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Female conductors wrangle with Yangon's hectic buses

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ISSUE 738 | JULY 21 - 27, 2014



IN PICTURES

PHOTO: AFP

Nation pauses to observe Martyrs' Day

Honour guards march in front of Martyrs' Mausoleum in Yangon on July 19 as part of a ceremony to mark the 67th anniversary of Martyrs' Day. General Aung San and other independence leaders were assassinated on the morning of July 19, 1947, while holding a cabinet meeting at the Secretariat building in downtown.

Speaker says civilians must be put first

Thura U Shwe Mann says stakeholders in the country's peace process should put the needs of affected civilians before their own interests in the wake of recent fighting. **NEWS 6**

NEWS 3

NLD petition campaign closes

The opposition group says that it could reveal the final number of signatures gathered by the end of this month.

BUSINESS 23

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

Vale, sharlom

On July 13, a cartoonist from Katha in Sagaing Region shared a picture of a strange animal caught by residents of the area.

People began to speculate as to exactly what it was, chiming in with internet-assembled opinions. Some suggested it could be a ring-tailed cat, a carnivorous member of the raccoon family. Others thought it might be a palm civet, or a large Indian civet, which is Myanmar is apparently called *kyaung-ka-toe* (a kind of cat).

"A Kachin hunter told that this kind of animal are so clever, are rare and most hunters are afraid of them. They are called Sharlom in Kachin. The

reason most hunters are afraid of them is when hunters take aim at animals, there may be more Sharlom at the scene. Immediately after the animals are shot down, before the hunters come and get the dead animal, Sharlom usually runs and gets it," wrote cartoonist Harjuly.

"The meaning of 'Shar' is 'eating' and of 'lom' is ahead in Kachin dialect," he added.

While the debate continued over what species the sharlom was, on the night of July 13 it attempted to escape and in an unfortunate turn of events wound up accidentally hanging itself. It had been detained with a steel chain around its neck, which caught on a spiked fence. There



Sharlom. Photo: via Facebook

is still no consensus on exactly what it was. If you have any ideas, please feel free to get in touch. You might get to choose its Latin name. – *Additional reporting by Lun Min.*

Shwedaung-8 cotton strain harvested in Wetlet Tsp

The model plot of Shwedaung-8 strain pre-monsoon cotton was harvested in the Leinbin village tract of Wetlet township, Sagaing Region, on July 18 – apparently proving something of a coup for farmers, who reaped a handsome yield of some 1400kg per acre. All of this excitement was presided over by the head of Shweboi District Industrial Crops Development Department (SDICDD) U Myint Hlaing and officials, *The New Light of Myanmar* reported. The head of district is said to have urged local farmers "to grow more cotton on places where paddy can not be grown", which is savvy agricultural advice the farmers should duly consider.

Why does this deserve a mention? Well, the story ran in the *New Light* on July 19 – a date some of you may recognise as Martyrs' Day, commemorating the 67th anniversary of the assassination of Bogyoke Aung San and six of his cabinet ministers. It's why there were slightly more cars honking at 10:37 on Saturday morning. This occasion warranted nary a line in the *New Light*, who are otherwise pretty big on anniversaries.

Tumbleweed on the road to Mandalay

The number of tourists visiting Taung Taman Lake and U Bein Bridge in Mandalay has plummeted since the recent outbreak of violence and imposition of a curfew, according

to local tour operators and business owners cited in a report from *Eleven* last week.

While the monsoon season usually sees a corresponding drop-off in tourist numbers, it turns out that forecasts which include not only heavy showers but the possibility of late afternoon pogroms apparently aren't that good for business. That said, the high-end tourism sector at Ngapali still seems to be doing okay so maybe it is just the rains after all.

Juche-y details

North Korean embassy officials last week extended an invitation to Myanmar's Interim Press Council to visit the DPRK in order to learn about the hermit kingdom and meet with domestic media outlets, in an move that rendered satire almost entirely redundant.

"If the Press Council is interested it is only for the goodwill between North Korea journalists and Myanmar journalists not in regards to press freedoms," a Press Council member told NK News.

The Council have reportedly called for a meeting with President U Thein Sein to discuss the *Unity Journal* verdict and address what they consider to be "intentional oppression against the media industry".

Mandela's message lives on

The Facebook event page for Nelson Mandela Day at the Institut Français last week was the lucky recipient of a spam post from a fake Facebook account (the likes of which *The Myanmar Times* gets every now and then), with a user posting the 969 flag and the comment "All right friends". One can't help but wonder if a better allocation of time for whoever is behind that particular account would have been to have a sit-down and actually read a bit about Mandela and the sort of stuff he was into – like, not apartheid. In other Facebook- and 969-related news, U Wirathu posted on July 17 that he had been locked out



Patricia
from *NOW!* Magazine.
Photo: *Htet Aung Kyaw*
(*Studio HAK*)

**Style
Statement**

NOW!

Once was Burma...

Archives provided by Pansodan Gallery



Oh Wei, July 15, 1971. Stories include "The Last Days of General Aung San" and "When The Two Generals Met in Le Wai". In the 1930s, Aung San served as one of the editors of the journal.

of his account for two days. He regained control of the account, and merrily resumed updates.

In brief:

Man adamant colonialism is the sole reason for high literacy among older generations in Myanmar, backs this up based on observations made in two months of living in the country

"Myanmar Culture Valley" mall development near Shwedagon appears to contain very little in the way of culture

Passengers shocked as study proves conclusively that removing seatbelt and standing as soon as

plane touches the tarmac at Mingalardon does not make disembarking process go any faster

Glance at Facebook news feed reveals there are more experts on the Israel/Palestine conflict than previously thought

Next week:

Cyclist almost lands perfect 360 flip after taxi driver opens door of moving vehicle to spit betel

Fashion Focus:

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DICA returns to Yangon

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THE Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), the principle body for foreign and domestic investment, has returned to Yangon from Nay Pyi Taw, to provide better access to businesses, an official said.

The directorate moved to Nay Pyi Taw in 2006 when the military government shifted the country's capital to the new city, built 400 kilometres to the north of Yangon. It resumed operations in Yangon on July 14.

"The entire directorate has been moved back to Yangon for the con-

venience of investors," said U Linn Htut, director of DICA's administration department. "It also makes it easier for us to administer investors since most businesses are based in Yangon."

However, DICA's line ministry, the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, remains in Nay Pyi Taw.

"Those staff members who have families in Yangon are happy with this move. For me, it is not so special," U Linn Htut said.

The entire process of company formation and administration can now be done at DICA's office in Yankin township, which was previously used as a branch only.



A pedestrian crosses the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw highway. Photo: AFP

Part of Yangon-MDY highway to be tarred

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THE Ministry of Construction will tar 240 kilometres (150 miles) of the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw- Mandalay highway in an effort to improve safety on the road.

The tarring will take three years, with 50 miles done each year for the next three years, Deputy Minister Dr Win Myint told the Amyotha Hluttaw session on July 15.

Since it was opened in 2009, hundreds of people have died in traffic accidents on the road, which is colloquially called the "death highway" or "highway of death" by local media outlets.

The deputy minister added that the ministry will seek K10 billion in additional funding for this financial year to tar an additional 26 miles and widen 25 bridges from 24 feet (7.2 metres) to 40 feet (12m) in width, following a number of high profile, deadly accidents.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw provided a budget of K15 billion (about US\$15.5 million) to conduct repairs to the vital highway during the 2014-15 financial year. These repairs will cover the tarring of nearly 38 miles and the addition of a fence for 45 miles. The funding will also widen 25 bridges to 48 feet (14.4m). The ministry will also install six cameras to monitor speeding, and 1178 signs will be erected to show the distance travelled in kilometres.

Additional special funds were released to widen 25 bridges to 48 feet after the Yar Zar Min bus accident in May, which claimed 14 lives.

A ministry official said in a press conference following the Yar Zar Min accident that it cost K2.5 billion to build every mile of the 386-mile-long highway. He said additional spending of about K2.5 billion a mile is required to make the highway safer. - Translation by Thiri Min Htun



NLD supporters gather to hear Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speak at a rally in Pakokku on July 12. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

NLD set to reveal final signature count

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THE final tally of signatures gathered by the National League for Democracy during its petition campaign calling for a constitutional amendment could be announced as early as the end of the month, an organiser said.

A member of central executive committee of the NLD, U Tun Tun Hein, said that the last signatures would be collected on July 19, when the nation marks the Martyrs' Day but the final count is not scheduled to be completed until July 26.

"The number of petitioners can be announced only after July 26 or may be earlier next month," U Tun Tun Hein said. He declined to estimate how many signatures had been collected.

The petition is an attempt to pressure the government to amend Section 436 of the 2008 constitution, which sets the threshold for changes to the constitution at 75 percent. The military's control of 25pc of the seats in parliament guarantees the Tatmadaw the power to veto any proposed change.

Amending section 436 is seen as a

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

The petition campaign was launched in Nay Pyi Taw on May 27 by the NLD and the 88 Generation student group and included a series of large public rallies since it began led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and 88 Generation leaders, the last of which was held in Pakokku township, Magwe Region, on July 12.

The petition has already attracted over 3 million signatures as of June 27.

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

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Yangon's New
Sole-Purposed
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IN PICTURES

PHOTO: KAUNG HTET

Children walk down the steps inside the Secretariat building in Yangon. City residents were given a rare glimpse inside the building where General Aung San was assassinated in 1947 along with other independence leaders on July 19, the 67th anniversary of his death.

US slams 'Unity' jailings

THE United States on July 18 condemned tough jail terms handed down on five Myanmar journalists for publishing a story about an alleged chemical weapons factory.

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Washington was concerned about the jail terms of 10 years with hard labor given to reporters from the *Unity Weekly News* under the country's official secrets act.

"The sentence sends the wrong message about Burma's commitment to freedom of expression, including for the press," Ms Psaki said, using Myanmar's former name.

"The Burmese government has made tremendous progress in the last three years, working to develop an environment conducive to free, fair, independent media," she told reporters.

"This is a critical element of a vibrant and well-functioning democracy and we urge the government of Burma to continue that trend and respect the right of all journalists."

The jailed men, who include the paper's chief executive, were arrested in February just days after the article alleging that the country's



Journalists take part in a silent protest Yangon on July 12. Photo: AFP

military was operating a chemical weapons factory in the town of Pauk in the central Magwe Region, under the instructions of former junta chief Than Shwe.

Unity Weekly quoted testimony from local people and workers, and included pictures of the alleged mil-

itary facility.

In January 2013, Myanmar denied accusations it had used chemical weapons against ethnic minority rebels in the northern state of Kachin, with government spokesperson U Ye Htut saying the military "never" deployed them. — AFP

Veteran editor takes up senior post with 'The Myanmar Times'

MCM buys *Freedom Daily* and *Myanma Dana* business magazine as it adds strength to its team in preparation for transition to daily publishing

VETERAN newsman U Thiha Saw has joined *The Myanmar Times* as editorial director.

Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd (MCM), publisher of *The Myanmar Times*, has also bought the assets of *Myanma Dana* business magazine and ownership of *Myanma Freedom Daily*, an English daily run by U Thiha Saw and his family that suspended publication earlier this year.

U Thiha Saw is heavily involved in the media sector and sits on the Press Council. He is also chairman of the Myanmar Journalism Institute (see story page 5).

U Thiha Saw has more than 30 years in the industry and started his career at the *The Working People's Daily* English newspaper in 1979. Later he published the monthly magazine *Myanma Dana* and weekly journal *Open News* before starting the *Myanma Freedom Daily*.

"I realised my lifelong dream in starting a daily newspaper in Myanmar. I grew up and worked inside a repressive media environment and I always imagined one day that I could launch

a daily," said U Thiha Saw. "When I had the chance my family and I decided that come what may we would do it and we did."

"We were unable to continue financing the daily, and eventually we closed its doors after 10 months. It was on the day of closing late in the afternoon when Ross Dunkley called me and we commenced negotiating the sale of the business," he said.

"In short order I had met and spoken with MCM chairman U Thein Tun together with Mr Dunkley, and after a period of time we concluded the sale of the assets of the company. I am very pleased to be able to join MCM and *The Myanmar Times* as the editorial director."

Mr Dunkley said the company and its publications will benefit immensely from U Thiha Saw's experience and knowledge.

"Few people, if any, have the depth and understanding of the Myanmar media scene as he does. His inclusion fills a glaring gap at the top end of the table here, and of course we welcome a man of his stature into our management grouping," Mr Dunkley said.

"We will now move into full planning phase for our English edition to go daily in the near future, and we will also undertake a major review of our local language edition of *The Myanmar Times*. As the senior Myanmar editorial executive we will rely much on U Thiha Saw's extensive experience and judgment on editorial issues." — Staff writers

1979

Year U Thiha Saw started his journalism career at *The Working People's Daily*.



U Thiha Saw (centre) speaks with editors at *The Myanmar Times'* offices on July 16. Photo: Kaung Htet



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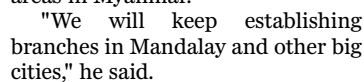
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SSA-N to blame for fighting, says vice minister

Thierry Mathou, the French ambassador to Myanmar, said that a scholarship fund of US\$800,000 had been approved by the French



Journalists enrolled at the Myanmar Journalism Institute

"This is cultivation season but villagers were forced to leave about 200 acres of their land because of fighting. Further, we have heard that there are human rights abuses in the conflict zone," said Daw Nan Whar Nu, a Shan State representative.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

All advertised fares are per person in Economy Class and include the price of the air ticket, associated taxes and surcharges, correct as at 26 June 2014. Fares quoted are available from now to 5 September 2014 for travel out of and into Yangon from now to 30 September 2014, subject to seat availability and currency fluctuation. Fares are only available at the authorised travel agents listed above, and may be subject to additional service fees. Change of passenger name is not allowed but date changes are allowed, subject to an administrative fee. Tickets are non-refundable, cannot be used in conjunction with upgrade awards and are not interchangeable for travel on other airlines. Tickets are eligible for mileage accrual at 10% of the actual miles flown. Other terms and conditions apply. For special fares to other destinations, please check with the appointed travel agents.

Speaker calls on peacemakers to put civilians first

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PYIDAUNG SU Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann has urged stakeholders in the peace process to protect civilians through their actions, rather than their own interests, following repeated clashes between the Tatmadaw and various armed groups.

The speaker made the comments following a proposal submitted to the Pyithu Hluttaw by U Sai Awng Seng Mai on July 15 that aims to stop further clashes between the Tatmadaw and armed groups, including those that have signed peace agreements with the government.

"They [peacemaking officials] all need to implement the peace process," Thura U Shwe Mann said. "If there are some matters that require coordination between two parties, peacemakers need to act reliably and honestly. Both sides need to maintain respect and trust."

He said that President U Thein Sein, "told the respective [government] departments to take responsibility."

"I want to tell you to take responsibility because we are all public staff. The hluttaw is the people's representatives. It is not for only for one group or one people. If you

look at what's in the people's interest, you all need to implement your promise to your people by taking responsibility," Thura U Shwe Mann said.

He also urged the respective departments, including the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, to work for regional stability and to provide security to the people.

Despite the ceasefire agreements signed between the government's Peace-Making Committee and every ethnic armed group, except the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Palaung National Liberation Army (PNLA), numerous skirmishes have broken out in the past 24 months that put civilians in danger and generated waves of internal

'The hluttaw is the people's representatives. It is not for only one group or one people'

Thura U Shwe Mann
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker



Thura U Shwe Mann speaks in Nay Pyi Taw. Photo: Staff

refugees.

Thura U Shwe Mann urged parliamentarians to think first of those living in conflict areas whose lives are on the line.

Soon after taking office, President U Thein Sein's government invited all armed groups to make peace with the national regime. To facilitate the process, the Union Peace-Making Central Committee and Union Peace Making Working Committees were formed in 2011, which then initiated peace talks with ethnic armed groups.

A presentation given by Daw Nan War Nu, Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Kunheing constituency in Shan State, detailed skirmishes between the Tatmadaw and the KIA in southern Kachin State's Man Wun region in June 2014, as well as another clash with the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) near Pomahe village in Karen State. Similarly, the Tatmadaw has fought battles against the PNLA, and the Shan State Progress Party and its armed wing, the Shan State Army.

During the two years since ceasefires were agreed, more than 100 separate skirmishes broke out in Shan State, with 28 recorded in 2014.

Some members of the Peace-Making Working Committee, including those also on the Pyithu Hluttaw's Ethnic Affairs, Rural Social Life Enhancing and Local Peace Making committees, say they participate in peace talks but have little sway in what happens.

"I am a member of the Peace-Making Committee as well as being a representative of Kachin State but I can't effectively take part in peace talks with the KIA," said Daw Dwebu, Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Ingyanyan constituency in Kachin State. "It is meaningless to be a Peace-Making Committee member because I can't even participate in my home state's affairs."

She added that ceasefire agreements meant nothing against a backdrop of regular clashes.

Representatives have regularly pushed to have more input in the peace process but officials from the Myanmar Peace Center, which has been working closely with the government in peace negotiations, have said there is little for parliament to do until a nationwide ceasefire has been agreed.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Women set to

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IN May 2014, Ma Hnin Kay Khaing, 26, embarked on an unusual career change: she left her job at a garment factory job and began working as a bus conductor.

Despite the long hours - she works seven days a week for more than 12 hours a day - the Insein township resident has no regrets about giving up her sewing machine for Yangon's testosterone- and betel nut-fuelled public transportation system.

"It's not difficult for me at all," she told *The Myanmar Times* last week. "I always try to focus on the passenger's peace of mind."

It is pioneering women like Ma Hnin Kay Khaing that some hope may transform the struggling image of the network.

Ko Tayoke Lay is one of several bus owners who has begun employing women and now has 40 female conductors on vehicles plying the 48 and 124 lines.

"We assigned the women on probation in April and permanently appointed them the following month. The main purpose is to give better service to public," he said.

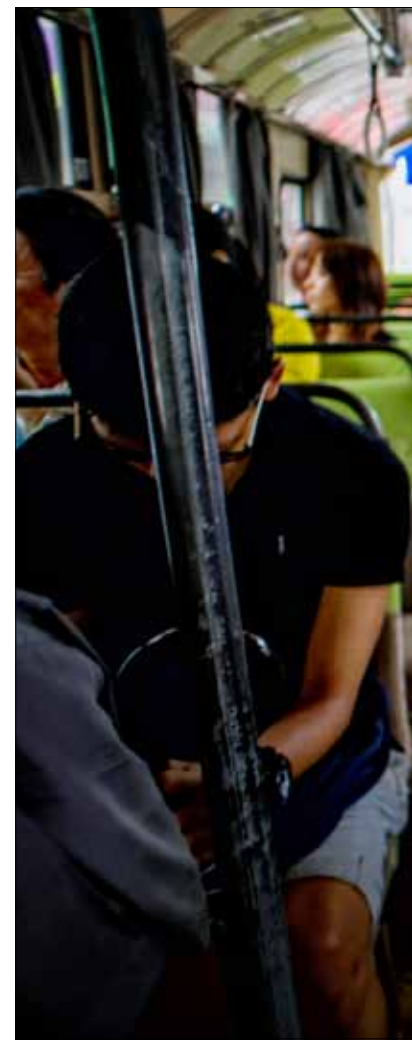
For now, government rules mean women can only handle money and are accompanied by a male bus conductor who helps passengers on and off the bus. However, Ko Tayoke Lay said he hopes this will change so he can appoint only women conductors. Before beginning work, all have to undertake a licence test on road rules conducted by the Road Transport Administration Department.

The rationale behind appointing women conductors is clear from the large number of complaints filed against their male counterparts, who dominate the network.

But owners also have a financial

'It's better than working in a factory. And from a financial perspective, I'm also much better off'

Ma Hnin Kay Khaing
Bus conductor



Bus conductor Ma Hnin Kay Khaing speaks

"We did not set many rules for them. We give them the same wage as male conductors," he said.

"But we earned more money than before because the women follow the rules more closely than men. For a start, they do not drink beer and chew quids of betel while working, so we save money on this. The women are also more polite than men so we think passengers will be satisfied."

The push for women conductors is part of a larger reform effort on the network. Ko Tayoke Lay is one of five bus owners running 53 vehicles on the 48 and 124 lines who have agreed to work together to raise service standards, in the hope that they will set an example to other owners.

While most buses carry signs inviting passengers who have had bad service to complain by phone to the Yangon Region Supervisory Committee for Motor Vehicles - better known as Ma Hta Tha - Ko Tayoke Lay's buses have his personal number.

"We want to change the transportation system. The government does nothing support to us. The current system is not good ... The [companies are] not developed, the bus conductors are not making money and the passengers are not satisfied," he said.

The plan has faced criticism from some people who expressed concern about whether the women conductors will be safe and if they have the

incentive. Most believe their male conductors are pocketing cash from fares that should be going to them. As *The Myanmar Times* has previously reported, this has major implications for service, as owners have less money to invest in repairs and upgrades to their fleet. They believe women are more honest, and Ko Tayoke Lay says he has proof: Income from lines with women conductors is already "much higher" than before.



Ma Hnin Kay Khaing collects fare money on a Yangon bus. Photo: Kaung Htet

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shake up bus lines



on her mobile phone during a recent shift aboard a bus in Yangon. Photo: Kaung Htet

skills and ability to resolve any problems that may occur on the route, such as if the bus breaks down or gets a flat tyre.

Ko Tayoke Lay said his company had already set up an on-call team that will come and fix the bus if there is a problem.

U Hla Aung, the head of Ma Hta Tha, said he is happy to have women on the network.

“It is good idea. I have heard that using this system is better for owners and women have a chance to show their abilities,” he said. “If the bus owners want to assign two women

[to each bus], it is also okay.”

Ma Hnin Kay Khaing urged other women to consider getting on board the profession.

“It’s better than working in a factory,” she said. “And from a financial perspective, I’m also much better off because we make K5000 a day profit.”

Anti-illegal trade mobile teams to expand scope

Mandalay International Airport to be one of three new areas of focus for Ministry of Commerce agents who are aiming to crack down on the country’s illicit border trade

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MINISTRY of Commerce mobile teams that aim to crack down on illegal border trade will extend their reach to police sites in Tanintharyi Region, as well as Ayeyarwady Region’s Gawwein Port and Mandalay International Airport, said Deputy Minister Dr Pwint San.

“We plan to start when we have new mobile teams ready,” the deputy minister told an Amyotha Hluttaw session on July 14.

Mobile teams have been checking Yangon’s five international ports – Htidan, Asia World, Myanmar Industrial, Bo Aung Kyaw and Sule – since July 2. Teams have also been monitoring commerce through Yangon International Airport since July 2. Other teams have been in place at Tachileik, in Shan State, since June 24, where they have been monitoring trade along the Mong La-Kengtung and Kengtung-Tachileik roads.

“Mobile teams have seized contraband valued at K17.512 billion [US\$180 million] in 20 months, resulting from 3390 cases brought by mobile teams, as well as regional and state governments between November 2012 and June 20 this year,” the deputy minister said.

Amyotha Hluttaw representative Major Than Tun Myint said that a lot of the nation’s revenue was lost importing fuel and telephone handsets into Myanmar.

“We have learnt that more than 80,000 telephone handsets were legally imported in the past financial year,” he said on July 14. However, he said more than four million SIM cards were in circulation.

He added that illegal fuel imports were estimated to have fallen by half

from the 2010-11 fiscal year to the following year – from 300,000 tonnes to 200,000 tonnes – even though many thousands of newer vehicles were imported to Myanmar following change in import policy in September 2011.

He added that illegal imports hurt the government in lost revenue but also damaged legitimate importers, who must compete with cheaper, untaxed imports.

The deputy minister said more than 17,200 handsets, which are valued at about K971.9 million (about \$1 million), have been seized in 31 Customs duty tax cases from November 2012 to June 2014.

He added that mobile teams will start cracking down on illegal fuel imports, which are mostly made by boat, to control the influx of untaxed fuel.

He said that the volume of trade has increased after mobile teams were formed to prevent illegal trade. By June 20, the trade volume in the 2014-15 fiscal year, which began on April 1, amounted to \$6.6 billion, compared with \$24.96 billion in 2013-14 and \$18.4 billion in 2012-2013, the deputy minister said. He added that the ministry predicts the trade volume to reach nearly \$26 billion for the current fiscal year.

Hluttaw representatives have said in parliament that Myanmar’s tax and gross domestic product (GDP) ratios are low compared to other countries in the region, placing part of the blame rampant illegal trade.

Figures submitted to parliament show that the ratio or tax to GDP in Thailand is 16.5 percent, it is 16.1pc in Malaysia, 14pc in Singapore and 12.9pc in the Philippines. Myanmar’s corresponding tax to GDP ratio is 4.4pc.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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Chinese demand is pushing padauk to extinction: report

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THE Forest Department has rejected calls for the government to enforce an international anti-smuggling treaty to combat the illicit trade in timber from two species of trees, which an environmental group warns could be logged to extinction within three years.

In its latest report, *Myanmar's Rosewood Crisis*, the UK-based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) said Chinese demand for padauk and tamalan has driven "increased illegal and unsustainable logging" in northern Myanmar, particularly Kachin State, over the past two years.

While the conflict in Kachin State has facilitated an increase in timber smuggling, EIA said demand has been driven by an "unprecedented boom" in the popularity of reproduction Qing- and Ming-dynasty furniture made from high-value luxury redwood, or rosewood, species.

As the report explains, other Mekong nations such as Laos and Vietnam have had their own reserves of tamalan and padauk largely depleted in the last decade, which has led smugglers and merchants to look towards Myanmar.

"Virtually overnight, Myanmar has become the biggest [rosewood] supplier to China worldwide, surpassing more traditional suppliers,"

The report's authors said the most effective way to stem the flow of logs into China would be for the government to implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES. They said that the convention "provides trade regulation, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms not otherwise available to national governments alone".

Myanmar became a signatory to CITES in 1997 and it entered into force in October of that year. However, the EIA says the government does not have the ability to implement the treaty and recommends international organisations assist to build capacity.

Whether the government wants



A Chinese worker works on rosewood furniture. Photo: Paul Redman/EIA

such assistance remains in doubt. U Zaw Win, deputy director general of the Forest Department, agreed that the increased rate of smuggling was of great concern but said national governments should be free to set their own policies and not forced to adhere to international agreements.

"We don't argue that [it is not a problem], but it's not so simple," he said. "The situation is not the same in each and every country."

U Zaw Win said he had not read the EIA report but described the issue of timber smuggling as large and complex. He said reducing smuggling will require a much broader range of reforms than implementation of a single treaty, including setting a land-use policy and reaching a ceasefire with the ethnic armed

groups, as insecurity and lawlessness play into the hands of smugglers.

U Zaw Win also acknowledged that

'Virtually overnight, Myanmar has become the biggest [rosewood] supplier to China worldwide, surpassing more traditional suppliers.'

EIA report

ILO Convention to come into force in December

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AN INTERNATIONAL Labour Organisation convention aimed at combating the worst of underage working offenses is set to come into effect in December. Government officials are hoping that the step will help bring Myanmar in line with the international community and could prompt further easing of sanctions.

Convention No 182, more commonly known as the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, addresses the gravest forms of child labour, in-

cluding child slavery and recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

U Aye Myint, Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security, said in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session on July 16 that the development could prompt additional easing of sanctions.

"Practising the Convention can give support to the lifting of EU and US sanctions against Myanmar," he said. "We have implemented it [the convention] with the approval of the Union government in accordance with the respective procedures."

Out of 185 ILO member countries, 179 countries have ratified the convention.

Myanmar announced its intention to change this at the ILO Conference held in June 2013. In December 2013, the government sent a ratification letter to the ILO. Under UN guidelines the convention will come into effect on December 18, 2014.

In addition to taking immediate action to end child labour, the government will also be responsible for providing rehabilitation activities to victims of child labour. – Translation by Thiri Min Htun



IN PICTURES

Daw Mya Kyi smokes a cigar and chats with neighbours at her small hut in Maetawsu village in Amarapura township on July 3. According to her National Registration Card, Daw Mya Kyi will turn 122 in October.

PHOTO: PHYO WAI KYAW

179

Number of ILO member countries, out of 185, where Convention No 182 has been ratified

Millions of smokers in Myanmar prove to be a serious health threat to those around them who choose not to light up

AUNG Aung has never smoked but his friends expose him to smoke every day. Three of his five closest friends smoke, and when they meet up at university, in teashops and other hangout spots, there is invariably a pall of smoke in the air.

Although Aung Aung says he does not mind being exposed to what experts call secondhand smoke – the fumes released from the burning end of a cigarette and the smoke exhaled by the smokers – his health could be suffering as a result.

The World Health Organization has found that smoking tobacco kills nearly 6 million people worldwide each year, with more than 5 million dying from direct tobacco use and more than 600,000 non-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke also falling victim.

In Myanmar, laws exist to protect the population from the effects of secondhand smoke but fines are weak and the laws have not been enforced.

However, there is evidence that awareness of the issue is growing and senior officials within the Ministry of Health now say they are committed to enforcing smoke-free spaces for the sake of the public.

A study published in January in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* said as of 2012 there was nearly 7 million smokers in Myanmar.

Smoking-related illnesses are a major public health issue and experts say they are concerned about the risks of passive smoking, or second-hand smoke, for the population.

"For those who smoke and who breathe in the smoked air, both have the same risk for smoking-related problems," said Dr Nang Naing Naing Shein, project manager of the Ministry of Health's Tobacco-free Initiative.

"People may wonder why they have smoking-related diseases although they do not smoke. It is secondhand smoke that puts them at risk," she said.

“For non-smokers, don’t forget that you are also inhaling the toxic fumes like the smokers around you.”

Secondhand smokers suffer the same health risks as smokers. Effects in children include more frequent and severe asthma attacks and respiratory symptoms such as coughing, sneezing and shortness of breath. Infants whose parents smoke are also at greater risk of sudden infant death syndrome. In adults, secondhand smoke can cause serious cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, lung cancer and other chronic diseases. In pregnant women, it can affect birth rates and lead to a higher risk of birth defects.

Dr Nang Naing Naing Shein said that everyone has the right to ask



people around them to put out their cigarette.

"We should also stop people who smoke around children. It is our responsibility to protect our children and ourselves against smoking," she said.

A Ministry of Health survey of more than 7000 people aged 15 to 64 in 2009 found that 55.6pc were exposed to secondhand smoke at home, while 63.6pc were exposed in public indoor places and 23.3pc in public outdoor places. Exposure at home was more common among women, while men are more likely to be exposed at work and public places.

A 2011 report on the effects of secondhand smoke on school children in Myanmar showed similar results. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey conducted on students aged 13 to 15 years, it found that 32.2pc of students live in homes where others smoke in their presence, 38.4pc are around those who smoke in enclosed public places, and 32.6pc are around other who smoke in outdoor public places. The survey also found that 47pc of those interviewed had at least one parent who smoked.

Dr Aye Win Set, a specialist at Yangon General Hospital's Chest Medical Department, said people exposed to secondhand smoke were dying "unnecessary deaths".

"People know that smoking can

‘People may wonder why they have smoking-related diseases although they do not smoke. It is secondhand smoke that puts them at risk.’

Call for action on use of drugs in fish farming



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HEALTH officials have called on the Department of Fisheries to crack down on the use of antibiotics at fisheries farms, after chloramphenicol residue was recently found in dried prawn products exported to Britain.

