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VIOLENCE IN MANDALAY

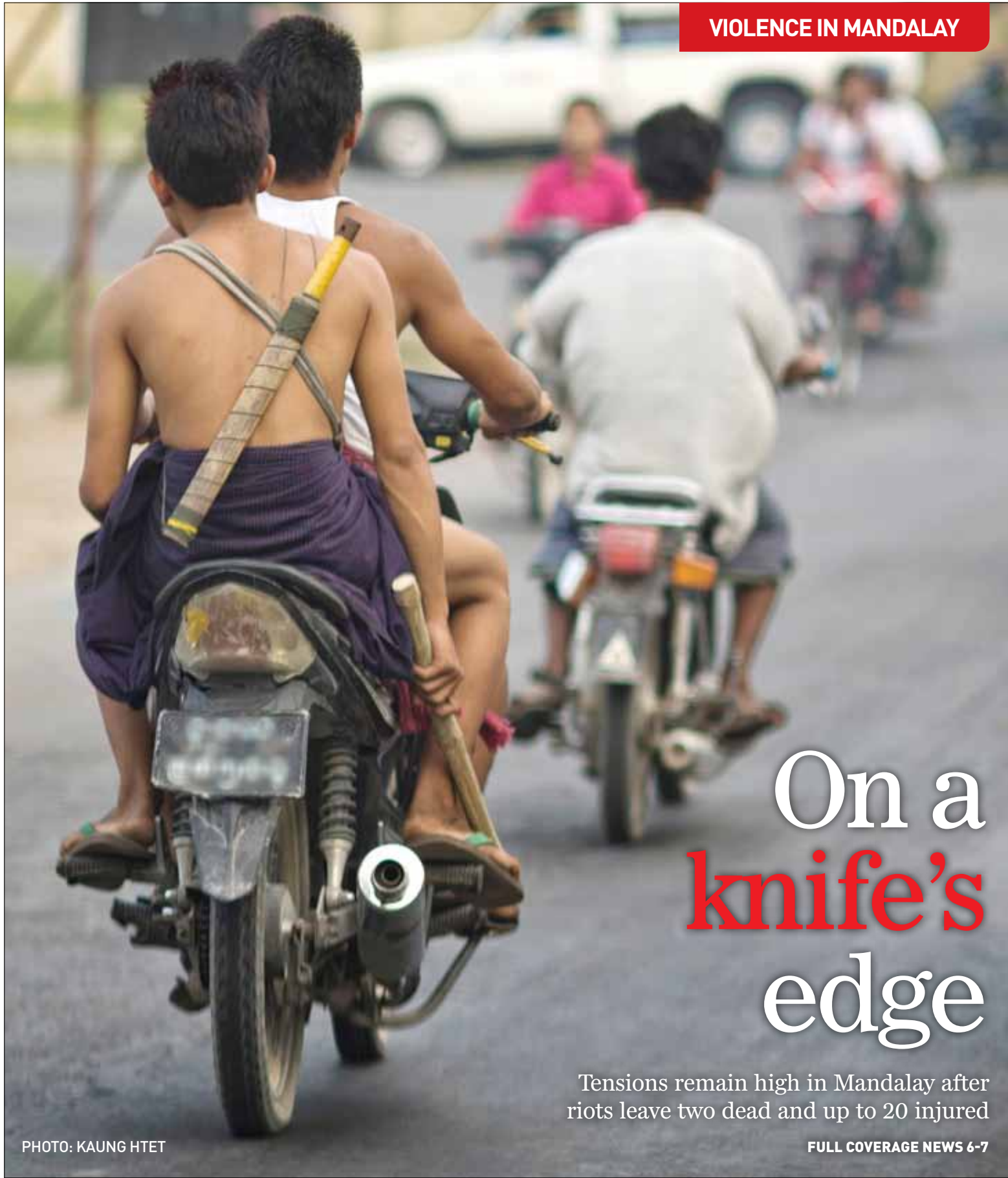


PHOTO: KAUNG HTET

On a knife's edge

Tensions remain high in Mandalay after
riots leave two dead and up to 20 injured

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Petition and rallies organised by NLD
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online editor **Kayleigh Long** |
kayleighlong@gmail.com



THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

2 Fast 2 Spurious

When the vast majority of people Google “escape gastro Yangon”, chances are they’re looking for a tried and true remedy to symptoms brought on by dubious chicken or something water-borne. However, some will be pleased to find the website of “The newest spot of choice for Yangon’s well-heeled set”, which opened towards the end of 2012: Escape Gastro Bar.

“I have to say ... the most difficult part was probably deciding on the name for the bar!” said bar co-founder and doyen of the city’s burgeoning high-end hospitality sector Htet Tay Za, in an interview with Myanmar back in April.

“I grew up witnessing Myanmar’s hospitality industry driven on the wrong path and I’ve always aspired to contribute and be part of our country’s urban potential,” he continued, allaying the concerns of anyone who had thought there wasn’t anywhere in town to get a decent “molecular cocktail”.

This is a concept that should be familiar to anyone who’s ever watched pioneering

molecular gastronomist Heston Blumenthal’s rather nauseating television show *Heston’s Feasts*, in which he makes food look like other food through his liberal use of liquid nitrogen and Bunsen burners, much to the surprise and delight of his celebrity guests.

Anyway, the copy of the latest Facebook ad for Escape Gastro’s upcoming Sunday hangover brunch is a joy to behold. To wit:

“...we’re no strangers to you beautiful people and the well heeled set. We don’t mind that extra attention. Got a set of wheels you wanna take for a ride on Sundays? Bring your cars to show case for a private photo shoot! Lamborghini, Ferrari, Bentley, and all that non-sense...”

Can I get a Hallelujah? Now you need not worry about where to park your Maybach as you wallow in crapulence, soak up the booze with bacon and imbibe some hair of the dog (or, perhaps, a dog hair vapour infused with organic, single-source quinoa mousse, served with a rusk straw made of powdered wagyu).

In other hospitality industry-related news, a plate of *htamin gyaw* at an eatery up the road from *The Myanmar Times* office has risen from K1,800 to K2,500 in the last week off the back of rising cooking gas prices – which I’m very lucky to be able to say isn’t catastrophic news for me, but it’s probably not great for the eight-year-old who delivered it, or anyone else in the country who eats food cooked off a gas hob, or ekes out a living selling it.

The Antisocial Network

Last week, Facebook was inaccessible from approximately 9pm on July 3, coming back up around 4am. Many wondered if this had anything to do with the events that took place in Mandalay, as social media went into overdrive with inflammatory material and has been largely credited as the conduit for the spread of a story about one of the two alleged inciting incidents.

That the site was accessible during the downtime using a VPN browser such as TOR indicated it was a deliberate block and not a mere glitch. On July 5 Facebook was blocked in Mandalay but not Yangon, with Police Brigadier General Win Kaung confirming to reporters this was done in order to quell rumours.

While blocking Facebook was possibly a good move on MPT’s part given the circumstances, it also means people are likely to seek out other avenues to communicate – whether it be for benign social interactions, to get information, or to disseminate the brand of extremely unhelpful inciting material that has put a match to the proverbial powder keg.

One of the myriad problems with tackling hate speech online is what I like to think of as the hydra effect: You can report and ban one malignant account, but another two will spring up in their place.

Since I started as online editor in 2013, I’ve watched outbreaks of ethno-religious conflict through the weird lens of my computer screen. I’ve sifted through various groups, and pored over profiles that spread hate speech.

In Myanmar, in particular, many accounts spreading hate speech reveal no details to indicate who it belongs to.

While the best-case-scenario take on this would be that it’s symptomatic of a broader legacy of mistrust and mild paranoia infused in the populace, I think it would be naïve to say that sort of anonymity can’t and isn’t used as a tool to overinflate the perceived support for certain ideas and material on social media. I must reiterate: This isn’t unique to Myanmar. It happens the world over.

The key is to educate people; to help them think critically about the information they’re receiving; to examine facts, to consider sources and motivations and not to let themselves become complicit in something that could well have implications offscreen for innocent people of all creeds who are just trying to live their lives.

Bad books

Yangon Expat Connection’s Google group and first world problem support network was under siege last week by a smut peddler, apparently not having learned their lesson from the *Romancebot* debacle of June 2014.

Someone posted a list of household items for sale, the first being the *50 Shades of Grey* trilogy, for the clearance price of \$5.

I, for one, wasn’t aware it was a trilogy.

Why someone would want a secondhand copy of that particular tome is also a question worth exploring but, really: Who can argue with that price?



Gon Yi Aye Kyaw
from *NOW!* Magazine.

Photo: *Pyan Han (ColorMax)*

Style
Statement

NOW!

Missing:

Deputy information minister U Ye Htut notably absent from Facebook, posting just twice since June 26

In brief:

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop successfully completes jog near Shwedagon Pagoda without falling into a drain

Woman vows to mete out vengeance against “whichever jerk” stole her umbrella from the office foyer during the throes of a monsoonal downpour

Next week:

Photo essay on BYO luxury car brunch



Panzagar: Flower speech, not hate speech



SAKURA

kitchen life



TATUNG

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CONSTITUTION

U Shwe Mann dismisses NLD 436 campaign

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THE public campaign on constitutional reform led by the National League for Democracy and the 88 Generation will have no effect on the parliament's constitutional amendment process, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said last week.

The campaign, which was launched with a rally on May 17 and includes a petition that has attracted millions of signatures, focuses on the need to change section 436 and remove the military veto.

"The NLD is running [the 436 campaign] based on its own desire but its actions will not influence the activities of the Constitutional Amendment Implementation Committee," Thura U Shwe Mann said in response to a question from *The Myanmar Times* at a press conference on July 3.

'Who says we will lose the 2015 election? I'm sure the USDP will win.'

Thura U Shwe Mann
USDP chair and hluttaw speaker

Thura U Shwe Mann, who leads the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), said the instructions he gave the 31-member committee when it was formed on February 3 were enough to guide its work.

He told members the top priority was to closely examine chapter 12 of the constitution, which outlines the process for amending the document and includes section 436. The committee was also told to draft an amendment bill that ensures the Tatmadaw's role conforms to democratic norms and gives more autonomy to states and regions.

He instructed members to review the process of selecting the president and two vice presidents, and to

consider whether the president, vice president and government ministers should have to be MPs.

His comments come after the NLD and the 88 Generation announced they had gathered 3.3 million signatures for the petition to May 31. The petition will run until Martyrs' Day on July 19, after which the groups will send all of the signatures to the president, commander-in-chief and parliament.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi responded to Thura U Shwe Mann's comments by saying that the campaign was not only aimed at the Constitutional Amendment Implementation Committee.

"It is also intended to have an effect on parliament. [Thura U Shwe Mann] always says, 'The parliament's voice is the people's voice,'" the NLD leader said, in reference to the speaker regularly citing the parliament's motto.

Thura U Shwe Mann held the press conference together with U Aung Thaung and U Htay Oo, who are both considered hardliners in the USDP and are thought to oppose changing the 2008 constitution.

Questioned on their stance, Thura U Shwe Mann admitted that there were divisions in his party over the constitution.

"But regardless of who is hard or soft, finally all members must follow the party's decision," he added.

The speaker also rejected the suggestion that the USDP is trying to change from first-past-the-post to proportional voting because it worries it will lose heavily in the 2015 election. "Who says we will lose the 2015 election? I'm sure the USDP will win."

He insisted that the major factor when considering change to the voting system would be the impact on the country and people rather than the effect on the USDP's election chances.

"Last week, I promised to ethnic parties that proportional representation must be fair for them before I would support any changes," he said.

"But I can't decide alone [to change the system]. The result will come out after discussing in parliament."



U Ottara (centre) arrives at a court prior to his hearing in Yangon on June 27. Photo: AFP

New religion minister says detained monks to face only light punishment

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NEW Minister for Religious Affairs U Soe Win has defended the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee's decision to raid Mahasantisukha Monastery but said five monks arrested during the raid are likely to face only light sentences.

"The committee had no choice but to instruct to take legal action against them. But I believe they will try to mitigate their punishment ... [because] they practise loving-kindness and must help to ensure the stability of the state," the minister told reporters in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on July 2, after being sworn in as minister.

He replaced U San Sint, who was sacked on June 19 and subsequently charged with corruption. Presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut said the former minister's handling of the Mahasantisukha raid was a factor in the president's decision to dismiss him.

But U Soe Win said the Yangon Region Government and police force were acting on instructions from the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee when they raided the monastery, which is at the centre of an ownership dispute between the committee and a prominent sayadaw.

"In the Mahasantisukha case, U San Sint was partly responsible but

we can't say that he did it all," said U Soe Win.

U Soe Win said it was the Sangha committee's responsibility to resolve the dispute and the government had to implement the committee's decision.

He said he will try to resolve the dispute peacefully.

"I will try my best for the monastery

case. The result will come out soon."

He declined to comment on the corruption charges subsequently levelled against U San Sint.

"I can say that the Ministry of Home Affairs is continuing to investigate his case. As everyone knows, he has to face trial for misusing government funds."

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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Thilawa impact studies will be released in full

ZAW HTIKE

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THE environmental and social assessments conducted for phase two of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone will be made available to the public in their entirety, the Japanese and Myanmar companies tasked with the project said last week.

ERM-Environmental Resources Management (Japan) Limited and Myanmar's E-Guard Environmental Services Co made the promise to residents at an explanatory meeting in Kyauktan township on July 1.

E-Guard managing director U Aye Thiha said the reports would be released to the public in full and the companies would not bow to any pressure to amend their findings.

"I would never follow any instruction from the government to edit or change anything in our assessment," U Aye Thiha said.

"We will put all our findings and assessments in our report. However, it will not be our responsibility if the government doesn't follow our report."

The Thilawa SEZ project area is 20 kilometres [32 miles] from central Yangon and will cover 2342 hectares. The first stage of the project, covering 396 hectares, is under development, with construction work on factories due to start shortly.

The environmental assessment for phase two will examine the qual-

ity of the air, the soil and nearby water sources and will assess how the impact on local wildlife can be minimised, said Daw Than Than Twin, joint secretary of the zone's management committee.

While there are environmental laws in place in Myanmar there are no regulations fixing land-, air-, and water-quality levels. Instead, ERM and E-Guard said, parameters will be followed that are laid down by the ministry of industry.

One local resident asked how waste water would be managed.

"If waste water from the factories will flow directly into the six brooks in this area, this will certainly hit not only the livelihoods of the people living in the two townships of the SEZ area, but also the people of the other four townships named Kawhmu, Kungyangon, Dala and Twante," U Mya Hlaing said.

Daw Than Than Twin said any waste water from factories will only flow into water channels after being recycled in a plant that will be set up in the SEZ.

A number of companies have already announced plans to set up inside the economic zone, including Ball Corp of the United States and Japanese car part producer Koyo Radiator Company. Both signed agreements with Myanmar Japan Thilawa Development Ltd to invest in the zone on June 6, with Ball Corp's factory estimated to cost US\$40 million.

Lawyers head to China to discuss Letpadaung project

A DELEGATION of lawyers working on land rights and the environment will travel to Beijing this week to consult with the Center for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims, a network of Chinese lawyers who seek to aid communities that have been adversely affected by large scale industrial projects.

U Kyee Myint from the Lawyers' Network told *The Myanmar Times* that during the visit the group will discuss issues related to large-scale industrial projects in upper Myanmar, which many in the network have been challenging in recent years.

The group will also visit the sites of several large-scale projects being

financed by the Wanbao Corporation, the parent firm of the Chinese mining company that is developing the controversial Letpadaung copper mine in Sagaing Region.

A CLAPV delegation visited the Lapadaung area in June to study the mine's impact on the environment.

The Lawyers' Network further announced that it is preparing a lawsuit against the Sagaing Region government for its role in the violent crackdown on protesters camped near the copper mine in 2012. Security forces allegedly used phosphorous bombs to disperse the crowd, injuring dozens of people, including monks. — *Ye Mon*



Ayeyarwady Region residents stage a demonstration against the sacking and arrest of U San Sint in the state capital Patheingyi.

Ayeyarwady residents the minister who sho



CHERRY THEIN

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LIKE many in Ayeyarwady Region, the residents of Nyaung Lane Gone in Dedaye township turned to U San Sint when they were in trouble.

On May 19, the then-minister for religious affairs met a group of seven residents from the village to hear

their complaint: that police had unfairly charged dozens of people with mischief, trespassing and unlawfully protesting after they attempted to plant mangroves on degraded land.

The village was severely hit by Cyclone Nargis and they wanted to return the land, which was cleared in 1997, to its original state to protect against further disasters. During the meeting at his office in Nay Pyi Taw, U San Sint promised to take up their case and resolve it fairly.

"I never dreamed to get such a warm reply from a union minister," Nyaung Lane Gone resident Daw Soe Soe told *The Myanmar Times* last week. "We heard that he had helped to solve many problems in other areas but I dared not believe it because we are just poor farmers, who have always been treated unfairly."

It is interactions like these that gave U San Sint a loyal following, particularly in Ayeyarwady Region, and explain the strong response to his downfall. While many former military officers have fallen from grace as a result of internal politics, few have had the level of public support that U San Sint commanded.

On July 1, Daw Soe Soe was among around 100 people from the region who travelled to Patheingyi to protest the minister's dismissal and urge President U Thein Sein to reconsider the case.

Organisers had been expecting as many as 500 people but blamed police intimidation for a lower-than-expected turnout. Some of those who took part said they had been stopped and questioned by police several times as they travelled to the regional capital for the demonstration. Police took their identity card numbers and asked why they were going to Patheingyi, they said.

"We are nervous about having to answer the questions from police but we wanted to [participate]," said U Myint Thauang from Tharpaung township.

IN DEPTH

The protest, which had been scheduled for June 30, eventually went ahead the next day at 10am. The demonstrators, who had come from eight delta townships, called for more transparency over the minister's sacking and arrest.

The delay was due to the authorities not giving permission in time, organisers said.

'I never dreamed to get such a warm response from a union minister.'

Daw Soe Soe


Resident of Nyaung Lane Gone village, Dedaye township

U Thein Myint Saung of the 88 Generation student group, who travelled from Kyone Pyaw township to Patheingyi for the protest, said it was "shameful" that police were trying to intimidate protesters.

"Police came and spoke to me three times. I answered truthfully but it is shameful to see they are still sticking to their old ways," he said.

"If the minister is found guilty, then it must be according to the law and in a transparent way. What is happening now just makes people angry ... If they want to win love and trust, they should behave."

"The country is democratising but not at the grassroots. If the government is going forward, do something better at the grassroots and let the people see and feel real democracy," he said.



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July 1. Photo: Thiri Lu

ts rally for wed he cared

U San Sint was fired by President U Thein Sein on July 19 and subsequently charged with corruption. He appeared in court for a second time on July 3.

He was appointed minister in February 2013, reluctantly leaving his post as speaker of the Ayeyarwady Region Hluttaw.

The government said it was forced to sack the minister for repeatedly failing to follow the president's instructions.

But his downfall has been controversial, particularly in Ayeyarwady Region, where he has a loyal following from his time as speaker and many opposed his elevation to the government.

Protest organiser U Tun Tun Oo from the Human Rights Watch Defence Network said the rally was not about showing support for the minister but rather highlighting the importance of respecting the desire of the public.

"They put him in a union-level position without considering what the people want and then they sacked

him. It is obvious that they have no respect for public. Is this democracy?" he said. "If they really want to transform the country, they should respect the voices of the public."

The former minister won the trust of the Ayeyarwady Region people through his efforts to resolve land conflicts, which are widespread in the delta area. In but one example, in 2012 he oversaw the passing of a law aimed at ending the deadly conflicts between fishermen and farmers over land use.

While in the minister position, he continued to serve as a focal point for residents of Ayeyarwady Region, helping them contact officials from other ministries to resolve their problems.

In Nyaung Lane Gone, the news of U San Sint's arrest, just one month after he promised to help resolve their problems, sent shockwaves around the village. Many have lost hope for the future, said Daw Soe Soe.

"I feel sorry for him," she said. "And we feel hopeless and helpless now."

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U San Sint makes emotional plea for freedom at court hearing



FORMER minister for Religious Affairs U San Sint has emphatically denied misusing state funds and called on the public and Buddhist monks to help clear his name.

U San Sint was sacked on June 19 and charged with corruption for allegedly misusing around US\$10,000 in late 2013. Appearing in court on July 3 for the second time since his arrest, he said the charges, which carry a potential life sentence, were levelled against him because he disobeyed the president.

"I have no guilt," he told the media outside Pobbathiri Township Court. "I did good deeds while I was serving as minister for religious affairs. I didn't do anything wrong and I didn't misuse the government's funds. My position is right but I have been charged for not obeying the president's order."

"I think it is unfair to charge me with misusing funds. I want to ask the public to help me. I also want to urge the monks to understand me, stand beside me and help me. I also call upon the gods to protect me."

U San Sint has been charged under section 409, for breaching of trust by public servant, and 109, for abetting an offence. The third court hearing will be held on July 17.

The former minister was not represented by a lawyer, and his family, who are thought to be under house arrest, were not able to join him in court.

The whereabouts of U San Sint's personal assistant, U Aung Thu Min, are also unclear.

U Aung Thu Min's wife, Ma Pwint



Former Minister for Religious Affairs U San Sint arrives at Pobbathiri Township Court on July 3. Photo: Hsu Hlaing Htun

Zin Mar Aung, attended court in the hope of seeing her husband but he did not appear.

"I heard that they had to appear in court today but I didn't see him."

'Our general [U San Sint] is like our father ... He is so good to his followers.'

Wife of a former sergeant who served with U San Sint

I haven't seen him since he was arrested," she said.

The court was crowded with observers hoping to catch a glimpse of the first corruption trial against a member of U Thein Sein's government. Many were sympathetic to U San Sint.

A man in his 60s who attended court said he believed U San Sint's pleas for help would be a waste of time.

"No one can help him," he said. "There is no justice here."

"Our general is like our father," said the wife of a former sergeant who served with U San Sint. "He is so good to his followers. We feel so sorry for him."

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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Curfew announced after rumour sparks violence



THAN NAING SOE SI THU LWIN

AUTHORITIES in Mandalay have imposed a curfew in an effort to contain religious violence in the town after two nights of clashes between Buddhists and Muslims that have left two people dead and almost 20 injured.

The violence was sparked by rumours that two Muslim owners of a prominent teashop had raped a Buddhist woman. The editors of a popular blog that published an article on the rumour, which then spread quickly on social media, have since pulled the piece from the website and apologised.

A 9am to 5pm curfew was announced on July 3, despite Mandalay Region Minister for Border Affairs and Security Colonel Aung Kyaw Moe saying earlier in the day that the government had no plan to introduce a curfew.

He said the government believed it could manage the violence and did not want to inconvenience the public.

"We are trying to take action against those responsible for the killings and injuries. We are also cooperating with the public and religious associations to prevent further violence and will post more security to places where we think violence could occur," Col Aung Kyaw Moe said.

One policeman and four other people were injured and 11 cars destroyed in the first night's violence, while on the night of July 2 two people - one Buddhist and one Muslim - were killed, and 13 Buddhists and one Christian were injured.

Over the course of the two days, the authorities struggled to contain the mob violence, even when they knew it was coming.

Security had been posted to the Sun teashop on July 1, after the article was published alleging that the owners had raped a woman in Nay

Pyi Taw on June 30.

As staff considered closing early for the night on the request of the ward administrator, a Buddhist mob descended on the teashop, which was full of Muslims breaking their Ramadan fast, said Police Lieutenant Colonel Zaw Min Oo.

While the crowd dispersed on the request of a Muslim leader at about 8pm, six youths on motorbikes drove down 26th Street singing the national anthem. A group of about 20 people then walked along 26th Street also singing the anthem. They quickly grew into a 200-strong mob, throwing stones at Muslim houses and destroying three cars.

While police managed to restore order, this group then merged with another at the corner of 26th and 86th streets, after which they damaged more buildings and cars.

"Although we told them to disperse, they disobeyed and destroyed nearby property so we shot three rubber bullets into the sky," he said.

The mob proceeded to the corner of 26th and 80th streets where rioters threw rocks at a mosque. Police then blocked the streets in the area to stop more people from joining in.

Members of the Upper Myanmar Sangha Union led by U Karwira, better known as Galone Ni Sayadaw, persuaded most of the mob to leave peacefully. Calm was restored at about 3am on July 2.

"We came to negotiate between the two groups to get peace following a request from the Muslim leaders, who are members of a multifairth group. I was very sorry that some Buddhists disobeyed us even when the other side obeyed," U Karwira said.

Meanwhile, the editors of the Thit Htoo Lwin news website apologised for printing an article that is thought to have been a factor in provoking the violence.

"We apologise and have removed the story ... we are sorry that there is a rumour that the Buddhist-Muslim crisis in Mandalay happened because of Thit Htoo Lwin," they said in a statement on the site. "We did not intend to cause this problem."

Tension high as thousand

Police appear in control despite motorcyclists riding the streets armed with knives and

THOUSANDS of people, some wielding sticks, flooded Mandalay on July 4 as tensions spiked during the funeral of a victim of Buddhist-Muslim clashes that have raised fears of spreading violence.

Mandalay was on edge as darkness fell with police blocking access to some Muslim neighbourhoods in a tightening of security for the central Myanmar city's second night under curfew, as anger grew following unrest that left one Buddhist and one Muslim dead.

Earlier on July 4, scores of motorcycles took part in a procession carrying the coffin of the 36-year-old Buddhist man through the heart of the city.

While Mandalay has a sizeable Muslim minority and also plays host to a group of nationalist Buddhist monks accused of stoking tension, it has not suffered religious unrest on this scale in recent years.

Police sources said they were boosting security measures as a precaution in other cities, including Yangon, which has a diverse population of religious and ethnic minorities.

Social media users were unable to access Facebook for the second straight evening, amid speculation that Myanmar had blocked the site to curb the spread of inflammatory comment online.

No one from the authorities was able to comment on the issue and presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut,

'I will hold a grudge for the rest of my life. If anything happens like this again I will not hesitate to be involved.'

U Htwe

Friend of U Tun Tun, a Buddhist who was killed on the night of July 2



Riot police patrol the streets of downtown Mandalay on July 4, just hours after mourners

who posts his official updates via Facebook, did not respond to requests for information.

The violence on July 1-2 saw mobs wielding airguns, swords, rocks and other weapons go on a rampage through the central metropolis.

The wife of the Buddhist victim, U Tun Tun, who was attacked on the night of July 2, said that she could not understand why the father of her three children was targeted.

"They killed him brutally," she said as she prepared for the funeral.

A friend of the dead man, who was with him at the time of the attack, showed injuries on his hand that he said were slash marks from a "sword" used by a group of Muslims to kill his friend.

"I will hold a grudge for the rest of my life. If anything happens like this again I will not hesitate to be involved," said U Htwe.

A funeral for the dead Muslim man, a popular local bicycle shop owner, was held on July 3, hours after he was killed while on his way to attend early



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Police attend funeral

Police use makeshift weapons following funeral of Buddhist man



Police gathered for the funeral of a Buddhist man killed late on July 2. Photo: Kaung Htet

morning prayers.

The unrest broke out July 1 after an accusation of a rape of a Buddhist woman by two Muslim men from a local tea shop was spread on the internet, prompting a crowd of hundreds to gather near the business, hurling stones and damaging property.

“The violence happened because of hate speech and misinformation spread online,” said an official from the President’s Office, who asked not to be named.

Prominent cleric U Wirathu, who is based in Mandalay, posted a link to online allegations against the teashop owners on his Facebook page just

hours before the latest unrest flared up.

But in an interview he dismissed suggestions that his online posts were inflammatory.

“Muslim organisations are the ones responsible for this and are more able to stop it from happening again,” he said, accusing the community of shielding the two men from the teashop.

U Kari Hasan, the head of downtown Shaeshaung mosque, said the Muslim community had become a target of hate speech and had been let down by the authorities. “If something happens they suddenly say it is because of Islam,” he said. – *AFP*

Why him? Baffled and grieving Muslim family mourns loss

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WHEN bicycle shop owner U Soe Min didn't come back home from morning prayers, his wife Daw Tin Tin Kyaw started to get worried.

U Soe Min, 51, had walked out of his home above his shop for early morning prayers at Mandalay's nearby South Oh Bo Mosque on the corner of 29th and 83rd streets at about 5:30am on July 3.

Well known around the neighborhood of Buddhist, Muslim and Chinese families, U Soe Min's store specialised in used Japanese bicycles. He was known as a family man who supported charities for the poor.

Some time later, word got back to Daw Tin Tin Kyaw, his wife of 14 years, that a body had been found near the mosque. She hurried out the door with a growing sense of anxiety.

‘He had a lot of friends and was kind to everybody ... He was a good person.’

Daw Hyu Win
Mother of U Soe Win, who was killed in a revenge attack on July 3

On the sidewalk by the mosque lay the body of her husband, his bicycle parked nearby. His head had been struck hard by a machete, apparently from behind.

“I cannot express my sorrow in words,” she told *The Myanmar Times* on July 3 as she sat in her home, surrounded by relatives.

Amid the grief, there is also a sense of bewilderment among U Soe Min's relative: Why would his attackers take someone who was so liked in the community?

But the attack did not target



Daw Tin Tin Kyaw (front right) cries at the funeral of her husband, U Soe Min, who was killed in a revenge attack on July 3. Photo: Kaung Htet

him specifically; he was just an ordinary Muslim, attending what was to be his first of five sessions of prayers for the day, who was caught as a mob sought retribution.

Several hours prior to U Soe Min's killing, a Buddhist man, U Tun Tun, was beaten to death. He and a friend were reportedly stopped on their motorcycles by a group of Muslim men.

The killings of U Tun Tun and U Soe Min followed a night of violence in which mobs targeted a Muslim-owned teashop after rumours spread that the owners had raped a Buddhist woman.

The first signs of trouble appeared at 7pm on July 1, when a mob gathered near the Sun teashop at the corner of 27th and 82nd streets in Mandalay's busy commercial district. A night of violence and arson ensued.

It was 34 hours later when U Soe Min was attacked. He lay on his side outside the mosque, a gash in his head spilling blood onto the ground. Nobody recognised him until his wife arrived.

“I had never expected such bad things would happen to my husband,” Daw Tin Tin Kyaw said later that afternoon, her eyes swollen from a morning of crying.

Sitting opposite her at the family residence, U Soe Min's mother, Daw Hyu Win, 79, burst into tears. She sobbed in a high-pitched voice, overcome with emotion, tears streaming down her face.

U Soe Min's daughters, Ma Soe Yu Yu Kyaw, 13, and Ma Su Lwin Thaw, 10, looked on bewildered and uncertain. The news of their father's death was too fresh to fully comprehend.

U Soe Min's family could only say that he was a pious person, dedicated to the social welfare of others in the community. He was very friendly to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

“He had a lot of friends and was kind to everybody,” his mother sobbed. “He was a people person, a very good person who respected elders.”

Leaders call for calm

KEEP calm and carry on: That's the message from religious leaders in Mandalay, after the city was rocked by two nights of communal violence.

The violence on the nights of July 1 and 2 left two people dead and almost 20 injured, according to police, and was sparked by rumours a Buddhist woman had been raped by two Muslim men. In response, large number of police been posted in the area bordered by 26th and 30th streets to the north and south and 80th and 84th streets to the west and east.

Masoeysin Sayardaw U Nanda Marlar urged members of the public to “consider what will happen and who will benefit if the conflict grows bigger”.

“There certainly won't be benefit for Myanmar and Mandalay if a conflict erupts here. There will only be bad consequences so nobody should take part in the conflict or support those who are taking part,” he said.

Religious leaders said the violence may have been incited by people hoping to derail the reform process ahead of next year's election.

“This conflict may be a political trick. All people should be careful – if not, we may go back to how it was before, and nobody wants that,” said Muslim preacher U Myint Aung. – *Mg Zar*

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USDP rep slams government over failure to enact by-laws



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GOVERNMENT ministries have been accused of holding back important legislation by taking too long to issue by-laws, without which legislation is not in effect.

Thura U Aung Ko, head of the Pyithu Hluttaw Legislative and Judicial Affairs and Complaints, Letters and Petitions Scrutinizing Committee, said in some cases laws were delayed more than a year because

the government had not issued the by-laws.

Laws that benefit the public usually face the longest delays, he said on July 2, adding that the government has issued by-laws for less than one-third of the 98 laws passed to date.

“Parliament decided that by-laws have to be issued within 90 days of a law being passed. But that deadline has gone by and some by-laws have even been pending for more than a year. Many laws have not yet come into effect because of the delay in issuing by-laws,” Thura U Aung Ko said.

One of these is the Farmer Protection Law, which was passed more

than eight months ago. In early June, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann strongly scolded

30%

Proportion of approved laws for which the government has also enacted by-laws

Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Khin Zaw for his ministry's failure to promulgate the by-

laws for the legislation.

Thura U Aung Ko used the address to urge the government to quickly amend the by-laws for the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law to reflect the changes passed by parliament last month.

Under these changes, local officials can only in extreme circumstances reject applications to protest.

“This is not a completely new law so the by-laws should be finished in a month. Then officials can no longer ban demonstrations without proper justification,” he said. “If officials ban, they may be punished under the existing law.”

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe



A security guard stands outside Paunglaung Stadium, which was renamed Nay Pyi Taw FC Stadium after it was leased to the football club in 2011. Photo: Hsu Hlaing Htun

Momentum builds behind campaign to reclaim stadium leased to Nay Pyi Taw FC

Residents complain they were never consulted over 30-year contract between Ministry of Sports and football team

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THE Ministry for Sports is coming under increasing scrutiny for a 2011 deal to rent a local football stadium in Nay Pyi Taw to a football team owned by the minister's son.

Pyinmana residents say the 30-year contract has left them unable to use the stadium, which they say is owned by the community and not the ministry.

They have started a petition campaign to get back the right to use the stadium and threatened to stage protests if the football club, Nay Pyi Taw FC, does not negotiate usage rights with them.

Former athlete U Kyaw Min Han, a member of the Paunglaung Stadium supervising committee who is leading the movement to get back the stadium, said the petition had already attracted more than 1000 signatures.

He said efforts to raise the issue with the ministry and football club through the Nay Pyi Taw Council had failed.

“If officials from Nay Pyi Taw FC don't agree to negotiate, we will submit a petition letter to the President and respective departments in Nay Pyi Taw Council ... If there is no decisive decision we will protest.”

In June 2011, the Ministry of Sports, headed by minister U Tint San, agreed to rent the stadium to Nay Pyi Taw FC, owned by the minister's son, U Phyo Ko Ko Tint San, for 30 years at K3 million a month, with the first three years rent-free.

Nay Pyi Taw FC then renovated the stadium and changed the name to Nay Pyi Taw FC Stadium. At a ceremony to reopen the stadium, U Phyo Ko Ko Tint San promised that township-level football matches would still be able to take place there.

But members of the committee's supervisory committee say they were never consulted over the deal, and after it was signed local football teams were not allowed to hold matches at the site.

At the request of residents, the local Amyotha Hluttaw representative, U Hmat Gyi, asked in parliament on

June 18 whether the ministry planned to give the stadium back. In response, U Tint San said the ministry would continue to rent it to Nay Pyi Taw FC.

“The state-owned Paunglaung Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw's Pyimmana township is rented to Nay Pyi Taw FC under contract. The intention of this is that its players can practise and hold football matches there under the guidance of the Myanmar Football Federation,” U Tint San said.

“With the permission of the authorities, it will also be used free of

MILLION

K3

Monthly rent Nay Pyi Taw FC will pay to the Ministry of Sports for Paunglaung Stadium under a 30-year contract

charge for matches of the [government ministries] if there is no [Nay Pyi Taw FC] match on the day they want to use the stadium. Also, the stadium can be used for practice if it is not otherwise in use.”

U Kyaw Min Han said locals were angry at U Tint San for describing the stadium as “state-owned.” He said former athletes had established it in July 1963 and managed it without ministry support for decades.

“The stadium has never been transferred to any group or government body since it was established,” he said.

“We feel like landlords who have to ask permission from our tenants ... Paunglaung Stadium is ours but we are happy to have [Nay Pyi Taw FC] as tenants if local players also have the right to use the stadium.”

Former football player Ko Kyaw Gyi said teams now had nowhere to play.

“Unless something is done we'll have nowhere to hold games for 30 years ... This is unacceptable. We want our stadium back,” he said.

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

IN BRIEF

Six townships yet to report on development funds
Six townships have still to report on how development funds allocated under a parliamentary program were spent by their MPs, more than a week after the final deadline.

