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ANALYSIS

Three-way mobile war on horizon



JEREMY MULLINS

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THE telcos need to attract customers like U Nay Linn Zin if they want to succeed.

A frequent airtime user, he is a successful businessman and not afraid to pay for quality service. He is also sick of hauling up to six different handsets along with him on business trips in the hope that at least one will find a strong connection.

Inside Myanmar, he has only ever had one choice for mobile service: state-owned Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT). But as of August 2, U Nay Linn Zin - for the first time - has another option. Ooredoo is launching services after an exhaustive six-month licensing process that began in January 2013 and was followed by licence negotiations that were finalised in January 2014. Finally, there was an intense tower build in the first half of the year that is continuing in some areas.

However, U Nay Linn Zin says he is not ready to make the switch from MPT just yet. He realises there will likely be benefits to changing to Ooredoo, but is also keen to check out Telenor's performance - he uses the Norwegian firm's DTAC service in Thailand on his business trips. He would also prefer to spend his money on a Myanmar company, such as MPT, provided it can offer reasonable connections.

Analysts agree that Ooredoo's launch is just the start of the competition.

Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) legal firm senior consultant Mark Robinson said despite Ooredoo getting out of the block first there is plenty of space for competitors to catch up. There may be some advantage to Ooredoo launching a month or two ahead of Telenor, and also ahead of MPT's anticipated re-launch, as customers are often reluctant to switch providers too frequently - but the market is still wide open.

MORE ON NEWS 4



PAGES

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PHOTO: AUNG HTAY HLAING

A woman holds an Ooredoo SIM card at KKA mobile phone shop on the corner of Anawrahta Road and Mahabandoola Garden Street in downtown Yangon on July 31. Ooredoo shipped SIM cards to stores in advance of its August 2 launch, prompting a buying frenzy at some stores in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw. The K1500 cover price includes access to a kick-off promotion that gives users free calls, text messages and internet use through to August 14. Rival firm Telenor is expected to launch its network in September, senior officials say.

Ooredoo kicks off new era for telecoms sector

CEO Ross Cormack speaks to *The Myanmar Times* exclusively about the company's network rollout and strategy for seeing off competition from Telenor and MPT. **INTERVIEW 4-5**

**Dunlopillo**
moments

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THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

Market forces

YCDC is said to be planning a crackdown on street vendors from October, with existing markets to become the only permissible place for such commerce, according to reports in local media last week. While this is apparently the sort of announcement YCDC is wont to make from time to time with little follow-through, it does seem a) misguided and b) like

potentially devastating news for a hell of a lot of people – people whose first choice at a careers fair probably wouldn't have been 'cross-legged water chestnut hawker', but that's just how it worked out. The move is reportedly intended to curb traffic jams and free up room on the crowded pavements, which often only allow one person to pass at a time. Now, I'm no urban planner, but I can't help

but wonder if the reason sidewalks have largely become a single-file affair is something to do with the fact that roads have been widened in order to provide parking, which in turn allows more cars. Just a thought.

Operation Protective Edge

Now, in case you missed it, we here at *The Myanmar Times* received a letter (and a hefty 40-page Operation Protective Edge information pack) from the embassy the other week, decrying our apparently biased coverage of Gaza. This was in response to the AFP wire story that was selected for use in our world section.

Taking aim at a local publication such as ours seems, to me at least, like a bizarre use of time and resources. I'd have to check the minutes, but I daresay the proposal that we establish a bureau in Ramallah was shot down before we could even carry out a cost-benefit analysis.

The Israeli embassy in Myanmar has continued with its campaign to ensure the masses understand the true nature of the situation unfolding in Gaza, taking a proactive approach and sharing Myanmar translations about Hamas atrocities via its Facebook page. They've opted for an unusually high level of interaction (compared with the other Israeli diplomatic missions of the ASEAN region, at least), encouraging fans to post a photo of their passport with a sign saying "I stand with Israel" as a show of online solidarity. Obviously the Gaza conflict is immensely complicated and I wouldn't venture to voice an opinion on any of it. I will, however, say I was heartened to read 'Owl hurt by Hamas fire recovering', which was the actual headline of an article in the *Times of Israel* last week.

Anyway, someone at the embassy's been hard at work writing back to individual comments so – if you have any questions, I suggest you direct them that way.