More than three tonnes of *bal-achaung* was destroyed after British officials detected 0.032 parts per million of chloramphenicol in early April, according to the Myanmar Fisheries Products Processors and Exporters Association.

TONNES

3

Amount of *balachaung*, or dried prawn, destroyed after British authorities detected chloramphenicol residue

The United States has banned the use of chloramphenicol in fisheries farms since 1994 and Western countries test imported products for residue of the antibiotic, which is used on farms to increase production but can cause antibiotic resistance and even aplastic anaemia, a bone marrow condition.

According to the Department of Fisheries, it is the first time since

2002 that chloramphenicol has been detected in fisheries export products. The company in question has been forced to close for six months and fined K100,000, a director in the Department of Fisheries said.

The prevalence of chloramphenicol and other antibiotics in local products remains unclear, however, as the department – which has the only laboratory in Myanmar capable of testing for the drug – only checks export products.

Food and Drug Administration director U Tun Zaw said his organisation has not approved for import any medicines containing chloramphenicol.

He urged the department to take stronger action against producers who deliberately or unknowingly administer antibiotics on their farms.

“The Department of Fisheries is responsible for stopping fish and shrimp farms from using prohibited medicines containing chloramphenicol,” he said.

Processors and exporters association secretary U Myo Nyunt said chloramphenicol was one of 14 types of antibiotics prohibited for use in fisheries farming in Myanmar. He said it was likely that the farms had used illegally imported food or medicine that contained the antibiotic.

“The Department of Fisheries instructs farmers not to use chloramphenicol,” he said.

The department of fisheries director said he did not believe local consumers would be at risk from chloramphenicol or other antibiotics.

“It is just used by exporters because it is expensive,” he said.

However, he conceded that the department is virtually powerless to test and take action against the use of antibiotics. “Until now we haven’t had any evidence ... but if we find out they have used it we will take action.”

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun



A volunteer sells flowers to a passing motorcyclist in Mandalay last month. Photo: Mg Zaw

Flower power helps kids in Mandalay stay in class

MG ZAW

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DOZENS of young children who normally sell flowers around Mandalay’s royal moat have been given some much needed days off thanks to a newly launched volunteer organisation known as “Flower Growers Teaching Class”.

Only a few weeks old, Flower Growers aims to help school-aged children who rely on selling flowers after school to pay for their education costs.

The program sees the young students receive extra tutoring at a make shift school in front of Shwe Pyi Moe Cafe at the south end of

the city’s moat, while adult volunteers take to the streets to sell flowers on their behalf.

All proceeds from the flowers go back to the students and organisers say each child is guaranteed at least K2500 per day, regardless of how many flowers the adults can sell.

Ma Ninsi, co-founder of the project, told *The Myanmar Times* that she was inspired to start the program after seeing the children selling flowers each evening on her commute home.

“I want to encourage their education,” said the 30-year-old restaurant manager.

While the group’s original plan was to provide classes only for the

flower-selling children, Ma Ninsi said the classes have already grown to accommodate children who can’t afford school at all.

The all-volunteer force is also seeking larger donations to provide books and healthcare to the children.

Ma Ninsi said the small project had already been overwhelmed by support from the community. Within days of its launch on June 25, they were contacted by several hundred Mandalay residents wanting to donate their time.

“At the moment we haven’t accepted all of their offers because we already have many [volunteers],” she said. – Translation by Zar Zar Soe



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‘Unity’ journalists are political prisoners: committee member

Remaining Political Prisoners Scrutiny Committee will also discuss fate of journalists charged over protest



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A COMMITTEE set up to push for the release of political prisoners will consider lobbying on behalf of five staff from *Unity* journal who were sentenced to 10 years' jail with hard labour earlier this month.

The journal's chief executive officer and four reporters were sentenced by Pakokku District Court on July 10 for breaking the 1923 State Secrets Act for reporting on a military factory in Magwe Region.

U Nyo Tun, a member of the Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee and the Former Political Prisoners Society (FPPS), said he would raise their case at the committee's next meeting.

"I think we should classify them as political prisoners because they were working for the interest of the people, not for their own sake," he said. "The leaders of the committee and other members should classify them as political prisoners."

The sentencing of the *Unity* journalists has been widely criticised by media freedom and rights groups at home and abroad. The journalists had published an article in January alleging that the factory was

33

Confirmed number of political prisoners, according to the Remaining Political Prisoners Scrutiny Committee



Unity chief executive officer U Tint San speaks to the media at Pakokku District Court on July 10. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

producing chemical weapons with Chinese assistance, although the government insists this was not the case.

Last week Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also criticised the sentencing and urged a review of the case. The NLD leader questioned the way the case was handled and why the government was clamping down on media freedom at a time when it as supposed to be on the road to democracy.

U Nyo Tun said the committee will also consider the case of 50 journalists who are likely to be charged for staging a silent protest against attacks on media freedom during President U Thein Sein's visit to the

Myanmar Peace Center on July 12. Kamaryut township police have reportedly said they plan to charge the protestors under section 18 of the peaceful protest law, which carries a potential six-month jail term.

"We will also discuss what we can do for those 50 journalists," U Nyo Tun said.

While hundreds of political prisoners have been released from prison since U Thein Sein came to office, more are still being arrested under the Emergency Provisions Act, the peaceful protest law and the Penal Code.

The committee has confirmed

there are 33 political prisoners and more than 100 politically motivated cases before the courts.

However, as *The Myanmar Times* reported last week, the committee's meetings since the end of 2013, when government claimed to have achieved its goal of freeing all political prisoners, have been infrequent. The last took place on June 1, and members said they expect the next will be in August.

At the meeting they will also discuss the case of five monks arrested and charged following a raid on Mahasantisukha Monastery in Tarmwe township.

Scam artist hits NPT hospital

HSU HLAING HTUN

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A DOCTOR at a large public hospital near Nay Pyi Taw has filed a lawsuit against a man who posed as a military officer and who she alleges extorted money from patients and their families on several different occasions by using her name.

One reported incident involved a patient, U Myint Wai, who was admitted to the 1000-bed hospital to undergo emergency stomach surgery after being transferred from a hospital in Tatkon township on July 8.

The next day, after surgery, an unidentified man visited the intensive care unit where U Myint Wai was staying and asked his family members for K150,000 (US\$153), promising better treatment and preferential care in return for what he described as "a present" for Dr Naw Mar Thay, an associate professor and surgeon at the hospital.

The man told the family he was a colonel from the No 109 Regiment.

"We are farmers. We believed his lies because he could tell us exactly about our village. We felt sorry for that," said family member U Maung Than. "He left me saying he was going to buy goods for the doctor and never come back."

After the July 10 incident, which was the fifth such case reported this year, hospital officials put notices at every department in the hospital to make others aware of the scam.

Dr Naw Mar Thay said she had also filed a complaint at the local police station.

"The cheater took advantage of the honesty of the patient's family. I think he is deliberately disgracing the reputation of doctors. We have never asked patients to give presents to us. I've worked here since 2006 and we never asked anything like that so I am very angry," said. "This time he used my name so I filed lawsuit." - Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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Arrests made over Mandalay killings

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POLICE in Mandalay have arrested a number of people in connection with the killing of two men – a Buddhist and a Muslim – at the height of religious violence earlier this month.

A spokesperson for the district police force office did not reveal the exact number of arrests made so far but said more people are likely to be detained in the coming weeks.

“We caught some suspects in relation to these violent deaths,” the spokesperson said. “We are trying to arrest other suspects but are not ready to reveal the exact number of people we are still searching for.”

On the night of July 12, police launched a raid to arrest people suspected of involvement in the violence earlier this month, which also left up to 20 people injured.

The regional police force office arrested nine people on that day. While five were later released, the rest are still being questioned. No charges had been filed at press time.

After the arrests were made, large crowds formed on 34th Street, between 74th and 75th streets, leading some to believe mobs were gathering



Riot police patrol Mandalay's streets on the night of July 2. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

to spread more unrest.

“It looked like a mob but it was just the relatives of suspects who were trying to make enquiries after the arrests. There was no conflict,” said Police Lieutenant Colonel Zaw Min Oo from the regional police force office.

One resident who lives in a nearby ward confirmed that it was the relatives of the suspects. “They came to enquire about the arrest at the ward administration office,” he said.

While the situation in Mandalay has returned to normal, rumours of imminent outbreaks of violence are spreading every day through social media. The police spokesperson said

authorities have so far been unable to identify who is starting the rumours.

“These rumours come out at least twice a day online, but everything is fine in the city,” he said.

The violence broke out in Mandalay on the night of July 1. On July 2, a Buddhist man, Ko Tun Tun, was killed while volunteering for a free funeral service, while a Muslim, Ko Min Soe, was killed the following morning while walking to the mosque for prayers.

The government imposed curfew in six townships on July 3, and the following day it was extended to nearby Patheingyi.

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe

New special rapporteur touches down

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THE UN's newly appointed special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar began her first visit to the country last week.

Yanghee Lee will visit Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Rakhine and Kachin states on her 10-day trip, which began on July 16. She will also travel to Mandalay, where a recent outbreak of violence between Muslims and Buddhists left two men dead.

“A frank and open exchange of views will be vital to help me better understand the realities on the ground,” Ms Lee said in a statement prior to the trip. “And it is my intention, as special rapporteur, to work closely with the government and people of Myanmar, towards the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.”

On July 17, Ms Lee spoke with members of the Interfaith Friendship Group and the Myanmar Human Rights Commission, and visited Insein Prison outside Yangon.

The position of special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar has existed since 1992. It is nominated by the UN secretary general and mandated by the UN Human Rights Council.

Ms Lee took over the role of special rapporteur in June from Tomás Quintana, who held the post for six years – the maximum period allowable – before finishing his mandate in May.

Though granted greater and more

frequent access to Myanmar than his predecessors, Mr Quintana's time as special rapporteur was dogged in recent years by accusations that he was biased toward the country's Muslims.

Visits to Rakhine State were regularly met by protesters, and in August 2013 Mr Quintana's convoy was attacked while travelling through Meiktila, less than six months after

‘A frank and open exchange of views will be vital to help me better understand the realities on the ground’

Yanghee Lee
Special rapporteur

more than 40 people were killed in religious violence in the town. The government rejected Mr Quintana's version of the incident.

Previously, Ms Lee was a member and chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child from 2003 to 2011 and is the founding president of International Child Rights Center. She is a professor at Sungkyunwan University in Seoul.



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New law could force private unis to teach state curriculum



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PRIVATE universities will have to offer the same curriculum as state-run universities under a new education law, a senior official from the Department of Higher Education has told *The Myanmar Times*.

But private colleges and the opposition National League for Democracy have already signalled their opposition to the section of the law, which is almost certain to be hotly debated when it is discussed in parliament.

Currently private universities are responsible for their own curriculum and many receive assistance in developing their courses from foreign universities.

This will change after the National Educational Bill, which was submitted to parliament earlier this year, is enacted, said the official, who asked not to be named.

“By the time the National Education Law is enacted, the curriculums of those private universities have to be [the same as] those of the state-owned universities,” the official said.

He insisted that this would “not degrade” the standards of the private sector.

“If they cannot teach it, we cannot recognise those schools. If every school



Students participate in a class at Yangon's Victoria College on July 10. Photo: Yu Yu

teaches their own curriculum, we cannot know which school is better.”

Private universities, of which there are more than 10 in Myanmar, say they are opposed to the provision in the draft law.

U Nay Win Naing from Victoria College said students would lose out if the law is passed in its current form.

“We are opening this university in this country and so we are going to follow this country's law. However, the curriculum should not be degraded. If this happens, students will lose out,” he

said.

The NLD, which has been at the forefront of the push for education reform, is in favour of private universities being independent. It argues that rather than force private universities to adhere to the state curriculum, the state universities should raise their standards to those of the private sector.

“If we adjust to the more preferable private school curriculum, students in the state sector will benefit significantly,” said U Thein Lwin, the deputy head of the NLD's education unit.

He said the subject has been discussed “several times” in parliament.

“We are waiting for these changes [to the bill] to be approved in the hlaw. They are needed to improve public education in the long run.”

But in a sign that the bill will be fiercely contested, the senior education official warned that private universities would face legal consequences if they did not comply.

“If they want to teach with their own curriculums,” he said, “they are going to be sued under the law.”

Road deaths fall in Mandalay

THAN NAING SOE
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POLICE in Mandalay have reported a slight drop in road deaths in the first half of this year.

Ninety deaths were recorded between January and June, eight fewer than over the same period in 2013.

The number of reported accidents dropped by two to 211, while the number of people injured on the roads fell by 31 to 244.

Police Major Thein Ko Ko from the Mandalay Traffic Police Force said about 75 percent of accidents involved motorcycles only.

“Most accidents are caused by reckless driving,” Pol Maj Thein Ko Ko said.

“If everybody follows the traffic rules, we all will be safe from traffic accidents. The traffic police force alone cannot solve the accident problems,” he said.

In the first half of the year 142 people were cited for reckless driving, 43 were cited for driving at a high speed, 23 for unskillful driving and three for driving a defective vehicle.

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Thailand rejects return rumours



BILL O'TOOLE

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THE Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs and refugee groups have rejected reports that the Thai government plans to deport more than 100,000 refugees encamped along the border back to Myanmar.

In a statement released on July 17, the ministry said that beyond discussing the issue in "general terms", there were no plans to repatriate the refugees, who mostly fled from Kayah and Kayin states.

The ministry further promised that any future program would be volun-

tary and in line with UN principles. Several refugee groups working on the border echoed the ministry's comments.

"The [Thai] government has reassured us on several occasions that there is no rush to close the camps," said Vivian Tan, a Bangkok-based spokesperson for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. "As far as [UNHCR is] concerned, conditions in southeastern Myanmar are not yet fully conducive to organised returns."

She said her agency "is not aware of any changes in this government policy, or of a government timeframe to repatriate refugees. We have certainly not agreed on any timeframe."

The rumors were ignited when General Prayuth Chan-ocha, leader of the Thai junta, mentioned during his weekly address to the nation that the

issue of refugees had been discussed during his meeting with Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who visited Thailand earlier in the month.

The story escalated further when the *Bangkok Post* published an article on July 14 quoting an unnamed member of the Thai military as saying that the government and the UNHCR had already begun conducting collecting data on where different camps of refugees wished to be resettled, the first step in a process that will take "at least one year". This quote was then repeated by other news outlets, such as Reuters and the *Irrawaddy*.

The statement from the Thai government acknowledged that the discussions took place, but claimed that touching upon the issue was a matter of course.

"In previous discussions between high ranking officials of Thailand and Myanmar, the issue of preparing conditions on both sides of the border for a possible return of these displaced persons has always been raised to touch base on both sides," said the statement.

During the meeting this month, "both sides touched upon this particular issue, among others, and the Myanmar side reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with Thailand to prepare for a safe return in the future."

Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* last week, Ms Tan said the original article in the *Bangkok Post* contained "a number of inaccuracies".

The Border Consortium, a coalition of 10 INGOs delivering humanitarian assistance to camps on the border, has previously said too early for an "organised and large-scale" return.

Director Duncan McArthur reiterated last week that a "premature" forced return would "not only be unsustainable, but may risk undermining the peace process by increasing tensions in conflict-affected areas".

"There has not been any policy change regarding refugee return since the National Council for Peace and Order assumed power in Thailand. This was the consistent message from the Third Army and the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) to refugee leaders ... during [meetings in] June," Mr McArthur said.

In recent weeks, the Thai government has instituted new policies limiting the movements of refugees living in Thailand, including a nightly curfew in camps on the border and requirements that refugees show several different forms of ID to access medical care.

FEATURE

Behind the bar with Myanmar's regional champion

EI EITHU
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WHEN Ko Kyaw Zin Htun went to Malaysia to work in a furniture factory in 2008, at the age of 20, the prospect of winning a regional title in anything seemed remote.

Although he didn't know it at the time, Ko Kyaw Zin Htun's journey to the ASEAN Hotel and Restaurant Association Bartenders' Championship started just four months after arriving in Malaysia. Like so many other migrant workers before and after him, he quit his factory job to escape an oppressive boss, who had refused to let him have his passport.

A friend working as a chef in a Chinese restaurant got him a job as a waiter, and then he switched to working behind the bar. Since returning to Myanmar in 2013, Ko Kyaw Zin Htun, who is also known as Kelvin, has made a name for himself mixing cocktails at Union Bar & Grill on Strand Road.

"I didn't attend any bartending classes," he said last week. "I just learned on the job and self-studied."

The undoubted highlight of his career to date came on June 20, when a panel of five judges awarded Ko Kyaw Zin Htun the regional title at the 11th AHRA Bartenders' Championship 2014, held at the Myanmar Convention Center in Yangon. He finished ahead of Wetsupakul Pramote from Thailand and Myanmar's Ko Phyo Nyi Nyi Aung, also known as Leo.

Ko Kyaw Zin Htun had been selected for the regional championships after winning the first Myanmar Bartenders' Competition earlier in the month.

Despite already having one victory under his belt, he said he was not expecting success on June 20.



Ko Kyaw Zin Htun mixes a cocktail at Union Bar & Grill on Strand Road. Photo: Zarni Phyo

"I wanted to be the best competitor but I didn't expect to win. I'm very glad to get this award and am very proud to be representing Myanmar," he said.

During the event, the nine competitors from Myanmar, Thailand,

Singapore and Malaysia each mixed two cocktails: a standard drink - in this case an espresso martini - and one of their own creation.

"I got the idea for my own creative cocktail from a pomelo, which tastes so good and you can get dur-

ing all three seasons in Myanmar. So I named it 'three seasons of paradise,'" Ko Kyaw Zin Htun said.

Of the five judges, three tasted the cocktails "blind", without knowing who had made them, while two judged competitors' performance

while mixing the drinks.

Judge U Myat Shwe Myint from the Myanmar Restaurant Association said it was a "fair" system.

"We didn't know who had made which drink or how they presented their cocktail so it was fair for the participants," he said.

He also headed off any suggestions of bias for the local entrants.

"I was surprised that Kelvin won the champion. I didn't think he would be the champion because I didn't give him the highest score but he was selected after tallying the assessments of all judges."

Ko Kyaw Zin Htun said he hoped his win would encourage more young people to take up bartending, which he said was now a viable career in Myanmar.

"In my personal opinion, bartenders are smart and have a good standard of living. They can learn a lot from customers because so many different types of people are coming into the bar and you can also support your family on your salary," he said.

His tips for aspiring mixologists? A skilled bartender should know not only their drinks but also their ingredients inside out, and also understand the full workings of their bar or restaurant. But most important, he said, is to always show respect for your customers.

"To any young bartender I would say to learn while you are working because Myanmar doesn't have a school just for bartending," he said.

Ko Kyaw Zin Htun, trophy in hand, is happy to be back behind the bar at Union, but also has greater ambitions for the future. "One day," he said, "I hope to be able to have my own restaurant." - *Additional reporting by Myint Kay Thi*

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Millions sign petition, what comes next unclear

IN a show of political strength ahead of next year's elections, the National League for Democracy has gathered millions of signatures in support of changes to a constitution that bars its leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from becoming president.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has travelled the country drawing crowds of thousands with speeches urging the military to accept a reduced political role.

The petition, which was launched in May, had gathered around three million signatures by early July.

"In a democratic country the people's will is important," U Nyan Win, a spokesperson for Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party, told AFP.

The campaign, which ended on July 19, is focused on altering a provision that currently ensures the military has a veto on any amendment to the junta-era charter.

To alter the constitution there needs to be support from a majority of over 75 percent of parliament.

Unelected soldiers, who make up a quarter of the legislature, therefore have the last say on changes to the charter.

U Nyan Win said he expects the clause to be altered during the current sitting of parliament, which ends later this month, and that this would enable further changes.

"It is the main door. If it opens,

you'll see everything," he said.

While the campaign has generated headlines, experts say it is unclear what effect it will have.

A member of the constitution amendment committee said the petition would make no difference to its deliberations.

He said the 31-member group will release its first recommendations in the coming days, but that these are only based on suggestions received before a December deadline.

"They should have done this earlier," he told AFP on condition of anonymity.

It is believed the committee has already decided not to recommend a change to the controversial provision that currently bars Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from becoming president.

Myanmar's 2008 constitution blocks anyone whose spouse or children are overseas citizens from leading the country - a clause widely believed to be targeted at the Nobel laureate, whose two sons are British.

She has urged soldiers to support the petition.

"I would like you all to consider whether getting more opportunities than ordinary citizens is really fair," she told a rally in Yangon in May, earning a rebuke from the country's election commission.

Derek Tonkin, a former British ambassador to several Southeast Asian countries, said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is "desperately disappointed"

by the committee's lack of support and could even consider pulling out of the election if she feels constitution reform falls short.

"Much will depend on the personal disposition of Aung San Suu Kyi herself," he told AFP, adding that the daughter of Myanmar's independence hero is convinced "that she has been born to rule".

Washington lent its support to Suu Kyi's charter change efforts in June, saying reform "should pave the way for the Burmese to freely choose their president".

But within Myanmar "there is no support for a change to this article" outside the NLD, said independent Myanmar expert Renaud Egretau.

He said there is an intrinsic wariness of foreign occupation, in a country that gained independence from British rule in 1948 and which has long lived under the shadow of its giant neighbour, China.

"You are touching on the heart of Burma," he said, using the country's former name. "No one wants the next president to have a Chinese wife or a Muslim husband."

Myanmar has been shaken by deadly anti-Muslim violence for two years, most recently in the second-largest city Mandalay, raising fears that the democratic transition could be destabilised.

If the 2015 vote is free and fair - the first such general election in the country's modern history - the NLD



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks during a joint public address with 88 Generation Students on July 17 in Yangon. Photo: AFP

is widely expected to win.

The president will be appointed by parliament.

"Everything the NLD is doing now is related to the 2015 election," U Nyan Win told AFP.

But experts say there remains much uncertainty over how the polls will play out in a country where the military gripped power for nearly half a century.

Mr Egretau said the NLD's petition was a "symbolic" way to show that it is a "strong political force". But

that strength has old elites on edge.

Members of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) are aware that they are likely to lose their seats next year.

The military, while not wanting to return to direct rule, views its legislative influence as part of its "guardian" role so "wants no big change in anything", said Mr Egretau.

"It seems that everybody has in mind that after 2015 many things will be different. But nobody knows how," he said. - AFP



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Not-so-secret voting stirs debate

Request to hide how parliamentarians vote provokes discussion on the merits of secret voting and pressure to toe the party line



EI EI TOE LWIN THOMAS KEAN

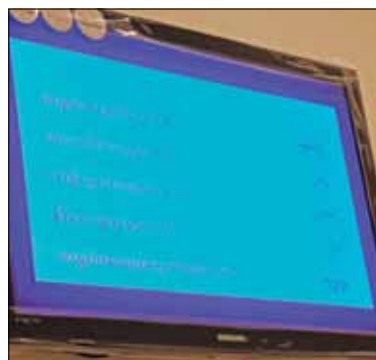
EARLIER this year, Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Ye Tun submitted a proposal that was voted down by nearly all MPs.

Afterward, a senior member of an opposition party approached him to offer praise for his motion. "I asked him, if that's the case, why didn't you vote for my proposal?" U Ye Tun said. "He just replied, 'Oh, please forgive me.'"

Although he agreed with the proposal, the MP hadn't wanted to vote against the majority – and the opinion of the powerful speaker, Thura U Shwe Mann, who leads the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).

But how did U Ye Tun know which way the MP voted? And why did the MP feel unable to vote freely?

Three methods are currently used to decide on proposals or amendments to bills. The first, and most common, is voting whereby MPs push a button on their console to vote either vote yes or no, or to abstain.



A television screen in parliament shows voting results. Photo: Staff

In other cases, MPs who object to a proposal are invited to stand up. Occasionally, the speaker simply asks three times if there are any objections, although this is used only rarely.

But none of these voting methods used are secret. When MPs vote using the button system, as they did for U Ye Tun's proposal, a light system on their desk enables everyone to see how they voted. The light turns green

if they vote yes, red if they vote no and yellow if they abstain.

On June 13, U Pe Than, a representative from Myebon in Rakhine State, asked whether the voting system used could be amended, as he said not all MPs feel they can vote freely on a proposal or bill.

"Can't we switch off the light so it doesn't come on after we've voted?" U Pe Than asked.

The response was illuminating. Hluttaw Rights Committee member U Soe Yin revealed that the system they are using is known as "open" voting, and that a genuinely "secret" voting system also exists, under which all lights would come on only after MPs vote.

"The secret voting system has not been used in parliament yet," U Soe Yin said.

U Pe Than responded that this should have been explained earlier to MPs, as some thought their votes were already secret.

"We've been in parliament three years but this is the first we've heard about secret voting," he said.

He then asked when secret voting would be used, to which Thura U Shwe Mann replied that the decision was up to him.

"It depends on [my] decision. [I can] use the system if it is necessary. At that time, all MPs must follow [my] decision," the speaker said.

Under computerised, open voting, the results, including how individual MPs voted, are logged with the hluttaw office. However, a senior official in the Amyotha Hluttaw Office told *The Myanmar Times* on condition of anonymity that neither of the speakers had ever requested data on voting.

The question now is whether it matters which system is used. Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Phone Myint Aung said he was unconcerned that his voting patterns were public. He said parliament had only used genuinely secret voting once – when voting on presidential nominees way back in February 2011.

"I know the speaker can find out how everyone voted if he asks for the data from the computer room," he said. "But I don't care that we haven't been using secret voting. I never feel that I have lost my rights because of using open voting."

U Aung Thein Linn, a senior MP from the USDP, said the speaker would use secret voting "if it necessary".



MPs vote during a session of parliament. The control unit on their desks lights up depending on how they vote. Photo: Staff

"As MPs we have no right to choose what system we want to use. It's just up to the speaker and we are ready to follow his decision," he said.

But Daw Khin Htay Kywe, a National League for Democracy

'Sometimes they are afraid that their leader or other people will be angry at them if they vote as they want to.'

U Ye Tun

Pyithu Hluttaw representative

representative from Mawlamyine, said she was "shocked" to find out during the June 13 discussion that the way she voted was being recorded in a control room.

"I only found out now that we are using an 'open' voting system [not a secret one]," she said. "But I'm not worried about others knowing how I voted."

Like U Pe Than, some MPs believe open voting has a chilling effect on some other representatives.

"Sometimes they are afraid their leader or other people will be angry at them if they vote as they want to," U Ye Tun said.

Voting as a bloc is not only about fear, however. What open voting has revealed, U Ye Tun said, is that many MPs decide how to vote based on their relationship with who submitted it, rather than on the merits of

the proposal – a practice he said was rooted in Myanmar culture. This is most clear in the staunch opposition of elected MPs to proposals from the president, such as on amendments approved bills.

"We have a saying, 'Poke ko kin ma taya min meh.' It means, if you have good relations with the person, you will like his words."

"I always try to see the problem as it lies, not the people behind the problem ... but many MPs and many leaders ... see only the person behind the proposal."

But does that mean secret voting is better? U Myat Thu, a director of the Yangon School of Political Science, said transparency is more important.

"I don't like secret voting," he said. "People in the constituency should be able to know how their representative voted."

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Views

Tales of Malaysia's rich and powerful



ROGER MITTON

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THIS is a tale of two powerful men, superficially different, but with quirky similarities in age, achievement, wealth, affinity for pretty ladies and, as I can attest having interviewed both several times, a marked propensity for landing in trouble.

One is Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak, 60, whose alleged complicity in the brutal murder of a svelte Mongolian model has returned to haunt him.

The other is the flashy business tycoon Francis Yeoh, 60 next month, who recently – and rashly – berated the extent of crony capitalism that still exists in Malaysia under Najib's government.

Yeoh, who runs YTL Corp, a diversified conglomerate founded by his father, extolled the audience at a Kuala Lumpur forum last month by telling them how YTL had succeeded without government patronage.

That raised eyebrows. No major company, not least one involved in infrastructure and power projects like YTL, can prosper in Malaysia without currying favour with political leaders.

But Yeoh, in a barely veiled swipe at his fellow crony tycoons, said he had moved 85 percent of YTL's business overseas, mainly to Australia, Singapore and the UK.

Why? Because unlike Malaysia, they follow the rule of law, stamp out corruption and practise a meritocratic system in politics and business.

"It is time to end crony capitalism in Malaysia!" Yeoh roared.

Apparently, he was not drunk,

except with his own pomposity and sense of divine righteousness.

The strange thing is that he was absolutely right. In Malaysia, corruption remains rife and favouritism toward Malays is institutionalised, while non-Malays who fund Najib's National Front government are richly rewarded.

Unfortunately, Yeoh's YTL falls into the latter category, so his pious sermon suffered from a pungent dose of hypocrisy.

Former PM Mahathir Mohamad pointed this out when he verbally chastised Yeoh for the intemperate remarks and obliged him to make a craven apology. YTL is now unlikely to be favoured when government contracts come up, and it has already been cut out of a planned US\$940-million power station in Johor state because of Yeoh's comments.

While it is sad that Yeoh should come a cropper for telling the truth, it is hard to feel much sympathy for such an arrogant hypocrite, whose private life has long been stained by infidelity and deception.

Which nicely brings us to Najib, whose past private life would make even French President François Hollande's peccadilloes seem mild.

In one of his more recent indiscretions, Najib is alleged to have pleased Altantuya "Tuya" Shaaribuu, the drop-dead gorgeous Mongolian model who was also a mistress of his political adviser Razak Baginda.

It was a tawdry and convoluted bolero that involved a \$155-million kickback on a defence procurement deal signed by Najib and culminated in the pregnant Tuya being raped, shot in the head and blown up.

She had refused to go back to Ulan Bator after Razak had had his fill of her and instead she had tried to pressure him into giving her a half-million from that humungous backhand. The exasperated Razak then paid one of his former security officers, P. Balasubramaniam, known as Bala, to more bluntly order Tuya not to come near him again.

When even that failed, Razak spoke to Najib and two of the PM's bodyguards were dispatched to make her go away, which they did, rather too literally. They were charged along with Razak, but naturally all three were set free. No one has been punished for Tuya's gruesome murder.

But that may be about to change.

Some time after the murder, Bala signed a sworn statement claiming that Razak had told him Tuya was Najib's lover before the PM passed her to Razak. That bombshell accusation was bizarrely defused the next day when Bala made another statement absolving Najib of any involvement with Tuya.

He was then given a bag of money, forced into exile and told to keep his mouth shut or else. Bala died of a heart attack last year.

His revelations, however, have now resurfaced due to a local lawyer, Americk Sidhu, filing a civil suit in the High Court claiming Bala was forced by Najib's henchmen to sign the second statement exonerating the PM. According to Sidhu's suit, one of Malaysia's best-known and politically well-connected lawyers, Cecil Abraham, was directed by Najib's office to write the second statement that Bala was pressured to sign.

It is such a grave allegation that the Malaysian Bar Council has referred the matter to a disciplinary board which is now considering whether Abraham acted unprofessionally and breached legal ethics. A clearly perturbed council president, Christopher Leong, went further and said, "We'll urge the Attorney-General's Chambers to reopen investigations into Altantuya's case."

Regrettably, that won't happen. The AG is a legal crony, much like the business cronies Yeoh criticised. He will not reopen the case, nor will Abraham be debarred, nor will anyone be punished for Tuya's murder.

It is a lamentable situation that calls to mind, with a slight revision, the final words of the movie *Chinatown*: "Forget it, Francis. It's Malaysia."