The constituency funding program resulted in each township receiving K100 million, with funds allocated to projects by the four local MPs through township development committees.

Each township was to give details of its spending no later than June 26. As *The Myanmar Times* previously reported, 73 townships had not done so by the middle of the month.

On July 2, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann urged representatives from the remaining six townships to send their report within two weeks.

The townships are Ton Zang, Paletwa and Matupi in Chin State, Ayadaw in Sagaing Division, Gwa in Rakhine State and Matman in Shan State.

"We need to complete the work correctly and on time," he said. "It is our responsibility and duty." – *Htoo Thant, translation by Khant Lin Oo*

MP urges govt to accelerate peace push
An Ethnic Kachin MP has urged the government to speed up its peacemaking efforts, warning that there are concerns the process could break down unless momentum is maintained.

He said the government's peacemaking team was making "moderate" progress and this should be accelerated.

"At time when we are facing many challenges, internal peace is absolutely vital for the country," U Khat Htein Nan, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative from Kachin State, said on June 30.

"We are fed up with civil war ... Many people had been homeless. So we want to end it quickly and urge [the government] to continue the successes so far and reach the goal [of peace]."

His proposal was seconded by U Paw Hlyan Lwin, a Chin representative, and parliament agreed to discuss his proposal.

– *Htoo Thant, translation by Zar Zar Soe*



Eligible voters cast ballots for the lower house of parliament in Taunggyi on November 7, 2010. The first-past-the-post voting system was used for the 2010 general election and April 2012 by-elections. Photo: AFP

Proportional voting possible in 2015: UEC

Commission will "make it happen" if parliament decides to switch to proportional representation, despite earlier insisting switch must be made by end of 2013

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THE head of the Union Election Commission says parliament still has time to switch to proportional representation for the 2015 election, despite earlier setting an end-of-2013 deadline to make the change.

Chair U Tin Aye also promised political parties that next year's election will be "free and fair" and said the commission would allow international monitors into the country for the polls.

He invited political parties, civil society, international election monitors and the media to work with the commission to ensure a fair vote.

Asked about proportional representation, the former general said it was too late to introduce it for this year's by-elections but that it was up to parliament whether to introduce it for 2015.

"If the hluttaw chooses to practise the proportional representation system, we will make it happen. Our duty is to implement the

hluttaw's decision," he said at the July 2 meeting.

But some party leaders who attended the meeting disagreed with U Tin Aye's assessment.

"The UEC is responsible for deciding which electoral system is appropriate and for ensuring elections are free and fair. The commission should know which system is best for the people," said U Aye Maung, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative from the Rakhine National Party.

"The majority of people in our country are uneducated so the commission should be aware that the most suitable system to ensure free and fair elections is one that is easily understandable," he said.

At the meeting, U Tin Aye, who was appointed by President U Thein Sein to chair the UEC in early 2011, invited feedback on the commission's actions.

"If the commission does something wrong, political parties, civil society organisations or media should definitely point it out so that the commission doesn't do it again," he said.

However, many have already criticised the commission. Local parties voiced outrage in April when U Tin Aye told a meeting in Patheingyi that the commission planned to introduce restrictions on campaigning that would require candidates to request permission for all campaigning events.

After the commission wrote to the National League for Democracy in May to warn that comments made by leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi may be unconstitutional, Human Rights Watch issued a statement urging it to "immediately stop intimidating opposition parties and threatening free expression in Burma".

HRW also criticised U Tin Aye personally, saying that "the former army general ... has made numerous remarks in recent months that demonstrate a pro-military bias".

However U Aye Maung said he had confidence in U Tin Aye's pledges of impartiality. "If he [does his job well], he will be given credit by future generations. So I believe he will make sure the elections are free and fair."

– *Translation by Myat Su Mon Win*

NCCT proposes conference to finalise ceasefire

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ETHNIC leaders are expected to meet at the Kachin Independence Organisation headquarters in Laiza later this month to finalise details of a proposed nationwide ceasefire agreement ahead of further talks with the government.

The Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), which is coordinating negotiations on behalf of 16 armed groups, has invited ethnic leaders to a meeting in Laiza in the third week of July.

"We have to make a decision on some obstacles in the draft [such as] the process of political dialogue," said NCCT leader Phado Saw Kwal Htoo Win, who is also secretary of the Karen National Union.

The meeting will focus on the version of the ceasefire agreed on at a meeting between the NCCT and government negotiators held in Yangon from May 21 to 23.

He said the NCCT had informed armed leaders that the conference needed to result in a final draft to take to the negotiating table with government representatives.

While the KIO has not yet replied to the invitation, Phado Saw Kwal Htoo Win said he was "certain they will allow us to hold the conference in Laiza".

The conference is considered essential for talks with the government to proceed any further.

Government negotiators and the NCCT had agreed to meet in June to finalise the draft but this round of talks has been postponed until ethnic leaders finalise their position on the draft.

"The government is ready [for the next round of talks]," said U Hla Maung Shwe, a senior adviser at the Myanmar Peace Center. "We are waiting until the ethnic armed groups have confirmed they are ready too."

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In internet age, a soldie

IN 2005, on his way back to Yangon from southern Shan State, U Ye Htut stopped at the Tatmadaw's Eastern Command headquarters in Taunggyi to meet up with an old classmate from his days at the Defence Services Academy.

A lifetime military officer, U Ye Htut was returning to Yangon to reluctantly take up a position at the Ministry of Information. While not pleased about what effectively amounted to a career change, he accepted it without question.

His friend passed him a book, which U Ye Htut would later describe as a sign of what the future held for him. Like many books that made their way into Myanmar at the time, it was a bootleg, a photocopy of *Taking Heat: The President, the Press, and My Years in the White House*, the recently published memoirs of Ari Fleischer, who spent two-and-a-half years battling the Washington press corps as spokesperson for George W Bush's administration.

U Ye Htut read the book, even taking the time to translate some chapters into Myanmar. He would revisit it often, particularly after he was appointed presidential spokesperson in 2013 and became the public voice of a government regularly under attack from both the newly unshackled local press and the international community.

In doing so he became, much like Fleischer, a lightning rod for criticism and a frequent media target. At the same time, he is also a trusted insider, a buffer for President U Thein Sein with a seemingly unflinching ability to absorb and respond to criticism.

'We saw a lot of suffering'

Before he was the most visible member of U Thein Sein's administration – and one of the country's most quoted individuals – U Ye Htut was a child of the military.

Originally from Yangon, U Ye Htut and the rest of his family followed his father, U Shwe Than, as he crisscrossed Myanmar moving from military post to post.

Wanting to follow in his father's footsteps, U Ye Htut applied to the elite Defence Services Academy in Pyin Oo Lwin. Initially rejected, he enrolled instead at Rangoon University and later applied again, being accepted for the academy's 22nd intake in 1977.

"I followed in my father's tradition and I loved the job," he says of the decision.

His classmates at the academy include Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice Senior General Soe Win and Lieutenant General Kyaw Swe, who in 2010 became chief of military security affairs.

After graduation in 1981, he was dispatched to Kayin State, where he would spend five years fighting the Karen National Liberation Army, the armed wing of the KNU, along the Myanmar-Thai border.

TIM MCLAUGHLIN

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This tour of duty took place at a key moment in fighting against the powerful Kayin group. During the 1983-84 dry season, the Tatmadaw launched a major offensive that saw its troops cut off key KNLA supply routes in an effort to stem the flow of taxes that they were using to fund their operations. It also seized control of the KNLA's strategically important Maw Tha Waw base.

Journalist Bertil Lintner wrote in a 1984 article for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* that the offensive appeared to be a "significant step forward in Rangoon's decades-long war against the Karen insurgents".

'We saw a lot of big battles. We saw a lot of suffering on both sides. I lost many of my friends.'

U Ye Htut on the 1984 Tatmadaw offensive in Kayin State

It was not without controversy. In his 1991 book *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, Martin Smith described the Tatmadaw as like a "marauding, conquering army" during the offensive.

A 1988 report by Amnesty International examining the counterinsurgencies carried out during the period in Kayin State and other minority areas found evidence of "serious human rights violations". The intense fighting sent a wave of refugees fleeing into Thailand, where many still remain in border camps.

"We saw a lot of big battles. We saw a lot of suffering from both sides. I lost many of my friends. We also [saw the] suffering of local people caught between the fighting," U Ye Htut says of the 1984 counterinsurgency campaign.

However, he offers no apology for the terror the Tatmadaw meted out and gives no sign of remorse. "As a soldier, you have to fight when you have to fight."

Over the next 16 years, U Ye Htut would serve in Tanintharyi Region, Kayin State, Kachin State and near Nay Pyi Taw, before landing as the chief instructor at a training facility in southern Shan State in 2002. In his spare time he contributed articles for the army's *Myawady* news journal. Unlike many of his colleagues, he had emerged from Myanmar's ethnic con-

PROFILE

flicts and was content with the peace that life behind the front lines offered.

"I wanted to read and I wanted to write and I wanted to teach," he said.

These plans were interrupted by the 2004 purge of then-Prime Minister Khin Nyunt and other Military Intelligence officials. The fallout hit the Ministry of Information hard. U Ye Htut, along with a handful of other officers, was recalled to fill positions.

He was joined by U Tint Swe, who would serve as chief censor at the Press Scrutiny and Registration Division and heads state-run MRTV.

U Ye Htut spent his first four years in the ministry as deputy director general in the Information and Public Relations Department. The irony of his regular battles with the press today is that during this period he was integral in the creation and implementation of a government roadmap for media reforms aimed at incrementally easing press restrictions.

The ministry received assistance from German organisation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), the Asian Media Information Centre at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development. The project initially focused on state media and media policymakers.

U Ye Htut and U Tint Swe emerged as "the key actors" in this reform process, according to Paul Pasch, who at the time was the FES representative for Malaysia and Myanmar. FES was one of the few European organisations willing to engage with Myanmar at the time. It quickly learned that there was some resistance within the government to the media reform plan, and that it would be a slow process.

"The framework for media reform had from the very beginning the aim to abolish censorship but in 2007 that could not be pointed out," Mr Pasch said.

Cyril Pereira, a Hong Kong-based media consultant who worked extensively on the roadmap, said that he was "quite impressed" with U Ye Htut.

"He understood the limits of decision-making within the regime. This process had to go step by step. It was baby steps," Mr Pereira said.

Over the next five years restrictions were eased, but pre-publication censorship for print media would not be removed until 2012. That same year, U Ye Htut, now a director general, was promoted to deputy minister for information. In February 2013, he would be given the concurrent title of spokesperson for the President's Office, a position that had not previously existed.

The president's voice

If the president was seeking a foil – someone almost his complete opposite – to serve as spokesperson, he found it in U Ye Htut.

The bespectacled U Thein Sein, 69, grew up in poverty in a small town in the Ayeyarwady delta. As he rose through the ranks of the military, he was seen more as a bureaucrat than a field commander.

Since becoming president in March 2011, the former general has carried a reputation for listening rather than speaking. The reserved U Thein Sein's legacy will be of a sweeping transition led through quiet authority.

Quiet is a foreign word to the stocky, clean-cut and charismatic U Ye Htut, who, at 55, carries himself like a veteran politician of the back-slapping, vote-gathering-in-an-election-year variety. (He is adamant that he has no interest in a career in politics.)

His outspokenness, which is tinged with a keen sense of humour and, at



Presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut delivers a speech during a conference organised

times, irony, has produced a string of brash and combative comments in the press that are invariably republished around the globe. One local journalist described him recently as a "quote generator".

After Thailand-based NGO Fortify Rights issued a report on the mistreatment of Muslims in Rakhine State, he dismissed it as the work of a "Bengali lobby group". When senior Kachin Independence Army member Major General Gun Maw travelled to the United States in April, U Ye Htut responded by questioning the ability of those in Washington to end fighting in foreign countries, telling the Associated Press that US efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan were "not impressive". When asked if President Barack Obama's May decision to continue some sanctions against Myanmar could have a negative impact on the country, he brushed off the move by nonchalantly saying it was "no problem".

72,000

Number of followers of U Ye Htut's Facebook page

Some have wondered why such a brazen individual was chosen to be the government's mouthpiece at a particularly sensitive and closely watched time of transition.

A factor in U Ye Htut's rise, according to a number of observers, was his command of English. Like his decision to join the military, his English proficiency was driven by his father, who trained from 1949 to 1951 at Britain's Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and pushed his son to learn the language.

U Thiha Saw, deputy chief of the Myanmar Journalists Association and a member of the Press Council, said that this skill has made him a particularly valuable asset to U Thein Sein's

administration.

"He can talk to the Malaysia ambassador or a Polish foreign minister or somebody from the BBC or CNN [and] he will come up with a direct answer in English, which is a good advantage for him," he said. "He has a lot of exposure. There are very few people like him in the whole cabinet."

While his language skills are impressive, his unwavering confidence – which at times borders on cockiness – draws attention away from the president and, as a result, makes him indispensable to U Thein Sein.

And while technically the spokesperson for the President's Office, U Ye Htut is often tasked with taking on other roles to which his skills are suited.

When Nay Pyi Taw played host to the ASEAN Summit in May, he was a constant presence the event's media centre and worked the room of reporters with ease. He took time to examine the many business cards thrust into his hands and quipped with reporters about recent articles he had read in their publications. He fielded questions from Chinese journalists about Myanmar's relationship with its giant neighbour and countless queries about how Myanmar as host of the bloc would tackle mounting tensions in the South China Sea.

U Thein Sein, by contrast – and in much more typical fashion for a high-ranking government official – delivered a short speech to assembled media and then quickly departed the stage, without taking a single question.

Meet the press

"Dealing with the media is not a threat," U Ye Htut explains a few weeks after the summit, on a muggy, overcast day in Nay Pyi Taw. "It is an opportunity to present your policy and your view to the people."

He sits at a long conference table surrounded by high-backed chairs in his Ministry of Information office, a light-filled space that looks out of place in the dimly lit ministry.

The walls of his office are lined with a personal library comprising 3000 books, each with an identification code carefully taped to the spine.

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r takes up a new fight



by the US embassy in Yangon on June 28. Photo: AFP

Most are, unsurprisingly, military texts. He is particularly fond of memoirs and biographies of military leaders; his favourite, he says, is William Manchester's *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*. He has read the 793-page text so many times he recently purchased a second copy.

Dressed in traditional Myanmar clothes, a comb tucked in the front pocket of his jacket, he apologises for being late, saying he has just returned from a meeting with the president that ran longer than scheduled. The visits are not daily, he says; after more than a year as spokesperson he has a firm grasp of the president's expectations.

When he was given the position, these were laid out to him in three simple guidelines. U Thein Sein said responses to questions should be

based on truth, that U Ye Htut should abide by the principles laid out in the 2008 constitution, and finally he must show respect for all reporters, no matter how junior. Of the three points, he says the president stressed that the last was the most important.

It was with these guidelines that he set about attempting to push the president's messages to the growing number of journalists covering Myanmar. The past 17 months have been an enormous learning experience but by his own confident assessment he has never made "a slip of the tongue".

"[On] both sides there is a learning process ... For the government officials and also for the media side," he says. "That is why we have a lot of problem[s], a lot of mistrust, a lot of actions which are not very ethical

ones. Sometimes government officials are misquoted; sometimes the press is using misleading headlines."

He believes government officials' reluctance to engage with the media has fuelled the issue. Last year the Ministry of Information organised seven training sessions aimed at getting ministry officials to speak more regularly with the media. The training has had little impact but U Ye Htut reserves the majority of criticisms for members of the media, who he views as largely inexperienced and believes are willing to break journalistic ethics to get a better story.

"I learn a lot about the state affairs when I talk to the press. Even though sometimes we disagree on many issues, I still enjoy talking to them. I still learn a lot," he says.

Though he can be difficult to reach, U Ye Htut's appointment has increased journalists' access to the government. But they are also polarised by his presence and most doubt his sincerity, to say the least.

"His job at the [Ministry of Information] is to control, not to promote, press freedom," said U Aung Zaw, founder and editor of *The Irrawaddy* magazine. "We're concerned that his main job is to defend the government and/or to create some smokescreen or to divert attention from serious and sensitive issues."

U Thiha Saw, meanwhile, said that having a contactable spokesperson was an improvement but described U Ye Htut as "tricky".

The man himself is aware of this uneasiness and says it is not just journalists who are suspicious of him. He recognises it is often a necessary part of their job to be untrusting.

"[When] I was leading the media reform discussion in our ministry, some people are attacking me. [They said] I was too liberal, some of them accused me in front of [then]-minister U Kyaw Hsan, Ye Htut has a hidden agenda, he is working for the opposition ... Now sometimes media people say I am a conservative or a hardliner. I can live with that. I have to do the job and I have to do what I believe is best for our people, by providing information to the media."

Not all are so standoffish. He regularly calls a small group of older journalists friends but says their identities are a "trade secret". At least one of these trusted few is U Kyaw Min Swe, editor-in-chief of *The Voice Daily*.

Senior staff of *7Day Daily* are also said to have a close relationship with the spokesperson.

He is particularly fond of U Sithu Aung Myint, a veteran political commentator who writes columns for a number of outlets, including *The Myanmar Times*. He points out that U Sithu Aung Myint is willing to criticise not only members of U Thein Sein's administration but also MPs, prominent businesspeople and even National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

"Even though I disagree with him I respect his ideas," U Ye Htut says.

U Sithu Aung Myint said that the two sometimes speak, exchanging

'His job at the [Ministry of Information] is to control, not to promote, press freedom.'

U Aung Zaw

Founder and editor of *The Irrawaddy*

ideas mainly on politics, and dismissed criticism of the spokesperson by saying he is simply "doing his job".

While they are also on occasion the subject of his criticism, U Ye Htut is more trusting of established international media outlets, which he believes operate with more professionalism.

"I'm safe with the international media," he says, naming the *Financial Times* and *The Washington Post* as publications he reads frequently.

At the other end of his trust spectrum is Eleven Media Group, publisher of *Daily Eleven*, which has increasingly become U Ye Htut's bête noire. He argues the publication regularly draws readers in with false or sensationalist reports about the government.

It was not always so. He previously wrote articles on international affairs for the publication from 2006 to 2012.

The relationship soured dramatically in early 2013 when a Facebook profile using the name Sit Aung appeared online.

MORE ON NEWS 12

U Ye Htut on...

Alleged "listening post" at the US embassy in Yangon, to Democratic Voice of Burma: "If you want to peep into someone's house, you need a solid reason for doing so."

– November 3, 2013

Unity journalists being charged under the State Secrets Act, to Democratic Voice of Burma: "I think even the United States government would respond with the same action, concerning national security, like Snowden."

– March 10, 2014

Media freedom in Myanmar, at the East-West Center Media Conference: "Yes – during the last few years, we made some mistakes. We are not perfect. We still have challenges to overcome. But we have a clear vision for a new Myanmar. We have a reform strategy. And most importantly, we have the political will to implement it."

– March 10, 2014

Britain summoning the Myanmar ambassador over the census, to The Myanmar Times: "It's unreasonable for the British to now urge recognition of the term [Rohingya]. It appears they are trying to intervene in our internal affairs and we don't accept it."

– April 9, 2014

UN statement regarding alleged killings in Maungdaw, to The Irrawaddy: "It was sad to see a statement issued by the UN, not using information from their local office staff, but quoting unreliable information and issuing the statement. These accusations are unacceptable. By acting like this, it will mean the local people will have more concerns, doubts and less trust in the UN."

– January 24, 2014

US concerns over amendments to the 2008 constitution, to AP: "It is not the concern of the United States. It is inappropriate for us to tell how the US should amend their constitution and likewise the US should not dictate how it should be amended."

– June 17, 2014

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ASIA'S BOUTIQUE AIRLINE

CONTINUED FROM NEWS 11

In internet age...

The account, since deleted, featured a picture of U Ye Htut travelling in Europe and the user posted negative comments about members of opposition parties.

Eleven journalists accused U Ye Htut of operating the account and said he also posted articles online under the pseudonym "Dr Seik Phwar". After one of these posts excoriated parliament, MPs formed a commission in February 2013 to reveal the identity of Dr Seik Phwar but the findings were inconclusive. Many MPs and observers accused U Ye Htut of being the author.

He laughs these accusations off. "Think about it. If I'm using another name to hide my identity, so why would I use my photo on the page?"

U Than Htut Aung, chief executive officer and chair of Eleven Media Group, declined to answer any questions regarding U Ye Htut or accusations made by *Eleven* journalists that U Ye Htut was responsible for the Sit Aung and Dr Seik Phwar accounts. He warned that anything published in this article about Eleven Media that it deems defamatory may result in legal action.

U Ye Htut claims to have no personal beef with the organisation, and says he still takes questions from *Eleven* reporters. It is clear though that he still holds a grudge against the wildly popular newspaper.

He is particularly frustrated by other journalists' unwillingness to publicly criticise *Eleven*, as well as *Eleven's* penchant for filing defamation suits against rival journalists and publications. One example is U Sithu Aung Myint, who *Eleven* has sued five times.

"So who is trying to stop the freedom of expression? The government – or Eleven Media?" U Ye Htut says of the lawsuits.

"It is not fair. You [journalists] are silent on your industry," he says. "Is it a good thing for the people or for the public? You are the same thing like the previous military government, trying to defend every one of your comrades, whatever they do."

The Minister for Facebook

In his office, U Ye Htut quickly slips past a pile of local news journals – articles deemed important are flagged with multi-coloured sticky notes – slides behind his desk and leans over his desktop computer. This is where he uses what might be his most effective tool in his armoury: his Facebook page.

He originally began using the social media network to keep in touch with friends. He expanded it to professional use after being appointed spokesperson, at the same time as he ordered upgrades to be made to the outdated

Ministry of Information website and Facebook page.

Today he is followed by more than 72,000 people. Rather than leak information to preferred outlets or publish it first in state media, it is here that he posts important announcements from the government and distributes his official statements on pressing issues. He also calls out journals for "mistakes" – generally when he thinks they have misquoted an official or misrepresented their message. The rapid-fire updates, which often include family snapshots and pictures of his travels, have become required reading for journalists and quickly earned him the nickname "Minister for Facebook". His proclivity for Facebook, however, hints at his often terse relationship he has with the press.

"I try to reach to the people directly using social media," he says. "Sometimes the private media are not fully reporting about the government news and policy, sometimes they omit the news."

'Who is trying to stop freedom of expression? The government – or Eleven Media?'

U Ye Htut on Eleven Media Group's defamation suits against journalists

On this particular day, he is upset with a journal that has reported that U Thein Sein will be meeting with members of the 88 Generation and has attributed the information to him. He insists he never said such a thing and that it is not true.

He has also posted a picture of a light post he snapped while travelling along the highway between Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw. A frame to hold a solar panel is empty – stolen, he says, by people who wanted to use it in their village. The Facebook post has been liked nearly 1700 times and U Ye Htut clearly finds this amusing.

In one way, his use of Facebook provides millions with an easily accessible and digestible stream of information from the halls of power in their remote capital. Tapping away on a smart phone in Yangon or a tablet in Mandalay – or an internet cafe elsewhere – readers can get the government's official position on a host of issues.

But on another level, it is used to circumvent the media. A tool to cut out the press, whose members U Ye

Htut views at times as meddlesome middlemen who cloud and muddle the government's message. If you want the job done right, do it yourself. Minimise what you cannot control.

Instead of addressing inaccuracies with reporters or editors in private, he turns to Facebook and uses the social media site as a platform for a public trial of those he deems have run afoul of the official line, all carried out in cyberspace.

Though he says there are still a few editors he would call directly to discuss issues, most he has written off. Trying to speak to them would be "like talking to the wall".

But the technology does not come without its pitfalls. In early June U Ye Htut's wife, Daw Khin Sandar Tun, shared a photoshopped image of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wearing an Islamic headscarf. The post spread quickly and was picked up by the BBC. U Ye Htut was forced to apologise for his wife's actions and assured readers he lectured her on the ethics of social media use.

This comment, predictably, then drew criticism for its paternalistic tone. It is in circumstances like this that it becomes clear U Ye Htut does not just perceive his job as one of issuing statements and then, inevitably, correcting the record with media outlets that he believes has mangled the government's message. Rather than edit or delete a Facebook post that draws criticism, he engages with readers and wades into the comments.

The anonymity afforded by the internet has emboldened those who leave messages for him. They are often offensive and personal, but he only deletes comments that he deems to be racially insensitive or particularly crude.

Following his statement that the US government should stay out of the debate on amending the 2008 constitution, one Facebook user called him a "liar" and "destroyer of our nation". After his apology for his wife's actions one reader wrote that he was a "loser". Another said speaking to him "is like talking to the rubbish bin" and described him as an "army dog".

It is an unwinnable battle, yet it is one he takes up with relish. A sense of duty drives this former soldier to take up the fight, time and again. Pushing the government line, whether it be through social media or speaking to reporters directly, will continue to be his priority as the country heads toward an historic election year, when tensions are guaranteed to rise further.

But U Ye Htut is matter-of-fact about the role he will play. While journalists will do their job, he will be alongside them with the government's message. "You cannot," he says, "stop the news from the government."



Assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labour Tom Malinowski (right) speaks during a meeting on June 22. Photo: Supplied

New minister could benefit Rakhine: US

SANN 00

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THE appointment of a new chief minister in Rakhine State could result in the easing of some restrictions on international organisations operating in the state, a senior United States official said last week.

Speaking at the end of his seven-day visit, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labour Tom Malinowski also said the US believes humanitarian issues in the state are more pressing than questions of reconciliation or citizenship.

"We hope to see in the coming days, with the new leadership in Rakhine State, a resolution for some of the problems that prevented organisations like [Médecins Sans Frontières] delivering assistance to people who need it to live," he said on June 28.

Major General Maung Maung Ohn was nominated by the President's Office to take over as chief minister from U Hla Maung Tin, who was given permission to resign on June 19. A senior government official said he left because of his deteriorating health and concerns that this may hinder his ability to manage the state's problems.

However, rumours of his resignation have been swirling since late March, when the offices of INGOs were attacked by ethnic Rakhine mobs because of perceived bias to the state's Muslim population. Aid groups were forced to pull out staff and halt operations, leaving thousands of people who rely on aid short of food, drinking water and

medical supplies. Through April and May INGOs got permission to return but according to the United Nations they face "logistical" difficulties, one of which is finding locals willing to rent them offices and homes.

Mr Malinowski, who was working for Human Rights Watch when the group accused the government and ethnic Rakhine groups of "ethnic cleansing" against Muslims in the state, said the most urgent task in Rakhine is to address the humanitarian situation.

"People need medicine, people need foods, and people need safety and security. The government has released a draft action plan and that action plan is a step in the right direction [but] what's important is action," he said.

While Mr Malinowski did not visit Rakhine State, he said he discussed it with key political and community leaders in meetings in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw.

The US embassy in Yangon denied reports that the government refused to give Mr Malinowski permission to visit Rakhine but did not explain the reasons for visiting Kayah and Rakhine states instead.

Mr Malinowski said Rakhine State's problems could only be resolved through a process of dialogue that involves all groups.

"In the longer term we hope that the process of dialogue between the two communities and the government [can] resolve the more complicated questions of citizenship and reintegration," he said. "There is no solution other than they find a way to live together. And we hope to see that happen."

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IN DEPTH

UNHCR reports 2013 rise in refugees

Myanmar had the third-largest number of asylum seekers register with the UN in 2013, behind Syria and Democratic Republic of Congo



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A NEW report by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has highlighted a major rise in the number of people from Myanmar seeking asylum in the region, with only the conflict-ravaged nations of Syria and the Democratic Republic Congo producing more refugees last year.

According to the organisation there were 57,400 new asylum seekers from Myanmar throughout 2013. Of these, 45,000 were waiting a decision on their status at the end of the year, close to double the 25,000 at the end of 2012.

The stark figures highlight the continued problems of displacement from Myanmar despite international perceptions that the country has made significant progress toward achieving peace.

UNHCR representatives say the sharp rise in 2013 is largely the result of a mobile registration program the organisation conducted in Malaysia, which encouraged previously uncounted displaced people to register as asylum seekers. About 38,000 people registered as a result of the program, which was launched in September, UNHCR said.

A large number of the newly registered asylum seekers have fled communal conflict in Rakhine State.

"Many people arrive in countries in the region with the help of smuggling networks and do not necessarily approach UNHCR for help. In Thailand, for example, we hear accounts of people being confined for months in hidden smugglers' camps, held ransom until their families pay for their release," said UNHCR spokesperson Vivian Tan.

An estimated 86,000 Muslims from Myanmar and Bangladesh who identify as Rohingya have embarked on dangerous boat trips to flee persecution and poverty since June 2012. UNHCR sources estimate that 15,000 Rohingya left the region in the first four months of this year, although the agency says the numbers cannot be independently verified.

Despite the rise in registered asylum seekers in 2013, international rights groups say the official figures still vastly underestimate the actual number in need of support.

"These figures are hugely conservative. They represent only the people who have been processed by UNHCR as asylum seekers, but not the overall number of would-be asylum seekers," said Matthew Smith from Fortify Rights, a Thailand-based rights group that has studied Myanmar's ethnic conflicts extensively.

He added that many people had missed out on the mobile program and remain vulnerable to abuse.



Ethnic Kayah refugees from Myanmar sit in a bamboo house in Ban Mai Nai Soi refugee camp, about 2 kilometres from the Thai-Myanmar border. Photo: UNHCR/R Arnold

"In Kuala Lumpur, the UN's project to target unregistered refugees reached only a fraction of the target population, and that's a program failure that needs to be rectified. Enormous numbers of unregistered refugees face abuse every day by the authorities and predatory employers, among other challenges, and far more

'These figures are hugely conservative. They represent only the people who have been processed by UNHCR.'

Matthew Smith
Fortify Rights

work needs to be done to protect their rights," Mr Smith said.

Large numbers of Muslims, many of whom describe themselves as Rohingya - an ethnic label the Myanmar government rejects - have fled persecution in Rakhine State since communal

violence broke out there in 2012, leaving more than 250 dead and about 140,000 people homeless.

Many of those who flee to foreign countries live in hiding, fearful of being deported back to Myanmar.

"Since 2012 we've seen a steady increase in the number of ethnic Rohingya arriving in Thailand and Malaysia. They typically endure brutal passage, and spend their life savings to do so," said Mr Smith.

"Most go into considerable debt. We have information that a concerning number of asylum seekers have died in Thai custody in the last year due to a lack of humanitarian provisions, including inadequate nutrition. This is a moral failure of the highest proportions."

Ms Tan from UNHCR said many of the Muslim asylum seekers are in poor health when they register.

"In the last six months or so, our office in Kuala Lumpur has seen a deterioration in the health of Rohingya approaching us," said Ms Tan.

"Since November, more than 120 people have turned up at the office in various stages of paralysis. Many have beriberi, a Vitamin B deficiency due to poor diets, and problems walking after months in confinement in smugglers' camps. UNHCR has been working with local partners to provide shelter

and medical care for the most vulnerable among them," she added.

The 2013 UNHCR figures for new asylum seekers show Myanmar has the third-highest number globally. Civil wars in Syria and DR Congo saw

64,300 and 60,400 from those countries apply for asylum.

Overall, Myanmar sits sixth globally in terms of refugees. By the end of 2013, there were 479,608 registered refugees from Myanmar around the world.

Conflict in Afghanistan and the war in Syria created by far the largest number of refugees in recent years, at 2.5 million and 2.4 million respectively by the end of 2013.

However Mr Smith said the actual number is far higher because many countries that host Myanmar refugees eligible for asylum status make it hard or impossible for them to register.

"Regional governments should let UNHCR conduct refugees status determination, and UNHCR should in turn fulfil its mandate. There are serious questions to be raised on both fronts, not only in Malaysia but also in Thailand, Bangladesh, and other countries hosting undocumented refugees from Myanmar," he added.

While Rakhine State appears to have created most of the new refugees, Mr Smith said the war in Kachin State had also sent people fleeing across international borders.

"Very little attention has been paid to the number of refugees produced by the conflict, in China, Thailand and Malaysia. Kachin refugees are arriving every month in Malaysia and have been for three years," he said.

Ms Tan said that while the number of Myanmar refugees and asylum seekers has increased over the years UNHCR is hopeful that the country will soon turn a corner.

"As the reform process takes root in Myanmar," she said, "it is hoped that the situation in various parts of the country will stabilise and improve sufficiently so that the refugees will eventually be able to return home in safety and dignity."

Where are they now? Myanmar's refugee exodus

Bangladesh: More than 30,000 Muslim refugees from Myanmar are registered and receive assistance in two official government camps. Most have been there since the early 1990s. In addition, the Bangladesh government estimates that there are 200,000-500,000 unregistered Muslims outside the camps. They have no access to assistance or basic services, and live in dire conditions.

UNHCR has been advocating with the Bangladeshi authorities to register and assist the unregistered Muslims. Last year the Bangladesh government announced it would start listing them. UNHCR says it hopes this exercise will lead to some sort of documentation being issued for this population and that they will be granted access to basic services and justice.

Thailand: There are some 120,000 refugees living in nine border camps in Thailand. Mostly Kayin and Kayah, they have been there for up to 30 years living on support from NGOs and the UN. Their movements are restricted and they cannot work legally. In 2005, a large-scale resettlement program was launched, with most going to the United States. Some 90,000 Myanmar refugees have been able to start new lives in third countries since 2005.

Malaysia: More than 100,000 refugees and asylum seekers are scattered in urban areas, as there are no refugee camps in Malaysia. Like many urban refugees in this region, those from Myanmar are often vulnerable to harassment, arrest and detention. They cannot work legally and cannot access the formal school system.

- Fiona Macgregor

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Illegal bus lines fined

Inspector U Lin Htut said traffic officers started fining drivers of the two bus lines on June 28.

"We can't guarantee the lives of citizens if there are any accidents while taking the illegal buses. Residents and bus line officials have requested that we take action against them," he said.

Twenty four illegal buses were stopped in Hlaing Tar Yar, North Okkalapa, Thingangyun, North Dagon and Tarmwe townships last week. Drivers were forced to pay a fine of K30,000 for operating a bus line without a licence.

Driver charged after bus near-miss with train

A bus driver has been charged after driving the wrong way across a set of railroad tracks and narrowly avoiding a major collision with a passing train.

U Myo Min Tun, a driver for the Parami bus company, drove his bus the wrong direction across a railroad crossing in Mayangone Township. The back of his bus was scraped by a passing train. Junior engineer U Ye Lin reported the driver to police.

Fugitive poses as policeman, robs man on toilet

A man who allegedly escaped from Insein Prison and his accomplice have been charged with impersonating a police officer and robbing a man in Dagon township.

U Paing Soe Thu knocked on the door of a toilet being used by an unnamed man and allegedly told him that he was a police officer. When the man opened the door, U Paing Soe Thu grabbed him around the neck and demanded money, police said.

The man handed over K260,800 and his mobile phone before U Paing Soe Thu and his accomplice, U Thet Zaw Win, fled the scene, police said.

Security staff and police officers were able to quickly track down U Paing Soe Thu. When apprehended he had the money and mobile hidden in his underwear. U Thet Zaw Win was also later arrested.

Police investigate robbery at home of MP

Police are still searching for a person who robbed the home of a National Democratic Force MP and took her handbag, documents and mobile phone.

The robbery took place at the home of Amyotha Hluttaw representative Daw Khin Waing Kyi in North Dagon township on June 24 and was reported to police on July 1.

Police believe that the robber used a branch from a nearby tree to reach into Daw Khin Waing Kyi's home and take her handbag, which contained documents and her mobile phone. The discarded handbag was recovered from a wood pile in front of the home, but the contents are still missing.

Father and son electrocuted

Father and son electrocuted
A father and son have died from electrocution after accidentally hitting an underground power line while digging.

U Tin Htun, 65, hit the power line with a mattock while digging near his home on July 2. His son, Mg Myo Thet Htun, 18, was electrocuted when he attempted to help his father. Both were pronounced dead at Kyauktan hospital.

– Toe Wai Aung,
translation by Khant Lin Oo

US general touts benefits of civilian oversight to Tatmadaw

Militaries “too powerful” to be overseen by “just a few people”, Lieutenant General Anthony Crutchfield says

TIM MCLAUGHLIN
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A SENIOR United States military officer has used an address to leaders of the armed forces in Nay Pyi Taw to outline the benefits of civilian leadership of the military, as Washington continues to push for the Tatmadaw to come under civilian control as part of a larger process of professionalisation.

