every day, it can relieve their hardship. We make this lunch donation here every day."

Most of those waiting are women and children. The kids are usually barefoot and bare from the waist up. They give every appearance of being extremely poor.

"I come here every day for lunch," Ma Win Maw, a worker from a sand pit, said with a shy smile.

The free lunch is more than just a meal; it means she can save her meagre earnings to spend on other necessities.

Next to her is Ma Myat Hnin, who has a large family, with seven members. She carries an equally large bowl to receive her lunch. Children in school uniforms stand at the front of the queue so they can eat and get back to class in time for their afternoon lessons.

The Ayeyar Myittar is headed by Dhammadara Ashin Kumarra and has more than 1000 members. It conducts a range of charitable activities, including free funerals for needy families.

The free lunch scheme was hatched when it teamed up with about 500 monks from a nearby monastery who wanted to donate what was left of their daily alms to the poor.

It now serves about 150 people a day. Longer queues form on weekends



A child waits for members of Ayeyar Myittar Organisation to hand out lunch on June 8. Photo: Phyo Wai Kyaw

and sometimes the group puts on a sit-down dinner feast. On those days about 500 people might turn up - but rather than balk at the workload, donors say they are delighted to see so many eat so heartily.

"We serve pork curry, chickpea curry, sour soup with different vegetables and fried pounded dried chili," said the group's leader, U Kyaw Soe. "We serve

them with porcelain plates on a dining table when we conduct these feasts."

While the food for these meals is bought by Ayeyar Myittar, on most days the food comes from donors - albeit indirectly, through the alms they give to the monks.

It brings to mind a scene from the comedy series "Mr Bean", where he wants to give money to a beggar but

finds he doesn't have any. His solution? Pull out his handkerchief, place it on the ground and beg money from other passersby. Eventually he hands over his gains to the beggar.

Life for many on the Ayeyarwady riverbank is far from a laugh. But thanks to Ayeyar Myittar, it has got a touch less desperate.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



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At Mann oil field in Magwe region, where farmland is cultivated directly beside machinery. Photo: Supplied

Oil fields highlight land policy failings

Ownership documents have been issued to thousands of farmers inside two oil fields, despite land being zoned exclusively for oil production

SANDAR
LWIN



sdl.sandar@gmail.com

THOUSANDS of farmers holding official land ownership documents are at risk of losing their land because it is inside the official boundaries of two oil fields in Magwe Region's Minbu township, according to local agriculture officials.

Land use experts say the case highlights the government's failure to adopt and implement an effective land use policy – and the way ordinary citizens have responded through informal arrangements.

An accountant from the township Settlements and Land Records Department office said 13,000 farmers are cultivating land inside the Htauksharbin and Mann oil fields. Of these, about 4000 – or almost one-third – hold official ownership documents.

"Many have already been granted farmland certificates – about one third of the total," said Daw Kayse Kyaw, an accountant in the department.

The oil fields collectively cover about 25 square miles (64 square kilometres), according to officials at the

sites. Both have been producing oil for more than 35 years and, while well past their peak, they continue to churn out thousands of barrels a day.

Under Myanmar's land use system, the land can be classified as either farmland or oil field, but not both. The inconsistency was uncovered while updating Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation land use records and the cases have been sent to the Central Land Administration Committee. While no decision has been made, the issue is not being ignored, Daw Kayse Kyaw said.

"The cases are being inspected with many documents going back and forth. If [these plots] are deemed farmland, the farmers will be issued renewed tenure certificates," she said.

If the committee certifies the plots as part of the oil field compound the farmers will have to be removed, she said.

"To share the land [between the oil field operators and farmers] would be informal rather than legal. According to the laws, the farmers would have to move," Daw Kayse Kyaw said, adding that those holding formal documents would be entitled to compensation.

The head of the Settlements and Land Records Department for Magwe Region said the farmland certificates were issued before the oil fields were

INVESTIGATION

discovered and never withdrawn. Mann began production in 1970, while Htauksharbin was developed eight years later.

"There was farmland there before and then the Mann and Htauksharbin fields started," said U Tin Tun Oo.

13,000

Estimated number of farmers working land inside the two fields, of whom about one-third hold ownership documents

"However, they didn't use the entire area of the land [allocated for the oil field] – only the spots where the oil can be extracted, and the oil wells do not take much space, so the farmers could keep farming on other spaces. But now that new land tenure certificates are to be issued we need to clearly define the land use."

However, officials from the two oil fields said at least some of the certificates were issued after the fields were demarcated.

"It was already certified as an oil field. Later, according to policies that gave priority to farming, the relevant departments, such as Settlements and Land Records, gradually developed and certified the farmland," an official from Mann oil field said on condition of anonymity.

U Nyunt Hlaing, the acting general manager of Htauksharbin field, accused local officials of failing to abide by land-use regulations.

"It's not like the farmers are cultivating inside the oil fields on their own. There would be some negotiations between the concerned authorities, like township administration office and Settlements and Land Records Department," he said.

Officials from both Mann and Htauksharbin said they allowed the farmers to work inside their fields because there were few other jobs available in the area. They said the land was shared on the basis of "mutual understanding".

"When we have to use the land for our work, we negotiate with the farmers. There haven't been any difficulties to date," U Nyunt Hlaing said.

The official from the Mann field,

which is run by MPRL E&P, said managers do their best to minimise the impact of their work on the farmers.

"We adapt our work with the farming cycle. If the crops are about to be harvested, we postpone [our work] until after harvest time," he said. "If we can't postpone it, we compensate them as much as we can."

However, he said the presence of the farmers was a potential safety risk. "Since it is an oil field, there is a risk of fire. Some farmers build houses near the oil wells and are getting gradually closer to the compound of the oil well," he said.

U Win Myo Thu, a land rights activist and managing director of NGO EcoDev, said the government's failure to develop and implement a national land use and housing program has prompted many to use land unofficially.

"Since the government made no arrangements ... as the population grew people used land and settled as they liked," he said.

"In many cases the government's land-use database does not have any information and this is partly because people failed to register their land use with the Settlements and Land Records Department. Still, some efforts to update the records were undertaken with distorted information."



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Views

Fear of freedom triggers exodus



ROGER MITTON

rogermitton@gmail.com

YESTERDAY, while relaxing in safe and tranquil Bangkok, happily protected by the shield of the joy-inspiring National Council for Peace and Order, a most shocking news release arrived.

Issued by the Civil Society Watch Group, an internationally respected organisation headquartered in the Dubya Centre for Global Enlightenment in the American capital, it is reproduced below so that readers across the region can be apprised of what is going on. It begins, with apologies for the excessive hyperbole, as follows:

Citizens of Southeast Asia! Wake up! Stand up! Stand up for your rights!

Be aware of the travails your compatriots face in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, referred to as the Kingdom of Bagan by Luddite

The nation's intellectual elite, its uber-rich and the patrons of Le Planteur have insisted that an appointed government of intellectuals and cronies would be far better – at least in the short term, say for the next century

historians and still known as Burma by officials in Canberra afflicted with outbreak disorder.

In the former pariah state, non-Buddhist citizens, hirsute people of a dark hue, individuals failing to genuflect to albino elephants, and liberal democrats of all types, including a certain woman, are under serious threat.

Nay Pyi Taw must, therefore, take prompt remedial action to improve human rights and honour contractual obligations for all foreign workers and investors, including Ooredoo executives and friends of Serge Pun.

According to official estimates, there are 8000 foreign nationals working in Myanmar on business visas and more than 220,000 on promissory notes issued by the Ministry of Alien Affairs for discretionary fees.

This large foreign community is now wracked by alarm and trepidation, at least according to data obtained by the Watch Group's field research staff spread across the nation.

As a result, Myanmar's neighbours, notably China, Laos and Thailand, have become deeply concerned as

many of their kinfolk, who sought work in newly liberated Myanmar, now believe they face discrimination and enhanced subjugation.

Indeed, the degree of anxiety among foreign manual workers has become so intense that thousands have already fled, causing an exodus the like of which has not been seen since Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt.

That, at any rate, is the considered view of the Civil Society Watch Group, whose research clearly indicates that the still-dominant military leaders in Nay Pyi Taw believe that the advent of democracy is the real reason for this catastrophe.

Indeed, they seem to believe it is the cause of many of the nation's ills, including an obsession with blowing whistles, wearing red or yellow longyis, performing silly dances and denigrating a certain woman.

Past attempts at parliamentary democracy are alleged to have failed due to country folks being too naive to know who to vote for and too prone to fiscal inducements and free patriotic movies.

Consequently, the nation's intellectual elite, its uber-rich and patrons of Le Planteur have insisted that an appointed government of intellectuals and cronies would be far better – at least in the short term, say for the next century.

The proposal has outraged Western countries and regional democracies like Indonesia and East Timor, and as a result, as things stand now, Myanmar's scheduled multiparty general election will still go ahead next year.

But it is that very prospect of democracy looming ever closer that has put all non-Buddhists and other aliens on edge in Myanmar.

And it is why so many have already fled the country, at least according to the United Agency for Migration, the Centre for Facebook Monitorisation, and the Respect My Feet movement in Bangkok.

"The plan to democratise Myanmar has caused a massive flight of migrant workers, who had become accustomed to the happy stability of military rule," said Magenta Decker, Asia director at Civil Society Watch.

"President Thein Sein and his team need to reverse this impending disaster by implementing strict laws that will prevent the occupation of ministries and airports by rent-a-mob thugs and former MPs," she added.

It is no wonder that people are fleeing back to the tranquillity of NCPO rule in Thailand and the stability of one-party Communist states like China and Laos.

After all, the Security Brotherhood Agency in Myanmar's border states has already begun a campaign to "regulate" foreigners and other stateless persons, or "Bojingas" as they misguidedly call themselves.

That is bad enough, but other targets apparently include Chinese mining executives, Scandinavian and Middle-eastern investors, Antipodean media tycoons, Dutch tax aces and non-Myanmar transgender sex workers.

It is a shocking situation and all right-thinking people must stand up, speak out and put on T-shirts bearing the slogan, "Respect my Generals!"

To paraphrase John Lennon: Happiness is a warm gun - especially when it is carried by the president and his fellow officers.

Well, that is the Watch Group's report in full. Now tell me if it does not scare the heck out of you. It does me.

Exiting the comfort

Today's youth must speak up, take on challenges and explore new ideas to prepare for



KYI THANT

kyizarthant@gmail.com

IT was hard – extremely hard, and intimidating – to raise my hand and offer an opinion. I was sitting in Expository Writing, a class that every freshman at Harvard is required to take. The purpose of the class? Speak your mind and learn how to put it into words, the more eloquent the better. After three years at Harvard – I am now a senior with just one year left to graduation – my interpretation of the Harvard education is that it focuses on finding issues we are passionate about and then understanding them in depth with the help of the brightest minds in the field, forming your own opinions about them, making sure you can back the opinions up with evidence, convincing people that your ideas are valid, running with it and winning a Nobel Prize. Well, the Nobel is not a requirement, but they'll love you for it if you do win one.

But on that day three years ago I found myself shifting in my seat uncomfortably. I hadn't said a word and my professor was eyeing me. It's not that I wasn't smart – I had been accepted into a number of major schools, so I was just as bright as the kids sitting next to me. But I couldn't help but feel like an outsider. Growing up in a very reserved and conservative Myanmar culture made me different. I was moulded to be obedient, to not speak my mind: Don't get creative; don't take risks. I didn't see the point in offering my opinion, because why would mine be better than the professor's? And when an American student sitting next to me said "but professor, I disagree with you on that" – well, my jaw dropped.

I was used to just believing what I was taught, without questions and without thinking critically. In primary school in Yangon, my math classes basically consisted of copying down solved problems as the teacher wrote them on the whiteboard. It made sense then – if our parents and teachers told us that this is the right way to solve a problem, why would we consider another way to do it? A lot of young people in Myanmar embrace this mindset. But if we continue to do this, our generation is going to end up being incapable of thinking on its own. We need to step out of our bubbles and find solutions independently.

A lot of bright young minds of educated families in Myanmar live sheltered lives. Our social circle consists of the friends who have lived across the street from us for as long as we can remember and maybe a buddy with whom we've sat next to in classes through high school. Emerging from Myanmar society, we are timid creatures when forced to interact with a new world. When we meet new people, we are reluctant to take their hands and share our stories. That's what happened to me during my freshman year at Harvard.

Day after day – if I didn't have work to do – I sought haven in my room watching South Korean dramas and eating Tom Yum noodles. It was a more comfortable and safer option than hanging out with people down the hall. A year went by and I got away with okay grades, a lot of empty Tom Yum cup noodle packets and a few friends. My fellow classmates,



however, found extracurricular activities that they were passionate about. They were already in leadership positions in student clubs and had stellar GPAs. They had found older students who became their mentors and a group of friends they could call family. They were enjoying a great start to what is supposed to be a life-changing four years at college. And I was there, checking boxes and getting by just okay.

For more than a year at Harvard, I chose not to leave my comfort zone. A comfort zone is a place we are used

I couldn't help but feel like an outsider. Growing up in a very reserved and conservative culture made me different.

to because there is no change or external influences. We develop a way of living that fits this environment well – anything new and unknown is a risk we don't want to take. Myanmar has been in such a place for over 50 years. Politicians were in a comfort zone without competition, businesspeople were in a comfort zone where they ran monopolies and youth were in a comfort zone where we've lived in a familiar society all our lives. Now that the country is opening up, we simply cannot remain locked up in our bubbles – we must engage, exchange, and be active in the process of positive change.

I look around and I see that many Myanmar youth have the same fears and inhibitions that I did three years ago in that Expository Writing class. Compared to Western cultures, youth in Myanmar are taught to not question authority and stick to the answers someone else has given us. But we must step out of our comfort zones to test the waters out ourselves because we may find new and different answers.

t zone

the demands of leadership



Ethnic administrations in the firing line



SITHU AUNG MYINT

newsroom@mmtimes.com

ON June 13 and 14, skirmishes between Karen National Union soldiers in Tanintharyi Region and state security forces erupted in the Myeik-Dawei area. One soldier was killed, another injured and the KNU lost two weapons. KNU general secretary Pado Kwe Htoo Win said the group sent an objection letter to the government regarding the fighting but added that he did not believe the clash would affect the peace process.

What is less known, however, is that after the fighting the chief minister of Tanintharyi Region sent a letter to the head of KNU No 4 Brigade, which is based in the Myeik-Dawei area, and the KNU district leader.

The letter said that the KNU had formed a “Karen National Police

Force” near Tanintharyi Region’s Sin Phyu Daing village on April 17 to undertake police, customs and forestry tasks. It warned that these actions may cause misunderstanding with the government’s police, customs and forestry officials, cause problems with local and foreign visitors, and affect the rule of law. The chief minister demanded that the KNU halt these activities on the grounds that they are the sole responsibility of the government.

This letter hints that if the KNU doesn’t cease its activities the government is likely to launch an operation to clear armed ethnic group rebels from the area, citing the need to “protect the people”. This is likely to lead to skirmishes between them. Most of the clashes that have erupted since the signing of ceasefires in 2011 and 2012 are related to similar issues.

Armed ethnic groups collect money to support themselves but the government describes it as “protection money” and fights armed ethnic groups on the grounds of protecting the people. Officials from the Myanmar Peace Center, including chief negotiator U Aung Min, have admitted that it is difficult for ethnic armed groups to follow the government’s prohibition on collecting taxes.

But this is not a new issue. Since their founding, armed ethnic armed groups, including the KNU, have formed their own governments to oversee areas under their control. The KNU formed the “Kawthoolei” government many years ago with departments of foreign affairs, forestry, customs, police, immigration and population, commerce and education. It even had its own court system. These departments administered KNU-controlled areas like a government.

When the KNU controlled large sections of land adjacent to the Myanmar-Thailand border, the Thai government and Thai businesses signed business agreements with Kawthoolei, rather than the central government. People who wanted to visit Thailand had to take a border pass from the KNU immigration gates. Thai immigration and border forces accepted the KNU border passes. The KNU has its own police, as well as its own schools and curriculum. In short, it is much more than an army; it is a governing body as well.

But the KNU is far from unique in Myanmar. The Kachin Independence Organisation also has its own government. At its headquarters in Laiza, it even has its own traffic police force. During the ceasefire years, every

January KIO government officials in their departmental uniforms – military, police, customs, forestry, commerce and so on – would descend on Myitkyina for the Manaw festival.

Similarly, the Wa and Mongla regions have their own governments that are far beyond the reach of the central government and Tatmadaw. They have their own prisons and courts, and the court can even give the death sentence.

The recent clashes in Tanintharyi Region are also significant for another reason. Ethnic armed groups have been fighting the government because they haven’t got the same rights as the Bamar majority. They want self-administration and self-determination. Therefore, there is little doubt that efforts to rein these groups in on the grounds that their activities are illegal and harming the people will lead to further conflict.

This would be an unfortunate and potentially dangerous development. What is most important now is to sustain ceasefire agreements while peace talks are continuing. The government needs to ask itself whether it is worth jeopardising the peace process over this issue.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



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Kyi Thant is a graduate of the International School of Myanmar and a senior at Harvard University studying economics with a secondary field in psychology. She is also a founder of the Yangon branch of Youth Lead the Change, a program initiated by Harvard College’s Leadership Institute.

Business

Tough times for Mandalay's hotels

Hotels struggle to stay afloat as a building boom leads to oversupply – particularly for the low season



KHIN SU WAI

KYAY MOHN WIN

A HOTEL building boom has resulted in empty rooms and hotel closures in Mandalay, compounded by the traditional slump in tourism during the low season, according to insiders.

The 2010 political reforms unleashed a sudden influx of tourists to Myanmar, causing room rates to skyrocket. But a subsequent hotel construction boom in Mandalay has put a lid on room prices, with many in the industry now scrambling to turn a profit in an increasingly competitive market.

The number of hotel rooms in Mandalay has more than doubled since the recent political reforms. In 2011 there were 64 hotels with 2274 rooms in Myanmar's second-largest city, but there are now 120 hotels and 5073 rooms in the city, and businesspeople are offering discounts and upping services in a bid to attract guests and generate revenue.

After several years of rising room rates, hotel owners have been forced to lower their prices by 30 to 50 per cent for the roughly March through September low season due to competition from all the new hotels, according to Myanmar Hotel Association – Mandalay Zone chair U Myint Aung.

Tourists now have many options for beds and particularly in low season hotels are rarely filled, while many move to slash prices and increase amenities to attract guests.

"It is true there are many new investments in the hotel industry. But for some hotels the situation is getting worse and they have stopped their business, and some continue, heedless to their losses," said U Myint Aung.

Rooms at the top-end hotels in Mandalay can go for US\$120, while local hotels often cost about K20,000 a night for Myanmar guests.

But hoteliers in Mandalay say they face less-certain returns on their businesses than their Yangon counterparts. While Myanmar's commercial capital sees a steady flow of businesspeople and foreign officials in addition to tourists, Mandalay aims mainly for tourists, who fluctuate widely based on the season.

Ministry of Hotels and Tourism director general U Aung Zaw Win said there were relatively few tourists in Myanmar from 1997 to 2009, but by 2011 record numbers of foreign visitors started to arrive.

"The sweeping political and economic reforms in our country enticed investors and tourists," he said.

Hoteliers claim they often operated at a loss prior to the recent political reforms, and the chance to raise prices with the subsequent tourism influx aided the bottom line. However, tourists were forced to pay rising room charges as demand suddenly outstripped supply for the period – though the situation is now changing as more and more projects open their doors.

"Tourists previously had little choice when room prices started rising," said Ko Kyaw Myo Latt, operations director from Hotel Dingar in Mandalay. "As there was a severe hotel shortage, Yangon room prices started increasing, followed by Bagan and then Mandalay," he said.

Businesspeople invested in sector with support from the ministry and high expectations for the ASEAN summit, said Ko Kyaw Myo Latt.

"But now there are many hotels, and the hospitality sector has become very competitive."

Increased competition has led to better service as the hotels in addition to some price cuts, as businesspeople vie to attract customers, he added.

Myanmar still has few visitors relative to some neighbours. Thailand – the 10th most visited country in the world – welcomed 26.7 million tourists last year, while Myanmar had about 2 million visitors. France claims the top spot worldwide with about 83 million arrivals.



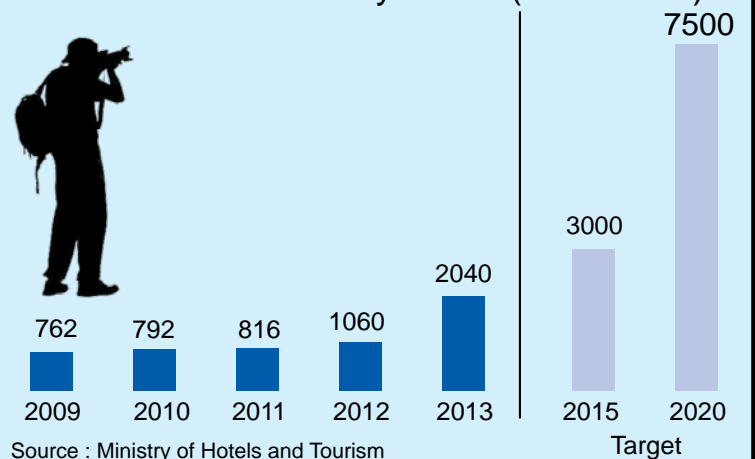
Tourists visit the Golden Palace Monastery in Mandalay. Photo: Phyo Wai Kyaw

Myanmar had 762,000, 792,000 and 816,000 tourists in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively. In 2012 the number grew to 1.06 million, and it hit 2.04 million by 2013, according to statistics from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Officials target reaching 3 million tourists by 2015 and 7.5 million by 2020.

While many hoteliers are complaining of squeezed profit margins at present, there are few signs the build in hotels will stop.

Ministry of Hotels and Tourism statistics show there were 34,800 hotel rooms in the country at the end of 2013, but U Aung Zaw Win said the ministry has long-term plans to improve facilities and add to the number of hotels in anticipation of even more visitors in the future.

Tourism arrivals in Myanmar (thousands)



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Licence delays leave finished projects empty, say developers

PROPERTY 34



U Set Aung lays out foreign bank plans in parliament

BUSINESS 24

Exchange Rates (June 27 close)

Currency	Buying	Selling
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Malaysia Ringitt	K300	K302
Singapore Dollar	K772	K782
Thai Baht	K29	K30
US Dollar	K973	K976

Sittwe economic zone in limbo as international investors get cold feet

FIONA MACGREGOR
newsroom@mmtimes.com

PLANS for a proposed economic zone on the outskirts of Sittwe are in limbo, after international investors pulled out over sectarian violence in Rakhine and wider political concerns about Chinese businesses in Myanmar.

In August 2013 the then-state minister for planning and economics U Mra Aung, told *The Myanmar Times* that a feasibility report was being carried out on creating an economic zone at Ponnagyun township, some 60 kilometres (37 miles) outside Sittwe. The zone was a separate project from the widely publicised Kyaukpyu SEZ off the Rakhine coast, and ministers hoped the Ponnagyun project would provide a financial boost that could bring stability to the troubled region.

But a source close to the study told *The Myanmar Times* earlier this

month that the original plan had fallen through because the South Korean firm decided violence in the state meant the Ponnagyun project posed too great an investment risk.

And he said a major Chinese firm which was also looking at backing the project had pulled out amid uncertainty about the position of Chinese business in Myanmar, after several high-profile China-backed projects were halted by the government.

“The South Koreans didn’t want to go ahead because of the trouble and the Chinese were worried about the politics,” said the source. He added that although he believed the situation regarding China was beginning to improve now, the last two years had seen little government incentive for Chinese companies seeking to invest in Myanmar.

Sean Turnell, an economist at Macquarie University in Australia, who focuses on Myanmar, said, “This is a very specific example of how the violence in Rakhine is now yielding very tangible economic costs.”

He said the issue could be “a wake-up call” for the Union and Rakhine governments. “Vested interest – the loss of material advantage – is always more effective than moral exhortation,” he added. Rakhine is Myanmar’s second poorest state, and communal conflict between ethnic Rakhine and the minority Rohingya Muslim population there has left over 250 people dead and around 120,000 homeless.

‘This is a very specific example of how the violence in Rakhine is now yielding very tangible economic costs.’

Sean Turnell
Myanmar-focused economist

MORE ON BUSINESS 24

Trade centre to be rebuilt after bombing

**AYE THIDAR KYAW**
ayethidarkyaw@gmail.com

THE Yangon Trade Centre rocked by a 2005 bombing will be re-opened, as the Ministry of Commerce has announced a tender for local investors to re-build the project.

The building in Mingalar Taung Nyunt township has sat unused after closing following the 7 May 2009 attack during a scheduled Thai commodity trade fair.

Some 11 people died and 163 were injured in the day’s three attacks, which included the trade centre bombing as well as two supermarkets, according to state media, the BBC reported in 2005.

Ministry of Commerce officials told *The Myanmar Times* last week that increased interest in Myanmar business and rising numbers of business delegations led to the decision to re-open the building.

“The tender is open to all local businesspeople, but [is best] for companies who prioritise trading, as the theme is to encourage trade relations,” said U Maung Maung, economist and consultant at the ministry.

The tender winner will be responsible for all renovations of



The Yangon Trade Centre is currently unused. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

the facility, which has been idle for many years, he added.

The tender will last until July 2 through the Nay Pyi Taw office. Applicants must deposit K100 million at Myanma Economic Bank, while rebuilding the facility for trade fairs and office space focused on trade, the ministry said in a statement.

U Myat Htun Kyaw, Ministry of Commerce director, said the building is intended to work as a centre for commodity deals.

“We will supervise the project to make sure there are no changes to the theme,” he said.

The bombing attack was initially blamed on dissident Myanmar and ethnic minority groups by the government, though several prominent groups denied involvement at the time.

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra ordered a C-130 cargo plane to fly to Yangon to pick up over 200 Thai participants, adding that he did not believe the attack was directed toward Thai interests and was instead an internal Myanmar matter, the BBC report said.



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Got something to say?
The Myanmar Times



newsroom@mmtimes.com



The Central Bank of Myanmar seen in Nay Pyi Taw. Photo: Staff

Foreign banks to be picked in September

BY **EI EI TOE LWIN**
HTOO THANT

newsroom@mmtimes.com

WHICH foreign banks will be allowed to operate in Myanmar will be selected in September, though their licences will initially contain significant restrictions, Central Bank of Myanmar deputy governor U Set Aung confirmed in parliament on June 25.

Requests for interest were sent to the foreign banks' local representative offices in May, starting the process to licensing them for operations. However, the introduction of international institutions has drawn some opposition from local banks who are concerned

about being out-competed.

Licences will be awarded by an assessment team consisting of officials from the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM), the Ministry of Finance and Revenue and the Attorney General Office, with support from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and German consultancy firm Roland Berger.

Between five and 10 foreign banks could be selected, said U Set Aung.

“It's difficult to say the exact number of banks we will choose at present, because the selection method is based on how they rate on the bank-rating model,” he said at a joint session of parliament on June 25.

The assessment will consider the for-

eign banks' international ratings, their capacity, and the extent to which they can support the growth of the economy and the financial sector, he said.

The central bank is eyeing allowing foreign banks to operate under a “quasi-branch banking”, which will be a mix of a subsidiary and a branch system. It will also require minimum US\$75 million capital.

Foreign banks will have to rely on capital to lend out, and will have to increase capital if they would like to lend more, said U Set Aung.

“We won't let them take all \$75 million capital from the country. More than 50 percent, up to \$50 million, will be locked-in,” he said.

Foreign banks will also face several restrictions, he said. They will initially not be allowed to open branches, operate retail banking, or offer direct banking services to local firms.

If local firms need to borrow money from foreign lenders, they will need to route through local banks.

“Apart from Singapore, in other Asian countries, local banks have never been overtaken by foreign banks,” said U Set Aung.

Authorities are pushing for foreign banks to create joint-ventures with local institutions once the Financial Institutions of Myanmar Law is passed. The law is currently being redrafted.

One current flaw is that a local institution is considered a foreign bank as soon as one share is sold to a foreign entity, and the new law will look to rectify this. – Translation by Zar Zar Soe

A selection of the foreign banks with Myanmar representative offices	
Singapore	Japan
DBS Bank	The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi
United Overseas Bank	Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp
Malaysia	Australia
Maybank	ANZ Bank
Thailand	South Korea
Bangkok Bank	Hana Bank
Siam Commercial Bank	Woori Bank
United Kingdom	Taiwan
Standard Chartered	First Commercial Bank
Bangladesh	China
AB Bank	Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
Source: Central Bank of Myanmar website	

Former hopes for Sittwe zone in limbo

CONTINUED FROM BUSINESS 23

According to the U Mra Aung, the proposed zone would have provided up to 100,000 jobs in light industry. A key aim of the project, he said, was to redress some of the economic fallout of violence in the state.

“Due to the crisis, investors from foreign countries are not brave enough to come. And because of that finances of Rakhine State are a little bit not okay,” he told *The Myanmar Times* last year.

The new SEZ would provide reassurance to potential investors he added. However continued violence in the state – which as recently as March saw international aid and development workers forced to evacuate Sittwe after attacks on their properties – has done nothing to improve the state's reputation in the international circles.

The UN and numerous international organizations have raised serious concerns about major human rights violations against the Rohingya population in Rakhine, who are more commonly referred to as Bengali in Myanmar.

“I have been concerned for a while of how this [sectarian violence] has had an impact on the broad reform ‘narrative’, hitherto somewhat uncritically accepted by the international community, but this demonstrates the dangers of a momentum fast developing in the other direction,” said Mr Turnell.

China has traditionally been seen as more likely than many countries to invest in areas with poor human rights records. But concern over projects such as the massive China-backed Myitstone dam – which provoked so much public outrage that the current government suspended it just six months after taking power in March 2011 – has increasingly put off Chinese investors.

Figures from Myanmar's Central Statistical Organisation show approved Chinese investment between April 2013 and January this year was just \$46 million, compared to \$407 million in the previous fiscal year and \$4.3 billion in the year through March 2012.

For already-troubled areas such as Rakhine, that appears to be having a significant knock-on effect.

However Mr Turnell suggested Chinese investors were unlikely to stay away in the long term.

“I am less concerned about the Chinese investment – which was always opportunistic, and always willing to leverage any relative advantage. The fundamentals of China's voracious energy and resource needs, and an epistemically supine Myanmar right next door, won't go away. They will be back,” he said.

U Mra Aung last week said the feasibility study had been abandoned after international investors had pulled out. However he insisted the Rakhine state government had not given up on the project, and the government would push ahead on its own to draw investment to the site at Ponnagyun which remained earmarked for development as an SEZ.

“We've already planned this and are going to announce the tender for development soon,” he said, though he said he did not know exactly when the tender would be made public. He did not comment on how the state hoped to draw international investors given the continued troubles.

Re-writing the mining law “waste of time”: lawmaker



EI EI TOE LWIN
eieitoelwin@gmail.com

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann has rejected a proposal to throw out amendments to mining laws in favour of a completely new bill.

The amendments were drafted by a parliamentary committee and the mining ministry last year and forwarded to Pyithu Hluttaw on May 22, after being approved by the Amyotha Hluttaw.

Speaking to the Pyithu Hluttaw on June 19, U Soe Moe Aung, a member of the Bill Committee, suggested that since the proposed amendments would affect three-quarters of the original law it would be better to enact an entirely new piece of legislation.

“If we approve the amendments, the original by-laws and directives would also need amending. This would result in complications for the companies concerned. It would be better to write a new law,” he said.

However, U Win Oo, the representative for Yebu in Tanintharyi Region, disagreed. “We have approved



many amendments to existing laws even though many provisions were changed. It doesn't make sense to write a new law because 75pc of its provisions were changed,” he said.

U Win Oo, who is managing director of Delco Mining Company and a member of the Investment and Industrial Development Committee, requested the speaker take into account the views of businesses active in the sector.

“We have been waiting so long for this amended law. Writing a new law would take too much time – and it's probably a waste of time,” he said.

Thura U Shwe Mann agreed that the amendment process should continue, in cooperation with the other committees and the mining ministry. “We must appreciate the efforts of Amyotha Hluttaw and the respective ministries to complete the draft. So we will continue the drafting process and the cooperative efforts of the committee and other MPs in order to approve the amendments,” he said.

Secrecy haunts oil sector, says Global Witness NGO

AUNG SHIN
koshumgtha@gmail.com

HIGH levels of corporate secrecy must be tackled if Myanmar is to benefit from its oil and gas wealth, claimed international NGO Global Witness.

It released a report highlighting its attempt to find the ultimate beneficial owners of the 47 international and local companies that won rights to 36 on-shore and offshore blocks in Myanmar in the past year.