Dialogue in Losing and

IN November 2002 I wrote a book called *Dialogue*. On the cover I dedicated it "to the people of Burma, who do not have the culture of dialogue".

Even before the book was published I received angry calls demanding I remove the dedication. My book's graphic designer asked me to remove it because he had received severe criticism from members of the exile community. They thought it was a provocation and an insult to Myanmar culture. They claimed to have a culture of dialogue.

Undeterred, I left the message on the front cover.

Unbeknown to them, earlier that year I had had a most disturbing conversation with one of the top exiles. It started out as a casual conversation. I told him I was writing a book called *Dialogue*. He then confided in me an alarming revelation: His group would only go into dialogue when it had the upper hand. Worse still, he even asked me if I was pro-dialogue.

To say that I was alarmed would be an understatement.

It was pure hypocrisy. The leader belonged to an opposition group that constantly accused the military government of refusing to enter into dialogue. He was at every gathering of major opposition groups on the Thai-Myanmar border calling for a nationwide ceasefire and a political dialogue "to resolve political problems through political means".

I was alarmed because he did not understand what I meant by dialogue. It made me wonder. How about other politicians and opposition exiles? Would they understand it? Like the exile I spoke to, did they consider dialogue a power game?

Dialogue is not about a contest in which one side wins and the other side loses. It is a win-win situation.

My thoughts went further – if exiles focused on gaining the upper hand in political dialogue, how would the Myanmar military view it? It was a "no brainer". There was no question as to who was more powerful in the context of Myanmar's political and armed conflicts.

As I explored further, I realised that misunderstanding was not only confined to political groupings outside the country. I found out, for example, that many in the National League for Democracy at the time considered "dialogue" as a means for transferring power to the party.

In the end, I used that disturbing conversation with the exiled politician in the foreword to my book. I thought it would be useful for readers, who I invited to debate if Myanmar truly had the culture of dialogue.

Actually, all I wanted was to give political stakeholders an understanding of dialogue. And my message was simple.

"Dialogue" is about exploring ways together to find a solution to a con-

A police officer and a Kayin man smoke cigarettes in Kayin State during a ceremony to distribute rice donated by the Nippon Foundation in February 2013. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing



flict and implementing that solution together. It is a process to "resolve political problems through political means".

I thought this message was fitting for Myanmar because I considered Myanmar's problems collective and not individual. Thus, the solution must be collective and not individual. At the time of publishing *Dialogue*, in my view every single political grouping both within and outside the country was pursuing its own individual interests.

We are now in 2014 and the Myanmar government and the ethnic armed groups are nearing agreement on a nationwide ceasefire. Consequently, we are at the threshold of long-awaited political dialogue. I feel that understanding "dialogue" is now more urgent and important than ever.

More critically, there are still many groups pursuing individual interests at a time when we are within reaching distance of a collective solution to Myanmar's conflicts.

The origins of the word "dialogue" come from Middle English "*dialog*" from French "*dialogue*", Latin "*dialogus*" and Greek "*dialogos*". It generally means "conversation".

But the meaning I like to convey, as in Merriam-Webster dictionary, is "a discussion or series of discussions that two groups or countries have in order to end a disagreement, or an exchange of ideas and opinions, or a discussion between representatives of parties to a conflict that is aimed at resolution".

With that meaning, dialogue is not a casual conversation or a debate. It is a tool to resolve conflict specifically "aimed at finding a resolution".

But I am not an expert on dialogue. In describing it in my book, I quoted *The Magic of Dialogue* by Daniel Yankelovich.

In his book, Yankelovich talked about the many qualities of a successful dialogue, ranging from peaceful interaction, mutual respect, equality and reciprocity to frank exchanges of deepest feelings and differences with a view

Building universities of the future



IAN HOLLIDAY

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ENERGETIC reform is sweeping Myanmar's universities – but the danger is they will be modernised to the late 20th century, rather than the early 21st century in which we actually live.

One big difference between the two eras is the disruptive technological impact of the internet – still little more than potential in 2000. Today online resources are transforming universities, especially through new modes of teaching and learning.

Central to this transformation is the emergence of the "massive open online course", known as the MOOC. To date, global experience has been variable. Often MOOC enrolment collapses within the first couple of weeks, and only 10 percent of students complete the course.

But there are proven ways to counteract this. Above all, online instruction needs to be complemented by weekly tutorial groups on campus. Then students not only continue to attend MOOCs, but also accomplish real learning through face-to-face discussion.

Internet coverage remains patchy in Myanmar. But with Ooredoo and Telenor rolling out new telecoms services later this year, cell phone penetration is targeted to reach 80 percent by 2015-16. Accessing educational resources through smartphones will be a viable option for almost all students just a year or two from now.

Universities should plan to exploit this major shift by building curricula around MOOCs. In the short term, many courses can be sourced from foreign partners and supported by local professors engaged in small-group teaching. In the long term, campuses across the country can develop their own online courses.

Another major change that differentiates today's universities from those of just 15-20 years ago is the rise of off-campus learning across all subject areas. Some of this takes place through proliferating exchange programs that see students spend a semester or a year gaining credits at a partner institution. For most, the experience is hugely positive.

More innovative, though, is the drive for experiential learning through internships. Typically students join a business, an NGO, a government agency or a political party for a day a week of part-time work in semester, or for two to three months of full-time work in the long vacation.

Again, internships do not always succeed, and to draw maximum benefit students need to be fully supported by workplace mentors and academic supervisors. When that happens, however, they are able to complement their core academic program with invaluable practical learning.

Although Myanmar's business sector is still finding its feet, some domestic and foreign companies are already able to work with interns. Even more so, the burgeoning NGO sector, bursting with local and global agencies, is ideally placed to host students. The opportunity to close a major skills gap is just waiting to be taken.

Many routine reforms need to be enacted in a higher education sector that has long been woefully neglected. Curricula need to be updated, libraries need to be restocked, campuses need to be renovated. This, and much more, is all essential rebuilding activity.

But if Myanmar's universities seek to move fully into the 21st century, they must also embrace online learning through MOOCs, and experiential learning through internships. Now is the time to do that.

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Ian Holliday is a professor of political science at the University of Hong Kong. He writes a daily blog at thukhuma.org.

Views

Myanmar: winning together



**AUNG
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to resolving a conflict.

He said dialogue is not something arcane or esoteric. But most important of all, dialogue is about winning or losing together. It is not about a contest in which one sides wins and the other side loses. It is a win-win situation. A win-lose or lose-win situation is incompatible with dialogue.

That is why togetherness, both in finding a solution and implementing it, is so central to successful dialogue.

I have often mentioned in my writings that dialogue in Myanmar is about repairing relationships that were severed due to the devastations of the war. Yankelovich, for his part, said dialogue is about building successful relationships.

In any case, democracy has allowed for peaceful and reciprocal negotiations to take place between the government and ethnic armed groups. This will help the culture of dialogue to take root and develop over time.

In the meantime, though, we should realise that focusing on power asym-

metry, like the exiled politician back in 2002, will not lead to successful dialogue. We should all avoid threats, violence, hatred, unrealistic expectations and distrust - they are destructive to dialogue. Likewise, we must start narrowing the gap in terms of our interests. Otherwise, these will prevent an effective dialogue that is so essential to securing a win-win outcome for everyone in Myanmar.

Aung Naing Oo is associate director of the Peace Dialogue Program at the Myanmar Peace Center. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the MPC.

Big changes brewing in the car market



**SITHU AUNG
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ON July 8, the Road Transport Administration Department under the Ministry of Rail Transportation released a very surprising announcement that will have significant implications for the car market.

In short, it will reduce the expense of importing cars by decreasing the value of what is known as a "slip" - an import permit, currently valued at about K10 million, that can only be gained by handing in an old car.

But this policy change has its genesis under the military government, when ordinary citizens were effectively prohibited from importing a car. Prices were very high: In the 2000s, a used Toyota van that would cost about K100 million in Myanmar could be bought on the Thai border for just K4 million. Other types of used cars, such as Toyota Prado and Hilux Surf, were even more expensive, at around K300 million. Based on these figures, Myanmar was the world's most expensive country to buy a car. Top-level government officials who had the authority to issue permits to import cars made significant sums of money.

When the new government took office in 2011, there were barely 270,000 vehicles, mostly old, cars. This, in a country of nearly 60 million - an average of just five vehicles per 1000 people.

At first, no one dared to introduce changes that would disturb these unnaturally high car prices. Then in late 2011, then-Minister for Rail Transportation U Aung Min introduced a substitution plan to enable owners of old cars to substitute them for an import permit, or slip. But the government restricted

which models of car could be handed over, so the price of a slip quickly rose in value.

They then allowed individuals to import cars with small engines - less than 1350cc - without a permit. A slip became worth more than a 2010-model Toyota Probox or Honda Fit.

As numbers of cars eligible for the substitution program dwindled, the value of the slip continued to rise.

But the July 8 announcement said that cars made in industrial zones, three-wheeled vehicles and any cars over 20 years of age can now be handed in for a slip. This means the number of slips in the market will increase, and they will decrease in value. While this will probably mean losses for those speculating on high slip prices, it should lead to lower car prices overall, which will benefit most people. It will have the greatest impact on cars with high horsepower engines.

The government has warned that those who hold on to old cars will not get any tax breaks for substituting them after 2015. However, the slip could still retain some value as long as they are required to import certain models of used car.

What is needed now is for the government to set a new policy for car imports. Previously policies have created a great imbalance, with many vehicles below 1300cc hitting the country's streets, and this should be rectified without harming taxation revenues.

The government also needs a new plan if it is serious about fulfilling its goal of 12 vehicles per 1000 people. In particular, attention needs to be placed on ensuring more cars enter rural areas.

About 300,000 cars have been imported to Myanmar over the past two-and-a-half years. More consideration needs to be given to encouraging international car manufacturers or car assembly firms to set up shop in Myanmar and produce cars locally. This will have the greatest impact in terms of bringing prices into line with neighbouring countries.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe



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Smuggled cigarettes, alcohol beat the ban



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FAKE or untaxed alcohol and tobacco products are flooding the market as the Ministry of Commerce and importers face an impasse over planned import reform, industry sources say.

The Internal Revenue Department announced early this month that it would crackdown on untaxed, illegally imported and sometimes fake goods that are freely available at wholesale markets such as Yuzana Plaza and Mingalar Market.

Minister for Commerce U Win Myint promised traders that they would be allowed to legally import wine, alcoholic beverages and tobacco products during a series of meetings in late June with companies such as City Mart, Gamone Pwint, Star Mart, Sein Gay Har and others. The minister also told importers that tax and duty rates would be adjusted, although he did not say when this would happen.

Director for Illegal Trade Prevention and Supervision Control Committee U Tin Ye Win said the ministry will give

permission to import as soon as importers accept two conditions: that they would take responsibility to pay the duties owed on goods already imported and in warehouses, and whether they would fully comply with the new tax policy when it is introduced.

U Tin Ye Win said the ministry hopes to encourage the biggest importers to form an agreement to import specific brands, with shipments logged and coded, to allow the authorities to easily pinpoint fake products and tax evaders.

"None of the big importers have agreed to this policy," he said, "even though they say they want import tax reform urgently."

"Smaller dealers also want import licences because they want to import products, but in small batches, not for the whole market," he added.

The Myanmar Times was unable to reach the Myanmar Retailers Association for comment.

U Tin Ye Win said the ministry is also wary of fast reform, stating that importers had exploited the easing of import restrictions for items such as seasoning powders and motorcycles two years ago.

He said importers had swiftly flooded the market with smuggled goods and few had paid tax.



Two responsible drinkers enjoy a bottle of Johnny Walker scotch whisky in Yangon. Photo: Zarni Phyto

The alcohol and tobacco impasse developed in spectacular fashion in late 2013, with raids conducted on City Mart and Quarto Products – two of the best-known importers and suppliers. Since then, the government has not provided new licenses for liquor shops or suppliers following an outcry in parliament over the profusion of liquor shops in major cities. The Ministry of Home Affairs also increased annual licence fees by nearly 50 percent early this year.

The tightening of the liquor sale and distribution market produced familiar results, said U Tin Ye Win.

"We saw negotiations for the sale of liquor distribution licences," he said.

U Zaw Moe Win, a spokesperson for the Myanmar Liquor Association, said

even though the association does not oppose liquor import reform, it wants local manufacturers, who cannot easily avoid paying tax, to operate on a level plain.

Customs duties for imported alcohol stand at about 40pc, while the Internal Revenue Department also levies a tax. However, officials from the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Commerce have said they are looking at adjusting taxes in line with other ASEAN countries.

The association has already proposed that imported liquor be sold for no less than US\$6 a bottle, while local producers should raise their prices to K5000 a bottle, he said.

"We don't oppose imports as some people think we do but we just want

the market to be monitored closely," he said.

U Zaw Moe Win added that some small producers make fake products by buying empty bottles from restaurants, filling them with locally made liquor, and applying stickers, corks or lids from Thailand and China to complete the forgery. "These fakes just bottle the goods at home and sell the bottles to liquor shops that put profit ahead of genuine products," he said.

The most common fakes are scotch whiskeys: Johnny Walker Red, Black and Blue Label bottles, as well as High Commissioner. He said genuine High Commissioner should sell at wholesale for about K5000 a bottle, while the fake is K3500, and genuine retails near K7000, he added.

Scotch whisky gets IP protection

Scotch whisky has been granted a collective trademark in Myanmar, aiming to prevent fakes, according to Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) officials.

Myanmar does not yet have a formal process for registering geographical indications as intellectual property, such as used to protect goods like scotch, Cambodia's Kampot pepper and France's champagne in other markets, but the current system will allow the SWA to take the necessary action to protect its trademark, said SWA spokesperson Rosemary Gallagher.

"Whilst Burma does provide for criminal sanctions for breach of trademark rights, the SWA will not hesitate in taking proceedings before the courts where necessary," she said.

Goods branding themselves as

scotch whisky must be made in Scotland from cereals, water and yeast, according to the SWA's website.

The SWA counts well-known distillery Walker, John and Sons – the makers of Johnny Walker – as well as Chivas and also Justerini and Brooks Ltd – the makers of J&B – as among its members.

Myanmar Liquor Association chair U Aung Moe Kyaw said some scotch is smuggled into Myanmar.

"Scotch whisky can only be produced in Scotland but [in practice] we can buy bottles labelled 'scotch whisky' that are produced in Thailand or Singapore," he said, adding that many brands are illegally smuggled into Myanmar.

– Jeremy Mullins and Aye Thidar Kyaw

TRADE MARK CAUTION

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Reg. No. IV/ 8089 /2014

used in respect of "Class 05: Nutritional supplements in liquid form; vitamin fortified beverages".

Reg. No. IV/ 8090 /2014

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Khine Khine U, Advocate

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

For Monster Energy Company

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

Dated. 21 July 2014

MPT promises a new era with KDDI

AUNG SHIN
koshumgtha@gmail.com

CONSUMERS have been told to look out for a "reborn" Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications, following the July 17 marriage with Japan's KDDI telco and Sumitomo Corporation.

"MPT has had a long existence in Myanmar but has no experience in competing with others," said U Khin Maung Tun, MPT's general manager. "There is no experience in quick decision-making and marketing. And we have decided to welcome foreign partners in KDDI and Sumitomo Corporation."

"MPT will be reformed to provide new services to all people in Myanmar. Look out for new MPT," he said.

The firms signed a 10-year joint operation agreement that aims update MPT's telecommunications network and providing service to a Japanese standard.

KDDI and Sumitomo Corporation established a joint-venture company, KDDI Summit Global Myanmar (KSGM), to act as one entity and link up with MPT.

The two Japanese firms succeeded in becoming MPT's foreign partner with the support of Japan's government, a spokesperson for Sumitomo said. "We thank the Japanese government for making this agreement,"

said Kuniharu Nakamura, Sumitomo's chief executive officer.

"We will commit our best efforts to provide a nationwide telecommunications network and [offer the] latest available services to the people of Myanmar."

"The Japanese government has supported us with information and by introducing us to respected government authorities in Myanmar as we are a newcomer here," said Hidehiko Tajima, chief executive for global business at KDDI.

KSGM will invest US\$2 billion in the next two to three years to implement the terms of its agreement with MPT. The company's first priority is to update the mobile network.

"MPT already has a nationwide commercial network," said Takashi Nagashima, managing director of KSGM and chief executive officer of joint operations. "This is a very big advantage. We will sell mobile SIM cards using both GSM and WCDMA networks, as is demanded. But WCDMA will be prioritised," he added.

"By all means, we look forward to a reborn MPT offering our services in the near future." Last November, MPT formally invited three foreign firms – France's Orange Group, Japan's KDDI and Singapore's SingTel – to begin partnership talks with MPT.

However, informal discussions had

been under way since April, when all three firms narrowly missed out in the race to win two 100 percent foreign-owned telecom operator licences. The winners in that heated battle were Qatar's Ooredoo and Norway's Telenor, both of which are expected to roll out networks in coming months.

Negotiations between MPT and the three foreign firms have been the subject of many rumours and delays, even after KDDI was nominated as the chosen partner early this year.

"We were very careful through the negotiations not to make any mistake," said U Khin Maung Tun. "We had many difficult negotiations before we signed an agreement. It is our first experience partnering with a foreign firm."

The two Japanese firms have also committed to create many jobs indirectly and directly, while maintaining the 8500 current MPT staff. However, both sides need further discussions regarding project implementation and operation management.

"We can't tell you when our services will be launched. But we can ensure that we won't be later than other operators and prices will not be higher either," U Khin Maung Tun said.

Mobile penetrations has nearly hit 10pc and the government has repeatedly stated its goal of seeing that level reach 75pc in the 2015-16 fiscal year.

British chamber of commerce races into Myanmar

BUSINESS 25



Mandalay mayor to act on tall buildings near the palace

PROPERTY 32

Exchange Rates (July 18 close)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1314	K1322
Malaysia Ringitt	K304	K305
Singapore Dollar	K779	K783
Thai Baht	K30	K31
US Dollar	K970	K973

Change in owners as U Tay Za said to exit AGD Bank



AUNG SHIN



AYE THIDAR KYAW

SEVERAL prominent businesspeople have bought or sold stakes in Asia Green Development (AGD) Bank, as it prepares for listing on the planned Yangon Stock Exchange in 2015.

Up to 60 percent of the bank could have changed hands, with prominent entrepreneur U Tay Za and his Htoo Group of Companies severing direct ownership ties with the bank, say insiders.

There are about 15 large shareholders in AGD at present, with the previous largest shareholder selling his shares to four or five people in recent months – including well-

known businessperson U Kyaw Ne Win, said Asia Green Development executive director U Soe Thein.

U Kyaw Ne Win is the grandson of U Ne Win, the former head of the junta government from 1962 to 1981, and chair of the ruling party until 1988.

U Soe Thein said U Kyaw Ne Win purchased 1.5pc of the firm, while a number of other businesspeople including the owner of Mikko Coffee bought in.

However, U Kyaw Ne Win told *The Myanmar Times* he had purchased 60pc of AGD last month through his Omni Focus company, adding other friends had invested as well.

“I bought shares and entered the banking business because I would like to support the poverty reduction goals of president U Thein Sein,” he said.

“The best way to support his reform is to invest in the banking sector. I have a clear focus on making the banking business better,” he added.

U Tay Za has been prominently associated with AGD since its founding in 2010, though U Soe Thein claimed the entrepreneur and his Htoo Group of Companies are no longer on the shareholders list. U Soe Thein added that the changes in ownership were routine, and it was the notoriety of the names involved with the transactions that drew public attention.

Htoo Group officials were not immediately available for further comment. U Tay Za and his associated companies – including AGD – are on the US blacklist, though restrictions against doing business with AGD and three other banks were largely lifted by a United States general licence issued on



U Tay Za speaks at a press event in 2007. Photo: Staff

February 22, 2013.

An official at the Central Bank of Myanmar requesting anonymity said he was not in a position to

confirm or deny U Tay Za withdrawing from AGD, but added that share sales above a specific percentage and changes to chairs and boards of directors at banks must be reported to the Central Bank. The Central Bank may intervene in specific cases, he added.

AGD is preparing to list on the Yangon Stock Exchange, which is slated to start in October 2015. AGD is one of two public companies, along with Myanmar Agribusiness Public Company, that have declared intentions to list in 2015.

U Soe Thein said the bank is currently searching for a legal firm to help guide it through the process, and is already buying shares to help it through the process.

AGD was granted a licence in 2010 at about the same time as three other banks. – *Additional reporting by Jeremy Mullins*

StanChart, regional banks bow out

List of foreign banks still pursuing licences released by Central Bank of Myanmar – and it is missing some notable banking names

JEREMY MULLINS

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STANDARD Chartered and several other banks have decided not to move forward with the ongoing process to licence foreign banks, representing “a missed opportunity for Myanmar”, according to experts.

The United Kingdom-based bank is perhaps the most notable firm absent from last week’s list of foreign banks that submitted applications for the second stage of the licensing process.

While many large regional banks are still in the race, Standard Chartered had the most international presence of the banks taking part in the process that ultimately aims to license between five and 10 foreign banks to operate in Myanmar this year.

“We have decided that we will not apply for an onshore branch licence at this time for commercial reasons,” said Standard Chartered head of corporate affairs for Thailand and Greater Mekong Raymond Francis.

Standard Chartered first opened its representative office in 2013 to manage trade and investment flows between its international clients and Myanmar, he said. Mr Francis added the firm will remain focused on growing its presence through its representative office.

Large South Korean banks Hana and Woori, as well as several Indian and Bangladesh institutions, are also not on the Central Bank of Myanmar’s list of 25 banks that was released on July 15. Still,

it is Standard Chartered’s absence that particularly stood out, experts said.

“Standard Chartered has an unrivalled global network amongst the interested banks, and experience-centred methodologies that would have served Myanmar well in accessing global production chains and commodity markets,” said Sean Turnell, a Myanmar-focused economist at Macquarie University in Australia.

The restrictions that are to come with the licence proved too onerous, he said, adding Standard Chartered’s

second stage of the licensing process. Preliminary winners of the licences are expected to be announced by the end of the third quarter 2014.

Foreign banks which receive licences will be restricted to foreign currency trading on a wholesale level at first, government officials have said.

A senior official at the Central Bank of Myanmar said Standard Chartered will hold a meeting soon to discuss why it did not submit an RFP. The official, however, said its decision was not due to restrictions the Central Bank has put on licences for foreign banks or from pressure from the UK government.

“Everybody has a right to choose whether or not to submit an application for a licence,” the official said.

Standard Chartered will also have future chances to enter the Myanmar banking sector through equity participation when the new companies act is finished, or later in a planned second round of licensing.

Standard Chartered officials did not return a request to confirm the meeting as of press time.

There are 42 foreign banks with Myanmar representative offices, though several of them are state-run export-import and development banks, and thought unlikely to be interested in licences. The Central Bank of Myanmar had 30 pre-qualified institutions, though received 25 Requests for Proposal by July 14.

Several large regional banks also are not on the list. Large South Korea banks

Hana and Woori as well as two Indian banks are not proceeding.

Woori Bank chief representative in Myanmar DJ Park told *The Myanmar Times* that the bank – South Korea’s largest – may get involved in future opportunities to enter the market.

“We did not submit [an application for] a licence at this time,” he said.

A senior Myanmar-based Hana Bank official declined to comment, claiming the Central Bank of Myanmar told him not to speak to media. However, the firm is also thought to have not

submitted a RFP application.

None of the Bangladesh banks with Yangon representative offices appeared on the latest list. Embassy officials steered questions towards the banks. An official from AB Bank, a Bangladeshi bank with an active Yangon office, did not return request for comment.

An official with another bank that is not on the list said he was not authorised to speak to the press, but his bank could not secure permission from its home central bank in time to meet the Central Bank of Myanmar’s deadline.

‘Bad for banks, bad for foreign investors wanting to hedge ... worst for Myanmar.’

Sean Turnell
Economist

Australia	ANZ Bank
China	ICBC
Malaysia	Maybank, RHB Bank, CIMB
Mauritius	State Bank of Mauritius
France	BRED
India	State Bank of India
Singapore	OCBC, DBS, United Overseas Bank
Vietnam	BIDV
South Korea	Kookmin Bank, Shinhan Bank, Industrial Bank of Korea
Taiwan	Cathay United Bank, E.SUN Commercial Bank, First Commercial Bank
Thailand	Bangkok Bank, Krung Thai Bank, Siam Commercial Bank, Kasikornbank
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ILO pushes for a more proactive UMFCCI

Business association ought to form positions and provide a platform for corporate voices, says International Labour Organisation official

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THE local chamber of commerce should be more active in pushing the debate on developing business and economic rules, rather than reactively providing feedback when approached, said International Labour Organisation liaison officer Steve Marshall.

"There are a whole host of issues that impact on the business, on the economy, on the society that to be frank at the moment ... I do not know what the chamber's position is," he said at a July 9 conference on Strengthening Myanmar Employers Organisations held at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

Government rules are undergoing a drastic overhaul as parts of its reform process, though Mr Marshall said the government often is responding to outside pressures to build a policy framework.

"Policies are being developed on a somewhat ad hoc basis," he said.

The UMFCCI can play a major role in shaping the policy for the country, but it requires being pro-

active and having government respond, rather than waiting to be approached by government officials for input.

"It sounds like a lot of work, it sounds very frightening, but I can assure you that if you don't do it someone else will. And the problem with that is they might not do it very well," he said.

U Win Aun, head of UMFCCI, said the organisation is representing the interests of employers, advocating policy at a national level as well as promoting research and developing a set of best practices.

"We also aim to be the organisation that can provide advisory services at all levels and conduct professional training through the most effective means possible," he said.

The UMFCCI and ILO signed an agreement for two projects, under the principle of developing the capacity of employer organisations in Myanmar to promote decent

work principles and sustainable enterprises.

The ILO is a United Nations agency looking at labour issues, including workers rights, and also employment opportunities, enhancing

and employment issues.

Mr Marshall said that government policy must be flexible and clear. "At the present time I will challenge most of you to tell me what the labour laws are," he said.

Often there are two or three laws on the same thing, he said. For instance there are three minimum ages for employment in three separate pieces of legislation. Sometimes - as in the case of minimum wage - there is an absence of rules. "The employer needs clarity," he said. "One of our prime responsibilities is to support in terms of getting the framework in place."

Companies operating in Myanmar often face an unclear regulatory situation, and try to operate by meeting local laws while putting in practices appropriate for the Myanmar context.

Employers and employees are also eyeing how future industrial relations will develop, he said.

Mr Marshall said both parties should work to build an environment where disputes are resolved mainly through dialogue rather than "combative industrial relations".

Many employers are still resisting changing away from old Myanmar

business models, but "the days in the company of the *sayar gyi* [big master] are gone," he said. "It has to be a different environment. And at the moment I'm a little bit concerned we're losing."

Mr Marshall also said there is an imbalance in the number of organisations, with 25 employer organisations and about 2000 worker organisations.

Labour activists agreed there can often be a rift between employers and employees.

Ma Ei Shwezin Nyunt, an official at Labour Right Defensive and Protector, said some employers go to third parties rather than speak directly to their employees, creating a lack of trust between them.

While there are many labour organisations, they are not as strong as the few employer organisations, she said.

"Although UMFCCI stands as the last representative of business, they rarely find activities to promote interest between employers and employees," she said, adding employers, employees and the government all have responsibilities.

"From the employees' side, they aren't aware of their rights and how to tackle problems and call out for their rights under the rules and regulations," she said.



A boy carries bricks. Photo: Staff

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Big plane purchase by Air Mandalay

ZAW WIN THAN

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AIR Mandalay has placed an order with Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation for six MRJ90 aircraft, becoming the first Asian carrier outside to Japan to order the jet, which is being jointly developed with Toyota.

The deal, which also gives Air Mandalay a purchase option for an additional four MRJ90, was signed on the sidelines of the Farnborough Airshow in Britain last week and could be worth as much as US\$400 million.

The planes, which are expected to have a capacity of 86-96 seats, are scheduled for delivery from 2018. In the meantime Air Mandalay plans to add six Embraer ERJ planes, the airline said in a statement.

The deals indicate Air Mandalay plans to add regional destinations to its schedule of domestic routes. The airline said only that it is "seeking to expand and enhance its fleet's capability through the introduction of regional jets" and the MRJ90 aircraft "will provide unprecedented benefits to drive the airline's expected growth in the region".

The purchase will dramatically change the make-up of the airline's fleet, which currently consists of a handful of ageing ATR aircraft servicing 15 local destinations. Established in 1994 as Myanmar's first privately owned airline, Air Mandalay has struggled to keep up with newer entrants to the market, such as Air Bagan, Asian Wings and Air KBZ. But the company insisted that the deal will give Air Mandalay "an opportunity to outpace the industry for years to come".

No details on financing were given but the MRJ90 is thought to have a list price of around \$40 million, putting the total deal at up to \$400 million.

British businesses get chamber



JEREMY MULLINS

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THE British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar launched on July 16 about a month after receiving government approval, becoming the latest business group to formally open its doors in Myanmar.

The organisation aims to provide a network for the business community partly to represent business interests, and will also work with United Kingdom Trade and Investment to support market entrants and match business partners, said Stephanie Ashmore, British Chamber of Commerce executive director.

It claims some 86 founding members, including well-known sponsors such as resource firm BG, Standard Chartered bank, conglomerate Jardines and insurance provider Prudential.

Lisa Weedon, a Myanmar-based director at UK Trade and Investment, said that while there are some British firms interested in manufacturing locally, much of the island's economy is service-driven. "A lot of UK exports overseas are actually services," she said. "That's why there are many British lawyers, British consultants, British accountants, all here."



UK Trade and Investment director Lisa Weedon speaks at a press conference launching the British Chamber of Commerce, as UK ambassador Andrew Patrick looks on. Photos: Zarni Phyo

Between 30 and 40 British companies have a presence in Myanmar, including firms such as Unilever, Jaguar-LandRover, and Prudential, while others operate from regional offices such as Rolls-Royce, said Ms Weedon.

Investor interest in the country has been picking up, she added.

"In the 18 months since I've been here [the number of businesses] certainly quadrupled," she said.

Directorate of Investment and Company Administration figures at the end of June place the UK as the fifth-largest source of approved foreign investment in Myanmar, comprising some 70 projects worth about 6.77 percent of the total. The next highest European nation is France at ninth spot with three projects comprising about 1.02pc of total foreign direct investment.

Tony Picon, president of the British

Chamber of Commerce, said the timing is right for the organisation to finally launch.

"The country for the last number of years has opened up to the economic reform process. We've seen a lot of talk, a lot of investors come into town, and I think we're only now starting to see real action," he said.

While this is the first British Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar, the British presence in Myanmar dates back centuries.

Myanmar was formerly part of the British Empire, with King Thibaw abdicating in 1885 after a string of defeats during the Third Anglo-Burmese War. Myanmar later gained its independence on January 4, 1948.

Asked what impact the colonial period has on Britain doing business in Myanmar today, UK ambassador to Myanmar Andrew Patrick said he has not seen it as a factor affecting business relations.

"I don't think it's been a big factor on our political work here and I haven't come across it as a big factor in terms of doing business here," he said. "I don't think it's a great advantage here or a great disadvantage."

Mr Picon said that some British companies that had been doing business in the country in the mid-20th century had some connections, but added firms from other countries were also active in Myanmar at the time and had similar connections.