Lieutenant General Anthony Crutchfield, deputy commander of the US Pacific Command, said that civilian oversight of the US military was a "cornerstone" of the institution and Myanmar's military would benefit from following suit - suggesting even that it could help to end the country's long-running ethnic conflicts.

"To ensure our national defence, our founders created a military comprised of soldiers who serve under leaders elected by the people. These soldiers obey the same rules and laws as the people and exercise their rights to participate in the democratic process," Lt Gen Crutchfield said in a speech

to officials at the National Defence College in Nay Pyi Taw on June 25.

“Simply put, militaries possess capabilities that are too powerful to be placed at the discretion of just a few people. Rather, they must be at the service of all people and used in accordance with the democratic will of the people.”

His speech – the first delivered to the college by a senior US military officer – touched on five key areas that the Tatmadaw should focus on to improve professionalism, including respect for human rights and ensuring diversity in its ranks.

**‘When a nation’s
armed forces are
above politics ...
they will win the
trust of the people.’**

Lt Gen Anthony Crutchfield
Deputy head of US Pacific Command

However, he particularly highlighted the need for the military to be led by a civilian commander-in-chief. Under the 2008 constitution, the military is led by a serving officer – currently Senior General Min Aung Hlaing – who does not answer to the president. Both sit on the powerful 11-member National Defence and Security Council.

While Washington is lobbying hard to eventually change this, it also wants to see the Tatmadaw relinquish its grip on 25 percent of seats in Myanmar's parliaments.

Lt Gen Crutchfield said this was important for armed forces to win and retain the respect and trust of their own people.

"In my experience working with other militaries, I have found that when a nation's armed forces are above politics, respect the ultimate authority of elected civilians, abide by the rule of law and protect civilians, they will win the trust of the people they serve," he said.

"It may seem they are accepting significant restrictions on their authority, but in fact they end up stronger, more respected and more effective

when they are called to fight.”

US engagement with the Myanmar military has been limited since the two countries began rebuilding relations. The Defense Institute for International Legal Studies, a Rhode Island-based organisation of military lawyers that works for the US Department of Defense, held an exchange with Myanmar military leaders in August 2013.

The engagement has been supported by some in Washington, including Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, who last year called for “modest, targeted military-to-military relationship” between the countries’ armed forces.

But support for military ties been met opposition from other lawmakers and Myanmar watch groups, who believe that the Obama administration is moving too quickly on the issue given the Tatmadaw's dismal human rights record and continued questions over its relationship with North Korea.

Lt Gen Crutchfield was in Myanmar for a week-long visit led by Tom Malinowski, the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labour.

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Reporter freed on appeal

DEMOCRATIC Voice of Burma video-journalist U Zaw Pe and co-defendant U Win Myint Hlaing were released from Thayat Prison last week, after the Magwe Region Court on July 3 reduced their sentence from one year to three months.

U Toe Zaw Latt, the organisation's Yangon bureau chief, said the sentence reduction was a very positive development.

He maintained, however, that DVB believes U Zaw Pe "was innocent of both charges ... and that the sentence should be completely dropped".

Defence lawyer U Thein Tun said the July 3 judgement was correct as the original punishment was unfair.

"The reporter and student's parent were released [on July 4]. Their three-month sentence was to end on Sunday [but they were released early because it] is a holiday," he said.

The pair was jailed after the Magwe Region Education Office's assistant officer U Maung Ngwe filed a complaint against them on August 25, 2012, after they questioned officials about qualification criteria for a Japanese scholarship project.

Magwe Township Court sentenced them to one year in jail on April 7 for trespassing and obstructing an official while on duty.

The defence lawyers appealed to the district court on April 9 but the appeal was turned down. They then applied for a revision to the Magwe Region Court on April 11. - *Ye Mon*

Intha minister calls for more funding for lake conservation

PYAE THET PHYO

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INTHA Ethnic Affairs Minister U Win Myint has warned that more local and international funding if Inle Lake is to be properly conserved for the benefit of future generations.

He also said that the threats posed to the lake were helping to bring local communities together to meet the challenges.

Existing development projects had generated cooperation between civil society groups "that I had not seen in my lifetime", said U Win Myint, who is a member of the Shan State government. "Local people are very interested in getting involved in conservation."

The lake's unique social and environmental features, which include leg-rowing fishermen, floating



A boatman steers a boat near Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda. Photo: Pyae Thet Phyo

villages and endemic wildlife, has earned it a place on the "tentative list" of UNESCO World Heritage sites, while it is already an ASEAN Heritage Park.

But the lake is shrinking rapidly because of a number of factors, including the changing climate, population pressures and unsustainable use of resources. Its water quality is deteriorating, threatening native plant and animal species, and silting up boat channels.

The main donors in the region are the Norwegian government

and United Nations Development Programme, which jointly funded a US\$2.6 million Inle Lake Conservation and Rehabilitation Project that ended in December 2013.

But U Win Myint said this had barely scratched the surface, focusing on conserving one of four main rivers flowing into the lake. "\$2.6 million cannot cover the whole lake ... We need more funding," he said.

More is coming from the regional government and foreign tourists, with the Irrigation Department providing K700 million and entry fees

to the lake zone contributing another K750 million in 2014-15, U Win Myint said. More will be requested from Nay Pyi Taw.

"We will take money from our region and undertake activities with support from abroad, and I think that the situation Inle Lake will improve [after completing more] projects," he said.

One local MP, noting that few of the NGOs at Inle Lake are local, said it was important that the impetus for conservation came from the community itself.

U Win Swe, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Nyaungshwe, said only two local NGOs had formally registered, while a handful of others are operating without registration.

"At the moment most NGOs have come here from other regions. Local groups haven't registered because of the high fees," he said. "It seems that NGOs from other regions and the government are working together and want local groups to join them."

Shan State Hluttaw representative for Nyaungshwe U Aung Kyi Win warned that failure to act would damage the lake's chances of World Heritage listing.

"Currently there are some weaknesses in the local community. We face difficulties with removing sediment and need more machines," he said. "We also need waste disposal techniques." - *Translation by Khant Lin Oo*

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Income from Inle Lake zone entrance fees that is being spent on conservation activities in 2014-15

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New chief minister to face close scrutiny from MPs

Rakhine National Party MPs unhappy at not being able to object to President U Thein Sein's chief minister pick

WALONE

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RAKHINE State Hluttaw MPs have vowed to watch closely how new chief minister U Maung Maung Ohn tackles the issues of communal conflict, citizenship for Muslims and poverty reduction in the state.

U Maung Maung Ohn promised to address the issues during an emergency session of parliament on June 25 that was called after President U Thein Sein nominated him for the chief minister post. He was confirmed as the chief minister on June 30 by the Rakhine State Hluttaw and took up the job on July 1.

"We will watch him closely to see whether he can keep his promises," said U Aung Mya Kyaw, a representative for Sittwe from the opposition Rakhine National Party (RNP).

While some Rakhine - particularly from the RNP, which holds a majority of elected seats in the regional parliament - were unhappy at the central government parachuting in an ethnic Bamar leader, under the constitution MPs can only reject a chief minister nominee if he fails to meet the criteria.

"We wanted to object but we couldn't under the constitution," said U Mya Kyaw, a state hluttaw MP from the RNP.

Maj Gen Maung Maung Ohn - until recently a major general who held the position of deputy minister for border affairs in the Union Government - was nominated to take over as chief minister from U Hla Maung Tin, who was given permission to resign on June 19.

Rakhine politicians said the nomination process highlights a major shortcoming of the 2008 constitution, which places the appointment of chief ministers - who form and lead regional governments - in the hands of Nay Pyi Taw.

"I don't want to talk about the personality of the chief minister. I just can't accept this section of the 2008 constitution," said RNP



U Maung Maung Ohn speaks to media in Rakhine State on April 9. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

spokesperson U Oo Hla Saw.

In some quarters U Maung Maung Ohn is considered a possible peacemaker between the Rakhine community and international NGOs. Prior to his appointment he headed the Emergency Coordination Committee (ECC), which coordinates humanitarian operations in Rakhine and comprises representatives of the state and central governments, United Nations agencies,

'We wanted to object to [U Maung Maung Ohn] but we couldn't under the constitution.'

U Mya Kyaw

Rakhine National Party MP

INGOs and the Rakhine community.

But for the most part, there is uncertainty about what his leadership will bring. Local media reported that U Maung Maung Ohn had said Muslim refugees in the state are living in better conditions than many Rakhine residents, just weeks after a senior UN official said camp residents were enduring "appalling conditions".

U Win Aung, a 58-year-old Muslim refugee who lives in a camp in Sittwe, said the ECC had instituted a policy whereby displaced people receive just 40 percent of humanitarian aid from INGOs in the state.

"The government does not allow refugees to go anywhere. We are also not allowed to do any business," he said.

For Rakhine groups, the concern is how the new chief minister will resolve the citizenship question and also control the perceived threat posed by armed Muslim groups on the border with Bangladesh.

U Zaw Aye Maung, the Yangon

Region minister for Rakhine ethnic affairs, said U Maung Maung Ohn's military background could help to bring the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) threat under control.

MP U Aung Mya Kyaw said it was unclear how the chief minister would implement his pledge to resolve the citizenship problems of Muslim people according to the 1982 citizenship law.

He also questioned why U Maung Maung Ohn appears to have been given more power to fix the state's problems than his predecessor, U Hla Maung Tin.

"U Maung Maung Ohn said that he can call to the president immediately to solve important problems because he comes from the union level," U Aung Mya Kyaw said.

Despite its opposition to his appointment, U Oo Hla Saw said the RNP just hoped he would have a positive impact on the state's future.

"We hope that his appointment brings good results for our state."

'Unity' asks court to use new media law

YE MON

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LAWYERS acting for four reporters and the chief executive officer of defunct weekly publication *Unity* have requested that their clients be charged under the newly passed media law rather than the 1923 Burma State Secrets Act.

On June 30 both sides gave their closing arguments in the case, with the district judge expected to hand down a verdict on July 10.

In its January 23 and January 30 issues the journal published a series of investigative reports alleging that the military had seized more than 3000 acres of farmland in Pauk township, Magwe Region, and built a chemical weapons factory there with Chinese assistance.

Unity CEO U Tin San and reporters Lu Maw Naing, Yazar Oo, Sithu Soe and Paing Thet Kyaw were then arrested under the State Secrets Act on February 1.

The lawyer for the prosecution, U Khin Maung Win, accused the reporters of writing a news story with the intention of damaging the country.

Unity defence lawyer U Wah Win Maung argued that they had simply quoted the views of the villagers living near the factory, which is officially known as No 24 Defence Equipment Factory.

"We argued that the facility in question was not officially designated [secret] so *Unity* [reporters are not] liable for prosecution under ... the State Secrets Act, and that they were only reporting the accounts of local villagers. So, we stated that they should instead be charged under the media law," said U Wah Win Maung.

The trial heard evidence from the plaintiff, Lieutenant Colonel Kyaw Kyaw Oo, and more than 40 prosecution witnesses. The five accused took the stand along with seven defence witnesses.

In an international twist to the story, the five have been awarded honorary citizenship of Sala Baganza, a small town in northern Italy.

In a statement the town council said the journalists' "professional activities ensure the right to freedom of opinion and expression in their country, Myanmar".

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MPs pressure govt to return farmland



EI EI TOE LWIN NOE NOE AUNG

THE government is coming under increasing pressure for its perceived failure to hand back confiscated farmland as promised, as a regional minister responsible for the program conceded that a September deadline to transfer ownership could not be met.

Parliamentarians last week criticised the government's handling of the issue and said its statements on what had been achieved to date did not match the reality on the ground.

A Land Utilisation Management Central Committee headed by Vice President U Nyan Tun was set up in 2013 to implement the findings of the parliamentary investigation commission. The committee agreed to return land or pay compensation in 699 cases, totalling 474,000 acres, and President U Thein Sein set an end-of-September deadline for the handover to take place. Of this figure, barely 150,000 acres will be returned to their original owners.

Committee secretary Brigadier General Kyaw Zan Myint, who is also deputy minister for home affairs, told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on July 2 that all cases had been addressed.

He conceded though that in some areas land had not yet been returned because there were difficulties ascertaining who the original owners were.

"Some cases have been completely settled but others are not ... Respective departments have been instructed to implement their procedures completely by December 31," Brig Gen Kyaw Zan Myint said.

But his response was disputed by MPs, who said the program had been beset by problems, including farmers receiving inadequate compensation and land being returned to former tenant farmers rather than the original owners.

"There is a huge gap between the real situation and what the committee has reported. Some land has not gone back to the original farmers - instead it went to those who were tenant farmers after it was confiscated by companies," said U Soe Aung from Bago Region's Thae-gone township. "In other cases, brokers helped [the government] to give below-market prices to farmers."



Photo: AFP

Daw Nan Say Ahw, the representative for Hpa-an in Kayin State, said the problems had harmed the reputation of local MPs, as they were being blamed for the committee's mistakes. In her constituency, compensation for land confiscated for a bridge was paid to the wrong people.

"As a result the farmers [blame me] for that problem because I am a member of the commission," she said.

In Ayeyarwady Region, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U San Maung said it was unlikely that all farmers in the region would get their land back by September as earlier promised.

In March, President U Thein Sein told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw he planned to resolve the land disputes by June 30 for monsoon crops and September 30 for winter crops to enable farmers to begin cultivation immediately.

But U San Maung said the process was "too complicated" to complete in such a short period of time.

"Many farmers are involved in lands disputes ... [and are] arguing over the ownership of the land," said U San Maung, who is secretary of the

regional Land Utilisation Management Committee.

"We are trying to solve the disputes. Farmers who have the exact documents for their lands or farmers who lost their lands directly to the military or company will get them back in time," he said.

He was unable to provide figures on the number of acres that the regional committee plans to return. However, he cited the example of Ayeyar Shwe War Company, which, owned by U Tay Za's Htoo Group, confiscated more than 40,000 acres of land. Of this, only three-quarters has so far been returned because of conflict over the other 10,000 acres.

Other local officials were equally cagey about the status of the land return program. The Patheingyi district general administration office declined to provide figures on how much land had so far been given back. "Both administration officers are too busy [to meet] and also we don't have up-to-date data," an official said.

At the Ayeyarwady Region Settlements and Land Records Department, an officer from the regional Land Utilisation Management Committee

refused to answer questions.

U Min Thu, a parliamentarian involved in the land dispute investigation commission, said he believed that in some cases land would not be

returned until well into next year.

"I don't think the government can solve land dispute problems before 2015," he said last week.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Activists decry 'unfair' trespassing charges

An activist group in Mandalay has highlighted the growing number of farmers "unfairly" charged with trespassing and mischief as a result of disputes over land ownership.

While there are no exact figures, hundreds of farmers are thought to have been charged or convicted of trespassing on land that was confiscated from them. Some have even been sentenced to jail terms.

"This type of prosecution should not happen. These farmers have been unfairly charged," said U Nay Myo Kyaw Soe, a legal expert with the group Facilitators Network With ILO, which, despite its name, has no formal ties to the International Labour Organization.

"It does not make sense that the original owners are being taken to court for trespassing on their own land."

U Aung, a farmer from Pyin Oo Lwin township, said the charges were aimed at deterring farmers from trying to regain ownership of the land.

"Most farmers who faced charges under section 447 [for trespassing] were on trial for more than a year but only received a fine of a few thousand kyat," he said.

U Myint Soe, who is helping dispossessed farmers in Pyin Oo Lwin, said judges have little authority to throw out the charges. "The judge himself said he knows the truth but is being pressured from behind."

- Si Thu Lwin, translation by Mabel Chua

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|--------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Kuala Lumpur | USD 117 | Jakarta | USD 147 |
| Phuket | USD 152 | Manila | USD 191 |

Fares are economy Saver fares (including airport taxes and fees) and come with 10kg carry-on baggage only. Conditions apply. Please visit jetstar.com, your local travel agent or call +959 4211 6661, +959 4211 6662, +959 4211 6663 to book these fares.



BEST CHOICE

SHOON EAT
Pop Corn Crackers
1.5kg



Ks. 5,400
4,850

HAIHACO
Impression Butter Cookies
500g



Ks. 5,200
4,680

TORTO
Vegetarian Yam Biscuits
Green Peas Cookies
180g



each/Ks. 1,200
1,080

VICENZI
Puff Pastry Stick with
Butter
MILLER COLE ITALIA
-Filled with Milk Cream
-Filled with Hazelnut Snacks
150g



Price range from
Ks.1,580 to Ks.1,950

ORION
Choco Pie
6's 168g
12's 336g



Ks. 1,100
1,000

GOUTE
Sweet Crispy Cracker
144g/ 288g



Ks. 2,100
1,950

AMANOYA
Rice Cracker
Kobayuki
110g/ 220g
Puchi
110g/ 220g
Hime
110g/ 220g



each/Ks. 2,900
2,450

HOSAN A+
Roasted Seasoned
Sea Laver Low Salt
6's



each/Ks. 1,750
1,500

LOACKER
Crispy Wafer with Caramel
Vanilla/ Milk Chocolate
Cocoa & Chocolate
45g



each/Ks. 780
700

MISTER POTATO
Crisps
Barbecue
Sour Cream & Onion
Hot & Spicy
Onion & Cheddar
140g



each/Ks. 1,450
1,300

CHUNGJUNGWON
Roasted Seasoned Laver
For Kimchi
10's 300g



Ks. 1,350
1,200

HOSAN A+
Roasted Seasoned
Sea Laver Low Salt
6's



Ks. 2,080
1,880

TOP
Cashew Brittle
240g



Ks. 3,250
3,000

OK
Cashewnut Kernels
WW-240
300g/ 500g



Ks. 3,200
2,880

MOTHER'S CHOICE
Margarine
250g
500g



Ks. 1,700
1,520

EQUAL
Sweetener
Sachet
100's 100g/ 25's 25g
Tablet 100's 100g/ 25's 25g
Caramel Sachet 50's 50g



Price range from
Ks.1,550 to Ks.5,150

LIPTON
Yellow Label Tea Bag
100's 200g



Ks. 4,850
4,350

FITNE
Herbal Infusion
Original 20's 200g
Chrysanthemum 15's 150g
Green Tea 15's 150g



Buy any 2 Pkts,
Get a free Food Carrier Bag.

SUNFLOWER
Jasmine Tea
120g



Ks. 2,750
2,480

HORLICKS
Malt (Bot)
Chocolate (Bot)
280g



Buy any 1 Bot, Get Exam Kit.
Buy any 2 Bots, Get Vacuum Flask.

MOTHER'S CHOICE
Malted Junior (Bot)
400g



Buy 1 Bot, Get
Colour Pencils Book.

OVALTINE
Malted Milk (Bot/ Box)
Chocolate Flavour (Bot/ Box)
400g/ 450g
3 in 1 Chocolate Flavour
1's 300g



Buy any 1 pc,
Get OVALTINE Plate.

NESCAFE
Gold Decaffeinated Premium
100g



Ks. 7,950
7,150

SUPER
Instant Cereal
20's 600g



Ks. 1,600
1,550

OLD TOWN
White Coffee
2 in 1 No Sugar 15's 225g
3 in 1 Classic 15's 225g
Hazelnut 15's 225g
Natural Caramel Surplus 15's 225g



each/Ks. 7,150
6,450

GOLD ROAST/ ROYAL MYANMAR/ CALSOME
Tea 1's 200g
Tea 30's 300g
Instant Cereal 30's 300g



Buy any 2 Pkts,
Get a free Umbrella.

DUTCH MILL
Kids Yoghurt 90ml
Yoghurt 180ml



Buy 90ml (3 pkts)
or 180ml (2 pkts),
Get Sheldon Bowl.

DUTCH LADY
UHT Milk Full Cream
1Ltr



Buy 90ml (3 pkts)
or 180ml (2 pkts),
Get Bio Plastic.

DUTCH LADY
UHT Milk Full Cream
1Ltr



Ks. 1,950
1,750

POKKA
Oolong Tea 1.5Ltr
Jasmine Green Tea 1.5Ltr



each/Ks. 2,100
1,900

SUNSWEEET
100% Fruit Juice
900ml



Ks. 3,950
3,550

OTTOGI
Instant Noodle
Spaghetti Ramen 150g
Bajing Ramen 135g



Ks. 1,180
1,050

MOM'S CHOICE
Mi Goreng Noodle
Thai Tom Yam/ Original
75g



Buy Same 5pkts, Get 10% Off.

WAI WAI
Rice Vermicelli
200g



Ks. 550
500

KEWPIE
Mayonaisse Mild Type
310ml



Ks. 2,380
2,150

LIGO
Pitted Prunes
142g



Ks. 3,050
2,750

SEALECT
Mackerel in Tomato Sauce
155g



Ks. 380
350

NAUTILUS
Tuna Steak in Oil
185g



Ks. 1,850
1,650

SINSIN
Soy Sauce Light Grade A
635ml



Ks. 2,600
2,350

WEI CHUAN
Soy Sauce
Chinese/Thai/Original
1Ltr



Ks. 2,800
2,500

MEIZAN
Vegetable Oil
2Ltr



Ks. 2,900
2,600

SHWE
Peanut Oil
1Ltr



Ks. 4,050
3,850

THA BAR WA
Organic Paw San Hm Wine
2kg/ 5kg



Ks. 2,100
1,850

Exclusively Available @
marketplace
by City Mart

BETTY CROCKER
Pancake Mix Buttermilk
1.04kg



Ks.
4,350
3,900

EARTHBOUND FARM
Organic Apple
16g



Ks.
1,500
1,350

DORITOS
Tortilla Chips Mild & Spicy
311g



Ks.
4,250
3,850

L'EXTRA COSTA D'ORO
Extra Virgin Olive Oil
250ml/ 500ml



Ks.
3,500
3,150

Ks.
6,400
5,750

CLEAN & FRESH

HEAD & SHOULDER'S
Anti Dandruff Shampoo
-Smooth & Silky
-Anti Hairfall
-Hair Retain Men
350ml/ 315ml



each/Ks.
3,450
3,100

IMPERIAL LEATHER
Bar Soap
2's 200g



Ks.
1,100
1,000

IMPERIAL LEATHER
-Shower Cream Korea/ So Lovely
-Shower Gel Freshen Up
220ml



each/Ks.
1,250
1,100

DENTISTE PLUS
-White Toothbrush Extra Soft
-White Toothpaste Night Time
100g



Ks.
1,800
1,600

Ks.
4,300
3,850

BEAUTE LIFE
Hair Serum
100ml



each/Ks.
3,900
3,300

REVLON
Absolute CC Cream
SPF30 No.1/ 2/ 3
30ml



each/Ks.
14,500
11,600

FA
Deo Roll On
50ml



Ks.
1,500
1,350

PASEO
Smart Pocket Tissue 2 Ply
-Perfumed
-Non-Perfumed
60's



Ks.
450
400

Ks.
400
350

HOME & KITCHEN

Luminarc
Carline Black
-Individual Bowl 12cm
-Dessert Plate 19cm
-Dinner Plate 26.8cm
-Soup Plate 26cm



Price range from.
Ks.2,600 to Ks.2,950

NIKKO
Vacuum Flask Flower
1Ltr



Ks.
8,100
7,700

LUCKY BOY
Bath Towel
-15" x 30" (Light)
-Light Blue 24" x 48" (Heavy)



each/Ks.
1,700
1,620

each/Ks.
4,200
3,980

-Tempered Essence March
Dinner Set



Ks.
55,200
49,700

ALGO
Interior Dustbin



Ks.
4,450
4,000

MY DREAMS
Bed Sheet
90" x 100"
1 1/2" 48"



Ks.
8,100
7,300

Ks.
12,600
11,300

LOCK & LOCK
EZ Pastel Food Box
Rectangular
-520ml (25.11x22cm)
-650ml (25.11x22cm)
-750ml (25.11x22cm)
-850ml (25.11x22cm)
-950ml (25.11x22cm)
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Last-minute rush to register motorbikes

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MORE than 30,000 illegal motorcycles have been registered in urban Mandalay under a Road Transport Administration Department amnesty program, an official said last week.

The head of the department said registrations had initially been sluggish when the program launched in February but had picked up ahead of the July 4 end date.

"More than 700 owners of bikes without official registration came to register on a single day, June 17, even though an average of 200 to 300



Owners of illegal motorbikes wait outside the road transport department office on June 19. Photo: Phyo Wai Kyaw

motorcyclists per day were coming to register last month," U Nay Linn said.

Motorcycle owners trying to register at the southern district office in Mandalay complained of long queues to obtain vehicle registration cards.

So far at least 32,000 motorcycles have been newly registered in urban Mandalay, along with a further 67,000 elsewhere in Mandalay Region. At the end of 2013 there were 500,000 motorcycles registered in Mandalay Region. One township - Maha Aung Myay - accounted for 128,000 alone.

32,000

Number of motorbikes registered in urban Mandalay under an amnesty program that began in February

Protest politicians agree to found party

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A GROUP of 30 politicians - all of whom have been in the past charged for conducting demonstrations without permission - have agreed to form a new political party, one of the politicians said.

U Win Cho, who has been charged 35 times under section 18 of the peaceful protest law, said the party has been given the provisional name of the People's Service and Action Party.

"So far 30 politicians including me have signed an agreement to found the party. All members have been charged for breaching section 18 by organising demonstrations without permission," he said.

The group is preparing to submit an application to form to the Union Election Commission.

U Win Cho has been found guilty in 34 of the 35 cases, with one case still before the courts. Of these, 27 resulted in no punishment, six resulted in a fine and in one case he received a one-year jail term.

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Views

Education is focus of Australian support

JULIE BISHOP

newsroom@mmtimes.com



DURING my first visit to Myanmar as Australia's foreign minister, I have been inspired by the commitment of a wide cross section of the population to the historic reform process under way. Australia supports this reform process and looks forward to Myanmar emerging as a true democracy that respects human rights and is inclusive of all its people.

Myanmar and Australia have deepened our bilateral ties in recent years and we are partnering in areas of defence, law enforcement, education, health, agriculture and immigration. Australia's aid program will grow to A\$90 million (US\$84.4 million) in 2014-15 and Australian businesses are increasingly engaged in Myanmar's growing economy.

The Australian government has adopted "economic diplomacy" as a key platform of our foreign policy. Just as traditional diplomacy aims for peace, economic diplomacy aims for prosperity. This is an important pillar of our engagement in Myanmar and the Asia-Pacific region, where 90 percent of our development assistance is delivered.

Sustained growth and prosperity require an investment in a nation's greatest resource: its people. The greater the number of years of schooling, the higher the household income, especially among women. Education is a key priority of Australian assistance and over the coming year we will invest more than A\$1 billion on education globally.

We are one of the largest donors to Myanmar's education sector, providing A\$105 million over six years from 2012 to strengthen Myanmar's education system. This support will promote early childhood development, help children attend primary and secondary school, and assist with education reform to improve learning at all levels.

While in Yangon I announced Australia's new investment of A\$25 million over the next four years to support the Myanmar government improve education for children

through its school grants and stipends program. This will increase funding for 43,000 schools across the country, promote free education and deliver nationwide assistance directly to schools for much-needed education supplies, such as blackboards and teaching materials. Australia is also investing in teacher training colleges to better prepare Myanmar's teachers to promote improved learning outcomes for all children.

Australia is helping to provide education to the 10 percent of children in Myanmar who do not have access to formal education due to conflict and other factors. About 75,000 of these children will now be able to go to school.

Next year Australia will offer 50 long-term "Australia Awards" for Myanmar applicants to study in Australia. More than 100 of these scholarships have been awarded in the past four years. Australia is also supporting links between our world-class tertiary education institutions and Myanmar's higher education sector.

Australia's commitment to education and our engagement with our region is exemplified by our government's New Colombo Plan (NCP), which will provide Australian undergraduates with the chance to undertake a wide range of study options in the Indo-Pacific region. I believe that Australian students should have a better understanding of Asia, including its languages, cultures and worldview. The NCP seeks to build new networks and relationships between Australia and our neighbours, and I am delighted that Myanmar has agreed to participate.

Australia is also supporting Myanmar in its chairing of ASEAN. This is a particularly important year for Australia and ASEAN as we mark the 40th anniversary of Australia-ASEAN relations. Myanmar is hosting a Commemorative Summit in November to celebrate this significant milestone.

While recognising the challenges Myanmar faces, Australia stands ready as a friend and partner to support Myanmar in education and trade and to help build its future. The nation is on a road to reform and will hopefully emerge as a fully engaged regional partner, seeking peace and prosperity for its people.

.....
Julie Bishop is Australia's foreign minister.

Does the govt encoura



SITHU AUNG MYINT

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THE Ministry of Commerce has recently held several meetings and issued announcements about its plans to tackle illegal trade.

Officials announced that mobile teams would begin checking imports at seven international seaports and Yangon airport from July 2 and seize any illegally imported items. The ministry will also order mobile X-ray machines to help mobile teams detect illegal goods, while they will also raise the proportion of prize money that goes to the teams in an effort to reduce corruption.

Education of import rules is also being promoted: Recently the ministry met with mobile phone handset traders to resolve the problem of illegal imports in the sector, where 98 percent of handsets are imported informally.

But some important questions need to be asked. What are the barriers to legal trading? Has the ministry's ambitious plans to stop illegal trade really been efficient? And what other things do we need to do to tackle the problem?

Trade rules and regulations are the biggest factor in encouraging illegal trade.

While there was little growth in official trade figures between 2011-12 and 2012-13, when trade volume was about US\$18 billion, the figure rose almost 40pc to \$25 billion in 2013-14. This growth raises the question of whether trade volumes are really increasing, or whether it just reflects higher levels of legal trade.



A man walks past a truck stopped in Bago Region on the main highway between

By comparing Myanmar's official trade figures with those of its trade partners, we can see how big an issue illegal trade is. It is most obvious between Myanmar and Thailand, where imports to Myanmar were barely one-tenth of exports from Thailand last year.

It's important to recognise that Myanmar's trade rules and regulations are at the root of this problem. One example is that the government doesn't give official import licences for imported alcohol. It appears that senior government officials are deliberately delaying for a group of privileged businesspeople. As a result, most foreign-made wine and beer is imported illegally but nonetheless ends up on shelves throughout the country to slake local thirsts. Foreign-made medicines and food products also make up a huge proportion of illegally imported goods. The ministry has blamed this

on the Food and Drugs Administration's tardiness in granting permission to officially import these items.

But not everything can be conveniently blamed on the FDA. Economists have pointed out that the smuggling of mobile phone handsets and computer accessories is driven by high import taxes and uncertainty of the tax system.

In short, trade rules and regulations are the biggest factor in encouraging illegal trade.

Corruption is the next most important factor. While the ministry has devised ambitious plans to tackle smuggling, they have made few inroads into the issue of corruption. Senior government officials, prominent businesspeople and even those tasked with eliminating illegal trade are involved in this corruption.

Another problem is ethnic armed groups, particularly along the Thai-

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Views

ge legal trade?



Myawaddy and Yangon. Photo: Boothee

Myanmar border in Kayin and Mon states. At Myawaddy just one border gate to Thailand is overseen by the government, while more than 20 gates are controlled by ethnic groups. Mobile teams steer clear of these areas and mostly try to uncover illegal imports from the safety of Bago Region near the Sittoung Bridge, which links Bago with Mon State.

Another hindrance to anti-smuggling efforts is the lack of cooperation between government departments, as well as between the central and state governments. Finally, there is the ethics of traders. Government officials have remarked that it is not only small entrepreneurs who are avoiding paying tax; this ignominious category conspicuously includes some of the country's biggest business

tycoons. Members of mobile teams have voiced suspicious that these moguls could be using ports and airports to bring in large quantities of illegal goods.

"Ordinary" businesspeople, meanwhile, avoid paying taxes by bringing in goods illegally through border trade. That means bribing officials or using shortcuts to avoid checkpoints. If they can't do it themselves, they pay others to do it on their behalf. Many feel they don't have a choice but to import illegally if they want to stay in business.

These are the major barriers the government and traders face to promote legal trade. Unless it addresses them in an orderly manner, most illegal traders will not switch to formal imports. - Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Vietnam suffers from the wobbles



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IN May, when Beijing moved a massive oil rig into an area of the South China Sea claimed by Vietnam, it shocked and scared the Communist Party leaders in Hanoi and caused severe dissension within their ranks.

After all, China is their neighbour, ideological partner and biggest trading partner by far; its aggressive move was like being stabbed in the back by a close ally.

Perhaps most importantly, by an ally whose military might totally dwarfs that of Vietnam, so any kind of forceful resistance would be suicidal.

Yet something had to be done or the party's leaders would lose face.

So after an acrimonious internal debate, the members of the Politburo, the party's topmost body, agreed to authorise protests against China outside the Chinese embassy in Hanoi and the consulate in Ho Chi Minh City.

As well, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung sent a nationwide text message to every Vietnamese cellphone holder urging them to be ready to make sacrifices for the motherland.

It was a kneejerk, symbolic act - one that has been used before and found to have zero impact on Beijing.

So clearly something more had to be done. But while Party leaders dithered, the Vietnamese public took matters into their own hands.

They extended their peaceful protests beyond China's diplomatic missions to factories and offices presumed to be operated by Chinese companies - and they became violent.

In their charged-up state, they did not properly check whether the plants they attacked really were Chinese-owned; they just guessed based on rumour and signage.

Thus, in the industrial zones in Binh Duong and Dong Nai provinces

near Ho Chi Minh City, not only were Chinese plants razed and staff beaten up, but so too were those from Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

When Hanoi's leaders came to their senses and realised what was going on, they mobilised security and military forces to brutally quell the rioting.

And the PM again texted all citizens telling them to remain peaceful and not take the law into their own hands.

But the damage was done and a US\$7 million compensation package for the deaths and injuries and the shattered plants did not appease shell-shocked businessmen who now fear Vietnam is no longer a safe place to invest.

Worse followed when China's State Councillor Yang Jiechi promptly arrived in Hanoi to appraise the damage and read the riot act to Vietnam's leaders.

He bluntly told them that China would continue to "take all necessary measures" to protect its sovereignty and the operations of its oil rig, which, in Beijing's view, was clearly in Chinese waters.

He warned that Vietnam would suffer badly if it collaborated with other countries, namely the United States, in resisting China's maritime claims. Nor should it join the Philippines in appealing to the United Nations.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson added, "Vietnam must

stop its interference and harassment, stop hyping up the issue and stop whipping up disagreement to create new disputes, and properly deal with the aftermath of the recent serious incidents of violence."

Palpably chagrined by this dressing down, Hanoi's leaders called another politburo meeting as soon as Yang departed. Another rancorous debate ensued.

"The Vietnamese leadership has been torn about its relationship with China for some time," said Edmund Malesky, a Vietnam expert at America's Duke University.

One group, led by PM Dung, argued that Hanoi should stand firm and continue to lobby for help from Washington.

Another faction, led by Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong, resisted and urged that Beijing should not be antagonised any more - and his side won.

As a result, a planned visit this month by Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh to the US has been shelved.

Basically, Hanoi has capitulated. There'll be no more protests, no appealing to the UN, no war games with the US and no leading an ASEAN united front against Beijing.

Meanwhile, China has moved a second oil rig into the disputed waters and says it plans to station another 50 there in the coming years. And that's what it'll do.



Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung (right) and Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi smile during a meeting in Hanoi on June 18. Photo: AFP



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Business

Gas production eyed as retail prices soar

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MYANMA Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) is reviewing a list of potential partners to join it in producing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), said officials.

The state-owned firm's attempt to boost production at its Nyaung Don LPG plant in Ayeyarwady Region comes as gas prices spike to record highs in Yangon, with insiders claiming supply from Thailand is being disrupted due to the after-effects of its May 22 coup.

Retail prices of LNG hovered around K8000 a viss (1.6 kilograms) on July 4, nearly quadruple prices at the start of June, though down slightly from highs of K10,500 a viss on July 1.

Gas sellers blamed the increase on difficulties on importing through border crossings following the Thai coup.

However, Thailand's minister counselor at its Myanmar office of commercial affairs, Boon Intiratana said that the land border gates are not closed to bilateral commerce, despite what some shop owners may say.

"I think [there are increased efforts] to control illegal trading along the border," he said, adding he was not sure of the effects of the move on Myanmar's LPG market.

MPE's plans to boost domestic production of the fuel through a joint venture pre-dates the recent price surge.

It is currently evaluating the Expression of Interest letters it received from 22 firms, said MPE director U Aye Cho. "We're planning to announce an invitation for tender for a joint venture at the end of August," he said.