A total of 13 companies, including two local firms, provided full replies to Global Witness, it said.

“Secret company structures enable powerful individuals to hide their identities and there are countless examples globally of corrupt officials awarding major deals to companies which they later turn out to own,” it said.

“Putting company ownership details into the public domain provides a crucial safeguard against corruption.”

Among Myanmar oil and gas companies, Machinery & Solutions – owned partly by its managing director U Aung Ye Soe – and Myanmar Petroleum Exploration and Production (MPEP) which is 50 percent owned by U Moe Myint – disclosed their ultimate owners.

It also noted MPEP aims to go public “in the near future”. While most of the 47 companies are involved in one or two blocks each, MPEP is the local partner in eight of the 36 total blocks.

The list of positive responses from international firms includes several giant listed companies such as ConocoPhillips and Total as well as state-run companies including Malaysia's Petronas and Brunei National Petroleum Company.

“The Myanmar government has a golden opportunity to take a lead on this critical issue within Southeast Asia, and show that it is willing to live up to its promises of reform and real openness,” the report said.

The Myanmar Times reported last year that transparency was a concern when the government reshuffled energy minister U Than Htay and his deputy, U Htin Aung during a period of controversial decisions awarding exploration licences and production concessions.

Myanmar has also been attempting to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative as part of its reforms.

IN BRIEF

Asian law firms open up offices
Two large foreign law firms officially set up shop in Yangon on June 23, claiming to be driven by growing interest in Myanmar from regional businesses. South Korean law firm Yulchon received permission to open earlier this year, and has other offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh. It has set up in Junction Square offices. Meanwhile, Singapore-based WongPartnership announced it had opened its Yangon office on June 23, located in Sedona Hotel's office suites. – *Jeremy Mullins*

Thirteen companies chosen for JV partnership in jet fuel business
A total of 13 international companies have been shortlisted for a joint venture with Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPE) to sell jet fuel in Myanmar. About two dozen companies have expressed interest, but only international firms have been selected.

MPPE maintains a monopoly of Myanmar's jet fuel business, but officials have said they would like to update its practices in line with international standards through the support of an international company. – *Aung Shin*

Microfinance gets a Japanese boost
Three banks have signed an MoU to collaborate with microfinance lending through shared technical assistance and loan provisions, according to U Kyaw Lynn, CEO of CB Bank. CB along with Myanmar Microfinance Bank and the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi signed the agreement. Tokyo-Mitsubishi is keen to provide funding and seed money to assist with microfinance lending in addition to technical expertise, said its Asia and Oceania CEO Go Watanabe at the signing ceremony on June 26. – *Tin Yadanar Htun*

Insein overpass to be twinned
A new overpass in Insein township will be constructed beside an existing overpass on Baho Road, said U Htun Aung Thin, general manager of the Lower Myanmar Railway Administration. The overpass will cost about US\$50 million, with a tender to be called for August. State media reported that existing structures will be removed to make way for the project, with a lot on railway land. – *Myat Noe Oo*

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Reg. No. 10327/2013

in respect of **Class 1:** Chemical products used in industry; horticulture chemicals (except fungicides, herbicides, insecticides and parasiticides); chemicals for forestry (except fungicides, herbicides, insecticides and parasiticides); and other agricultural chemicals (except fungicides, herbicides, insecticides and parasiticides); fire extinguishing compositions; tempering preparations; soldering fluxes; chemical substances for preserving foodstuffs; tanning substances; casting preparations of silicone; silicone release; silicone anti-foam and silicone water repellent; substances comprised mainly of silicone nitride for use in machinery for the electronic and semiconductor industries; and other chemicals; adhesives (not for stationery or household purposes); plant growth regulating preparations; fertilizers; ceramic glazings; higher fatty acids; nonferrous metals; non-metallic minerals; developers; and other chemical preparations for photography and other photographic materials; chemical test paper; artificial sweeteners; flours and starches for industrial purposes; unprocessed artificial silicone resin; and other unprocessed plastics; pulps. **Class 2:** Canada balsam; wallpaper removing preparations; copal; sandarac; shellac; pine oil; dammar; mordants; mastic; pine gum; preservatives against deterioration of wood (wood preservatives); dyestuffs; toners for copying machines, printers and facsimile machines; and other pigments; varnishes; lacquers; distemper [water paint]; enamels for painting; fireproof paints; primers; thinners for lacquers; thinners for paints; and other paints; printing inks; colors (for drawing pictures); anti-rust greases; nonferrous metal foils or powders for paintings, decoration, printing or art production; precious metal foils or powders for paintings, decoration, printing or art production; toner cartridges for facsimile machines [filled]; toner cartridges for copying machines and printers for computers [filled]. **Class 3:** Anti-static preparations for household purposes; de-greasing preparations for household purposes; rust removing preparations; stain removing benzene; fabric softeners for laundry use; laundry bleaches; adhesives for affixing false hair; adhesives for affixing false eyelashes; laundry starch; seaweed gelatine for laundry use (*funori*); paint stripping preparations; shoe and boot cream; shoeblack; silicone polish; and other polishing preparations; soaps and detergents; dentifrices; cosmetics and toiletries; perfumery, fragrances and incenses; abrasive papers (sandpaper); abrasive cloths; abrasive sands; artificial pumice stones; polishing papers; polishing cloths; false nails; false eyelashes. **Class 4:** Solid lubricants; greases for shoes and boots; leather preserving oils and greases; gasoline; and other fuels; mineral oils and greases for industrial purposes [not for fuel]; non-mineral oils and greases for industrial purposes (not for fuel); waxes (raw material); lamp wicks; candles. **Class 5:** Pharmaceutical, veterinary and sanitary preparations; oiled papers for medical purposes; sanitary masks; pharmaceutical wafers; gauze for dressings; empty capsules for pharmaceuticals; eye patches; ear bandages; menstruation bandages; menstruation tampons; sanitary napkins; sanitary panties; absorbent cotton; adhesive plasters; bandages for dressings; collodion; breast-nursing pads; dental materials; bracelets for medical purposes; incontinence diapers; fly catching paper; mothproofing paper; lactose (milk sugar); powdered milk for babies; semen for artificial insemination. **Class 6:** Pipes and tubes of metal, and other irons and steels; nonferrous metals and their alloys; ores of metal; metal materials for building or construction; transportable buildings of metal; and other prefabricated building assembly kits of metal; loading and unloading pallets of metal; turn-tables for load

handling; traversers for load handling; artificial fish reefs of metal; poultry cages of metal; paint spraying booths of metal; metal moulds for forming cement products; metal pulleys, springs and valves (not including machine elements); metal junctions for pipes; metal flanges; keys (mechanical element); cotter pins; railway points; road signs of metal (not luminous nor mechanical); beacons of metal (non-luminous); reservoirs of metal; anchors; mooring bitts of metal; mooring bollards of metal; containers of metal for transport; anvils; swage blocks; metal hardware; wire ropes; wire nets and gauzes; industrial packaging containers of metal; metal nameplates and door nameplates; chains for dogs; metal stepladders and ladders; letter boxes of metal; hat-hanging hooks of metal; money boxes of metal; water tanks of metal for household purposes; tool boxes of metal; towel dispensers of metal; metal joinery fittings; safes; door mats of metal; upright signboards of metal; transportable greenhouses of metal for household use; metal tombs and metal tomb plaques; buckles of metal; ferrules of metal for canes and walking-sticks; crampons (climbing irons); carabiners; rock pitons; diving platforms of metal; stirrups of metal; spurs; sculptures of metal. **Class 7:** Electric welding machines; electric drills [hand-held]; power-driven hand-held tools; moulds and dies for metal-forming; other metalworking machines and tools; construction machines and apparatus; elevators; escalators; moving walkways (in the nature of escalators); other loading-unloading machines and apparatus; machines and apparatus for capturing and storing carbon dioxide emitted from power plants; machines and apparatus for capturing and storing valuable resource in wastewater; filtering machines [for chemical processing]; other chemical processing machines and apparatus; lumbering, woodworking, or veneer and plywood making machines and apparatus; semiconductor manufacturing machines and systems; blades for hydraulic turbines; hydraulic turbines runners; hydraulic turbines and their fittings; blades for wind turbines; wind turbines and their fittings; other turbines [not for land vehicles]; drive motors [not for land vehicles]; other non-electric prime movers [not for land vehicles]; compressors (machines); electric pumps for domestic use; internal pumps; other pumps; other pneumatic or hydraulic machines and instruments; automatic stamping machines; dish washing machines for household purpose; dish washing machines for industrial purpose; electric wax-polishing machines; washing machines for household purpose; washing machines for industrial purpose; vacuum cleaners; electric food blenders; dry-cleaning machines; laundry presses for industrial purpose; electric driers for clothing; electric can openers; electric juice extracting machines; electric coffee mills; electric coffee blenders; automated coffee mills and coffee blenders; knife sharpener machines; electric polishers for floorings for household purpose; electric polishers for floorings for industrial purpose; electric food processors for household purpose; electric food processors for industrial purpose; mechanical parking systems; ball bearing; other machine elements [not for land vehicles]; lawnmowers; waste compacting machines and apparatus; waste crushing machines; starters for motors and engines; AC motors and DC motors (not including those for land vehicles but including "parts" for any AC motors and DC motors); solar AC generators (alternators); other AC generators (alternators); solar DC generators; other DC generators. **Class 8:** Tweezers; braiders (hand-held ones only); hoes (hand-held); digging forks (spading forks); lawn rakes (hand-held ones only); lasts for shoe-making (hand-held ones only); electric razors and electric hair clippers; table knives; razors; and other bladed or pointed hand tools; hand tools; egg slicers (non-electric); non-electric planes for flaking dried bonito blocks (*katsuo-bushi* planes); sugar tongs; can openers (non-electric); nutcrackers; spoons; cheese slicers (non-electric); pizza cutters (non-electric); forks (cutlery); flat irons (non-electric); needle-threaders; dressmaker's chalk sharpeners; pot stands; fire pans for carrying live charcoal (*juno*); fireplace bellows (hand-tools); Japanese charcoal extinguishers (*hikeshi-tsubo*); fire tongs; bludgeons; insecticide sprayers (hand-held ones only); shaving cases (not filled); pedicure sets; eyelash curlers; manicure sets; diving knives; diving knife holders; mountaineering pickles (ice axes); palette knives. **Class 9:** Electric arc welding machines; metal cutting machines (by arc, gas or plasma); laser welding machines; electric

welding apparatus; ozonisers (ozonators); electrolyzers (electrolytic cells); electronic engine control apparatus [for automobile]; cash registers; coin counting or sorting machines; automated teller machines [ATM]; voting machines; billing machines; vending machines; battery charging station equipment; gasoline station equipment; fire alarms; gas alarms; DNA chips; DNA testing apparatus; other laboratory apparatus and instruments; focusing mirror; flash guns for photographic purposes; flash lamps for photographic purposes; cameras; other photographic machines and apparatus; cinematographic machines and apparatus; magnifying glasses; other optical apparatus and instruments; telemetering equipment; water quality measuring apparatus; biochemical analyzers; electronic weighing scales; testing equipment for semiconductors; X-ray or gamma-ray thickness gauges; gamma-ray level gauges; electromagnetic flow meters; smart meters; electricity meters; other measuring testing machines and apparatus; chargers for electric batteries; sockets; receptacles; plugs; transformers; inverters; induction voltage regulators; condensers (capacitors); circuit breakers; switches; plug boards; lighting arresters; electric relays; converters; connectors; rectifiers; fuses; resistors; static power capacitors; leakage breakers; switch boxes; ballasts; vacuum circuit breakers; other power distribution or control machines and apparatus; rotary converters; phase modifiers; photovoltaic panels; power conditioners; photovoltaic power generators and their parts; dry cells; accumulators; photovoltaic cells; re-chargeable cells; solar cells; fuel cells; lithium-ion batteries; other batteries and cells; watt hour meters; electric leakage detectors; oscilloscopes; other electric or magnetic meters and testers; electric wires and cables; electric flat irons; electric hair-curlers; electric buzzers; telephone sets; mobile phones; battery chargers for mobile phones; video-phone equipment; telephone exchangers; inter-phones; transceivers; AC adaptors; television receivers (TV sets); television transmitters; television cameras; closed circuit television cameras; closed circuit television monitors; closed circuits other television equipment; radio receivers with clocks; car radios; other radio receivers; radio transmitters; broadcasting machines and apparatus; radio communication machines and apparatus; radio application machines and apparatus; facsimile machines and their parts and accessories; tape recorders; radio cassette tape recorders; tuners; record players; sound recording machines and apparatus; digital audio players; CD players; CD players combined with radio tape recorders; loudspeakers; DVD players; DVD recorders; DVD drives; video cameras; video tape recorders; video disc players; digital video disc recorders; digital photo frames; surveillance cameras; digital cameras; digital video cameras; magnetic tapes for tape recorders; magnetic tapes for video tape recorders; video discs for video disc players; needles for phonographs; phono-cartridges; noise reduction devices and units for audio equipment; audio amplifiers; microphones; headphones; equalizers; antennas; public-address systems and instruments; other parts and accessories for electric communication machines and apparatus; other electric communication machines and apparatus; electrostatic copying machines; image scanners; multi-function peripherals having function of copying machines, printers, image scanners and facsimile machines; personal computers; computers; USB (universal serial bus) memories; printers for use with computers; apparatus having magnetic tape and disc systems for use with computers; card readers for use with computers; displays for computers; display monitors for computers; keyboards for computers; mice for computers; word processors; integrated circuit memory card readers and/or writers; smart phones; personal digital assistance having function of internet connection, the sending and receiving of e-mail, and video and data information; personal digital assistants; printers for digital cameras; hard disc drives; parts and accessories for electrostatic copying machines and printers; computer servers; machines and apparatus for POS (Point of Sale) systems and their parts and accessories; barcode readers; barcode printers; RFID (radio frequency identification) readers and/or writers;

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kiosk terminal; digital signage; X-ray non-destructive testing units; ultrasound non-destructive testing units; electric and/or electronic large size display apparatus; X-ray tubes; X-ray image intensifiers; electron tubes; radiation detectors; other electron tubes; semiconductors; integrated circuits; printed circuit boards; SSD (solid state drive); integrated circuit memory cards; other electronic circuits; computer programs recorded on tapes; computer programs recorded on discs; computer programs for medical diagnostic and therapy apparatus; computer hardware and computer programs for managing information in hospital; computer hardware and computer programs for managing electronic medical image (Picture Archiving and Communication System [PACS]); computer programs; other computer programs and computer software; LED (light emitting diode) displays; liquid crystal displays; LCD (liquid crystal display) projectors; other electronic machines, apparatus and their parts; communication satellites, other rockets; spectacles (eyeglasses and goggles); consumer video games; hand-held units for playing games; electronic circuits and CD-ROMs recorded programs for hand-held games with liquid crystal displays; electronic circuits and CD-ROMs recorded automatic performance programs for electronic musical instruments; recorded video discs and video tapes; electronic publications.

Class10: Aesthetic massage apparatus for industrial purposes; biochemical analyzer for medical purpose; X-ray CT systems for medical purpose; diagnostic ultrasound systems for medical purpose; diagnostic X-ray systems for medical purpose; magnetic resonance imaging systems (MRI); nuclear medicine systems; endoscopes; endoscopes for medical purposes; diagnostic imaging apparatus for medical purpose; ultrasonic therapy machines and apparatus; radiation therapy apparatus and instruments; other medical machines and apparatus; electric massage apparatus for household purpose. **Class 11:** Industrial furnaces; nuclear reactors (atomic piles); solar furnaces; industrial boilers; air-conditioning apparatus for industrial purposes; heat pumps; freezers; refrigerating or freezing showcases; refrigerating machines; ice machines; other freezing machines and apparatus; clothes drying machines for industrial purposes; cooking equipment for industrial purposes; industrial dish drying machines; dish disinfectant apparatus for industrial purposes; waste water treatment tanks for industrial purposes; septic tanks for industrial purposes; solar water heaters; water purifying apparatus; electric bulb sockets; lamp reflectors; infrared lamps (other than for medical use); incandescent lamps; halogen lamps; neon lamps; sealed beam lamps; beam lamps; fluorescent lamps; projector lamps; xenon lamps; iodine lamps; metal halide lamps; LED lamps; miniature lamps; pocket lights; car lights; filaments; torches for lighting; glow lamps; fittings for incandescent lamps; other electric lamps and other lighting apparatus; electric radiant heaters for household purposes; Japanese electric leg-warming apparatus for household purposes; Japanese electric warming pans; electric hot air heaters for household purposes; electric hair dryers; room air conditioners for household purposes; electric fans; electric room air purifiers; electric ventilating fans; electric humidifiers; electric dehumidifiers; electric blankets; water heaters for household purposes; storage type water heaters for household purposes; electric cooking ovens for household purposes; microwave ovens; electric toasters, immersion heaters; electric refrigerators for household purposes, electric freezers for household purposes; automatic rice cookers; electric hot plates for cooking; automatic steam cookers; electric baking machines for household purposes; electric pots; electric pans; electric coffee percolators; electric egg cookers for household purposes; electric popcorn cookers for household purposes, electric hamburger cookers for household purposes, electric waffle cookers for household purposes; electric ice cream makers for household purposes; electric rice-cake making machines for household purposes; electric yogurt makers for household purposes; electric grilling apparatus for household purposes; electric pressure cookers; electric water coolers for household purposes; electric driers for clothing for

household purposes; ionizers for treatment of air for household purposes; electric foot warmers; other household electrothermic appliances; gas lighters; gas ovens; gas tables; other non-electric cooking heaters; kitchen worktops; kitchen sinks; household tap-water filters; toilet stool units with a washing water squirter. **Class 12:** Ropeways for cargo or freight handling; unloading tipplers (for tilting railway freight cars); mine-car pushers; mine-car pullers; tractors; motors and engines for railway rolling stock (not including “their parts”); non-electric prime movers for other land vehicles (not including “their parts”); power transmission and gearings for railway rolling stock; power transmission and gearings for other land vehicles; and other machine elements for land vehicles; parachutes; anti-theft alarms for vehicles; wheelchairs; AC motors or DC motors for land vehicles (not including “their parts”); vessels and their parts and fittings; aircraft and their parts and fittings; electric locomotives; tram cars; monorail cars; bogie for railway rolling stocks; and other railway rolling stock and their parts and fittings; trolley buses, electric automobiles; and other automobiles and their parts and fittings; two-wheeled motor vehicles, bicycles and their parts and fittings; baby carriages (prams); rickshaws; sleighs and sleds; wheelbarrows; carts; horse drawn carriages; bicycle trailers (rear cars); adhesive rubber patches for repairing tubes or tires. **Class 13:** Firearms; ammunition for firearms; gunpowder; explosive powders; pyrotechnic products and their peripherals; tanks (weapons). **Class 14:** Precious metals; keyrings (trinkets or fobs); jewel cases; trophies (prize cups); commemorative shields; personal ornaments; unwrought and semi-wrought precious stones and their imitations; shoe ornaments of precious metal; clocks and watches. **Class 15:** Tuning apparatus for musical instruments; musical instruments; musical performance auxiliaries; tuning forks. **Class 16:** Pastes and other adhesives for stationery or household purposes; sealing wax; printers’ reglets (interline leads); printing types; blueprinting machines; addressing machines; inking ribbons; automatic stamp putting-on machines; electric staplers for offices; envelope sealing machines for offices; stamp obliterating machines; drawing instruments; typewriters; checkwriters; mimeographs; relief duplicators; paper shredders (for office use); franking machines (stamping machines); rotary duplicators; marking templates; electric pencil sharpeners; decorators’ paintbrushes; babies’ diapers of paper; industrial packaging containers of paper; food wrapping plastic film for household use; garbage bags of paper (for household use); garbage bags of plastics (for household use); paper patterns; tailors’ chalk; banners of paper; flags of paper; indoor aquaria and their fittings; hygienic paper; towels of paper; table napkins of paper; hand towels of paper; handkerchiefs of paper; baggage tags; printed lottery tickets (other than toys); table cloths of paper; paper and cardboard; pencil sharpeners [non-electric]; other stationery and study materials; magazines, other printed matter; paintings and calligraphic works; photographs; photograph stands. **Class 17:** Mica (raw or partly processed); valves of rubber or vulcanized fiber (not including machine elements); gaskets; junctions for pipes (not of metal); packings; fire hoses; asbestos fire curtains; floating anti-pollution barriers; insulating varnish; and other electrical insulating materials; washers of rubber or vulcanized fiber; horseshoes (not of metal); chemical fibers (not for textile use); asbestos; rock wool; slag wool; rubber thread and covered rubber yarn (not for textile use); chemical fiber yarn and thread (not for textile use); asbestos yarn; asbestos fabrics; asbestos felt; insulating gloves; rubber cords and laces; asbestos cords and strings; asbestos nets; industrial packaging containers of rubber; rubber stoppers (for industrial packaging containers); rubber lids and caps (for industrial packaging containers); plastic sheeting for agricultural purposes; condenser paper; asbestos paper; vulcanized fiber; plastic semi-worked products (for use as material); silicone rubber; and other rubber [raw or semi-worked]; soundproofing materials of rock wool (not for building purposes); asbestos boards; asbestos powder. **Class 18:** Handbag frames; purse frames; industrial packaging containers of leather; clothing for domestic pets; bags and the like; pouches and the like; vanity cases (not fitted); umbrellas and their parts; walking sticks; canes; metal parts of canes and walking sticks; handles of canes and walking-sticks; saddlery; leather

(unworked or semi-worked). **Class 19:** Tar and pitch; non-metallic minerals for building or construction; ceramic building materials, bricks and refractory products; linoleum building materials; plastic building materials; synthetic building materials; asphalt, and asphalt building or construction materials; rubber building or construction materials; plaster (for building purposes); lime building or construction materials; building or construction materials of plaster; rockfall prevention nets of textile; prefabricated building kits (not of metal); vegetation seed-carrier sheets for prevention of earth collapse or landslide; plastic security windows allowing communication; demarcating tapes; cement and its products; building timber; building stone; building glass; artificial fish reefs (not of metal); hen-houses and poultry cages (not of metal); paint spraying booths (not of metal); moulds for forming cement products (not of metal); water-pipe valves (not of metal or plastics); road signs (not of metal, non-luminous, and not mechanical); beacons (not of metal, non-luminous); storage tanks (not of metal or plastics); mooring bitts and bollards (not of metal); letter boxes of masonry; joinery fittings (not of metal); stone lanterns; transportable greenhouses (not of metal) for household use; gravestones and tomb plaques (not of metal); diving platforms (not of metal); stone sculptures; concrete sculptures; marble sculptures; non-metallic mineral materials (unworked or partly worked). **Class 20:** Meerschaum (raw or partly worked material); yellow amber; loading pallets (not of metal); beehives (hive boxes or honeycombs); hairdresser’s chairs; barbers chairs; valves of plastic (not including machine elements); storage tanks (not of metals or masonry); containers for transport (not of metal); curtain fittings; metal-substitute plastic fasteners; nails, wedges, nuts, screws, tacks, bolts, rivets and casters (not of metal); washers (not of metal, not of rubber, nor vulcanized fiber); locks (non-electric, not of metal); cushions (furniture); Japanese floor cushions (zabuton); pillows; mattresses; straw plaits (braids); industrial packaging containers of wood, bamboo or plastics; drinking straws; trays (not of metal); embroidery frames and hoops; nameplates and door nameplates (not of metal); flagpoles; hand-held flat fans; hand-held folding fans; stakes for plants or trees; beds for household pets; dog kennels; nesting boxes for small birds; step ladders and ladders (not of metal); letter boxes (not of metal nor masonry); hat hooks (not of metal); shopping baskets; water tanks for household purposes (not of metal nor masonry); hanging boards (Japanese style pegboards using positional hooks); tool boxes (not of metal); towel dispensers (not of metal); furniture; indoor window blinds (shade, furniture); blinds of reed, rattan or bamboo (sudare); bead curtains for decoration; oriental single panel standing partition (tsuitate); oriental folding partition screens (byoubu); benches; advertising balloons; upright signboards of wood or plastics; artificial model food samples; man-made garden ponds (structures); ritual equipment; cradles; infant walkers; mannequins; costume display stands; sleeping bags (for camping); picture frames; plaster sculptures; plastic sculptures; wooden sculptures; Japanese food wrapping sheets of wood as materials (kyogi); ferns (unworked or partly worked material); bamboo (unworked or partly worked material); bamboo skins (unworked or partly worked material); vines; rattan (unworked or partly worked material); tree barks; reeds (raw or partly worked material); rushes (raw or partly worked material); onigaya hay (raw or partly worked material); sedges (unworked or partly worked material); vegetable aggregate for plaster (susa); straw of wheat, barley or oats; rice straw; tusks (raw or partly worked material); whalebones; shells and crusts; artificial horns; ivory (unworked or partly worked material); animal horns; animal teeth; tortoiseshells (unworked or partly worked material); animal bones (unworked or partly worked material); coral (unworked or partly worked). **Class 21:** Dental floss (floss for dental purposes); unworked or semi-worked glass (not for building); mangers for animals (troughs for livestock); poultry rings; cooking skewers; tub brushes; metal brushes; brushes for pipes; industrial brushes; ship-scrubbing brushes; gloves for household purposes; industrial packaging containers of

glass or ceramic; cooking pots and pans (non-electric); coffee-pots (non-electric, not of precious metal); Japanese cast iron kettles (non-electric, *tetsubin*); kettles (non-electric); tableware (not of precious metal); portable coldboxes (non-electric); rice chests; food preserving jars of glass; drinking flasks (for travelers); vacuum bottles (insulated flasks); ice pails; whisks (non-electric); cooking strainers; pepper pots, sugar bowls and salt shakers (not of precious metal); egg cups (not of precious metal); napkin holders and napkin rings (not of precious metal); trays (not of precious metal); toothpick holders (not of precious metal); colanders; shakers; Japanese style cooked rice scoops (*shamoji*); hand-operated coffee grinders and peppermills; cooking funnels; Japanese style wooden pestles (*surikogi*); Japanese style earthenware mortars (*suribachi*); Japanese style personal dining trays or stands (*zen*); bottle openers; cooking graters; tart scoops; pan-mats; chopsticks; chopstick cases; ladles and dippers; cooking sieves and sifters; chopping boards for kitchen use; rolling pins (for cooking purposes); cooking grills; toothpicks; lemon squeezers (citrus juicers); waffle irons (non-electric); cleaning tools and washing utensils; ironing boards; tailors' sprayers; ironing boards (*kotedai*); marking boards for use with an impress blades (*hera-dai*); stirrers for hot bathtub water (*yukakibo*); bathroom stools; bathroom pails; candle extinguishers and candlesticks (not of precious metal); cinder sifters for household purposes; coal scuttles; fly swatters; mouse traps; flower pots; hydroponic apparatus for domestic horticultural; watering cans; feeding vessels for pets; brushes for pets; chewing goods for pet dogs; bird cages; bird baths; clothes brushes; chamber pots; toilet paper holders; piggy banks (not of metal); lucky charms (*omamori*); sacred lots (*omikuji*); boxes of metal for dispensing paper towels; boot jacks; soap dispensers; flower vases and bowls (not of precious metal); wind chimes; upright signboards of glass or ceramics; perfume burners; electric toothbrushes and other cosmetic and toilet utensils; shoe brushes; shoe horns; shoe shine cloths; handy shoe shiners; shoe-trees (stretchers); portable cooking kits for outdoor use; pig bristles (hog bristles for brushes). **Class 22:** Tarpaulins (for ships); sails; raw textile fibers; cotton waddings for clothes; hammocks; futon bags; cotton batting for futon; knitted cords and braids; Japanese style braids (*sanada-himo*); starched braids; twist braids; cordage; netting (not of metal or asbestos); industrial packaging containers of textile; industrial packaging containers of straw; elastic bands for binding; awnings; tarpaulins (not for ships); tents (not for camping); sunshades; Japanese reed screens (*yoshizu*); wax ends; mountaineering ropes; tents for mountaineering or camping; sawdust; kapok; wood shavings; wood wool (wooden excelsior); rice hulls; wax waste; cattle hair (not for textile use); raccoon dog hair (not for textile use); pig bristles (not for brushes); horsehair (not for textile use); feathers and downs. **Class 23:** Threads and yarns (for textile use). **Class 24:** Woven fabrics; knitted fabrics; felt and non-woven textile fabrics; oilcloths; gummed waterproof cloths; vinyl coated cloths; rubberized cloths; leather cloths; filtering materials of textile; personal articles of woven textile (not for wear); mosquito nets; bedsheets; futon and quilts; futon and quilts cases (linen); futon ticks (unstuffed futon); pillowcases (pillow slips); blankets; table napkins of textile; dish cloths; shower curtains; banners and flags (not of paper); toilet seat covers of textile; seat covers of textile; wall hangings of textile; curtains; table cloths (not of paper); draperies (thick drop curtains); shrouds (sheets for wrapping corpses); for dressing a corpse for funeral (*kyokatabira kimono*); Japanese cloth screens with black-and-white stripes(*kuroshiro-maku*); Japanese cloth screens with red-and-white stripes(*kohaku-maku*); billiard cloth (*baize*); labels of cloth. **Class 25:** Clothing; garters; sock suspenders; suspenders (braces); waistbands; belts for clothing; footwear; masquerade costumes; clothes for sports; boots for sports. **Class 26:** Shuttles for making fishing nets; hosiery loom needles; needles; eyelets for clothing; tapes (semi-finished); ribbons; knitted raschel lace fabrics; embroidery lace fabrics; tufts and tassels (semi-finished); braids; knitting needles; sewing boxes;

dressmakers' impressing blades; sewing thimbles; pin and needle cushions; needle cases (not of precious metal); armbands; insignias for wear (not of precious metal); badges for wear (not of precious metal); buckles for clothing (clothing buckles); brooches for clothing; special sash clips for obi (obi-dome); bonnet pins (not of precious metal); ornamental stickers for front jackets; brassards; hair ornaments; buttons and the like; artificial flowers; false beards; false moustaches; hair curlers (non-electric); shoe ornaments (not of precious metal); shoe eyelets; shoe laces; metal fasteners for shoes and boots; human hair (not for textile use). **Class 27:** Bath mats; tatami mats and the like; artificial turf; floor coverings; wall hangings (not of textile); gymnastic mats; wallpaper. **Class 28:** Wax for skis; amusement machines and apparatus for use in amusement parks (other than arcade video game machines); toys for domestic pets; toys; dolls; *Go* games; Japanese playing cards(*utagaruta*); Japanese chess(*shogi* games); dice; Japanese dice games (*sugoroku*); dice cups; diamond games; chess games; checkers (checker sets); conjuring apparatus; dominoes; playing cards; Japanese playing cards (*hanafuda*); mah-jong; game implements; billiard equipment; body-training apparatus and other sports equipment; fishing tackles; insect collecting implements. **Class 29:** Edible oils and fats; milk products; meat for human consumption (fresh, chilled or frozen); eggs; edible aquatic animals (not live; fresh, chilled or frozen); frozen vegetables; frozen fruits; processed meat products; processed fisheries products; processed vegetables and fruits; fried tofu pieces (*abura-age*); freeze-dried tofu pieces (*kohri-dofu*); jelly made from devils' tongue root (*konnyaku*); soybean milk (soy milk); tofu; fermented soybeans (*natto*); processed eggs; curry, stew and soup mixes; dried flakes of laver for sprinkling on rice in hot water (*ochazuke-nori*); seasoned powder for sprinkling on rice (*furi-kake*); fermented soybean foods as accompaniment (*name-mono*); raw pulses; protein for human consumption. **Class 30:** Binding agents for ice cream; meat tenderizers for household purposes; preparations for stiffening whipped cream; aromatic preparations for food (not from "essential oils"); tea; coffee and cocoa; ice; confectionery, bread and buns; seasonings; spices; ice cream mixes; sherbet mixes; unroasted coffee (unprocessed); cereal preparations; almond paste; Chinese stuffed dumplings (*gyoza*, cooked); sandwiches; Chinese steamed dumplings (*shumai*, cooked); sushi; fried balls of batter mix with minced meat (*niku-manjuh*); hamburgers (prepared); pizzas (prepared); box lunches (prepared); hot dogs (prepared); meat pies (prepared); ravioli (prepared); yeast powder; fermenting malted rice (*koji*); yeast; baking powder; instant confectionery mixes; sake lees (for food); husked rice; husked oats; husked barley; flour for food; gluten for food. **Class 31:** Wreaths of natural flowers; fishing baits; hops (unprocessed); edible aquatic animals (live); edible seaweeds; vegetables (fresh or chilled); sugar crops; fruits (fresh or chilled); copra; malt (not for food); foxtail millet (unprocessed); proso millet (unprocessed); sesame (unprocessed); buckwheat (unprocessed); corn (unprocessed grain); Japanese barnyard millet (unprocessed); wheat, barley and oats (unprocessed); unprocessed rice; sorghum (unprocessed); protein for animal consumption; animal foodstuffs; seeds and bulbs; trees; grasses; turf (natural); dried flowers; seedlings; saplings; flowers (natural); hay; potted dwarfed trees (*bonsai*); live mammals, fish (not for food), birds and insects; silkworm eggs; cocoons for egg production; eggs for hatching; urushi tree seeds; rough cork; palm tree leaves (unworked or partly worked material). **Class 32:** Beer; soft drinks (refreshing beverages); fruit juice beverages (non-alcoholic); extracts of hops for making beer; whey beverages; vegetable juices (beverages). **Class 33:** Japanese liquors (in general); western liquors (in general); alcoholic beverages of fruit; Chinese liquors (in general); flavored tonic liquors. **Class 34:** Cigarette paper; tobacco; smokers' articles (not of precious metal); matches. **Class 35:** Providing information on commodity sales by Internet; accumulation and compilation of information into computer databases. **Class 36:** Insurance; financial affairs; monetary affairs; real estate affairs; banking; antique appraisal; art appraisal; precious stone appraisal; used automobile appraisal; company credit investigation; charitable fund raising; rental of paper money and coin counting or processing machines; rental of cash dispensers

or automated-teller machines. **Class 37:** Repair or maintenance of computers; repair or maintenance of other electronic machines and apparatus; general building construction works; construction of power plants; machinery installation. **Class 38:** Telecommunications, namely, electronic transmission and retrieval of data, images, audio, video, messages and documents; telecommunication access services; electronic mail services; sound, image, video data transmission over Internet; providing Internet chatrooms; online social networking services; communication by computer terminals over computer network (Internet); providing access to information and communication network (including Internet); providing information of television broadcasting, cable television broadcasting or radio broadcasting; providing information of program listing for television broadcasting, cable television broadcasting or radio broadcasting; broadcasting. **Class 39:** Transport; packaging and storage of goods; travel arrangement; providing road and traffic information; vehicle-driving services; removal services; brokerage for rental, selling, purchasing or chartering of vessels; refloating of ships; ship piloting; warehousing services; temporary safekeeping of personal belongings; gas supplying (distribution); electricity distribution; water supplying (distribution); heat supplying (distribution); rental of warehouse space; parking places; providing toll roads; providing vessel mooring facilities; airport services; management of parking places; rental of loading-unloading machines and apparatus; car rental; rental of vessels; rental of wheelchairs; rental of bicycles; rental of aircraft; rental of mechanical parking systems; rental of packing or wrapping machines and apparatus; rental of safes; rental of refrigerator-freezers for household purposes; rental of freezers for household purposes; rental of freezing machines and apparatus; rental of gasoline station equipment (not for repair and maintenance of automobiles). **Class 40:** Removal of radiation rays; treatment or processing of cloth, clothing or fur (including drying); tailoring or dressmaking; embroidery (embroidering); metalwork; processing of rubber; processing of plastics; ceramic processing; wood-working; paper treating and working; stone-working; taxidermy; processing of bamboo, tree barks, rattan, spectacle temples or other mineral vegetable materials (other than processing of ingredients); food processing; processing of artificial limbs or artificial teeth (including processing of medical materials); processing of cinematographic films; photographic enlarging; photographic printing; photographic film development; bookbinding; water treating; recycling of waste; nuclear fuel reprocessing; engraving of sealing stamps; photogravure; rental of textile machines and apparatus; rental of machines and apparatus for film development, photograph printing, photograph enlargement or photograph finishing; rental of metaltreating machines and tools; rental of bookbinding machines; rental of machines and apparatus for processing foods or beverages; rental of machines and apparatus for lumbering, wood-working, or veneering or plywood making; rental of machines and apparatus for pulp-making, papermaking or paper-working; rental of water purifying apparatus; rental of waste compacting machines and apparatus; rental of waste crushing machines and apparatus; rental of chemical processing machines and apparatus; rental of glassware manufacturing machines and apparatus; rental of shoe making machines; rental of tobacco processing machines; providing material treatment information; printing; collection, sorting and disposal of waste and trash; collection, rental of knitting machines; rental of sewing machines; rental of printing machines and apparatus. **Class 41:** Providing information of image, video, music over computer network; providing sound files, music files, image files, movie files over computer network (excluding downloadable files); remote educational and instruction services via the Internet in the nature of providing courses of instruction in the fields of information technology, computer operation, computer programming, e-commerce, economics, business management, creation of business documents, corporate finance, business, employee training, corporate

Investment hurdles slow rice exports

Rules requiring special permission for foreign firms to invest in the rice sector are hurting investment and slowing progress, experts say

ZAW HTIKE



zawhtikemjn1981@gmail.com

MYANMAR must attract more foreign direct investment in rice production if it is to achieve a potential doubling of rice exports, said World Bank Southeast Asia senior agricultural economist Sergiy Zorya.