"It's the beginning of what I call 'a virtuous circle' in Myanmar's economic development. And to be setting up a chamber at that moment is a pretty significant event for us." – Tony Picon, Chamber president



"Membership is open to all UK companies and non-UK companies that can demonstrate their links to UK business or are interested in developing trade links in the UK or Myanmar." – Stephanie Ashmore, Chamber executive director

IN BRIEF

Singapore recruitment fair plans to bring Myanmar workers home

Local work firm Myjobs is planning a recruitment fair in Singapore from August 2 to 3 in an effort to match Myanmar expats living in Singapore with employers back home.

Targeting the estimated 300,000 Myanmar living in the Lion City, the fair at Suntec Exhibition Centre will include firms like Samsung, Golden Myanmar Airlines and AYA Bank, a press release said. "It's a great opportunity to bring Singapore-based Myanmar job seekers together with Myanmar employers and family members to grow this exciting economy," said MyJobs managing director Jemin Popat in the release.

The firm is also intending to hold events in other Southeast Asia markets and possibly the Middle East, it said.

– Jeremy Mullins

Kelvin Chia opens Mandalay office

International legal firm Kelvin Chia has opened an office in Mandalay, according to a statement. It first opened in Yangon in 1994, and has "borne witness to the tremendous changes and developments in the country's economic and regulatory landscape," it said. The firm's new office will be located in the Sedona Hotel in Mandalay, and will be staffed by senior advocate U Than Naing and corporate affairs executive Daw Khin Khin Sett.

– Jeremy Mullins

Indian weather boosts bean market

Matpe bean prices are still soaring after reports of poor weather in India reached the local market. Prices have climbed nearly US\$100 a tonne in the past week, as some predict the Indian market will face dramatic shortfalls of beans ahead of its annual Diwali festival, traders said. Local stocks of the bean are rapidly depleting, said U Myat Soe, central executive committee member of the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants' Association.

Prices for standard matpe reached K825,000 a tonne last week, from K740,000 a tonne on July 10, he said, adding the market showed no signs of slowing, as traders continue to bet on a poor Indian harvest. – Myat Noe Oo

First Myanmar healthcare market report by Rubicon Strategy Group and DKSH reveals encouraging entry and growth opportunities for healthcare companies in Myanmar

The growth opportunities for healthcare companies and Market Expansion Services providers in Myanmar are encouraging. According to a study by Rubicon Strategy Group, a recognized leader in market analysis, the Myanmar healthcare market is expected to further open up. Yet challenges like the abundance of counterfeit products and the fragmented point of sales channel however underline the need for companies to work with an experienced and established partner in the country.

The market study by Rubicon Strategy Group provides an extensive market overview based on on-the-ground surveys and interviews with business leaders, consumers and customers (pharmacies, drugstores, hospitals and doctors). Part of Rubicon's 'Asia Market Series', it is the first publication that uncovers the opportunities for healthcare companies to expand to Myanmar.

The country opening up and the ASEAN Economic Community becoming reality in 2015 are expected to spur growth for healthcare companies and Market Expansion Services providers in Myanmar. According to Rubicon's study, consumer spending on over-the-counter healthcare products is anticipated to grow three-to-four-times in size, from about USD 140 million in 2013 to USD 480 million by 2020.

The research further shows that the medical devices market in Myanmar is anticipated to grow threefold by 2020. Meanwhile, eight out of ten of Myanmar's consumers are willing to spend more on healthcare products and services if they have access to better options.

The strong overall market growth is partly driven by the vast increase in government spending on pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Specialty products, in particular cardiovascular, diabetes and oncology products are expected to experience high growth rates for the next years.

Challenges to enter the Myanmar healthcare market however remain. Comparing the healthcare systems worldwide, Myanmar was recently ranked 190th and last by the World Health Organization (WHO). Rubicon's study confirms that collaborating with a local distribution partner is the only viable means of efficiently accessing the market in Myanmar. This is due to Myanmar's opaque regulatory environment, the abundance of counterfeit products, complex channels to market and the extremely fragmented point of sale network.

Dr. Varun Sethi, DKSH's General Manager, Business Unit Healthcare in Myanmar, said: "With the opening of Asia's economy, Myanmar offers great potential for healthcare companies. Companies intending to expand in Myanmar should look for an experienced partner with the knowledge and connections to reach a broad range of channels and consumers. With

our 15 years of experience in Myanmar and almost 150 years in Asia, DKSH is well-positioned to help companies explore the opportunities in Myanmar."

The study results are captured in the 115-page Myanmar healthcare report, which provides an extensive market overview and insights for healthcare companies exploring opportunities in the country. The full report is available online at <http://www.healthintelasia.com/asia-healthcare-shop/myanmar-report-page/>

About Rubicon Strategy Group

Rubicon Strategy Group is a boutique consulting firm specialized in market access work for emerging economies in the healthcare, biotech and senior care industries. Rubicon has a focus on China and has completed research and market access projects in the pharmaceutical, private hospital, senior housing and home healthcare sectors in China.

About DKSH

DKSH is the leading Market Expansion Services provider with a focus on Asia. As the term "Market Expansion Services" suggests, DKSH helps other companies and brands to grow their business in new or existing markets.

Publicly listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange since March 2012, DKSH is a global company headquartered in Zurich. With 735 business locations in 35 countries – 710 of them in Asia – and 26,700 specialized staff, DKSH generated net sales of CHF 9.6 billion in 2013.

DKSH Business Unit Healthcare is the leading Market Expansion Services provider for healthcare companies seeking to grow their business in Asia. Custom-made offerings comprise registration and market entry studies as well as importation, customs clearance, marketing and sales to physical distribution, invoicing and cash collection. Products available through DKSH Healthcare include ethical pharmaceuticals, consumer health, over-the-counter (OTC), as well as medical devices. With 150 business locations in 14 countries and around 9,050 specialized staff, Business Unit Healthcare serves over 160,000 customers and generated net sales of around CHF 4.3 billion in 2013.

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **THEFACESHOP CO., LTD.**

P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.

Phone: 372416

Dated: 21st July, 2014

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Phone: 372416

Dated: 21st July, 2014

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U Kyi Win Associates
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Dated: 21st July, 2014

Bringing banks to the poor

With many living beyond the reach of financial institutions, experts grapple with the challenges of promoting financial inclusion throughout the country. A recent report lays the groundwork for reaching Myanmar's vast unbanked population.

STUART ALAN BECKER

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CHANGES need to be made to promote financial inclusion particularly among the poorest, according to a report by a joint team including several United Nations organisations.

Some 15 percent of adults are currently borrowing an estimated US\$3.9 billion from unregulated money lenders in Myanmar while less than 5pc of the population have formal bank accounts. Yet promoting financial inclusion will be no easy task.

The report is the result of a process called "Making Access Possible" or MAP, developed jointly by UNCDF, FinMark Trust (FMT) and the Centre for Financial Regulation and Inclusion (Centre) to look at ways of fostering inclusive financial sector growth. Funding comes from UNCDF and the multi-donor LIFT fund.

The purpose of the report is to provide the Myanmar government with accurate information and recommendations as to what their next steps should be to maximise access to finance for Myanmar's citizens.

Paul Luchtenburg, program specialist for inclusive finance at UNCDF, who helped coordinate the report, said Myanmar citizens often lack alternatives so are forced to borrow money in the informal sector. Unfortunately informal lending can cost 10pc per month. One of the goals for the future is to move people into the formal lending sector - including banks and MFIs - where they will get lower interest rates.

Mr Luchtenburg met with *The Myanmar Times* on June 18 for an interview on the report, discussing how to promote financial inclusion in one of the world's most under-banked countries.

What surprised you the most about the findings of the report in terms of how people finance things in Myanmar?

The biggest surprise was the size of the informal sector. We knew it was out there, and that we didn't know the scale of it, and it's almost as large as the commercial bank portfolio.

If you look at where Myanmar is coming from and try to guess where it is going, in terms of financial services, would you say this is a moment in time that is full of opportunity?

Yes, I would say that there are enormous opportunities in this country. At the same time, everyone's expectations of the golden land are extremely high as well. It is not a "get rich quick" country though and investors need to be here for the long haul. When I look at microfinance, it seems that every MFI in Asia wants to come here and set up operations. Anyone coming in needs to realise that this will be a long term engagement as there are many challenges.

Because the MAP report indicates that Myanmar is not only the poorest country in Southeast Asia, but that it is one which is the most thinly served by financial services - and with the majority of the people living in the countryside - do you see an improvement in financial services as perhaps the most effective way to ease the suffering of the rural poor? Why?

People need a variety of services. They need to have financial services and I think it is an essential piece of improving peoples' lives but they



Paul Luchtenburg.
Photo: Stuart Alan Becker

need other services as well. For example, sickness is one of the key ways people become indebted. If we provide more and better financial services it helps to have more of a financial cushion if there is a problem, but they should know how to prevent and deal with health issues.

What creative ways do you see people using to finance their businesses and lives in the absence of a developed financial services system?

We have to appreciate the creativity of the poor, how they are able, on very little money to cover this cost, to borrow a little money here, and use money there. Actually they are very creative. To learn more about the details of how people manage their money we are doing some research called financial diaries to follow clients for a year to look at their inflows and out flows: how people manage their finances and how are they able to live.

'When I look at microfinance it seems that every MFI in Asia wants to come here and set up operations.'

Paul Luchtenburg
UNCDF program specialist

One of the fallacies is that we know that a lot of people live under US\$2 a day, and we instinctively think that this means they get \$2 every day. In reality they get 50 cents one day, a dollar the next, \$2.50 the next day and they have to manage the uneven cash flow.

We are doing these financial diaries to learn how they are surviving financially and will help us develop more appropriate projects based on what they need.

How does the presence of a largely unregulated financial services market present challenges to development, and challenges to people who live in Myanmar? And in a broad stroke should it be made easier?

I don't think of unregulated financiers [money lenders] as bad guys.

They are filling a gap for people who don't have other options and they have extra money and that's the way to utilise it. They are entrepreneurs meeting a need. What we want to do is help the formal sector meet those needs in a safer, cheaper, more convenient way.

What would be an easy way for the Myanmar government to increase availability of unsecured credit to the population? And what surprised you most about the report?

The regulatory environment is not fully evolved. What we have to take into account is two-and-a-half years ago microfinance was essentially illegal in this country. Since then there have been 197 MFIs licensed. Although this is a huge challenge to supervise this group it does show how quickly things can happen in a country like Myanmar.

One of the things which makes Myanmar such an interesting place to work compared to other countries is the speed with which decisions can be made. If the top makes the decision, you can get vast changes quickly. We do hope that regulations for the microfinance sector will improve as this will also give financial institutions the opportunity to provide a better variety of services in more remote areas.

Currently according to the MAP report 30pc of people do have access to some type of financial services but only 6pc have access to more than one financial product and the services they have tend to be of lower quality.

So, improving regulations would allow MFIs and other providers to provide better services to more people. As the same time we do need to acknowledge the progress which the MMSE [Myanmar Microfinance Supervisory Enterprise] and the Ministry of Finance have made already.

Correction

In the survey section of last week's "Your Money" supplement (July 14-20, 2014; page 22), two incorrect totals were listed under Kanbawza Bank. The figures should read:

Total loans outstanding: K2.664 trillion
Total deposits: K4 trillion

The Myanmar Times regrets the error.

China lobbies to legalise rice trade



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CHINESE officials are pushing Myanmar businesses to lobby the government to legalise the bilateral rice trade, according to officials from the Myanmar Rice Federation.

The world's most populous nation is increasing its imports of Myanmar rice each year, but from Beijing's point of view the imports are illegal as there is no sanitary and phyto-sanitary agreement on rice standards between the two countries.

China's commercial attaché at its Yangon embassy visited the Myanmar Rice Federation's (MRF) office on July 14 to ask the organisation to push for an agreement, said MRF joint secretary U Lu Maw Myint Maung.

"The Chinese side wants to make the market official, from being illegal," he said. "But the Myanmar side needs to meet the requirements to make the market official."

Informal border rice exports to China reached 747,000 tonnes in 2013, about 60 percent of the 1.28 million tonnes exported in the year. In 2011, there were only 6000 tonnes in rice export to China, according to a June

report by the World Bank.

Myanmar rice traders have said they are aiming to capitalise on growing demand in China, particularly as Beijing's relationship sours with Vietnam over the South China Sea. Vietnam is one of the largest exporters to China.

Although exports to China are legal from Myanmar's point of view, Beijing requires a sanitary and phyto-sanitary agreement guaranteeing health standards. Cambodia signed a similar agreement with China in 2010, which allows the country to export officially, but requires its milled exports to follow Chinese plant quarantine rules, including being certified free from particular pests through a third-party inspection.

U Lu Maw Myint Maung said that Myanmar will need to ensure its rice exports do not have disease or pests as part of an agreement with China.

Experts have highlighted the need to formalise a sanitary and phyto-sanitary agreement with the People's Republic to grow the industry.

World Bank agricultural economist Sergiy Zorya told *The Myanmar Times* in an exclusive interview last month that Myanmar needs to meet Chinese standards to sign an agreement. He added that Vietnam is a "very price competitive seller" to the world's most populous nation, and China will likely think pragmatically about where it imports from, particularly if prices for the staple crop rise.

Still, some private sector officials expressed frustration there is no deal.

The Myanmar government has said for two years they are trying to get an agreement with China, but "there is no tangible result," said U Soe Tun, another joint secretary at MRF.

"One ministry always says that another ministry has responsibility for the issue. The Chinese side has now approached Myanmar's private sector to urge the government to take responsibility," he said, adding the Ministry of Irrigation and Agriculture is responsible.


While officials from that ministry were not available for comment, Commerce Ministry economic advisor U Maung Aung said that ministry has been negotiating with Chinese officials on the issue directly since last year.

Legalising rice exports requires not just negotiating with Beijing officials, but also provincial officials as they often have different rules, he said.

"The [Myanmar] minister of commerce himself has negotiated to make the rice market with China official," he said.

MRF chair U Chit Khaing told *The Myanmar Times* that the MRF is urging the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to negotiate with Chinese officials to legalise the market.

Chinese embassy officials had not returned a request for comment as of press time.



A woman threshes rice.
Photo: Staff

Myanmar's Rice Exports

Year	Formal	Informal (Border trade with China)	Total
2011	6,000 tonnes	816,000 tonnes	822,000 tonnes
2013	747,000 tonnes	530,000 tonnes	1,277,000 tonnes

Source: World Bank's Myanmar: Capitalizing on Rice Export Opportunities Report

Rice price pushed up by Chinese demand

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TERRITORIAL tensions in the South China Sea between China and Vietnam are inflating rice prices in Yangon, merchants said last week.

Traders say up to 30 percent of rice shipments from Ayeyarwaddy Region destined for Yangon's wholesale markets are being re-routed to Muse on the China border as Chinese buyers seek alternative suppliers to Vietnam.

The reduced supply of rice to Yangon's biggest commodity market, the Bayintnaung Wholesale Commodity Exchange Centre, has boosted prices by up to K3000 a bag (50 kilograms or about 110 pounds).

Daw Cho Cho, the owner of OK rice warehouse at Bayintnaung, said prices are increasing for all grades of rice.

"Prices of all types of rice are obviously higher than last month," she said. "*Pawsan* prices have risen because little *pawsan* paddy is available, while 25 broken grain *ehmeta* is being exported to China."

Most rice produced in Myanmar is lower grade *ehmeta*, which includes 25pc broken grains. However, this rice is popular with consumers and overseas buyers for the same reason - it is cheap.

Pawsan rice retailed for K28,000 and K30,000 on July 18, while fetching between K25,000 and K27,000 in June. Likewise, *ehmeta* is trading for K16,500 to K18,50, and sold for between K15,000 and K17,000 in June, said U Soe Naing, owner of Golden Lucky rice shop in Pa-zundaung township.

U Soe Naing said Chinese demand had unexpectedly pushed prices up. "In most year the rice price does not increase during monsoon. Chinese demand has led to an increase this year but I don't think they will go much higher." He added that the supply would likely be restored to normal soon.



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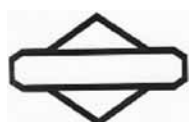
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Dated: 21st July, 2014

The Fine Print

Legal & tax insight

How foreigners can get trading

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THIS article is part two of a two-part series begun last week, with “How foreigners are barred from trading”.

IT is well-known that foreigners cannot establish trading companies.

There have, however, been schemes in the recent past whereby foreign investors successfully set up retail outlets in Myanmar. This window of opportunity is probably closed now, though. A foreign department store chain, for instance, established a joint venture with a local company in the beginning of 2013. The merchandise has to be imported by the local company as the joint venture company, having a foreign shareholder, cannot register as importer with the Ministry of Commerce. It is then sold, however, by the joint venture company. This works as it was – apparently – possible, at the time, to set up a foreign-invested services company and register “retail services” as its business scope. Nowadays, however, DICA would, in all likelihood, not allow such a business scope.

It is possible to set up joint ventures to participate in the Myanmar retail market. Sojitz, for example,

announced last year that it had set up a joint venture company in Singapore together with the City Mart group to purchase consumer goods in bulk in order to distribute them through the City Mart network.

Retail is also possible through a franchising structure. The foreign partner (franchisor) and the local partner (franchisee) conclude a franchise agreement by which the franchisee pays a franchise fee to the franchisor; the franchisor allows the franchisee to use the franchisor's trademark; and the franchisor provides the franchisee with a business concept (e.g. design of the shops, assistance with sourcing goods at a low price, marketing services, training of employees, etc.).

Franchising is still uncommon in Myanmar and not regulated. However, it is a legal business model and foreigners are not prohibited from entering into franchise agreements with locals. Internationally, franchise models are tried and tested models in the retail sector; for example convenience stores in Japan are often operated as a franchise. The idea of a franchise is appealing as there is a wealth of experience with franchise models internationally from which the parties can draw.

The services provided by the franchisor usually justify a substan-

tial remuneration, meaning that the franchisor is entitled to a substantial portion of the profits of the retail business. The local partner, in return, may, amongst others, acquire access to cheap financing (if the franchisor extends a loan at advantageous conditions), profit from low purchase prices when acquiring stock (as the franchisor is usually able to buy in bulk), profit from the franchisor's reputation with producers (if, for example, the franchisor is already their distributor in other countries) and use the franchisor's experience in setting up and managing a chain of retail stores.

Foreign manufacturers cannot set up a distribution company in Myanmar in order to sell their goods if these goods are manufactured abroad. However, a manufacturer of machines could set up a services company in order to install the machines and provide customer support. The machines would have to be imported by a local importer or the customer.

Foreign sellers wishing to support their local distributor so as to increase sales can provide marketing and management assistance.

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

Jumpstarting forex trades

AYE THIDAR KYAW

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THE year-old interbank foreign exchange (forex) market is developing slowly, but could grow in the future, according to officials.

The Central Bank of Myanmar began an interbank forex market in 2013 after introducing a managed float for the kyat in 2012, but central bank officials say take-up on the interbank market has been relatively gradual.

Internationally, different banks trade foreign exchange between each other in a largely unregulated, decentralised manner, with bankers making deals through electronic platforms or over the phone.

In Myanmar the interbank market officially began last year. Banks are now free to set their own rates with

each other and trade foreign exchange, though in practice the Central Bank is still a major player in the foreign exchange market. The Central Bank sets daily reference rates and then auctions foreign currency every week day, though officials say they would like to strengthen the interbank market.

“We are at a fundamental stage to develop a foreign exchange interbank market, which needs an appropriate amount of time,” said Central Bank of Myanmar vice governor U Set Aung at a banking and business development conference on July 15.

The interbank market is not particularly active, but banks are starting to get involved, and the central bank aims to make sure its reference rate used for its daily auctions do not deviate too much from the market rates, he said.

“Banks should rely on reach other

rather than depending on the Central Bank's auctions – but the practice is unfamiliar as it's only been going on for a year,” the official said. “We also need to incentivise state-owned banks to get into the market, and open it along the lines of international practices.”

Commercial bankers said it can be difficult trusting other banks.

Daw Kim Chawsu Gyi, deputy managing director of Kanbawza, said a lack of transparency between banks in areas like audits and balance sheets makes the interbank market unpopular.

It is also difficult operating without a credit bureau, she added.

“They think [the forex interbank market] is a risky thing,” she said.

The Central Bank also allowed interbank kyat lending beginning in August 2013.



Vacancy Announcement



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- Proven experience at a senior management level in strategy, innovation and increasing financial performance
- Seasoned leader with understanding of human resources
- Developing, implementing, monitoring new systems and processes for efficient operations
- Commercial sector experience, NGO experience not necessary
- Belief in progressive concepts and strategies on sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Effective communicator, fluent in written and spoken English
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For further information, please contact **Good Neighbors International (Myanmar)**, No. 21, Ywar Ma Kyaung Street, Hlaing Township. Tel: 01-531200
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Property

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Changed assessments for land

MYAT NYEIN AYE

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PROPERTY value assessments used to determine transactions taxes will be changed to keep prices in line with the market, according to officials from Yangon's Internal Revenue Department.

The government had assessed values on all of Yangon and Mandalay's property last year in a bid to avoid problems from the previous system of buyers declaring their own property values at the time of transaction - which led to many deliberately undervaluing their property to avoid taxes.

Yangon Internal Revenue Department director U Kyaw Kyaw said that market prices for Yangon land changes often, forcing the department to follow suit with their assessed values.

"In Yangon some land prices are

higher and some are lower," he said. "Prices from last year's assessment are not in line with the present market."

Some standards used by the department are well below market prices. Property in the downtown area of Lanmadaw, Padeban and Latha townships generally trade for around K700,000 a square foot in the market, though the assessment pegs their value at K240,000. Similarly, land in Mayangon township retails at about K900,000 at present, but is assessed at about K275,000 a square foot.

The Internal Revenue Department created standard land prices in October 2013 on a road by road or block by block basis.

It has already amended the prices and submitted the list to the Yangon Region government for approval. If it gets the green light, the list of values

will move to the Union government in Nay Pyi Taw for final approval.

"If the Union government accepts the new standard prices, we can officially reveal the prices this coming October," said U Kyaw Kyaw.

Reassessments are based on the difference between assessed prices and real prices - so not all are changing, he said.

"Some prices have increased, some have decreased - and some are the same," he said.

Property market insiders said that levying taxes based on assessed values has somewhat dampened the rising property market.

U Khin Maung Aye, senior agent at Shwe Kan Myae real estate, said that if taxes are high, there will be less tax revenue as less property gets bought and sold.

Prices buck trend around Kyaukphyu

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LAND prices around Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone has so far not risen much, bucking a trend that has seen property prices near prominent developments like Thilawa and the planned Hanthawaddy airport increase rapidly.

Rakhine State Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Maung San Shwe said that land prices have barely increased, despite some residents claiming prices have quadrupled in recent months.

"I haven't heard anything about land prices getting higher there," he said.

Businesspeople also claimed to have seen little increase in prices, despite an anticipated flurry of development at the site.

Prominent local lawyer U Aung Kyaw Nyunt, who lives in the Kyaukphyu area, said local prices have risen and are more volatile than before the announcement of the project, but still there is nothing like the speculation frenzy that has taken place around

'I haven't heard anything about land prices getting higher there.'

U Maung San Shwe
Rakhine government official

other projects.

"Land prices are just a little unstable, though they are at their highest so far," he said.

There are at least three other industrial zone projects planned for Rakhine State, but they are similarly having little knock-on effect, according to some.

Golden Land Development Public Company executive director U Phoe Cho said that land prices around Ponna Gyun industrial zone are also in check. Golden Land will develop on the Ponna Gyun project.

Officials hope to build much of the Kyaukphyu and Ponna Gyun zones in the 2014-15 financial year, with two other industrial zones slated for possible future development. The first phase of Kyaukphyu is set for a completion in March 2015.



Workers hold rebar at the Saitara Mahi project. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Mandalay may oversized deve

Saitara Mahi development to contravene zoning require



SITHU LWIN

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MANDALAY mayor U Aung Maung says he may force changes at a construction site near his office that contravenes the city's zoning rules.

The Saitara Mahi housing development on Mandalay's 26th Street, between 73rd and 74th, is set to be taller than is allowed for projects near Mandalay's palace, but U Aung Maung said he was unaware of the project - which is about two blocks from his office - until work began at the site in the last few weeks.

"Constructing tall buildings near the royal palace, a representation of our ancient heritage, is prohibited," he said. "But I cannot

make a decision [on what to do with the project] alone."

U Aung Maung, who oversees Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), added he would announce a decision shortly.

The mayor made the comments at a meeting with Archaeology Department officials, private sector representatives and official caretakers of the palace. Mandalay's palace is one of the city's famous landmarks, located in the centre of the city. Much of the land within the palace walls is controlled by the military and off-limits to visitors, though a portion of the largely rebuilt palace is open to tours.

The Saitara Mahi site is two blocks from the headquarters of MCDC, which is located on 26th Street between 71st and 72nd Streets.

U Myo Aung, head of MCDC's Building and Warehouse department, said the former military government had restricted buildings

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

For **Aptalis Pharma Canada Inc.**

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

Dated. 21 July 2014

“At the present time I will challenge most of you to tell me what the labour laws are.”

— Steve Marshall, International Labour Organisation official

Yingluck cleared by junta for a French holiday

WORLD 36



or considers lopment’s fate

ments only two blocks from the mayor’s office

near the moat to four storeys. But because the size of a storey was not defined, the civil government later restricted heights to 46 feet. Exceptions were made for buildings like the Sedona Hotel that were located 100 feet (30.5 metres) from the street, he added. “There are only one or two buildings over 46 feet around the palace,” he said. “We no longer allow tall buildings, to preserve our cultural heritage.” The Saittara Mahi housing project is planned to comprise 13 buildings, including six condominiums, five apartment buildings for government officials, one showroom and one administration building. Plans call for the tallest to be about nine storeys. The development will replace 60-year-old housing for civil servants by the end of 2015, according to Human Settlement and Housing Development Department director Daw Aye Aye Myint. Officials had notified the regional government, she said, but added an apology that there had been a delay in information filtering down to Mandalay City Development Committee. “As Mandalay is a precious cultural city, I understand it is our duty to value and preserve our heritage,” she said. “At the same time we need to improve it as well.” Daw Aye Aye Myint said she asked MCDC officials to propose any changes as soon as possible to minimise disruption to the project. The apartments are to be 52 percent owned by the Human Settlement and Housing Development Department, and 48pc by private companies. Myanmar Mandalay, United Pacific, New Innovation, New Starlight and MGW companies won the tender to develop different parts of the project. – Translation by Myat Su Mon Win

HOUSE OF THE WEEK Newly built home for a large family

The paint has just finished drying on this modern home with large windows. It’s a well-lit house, with plenty of natural sunlight and a subdued but complementary interior colour scheme. Its location in Mayangone township leaves it a little far from downtown, but what you lose in commuting you make up in space. The two-storey house is 2600 square feet, and suitable for a large family. It’s newly built, and boasts two master bedrooms, two single bedrooms, a maid room, a living room, three bathrooms and a garage. Besides the large windows, it also has a balcony directed towards downtown Yangon. There are no furnishings in the home, leaving decoration up to the future tenant. It has six air conditioners,



a telephone land line and a tube well. House of the Week is most impressed by the asking price: It’s pretty good for a new home, and it’s negotiable. If you are looking for a large, new house with a fair price in a not-terrible location, this is a fine option. – Tin Yadanar Htun

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Price : \$3000 per month (negotiable)
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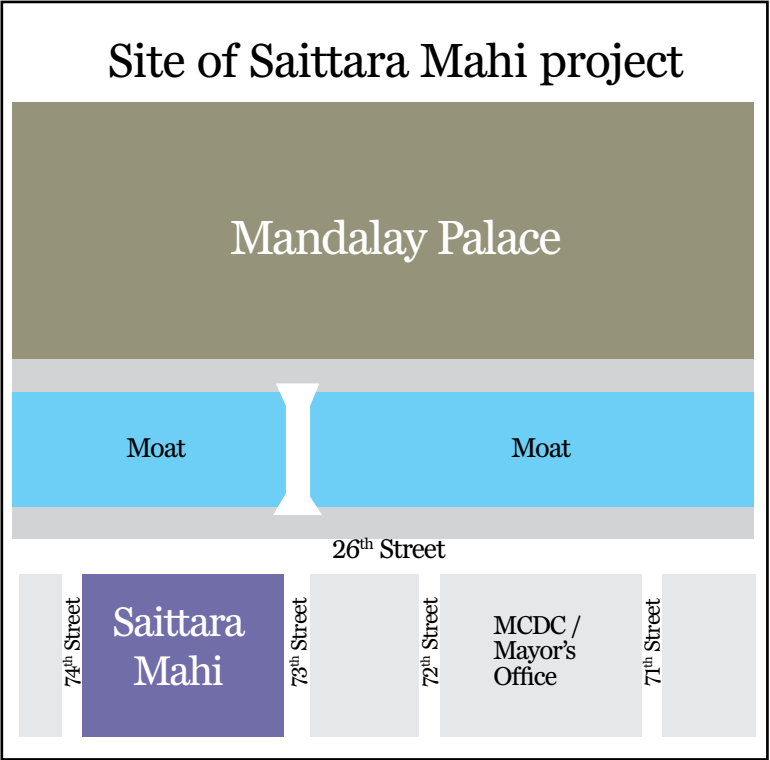
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Translate-a-thon coming this August

MAY THINZAR NAING

maythinzaing99@gmail.com

CALLING all polygots! The Khan Academy announced last week that it has partnered up with the Ooredoo on a crowd-sourcing project aimed at translating thousands of educational videos into Myanmar language.

The California-based Khan Academy is a non-profit organisation that aims to provide “a world-class education for anyone, anywhere” using educational videos.

Through their website and mobile apps, the company offers a free library of educational resources, chief among them being 6000 videos covering everything from math to the sciences to economics, finance and history. The videos currently receive 10 million views every month from students around the world.

The academy is keen to share their library with students across the nation, especially those isolated in rural areas. To that end, Khan Academy and Ooredoo will be holding Yangon's first translate-a-thon this August.

Volunteers will gather at Ooredoo's office in MICT Park on August 9 with



one simple goal: translate as many videos as possible.

Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* last week, a spokesperson for Khan Academy said that while Myanmar language would be the focus of the event, volunteers who are able to speak and write the language of minority groups are highly encouraged

to take part.

“By collaborating and coming together, our volunteers have the power to positively influence so many lives”, said Ooredoo's public relations manager Daw Thiri Kyar Nyo.

The interested and bilingual can visit translatathonmyanmar.org for more information.

Workshop trains techies in Wikipedia

AUNG THU YA

aungthura.smith@gmail.com

TELENOR is set to provide Wikipedia Zero on its mobile phone networks when it launches later this year, giving customers free access to Myanmar-language information from the open source platform.

The only problem is a serious lack of articles.

Though the partnership was announced in November of last year, so far the Myanmar version of Wikipedia only contains about 30,000 articles, a pittance by the standards of the web giant.

To rectify this, and make both the Wikipedia Zero and Telenor more attractive to customers, Telenor organized a workshop on June 21 in Yangon, where local tech-

enthusiasts received “training in how to identify content for translation, how to edit articles and also how to teach new members of the Wikipedia community” according to a statement from Telenor.

“We need more local content in Myanmar language and our aim is to create a collaborative, growing ecosystem of contributors in the Myanmar community” said Ko Ngwe Tun, who helped run the workshop. “More contributors mean more articles, which results in more usage of Wikipedia.”