In brief:

Reggae night at 50th Street "officially the whitest thing I've ever seen," says attendee

Man repeatedly namedrops prominent rebel figures in anecdotes that only serve to demonstrate that they probably hate him

Woman bemoans lack of organic vegetables in Yangon, should get some real problems



Shar Htut Eindra from *NOW!* Magazine.
Photo: Pyay Han (ColorMax)

Style Statement
NOW!

Once was Burma...
Archives provided by Pansodan Gallery



Oh Wei magazine, date unknown. Cover features images of refugees from east Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1948

Man justifies not giving money to a begging street child by making vague reference to an article he read once about how they're categorically "all employed by criminal syndicates"

Missed connections:

I met you in the immigration queue and I could have sworn when I asked what sort of visa you were on you winked when you said multiple entry. If you remember me, I was the 30-something consultant in chinos. I hope that narrows it down.

Yangon Living 101:

Use a toothbrush container. No matter how nice your house is, cockroaches almost certainly crawl on it at night.

Next week:

Release of Ooredoo SIMs drives prices of black market national registration cards

Street vendor nonplussed at reports of YCDC crackdown, has "plenty of other options"

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Can U Ye Htut tame the media industry?

YE MON
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THE appointment of U Ye Htut as the new minister for information garnered a mixed reaction from Myanmar journalists last week, with some saying that his long experience in the sector will help heal the acrimony of recent months.

President U Thein Sein nominated Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Htut to the post on July 30, a day after former minister U Aung Kyi resigned. His appointment was confirmed by parliament on August 1.

“I think he is better disposed toward the media than U Aung Kyi because he has had a long relationship with the journalists,” said U Than Htay, a joint secretary at the Myanmar Journalist Network.

His appointment comes at a critical time for the ministry and the sector, with two recently enacted media laws yet to come into effect and a number of journalists in jail or facing legal action.

Press Council member U Thiha Sav, who is also an editorial director at *The Myanmar Times*, said U Ye Htut will focus on enacting new broadcasting and library laws and the by-law for the News Media Law.

However, he said U Ye Htut has a mixed reputation in the sector. While he is an important conduit for government news and opinion, which has been helpful for reporters, he also regularly criticises Myanmar journalists for their perceived lack of ethics.

A prolific social media user, U Ye Htut has been nicknamed the Minister for Facebook. After rising up through the military, he was transferred to the Ministry of Information in 2005 and played an important role in relaxing pre-publication censorship. He declined to comment on his impending appointment when contacted by *The Myanmar Times* last week.

Not all are enthusiastic about his appointment. U Ye Htut is seen as a major proponent of the public service media bill, which will prop up failing state-run newspapers with government support. The law has been criticised by the press council because, the council argues, it will undermine private sector media.

U Zaw Thet Htway, a leading member of Myanmar Journalist Union, said he did not think that U Ye Htut's appointment would bring any improvement. “I don't think his appointment is a step forward for the media,” he said.



Former minister for Health Dr Pe Thet Khin (left) and former Minister for Information U Aung Kyi. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

‘Third wave’ reforms leaves two ministers floundering

Minister for Health Dr Pe Thet Khin and Minister for Information U Aung Kyi were replaced for failing to stick with the president's much-promoted “third wave” of reforms, which is focused on corruption and red tape

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THE decision to change ministers in two key portfolios last week was taken because they had failed to live up to President U Thein Sein's ambitious plan for a “third wave” of reforms, which seeks to tackle corruption and improve the public service, sources said last week.

The President's Office announced on July 29 that Minister for Information U Aung Kyi and Minister for Health U Pe Thet Khin had been allowed to resign “of their own volition”. However, sources said that they had been removed from the cabinet.

The following day, the president nominated Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Htut to take over from U Aung Kyi and Deputy Minister for Health U Than Aung to replace Dr Pe Thet Khin. He also appointed Major General Tin Aung Chit from the Commander-in-Chief's Office as deputy minister for border affairs to fill the vacancy left by U Maung Maung Ohn, who was appointed chief minister of Rakhine State in late June.