The state-owned firm is looking for an international-standard partner to assist with MPE's gas production, storage and distribution, as well as improvement in areas like business expansion and financial capacity.

Myanmar currently has three LPG plants that compress the gas to a liquefied form used in the country's kitchens.

The three existing LPG plants are all thought to require some updating. Minbu in Magwe Region was completed in 1986 by Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industry. Ayeyarwady's Nyaung Don was finished in 2005, while Kyun Chaung in Magwe Region was finished in 2010, with both built by Chinese company CMC Dong Fang.

There is declining production at the gas field that fuels Nyaung Don plant.

While the fields has seen highs of 60 to 100 million cubic feet per day (mcf) of natural gas in previous years, production has declined to 19mcf this year, said an official from Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), which is responsible for the Nyaung Don block.

"The block has now seen over 15 years of natural gas production," he said. "It is usual that production rates decline over time." The official, who requested anonymity, declined to confirm whether that was enough gas to fuel the LPG plant.

The move to increase production at existing plants comes as the government has loosened import restrictions on the fuel. Before 2011 the government was the sole official importer of LPG, though there was thought to be widespread smuggling. But in August 2011 the government granted five private firms licences to import and sell LPG as part of the government's ongoing privatisation efforts.



Govt aims to formalise



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THE vast majority of mobile phones brought into Myanmar - including iPhone or Samsung Galaxy-series handsets - do not follow correct import procedures, said Minister of Commerce U Win Myint.

About 98 to 99 percent of all imported handsets are brought in without import licences, with only about 200,000 licences being issued for about 10 million mobile phones, he said.

Importers unwilling to apply for licences and pay the correct fees means an unlevel playing field for those who follow the rules, such as official dealers, he said.

"It has a huge impact on official dealers," he said at a meeting of local traders in late June.

Outside of official dealers, not a single iPhone or Samsung Galaxy has been properly imported to Myanmar, he added.

The Ministry of Commerce is now negotiating with the Ministry of Finance to lower customs duties on handsets, with a goal of bringing them into line with other ASEAN countries.



A man checks out his handset options at a Yangon shop. Phones are expected to

'The tax rate of 12pc is probably the main reason why handset dealers don't get licences.'

U Win Myint

Minister of Commerce

"The tax rate of 12pc is probably the main reason why handset dealers don't get licences," said U Win Myint, who added the ministry is also considering organising a mobile dealers association to control the issue.

There are a number of ways to bring in handsets without licences, said U Tin Ye Win, director for the ministry's Illegal Trade Prevention and Supervision Control Committee.

Some come through ports mixed with products like textiles or cars, while others apply for

only a few licences and bring in far more phones. Some are also brought through Muse border crossing near China and Myawaddy near Thailand, as well as from Singapore, he said.

Mobile penetration rates in Myanmar are one of the lowest in the world, with most pegging the figure around 10pc. Still, experts say recent liberalisations in the sector are likely to rapidly increase demand for phones.

Two foreign firms, Telenor and Ooredoo, are set to launch in the

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Yangon's first floating hotel cruises toward completion date

PROPERTY 34



Rare algae farms on the rise as natural growth in decline

BUSINESS 28

| Exchange Rates (July 4 close) | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Currency | Buying | Selling |
| Euro | K1328 | K1331 |
| Malaysia Ringitt | K303 | K304 |
| Singapore Dollar | K780 | K781 |
| Thai Baht | K30 | K31 |
| US Dollar | K971 | K973 |

phone imports



increase in popularity when the foreign telcos launch. Photo: Staff

coming months, taking on Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), the sole incumbent operator.

MILLION

9

Number of SIM cards MPT claims to have distributed in the country, including GSM, CDMA and WCDMA.

Some 9 million MPT SIM cards for GSM, CDMA 800MHz and WCDMA have been distributed, including 400,000 SIMs for K1500 distributed in June, state-owned media claimed on July 1. SIMs have routinely cost in the hundreds of dollars, but with the private operators

pledging to sell SIMs at K1500, many more people are likely to be able to afford phones. Users are often price-conscious and shop around to save a few kyats, said U Htin Lin Kyaw, general manager of Mr Fone mobile shop. Most of Myanmar's phones are currently sold through mobile shops rather than official dealers. KKA mobile shop sales manager Ma Hteik Hteik San said customers are keen to get low prices and have software installed on their phones. She added that one draw for official dealers are warranties, particularly for higher-end phones. One 30-year-old man browsing phone shops in Kyauktada township said he noticed differences between official and ordinary shops rising up to K100,000. "The K100,000 difference is important for customers," he said. "They want to save money, especially when there's not much difference for services and quality."

Door opens to foreign involvement in local hospital joint ventures



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FOREIGN investors will be allowed to team up with local partners to finance private hospitals, clinics and laboratories, the Ministry of Health says. The decision reverses longstanding restrictions on foreign investment in medical facilities but will not come into effect until changes are introduced to Foreign Investment Law rules. Dr Moe Khine, deputy director for medical care in the Health Department, said last week that the ministry would support applications from prospective foreign investors but they would also have to get a licence from the Myanmar Investment Commission. "[Foreign investors] can apply for permission to the ministry by getting their local partner to submit an application to a township health office," Dr Moe Khine said. "But the main point is they need to have an MIC business licence." The previous law governing Foreign direct investment, issued in 1988 did not allow investment in the health sector, according to U Tin Myint from Peace Law Firm.

The Health Department said Yangon's Parami hospital and Thai investors has already applied for permission to enter into a joint investment agreement, but the MIC had so far refused to issue licences. A spokesperson for the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration said no licences would be issued to foreign firms applying to invest in the health services sector until a review of Foreign Investment Law rules is completed. "Some investors are applying to invest in health services but we will not authorise them until the government's Foreign Investment Law rule changes are announced," said DICA director Daw San San Myint. The rule changes are expected to be issued at the end of July and could limit or reduce the types of businesses in which foreign investors can engage, sources say. However, the existing rules, issued as a notification on January 31, 2013, do not specifically restrict investment in health services, including hospitals and clinics. Rather, they state that the investor "must obtain and comply with guidance from the Ministry of Health". One official who requested anonymity said the present rules on investment were rushed, with officials told to complete the rules within 90 days of finishing the FDI

law, requiring negotiations between different ministries. But Ministry of Health officials said they are confident that investment will soon be allowed. The chance for foreign firms to invest in Myanmar hospitals could benefit the companies and improve care for patients, said Dr Ba Shwe, vice chair of the hospital administration association under the Myanmar Medical Association. Currently, many wealthy Myanmar people travel abroad to receive care, but the introduction of international-level hospitals inside the country could save patients time and money by offering quality services closer to home, and provide job opportunities and improved training for healthcare workers. Investing in hospitals could also allow foreign firms to extend their reach in other healthcare-related industries, he said. MIC official U Kyaw Swar Soe said the commission has not yet received an application for foreign investment. However, *The Bangkok Post* reported recently that Thai property tycoon Boon Vanasin has signed a US\$165 million deal to build three hospitals in Myanmar over five years, including one with Myanmar's Aung Shwe Three (AST) International Group. AST officials declined to comment when contacted by *The Myanmar Times* last week.

Resource transparency group accepts Myanmar as candidate



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MYANMAR was approved as an official "Candidate" country with global resource transparency group Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) at its board meeting in Mexico on July 2. Joining the international group has been a public goal of the current Myanmar administration, aiming to increase transparency in a notoriously opaque sector. The EITI is now composed of 45 countries, and membership will require Myanmar to disclose and improve how oil, gas and mineral resources are governed, with the first report due in 18 months, the EITI said in a press release. "The government has made a commitment to the people of Myanmar: that they will have the right [to] see

how these resources are managed. I encourage the government to make use of EITI as a tool to inspire wider reforms and to enshrine transparency in government institutions," said Clare Short, the chair of EITI. The reporting requirements mean Myanmar must publish accounts showing all payments and increasing transparency of licence holders, production data, state-owned enterprise operations, and allocation of all revenues from its natural resources. Being a part of EITI, Myanmar government also committed to map and identify beneficial ownerships of companies operating in Myanmar. It must also disclose details of the 2013-14 oil and gas bidding round and provide contract transparency. "EITI gives us a useful tool to design our escape from resources curse. It is important for ongoing reforms. We

pledge to overcome many challenges facing implementation of EITI standards," said U Zaw Oo, the national coordinator of Myanmar EITI. Myanmar needs to meet all requirements set out by the EITI within three years to become EITI Complaint, beginning with its first EITI report due by January 2, 2016. If the EITI report is not published by deadline, Myanmar could be suspended from the group. "This milestone is a testament to a new level of national dialogue on extractive industries in Myanmar. We look forward to continuing collaboration of Myanmar [with] EITI [and the] multi-stakeholder group," said Kanthan Shankar, World Bank country manager, in the statement. Myanmar applied to EITI early this year as part of President U Thein Sein's drive to increase transparency in the oil and gas sector.

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Active black market discourages foreign firms, says minister

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THE prominence of the domestic black market continues to discourage prospective foreign investors from entering the country, according to Minister of Commerce U Win Myint.

Foreign firms are worried that black market goods are often sold at unfairly low prices because importers avoid paying import duties and taxes as well as following proper regulations, and in many instances the products are counterfeit.

U Win Myint said the ministry's mobile enforcement teams are crucial to stemming the flow of illegally imported and counterfeit goods and improving the domestic business environment.

"If not, the country's trade will not increase and foreign investors will not trust the market and not come and invest," he said on June 21 at his Yangon office.

'If there is market demand, businessmen will try to fill it in various ways.'

U Myo Hlaing Swe
Border trader

Mobile enforcement teams have been sent to target Yangon's main sea and airports this month, after previously focusing on illegal land border trade. The teams are known partly for suppressing the black market trade in liquor in December 2013, which resulted in an alcohol shortage on many Yangon shelves.

U Win Myint's comments come as some large international firms have raised concerns about goods being illegally sold in Myanmar.

Officials from Japanese manufacturer Canon Inc said they are holding off on setting up a Myanmar production facility until Intellectual

Property (IP) laws are enacted and enforced.

Analysts generally regard Myanmar's intellectual property environment as quite weak, with a full set of modern laws on patents, trademarks, industrial designs and copyright still not yet passed by parliament. Enforcement of existing rules has also been flagged as an issue.

Canon products such as ink cartridges are being widely imitated on a wholesale level in Myanmar, getting in the way of future investment, said Inez Siantar, a Singapore-based Canon representative at a Yangon press event on June 19.

Canon's genuine products are imported from China to Myanmar, and marked by a distinct hologram on the cardboard packaging, but imitations are readily available on the local market.

"We see in Yangon often the cardboard box was made in Myanmar and the ink cartridges are [knock-offs] imported from China," she said. "I think that's terrible."

The firm began one local lawsuit on unlawful use of IP in 2010, and it still is not settled, said Ms Siantar.

Daw Tin Ohmar Tun, chair of the ASEAN Intellectual Property Organisation, said that modern IP laws will solve many of these problems.

Traders however say the black market comes about in response to unmet demand.

U Myo Hlaing Swe, a trader from Muse on Chinese border, said that restrictions on imports of many goods meant businesspeople are encouraged to work outside the rules.

"If there is market demand, businessmen will try to fill it in various ways, even if there are official limitations. In my opinion the government needs to put its trade policy in line with the country's real situation," he said.

The Ministry of Commerce's mobile enforcement teams seized goods valued at K17.5 billion (US\$17.9 million) from November 1, 2012, through to June 26, 2014.

Ministry of Commerce economics advisor U Maung Aung said the ministry has been keen to build a trade policy in line with international practices, and has been cooperating with the World Trade Organisation on a trade policy review.



A man leans over an artificial pond used to grow spirulina in Shan State. Photo: Kyay Mohn Win

Rare algae farms grow as harvests drop off



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A RAPID drop in spirulina algae harvesting in Sagaing Region has led to plans to double algae farming using brick tanks that function as artificial ponds, according to industry insiders.

Spirulina has been harvested from Twin Daung lake in Sagaing's Bu Ta Lin township for over a decade, but climate change and diverted rivers are being blamed for the drop-off in natural production.

"The quality and effect of natural spirulina and artificially-created spirulina might not be exactly the same, but it won't be much different either," said U Min Thein, a leading spirulina grower and company official from June Pharmaceutical and Foodstuff Industry.

Spirulina is blue-green algae that is rich in protein and widely used in traditional medicine as well as food and drink. Its supposed health benefits are also touted in "Spirulina Anti-Aging Beer", which has been sold in Mandalay Region.

U Min Thein said he has been growing spirulina in artificial ponds for 10 years, producing 100 tonnes annually.

Myanmar boasts about 25 acres of spirulina farms, centred on Twin Daung and Yae Khar lakes in Sagaing Region.

The uniquely high pH level of the water at the volcanic lakes has enabled the algae to grow in the wild, one of just a handful of natural sites in the world.

"Other countries don't get spirulina from nature - they have to grow it," said Daw May Yu Khine, deputy general manager of Sagaing Pharmaceutical Industry.

"It is hard for the business to exist relying solely on nature," she said.

Building the brick tanks to function as artificial ponds for the algae makes it easier to grow the notorious fickle crop, and also allows more frequent harvests. There are presently 20 large bricks tanks measuring 420 feet (128 metres) long and 55 feet wide, along with 64 smaller tanks at Twin Daung lake.

The artificial ponds near Twin Daung lake were built to combat fears a planned nearby dam could destroy natural algae growth in 2003. Though the dam never materialised, the ponds have been useful given the large drop in natural growth in the nearby lake - estimated at 75 percent in November 2013 compared year-on-year.

Daw May Yu Khine expects dry spirulina production will hit between 80 and 100 tonnes in 2014, adding there is a large stockpile of 700 tonnes of the product.

U Min Thein said that while there are many who are keen to grow the algae, it is difficult to do so individually.

"Look at mushroom farming for example. It is easier than spirulina farming, but still not everyone can grow mushrooms," he said.



"If you don't make it a success, you are going to lose a lot."

One farmed acre produces about 0.6 tonnes annually in Myanmar, though the largest producers in places like the United States, Thailand, Taiwan and Japan are able to produce up to a tonne per year.

— Translated by Myat Su Mon Win



A woman spreads out spirulina to dry. Photo: Kyay Mohn Win

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Mandalay civil society calls for EU treaty halt

BILL O'TOOLE



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A GROUP of 15 civil society organisations (CSOs) based in Mandalay released a statement last week calling for the government to hold off on signing new bilateral investment treaties with the European Union, saying the proposed regulations of the agreement could have a “chilling effect” on policy making.

The CSOs specifically raised alarms over the proposed mechanism for settling disputes between investors and the government, known as the Investor State Dispute Settlement Mechanism (ISDS).

A common feature of bilateral trade agreements across the globe, ISDS is defined by the World Bank as a form of resolution of disputes between foreign investors and the state that hosts their investment. ISDS allows foreign investors to initiate dispute settlement proceedings against a host state.

Legal proceedings are then settled by independent arbiters and conciliators appointed to each case.

In a statement released on June 21, the Mandalay-based CSOs warned that such an agreement would give foreign investors far too much power to block proposed legislation.

Foreign investors can bring cases against governments through the ISDS mechanism at international tribunals, while the state or communities cannot sue the investor, the statement said. “The threat of a potential case brought by an investor to a state through ISDS has a chilling effect on policymaking,” it added.

The groups point out that even if the arbitration panel finds in favour of the state, the legal fees for such a procedure routinely run into millions of dollars.

“Given the above concerns we are of the opinion that no investment treaties should be signed,” it said.

Representatives from the EU and the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration could not be reached for comment last week.

However, in a statement released in May following the beginning of the negotiations, Jean-Luc Demarty, the EU commission's director general for trade, wrote, “The existence of investment protection and ISDS does not prevent the host state from applying all its laws ... and interested parties can always seek redress in national courts.”

“I strongly believe that such an agreement will allow for EU investors to play an important role in contributing to sustainable growth and development in Myanmar”.

‘In the last couple of years it is becoming an issue; more and more countries are being sued.’

Charles Santiago
Malaysian parliamentarian

EU Ambassador to Myanmar Roland Kobia has publicly stated that the EU is only pursuing an ISDS agreement in order to address Myanmar's lacking “legal infrastructure” and allay concerns of European investors, thus incentivising them to bring in capital that the nation needs to develop.

The concerns of the local CSOs, including the Kachin Peace Network and EcoDev, are shared by many experts on international investment, who claim that such treaties often stand in the way of progress in developing nations.

“The system was designed to protect investors from nationalisation of their property but has evolved through arbitrations to include protection against regulatory measures adopted in the public's interest,” said Daniel Auguirre, a legal advisor for the International Commission of Jurists based in Yangon.

Experts in other ASEAN countries said similar treaties have reduced policy options open to their governments.

“[In] the last couple of years it is becoming an issue; more and more countries are being sued. This is a problem because it has an impact on policy space for governments,” said Charles Santiago, a Malaysian Parliamentarian and former economist. “[Arbitrators] who are not judges are now calling the shots in terms of investment and democracy”

Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* last week, Mr Santiago claimed that he himself has proposed legislation to limit advertising for tobacco products in the Malaysian parliament, only to be told by his peers that such a law could open the government up to a lengthy and costly arbitration battle with Phillip Morris Tobacco.

“Even if Malaysia wants to introduce plain packaging [on cigarettes] in the interests of our citizens, for public health reasons, now [we] cannot do it,” he said.

In addition, both Mr Aguirre and Mr Santiago claimed that there is very little evidence that such treaties benefit developing nations.

There is a “dearth of research directly linking the adoption of BITs with increased economic growth. In fact, in some of the poorest African states, the opposite relationship has been shown” said Mr Aguirre.

Both Mr Aguirre and Mr Santiago say that citizens would be better served if the nation's judicial system were properly reformed, removing the need for independent arbitration, and sentiment shared by the CSOs in their statement.



Workers prepare crabs for export in Myeik. Photo: Staff

Fishery products could soon be flown to Japan

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THE possibility of fish products travelling to Japan on All Nippon Airline (ANA) flights is being discussed by fisheries associations, though shipping costs are the largest stumbling block, say officials.

Flying the fish exports would mean higher prices in Japan, where the catch would be fresher than current exports which are refrigerated and sent by ship, said Daw Toe Nandar Tin, vice chair of the Myanmar Fisheries Product Processor and Exporter Association.

“The process may take a while because we are finding those who want to export by airline,” she said, adding that each group is different.

Daw Toe Nandar Tin said the main sticking point is the cost of the service.

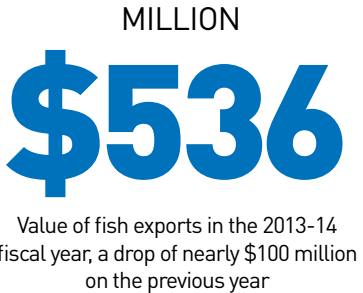
“If the charges are okay, I believe some businesses will export fish on the airline,” she said.

U Kyaw Ko Ko, an ANA official based in Myanmar, confirmed that discussions on flying the fish exports are under way.

The industry is looking at shipping by airplanes as part of a drive to get more value from its fishery products – which have been in decline in recent years.

Myanmar Fishery Federation chair U Soe Win said that exporters are also eyeing American and European markets as sanctions are becoming less of a problem and the markets offer lots of potential.

Fishery exports generated revenue of about US\$536 million in the 2013-14 fiscal year, according to a Myanmar Fishery Federation official, a decline on \$650 million from last fiscal year, from government data.



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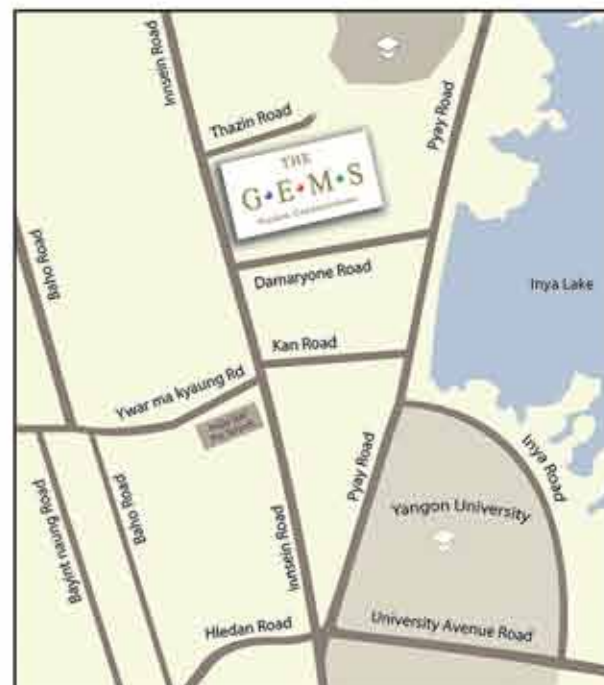
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Trade-ins drive jeep demand

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WHILE factories producing Myanmar-made jeeps have mostly closed, demand for the iconic vehicle lives on – propped up in part by a government trade-in program.

Up to 25 varieties of jeeps and light trucks were made in the country prior to 2011 using imported, often second-hand parts, but the gradual opening of the vehicle imports market saw local assemblers of brands such as Shan and Dagon mostly halt operations.

The government has been issuing vehicle substitution certificates – commonly called a “slip” – allowing the owner of older vehicles to hand the vehicle to authorities and in return receive permission to import a new car.

The policy, put in place to encourage the jeeps to be taken off the road in favour of a modernised fleet, has had the side effect of introducing a secondary market for slips, with each slip – and vehicles eligible for slips – trading for up to several million kyats.

Deputy rail transportation minister U Chan Maung said in the Pyithu Hluttaw in June that owners of many locally made vehicles will be eligible to receive slips this year.

Currently, many of the locally made vehicles are not eligible, as they were built relatively recently.



However, locally made vehicles with number plate “1 ka” have been accepted for trade-in since April 4 and prices have reached over K10 million (US\$10,256), while the price for vehicles with plates beginning with “2 ka” has topped K9 million after the Road Transport Administration Department posting on its Facebook page that trade-ins for the slip could begin this October.

Customers have bid up the price of the jeeps, which usually trade for around K4 million with a non-eligible plate number, in order to obtain slips.

The vehicles with “1 ka” or “2 ka” plates are expensive, but if all locally produced jeeps could be traded in for slips the price would likely decline, said U Win Myint Oo, a Mandalay car dealer.

The program giving slips in return

for handing over specific older vehicles was announced in September 2011, though importers were initially confined to models made from 1999 to 2006 until a 2012 rule change.

U Kyaw, the owner of a locally-made jeep, said many people would like to purchase the cars, which are often quite affordable, but are unable to do so due to supplies being taken off the market through the slip program.

Nay Pyi Taw farmland set to grow

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AGRICULTURE around Nay Pyi Taw is set for a boost after the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved borrowing some US\$136 million for projects in the area.

While initial improvements are planned for areas around the capital, assistance to areas such as Shan and Chin States could be forthcoming if more funding can be found, said officials.

About \$100 million will come from the World Bank and \$36 million from Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development, said U Ohn Than, vice minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

The loans will be mainly used to improve irrigation systems around Nay Pyi Taw as well as some other locations, he said.

U Ohn Than said repayments on both IFAD and World Bank loans starts in 10 years, with repayments scheduled over the following 30 years at relatively low interest rates. The World Bank loans are specific earmarks in a previously announced package of loans, he added.

– Translation by Win Thaw Tar

Foreigners get a taste for food investment

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MYANMAR Industries Association (MIA) plans to support foreign investment in food production joint ventures as they apply for permission to set up in the coming months, said its chair U Zaw Min Win.

The food industry has been picking up steam on the heels of entry by large international companies including American drink makers Pepsi and Coca-Cola, as well as Unilever from Europe and Thailand's CP Livestock, he said.

Several more international firms have submitted proposals to the Myanmar Investment commission through MIA this year, mainly for soft drinks as well as farmed and seafood goods.

“Investment in the local food industry is essential, especially as local companies should not import products which are not safe,” he said.

Although Myanmar has extensive agricultural capabilities, many local producers have trouble gaining domestic market share, he said. About 70 percent of edible products are imported, though they often come through border areas without proper testing or Food and Drug Administration approval.

The government banned imports of some food items including edible oils, chewing gum and noodles in 1997, but relaxed the ban two years ago partly to stem illegal sales. Imports of some products such as liquor, cigarettes and tobacco are still restricted or prohibited, with certain exceptions.

There are nearly 30,000 registered food manufacturers with combined approved investment of about US\$4 billion, according to figures from the Myanmar Investment Commission.

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U Nyein Kyaw
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Date: 7th July, 2014

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **Revlon Consumer Products Corporation** a company organized under the laws of United States of America and having its principal office at 237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017, United States of America is the owner and sole proprietor of the following trademarks:-

TOP SPEED

(Reg: Nos. IV/3651/2011 & IV/2661/2014)

in respect of: - "Hair coloring preparations"

REVLON AGE DEFYING WITH DNA ADVANTAGE

(Reg: Nos. IV/9919/2011 & IV/2662/2014)

in respect of: - "Bleaching preparations and other substances for laundry use; cleaning, polishing, scouring and abrasive preparations; soaps; perfumery, essential oils, cosmetics, hair lotions; dentifrices; skin care products including lotions, creams, cleansers, toners and serum, cosmetics and makeup, soaps, perfumes, perfumed oils for the manufacture of cosmetic preparations, perfumed oils for cosmetics, cosmetic liquid foundations, cleansing milk for cosmetic purpose, skin lotions, cosmetic creams for skin care, eau de cologne, vanishing creams, cold creams, cleansing creams, foundation creams, lipsticks, cheek colors, pomades for cosmetic purposes."

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademarks or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

U Kyi Win Associates
for **Revlon Consumer Products Corporation**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416

Dated: 7th July, 2014

WASHINGTON

BNP Paribas slapped with record fine for sneaking around sanctions

LEADING French bank BNP Paribas said it would face no difficulty in absorbing the record multi-billion-dollar fine slapped on it by US authorities for breaking sanctions against pariah regimes.

Under the overnight deal, BNP Paribas accepted guilt and a number of penalties totalling US\$8.9 billion (6.5 billion euros) for organising ways to enable Iran, Sudan, Cuba and Myanmar to get round sanctions.

But on July 2, the bank said it had "ample" resources to pay the fine, and shares in the bank rose.

The terms of the deal enable the bank to avoid criminal prosecution, although the US Justice Department was severe in its findings.

It said the bank had hidden thousands of transactions with the countries between 2004 and 2012 in what officials called a "complex and pervasive scheme" which top bank managers knew broke US law.

"BNP went to elaborate lengths to conceal prohibited transactions, cover its tracks, and deceive United States authorities," Attorney General Eric Holder said.

The violations aided countries involved in terrorism and human rights violations, Mr Holder said, "in many cases to the detriment of United States national security".

"This outcome should send a strong message to any institution, any institution anywhere in the world, that does business with the United States, that illegal conduct will simply not be tolerated," he said.

The French government immediately sent signals that its threats to block a EU-US trade deal no longer applied and that contrary to its previous warnings, the bank's ability to lend would not be crippled.

French Trade Secretary Fleur Pellerin assured that there was no risk or linkage between the case and the

negotiations between the European Union and United States over the vast trans-Atlantic free trade agreement.

The finance director at BNP Paribas, Lars Machenil said the bank had "ample" cash resources and had no need "to rush", ruling out any capital-raising operation for now.

Shares in the bank showed a gain of 4.05 percent in early afternoon trading to 51.55 euros despite the record fine, with investors expressing relief that the way ahead was now clearer.

"The CAC 40 [French stock index] is being pulled ahead largely by the good performance of BNP Paribas shares following the announcement of an agreement," said Saxo bank analyst Christopher Dembik.

"BNP Paribas should be well able to withstand the fine inflicted by US authorities which, in comparison with the assets managed by the bank, amount to only a very small amount," he said. - AFP

EXPAT FINANCE

The personal protections you should keep in mind

ANDREW WOOD

enquiriesmyanmar@fsplatinum.com

PREVIOUS articles relating to health-care, medical insurance, and nightmares and dilemmas have been popular with many readers asking about what could happen and how to protect themselves.

Many expats sincerely believe that mishaps and accidents will never happen to them. With this optimistic philosophy they continue their lives almost in oblivion, never thinking of the consequences of sickness or accidents. Only when an individual becomes the victim of a life-changing event or witnesses the devastation it can cause do they actually realise and accept this actually happens to real people.

What emphasis do you place on sheltering yourself from real life disasters? Medical, life, critical illness and income protection are the four key insurances expats should consider. They may not all be essential but in developing your own risk management strategy they offer financial protection from events beyond your control.

First you should assess your current situation to determine your exposure. Next, consider providing yourself with financial protection via one of the many international insurance solutions available today. Maybe you do not need coverage for all these risks, but it is better to consider the consequences of different types of catastrophe and factor these into your plan.

Recently I witnessed an expat with international medical insurance who

was busy and did not renew his policy. When his policy expired he needed to arrange new medical insurance. This was implemented on a moratorium basis, meaning that any existing problems they had would not be covered.

During the delay in arranging new cover, a lump appeared on his neck. He took little notice. It was later discovered this was an inoperable malignant tumour. Two points should be mentioned here about the medical cover. Had he arranged continuous cover from the changeover date, usually conditions which emerge are covered by the new insurance. Second, had he arranged the new insurance prior to the appearance of the lump he would be covered.

Some people think that insurance is cost-prohibitive - to those I say consider it as assurance.

Now he faces an unknown situation where he is responsible for his own medical treatment. Without reimbursements from insurers, costs could be prohibitive. This could limit the availability of treatment. What will happen to his family if he fails to survive or becomes incapacitated?

In another case an expat was injured

in a car accident, leaving him unable to work. He has a wife and two children: a happy family with a bright future.

A successful businessman, with a highly sought-after skill, Bill had his own prosperous business. He was working toward a promising future, making plans for his children's education as well as retirement in total financial security. Whilst seeing the dangers of dread disease and extensive illness, he believed it would never happen to him. He used to quip that he was young and fit, not requiring medical insurance until he grew older.

Now he faces a totally different life. With high medical bills he will run out of money before long, creating an even bigger problem. What will become of the family and their decent life?

Some people think that insurance is cost-prohibitive, a waste of money - to those I say consider it as assurance. Once you are insured you can readily adopt the "it will never happen to me" approach because you have the assurance of being covered.

The most sensible thing you can do now is assess your real situation of risk. What is the worst thing which could happen to you? Then consider how you could use insurance wisely to ensure you are protected; can you afford not to consider this?

Next time we will look closer at the realities and how to consider what is best for you personally.

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



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Mandalay: Room No. 110, Level-3, Yadanapon Diamond Plaza. Tel: 09 7300 2698



JOB WATCH



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Myanmar Cruises Limited is delighted to announce the vacancy for the following post;
Human Resources Manager (1) (Road To Mandalay)

Required Skills / Experiences : Core functions such as organizational development and effectiveness, employee relations, training and development, performance management, conflict resolution, employee promotions/transfers, berthing compliance, progressive disciplinary action, employee turnover and retention, ongoing HR management/administration. The HR Manager will provide assistance and support to all senior officers and onboard management when dealing with human resources issues. At least three to five years of progressive management experience in Human Resources. This position must be excellent written and oral communication skill in Myanmar and English

Benefits : Performance related bonus, Leave Entitlement according to the government stated law, medical duty meals, Belmond Discovery Programme

Contact Person : Eddie Teh
General Manager
eddie.teh@belmond.com
Myitzu Chit
Regional Human Resources and Learning and Development Director Asia
myitzu.chit@belmond.com



Vacancy Notice

UNFPA – because everyone counts.
The United Nations Population Fund: Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

Interested in being part of a multi-cultural team delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person's potential is fulfilled in Myanmar? Come and join us, because at UNFPA, everyone counts. We are seeking a creative, dynamic and highly motivated individual to join our growing effort to drive forward to the next level of UNFPA country programme on population, gender equality and reproductive health and rights for the people in Myanmar. If you're looking for an opportunity to make a difference, thrive in a challenging yet rewarding teamwork environment, we wish to hear from you.

| Position | Type of Contract | Grade | Duty Station | Deadline |
|--|------------------|-------|--------------|--------------|
| National Programme Officer (Reproductive Health) | Fixed-Term | NOB | Yangon | 18 July 2014 |

Applications should be addressed to UNFPA Representative. Attention: International Operations Manager, Room A-07, UNFPA, No.6, Natmauk Road, Yangon.

Email: myanmar.office@unfpa.org

For further details, please see the vacancy announcement posted at UN billboard. No.6, Natmauk Road, Yangon and also at UNFPA website (<http://myanmar.unfpa.org>)

Applications will be considered only when meeting all requirements set in detailed vacancy announcement.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN A DYNAMIC MEDIA LEADER

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.

Customer Care Representative (2 Posts in Yangon, 2 Posts in Mandalay)

Reporting to MCM's Circulations Manager, as well as to the Circulation & Distribution Director, the Customer Care Representative serves as the human interface between MT, the public and our sellers, regularly assessing the quality and performance of our products via phone and street polls, surveys and focus groups.

Main Duties: The Customer Care Rep calls all new subscribers to verify information; calls current subscribers to ensure satisfaction with delivery; and calls wholesalers weekly to verify sales data. All feedback, suggestions and complaints from the public and sellers are funneled to the Rep, who then distributes them to the appropriate staff for addressing, and tracks responses.

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.
379-383 Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Kyauktada T/S, Yangon
Email applications to: mcmhrd@myanmartimes.com.mm



The International Rescue Committee (IRC) Myanmar is seeking qualified and motivated staff for the following positions:

1. Supply Chain Coordinator
2. HR Manager
3. Senior Budget Officer
4. HR Officer
5. Driver
6. M&E Assistant
7. Senior Mobile Clinic Medical Doctor
8. Senior Hygiene Promotion Officer
9. AEI Manager
10. Senior Field Health Officer

Application deadline date: 15 July 2014. This position is open for national only. For more info, Please go to <http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals>. For any queries please do not hesitate to contact IRC at 01 556504

DVB Multimedia Group Co. Ltd

Job Vacancy: Sales Director

The Director of Sales will set and achieve sales targets, identify new business opportunities, and manage and develop the sales team. S/He will develop relationships with advertisers, sponsors, and partners such as advertising agencies.

Requirements:

University degree and 10 years work experience, including 5 years in sales management. Must have demonstrated success closing deals, preferably in the media / advertising industry. The ideal candidate is proficient in English and Burmese. Good command of English is required.

Pay is performance-based.

See <http://burmese.dvb.no/jobads> for complete job posting.

Submit CV and cover letter to admin@dvb.no.



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DAI Announces the Issuance of:

KANN LET PROGRAM

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Issuance Date | : 1 July 2014 |
| Deadline for Question | : 12:00pm MMT (UTC +6:30h) 9 July 2014 |
| Submission Deadline | : 12:00pm MMT (UTC +6:30h) 31 August 2014 |
| RFA Information Session | : 15 July 2014 (Location/Time TBD) |
| Information Session | : 17:00 MMT (UTC +6:30) 9 July 2014 |
| Registration Deadline | |

Organizations interested in submitting an application can find the RFA at : www.dai.com/kannlet

If you can not download the RFA documents, have any questions, or wish to attend the RFA information session please contact:

LWVfhelp@dai.com or call 09.421.127.052



JOB VACANCY

PSI is looking for a Deputy Director of Marketing and Communications

You will manage a team of fifteen professionals responsible for creating and activating all consumer communications initiatives, including advertising, social media, mobile apps and promotional items, for PSI/Myanmar. This position reports to the Director of Marketing and Communication and you will have three direct reports: Sr. Creative Manager, Sr. Media Production Manager and Manager of Media Placement. This expansive role will have three main areas of responsibility:

1. Managing the consumer communications budget.
2. Producing evidence-based communications campaign, materials and resources which target consumers.
3. Provide exceptional marketing expertise to end user departments.

You will be a Myanmar national with at least five years of experience working in the marketing or advertising sector and have excellent written and spoken English skills. An advanced degree (MBA, MBBS or MPH) will be an added advantage.

If you are interested in the above position, please send your CV (maximum 2 pages) and cover letter (minimum 1 page) to the following address:

PSI/Myanmar (HQ): No. 16, West Shwe Gone Dine 4th Street,
Bahan Township, Yangon.

Telephone: 01 375854, 375855, 375856, 375857, 375858

email address: hr@psimyanmar.org. Closing date: 17th July 2014

Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Jeremy Mullins | jeremymullins7@gmail.com

Kyaukpyu SEZ looks for interest from construction firms

TIM MCLAUGHLIN

timothy.mclaughlin3@gmail.com

EXPRESSIONS of interest (EOI) for firms aiming to bid on constructing a special economic zone in Rakhine State are slated to be issued later this month, according to officials involved in the project.