In their statement, Telenor described Ko Ngwe Tun as “one of the first Wikipedians in Myanmar”.

Wikipedia Zero is a project aimed at bringing the website to consumers in the developing world at no cost.

The platform has already debuted in hundreds of nations across the globe, always in partnership with local telecom providers.

“[The provider] ‘zero-rates’ access to Wikimedia sites in their billing system, so their subscribers will not incur data charges while accessing Wikipedia and the sister projects on the mobile web or apps,” according to the Wikimedia website.

30,000

Total number of Wikipedia articles in Myanmar.

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Gadget Round-up

by Myo Satt



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— Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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MONTREAL

Consumer drones ready to take flight

LIKE a well-trained dog, the HEXO+ follows you faithfully wherever you go. But it doesn't walk besides you – it's airborne.

Developed by a French start-up, Squadrone System, the six-rotor HEXO+ – which handily totes a Go-Pro video camera – is billed as the first autonomous small drone for the mass market.

It's also a prime example of the many ways in which automation will take to the sky as unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, become part of daily life in the not-too-distant future.

Due out in May 2015 with a planned retail price of US\$899, the HEXO+ is targeted at extreme sports enthusiasts looking for a way to immortalize their every move.

Users activate it with a smartphone app, then let it fly a few metres behind them, recording their every twist and turn, up to a top speed of 70 kilometers an hour.

"Making snowboard films is my main activity, so essentially I started

'Used imaginatively, future drones could detect ethnic conflict [or] find survivors amid rubble.'

Jack Chow
Global Health Expert

Drones report for civilian duty

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) set enter daily life in the not too-distant future

HEXO+ drone
Developer: Squadrone System (France)
Billed as first autonomous drone for the mass market

Speed: up to 70kph
Flight time: 15 mins
Retail price: \$899
On sale: May 2015



Six rotors provide stability

GoPro video camera

SPORT AND LEISURE
Follows and films target autonomously linked to a smartphone app
Targeted at extreme sports enthusiasts (skiing, snowboarding, motorcycle rides etc) and movie makers

Other potential uses for drones (various makers and models)

AID
Ferry drugs and medical supplies, especially in conflict and disaster zones

AGRICULTURE
Evaluate soil conditions, guide tractors and assess ways to spread pesticides, water or fertilizers

WEATHER
Hurricane hunting to improve forecasts and study wind and water forces

SEARCH AND RESCUE SOS
Especially at night, or in large areas or inaccessible terrain

3D MAPPING
Survey landscapes, and landmarks, create customised maps

WILDLIFE MONITORING
Monitor populations, forest cover and wetlands to aid in conservation work

JOURNALISM
Photo, video and data gathering

DELIVERIES
For food and packages

Source: Kuckert.com/InfQm

AFP

using drones a few years ago," said Squadrone System's co-founder Xavier Delerue, a former world snowboard champion.

"At the outset, it was great. It was easy. It was going to change everything – and then I quickly realized taking good images involved a lot of logistics when it came to using a drone," he

told AFP.

Mr. Delerue, whose venture has attracted \$1 million in Kickstarter funding, plays down concerns that small drones could have a more sinister use, like peering at small children at play in a park.

"Regulations are in place that guard against abusive use," he said.

North America and in Europe, advances in drone technology have caught lawmakers on the back foot. They are now scurrying to find ways to regulate the skies.

Unlike military drones, drones for civilian use can only operate for up to 20 minutes and usually cannot carry much more than a small camera. But big business is looking to boost that capacity.

In the run-up to Christmas last year, Amazon, the world's biggest online retailer, caused a stir with its proposal to use small drones to deliver packages.

Russian fast-food chain Ilya Farafonov isn't waiting. In June it unveiled its first pizza delivery drone, an idea it hopes to extend to the 18 cities in which it operates.

For some drone enthusiasts, food deliveries via drone is a waste of time.

"This is total nonsense. Why the hell would you do that?" asked Andreas Raptopoulos, chief executive of Matternet, a start-up that's exploring ways to put drones to work in developing nations for humanitarian purposes.

"Why don't you use the same technology to save somebody's life when a mother needs medicine, or a child needs medicine ... To me, this is where technology works best," he told Britain's Guardian newspaper.

Mr. Raptopoulos envisions a network of drones that can ferry food and medical supplies into conflict zones or areas hit by natural disaster.

Matternet has already carried out trial flights in Haiti, and in September it aims to shuttle blood samples in conjunction with international charity

Doctors Without Borders.

Since December, the United Nations has used drones in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to monitor rebel activity along the borders with Uganda and Rwanda.

"Used imaginatively, future drones could detect stirrings of ethnic conflict, find survivors amid rubble, or even perform fanciful functions such as body-temperature surveys of populations to hunt killer outbreaks," said Jack Chow, a former US ambassador and expert on global health diplomacy, speaking at the Canadian International Council think tank.

News media are meanwhile scoping out the possibilities of drone journalism, with Canadian journalism schools already offering specialised courses on UAV newsgathering.

Aerial photography with drones has also captured the imagination of real estate agents eager to pitch luxury properties in places like Los Angeles or Toronto – although regulations strictly limit flights in populated areas.

Rural districts remain a more welcoming environment for drone flying, where farms can embrace the technology to evaluate soil conditions, guide tractors or assess the most effective way to spread fertilizer.

Two years ago, French entrepreneur Vivien Heriard-Dubreuil, seeing opportunity in the countryside, founded Flyterra, which is based in New York with operations in Quebec.

"Using drones to maximize harvests is very promising," he told AFP, adding that his drone fleet can also be useful to inspect mines, dams and windmills. – AFP

TOKYO

Japanese androids take us closer to 'Blade Runner' future

A FUTURE in which it is difficult to tell man and machine apart could soon become reality, scientists say, after recent robotic breakthroughs in Japan.

But as the once-fantastical idea of wise-cracking android sidekicks takes form in laboratories – and the gap between humans and robots narrows – society faces ethical and legal complications as yet undreamed of, they warn.

"Already computers have surpassed human ability," leading Japa-

nese roboticist Hiroshi Ishiguro said. "Robots will be very clever soon."

Science fiction's rapid slide towards science fact owes much to the likes of Mr Ishiguro, who has an android copy of himself that he sends on overseas business trips in his place.

"It saves me time," he smiled. "The upper torso and lower torso you can pack in two big suitcases. The head is very fragile – it goes as carry-on baggage."

Robots already perform a wide

variety of tasks in Japan: They cook noodles, help patients undergo physiotherapy and have been used in the clean-up after the 2011 nuclear meltdown at Fukushima.

South Korea deploys jellyfish-terminating robots, while a robot with artificial intelligence able to analyse market trends has become a company director in Hong Kong.

One day, predict future-gazers, robots will perform all kinds of household chores, monitor the sick and even serve up cappuccinos.

The blurring of that line has long been a source of worry for humanity, as often depicted in popular culture.

The 1982 Hollywood cult film *Blade Runner*, which is set in 2019, features genetically engineered robots called "replicants" which are visually indistinguishable from humans, but physically superior and able to withstand pain.

The film's protagonist, played by Harrison Ford, is given the task of tracking down and killing replicants

that have escaped and are living among us. His problem is knowing the difference.

More recently, Hollywood broached the possibility of falling in love with technology in the critically acclaimed movie *Her*.

Released 2013 and set in the not too distant future, the film tells the story of an introverted loner, played by Joaquin Phoenix, who falls for an intelligent operating system that exists only as a female voice on his computer and mobile devices.. – AFP



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WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

MELBOURNE

Devastating blow to AIDS community

Up to 100 experts en-route to conference die in crash

THE world AIDS community was sent into mourning as it emerged as many as 100 of the passengers on a crashed Malaysian Airlines plane were delegates heading to Australia for a global conference on the epidemic.

Flight MH17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, which US officials believe was hit by a surface-to-air missile over Ukraine, was due to connect with another flight to Melbourne.

Unconfirmed reports in Australia on July 18 said as many as 100 of those who died were en route to Melbourne for the 20th International AIDS Conference, which was due to begin on July 20.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* said those attending a pre-conference meeting in Sydney were told that around 100 of their colleagues were on the plane, including former International AIDS Society president Joep Lange.

The Australian broadsheet reported that the Melbourne conference delegates were to be informed that 108 of their colleagues and family members died.

The International AIDS Society confirmed that “a number of our colleagues and friends” were killed, but did not say how many.

Asked by reporters whether 108 people attending the conference were on the flight, International AIDS Society president Francoise Barre-Sinoussi said, “We don’t have the confirmation [of numbers].”

In a tweet, UNAIDS executive

director Michel Sidibe said “many” delegates were on board.

Held every two years, the International AIDS Conference is a forum for campaigners to highlight developments in fighting the disease and discuss financing problems.

It was this year also expected to channel anger about laws in Africa that stigmatise homosexuality and in the former Soviet Union that punish intravenous drug users.

Ms Barre-Sinoussi said it would go ahead despite the tragic news.

“The decision to go on, we were thinking about them because we know it’s really what they would have liked us to do,” she said.

Some 12,000 participants are due to take part, joined by former US president Bill Clinton and rock singer and poverty activist Bob Geldof.

Australia’s National AIDS Trust paid tribute to Dutchman and leading AIDS researcher Mr Lange, who has been involved in HIV research and treatment since 1983.

“Reports Joep Lange died in Malaysian plane crash today, with other scientists on way to @AIDS conference. Desperately sad news,” it said on Twitter.

The International AIDS Society said it was devastated.

“At this incredibly sad and sensitive time the IAS stands with our international family and sends condolences to the loved ones of those who have been lost to this tragedy,” it said. — AFP



Chris Beyrer (left), president-elect of the International AIDS Society, and Owen Ryan (right), the society’s executive director, leave the venue for the 20th International AIDS Conference in Melbourne on July 18. Photo: AFP



Wreckage of a Malaysia Airlines jet which was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when it crashed is evident the following day, MH17 died in the incident. Pro-Russian rebels fighting central Kiev authorities claimed on July 17 that plane had been shot down by crew on-board the jet had reported no problems during flight. Photo: AFP

GRABOVE

Investigators struggle crash site in strife-torn

INVESTIGATORS are facing massive hurdles as they seek access to the grisly crash site of a Malaysian plane in eastern Ukraine, with the area controlled by armed rebels blamed for downing the jet with a missile.

Despite a hail of calls from around the globe for a swift probe into the July 17 crash, initial efforts by international monitors to gain full access to the site have been impeded by pro-Russian separatists locked in fighting with Ukraine forces.

The fate of the vital black boxes – at least one of which was reported to have been recovered – was unknown. AFP journalists at the site say dozens of mutilated corpses remained scattered around the vast area, the scale of which appears to have overwhelmed local rescue workers.

While the rebels, who Kiev and the US believe fired a sophisticated surface-to-air missile at the jet, have vowed to protect the scene, they have ruled out a ceasefire and rocket-fire still rings out in the distance.

Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans, whose nation was stunned by the loss of nearly 200 citizens in the crash, arrived in Kiev on July 18 with a team of 15 forensic experts.

A 62-strong Malaysian disaster response team was due to arrive on July 19, and Prime Minister Najib Razak urged Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone call to help them gain access to the site.

Concerns over the site’s vulner-

ability are high after international observers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe were blocked from fully accessing the sites by armed rebels “for their own” safety.

Blame trading

US President Barack Obama blamed Russia for creating the conditions that led to the doomed flight MH17 being shot down, as the disaster further fanned the flames of the worst East-West crisis since the Cold War.

Malaysia Airlines said 283 passengers and 15 crew were aboard the plane – including, at last count, 192 Dutch nationals, 44 Malaysians, 27 Australians and 12 Indonesians. Australia said 28 of its citizens were on board.

Mr Obama cranked up political pressure on Mr Putin as he presented the conclusions of US intelligence analysts about the “unspeakable” carnage.

“Evidence indicates that the plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile that was launched from an area that is controlled by Russian-backed separatists inside of Ukraine,” Mr Obama said.

He said previous attacks by separatists on government aircraft in Ukraine suggested rebels benefited from Russian technical expertise.

“A group of separatists can’t shoot down military transport planes, or, they claim, shoot down fighter jets without sophisticated equipment

and sophisticated training, and that is coming from Russia,” Mr Obama said.

Kiev and Moscow have traded blame for the tragedy, with Mr Putin saying Ukraine bore responsibility for the crash for pressing on with its offensive against the rebels.

Ukraine has released recordings of what it said was an intercepted call between an insurgent commander and a Russian intelligence officer as they realized they had shot down a passenger jet.

Comments attributed to a pro-Russian rebel chief suggested his men may have downed the plane by mistake, believing it to be a Ukrainian army transport aircraft.

‘I think that this certainly will be a wake-up call for Europe and the world that there are consequences to an escalation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine.’

Barack Obama
US President

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Why Pakistan’s gem trade is losing its lustre

WORLD 38

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WORLD 40



Can Modi really clean up the Ganges?

WORLD 41



near the town of Shaktarsk, in rebel-held east Ukraine. All 298 people on board Flight a Ukrainian jet. The head of Ukraine’s air traffic control agency said on July 17 that the

to reach MH17 Ukraine

Pentagon spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby said, “It strains credulity that [the missile] can be used by separatists without some measure of Russian support and assistance.”

“Wake-up call for Europe” In calls to the leaders of Germany, Britain and Australia, Mr Obama pressed for “a prompt, full, unimpeded and transparent international investigation”, and stressed the need for immediate access to the crash site. The US leader, who stiffened sanctions on Russia on July 16, also prodded Europe to do more to restrain Mr Putin, who he said had the power to rein in separatists but refused to use it. “I think that this certainly will be a wake-up call for Europe and the world that there are consequences to an escalation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine,” Mr Obama said. The UN Security Council unanimously demanded a “full, thorough and independent investigation” at the start of a meeting on the Ukraine crisis that saw fraught exchanges between Western countries and Russia. US Vice President Joe Biden spoke with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk for the second day running. Mr Tusk and Mr Biden noted that Russia was “supplying weapons and training – including anti-aircraft weapons – to the separa-

tists, with profoundly de-stabilizing consequences”, a White House statement said. In Buenos Aires, China’s President Xi Jinping said Beijing favored a “fair and objective” probe. Grief and fury Grief over the tragedy melded with fury as heart-rending stories emerged of the men, women and children aboard the doomed Boeing 777. Dutch families jetting off to exotic destinations, more than 100 AIDS experts and an Australian family who also lost relatives on Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, which went missing in March, were all among the victims. Prime Minister Najib Razak – embroiled in a Malaysia Airlines disaster for the second time in four months – highlighted the need for an objective, unfettered probe into the crash in a phone call with Mr Putin. “I also told Putin that the site should not be tampered [with] before the team begins its investigation,” Mr Razak, whose step-grandmother was on the ill-fated flight, was quoted saying by Malaysian national news agency Bernama. Separatist leaders ruled out a truce to allow the plane probe to go ahead and fierce clashes continued on July 18, with local authorities saying 20 civilians were killed in the rebel-held city of Lugansk, some 100 kilometres to the northeast of the crash site. – AFP

GAZA CITY

Death toll soars as strikes escalate

At least 260 Palestinians have been killed as the Israeli offensive pushes deeper into Gaze a

ISRAELI troops backed by tanks and warplanes pushed deeper into Gaza on July 18 in an operation to halt rocket fire and destroy tunnels that Hamas said was doomed to fail. The death toll among Palestinians soared to 260 as the large-scale Israeli offensive entered its 11th day, with the army bombarding Gaza by air and sea as well as from tanks massed along the border. Israel reported its first combat death since its troops went in, while a five-month-old baby was among the 19 Palestinians reported killed on July 18. The Jewish state said it was pressing ahead with the operation to destroy a network of tunnels that riddle the Gaza strip, used for assembling rockets and staging cross-border attacks. Before the ground offensive was launched, the army said it had foiled a subterranean raid by Gaza militants into southern Israel. Thirteen militants emerged from a tunnel under the Gaza border, and were headed toward Sufa kibbutz, a small community just over a kilometre away, when they were spotted, it said. Warplanes killed at least one of the attackers, and the rest ran back to the tunnel. As the incursion began late July 17, rockets lit up the sky, and the force of the shelling shook violently a seafront hotel in Gaza City housing scores of journalists. The assault followed a brief

humanitarian truce and urgent diplomatic appeals that Israel redouble its efforts to avoid harm to civilians. US Secretary of State John Kerry urged Israel to limit collateral damage in Gaza and be “precise” in its ground assault on the enclave. In a telephone call to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu he emphasised “the need to avoid further escalation and to restore the 2012 ceasefire as soon as possible”, said the State Department. Hamas, the Islamist movement that controls Gaza, said the ground operation was destined not to succeed. “What the occupier Israel failed to achieve through its air and sea raids, it will not be able to achieve with a ground offensive. It is bound to fail,” Hamas chief Khaled Meshaal said. Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said Israel must stop its ground operation, warning it would lead to “more bloodshed” and complicate efforts to end the conflict in the



A Palestinian child shouts at al-Shifa hospital on July 18. Photo: AFP

enclave. Israel approved the call-up of another 18,000 reservists, taking the total number approved to 65,000 for an operation aimed at protecting Israeli lives and striking “a significant blow to Hamas’s terror infrastructure,” the army said. Shortly beforehand, the military began an intensive bombardment of Gaza by air and sea as well as by tanks massed along the border. Israel launched Operation Protective Edge on July 8 to stamp out rocket fire from Gaza, pounding the coastal enclave from both the air and the sea. Egypt lashed out at Hamas on July 17, saying it could have saved dozens of lives had it accepted a truce brokered by Cairo, but also condemned the “Israeli escalation”. An initial ceasefire proposal which was to begin on July 15 was accepted by Israel but ignored by Hamas, which continued to fire rockets over the border. Mr Netanyahu and his defence minister, Moshe Yaalon, instructed the army “to commence ground action to strike at the terrorist tunnels from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory”, the premier’s office said. “I regret that despite my repeated urgings, and those of many regional and world leaders together, an already dangerous conflict has now escalated even further,” UN chief Ban Ki-moon said. – AFP

Thank You

Heartfelt thanks to my Relatives, Friends, Working Colleagues and Associates, far and near, for your kind words in congratulating me for the award of one of the highest awards decorated to me, "THE ROYAL ORDER OF THE POLAR STAR-OFFICER FIRST CLASS" and "DIPLOM" in recognition as "KNIGHT" by His Majesty Carl Gustaf XVI, King of Sweden, on the National Day of Sweden, 6th June 2014. It is indeed a great honor and privilege to receive such a high award of honor which was introduced as early as in 1748 by King Fredrik I of Sweden to citizens, officials and civics with wide knowledge, skill, patriotism and devotion for their dedicated services and outstanding performances for the benefit of the country. In respect of that, I owe my sincere thanks, gratitude and respect to my beloved Parents for their exemplary support and encouragement given to me in acquiring excellent education, my wonderful and well respected Teachers for their invaluable guidance, professions and teaching skills for acquiring basic as well as advanced knowledge, to my Working Colleagues and Associates for sharing their wisdom, knowledge, skills and experiences in different scientific and engineering disciplines which I truly inspire, to the Myanmar Government for the State Scholarship Award to study abroad and to the Swedish Government for the financial assistance given to me to pursue my higher academic studies in Sweden in 1964, thus enabling me to build up my career with respect, discipline, courage, spirit, goodwill, confidence, passion, trust and cooperation. Kindly allow me to convey my solemn salute and utmost respect to ALL OF YOU for your loving kindness, assistance, support and encouragement rendered to me all these days with many more to come, and especially in sharing the joy and merit together with my family which I will cherish and treasure throughout my life. Thank you once again and MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.



Dr. Myint Han (Honorary Consul of Sweden)

BANGKOK

'Low profile' Shinawatra free to travel to France

THAILAND'S junta has given permission for ousted former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra to leave the country for the first time since a May 22 coup, a military spokesperson said on June 17.

Ms Yingluck is expected to travel to Paris this week to attend the 65th birthday party of her elder brother, the fugitive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

Her request was approved because she has stayed out of politics since the military seized power, according to the junta, formally known as the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO).

"The NCPO yesterday approved Prime Minister Yingluck's request to leave the country because since the coup she has never shown that she was against the NCPO's work," army spokesperson Colonel Winthai Suvarree said. "She has kept a low profile ever since."

Ms Yingluck, Thailand's first female premier, was removed from office in a controversial court ruling shortly before the army toppled the remnants of her elected government.

She was among hundreds of people summoned and temporarily detained by the junta afterward.

Ms Yingluck, who was indicted for dereliction of duty a day after she was removed from office, could face criminal charges linked to a loss-



Former Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra speaks at a press conference in Bangkok on May 7
Photo: AFP

making rice subsidy scheme.

The National Anti-Corruption Commission said on July 17 that it was referring the case to the attorney general's office for possible referral to the Supreme Court's Criminal Division for Persons Holding Political Positions.

"The defendant as prime minister should have suspended the scheme as soon as she heard of corruption and losses," it said in a statement.

Ms Yingluck's brother Mr Thaksin was ousted in an earlier coup in 2006 and later fled Thailand to avoid prison for a corruption conviction that he insists was politically motivated.

The billionaire tycoon turned populist politician, who clashed with the royalist establishment before his overthrow, lives in Dubai but remains a hugely divisive figure in his homeland.

An attempt by his political allies to push through a political amnesty that could have led to his return sparked months of opposition street protests leading up to the May coup.

A military source said Ms Yingluck must inform the Thai authorities of her whereabouts through overseas embassies while travelling.

Army chief General Prayut Chan-O-cha seized power after nearly seven months of political street rallies and related violence that left 28 people dead and paralysed Ms Yingluck's government.

The junta has ruled out holding new elections before October 2015, despite appeals from the United States and the European Union for a return to democracy. — AFP

SEOUL

Buddhist nuns in holy rap

SOUTH Korea's top Buddhist organisation held an experimental "prayer competition" on June 16 featuring rapping nuns and singing monks in a bid to attract new, younger followers.

More than 300 monks and nuns packed a large temple in downtown Seoul to take part in the competition hosted by the Jogye Order.

Participants, mostly young monks, chanted prayers, or invocations, from classic Buddhist scriptures, as well as "freestyle" prayers they composed.

While many delivered traditional, monotone recitations, some opted for something bolder.

A group of three young nuns delivered a blistering performance of a rap song derived from *The Heart Sutra*, one of the most popular Buddhist scriptures, and using their own lyrics promoting love and harmony.

"Great wisdom, perfect wisdom. Buddha's teachings that show you the way!" Hye-Kang bellowed out to cheers from hundreds of excited followers and monks.

The 25-year-old nun, clad in grey robes, waved at the audience, urging them to clap their hands as she jumped around the stage.

She was accompanied by two equally animated nuns on traditional gong and drum as she rapped over the sutra refrain, "Aje Aje Bara Aje (come, come, come upward.)"

Buddhist tenets of humility and overcoming material cravings were briefly pushed aside as monks from Hye-Kang's temple chanted, "We're here to win!"

The contestants were competing for a cash prize of 3 million won (US\$2900).

Another nun, Go-Woo, also went down the hip-hop route, rapping a mix of classic scriptures and original lyrics praising the Buddha's teachings.

"You're not alone. Let's take down the wall among us and share the teachings of wisdom!" she sang.

Hye-Kang said she and her fellow performers had taken the contest very seriously, practising day and night for a month for the performance.

"I wanted more young people to take an interest in Buddhism and the message of its prayers," she said.

The Jogye Order claims 10 million followers, but Buddhism, once the dominant religion of South Korea, has been overtaken by Christianity in terms of popularity.

The Christianity practised in South Korea is strongly evangelical, with a lot of proselytising work that some Buddhists believe is bringing young people to the churches rather than the temples.

Venerable Yin-Mook, a senior member of the Jogye Order and one of the judges of the event, said efforts were needed to make Buddhist scripture more accessible.

"Many Buddhist prayers are written in ancient words many people are not familiar with, so we asked participants to write prayers in plain, easy-to-understand language," he said.

"We wanted to let people, especially young people and children, know *Yumbul* [Buddhist prayers] can be more interesting and easier to practice than they think," he added.

—AFP

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ESHAWAR

Sparkle fades on Pakistan’s gem trade

After centuries of precious stone production, continued violence and out-dated production methods are taking their toll on the country’s industry

NASIR JAFFRY

FOR 400 years the craftsmen and traders of Peshawar’s jewellery bazaar have cut, polished, set and haggled over precious gems dug from the rugged mountains of northwest Pakistan.

Pakistan’s gem and jewellery exports have boomed in recent years but Taliban violence, a crippling power crisis and outdated production methods are taking their toll in Peshawar, where traders say business has slumped alarmingly in the past 12 months.

‘Pakistan could triple its current gemstone exports if these reserves are fully tapped.’

Ilyas Ali Shah
Gemologist

As dusk settles over Peshawar, the gateway to Pakistan’s wild and restive northwest, the stalls and narrow lanes of Namakmandi bazaar in the heart of the city bustle with activity.

Traders peer beadily to check the quality of emeralds, rubies and lapis lazuli, plying customers with green tea while food sellers roam about, the aroma of spices scenting the air.

But traders like Shehzad Sabz Ali say business is collapsing, and foreign buyers in particular have been scared off, a major problem in a sector where exports account for 95 per cent of the market.

“I have been in this business for the last 25 years but the slump that

we are witnessing these days because of unrest and Talibanisation is unprecedented,” he said.

The buyers from the United States, Thailand, France, Germany and Dubai who once thronged the packed market are largely a thing of the past.

“The bomb blasts and suicide attacks have turned our businesses upside down, leaving us no option but to interact with our buyers through the internet,” Mr Ali said as employees in his small shop cut and polished delicate rose-pink kunzite stones.

Online dealing may be the thing of the moment, but traders like Mr Ali, whose businesses have been built on generations of salesmanship and personal relationships, feel it is ineffective.

For fellow trader Sheharyar Ahmad, the solution is to hold more trade shows in Pakistan’s other cities.

“I have attended a few exhibitions in Islamabad and Lahore where foreign buyers showed a great deal of interest in the stones such as emerald, ruby and sapphire,” he said.

Most of Pakistan’s gemstones are found in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northern Gilgit-Baltistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan-administered Kashmir region and Baluchistan.

The reserves of precious and semi-precious stones in Pakistan are worth trillions of dollars, according to Peshawar-based gemologist Ilyas Ali Shah.

But much of this potential remains untapped as the stones lie buried in the seven restive tribal areas along the Afghan border, where militancy and poor infrastructure have restricted access.

“Pakistan could triple its current gemstone exports if these reserves are fully tapped,” he said.

While the quality of stones from



A Pakistani craftsman checks a gemstone at a workshop in Peshawar on June 24. Photo: AFP

Pakistan is good and they sell well at international trade shows, Peshawar trader Sheharyar Ahmad said the primitive cutting and polishing techniques are not up to international standards.

“That is why when our stones go to Thailand, they are re-faceted and polished again,” he said.

Mr Shah, who heads the Gem and Jewellery Training and Manufacturing Centre in Peshawar, said the

manual equipment Pakistani traders are still using did not allow the same precision and delicacy of workmanship as modern machinery.

His training centre aims to bring Pakistani jewellery techniques up to date.

“Our institute has been set up to train traders in cutting and polishing of gemstones through scientific means and we have so far trained over 1000 students in Peshawar,” he said.

The government-run Pakistan Gems and Jewellery Development Company (PGJDC) is also trying to raise skill levels to allow the country to compete better with the likes of Thailand and India.

Gem and jewellery exports have risen enormously in recent years to stand at US\$1.3 billion in 2013, and PGJDC general manager Khalid Aziz said they were aiming for a target of \$1.7 billion by 2017. – AFP

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PERTH

Shark chokes to death on sea lion

A GREAT white shark that washed up on an Australian beach last week had a sea lion stuck in its throat which likely caused its death, fisheries officials said on July 17.

The four-metre (13-foot) white pointer was filmed thrashing around just off Coronation Beach, 430 kilometres (270 miles) north of Perth, and was later found on the sand.

The Western Australia Department of Fisheries said it had no visible signs of injury or disease, but had a large sea lion lodged in its throat.

“This could explain why the shark was exhibiting such unusual behaviour,” said research scientist Rory McAuley in a statement.

“It is possible that the shark was trying to dislodge the blockage.

“Such a large object may have damaged the shark’s internal organs or impeded water flow into his gills, contributing to his death,” he added.

“Alternatively, the shark may have accidentally become stranded in his attempts to get rid of the obstruction.”

Brad Tapper filmed the shark as it struggled in shallow waters and posted the clip on YouTube.

“When we spotted it, it was about 50 metres off the shore. We thought it was a diver or something,” he told the *West Australian* newspaper. – AFP

BEIJING

China moves disputed rig

CHINA has withdrawn an oil rig from contested waters a month earlier than initially expected after its presence set off deadly protests in Vietnam, a move welcomed in Washington.

The energy company behind the project however said that it had finished the drilling "as planned" and China reiterated its claims in the South China Sea.

China's official news agency Xinhua said the giant rig would be withdrawn to the area of Hainan island.

Relations between Vietnam and China plummeted when the rig was moved near the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea in May.

Beijing and Hanoi are embroiled in a bitter territorial dispute over claims in the area. There have been repeated skirmishes between dozens of Chinese and Vietnamese vessels since the rig was deployed, along with a wave of deadly anti-Chinese riots in Vietnam.

"The mission has been completed smoothly as planned, and oil and gas has been discovered," said a statement from China National Petroleum Corp posted on its website late on July 15.

"The data collected will be analysed and a decision made on the next step."

The statement did not give any indication of the quality of the reserves or how they could be exploited. Foreign ministry spokesperson Hong Lei on July 16 reiterated Beijing's stance that the project had taken place within China's "inherent territory".

"China strongly opposes Vietnam's irrational disruptions and has taken necessary security measures to ensure the operation," he added.

Vietnam's foreign ministry spokesperson Le Hai Binh hit back, labelling the project as "completely illegal".

"To create a peaceful, stable environment in the East Sea [the Vietnamese name for the area], Vietnam requests that China not bring the [rig], or any other oil rig, back to this area or into any other part of Vietnam's territorial waters."

The United States, which has repeatedly voiced concern over rising maritime tension in Asia, described China's step as a move forward. — AFP

MANILA

Typhoon claims at least 38 lives despite 'zero-casualty' efforts

MILLIONS in the Philippines endured a second sweltering day without power on July 17 after a ferocious typhoon paralysed the capital and wrecked flimsy rural homes, claiming at least 38 lives.

Authorities expressed frustration as reports from badly damaged areas filtered in and the death toll from Typhoon Rammasun, the first major storm of the Southeast Asian archipelago's rainy season, was nearly doubled to 38.

"We still have to find out what exactly are the reasons a lot of our countrymen refuse to heed the warnings," National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council chief Alexander Pama told reporters.

As part of a "zero casualty" effort, the government evacuated nearly 400,000 people from the path of Rammasun and warned others to stay indoors.

But most of the people who died were outdoors, killed by falling trees, collapsing buildings and flying debris, according to the council's data.

Mr Pama said the death toll could rise further, with mobile phone and other forms of communication still cut to some rural areas. He said at least eight people remained missing.

Rammasun, a Thai word for "Thunder God", swept in off the Pacific Ocean on the night of July 15, then brought wind gusts of up to 160 kilometres an hour (100 miles) across land to Manila and other heavily populated northern regions.