The Foreign Direct Investment law forbids foreign joint-venture partners in rice milling and trading without special government approval, but Mr Zorya said Myanmar needs to relax restrictions and improve mills if it is to gain more orders from higher-value European and Middle Eastern markets.

Myanmar currently focuses on producing low-quality rice, with up to 95 percent of the 1.2 million tonnes exported in 2013-14 fiscal year of the low-quality 25 percent broken variety. African countries and China together make up most of the Myanmar's exports.

"Many Thai and other potential investors find the new investment law and implementing regulations both unclear and seemingly unwelcome," the World Bank's *Myanmar: Capitalising on Rice Export Opportunities* report said.

It notes that three of Thailand's top 10 rice exporters are investing in Cambodia and others are looking at Vietnam, but "virtually all are hesitant to invest in Myanmar".

Myanmar Rice Millers Association chair U Tin Win said that while there may be up to 10,000 rice mills in Myanmar, only 1312 can produce 25pc broken rice and the rest are too outdated even

for that. Few can produce highest quality rice, he added.

Foreign investment is allowed in the rice milling industry, but in practice the hurdles are significant and discouraging, according to U Myo Thura Aye, former joint-secretary of the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

Besides foreign investment restrictions, the industry is often stymied by a lack of a crop insurance system, poor infrastructure and machinery repairs, along with many other concerns.

A large number of MoUs have been signed between local and foreign firms, but few projects have so far progressed any further, he said.

Mr Zorya said that while there has been lots of discussion about investors coming to Myanmar, he has only heard of three concrete examples of FDI in the rice sector.

"Even in a small country, Cambodia, there are 44 [instances of] FDI in the rice industry," he said, adding Cambodia's rice exports had greatly benefited from foreign interest.

In 2012-2013, Myanmar exported up to 1.6 million tonnes of rice, the largest amount in 46 years, largely due to

‘The opportunities are there if Myanmar can offer good quality products at competitive prices.’

Sergiy Zorya
Agricultural economist



Labourers unload rice bags at Yangon port. Photo: Staff

booming demand from China. Traders say about 60pc of exports went to China, 35pc to Africa and the rest to a variety of markets.

However, exports to China are unofficial from Beijing's point of view due to a lack of an agreement on health standards for rice.

The European Union gave Myanmar rice preferential market access in 2012, and many are pointing to it as an area of future expansion particularly for more value-added rice.

"The opportunities are there if Myanmar can offer good quality products at competitive prices," said Mr Zorya. Significant changes need to

be made, not least the modernisation of the rice mills.

"We would say if there are no changes in the rice mills ... the amount of export to the EU and the Middle East will be limited."

Some have pointed to a complicated history of involvement by foreigners in Myanmar's rice production and export.

Under British rule Myanmar became the single most important exporter of rice in the world, said Ian Brown, a professor of economic history at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

While increases in rice production

during that period were built principally on the labour of the rice cultivator, but the profits went to the middlemen, moneylenders and export merchants, who were overwhelmingly Indian and British foreigners, he said. A high proportion of cultivators had also been dispossessed of their land by the end of the colonial period by foreigners, he added.

"It is little wonder that independent Myanmar was determined to keep foreigners out of the rice economy," he said.

"The colonial experience, and the fight against the colonial legacy after 1948, are deeply etched in Myanmar's perceptions of the outside world."

Continued from page 28

ethics, compliance, technology, languages; educational consultation in the field of employee training; providing services for business enterprises in the field of employee training; developing educational materials for others in the field of employee training. **Class 42:** Providing Internet search engine; providing Internet search engine information; rental of computer server storage area (memories) for sharing electronic information, electronic data, image data, and other digital contents over Internet; rental of computer server storage area (memories) for social networking or provision of information related to social networking; rental of computer server storage area (memories); rental of a database server; rental of computers; rental of computer programs; providing computer programs Application service provider (ASP) featuring software for database management; hosting of digital content on the Internet; hosting computer sites [web sites]; consulting services in the field of hosting computer software applications; rental of storage area of servers on the Internet; rental of storage area of computers; computer software design, computer programming, or maintenance of computer software; rental of educational software featuring instruction in employee training via the Internet; design, programming, configuration, maintenance, installation, extension of function, change of function, addition of function and other optimization of computer programs; investigation, advice, consulting and provision of information related to design, programming, configuration, maintenance, installation, extension of function, change of function, addition of function and other optimization of computer programs; fault diagnosis and virus inspections of computer programs; investigation, advice, consulting and provision of information related to fault diagnosis and virus inspections of computer programs; duplication of computer programs; remote monitoring of computer systems or computer programs; design, programming and

maintenance of computer systems, communication network systems, or information processing systems; investigation, advice, consulting and provision of information related to design, programming and maintenance of computer systems, communication network systems, or information processing systems; customizing educational software featuring instruction in employee training; providing computer programs by application service providers; providing non-downloadable computer programs via the Internet; providing software as a service (SAAS) services, platform as a service (PAAS) services, and infrastructure as a service (IAAS) services, all for use in database management, data storage, big data processing, home energy solutions services, healthcare services, consulting services, software design and implementation services, file sharing services, document solution services, tax services, retail services and sales, educational services, research services, group collaboration services, scheduling services, communications services, business operations, hardware maintenance services, intellectual asset management services, human resources, finance services, banking services, management services, social infrastructure services, energy solutions, traffic services, medical services, information security services; providing security for public, private and hybrid software. **Class 43:** Providing temporary accommodation; accommodation bureaux (brokering reservations for hotels, boarding houses or the like); providing foods and beverages; boarding for animals; preschooler and infant care at daycare centers; caring of elderlies; providing conference rooms; providing facilities for exhibitions; rental of futon and quilts; rental of cooking equipment for industrial purposes; rental of industrial dishdrying machines; rental of dish washing machines for industrial purposes; rental of non-electric cooking heaters; rental of kitchen worktops; rental of sinks; rental of curtains; rental of furniture; rental of wall hangings; rental of floor coverings; rental of towels. **Class 44:** Beauty salons; hairdressing salons; providing bath houses; garden or flower bed care; garden tree planting;

fertilizer spreading; weed killing; vermin exterminating (for agriculture, horticulture or forestry); massage and therapeutic shiatsu massage; chiropractics; moxibustion; treatment to joint-dislocation, sprain, bone-fracture or the like (judo-seifuku); acupuncture; medical services; providing medical information; physical examination; dentistry; preparation and dispensing of medications; dietary and nutritional guidance; animal breeding; veterinary services; rental of potted plants; farming equipment rental; rental of medical machines and apparatus; rental of fishing machines and instruments; rental of machines and apparatus for use in beauty salons or barbers' shops; rental of lawnmowers. **Class 45:** Legal services; security services for the protection of property and individuals; personal and social services rendered by others to meet the needs of individuals; fashion information; providing information on newspaper articles; marriage partner introduction or dating services; providing facilities for wedding ceremonies (including "post-ceremony receptions"); funeral service undertaking; providing grave spaces or charnel houses; security guarding for facilities; personal body guarding; investigation or surveillance on background profiles; fortune-telling; personal affairs consultancy; housework services; rental of clothing; rental of altars; rental of fire alarms; rental of fire extinguishers; rental of household electrothermic appliances (not included in other classes); rental of prime movers; rental of pneumatic or hydraulic machines and instruments; rental of personal ornaments for wearing.

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **KABUSHIKI KAISHA TOSHIBA**
P.O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Date: 30 June 2014

Who will benefit from Condominium

THOMAS
KEAN

tdkean@gmail.com



DAW Min Min Soe only realised there was a problem with her apartment when officials from the bank arrived at her building and put up a notice reading, "If the owner fails to repay the loan and interest we will seize the apartments."

The owner of the land in Pazundaung township had developed the eight-storey, 16-room building with her own money and sold off most of the apartments - including five she had mortgaged to CB Bank.

"We have known that woman for a long time - we've been living in the same quarter together for ages," said Daw Min Min Soe, whose family runs a grocery store. "So we tried to get an agreement with her to resolve the problem. She said she didn't have any money so couldn't help."

The owners of the five apartments had few legal options. When they threatened to sue the woman, she reminded them that it would do little to solve their problem: Without money to repay the loan, she would end up in jail but they would still lose their homes - and have to pay legal expenses.

"She said she can go to jail or we can take her flesh as compensation [because she had nothing else]. What can we do? We knew she was broke and we couldn't get any money from her," Daw Min Min Soe said. "Finally, we decided to all contribute and pay the loan and interest to the bank. We had no choice - otherwise we all would have lost everything."

Ownership disputes and scams such as those endured by the group of residents in Pazundaung are depressingly common because of Myanmar's complicated and outdated regulations on immovable property rights, including those related to land, apartments and houses. These are compounded by efforts to evade tax, which have left

ownership records incomplete or incorrect. Anecdotal evidence suggests a large proportion of civil cases within the legal system are related to property ownership.

With apartments, this is compounded by the lack of strata title; owners instead rely on sales contracts, which can easily be fabricated. As there is no ownership database, it's virtually impossible to cross-check records to see, for example, who owns an apartment, if its ownership is disputed or if it is mortgaged. Instead, prospective buyers place ads in state-run newspapers announcing their intention to buy and giving claimants to the same property a period of time to come forward.

The first changes are on the way, however. In November 2012 a draft Condominium Law was submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, and the draft was published in state media a year later.

Most attention has focused on provisions that would enable foreigners to own apartments above the sixth floor, with up to 40 percent of a single building allowed to be held by foreigners.

However, industry sources say that more significant than this will be the granting of strata title to owners of apartments in registered condominiums, which will not only significantly strengthen ownership rights but potentially open the door to international financing for developers and mortgages for buyers. What remains unclear is who will benefit the most - ordinary apartment owners or high-end developers and buyers.

The law in its current draft form will strengthen ownership by creating

'I don't know what the condo law is. I just know how bad it is to get cheated.'

Daw Min Min Soe
Apartment owner



Yangon's skyline could keep getting taller when the condo law comes to fruition. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

a new classification of land. Once projects are completed the land on which they are built will be transferred to a body co-owned by the apartment owners; if there are 100 units in the project, for example, each owner will hold a 1pc interest in the land. Significantly, owners will retain that interest in perpetuity - including if the building is demolished and replaced.

"When you have a strata title, you're transferring your title. Your part ownership of that land strengthens your connection with that space," said Tony Picon, managing director of the Myanmar branch of property consulting firm Colliers International.

As *The Myanmar Times* reported in June, the draft has been sent back to the government because of a range of concerns, including the definition of a condominium and land use requirements. It will be reviewed by relevant ministries before being submitted to parliament again, officials said.

"The condo law should clearly set out minimum ownership standards [for the land] to decide what is a condo," said Daw Moe Thida, assistant director of the housing department under the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development (DHSHD). "We will submit the law to responsible departments, who will go through it point by point. There are some weak points compared with other international condominium laws."

One of the changes could see the definition of a condominium broadened. While the government has discretionary powers to decide which developments qualify, the draft states that condominiums should be built on at least 1 acre of land, which would rule out the majority of existing "condominiums" - let alone walk-up apartments like Daw Min Min Soe's.

One potential issue in retroactively granting title is that the owner of the land on which the building is developed

would have to agree to give up their ownership right and transfer it to a co-owned body - something few would likely be willing to do given the potential to generate further income from the land in the future, such as when apartments are demolished and rebuilt.

Regardless, there appears to be little appetite for changes that would make title attainable for virtually all apartment owners, as it is in other countries in the region. In Thailand, for example, the definition does not set a minimum size for the development, or specify certain facilities, such as an elevator; instead it defines a condominium as a building that can be divided into personal properties, or apartments, but also has collective ownership of land.

One of those arguing for the definition of a condominium to be expanded to take in more multi-storey developments is Serge Pun, chair of First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Serge Pun & Associates and Yoma

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

for **Exxon Mobil Corporation**

P.O. Box 60, Yangon

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

Dated: 30 June, 2014

Law?

Strategic Holdings.

He told *The Myanmar Times* the law should instead be called the strata title act and aim to “address all the needs of strata ownership rather than just concentrate on what percentage foreigners can own”.

“This legislation is supposed to govern how strata properties, meaning how a property whose land is co-owned by multiple owners, is to be governed – their rights as well as their obligations. It should apply to any apartment,” he said.

Mr Picon agreed there were major issues with the Condominium Law – particularly the 1-acre requirement and lack of clarity on how it would be applied – but cautioned against opposing legislation on the grounds that it is not “perfect”.

“Thailand muddled through [strata title] a bit and then eventually it got better,” he said. “I think the fact you have a law creating some form of title is more important to start with ... It’s not going to change Myanmar, but it is part of this whole package of getting the country on a par with Thailand and Malaysia.”

Even in its current form, the law will still have an important impact on some sections of the market and will enable land to be used more efficiently. Edwin Vanderbruggen, a partner at legal advisory firm VDB Loi, described it as “manna from heaven” for cash-strapped local developers.

“Until now, you need to get everything done with equity. That means you can only do one-15th of the project you would otherwise be able to do and you’re relying on pre-sales, which you

40%

Rooms in a condo building that can be owned by foreigners under the draft law; units must be above the sixth floor

may or may not get,” he said.

“[The law is] investment-oriented, it’s forward-looking, the effect of this on financing of existing projects is significant. Don’t forget that we’re on the verge of an influx of money, of international financing. For the first time in a long time international banks are seriously looking at providing financing for Myanmar projects.”

And while it won’t enable everyone to access title, Mr Vanderbruggen described high-end developments as “not a bad place to start”. “[Land ownership reform] is really too big of a piece to swallow at one time because it’s not just apartments, it’s also ... rural land and urban land and houses,” he said. “I wouldn’t know where to start ... At least [with the Condominium Law] we’ll have proper title for one thing.”

Public discussion on the Condominium Law has been limited; Daw Min Min Soe said she had no idea about its contents or that it had been submitted to parliament. However, she said she supported any legal changes that would strengthen apartment ownership.

“I don’t know what the condo law is. I just know how bad it is to get cheated. I don’t want it to happen to me again and I don’t want other people to have to go through it either,” she said.

“Buying a house or apartment is not easy for people in Myanmar so we need to have stronger laws for ownership.”

For now, she says, people just need to “be careful” when buying property.

“Don’t trust other people too easily,” she said. “All we can do is to do double- or triple-check the documents before buying.”

Port project to get shopping mall



SHWEGU THITSAR

khaingsabainyein@gmail.com

A FIRM called New Downtown Development Company will build a 10 storey building including a luxury shopping mall at Yangon’s Pansodan port, said Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung.

The firm won a tender to develop the building at the port, which is a main passenger terminal for the Yangon-Dala township ferries that frequently make the short trip across the Yangon river.

The project will be built under

Build-Operate-Transfer terms of 20 years’ duration, said U Nyan Tun Aung at a June 21 ceremony laying the first stone of the project. The firm will pay US\$1 million up front to secure the land rights as well as \$1 million in annual rental fees.

‘This is a big transportation project to implement in Yangon.’

U Nyan Tun Aung
Minister for Transport

The shopping mall is part of a planned rebuild of the Pansodan-Dala passenger port that also includes a 12 metre-long steel jetty, a two-storey resting hall measuring 200ft (61m) by 145ft (44m) and a 100m long steel bridge.

The jetty on the Dala side is expected to cost \$4.5 million, and the terminal building \$3.5 million, said Myanma Port Authority chief civil engineer U Mya Than.

The jetty and terminal building are expected to come first, followed by the building with the shopping centre.

“The company is still working out the design,” said Ministry of Transport information office U Htain Lin.

“Initially it was planned as a 20-storey building, but it will be 10 storeys,” he said.

U Nyan Tun Aung claimed the project will be completed within a year, adding that New Downtown Development Company was aiming only to cover costs.

“This is a big transportation project to implement in Yangon, the country’s commercial hub,” he said.

More than 30,000 people commute from Dala to Yangon and back every day, generally using the passenger ferries that dock near Strand Road. Japan has agreed to donate three ferries – to be christened Cherry 1, 2 and 3 – with a capacity of over 1000 passengers each, necessitating the port upgrades, he said.

Officials did not release any details of New Downtown Development Company. – *Translation by Zar Zar Soe*



Workers build a jetty in Dala township.
Photo: Shwegu Thitsar



Concept drawing of the new Pansodan passenger port. Photo: Supplied

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U Nyunt Tin Associates International Limited

Intellectual Property Division

Tel: 959 4500 59 247, Email: info@untlaw.com

For **ACCOR**

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Intellectual Property Division

Tel: 959 4500 59 247, Email: info@untlaw.com

For **Days Inns Worldwide, Inc.**

Dated: 30 June, 2014.

Anti-smuggling teams to watch Yangon airport

SU PHYOWIN

suphyo1990@gmail.com

THE Ministry of Commerce's mobile enforcement teams will include Yangon International Airport in their air and sea port investigations set to start on July 2, according to ministry officials.

With much of Myanmar's cross-border commerce thought to be carried out illegally, the teams will target tax evasion and promote legalised trade, which has grown to US\$24.96 billion for the 2013-14 fiscal year, from \$18.42 billion the previous year.

Up to 80 percent of sea trading routes were unmonitored, deputy commerce minister U Pwint San said at a Pyithu Hluttaw meeting in October last year.

Mobile enforcement teams will target illegal trade at Asia World, Hteedan, Myanmar Industrial, Bo Aung Kyaw and Sule Ports as well as Yangon airport's cargo service and customs warehouses, after previously

focusing on border areas.

U Tin Ye Win, director for the ministry's Illegal Trade Prevention and Supervision Control Committee, previously told *The Myanmar Times* that enforcing the rules in urban areas can be more difficult as it brings them into contact with more important companies.

The committee began in November 2012. It claims to have handled 3391 cases, seizing goods worth K17.5 billion (\$17.9 million) up to June 26. They are well-known for orchestrating a crackdown on illegal alcohol imports late last year that saw supplies for some foreign alcohols drop precipitously in Yangon.

The Ministry of Commerce has also raised its trade volume target for this fiscal year to \$30 billion, from its \$25.7 billion previous target, said ministry official U Nyunt Aung, adding that part of the rise came from success of the mobile teams.

He claimed the 250 members of the teams are effective at combating illegal border trade, and are now focusing on ports and airports, adding that the consequences faced by illegal traders could be severe.

The committee has four main procedures, including destroying questionable food, transferring products such as timber and jewels to other departments, levying fines, and also seizing property as the last resort.

Myawaddy was the largest overland gate for trade last fiscal year, reaching \$271.5 million total imports and exports, according to U Nyunt Aung.

BILLION

K17.5

Value of goods seized by mobile enforcement teams as of June 26, after mostly targeting land crossings

EXPAT FINANCE

Neglected expat investments

ANDREW WOOD

enquiriesmyanmar@fsplatinum.com

EXPATRIATES around the world are investors out of necessity, and rarely cared for as they would be back at home. Many become lifelong travelers once they have been abroad for a few years.

Living in a foreign land, like Myanmar, means you need to be financially independent. You may have some financial arrangements back home which are not portable and insufficient for your overall needs. It is impossible to compare your financial affairs with those back home because circumstances are so different. As expats we necessarily become more lateral in our thinking.

Most of us realise the dilemma we face, needing to become financially self-sufficient. We build wealth and then have difficulty managing it successfully, often resulting in our accumulated reserves being insufficient to sustain us in the future.

Deferred pensions in your home country, where you have no control over management, frequently languish and deteriorate in value. Quite often you are not even aware that you have such assets. They are simply parked in a convenient place for the manager – usually going nowhere except down.

If you self-manage your offshore investments you are brave and likely spend a lot of time trying to become successful. Many expats have invested in products through so-called professional advisers who neglect any further attention to clients beyond the initialisation process. Do you have investments in a portfolio simply ailing, losing real-time value and falling behind inflation?

The chances are you initiated this investment whilst working in another country and have lost touch with the adviser who signed you up since coming to Myanmar. Getting back in touch can be tricky and very often they have moved on or are not really interested.

You may have found that the value of your plan is less than you had anticipated. If you try to withdraw it you are hit by surrender penalties. Which ever path you choose looks as though you are going to be a big-time loser.

Such an experience may have shredded your confidence in financial advisers. But there are solutions available. If

If you self-manage your offshore investments you are brave and likely spend a lot of time.

an adviser you can trust is worthy, he will be willing to assist you in getting your investments back into shape and working with you further to ensure that you do not suffer the heavy penalties which can be imposed when you wish to make changes.

Quite often it is best to restructure your investment into a new portfolio product. There are new generation facilities available which have much lower charges and greater investment choices than older models. If you are asked to bear any surrender penalties when exiting from your current situation, refuse and seek an alternative.

Insurance sector aims at HR needs with school

SHWEGU THITSAR

khaingsabainyein@gmail.com

MYANMAR is revitalising its insurance industry with a new training college to meet the growing needs of newly established private companies.

Twelve private companies have so far been licensed to sell insurance policies in six categories. A Myanmar National Insurance College (MNIC) is being set up to train staff, particularly young graduates.

“We will prioritise young adults who will lead the future of insurance one day here in Myanmar,” Deputy Minister for Finance U Maung Maung Thein said last week.

“Since these private companies have started operating they have created numerous job opportunities, not only for young adults but also for senior citizens who rely on pensions,” he added.

The college will be established with funding from the private sector, the deputy minister said, adding that graduates' qualifications would be recognised internationally. Teachers will also be recruited from abroad, he said.

“It is mandatory for all incoming students to have earned a college degree and we will have limited places available,” he added.

The Myanmar Insurance Committee, which will run the MNIC, says the college will open next year but it has not yet identified a site.

– Translation by Mabel Chua

When restructured correctly exit charges can be recovered in full making sure that the overall cost of the exercise to you is zero.

Any investment should comply with your risk appetite. Many expats do not really understand the significance of this. It is the art of measuring the acceptable level of risk against your expectation for future investment performance. For example, if you expect an annual growth of 10 percent and you are a cautious investor this is impractical. These two factors do not currently gel. No cautious investor in today's markets should expect a return of that magnitude. Your risk profile is important and will govern your overall objectives.

The holistic view is another key factor. One expat, in Yangon, was discussing a specific portfolio amounting to some US\$250,000. He was a risk averse, cautious investor whose portfolio had lost 20pc. This investment was only a relatively small part of his overall net worth of some \$5.8m. After lengthy deliberation it was decided that this portfolio should be placed in adventurous holdings because his remaining assets were producing good results in their cautious and balanced strategies. Despite his cautious attitude it was relevant to invest this part of his overall assets in high-risk areas to make up for the losses already suffered. The strategy worked well.

Many expats hold neglected investments, often falling into decay through negligence. Make sure you are one of those who do not suffer as a result of such mistreatment.

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



JOB WATCH

EMBASSY OF DENMARK Yangon

Job Vacancies The Nordic House

The Nordic House is the home of the offices of the four Nordic Diplomatic Missions in Myanmar: *The Diplomatic Mission of Finland, The Embassy of Denmark, The Embassy of Norway and The Embassy of Sweden, Section Office Yangon.* The four diplomatic missions have common premises and administration. We are currently looking to recruit a highly motivated and dedicated Myanmar national for the following positions to join our dynamic Myanmar and Nordic team.

(1) Secretary to the Ambassador of Denmark (ref: 08/14)

RESPONSIBILITIES: Manage meetings and appointments, organize travel arrangements, coordinate visits and delegations, prepare correspondence and protocol matters ensuring correctness of language and format, coordinate transport and messenger service, update contact lists and other secretarial and administrative tasks as assigned.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS: At least four years of relevant work experience, proficiency in both written and oral English and Myanmar languages, service-minded and creative, team-oriented and flexible, good computer skills (Word, Outlook, Excel), ability to manage several tasks simultaneously.

(2) Driver for the Ambassador of Denmark (ref: 09/14)

RESPONSIBILITIES: Personal driver for the ambassador and visitors/staff for in-town and out-of-town trips, secure handling of office affairs and messenger service, maintenance of cars, and other tasks as assigned. Overtime and occasional weekend work must be expected.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS: At least four years of relevant work experience for international employers, valid driver's license and ability to drive 4WD vehicles, good knowledge of Yangon and Myanmar locations, good command of English language and good communication skills.

Application Details

For both positions, please send an application including cover letter, CV, references, salary expectations, and supporting documents to the Head of Administration, Nordic House, No. 7, Pyi Thu Street, Pyay Road, 7 Miles, Mayangone Township, Yangon, or by email to emb.yangon@mfa.no with copy to swe.swe.aung@mfa.no.

Closing date for applications: **16 July 2014**



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Please read the detailed competition notice & job description available at
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Last Date to Submit Application for this position: **11 July 2014 16:00 hours**



National Expert (Law Enforcement)

Cardno Emerging Markets is looking for an enthusiastic and committed National Expert in Myanmar for the **Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP)**. AAPTIP is a five-year (2013-2018) AU\$50m initiative of the Australian Government – managed by Cardno. With the Regional Office in Bangkok, this program works in Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and the Philippines with the overall goal of reducing the incentives and opportunities for trafficking of persons in the ASEAN region.

The **National Expert** will support the implementation of AAPTIP in Myanmar in line with national priorities and regional developments. This will require the National Expert to work closely with the International Adviser, the Myanmar Country Program Coordinator, and others in the AAPTIP team to implement key project activities related to developing the capacity of law enforcement officials to respond to trafficking in persons cases in an ethical and effective manner. The role will involve providing strategic and operational advice to national counterparts and the AAPTIP team.

A competitive salary package will be offered to the preferred candidate in line with local labour laws. Please refer to <http://www.cardno.com/en-au/Careers/Pages/Jobs-at-Cardno.aspx> for more information.

Please email applications that address the Core Competencies and a current CV, quoting the relevant job title to the Recruitment Manager at aaptip.recruitment@cardno.com. Please also provide two professional referees. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview.

Cardno is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to Child Protection in all fields. Successful applicants may be required to provide a police clearance certificate.

Applications must be submitted by **14 July 2014**.



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EMBASSY OF DENMARK Yangon

Job Vacancy: Political Officer The Nordic House

The Nordic House is the home of the offices of the four Nordic Diplomatic Missions in Myanmar: *The Diplomatic Mission of Finland, The Embassy of Denmark, The Embassy of Norway and The Embassy of Sweden, Section Office Yangon.* The four diplomatic missions have common premises and administration.

We are currently looking to recruit a highly motivated and dedicated Myanmar national to join our dynamic team as a political officer.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Your responsibilities will include monitoring and reporting on the political situation in Myanmar, participating in the management of the Danish Development Assistance Program, translation of information material, participating in field trips, assisting visiting missions and other duties as may be assigned.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS: The successful candidate will have an academic degree combined with minimum three years of relevant work experience, in-depth understanding of the political landscape with a well-developed network among relevant actors, fluency in both written and oral English and Myanmar languages, plus have strong research, analytical and communication skills.

Application Details

Please send an application marked "Ref: 10/14" including cover letter, CV, references, salary expectations, and supporting documents to the Head of Administration, the Nordic House, No. 7, Pyi Thu Street, Pyay Road, 7 Miles, Mayangone Township, Yangon, or by email to emb.yangon@mfa.no with copy to swe.swe.aung@mfa.no.

Closing date for applications: **16 July 2014**



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Careers at MCM

Copy Controller (1 Post in Yangon)

Reporting to the Circulation & Distribution Department's Finance and Accounts Manager for Yangon, as well as the Circulation & Distribution Director, the Copy Controller performs an auditing function of verifying the amount of each publication printed in numbers and verifying that each allotment of the print run has been delivered in the numbers required to the appropriate destination.

Main Duties: Working in the storeroom as the newspapers and magazines are being printed, the Copy Controller uses the "ISSUE ORDER" system to verify that the correct numbers of each publication (*The Myanmar Times* English; *The Myanmar Times* Myanmar Language and NOW! Magazine) have been allocated in the exact amounts to each required destination. The Copy Controller will be the one person who verifies and accounts for each printed product from *The Myanmar Times*.