U Thein Sein has repeatedly warned in his public addresses that he would not hesitate to remove officials who fail to support his reform agenda. During the regular reshuffles that have marked his tenure, the

‘The president thinks that some changes are needed in the government to achieve better outcomes’

U Ye Htut,
Minister for information

president has often mentioned that he has not made enough progress on building good governance and clean government and hinted at the corruption that still pervades his cabinet.

But presidential spokesperson – and new minister for information

– U Ye Htut insisted that the pair had not been removed because of corruption.

“The president is accelerating the third wave of reforms and some goals are still yet to be accomplished. The two ministers, U Pe Thet Khin and U Aung Kyi, realised that they have problems and difficulties taking part in the third wave of the reform process and completing those goals,” he told *The Myanmar Times*.

“The president acknowledges and respects everything they have accomplished ... [but] the president thinks that some changes are needed in the government to achieve better outcomes so he accepted their letters of resignation,” he said.

While the removal of U Aung Kyi came as a surprise, U Pe Thet Khin had been under pressure to leave for some time.

Earlier this year the president attached U Pe Thet Khin to the President's Office, with Vice President Sai Mauk Kham taking on most of the ministerial duties, a source close to the President's Office confirmed. Despite this, the president had refused to U Pe Thet Khin from the government altogether.

“I was informed that [U Pe Thet Khin] would be removed one year ago because of management problems in the ministry,” said U Myint Oo, a senior member of Myanmar Medical Association.

“When I met him at a meeting last month, it seemed he did not have a minister's decision-making power. He had to report to parliamentary committee secretaries U Mya Oo and U Maung Maung Wint before he did anything.”

He said the minister's management skills were not significantly different than those of other ministers.

“I think he was removed because he could not build good relations with other people of authority.”

U Myo Zaw Thant, a personal assistant to U Than Aung, said he was confident his boss could do a good job. “The [tasks of a minister] are the normal things for my boss,” he said.

The reshuffle comes after President U Thein Sein fired former Minister for Religious Affairs U San Sint on June 19. U San Sint was later arrested and charged with misusing state funds. – *Additional reporting by Lun Min Mang*



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CONTINUED FROM NEWS 1

Three-way mobile war on horizon

"By the end of the year or early next year we'll see three players in the market," he said.

Mr Robinson said developments at MPT are particularly worthy of attention. The firm signed a deal with Japan's KDDI and Sumitomo in July to overhaul its services, and MPT could emerge as a strong competitor to Telenor and Ooredoo.

"We have to see how quickly they can get operating," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised to see them get off the ground soon."

Although management of split private-public companies can be difficult, MPT has certain innate advantages. It will likely have easier access to government land to build towers and also has an existing network and customer base. Still, its success is not guaranteed.

"MPT is not like incumbents in other markets that are huge monopolies," said Mr Robinson.

One issue that has followed Ooredoo is anti-Muslim sentiment that has even prompted calls for a boycott among some Buddhists because of the firm's Qatari roots. Company officials have said they are aware of the issue but are concentrating on the job of providing telecommunications services, adding mistrust will dissipate as people see the advantages the company brings. HSF associate Rebecca Cochrane said the sentiment is a "manageable issue", and pointed to Ooredoo's extensive marketing campaign as part of its efforts to reach out.

Certainly the initial flood of messages on social media - particularly from Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw, where SIMs went on sale quite openly for days ahead of the launch - indicate the boycott calls are having little effect. Instead, the overriding sentiment seems to be one of excitement.

"There's been a lot of fanfare," said Mr Robinson of Ooredoo's launch.

Yet its rival Telenor is not idle, and it plans to launch in September.

Telenor CEO Petter Furberg told *The Myanmar Times* last week that while he does not usually comment directly on competitors, he views mobile competition as healthy because consumers ultimately benefit.

"We are confident that Telenor will become the most affordable operator in the market," he said. Mr Furberg added that because his company is using both 3G and 2G networks, all GSM phones will work on its network.

In other countries, Telenor has pursued a middle-market approach appropriate for the country, said

Mr Robinson. While the service provider has made much of its attempts to cast a wide net in Myanmar, he said there may be room for potential positioning below Telenor.

Yatanarpon Teleport is supposed to be the fourth operator in Myanmar. While it too might secure a foreign partner or otherwise prove to be a serious competitor, it is currently the quietest of the four.

There may also be room for services similar to those offered by mobile providers that use new technologies, such as WiMax or 4G-type, Mr Robinson added.