"It really scrambled whole towns, blowing down houses and toppling power lines," said the chairperson of the Philippine Red Cross, Richard Gordon.

The typhoon destroyed or damaged 26,000 homes, while cutting electricity supplies to nearly all of Manila, a mega-city of more than 12 million people, and surrounding urban areas.



A village official evacuates a child from a house in an informal settlers' area as Typhoon Rammasun barrels across Manila on July 16. Photo: AFP

Schools and government offices were closed throughout the capital, hundreds of flights suspended and the stock exchange closed.

The stock exchange and government offices re-opened on July 17 but many schools remained closed partly because of the power problems.

The Manila Electric Company (Meralco), the country's largest power distributor which serves the capital and surrounding areas, said 1.8 million households still did not have power on July 17 afternoon.

As temperatures soared to 33 degrees Celsius (91 degrees Fahrenheit) and the air was thick with tropical moisture, Meralco said it did not expect to have power fully restored to the capital and surrounding areas until late the following day.

Energy Secretary Jericho Petilla also said electricity in the eastern region of Bicol, an impoverished farming area of more than 5 million where the typhoon first hit, would likely not return until July 22.

Manila office worker Karen Luna said her family spent a miserable night at home in Bacoar town adjacent to the capital with no power or tap water supplies.

"At first light I ordered my child to fetch water, so I was able to bathe before going off to work, using half a pail," Ms Luna said.

The neighbourhood used candles overnight and could not log onto the internet, while food was eaten quickly so it would not waste in the warming fridge, she added.

Across Manila, streets remained

littered with fallen trees, branches and electrical posts as repairmen struggled to restore power services.

The Philippines is hit by about 20 major storms a year, many of them deadly. The Southeast Asian archipelago is often the first major landmass to be struck after storms build above the warm Pacific waters.

Rammasun was the first typhoon to make landfall since this year's rainy season began in June.

It was also the first major storm since Super Typhoon Haiyan devastated the eastern islands of Samar and Leyte in November last year, killing up to 7300 people in one of the Philippines' worst natural disasters.

Those areas were largely spared last week's typhoon. — AFP



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PARIS

An illustration released on July 11 by the Dinosaur Institute of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County shows a newly discovered feathered dinosaur, the *Changyuraptor yangi*. Photo: AFP

Four-winged dinosaur gives clue to first birds

THE fossil of a strange dinosaur with four feathery wing-like appendages, unearthed in China, could provide clues to the origins of birds, scientists said last week.

Discovered at a dinosaurs' graveyard in the northeastern province of Liaoning, the highly well preserved fossil is that of a 125-million-year-old predator the size of a small but slim turkey.

Named *Changyuraptor yangi*, the creature sports a full set of feathers over its entire body, which measured 1.3 metres (four feet) from its beak to the tip of its super-long tail.

"At a foot [30 centimetres] in length, the amazing tail feathers of Changyuraptor are by far the longest of any feathered dinosaur," said Luis Chiappe at the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles.

The raptor, believed to be an adult that probably tipped the scale at around 4.5 kilograms (9 pounds), is the biggest "four-winged" dinosaur ever found.

These creatures, known as micro-raptorines, had long feathers attached to all their legs and arms, although how well they used the skies is a matter of debate.

The new discovery suggests that, in the case of Changyuraptor, a form of flight or gliding was quite possible. The super-long tail feather may have existed to give aerodynamic control, ensuring that the animal made a safe landing.

'Numerous features we have long associated with birds in fact evolved in dinosaurs.'

Alan Turner
Stony Brook University

If so, that calls for a rethink of the theory that birds evolved just from small, feathery theropods, or two-footed dinosaurs.

"The new fossil documents that dinosaur flight was not limited to very small animals but to dinosaurs of more substantial size," said Mr Chiappe in a press release.

"Clearly, far more evidence is needed to understand the nuances of dinosaur flight, but Changyuraptor is a major leap in the right direction."

Dating the origin of birds has been a source of wrangling among palaeontologists.

For decades, the title of "first bird" went to the 150-million-year-old Archaeopteryx, 11 specimens of which have been found in German limestone quarries.

But the picture became muddled a few years ago with the emergence of 160-million-year-old fossils in China that appear to be older relatives of Archaeopteryx.

Changyuraptor's tail contributes to the debate by showing one of the long evolutionary paths that led to the first bird.

"Numerous features that we have long associated with birds in fact evolved in dinosaurs long before the first birds arrived on the scene," said fellow investigator Alan Turner of Stony Brook University in New York.

"This includes things such as hollow bones, nesting behaviour, feathers ... and possibly flight."

The study appears in the journal *Nature Communications*. - AFP

SINGAPORE

Foreign maids are not 'commodities'

MAID employment agencies in Singapore have been warned against "undignified" advertising following complaints by rights groups that domestic workers are being marketed as commodities.

In an advisory sent to the agencies, the Ministry of Manpower said it was concerned by the "insensitive and inappropriate" portrayal of domestic helpers in advertisements as well as instances where they are put on display in shopping malls.

"Advertisements which emphasise cheap fees, promotional rates, and/or discounts inadvertently give the impression that the FDWs (foreign domestic workers) are being marketed as merchandise," the ministry said in the advisory, a copy of which was sent to AFP on May 17.

The ministry warned it has the power to suspend or revoke the licences of violators.

Employment agencies should "refrain from all forms of public advertising that casts FDWs in an undignified light," the ministry said.

Advertisements that liken domestic helpers "to merchandise that can be purchased and replaced when found unsatisfactory" are unacceptable, it added.

It urged employment agencies not to make domestic helpers sit outside shop fronts for inspection by prospective employers as it reinforced the impression that they are "commodities to be 'tested' or traded".

The advisory follows news reports and complaints by migrant labour activists about foreign domestic helpers

being made to demonstrate household and caregiving chores at employment agency premises in shopping malls.

The Qatar-based Al Jazeera news network in June reported that it spotted foreign domestic helpers at a suburban shopping mall pushing each other around in wheelchairs pretending to be taking care of the elderly.

Others cradled baby dolls or did ironing in mock living rooms, the network said. The manpower ministry said in a July 4 statement that its own investigations found no such "inappropriate" display of foreign domestic helpers.

More than 210,000 women from Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Myanmar and India work as maids in affluent Singapore. -AFP

KANPUR

Can Modi clean up the Ganges?

India’s new prime minister has vowed to succeed where his predecessors have failed and address pollution in the sacred-but-filthy river that run through his country

STANDING on the banks of the river Ganges a day after his election triumph, Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to succeed where numerous governments have failed: by cleaning up the filthy waterway beloved of India’s Hindus.

From a prime minister already known for the scale of his ambitions, it was a bold but calculated promise to improve the health of what the deeply religious leader referred to as his “mother”.

Success would pay huge dividends in endearing him further to his core Hindu supporters and correcting the long-standing neglect of the river would perfectly demonstrate his fabled administrative skills.

‘Everybody is united and working with unseen enthusiasm for this [river clean-up] campaign.’

Uma Barti
Minister for Ganga Rejuvenation

But nowhere is the scale of the challenge more evident than in the northern city of Kanpur, around 500 kilometres (300 miles) from the capital, which is known for its large leather-treatment industry.

A river believed to cleanse sins is used here as a giant sewage line for the largely untreated excrement of 5 million residents and a disposal facility for millions of litres of chemical-laced industrial waste.

Some devout pilgrims still brave the obvious dangers of submersing themselves in the water, in which fecal coliform bacteria can be 200 times the safe limit, according to local authorities.

But even they are increasingly put off. Local boatman Vijay Nishad, who has been rowing religious visitors on the river for more than 15 years, says his business is suffering.

“Around 100 or 200 people came to bathe this morning but they left without going in the water because of the dead fish and the terrible stench,” he said as he oared his boat.

Mr Nishad put his hand into the soil-coloured waters and plucked out a few small fish floating lifelessly just below the surface.

The Ganges snakes for 2500 kilometres across northern India from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal through a basin that is home to an estimated one third of India’s 400 million population.

Kanpur is one of the four most critically polluted spots which also include the holy city of Varanasi from where 63-year-old Mr Modi was elected to parliament for the first time in May.

Rakesh K. Jaiswal, founder of Kanpur-based campaign group Eco-Friends, said the city produced 500 million litres of sewage a day, and had a capacity to treat only around 160 million litres.

A recent note from the environment ministry, seen by AFP, estimated that the capacity of sewage treatment plants in the 50 biggest towns along the river was only 1.2 billion litres daily. Total human waste totalled 2.7 billion litres.

Mr Jaiswal wishes Mr Modi and his newly named Minister for Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation Uma Bharti well, but he is sceptical that significant changes can be made in their five-year term.

India’s first highly publicised effort to clean its most sacred river was in 1986, when the Ganga Action Plan was launched.

Environmental activists estimate billions of rupees have been poured into clean-up efforts over the last three decades with few, if any, results.

Mr Modi’s government announced another 20.4 billion rupees



Indian youths cross a bamboo bridge over a polluted tributary that runs into the river Ganges in Kanpur on June 26. Photo: AFP

(\$340 million) for a new “Ganga Mission” in its first budget earlier this month.

“It is the first time I have seen one issue uniting people from across the board. Everybody is united and working with unseen enthusiasm for this campaign,” Ms Bharti told a conference on July 7.

While the lack of sewage facilities in Kanpur is an administrative failure common to most towns along the river, the industrial waste problem is particularly acute there.

Kanpur has been a centre of the leather trade since the early 1900s when it evolved as a major domestic handloom and leather hub under British colonial rule.

A sometimes overpowering stench of rotting flesh fills the air in the city’s tannery-dominated Jajmau area.

Workers, mostly poor, illiterate daily wagers, work barefoot without any protective gear as they remove the skins and send them off for chemical bleaching, colouring and drying.

Drains from these river-side facilities discharge toxic, deep black, blue or at times yellow coloured waste water directly into the river.

That the leather industry is owned and run by Muslims and those clamouring for a clean up are Hindu nationalists gives the new government’s operation a religious slant.

Mr Jaiswal from Eco-Friends estimates 400 regulated and unregulated tanneries produce 50 million litres of waste per day, but only 9 million litres are treated.

The heavy metals and other pol-

lutants kill river life and enter the food chain through use of the same water for irrigation and the local fish consumed by local villagers.

“Modi government’s intent is definitely a good sign,” said Neeraj Srivastava, a coordinator of the Kanpur administration’s efforts to clean and develop its river stretch.

“A lot has been tried since 1986 but I think we’ve lacked a technical focus and coordinated effort. We have to do it now,” he added.

In the typically poor village of Jaana on the outskirts of Kanpur, the public health effects of 30 years of inaction can be seen.

Malti Devi, a 33-year-old homemaker and mother of three, said she developed severe rashes soon after she moved there after her marriage.

“It became severe and then I got these permanent rashes all over my body,” Ms Devi said, as she revealed red sores on her arms, stomach, upper back and neck.

A group of half a dozen villagers gathered outside Ms Devi’s small, brick house eager to describe their own problems which they linked to the water.

“Those who can have already left the village,” 40-year-old Ramesh Chandra Nishad said.

Senior medical authorities in the area backed their claims, blaming the rashes and other ailments on contact with the water.

For Ms Daevi, Mr Modi’s operation is welcome, but she has heard ambitious plans from politicians before, “I doubt if anything will happen,” she said. – AFP

TOKYO

Vagina artist released, but facing two years in jail

AN artist known for her genital-inspired works has been released from police custody in Tokyo following her arrest over obscenity charges that could see her jailed for two years, her lawyer said on July 18.

Megumi Igarashi, 42, who calls herself Rokude Nashiko which roughly translates as “illegitimate child”, was taken into custody a week previously for distributing data that allowed recipients to make 3D prints of her vagina.

“She was released today,” said lawyer Kazuyuki Minami on July 18.

The case has sparked accusations of a clampdown on freedom of expression.

It was not immediately clear if the artist, who suddenly became a household name in Japan following her arrest, would face criminal proceedings.

If convicted, Ms Igarashi could receive up to two years in jail or a fine of as much as 2.5 million yen, according to her lawyer.

Ms Igarashi had been trying to raise funds online to pay for the construction of a kayak, using a 3D printer, modelled on the shape of her genitals.

Ms Igarashi’s supporters said they were shocked by what they described as the police’s unusually broad use of Japan’s obscenity laws.

Japan has a notoriously vibrant pornography industry that caters to a vast array of tastes. But obscenity laws still forbid the depiction of actual genitalia, which usually appear censored or pixellated in images and videos.

The artist was arrested for “distributing data that could create an obscene shape through a 3D printer,” a police spokesperson said.

Before her arrest, Ms Igarashi had collected about one million yen (\$9,800) through an Internet crowd funding site.

In exchange for donations, she supplied data to supporters that would let them create 3D prints of her genitals.

The artist’s arrest sparked protest among her fans and supporters, who started an online petition to demand her immediate release, as they criticised police for what they said was an attack on free expression. – AFP

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It's a centuries-old tradition, but will the use of thanaka persist as more young women shun the practice in favour of modern cosmetics?

BY ZON PANN PWINT AND NYEIN EI EI HTWE

What makes a beautiful face

Photo: Staff



MA Emerald Nyein is often praised by her friends for her smooth skin. So what's the secret ingredient in her beauty regime? "I love applying thanaka," the 20-year-old model said. "It cools the skin, and I've found it effective for skincare."

But while she says she has applied thanaka from tip to toe every day since she was a child, you won't catch her wearing it in public. This is one make-up product some people are now choosing not to show.

It hasn't always been this way. For centuries, Myanmar people – especially women, but sometimes men – have applied the thick paste made from tree bark to their skin as part of a daily routine. For some it's a quick dab on the cheeks, while others spend time smearing it over their faces and body. Modern science isn't sure on the benefits, but those who use it swear it makes the skin feel cold, protects against and relieves sunburn, and even cures acne.

These days, however, the habit of wearing thanaka is changing. Fewer women wear it outside their homes and those who do are opting for readymade pastes that have more in common with modern mass-produced cosmetics than the natural, watery mix of old.

"During my school days, I used to apply a thick coat of thanaka on my face every day before I left for school," Ma Emerald said. "After matriculation, I started to put make-up on when I go out."

Some people don't want to hang out or work with "village girls" because it's assumed they don't understand the style and pace of city living, Ma Nandar Nwe said.

For other women, it's not peer pressure but workplace rules that have turned them off daily thanaka use. Ma Tin Tin Oo said this was the case at the garment factory where she worked in 2003.

"When we [employees] sweated, a mixture of sweat and thanaka made my face dirty, and it could smear the textiles. So the factory manager didn't allow us to wear it," she said.

Even though she is now a housewife and no longer needs to worry about what her employer thinks, she still prefers to wear anti-ageing cream rather than thanaka, considering it more tidy, clean and graceful.

In contrast, Daw Myint Myint Thein, 64, is unimpressed by the takeover of modern cosmetics. She still prefers to treat her arms, legs and toes with a thick layer of natural thanaka, believing that it's good for her health.

She has, however, noticed the trend among younger women of turning away from it. "They don't wear thanaka anymore, and their faces look like dolls and Barbies. It makes me unhappy. I think they're ungraceful."

Daw Myint Myint Thein says she also prefers the hand-ground variety of paste, rather than newfangled readymades with strong scents and colours.



Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

Modern clothing trends, she says, don't work well accented with yellowy circles on the cheeks.

"I think only Myanmar traditional dress goes with thanaka properly," she said.

She is not alone in thinking so. While many housewives continue to wear the paste, other women – university students, company employees and others working outside the home – increasingly find it socially uncomfortable to wear thanaka. Several women interviewed for this story said this is in part because thanaka tends to look "dirty" as it mixes with sweat over the course of the day.

The decline in thanaka use outside the home started around 2000, estimates Ma Nandar Nwe, a final-year student at the Yangon University of Foreign Languages. If a woman turns up at a formal occasion in thanaka, she will stand out from the rest, she says. Moreover, she doesn't think thanaka matches well with other cosmetics such as lipstick and eyeshadow.

"I used to apply thick paste to my cheeks until I was a first-year student, when I started to get teased about it. They said I looked like a village girl, so I kicked the habit of wearing it outside," she said.

Ma Win Win, 33, faced a similar experience. "My mother used to put thanaka on my face. When I was a grade-four student, I stopped letting her do that and started putting on make-up. I disliked it because I felt like I looked like a village girl," said Ma Win Win, who works as general manager at Myanmar Book Centre.

It's a tradition for women who work in the sun to wear thanaka, believing that it saves their faces and hands from harmful ultraviolet rays. In the city, however, wearing it appears to signify naivety, with social and perhaps even economic repercussions.

But among young women who do wear thanaka, the readymades have gained ground, in part due to the perception that they are more hygienic.

Beauty adviser Ma Thae Thae Nyein says all cosmetics – modern or traditional – can be pore-clogging, and that a lot of women use them the wrong way.

"Most people don't expose thanaka to the sun during the rainy season, so it grows fungus. You have to wash it before you grind it every day, but we forget," she said, adding that another bad habit to watch out for is going to bed with a face full of make-up after a long, sweaty day.

For others, just the chore of grinding thanaka is enough to turn them off it. To produce the paste takes time. The tree bark must be ground on a *kyaut pin* (a flat, circular stone). Readymade products, available at a reasonable price, strike many as a simpler option.

Readymades come with their own risks, however, as they often contain chemicals that help preserve the thanaka. For tourists wanting to try the cosmetic without having to lug home a heavy *kyaut pin*, however, they're the worry-free choice.

On a recent morning, readying her son for elementary school, Ma Tin Tin Oo ground up some fresh thanaka and applied circular dabs on his baby-soft cheeks. He stood in front of her, wearing white shirt and green pants, hair oiled and combed. Similar scenes, no doubt, were happening all across the country at the very same moment.

"Wearing thanaka makes them more fresh, innocent, neat and tidy," she said. "If I don't put thanaka on his face, he will be different from the other students in his class."

Young or old, village or city, local or visitor thanaka use, it seems, is mostly about fitting in.



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Street seen



A rubbish collector walks down Merchant Street on April 4. Photo: Zarni Phyo



Rush hour on Maha Bandoola Garden Street on February 5. Photo: Yu Yu

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

JULY 21 - 27, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 – Feb 18



You need to make some changes to your self-image and the image you present to the world. The more responsibilities you assume, the more you need to be able to solve problems and make decisions. Expand your thinking about what is possible for you to achieve. Thinking about possibilities is a proactive way to positively influence future events. You will be what you think about.

PISCES | Feb 19 – March 20



Lighten up and try to learn something from new experiences and feelings. When you focus on what you have (not what you want), you can end up getting more of what you want. The possibilities for your life are endless if you have optimism. Know that whatever you practise most is what you will become. Love is not an emergency, unless you make it so.

ARIES | Mar 21 – Apr 19



Sometimes emotions lead us to seek logic, and other times logic must be put aside so we can feel emotions. It depends on the relationship. A higher level of communication is characterised by mutual trust, respect and concern. Always maintain congruency. Be harmonious in negotiations. You will feel good about your integrity.

TAURUS | Apr 20 – May 20



Establish the habit of doing things at the proper time, and notice the change in communication that comes with respect and understanding. Do not make your daily program too tight with successive engagements. Leave some scope for emergencies and unexpected events. A misunderstanding is never ended by an agreement but by tact, diplomacy and a sympathetic desire.

GEMINI | May 21 – June 20



See things in perspective. Opportunity is available at every point of your intellectual focus, and you can make everything happen effectively and certainly. Seek genuine optimists as your friends and make enthusiasm a daily habit. Don't waste time thinking about past hurts but think only well of yourself and others. Know that nothing stays the same.

CANCER | June 21 – July 22



A successful person has a built-in sense of responsibility and integrity. Always be confident of your own value and live in your own style. Clothing is a visible status symbol that needs a thoughtful investment. One of the major obstacles to success is the problem of appropriate dress. Don't be concerned if you have not finished something important in your social life.

LEO | July 23 – Aug 22



Show your inventions and talents at the right time. You don't want to become famous if it means inciting competition at the wrong time. Your money in the bank may become important soon. You can benefit at the same time that you do things to improve your impression honestly. You can make rules to help yourself deal with change and conversation.

VIRGO | Aug 23 – Sept 22



Judgment and discrimination are not in your nature. You have a realistic mind that will develop remarkably with time. Learning may be easy, and you should keep your head cool. You can be well-off and amass good money so that your lifestyle becomes more comfortable. Emotional affinity is needed to be calm and reasonable in your mind-set.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

4th Floor, 113, Thamain Bayan Road, Tarmwe township, Yangon.
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LIBRA | Sept 23 – Oct 22



Empty discussion is a fool's game. Put careful emphasis on vision, value and motivation. Don't accept the status quo but strive to change what's in your control. Beautify something you see and think about. Don't undersell your abilities and values, but keep stress from overtaking your life. Mental strength is never empty.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 – Nov 21



You cannot change anything unless you accept it. Condemnation does not liberate but oppresses. Acknowledge today's accomplishments and choose to be the architect of your future. Organise and execute around priorities. Planning must bring the future into the present so that you can act now.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 – Dec 21



Humans are disturbed not by things but by the view which they take of them. Noticing your own point of view is the hard part, but when you do you can get ideas to make the uneven things smooth. Simplifying can be valuable and enlightening, and you must be able to do it for everything but your own theory and tactic. Don't go too far.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 – Jan 19



Effective anger management means you must acknowledge your heart and make a commitment to avoid the same frustration or mistake in the future. Don't take "dark cloud" words or actions too personally. Learn to quiet the storm within yourself whenever you encounter hurt or anger, and you will become a conqueror of life. Identify your main problems now.

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Do beauty pageants liberate or oppress?

CHARLOTTE ROSE

charlottelola.rose@gmail.com

WHILE May Myat Noe, crowned Miss Asia World Pacific 2014 in Seoul last month, basks in the glory of becoming the first Myanmar beauty queen to win an international pageant, and with preparations underway to choose Miss Universe Myanmar 2014 at the national this week, it looks like pageant-mania has officially swept the nation.

Miss Myanmar competitions are nothing new. The country first sent a representative to the Miss Universe pageant in 1959 but stopped in 1962 when General Ne Win came to power. Last year, Moe Set Wine became the first beauty queen to represent Myanmar at the annual event in over half a century. Since then, beauty contests have become something of a phenomenon, according to the country's national director for the Miss Globe and Miss Asia World Pacific pageants, Hla Nu Htun.

"It's the dream of all young girls to grow up to be beauty queens," she said. "Pageants offer girls the opportunity to travel all over the world, experiencing different cultures and promoting the culture and beauty of Myanmar. Pageants can lead to a career in modelling or television."

Beauty pageants have been a source of controversy around the world for decades. Since the first Miss Universe contest was held in the US in 1952, critics have argued that pageants objectify women by reinforcing the idea that they should be valued primarily for their physical appearance. Feminists famously staged an anti-pageant demonstration at the 1968 Miss America contest in Atlantic City, which drew worldwide media attention and reportedly inspired the decades-old myth of bra-burning feminists.

Today, beauty pageants are a global phenomenon, with local pageants being held all over the world. As the contests have increasingly attracted candidates from cultures that traditionally forbid the public exposure of women, scenes of bikini-clad girls parading on catwalks have sparked protests in countries such as India, Indonesia and Nigeria – where, in 2002, the Miss World pageant was moved to London after local outrage led to more than 100 people getting killed in secular clashes.

In Myanmar, not everyone has welcomed the swimsuit rounds that have become an ubiquitous part of international pageants. For this reason, most national competitions do not allow contestants to wear bikinis on stage, said Hla Nu Tun, who also runs personality enhancement classes for women and aspiring beauty queens.

"Although people are becoming broader minded, some people still have a problem with the girls wearing bikinis in public," she said. "If we [allowed it], people wouldn't accept it."

Pageant hopeful May Zinmar Ko, 22, has competed in the Miss Myanmar International and Miss Globe Myanmar pageants and was recently chosen from over 400

'Myanmar culture is strict, and my father didn't like it that I might wear a bikini on stage.'

May Zinmar Ko
Pageant contestant

applicants to be one of 20 finalists for Miss Universe Myanmar 2014, which will be held at the National Theatre in Yangon on July 26. However, May admits that entering a beauty pageant for the first time wasn't an easy decision because of her family's views on her exposing her body in public.

"My father didn't like it," she said. "Myanmar culture is very strict and he didn't like it that I might wear a bikini on stage. I had to explain to him that we don't wear bikinis on stage in Myanmar because it's not allowed. I told him that the bikini round is to check the girl's fitness, not to persuade people to dress like that. Now, my father accepts it."

However, the pageants seem likely to impact the broader culture. Exposure

to international culture is challenging traditional ideas about how much skin it's acceptable for a woman to reveal, said May Sabe Phyu, director of the Gender Equality Network.

"As Myanmar joins international events, we must realise that we are stepping out from the confines of our culture as we currently know it and that, if we want to take part, there will be ways of doing things that we may or may not like," she said.

What is important is that both women and men have the choice about what they wear, she said.

"When men roll up their longyi's, take off their shirts and play chinlone, do they have women staring and calling out to them, making rude suggestions? No they don't, so neither should women attract bad behaviour from men if they wear a skirt or sleeveless top. Both men and women are entitled to the same respect."

Despite beauty pageants being branded as misogynist and outdated by critics in the west, in Myanmar pageants are increasingly perceived as a means for women to express themselves and promote women's rights. Miss Universe hopeful May Zinmar Ko, who has a degree in electronics and a post-graduate diploma in tourism management, believes that beauty pageants give Myanmar women an opportunity to promote their freedom and independence.

As "Miss" culture takes off, critics and supporters debate whether skin-revealing contests promote or hinder women's rights and independence

"In Myanmar culture, people think women should stay at home and do housework. Women can be educated, but after they get married their education is wasted because they stay at home," she said. "I don't accept it. If I am Miss Universe Myanmar, I want to show that women have their own minds and they can do anything they want. We don't have to be dependent on men."

National pageant director Hla Nu Tun, who has herself won several local beauty pageants, also believes that beauty queens can be role models for other women.

"Beauty queens like May Myat Noe show that anyone can make it if they have confidence and work hard," she said.

May Sabe Phyu is less convinced of the liberating effect of pageants in a country like Myanmar, where women are often marginalised.

"The negative thing is that people mix up these issues. They say 'See, we are promoting women's

Moe Set Wine struts her stuff at the Miss Universe Myanmar 2013 contest at the National Theatre in Yangon on October 3.
Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

rights. Women are able to show their bodies to the public. We have gender equality in Myanmar," she said. She believes this view is too simplistic.

"Women's rights go way beyond this one choice. It involves much more, including access to information and control," she said. "Women must also have the choice and control over how many children they want, who they marry, what profession or job they want to follow, as well as how they want to dress."

That may be. Yet with 20 contestants for Miss Universe Myanmar 2014 preparing their outfits for the final, applications already being submitted for Miss Myanmar International 2014 and Jue San Thar set to represent Myanmar at Miss Globe International in Turkey at the end of August, it seems that, whatever the public's opinion, the "Miss" craze is set to continue.

Raw energy, vivid colour enliven Soe Naing's latest paintings



Gallery-goers celebrate the opening of Soe Naing's exhibition at TS1 on July 12.
Photo: Supplied

FIONA MACGREGOR

THE energy and exuberance of Soe Naing's paintings lifts the spirits as delightfully as the festival dances they depict.

Thickly daubed oils in earthy russet and vivid jungle greens portray characters, human and animal, with simplicity of line yet surety of form that communicates a certain self-deprecating sense of humour.

In a country where so many artists have overcome torture, imprisonment and oppression for their artwork, there's an inevitable association between Myanmar art and darkness and pain.

But for Soe Naing, now in his early 50s, these works – created for his current untitled exhibition at TS1 – are not about political dialogue but more an expression of a raw, creative urge.

"I don't label myself as an artist, just

a normal man living with family and friends," said the teacher and son of a government official.

"When I was growing up I didn't want to work with paint. I just wanted to sketch – all the time – but I never thought I must be a painter."

Yet he has developed into an artist whose work is now in demand among international collectors.

"When I started as an artist, I started off with lines, then I developed step by step into painting," he said.

While viewers could be forgiven for imagining that his pictures of wild dancers and intrepid travellers in high grasses are inspired by some form of rural animistic rituals, the Yangon-born artist dismisses such romanticism with what could amount to urban cool, were he not so charmingly unassuming.

"I don't have to travel around. I see all these things happening around me in normal life and in my

neighbourhood," he said, describing his home in North Dagon.

He also discourages drawing a link between his art and his university studies in zoology.

"I just want to sketch the lines, but the lines [themselves] don't mean anything so I turn them into characters to describe the sketch," he said.

So at this time of transition for Myanmar and its creative culture, who does he turn to for inspiration?

Soe Naing says that while he counts numerous artists and poets among his friends he generally prefers to work alone.

"Usually I want to develop art for myself. I'm not very comfortable working with other artists. But I do have lots of artist friends!"

Soe Naing's exhibition runs until August 4 at TS1, between Lanthit Jetty and Kaing Dan No 1 Jetty, Oo-Pa-Sa Street, Seikkan.



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Living well in Myanmar

Why brain exercise may lead to a longer independent life

CHRISTOPH GELSDORF, MD

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DECLINING brain strength is a normal, inevitable part of ageing – at least to some degree. Just as organs such as the kidney and heart become weaker and go into “chronic failure”, so the brain is said to be failing permanently when irreversible cognitive decline sets in.

For other organs we have several lifestyle and pharmaceutical preventative interventions intended to stave off failure. What can we do to defend ourselves against brain failure?

In previous columns I’ve discussed how diet and exercise may decrease the likelihood of developing Alzheimer’s disease, in addition to all the other benefits of moving your body and eating right. As it turns out, exercising the brain – by making it think and learn – also defends against its decline.

Many of my older patients are attracted to the idea of including brain exercise in their daily routine with the hope of keeping the mind sharper for longer. It seems logical that challenging the brain regularly will make it healthier. The hope is that mental exercise will maintain powers of awareness and interpersonal communication, as well as of responsible decision-making and independent living. However the Western medical evidence in support of this hypothesis is sparse.

An interesting new study in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* attempts to find out whether cognitive training in healthy adults can result in long-term reduction in cognitive decline and daily function. Nearly 3000 adults older than 65 were randomly placed into four study groups: reasoning training, speed-of-processing training, memory training and no training. Each group received 10 one-hour practise and instruction sessions over the course of one-and-a-half months in the late 1990s.

Then, 10 years later, the participants were given written and verbal tests to assess their capacity in each area. They also filled out questionnaires on how well they were currently achieving activities of daily living such as meal preparation, housework, shopping, finances, hygiene, etc.

In reasoning training, the study subjects learned techniques to help them solve problems by looking for a serial pattern in written exercises. For example, they examined the pattern in a bus schedule. As compared with the group that received no training, the reasoning group showed improved cognitive ability immediately after the training and maintained a small improvement after 10 years. They also reported less difficulty with activities of daily living.

The speed-of-processing group looked at pictures and texts and was asked to mentally process pieces of information contained in each. The amount of time allotted was steadily decreased. After 10 years, this group maintained a moderate improvement in speed-of-processing over the no-training group, and they also reported less difficulty in daily living.

The memory training group focused on learning to better remember items and written text, for example, a shopping list. Unlike the other two groups, the memory group was unable to maintain any memory benefit over the no-training group after 10 years. They did, however, show the same protection against daily living difficulties as the other two groups.