Qualifications: The Copy Controller will be fluent in both Burmese and English, will be able to type, will be able to use computers and will take pride in keeping accurate records.

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Qualifications: University degree, good communications skills, pleasant phone voice; highly organized; experience in customer relations or telemarketing a plus.

The Myanmar Times seeks to fill these positions **immediately** and all qualified Myanmar nationals are encouraged to apply.



The Human Resources Manager: Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd.
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Email applications to: mcmhrd@myanmartimes.com.mm

Job Watch

MYANMARTIMES
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Call: Chan Tha Oo
chantha.mcm@gmail.com
09: 25400 6188
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Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Jeremy Mullins | jeremymullins7@gmail.com



Cars drive past the site of the Ye Kyaw Place development in Pazundaung township. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

Problems pile on at old site of Ye Kyaw market



NOE NOE AUNG

noenoeag@gmail.com

DEVELOPMENT of Ye Kyaw Place in Yangon's Pazundaung township has run into delays stemming from a repeatedly broken pile driver, local noise complaints and problems keeping workers, said a company official.

The site on Ye Kyaw Street held a military warehouse in colonial times, and a market following independence, until a 2013 decision to tear it down and build a modern development in its place.

The move by Yangon City Development Committee to build the new project had been controversial, with shopkeepers claiming to be unhappy with their temporary shops where they waited for the project's completion.

Negotiations have since largely

solved the issue, but the close proximity of nearby shops in the busy neighbourhood has become a problem.

"Ye Kyaw is a crowded place and there are shops all around the construction site. So bringing construction materials and trucks is not easy," said the official with Aung Myin Pyae Sone development company headquartered in Thingangyun township, who declined to be named.

Nearby shopkeepers had requested work not start until later in the afternoon, and finish at 7pm, which has added to the difficulties of construction.

'Ye Kyaw is a crowded place and there are shops all around the construction site.'

Official from developing company

Problems retaining workers and a pile driver that needs frequent repair has also slowed work, the official said.

Work started in February, but foundations are only about 20 percent complete. The project will eventually be eight stories, with five floors for apartments, one for shopping, one for a car parking lot and one for the new Ye Kyaw market.

Former shop tenants of the demolished market have eyed returning to the re-built market once it is complete.

The firm has also started pre-selling 45 apartments.

The official said that the project is designed to fit into the subdued surroundings of Pazundaung township, while still channelling some unique character.

"The design of the building is simple and pleasant, and it will be different than all the other buildings in town," he said.

Moving in difficult due to permit delays

MYAT NYEIN AYE
myatnyeinaye11092@gmail.com
TIN YANDANAR TUN
yadanar.mcm@gmail.com

DELAYS issuing Building Completion Certificates (BCC) are keeping owners and renters from moving into recently completed buildings, say developers.

Contractors often have to wait up to a month to be issued the permits from Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), which translates into lost revenue for developers unable to move in tenants and owners immediately after the project is finished.

YCDC officials dispute these claims, however, saying that the process is usually wrapped up within a week.

Still, developers say their businesses are being hurt by delays in the process.

"The buildings have finished, the buyers want to move in, but with the BCC delays we sometimes have to rent rooms at other buildings for buyers until we get permission to move them in," said Daw Khin Aye, who owns land and cooperates with developers for buildings.

"It's taking between one and two months for buildings to get BCC permits," she said.

Some developers say part of the problem is ascertaining what type of land the buildings are on.

U Aung Min, manager of Myat Min contractors, said uncertain land ownership often complicates the BCC permitting process.

If the site has an electricity

meter and clearly stands on grant land, then the process can be easy, he said.

Buildings in Yangon's hinterlands are particularly likely to be delayed, with some projects taking over a year to gain a BCC if they are not built on grant land, he added.

BCC permits are only required for buildings over five floors.

Residents want to move as quickly as possible, and are often frustrated when the project is complete but they are not allowed to move in.

"We want the department to solve this problem quickly for the residents," he said.

YCDC officials countered that they are providing the BCCs quickly - provided the developer has completed all the necessary steps.

"They might say it's random, that it takes one month or two months, but actually the department is issuing BCC permits in one week," said YCDC Department of Engineering (Building) deputy director U Nay Win.

Firms applying for BCCs need to complete their responsibilities laid out in YCDC guidelines if they want to get permits quickly, he said.

"If everything is fine, we will give the permit," he said.

Contactors applying for BCC permits are required to have evidence they have paid appropriate taxes, approval from fire brigades, concrete plans to install an electricity meter, water hook-ups, and road and bridge approval as applicable, according to the Department of Engineering (Building).

Once these checks are complete, department officials check the site to make sure it meets up with the submitted paperwork, said U Nay Win.

"If the work isn't completely finished, the residents will be in danger, so we can't allow them to move in," he said.

The process is also cost-free, he added.

If people live in a building without a BCC permit, the department can fine contractors some K100,000 per room, according to U Nay Win.

THOUSAND

K100

Fine per room that can levied by YCDC on developers who allow residents to move in without a BCC permit

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for INNOVIS MARKETING PRIVATE LIMITED
P. O. Box 60, Yangon

Dated: 30 June, 2014.

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



Living with some European design

If you're looking for peace and quiet, this brand-new, partially furnished three-bedroom house in South Okkalapa township could be the home for you.

Set in a spacious, tree-shaded compound in Kyar Badonmar Street, the property is convenient for the Gandamar Wholesale Centre. Boasting two master bedrooms, one single bedroom, two living rooms, three bathrooms, a kitchen, garage, and verandas, this house would suit a small-to-medium sized family, and a small home office to boot.

Painted grey, the living area is amounts to 1800 square feet, located in a 2400 sq-ft compound. Built in the western fashion, the house comes with the range of amenities that House of the Week would expect, including two air conditioners, telephone land lines, tube-well and ground water.

The rental price is a negotiable K2,500,000, fair for the size of the house. HotW could certainly recommend it for the right family. - Tin Yadanar Htun

Location : Kyar Badonmar St, Lane of Waizayantar Rd, South Okkalapa Township
Price : K2,500,000 per month (negotiable)
Contact : Estate Myanmar Real Estate Agency
Phone : 09-43118787, 09-73114860

“Apart from Singapore, in other Asian countries, local banks have never been overtaken by foreign banks.”

— U Set Aung, deputy governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar

Chinese vacations to woo dissenters onto govt side

WORLD 42



A man signs on a Dagon City 1 board last week. Photo: Supplied

Officials watch height of Dagon City 1 project

MYAT NYEIN AYE

myatnayeinaye11092@gmail.com

PLANS for a large US\$300 million mixed used project near U Htaung Bo Roundabout in Yangon were promoted last week, though government officials say they will keep an eye on its proposed high-rise structures to see if they contravene zoning plans.

The Dagon City 1 project is set to include a five-star hotel, office and retail space and residential buildings, aiming to finish the multi-phased project in five or six years, according to company officials.

The land is leased from the government what branch using a build-operate-transfer system. Developers Marga Landmark, an international syndicate of Hong Kong, Korean and British investors, and local firm Thu Kha Yadanar say they hope to have the first phase of four residential towers finished by the fourth quarter of 2014.

Yangon City Development Committee's (YCDC) zoning plan sets height limits for many of Yangon's

buildings. The Dagon City 1 project is near Shwedagon Pagoda, where many buildings are limited in height to avoid blocking views of the landmark site.

YCDC director of urban planning U Toe Aung said that a project proposal has not yet been submitted to YCDC, but it sits on land designated to be in the Shwedagon highrise limited zone and in green zone 2 – both areas with various restrictions on building height.

“When they propose their project to YCDC, we will assess whether their plans comply with restrictions on heights,” he said.

Company officials said the firms have received permits from Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and also agree to follow YCDC's rules.

Dagon City 1 aims to include eight-storey residential towers with apartments between 600 and 2000 square feet, as well as several penthouses. It also boasts amenities including a fitness centre, outdoor swimming pool, restaurant and indoor golf.

Developers also highlighted the opportunity to provide jobs for local people.

BEIJING

China funds French wine

Misappropriated state funds end up in all sorts of questionable places, say authorities

CHINESE government funds have been misused to buy French vineyards, pay for a trip to Las Vegas and more, the state auditor said in a document revealing more than 300 serious corruption cases.

President Xi Jinping launched a much-publicised anti-graft campaign after taking over as Communist Party chief in late 2012, but critics say no systemic reforms have been brought in to prevent corruption.

Two companies in the northeastern port city of Dalian were granted 268 million yuan (US\$43 million) by local authorities last year to buy overseas technology, but instead purchased 14 vineyards in France, the National Audit Office (NAO) said in its annual report.

Haichang Group, one of the firms it named, is the biggest Chinese owner of Bordeaux vineyards with more than 10 wine estates including Chateau

Chenu-Lafitte, said French media.

Executives with Haichang Group, a trading and shipping company that also has interests in property, tourism and agriculture, were not immediately available for comment when contacted by AFP.

The company is one of the two investors in a seaside theme park in Dalian that was passionately promoted by disgraced former political high-flyer Bo Xilai, who was once mayor of the city.

AFP was unable to locate a website or any publicised contact telephone numbers for the other Dalian firm, Ruiyang Investment Management Co.

Chinese investors have been among the biggest buyers of French wineries in recent years. The purchases have raised concerns highlighted by a report last year by Paris's money laundering investigators Tracfin, calling for “increased vigilance” of such deals.

The NAO said a total of 314 cases where “major violation of laws and disciplines” was suspected, involving more than 1100 people, had been “uncovered and transferred” to investigators.

The 2012 report had 175 such cases, it added in the document submitted June 24 to the National People's Congress, China's Communist-controlled legislature.

China Geological Survey officials spent three days in Las Vegas during a trip to North America meant to study shale gas technology, and later claimed they were working in Canada at the time, the NAO said.

A tour by high-ranking officials organised by the State Oceanic Administration in 2012 to a Chinese research station in Antarctica spent half the travel time in France and Chile, it added.

Mismanagement of state assets was rife, the NAO said. — AFP



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LONDON

Powerful internet body mulls future of the web

IN a London hotel, over 3,300 technicians, government representatives, academics and members of the domain name industry gathered this week for the largest ever meeting of the powerful body that runs the internet's key infrastructure: the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

Its name is one of numerous acronyms that can make the world of the internet's managing forces seem impenetrable to outsiders.

But its policies are of enormous importance, deciding what addresses like .com, .org or .fr exist, and who has the right to use them.

Over the last two years, ICANN has overseen the highest ever expansion of these generic Top-Level Domains – it awarded .catholic to the Vatican, but opted to give .amazon to the South American region rather than the online business.

It must balance the demands of myriad corporations, interest groups and governments, eking out compromises to ensure the system sticks to one set of rules and does not split into regional “internets”.

To this end, ICANN is trying to transform itself from an institution overseen by the US government into a globally representative body – and some say now is the time to change how it is run.

“ICANN’s procedures highlight its inability to take into account the legitimate concerns of states,” the French delegation to ICANN said in a statement June 25.

“Today ICANN is not the appropriate forum to discuss Internet governance.”

The attack followed a standoff over the .wine and .vin domains, which France believes should be legally protected, in a similar way to how the European Union limits who can use the drink label “Champagne”.

ICANN’s leadership dismisses the French characterisation that it is opaque and lacks accountability, contending that it is a pioneer in transparency that needs little advice from governments.

“When I prepare a draft budget, let alone a draft plan, even before it’s vetted by my leaders it’s put on the internet for anyone to comment on,” said Jean-Jacques Sahel,

‘It’s a strange contraption. It’s a private corporation but it’s making public policy.’

Milton Muelter
Professor of Information Sciences

ICANN’s Vice President of stakeholder engagement for Europe.

“Tell me what corporation, international organisation or government consults on its draft budget and draft plans at such a detailed level?”

ICANN’s complex and unusual structure grew out of the peculiarities of the early internet, when its core job was done by just one man: Jon Postel, a California computer scientist known as the “God of the Internet”.

“It’s a strange contraption. It’s a private corporation but it’s making public policy,” said Milton Muelter, a professor at the Syracuse University School of Information Studies who has worked in ICANN’s decision-making process.

“It’s like what Winston Churchill said about democracy – it’s the worst system apart from all the others.”

Its board of 21 directors is partly appointed by an independent committee, and is split between various stakeholders and industry bodies, with governments and “internet users” represented by a board member each.

Decisions are made through “rough consensus”, according to which suggestions that are put to ICANN are developed into a report by a committee, which is then put out for public review, and discussed and revised until a consensus is reached, or as a last resort the board decides. – *AFP*

House-hunting app debuts



IN a sign that Yangon’s real estate boom is far from over, the international real estate network Lamudi has introduced a new Android app aimed at connecting property buyers and sellers.

“It is no secret that house-hunting can be a stressful process,” said Mr Michiel Bakker, Myanmar country manager for Lamudi, in a statement posted on the company’s website.

“This application helps take the pressure out of searching for property, allowing you to look up homes for sale or rent at anytime and on any device”.

Though just over a year old, Lamudi has already launched dozens of similar apps in developing nations all over the world.

According to Lamudi’s management, they were especially keen to debut the app in Myanmar due to the rapidly developing mobile market and the rapidly expanding property market.

Writing on their company website, Lamudi claims that 75 percent of Yangonites searching for real estate are looking to buy.

The app is exclusive to Android, and statements from the company suggest it will stay that way.

“Android is the future of the smart phone market not just in Myanmar, but worldwide. For this reason, we have focused on rolling out the Android application to Lamudi’s 28 countries to reach the maximum number of users with our unique property platform,” said Antonius Salis, Lamudi’s co-founder and Managing Director.

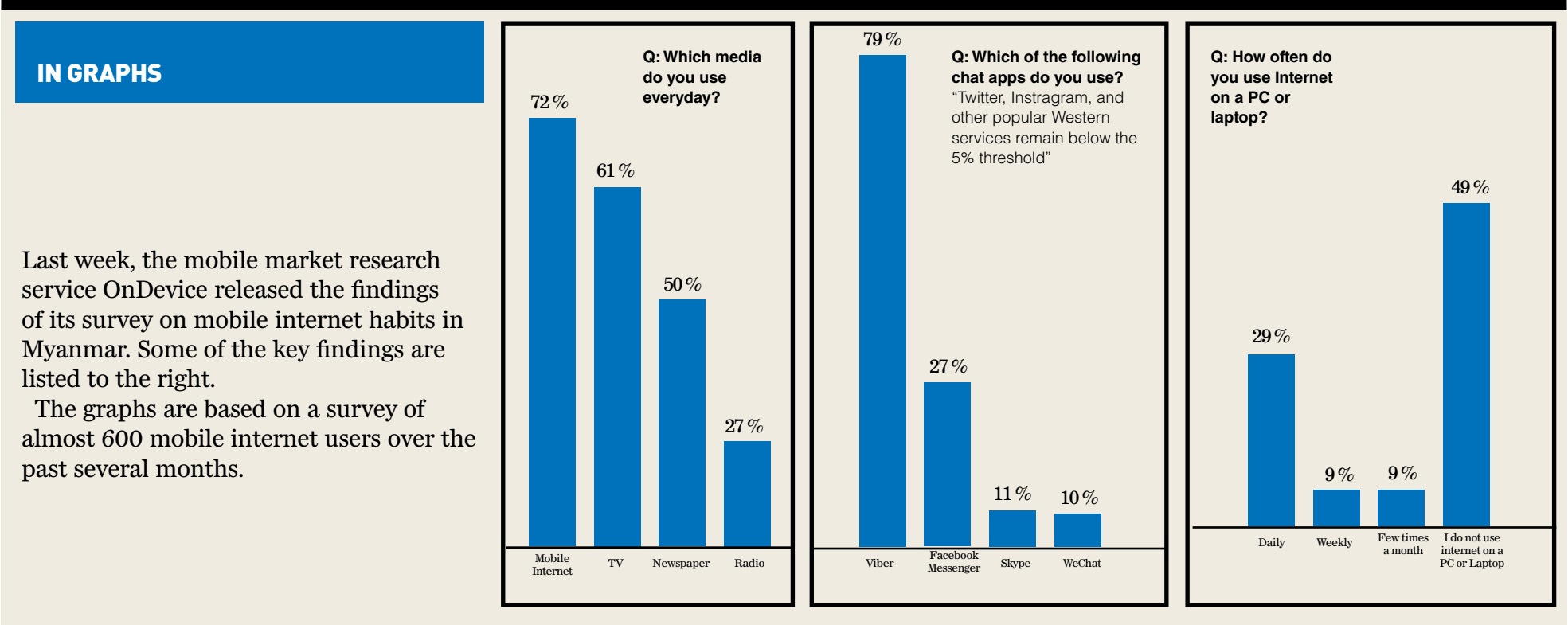
Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* last week, Mr Bakker said the network is free to use for interested buyers, and charges a small fee for sellers.

IN BRIEF

New roaming rates from MPT begin in July

Starting July 2, Myanmar Post and Telecommunication will provide international outbound roaming service to its GSM and WCDMA SIM cards users.

According to a June 26 announcement on the MPT website, users will be able to use their SIMS in over 31 foreign countries. The rate for making calls from Southeast Asian nations to Myanmar is K3000 per minute, while calling from East and South Asia to Myanmar is K3500 per minute. Calling from the Middle East will be K4500 per minute, and calls from Europe, Australia, Africa and America to Myanmar will be K5000 per minute. MPT has rolled out several new services in the past year in the hopes of retaining customers when private telcos enter the market this fall. – *Aung Kyaw Nyunt*



MYANMAR PHARM-ED EXPO 2014

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ကမ်းခြေဆိုင်ရာကုန်သည်ပြပွဲ



IN PICTURES

Last month, Bitcoin, the unregulated virtual currency, opened its headquarters in Paris at “La Maison du Bitcoin” where the currency will be promoted and a dispenser and changing counter will be available to the general public.
Photo: AFP

SAN FRANCISCO

Google Android software spreading to cars, watches, TV

GOOGLE is expanding its empire to cars, watches, businesses and televisions.

The technology titan laid out a sweeping vision at the opening of a sold-out developers conference in a keynote presentation streamed online to millions of people across the world last week.

“We are beginning to evolve our platforms beyond mobile,” Android and Chrome teams chief Sundar Pichai said of how Google’s twin operating systems are being adapted to work with one another and with new types of computing hardware.

Google’s goal, according to Mr Pichai, is to have its software be a foundation for applications, services or digital content delivered seamlessly across the increasingly diverse array of Internet-linked screens in people’s lives.

A new LG G smartwatch and a freshly-announced Gear Live smartwatch by Samsung that both work with the “Android Wear” platform debuted June 25 at the online shop Google Play.

On-stage demonstrations included ordering a pizza in seconds, fielding reminders and messages, and using voice commands on smartwatches.

An eagerly awaited Moto 360 smartwatch is due to join the Android Wear lineup later this year.

“These are the first three watches, but there are more on the way,” Mr Pichai said.

Android Auto software for cars, synching smartphones with in-dash-board screens and controls, is being

shared with automakers, and vehicles are set to be equipped by the end of this year.

Android Auto brings apps like Google Maps and Spotify music service to an “interface built for driving”, according to a freshly formed coalition of technology and car companies called the Open Automotive Alliance.

Google also announced another shot at smart televisions with Android TV software for what are typically the biggest screens in homes.

Google is giving televisions “the same level of attention that phones and tablets have enjoyed,” according to Android engineering director Dave Burke.

Android smartphones, complete with voice command features, could be used to direct searches and more on television screens, an on-stage demonstration showed.

Games from the Google Play shop could also be played on televisions.

“The Google empire is trying to grow,” Gartner consumer technology research director Brian Blau told AFP on the sidelines of the San Francisco keynote presentation.

“Google is trying to be more like Apple: create more consistent experiences with devices that work together.”

Handset or tablet makers are free to customise free Android software to suit hardware and set themselves apart from rivals, but this has resulted in popular applications working on some gadgets and not others in a situation referred to as “fragmentation.”

Apple, on the other hand, so tightly controls software powering

iPhones, iPads and iPod touch devices that developers can more easily target broad audiences.

Improving how well popular services or applications work across Android devices should also entice users to “lock in” to the platform the way Apple devotees remain loyal to the Cupertino, California company’s gear, according to Mr Blau.

“Lots of variations of Android make developers work harder to support all those devices,” the analyst said.

“A consistent experience will help Google in the long run.”

Google also showed off steps it is taking to make Android devices along with its services offered in the internet “cloud” amenable to workplaces.

Improvements include tools for separating personal and company uses of mobile devices, as well as better handling of files made using Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint programs.

Outside the convention center, protesters dressed as ‘Star Wars’ film bad guy Darth Vader to remind Google of its founding vow not to be evil.

Protests did not disrupt on-stage presentations, and Mr Pichai made a point of addressing criticism that women engineers are scarce in Silicon Valley firms.

Among those watching the conference online was a group of female developers in Nigeria, said Mr Pichai, who noted that more than a fifth of those taking part in the conference are women.

“We are working hard to elevate women in computer sciences,” Mr Pichai said. — AFP

Gadget Round-up

by Myo Satt

Speakers for PC, laptop and handset

Sony Ericsson MPS-100
This portable speaker with fancy design is compatible with phone. Just connect with 3.5mm chord. Although this device is small, it can give the best sound quality even in the loudest volume.
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K25,000



Mini Speaker (E-118A)
These speakers are compatible with PC, DVD, MP3 and MP4 files. They also include a built-in active amplifier and volume control buttons. The design is portable and travels well.
K25,000



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World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

BANGKOK

Thailand's generals to keep control of interim government

ARMY rulers will appoint a national assembly stacked with military officers to pick Thailand's interim government leader as they seek to retain their influence over the kingdom's political transition.

In the first real hint of the shape the politically fraught country's next administration may take, army sources on June 26 told AFP that the military will select the 200 assembly members and that the junta itself will not be dissolved.

"We have learned our lesson. By pushing power in other people's hands, they may not do what we expect them to do," said an official under the condition of anonymity.

The kingdom's generals are keen to avoid ceding as much power to the interim government as they did following the last coup in 2006.

Earlier in June junta chief General Prayut Chan-O-Cha said the regime would set up an interim government by September to oversee political reforms, including crafting a new constitution, followed by elections in about a year's time.

Pro-coup demonstrators have called for reforms that would rid the country of the influence of the

Shinawatra family, whose political parties continually win during elections but are loathed by much of the country's powerful elite.

The junta, formally known as the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), has now finished drafting an interim constitution, according to the military official.

The comments were confirmed by another army source who also requested anonymity. "The interim constitution is complete ... The NCPO's powers will remain, different from the 2006 coup when the military lost power after establishing an interim government," the source said.

The officials did not specify the exact balance of power between the junta and the planned interim government.

The remarks came as a Thai opposition alliance set up to counter the nation's coup-making junta said on June 26 it would establish an official base in a Western country by July.

Thailand's junta has muzzled dissent, summoning and detaining hundreds of people, the majority linked with the deposed government of ex-premier Yingluck Shinawatra and her administration's "Red Shirt" supporters.

The new anti-coup "Organisation of Free Thais for Human Rights and Democracy" is in talks with several countries in the West over setting up headquarters, spokesperson Jakrapob Penkair told reporters in Hong Kong.

Mr Prayut, who is due to retire as army chief in September, has not ruled out becoming prime minister himself.

He also has not revealed whether the cabinet, handpicked by the premier, would be made up of civilians or military personnel.

A committee to draft political

reforms will also be appointed by the junta and comprise 250 members, the sources said.

The junta claims that Thailand, which has seen 19 failed or successful coups in recent decades, needs a strong military to help steady the country after months of violent protests between opposing political camps.

In a BBC interview published on June 26, a senior Thai general rejected reports the army had been planning a coup for several years in a bid to rid the kingdom of the influence of controversial former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

"So far as I know there was no advanced planning, because if it were planned that would be illegitimate," Lieutenant General Chatchalerm Chalermsukh told the British broadcaster.

"If you're wondering why this [the coup] happened so smoothly, that was because forces were already deployed in the city [Bangkok]," he claimed.

His comments came after local media reported that Suthep Thaugsuban, the leader of mass protests which crippled the former administration, said he had been advising Prayut on how to tackle Mr Thaksin since 2010.

The Thai military seized power on May 22 after nearly seven months of protests saw 28 people killed and hundreds of others wounded, paralysing the government of former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra, Mr Thaksin's younger sister.

It was the latest chapter of a seemingly-intractable political crisis that broadly pits billionaire Mr Thaksin, a fugitive former premier who was toppled by the 2006 coup, and his supporters against a royalist establishment backed by parts of the military and judiciary. — AFP



BAGHDAD

Military needs po

As Sunni militants continue their offensive, Iraq's prime

PRIME minister Nuri al-Maliki has conceded that political measures are needed alongside military action to repel a Sunni insurgent offensive that is threatening to tear Iraq apart.

He spoke on May 26 as British Foreign Secretary William Hague urged Iraqi leaders to unite in the face of the onslaught, led by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), that has killed nearly 1100 people and displaced more than half a million more.

Iraqi forces launched a helicopter-borne assault aimed at opening the way to retaking militant-held Tikrit, while the autonomous Kurdish region further staked its claim to the disputed city of Kirkuk.

Powerful Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr meanwhile risked ratcheting up already-high sectarian tensions by vowing to "shake the ground" under the feet of the advancing militants.

Later on June 26, a suicide bomb in a predominantly Shiite area of Baghdad killed 19 people.

"We should proceed in two parallel tracks," Mr Maliki told Mr Hague who was on a surprise visit to Iraq.

Along with military operations, authorities must continue "following up on the political process and holding a meeting of the parliament [on time] and electing a head of parliament and a president and forming the government".

Iraq's parliament has been called to convene on July 1, a statement from the Iraqi presidency said.

Thus far, Mr Maliki had publicly focused on a military response to the two-week crisis, and his latest comments were his clearest yet regarding finding a political solution.

In an interview with the BBC, Mr Maliki said the Syrian air force had carried out strikes against militants on the Syrian side of the Al-Qaim border crossing, controlled by ISIL.

He added that Iraq had purchased several used Sukhoi fighter jets from Belarus and Russia.

Mr Maliki said Baghdad had not requested the Syrian strikes, but he "welcomed" any such move against the ISIL-led militants.

But the United States later said that Syrian military action would not be "in any way helpful to Iraq's security", but that Iran "could play a constructive role" if it promoted an inclusive Iraqi government.

Iraq had appealed for US air strikes against the militants, but Washington had only offered up to 300 military advisers, the first of whom have begun work in Baghdad.

On June 26, Iraqi forces swooped into Tikrit by helicopter, taking control of a strategically located university after clashes with militants, officials said.

A senior army officer said the assault on Tikrit, which has been held by militants since June 11, would



Thai junta chief General Prayut Chan-O-Cha speaks during a meeting at the Army headquarters in Bangkok on June 19. Photo: AFP

SYDNEY

Missing jet most likely on autopilot

MALAYSIA Airlines flight MH370 was almost certainly on autopilot when it ran out of fuel and crashed, with the crew likely "unresponsive", Australian officials said on June 26, announcing the search for wreckage would shift further south.

Investigators have been grappling with the mystery of the Boeing 777's disappearance on March 8 with 239 people on board, spending months scouring the Indian Ocean in vain.

An expert group has reviewed all the existing information and Australian Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss said it was now "highly, highly likely that the aircraft was on autopilot" when it went down.

"Otherwise it could not have followed the orderly path that has been identified through the satellite sightings," he told reporters.

Martin Dolan, commissioner of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB), which is leading the search, agreed.

"Certainly for its path across the Indian Ocean we are confident that the aircraft was operating on autopilot until it went out of fuel," he said.

He quantified this by saying the experts assessed that the plane flew in a

straight line, according to the electronic "handshakes" it periodically exchanged with satellites.

"If you look at our detailed report, you will see there are seven arcs that we are looking at and we're saying the path the aircraft took to intercept each of those arcs was a straight path," he said.

The plane was flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing when it veered off course and vanished.

No trace of the plane has been found despite an extensive Australian-led search deep in the Indian Ocean, where Malaysia believes it crashed.

Theories on what happened include a hijacking, rogue pilot action or mechanical failure.

But a 64-page report into the disappearance by the ATSB released on June 26 said the most likely scenario was the pilots and crew suffered from hypoxia, or lack of oxygen, where a plane loses air pressure at high altitude.

Hypoxia can cause confusion, hallucinations, poor judgement and eventually unconsciousness and death.

"The final stages of the unresponsive crew/hypoxia event type appeared to best fit the available evidence for the final period of MH370's flight when it was heading in a generally southerly direc-

tion". ATSB said.

A review of the data has now identified a new area, covering up to 60,000 square kilometres (23,200 sq miles) in the southern Indian Ocean, where an underwater search will start in August and take up to 12 months.

"Specialists have analysed satellite communications information - information which was never initially intended to have the capability to track an aircraft and performed extremely complex calculations," Mr Truss said.

"The new priority area is still focused on the seventh arc where the aircraft last communicated with satellites.

"We are now shifting our attention to an area further south along the arc based on these calculations."

The new area is around 1800 kilometres (1100 miles) west of Perth and had previously been subject to an aerial search, which found no debris.

Mr Truss said he was "optimistic" that "this site is the best available and most likely place where the aircraft is resting". Until now, the most intensive search had been with a mini-submarine.

Two ships, *Fugro Equator* and *Zhu Kezhen*, are currently surveying the area before a contractor begins the intensive undersea probe. — AFP



Chinese dissidents forced to go on paid-for holidays

WORLD 42

Polio fears as 500,000 flee Pakistan conflict

WORLD 44



Afghan women cycling their way toward equality

WORLD 45



IN PICTURES

Devotees covered in mud and wearing costumes made from banana leaves make their way to church to take part in a religious festival in honour of St John the Baptist, also known locally as the “mud people” festival in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija province, north of Manila, on June 24. Farmers coated in mud paraded in Philippine villages to mark one of the Catholic nation’s most colourful religious festivals. *Photo: AFP*

Political backup: PM Maliki

minister acknowledges that military force alone will not end the national crisis

open the way for the city and surrounding areas to be retaken. Washington has urged Iraqi’s fractious leaders to unite in the face of the militants, and Hague echoed that message on June 26, saying the “urgent priority must be to form an inclusive government.”



UK Foreign Secretary William Hague in Baghdad on June 26. Photo: AFP

“It is vital to demonstrate to the world that Iraq is uniting in the face of this threat,” he said after meeting Iraqi leaders. “This is the best way to receive international support.” Washington has stopped short of calling for Mr Maliki to go, but has left little doubt it feels he has squandered the opportunity to rebuild Iraq since American troops withdrew in 2011. In a televised speech from the Shiite shrine city of Najaf, powerful cleric Mr Sadr vowed to “shake the ground” under the feet of the militants. He said foreign powers “and especially forces of the occupier and regional states should take their hands

off” the country, referring to the United States and Iraq’s neighbours. But in an apparent effort to restrain worsening sectarian tensions, Mr Sadr insisted that the militants did not represent Iraqi Sunnis, whom he said had suffered “marginalisation and exclusion.” Potentially worsening communal ties, a suicide attack in Kadhimiyah, a north Baghdad neighbourhood that is home to the shrine of a revered Shiite figure, killed 19 people. Iraq’s flagging security forces were swept aside by the initial insurgent push, but have since begun regrouping, although they have yet to take back control of major cities lost to the militants. – *AFP*

BRUSSELS

Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in EU accord

THE European Union last week signed association accords with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova as the three former Soviet republics committed themselves to a future in Europe ..

“This is a great day for Europe ... The European Union stands by your side today more than ever before,” European Council head Herman Van Rompuy said at the ceremony with Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko and prime ministers Irakli Garibashvili of Georgia and Iurie Leanca of Moldova.

Mr Van Rompuy said that the accords contained “nothing that might harm Russia in any way” and that they offered all sides the chance “to chart together a safer future”.

EU officials have consistently argued that Russia has no reason to fear the accords, which offer closer political and economic ties, but Moscow has condemned them as harmful to its economic interests and an intrusion into what has traditionally been its sphere of influence.

Mr Poroshenko said signing the accord would open up a whole new future for Ukraine, including Crimea which Moscow annexed in March, and set it firmly on course for membership of the European Union.

Ukraine had paid a high price in recent months for its ambitions to become part of Europe, he said, but it was worth it because the country’s future was at stake.

“Long live Ukraine, Long live Europe,” he said in closing his address at the ceremony, attended by all 28 EU leaders.

Mr Garibashvili said Georgia shared the European values of democracy and freedom.

Significantly, he said Abkhazia and

South Ossetia, breakaway regions recognised by Russia as independent since a 2008 war with Tbilisi, would also see the advantages of closer ties with the EU.

‘This is a great day for Europe. The European Union stands by your side today more than ever before.’