But regardless of who pulls ahead in the race, Myanmar is likely to benefit. Frost and Sullivan Asia Pacific telecom industry principal Naveen Mishra said mobile penetration is likely to boom from its present 10 to 15 percent, with a phone going from a status symbol to an everyday commodity in perhaps three or four years.

'MPT is not like incumbents in other markets that are huge monopolies.'

Mark Robinson
Senior consultant,
Herbert Smith Freehills

"When there were no competitors to MPT, there were no reasons for it to be very active," he said. "With the new licences [being awarded], the market is going to get very significant growth."

The anticipated growth offers huge potential to other businesses, he added.

"Myanmar offers a very large bouquet of opportunities for pretty much everyone in the telecoms ecosystem," he said, adding this includes everyone from handset makers to tower builders.

Yet for all the excitement and various teashop predictions about the industry's future, it is much too early to pick a winner.

Mr Mishra said that all three providers - MPT, Ooredoo and Telenor - have a good chance of ultimately leading the market.

And attracting customers like U Nay Linn Zin is at the heart of the race.

- Additional reporting Zaw Htiike



Workers attach an Ooredoo sign to the front of a mobile phone store in downtown Yangon on July 31. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

Six months, 1000 staff,

Ooredoo Myanmar CEO Ross Cormack speaks about the challenges

INTERVIEW

MOBILE users can now receive calls from phone numbers starting with 997 - the first three digits of an Ooredoo number - after the firm launched its network on August 2. Yet the road to the launch has not always been easy for Ooredoo, which has had to manage a massive infrastructure rollout, connection agreements with rivals and even a boycott call from extremist groups. Ooredoo Myanmar chief executive officer Ross Cormack sat down with *The Myanmar Times*' Jeremy Mullins and Aung Shin ahead of the launch to discuss what Ooredoo has done so far and its plans for the future.

Firstly, congratulations on getting this far. If you were to give Ooredoo a letter grade from A to F based on its performance so far, what would it be?

I think we were given a huge challenge by the government. The government right from the very beginning - from the bids stage, actually - challenged all the operators of the world to come out with something that met the needs of Myanmar, which was to deliver affordable communications everywhere. And so we've got quite a steep hill to climb.

What we're doing is bringing the latest technology to Myanmar to meet Myanmar's needs - the people of Myanmar and the government of Myanmar.

What are you particularly proud of?

In terms of the service we'll be delivering customers, the HD, the crystal-clear voice communications. I'm proud of the fast internet for all. Wherever we have coverage, you can have fast internet. The third thing I'm proud about is that we're able to deliver services for a very affordable level. I'm proud of that.

I'm proud of [the fact that] as you look around we've got real Myanmar people in our business. We depend on Myanmar people. We've got 800 Myanmar people on our team, which is approximately 80 percent of our people. So that makes a difference.

With the benefit of hindsight, what did Ooredoo not do that well? What could you have done better?

I will also preface these remarks by saying we've had fantastic help - every time we said "help!" we had help, including any ministers in government [who] have been very accessible for us to get decisions, any regional chief ministers and their ministers have all been very accessible, all the

township councils have been very accessible.

But we're dealing with rules that are not fully understood across the country. So if I had my time again we could have done how we did our [tower] permit applications more smoothly. It was very lumpy when we were getting started but now it's running like a machine.

Are you on track to meet the performance targets set by the government?

Absolutely, yes. What we said was we would launch within six months of our licence. So here we are launching the pre-kick off promotion on August 2. This cements the promise we made to the government about having products and services out there. We'll be in the three big cities at launch. We

You end up with a history of different technologies, layer upon layer upon layer, and in a country where you haven't had to interconnect with other operators you have someone coming along and says, "I just want to plug in to your interconnect," and of course you're not set up for it. So it's actually harder.

There have been anti-Ooredoo messages spread around Facebook, most on purported Muslim links. How do you counter these rumours? What's your message?

It's very simple: We're a telecom operator. That's all we do.

The government challenged us



A man uses a mobile phone outside a store selling Ooredoo SIM cards in downtown Yangon last week. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

obviously will be pleased to roll out more quickly as soon as we can.

So three cities - Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw?