The EOIs for the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone will be made available on July 14 with a submission deadline of August 11. Submitted EOIs will be opened the following day. After an evaluation process, shortlisted candidates will be announced on September 1.

Three areas of the 1400-acre SEZ are being developed separately, including a deep sea port, industrial park and residential area. EOIs will be issued for companies and consortiums interested in each area of the SEZ.

According to officials from project management company PM Link, bids for the deep sea port will be evaluated with 60 percent of the final score based on a firm's track record, judged on expertise, design and construction of previous projects. The remaining 40pc will be based on financial strength over the past three years.

For the industrial park, 50pc of the final score will be based on track record over the past seven years, with focus on large scale projects greater than 100 hectares; 40pc will be drawn from financial strength; and the remaining 10pc will be based on awards

and certifications won by the company or consortium lead.

The residential area EOIs will be evaluated using the same grading breakdown as the industrial park development.

Following the EOI process, requests for proposals are set to be issued on September 9, with a submission deadline of November 10. The requests for proposals will be opened the next day.

Singaporean consultancy CPG Corporation was selected in early March to lead a consortium of companies in advising the Bid Evaluation and Awarding Committee. The group also includes real estate firm DTZ, Global Maritime and Port Services, accountants Ernst & Young and PM Link.

Officials from the consortium held an open information event in Yangon yesterday as part of a larger "road show" to drum up interest in the SEZ. Company officials and representatives from the Myanmar government will be in Singapore on July 7 for a similar event.

The Myanmar government is hoping that Kyaukpyu's location coupled with investment incentives will attract companies and turn the area into a major trading hub. PM Link officials said that firms that are selected to invest in the SEZ will be eligible for income tax exemption for eight years and customs duty exemptions on the importation of construction equipment and machinery, along with other incentives.

Residents ask for gov

Locals in Thingangyun township urge government to take action on illegal contractors

MYAT
NYEIN AYE

myatnyeinae11092@gmail.com

LOCAL residents in Thingangyun township last week asked government officials to crack down on unlicensed contractors who are not seeking proper building approval, but added they are worried about projects being frozen by authorities.

The township has become notorious as a centre for unofficial builders, with government officials and now local residents singling it out as home to a disproportionately high number of unlicensed contractors operating without permits.

Residents claim that there are 216 buildings under construction where contractors have not obtained permits, while about 100 more without permits have already been completed.

"So many unlicensed contractors are building apartments without permits in our area," said U Tin Htun, one local resident, at a press conference on the issue.

"The buildings did not get a BCC [Building Completion Certificates] but the developers sold them anyways," he said, referring to the BCC permits that must be issued by Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) to certify a completed building has met the appropriate rules and can be inhabited.

YCDC announced a crackdown on unlicensed contractors building



A pedestrian walks past a construction site in Thingangyun township last week.

'So many unlicensed contractors are building apartments without permits in our area.'

U Tin Htun
Thingangyun resident

without permits in early June, with officials pointing to Thingangyun township as a particular hotspot of illegal building, though adding other townships, including Hlaing, Mayangone and Insein, have many unlicensed projects.

YCDC has begun plastering warning sign-boards on construction sites in Thingangyun operating without permits, causing many to shut down.

Although this practice has put a pause to many unlicensed projects,

some are worried about the future of their investments.

U Tin Htun said the many local people bought apartments on a pre-sale basis, and they are worried they could lose their investments if YCDC does not allow the projects to restart quickly.

"People are faced with difficulties over where they are going to live. Some people are not rich but saved their money to buy [pre-sale] apartments, while others gave their land to developers



A worker inspects pipes at the site of the Kyaukpyu SEZ in Rakhine State. Photo: Juliet

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **HUMAN GESELLSCHAFT FUER BIOCHEMICA & DIAGNOSTICA MBH** a company organized under the laws of Germany and having its principal office at Max-Planck-Ring 21, 65205 Wiesbaden-Delkenheim, Germany is the owner and sole proprietor of the following trademark:-

HUMAN

(Reg: Nos. IV/5099/2011 & IV/7573/2014)

in respect of :- "Diagnostic reagents for scientific use/Diagnostic reagents for medical use/laboratory equipment"

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **HUMAN GESELLSCHAFT FUER BIOCHEMICA & DIAGNOSTICA MBH**

P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.

Phone: 372416

Dated: 7th July, 2014



IN PICTURES

A Michael Jackson impersonator dances at an overseas property and immigration exhibition in Beijing on July 4, 2014. After years of boom that have seen prices rocket, the prospect of a bust is looming over China's vast property sector, with authorities hoping to avoid a meltdown that could send shockwaves through the world's second-biggest economy. Photo: AFP

“The government has made a commitment to the people ... that they will have the right to see how these resources are managed.”

— Clare Short, chair of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

Indonesian election tripped by on racism
WORLD 42

ernment help

who are building apartments without proper permits



Photo: Yu Yu

in return for units in the future building,” he said.
U Tin Htun pre-bought from one project, but it has been forced to halt after YCDC’s warning, leaving him worried about his payments so far of K14 million.
Local residents all want good-quality places to live, said U Ye Mya, another Thingangyun township resident.
Unlicensed contractors often use low quality materials and shoddy workmanship, putting people at risk.
“In our area people are changing from huts or wooden houses to apartments, and everybody was buying rooms. But our rooms have no BCC permit, no electricity permit,

and we need to get those,” he said.
Thingangyun township has rapidly changed to an area of apartments, while previously being mostly wooden houses.
“In the past we worried about harm from fires in our area because all the huts and houses were crowded together,” said U Tin Win. “Now we don’t worry about that, but we are worried about BCC permits and whether we can move in.”
YCDC officials have publically discussed sending unlicensed builders to prison and demolishing buildings, aiming to increase the severity of punishments which formerly saw convicted unlicensed contractors receiving fines of as little as K10,000.

NEW DELHI

More bodies found in collapse

RESCUERS have pulled 13 more bodies from the rubble of a building that collapsed last weekend in southern India, raising the death toll to at least 55, officials said on July 3.
The 11-storey apartment tower on the outskirts of Tamil Nadu’s state capital Chennai, which was still under construction, came crashing down June 28 following heavy rains, killing mainly labourers.
Karuna Sagar, a senior officer with the Tamil Nadu state police force, said the confirmed death toll from the disaster now stood at 55 and added that chances of finding more survivors “appear bleak”.
Some 27 people have been rescued from the rubble so far. It is not known how many people were inside the building at the time of the collapse.
“There is no question of winding up

the rescue operations any time soon,” said Mr Sagar.
“As we’ve said repeatedly, the [rescue] efforts will continue till the very last,” he said.
“We don’t know if there are more people buried under the debris. To find that out we have to continue the work.”
Rescuers have been working almost round the clock, using drills, mechanical diggers and heavy-cutting equipment to break through slabs of concrete.
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalithaa Jayaram, meanwhile, announced that a one-man commission will investigate the disaster.
The commission will look into the circumstances that led to the collapse and “fix responsibility”, she said in a statement, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.
Six people have been arrested so

far for negligence, including the chief builder and the architect.
The collapse came only hours after a dilapidated apartment block crumbled in New Delhi, killing 10 people including five children.
A massive influx of people to cities in search of jobs and a shortage of low-cost housing has fuelled fast construction of buildings across the country, often using substandard material.
Millions also live in dilapidated old buildings that have frequently caved in during heavy rains.
Last September, more than 50 people were crushed to death when a five-storey building collapsed in India’s financial hub Mumbai.
Most of the victims of the Chennai tragedy were construction workers, who were reportedly in the building to collect their wages. — AFP

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



Finding Yangon’s white house

The exterior of this white house is certainly nothing to sneeze at, but it’s the interior that took *House of the Week*’s breath away.
Coming in at about 2000 square feet, this large, fully-furnished home in Mayangone township is a little far from downtown. But what you sacrifice in location, you gain in beautiful space, modern décor and a quiet and serene environment.
Boasting three master bedrooms, one single bedroom and particularly pleasing living room, there’s plenty of space for a medium-sized family.
It also has a well-kept garden and

wide balcony perfect for reflecting over Yangon. Its yard is also a pleasant place to sit and ride a book – at least when rainy season is over.
It’s a western-style house that nods to Myanmar decoration sensibilities. It of course has the amenities HOTW expects from our top-end showings, including three air conditioners, a land telephone line and water heater. All the furnishings are there with new pieces, and the location is great – near Ocean Supermarket.
The price is pretty reasonable, all things considered, but you can always try your luck negotiating it a bit lower.

After all, this one remarkably pleasant place to hang your hat.
— Tin Yadanar Htun

Location : Masoeeyin Lane, Mayangone township
Price : US\$3500 a month (negotiable)
Contact : Estate Myanmar Real Estate Agency
Phone : 09-43118787, 09-73114860

CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Hadley Industries Overseas Holdings Limited, a company organized under the laws of Great Britain, of Downing Street, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B66 2PA, Great Britain, is the sole Owner and Proprietor of the patent entitled:-

Sheet of cold Material and Method and Tool for its Manufacture”.

Reg. No. 3409/2014

The said Owner claims all rights in respect of the above patent and will take all legal steps against any person, firm or corporation infringing their rights to the said patent.

Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **Hadley Industries Overseas Holdings Limited**
P. O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 7 July 2014

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Notice is hereby given that BIOFARMA of 50, rue Carnot 92284 Suresnes cedex , FRANCE, is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademarks: _

VALDOXAN

(Reg: No. IV/7212/2014)

In respect of: -

“Pharmaceutical preparations”

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademark or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

U Nyein Kyaw
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Tes: (951) 9662866
E-mail: nyeinkyaw9@gmail.com
Date: 7th July, 2014

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **Henan Xinfei Electric Co., Ltd.** a company organized under the laws of People’s Republic of China and having its principal office at East Beigan Dao Road, Xinxiang Henan Province People’s Republic of China is the owner and sole proprietor of the following trademark:-



(Reg: No. IV/10828/2012)

in respect of :- “Washing machines, refrigerators, refrigerator compressors; parts and fittings for washing machines and refrigerator compressors” Class: 7

“Refrigerators; freezers, microwave ovens; air-conditioners, air-conditioning installations and apparatus; refrigerating apparatus and machines; refrigerating containers; ice machines and apparatus; ice chests; cooling appliances and installations; ice boxes; air cooling apparatus; ventilation [air-conditioning] installations and apparatus; hot air ovens; structural plates for ovens; pressure cooking saucepans, electric; baker ovens; burners; cooking utensils, electric; cookers; cooking apparatus and installations; stoves; burners (gas); bread toasters; griddles [cooking appliances], kitchen ranges [ovens]; roasters; autoclaves [electric pressure cookers]; solar energy water heater; solar energy refrigeration appliances and solar energy lighting fitting” Class: 11

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademark or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

U Kyi Win Associates
for **Henan Xinfei Electric Co., Ltd.**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416

Dated: 7th July, 2014

Silicon Yangon

Dispatches from the nation's burgeoning tech sector ...

Yangon start-up will launch maternity app with Ooredoo

AUNG KYAW NYUNT

aungkyawnyunt28@gmail.com

ON June 26th, Ooredoo Myanmar announced that, in partnership with the Yangon based company Ko Ko Tech, they would be providing a free maternal health app for all Ooredoo costumers following their network's launch later this year.

Using the app, expectant mothers will receive three notifications per week in Myanmar language offering advice on how to keep themselves and their unborn children healthy.

The notifications will be tailored to each user's specific phase of pregnancy. They will include messages like “Your baby is now the size of a date. Arrange to go the clinic for a check-up and for your iron and folic acid pills. Take these each day.”

The medical advice is being provided by the health INGO population services international, also a

partner on the project.

In addition, the app will have a doctor locator service to help pregnant women and find doctors in their area.

The project has the potential to transform the lives of many young mothers in rural areas, whose access to prenatal healthcare is among the lowest in all of Asia.

“The country is seriously in need of digital solutions especially in ... [the] health care sector,” said Ross Cormack, CEO of Ooredoo Myanmar. “We are very delighted and proud that Ooredoo Myanmar's partnership with PSI and Koe Koe Tech will bring the most effective solutions.”

Ko Ko Tech was founded in 2012 by Dr. Yar Zar Min Htoo, a Myanmar citizen with degrees in medicine information technology, and Michael Lwin, a Myanmar-American and former analyst with the Economist Intelligence Unit on Myanmar.

Telenor to build public tech centers

AUNG KYAW NYUNT

aungkyawnyunt28@gmail.com

IN an effort to build tech-literacy in rural markets, telecommunications company Telenor will be partnering with the Myanmar Information and Communications Technology Development office, or MIDO, to construct of several hundred tech-based community centers to serve small communities.

The first of these so-called community information centers will be built in Irrawaddy division, Kayin State, Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Bago by the end of the year, according to a statement released by Telenor on June 27.

At the centers, young and old alike can familiarise themselves with a variety of IT concepts and technology.

“We can give Myanmar people to connection with the world easily,” said U Nay Bone Latt, Executive Director of MIDO. Telenor is expect to launch its SIM cards in September of this year.

Phew! New app teaches alphabet on the iPad

BILL O'TOOLE

botoole12@gmail.com

LEARNING the Myanmar alphabet is only one swipe away with Revo Tech's new learning app.

Users learn to write by following guided by moving dots on a tablet's screen. The app generate s automated applause when the user is successful.

“We want it to be fun and innovative at the same time. We want to revolutionize the way kids learn how to write Myanmar [letters]. We called it ‘PHEW!’ which translates into “porcupine” in Myanmar, said Ko Myo Myint Kyaw,

the managing director of Revo Tech.

“We will improve it all the time and add additional features so that

‘It’s not only for Myanmar kids but also for foreigners who want to learn.’

Ko Myo Myint Kyaw

Revo Tech managin director

it's not only for Myanmar kids but also for foreigners who want to learn Myanmar,” he added.

The app is currently on sale at the iOS store for US \$4.99.

A Yangon native, Ko Myo Myint graduated from Middlesex University in London with a degree in Business Information Systems. Though he found success working as a software engineer is both London and Singapore, a viewing of Besson's “The Lady” inspired him to return to his homeland.

“I love my country and I want to be part of the nation's development,” he said.



Five-year-old students in Yangon use PHEW. Photo: Supplied/Revo Tech

Gadget Round-up

by Myo Satt



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LONDON

‘Right to be forgotten’ requests flood Google

MORE than 70,000 people have already asked Google to delete links about them under Europe’s “right to be forgotten” ruling, with some of the world’s biggest news sites the first to be hit.

The search engine has restricted access to a BBC blog posting and several British newspaper stories under a legal ruling granting people a right to be “forgotten” in search engines, it emerged on July 3.

Google said it had received 70,000 requests since it put a form online on May 30 as a result of the ruling by the European Court of Justice.

The court said that individuals have the right to have links to information about them deleted from searches in certain circumstances, such as if the data is outdated or inaccurate.

But BBC economics editor Robert Peston complained that Google had “killed this example of my journalism” after being informed that a 2007 posting about former Merrill Lynch chair Stan O’Neal had been removed from certain searches in Europe.

The Guardian newspaper also said it had been notified that six links to its stories had been removed from search results, three of them about a 2010 controversy involving a now-retired

Scottish Premier League referee.

The newspaper said Google gave it no reason for removing the link or a chance to appeal.

Reports in Europe late last week indicated that Google restored some deleted Guardian story links to search results, indicating the California-based internet titan was refining the right-to-be-forgotten process on the go.

European news organisations have opened fire on Google for removing links to stories from search results in the name of adhering to the court order.

Mail Online, the world’s biggest news site, said it had received notification that links to a story about the same Scottish referee, Dougie McDonald, had been removed from certain searches.

Other stories restricted include one about a couple caught having sex on a train, and another about a Muslim man who accused the airline Cathay Pacific of refusing to employ him because of his name.

“These examples show what a nonsense the right to be forgotten is. It is the equivalent of going into libraries and burning books you don’t like,” said Martin Clarke, the publisher of Mail Online.

He said the website would regularly

publish lists of articles removed from Google’s European search results, while the BBC and The Guardian also published links to the restricted stories.

The links remain visible on Google.com, the US version of the site, and the restrictions only appear to relate to certain search terms.

A commentary in The Guardian noted that a search for Dougie McDonald no longer brought up its story on Google.co.uk, but a search for “Scottish referee who lied” worked fine.

According to the story, McDonald was found to have lied about his reasons for granting a penalty in a Celtic v Dundee United match.

Google, the world’s leading search engine, said that each request “to be forgotten” would be examined individually to determine whether it met the ruling’s criteria.

A spokeswoman told AFP, “We have recently started taking action on the removals requests we’ve received after the European Court of Justice decision.

“This is a new and evolving process for us. We’ll continue to listen to feedback and will also work with data protection authorities and others as we comply with the ruling,” she said. – AFP

WASHINGTON

Survey: internet’s future uncertain

THE future of an open internet faces threats from government crackdowns, and “balkanisation” resulting from growing concerns over broad electronic surveillance, a survey of experts showed last week.

The Pew Research Center said a majority of experts and others in the opt-in survey were generally optimistic about internet freedom but that a significant number expressed concerns.

“[Experts] pointed out that nations such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey have blocked Internet access to control information flows when they perceived content as a threat to the current regime. China is known for its ‘Great Firewall,’ seen as Internet censorship by most outsiders, including those in this canvassing.”

Pew said 35 percent in the survey agreed with the statement that by 2025, “there be significant changes

for the worse and hindrances to the ways in which people get and share content online.”

The remaining 65pc of those in the survey were optimistic that the internet would avoid these issues.

The report is not based on a random poll, but instead an opt-in survey of people deemed experts or affiliated with certain organizations, taken between November 2013 and January 2014. – AFP

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JUBA

South Sudan facing famine within weeks

FAMINE will break out in war-torn South Sudan within weeks unless there is massive funding for food aid, relief agencies has warned.

"If the conflict in South Sudan continues, and more aid cannot be delivered, then by August it is likely that some areas of South Sudan will slip into famine," said Britain's Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), a coalition of 13 major aid agencies, on July 3.

Thousands have been killed in the conflict in the world's youngest country, while more than 1.5 million have been forced to flee since the war broke out in mid-December. Peace talks are currently stalled.

The United Nations has around 40 percent of the cash it needs, with a shortfall of over a billion US dollars with almost four million people in need of aid.

100,000

civilians crammed into camps in UN bases around South Sudan

"There is a very real risk of famine in some areas," DEC chief Saleh Saeed said, warning that "millions of people are facing an extreme food crisis".

Famine implies that at least 20 percent of households face extreme food shortages, acute malnutrition affects over 30pc of people, and causes two deaths per 10,000 people every day, according to the UN's definition.

Rains this year are hoped to be around average or slightly below, according to UN experts, with hunger being caused by fighting not extreme climatic conditions.

The DEC coalition, which includes agencies such as Oxfam, Tearfund and Save the Children "have less than half the money they need to help prevent the growing food crisis in South Sudan turning into a catastrophe", Mr Saeed added.

Fighting between forces of President Salva Kiir and troops loyal to rebel chief Riek Machar has been marked by widespread atrocities.

Mr Kiir and Mr Machar committed themselves last month to a third ceasefire deal, and agreed to forge a transitional government within 60 days, but fighting continues.

"Although humanitarian agencies are making every effort to increase aid deliveries, access has been limited by fighting and the start of the rainy season, which has turned many unpaved roads into rivers of mud," the aid agencies added.

On June 30, Doctors Without Borders (MSF), which has earned a reputation for working in some of the toughest warzone conditions across the world, said the situation was the worst it had seen in years, even during the two decades of war that paved the way for South Sudan's independence three years ago.

Some 100,000 civilians are crammed inside squalid camps inside UN bases across the country.

"There are so many diseases because we are living on the ground, and there is rain," said Abraham Tut Mayak, who like thousands of others lives in a makeshift plastic shelter in the UN base in Juba.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which has begun its first air drops of food for two decades, said there are already "alarming signs" of malnutrition, its country chief Franz Rauchenstein said.

The UN mission in South Sudan opened the gates to its peacekeeping bases to civilians when heavy fighting broke out in mid-December, expecting to offer temporary shelter, but many of those inside the camps say they are too frightened to leave, fearing revenge attacks.

The US-based Fund for Peace think-tank last month ranked South Sudan at the bottom of its fragile states index, surpassing anarchic Somalia as the worst in the world. It warned that neither the rebels nor the government appear to realise "that it is 'losing' and could be compelled to put down arms". — AFP



A family shelters in an overcrowded internally displaced persons camp outside Juba on June 20. Photo: AFP



JERUSALEM

Clashes ahead of t

Violence erupted on the streets of Jerusalem for the third day in a row following the appar

PALESTINIANS clashed with Israeli police in east Jerusalem on July 4, ahead of the emotionally-charged funeral of a Palestinian teenager believed murdered by Israelis.

It was the third straight day of violence since Mohammed Abu Khder, 16, was kidnapped and found dead on July 2 in a suspected revenge attack for the abduction and murder of three Israeli teenagers last month.

"Dozens of Palestinian youngsters, some masked, threw stones at police in Ras al-Amud," Israeli police tweeted, referring to a neighbourhood of annexed Arab east Jerusalem.

"The police drove them off with riot control means," a term usually referring to tear gas or stun grenades.

Police said "thousands" of officers were on the streets across east Jerusalem ahead of the teenager's funeral in the Shuafat neighbourhood, which coincided with the first Friday prayers of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Despite the occasion, just 8000 worshippers joined the prayers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Israeli police spokesperson Luba Samri told AFP.

Many apparently stayed away fearing clashes with police. On the same day last year police reported a crowd of 80,000.

Police allowed access only to women, and men over 50. Last year, the age limit for men was 40.

Israeli military commanders meanwhile waited to see if a series of statements by Israeli leaders promising to "meet quiet with quiet" would



A family photo released on July 2 shows 16-year-old Mohammed Abu Khder. Photo: AFP

bring a halt to the latest flare-up of violence on the Gaza border.

Media reports spoke of a possible truce in the making after a week of militant rocket fire into southern Israel and retaliatory air strikes against Gaza.

Hamas said that efforts were under way, with Egyptian mediation, but they had so far not been concluded.

"There are continuing Egyptian efforts to return calm to the Gaza Strip, but no agreement has been reached yet," a Hamas official told AFP, on condition of anonymity.

The Israeli army reported that four rockets and two mortar rounds were fired at Israel on the morning of July 4.

Israel's Iron Dome air defence system intercepted one of the rockets, and the other projectiles hit open ground.

Senior Hamas official Bassem Naim said, "Hamas is not interested in an escalation or war in Gaza, but at the same time it is not possible for it to remain silent on the continued aggression against Gaza and the West Bank."

The teenager's funeral was to be held in Shuafat on the afternoon of July 4, a day later than originally planned after his body was held so pathologists could complete a post-mortem.

Many believe he was killed in revenge for the abduction and murder in the occupied West Bank last month of three Israeli teenagers whose bodies were found on June 30.

Israeli police say the motive for the Palestinian boy's killing is still unclear, and have not said how he died.

In Shuafat and other parts of east Jerusalem, Palestinians clashed with police for a second day on Jul 3, hurling rocks and fireworks at security forces and burning tyres.

A video posted on YouTube by Palestine Today TV showed what appeared to be Israeli border police in riot gear, accompanied by undercover officers, beating and kicking a Palestinian suspect unconscious in Shuafat.

Police spokesperson Micky Rosenfeld said six people were arrested there on July 3 on suspicion of attacking police, but he was unaware of the incident and had not seen the images.



Life in the sun for prisoners in the Philippines

WORLD 44

Red-shirt internet activist freed in Thailand

WORLD 47



Seeking friends for the afterlife in a new Japanese burial trend

WORLD 49



IN PICTURES
Photo: AFP

Former Philippines first lady and now congresswoman Imelda Marcos kisses the glass case containing the body of her late husband, president Ferdinand Marcos, during a visit to the mausoleum on her 85th birthday in Batac town, north of Manila on July 2. Ms Marcos – a former first lady who was accused, but never convicted, of stealing state billions to support a profligate lifestyle during her late husband’s 20-year rule – threw a party in the family’s northern Philippines stronghold to celebrate her birthday.

een funeral

ent revenge killing of a Palestinian teenager by Israelis

Israel warned Hamas on July 3 to put a stop to rocket fire from its Gaza power base and sent army reinforcements to the border. But it also offered to de-escalate if the Islamist movement would do the same. “We are prepared for two possibilities in the south,” army radio quoted

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as telling a July 4 reception at the US ambassador’s residence. “That the fire at our communities will stop and our activities will also stop, or that the fire at our residents of the south will continue and then the reinforced troops which are in place will act forcefully.” – AFP

WASHINGTON

Iraqi forces not strong enough for counter-offensive: US chief

THE US military’s top officer has said that Iraqi forces had shored up their defenses against Sunni militants, but would be hard-pressed to regain territory without outside help. General Martin Dempsey, chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on July 3 that American advisers were still evaluating the state of the Iraqi army, and he suggested US military action was not imminent. Mr Dempsey told a news conference that Iraqi forces were not yet in a position to stage a major counter-offensive after being driven back by Sunni extremists in recent weeks. US military advisers in the capital found that Iraqi security forces are “stiffening, that they’re capable of defending Baghdad” Mr Dempsey said. However, they also found the Iraqi forces “would be challenged to go on the offensive, mostly logistically challenged”. “If you are asking me will the Iraqis, at some point, be able to go back on the offensive to recapture the part of Iraq that they’ve lost ... probably not by themselves,” he said. But the Iraqi army’s shortcomings did not necessarily mean the United States would have to take military action, he said. “I’m not suggesting that that’s the direction this is headed.” About 200 US military advisers have deployed to Baghdad to assess the state of the Iraqi army and the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) jihadists, who have seized control in areas north and west of Baghdad. The advisory teams have set up command centers in Baghdad as well as in Arbil in the north, he said. Apart from the advisers, nearly 500 US troops have been sent to Iraq to bolster security at the American embassy and parts of the Baghdad airport. Mr Dempsey and Pentagon chief Chuck Hagel both insisted that the US troops in Iraq had no combat mission but left open the possibility that President Barack Obama might opt to order air strikes against the IS extremists in the future.



Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel (left) and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey (right) speak at the Pentagon on July 3. Photo: AFP

Mr Dempsey said the role of American troops in Baghdad was “very different” than in the past, when US forces invaded Iraq in 2003 and waged war against insurgents until withdrawing in 2011. “I mean, assessing, advising and enabling are very different roads than attacking, defeating and disrupting,” he said. That could change if the threat posed by Sunni extremists led the US president to order military action, he said. “I’m just suggesting to you we’re not there yet,” said Mr Dempsey, who led combat troops during the US war in Iraq. The four-star general said that future US military assistance might not require an “industrial-strength effort” to aid the Iraqi forces. Instead, smaller scale aid could be successful if Baghdad could isolate the IS jihadists from other Sunni groups. He warned that an Iraqi military campaign designed to roll back the Islamist militants would take time to develop and would have to be accompanied by clear signals from the Shiite-led government in Baghdad that it is ready to reach out to Sunni and Kurdish communities. Mr Dempsey said “the first step in developing that campaign is to determine whether we have a reliable

Iraqi partner that is committed to growing their country into something that all Iraqis will be willing to participate in. “If the answer to that is ‘no,’ then the future’s pretty bleak.” He said the IS extremists had prevailed not through military prowess but by exploiting the Sunni population’s distrust in Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki’s government. The militants had “bought some people off, they threatened the families of others” and “they reminded everyone that the central government in Iraq was not operating on their behalf”, Mr Dempsey said. The Iraq army “collapsed in the face of a future that didn’t hold out any hope for them”, he said. The White House echoed Mr Dempsey’s call for unity on July 3, offering a cool reception to a proposal by Iraq’s Kurdish leader for an independence referendum. The crisis in Iraq has created an unusual situation in which the United States and Iran are both supporting the same side in the conflict, with each lending aid to Baghdad. Mr Dempsey reiterated that there were no plans for US military cooperation with Tehran but said, “It’s not impossible that in the future we would... have reason to do so.” – AFP



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SEOUL

Xi's visit marks shifting alliances in East Asia

CHINA'S president on July 4 wrapped up a state visit to South Korea that was heavier on symbolism than substance, but also exposed the slowly but steadily shifting bedrock of historical, Cold War alliances in East Asia.

Xi Jinping's trip had been seen as a pointed snub to North Korea, with his decision to visit Seoul before Pyongyang a sign of Beijing's growing frustration with its wayward, unpredictable nuclear-armed ally.

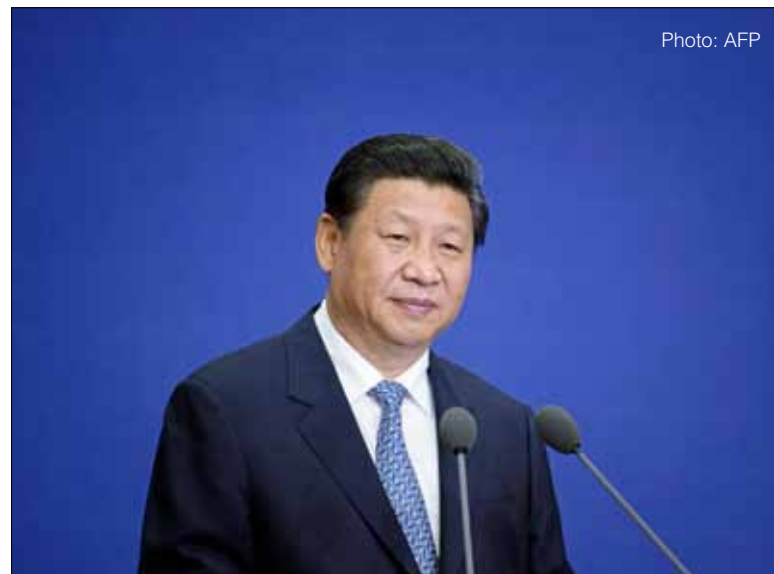
Mao Zedong once declared China and North Korea to be as close as "lips and teeth" - a bond forged in the 1950-53 Korean War against the South and US-led UN forces.

But Beijing's patience with the North's relentless nuclear brinkmanship has worn thin and Xi's visit was a clear reflection of the common ground it now shares with the South - economically and, to a growing extent, diplomatically.

If South Korea hoped this might all translate into a joint, strongly-worded warning to the North over its nuclear program, it was disappointed.

'A prolonged rift between Japan and South Korea will obviously help China extend its influence.'

Lee Shang-Hyun
Sejong Institute



China's President Xi Jinping speaks at Seoul National University on July 4.

The statement that emerged from Mr Xi's summit with South Korean President Park Geun-Hye on July 3 didn't even reference "North Korea" directly, calling instead for the "denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula", a formulation long-favoured by Beijing.

Rather than North Korea, Mr Xi ended up expressing common cause with South Korea over an older regional rival, Japan.

In a speech at Seoul National University on July 4, he recalled the "barbarous wars of aggression" Japan had waged against China and Korea and the suffering inflicted by occupation and colonial rule.

Such rhetoric plays well in the South where relations with Japan are at their lowest ebb for years,

mired in disputes related to Japan's 1910-45 rule over the Korean peninsula.

The rift is a source of increasing anxiety for the United States, whose strategic "pivot" to Asia is on a more fragile footing with its two main military allies in the region barely on speaking terms.

For China, however, it's an opportunity, according to Lee Shang-Hyun, a senior researcher on security and international relations at the Sejong Institute thinktank in Seoul.

"A prolonged rift between Japan and South Korea will obviously help China extend its influence over the Korean peninsula and its diplomatic goal of driving a wedge into the trilateral alliance involving Seoul, Tokyo and Washington," Mr Lee said. - AFP

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UOB hosts financial markets seminar for senior Myanmar bankers



UOB hosts a financial markets seminar for senior Myanmar bankers in Yangon, as part of building stronger financial ties between Singapore and Myanmar.

As part of building stronger financial sector ties between Singapore and Myanmar, United Overseas Bank (UOB) conducted a seminar on opportunities for Myanmar's financial and treasury market development for more than 45 of Myanmar's senior corporate and central bankers.

Industry experts from UOB and the Singapore Management University shared their expertise and experience of navigating the global financial market and updated bankers on best practices and real-life case studies on how capital and treasury markets could fuel the growth and development of Myanmar's financial sector.

Mr. Ian Wong, Managing Director and Head, International, UOB Group said, "An important step in the continuing

development of Myanmar's financial sector is to ascertain the best way to tap into the international financial market. To help facilitate this, we wanted to share the experience UOB had gained over many years across Asia and beyond and to bring in independent experts to share their insights of what is possible for Myanmar."

The guest of honour of the seminar, Dr. Sein Maung, Chairman, First Private Bank and Vice President of Myanmar Banks Association, said that Myanmar's financial sector must be developed in a progressive and calibrated manner.



Dr. Sein Maung, Chairman of First Private Bank and Vice President of Myanmar Banks Association (center), with Mr. Robert Chua, Singapore Ambassador to Myanmar (left) and Mr. Bill Chua, Managing Director and Head, Global Financial Institutions Group, UOB Group (right), at the seminar.

Dr. Sein Maung said that he welcomed UOB's practical trade finance training sessions for Myanmar's banking professionals as these knowledge-sharing initiatives would lay the foundation for the country to develop a strong and resilient banking sector. He also suggested more practice-oriented courses, especially on the job training for international trade services.

In 1994, UOB was one of the first banks to set up a representative office in Myanmar and since then has established a correspondent banking network with most of Myanmar's local banks. As part of its long-term commitment to Myanmar, UOB regularly shares best practices in international trade, risk mitigation and working capital solutions with the local business community, regulators and banks.

UOB Yangon Representative Office

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Dr. Fock Siew Tong, Visiting Professor of Finance (Practice) at Lee Kong Chian School of Business, SMU, sharing his expertise at the seminar.

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JAKARTA

Racism and religious bigotry in media tarnish Indonesia's election campaign

OPPOSITION campaigners in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, have attempted to discredit presidential frontrunner Joko Widodo by describing him as an ethnic Chinese Christian.

Smear campaigns have escalated ahead of the July 9 election, with the candidates' supporters playing dirty to control the messages swirling in the media, a trend commentators say has contributed to a steep fall in support for Widodo.

In another incident, a senior official from the party of Prabowo Subianto, the only other contender, suggested on Twitter Widodo was a communist, playing on fears that linger from the era of dictator Suharto, who demonised the far-left.

'I'm very afraid the outcome of this election is not going to be based on informed votes.'

Endy Bayuni

Senior editor Jakarta Post

While Widodo, known by his nickname Jokowi, has borne the brunt of the attacks, Prabowo has also been targeted.

He has been labelled a psychopath, and a YouTube video of the infamously hot-headed ex-general punching someone at an election rally went viral, even though it appeared to have been doctored.

Most of these allegations have been denied or proven to be false. But

in a social media-mad country where rumours spread fast on the internet, they appear to be having an impact, commentators say.

"I'm very afraid that the outcome of the election is not going to be based on informed votes, because smear campaigns are having an impact on voters," Endy Bayuni, senior editor at the English-language daily *Jakarta Post*, said at a recent panel discussion.

Just a few months ago, Widodo had a massive 30 percentage point lead on Prabowo, but polls last week showed the gap had dived to single digits.

In a survey by Indikator Politik Indonesia, 17 percent of more than 3000 respondents said they had heard the rumour Widodo was an ethnic Chinese Christian, and 37 percent of those said they believed it.

Widodo's team have sought to counter the escalating smear campaigns by highlighting Prabowo's tainted human rights record: He ordered the abduction of student activists before Suharto's downfall in 1998.

But Indikator said that this appeared to have had little impact on voters, despite the fact it was true.

The claims about Widodo's religion and ancestry have been by far the most damaging, as they could alienate Muslim voters and play on long-standing resentment toward the ethnic Chinese community. Widodo vehemently denies the claim.

The rumours were spread predominantly through a new tabloid, *Obor Rakyat* (The People's Torch), widely seen as a vehicle for pro-Prabowo propaganda, which was distributed to Islamic boarding schools and mosques on the main island of Java.

Ross Tapsell, an Indonesian me-



Presidential candidate Joko Widodo from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) speaks during the third presidential debate in Jakarta on June 22. Photo AFP

dia expert at the Australian National University (ANU), said the rumours were "ridiculous" but added, "They get circulated and, particularly in regions of Java, it will be important."