Herman Van Rompuy
European Council

“You are sharers in this project,” he said.

Mr Leanca pledged that Moldova would make the most of its association accord, promising that after “many ups and downs ... we will do everything to modernise” the country.

The signatures were hugely symbolic given the crisis in Ukraine where a Poroshenko peace plan and ceasefire due to expire later that day hung in the balance.

The last-minute ditching of the association accord by Ukraine’s pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich in November sparked demonstrations that eventually led to his ouster in February.

That, in turn, led to an angry Russia annexing Ukraine’s Crimea peninsula, plunging the West’s relations with the Kremlin to their lowest level since the end of the Cold War. – *AFP*



(From left) European Union Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko and European Union Council President Herman Van Rompuy pose at the EU Council in Brussels, on June 27, 2014. Photo: AFP



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MANILA

MILF chief meets Aquino over peace deal

PHILIPPINE President Benigno Aquino held a surprise meeting in Japan last week with the country's top Muslim rebel to address growing concerns over delays in implementing a peace deal.

The meeting took place June 24 on the sidelines of a peace conference in Hiroshima where Mr Aquino and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chair Murad Ebrahim were guests, presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda said.

A rebel spokesperson said the MILF sought the meeting to raise concerns over delays in implementing an accord signed in March, after a draft law that is crucial for a final peace was not passed by Congress this month as planned.

Mr Lacierda divulged few details of the meeting, other than it was a 15-minute encounter and that they talked about the planned law that would create an autonomous Muslim region in the southern Philippines.

Muslim rebels have been battling for independence or autonomy in the southern islands of the mainly Catholic Philippines since the 1970s, with the conflict claiming tens of thousands of lives.

The MILF, with 10,000 armed followers, is the biggest rebel group and its signing of the accord has raised hopes of an enduring peace in the south, despite other breakaway groups still vowing to fight.

The pact made the MILF and the government partners in a plan to create the autonomous region by mid-2016, when Mr Aquino is required by the constitution to stand down.

A commission composed of rebel and government nominees drafted a "basic law" for the autonomous region, and it was submitted to Aquino in April as part of a timeframe to have Congress pass it by June.

Mr Aquino, however, is still reviewing the planned law. His aides have said this is because he wants to ensure it withstands scrutiny of the legislative body.

MILF deputy chief Ghazali Jaafar said Mr Murad had sought out the meeting to "express our concerns over the delays", and had been partly appeased by Mr Aquino's response. —AFP

SINGAPORE

Christians and Muslims unite to oppose LGBT rights rally

A showdown ahead of a weekend rally celebrating sexual diversity in Singapore has highlighted rising tensions between the city-state's religious conservatives and a growing gay-rights movement.

As organisers of the annual Pink Dot prepared for a record turnout of more than 20,000 to turn out on June 28 at a downtown park, Muslim and Christian conservatives in the multi-ethnic island were hitting out.

The carnival, which has been held every year since 2009, draws a diverse array of straight and gay participants decked out in bright pink attire including hats and facial hair dyed in the colour organisers picked to represent the freedom to love.

The term "Pink Dot" is a play on Singapore's nickname — "The Little Red Dot" on the world map.

The event enjoys the support of local celebrities as well as internet giant Google and financial firms Barclays and JP Morgan, in a show of support for diversity in society and the workplace.

But Lawrence Khong, a senior pastor with the 10,000-strong Faith Community Baptist Church, has led a charge to ban the event, saying it is an affront to morality and "family values" in the nation of 5.4 million people.

Mr Khong is a longstanding opponent of a campaign to repeal Section 377A, a provision in the Singapore penal code that makes sex between men a crime.

The provision dates back to British colonial rule and carries a maximum penalty of two years, but it is not actively enforced by the Singapore government.

"We must let our government know that, in allowing the Pink Dot Event to continue without restraint, they are more than tolerating the gay agenda," Mr Khong wrote in a Facebook post.

"They are bordering on endorsing and emboldening the LGBT claim to gay rights," he wrote, using the acronym for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

The pastor, who leads a network of Protestant churches called Love Singapore, professed support for a peaceful protest led by Ustaz Noor Deros, a Singaporean Muslim



Two supporters of LGBT rights celebrate at "Speakers' Corner" in Singapore on May 16, 2009, the first year in which the Pink Dot gathering took place. Photo: AFP

teacher.

Mr Noor last week launched a "WearWhite" campaign urging Muslims to shun Pink Dot and instead wear white garments to mosques on the same night as the rally, which coincides with the eve of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

"The movement's genesis was from our observations of the growing normalisation of LGBT in Singapore," WearWhite's website said. Its Facebook page has attracted over 3700 "likes".

Archbishop William Goh, in a letter to local Roman Catholics, also said "the LGBT movement is gaining momentum" and reiterated the church's stand that gay sexual relationships "are not in accordance with the plan of God."

But he also spoke out against "discrimination of any kind".

An umbrella group of Protestant churches affirmed its belief that homosexual and bisexual practices are "contrary to the teaching of the Bible" but called for "grace and restraint" by the Christian community in dealing with the rally.

Organisers of Pink Dot said they were "saddened that certain quarters have reacted negatively to our efforts at creating a more loving and embracing society".

And Singapore's leading activist groups issued a statement condemning rising anti-gay rhetoric from religious conservatives.

"A worrying trend has emerged on social media with voices calling for gays and lesbians to be targeted for public shaming and harassment," said the statement signed by nine groups including Maruah, Singapore's main human rights organisation.

The Pink Dot event usually passes without much controversy. A June 28th gathering, was slated to include speeches and musical performances, will culminate with the crowd forming a giant pink dot after dusk by holding LED lights.

Siew Kum Hong, a former lawmaker who has championed LGBT rights, said the pushback this year stemmed from "a clear and deliberate escalation by the Christian right".

Mr Siew launched a landmark

parliamentary petition to repeal Section 377A in 2007. It was unsuccessful but helped galvanise the gay-rights movement.

"The current position is simply not tenable, and the pressure to repeal will only continue to grow," he said.

Officials have urged Singaporeans to practise restraint in debating LGBT rights.

"We just have to be a society where you don't go pushing your own beliefs and preferences, but at the same time everyone keeps the balance in society and avoids creating conflict," Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam said.

Even though it is not enforced, the government says Section 377A has to stay on the books because most Singaporeans are conservative and do not accept homosexuality.

A survey of 4000 citizens by the government-linked Institute of Policy Studies earlier this year found that 78.2 percent of the local population felt same-sex sexual relations were wrong. —AFP

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JAKARTA



Haze from forest fires blankets a road in Dumai on Indonesia's Sumatra island on June 22. Photo: AFP

Forest fire smog raises diplomatic controversy

INDONESIA's disaster agency has warned that neighbouring Singapore and Malaysia could be hit by more choking smog, after a huge jump in forest fires in a province at the centre of an air pollution crisis last year.

Fires in Riau province, on Indonesia's western Sumatra island, caused the worst haze in Southeast Asia for more than a decade in June last year, affecting daily life for millions and sparking a heated diplomatic row.

June is the start of the forest fire season when slash-and-burn techniques are used to clear land quickly and cheaply, often for palm oil plantations. Disaster officials said the number of blazes in Riau was rising quickly.

A total of 366 "hotspots", either forest fires or areas likely to soon go up in flames, had been detected in the province on June 25, up from 97 the previous day, according to disaster agency spokesperson Sutopo Purwo Nugroho.

"We must be on alert as the wind

is travelling east-northeast. The likelihood of the smog reaching Singapore and Malaysia is getting higher," Mr Nugroho said.

Experts have said that an expected El Niño weather phenomenon later this year is likely to fan the forest fires as conditions become drier than usual.

El Niño drags precipitation across the Pacific Ocean, leaving countries including Indonesia drier and parts of the Americas wetter.

But the latest outbreak of forest fires was yet to have any serious impact on daily life in Sumatra, and the skies over Singapore were still free of haze.

Authorities said that most of the forest fires last year were deliberately lit to clear land. Slash-and-burn is a traditional farming technique, but environmental groups also accuse big companies of using the method.

According to the Washington-based World Resources Institute, a large number of the recent fires have

been linked to paper and palm oil giants and their suppliers.

Using data from satellite mapping tools, it found 75 hotspots between June 21 and 23 in areas where Asia Pulp & Paper (APP), one of the world's largest paper companies, has operations.

A further 43 hotspots were found in areas occupied by suppliers to paper company Asia Pacific Resources International Limited (APRIL) in the same period.

Aida Greenbury, APP managing director of sustainability and stakeholder engagement, said 10 fires had occurred on forest land run by APP's suppliers in the past five days, all of which had been extinguished.

"We do not practise and highly condemn slash-and-burn activity," she said.

APRIL said it had agreed to support the fire-fighting effort, lending its water pumps and a company helicopter. - AFP

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

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BEIJING

Paid vacations for China's activists

Beijing has come up with a novel way of stifling dissent – sending its critics on forced luxury vacations accompanied by government minders.

AS top Communist leaders gathered in Beijing, veteran Chinese political activist He Depu was obliged to leave town – for an all-expenses-paid holiday to the tropical island of Hainan, complete with police escorts.

It is an unusual method of muzzling dissent, but Mr He is one of dozens of campaigners who rights groups say have been forced on vacation, sometimes featuring luxurious hotels beside sun-drenched beaches, trips to tourist sites and lavish dinners, courtesy of the authorities.

It happens so often that dissidents have coined a phrase for it: “being travelled”.

Mr He, 57, had not been charged with any crime, but officers took him 2300 kilometres (1400 miles) to Hainan for 10 days to ensure he was not in the capital for this year's annual meeting of China's legislature, he said.

Two policemen accompanied him, his wife and another dissident for dips in the ocean and visits to a large Buddha statue, he said.

“We had a pretty good time, because a decent amount of money was spent on the trip. The local government paid for everything.”

Altogether eight activists told AFP they had been forced on holiday in recent years.

“Every time there is an important national event I'm taken on vacation,” said Xu Xiangyu, who has long campaigned against officials she

accuses of demolishing her house without any compensation.

In 2011 police and court staff announced they and her family were going on a trip to Hainan: a place of internal exile for criminals, disgraced officials and renegade poets as early as the Tang dynasty of 618-907.

She rifled through holiday snaps showing her posing at a seaside park, and with her chaperones around a table heaped with empty plates.

“The hotel was luxurious, and we ate excellent food. They paid for everything,” she said of her guides. “We would spend up to 1000 yuan [US\$160] on a single meal.”

China's ruling Communist party keeps a tight grip on power, frequently detaining those who speak out against government abuses.

Over the last decade domestic security spending has soared, regularly exceeding Beijing's declared military outlays.

It has built a vast “stability maintenance” apparatus and President Xi Jinping has sought to further stifle dissent since his 2012 ascension to the top of the ruling party.

State-enforced travel spiked this year ahead of the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown when the army killed hundreds of protesters on June 4.

According to US-based advocacy group Human Rights in China, 15 people were taken on forced vacations beforehand.

“I've just returned from Beijing after being travelled,” Yan Zhengxue, a painter and government critic said.

Police “went with me every day, and paid for everything” on a trip to Ningxia in the northwest, including the towering dunes of the Tengger desert.

“If you refuse to go travelling, there will be consequences,” he said. “You have to go. Even though you are at tourist sites, you have been forced to go, so you're not in the mood to enjoy it.”



Activist Xu Xiangyu (left) lunches with court and police officials who escorted her on a forced vacation in China's southern Hainan Island in March 2011. Photo: AFP

Government personnel relish the trips, some regular forced travellers suggest.

“We ate the best food, and drank the best alcohol. The security officials enjoyed it too. Not just any security official can go on this kind of trip. They need to be above a certain rank,” said environmental campaigner Wu Lihong, adding he was taken to the ancient city of Xian for two weeks in March. “Quite a few” officials from Beijing's secretive ministry of state security accompanied him, he said.

They stayed at Xian's “best hotel”, he said, and saw the Unesco-listed terracotta warriors, as well as the “Wild

Goose Pagoda”, a Tang dynasty tower that hosts night-time laser shows.

“They are usually stuck inside using their computers and reading the papers, but by accompanying me they have a chance to travel and eat well,” he added.

When Chinese citizens travel to Beijing seeking redress from higher authorities for local government abuses they risk detention in makeshift “black jails”, where they are sometimes beaten before being sent home.

More persistent ones, though, are targeted for holidays.

“If you're really grassroots you'll be held in a black jail. Forced travel is for

fairly well-known activists,” said Maya Wang, of US-based campaign group Human Rights Watch.

“It's a form of illegal detention,” she added. “This kind of forced travel depriving people of their freedom is unlawful.”

Wang Rongwen, a longtime petitioner from Sichuan in the southwest, had her third trip ahead of the Tiananmen anniversary, with six officials taking her to the majestic peaks and gurgling waterfalls of the Tiantai mountains. But she did not enjoy the experiences, she said.

“Being travelled is no better than being in a moving jail.” – AFP

‘Every time there's an important national event I'm taken on vacation.’

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TOKYO

Triple killer executed

JAPAN carried out its first execution of the year on June 26 when it hanged a man for a triple murder, the ninth prisoner to be put to death since the conservative government of Shinzo Abe took power in 2012.

Masanori Kawasaki, 68, was convicted of stabbing three people to death, including a three-year-old girl, as they slept, after breaking into their house in Kagawa, western Japan, in 2007. “It was an extremely cruel case,” Justice Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki told reporters.

Apart from the United States, Japan is the only major industrialised democracy to use capital punishment.

Surveys have shown the death penalty has overwhelming public support, despite repeated protests from European governments and human rights groups.

Tokyo did not execute anyone in 2011, the first full year in nearly two decades without an execution amid muted debate on the rights and wrongs of the practice.

But in March 2012 it abruptly resumed its use of capital punishment, dispatching three multiple murderers.

International advocacy groups say Japan's system is cruel because inmates can wait for their executions for many years in solitary confinement and are only told of their impending death a few hours ahead of time. – AFP

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Khine Khine U, Advocate

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

For Monster Energy Company

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

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Phone: 372416

Dated: 30th June, 2014

GENEVA

Nobel laureate joins Sri Lanka war probe

FORMER Finnish president and Nobel laureate Martti Ahtisaari will serve as an advisor to an international inquiry into alleged war crimes in Sri Lanka, the UN has announced.

Mr Ahtisaari, who won the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize for his role as a mediator in trouble spots such as Indonesia, Namibia, Northern Ireland and the Balkans, will be one of three international experts assisting a team of 12 investigators in their controversial probe, UN human rights chief Navi Pillay said in a statement on June 25.

The UN Human Rights Council in March backed a resolution calling on Ms Pillay's office to launch a probe into “alleged serious violations and

abuses of human rights and related crimes by both parties in Sri Lanka”.

Colombo has vowed not to cooperate with the international probe of alleged war crimes committed in 2009 when the government launched its final offensive to end one of Asia's deadliest civil wars.

The UN has said up to 40,000 Tamil civilians may have been killed during the last months of fighting against Tamil Tiger rebels and blamed many of the atrocities on government forces – something Colombo vehemently denies.

The rebels were notorious for their suicide bombings during the 1972-2009 conflict, which is estimated by the UN to have claimed 100,000 lives.

In addition to Mr Ahtisaari, Silvia Cartwright, a former governor general and high court judge in New Zealand who is serving as a judge in Cambodia's Khmer Rouge War Crimes Tribunal, will also serve as an advisor to the probe.

They will be joined by Asma Jahangir, a former president of Pakistan's Supreme Court Bar Association and of the country's Human Rights Commission, who was also part of a recent UN team investigating Israeli settlements.

The initial results of the probe are to be submitted to the council in September, and the investigators are set to present a comprehensive report next March.

BANNU

Pakistani health workers administer a polio vaccine to a child during a vaccination campaign in Bannu on June 25. Photo: AFP

Fears polio will spread as 500,000 flee fighting

PAKISTANI health officials are rushing to vaccinate hundreds of thousands of children against polio amid fears that a civilian exodus from a tribal area where the virus is rampant could spread the disease around the country.

Nearly half a million people have fled a military operation against Taliban strongholds in North Waziristan, a hotspot for the crippling disease in Pakistan.

Children in the tribal district have not been vaccinated since Taliban and local warlords banned health teams from giving out drops in June 2012.

Tens of thousands of families have fled to the town of Bannu, close to North Waziristan, while hundreds more have moved further afield to Lakki Marwat, Karak and Dera Ismail Khan towns, since the offensive began in mid-June.

Officials have begun a vaccination campaign in Bannu and three other districts adjacent to North Waziristan, vaccinating both resident families and newcomers fleeing the offensive.

“We are vaccinating both local and displaced children. The target is to vaccinate more than 200,000 children,” doctor Akbar Jan, a senior health official in Bannu, said.

The campaign in areas adjoining North Waziristan began unannounced on June 23.

“Displaced persons were a threat to the host communities. Now we have the opportunity to vaccinate both host community and displaced families,” Mr Jan said.

More than 50 cases of polio have

been detected so far this year in militant-infested North Waziristan, out of 82 cases across the country and 103 worldwide.

A World Health Organization (WHO) official in Bannu told AFP the campaign would continue one day a week during the fasting month of Ramadan, which began last weekend.

Pakistan is one of only three countries, along with Afghanistan and Nigeria, where polio remains endemic, and efforts to eradicate it have been badly hit by rumours about the vaccine.

‘They said the Taliban told them it was an American conspiracy to disable their children.’

Shumila Khan
Health worker

Various outlandish claims have circulated about the drops, such as that they contain pork, or cause infertility or AIDS.

But health workers giving out the vaccine in a narrow street in Bannu's Tanchi bazaar area said they had

encountered little resistance.

“This is a house-to-house campaign. Our team has vaccinated 300 children in two days,” Shumaila Khan said.

“So far no family has refused to vaccinate their kids. There were many who were reluctant at first but later convinced.”

Many parents had heard the rumours about the vaccine, Ms Khan said.

“They said the Taliban told them it was an American conspiracy to disable their children, to make them infertile and to decrease the Muslim population,” she said.

Sharif Zaman, a 35-year-old teacher sheltering in a school with 10 other families after fleeing North Waziristan, recalled the militants' propaganda.

“They used to tell us your children will suffer epilepsy and would become abnormal,” the father-of-five said.

Mr Zaman had five kids who were all were vaccinated at a check-post.

Naimatullah Khan, who was running a restaurant in Mir Ali, said militants used to distribute leaflets saying anti-polio drops were perilous.

“They used to threaten the whole population that anyone whose child had polio drops would be slaughtered,” he said.

“They used to say: ‘We will cut your throat with a dagger.’”

At the start of May, WHO declared a global “public health emergency” after new polio cases began surfacing and spreading across borders from countries including Pakistan. – AFP

PAGHMAN



Free and wheeling: a revolution on the road

Afghanistan’s women’s cycling team are defying traditional taboos and encouraging others to get on their bikes and take up the sport

ANUJ CHOPRA

TRUNDLING down dun-coloured mountain slopes, they ignore hard stares and vulgarities from passing men, revelling in an activity that seemed unthinkable for previous generations of Afghan women – riding a bicycle.

The sight of a woman on a bicycle may not be unusual in most parts of the world, but it is a striking anomaly in Afghanistan where strict Islamic values deem the sport unbecoming for women.

The country’s 10-member national women’s cycling team is challenging those gender stereotypes, often at great personal risk, training their eyes not just on the 2020 Olympics but a goal even more ambitious: to get more Afghan women on bikes.

“For us, the bicycle is a symbol of freedom,” said Marjan Sidiqqi, 26, a team member who is also the assistant coach.

“We are not riding bikes to make a political statement. We’re riding because we want to, because we love to, because if our brothers can, so can we.”

One crisp morning, dressed in tracksuit bottoms, jerseys and helmets, Ms Sidiqqi and half a dozen team members, all aged between 17 and 21, set out for a training ride from Kabul to the hills of neighbouring Paghman.

Mindful of turning heads and ogling eyes, they rode in the amber light of dawn through a landscape of grassy knolls, fruit orchards and tree-lined boulevards.

A little boy dressed in a grubby shalwar kameez stopped by the wayside and stared at the girls with wonder and amazement.

Up ahead, dour-looking bearded men in a Toyota minivan pulled up parallel to the cyclists. Their stares were more menacing.

But the wheels continued to spin as the women powered ahead undaunted.

They have become accustomed to the hostility, often accompanied by insults:

“Whore.”
“Slut.”
“You’re bringing dishonour to your families.”

“Go home.”
But the team say they are emboldened despite such attitudes, partly due to the encouraging support from unexpected quarters.

Fully cloaked in black, the mother of one cyclist came out to cheer them on the way to Paghman, waving, applauding and exuding enthusiasm that is not shared by most of her extended family.

“My daughter is living my dream,” said Maria Rasooli, mother of Firoza, 20-year-old university student.

“My parents never allowed me to ride a bicycle. I can’t let the same happen,” she said, adding that she and her husband kept relatives and neighbours in the dark about their daughter’s sport because “they just won’t understand”.

‘My parents never allowed me to ride a bicycle. I can’t let the same happen.’

Maria Rasooli
Mother of member of national women’s cycling team

Thirteen years after the Taliban were toppled from power in a US-led invasion, Afghan women have taken giant strides of progress with access to education and healthcare.

Female lawmakers are no longer an anomaly in Afghan politics and the ongoing election saw the participation of the country’s first woman vice-presidential candidate.

That marks a sea change in women’s rights from the Taliban era, when women weren’t allowed to leave their homes without a male chaperone and were brutally repressed and consigned to the shadows.

But gender parity still remains a distant dream as conservative attitudes prevail.

That sentiment is portrayed in a mural by graffiti artist Shamsia Hasani on the walls of a Kabul cafe: burqa-clad women trapped in a watery

universe – an allegory of women in the post-Taliban era who have a voice but still cannot be heard.

It’s hard to reason with self-proclaimed arbiters of “morality” who regard a woman mounted on a bicycle as unconceivably risqué, say members of the cycling team.

On a recent training session outside Kabul, three young Afghan men riding a motorbike swooped out of nowhere and sideswiped one of the cyclists, 18-year-old Sadaf Nazari, who tripped and tumbled on top of Ms Sidiqqi.

Ms Sidiqqi badly injured her back in the incident, which drove Mohammed Sadiq, head of the Afghan Cycling Federation who was trailing the women in his SUV, into a fury.

He chased down the men. The two pillion riders escaped, but he caught the driver by his collar and hauled him over to the police headquarters.

Mr Sadiq, who established the team in 2003 after his own daughter expressed an interest in cycling, said the women’s safety was a constant concern and that plans for international troops to pull out of Afghanistan by 2016 have perpetuated those anxieties.

“If the Taliban return, the first casualty will be women’s rights,” he said in an interview in Kabul’s old city.

As he spoke, half a dozen young women, some sporting kohl-accented eyes and henna-dyed hair, convened in his living room for a discussion about nutrition and diet with Shannon Galpin, an American competitive cyclist who is coaching the team for the forthcoming Asian Games in South Korea.

Back on the training ride, the exhausted girls gathered by a freshwater stream in Paghman to refuel on naan bread, raisins and cottage cheese.

Near a roadside kiosk where fresh plums, cherries and mulberries dangled from strings, a curious Afghan man sidled up to Ms Sidiqqi.

“Are you with those cyclists going around the mountain?” he asked.

Startled, her eyes darted around as she braced for trouble.

“Yes,” she replied hesitantly.
“Are they boys or girls?” the man enquired.

Ms Sidiqqi face lit up with bravado. “Girls,” she beamed proudly. —AFP

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KINSHASA



A man digs a hole next to a grave at the Kinsuka cemetery in Kinsuka, south-west of Kinshasa, on June 10. Photo: AFP

Cemetery squatters living with the dead

Poverty and a lack of residential space has forced large numbers of people from the DR Congo to set up home in local graveyards.

IN a Congolese cemetery overrun with weeds and rubbish strewn among the graves and banana trees, the living have moved in with the dead.

For want of money and space, families have built houses out of earth, brick or sheet metal alongside tombs, some of prominent figures like the father of the current first lady, in the Kinsuka cemetery in Kinshasa, the DR Congo capital.

As they attempt to lead normal lives in this unlikely setting, the cemetery dwellers, who number at least several hundred, are not only living on the land illegally but also face dangerous sanitary conditions.

“You’re afraid you’re going to dig up a bone,” said 19-year-old Emile as he worked on the foundation for his older brother’s new house just steps away from a well-tended grave.

Should he, or the others, degrade a tombstone they face up to six months in prison, while living without a proper land title could mean a year in jail under the country’s penal code.

Neighbour Bibiche, 23, has lived in

the cemetery for two years but says it is still an unsettling experience.

“You feel afraid sleeping amidst the graves, but we had no home,” she said. “The cemetery isn’t good. We have no electricity.”

Yet other cemetery residents say they not only have electricity but pay a “bill” to the national power company, SNEL.

Despite its vast mineral wealth, two-thirds of the DR Congo’s 68 million people are mired in poverty, exacerbated by back-to-back wars that ravaged the country from 1996 to 2003 and left a complex web of rebel groups still terrorising the eastern provinces.

Finding housing is a constant struggle for many, and large numbers of civilians, and even police and soldiers, have taken to the country’s cemeteries to find a place to call home.

But life among the gravestones is no free ride, explained Therese, a five-year resident of Kinsuka cemetery. The 57-year-old widow paid a local chief to buy four plots of land with her children’s help.

“They cost between US\$2500 to \$4000 each,” said Therese, who like all the cemetery residents only gave her first name for fear of reprisal.

Inside her two-room house, the bedroom has a mosquito net but no bed.

‘You feel afraid sleeping amidst the graves, but we had no home.’

Bibiche
Cemetery squatter

“In November, the police came to destroy the houses. They took my things,” she said.

“I had to rebuild my house, but I don’t have the courage to rebuild on my other plots that I wanted to rent out.”

Yet scenes typical of village life can still be found in Kinsuka. The

dirt paths are lined with wooden stalls selling food and basic supplies, and children in traditional blue and white kits play football at a Protestant school built inside the graveyard three years ago.

“Today it has about 150 students. Parents pay 78,000 Congolese francs [about \$80] per year, against \$300 to \$400 dollars elsewhere,” said the school’s director.

In some parts of the cemetery the construction of homes has made it harder to locate remaining burial plots. The graveyard was founded in 1978 and is the final resting place of several well-known figures, such as engineer Sita Barnabe Kinsumbu, the father of the DRC’s first lady Olive Lembe Kabila, according to a local burial tax collector.

Government officials say the homes in Kinsuka and other cemeteries across the country constitute a public health hazard, noting that it takes as long as 50 years after a site’s last burial to ensure the ground is fully decontaminated.

“Sometimes people find a source of water but when you sniff it, it smells

like a corpse,” said Dr Benjamin Mavard Kwengani, director of hygiene at Kinshasa’s health ministry.

“We haven’t done a study, but there have been abnormal cases in the [cemetery] communities diarrhoea and abnormalities that we can’t explain,” he said.

According to Pius Ngoie, an advisor to the urban planning ministry, cemetery villages only continue to exist due to negligence and corruption within the civil service.

“Some of the state’s civil servants ... are completely irresponsible” and “fraudulently” sell tracts of land in the cemetery, he said.

The cemetery dwellers are under no illusions that their homes could be razed at any moment.

“One day, a [state] tractor is going to come and knock down the houses and they will lose everything,” said Peter, whose father and grandfather are buried in Kinsuka.

His words turned out to be prophetic. Just a few days later, soldiers arrived to destroy some of the homes built on the remains of this final resting place. – *AFP*

KHARTOUM

Apostacy death-threat victim on forgery charge

A SUDANESE Christian woman who faces death threats after a court cleared her of apostasy has been charged with forgery, after trying to leave the country, a lawyer said.

“She is arrested,” Mohanad Mustafa told AFP on June 25. The charge against Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag, 26, relates to the South Sudanese travel document she was carrying when authorities stopped the family from leaving Sudan on June 24 following an annulment of her apostasy death sentence. Ms Ishag is also charged with providing false information, Mr Mustafa said.

She was detained by national security agents at Khartoum airport, despite the presence of US diplomats who were escorting her and her family, her American husband Daniel Wani said.

They were trying to travel to Washington, Mr Wani said, insisting there the travel documents were valid.

Sudan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs

on June 25 summoned the charges d’affaires of both the United States and South Sudan over the incident, official media reported.

US State Department deputy spokesperson Marie Harf said Washington’s charge d’affaires had voiced “our concern that the family should be allowed to depart swiftly from Sudan.”

“Sudan has assured us of their, the family’s, safety. We will continue monitoring the situation and discussing it,” she added.

Sudan’s foreign ministry criticised South Sudan’s issuing of the travel permit, “despite their knowledge that she is a Sudanese national”, while condemning the US for trying to help the women leave Sudan “via illegal (false) travel document,” the SUNA news agency said.

“We are worried. That’s why we want to get out of here as soon as possible,” Mr Wani said of death threats against his wife.



GET YOUR FINGERS ON IT

the pulse

Yangon could serve its citizens well by expanding its network of parks for physical and mental well-being. Will our city planners make it so?

1

Guarding the garo



2



5



ZON PANN
PWINT

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AFTER a condominium development took over his local park on Bo Myat Tun Road, U Ko Ko, 59, used to walk every morning around the Secretariat on Bo Aung Kyaw Street. But walking along the roadside did him more harm than good. With all the exhaust from passing cars, he sometimes felt like he was choking on fumes.

“I gave up walking exercise in the early morning and slept late,” he said, resting for a moment on a concrete bench, inhaling the fresh Yangon River air at Botahtaung Jetty.

“Five years ago, my friend brought me here. Since then, I do my walking exercise every morning because the air is very fresh, and it’s good for elderly people like us.”

Lacking nearby park facilities, hundreds of people like U Ko Ko from Botahtaung and nearby townships use the broad stretch of open space lined with palm trees every morning for physical exercise and recreation. At 5:30am, a large group of women practise aerobics to music, a group of Myanmar-Chinese practise tai chi and elderly men walk in slow, relaxed fashion while younger men and women jog up and down the riverside lot. In the evening, young men play chinlone or football.

U Ko Ko lives on 47th Street – not a place conducive to leisurely strolls. Cars parked in the front of buildings occupy half the narrow lane.

for visitors. “We have to run to the [Botahtaung] pagoda trustees’ board office,” he said.

According to Kyaw Thein, overseer of Maha Bandoola Park for the City’s Department of Garden and Playground Parks, Yangon has 58 parks and gardens that will be preserved. Currently some parks are inaccessible to the public, including Kyat Shar Soon Park in Pabedan township, because of lack of facilities. Others are under renovation.

In 2012, the city upgraded Maha Bandoola Park, People’s Square, People’s Park and Kandawmin Park. The former is now accessible to the public without charge, while a K300 entrance fee for locals is collected at People’s Park. In the 2013-14 fiscal year, the department aimed to budget more than K2 billion to improve gardens and playgrounds.

“We are now upgrading Ahlone township’s Thakhin Mya Park’s exercise facilities for adults and children and sowing grass and trees. Soon it will be open to the public without charge,” Kyaw Thein said. He added that the city would drop the fee for People’s Park, expand park areas in some townships and build facilities where currently there are none, like Latha township.

The public’s interest in green space appears strong. Established in 1947, the 7.5-acre Maha Bandoola Garden had long been spoiled by a surrounding of small restaurants, shops and vendors. A thick hedge and overgrown trees inside the park caused the park to become known as a shady place for couples rather than exercisers, which also discouraged many from visiting.

In 2012, it was restored to its former glory: The garden enjoyed a facelift, with new grass and carefully pruned trees. In 2013 it opened to the public free of charge and is now attracting between 3000 and 5000 visitors every day.

Science in 2013 found that people in a survey reported higher life satisfaction and less mental distress when the area within a 2.5 mile (4km) radius from their home was greener.

People experienced improved health, even accounting for differences in income, employment status, marital status and housing quality. The survey looked at 10,000 people in the United Kingdom between 1991 and 2008.

“Complete health is defined as ‘psychological, physical and social wellbeing,” said psychiatrist Dr Zaw Sein Lwin. “Leaving cures for disease aside, when we think of prevention and recovery, family, environment and the beauty of the urban landscape play an important role.”

The city’s rapid development has engendered higher levels of competition and urgency, he said, adding that he sees people going to pubs and KTV lounges to relieve their stress. “That’s wrong,” he said, also calling for more green spaces.

“In other countries, the standard of the country is measured against the perfection of its golf courses. But golf courses are only frequented by the upper classes. We need more parks which are as pleasant and green as golf courses, accessible to everyone,” he said.