Yes. We cover a lot of Yangon but not the whole of Yangon yet. We've still got one or two significant gaps which are being closed as we speak.

I am told an agreement with Telenor on interconnect, to enable Ooredoo users to call Telenor users and vice versa, came pretty easily but it took a little longer to get the interconnect with MPT. Was it them using pricing power or market power?

When you've built a network over many years you actually have a very complicated network. We know this from other countries. We've been incumbents in other markets and actually it's very difficult.

like I mentioned at the beginning, and we've been building a network as fast as we can that more than meets their expectations. If we get our service right we're confident people will enjoy using it, and if they enjoy using it they will get other people to come and join as well. So that's one level.

There's another level which is what a telco generally does in society. We employ quite a few people directly but also indirectly our industry typically employs a huge proportion of people who add to the value chain, whether they're tower companies, whether they're infrastructure companies, vendors [or] people doing maintenance.

The other stuff we do that is just our way of life is that we reach out to other communities. We do that naturally because it's our business model. Some people call it CSR but we call it meaningful community engagement.

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one network

of the rollout and the company's future plans

By having community engagement are you are able to counter the negative messages on the ground? Is that the crux of the idea?

We're aware of [the negative messages] but our real activity is just to do our day job. Our day job is telecoms. But what we're also describing [in terms of CSR activities] is what we do in every country we operate in.

We believe that actually once people understand the telecoms they're getting is world class, they'll start to be focused on enjoying that and getting the best from that.

MPT is the sole incumbent right now, and probably has the best customers in terms of average revenues per user. How will Ooredoo tempt them to its side?

Put very simply, we've asked customers what they want, and if we get that right we're giving customers what

'It's the world's last frontier telecoms market so it's the most exciting [launch] I've ever done.'

Ross Cormack
Ooredoo Myanmar CEO

they say they want, at a more affordable price. So I would encourage ... everyone to try the service over the next couple weeks and see what they think.

Your chief operations officer left mid-June. Can you discuss why he left?

We have about 800 Myanmar and about 200 plus internationals. And we bring those people from other countries. Some come from other parts of Ooredoo, some come from the market with specific skills. So at any one time we've got people coming and going because it's a start-up.

When we started in the Park-royal [Hotel], we sat in a room, we had nothing apart from 10 people, and said how do we go from here to having an office full of people [and operating a telco] So we've had a number of people come through, senior positions and also more project positions, and they come and go regularly.

Your network obviously did not come cheap. Correct me if I'm wrong, but Ooredoo previously announced it plans to spend US\$15 billion over 15 years.

Yes, I have not been repeating that because I think it caused us more trouble than it was worth. But it was a true number for the total re-investment of the company over a 15-year period. It's the cost but it's still a real number. It's the cost of employing people and buying stuff and operating stuff and looking after customers. So from a business plan that was the total cost over 15 years ... [but] everybody just thought we were bloody rich. So it was the wrong statement to make but it was true.

Is it fair to say you're probably spending a little more than your competitor?

You'd have to ask them. We're spending in a very focused way on what we think makes a difference.

You personally have worked in a few other markets. How does this market compare to those?

It's the world's last frontier telecoms market so it's the most exciting I've ever done. Also the most complicated that I've ever done simply because the country doesn't have a process for doing a lot of the stuff we need to do. So we've had to learn and the country's had to learn and we've had to learn that together.

But having said that, my goodness, do you feel that you are able contribute to making a difference? Yes, you do. And I know a lot of my dear colleagues feel the same way. I'm only half-joking when we do all-hands meetings and I stand on my desk and everybody gathers around and I tell them, "You will be telling your grandchildren about what you're doing here because you will be making a difference for your country."

The government's been very much behind us. Right from the first press conference they held about the selection of Telenor and us, they held a dinner in the evening with YTP, MPT, and the two new guys on the block. They had four ministers and the regulator and we sat around a table, about 16 of us at a round table eating Myanmar food for five hours, and we just chatted as human beings. They said, "Guys, we chose you because we need help." And they told us about their vision for their country. And they said, "So we need you to damn well deliver what you said you were going to deliver."

Editor's note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Ooredoo marks launch in Yangon

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THE long-promised new era in telecommunications finally landed in customers' hands on August 2 with the launch of the Ooredoo network.