The general conclusions of the study are intriguing. This is the first research showing that certain types of brain training can help people be more independent as they age over the long-term.

If this data is supported in future studies, it will change the way we counsel patients in their 50s and 60s. In addition to recommending diet, exercise and tests such as cholesterol and colonoscopy, we will prescribe brain-training exercise and activities – and presume that national health insurance will pay for it. For Myanmar and elsewhere, keeping people living independently has major potential to reduce public health costs.

Exactly what the most effective brain activities are has yet to be determined. Possibilities include games, tests and educational courses. In any case, no harm has ever come from my patients stimulating their minds, so encouraging cognitive training is just good medical practise.

Christoph Gelsdorf is an American Board of Family Medicine physician who sees patients in Yangon and California. He is an honorary member of the Myanmar Medical Association. Reader thoughts and questions are welcomed.

What's on

JULY 21 - 27

Got an event?
List it in What's On!
Email: whatsonmt@gmail.com

ART

July 15-August 4 Soe Naing's solo exhibition. TS1, between Lanthit Jetty and Kaing Dan No 1 Jetty, Oo-Pa-Sa Street, Seikkan

July 21-26 “Scion” group show, Lokanat Galleries, 1st Floor, 62 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada

July 28-August 2 “Beyond 50 Years of Mahar Hmaing”, Lokanat Galleries, 1st Floor, 62 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada

FILM

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

Dawn of the Planet of the Apes. Directed by Matt Reeves. A sci-fi battle between apes and humans.

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
Oculus. Directed by Mike Flanagan.

American psychological horror film.
Junction Square Cineplex, Kamaryut

In the Dark. Directed by Yeo Joon Han. A Chinese horror film that conveys messages on social issues.
Z-storm. Directed by David Lam. A crime thriller about the biggest financial fraud attempted in Hong Kong.

Mingalar San Pya Cineplex, Phone

Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Kyauktada
Dawn of the Planet of the Apes.
Oculus.

MUSIC

July 1-30 Wednesday Hospitality Night with the Columbian Sinaloa Band and DJ Blues. Park Royal Hotel, 33 Alan Pya Road, Dagon 6pm-1am
July 25 Live music. 50th Street Bar, 9-13 50th Street, Botahtaung 3-5pm

MISC

July 22 Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada, 7pm-late
July 24 Tipsy Travel Talk Thursdays.

Discuss alternative travel in Myanmar over drinks. Off the Beaten Track Café, Kandawgyi Oo Yin Kabar, Kandawgyi Park, Mingalar Taung Nyunt

July 27 Drawing club. Pansodan Scene, 144 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 10-11:30am

The Global Gossip



Actress Cameron Diaz attends the *Sex Tape* screening at Regal Union Square in New York City on July 14. Photo: Andrew H Walker/AFP

LOS ANGELES

Goddess of Thunder? Sex change for Thor
He's famed as the God of Thunder but Thor is changing sex in an “all-new era” for the comic book icon, Marvel Comics said July 15.

The company will introduce the female Thor in October, it announced.

It was not immediately clear if the sex change will be taken over in the movie version of Thor, a huge box office hit in recent years.

“The inscription on Thor’s hammer reads ‘Whosoever holds this hammer, if HE be worthy, shall possess the power of Thor’,” said Marvel editor Wil Moss. “Well it’s time to update that inscription.”

He said that the new Thor carries on Marvel’s tradition of “strong female characters like Captain Marvel, Storm, Black Widow and more”.

“This is not She-Thor. This is not Lady Thor. This is not Thorita. This is THOR. This is the THOR of the Marvel Universe,” added series writer Jason Aaron.

The change of gender is not unprecedented for Marvel, which was bought by entertainment giant The Walt Disney Company in 2009. Captain Marvel used to be male, but is now female, a spokesperson said.

MOSCOW

Depardieu to make ‘organic Russian vodka’
Gerard Depardieu, Russia’s most famous new celebrity citizen, wants to open a distillery there to make organic vodka.

“Vodka is a party drink,” said the flamboyant French-born actor, who already owns several vineyards.

“This will be my first venture into strong alcohol, and I hope it works,” he told the Itar-Tass news agency on July 14, two weeks after revealing that he wanted to open his own restaurant – “Gérard” – in Moscow.

Depardieu is perhaps better known for his thirst for spirits than his expertise in making them.

He missed the premiere of his latest film, *Welcome To New York*, in which he plays disgraced former IMF chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn, at the Edinburgh Film Festival last month after spending an evening sampling local whiskies and “attacking a haggis” on Scotland’s Isle of Skye.

Depardieu, 65, also wants to open another restaurant serving Franco-Russian cuisine, as well as an arts centre, in Saransk, the capital of Mordovia, where he is now officially domiciled.



Bollywood actress Ankita Shorey models a creation during Indian International Jewellery Week 2014 in Mumbai on July 14. Photo: AFP

HONG KONG

Book fair packs political punch

The Hong Kong Book Fair opened its doors July 16 with hundreds of thousands expected to attend the seven-day show of everything from cute cartoons to cutting-edge political satire.

Some book stalls reflected the heightened tensions in the semi-autonomous Chinese city, where fears are growing over what is seen as increasing interference by Beijing and where pressure for democratic elections is growing.

At the Subculture Ltd stand, a poster with the words “Love Hong Kong, not the [Communist] Party” promoted a new book from the local publisher, renowned for its political titles.

“We don’t publish books to confront. We are just trying to make fun and tease CY Leung [Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying],” said the head of Subculture, Jimmy Pang Chi-ming.

“Nowadays, very few people speak out for Hong Kong. Officials are not representing Hong Kongers but following orders.”

The fair also attracts readers from mainland China seeking books banned at home.



Drake hosts the 2014 ESPYS at Nokia Theatre LA Live in Los Angeles on July 16. Photo: Kevin Winter/AFP

LOS ANGELES

Ron Howard to make new Beatles film

Oscar-winning director Ron Howard will make a new authorised documentary about the Beatles’ touring years, with the backing of the Fab Four’s music label Apple Corps, both parties said July 16.

The two surviving Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr are giving their “full cooperation” to the movie, as are John Lennon and George Harrison’s widows, Yoko Ono and Olivia Harrison, the filmmakers said.

Apple Corps has hired producers from Imagine Entertainment and White Horse Pictures to make the film, which will tell the story from the Cavern Club through the Ed Sullivan show to full-blown Beatlemania.

“I am honoured to be working with Apple and the White Horse team on this astounding story of these four young men who stormed the world in 1964,” Howard said.

“Their impact on popular culture and the human experience cannot be exaggerated,” said Howard, who is one of Hollywood’s most sought-after directors.



Actress Audrey Tautou attends the Mood Indigo New York premiere at Tribeca Grand Hotel in New York City on July 16. Photo: Dimitrios Kambouris/AFP

Go veggie with Shan basics

food

PUMPKIN RICE

Serves 4

- 1 cup rice
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1½ cups vegetable stock
- A pinch of salt
- 2 cloves garlic
- ½ cup pumpkin sauce (see last week's recipe)



PHYO ARBIDANS
phyo.arbidans@gmail.com

Wash the rice, drain and set aside. Crush the garlic and sauté in a pan. Add the pumpkin sauce and mix well with the oil. Bring the rice into the pan and sauté for 2 minutes. Make sure the rice is coated with pumpkin. Transfer all to a rice cooker and

add the vegetable stock. Cook. Stir gently when the rice is ready. Note: You don't have to grill the pumpkin to make the sauce. Steamed or roasted pumpkin will work also. Make it to your taste.



Photos: Phyo

NOW that Buddhist Lent has begun, some people will commit to vegetarianism for the next three months. Some will go vegetarian just for the week of their birthday. I'm not a vegetarian, but I love veggies and will eat them any time. But a simple vegetable dish is a challenge to make. To that end, this week I'm sharing some recipes that rely on the essential ingredients of Shan cuisine. Shan pickled soybeans (*pae poke*) are available as a dried thin sheet or thick bar. You need to roast or grill them until the aroma comes out, then crush or

grind them. Alternatively, the thin sheets can be fried. In addition to *pae poke*, chive roots (*ju myit*) and tomatoes are essential in Shan cooking, especially in rural areas. It's all simple, fresh and yummy.

SOUR AND SPICY CHIVE ROOT CURRY

Serves 6

- 2 bunches chives
- 1 small onion
- 3 ripe tomatoes
- 1 tsp ground chilli
- 2 tsp Shan pickled soybeans
- Salt
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil

Wash and trim the chive roots. Cut the green parts from the white. Cut the white roots into three pieces. Dice the onions finely. Cube the tomatoes. Crush the garlic. Heat the oil in a sauce pan over medium heat. Sauté the onions. When they are golden, add the chilli and half of the chive roots. Fry 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes and fry well. When they are soft, add the soybeans and cook 1 minute. Add 2 cups of water and bring to a boil, then turn heat down and simmer about 30 minutes. Cover with a lid. When the liquid is nearly absorbed and the oil rises to the top, remove from the heat. Salt to taste. Serve with steamed rice.

Delectable drinks and bites tempt extra orders

FIONA MACGREGOR

THE “shaved octopus” made us giggle. We didn't know what to expect from this dish, as the menu at Gekko is a little light on description: a hipster mollusk robbed of its beard for our delectation perhaps? In the upstairs section of the eclectically decorated bar, as polite wait staff placed napkins on our laps in a cute nod to formality, hirsute sea monsters writhed in our imaginations. When the elegant platter of translucent slices appeared, it was, thankfully, somewhat tamer than we'd envisaged. And what the dish (US\$7) lacked in drama, it made up for in

delicacy. Badly prepared octopus will leave a diner grinding flesh so chewy the creature might as well be still alive and fighting back. Served in this manner, with piquant seafood sauce, it was anything but tough, one of the favourites of the evening. Despite billing itself as a “ramen restaurant, bar and barbecue”, Gekko is less focused on noodles and more on a Yakitori-inspired selection of skewered bites. There are chicken, pork, seafood and vegetable “stix” – a description my dining companions felt conjured up a family diner rather than an up-market bar. In any case, the chilli-garlic squid with lime stix (\$7) were grilled to melt-in-the-mouth perfection. The Hichibachi salmon with risotto (\$12) is described on the menu as a “medium dish” and, indeed, came with a fish portion of reasonable size, and well sourced if it's firm texture and depth of flavour was anything to go by. The risotto serving, however, was stingy and the only disappointment of the evening. Diners looking for a more substantial meal would be better ordering bibimbap – an all-in-one bowl of rice, meat and egg. It's one of the best value dishes on the menu, served up in hearty portions (\$10). Abstemious is not a word that would apply to our cocktail sampling that evening. The Japanese-inspired drink menu, created by Singapore mixologists, is long and tempting. Among the highlights – for those who

Restaurant Review



like their drinks with kick – is the Hanami Old Fashioned (\$7), made with Japanese whisky, hanami tea syrup and bitters. Those with a mellower palate might prefer a Yellow Bird (\$8) made with barley shochu, umeshu, yuzu and shiso, fresh lime, organic agave nectar and Maldon salt. When the bill came we got something of a shock. Upon analysis, the issue was not that any individual dish or drink is very expensive. It was the quantity we'd managed to consume. The light portions encourage the ordering of several dishes per person (at least for the hungry) while the quality of the cocktails make them all too alluring. Which is, except for the purse strings, rather a good complaint.



Photos: Zarni Phyo

Gekko

535 Merchant Street, Kyauktada
Open 9am-1am
Phone 0-138 6986

Restaurant Rating
★★★★★

Food:	7
Beverage:	9.5
Service:	8
Value for Money:	7
X-factor:	8



Daw Khin Saw Oo



Ma Htet Htet Kyaw



Ko Ye' Linn Htut



Thomas



Green Growth platform launch

The British Ambassador's residence welcomed guests on July 12 for speeches announcing the launch of the Myanmar Platform for Dialogue on Green Growth. Ambassador Andrew Patrick and "Green Lotus" chair Jean-Marc Brûlé gave opening remarks, which were followed by presentations about investing in sustainable cities, renewable energy, climate change mitigation and more.



Jean-Marc Brûlé



Dave and Tony



Designer Linn Latt Pyo



Daw Khin San Oo and Daw Khin San Yin

Thazin Nwel cotton shop opening

A new silk and cotton shop named Thazin Nwel opened near U Bein Bridge in Mandalay on July 9. About 30 people turned out, including designers and shoppers.

Photos: Kyay Mohn Win



The DVB team



Tser Htoo



Indie-rock night at Union

Union Bar hosted a loud night of indie rock on July 12, featuring a performance by local heroes Side Effect.



Katrin and Sarah



Reina, Sai and Yin Mon



Flo and Ye Ngwe Soe





Photos:
ima/Emmanuel Maillard
imaphotodesign@gmail.com



Dorothee and Damien



Clara and Alex



Raouf and Charles



May and Nicolas



Ma Hnin Nu Htwe



Chaw Su and Ju Juu



Ma Hnin Pwint Khine

Lady Bug nail art anniversary

Lady Bug nail art shop celebrated its one-year anniversary on July 11 at its location between 77th and 78th streets in Mandalay. Owner Ma Hnin Nu Htwe announced that she will be expanding her business to include foot reflexology. She also offered special customer discounts.

Photos: Kyay Mohn Win



Kaythari Kyaw



Chu Chu



Main Main



The Loft Hotel team

Bastille Day celebration

French wine, cheese and live music delighted invited guests to Bastille Day celebrations at Inya Lake Hotel on July 14. The French Embassy hosted the event, which was sponsored by the company LeGrand. Ambassador Theirry Mathou attended and gave a speech to mark the occasion.



Laura, Clement, Léa, Aurélie and Olivier



ကိုနိုဒင်

ချောင်းဆိုးကင်းစင် ပြုံးပျော်ရွှင်

ချောင်းဆိုးခြင်းအမျိုးမျိုးတို့ကို လျင်မြန်စွာ သက်သာပျောက်ကင်းစေပါသည်။

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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	2,4,5,7	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	
6T 401	1,3	7:00	8:25	
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	2,4,6	11:00	14:00	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	13:10	
W9 151/YJ 7151	1	11:00	14:45	
W9 153/YJ 7153	2	11:00	12:55	
W9 153/YJ 7153	7	11:30	12:55	
YH 731	Daily	14:30	16:40	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	16:35	
6T 501	2,4,7	14:45	16:45	
6T 501	3,5	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	
W9 7143/YJ 143	2	8:40	10:05	
6T 401	3	8:45	11:35	
6T 402	2,4,5,7	8:45	10:45	
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	
6T 402	1	10:10	12:10	
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 732	Daily	16:40	18:45
YJ 235	1	16:45	18:10
6T 502	6	16:50	18:55
K7 225/7Y 222	Daily	16:50	19:00
6T 502	2,4,7	17:05	19:10
YH 738	3,5,7	17:10	18:35
8M 6604	2,4,7	17:20	18:30
W9 7211/YJ 211	3,4,5,6	17:40	19:45
YH 730	2,4,6	17:45	19:10
6T 502	3,5	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	2,4,5,7	6:20	7:40	
6T 411	6	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	
6T 401	1	7:00	9:10	
6T 401	3	7:00	9:15	
6T 501	6	10:30	11:50	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	17:25	
YH 731	1,3,5,6,7	14:30	17:25	
6T 501	2,4,7	14:45	17:35	
6T 501	3,5	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	2,4,5,7	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 412	6	8:40	10:00	
6T 401	1	9:25	12:10	
6T 402	3	9:30	11:35	
YH 732	Daily	17:25	18:45	
6T 502	6	17:35	18:55	
6T 502	2,4,7	17:50	19:10	
6T 502	3,5	18:35	19:55	
W9 211/YJ 7211	4,5,6	18:25	19:45	
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	2,4,5,7	6:20	9:20	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	9:30	
6T 401	1	7:00	10:45	
6T 401	3	7:00	10:10	
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	
6T 501	6	10:30	12:45	
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	2,4,7	14:45	15:55	
6T 501	3,5	15:30	16:40	

HEHO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 918	Daily	9:15	10:25	
6T 402	2,4,5,7	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	
6T 402	3	10:25	11:35	
W9 201	1,2,3,5,6	10:25	11:35	
7Y 771	7	10:50	15:20	
6T 402	1	11:00	12:10	
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	
6T 501	6	15:55	18:55	
YJ 235	1	16:00	18:10	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	16:00	19:00	
6T 501	2,4,7	16:10	19:10	
YH 738	3,5,7	16:25	18:35	
6T 501	3,5	16:55	19:55	

YANGON TO SITTWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 611	2,3,4,7	11:15	12:40	
6T 605	5	11:15	13:15	
W9 7311/YJ 311	4	11:30	13:20	
6T 607	1	12:30	13:55	
K7 422	Daily	13:30	15:25	

SITTWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 612	2,3,4,7	13:00	14:25	
6T 606	5	13:35	15:00	
W9 7311/YJ 311	4	13:35	15:00	
6T 608	1	14:15	16:15	
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	

MYEIK TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 634	3,4,5,7	11:25	13:25	
K7 320	Daily	11:30	13:35	

YANGON TO THANDWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 141	Daily	6:15	9:35	
6T 605	5	11:15	12:10	
6T 607	1	12:30	15:05	
K7 422	Daily	13:30	14:25	

THANDWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 605	5	12:25	15:00	
6T 608	1	15:20	16:15	
K7 422	Daily	14:40	17:00	

YANGON TO DAWEI				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 633	3,4,5,7	7:00	8:25	

DAWEI TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 634	3,4,5,7	12:15	13:25	

YANGON TO LASHIO				
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	

LASHIO 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 730	2,4,6	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	

|--|

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

NAY PYI TAW 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

KUALA LUMPUR TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AK 504	Daily	6:55	8:00
MH 740	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 9505	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 502	1,2,3,5,6	12:50	13:50
8M 9507	Daily	13:30	14:40
MH 742	Daily	13:30	14:40
AK 502	2,4,6	17:50	19:00

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CZ 3055	3,6	8:40	10:25
CZ 3055	1,5	14:40	16:30
8M 712	2,4,7	14:15	15:50

TAIPEI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7915	1,2,3,5,6	7:00	9:55

International Airlines

Air Asia (FD) Tel: 251 885, 251 886.
Air Bagan Ltd.(W9) Tel : 513322, 513422, 504888, Fax : 515102
Air China (CA) Tel : 666112, 655882.
Air India Tel : 253597~98, 254758. Fax: 248175
Bangkok Airways (PG) Tel: 255122, 255 265, Fax: 255119
Condor (DE) Tel: + 95 1 -370836 up to 39 (ext : 810)
Dragonair (KA) Tel: 95-1-255320, 255321, Fax : 255329
Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5) Tel: 95 9 400446999, 95 9 400447999, Fax: 01 860 4051
Malaysia Airlines (MH) Tel : 387648, 241007 ext : 120, 121, 122 Fax : 241124
Myanmar Airways International(8M) Tel : 255260, Fax: 255305
Silk Air(MI) Tel: 255 287~9, Fax: 255 290
Thai Airways (TG) Tel : 255491~6, Fax : 255223
Vietnam Airlines (VN) Fax : 255086. Tel 255066/ 255088/ 255068.
Qatar Airways (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 NAY PYI TAW			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:35	19:35

International

FD & AK = Air Asia
TG = Thai Airways
8M = Myanmar Airways International
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines
PG = Bangkok Airways
MI = Silk Air
VN = Vietnam Airline
MH = Malaysia Airlines
CZ = China Southern
CI = China Airlines
CA = Air China
KA = Dragonair
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines
IC = Indian Airlines Limited
W9 = Air Bagan
3K = Jet Star
AI = Air India
QR = Qatar Airways
KE = Korea Airlines
NH = All Nippon Airways
SQ = Singapore Airways
DE = Condor Airlines
MU=China Eastern Airlines
BR = Eva Airlines
DD = Nok Airline
AI = Air India
BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines
TR = Tiger Airline
<div>Subject to change without notice</div>
<div><div><div>Day</div><div>1 = Monday</div><div>2 = Tuesday</div><div>3 = Wednesday</div></div><div><div>4 = Thursday</div><div>5 = Friday</div><div>6 = Saturday</div><div>7 = Sunday</div></div></div>

‘Ghostly’ cave in Kayah State added to pilgrim tours

A tomb of possibly ancient origin discovered near Loikaw adds intrigue to a three-day heritage circuit

EI EI THU
91.eieithu@gmail.com

KAYAH State’s attractions are numerous. The beautiful scenery, including idyllic lakes, natural caves and sites like the Nwge Taung Dam (Silver Dam) and Taung Kwe Zedi (Stupa of the Cleft Mountain), appeals to tourists and local pilgrims alike.

Now a new attraction is added to the list. Earlier this year, locals chanced upon a cave in the east of the state, 16km (10 miles) from Loikaw. They named it simply the Kyap Cave (Ghostly Cave) – it turns out to be a graveyard subdivided into chambers housing a total of 15 coffins.

No research has been completed yet to confirm from what period the tomb dates and who is buried there. According to U Myo, owner of Thukamein, a domestic pilgrimage outfit, they might be ancient Myanmar people. Each coffin is 9 feet long and can be seen only with a torch because no electric lights have been installed.

“The gate is about 80 feet across and the height of the cave is 30 or 35 feet, and it’s 100 feet above sea level,” he said.

Whether the site will see many visitors, however, is uncertain. Locals tend not to be interested in heritage, only in seeing new landscapes, U Myo said. He finds that foreign tourists tend to show much more eagerness to learn the history of sites like this. The result is that much Myanmar heritage tends not to be well preserved, he said.

Thukamein is now taking visitors to the site. So far, it’s attracted 200 people on five buses from Yangon for a three-night, four-day journey. The round trip is 1448km (900 miles), including stops at Shwe Kyaung monastery in Loikaw, Ngwe Taung

Dam, Taung Kwe Zedi and Su Taung Pye Zedi.

It also goes to Thandaung Lay and Thandaung Gyi in northern Kayin State. Thandaung Lay is famous for the Pathi Chaung waterfall, which is 21km (13 miles) from Taungoo. Thadaung Gyi is an old British hill station, 4800 feet above sea level, with a prominent church.

“Before going to the church I went two times for our trip to see that they really can serve a meal for 200 people,” U Myo said.

No research has confirmed from what period the tomb dates ... Each coffin is 9 feet long and can be seen with a torch.

At the town, the tour group learned about local ways of life, taking a tour led by Father U Ohn Phae.

“All of the people

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

TOO SOON? By Bill Bobb

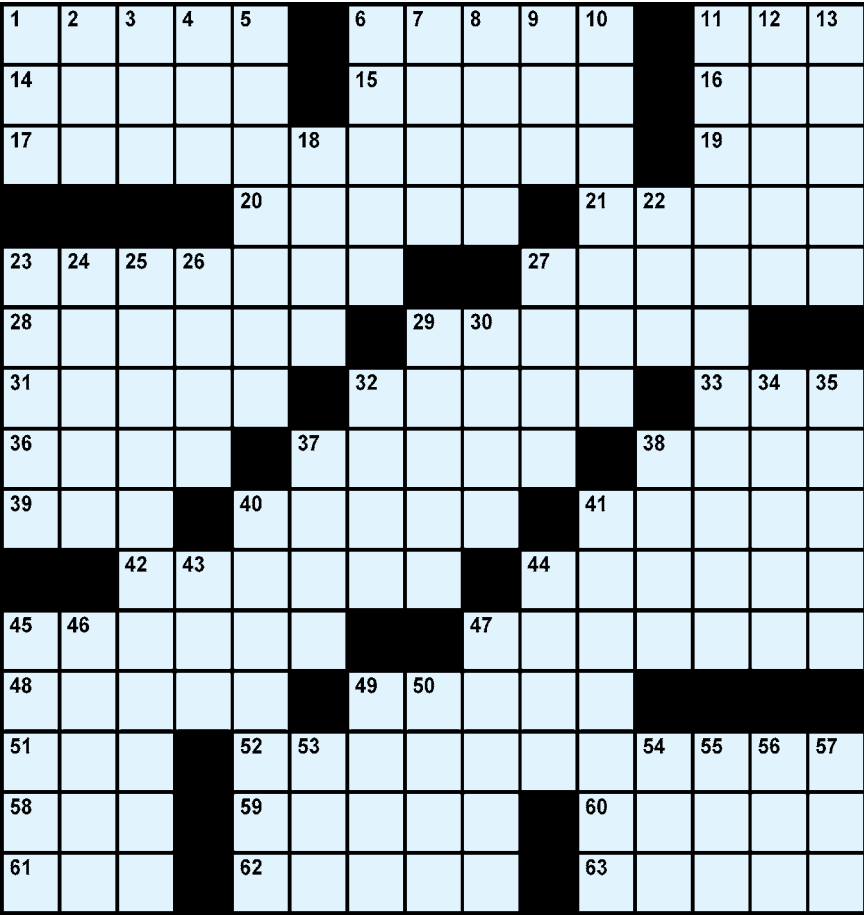
ACROSS

- 1 Healthy fare
- 6 1950s first lady
- 11 Campsite bed
- 14 Beyond portly
- 15 It has a floor but no ceiling
- 16 Underground discovery
- 17 Lightly dismissing
- 19 "___ to a Nightingale"
- 20 Bedsheet fabric
- 21 Mature, as fruit
- 23 Radio antennas
- 27 Bistro
- 28 Sings like Sinatra
- 29 Passion
- 31 Witch
- 32 Woodworking tool
- 33 Part of MOMA
- 36 Radiation measures
- 37 Calf-roping loop
- 38 Small sewing bag
- 39 They might be classified
- 40 Quarterback great Bradshaw
- 41 Say cheese
- 42 Discoverer's word
- 44 Fictional Twist
- 45 Full-length, for one
- 47 Impolite viewers
- 48 Blacksmith's instrument
- 49 "The first ___ the deepest"
- 51 Go down a slippery slope
- 52 Under-the-cushions find
- 58 Hr. fraction
- 59 Rear-___ (road mishap)
- 60 USPS alternative
- 61 Roses-red link
- 62 Desire greatly
- 63 Dull and dirty

DOWN

- 1 Soak up, as gravy
- 2 Blood-type group

- 3 August birth sign
- 4 Barbecue leftover
- 5 Get off at the terminal
- 6 Planetary orbiters
- 7 Cause for a massage
- 8 Lo ___ (Chinese noodles)
- 9 Fleming or Holm
- 10 Etch
- 11 Willing to help
- 12 "Two eggs over easy," e.g.
- 13 Microscopic
- 18 Olive and vegetable
- 22 "What was ___ think?"
- 23 Capital of Ghana
- 24 Behaved humanly?
- 25 Hotel convenience
- 26 Atoms with charges
- 27 Osprey's cousin
- 29 Fauna's partner
- 30 Unchallenging
- 32 It may be sweet and sour
- 34 Use it for good measure
- 35 Arena levels
- 37 ___-do-well (good-for-nothing)
- 38 Islamic ruler
- 40 One-time streetcar
- 41 Clearance-priced
- 43 Alleged spoon-bender Geller
- 44 Connected to the ear
- 45 Italy's marble center
- 46 Contract signer
- 47 Rudder's locale
- 49 Ending passage in music
- 50 Advertiser's target
- 53 Only companion
- 54 "What ___, your maid?"
- 55 Bobbsey twin
- 56 Band's booking
- 57 England's Isle of ___



DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



PEANUTS

BY CHARLES SCHULZ



CALVIN AND HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON



SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



7/24

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

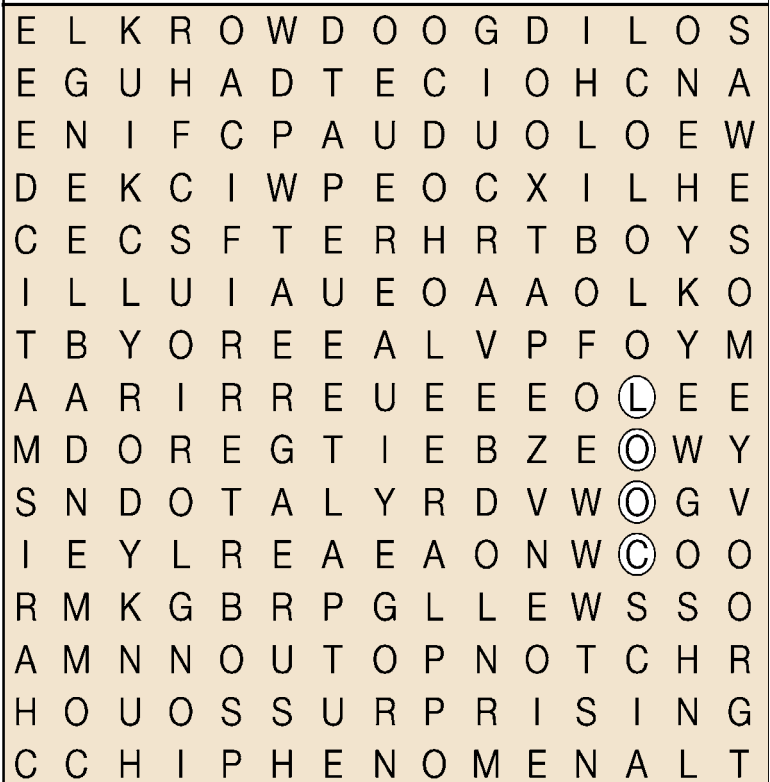
WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THAT'S SUPER-DUPER!

Solution: 9 letters



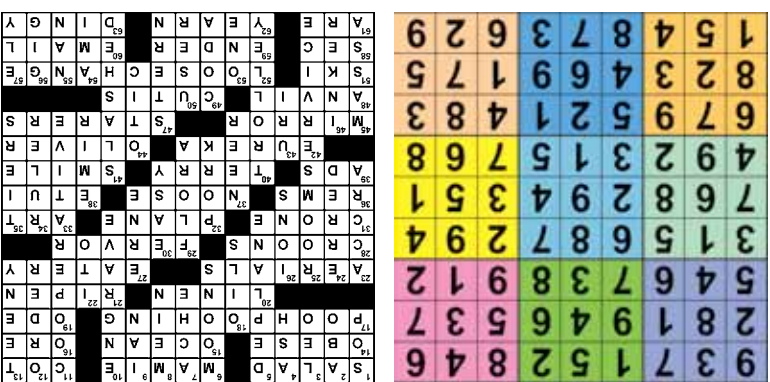
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Approve, Awesome, Beautiful, Charismatic, Cheer, Choice, Commendable, Congratulations, Cool, Far Out, Fine, Gadzooks, Glorious, Golly, Good Work, Gosh, Great, Groovy, Head, Hip, Hooray, Huge, Hunkey Dory, Loud, Lovely, Meow, Phenomenal, Solid, Superb, Surprising, Swell, Terrific, Top-notch, Unbelievable, Whoopee, Wicked, Wow

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



QUICK GUIDE

FAX : 951-254158
EMAIL : CLASSIFIED.MCM@GMAIL.COM
WWW.MMTIMES.COM



The Essentials

EMBASSIES
Australia 88, Strand Road, Yangon. Tel : 251810, 251797, 251798.

Bangladesh 11-B, Than Lwin Road, Yangon. Tel: 515275, 526144, email: bdootygn@mptmail.net.mm

Brazil 56, Pyay Road, 6th mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 507225, 507251. email: Administ.yangon@itamaraty.gov.br.