However, while the smear tactics have undoubtedly hit Widodo's popularity, observers say Prabowo's campaign has also been helped by other factors such as his powerful media backers and his huge personal wealth.

Television remains the most influential media in Indonesia, and in this regard Prabowo is clearly leading, with five stations backing him compared to just one for Widodo.

The channels are making their

allegiances increasingly clear as the race tightens Surya Paloh, head of a political party backing Widodo, appeared recently on his own Metro TV news channel in a farmer's hat bearing stickers of his chosen candidate.

And Prabowo handed out prizes on the final of popular singing contest *Indonesian Idol*, aired on a station owned by a member of his coalition.

Prabowo also has greater funds to fight his campaign. Both candidates publicly declared their wealth this week, something required under Indonesian election law, and Prabowo's \$150 million dwarfed

Widodo's \$2.4 million.

In addition, the 62-year-old has the backing of his billionaire brother, Hashim Djojohadikusumo.

The ex-general has also been planning his run for presidency for a long time, and his well-oiled political machine stands in stark contrast to Widodo's often disorganised campaign, analysts say.

"Jokowi was nominated in March, Prabowo's been planning this for 10 years," said ANU's Tapsell.

"His team members know exactly what they're doing, while in Jokowi's team, they're still arguing about what they should do." - AFP

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NAIROBI

Ivory price triples

THE price of ivory taken from African elephants slaughtered for their tusks has tripled in the past four years in China, the world's biggest market, conservationists said on July 3.

"The surge in the price of ivory is driving a wave of killing of elephants across Africa that shows little sign of abating," campaign group Save the Elephants said in a new report.

"With the ivory price in Africa a tenth of that reached in China, substantial profits are being generated for organised crime that fuels insecurity, corruption, and deprives local communities of valuable income."

Researchers from the Kenyan-based group studying ivory sales in China said prices had risen for raw ivory from US\$750 in 2010 to \$2100 in 2014.

This week wildlife group TRAFFIC warned that Thailand's ivory market was "out of control" and that the number of ivory products on sale in Bangkok had nearly trebled in the past year.

Save the Elephants estimates an average of 33,000 elephants were lost to poachers every year between 2010 and 2012.

"Without concerted international action to reduce the demand for ivory, measures to reduce the killing of elephants for ivory will fail," said Iain Douglas-Hamilton, founder of Save the Elephants. - AFP

TOKYO



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (centre) speaks to reporters at his official residence in Tokyo on July 3. Photo: AFP

N Korea sanctions eased

JAPAN will revoke some of its unilateral sanctions on North Korea, the prime minister announced on July 3, after talks on the Cold War kidnapping of Japanese nationals.

Shinzo Abe said Tokyo judged that Pyongyang, which pledged to re-investigate the disappearance of missing Japanese citizens, had shown sufficient willingness to resolve the decades-old row and that this needed to be reciprocated.

“We have concluded that an unprecedented scheme that can make national decisions has been established. In accordance with the principle of action to action, we will lift part of the measures taken by Japan,” Mr Abe told reporters.

The move comes after the two sides met in Beijing to discuss what happened to the dozens, or possibly hundreds, of people Japan says were snatched by North Korean spies to train their agents in language and customs during the 1970s and 1980s.

The sanctions in question are additional to international strictures imposed after UN Security Council resolutions in the wake of nuclear and missile tests carried out by the North.

Tokyo is expected to lift a ban on North Koreans entering Japan, waive the reporting requirement for remitting more than 100,000 yen (US\$1000) in cash and end the prohibition on some North Korean ships entering Japanese ports.

Japan and North Korea do not have formal diplomatic ties and relations between the two have been testy for decades.

But a recent thaw, despite several recent missile tests by the North, comes as Pyongyang appears to have fallen out of favour with Beijing, its longterm patron and protector.

The *Nikkei* business daily said North Korea had handed Japan a list of at least 10 Japanese nationals who are said to be living in the country, including those believed to have been kidnapped by Pyongyang agents.

The list, which is in Korean, includes names and personal histories, according to Japanese government officials involved in the talks, the paper said.

At a meeting on July 1, the North Korean delegation also presented details of a planned investigative panel, which Tokyo considers is well authorised to launch the probe, it said.

“The special investigative committee will be quite large” and chaired by a close aide to the North’s leader Kim Jong-Un, said a Japanese government official involved in the negotiations.

Pyongyang is expected to use the list to confirm their whereabouts, while Tokyo will analyse it to see if any names match those of reported abductees, it said.

North Korea admitted in 2002 that it had kidnapped 13 Japanese citizens to train its spies in Japanese language and customs.

Five of the abductees returned home but Pyongyang said, without producing credible evidence, that the eight others had died, provoking an uproar in Japan.

The subject is highly charged in Japan, where there are suspicions that perhaps even hundreds of others were taken. – *AFP*

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IWAHIG

Inmates from a minimum security compound walk unescorted to their place of work at Iwahig Prison, Palawan island, the Philippines on June 6. Photo: AFP

Open prison works for island's inmates

In an open prison twice the size of Paris, Filipino convicts are being rehabilitated with outdoor life and a tropical island existence very different from most jails

ONE hundred convicts armed with machetes wander through a vast prison without walls in one of the Philippines' most beautiful islands, as part of a unique approach to reforming criminals.

Two token guards with shotguns slung on their shoulders relax in the shade nearby as the blue-shirted group of inmates chop weeds at a rice paddy at the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm on Palawan island.

But Arturo, who is 21 years into a life sentence for murder, has no plans to escape, preferring to keep his chances of an eventual commutation or even a pardon.

“I don't want to live the life of a rat, panicked into bolting into a hole each time a policeman comes my way,” said the 51-year-old inmate whose full name cannot be used in keeping with prison regulations.

Surrounded by a thick coastal mangrove forest, a mountain range and a highway, the 26,000-hectare (64,000-acre) Iwahig jail is one of the world's largest open prisons, more than two times the size of Paris.

A single guard sits at its largely ceremonial main gate, routinely waving visitors through without inspection.

A shallow ditch, but no walls, is all that separates the 3186 prisoners from the outside world.

A mere 14 kilometres (9 miles) away is Puerto Princesa, a city of 250,000 people and a top tourist destination as the gateway to an island famed for stunning dive sites, a giant underground river system and beautiful beaches.

A steady stream of local and foreign tourists visit Iwahig's quaint, pre-World War II prison administration buildings and a handicrafts shop, which is manned by inmates who have made the items on sale.

A few hundred hectares of the land is devoted to rice paddies, which sit picturesquely on either side of a fire-tree-lined dirt road. Ducks, cattle, goats and egrets feed quietly on newly harvested plots.

Fish ponds, coconut plantations, corn fields and vegetable plots are scattered across the prison, although the bulk of the land remains covered by forest and mangroves.

US colonial rulers established Iwahig in 1904 for political prisoners and Manila's worst inmates, seeking to isolate them in what was then a

sparsely inhabited frontier about 600 km [370] miles from the nation's capital.

Prisoners were used to clear virgin rainforests for farming, which would in turn encourage migration from the archipelago's more populous areas.

After the Philippines won independence post-World War II, those who had served out their term were also given the option to clear and own up to 6 hectares of land.

Up until the 1970s, the prisons had much tougher security than today, with chain gangs of inmates the norm.

Most other jails in the Philippines continue with brutal conditions, with inmates packed beyond capacity in dingy, airless cells and having to take turns sleeping.

But at Iwahig, and four smaller penal farms in other provincial areas, authorities have sought to take advantage of the open spaces to create conditions that encourage the rehabilitation of inmates.

‘I don't want to live the life of a rat panicked into bolting into a hole each time a policeman comes my way.’

Arturo
Iwahig prisoner

“This [farm work] serves as their preparation for getting back into a free society once they are released. It helps them adapt back to life as free men,” said prison superintendent Richard Schwarzkopf.

Iwahig's inmates mostly come from Manila's main Bilibid prison, a far smaller facility that holds about 22,000 convicts and which requires periodic prisoner transfers to ease the over-crowding.

Instead of the squalid, sardine can-like cells of Bilibid, night quarters for most of Iwahig's inmates are lightly guarded buildings that are bigger than

a basketball court, surrounded by barbed wire rather than concrete or metal walls.

About 50 lucky minimum-security inmates live full-time in straw-and-bamboo huts scattered along the penal farm, assigned to guard the crops, tractors and other implements.

There are just 150 maximum-security inmates who must work indoors and remain in a more tightly secured environment.

However, murderers and other previous maximum-security prisoners can qualify for the outdoors if they have served at least half their sentence and have a record of good behaviour. A life sentence is regarded as a 40-year term.

Mr Schwarzkopf said the modern approach to penology had been a success. He said less than 10 percent of Iwahig's prisoners became repeat offenders after being released, lower than the national average.

The jail has also had no recent history of riots or mass breakouts.

Mr Schwarzkopf said there had been just one breakout since he took over leadership of the prison in 2012, involving four inmates serving terms for murder, attempted murder and car theft.

Three of them were swiftly captured, according to Mr Schwarzkopf, although he declined to say which one of the four remained at large.

Prominent Puerto Princesa lawyer Herminia Caabay said she also regarded Iwahig's “humane” approach to inmates as a success.

“Riots are a sign of depression brought about by prison conditions. These usually happen at places where people are kept behind bars,” Ms Caabay said.

Convicted drug dealer Gamay, 39, said he treasured his time working the land as it helped him keep his mind off his wife, who had left him for another man.

“It stops me thinking bad things,” said the stocky, tattooed former fish vendor, who began his 30-year sentence in Manila's Bilibid but was transferred to Iwahig seven years ago.

Gamay said living at Iwahig had allowed him to dream and prepare for a successful life back in society.

“The work experience helps you learn to stand on your own two feet... I want to go back to selling fish and save up to build my own house,” he said. - AFP



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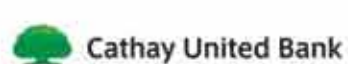
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BANGKOK

Redshirt activist freed

A PROMINENT Thai activist who led an anti-coup campaign using the three-finger salute from the *Hunger Games* films has been freed on bail after nearly a month in detention, officials said on July 2.

Sombat Boonngamanong faces up to 14 years in jail on charges of incitement, computer crimes and ignoring a summons to turn himself in to the junta.

Following his release, he was taken to another court in the northeastern province of Roi Et to hear a separate charge of insulting the monarchy, which carries a punishment of up to 15 years in prison.

That case, filed by a member of the public, relates to a photo that Mr Sombat allegedly posted online, said Roi Et chief investigator Lieutenant Colonel Suriya Saengonta.

"He denied the charge and said he did not intend to insult the monarchy," Mr Suriya said.

Mr Sombat was one of several hundred politicians, activists, academics and journalists called in by the junta following the May 22 coup.

Mr Sombat, the leader of a faction of the "Red Shirts" movement that broadly supports fugitive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, refused to turn himself in, posting a message on Facebook saying, "Catch me if you can."

While on the run he urged followers to stage peaceful public demonstrations, flashing the three-finger salute from the *Hunger Games* films that became a symbol of defiance against the junta.



Anti-coup activist Sombat Boonngamanong (right) arrives escorted by police and soldiers at a military court in Bangkok on June 12. Photo: AFP

He was later tracked down and arrested. Mr Sombat said on July 2 that he was not mistreated while being questioned in military detention.

"They were very gentle. There was no intimidation, no physical contact at all," he said.

He added the legal cases against him were expected to proceed, and insisted he was innocent of insulting the monarchy.

Mr Sombat said his bail conditions restrict him from further political involvement.

"I have to stay still unlike in the past when I was involved in a lot of

activities," he said.

The military banned public protests and temporarily imposed a nighttime curfew after the coup, which followed months of mass opposition protests and political violence.

Critics see the coup as a pretext for a long-planned power grab by the military-backed royalist establishment to purge politics of the influence of Mr Thaksin, who was himself ousted by the army in 2006.

The billionaire tycoon-turned-populist politician lives in Dubai to avoid jail for a corruption conviction.

- Photo: AFP

KUALA LUMPUR

Rape case diplomat to be returned to NZ

MALAYSIA said on July 2 it would send an envoy back to New Zealand to face an attempted rape charge as a diplomatic storm erupted over the case.

The Southeast Asian nation had earlier asked Wellington to drop the case against defence staff assistant Muhammad Rizalman Ismail, promising he would never return to the country, according to documents released on July 2.

Mr Muhammad Rizalman appeared in a New Zealand court on May 10 accused of stalking a 21-year-old woman the previous night and attacking her at her home in the same Wellington suburb where Malaysia's High Commission is located.

Police charged him with burglary and assault with intent to commit rape, both offences that carry jail terms of up to 10 years, but he escaped prosecution after invoking diplomatic immunity and returning to his homeland.

But in an about-turn, Malaysia's foreign ministry said that Mr Muhammad Rizalman would return to New Zealand "to assist in the investigation for the charges".

"The Malaysian Government is of the view that this decision will provide an opportunity for Mr Muhammad Rizalman to cooperate fully and assist the New Zealand authorities in the on-going investigations on the allegations made against him," it said in a statement.

New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully said this was a "very welcome development which underlines the good faith and integrity with which they [Malaysia] have approached this issue".

The case has caused uproar in New Zealand, with the government facing criticism for failing to ensure the diplomat stood trial.

The Malaysian government has also been accused by its nationals of wrongly protecting Mr Muhammad Rizalman.

"There was never any intention by either government to let this matter rest, and regardless of whether the process took place in Malaysia or New Zealand there was a strong commitment to seeing justice done," Mr McCully said in a statement.

Malaysia said it would provide legal assistance to Mr Muhammad Rizalman, who "is considered innocent until proven guilty".

In an unusual move, New Zealand earlier on July 2 released correspondence between foreign affairs officials and the Malaysian High Commission, in which the diplomatic mission refused to waive immunity and asked that the charges be dropped and the matter kept quiet.

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key has said he feels the accused should be in the dock in the country where the alleged offences took place. - AFP



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TOKYO

TILL DEATH US DO JOIN

Growing numbers of people in Japan are choosing to abandon family traditions and marriage bonds, and instead signing up for communal burials in a new trend that is also boosting their social lives and creating new friendships

KYOKO HASEGAWA

EVERY once in a while, Kumiko Kano meets a group of people with whom she has decided to spend eternity.

She is one of a growing number in Japan who are shunning the expense and commitment of a traditional family grave and choosing a more communal arrangement.

Instead of shelling out millions of yen (tens of thousands of US dollars) on an elaborate tomb, which, according to religious custom must be lovingly tended by descendants, Ms Kano and her late husband decided to be interred in a collective grave with thousands of others.

“My husband saw his eldest brother rack up huge costs for the family gravestone, and we decided that we didn’t need one that would be a burden to our children,” said Ms Kano, 74.

“Today, children don’t always live near your place. Visiting a graveyard would be difficult if they live abroad, for example,” she added.

Instead, the couple joined a group for prospective gravemates that has established a collective final resting place. The organisation arranges meetings, from book club to countryside excursions, so that ties may be formed before members are laid to rest.

In native Shintoism, as well as in imported Buddhism, successive generations have a duty of care for dead ancestors, who exist on a continuous plane with those still living.

Photographs of departed loved ones stare out from altars at the family home, where they are prayed to and offered gifts of fruit, alcohol or cigarettes in exchange for the protection they offer from the netherworld.

Their mortal remains are cremated and the ashes are kept in urns, which are stored in a costly tomb built on sacred ground.

The heavy granite obelisk bears the family name and will be the final resting place of the oldest son and his family in each coming generation.

Younger sons must establish their own tomb and daughters are co-opted into their husband’s grave.

Ms Kano and her late husband, decided about a decade ago they did not want to build a new tomb, joining communal resting place



Kumiko Kano, 74, sits at the communal resting place of the group “Moyainokai”, which means “working together”, in Tokyo on June 4. Photo: AFP

group Moyainokai, which means “working together”.

Her husband Jiro was buried in their grave at the age of 76 in 2008, where he is now one of 3000 whose remains rest there.

Ryukai Matsushima, a Buddhist priest whose father pioneered the movement, said Moyainokai was established 25 years ago “for people who were worried about their own burials because they had no kin or had only daughters”.

“It’s unfair that some people have someone to look after them when they die and others don’t, just because they chose a lifestyle of staying single ... or they didn’t have children,” he said.

Group members meet for excursions or events “to nurture ties not based on blood”, he said.

Ms Kano, for example, recently visited a distant temple with some of those she will share a grave with.

For the mother of two, it’s no longer just a lack of offspring that is causing a rethink among those entering the autumn of their lives.

“Today, people with all sorts of backgrounds ... whether they have children or not, show interest in a

collective grave like this,” Mr Matsushima said.

“Among them are women who say they don’t want to be buried with their husbands.”

A generation ago, married women had no choice, and would automatically be included in the family plot.

“But now you can say you don’t want to be buried there,” he said. “What was a religion for the family is transforming into a religion for individuals.”

Syohei Maekawa of Club Tourism International, which takes its clients on tours of possible final resting places, says wives wanting to escape their husbands in the hereafter are not uncommon.

“I’ve heard some of our customers talking to each other, saying, ‘It’s off the record, but I don’t want to join my husband’s family grave,’” he said.

Some of the different options being offered are for ashes to be scattered at sea or for burials under trees.

Toyo University sociology professor Haruyo Inoue, who is also director of a not-for-profit organisation promoting such

possibilities, says wives who do not want to lie with their husband for eternity are the fifth-largest group of people seeking alternative afterlives.

The largest category, she says, are couples with only daughters, followed by those with sons (and potentially also daughters). Childless couples are third, while single people are fourth.

“For the wives, it’s not necessarily because their relationships with their husbands are bad, but rather because they want to do things their own individual way,” she said.

Mitsuharu Nojima, of Club Tourism International, says the growing movement of people looking to get something a little different out of death is the natural result of the huge changes that have rippled through Japan since World War II.

“Seniors today are feisty with desire for self-determination– they were in their 30s during the years of Japan’s bubble economy and they were used to creating new things,” he said.

“They have the energy to get what they want,” Mr Nojima said. – AFP

KUALA LUMPUR

Church loses ‘Allah’ challenge

MALAYSIA’S highest court has dismissed a bid by Christians for the right to use the word “Allah”, ending a years-long legal battle that has escalated religious tensions in the Muslim-majority country.

The divisive case, in which the Catholic Church challenged a government ban on its long-time use of the Arabic word to refer to God, came amid concern from minorities who feel their rights are under threat by rising Islamisation in the Southeast Asian nation.

The government had previously banned the use of “Allah” in the local Malay-language edition of the Church’s *Herald* newspaper, which had angered Muslims, who say Christians are overstepping religious boundaries.

A seven-judge panel in the administrative capital Putrajaya ruled on June 30 that a lower court decision siding with the government stood.

“It [the Court of Appeal] applied the correct test, and it is not open for us to interfere,” chief justice Arifin Zakaria said.

Analysts termed the ruling a “vote-winner” for the government.

S. Selvarajah, one of the church’s lawyers, said his team would explore further ways to challenge the ban.

“It’s a blanket ban. Non-Muslims cannot use the word. It has a major impact,” he said.

The *Herald* editor Father Lawrence Andrew said the judgement “didn’t touch on the fundamental rights of minorities”.

“We are greatly disappointed by this judgment,” he said.

Outside the court, which was cordoned off, about 100 Muslim activists cheered the verdict.

“I hope the issue will be put to rest,” Ibrahim Ali, head of Muslim rights group Perkasa, said.

“We must defend ‘Allah’ because this is our religious obligation.”

The dispute first erupted in 2007 when the Home Ministry threatened to revoke the publishing permit of the *Herald* for using the Arabic word in its Malay-language edition.

The Church launched a court case to challenge the directive, arguing “Allah” had been used for centuries in Malay-language Bibles and other literature to refer to “God” outside of Islam.

But authorities say using “Allah” in non-Muslim literature could confuse Muslims and entice them to convert, a crime in Malaysia. – AFP

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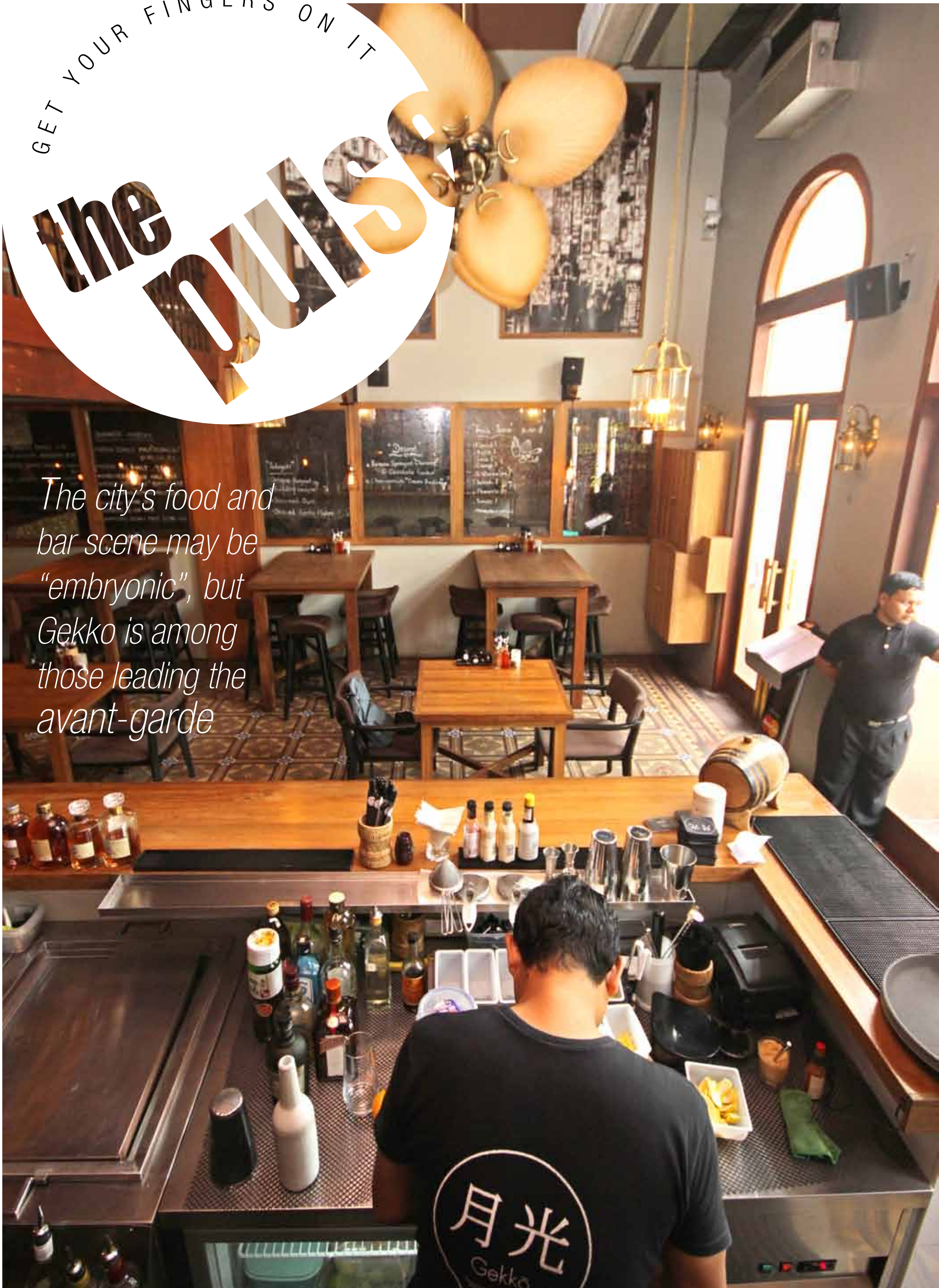
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the pulse

The city's food and bar scene may be "embryonic", but Gekko is among those leading the avant-garde



FIONA MACGREGOR

It doesn't feel like Yangon." So proffered an English friend on our first venture to Gekko, a recently opened bar and restaurant on the city's Merchant Street.

We got what she meant as we gazed at the quirky ceiling fans – giant propellers that look as if they might have been taken off the front of a WWII plane – the outsized sepia snapshots of Tokyo street scenes, and the perforated lamp-shades casting a moody, up-market, opium-den light.

But her observation raised an interesting debate, our enthusiasm for which was no doubt fuelled in part by the sprightly saki-based cocktails and Japanese whiskies we were downing at the time: "If this isn't it, what exactly does Yangon nightlife feel like?"

Despite further experimentation with the cocktail list – created by Singapore-based friends of Gekko's managing director Nico Elliott – we failed to come up with an answer. Nor did we get any further after attempting to counter the alcohol with various plates of octopus, dumplings and other Japanese-inspired bites from the menu.

Sated? Yes. Merry? Decidedly. But able to conjure up a definitive summation of Yangon's burgeoning bar and restaurant scene? No.

Eventually we agreed that while Gekko might not yet be particularly representative of Myanmar's largest city, it could be one day. We just didn't know.

Like most other forms of business in this rapidly changing country, no one's quite sure which direction Yangon's drink and dining culture is heading. But a growing number of bars and restaurants aimed at a cosmopolitan clientele are springing up alongside the city's myriad traditional beer stations and snack stands.

I returned to Gekko to meet Elliott and discuss the topic over more sober refreshments of green tea.

"You're not going to be able to create in Yangon what's happening in London's Soho right now," he says. However that doesn't mean there's not some exciting possibilities ahead.

European or US cities, gave him the inspiration for Gekko's look.

"There's a concept [restaurant] in Hong Kong called Yardbird which is not Japanese-run but based around Yakatori [grilled and skewered food]. It's very modern and trendy with cocktails. I know the person who's involved with it there, and I was very impressed with it. It's booming in Hong Kong," he says, explaining Gekko's Japanese theme, which may have seemed an unusual choice for an English entrepreneur, especially given the considerable number of Japanese restaurants already operating in the city.

But "most of them are Burmese-run", he points out, although another recent arrival, Maru Bar and Grill, is a Japanese original that's also helping ramp up Yangon's night scene.

On a busy evening, Gekko customers are a mix of ages with Myanmar locals mixing with Japanese, South Korean and Western expats, business travellers and the odd tourist.

Is it difficult to meet the demands of such a varied clientele?

"Not really. I just go with how I think things should be," says Elliott.

So what's his vision for how things should be in Yangon's wining and dining sector as a whole? How can entrepreneurs tap into something that will help the city's nightlife develop a characteristic style?

At the moment, Elliott says, Yangon's bar and restaurant culture is still "embryonic", though he welcomes the increasing number of new additions which he sees not as competition but as good for business in general, helping draw customers to a particular part of town.

"You could have ten times as many bars downtown," he adds.

"I hope more people come, and I hope they [use] the old buildings," he says, identifying Yangon's architectural heritage as one of the city's most attractive features, and something that could really shine through as the sector develops.



While planning Gekko, managing director Nico Elliott was inspired by Yardbird, a high-concept Japanese restaurant in Hong Kong. Photos: Yu Yu

Redefining Yangon's nightlife

Having established Gekko and its elder sister Union on Strand Road – two of downtown Yangon's most popular bar and eateries – and with a new wood-oven pizza joint set to open in Parami later this month, Elliott is familiar with the challenges of creating an urbane dining and drinking experience in a country where alcohol imports are difficult and access to international ingredients are limited.

"Even simple things. Lemons are expensive here. So if you want to make a lemon-juice-based cocktail, that's going to push the cost up. And people here don't expect to pay those prices in Yangon. If you want to get a range of spirits, you have to bring them back with you on the plane," he says.

Like most who appreciate a decent drink, he's unimpressed by the authorities' clampdown on alcohol imports, which ended Myanmar's enviable position as "the best place for drinking in the region after Hong Kong", as he puts it.

That city and other Asian metropolises, rather than

He says he's a big fan of downtown, where some of the most impressive colonial era buildings can be found – but the complications of renting property here don't make it easy to take advantage of them.

The city's port region is a case in point.

TS1, a gallery-cum-pop-up-store on Warden Jetty that has attracted international interest, is set to open a cafe next door within the next couple of months, bringing a new style of dining to what is still a busy working docks.

But realising visions of those who want to see the wider area develop into a hip spot for socialising appears to be some way off.

"I want to show you a photo," says Elliott ruefully.

He'd found a former rundown hotel, complete with river-side swimming pool, just 100 yards from TS1 that was crying out for conversion into a bar and private pool club, he says. Alas, for those who dream of sipping cocktails while gazing over the Yangon River, it was not to be.

Elliott lost out on the tenancy to the maritime police. His would-be-glamour spot is, he says, currently sheltering "five sleeping policemen".

Similarly, Elliott says he would be keen to open a boutique hotel, but licensing, bureaucracy and investment issues have made doing so impractical.

But despite some of the frustrations of business, he believes the next five years will bring huge change.

"It took a long time to find our new [Neapolitan] chef, but he's exactly the kind of person who wants to be here."

He speculates also that it's not just more international arrivals, but the growing numbers of Myanmar "re-pats", who will help develop Yangon's hospitality scene.

For the moment, he says, it still takes a pretty "unique person" to decide to come and set up business here.

Perhaps that is what makes a definition of Yangon so difficult to pin down – and such an interesting place to live, after all.



Patient prayers

Thanks to donor support, a group of women with mental health disorders make a rare visit to Shwedagon



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FOR many people, prayer is a time to ask a higher power to fulfill wishes for the future. They pray with flowers and water and candles for good news and healing. It helps them to feel better.

The same is also true for people with mental health disorders. They may wish to visit the monastery or pagoda to pray for relief of suffering or a good life. But in years past, such patients with no family and no connections lacked the opportunity to leave the hospital, said Dr Sun Lin, a consultant at the Mental Health Hospital in Yangon.

Since 2013, however, hospital staff has facilitated patient visits to pagodas

with the support of donors. On the morning of June 27, 40 women patients, aged 20 to 50, were accompanied by their helpers to Shwedagon Pagoda.

They came by the East Gate elevator, wearing *yawgayi* uniforms – a special white blouse and brown longyi for religious ceremonies. Their hair was styled short.

At first, a look of embarrassment could be read on their faces. They seemed to feel the stare of other people's eyes on them.

Then the nurses put Eugenia leaves into their hands and said, "Pray that your health will get better."

The women walked to the pagoda platform, their hospital helpers by their side to make sure all reached the top. Then the women formed rows in front of the pagoda and began chanting their prayers.

"They have been in the hospital over 10 years," said Daw Lae Lae Win, the head nurse. "They receive treatment, and if they don't like someone, they don't say anything.

But each has a mood disorder, like hypomania or schizophrenia."

Two patients, Hpein Hpein and Daw Win Kyi, were permitted to speak with the media.

Hpein Hpein, a young woman from Moe-nai township, in Shan State, is now working at the hospital as a janitor. She arrived at a school for orphans when she was young, and has been staying in the hospital for a long time because she had no other place to go. Like many of her fellow patients, her family left her there, unable to care and support her themselves.

Hpein Hpein said it was the first time she had visited the pagoda, though she didn't know its name.

Daw Win Kyi knew that they had arrived at Shwedagon, and she prayed she would have a better life when she is born again, but at the same time tears formed at the corners of her eyes.

Both of the women said they were happy to be there.

The Thingangyun social welfare association supported the visit with



Mental health patients pray at Shwedagon Pagoda on June 27. Photos: Yu Yu

transportation and the donation of some money to buy food and beverage for the occasion.

"This event is really different from others we support because we have a big responsibility toward them," said

association chair Daw Dawi Khin, explaining how the women needed guiding through each step – prayer, offering and chant.

"But we are happy to help like this."



Seen through a bamboo blind, a Japanese woman lunches at a restaurant on June 1.



Reflections of passengers captured on a city train on June 3.



Pedestrians walk past a wall decorated with Robert Capa's iconic picture in front of the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography on June 1.

A Tokyo photo tour

Recently, **Kaung Htet**, photo director of *The Myanmar Times*, was invited to participate in the 2014 Month of Photography Tokyo by the Photographic Society of Japan. Representing Myanmar photojournalists, he attended the organisation's exhibition June 1-7. During his stay, he also documented through street photography the unique culture and lifestyle of citizens of Tokyo. Through his lens, we see the city's rush, and its fusion of traditional customs and modern ways of life.

Q & A

Pressing questions with May Myat Noe

The winner of the 2014 Miss Asia Pacific World contest discusses the pageant and her hopes for the future

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A few years ago, Myanmar started to participate again in international beauty pageants for the first time in decades. Since then, it's become the dream of teenage girls to become a "Miss".

Recently, one lived that dream. May Myat Noe brought home the Miss Asia Pacific World title from Seoul in May. It was the first international beauty pageant appearance for the 19-year-old from Yangon. A tall, slim woman, she is still a student trying to complete the O level of the Cambridge IGCSE.

In 2013, she was the seventh runner-up at a local singing contest. After that, she attended Myanmar Model Management and, later, "personality enhancement" classes at Style Plus H training centre, which was opened by Hla Nu Htun, Myanmar national director of Miss Asia Pacific World.

May Myat Noe took the crown for her smarts, said the organisation.

She didn't expect to win, she told *The Myanmar Times*. She just wanted to let the world know about Myanmar culture, traditions and manners.

How did you feel when they announced you won?

At the end of the contest, it was only me and Miss Korea left. I thought the announcers called Miss Korea's name, but actually it was my name. It was so amazing. I don't have words for how happy I was.

What was the pageant like?

All the women from different countries were pretty and



Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

talented. I became good friends with my roommates Miss Korea and Miss Singapore. We each shared our culture and history. All the contestants possessed beautiful minds, and we forgot it was a contest and helped each other as necessary.

How did you prepare?

I was trained by professionals in the Philippines. They taught me how to walk smarter than others, respond to questions and general knowledge. My hobby is singing, and I prepared three songs for the talent show. In the end, I sang a K-pop song. I'm not very fluent in Korean language but I'm always listening K-pop. Ms Hye Ryeongu taught me the right pronunciation.

What was the prize?

The Miss Asia Pacific World organisation will train me to become a star. That is the prize, and I've made a three-year contract with them. They will train me in dancing, singing and acting in Korea. I will go back there in July. I haven't lived there for three years. I will do some activities in Myanmar, too.

Most "Misses" do good things for needy people. What are you going to do?

I'm still a student, but now that I'm an international "Miss" I will do as much as I can.

What career do you want?

I'm doing all kinds of art, including acting, modelling and singing. My favourite is singing, so I'm more focused on that project.

Who are your influences and role models?

I attend school overseas, so I was influenced by foreign people's behaviour and lifestyle, but I love Myanmar. My role model is my mum. I want to become a good mother like her.

Do you think of yourself as a role model for young women?

When I was in the beauty contest, I showed that Myanmar women have talent, and we can do most things just like international men and women. In this way, I thought young women could identify with me as a role model.

When did you discover that you loved to sing?

After I learned to speak very well, I sang songs that came from my family and other places. Even though I couldn't sing a whole song, I loved music since my childhood. I noticed singing was my hobby, but I didn't attend any voice lessons. I would like to attend a class if I have the chance.

What are you reading?

I'm reading Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

What is your motto?

"Never give up."

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

JULY 7-12 "I am a Musical Legend" Lokanat Galleries, 62 Pansodan Street, 1st floor, Kyauktada 9am-5pm

JULY 11-18 "From Canvas to Concrete" two artist show. River Gallery II, 38th Street (beside Strand Hotel) 5-8pm

JUNE 21-JULY 18 "People of the River" photo exhibition. Witness Yangon Documentary Space, 4A, 3rd Floor, Parami Road, Pyan Hlwar Building, Mayangone 12-5pm

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*. Directed by Dean DeBlois. An animation for both kids and adults.

Mingalar 2 Cinema, at Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone, Sanchaung *Transformers: Age of Extinction*. Directed by Michael Bay. A sci-fi action film based on the Transformers franchise.

Shae Shaung Cinema 1, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada *Transformers: Age of Extinction*

Shae Shaung Cinema 2, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada *Maleficent*. Directed by Robert Stromberg. The untold story of Disney's most iconic villain from the 1959 classic *Sleeping Beauty*.

Junction Square Cineplex, Kamaryut *Haunt*. Directed by Mac Carter. A teenage boy uncovers the mysterious events behind the supernatural presence in his new attic residence.

JULY 7 - 13

Got an event? List it in What's On! Email: whatsonmt@gmail.com

Main Tera Hero. Directed by David Dhawan. A Bollywood action comedy film.