One way to improve universal access to parks is to build networks in which green spaces around the city are connected by green corridors. It’s an idea that’s gained traction internationally and is advocated by the American Planning Association through its series of City Parks Briefing Papers. The association notes that connected park networks offer the greatest benefits in terms of the improved health of residents, but also in terms of preserving wildlife habitat and mitigating problems like rainwater drainage.



“I love walking. If I go walking in the early morning, I feel fresh the whole day. The clean air wafting across the river is good for my lungs,” he said.

Studies have shown U Ko Ko’s feeling to be near universal. A 2010 report in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology* gave evidence that exercising outdoors especially in green spaces – even for as little as five minutes a day – improved people’s mood and self-esteem.

It and similar studies are part of a growing body of research that’s influencing cities around the world to focus on improving access to parks in a bid for better public health outcomes.

As a remarkably green city, Yangon stands to serve its citizens well in this regard – but it still has a long way to go. Many areas that were once parks have been converted into housing estates, and as people try to gain access to open spaces, they sometimes take other risks, such as jogging on busy roadsides, walking along railway lines or playing chinlone and football in the street. Likewise, Botahtaung Jetty, a truck transfer site filled with shipping containers, isn’t safe.

“We always face the oncoming container trucks. It presents a danger to walkers,” said Than Zaw, 67, who has jogged at the jetty every morning since he was 20 years old. “It would be better if the buses were only allowed to use the space from 7am onward.”

He recalls the shock he felt when a passing container truck plunged into a pothole, resulting in a loud noise. He also notes the lack of toilet facilities

“In the past, people used to crowd the Kandawgyi Park and Botahtaung jetty for exercise,” said Aye Thuzar, a yogi who teaches a crowd of about 20 people at the garden. “After the upgrade and greening of Maha Bandoola, People’s Square and People’s Park, people started to crowd there.”

The thing that attracted people to Kandawgyi, she said, was that you didn’t have to pay to enter before 8am. Now that Maha Bandoola Park is free also, retirees and people from all classes of society are able to enjoy it.

To a certain extent, free entry and the quality of the green space are important to attract visitors. But to a greater extent, the distance people have to travel to reach a park is crucial, as is the will to exercise.

“My friend lives in Yankin township, and she wants to attend my yoga class, but she can’t get there at 5am,” Aye Thuzar said. “If a person is rich but doesn’t have knowledge of keeping fit by doing exercise, he can’t visit the park. If a person is poor and can’t spend time for leisure activities, he can’t visit the park. So we need to share knowledge of how exercise is important for health and create neighbourhoods that are conducive to working and exercise.”

A retired doctor from the Department of Medical Research, who wished to remain anonymous, concurred. Not far from his home in Pazundaung township, he visits Maha Bandoola Garden every morning at 5:30 to help instruct people in the use of the park’s exercise facilities.

“If a person lives far from the park, he can’t visit regularly. If his neighbourhood has one park, the government has to plan two parks. Then he may have the desire to enter the park if it’s within walking distance,” he said, while giving pointers on how to do stomach crunches.

“Doing exercise in the park is better than working out at home like some rich people do when they buy exercise machines,” he added.

In a study published in the journal *Psychological*

In Asia, Singapore has embraced this model and is known as the “Garden City” – a moniker Yangon once held. The city boasts 200km of networked paths for walkers, runners and cyclists, dozens of parks, gardens and walking trails. It’s also been named among the world’s “healthiest cities” by BBC and boasts an average life expectancy of 84 years – fourth-highest in the world.

“Yangon is still a green city, but lots of green areas are actually either private or state property, and even parks are closed off,” said Thant Myint-U, founder and chair of Yangon Heritage Trust. He is one of the experts on a committee advocating public access to the waterfront area along Strand Road.

He said the government has been working on economic reform, to reduce poverty and create jobs and thus increase happiness, but equally important is the creation of more public space such as squares for socialisation and green areas. He advocates making the city easier to navigate by walking and public transport and setting up free sports facilities and playgrounds.

All this costs a relatively small amount of money and would have a tremendous positive effect on the lives of millions of city dwellers, he said.

Today, he pointed out, “Exercising in Yangon is becoming harder and harder. People take cars rather than walk or cycle and there are almost no sports grounds left. I live downtown and every evening I see kids trying to play football in the side streets, but having to make way for cars.”

Khin Sandar Wyne knows exactly what he means. “Every morning, I gaze at the green grass for my eyes and breathe the fresh air for my heart,” she said while doing gentle exercise on the lawn in Maha Bandoola Park.

“It was very difficult for me to visit the park when I lived on 48th Street, but I moved to 38th Street.” Now she lives right next door.

1. Women exercise at Maha Bandoola Garden.
2. People do a group workout near Mya Kyun Thar Park.
3, 4. Kids play at Kandawgyi park.
5. Young people play chinlone at Botahtaung Jetty. Photo: Yu Yu

Treasures of Mandalay

Literary tea house calms all comers

Long-running and beloved tea shop Kyaing Thin operates on the 'sweet scent' of Buddhist principles

STUART ALAN BECKER

WHEN you arrive at Kyaing Thin tea shop, one of the staff will put a steel-weighted piece of white cardboard across your motorcycle seat to keep it from getting hot in the sun.

That's just one of many experiences of *metta*, the Buddhist concept of loving kindness, you'll get at this unique traditional cafe that lies east of Mandalay's palace moat on 19th Street between 57th and 58th streets.

Inside, past the tea-brewing station where the man with the row of small aluminum kettles and glass cups warms milk over hot coals, groups of people sit reading and talking softly at the red-and-white wooden chairs and tables.

"White means purity in Buddhism ... The colour red might lighten your heart and give some kind of courage," says owner U Myint San.

A mood of Buddhist principles casts a spell over the whole place, where even the most excitable or anxious person may be calmed.

His son Kyaw Thet Htun, 24,

stands ready to serve customers, and his wife looks over the bean-filled sweet cakes as they are rolled and fried on wood-fired brick ovens.

"You should blend religion and business together so you can flourish," U Myint San says. Twenty percent of his shop's income goes directly to Buddhist charities. He chooses the poorer pagodas to make the donations.

Founded in 1985, Khaing Thin (which means "sweet scent") opens at 5am each day and closes between 9:30 and 10pm, 7 days a week. It's a favoured hangout for groups of men who come for conversation, families and all types of Mandalay people who come to read the latest newspapers, periodicals and Buddhist literature that U Myint San provides on the tables.

A sweet smile goes with the offer of sweet bean cakes. Photo: Stuart Alan Becker

"My idea is that I like to provide books and periodicals to customers, and these people will never tend to be arrogant and aggressive, and they are book lovers. It is choosing the right people who are potential customers," says the man who has been 100-percent vegetarian for 12 years and never uses an air-conditioner because "they aren't healthy".

In addition to the fresh tea with milk (K350) and fried cakes with a sweet bean filling (K300), there's milk and egg pudding (K450).

The simplicity of the tea comes down to the same principles of loving kindness.

"To make a good cup of tea, you need three basic ingredients: milk, tea and condensed milk."

U Myint San buys sweetened condensed milk, which he mixes with

fresh milk from a friend he knows from years ago when he used to raise dairy cows himself.

Born at Pyin Oo Lwin, which the locals here still refer to as Maymyo, U Myint San has lived in Mandalay since 1977. He's the fifth of seven children, and his father's home was Myingyan in a well-respected middle-class family of devout Buddhists.

He moved to Mandalay at age 27 to stay with his older brother who had gotten a job at Taung Myo's Virginia Tobacco Factory.

Over the years of operating the tea shop, he has become an observer of people.

When someone who is obviously suffering comes into his shop – from drugs or alcohol or other problems – U Myint San persuades them to read Buddhist literature and to practise meditation, to live by the rules of Buddha. He says most of them mend their ways and go on to become good people.

Now U Myint San dreams of closing down his shop and moving out to the forest and living the life of a spiritual recluse. He thinks about it a lot these days, he says, but is still busy showing his son how to treat

people and how to "earn his salt".

Does he ever get angry?

"Of course I feel angry sometimes, but I try to cool myself down."

Is he pleased with the choices he made in life and how his life unfolded?

"Absolutely I'm pleased about my choices in life, and I feel I have the full blessing of Lord Buddha," he says.

"I have taught my staff to be highly civilised and show respect to elders in our long-cherished Burmese custom: treating customers with loving-kindness like they are all relatives."

All along one wall of U Myint San's tea shop are framed certificates – testimony to the many occasions when he and his family and staff have visited and donated to Mandalay's pagodas in need.

The certificates are lined up beyond a special glass shrine that houses an image of Buddha.

U Myint San brings over a piece of cardboard with a message written in the Burmese language. It's a moral message he wrote to remind his wife and son to always keep in mind:

"Remember to give loving kindness, benevolence to everybody, any customers."



A Buddhist shrine is front and centre in Kyaing Thin tea shop in Mandalay.
Photo: Stuart Alan Becker



A tea ceremony is performed in Zhangjiagang, Jiangsu province.



Visitors peruse the Museum of Qin Warriors and Horses in Shanxi province.



Traditional dance is performed at the Tang Palace in Shanxi province.

A China photo tour

Photos and text by Aung Htay Hlaing aunghtayhlaing@gmail.com

In May, I had the opportunity to tour China as part of the Wonderful China Interview Tour hosted by China Daily.

The news outlet invited editors, reporters and photojournalists from Korea, Nepal, Kazakhstan, Brunei, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Philippines, the US and Myanmar as well as Chinese media to visit Shanxi and Jiangsu provinces. Between May 21 and June 1, our guides took us to see a tea ceremony, vineyards, the steel and metals industry, a noodle performance, traditional dances, schools, museums and parts of the ancient Silk Road.

I enjoyed all of these places, but the one that inspired me the most was the Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses. The museum stands on the site of the ongoing excavation of a major 20th-century archeological discovery – about 7000 life-size figures of warriors, horses, chariots and weapons portraying the imperial guard of the Qin dynasty. The UNESCO world heritage site is famous for the sculptures' artistic excellence and imposing manner.

It had been my wish to visit this place as a photographer, and thanks to China Daily, I got there. Here are some photos from the tour.



CELEBRATING
10 YEARS
OF PROUD PARTNERSHIP



Chang Soda and Drinking Water

LONDON

The editor who became front page news

Tabloid mogul Rebekah Brooks stopped at nothing to become one of the most powerful women in Britain

KATHERINE HADDON

REBEKAH Brooks, who was cleared of all charges after the landmark phone-hacking trial on June 24, combined magnetic personal charm with ruthless ambition to become one of the most powerful women in Britain.

As editor of top-selling tabloids the *News of the World* and *The Sun*, she published scoops involving the royal family, football superstar David Beckham and the “fake sheikh” – a reporter who dressed as a Middle Eastern prince to elicit incriminating comments from celebrities.

Rupert Murdoch, the media mogul who owned the papers, treated 46-year-old Brooks as a daughter and she was close friends with Prime Minister David Cameron, who went to school with her racehorse-trainer husband Charlie.

Now she faces having to rebuild her career after a high-profile trial in which her methods and reputation faced intense scrutiny.

A former secretary, Brooks was famous in Britain's traditionally male-dominated tabloid world as a woman who would stop at almost nothing to get a story.

She once disguised herself as a cleaner and hid in the bathroom of a rival paper for two hours before stealing an early edition so the *News of the World* could lift its scoop on Prince Charles, according to her former editor Piers Morgan.

Such determination helped her to rise to become editor of the *News of the World* between 2000 and 2003 and *The Sun* between 2003 and 2009.

On her first day editing *The Sun*, she kept the tabloid's semi-naked page-three pin-up but the model's name was given as “Rebekah from



Former head of News International Rebekah Brooks (centre) and her husband Charlie Brooks leave the Old Bailey in central London, on June 24.

Photo: AFP/Leon Neal

Wapping” – the area of east London where the paper was produced.

As she rose ever higher in the Murdoch empire, she became part of his inner circle.

After Murdoch announced the closure of the *News of the World* in 2011, he was asked by journalists what his first priority was.

Gesturing at Brooks, by then chief executive of his British newspaper group News International, he said, “This one.”

Brooks, 45, and her husband socialised with Murdoch's daughter Elisabeth as part of a rural elite known as the Chipping Norton set, which also included Cameron.

Before her marriage to Charlie Brooks, she also had an affair with her colleague and co-defendant Andy Coulson, who went on to become Cameron's communications chief.

Her first husband was former *Eastenders* soap actor Ross Kemp, whom she married in 2002. Brooks

admitted it was a stormy relationship, and they divorced in 2009, by which time she had already met her new husband-to-be.

Cameron was not the only prime minister whom she befriended – former premier Tony Blair also advised her days before she was arrested to “tough up” and take sleeping pills, it emerged at her trial.

But Brooks's excellent connections could not prevent her arrest, days after the *News of the World* was shut down amid a scandal over claims its private investigators hacked the phones of victims of London's 7/7 terror attacks and Milly Dowler, a murdered 13-year-old girl.

During her trial, she denied charges of conspiring to hack phones, conspiring to commit misconduct in public office and perverting the course of justice.

Now she faces an uncertain future after months in the dock. – *AFP*



SEOUL

N Korea slams comedy as ‘act of terror’

North Korea on June 25 denounced a new Hollywood comedy about an assassination bid on leader Kim Jong-Un as a “wanton act of terror” and warned of a “merciless response” unless the US authorities banned the film.

The *Interview* stars Seth Rogen and James Franco as tabloid TV journalists who land an interview with Kim in Pyongyang and are then tasked by the CIA with killing him. The film is due to be released in the US on October 14.

In a statement carried by North Korea's official KCNA news agency, a foreign ministry spokesperson said the film was the work of “gangster moviemakers”.

“The act of making and screening such a movie that portrays an attack on our top leadership ... is a most wanton act of terror and act of war,” the spokesperson said.

Rogen poked fun at the threat on Twitter, writing, “People don't usually wanna kill me for one of my movies until after they've paid 12 bucks for it.”



A model presents a creation from the Roberto Cavalli Menswear Spring-Summer 2015 collection on June 24 during men's fashion week in Milan, Italy. Photo: AFP/Tiziana Fabi

SAN FRANCISCO

Etsy buys French handmade goods online market

Online marketplace Etsy on June 23 announced it has acquired an online emporium for handmade goods in France.

Etsy did not disclose how much it paid for A Little Market, which it said is the sixth and largest take-over by the Brooklyn-based company since it launched in 2005.

US media reports valued the deal at less than US\$100 million.

“A Little Market has built a community and business that we admire,” Etsy chief executive Chad Dickerson said in a release.

“Together we are incredibly well positioned to reimagine commerce in France.”

Etsy said that its business in France is more than 90 percent import-export, and the acquisition provides opportunity to focus on the domestic market.

A Little Market co-founders Nicolas Cohen and Nicolas d'Audiffret will run the company from their Paris offices.

Etsy is an internet-age spin on a crafts fair, providing an online market where people sell handmade or vintage items.



A model presents a creation from the Roberto Cavalli Menswear Spring-Summer 2015 collection on June 24 during men's fashion week in Milan, Italy. Photo: AFP/Tiziana Fabi

PARIS

‘Ratatouille’ ride tops record investment year for EU theme parks

Disneyland Paris recently unveiled a new ride based on its animated film *Ratatouille*, topping off a record year for investment in Europe's theme parks with the region's most expensive attraction ever.

Visitors to “Ratatouille: The Adventure” are made to feel they have shrunk to the size of Disney's rat Remy as he scurries around a giant kitchen, chased by his nemesis from the film, Chef Skinner.

Seated in their own “rat-mobile”, visitors are plunged into a huge, cold fridge and confronted with a fish 7.5 metres long and a ham weighing a tonne – but luckily the oven isn't quite so realistic.

Euro Disney spent more than 150 million euros (US\$204 million) on the ride inspired by the adventures of Pixar character Remy, a rat with a remarkable sense of smell who ends up as a chef in one of Paris's top restaurants.

Outside, the park has also created an entire Parisian quartier, including the 370-seat Bistrot Chez Remy, that will, of course, serve ratatouille.



A model presents a creation from the Giorgio Armani Menswear Spring-Summer 2015 collection on June 24 during men's fashion week in Milan, Italy. Photo: AFP/Tiziana Fabi

NEW YORK

Bob Dylan lyrics fetch US\$2 million

Handwritten song lyrics from legendary American singer Bob Dylan sold for US\$2 million at auction in New York on June 24.

The handwritten copy of Dylan's original lyrics for the 1965 epic “Like a Rolling Stone”, which transformed him from a folk musician into a rock icon, had been valued at \$1-2 million by Sotheby's before the auction.

Sotheby's went so far as to say the lyrics transformed the course of pop music in the 20th century.

“The Holy Grail of rock lyrics has taken its rightful place as the most expensive popular music manuscript sold at auction,” said Richard Austin, head of the sale.

Austin told AFP “Like A Rolling Stone” was the first 6-minute single ever released, allowing people to go beyond short format, and it marked one of the first cases of viral marketing.

Executives opposed its release because of its length, but an employee took it to a nightclub where it played all night, leading DJs to clamour for Columbia records to put it out. – *AFP*



A model presents a creation from the Fendi Menswear Spring-Summer 2015 collection on June 23 during men's fashion week in Milan. Photo: AFP/Tiziana Fabi



IN PICTURES

A man blows a bubble as the gates open at the Glastonbury Festival of Music and Performing Arts in Somerset, southwest England, on June 25. US metal giants Metallica played this year's coveted headline spot on June 28. It was the “Master of Puppets” four-piece's first appearance at the legendary festival on Worthy Farm, where The Rolling Stones were the headliners last year. Photo: AFP/Leon Neal

Q & A

Pressing questions with Phyu Mon

The environmental activist and artist speaks about gender inequality and what inspires her



Photo: Yu Yu

NYEIN EI EI HTWE
nyeineiehtwe23@gmail.com

ARTIST Phyu Mon, 57 years old, has worked in digital, performance and installation arts with an environmental focus since 1985. She featured in the *Attention Please* performance by 10 female artists at TS1 gallery, Latha township, Yangon, on June 28-29, and plans other exhibitions with female artists in Hong Kong, Italy and Japan.

How and when did you become an artist engaged in saving the environment?
When I visited Shan State, where my husband was working, I met many villagers in their fields. They used chemical fertilisers and their lands were getting worse, while paddy and fruit production was declining. They wanted to use their knowledge to protect the environment, and after I talked to them about climate change it made me feel I could reflect this in my art.

Do you think your artworks can help to save the environment?
It can help some people who come to our exhibitions, but those people live in cities and are not really affected. I want to hold my exhibitions in rural areas and to share my knowledge, which I believe could help them effectively one day.

What do you think of the rights of female artists in Myanmar? What problems do they encounter compared to male artists?
Women worry more than men, and experience stress and fatigue more. The stress holds them back. Because of housework, they don't have enough time.

What gender discrimination do you see in artists' networks?
I think there is no discrimination in our art networks for females or males. But I also wonder why there are fewer female artists than male, including poets, cartoonists, painters and authors.

What improvements have you seen in the condition of female artists, both in their work and in their rights?
A lot. When we were young, our parents didn't understand the arts or let us study art. They thought all that was just for men. But now parents accept and understand art better. Girls try hard, and their parents support them a lot, so they can study and work well.

As a female artist and environmentalist, what is most important for you now?
Working with anyone who shows sympathy and a sense of responsibility. We are artists and I want us all to work with sympathy, which brings out the best in our work.

Who are your artistic influences?
They keep changing. The artists I admired most in my childhood are

not the same as my more recent favourites. But all of them share this: they are practical artists who can work for the world, like war photographers. They explore the best of their lifestyles and their surroundings. Some of them die while at work. I admire them a lot.

What medium do you prefer and why?
I'm not sure what my most preferred medium is, whether writing poems and novels, making installations, performing and exhibiting digital arts. All my work might be useful and effective for people because I am always eager to produce work in all mediums. But I'm now focusing on landscaping because it can help my environmental art.

What is your state of mind regarding the environmental situation in Myanmar?
People should be aware that we only have 40 years to save nature. Global warming is the most obvious manifestation of the danger. Look at Mae Zar, Sagaing Region, once famous for its cold weather but now as warm as anywhere. Despite attempts to preserve forests, almost all have now been destroyed.

What do you believe is your greatest achievement?
It was one of my installations in Tokyo in 2002. I put a balloon in a cage and filled it up with gas until it burst. It represented the situation of our Myanmar women at that time, always controlled by the rules of our culture.

What's on

ART

Until mid-July "It's a Long Way" group show. TS1, between Lanthit Jetty and Kaing Dan No 1 Jetty, Oo-Pa-Sa Street, Seikkan
JUNE 2-JULY 18 "People of the River" photo exhibition. Witness Yangon Documentary Space, 4A, 3rd Floor, Parami Road, Pyan Hlwar building, Mayangone 12-5 pm

FILM

JULY 16 Screening of *Shodo Girls!!* Directed by Inomata Ryuichi. Follows the life of students at a Japanese school. Assembly Hall, Embassy of Japan Yangon, 100 Natmauk Road, Bahan 5:30pm
JULY 19 Screening of *Bushido Sixteen*. Directed by Furumaya Tomoyuki. 2pm
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 Pya** are 10am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm.
Nay Pyi Taw Cinema, near Sule pagoda
How To Train Your Dragon 2 3D. Directed by Dean DeBlois. An animation for both kids and adults.
Mingalar 1 Cinema, near Theingyi Zay Market.
Iceman 3D. Directed by Law Wing-Cheun. A Hong Kong-Chinese martial arts action comedy.
Mingalar 2 Cinema, at Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone, Sanchaung
Maleficent 3D. Directed by Robert Stromberg. The untold story of Disney's most iconic villain.
Shae Shaung Cinema 1, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada
Brick Mansions. Directed by Camille Delamarre. A French-Canadian action thriller.
Shae Shaung Cinema 2, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada
Edge of Tomorrow 3D. Directed by Doug Liman. In this sci-fi thriller Tom Cruise plays an officer who has never seen a day of combat when he

JUNE 30 - JULY 6

Got an event?
List it in What's On!
Email: whatsonmt@gmail.com

is dropped into what amounts to a suicide mission.
Junction Square Cineplex, Kamaryut Haunt. Directed by Mac Carter. A teenage boy uncovers a supernatural presence in his new attic residence.
Beauty and the Beast. Directed by Christophe Gans. A French fairytale about the relationship between a girl, Beauty, and a strange beast who lords over a nearby magical kingdom.
Junction Maw Tin Cineplex, Lanmadaw
Beauty and the Beast.
Mingalar San Pya Cineplex, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw
Brick Mansions.
How to train Your Dragon 2 3D.
Iceman 3D.

MUSIC

JUNE 30 Live blues. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 8:30- 11:30pm
JUNE 30 Peaceful Blossom Road Foundation fundraising show. Tickets K20,000, K10,000 and K7000 by calling 09-451230066. National Theatre, Myoma Kyaung Street, Dagon 6-11pm

MISC

JULY 1 Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 7pm-late
JULY 1 Live stand-up comedy featuring The Punchline comedy club with Eddy Brimson, Jeremy O'Donnell and Stefano Paolini. Tickets US\$30 by calling 01-392263. Union Bar, 42 Strand Road, Botahtaung 7-11:30pm
JULY 3 Topsy Travel Talk Thursdays. Discuss alternative travel in Myanmar over drinks. Off the Beaten Track Café, Kandawgyi Oo Yin Kabar, Kandawgyi Park, Mingalar Taung Nyunt
JULY 12 Bollywood Night party. Tickets are K9000. Call 09-31559495, 09-43185009 or 09-420187010. Adamas Lounge, 14 Kanbawza Road, Bahan 9pm-late



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Shakespeare comedy inspires young actors

NANDAR AUNG
nandaraung.mcm@gmail.com

A PERFORMANCE of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Strand Ballroom on June 17 brought together a diverse group of actors of all levels.

Thirty people from Pwe, a new theatre company set up by Shakespeare Schools, the LGBT community, Art Traveler Theater (*Thukhuma Khayeethe*) and professional actors from the UK, New Orleans and New York danced, sang, played instruments and acted, combining Myanmar traditions like the *nat* and *pyo daw* dances and Western-style dramatic theatre. It was surely a unique staging of the Bard's play.

The young director, Liam Shae, 36, of the Yangon-based Shakespeare Schools, hoped the audience members would appreciate what they had created.

Judging by the crowd's reaction, they did. The performers received a standing ovation from a sold-out house of 350 people.

"We are doing a lot of work around making it happen and it is very hard when you're the first person to try and start this sort of thing it hasn't been done before," Shae said at the rehearsal.

Sponsored by KBZ Bank, the performance was a fundraising event organised by the Shakespeare School, which is an outreach group set up by a veteran of London's Globe Theatre. The money is going toward hosting more theatre workshops with students of local public and monastery schools and community



Actors perform *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on June 17. Photo: Yu Yu

groups. The plan is to present more plays in November.

Hniang Chin Pari (Jennet), 22, acted the part of Hermia in the recent production. She was convincing, with eyes full of tears as Hermia refused to marry the man her father preferred because she was in love with another.

"This is my first experience with the international professional performers," said Jennet, who is of Chin ethnicity. "We don't all look the same, but we all draw inspiration from art. I was so pleased to meet people who are so crazy for the arts like me."

All the scenes were performed bilingually in Myanmar and English. In one scene of dialogue, one performer spoke in English while others replied in Myanmar. A combination of electronic and traditional music helped bring the drama alive.

"This was a very unique and wonderful play. I've never seen mixing of two languages together. I don't understand Burmese, but it was great to see the English and Burmese actors play together," said Rehan Baig, whose two daughters, Leia, 11, and Maya, 7, were in the show.

The veteran performers practised with the local groups for six weeks before the performance.

One of the performers, Thila Min, 36, who played the part of Pyramus, said he had learned a lot from the international experts.

"I want to make Myanmar traditional plays like this. There are [historical] Burmese writers like U Kyin U and U Pone Nya who compare to Shakespeare," he said. "We need to improve our traditional plays with modern settings and lighting. If we did that, people would also like us."

PHILIPPINES

Roast pigs, mud baths mark festivals

ROAST pigs decked out as superheroes and mud-coated farmers paraded in separate Philippine villages on June 24 in two of the mainly Catholic nation's most colourful religious festivals.

Several thousand revellers marched behind mini-trucks carrying roasted hogs through the town of Balayan, with bystanders periodically dousing the raucous procession with buckets of water.

"In the old days these processions were not as fabulous as the ones that we have now," pensioner Teresita Francisco, 60, told AFP after watching the start of the parade from her front yard.



A roasted pig (left) dressed as a motorcycle rider is paraded through the streets in Balayan, south of Manila, on June 24 to celebrate the feast of John the Baptist. Photo: AFP/Noel Celis

The procession is a post-harvest agricultural rite featuring the "lechon", suckling pig roasted on a spit over charcoal that is one of the country's most popular special dishes.

It is held in honour of St John the Baptist, whom Christians say baptised Jesus Christ on the banks of the Jordan River.

This year's three-hour parade through Balayan, a coastal town in Batangas province south of Manila, featured about a hundred roasted pigs in gaudy outfits.

They were kitted out in a Spiderman suit, boxing trunks and gloves, as a doctor and as

a Red Cross rescuer on a boat. Another hog was mounted atop a motorcycle.

The pigs, which cost about 3500 pesos (US\$80) each, were consumed communally after the parade.

Big corporations as well as thousands of tourists also took part in the parade, with corporate sponsors handing out free liquor, beer and candies.

Telephone repair man Leon Sara, 28, splashed water at revellers as they passed, a traditional Filipino custom during the feast day.

"I doused a uniformed policeman earlier. He wasn't too upset about it because he knows it's the custom here," Sara told AFP.

The saint was also honoured in another unique procession June 24 in the remote farming village of Bibiclat 110 kilometres (68 miles) north of Manila.

Following annual tradition, about 200 men and women trooped to nearby rice fields at daybreak, cast off their outer clothing and rubbed mud all over their faces and bodies before donning cloaks made from torn-up banana leaves.

Then they walked barefoot down the main street, accepting candles and alms offered by residents on the way to the local church for a thanksgiving mass.

Religious devotees take part in the procession as an act of humility and penance, imitating a saint who preached and lived in poverty in the desert. - AFP

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

JUNE 30 - JULY 6, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



You won't make any progress in your learning if you get stopped by your own self-hating and warped views. Be confident in your power to achieve what you want, and then let your intuition operate freely. Don't be held back by your mind's restrictions that seem rational but in fact are not. Open your heart to accept emotional challenges.

LEO | July 23 - Aug 22



Executive and administrative positions are not so difficult to hold given your intellectual capacity. Great thoughts and ideas will be with you, and you will show your high-profile quality and leadership. Gain knowledge through observation and travel and you will be sure to win friends and contacts. You can get love.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



Your philosophy of life should move you toward a specific target. Move past the clutter and potholes that draw your focus away from things that are really important. Acknowledge that your mental image of what you want to achieve is key to your success. Love and understanding will favour you.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sept 22



Use your intellect and know-how to engage in the construction of a better life for all. Accept the views of others, delegate and be organised. Make this a part of your life philosophy. Be reliable and trustworthy to earn a good reputation. Never promise what you are unable to give but offer the truth simply.

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19



Stay cool and stay open to possibilities. Some things work out, and some things don't. Unhappiness is the result of struggling against the natural flow of events. Have a positive outlook by thinking what could go right, not what could go wrong. It's best to listen to others more than speak. Adjust your behaviour accordingly. An immature heart knows nothing about love.

LIBRA | Sept 23 - Oct 22



Your artistic nature leads you to engage in different problems at different times and justifies your contrarian view on current affairs. What looked like good possibilities may become impossibilities for no reason. You might face some bad luck in social relationships and personal affairs. Don't worry about what you can't control. Keep healthy and smart.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20



Listen to your dreams. They hold a wisdom beyond the current limits of rational thought. You should start to change your ways in order to avoid stress and negative obsessions. Keep promises and hear the emotions that your friends are expressing. It is the only way to build trust.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



Relax by letting go of all your tensions and worries to feel peaceful and calm as soon as possible. You are about to experience some good luck. It is time to hit hard. Start to challenge yourself and be self-disciplined. Meeting evil with evil is a law of the animal kingdom but abstaining from evil through knowledge is the law of human beings. Every creature has love.

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



Simplify your life and change your thoughts. With courage and boldness, you can take control of your mind and make the life that you want. If you do, you will experience enthusiasm and optimism. Agreements aren't about winners and losers. Think about how you will do what is required well. Consider your potential fairly, and develop a long-term view.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



Make a living by what you get, but make a life by what you give, said Winston Churchill. Know that it is impossible to restore a relationship if either partner feels misunderstood, unappreciated or ignored. The ultimate answers to questions of love are really easy - but they must come from the heart. Only love can make things peaceful and secure.

CANCER | June 21 - July 22



Successes are fleeting, so don't embrace them as permanent. Make the best use of every day and every evening. Believe that success, coupled with integrity, self-esteem and self-respect, is a goal worth striving for. Character can't be counterfeited, nor can it be put on and cast off as situations seem to require. It takes time and attention to grow.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



Stress reduction is the most important thing you can do to make your relationship lasting and better. Just as men need to learn the art of listening to fulfill a woman's primary love needs, women need to learn the art of empowerment. Validation is an amazingly effective technique. It is like opening a door to welcome your partner.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

4th Floor, 113, Thamain Bayan Road, Tarmwe township, Yangon.
Tel: 09-731-35632, Email: williameastel@gmail.com

Peppered with pickles

Shan pickles inspire a range of quick stir-fry dinners

SHAN-STYLE OYSTER MUSHROOM STIR-FRY

Serves 6

PHYO ARBIDANS
phyo.arbidans@gmail.com

- 2 packs of *pone yay gyi* powder
- 600-700g oyster mushrooms
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 tsp chilli flakes
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

Wash the mushrooms and dry well. Shred them thinly and drain the water as much as you can, for half a day.


Add one-third of the vegetable oil to a wok and heat on high. When hot, add mushrooms and slowly stir-fry. A lot of water will come out. Turn the heat down to medium and fry until evaporated. Keep stirring.

Then add the remaining oil, if it is needed. Crush the garlic and add to the wok. When the garlic aroma comes out, add chilli flakes and fry.

Turn back to high heat and stir-fry for 2 minutes.

Transfer to a plate to serve.

Note: The secret of getting the right texture in this dish is to fry the mushrooms until they are as dry as possible.





Photos: Yu Yu

A COUPLE weeks ago, at City Mart in Yankin Center, I came across Shan-style pickles and got inspired to try them all. I love these spicy-sour treats.

In Sydney, I used to visit Little Korea to get my pickle fix. I would refrigerate them and mince them for use in stir-fries. Sometimes we ate them with fried fish on steamed rice – a simple, yummy dish.