The launch bookended a process that began more than two years ago, when state-run media announced it was looking for international consultants to run a mobile licence tendering process.

That process ultimately yielded two foreign firms – Ooredoo and Telenor – and has now broken a decades-old state monopoly in the telecoms sector.

In a taste of what is to come, Ooredoo marked the launch with a promotion aimed at enticing customers to try their service over the coming two weeks, with the commercial launch to take place on August 15.

After buying a SIM card, customers in service areas will enjoy 900 free minutes of voice calls and 900 free text messages to any phone on the Ooredoo network, as well as 90 free minutes and 90 free texts to phones on other networks. Customers also get 20 megabytes of data downloads a day and free access to Facebook. At the time of launch, coverage areas include all of Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw and most of Yangon.

Though August 2 was when the network went live, a handful of retailers in Yangon and Mandalay began selling Ooredoo SIM cards last week. While the cards are supposed to be sold for K1500, reports from both cities indicated that some retailers have been taking advantage of high demand by charging as much as K10,000 for a card.

Ooredoo CEO Ross Cormack said at a ceremony in Yangon on August 2 that he was aware of the over-charging but confident the company had distributed enough SIMs to discourage any black market in the longer term. He said Ooredoo has already



Ooredoo Myanmar chief executive officer Ross Cormack (left) speaks during a press conference in Yangon on August 2. Photo: Yu Yu

established a network of more than 6500 dealers nationwide.

"If one shop is asking for too much, you just need to walk next door," he said.

Some of the early Ooredoo subscribers in Yangon reported that the internet speed was slower than they were told to expect, but a spokesperson for the company said that this was likely due to them being outside the coverage area, which is expanding rapidly.

Mr Cormack said that the company would have Yangon and 68 other cities and towns covered by August 15, and promised that Ooredoo's network would reach 80 percent of the country by the end of 2015.

"The company is working hard to expand its coverage beyond initial availability ... to include cities such as Pyay, Magwe and Meiktila in order to enable more people to experience life-enriching technology," he said.

Ooredoo has been at the center of controversy in recent weeks, as some Buddhist monks, including U Wirathu, have called for a boycott because of the company's Qatari roots.

When asked about the boycott, Mr Cormack sought to downplay the

issue. "We are a Myanmar company, and our products will benefit all the people of Myanmar," he said.

Ooredoo said in a statement that the services offered during the promotion are only a fraction of what the company plans to provide users in the coming months.

"These will include initiatives that serve the Myanmar people's high demand for education, applications that help improve mental healthcare, solutions that help the country's unbanked and technology that improves the productivity of the nation's large agriculture sector," it said.

Ooredoo's pay-as-you go pricing
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Note: Effective August 15

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IN BRIEF

U San Sint's bail application rejected

Former Minister for Religious Affairs U San Sint has had an application for bail rejected by Dikkhinathiri District Court in Nay Pyi Taw.

His lawyer, U Tin Tun, said the court had rejected the application on July 30 despite him presenting copious evidence that it was justified on health grounds.

"I presented a book as big as the *Myanmar Encyclopaedia* outlining his medical problems to the court but the court dismissed it," U Tin Tun said.

He said U San Sint has been suffering from heart disease, eye disease and a bulbous growth on his bones.

The hearing ran from 10am to 3:25pm. As the former minister left court, he told the journalists waiting outside that he was "not well".

The court did not give a reason for dismissing U San Sint's bail application.

U San Sint has been accused of misusing public funds, abetment and sedition. He was sacked on June 19 by President U Thein Sein and arrested shortly afterward. If convicted he faces up to life in prison.

The next session in the hearing will be held on August 6. - *Pyae That Phyto, translation by Win Thaw Tar*

Media by-laws wait govt approval

By-laws for two new media laws have been drafted and could be introduced within two or three months, a member of the Press Council says.

The by-laws are for the Printing and Publishing Enterprise Law and News Media Law, which were both enacted in mid-March.

Interim press council member U Thiha Saw said the council drafted the by-law for the News Media Law, while the government drafted the by-law for the Printing and Publishing Enterprise Law.

Both drafts were then examined by the ministry and the press council.

"[Both] have been finished and sent to the ministry. If the ministry agrees on the drafts, there are two steps left: approval from the Attorney General's Office and then cabinet," U Thiha Saw said.