Brunei 17, Kanbawza Avenue, Golden Velly (1), Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 566985, 503978. email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm

Cambodia 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 549609, 540964. email: RECYANGON@mptmail.net.mm

Candian Embassy 9th Floor, Centerpoint Towers, 65 Sule Pagoda Road, Yangon, Tel : 01-384805 , Fax :01-384806, Email : yngon@international.gc.ca

China 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 221280, 221281.

Danmark, No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 01 – 9669520 - 17.

Egypt 81, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 222886, 222887, Egyptembassy86@gmail.com

France 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 212178, 212520, email: ambaf rance.rangoun@diplomatie.fr

Germany 9, Bogoyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 548951, 548952, email: info@rangun.diplo.de

India 545-547, Merchant St, Yangon. Tel: 391219, 388412, email:indiaembassy@mptmail.net.mm

Indonesia 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Rd, Yangon. Tel: 254465, 254469, email: kukygn@indonesia.com.mm

Israel 15, Khabaung Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il

Italy 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. Tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang.mail@esteri.it

Japan 100, Natmauk Rd, Yangon. Tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643

Kuwait 62-B, Shwe Taung Kyar St, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-230-9542, 230-9543. Fax : 01-230-5836.

Lao A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 222482, Fax: 227446, email: Laoembcabid@mptmail.net.mm

Malaysia 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 220248, 220249, email: mwkyangon@mptmail.net.mm

Nepal 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. Tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb@mptmail.net.mm

Norway, No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 01 – 9669520 - 17 Fax – 01- 9669516

New Zealand No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2306046-9 Fax : 01-2305805

Netherlands Diplomatic Mission No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2305805

North Korea 77C, Shin Saw Pu Rd, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 512642, 510205

Pakistan A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange)

Philippines 50, Sayasan Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 558149-151, Email: p.e.yangon@gmail.com

Russian 38, Sagawa Rd, Yangon. Tel: 241955, 254161,

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia No.287/289, U Wisara Rd, Sanchaung. Tel : 01-536153, 516952.

Serbia No. 114-A, Inya Rd, P.O.Box No. 943, Yangon. Tel: 515282, 515283, email: serbemb@yangon.net.mm

Singapore 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 559001, email: singemb_ygn@sgmfa.gov.sg

South Korea 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr

Sri Lanka 34 Taw Win Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222812,

Switzerland No 11, Kabaung Lane, 5 ½ mile, Pyay Rd, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 534754, 507089.

Thailand 94 Pyay Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 226721, 226728, 226824

Turkish Embassy 19AB, Kan Yeik Thar St, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 662992, Fax : 661365

United Kingdom 80 Strand Rd, Yangon. Tel: 370867, 380322, 371852, 371853, 256438,

United States of America 110, University Avenue, Kamayut Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 536509, 535756, Fax: 650306

Vietnam Bldg-72, Thanlwin Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 511305

UNITED NATIONS ILO Liaison 1-A, Kanbae (Thitsar Rd), Yankin Tsp, Tel : 01-566538, 566539

IOM 318 (A) Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel – 01-210588, 09 73236679, 0973236680, Email- iomyangon@iom.int

UNAIDS 137/1, Thaw Wun Rd, Kamayut Tsp. Tel : 534498, 504832

UNDCP 11-A, Malikha St, Mayangone tsp. Tel: 666903, 664539.

UNDP 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739.

UNFPA 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029.

UNHCR 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. Tel: 524022, 524024.

UNIAP Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. Tel: 254852, 254853.

UNIC 6, Natmauk St., Bahan, Tel: 22910-19

UNICEF 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, Kyauktada. Tel: 375527-32, unicef.yangon@unicef.org.

UNODC 11-A, Malikha Rd., Ward 7, Mayangone. tel: 01-9666903, 9660556, 9660538, 9660398. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org

UNOPS 120/0, Pyi Thu Lane, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp. Tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279.

UNRC 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE Tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator),

WFP 5 Kan Baw Za St, Shwe Taung Kyar, (Golden Valley), Bahan Tsp. Tel : 2305971-6

WHO No. 2, Pyay Rd, 7 Mile, Mayangone Tsp, Tel : 650405-6, 650416, 654386-90.

ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Tsp. Tel: 225258.

FAO Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673.

General Listing

ACCOMMODATION-HOTELS



Asia Plaza Hotel YANGON

No. 277, Bogoyoke Aung San Road, Corner of 38th Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : (951) 391070, 391071. Reservation@391070 (Ext) 1910, 106. Fax : (951) 391375. Email : hotelasiaplaza@gmail.com

Avenue 64 Hotel

No. 64 (G), Kyitewine Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 09-8631392, 01 656913-9



BEST WESTERN Green Hill Hotel

No. 12, Pho Sein Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon Tel : (95-1) 209299, 209300, 209343 Fax : (95-1) 209344 bestwestern.com/ greenhillhotelyangon.com

Chatrium Hotel

40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe. Tel: 544500. fax: 544400.



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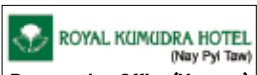


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Tel : (95)-(067)-422042, 422050, 422060
Fax : (95)-(067)-422041
Email: zabuthirihotel@gmail.com
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Employment

UN Positions

THE UNITED Nations World Food Programme is seeking (1) Field Monitor Assistant SC-3 (Maungdaw) 4 posts. For more information, please visit to <http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals>. Please Email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org <<mailto:wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org>> CCB 30 July 2014.

THE UNITED NATIONS World Food Programme, is seeking (1) **Logistics Assistant** (Tally) SC-2 Lashio (2)**Senior Programme Assistant** (School Feeding) GS-6 Yangon (Re-advertise) For more information, please visit to <http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals>. Please Email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org <<mailto:wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org>> CCB 24 July 2014.

Embassy

EMBASSY of the Republic of Korea is seeking (1)**Admin Assistant** - M/F 1 Post : Fluent in both written and spoken English, self-motivator, computer literate, good knowledge in Korean language is preferable. University degree holder, Minimum 2 years of experience in Administration. (2) **Economic Researcher** - M/F 1 Post : Fluent in English 4 skills, self-motivator, computer literate. University degree holder, having knowledge in collecting & updating information especially in Economic & Energy field. Send updated CV to 97, University Avenue, Bahan. Ph: 01-527142~4 or through the mail koreaembassymm@gmail.com.

Ingo Positions

THE CENTER for Vocational Training is seeking (1) **Myanmarsar & General Education Teacher** 1 post : Any graduate, prefer Myanmarsar & Economics related degree. Good communication & presentation skills. Used to work a computer (basic computer knowledge). Good command in English. (2)**Teacher** for Hotel & Gastronomy Profession 1 post : Must be certificate holder of Room Divisions. 5 years experience & 2 years Teaching experience: Interested in wide spectre of the profession related aspect in general. Used to work with a computer (Microsoft Office). Good command in English. Submit an application letter with CV, recent passport photo & Copy of relevance documents to the reception counter or by email : 3rd Flr, MRCS Bldg 42, Strand Rd, Botahatung, Yangon. Email: hrcvtmyanmar@gmail.com, cvt.2001.2009@gmail.com. Closing date: 30th July 2014.

F O N D A Z I O N E Terre des hommes Italia (TDH Italia) is seeking **Monitoring & Evaluation Officer** in Magway & Mandalay Regions: University degree in related field, preferably in agriculture. He/she has proven experience in rural development and agricultural project and 3 years with INGOs and related in the same position or equivalent. Command of English. Pls submit application

with completed information about current job & expected salary incl. CV, photo references by email or by postal service to TDH Italia Main Office: 48, Shwe Hnin Thar Rd, 11 Ward, Bahan, Yangon. Email: hr.tdhit.mya@gmail.com. Closing date: 25th July 2014.

THE International Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking (1)**Hygiene Promotion Officer** in Loikaw, Kayah State: Tertiary qualification in public health, community health or environmental health. 2 years experience in appropriate community health programs. Familiarity with hygiene promotion methodologies including PHAST (Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation). Fluency in English. Closing date : 23 July (2)**Field Coordinator** in Loikaw, Kayah State: Masters Degree in BusinessAdministration, Int'l Development, Community Development, Development studies, Economic planning, Rural development or related fields. 5 years of senior management experience and/or community development. Fluent in English & report writing skills. Computer skills in Microsoft Office. (3) **Driver** - 1 post in Yangon: Basic High School Education. Valid driving license; 2 years as a professional driver. No road safety-related fines or convictions. Skills in minor vehicle repair. Competent in English. Closing date for 2 & 3 : 23th July 2014. Pls submit a Cover letter & CV to the HR Department by email at: MaiMyaMyintZu.Tin@rescue.org or by delivery to the IRC office: Int'l Rescue Committee (IRC) : 33/A, Natmauk Lane Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Quarter, Bahan, Yangon

SAVE THE CHILDREN, is seeking (1). **HR Coordinator**: Provide support in recruitment & selection process, staff orientation and induction, staff contracts, comply with policies and regulations that are in conformity with Save the Children HR strategies, monitor compliance on HR policy & practices & provide technical guidance, coordinate with Regional & Head quarters, practical trainings on HR and represent in NGO HR meetings & network with local and international organizations. (2). **HR Manager** - Work in collaboration with all respective programmes in strategic resource planning and forecasting, manage local recruitment process and consultant contracts and ensure compliance of policies, staff grievance and disciplinary procedures, prepare reports, write job descriptions & evaluate job grade, update HR policy manual, monitor compliance on policies & procedures, delegate tasks and activities, represent in meetings & provide support in building technical capacities. Detailed job description will be available at the office or at the SCI web site <http://myanmar.savethechildren.net/jobs>: 3 years experience preferably for HR Coordinator & 5 years for HR Manager; Proven previous experience in HR Management in a large organisation (more than 500 staff); Excellent knowledge of the local labour laws and regulation, local taxation, social security laws & regulations, Fluency in English & computer literate; Commitment to

& understanding of Save the Children's aims, values & principles. Pls submit a Cover letter & CV to the HR Department, Wizaya Plaza, 226 U Wisara Rd, Bahan or through email: recruitment.myanmar@savethechildren.org Closing date : 24 July 2014.

INT'L Rescue Committee - Myanmar is seeking (1) **Field Coordinator** in Loikaw, Kayah State: Masters Degree in BusinessAdministration, Int'l Development, Community Development, Development studies, Economic planning, Rural development or related fields. 5 years of senior management experience and/or community development. Fluent in English & report writing skills. Computer skills in Microsoft Office. (2) **Driver** - 1 post in Yangon: Basic High School Education. Valid driving license; 2 years 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 & CV to the HR Department, Applications will be accepted by email at: MaiMyaMyintZu.Tin@rescue.org or by delivery to the IRC office: Int'l Rescue Committee (IRC) : 33/A, Natmauk Lane Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Quarter, Bahan, Yangon. Closing date : 23, July 2014.

Local Positions

THE WELL established Sales & Distribution Company is seeking (1). **Sales Promoter** - 5 posts: Preferable female, Age 20 ~ 25 years, Any University graduate, 1 ~ 2 years experiences especially in FMCG, Good communication English skills (2). **Driver** - 3 posts in Yangon : Basic High school education, Age above 30, Valid driving license with 2 ~ 3 years experiences work as a professional driver, Thorough knowledge of road rules & regulations, Able to travel, Salary offered will be in line with experience. Please submit a detailed CV via email : fmcgmyanmar@gmail.com and Please mention "position title" in subject if you apply OR call 09- 4211-25584, 09-2542-30 851

GREATER MAN Int'l Services Co., Ltd is seeking **Service Center Manager** - M 1 post: Handling customer inquiry and supporting necessary documents. University graduated with management studies (or) Engineering Degree more preferred. 3 years experience in automobile & machinery. Age above 30. Good in English. Can use Microsoft Office & Email & Internet. (2) **HR Manager** - M/F - 1 post : University Graduated with management studies more

preferable. Age 27-35. 3 years experience. Able to handle for HRM & HRD. Establish and administer recruitment & selection program to ensure adequate manpower supply to meet current and future requirement in line with business expansion. Actively involves in talent recruitment, interview arrangement resume screening and candidate section process Develop & maintain employee database, monthly report & documentation systems of human resource. Demonstrated attention to detail, ability to follow procedures, meet deadlines and work independently and cooperatively with team members is required. Can travel locally if work is demanding (3) **Admin Manager** - M/F - 1 post : University graduated with management studies (or) Administration more preferable. Age 27~ 35. 3 years experience. Demonstrated attention to detail, ability to follow procedures, meet deadlines & work independently & cooperatively with team members is required. Can travel locally if work is demanding. Good in English. Can use Microsoft Office & Email & Internet. (4) **Service Center Supervisor** - M 1 post : Any graduate, Handling customer inquiry and supporting necessary documents. University Graduated with management studies (or) Engineering Degree more preferred. 1 year experience in automobile and machinery. Age above 25 years old. Good in English language. Good hospitality, attitude and willing to work as team. Can use Microsoft Office (Excel, Word) and E-mail & Internet. (5) **Admin Officer** - M/F - 2 posts : Any graduate, 2 year experience in customer service field would be preferable. Age between 25 & 30 years. Good in English. Handling work process and Control office documents. Smart and Hard working Good hospitality, attitude and willing to work as team. Can use Microsoft Office (Excel, Word) and E-mail & Internet. (6) **HR Officer** - M/F 2 posts : Any graduate. 2 years experience. Age between 25 ~ 30. Good in English. Can use Microsoft Office & Email & Internet. (7) **Service Engineer** - M 5 posts: Bachelor Degree in Mechanical Engineering 3 years of hands-on experience in trouble-shooting, repairing and servicing of Automobile. Technical knowledge in Euro 4 diesel engine & electrical system, Computer literate. (8) **Spare Part Engineer** - M/F 2 Posts : Degree in Mechanical Engineering or other Engineering discipline. 2 years experience in inventory planning and control. Handle purchasing orders (local & overseas) analyze

and evaluate supplier, Inventory Management and movement from Regional spare parts of Automobile. Should have basic knowledge of logistic and ware house management. Proficient in Microsoft Office and strong computer skills. (9) **Admin/HR Assistant** - M/F 5 posts : Age 20 ~ 25 years, Any graduate, 2 years experience. Able to rate with government office. Good communication skills in English. Excellent computer literate. (10) **Security** - M 5 posts : Age 20 ~ 40, 10 standard. Able to work both day and night. Pls submit CV, a recent photo with necessary documents to 4, Dagon St, Aungmyingalar highway bus station. Ph: 09-863-1155. Closing date: 31th, July, 2014

GOLDEN HILL Tower is seeking (1) **Demi Chef** - M 1 post : Must be expert in cooking especially Asian Food. Any graduate, 3 years experience in the similar field. (2) **Cook** - M 1 post : Must be expert in cooking. Matriculation passed, 2 years experience. (3) **Waiter** - M 1 post : Proficient in English, Computer knowledge. Any graduate, 1 year experience. Please submit an application to HR Dept: 24-26, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Bahan, Tel: 558 558, Closing date: 23rd July 2014.

PRO 1 ONE STOP Home Centre is seeking (1) **Project Sales & Marketing Manager** (2) **Project Marketing Asst; Manager** (3) **Project Sales & Marketing Asst;** (4) **Supervisor** (5) **Asst; Manager** (6) **Asst; Supervisor** (7) **Purchasing & Account Assistant** (8) **Buyer / Purchaser** (9) **Surveyor** (10) **Ware House Asst;** (or) **Store Asst;** (11) **Stock Control** (For Inventory) (12) **Driver** (13) **General Worker**. Ph: 640469 email : pro1hrho@gmail.com

WEARE urgently looking for (1). **Skilled Photo-Shop & Graphics Designer** - F/M (2). **Architect** uses Skillfully 3D-Max and Auto-Cad - F/M - Compulsory 4-Skills English. Age 25 to 35 Years. University Graduate with General Computer Literate. Email: patrickrobert09@gmail.com

THE HOTEL @Tharabar Gate, Old Bagan has the following opening: (1) Front Office Manger - 1 post : Spoken and written English, good customer handling skills, computer knowledge, service minded are essential for this position. (2) **Pastry Chef** - 1 Post : Good knowledge in bread baking, flair for outstanding desserts, leadership and English communication skills important for this position. (3) Sous Chef / Chef de Cuisine - 1 Post Leadership, innovation, modern presentations, Western-, Asian and Myanmar Cuisine, Guest Relation, high

hygiene standards are vital for this position. 3 years experiences in a similar position. Salary accordingly to experiences. All Position based in Bagan. Please send your CV with 1 recent photos, labour registration card, relevant certificates and testimonies to Room 2H, No 22/24 Sa Mon St, Natwarat Condo, Dagon Tsp, Yangon or mail to: gm@tharabargate.com or bodsec@hoteltharabarbagan.com.mm Closing date: 30 July 2014. Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL is seeking (1). **Senior Staff Nurse** - M/F 10 Posts : B.N.Sc / Diploma in Nursing (2). **Jr. staff Nurse** -M/F 10 Posts : Diploma in Nursing (3). **Nurse Aid** - M/F 10 posts : Must have nursing certificate, 1 year experience, Proficient in Computer. (4). **General Worker** - M/F 10 posts (5). **Driver** - M 5 posts : 5 years experience. (6). **Radiographer** (Imaging) - M/F 10posts : B.Med. Tech, 2 years experice, Proficient in Computer & English 4 sills. 7. **Counter Cashier** - F 10 posts : Any Graduate, Computer skills, 1 year experience. Pls submit CV, Photo with necessary documents to 68, Tawwin St, 9 Miles, Mayangone. Ph: 01-9666141, 9666128. Email: hr@witoriyahospital.com

AVER ASIA (Myanmar) Ltd is seeking **Technician & Chauffeur/Personal Driver**. Able to communicate in English preferred. Training will be provided for technician. Interested candidates can apply through yangon@averasia.com. Office: Unit 514, Hledan Center, Corner of Pyay Rd & Hledan Rd, Kamayut. Tel: 01-2305629, 09-31501567.

KELVIN CHIA Yangon Ltd is seeking **Senior Administrative Executive**: Must have good written & spoken communication skills in English. Some HR background & experience preferred. Interested applicants are invited to send their full resume together with a recent photograph to chw@kcyangon.com

THE Hotel @Tharabar Gate, Old Bagan is seeking: (1) **Front Office Manager** - 1 post : Spoken & written English, Good customer handling skills. Computer knowledge, service minded are essential. (2) **Pastry Chef** - 1 post : Good knowledge in bread baking, flair for outstanding desserts. English communication skills important for this position. (3) **Sous Chef/ Chef de Cuisine** - 1 post : Leadership, innovation, modern presentations, Western, Asian & Myanmar Cuisine, Guest Relation, high

hygiene standards are vital for this position. 3 years experiences in a similar position. Salary accordingly to experiences. All positions based in Bagan. Pls send CV with 1 recent photo, labour registration card, relevant certificates & testimonies to Rm 2H, No 22/24, Sa Mon St, Natwarat Condo, Dagon Tsp, Yangon or mail to: gm@tharabargate.com or bodsec@hoteltharabarbagan.com.mm. Closing date : 25, July 2014.

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

DVB Multimedia Group Co. Ltd is seeking **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 dvv.no/about for complete job posting. Submit CV and cover letter to admin@dvv.no.

Vacancy Announcement

Yangon International School (YIS) is looking for candidates for the following positions.

Teacher Assistant: (3 posts)

Requirements : A bachelor degree holder, good command of both English and Myanmar languages and ability to work with expat teachers.

Applicants are requested to send a CV and a brief cover letter within a week from the date of this announcement via email to twphyo@yismyanmar.com or to the following address : YIS, 117, Thumingalar Lannmagyi, Thumingalar Housing, Thingangyun Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Phone : 01 578171, 0973044271.

Vacancy Announcement

Established investment company working on projects in Myanmar with foreign investors.

Available local positions

- Investor/ Government Relations
- Investment Professional / Researcher
- Senior Accountant
- Secretary

Appropriate degree; 2-3 years experience; Strong interpersonal skills; Fluent in Myanmar, English, Microsoft office; Independent and able to travel locally and abroad. Please send CV, cover letter and expected salary to hr.investco@gmail.com.

HOYLAKE



Thailand's Kiradech Aphibarnrat tees off at Royal Liverpool Golf Course in Hoylake on July 15. Photo: AFP

Kiradech looks to Buddhism for inspiration at Open

ASIAN Tour number one Kiradech Aphibarnrat says a week spent in a Thai Buddhist temple in May has improved his golf game and may serve him well on his second trip to the Open Championship.

The big-hitting Thai has endured a run of lacklustre form following a magical 2013 campaign where he won once and enjoyed eight top-10 finishes to become the region's number one player.

But his new source of inspiration may serve him in good stead for a potential run at this week's Open which teed off at Hoylake on July 17.

Kiradech spent some time at the Buddhist temple to learn to become a monk which he said taught him to become more patient with himself.

"From the beginning of the year until now, I felt like I haven't been mentally strong and focused. I want to learn to be more patient with

myself and enjoy my golf and hopefully my time in the temple will help me appreciate what I do for a living," said Kiradech, who holds two wins on the Asian Tour.

"In the temple grounds, I did a lot of meditation and prayer every day. We also walked without shoes with the other monks for several kilometres daily to collect food which was another experience.

"I had to work and clean the temple grounds every day," he said.

The 24-year-old will also be lifted by the presence of his mother Supunnikar who he says has helped him regain self-belief.

"I've got my mum here [at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club]. When I was a junior golfer, I've always travelled around the world with her and we are very close.

"My parents know I've lost some confidence but we're sticking together and they are trying to push me up," said Kiradech, who has finished

in the top ten just once this season.

Kiradech will make his second appearance at The Open after a disappointing debut last year.

He opened with a solid 72 at Muirfield but ballooned to a disastrous 85 after starting his second round with a triple bogey which shook him up.

"The Open was my first major last year and I made a lot of mistakes. It was a good experience and I believe I will not be so nervous [this year] as before," said Kiradech.

"The main thing this week is the wind and bunkers but I do feel comfortable out here. I'm hitting it sharper than previously and I've got my confidence back. I just have to find one good week and hopefully everything will come back.

"I think the second half of the year should be a better one. The way I'm striking the ball in the last couple of weeks, I'm happy and I have a lot of confidence with my swing."

- AFP

MINNEAPOLIS

Jeter, Trout shine in baseball all-star game

DEREK Jeter went two-for-two, helping the American League grab home field advantage in the World Series with a 5-3 win over the National League in the MLB all-star game on July 15.

Jeter belted a double on the second pitch from NL starter Adam Wainwright at Minneapolis' Target Field, as the New York Yankees shortstop made his final all-star game appearance.

Jeter also scored a run for the American League which won the mid-summer classic for the second-straight year. The victory earns whatever American League team reaches the World Series home field advantage in the MLB championship.

Miguel Cabrera blasted a two-run homer in the first inning, while all-star game MVP Mike Trout doubled, tripled, drove in two runs and scored another for the winners.

Jeter is playing in the final season of his brilliant 20-year career. Even

though his numbers this season didn't warrant a selection, MLB fans chose him to appear in his 14th all-star game based on his legacy and reputation as a team-first player.

He walked off the field in the top of the fourth inning Tuesday to a

standing ovation as the song "New York, New York" echoed through the Target Field stadium.

Jeter now has the second highest batting average in the all-star game at .481. Former Detroit Tiger Charlie Gehringer ranks first with .500.

But Jeter's hits didn't come without some controversy. Wainwright told reporters after his brief appearance on the mound that he didn't want to spoil Jeter's moment by overshadowing the future hall-of-famer.

"I was going to give him a couple of pipe shots," Wainwright said. "I didn't know he was going to hit a double, though."

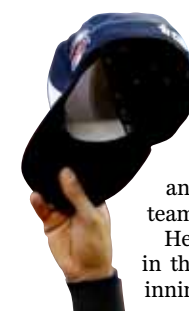
Boston Red Sox manager John Farrell named Jeter, who played in his first all-star game in 1998, as his lead-off hitter for the AL.

Jeter's celebration on July 15 was similar to the way his former Yankee teammate Mariano Rivera was honoured during last year's 3-0 AL win.

Jonathan Lucroy hit a pair of RBI doubles to pace the NL, which went one-for-10 with runners in scoring position. The NL has now lost back-to-back all-star games on the heels of a three-game win streak.

This is the third time that the all-star game was held in Minneapolis and the first since the NL rolled to a 6-1 win in 1985 at the Metrodome.

Next year's classic will be at Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati, Ohio. - AFP



Derek Jeter waves to fans at the MLB all-star game on July 15. Photo: AFP

SYDNEY

Thorpe's gay revelations earn praise, support

SWIMMING giant Ian Thorpe received support and glowing praise on July 14 for revealing he is gay in a move advocates believe will help remove the stigma of homophobia in sport.

The five-time Olympic champion made the admission in an interview with British presenter Michael Parkinson aired by Australia's Channel Ten on July 13.

Thorpe's bravery in openly discussing his sexuality was a major talking point with fellow sportspeople, celebrities and commentators speaking up for the global icon.

The New South Wales Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby said his coming out would have a positive impact, particularly on young people.

"It's a measure of how far we've come that Ian Thorpe is able to come out and I think it's a measure of how far we have to go that it's a news story," the group's Justin Koonin told reporters.

Olympic gold medallist and gay

Australian diver Matthew Mitcham said the revelations were an important development to break down the stereotypes about gay athletes.

"I think it's wonderful that he feels like he's in a place now where he can talk about it," Mitcham told the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Mitcham said sponsorship commitments would have weighed heavily on any athlete deciding whether to go public with their sexuality as the stereotypes and the stigma are well known.

"That's why we need high-profile gay athletes, to prove the stereotype wrong. Thorpe is about as high-profile as it gets."

The swimming world embraced the 31-year-old for the courage to reveal his deep secret.

"You've always been a great champion, now even more! I'm proud of you @IanThorpe," tweeted Dutch Olympic champion sprinter Pieter van den Hoogenband, while Australian Olympic gold medallist Steph-

anie Rice also praised him.

"I'm sure it must have been incredibly hard for @IanThorpe to come out, but I hope this brings him peace and that everyone respects his choice," she tweeted.

'Part of me didn't know if Australia wanted its champion to be gay.'

Ian Thorpe
Olympic gold medallist

Olympic and world champion Grant Hackett, who grew up with Thorpe during their peak swimming years, said he hoped the decision to speak publicly would help his friend move forward.

"Obviously we went through our careers together and we raced a lot but at the end of the day who really cares? It's 2014, I don't think anybody's really too concerned about his sexual orientation," Hackett said.

Swimming Australia president and yachting great John Bertrand congratulated Thorpe for making a stand.

"The fact that one of our greatest Olympic athletes has been so honest sets a precedent in this country for more open dialogue," he said in a statement.

"It was great to see Ian looking so happy and healthy during the interview, after what has clearly been a difficult year for him with injury and illness."

Athletes from other sports also weighed in, with Australian cricketer Brett Lee saying, "It doesn't matter as long as you're happy in your own skin. Well done mate."

Even singing superstar Ricky Martin added his congratulations, tweeting, "Congrats @IanThorpe! Brave

man! Happy for you! Millions appreciate what you've done! Proud of you!"

Canadian swimmer Mark Tewksbury, who came out as gay six years after he won the gold medal and broke the 100-metre backstroke world record at the 1992 Olympics, was another to salute the Australian.

"It was always the question of who was going to be the really big star [to be openly gay]," he told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "Ian is an icon, Ian is the star."

In the interview, Thorpe said he had "wanted to come out" for some time, but didn't feel as if he could make the admission.

"Part of me didn't know if Australia wanted its champion to be gay, but I am telling not only Australia but the world that I am gay and I hope it makes this easier for others now," he said.

Thorpe also described during the interview his years of battling depression and said that he had at times contemplated suicide. - AFP

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SPORT 62

MANCHESTER

Van Gaal braced for United balancing act

LOUIS van Gaal claims balancing Manchester United's commercial ambitions with their desire for success on the field will be one of his biggest challenges at Old Trafford.

Van Gaal was officially unveiled as United's new manager at Old Trafford on July 17. Speaking at his first press conference, the Dutchman emphasised that he understood the extra responsibilities that come with managing a club of United's global stature.

United will shortly undertake a pre-season tour of the United States and, without European football next season, the Premier League giants may be tempted to play exhibition friendly matches during the quiet periods of the season to generate extra revenue.

"This club is also guided in the commercial way and we have to fulfill that also," Van Gaal said.

"That is not always possible, to fulfill the commercial expectations or the football expectations. That is my biggest challenge after two weeks.

"Maybe it will change after the US tour. I don't know, but I don't think so. This is the biggest club because it is known worldwide.

"It's a club that is well known all over the world. When I was in China, or now in Brazil, people are talking about Manchester United."

"There is a lot of expectation, but also a great challenge because of that and therefore I have chosen this club."

Van Gaal confirmed he will not hesitate to speak to former United manager Alex Ferguson, with whom he already has a solid relationship and a great admiration, about the club.

"Sir Alex has a strong philosophy. He was always confirming that



Manchester United's newly appointed Dutch manager Louis van Gaal addresses a press conference at Old Trafford on July 17. Photo: AFP

because he won a lot of titles with Manchester United," Van Gaal said.

"I think he has a good philosophy. I hope I can do that and start with philosophy."

Van Gaal insisted that his initial remit at Old Trafford will be to make

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Louis van Gaal
Manchester United manager

United's first team successful rather than a broader mandate to change the overall setup of the club, including the youth sides.

"The main project is the first team," he said. "The first team is more short term than the youth education which is long term.

"The first two years we have to separate them because now I need all my knowledge to transfer my philosophy into this selection.

"You have to give me time to do that, not only you, but the chief executive and the owners."

Van Gaal indicated he would find room in his backroom staff for some of United's former players from the "class of 1992" including Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and Phil Neville.

The former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss, who led the Netherlands to a third-place finish at the World Cup in Brazil, has not yet made a decision about whether compatriot Robin van Persie or fellow striker Wayne Rooney will be appointed as the club's new captain. - AFP

National futsal team returns to action

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THE national futsal team will travel this week to China to take part in a four-nation tournament as it prepares for the AFF Futsal Championships in September.

Myanmar will join Vietnam, Iran and hosts China at the Hangzhou International Futsal Tournament that runs from July 22 to 24.

Myanmar will take on China on July 22, before squaring off against Iran and Vietnam. Myanmar is hoping that the tournament will serve as a productive tune-up for the upcoming AFF Futsal Championships to be held in Malaysia.

"The Myanmar national futsal team has not played in an international competition since last year's Southeast Asian Games. This competition is the first international competition for the team in 2014. We hope this four-na-

tions tournament will prepare us for the 2014 AFF Futsal Championships and our players will gain international experience from this matches," said U Kyi Min Thein, team manager of the Myanmar side.

The team is now under the guidance of Iranian coach Khodarahml Aseid. The team heading to China will feature eight players from the SEA Games squad and six new additions.

Following the tournament, the team plans to return to Thailand for joint training.

"After this four-nation competition the Myanmar team will partake in joint training in Thailand prior to the AFF Futsal Championship. Last year we did joint training in Thailand for the 27th SEA Games, which improved the talent of our team. So we will go to Thailand for the AFF tournament and we will play five international friendly matches during the training," U Kyi Min Thein said.



IN PICTURES

Grip and rip: John Ranagan of the Rochester Rattlers shots and scores during a Major League Lacrosse game against the Chesapeake Bayhawks in Annapolis, Maryland on July 17. Photo: AFP

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