So I ended up buying everything they had at City Mart: dried white radish pickles, Shan garlic pickles, Shan mustard bud pickles and a variety of vegetable pickles.

I had a lot to do this week so, as before, I made some stir-fries. Korean- and Shan-inspired dishes, you could say.

I'm also sharing a recipe for shredded oyster mushroom stir-fry. In Myanmar, the oyster mushroom is called *ngwe hin moh*. It's easy to follow, but you might need a bit of preparation time and patience.

CHICKEN MINCE STIR-FRY WITH SHAN PICKLES
Serves 6

- 300g of chicken mince
- 2 tbsp Shan chilli paste or chilli-garlic sauce
- 1 tbsp Shan garlic pickle
- 1 tbsp Shan mustard bud pickle
- 1 tbsp dried white radish pickle
- 1 small onion
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- Salt to taste
- 1 ½ tsp ground white pepper

Pat dry the chicken mince with kitchen paper. Marinate it with half of the white pepper.

Slice the onion thinly and set aside. Add oil to a wok and heat on high. When it's hot, sauté the onions until they are translucent.

Add the chilli-garlic sauce and fry for half a minute. Add garlic pickles and fry another half-minute. Add the white radish and mix well.

Add the chicken mince. Use a wood spatula to break it up.

Fry until all the water comes out of the mince.

Add mustard bud pickle and soy sauce. Fry for half a minute.

Add salt and white pepper to taste. Remove from the wok and serve with steamed rice.

Note: I have used Lee Kum Kee brand chilli sauce, but Shan chilli paste or sauce is okay, too.

Mediterranean dishes shine at lushly gardened manor

WHITNEY LIGHT
light.whitney@gmail.com

THE House Bar & Grill is situated in – what else? – a big, beautiful house, just down the road from Ginki Kids. You could sit inside, in the high-ceilinged, spare but gracefully adorned rooms, but if it's not raining you'll probably want to head outside to enjoy the garden.

The House advertises itself as “the only restaurant in Yangon with a tropical forest theme”. While that is debatable, the intimate horseshoe tables for two or four

nested among thick foliage and goldfish ponds and the attractive lamplit ambiance do make this spot special – a good venue for a small dinner party or couple's night out.

Few seem to have discovered this restaurant in the several weeks since it opened, and that's a shame. Our party arrived a little after 8pm and we were alone in the garden until nearly closing time. While I can't offer an opinion on the kitchen's competency at full capacity, on our visit the welcoming waitresses armed us with a little bell to ring for service, and our meal arrived promptly after ordering.

The head chef here hails from Syria.



Restaurant Review

The House Bar & Grill
6 Kanbawza Road, Bahan
Open 11am-midnight
Phone 09 863 4400

Unsurprisingly, the Mediterranean offerings are among the best. The menu, however, is quite extensive, covering bits of Mexican, South Asian, Italian and American cuisine.

The falafel (K4000) is, according to my guest, the best in town. Light and crisp on the outside and soft and aromatically spicy on the inside, it arrived in portions generous enough to share, as did all the other dishes we ordered.

The beef kebab, served with a fresh tomato salsa and feta cheese, was delicious – well marinated and well-done but still tender.

Two Middle Eastern *mutabel*, or dips – roasted eggplant and tahini (K5000 and K7000) – are served with soft pita bread and very simply prepared. Similarly, the tabouli (K8000) is a high pile of diced parsley and tomatoes. These plates struck me as slightly under-salted, but that's usually better than the opposite. There's nothing hiding in the food here: It's just decent home-style cooking.

As a litmus test, we also ordered the Caesar salad (K6000). Here things fell apart, or at least defied expectations. Instead of romaine lettuce, we got shredded napa cabbage, chicken chunks and corn topped with a light



Examples of falafel and tabouli salad. Photos: via Ellie and Food My Friend

dressing and shredded mozzarella cheese. It's edible, but not a Caesar, and not recommended.

The menu offers a few steak options – steak here broadly interpreted as chicken, pork or beef. We went for the “wine fresh” beef steak (K12,000). A richly flavoured red wine sauce, a bit of melted cheese and fresh mushrooms topped a well-done steak of more than passable but not great quality. Accompaniments included a tasty bit of mashed potatoes and a few spears of steamed veggies, including unfortunately watery slices of carrot.

In sum, the food is mostly healthful and fresh if not spectacularly delicious, though the Mediterranean menu is particularly successful. Along with an

extensive drinks menu that includes cocktails, beer and wine by the bottle, what pushes up the ranking is the pretty, relaxing environment. A good place for conversation, you're bound to have a memorable evening here.

Restaurant Rating	
★★★★★	
Food	7
Beverage	8
Service	7
Value for Money	7
X-Factor	9



Julie, Thomas and Ania



Laura and Frank



Flo and Lydia



Chuck and Thazin



Alice and a fan

The Institut Français de Birmanie hosted a music festival at the Strand Ballroom on June 24. Canadian folk-blues singer Mélissa Laveaux gave a stunning solo performance. Local band Symmetric opened the concert night with their Myanmar electro pop, and Alice and her Wonderband performed some hot jazzy covers.

Fête de la musique



Photos:
ima/Emmanuel Maillard
imaphotodesign@gmail.com



Alex, Scarlet and Clara



Andrea, Ricardo and Barbara



Glenn and Caroline

'People of the River' opening



Pierre and Christophe



Thet Htoo, Lwin Ko Taik and photographer Zarni Phyto



Thu Ya, Maung Maung Myat and Suyin Htwe



Pres, Angel and Sheryl

The Myanmar Times' own Zarni Phyto celebrated the launch of his solo exhibition "People of the River" with friends and art fans on June 21 at Myanmar Deitta. The photos document aspects of the life of people who comb shipwrecks for valuables on the Yangon River.



Thet Thet Khine, Soe Lwin, Jack and friends



Harrison and Ketura



Ali



Independence Day in Mandalay

US Ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell announced a US State Department-funded education and training program called iPACE during an event on June 21. Mitchell was in Mandalay for an early celebration of American Independence Day at the Jefferson Center. It was the first such Independence Day celebration with a US Ambassador in more than 30 years. Mitchell cut the cake at a party attended by about 100 people.



Pre-show KBZ cocktail evening



U Than Maung



Naw Bway Wah



U Win Aung, Andrew Patrick and Khaing Khaing Nwe



Nicholas and friend



Joseph Fisher



Yu Mon Phyo, Sett Hlaing and Nilar Aung

As the main sponsor of Shakespeare Schools *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – performed June 20 at the Strand Ballroom – KBZ hosted a cocktail function at River Gallery before the show. Guests included staff of the British embassy, KBZ and their partners.



Htet Myat, Linn Lett and Mya



Nang Kham Nong



Kevin Kye-Yong Kim and Si Thu

Marga Landmark announces luxury development



Marga, an international property developer, announced on June 23 that it will bring “a world-class development and a luxurious lifestyle experience” to “Dagon City 1”. The project will see a mixed-use retail-office-hotel-apartment complex rise on 22 acres at U Htaung Bo Circle. “Dagon City 1 will be Yangon’s new symbol of international progress,” said Alex Lau, head of design at the project-partner firm Wong Tung & Partners.

DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 761	1	7:30	8:25	
FMI A1	1,2,3,4,5	7:30	8:30	
FMI A1	6	8:00	9:00	
FMI B1	1,2,3,4,5	11:30	12:30	
FMI A1	7	15:30	16:30	
FMI C1	1,2,3,4,5	16:45	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	
FMI C2	1,2,3,4,5	18:05	19:05	

YANGON TO MANDALAY				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 7143/YJ 143	2	6:20	8:25	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	8:30	
Y5 234	Daily	6:15	7:30	
6T 401	1,2,4,5,6,7	6:20	8:25	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	8:40	
W9 7143/YJ 143	3,5,6,7	6:50	8:55	
YJ 233	1,6	7:00	8:25	
YJ 211	7	7:00	8:25	
7Y 701	6	7:05	10:40	
7Y 815	3,4	7:05	11:20	
7Y 771	7	7:05	11:20	
7Y 707	2,5	7:10	11:55	
YJ 761	1	7:30	9:40	
7Y 815	1	8:00	12:15	
W9 7201/YJ 201	4,7	8:00	9:25	
W9 201	1,2,3,5,6	8:00	9:25	
8M 6603	2,4,7	9:00	10:10	
YJ 601	4,6	11:00	12:25	
YJ 761	2	11:00	12:55	
YH 727	1	11:00	13:10	
YH 729	2,4,6	11:00	14:00	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	13:10	
W9 151/YJ 7151	1	11:00	14:45	
W9 153/YJ 7153	2	11:00	12:55	
W9 153/YJ 7153	7	11:30	12:55	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	16:35	
6T 501	2,4,6,7	14:45	16:45	
6T 501	3	15:15	17:15	
6T 501	1,5	15:30	17:30	
W9 211	2,6	16:00	17:25	
W9 7211/YJ 211	3,4,5,6	16:00	17:25	

MANDALAY TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 233	Daily	8:10	9:25	
YH 918	Daily	8:30	10:25	
6T 402	1,2,4,5,6,7	8:45	10:45	
W9 7143/YJ 143	2	8:40	10:05	
K7 223/7Y 112	Daily	8:55	11:00	
W9 7143/YJ 143	3,5,6,7	9:10	11:05	
W9 7201/YJ 201	4,7	9:40	11:35	
W9 201	1,2,3,5,6	9:40	11:35	
Y5 132	3,5,6,7	9:30	10:30	
7Y 772	7	11:35	15:20	
YJ 212	7	12:00	13:25	

7Y 708	2,5	12:10	16:28
7Y 816	1	12:30	16:45
YJ 762	2	13:10	17:00
YJ 234	1,6	13:20	14:45
7Y 702	6	13:45	17:20
7Y 815	3,4	14:25	18:40
YJ 602	4,6	15:40	17:05
YH 728	1	16:30	17:55
K7 225/7Y 222	Daily	16:50	19:00
6T 502	2,4,6,7	17:05	19:10
YH 738	3,5,7	17:10	18:35
8M 6604	2,4,7	17:20	18:30
6T 502	3	17:35	19:40
W9 7211/YJ 211	3,4,5,6	17:40	19:45
YH 730	2,4,6	17:45	19:10
6T 502	1,5	17:50	19:55
W9 154/YJ 7154	7	18:35	20:00

YANGON TO NYAUNG U				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	7:45	
6T 401	Daily	6:20	7:40	
W9 7143/YJ 143	2	6:20	7:40	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	7:50	
W9 7143/YJ 143	3,5,6,7	6:50	8:10	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	17:25	
6T 501	2,4,6,7	14:45	17:35	
6T 501	3	15:15	18:05	
6T 501	1,5	15:30	18:20	
W9 7211/YJ 211	4,5,6	16:00	18:10	

NYAUNG U TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 918	Daily	7:45	10:25	
W9 7143/YJ 143	2	7:55	10:05	
6T 401	1,2,4,5,6,7	7:55	10:45	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	8:05	11:00	
W9 7143/YJ 143	3,5,6,7	8:25	11:05	
YH 918	4	8:35	10:40	
6T 401	3	10:00	11:20	
6T 502	2,4,6,7	17:50	19:10	
6T 502	3	18:20	19:40	
W9 211/YJ 7211	4,5,6	18:25	19:45	
6T 502	1,5	18:35	19:55	
K7 225/7Y 222	Daily	17:40	19:00	

YANGON TO MYITKYINA				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 824	1	7:00	9:40	
YJ 233	1,6	7:00	9:50	
YJ 211	7	7:00	9:50	
YH 828	2,6	7:00	10:00	
7Y 815	3,4	7:05	12:45	
7Y 701	6	7:05	12:05	
W9 7151/YJ 151	1	11:00	13:15	
W9 7153/YJ 153	2	11:00	13:55	
W9 7153/YJ 153	7	11:30	14:25	
YH 826	4	14:00	16:40	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 212	7	10:00	13:25	
YH 829	2,6	10:00	12:25	

YH 825	1	11:30	13:55
YJ 234	1,6	11:55	14:45
7Y 702	6	12:20	17:20
7Y 815	3,4	13:00	18:40
W9 7152/YJ 152	1	13:35	16:30
W9 7154/YJ 154	2	16:35	18:50
YH 827	4	16:40	19:05
W9 7154/YJ 154	7	17:05	20:00

YANGON TO HEHO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	9:15	
6T 401	1,2,4,5,6,7	6:20	9:20	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	9:30	
7Y 701	6	7:05	9:58	
7Y 815	3,4	7:05	10:35	
7Y 771	7	7:05	10:35	
7Y 707	2,5	7:10	11:13	
YJ 761	1	7:30	10:10	
7Y 815	1	8:00	11:30	
W9 7201/YJ 201	4,7	8:00	10:10	
W9 201	1,2,3,5,6	8:00	10:10	
YJ 751	3,5,7	10:30	11:40	
YJ 761	2	11:00	12:10	
YH 727	1	11:00	12:25	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	12:25	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	15:45	
6T 501	2,4,6,7	14:45	15:55	
6T 501	3	15:15	16:25	
6T 501	1,5	15:30	16:40	

HEHO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 918	Daily	9:15	10:25	
6T 402	1,2,4,5,6,7	9:35	10:45	
K7 223/7Y 112	Daily	9:45	11:00	
W9 143/7Y 7143	3,7	9:55	11:05	
W9 201/7Y 7201	4,7	10:25	11:35	
W9 201	1,2,3,5,6	10:25	11:35	
7Y 771	7	10:50	15:20	
7Y 707	2,5	11:25	16:28	
7Y 816	1	13:15	16:45	
7Y 702	6	14:30	17:20	
7Y 816	3,4	15:10	18:40	
YH 728	1	15:45	17:55	
YJ 762	2	15:50	17:00	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	16:00	19:00	
6T 501	2,4,6,7	16:10	19:10	
YH 738	3,5,7	16:25	18:35	
6T 501	3	16:40	19:40	
YJ 752	3,5,7	16:45	17:55	
6T 501	1,5	16:55	19:55	

YANGON TO SITTWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 607	1	11:15	12:40	
6T 611	2,4,6,7	11:15	12:40	
6T 605	5	11:15	13:15	
6T 611	3	11:40	13:05	
W9 7311/YJ 311	4	11:30	13:20	
K7 422	Daily	13:30	15:25	

SITTWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 612	2,4,6,7	13:00	14:25	
6T 608	1	13:00	15:00	
6T 612	3	13:25	14:50	
6T 606	5	13:35	15:00	
W9 7311/YJ 311	4	13:35	15:00	
K7 423	Daily	15:40	17:00	

YANGON TO MYEIK				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 633	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	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

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 252	Daily	8:30	10:15
FD 254	Daily	17:50	19:35
DD 4239	Daily	21:00	22:45

YANGON TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25
Y5 233	Daily	10:10	14:40
SQ 997	Daily	10:35	15:10
3K 582	Daily	11:20	15:50
MI 533	2,4,6	13:45	20:50
MI 517	Daily	16:40	21:15
TR 2827	Daily	19:05	23:40

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 501	1,3,5,6	7:50	11:50
AK 505	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 503	2,4,6	19:30	23:45

YANGON TO BEIJING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 716	1,3,5,7	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	8:35	11:10

YANGON TO PHNOM PENH			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 403	3	16:50	19:15

YANGON TO SEOUL			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:35	9:10
KE 472	Daily	23:35	8:05+1

YANGON TO HONG KONG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	1,4,6	01:10	05:45

YANGON TO TOKYO			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	Daily	21:45	06:50+1

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 245	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	20:05	23:05

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	20:15	21:30

DON MUENG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4230	Daily	6:30	7:15
FD 251	Daily	7:15	8:00
FD 253	Daily	16:35	17:20
DD 4238	Daily	19:25	20:15

SINGAPORE TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
SQ 998	Daily	7:55	9:20
3K 581	Daily	8:50	10:30
MI 533	2,4,6	11:35	12:55
8M 232	Daily	13:25	14:50
MI 518	Daily	14:20	15:45
TR 2826	Daily	17:05	18:25
Y5 234	Daily	15:35	17:05

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 715	1,3,5,7	19:30	22:50

KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AK 504	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	13:30	14:40
AK 502	2,4,6	17:50	19:00

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	11:50	13:25

DOHA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 918	3,5,7	20:30	6:35+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	20:15	21:40

SEOUL TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	Daily	18:45	22:35
OZ 769	3,6	19:50	23:25

TOKYO TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:00	15:40

HONG KONG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 250	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 244	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	17:35	19:35

International	
FD & AK = Air Asia	
TG = Thai Airways	
8M = Myanmar Airways International	
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines	
PG = Bangkok Airways	
MI = Silk Air	
VN = Vietnam Airline	
MH = Malaysia Airlines	
CZ = China Southern	
CI = China Airlines	
CA = Air China	
KA = Dragonair	
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines	
IC = Indian Airlines Limited	
W9 = Air Bagan	
3K = Jet Star	
AI = Air India	
QR = Qatar Airways	
KE = Korea Airlines	
NH = All Nippon Airways	
SQ = Singapore Airways	
DE = Condor Airlines	
MU=China Eastern Airlines	
BR = Eva Airlines	
DD = Nok Airline	
AI = Air India	
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

TOKYO

Traditional Tokyo ‘burb’ offers a bohemian vibe

JULIE WAN

FIRST learn of Shimokitazawa, a suburb west of Tokyo, on a vacation rental site: “Imagine a neighbourhood ... run by hippies,” says the listing. It goes on to tout alleyways lined with vintage clothing stores, bars, small theatres and live-music venues, all emitting a bohemian vibe.

Just as intriguing to me, though, is the area’s affordability, especially after days spent looking at one expensive, claustrophobic Tokyo hotel room after another. I book an apartment.

Shimokita is only a few stops from Shibuya, the iconic heart of bustling Tokyo. But it’s surprising how quickly the frenetic atmosphere fades as my husband and I, with our toddler son in tow, board a clackety train to the city’s western edges. Just three stops

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

COVER UP By Rob Lee

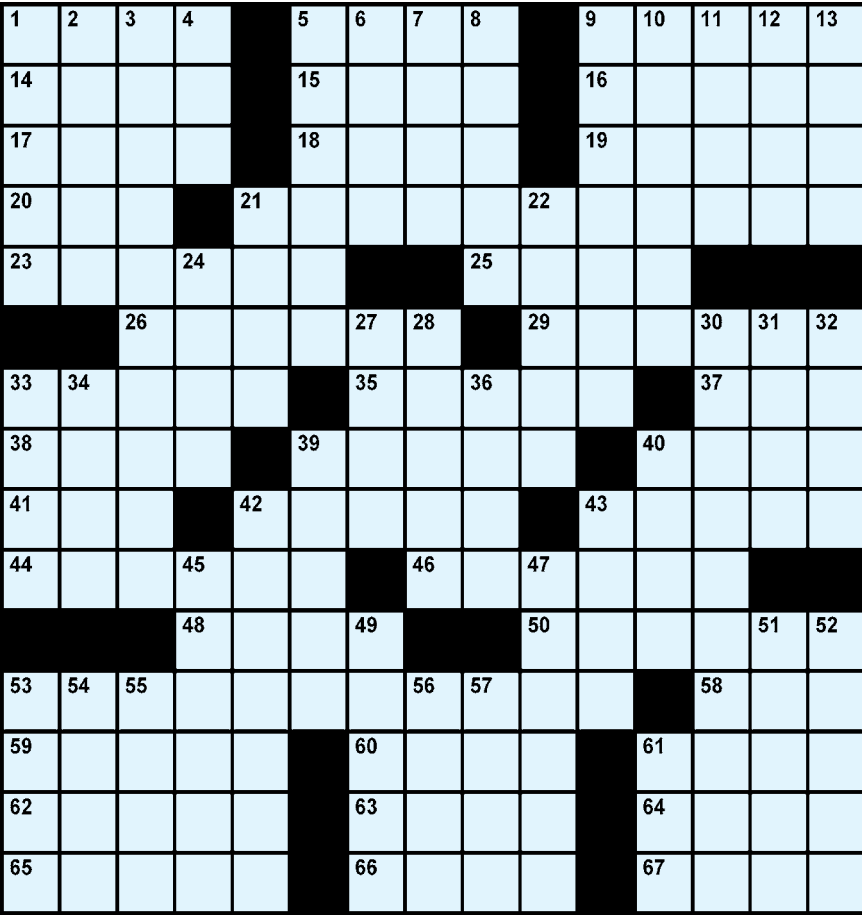
ACROSS

- 1 Ump's call
- 5 Cut, as a log
- 9 Confine, in a way
- 14 State categorically
- 15 Post-exercise soreness
- 16 Disassemble naturally
- 17 Storyteller?
- 18 Type of shake
- 19 Concise list
- 20 "To the max" indicator
- 21 Beautician
- 23 Angora coat
- 25 Quick to the helm
- 26 Join the Navy, e.g.
- 29 Dolphin fin
- 33 What "honorable mention" indicates
- 35 Himalayan priests
- 37 U.S. undercover outfit
- 38 Planets or peepers
- 39 Comparatively uncommon
- 40 Antony of antiquity
- 41 In times past
- 42 Roof parts
- 43 ____-walsy (friendly)
- 44 Cuddly warm
- 46 Wreck, as property
- 48 Elizabethan pronoun
- 50 Prefix with "crat"
- 53 Classic kids' game
- 58 Party mix
- 59 Put in a vase
- 60 "Oh, shoot!"
- 61 Mongolian desert
- 62 Exec's helper of yore
- 63 Italian erupter
- 64 "A Prayer for ____ Meany"
- 65 Sum answer
- 66 Oboe or bassoon
- 67 Get the pot going

DOWN

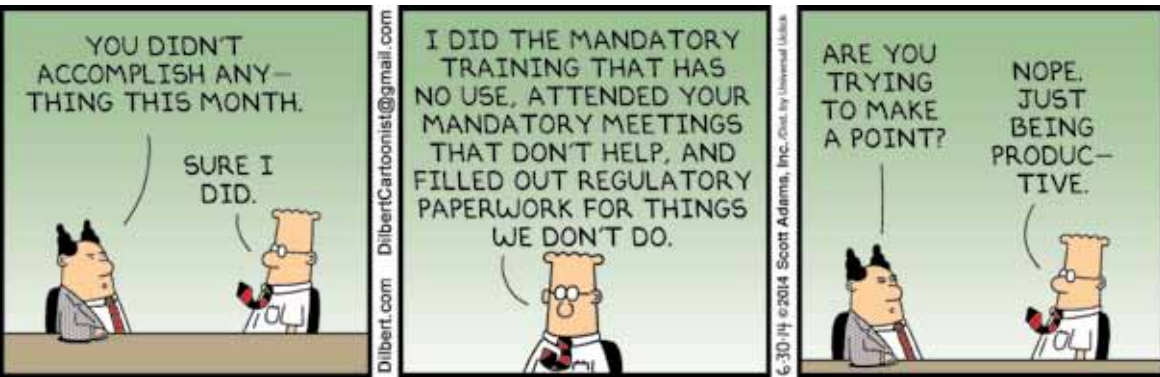
- 1 Beaver State capital
- 2 Message boat
- 3 Flamboyant neckwear

- 4 Make a goof
- 5 Expedition in Kenya
- 6 Exotic berry
- 7 Buzzing sound from spinning
- 8 Like Dilbert's character
- 9 They're straight
- 10 Boo-boo remover
- 11 They're hard to control
- 12 Nothing doing?
- 13 "... and ____ the twain shall meet"
- 21 Sword handle
- 22 Airport tracking device
- 24 Variety of Spanish liqueur
- 27 A Belgradian
- 28 Deducted from the gross weight
- 30 Reduces, in a way
- 31 Haughty attitude
- 32 Like some negligees
- 33 Castle
- 34 Word of conclusion
- 36 Costa ____, California
- 39 Cellulose fiber
- 40 Ancient gift givers
- 42 Gasohol ingredient
- 43 Recreation area
- 45 Breastbones
- 47 Dionysus follower
- 49 Cow's mammary gland
- 51 Highest land on Earth
- 52 Editorialize
- 53 High school subj.
- 54 Obsessed by
- 55 Operatic love scene
- 56 Fill too full
- 57 Hawk relative
- 61 "... can ____ long way"



DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



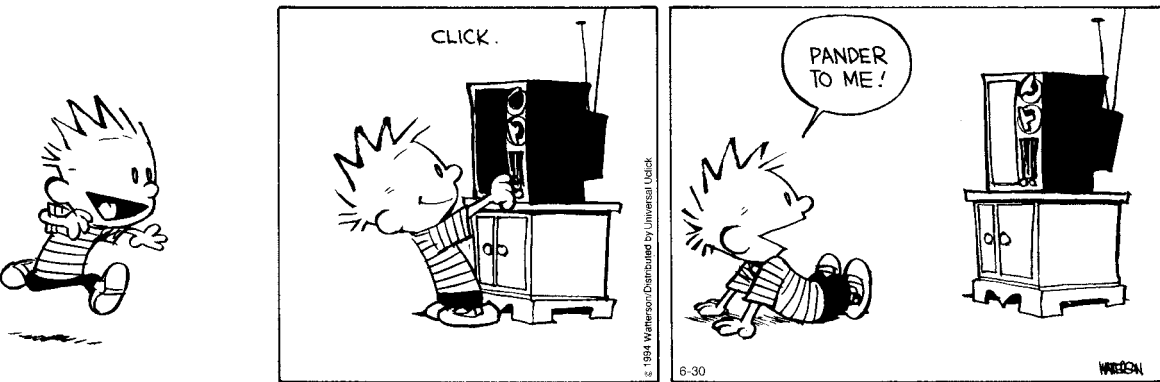
PEANUTS

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CALVIN AND HOBBS

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SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



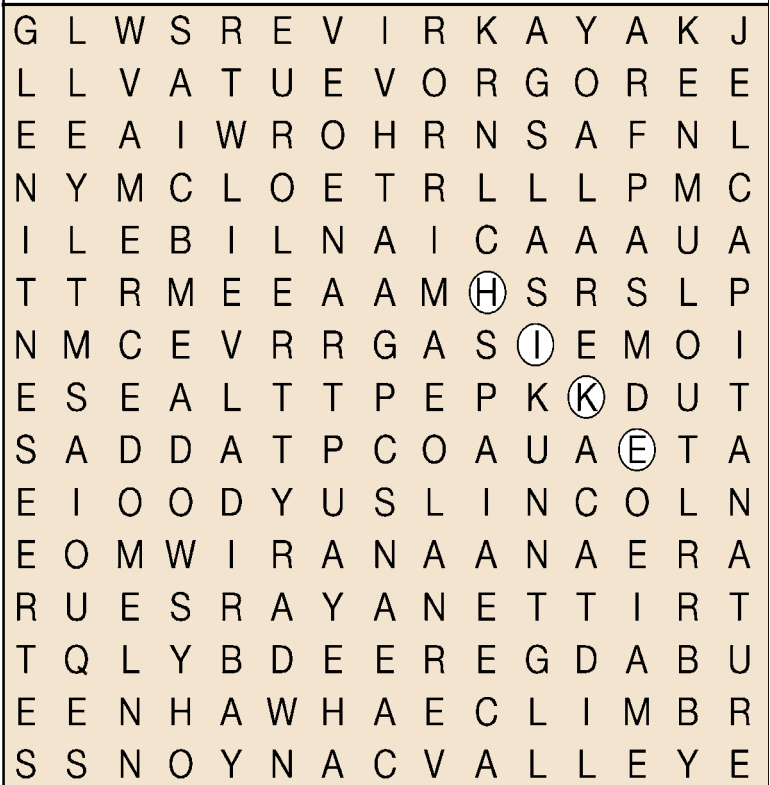
7/3 DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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.

CALIFORNIA'S YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK Solution: 8 letters

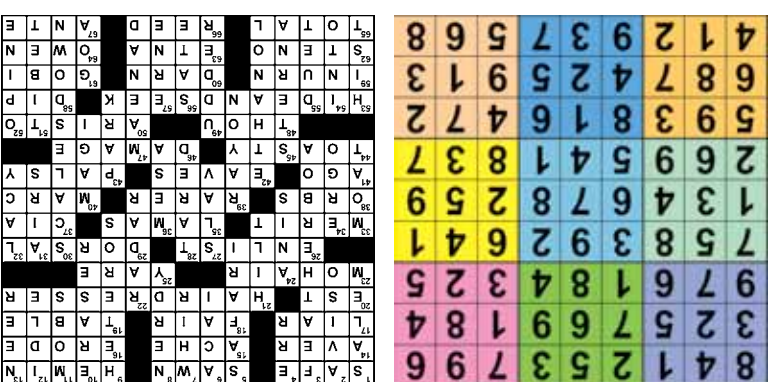


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CAMERA, From Singapore : used DSLR Canon 450D with (18-55) mm lens (9/10) & 550D with (18-55)mm lens (10), 600D with (18-55)mm lens (9/10). DSLR Nikon D 5000 (18-55)mm lens (9.5/10) Ph: 09-512-8713

COLD STORAGE, 100 M/T capacity situated at Hlaing Thar Yar Industrial area at reasonable rate. Aye Chan Win Co., Ltd. No.85, Hlay Thinn Ah Twin Wun U Chain Rd, Zone (2) Hlaing Thar Yar, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: 95-1-704539, 682011, 663569, Fax: 95-1-682011, 685846, Email: ayecho@mptmail.net.mm, Pls contact: 682011, 685846, 09-500-8845, 09-500-8843.

APPLE new Macbook Air 13" (2014 latest model) \$1099; Ipad Air: 500000 Kyats; Ipad mini 260000 Kyats; Samsung Note3: 550000 Kyats; Samsung Notes 8.0: 260000 Kyats; Samsung Note 10.1 (2014): 460000 Kyats; Samsung Tab3 7": 150000 Kyats. All Brand New. Call : 09-532-2747

CAR : Mercedes Benz S350, 2006 Model (Black colour) Interested person may contact Ms. Thazin, Tel: 01-664-372

TOYOTA BELTA (grey) year: 2011. Dec, mileage : 22,000 km, excellent condition. fee : \$500 / month, no driver, only car. I am real owner, pls contact directly. ryankim aceyangon79@gmail.com. Ph: 09-4313-2872

TOYOTA PRADO, 2006 Model/ White Colour Left Hand Drive /4 Doors Very Good Driving Condition (No Accident)

Only serious buyer can contact. Ph : 09-515-0751

Language

OXFORD English Language centre : Daw Khtheelen Thein, B.A(Eng), Dip in ELT, TESOL(Canada), Dip in Franch. Starters, Movers, Flyers. IELTS (Preparation). Four skills. No. 10, Marlar Myaing St, Yankin. Ph: 09-5026470.

INTERNATIONAL Experienced Teacher Daw Kathleen Thein (B.A Eng, Dip in ELT, TESOL Canada, Dip in French) teach Young Learners English, Adult learners for General English, IELTS and company staff for communicative English. No.1, Marlar Myaing Rd, Bauktaw, Yankin. Ph: 09-502-6470.

KOREAN Language : I do teach Korean language 4 skills . Available home tuition or group class. Are you a Korean? Do you want to speak, read, write and listen in Myanmar language? Pls do not hesitate to contact me: 09-731-23196, 09-2502-68353.

TEACHING Myanmar language for foreigners Near Myay Ni Gone City Mart, Sanchaung. Tel: 09-4200-30 782

WANT TO LEARN Myanmar Language? 2 Months course. Contact : Ms May : 09-4921-4276.

WE CAN TEACH Korea language for EPS-TOPIK. Ph: 09-4210-06072, 09-2505-65793.

ARE YOU a foreigner? Do you want to read, speak and listen in Myanmar language? Contact us: 09-513-9298

FOR FOREIGNERS - We do teach Myanmar language 4 skills by (Teacher Tun). Available home tuition or group class. Basic - 3 Months, Intermediate - 3 Months, Advanced - 3 Months. English Language : For adults & young learners, We do teach 4 skills face to face or group teaching. Available home tuition or group class. Contact us: 09-4211-47821, 01-243420.

CHINESE (Mandarin) teacher here in Yangon, Myanmar. I have over 6 years teaching in Singapore. Pls do not hesitate to contact me for an evaluation. I'm a professional teacher who will help you improve your speaking, reading and writing skills. I use Singaporean text books and Chinese speaking/ conversation books for teaching speaking, reading and writing in Mandarin. I'm available Monday-Saturday with a

flexible schedule. I also teach Myanmar language & Textbooks to Foreigner. If I don't answer please send me a sms and I will get back to you as soon as possible. May : 095 9-516-2988.