The process could take two to three months to complete, he said. When the by-law of the News Media Law is enacted, a new press council will be elected. The current press council was formed in 2012 and comprises 22 members.

In July, Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd (MCM), publisher of *The Myanmar Times*, announced that U Thiha Saw had joined *The Myanmar Times* as editorial director. - *Sandar Lwin*

ANALYSIS

Speaker seeks middle ground on proportional representation

After acrimonious debate, Thura U Shwe Mann steers modified proposal through the Pyithu Hluttaw

IEI TOE LWIN

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AT the end of three days of tense discussion about the proposed introduction of proportional representation for Pyithu Hluttaw, or lower house, seats in the seven regions dominated by the ethnic Bamar, speaker Thura U Shwe Mann asked representatives for their opinion on the proposal.

It was already clear where the different groupings in parliament stand on the issue. The Union Solidarity and Development Party, along with most Bamar political parties, are for proportional representation. The National League for Democracy and ethnic parties are firmly against it. Of the 39 speakers who debated U Aung Zin's proposal, 18 spoke in favour and 18 against. The three military speakers remained mostly neutral.

Those arguing for proportional representation said it would mean no vote is wasted and would ensure diversity in the parliament - a "colourful hluttaw", with many smaller parties represented. Objectors, meanwhile, pointed to provisions of the constitution that would appear to preclude using the system in the lower house, and warned it would harm national unity if proportional representation is used in the 2015 election.

Ethnic MPs had boycotted the vote on whether to discuss the proposal, and some also refused to take part in the debate on July 25, 28 and 29. Finally, when MPs had to decide on July 29 whether to approve the proposal, all of the major groups were present.

Strictly speaking, U Aung Zin had proposed the formation of a committee or commission to draft a law to introduce an electoral system based on proportional representation "that can develop a system of democracy suitable for Myanmar".

But when Thura U Shwe Mann, after praising the discussion as "an example of democracy", asked MPs whether they would approve the proposal, he said: "Whether we want to adopt proportional representation or first-past-the-post voting, or a system integrating both of those systems ... I believe we should form a commis-



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann speaks during a parliament session in July 2012. Photo: AFP

sion because we can't decide it in the hluttaw."

He then asked, "Does the hluttaw agree to form a commission to set an election system that is suitable for Myanmar?"

NLD leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was quick to note the difference, asking which proposal MPs were being asked to support: U Aung Zin's or the speaker's?

Thura U Shwe Mann responded that he cannot agree to adopt proportional representation across Myanmar because it will affect national unity, national reconciliation, the rule of law and internal peace. Instead, he will follow the recommendation of a committee or a commission comprising experts on the issue.

He then asked again, "Does the hluttaw agree to the proposal that the Pyithu Hluttaw will form a committee or a commission to identify an election system suitable for Myanmar?"

The proposal was approved with-

out objection, receiving support even from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of the NLD. Afterward, however, many MPs were still in doubt as to what it was they had actually agreed to.

Some political observers described the speaker's strategy as a "political trick". U Yan Myo Thein, an expert on Myanmar politics, said Thura U Shwe Mann was concerned

'It looks like [the USDP] is trying to win through strength of numbers.'

U Pe Than

Rakhine National Party MP

about what the result would be if he put the proposal to a vote. By instead proposing the formation of a commission to examine all voting systems, he had received support from all MPs.

"I think it is a way of moving the NLD toward a proportional representation system. The NLD members who were on a similar commission recently formed in the Amyotha Hluttaw resigned so [the USDP] has learned from this. I wouldn't be surprised if they ask Daw San Suu Kyi to sit on the commission," U Yan Myo Thein said.

That Daw Aung San Suu Kyi supports the speaker's stance is not in doubt. After the discussion she told reporters that she will write and sign a letter to be distributed to all MPs explaining her support for the speaker's proposal.

U Pe Than from Rakhine National Party said the speaker's proposal had also been a "relief" for ethnic parties, who had feared they would not have the numbers to reject the original motion.

U Thein Nyunt from Thingangyun said the most likely outcome is a system that mixes proportional representation and first-past-the-post.

"It has been approved to adopt proportional representation in the coming election. The commission will propose the extent to which proportional representation will be used and it will be decided in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw," he said.