Mingalar San Pya Cineplex, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw *Transformers: Age of Extinction* *How to Train Your Dragon 2*

MUSIC

JULY 7 Live blues. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 8:30-11:30pm

MISC

JULY 6-13 Ginza Teppanyaki Restaurant opening promotion. Japanese food will be 10pc off for one week. Ground Floor, Ocean Super Center, 110 Shwegonedaing Road, Bahan

JULY 8 Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada, 7pm-late

JULY 10 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 10-12 Myanmar Phar-Med Expo 2014. The 2nd international expo and conference for the medical and pharmaceutical industry. Myanmar Convention Center, Mayangone, 9-5pm

JULY 10-12 Myanmar Business Engagement Forum, focusing on youth competitiveness and social business. Sein Gay Har, Pyay Road 8-5pm

JULY 11 Live Music, 50th Street Bar, 9-13 50th Street, Botahtaung 3-7pm

JULY 12 Bollywood Night Party. Tickets are K9000. Call 09-31559495, 09-43185009 or 09-420187010. Adamas Lounge, 14 Kanbawza Road, Golden Valley, Bahan 9pm

JULY 13 FIFA World Cup Celebration Party. Singer Eaint Chit and Mi Sandi will perform, among others. Free. Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone 1-5pm

JULY 13 Drawing club. Pansodan Scene, 144 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 10-11:30am

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A tour of faith

Twenty-five young people visit churches, temples and pagodas in Yangon to learn the meaning of tolerance

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WALKING through the temple, the guests fell silent and peaceful. This part of the tour was about understanding Sikh religion. To go upstairs into the worship hall, all the followers must take off their shoes. Then they wash their hands and cover their hair with a piece of cloth. The basin to wash is in the front hall. Covering one's hair means to regard it as god's precious gift.

Many wars and conflicts of religion persist in the world, as well as wars of skin colour and race. In Myanmar, religious conflicts started in 2012, now with over two hundred dead and thousands of people displaced.

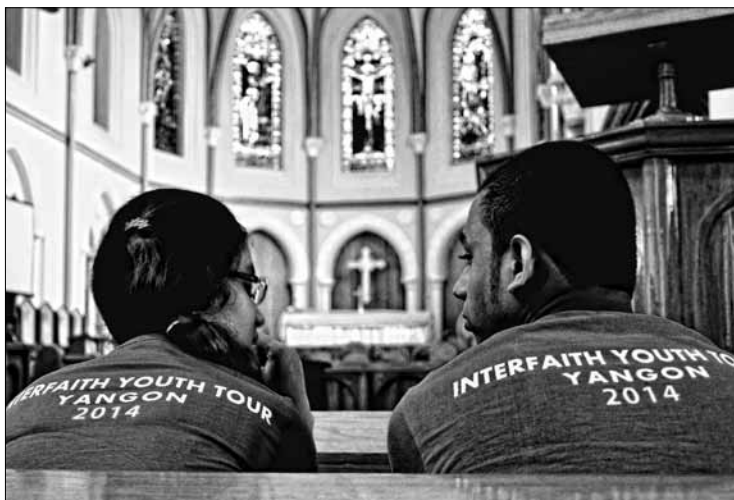
With the purpose of spreading understanding and respect among members of different religions, Smile Education and Development Foundation planned a short tour for young people in Yangon on June 28. Twenty-five youth, aged 15 to 25, of Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Islamist belief participated. The tour started with a visit to the Sikh temple on Thein Phyu Street.

According to the temple's leader, Sikhism appeared in the 15th century. All Sikhs pray following the hymns and writings of the Sikh gurus who lived several centuries ago. The holy book of the gurus' writings, the Guru Granth Sahib, is put on the throne in the hall and regarded with sanctity, and all who enter the hall must pay respect to it.

There is a small number of Sikhs in Myanmar. Most of the tour group didn't know that there were any at all; they mistook Sikhs for Hindu and Muslim people. The differences are important, not least so we can recognise how we are all the same.

"We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race," UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said once in a speech.

Myo Win, executive director of Smile Education said, "I



Members of a tour hosted by Smile Education discuss faith at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Yangon on June 28. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

hope [the youth] can share their knowledge from the tour. All the conflicts happen in Myanmar because of rumours. If they know each other well and they are informed, the rumours can't influence them."

The next place the tour visited was of the country's majority faith. Ji Na Mang Aung Pagoda is located in Thaketa township and is said to enshrine Buddha's relics. A local trustee recounted the life of Buddha and the Buddhist doctrine of benevolent love for all creatures.

Later the tour group visited Holy Trinity Cathedral located nearby Bogyoke Market. Although there are many denominations of Christianity, all Christians believe Jesus Christ was sacrificed for humanity.

"It's not Christianity per se that makes us good; Jesus helps us be good," said one of the brethren when a Buddhist boy asked him what the advantages of Christianity are.

Islam is also based on belief in one God, Muhammad. The next tour stop was the 59th Street mosque. As soon as we entered, we saw the podium where worship is led. On the wall were painted paragraphs of the Quran in both the original Arabic and a Myanmar translation.

In Myanmar, most religious conflict has happened between Buddhists and

Muslims. U Than Aung from the Association for Quran Knowledge Propagation said, "In Islam, using violence to force conversion is wrong. In the holy Quran, there is no rule of death sentences for those who change religion or women who become educated. In my opinion, some people take up the words from some mosque leaders that do not appear in the Quran."

He continued to explain about jihad. Most people think the word means religious war. Actually, he said, jihad means a spiritual struggle to avoid breaking religious law.

The last stop was Shari Kali Temple located on Maha Bandoole Street. It is a temple of Hinduism, which shares some beliefs with Buddhism, and Gautama Buddha is also a Hindu god.

"I've learned many things about religion from our trip," said Khin Myo Win, a Hindu youth. "All religions guide people to do good and to be virtuous. Most people say that a certain religion is good and another is bad, but they don't know the details. The religious conflicts happen due to religious bigotry and extremism."

Smile Education has plans to gather the youth tour group and other young people for an interfaith youth conference in the name of stopping religious conflicts by the end of the year.



MUMBAI Bollywood's Shah Rukh Khan receives top French honour

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan was on July 1 bestowed with France's highest civilian award for his contribution to cinema.

The actor was honoured as a Knight of the Legion of Honour by French foreign minister Laurent Fabius at the Taj Mahal Palace hotel in India's entertainment capital Mumbai.

"There are different moments in life that make you feel that you are on the right track. This is one such moment," said Khan, 48, one of Indian cinema's most recognisable faces.

Fabius said the French people hailed the actor's "talent and generosity, which arouse the enthusiasm of a vast audience across the world, transcending cultural and historical differences and bringing together people from all walks of life to his films".

In a career spanning three decades, Khan has made himself the biggest box office draw in Bollywood as the hero of romantic dramas and action movies.



Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan is awarded with the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur by the foreign minister of France during a function in Mumbai on July 1. Photo: AFP/Punit Paranjpe



Chinese actress Tang Wei attends the photo-call for Wu Xia at the 64th Cannes Film Festival on May 14, 2011. Photo: AFP/Anne-Christine Poujoulat

SEOUL Chinese actress Tang Wei and S. Korean director to wed

Chinese actress Tang Wei, who rose to fame in the erotic thriller *Lust, Caution*, is to marry the South Korean director who helmed her 2010 movie *Late Autumn*, the couple have announced.

The 34-year-old star met Kim Tae-Yong, 44, on the set of the English-language co-production in which Tang played a prisoner who falls in love with a South Korean man while on a parole visit to her family in Seattle.

"We came to know and understand each other through a movie. We became friends and eventually lovers," they said in a joint statement released July 2.

"And now we are about to become a husband and a wife, although we face a challenge to learn each other's language," it said.

The wedding will take place later this year with close family and friends.

Lust, Caution, directed by Ang Lee, brought Tang international recognition although the sexually explicit nature of some scenes caused a backlash in China where the actress lost a number of lucrative endorsement deals.

LONDON No, baby! 'Austin Powers' star Myers opposes Scottish independence

Comedian Mike Myers, the voice of Scottish movie ogre Shrek, came out on July 2 against the country splitting from Britain ahead of its independence referendum in September.

Canadian Myers joins stars such as author JK Rowling and singer David Bowie in opposing independence.

In a BBC radio interview, Myers was asked whether Shrek – the grouchy but loveable swamp-dwelling star of four animated films – would back Scotland going it alone.

He was reluctant to answer but finally said in the ogre's Scottish accent, "Shrek wants what the will of the Scottish people want."

He added in his own voice, "I love Scotland. I hope they remain part of Britain – and if they don't, I still love them."

In response to the star's comments, a rep of the anti-independence Better Together campaign said, "It's no surprise Mike Myers doesn't support separation. He knows a fairytale when he sees one."



Mike Myers poses with the character Shrek during a photo-call at a hotel in central London on June 11, 2007. Photo: AFP/Max Nash

MOSCOW Russia bans swear words in art, films

A controversial Russian law banning curse words in films, theatre, the media and arts came into force on July 1, part of a Kremlin-backed drive to play up traditional values.

The legislation, which was signed off by President Vladimir Putin in May, imposes hefty fines on offenders – up to 2500 rubles (US\$72) for individuals and up to 50,000 rubles (\$1460) for businesses.

The legislation does not spell out what constitutes profanity but the law is widely seen to be targeting Russia's potent lingua franca of obscenities known as *mat*.

While critics say the targeted swear words are offensive to the Russian ear and their use should be curtailed, supporters say "mat" is an art-form that can help express pain or anger.

Many ridiculed the legislation, saying efforts to outlaw what essentially is an inalienable part of Russia's culture will fail.

Some of Russia's best-loved poets including Mikhail Lermontov and Alexander Pushkin are known for using swear words in their works.



Director Spike Lee attends *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus* world premiere during the 2014 American Black Film Festival at Metropolitan Pavilion on June 22 in New York City. Photo: Astrid Stawiarz/Getty Images/AFP

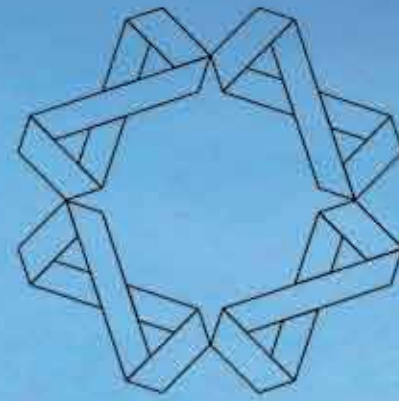
IN PICTURES

Girls in traditional Sorbian dresses decorate a young man with cornflowers and water lilies as he embodies the "Johannis" (John) for the traditional Sorbian "Johannisreiten" (John's horseback riding) in Casel, eastern Germany on June 22. Casel is the only place within this Slavic minority area in eastern German territory that still celebrates this Sorbian tradition, as part of the Feast Day of St John the Baptist. The chosen young man is escorted on a horse to an open terrain where the girls try to stop him in order to catch one of his cornflowers, considered to be good-luck charms. Photo: AFP/DPA/Patrick Pleul



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Go nuts

A new study suggests that nuts and peanuts are key ingredients for reduced risk of disease and a long life

CHRISTOPH
GELSDORF, MD

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LOOKING for a simple way to live longer? Perhaps eating more nuts is your answer. Epidemiologic research is starting to show clearly that frequent consumption of nuts prolongs life.

Studies in 2008 and 2010 suggested a beneficial effect on heart disease and cholesterol. Other research has associated nuts with reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, hypertension and gallstone disease. Now the first study showing a direct decrease in mortality has been published. In late 2013 the *New England Journal of Medicine* detailed the nut-eating habits and life-spans of 115,000 Americans over approximately 30 years. Study participants filled out a questionnaire every two to four years. In it, they noted how many servings (28 grams) of nuts they ate per week.

People were less likely to die of any cause by eating nuts: 7 percent less likely if they consumed nuts less than once per week, 11pc less likely if they ate nuts once per week, 13pc for two to four times per week, 15pc for five to six times per week and 20pc for seven or more times per week.

It should be noted that the people who ate a lot of nuts tended to be healthier in other ways also. They were thinner, more physically fit, less likely to smoke and more likely to eat fruits and vegetables. Statisticians attempted to account for these “confounders”, but the possibility remains that nuts contribute a bit less to lifespan than the numbers indicate. Also this study showed association rather than causality, meaning it does not prove that the nuts are the cause of longer living, only that people who eat nuts are observed to live longer.

The exact mechanism by which



A handful of nuts a day could keep the doctor away. Photo: Staff

nuts might allow people to live longer is not clear. However, we know they are heavy in unsaturated fats, fibre, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Scientists have given people high-nut diets and then tested their blood, finding decreased inflammation, insulin resistance and vascular dysfunction. Each of these blood characteristics has established relationships to various chronic diseases.

As previously discussed in this column, nuts – along with vegetables, fish, beans and olive oil – are part of the “Mediterranean Diet”, which has been gaining momentum in recent years as our current best guide to healthy eating. For most people the statistical benefits of adhering to this diet surpasses what can be achieved with medicines and diagnostic testing.

While nuts are certainly available in various forms in Myanmar, and often added to

Burmese salads, they are not a staple of the average diet. The price point of some nuts may put them out of reach for most citizens who are not middle-class. However the *New England Journal* study showed that peanuts, which are actually a legume, conferred the same benefit as tree nuts.

Peanuts are widely available in street markets and from vendors, and one serving costs around K200. As the country begins to consider incorporating healthy eating into its public health messages, perhaps peanuts can be emphasised as an accessible lifestyle choice.

.....
Christoph Gelsdorf is an American Board of Family Medicine physician who has a health clinic in Yangon (www.gelsdorfMD.com). He is a member of the GP Society of the Myanmar Medical Association. Reader inquiries are welcomed.

NEW DELHI

Can curry spices lower hypertension?

INDIAN medical researchers say they have found a blend of curry spices that lowers blood pressure in lab rats, raising hopes for a natural and affordable drug to treat the chronic disease.

S Thanikachalam, the cardiology expert who headed the research, said his team tested a mixture of ginger, cardamom, cumin and pepper – common ingredients in Indian kitchens – along with white lotus petals and other ingredients on the rodents.

“We saw tremendous positive changes in rats induced with high blood pressure during our laboratory experiments,” said Thanikachalam, who heads the department of cardiology at Sri Ramachandra University in Chennai.

“The drug was very effective in reducing the blood pressure and bringing down oxidative stress in

rats,” he told AFP.

The study said the spices were successful at reducing renovascular hypertension, a secondary form of high blood pressure caused by a narrowing of the arteries in the kidneys.

Indians are genetically predisposed to hypertension, with one in four people in cities suffering from the disorder, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Hypertension is mostly treated with modern pharmaceuticals but high costs and the possibility of side effects deter many from taking daily medication.

The latest research is not the first time a curry ingredient has been associated with health benefits.

In February 2011, scientists released a study of animals that suggests the chemical found in turmeric can help regenerate

brain cells after a stroke.

Thanikachalam said the herbal treatment tried by his team, known as *venthamarai chooranam*, is a combination mentioned in ancient Indian literature.

“It’s been passed on from one generation to the other. It’s just that it’s not been validated scientifically,” he said.

The researchers want to expand the animal study to see if the herbal medicine works for chronic conditions before turning to human clinical trials, a mandatory step before any new drug can be brought to market.

“We will be observing the rats in the long run and see if it sustains. Our goal is to develop a drug that is effective and cheap,” he said.

The results of the study were published in the June edition of the medical journal *Experimental Biology and Medicine*. – AFP

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

JULY 7 - 13, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 – Feb 18



Thoughts make the dignity of all humankind, and they choose a way of life and the habits that lead to success. Endeavour to be a good

thinker – it’s your only moral obligation. Notice your creative and original thoughts in order to improve your style of thinking. An unexpected change that you would like to enjoy may come upon your love life.

LEO | July 23 – Aug 22



You have an active and highly creative turn of mind, which you should apply as often as possible. Since you are self-reliant, you won’t

hesitate to tackle the most difficult or complex of problems. Courage, initiative and leadership distinguish you. Art and love will favour you, and you will walk hand-in-hand with beauty.

PISCES | Feb 19 – March 20



Experience the peace of letting go as well as the joy of letting others be right. You should spend more time engaging in creative

thinking. Get into the habit of looking beyond behaviour for wisdom and embracing the simple act of forgiveness. Know that humility and inner peace go hand-in-hand. If you let yourself feel smug, the other person feels diminished, and you learn nothing.

VIRGO | Aug 23 – Sept 22



It is better for you to control your aggressive impulses. Don’t fight in conditions that are unfair and restrictive.

Your ability to organise and stay balanced is essential to maintaining harmony and flexibility. With a proper degree of pride and dignity, it will be relatively easy to obtain recognition. An opportunity for an affair is coming.

ARIES | Mar 21 – Apr 19



You have a natural flair for maintaining strong and healthy friendships. Your partner must be comfortable with your

high-profile style and complimentary to your business activities. A big disturbance is coming, and you will have to pass through it. Colleagues and old acquaintances might prove their trustworthiness. Prove your own.

LIBRA | Sept 23 – Oct 22



Don’t be taken in by others. Discover what a quick learner you are, and get rid of your bad attitude and direction. Pay more

attention to the answers you get from others, and remember that small decisions can sometimes create golden opportunities. All our lives are but a mass of small habits taking us toward our destiny.

TAURUS | Apr 20 – May 20



Ups and downs, good and bad, are part of everyone’s life. You have a tendency to try to weatherproof your relationships and other

aspects of your life against storms. Write off weatherproofing as a bad idea. The less often you are preparing for the worst, the more you will notice how super your life really is. Emotional ups and downs will teach you something.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 – Nov 21



In a sound mind, intuition is the tree and reason is the flower. Know that as far as knowledge is concerned, you can come closer and closer

to a notion of truth. Exercise energy and alertness in order to apply your ideas properly. Social connections must be found out if you want to have power in your community.

GEMINI | May 21 – June 20



Mastering time management is very important if you want to be an achiever. Know that your fortunes depend on how

competent you are. The quality of outcomes depends on the choices you make between requirements and whims. Your life will change according to the type of decisions you make. Prompt decision-making is an art of a high level.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 – Dec 21



Don’t be frustrated, resentful or helpless about time. Even the most destructive relationship conflicts begin with good

intentions. What’s important is to tap into these good intentions and find a reservoir of hope. With right awareness and practice, you can turn resistance into rapport and resentment into respect. Love should not be sealed or enclosed.

CANCER | June 21 – July 22



Be afraid only of yourself. Stand in awe of no one except your conscience. You have to develop

self-esteem as well as self-image. Visualise yourself on top of your problem, and strive to succeed from your inner worth and potential. Set limits for yourself, and know the value of time management. Your mind should remain focused despite currents of emotion.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 – Jan 19



Everything that is gained by meekness will be kept by the meek, but that which is gained by violence won’t last for long. Nobody, as long as

he or she moves in the chaotic current of life, is without trouble. Know that the essence of genius is knowing what to overlook or put aside. The more a couple is able to fight constructively, the higher their level of happiness.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

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Pumpkin it up

Dress up grilled prawns with smoked paprika and warm pumpkin sauce

GRILLED PUMPKIN WITH GARLIC DRESSING

Serves 6

- 500g pumpkin
- 3 cloves garlic
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil



Wash the pumpkin, discarding the seeds and fibres from the inside. Leave the skin on. Cut into wedges, then into cubes. Rub well with 1 tbsp of the olive oil. Heat a grill pan on high. Grill the pumpkin, turning a few times to make sure it's evenly cooked. Transfer to a plate.

Sprinkle with crushed garlic and drizzle with the remaining olive oil.

Serve with grilled meat or a roast. Steamed plain rice is also a good match.

Note: I have used McCormick smoked paprika in this recipe.



PHYO ARBIDANS
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food



Photos: Yu Yu

It is raining heavily these days, and I love to stay inside just watching a favourite movie with a cup of warm soup. At least, that's my dream while I watch my little toddler become more energetic.

Recently, I was having a chat with my friend about making pumpkin soups and what makes a good one. We agreed that pumpkin and prawns are a nice match, and she insisted that I make a fusion dish with these ingredients.

I have smoked paprika that I got at a food expo a few weeks ago, and I wanted to try it out in my recipes. I made several dishes that are very smoky. I love the aroma. In the end, I arrived at grilled prawns with smoked paprika and pumpkin sauce for a starter.

GRILLED PRAWNS WITH PAPRIKA

Serves 6

- 13-15 prawns
- 2 cloves garlic

- Salt to taste
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 500g golden pumpkin
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups vegetable stock

Wash the prawns and drain. Discard the head. Take off the shells but leave the tails. Discard the dark lines on the backs. Halve the prawns from the back slowly to make butterfly cuts. Lay them on a plate, keeping them flat.

Wash the pumpkin. Discard the seeds and fibres on the inside. Leave the skin on. Cut into thin wedges approximately 1.5cm (0.5-inch) thick and then into 4-5 cm (2-inch) lengths. Rub well with 1 tbsp of the olive oil.

Heat a grill pan on high heat. Grill the pumpkin. Turn it a few times to cook evenly. Check the pumpkin by poking it with a pointy knife or fork. If it goes in easily, it's cooked. Let cool. Peel the skin off.

Add the grilled pumpkin and vegetable stock to a sauce pan and

boil. When it starts boiling, turn the heat down and simmer for 40 minutes. Stir the stock occasionally, and make sure the bottom is not sticky.

Remove the sauce pan from the heat and use a blender to puree the soup. Be careful blending the hot soup. A handheld blender works well.

Heat again and simmer to keep warm. Slice the garlic and set aside.

Heat the grill pan again on high heat. Lay the prawns flat in the pan and grill. Sprinkle salt on the prawns and smoked paprika. Also lay on the garlic slices. When the prawns curl, flip. Four minutes total of grilling should be enough.

Transfer the prawns to a plate. Serve with pumpkin sauce.

Left over pumpkin sauce can be frozen or kept in the fridge for several days. It's also a good base for pumpkin soup.

Note: I made the stock with 2 cups of water and 1 teaspoon of Massel stock powder.

Restaurant Review

Hidden snack shack lures customers from Bogoyoke Market

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WE walked past many food vendors, ignoring them all until we reached the pork-stick and fried vermicelli shop at the back of Bogoyoke Market. It's located near the bridge that goes over the railway and a bunch of



unused steel construction materials – not exactly a nice environment. Yet the old and unattractive shop is always crowded. It was at the urging of my friends, who swear by the taste, that I went to check it out for lunch.

There's not much of a menu, just fried vermicelli, pork-stick, fried pork rolls, *phat htoke* (chicken and rice rolls) and fresh juice.

We ordered several dishes and all of it arrived within moments. It's not that the food looks much different from other places.

Fried vermicelli came on a small steel plate with red chillies, but the soft texture is superb, as is the seasoning. We ordered a second plate. It's only K400 each.

This is not a relaxing place to eat. Customers and busy sellers ran through the small shop the whole time, making us dizzy even while we were enjoying our lunch. Four people work the shop – a

woman who makes the vermicelli and pork-stick, two men who serve the tables and one other man who makes the juice.

The pork-stick (K3000 per plate) is messy looking but tasted sweet and was well-boiled, which is quite different than I've found at other pork-stick shops. In the dish were parts of pork ear, head and liver, which had all been marinated in a sour sauce before boiling. It was delicious.

The fried pork roll (K1000) is crisply wrapped in rice paper and comes with a dipping sauce. You wouldn't want to eat a lot, as it was quite salty and fatty.

Phat htoke – chicken wrapped in small rice papers – failed to live up to the other dishes. The rice papers were thick and each pack was a little too big. It was tasty, but we'd had enough to eat by then.

The meal left us feeling full and with grease on our lips, so we ordered fresh orange juice (K1000) and a beverage called *than buu* (K400), which is a Myanmar drink that resembles Pepsi without the fizz. The man who makes the juice is enthusiastic in his work and stands next to a small mountain of oranges and limes.

The shop has no name or sign to



Photos: Thiri Lu

help identify it, but most customers are either buyers or sellers at Bogoyoke Market and thus know it well. However, some make a special trip here just for the food.

The shop is open the same hours as the market every day, mind it's closed Mondays. The woman who prepares the food explained that the shop had opened originally on the other side of the market near some small welding shops in 1980s. But soon after that place was taken over for a new construction and they moved to the back of Bogoyoke Market.

We couldn't help but overeat this time, trying all the menu items. Next time I would eat less, but I'll definitely be back for more of this tasty and inexpensive lunchtime fare.

Vermicelli shop
Bogoyoke Market
Near the railroad footbridge
Open Tuesday-Sunday 9am-5pm

| Restaurant Rating | |
|-------------------|----|
| ★★★★★ | |
| Food | 8 |
| Beverage | 7 |
| Service | 7 |
| Value of money | 10 |
| X -Factor | 6 |

Canada Day celebrations



Ambassador Mark McDowell and Linda Chang



Michael, Alex Aung Khant, Samia and Yasmin



Khine Zin and Shwe Yi



Photos:
ima/Emmanuel Maillard
imaphotodesign@gmail.com



Kyaw Mint, William Aung and Zaceu Lian



On July 1, the Canadian Embassy celebrated Canada Day at Chatrium Hotel. The country recently inaugurated its diplomatic mission in Yangon and has just listed Myanmar among its priority countries, raising expectations that it will be very active in the coming months. U Myint Swe, U Soe Thein and Dr Kan Zaw joined in the festivities.

Frank Nitt comes to town



Frank Nitt



Marieke, Hedwig and Ralf



Thiha, X-Boix and Valerie



Jean Curci and friend

Performance art by the river



Zarchi Oo, Kavas and Phyu Mon



Sandar Khine, Tun T Lin and San Naing



Siang Te, Chris and Mai



Chris Saines, Yadanar Win and Tarun Nagesh



Gutu, Okka, Michael and Steven

On June 27, Mojo bar hosted its first international DJ artist. Hailing from Detroit, recording artist and producer Frank Nitt offered a world class hip-hop set. The two-floor bar was packed and dancing.





Chan Mya Aye and Ma Phyu Phyu

Wanlima new outlet opening

The Taiwan bags and luggage brand Wanlima opened a an outlet in Skywalk shopping mall in Mandalay on June 28. This is the second outlet to open in Myanmar. Customers were invited to a lively ceremony featuring beautiful models posing with the much-loved accessories.



Hnin Le Yi and Thun Wati



Wine Shwe Yi



Phoo Yupar Lwin



Chan Chan



Yu Ha Eun



Than Lwin



Phyo Zaw Hein



Sang Ki Park



Supermodels Girl Band

Eushido cosmetics launch

RDC Co Ltd, which distributes Eushido hair care products, launched its new Korean skincare cosmetic line called DABO & Selleope on June 26. Famous singers Chan Chan, Jackson Tun and others entertained customers in the promotions area of Skywalk shopping mall in Mandalay. Twenty Miss Universe Myanmar contestants also turned out to the event.



Myat Thu and Olivia White



Yoko and Kousei

On June 28, the occasion of Myanmar Women's Day, 10 local women artists performed new work and works-in-progress at gallery TS1 at Warden Jetty. The event, titled "Attention Please!", was poetic and intriguing - definitely something different for Yangon.



Ma Ei

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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 201 | 2,3,4 | 7:00 | 8:25 | |
| YJ 211 | 5,7 | 7:00 | 8:25 | |
| YJ 233 | 1,6 | 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 | |
| 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 | |
| YH 727 | 1 | 11:00 | 13:10 | |
| YH 729 | 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 | |
| YH 731 | 1,3,5,6,7 | 14:30 | 16:40 | |
| 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 | |
| 7Y 708 | 2,5 | 12:10 | 16:28 | |
| 7Y 816 | 1 | 12:30 | 16:45 | |
| 7Y 702 | 6 | 13:45 | 17:20 | |
| 7Y 815 | 3,4 | 14:25 | 18:40 | |

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| YJ 203 | 2 | 14:55 | 16:20 |
| YJ 213 | 7 | 15:45 | 17:10 |
| YJ 235 | 6 | 16:20 | 17:45 |
| YH 728 | 1 | 16:30 | 17:55 |
| YH 730 | 2 | 16:40 | 18:05 |
| YH 732 | 1,3,5,6,7 | 16:40 | 18:45 |
| YJ 235 | 1 | 16:45 | 18:10 |
| 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 | 4,6 | 17:45 | 19:10 |
| 6T 502 | 1,5 | 17:50 | 19:55 |
| YJ 204 | 4 | 17:55 | 19:20 |
| 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 | |
| YH 731 | 1,3,5,6,7 | 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 | |
| YH 732 | 1,3,5,6,7 | 17:25 | 18:45 | |
| 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 201 | 2,3 | 7:00 | 9:50 | |
| YJ 211 | 5 | 7:00 | 9:50 | |
| YJ 233 | 1,6 | 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 | |
| YH 829 | 2,6 | 10:00 | 12:25 | |
| YH 825 | 1 | 11:30 | 13:55 | |
| 7Y 702 | 6 | 12:20 | 17:20 | |

| | | | |
|----------------|-----|-------|-------|
| 7Y 815 | 3,4 | 13:00 | 18:40 |
| W9 7152/YJ 152 | 1 | 13:35 | 16:30 |
| YJ 213 | 7 | 13:50 | 17:10 |
| W9 7154/YJ 154 | 2 | 16:35 | 18:50 |
| YJ 204 | 4 | 16:30 | 19:20 |
| 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 | |
| YJ 201 | 3 | 7:00 | 12:00 | |
| 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 | |
| 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 | |
| YH 727 | 1 | 11:00 | 12:25 | |
| YH 737 | 3,5,7 | 11:00 | 12:25 | |
| YH 731 | 1,3,5,6,7 | 14:30 | 15:55 | |
| 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 | |
| YJ 203 | 2 | 14:10 | 16:20 | |
| YJ 203 | 4 | 14:20 | 19:20 | |
| 7Y 702 | 6 | 14:30 | 17:20 | |
| 7Y 816 | 3,4 | 15:10 | 18:40 | |
| YH 728 | 1 | 15:45 | 17:55 | |
| YJ 213 | 5 | 15:50 | 17:00 | |
| YJ 203 | 3 | 15:55 | 17:05 | |
| YH 732 | 1,3,5,6,7 | 15:55 | 18:45 | |
| YJ 235 | 1 | 16:00 | 18:10 | |
| 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 | |
| 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 | |

| THANDWE TO YANGON | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |
| 6T 605 | 5 | 12:25 | 15:00 | |
| 6T 608 | 1 | 14:05 | 15:00 | |
| K7 422 | Daily | 14:40 | 17:00 | |

| YANGON TO DAWEI | | | | |
|-----------------|---------|------|------|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |
| 6T 707 | Daily | 7:45 | 8:55 | |
| YH 633 | 3,4,5,7 | 7:00 | 8:25 | |

| DAWEI TO YANGON | | | | |
|-----------------|---------|-------|-------|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |
| 6T 708 | Daily | 13:00 | 14:10 | |
| YH 634 | 3,4,5,7 | 12:15 | 13:25 | |

| YANGON TO LARSHIO | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |
| YJ 201 | 3 | 7:00 | 13:05 | |
| YJ 211 | 7 | 7:00 | 9:25 | |
| 7Y 707 | 2,5 | 7:10 | 8:48 | |
| YH 729 | 2,4,6 | 11:00 | 13:00 | |

| LARSHIO TO YANGON | | | | |
|-------------------|------|-------|-------|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |
| YJ 202 | 3 | 13:20 | 17:05 | |
| YJ 213 | 5 | 14:45 | 17:00 | |
| 7Y 708 | 2,5 | 14:50 | 16:28 | |
| YH 729 | 2 | 15:40 | 18:05 | |
| YH 730 | 4,6 | 16:45 | 19:10 | |

| YANGON TO PUTAO | | | | |
|-----------------|------|------|-------|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |
| YJ 233 | 1,6 | 7:00 | 10:45 | |
| YH 824 | 1 | 7:00 | 10:35 | |

| PUTAO TO YANGON | | | | |
|-----------------|------|-------|-------|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |
| YH 825 | 1 | 10:35 | 13:55 | |

| YANGON TO CHIANG MAI | | | | |
|----------------------|------|-----|-----|--|
| Flight | Days | Dep | Arr | |

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

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|--|
| 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 (QR) 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 | |
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| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Day | 4 = Thursday |
| 1 = Monday | 5 = Friday |
| 2 = Tuesday | 6 = Saturday |
| 3 = Wednesday | 7 = Sunday |

CAMBODIA

Thais flock to Cambodia casinos to sidestep junta betting blitz

SUY SE

DESPERATE for a flutter during a junta crackdown on gambling at home, Thais are making a beeline for casinos in a seedy Cambodian border town – one that has already been deluged by migrants also fleeing the kingdom.

For over a decade Poipet, a scruffy, vice-ridden frontier town studded with casinos and online gambling booths, has lured customers from neighbouring Thailand, where betting is all but banned.

Casino staff in Poipet told AFP the chips have been changing hands at an unusually fast rate since the Thai army seized power across the border on May 22.

A junta blitz on organised crime has seen raids on underground casinos, dozens of arrests and access to a number of online gambling sites blocked.

In its get-tough message to illegal gamblers – and any local officials caught in cahoots with casino operators – the army rulers cited the need “to safeguard the public and uphold social order”.

The warning brought a boon to Poipet’s card tables, slot machines and 24-hour online gaming booths – key for live betting on World Cup football matches being played in Brazil.

“We cannot play these games in Thailand now,” 32-year-old Nan told AFP as she laid a 100 Thai baht (US\$3) stake at a baccarat table at the Crown Resort Casino.

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

ACROSS

- 1 Theatrical hit, in slang
- 5 Isle ____ (site off England)
- 10 Draws to a close
- 14 Wrinkly Jamaican fruit
- 15 Grassland or rain forest
- 16 Calm under pressure
- 17 Make indistinct
- 18 Very unfit
- 20 Trouble persistently
- 22 Superman's symbol
- 23 Marvelled aloud
- 24 Holds fast
- 26 Capitol Hill figure (Abbr.)
- 28 Have a premonition
- 30 Two-handed log cutter
- 35 Simple figures
- 38 Frozen spear
- 39 Lake ____ (Blue Nile source)
- 40 Go with the flow
- 42 Crescent's tip
- 43 Blows
- 45 Nut
- 47 Walks leisurely
- 48 Wigwam kin
- 49 ____ usual
- 51 Cigar with square-cut ends
- 55 Speak to the people
- 59 United
- 61 Barrel strip
- 62 Tailless simian
- 65 Between islands
- 66 Mental conception
- 67 Hops driers
- 68 Parker and Waterman
- 69 Old autocrat (Var.)
- 70 Rollicking good time
- 71 Start of North Carolina's motto

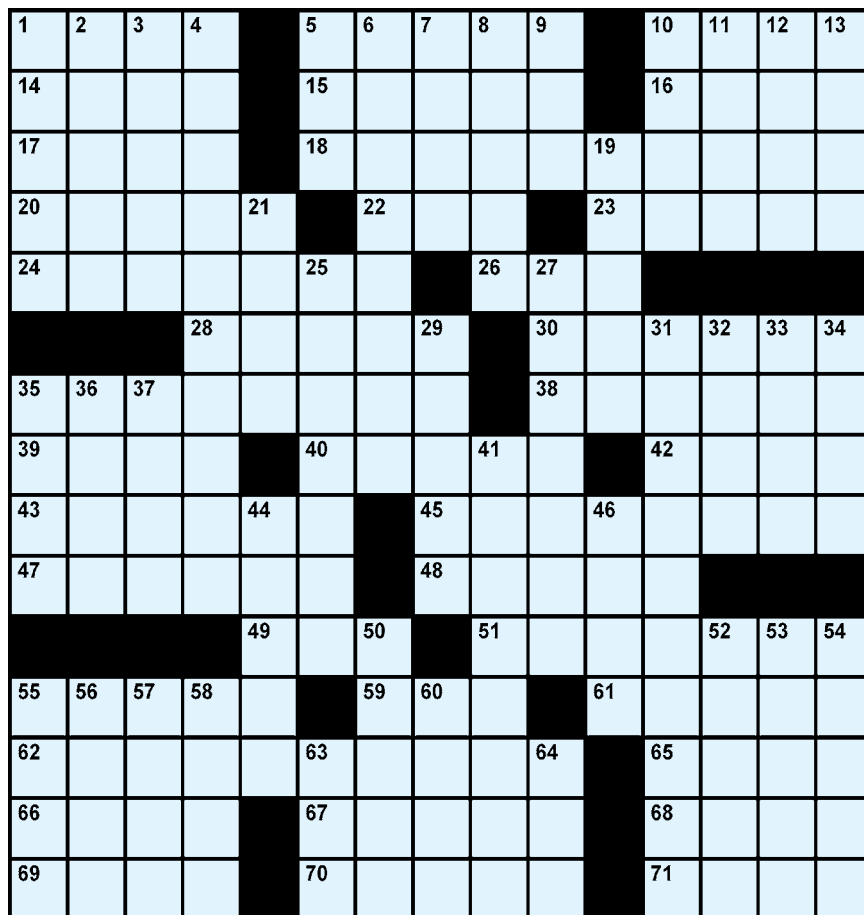
DOWN

- 1 Forrest Gump's friend
- 2 Gave the twice-over

- 3 Impressive poker hand
- 4 Emergency exit of sorts
- 5 Kimono belt
- 6 Used extreme subtlety
- 7 Groups of rioters
- 8 Stock up on
- 9 Flanders on TV
- 10 Yodeler's feedback
- 11 Russell Crowe film
- 12 Unlikely Mensa candidate
- 13 Kane's Rosebud, e.g.
- 19 Kind of barrier or boom

- 21 Slog
- 25 Collectively
- 27 Words carved in stone?
- 29 Create a statute
- 31 Old-time Broadway greeting
- 32 Porgy
- 33 Besides which
- 34 Sobbed
- 35 Originate
- 36 Starchy tropical root
- 37 "... and the truth is not ____"
- 41 Rules of personal conduct
- 44 High-powered personality

- 46 Mediocre grades
- 50 Flush of a sort
- 52 Green regions of desert
- 53 They're found on the range
- 54 Make fun of
- 55 Brief notice in passing
- 56 X-ray dosages
- 57 Type of rug or code
- 58 Certain mountain climber
- 60 It plans long trips
- 63 Knock off
- 64 Winning finish?