MYANMAR, English, Chinese, Japanese. For foreigners - We do teach Myanmar language 4 skills by (Teacher Tun). Basic - 3 Months. Intermediate - 3 Months. Advanced - 3 Months. English language - For adults & young learners. We do teach 4 skills face to face group teaching. Available home tuition or group class. Chinese language - For all grades & classes. (Taiwan Teacher Mr. Lin) teach 4 skills to be native speaker. Intend to go abroad to study or work students can contact us. Basic - 3 Months, Intermediate - 4 Months, Advanced - 6 Months, Super advanced - 6 Months. We do service. Japanese language - For all students who want to go to JAPAN for Work or study. We do teach 4 skills & practice very well. Contact us - 09-4211-47821, 01-243420.

Training

"ASIAN Bliss Myanmar" Travel & Tour (Car Rental Services) Bldg 289, Rm 3 East Yankin 09-519-1785, 09-731-18957

WEB Development & Design Training Sat & Sun - 5:00 ~ 7:00pm. Contact: 09-4211-44937

Travel

A VISIT to Mrauk-U, a land of marvelous historical & divine religious monuments would be incomplete without staying at the simple yet stylish Nawarath Hotel. Enjoy our Complimentary breakfast, hot & cold shower, satellite TV, mini-bar & free WIFI. Yangon Office: 26, 43rd St, Botataung, Yangon. Ph: (+95) 1-202540, 298943, Fax : 202587. Email : mraukoonawarathotel@gmail.com

We provide the following Training, CISCO, CCNA, CCNP, MICROSOFT, MCSA, MCSE, LAB, EC-COUNCIL CEH, SECURITY ADMIN. www.facebook.com/imcscompany, 09-4500-16040.

Property

Sale/Rent

MODERN Properties/ Condos, No agency fee, properties screened by foreign agent. www.rivers-realestate.com, jasonwongjp@gmail.com, 09-4211-02223

GOLDEN VIEW Tower, (Shine Condo), Condo room with Karaweik & Shwedagone Pagoda view, New room, 2400sqft, fully furnished, 2MBR, 2BR, living, lobby, dining, kitchen. Contact : 09-513-3958.

Housing for Rent

BAHAN, (1) New University Avenue Housing, 1350 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, (2) Near Golden valley, Yankin Center, Fully furniture 3 A/C, Ph, 17 Lakhs. Ph: 09-43200669, 09-731-35900

OFFICE SPACE TO LET 3100 sqm available over 5 floors in a 12-storey building with car park, restaurant, multi function hall and apartments. Please Contact - Ph : 09-431-34381. Email : office@uniteam-yangon.com, web : www.facebook.com/officespaceyangon

SHWE PIN LONE Housing, North Dagon, 80' x 80', 2 RC, Near Super Market, Near Hospital, Good neighborhood, 1 MBR, 3 SR, 15 Lakhs, Foreigner welcome. Ph: 09-43200669, 09-731-35900

YANKIN, Shwe Ohnbin Apartment, 900 Sq.ft, 1 MBR, 2 BR, 2 Aircon, 5th Fl, 8.5 Lakhs, Ph: 09-201-5148

PEARL CONDO (D), 15th Floor, 1500sqft, Corner Room, Fully furnished, 4 Air-con, 2BR, 1MBR, Suitable for foreigner, 2'000 US\$ per month. contact no: Burmese: 09-511-1032; English: 09-515-2532

49TH STREET, middle block, 6th Floor, 1500 Sqft, 25' x 60', Puzundaung Tsp, Yangon, 1MBR with Bath Tub, western toilet, 1BR, Huge Living room, Teak wood floor, Hot & Cold shower, Bath tub, 4 Aircon, Laundry room, Tilling floor Kitchen, Fully finished, Very comfort walk up stair, Nice and Clean excellence location in Yangon. Call us - 09-507-6675, 09-2500-13963, 09-503-9498

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

(1) 7 MILE, Payay Rd, 60'x80', 2 Storey new house, Lawn, European style, 4 MBR, Generator provided (New), USD 5500 per month. (2).

Kamayut, Inya Rd, 70'x130', 2RC storey, 1MBR, 3SR, Ph line, Big lawn, Semi-furnished, USD 6500 per month. (3). Bahan, Golden Valley, 0.6 Acre Land, Single storey new house, 2MBR, 2SR, Nice big lawn, USD 7000 per month. (4). Hlaing, Shwe Hinn Thar Condo, 2150sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, Ph line, Fully furnished, Swimming pool + Gym facility, Internet line, 24hrs electricity, Generator line included, USD 4500 per month. Ph: 09-4253-11320

CONDO Apartments: (1) MGW Tower, 1500sqft (2) University Avenue Condo, 1350 sqft, Fully furnished (3) Yankin Apartment, 1400 sqft. (4) 9th Miles, Ocean, 1350sqft (5) A-One Lane, Main Rd, 2 storeys house, 100' x 100', (6) Thuwunna, 2 storeys house, 80' x 90', (7) South Oakkalapa, 1 single house, 40' x 60' (8) Botataung, 25' x 62', 3rd Flr left. Ph: 09-732-41848, 09-8601-042

(1) NEAR Taw Win Center, 25' x 60', 2MBR, 1SR, FF, Lift, \$ 2500. (2) Near Kabaray Ga Mone Pwint, 15' x 60', Hall, Lift, 7 Lakhs. (3) Near Yuzana Plaza, 15' x 60', 1MBR, 1SR, 3F, 8 Lakhs. (4) La Min Tharyar Condo, 1875sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, FF, Lift, 16 Lakhs. (5) Parami Condo, 1350 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, FF, Lift, 8 Lakhs. (6) Kyauktada, Mingalar Condo, 25' x 55', 1MBR, 2SR, Lift, 15 Lakhs. Ph: 09-492-14276, 09-4211-77105.

(1) MAYANGONE, 9 Mile, 45' x 85', 3MBR, 1SR, FF, 2RC, 40 Lakhs. (2) Inya Rd, 50' x 64', 4MBR, 2SR, FF, 2RC, \$ 4000. (3) Mayangone, 8 Mile, 70' x 90', 3MBR, 2SR, FF, 2RC, 40 Lakhs. (4) Yankin, Kyauk Kone, 40' x 80', 3MBR, FF, 2RC, 50 Lakhs. (5) 9 Mile, A1 St, 5000 sqft, 4MBR, FF, 2RC, 35 Lakhs. (6) Golden Valley, 3000 sqft, 2MBR, 1SR, FF, 1RC, 25 Lakhs. Ph: 09-492-14276, 09-4211-77105.

Housing for Sale

N/ DAGONMYOTHIT, #810, Thakhinphohlagyi Rd, 43rd Quarter, 40x60', 2 story, 1 MBR & 3 BR, 5 Air cons, 2 water lines, 1 meter with garage. Contact Ph: 09-502-1315

LASHIO, Shan state (North), 14 Hninsi Lane 2, Buyha St, Quarter 1, 50'x120' wide compound, 30'x45' wide one-storey building, Living room, 1MBR, 1 extra bed room, dining room & kitchen, 1 office room, duel key system, fully furnished, suitable for NGO, INGO, Company office and/ or executive residence, available from July 2014. Ph: 082-26438, 09-502-6602

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Employment

UN Positions

THE UNITED NATIONS World Food Programme is seeking (1)**Admin Assistant** GS-4 Lashio (2)**Office Assistant** SC-2 Lashio (3)**Field Monitor Assistant** SC-4 Myitkyina (4) **Field Monitor Assistant** SC-4 Bhamo Operation (under supervision of Myitkyina office) 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 COB 10 July 2014.

Ingo Positions

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking (1) **Physiotherapist** - 2 posts in Hpa-an, Kayin State: Bachelor degree in physiotherapy. 3 years experiences in a similar field. Effective English language skills & computer knowledge skills. (2)**IT Assistant** - 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: B.E (IT) or B.C.Sc or IADCS or IT Diploma/ Certificate in related field. Certificate in (A*) Hardware. 2 years working experience in IT field. Experience of PC hardware, operation system and applications software. (3)**Monitoring & Evaluation Officer** 1 post in Matupi Tsp: Bachelor or equivalent degree in public administration, community development, statistics, social or development related studies. 2 years' experiences and proven skills in programme planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Effective computer knowledge & English Language skills. Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Please send application letter, CV and related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyi Taw Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 10-7-2014.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking **National Consultant** - 1 post in Yangon: Relevant university M.B.B.S or post graduate in Public Health, Nutrition Training. 2 years experience in designing, implementing & monitoring of nutrition programmes, preferably related to MNCH. Excellent command of English. Computer skills, including competency in use of Microsoft Office, Excel & internet navigation. Interested individual consultants are invited to submit consultancy proposals. www.myanmarredcross-society.org.

AMDA is seeking a dedicated person to work as a **Project Coordinator** for 'Healthy Village Project' at Western part of Pakokku, Magwe Region : University degree (Health/ Public health/ Social science will be preferable). More than 3 years professional working experiences, preferably in community development sector. Strong computer skill (Excel, Word, Power Point, Outlook etc.). Excellent in English and

Myanmar communication (both spoken and written). Please enclose a C.V., copies of testimonials (references) & passport photo, & send it to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office, 19 B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Block6, Yankin, Yangon. Email: sr.af.o.amda@gmail.com Closing date : 8 July 2014.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking (1) **Dissemination Officer** - 1 post in Kachin: University degree. Experience in working within the social and/ or NGO environment. Good Computer literacy. (2) **Communication & Reporting Officer** - 1 post in Yangon: Myanmar National. University degree. 2 years experience in the social and/or NGO environment. Effective both Myanmar & English language skills. Ability to translate Myanmar to English & English to Myanmar. (3) **HR Assistant** - 1 post. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

FONDAZIONE Terre des hommes Italia (TDH Italia) is seeking (1)**Civil/ Water Engineer** (Based in Yenanchaung/ Natmawk: Bachelor degree in Civil Engineering or equivalent. Previous experience on rain harvesting ponds construction/ rehabilitation in Dry Zone. Command of English. Command or Microsoft Office and Autocad. (2)**Civil Engineer** (Based in Yenanchaung & Natmawk): Diploma of degree in Civil Engineering or equivalent. Command of English. Command of Microsoft Office & Qutocad. Pls submit application with complete information about current job and expected salary incl. CV, photo, references by email or by postal service to Terre des Hommes Italia main Office: TDH Italia main Office: 48, Shwe Hinn Thar St, 11 Ward, Hlaing, Yangon, Tel: 654604, Email: hr.dh.it.mya@gmail.com, Closing date: 30-6-2014.

MYANMAR Tourism Federation is seeking (1) **Office Admin Assistant** - F 1 post : Age 20 ~ 30 years. Hold a any University Degree. 2 years experience in the office environment. Can use Office Software like Microsoft Word, Excel. Ability to communicate in English. (2)**Chief Accountant** - M/ F 1 post : Age 30 ~ 40 years. Hold B.Com (CPA) (or) B.Act (CPA), ACCA. 5 years experience. Can use Office Software (or) Computerized Accounting Software. (3) **Cashier** - M/F 1 post : Age 20 ~ 30 years. Hold B.Com (or) B.Act, LCCI Level III. 3 years experience. Can use Office Software (or) Computerized Accounting Software. All applications should include: A detailed CV. A copy of Certificate of Degree. A copy of NRC card. Relevant documents you would

like to submit. 2 recent passport photos to 3/A, Corner of Waizayandar Rd & Thanthumar Rd, Thuwanna, Thingan gyun, Yangon. (Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association Compound). (1)**WASH Engineer** - 1 post (2)**EOC Officer** - 1 post (3)**Project Officer** - 1 post (4)**Field Assistant** - 1 post. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, pls visit to www.myanmarredcross-society.org Pls mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

Local Positions

INTER GROUP of companies is an intl management consulting company. Now we are looking for highly qualified and motivated candidates to join our team for our business expansion in Myanmar. (1)**Receptionist** - F : Minimum Diploma Holder, 3 years relevant experience, Self-motivated, team-oriented and able to multi-tasks, Able to work independently, Excellent communication skills in English, Computer literate with MS Office Application. (2)**Accounts Executive** - M/F : A minimum of Degree. Positive working attitude with a willingness to learn and adapt. Results-oriented, possess initiative, drive, & a good eye for details. Team-player mindset. Able to multitask & comfortable working in a fast-paced environment with tight deadlines. Proficiency in Microsoft Office & MYOB Accounting Software is required. Able to start work immediately will be advantageous. Pls submit detailed CV in person or by email, stating your current & expected salary, date of availability, reason for leaving and a recent passport photo to 7(D), 1st Flr, 6 Miles, Pyay Rd, Hlaing, Tel: 09-731-0 5353, 09-731-05340. Email: hr-ygn@icononline.net Please state the Job Title that you are applied for in the subject of your email.

SANDA TOUR (Asia) is seeking (1)**Operation Manager** - 1 post : (2) **Reservation Manager** - 1 post (3)**Assistant Operation** - 1 post (4) **Assistant Reservation** - 1 post : For all posts : 3 ~ 5 years experience in Travel agency or related field. Pls submit CV, Photo with necessary documents to Rm 404, 4 Flr, Royal Yaw Min Gyi Condo., No 52, Yaw Min Gyi St, Dagon. Ph: 01-255571, 255580 ext 404 Email : project.inlelakeview@gmail.com **SANDA HOTEL** Co., Ltd is seeking (1)**Project Development Manager** - 1 post : 5 year experience in construction (2)**Human Resource Manager** - 1 post (3)**Secretary to the Managing Director** - 1 post : Able to communicate in English (4 skills) (4) **Hotel Reservation Assistance** - 2 posts : 3 ~ 5 years experience in hotel or related field. (5)

Reservation Manager - 1 post : 5 year experience in hotel or related field. (6)**Internal Auditor** - 2 posts (7)**Accountant** - 2 post : B.Com (CPA), 3 ~ 5 years experience, (8) **Cashier** - 4 posts. Please submit CV, Photo with necessary documents to Rm 404, 4 Flr, Royal Yaw Min Gyi Condo., No 52, Yaw Min Gyi St, Dagon. Ph: 01-255571, 255580 ext 404 Email : project.inlelakeview@gmail.com **THE INTERNATIONAL** Montessori Myanmar invites application from suitably qualified local candidates for the following positions of **Nursery/ Pre-K/ Khindergarten Lead teachers and Assistant teachers**. A Kindergarten teacher who is loving, caring and understand early childhood education with ECCD certification is preferred, but we will train the right person who is willing to get certified at a later date. Both are full time positions, Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 4:00. Please email your CV through imm.myn@gmail.com or contact 55 (B) Po Sein Rd, Bahan, Yangon Tel: 546097, 546761.

this sounds like you, apply now! Contact us on +95 94310 8839 or +95 97300 8839. Send CV and a personal statement telling us about you to: rhymesandrhythms-preschool@gmail.com **COMPASSROSE** Co.Ltd is seeking (1) **Driver** - M 1 post. Requirement: Age 30 ~ 45, can speak English a little, must know Yangon City well, minimum 5 years' experience. Contact Number: 09 508 9314, 01 667476 (Myo Su) **AMARAGROUP** Co., Ltd is currently looking for (1)**General Manager** - 1 Post (Ngapali) (2) **Finance Manager** - 1 Post (Yangon) (3) **F & B Manager** - 1 Post (Ngapali) (4) **FO Manager** - 1 Post (Ngapali) (4) **Sales & Marketing Manager** - 1 Post (Yangon) (5) **Sales executive** - 2 Posts (Yangon), (6) **Purchaser** - 1 Post (Yangon), (7) **Spa Manager** - 1 Post (Ngapali) (8) **Personal Manager** - 1 Post (Ngapali) (9) **Guest Relation Officer** - 1 Post (Ngapali) (10) **Chef De Parties** - 1 Post (Mandalay) (11) **Commis II** - 1 Post (Mandalay). Be

projects in a demanding & changing environment across multiple locations. Degree in Engineering - Electrical, Mechanical, Applied Sciences. Solid understanding of SCADA and background in protection. Knowledge of solar, hydro, and power generation, and an interest in renewable energy would be a benefit. Excellent communication skills including the ability to present at all levels of the organization (written & spoken in English). Knowledge and application of good project management standards (such as PMBOK or PRINCE2) We offer an attractive working environment and an executive salary package commensurate with experience & skills. Pls send a current CV with a recent photograph, copies of certificates, recommendations, examples of prior work & other references no later than 10 December 2013. Ms. Su Wai Thant suwaitthant@penergypartners.com Ph: +959 421036749, +95 9 31454084

THIRI COSMETIC Co., Ltd. is seeking (1)**Manager** - F (2) **Programmer** - M/F (3) **Sales Executive** (Whole sale) - M (4) **Junior Marketing Planner** - F (5) **Marketing Staff** - F (6) **Driver** (Delivery) - M (7) **Asst. Accountant** - F (8) **Asst. Auditor** - F (9) **Junior Graphic Designer** - F (10) **Cashier** - F (11) **Asst. Store Keeper** - M (12) **Showroom Incharge** - F. Please contact to 09-731-54474 ext -104, 09-731-26761 ext-104, 09-4309-8630.

URGENTLY Need (1). **Senior Reception** - 2 Posts : Salary Rate (\$ 200) (2). **Sous Chef** - 2 Posts : Salary Rate (\$300) Email: workhaung1997@gmail.com Ph: 09-4207-08515, 09-4927-8053. **SECRETARY** - Female 1 Post : Must be a computer literate, good at spoken/written English with 3 years experience. Please send CV with recent photo to email: ttztzt78@gmail.com

(1) **PERSONAL secretary** - M/F 2 posts : Excellent in speaking & written English. Good knowledge of int'l humanitarian organization. Age between 25 to 35 years. (2) **Japan (or) Korean**, (Excellent 4 skills) - M/F 2 posts : Age between 25 to 35 years. For 1 & 2 : Interesting real estate. (3) **Computer** - M/F 3 posts : (Word, Excel, Photoshop, power point) Age between 20 to 35 years. Address : 16, U Aung Myat St, near Their Phyu car driving range. Mingalar Taunyunt, Ph: 09-4921-4276, 09-4211-77105.

NS Bluescope Pte 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 & experience in business development, customer service, event management, & development of communications materials. Supervisory/ Management skills. Good computer literacy. Good command of English & 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 & 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. 301, Pyay Rd, Diamond Condo A, Kamayut, Yangon. Ph: 01-1221343, 09-4480-18719, 01-2306223. www.bluescopesteel.com. **LOOKING for a Violin Teacher**. Ph: 09-2540-08146, 01-572177. **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 : naychi-mgt@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

UNEXCEL 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@unexcelgroup.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.

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 trustworthy, 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. Pls 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

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FOR ESTABLISH Foreign Company is seeking (1)**General Manager** - M/F : 1 Post USD \$1000 over (2)**HR Manager** - M/F : 1 post USD \$700 (3)**Sale and Marketing Manager** - M 1 post: USD \$500-700 (4) **Assistant Accountant** - F 3 Posts : USD \$100 (5)**HR Supervisor** M/F 2 Posts : USD \$250-350 (6)**Admin Staff** - M/F 5 Posts : USD \$150-200 (7)**Receptionist** F 3 Posts : USD \$100. Please send your CV & a cover letter, including your salary expectation to email : zzboon22@gmail.com & cc to 7chawsuwin@gmail.com. Only short-list candidates will be notified by phone for interview.

A NEWLY opened international preschool in Yangon is seeking (1) **Pre School Teacher** - 2 posts: Prefer English native speaker. At least 1 year experience with children from 2 to 5 years. Prefer the candidates with Diploma/ Bachelor Degree/ English teaching qualifications such as TESOL or equivalent. (2) **Pre School Assistance Teacher** - 4 post : Prefer Local. 1 year experience with children from 2 to 5 years. Assist the head teacher and children. (3) **Cleaner** - 1 post. If

part of a young dynamic team & contribute to the hotels success with your expertise and experience. Therefore we offer an interesting work environment, accommodation & an attractive package. We look forward receiving CV in English. Contact: hmr@amaragroupmyanmar.com, Ph: 09-4252-74608

PRIME ENERGY Partners is the industrial operations arm of Prime Partners Group, a corporate finance & asset management company based in Singapore is seeking an experienced project manager to work with us in our grid optimization project in Yangon, Myanmar. **Senior Project Manager** (Electrical Power & Engineering) 1 Post: Senior project manager with over 10 years' experience in managing and leading engineering projects in a medium and high voltage environment. Experience in leading teams (10+ persons) at a national utility or major engineering firm focused on electrical transmission & distribution and/or power generation. Capable of trouble shooting with a proven track record of successfully delivering

Vacancy Annoucement

Development Facilitators Myanmar is seeking an **Office Manager** cum Training Coordinator with 2 years relevant experience in either field preferred. Has to have good English and a University degree. The position will be in Yangon. Please call **09250870432** or email dulande@gmail.com.

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PARIS

World Cup brings global carnage

THE hangover goes around the globe like a Mexican wave – a trail of destructive and sometimes deadly celebration is left after every win and the World Cup “sickie” has become an epidemic.

Bogota's mayor ordered a ban on alcohol sales during Colombia's World Cup matches after nine people died in fighting and car accidents sparked by the country's 3-0 win over Greece.

“We want peaceful celebrations. We must reject violence,” said the mayor, Gustavo Petro. About 3000 street fights were reported to police after the win in the city of eight million people.

In France, migrant Algerian fans poured onto the streets of Paris and other big cities after their country beat South Korea 4-2 on June 21.

At least 28 people were arrested by police who fired flash balls to break up unruly crowds and in some cases were pelted with stones, police said. Dozens of cars were burned.

3000

Street fights reported in Bogota after Colombia defeated Greece on June 13.

Alcohol is causing other World Cup tragedies. A drunken Mexican fan jumped off a cruise ship deck to his death after his country drew with Brazil. The ship was taking 3500 Mexicans between the Brazilian cities of Fortaleza and Recife.

Hardly a country has escaped fall-out from World Cup binge drinking.

Nepalese police have caught hundreds of football fans drinking and driving after staying up all night to watch World Cup matches.

Police in the Himalayan nation's capital, Kathmandu, seized the licenses of more than 400 fans in one week, said Basanta Pant, spokesperson for the Kathmandu Traffic Police Division. That is twice the weekly average.

Authorities have deployed 100 extra personnel to stand guard at main intersections until 4am, ready to stop beer-fuelled fans.

Some 5200 cases of drunk driving were reported in China in the first three days of the World Cup, a 65 percent increase over the figure during the 2010 tournament, the official

China Daily newspaper reported.

Traffic police will “conduct selective tests during daytime to keep hungover motorists off the roads,” added the report.

A time difference of up to 12 hours between China and Brazil has also given Chinese wheeler-dealers a lucrative opportunity to sell fake sickie notes to World Cup fans staying up all night.

A search on Chinese search engine Baidu showed thousands of results for vendors providing photocopies of hospital certificates with official stamps and doctor's signatures in their “product catalogue”.

World Cup absenteeism – what the British famously call “throwing a sickie” – is a widespread problem around the world.

Shamsuddin Baradan, executive director of the Malaysian Employers Federation, which represents the employers of about a third of the country's private sector work force, said employers were concerned about lower productivity and increased absences.

“The first week you may not feel anything but by the second, third and fourth week, we expect quite a high degree of negative impact,” he told AFP, urging employees to be “selective” in the games they watch to reduce damage.

An earlier federation survey found that 56pc of its members said they had been hit by absenteeism or productivity losses during the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

In Britain, the employment law specialists ELAS said that “World Cup fever”, the mystery illness that strikes once every four years” could cost the country's economy up to four billion pounds (US\$6.8 billion).

Its survey of 1,500 workers revealed that 13pc plan on “throwing a sickie” to watch matches and 43pc would take planned or unauthorised time off.

In Paris, Arnaud Monthlery, owner of a small restaurant, said that five of his nine staff failed to turn up the day after France beat Switzerland 5-2 on June 20.

“As a fan I'm happy that they won. As a businessman I'm worried that this good form good last,” he commented.

In Australia most of the games are played in the middle of the night. Fans' feelings were expressed in one Twitter comment: “MESSAGE TO ALL EMPLOYERS: Please be patient with weary staff today. They have endured a night of sporting drama.”

– AFP

SAO PAULO



Brazil's supporters cheer during a match against Cameroon in Brasilia on June 23. Photo: AFP

Nothing is kitsch

From dog jerseys to Brazil condoms, fans wear all

WORLD Cup fans are expressing their love of the game in wild ways, wearing patriotic nail polish, dressing up dogs with jerseys and showing their passion under the sheets with Brazil-inspired condoms.

The usual football frenzy fashion is on full display in the South American host country's streets and stadiums, from the inevitable replica team jerseys to colourful wigs and flag-themed face paint.

But pet owners, fashionistas and love-struck fans have found their own ways to wear their team colours, with Brazil football kits for dogs, designer clothes for women and caipirinha-flavoured condoms for couples.

In the sprawling business hub of Sao Paulo, World Cup souvenirs – from the kitschiest to the trendiest – can be found anywhere, from upper-class neighborhoods to bustling street markets.

In one well-to-do district, the MVet pet store sells a yellow, round doggie poop bag dispenser with a football printed in the middle.

But the hottest-selling item is the US\$14 yellow dog shirt with the number 10 printed on the back, just like Brazil's star forward Neymar. Eighty have sold so far.

“It's cold here now and he looks cute, and we're in the middle of the Cup,” said Regina Saccarelli, a 34-year-old architect who bought the outfit for her Maltese.

Around the corner, women get discounts to paint their nails in the colors of their favorite team, with Brazil's yellow, green and blue the most popular.

A manicure with two nail appliques – choices include Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer statue or leopard prints – goes for \$13.

“In addition to dressing up for the games, we always want to have our nails done,” said Marina Jorkovics, the 28-year-old marketing director of the Nailsxpress salon.

“This is another reason to have them done and it looks nice.”

Local fashion designers have joined the party, making blouses, purses and dresses for women who want to show team spirit without having to wear a football jersey.

‘Anything goes at the world cup. If it's to celebrate, cheer, it's worth investing in fun objects.’

Paula Acioli

Fashion consultant and professor at Getulio Vargas Foundation University

“Anything goes at the World Cup. If it's to celebrate, cheer, it's worth investing in fun objects,” Paula Acioli, a fashion consultant and professor at Getulio Vargas Foundation University, told AFP. “Nothing is kitsch.”

Italian, Dutch and Russian tourists have forked over between \$26 and \$35 for green and yellow sleeveless shirts with leopard and zebra prints at Mamy de Silveira's Essere Fashion store.

“There's a lot of patriotism in Brazil despite the protests and strikes,” said Silveira, referring to a wave of demonstrations against the costs of hosting the World Cup.

“People like to cheer for Brazil by wearing things that stand out.”

Love of country has even made it into the bedroom.

Since February, DKT International, a US-based non-profit that promotes family planning and HIV prevention, has sold 2.1 million condoms flavored like caipirinha, Brazil's famous cocktail.

Sold under the Prudence brand, the condom is yellow with a green tip. The first 850,000 were supposed to last three months but sold out in 15 days. A pack of three sells for \$1.40.

“I think there must be foreigners who will take it home as an inexpensive souvenir,” said Daniel Marun, DKT's Brazil director.

“What's important for us is to pass on a message of safe sex, but also fun and pleasurable sex.”

The kitschiest and cheapest World Cup souvenirs can be found in Sao Paulo's busy March 25 Street, where outdoor market stall owners sell \$5 harlequin hats, mohawk wigs and ear-piercing vuvuzelas.

Mariane Vicente, a parliamentary advisor, was sifting through a pile of football-shaped hats. For Brazil's game against Mexico, the 27-year-old wore a sequin dress in the team's yellow, green and blue colors.

“You have to dress with character,” she said. “You have to cheer from head to toe.” – AFP



Brazil's supporters cheer during a match against Cameroon in Brasilia on June 23. Photo: AFP

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Sport

Violence shows ugly side of World Cup

SPORT 66

RIO DE JANEIRO

Suarez kicked out of World Cup for biting opponent

Uruguan star to spend a record four months on the bench

URUGUAY star Luis Suarez exited the World Cup in shame last week after being hit with the heaviest suspension in the tournament's history for biting an Italian opponent.

Suarez, who bit Italian defender Giorgio Chiellini during his team's Group D win on June 24, was slapped with an immediate worldwide four-month ban and fined 100,000 Swiss francs (\$112,000).

"Such behaviour cannot be tolerated on any football pitch, and in particular not at a FIFA World Cup when the eyes of millions of people are on the stars on the field," FIFA Disciplinary Committee chief Claudio Sulser said.

Football's governing body imposed a four-month ban on all football activities, a nine-game international ban and the fine. The punishment took immediate effect, meaning Suarez misses Uruguay's second round match against Colombia on June 28 in Rio de Janeiro.

It will also hit his club career with Liverpool in England's Premier League as he cannot play until the end of October.

The nine-match ban is also likely to rule Suarez out of Uruguay's defence of the Copa America in 2015.

The sanction was the toughest ever handed down for foul play at a World Cup, surpassing the eight-match ban against Italy's Mauro Tassotti in 1994 for elbowing Spain's Luis Enrique.

It is the third time Liverpool star Suarez has been banned for biting players following incidents in 2010 in the Dutch league and 2013 in England.

He also received a long ban in



Italian defender Giorgio Chiellini (left) and Luis Suarez after the bite. Photo: AFP

2011 for racially abusing Manchester United's French international Patrice Evra.

Uruguay football officials, who insisted Suarez had not bitten anyone, said they planned to appeal, describing the punishment as "totally exaggerated."

The country's Sports Minister Lilian Kechichian also railed against the verdict. "This disproportionate sanction hurts us," she said on Twitter.

But the speed and severity of FIFA's punishment reflected the widespread revulsion throughout the football world at an incident captured clearly on television footage.

FIFA had faced mounting calls to issue a heavy sanction given Suarez's previous disciplinary history.

Suarez's sponsor Adidas

responded to the punishment by saying it "fully backs" FIFA's decision.

The company said it was dropping Suarez for all campaigns during the World Cup.

"We do not accept the recent behaviour of Luis Suarez and shall remind him of the high standards we expect of our players," an Adidas spokesperson said.

Suarez was also ordered to leave his team's hotel after his accreditation was revoked.

He was reported to be heading back to Montevideo, where crowds of flag-waving spectators had gathered at the city's international airport.

On the pitch, Germany and the United States clinched their places in the last 16 at the expense of crisis-hit Ghana and Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal.

Thomas Mueller's long-range effort was enough to clinch a 1-0 win for Germany in a rain-soaked affair in Recife.

The Americans joined the Germans in the last 16 as the runners-up from Group G after the result in the game between Ghana and Portugal went in their favour.

United States coach Jurgen Klinsmann praised his team for defying the odds to advance to the second round.

"It's huge getting out of this group," said Klinsmann.

"Everybody said, 'You have no chance,' but we took our chance and now we move on and we really want to prove a point."

Real Madrid superstar Ronaldo struck a late volley to give Portugal a 2-1 win that left them level on four points with the United States.

But Portugal's inferior goal difference - a result of their disastrous 4-0 opening defeat to Germany - always left them struggling to pip the Americans.

Ghana's chaotic World Cup came to an end just hours after revelations of turmoil inside the African giant's camp.

The Ghana Football Association said star players Sulley Muntari and Kevin-Prince Boateng had both been axed from the squad after a bust-up with team officials.

The suspension came one day after the Ghana government said it was airlifting \$3 million to Brazil to resolve a financial dispute with players, who boycotted training June 23.

In later games, Belgium clinched first place in Group H after beating South Korea while Algeria reached the last 16 for the first time after drawing 1-1 with Russia. - AFP

Htun Htun Min headlines Thai-Myanmar boxing tournament

KYAW ZIN HLAING



kyawzinhlaing91@gmail.com

SOUTHEAST Asian Games gold medal winner Htun Htun Min will take on Thailand's Weerapol in the main event of the "One on One" traditional boxing tournament next week.

The fight will be the main bout at a 10-card event that will pit boxers from Myanmar and Thailand against each other on July 6 at Thein Phyu indoor stadium.

Htun Htun Min said that he had trained well before the fight and was looking forward to the match.

"I studied my opponent's fight film. I enjoy fighting foreign opponents and I also have experience fighting foreign opponents. I have prepared for this competition and I believe I will compete at my best," said Htun Htun Min.

In other action, Myanmar's Golden Belt champion Soe Lin Oo will take on Par Wit who has fought against Myanmar opponents before.

Tournament organisers said that the tournament would be a good opportunity for Thai boxers to showcase their skills.

"We will find out which Thai boxers have Myanmar traditional boxing skills. There are some Thai boxers who are well known to Myanmar fans who haven't fought in Myanmar before. We will hold this tournament at an international level," said U War So Win Myint, general secretary of the Myanmar Letwhay Association, at a press conference on June 24.

General admission tickets will cost K15,000. VIP seating will range from K30,000 to K50,000.

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