DILBERT



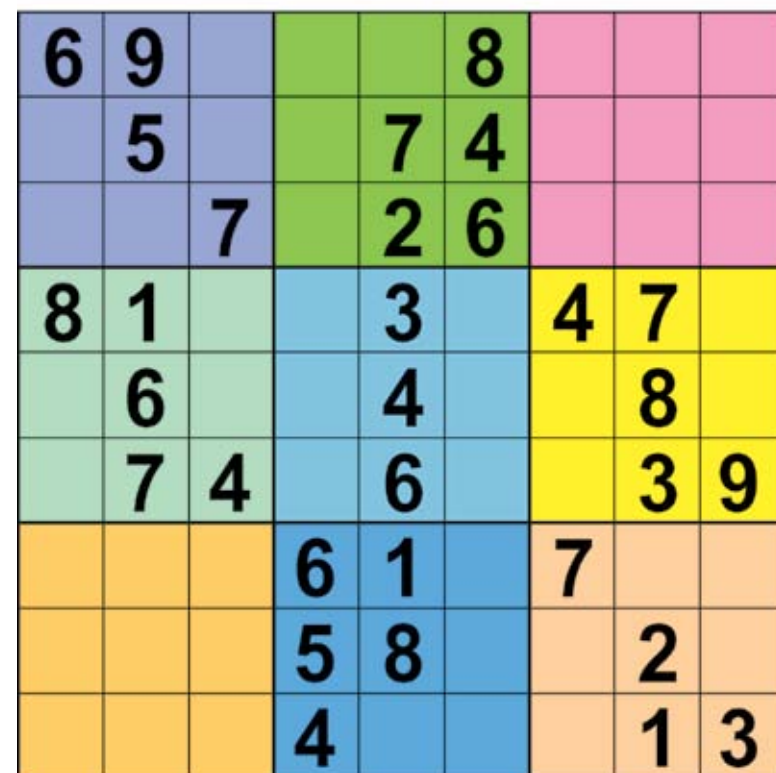
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



7/10

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

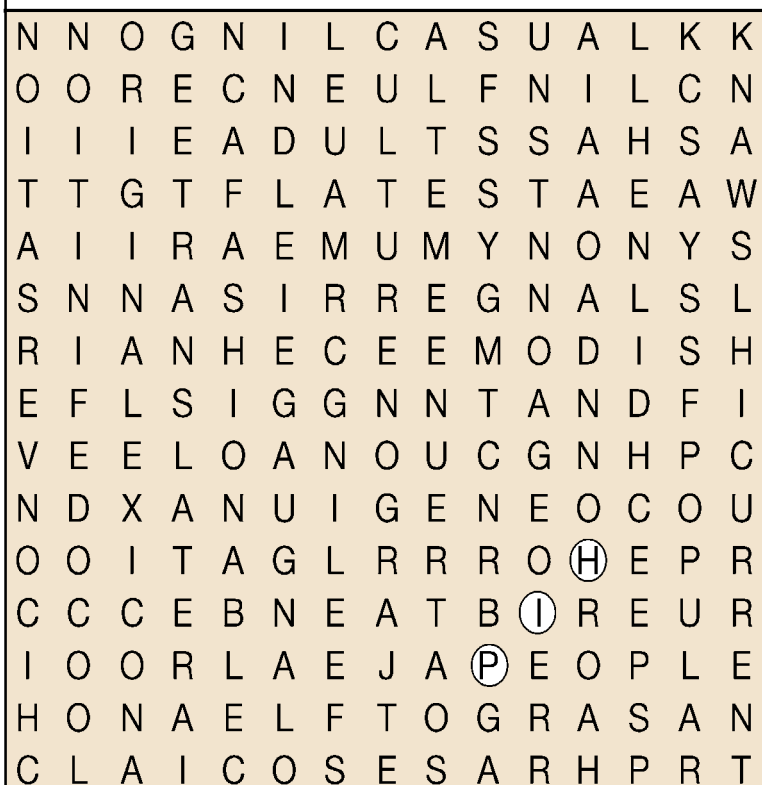
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717

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Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia No.287/289, U Wisara Rd, Sanchaung. Tel : 01-536153, 516952.

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UNIAP Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. Tel: 254852, 254853.

UNIC 6, Natmauk St., Bahan, tel: 52910-19

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WFP 5 Kan Baw Za St, Shwe Taung Kyar, [Golden Valley], Bahan Tsp. Tel : 2305971-6

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ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Tsp. Tel: 225258.

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Traffic Control Branch ☎tel: 298651
Department of Post & Telecommunication ☎tel: 591384, 591387.
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Ministry of Education ☎tel: 545500m 562390
Ministry of Sports ☎tel: 370604, 370605
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Myanma Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768.
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Yangon City Development Committee ☎tel: 248112.

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Yangon General Hospital (West) ☎tel: 222860, 222861, 220416.
Yangon General Hospital (YGH) ☎tel: 256112, 256123, 281443, 256131.

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YANGON PORT
Shipping [Coastal vessels] ☎tel: 382722

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Fax : (951) 391375. Email : hotelasiaplaza@gmail.com

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Chatrium Hotel
40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe. tel: 544500. fax: 544400.

Clover hotel
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Clover Hotel City Center
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Property

Sale/Rent

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LASHIO, quarter (1), Hninsi Lane (2), No (14/B) a 30' x 40' house in a wide 50' x 120' compound suitable for NGO, Company office or executive residence. A suitably wide living room, a master bed room attached with solar water heater system, an extra bed room, an office room, a kitchen & dining room. Duel key access system. Private electric meter & municipal water supply. Tube well and inland telephone can be arranged on demand. contact : Dr. Soe Lin, Aryu Thukha Specialist Hospital, 229/2 Buta Rd., Lashio. Ph: 082-26438, 09-502-6602.

BAHAN, (1)New University Avenue Housing, 1350 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, (2)Near Golden valley, Yankin Center, Fully furniture

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Employment

UN Positions

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THE UNITED NATIONS World Food Programme is seeking (1)**Senior Admin Assistant** GS-7 Yangon (Re-advertise) (2) **Programme Officer** (Head of Sub-Office) NO-A Magwe For more information, please visit to <http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals>. Please Email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org > COB 10 July 2014.

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

THE International Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking (1)**Supply Chain Coordinator** 1 post in Yangon: University degree in Supply Chain, business Management or related field. 3 years progressive management & leadership experience. (2) **HR Manager** - 1 post in Yangon: Bachelor's and/or Master's university degree in HR management, Business Administration, or related field. 5 years progressive experience as an HR generalist. 3 years experience managing & mentoring HR staff. Fluency in Myanmar & English. Very strong proficiency in MS Word, Excel & PowerPoint. (3) **Senior Budget Officer** 1 post in Yangon: University degree in accounting, finance or business administration. Demonstrated ability to prepare budgets and manage project finances. 3 years experience. Ability to work with complicated Excel spreadsheet. Good English communication skills. (4) **HR Officer** - 1 post in Yangon: Bachelor's and/or in HR management, Business Administration, or related field. 1.5 years progressive experience in the HR function, with supervisory experience preferred. Very strong proficiency in MS Word, Excel & PowerPoint is required. Pls submit a Cover letter & CV to the HR Department. Applications will be accepted by email at: MaiMyaMyintZu.Tin@rescue.org

rescue.org or by delivery to the IRC office: 33/A, Natmauk Lane Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Quarter, Bahan, Yangon. Closing date: 15th July 2014.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking **Branch WASH Officer** 4 posts in Falam, Mogok, Sagaing, Matupi: Myanmar Nationality. University Degree in Civil Engineering, Geology, Hydrology, or related fields. Effective computer knowledge and English language skills. Understanding of the Red Cross Movement & willingness to actively promote Red Cross Fundamental principles. Knowledge of AutoCAD (2D). Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com Closing date: 16-7-2014.

COMMUNITY Partners International (CPI) is seeking **Program Assistant** (GF-RAI) Dawei, Travel to Tanintharyi Region, Kayin and Kayah State 1 year (Extendable) : Essential Knowledge / Skills / Attributes: Any university degree. 3 years experience in health or development projects in an international/ local organization. Strong knowledge on ethnic issues and proven experience in engaging ethnic based organizations. Strong inter-personal skills and ability to establish good working relationships with stakeholders with different cultural backgrounds. Ability to work independently with strong organizational skills. Good presentation skills, writing & analytical skills. Excellent software skills for MS Word, Excel, Power point. Pls submit CV & cover letter to Community Partners International : 270, 5/B, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung, Yangon. Ph: 504165. Email : hr.ygn@cpintl.org Closing date: 14.7.14

THE International Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking **Driver** 1 post in Yangon: Basic High School Education. Valid driving license; 2 years work as a professional driver. No road safety-related fines or convictions. Thorough knowledge of road rules and regulations. Skills in minor vehicle repair. Competent in spoken & written English. Pls submit a Cover letter and CV to the HR Department, by e-mail at: MaiMyaMyintZu.Tin@rescue.org or by delivery to the IRC office : 33/A, Natmauk Lane Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Quarter, Bahan, Yangon.

FOR a **Research Assistant/Manager**. His/Her primary job scope is to collect data and information on real estate markets in Myanmar and the region.

At least 5-years working experience in research and analysis, with real estate experience. Effective communication in English, Myanmar and/ or Mandarin language is required. Interested applicants, please send CV to corporate@asianacre.com

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 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, and send it to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office, 19 B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin, Yangon. Email: sr.afo.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, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com For more information & application, www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

(1)**PHYSIOTHERAPIST** 2 post (2)**National Consultant** 1 post (3) **IT Assistant** 1 post (4) **M&E Officer** 1 post. Application process: Please send application letter, CV and related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com For more information and application, please visit to www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

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.myanmarredcrosssociety.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, and send it to Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office, 19 B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin, Yangon. Email: sr.afo.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, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com For more information & application, www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

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, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, pls visit to www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Pls mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

Local Positions

WIRED MEDIA Co., Ltd is seeking (1) **Assistant Manager** (Sales & Marketing) - Female 2 posts: Can use computer, internet & email, Must have 2 years experience in Medical Field (2)**Sales & Marketing** - Female 10 posts : Must have experience in Medical Field. Pls submit CV with necessary documents to No. (8), Nguwar (3) St, ward (5), Myakanthar Villa, Hlaing, Yangon. Ph: 01-505724, 538552, 09 4500 53498. Opening Date : 19-05-14. Closing Date: 18-06-14

CHINESE SEAFOOD Restaurant is seeking (1) **Manager** - M/F 1 post, (2) **Chinese Food Chef** 2 posts, (3) **Waiter/ Waitress** - M/F 10 posts, (4) **Cashier** - F 5 posts. Ph: 09-4210-50413.

(1) **WAITER/ESS** - M/F 10 posts, (2) **Cashier** - F 3 posts, (3) **Thai Cook** - 3 posts, (4) **Staff with knife skill** - 3 posts, (5) **Japanese Cook** 2 posts, (6) **European Cook** 1 post, (7) **Bakery Chef** 2 posts, (8) **Steward** 3 posts. Ph: 09-4210-50413.

THE International Montessori Myanmar invites application from suitably qualified local candidates for the following positions of **Nursery/ Pre-K/ Kindergarten Lead teachers and Assistant teachers**. A Kindergarten teacher who is loving, caring and understand early childhood education with ECCD certification is preferred. 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) Pho Sein Rd, Bahan, Yangon.

TAW WIN ACM Co., Ltd (Constructin, Reat Estate & Trading) is seeking (1)**Sales & Marketing Manager** - M/F 3 posts (2)**Sales & Marketing Executive** - M/F 5 posts (3)**Graphic Designer** - M/F 3 posts (4) **Driver** - M 5 posts. Pls submit CV with necessary documents to acm.hrdept@gmail.com. Ph: 09-514-765, 09-4201-70274.

(1)**MANAGER**-Male 1 post : Any Graduate, 5 years experience, Age over 35 years. (2)**Assistant Manager** - Male 1 post : Any Graduate, 3 years experience, Age over 25 years. (3)**Accountant** - Female 3 posts : B.Com, LCCI Level III, Knowledge of Accounting Software. 3 years experience. For all posts : Computer literate, Can speak English, Prefer who lives in Shwe Pyi Thar. Pls submit CV, Photo to Email : shweptpt@gmail.com

ASIAN ACRE Advisors, a Singapore real estate advisory firm based in Yangon, is looking for a **Research Assistant/ Manager**. His/Her primary job scope is to collect data and information on real estate markets in Myanmar and the region. At least 5-years working experience in research and analysis, with real estate experience. Effective communication in English, Myanmar and/ or Mandarin language is required. Interested applicants, please send CV to corporate@asianacre.com

(1)**ENGINEER** - 5 posts (for construction project) - Male 20 ~ 40 years, Myanmar person, Graduated from University related to construction industry, Can speak well at English, Can drive car, Can work out of Yangon according to working requirement. Salary: 400 USD ~ 600 USD (2)**IT Staff**: Working place: Japan, Good at English, Japanese level is N4 up, Graduated from University related to IT, Technology, Microsoft Office skills is very good. People who want to work in Japan, don't need experience. Description - Install software into computer, Set-up server, On-job training (3)**English - Burmese Translator** - M 2 posts : Age 20 ~ 50 years, Myanmar person, Speaking and writing is well at English, Translate documents, Translate for Engineer, Salary: 300 USD ~ 500 USD (5) **Manager Assistant** - M 2 posts : Age 20 ~ 50 years old, Vietnamese person speaks well at Burmese / or Myanmar person speaks well at Vietnamese, Communicate between workers and Manager, Can drive car is a plus, Salary: 500 USD ~ 800 USD.

MMIP Myat Myanmar International Power Co., Ltd is seeking **Marketing Staff** - Male 2 Posts (2) **Marketing Executive** - Female 1 Post. Building-B, No-646, 5 Floor, Mudidar Housing, Baho St, Mayangone Tsp. Yangon, Myanmar. Ph (+95 9) 320 800 23, 320 800 24, 320 800 25

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RIO DE JANEIRO

World Cup goalies earn respect

Standout goalkeepers have been some of the tournament's best players

LIONEL Messi, Neymar and Robin van Persie make the headlines, but the World Cup's real heroes have been goalkeepers like Tim Howard, Guillermo Ochoa and Julio Cesar who throw themselves into the line of fire.

"Two words .. TIM HOWARD #respect" was the simple Twitter comment made by Belgium's captain Vincent Kompany within minutes of his country finally beating the United States in the last 16 on July 1.

Belgium's Romelu Lukaku, who hit the winning goal, and Dries Mertens both hugged Howard at the end of their 120-minute onslaught on the 35-year-old Everton goalkeeper.

'How Tim played tonight was just phenomenal. As the game went on, on the back of Tim's performance we got back in the game.'

Jurgen Klinsmann
US national team coach

Howard's 16 saves, some at point blank range, two spectacularly flicked over the crossbar, were a record for a goalkeeper in a World Cup match since 1966.

The US defence seemed unable to resist the Belgian attack of Mertens, Divock Origi and Eden Hazard. US coach Jurgen Klinsmann said Howard kept the team in the game right to the end. The Americans had chances to equalise right until the final seconds.

"How Tim played tonight was just

phenomenal," Klinsmann said. "As the game went on, on the back of Tim's performance we got back in the game."

Similar compliments have been paid to Ochoa for giving Mexico an unlikely 0-0 draw with Brazil in Group A, and Cesar for his heroics in keeping Chile at bay in a game Brazil won to reach the quarter-finals.

Costa Rica's 'keeper Keylor Navas was the hero as his side, down to 10 men, beat Greece in their last 16 game.

Germany's Manuel Neuer has been hailed for rushing out of his penalty area to clear the ball as North African minnows Algeria poured forward on June 30.

"He reacted like a libero and protected us from many situations that smelled of danger," said Germany coach Joachim Loew.

Neuer has a good job with Bayern Munich, but for some of the other goalkeepers, the brilliant performances could be a career saver.

Mexico's Ochoa, who held Brazil at bay for 90 minutes, was without a club after his French side Ajaccio were relegated to the second division and his contract ran out last month.

One sprawling one-handed save from a powerful header by Brazil striker Neymar has been compared to the legendary stop by England's Gordon Banks against Brazil's Pele at the 1970 World Cup.

"I feel really flattered," Ochoa, 29, said of the comparison. "Of course I'd rather have less work," he added.

His shift in Fortaleza has earned interest from English sides including Liverpool, according to media reports.

Costa Rica's Navas was another goalkeeper to earn man-of-the-match honours as his side beat Greece to reach the quarter-finals for the first time.

Navas has been hailed as his country's new "Lucky Rabbit", the nickname for Luis Gabelo Conejo, who kept goal for Costa Rica at the 1990 World Cup finals.



US goalkeeper Tim Howard makes a save during extra-time against Belgium in Salvador on July 1. Photo: AFP

Having thwarted Italy and Uruguay in landmark group victories, Navas again performed spectacular gymnastics as he punched away a spot kick by Greece's Fanis Gekas in a penalty shootout.

Navas, who plays in Spain for Levante, said, "I have already faced great players and I am not scared. It's a good challenge for me to play against the best."

Brazil's Julio Cesar hopes his two penalty shootout saves against Chile

will turn him from a national villain to a respected figure alongside the country's other football legends.

The 34-year-old has faced national humiliation since his mistake was blamed for Brazil's defeat to the Netherlands in the 2010 World Cup quarter-final.

Cesar revealed that he took a religious cross, given to him by his reserve Victor, when he went into the goal for the Chile shootout. He saved two penalties and Chilean Gonzalo Jara's kick

came off a post and just managed to stay out of the goal.

"Julio Cesar and the goalpost save Brazil from humiliation at home," said Folha de Sao Paulo newspaper's front page.

"After the [2010] World Cup to be labelled as the villain, it was very bad for me," Cesar said. "I got the support of my family who just supported me. This allows me to have the necessary strength to go forward," said the emotional keeper fighting back tears. — AFP



IN PICTURES

Riding high: Wearing costumes of Kuban Cossacks, horsemen of the Kremlin Riding School perform at the VDNKh, a public park and exhibition space, in Moscow on July 1. Photo: AFP

LOS ANGELES

A-Rod OK'd for PEDs prior to MVP season: report

SUSPENDED Major League Baseball player Alex Rodriguez asked for and received an exemption from the league to use a banned performance-enhancing drug during his all-star career.

A new book, *Blood Sport: Alex Rodriguez, Biogenesis and the Quest to End Baseball's Steroid Era* alleges that prior to Rodriguez's 2007 MVP season, the disgraced New York Yankee slugger was given a therapeutic use exemption (TUE) to treat hypogonadism, a testosterone deficiency.

Excerpts from the book were printed by *Sports Illustrated* on its website on July 2.

"In 2007, of the 1,354 players subjected to testing, 111 were granted a TUE," the book said. "Only two, apparently including Rodriguez, received an exemption for 'androgen deficiency medications,' the category that would include testosterone."

The 38-year-old Rodriguez is suspended for the 2014 MLB regular season and playoffs for his involvement in the Biogenesis scandal.

Rodriguez also asked for two other TUEs for the 2008 season, the book claims. He was given one for a different treatment for testosterone deficiency but denied the other which was

thought to be a weight-loss drug.

"In 2008, three major leaguers were granted exemptions to take drugs to treat hypogonadism. In fact, from the 2006 season through 2013, only 15 were granted for androgen deficiencies and hypogonadism, the conditions that under MLB's drug policy could require a medical testosterone boost," according to the book.

Major League Baseball on July 2 defended its decision to grant therapeutic use exemptions.

"The TUE process under the Joint Drug Program is comparable to the process under the World Anti-Doping Code," the MLB statement says.

"The standard for receiving a TUE for a medication listed as a performance-enhancing substance is stringent, with only a few such TUEs being issued each year by the [Independent Program Administrator]."

"MLB and the MLBPA annually review the TUE process to make sure it meets the most up-to-date standards for the issuance of TUEs."

Rodriguez claimed his third MVP award in 2007 after hitting 54 homers and driving in 156 runs. In the offseason, Rodriguez inked a 10-year deal with New York that would pay him a guaranteed US\$275 million. — AFP

BEIJING

In China, web firms are the winners with World Cup gambling

CHINA'S internet giants and insurance companies are finding ever more innovative ways to get around the country's strict betting laws and reap a payout as fans wager billions on the World Cup.

Gambling is banned in China, except where it is run by the government or the proceeds are donated to charity, but technology behemoths Alibaba and Tencent have this year linked up with state-owned provincial lotteries to enable punters to bet on the World Cup online.

Both have smartphone gambling apps which have proved hugely popular during the Brazil tournament, with more than 10 billion yuan (US\$1.6 billion) is expected to be bet legally - dwarfing the 2.3 billion yuan figure reached at the 2010 finals in South Africa. Many times more will be spent illegally.

"I find it so much easier to bet on an app rather than having to go to a lottery centre," said Li Qiang, from Shanghai, who said he won 200 yuan when Uruguay beat Italy in the group stage.

"I love the World Cup, but being Chinese, we have little way to get involved other than to bet," he said, lamenting the poor performances of the national team, who are ranked 103rd by FIFA.

Neither Tencent nor Alibaba have gambling licences, but earn revenue by acting as online platforms for provincial lotteries which offer odds betting on most aspects of the game.

Alibaba - which heavily promotes World Cup betting on its main e-commerce shopping platform, Taobao - takes a 7 percent cut of money gambled through its websites, the *Beijing Youth Daily* reported.

On July 3, an advertisement on Taobao priced Brazil as favourites to win the tournament at 2.3/1, less generous than the 2.75/1 generally available from British bookmakers.

Alibaba, which is preparing a



Men look at lottery results next to a China Sports Lottery poster outside a lottery kiosk in Beijing on July 3. Photo: AFP

multi-billion-dollar share offer in the US, declined to comment to AFP. Tencent did not respond to a request for comment.

More than 500 million people in China access the internet via their smartphones, according to the state-run China Internet Network Information Center.

"The law is quite strict in China, but gaming opportunities are very accessible to anyone who has a smartphone," Huang Guihai, associate professor at the Gaming Teaching and Research Centre at the Macao Polytechnic Institute, told AFP.

Insurance firms, though, have found their attempts to do World Cup business meeting official disapproval.

An Cheng Insurance offered a "heartbreak" policy offering fans Taobao credit if their team was eliminated, to "alleviate the mental shock" - effectively enabling customers to try to profit from teams going out of the contest.

Regulators stepped in last week to issue an urgent notice that "insurance products with gaming character should be suspended", the official news agency Xinhua said.

"Some insurance companies have pulled related World Cup regret insurances from the shelves," it added.

Most Chinese sports betting, though, takes place via outlawed websites, where odds are more attractive and credit offered.

Research by sports newspaper *Titan Weekly* estimated an astonishing 500 billion yuan was spent on legal and illegal online gambling during the 2006 tournament in Germany - roughly 2pc of China's GDP.

"The issue of illegal gambling is particularly serious during the World Cup," said Wang Xuehong, head of the Lottery Research Institute at Peking University.

Given the scale of the demand, official restrictions on betting created opportunities for illegal operators, she said. "It is difficult to carry out

measures to deal with it, and it is difficult to supervise internet activities."

The sums and networks involved are vast.

The Doha-based watchdog International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) warned in a May report that Asian-dominated criminal groups are laundering more than \$140 billion in illegal sports betting annually, with many gamblers coming from China.

Laurent Vidal, chair of the joint Sorbonne-ICSS research program that produced the report, said previously, "The Chinese are not interested in local sport any more. That is why they bet on European sport."

In May, police in Shanghai detained 63 people for being involved in an illegal online gambling operation that was alleged to have handled more than 113 billion yuan.

Police in the southern province of Guangdong busted 1651 criminal gambling cases in the months leading up to the World Cup, detaining 58,154 suspects in raids across the province, police said.

For the losers, though, the consequences can be fatal.

A college student in Guangdong leaped to his death after losing more than \$3000 gambling on the World Cup, state media reported last week, adding that moments earlier, the student was heard telling a telephone caller he would "return the money".

A 32-year-old woman on the southern island of Hainan also reportedly committed suicide after losing more than \$16,000.

"There should be awareness training to let the public know of the potential risk of gambling becoming addictive," said Huang, of the Macao Polytechnic Institute.

"With gambling, the rules favour the casinos, favour the lottery agencies. They provide this entertainment service for profit." - AFP

KATHMANDU

Families of Everest avalanche victims still await payouts

MORE than two months after the deadliest accident in Mount Everest's history, relatives of the victims said on July 3 that they have yet to receive compensation and insurance payments promised by the government.

The government initially pledged US\$400 for the families of the 16 Nepalese guides killed in the April 18 avalanche, but later hiked the compensation to \$5000 after angry sherpas protested the sum was too small.

The families are also entitled to life insurance payments of \$10,000.

"We haven't received a single rupee from the government," said Menuka Gurung, 25, the wife of avalanche victim Ash Bahadur Gurung.

Gurung, a housewife with two children, said she had been living on handouts from Western climbers since the accident.

Chhechi Sherpa, the 19-year-old daughter of victim Ang Kaji Sherpa, also said the government had not contacted her family about compensation.

"The country earns so much in royalties from mountaineering. It's disheartening that they don't care about the families of the people who sustain the industry," she said.

The avalanche victims, who all worked as guides on the world's highest peak, were their families' main bread-winners.

The tourism ministry blamed bureaucracy for the payment delays.

"We're committed to addressing the demands," a senior tourism ministry official, Madhusudan Burlakoti, told AFP.

"The file has been forwarded to the finance ministry and the funds will be released after the process is completed," he said.

Ramesh Prasad Dhamala, president of Nepal's Trekking Agencies Association, said the government should "honour its promises on time". - AFP

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LEEDS

Froome to defend Tour title

CHRIS Froome is determined to buck the recent trend and defend the Tour de France title he captured last year.

The official records show no-one has defended a Tour crown since Spaniard Miguel Indurain in 1995, but when asked whether that was due to the difficulty in repeating such a success in a new "clean" era, Froome denied that factor played a role.

"I'd have to disagree with you there, with the fact that if you've won it once then you're spent for years to come," said the Kenyan-born Brit.

"I don't agree with that principle, [but] I do believe that you have pressures coming back as a defending champion having won the Tour.

"You definitely have a lot more on your plate after winning the Tour; time between races just slips away from you. You end up doing a lot more in terms of media commitments, sponsor commitments.

"Life definitely changes after winning the Tour and if anything that's probably a bigger factor compared to being wiped out after winning one Tour de France.

"For me that's a big goal, to come back and win it again. There's no guarantee that's going to be possible but I'm certainly going to try."

That statistic is somewhat affected by the sorry doping history that hit the Tour over the last 20 years.

Disgraced American Lance Armstrong defended the Tour six times but was stripped of his seven victories for doping.

Alberto Contador defended his crown in 2010 but again was stripped of that for failing a drug test.

Last year Bradley Wiggins was denied the chance to defend his crown due to injury, although by then Froome had already replaced him as Team Sky's leader.

The main challenge to 29-year-old Froome's dominance comes from Spaniard Contador, 31, who has been in fine form this season.

Last year he finished fourth after



Chris Froome rides during a training session with Britain's Sky cycling team on July 3 in Leeds, England. Photo: AFP

expending much energy attacking Froome while going out for overall victory, allowing Colombia's Nairo Quintana and Joaquim Rodriguez of Spain to sneak past him in the standings.

But he has had his best start to a season since 2010, winning two week-long stage races and finishing second in three others.

He beat Froome at both the Tour of Catalunya and last month's Criterium du Dauphine, although the Briton was leading the latter until a crash on the sixth of eight stages badly affected him.

Froome acknowledges Contador is his main rival but claims several other riders, such as last year's Giro d'Italia winner Vincenzo Nibali,

Fleche Wallonne winner Alejandro Valverde, Dauphine winner Andrew Talansky or 2012 white jersey winner Tejay Van Garderen, could also cause problems.

"I think Alberto has shown he's definitely in a much more competitive position this year than he was last year," said Froome.

"His run-up to the Tour de France has certainly been a lot smoother; he's managed to get a lot more results in early season than he did last year.

"As with a lot of my main rivals and the main contenders here, everyone seems to have upped their game and again we're going to be looking forward to a really exciting Tour this year, and it's going to be a battle all the way to the end."

The 2014 course has been widely praised for offering a more complete test of a rider's ability.

There are five mountain-top finishes and one long 54km time trial.

But it is the challenging, undulating stages and one flat route that tackles 15.4km of cobblestones - usually reserved for the prestigious Paris-Roubaix race - that could provide several more unexpected opportunities to gain time.

Crosswinds could also be an issue on two flat, exposed stages in northern France, which visit the scene of some of the most important World War I battles.

As Froome himself says, it promises to be an exciting battle right to the end. - AFP

NEW DELHI

Sharapova targeted for cricket star Tendulkar snub

OUTRAGED Indian cricket fans have left thousands of angry messages on Maria Sharapova's Facebook page after she admitted to not recognising cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar.

Tendulkar, considered a demi-god in his home country and an all-time great of the game by most fans, was among a star-studded crowd that watched Sharapova at Wimbledon on June 28.

When asked if she recognised the recently retired batsman, seated next to former English cricket captain Andrew Strauss and football star David

'I was one of the biggest fans of you as a tennis star but now I will never see your matches.'

Vivek Kumar Pandey
Indian cricket fan

Beckham, she reportedly replied that she did not.

"I was one of the biggest fans of you as a tennis star but now I will never see your matches," wrote Vivek Kumar Pandey in one of the milder messages on the Russian tennis player's Facebook page.

Others used foul language and made threats, while Twitter users took up the tongue-in-cheek "#whoisariasharapova" hashtag which began trending.

For some, the hurt pride was misplaced.

"Why splutter over Sharapova not knowing Sachin?" leading TV presenter Barkha Dutt wrote on Twitter on July 4. "Does it matter? Doesn't diminish him. But makes us sound insecure." - AFP



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Sport

Froome looks for repeat as Tour gets started

SPORT 70

YANGON

National team disappoints

KYAW ZIN HLAING

kyawzinhlaing91@gmail.com

THE Myanmar national football team was unable to muster a win in two prep matches leading up to the AFF Suzuki Cup in October.

Myanmar took on Japan's Cerezo Osaka FC in Yangon on June 28, but lacking key players Kyi Lin, David Htan, Yan Paing due to injury, the team was flat.

Osaka, despite having a number of players out in order to compete on Japan's World Cup squad, was able to control the match from the opening whistle.

Kai Hirano scored in the 52nd side, putting the J-League club ahead and Myanmar was unable to answer, losing 1-0.



Players from the Myanmar national team and Cerezo Osaka FC compete for a head ball on June 28 in Yangon. Photo: Supplied/Myanmar Football Federation

"I have to praise to my players who were hard-working this match. Our main players were not competing because they are playing with the national team at the World Cup but we did

our best. Our defenders controlled the Myanmar strikers in the entire match," said Hojin Ahn, coach of Cerezo Osaka FC, who also praised the play of Myanmar striker Kyaw Ko Ko.

Hojin Ahn said that he believed that Myanmar would benefit from better fitness and playing more international matches.

Myanmar coach Radojko Avramovic said despite the loss he believed that his team played well and tried to brush off the result.

"This is a test for the players. Our players played well in this match," he said, adding that he hoped it would provide valuable preparation ahead of the Suzuki Cup.

But later in the week the Myanmar side looked even worse, suffering a 6-0 drubbing against the Vietnamese national team on July 2 in Binh Duong.

Lead by a hat-trick from forward Lê Công Vinh, Myanmar found themselves totally outmatched by Vietnam, which was playing under new coach Toshiya Miura.

Myanmar has been disappointing since Avramovic took the reins in February, following the sacking of Park Sung-Hwa.

7

Goals conceded by the Myanmar national football team over their two most recent matches, in which Myanmar failed to score.

FORTALEZA, BRAZIL

Youthful Neymar carried hopes of a nation at World Cup

SLIM, spiky-haired and prodigiously talented, Neymar is the child prodigy who made good on his talent and looked poised to deliver the World Cup for an expectant host nation.

Aged just 22, such is his importance that a serious back injury which has ruled him out of the tournament could also dash the hopes of his 200 million compatriots.

Neymar is the main creative contributor and leading goal-scorer for an otherwise unimpressive team whose patchy World Cup has provided uneasy viewing for Brazilian fans.

His goals led Brazil to victory in the highly charged tournament opener and sealed the 4-1 victory over Cameroon which took them into the knock-out stages.

Neymar's tears during appearances against Croatia and Chile were testament to the severe pressure that he otherwise seemed to carry lightly.

And his pain and anguish while being stretchered off against Colombia were explained when hospital tests showed he had fractured a vertebra in his back, ending his tournament.

"I have been saying for three matches that Neymar has been hunted," fumed Brazil coach Luis Felipe Scolari, as a shocked nation began to digest the news.

Brazilian World Cup-winning sides have always possessed a goal-scorer in top form - from a 17-year-old Pele in 1958, to Garrincha in 1962, Jairzinho in 1970, Romario in 1994 and most recently Ronaldo in 2002.

Neymar followed in Pele's footsteps at the Santos club, wears the same 10 jersey and plays in a similar carefree style - the "jogo bonito" [beautiful game] that made Brazil so popular with football fans worldwide.

Born in the hard-scrabble city of Mogi das Cruzes, near Sao Paulo, as the son of a professional footballer, Neymar grew up playing in the streets.

He joined Santos in 2003 and made his debut for them in 2009.

Neymar finished the 2010 season with 42 goals in 60 games as Santos secured the Copa do Brasil and domestic Sao Paulo state championship.

In 2011, Neymar played the central role as Santos took the Copa Libertadores and the state championship again.

He won the FIFA Puskas goal of the

year award for an astonishing solo effort for Santos which beat out Wayne Rooney's famous overhead volley against Manchester City.

Barcelona beat Santos 4-0 in the Club World Cup final that year and it already seemed a formality that Neymar would head to Spain.

But it was not until 2013 that he followed so many of his Brazil team-mates overseas - a delay that helped further endear him to Brazilian fans.

Neymar already has an impressive tally of 35 goals in 54 international games and shone as the Selecao prepared in perfect fashion by winning the Confederations Cup last June.

However, an unconvincing first season in Europe threw up questions about whether he is ready to lead Bra-

zil to World Cup glory.

"This is Neymar's first World Cup and nobody knows exactly what is going to happen. It is a big responsibility for him," Pele said in an interview with AFP.

Neymar attracted criticism for fathering a child out of wedlock in 2011, but his biggest controversy revolves around alleged tax evasion implicating ex-Barcelona president Sandro Rosell over his transfer to Spain.

Despite this, such is his popularity that his publicity machine is known as "Neymarketing"; his female fans are called "Neymarzettes" and many young men have had his image shaved into the back of their heads.

"First comes God, then family and then Neymar," Rayellen Andrade, 17, told AFP during the World Cup.

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