Because it is the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw that will decide, it is almost certain that the Union Solidarity and Development Party, by having the largest number of seats, will have the final choice. The question then is how opponents of proportional representation will react. Their options include boycotting the 2015 election and staging mass protests, as ethnic parties have already threatened.

"It looks like [the USDP] is trying to win through strength of numbers," U Pe Than said. "If they approve it in the hluttaw, we will object to it with the help of the people." - *Translation by Thiri Min Htun*

President agrees to respect press council mediation role

YE MON

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PRESIDENT U Thein Sein has agreed to settle any future media disputes through the press council, following a spate of cases in which journalists have been arrested and jailed.

The president met members of the press council in Nay Pyi Taw on August 1. He told members that while he would try to ensure jailed and charged reporters do not "suffer loss", he also had to respect the independence of the judiciary.

His government's failure to respect the role of the press council, which is designed in part to mediate on disputes, had prompted some council members to consider resigning but the president appears to have averted that possibility for now.

"The president told us that he will acknowledge the council and in future the council will solve media disputes with the President's Office and the Ministry of Information," U Kyaw Min

Swe told *The Myanmar Times* following the meeting.

Under the News Media Law, anybody wishing to take legal action against a journalist or publication is required to first attempt mediation through the council.

At the August 1 talks, both sides also agreed to hold a meeting between the leaders of the executive, legislature, judiciary and media.

"We agreed to hold a meeting to improve understanding between the four estates," he said.

Minister for Information U Ye Htut said the government discussed ways of improving communications from its ministries and also explained its problems dealing with journalists who do not adhere to ethical standards.

The press council reported that the president promised to set up a system so that each ministry responds to journalists' questions in a timely manner.

The meeting was the second to take place between the president and the press council.



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Ethnic groups send mixed messages on draft ceasefire

Leaders agree to several changes to draft ceasefire but call for further guarantees on equality, self-determination

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ETHNIC leaders have made a number of decisions on a draft nationwide ceasefire agreement but say they want further guarantees from the government on minority rights, particularly the introduction of a federal system.

The July 25-29 talks in the Kachin State border town of Laiza – the headquarters of the Kachin Independence Organisation – brought together the 16 members of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, which is negotiating the ceasefire with the government on behalf of armed ethnic groups. Several armed groups that are not part of the NCCT joined for a separate meeting on July 30-31.

While a single draft comprising seven chapters was agreed upon at talks in Yangon in April, about one-quarter of the text still needs to be revised and the definitions of 20-30 words finalised. The government hopes to have the agreement signed in September, after which a framework for political dialogue will be set, paving the way for political talks early in the New Year. The NCCT is scheduled to meet the government peacemaking committee led by U Aung Min in Myitkyina on August 3, while formal discussions are to take place in Yangon on August 12.

‘Democracy alone does not guarantee our rights.’

Naing Han Thar
New Mon State Party

But following the Laiza meeting, ethnic leaders warned that political dialogue can only start when the government guarantees ethnic minorities equal rights and self-determination.

They said they made 10 decisions on key points of the draft but warned the peace process would struggle to move unless the government accepts the principles of the ethnic groups.

“Democracy alone does not guarantee our rights. We must establish a genuine federal union,” said Naing



A senior member of the Karen National Union speaks at ceasefire talks in Laiza on July 29. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Han Thar from the New Mon State Party.

While the government insists it is ready to sign the ceasefire, Naing Han Thar said the delays were due to the government and military not wanting “to accept a genuine federal union”.

U Min Zaw Oo, a director at the Myanmar Peace Center, said the state peacemaking team was united behind the draft ceasefire, and the government has already discussed the text with the parliament and military.

He said the government had not refused to accept equality for ethnic groups but the issue would be discussed further at the political dialogue stage.

Despite the combative talk, ethnic leaders also showed at the Laiza talks that they are willing to make concessions. One decision made was to remove the word “revolutionary” from the title of the ceasefire draft. The term has been a constant source of disagreement with the government, which argues that not all ethnic groups are revolutionary in nature. The word will still appear in the text of the agreement, however.

“We are not giving in. We decided to take it out because we want to be able to sign the ceasefire agreement,” said Salai Lian Hmung from the Chin

National Front.

Ethnic leaders also accepted the government’s proposal to call the political dialogue conference, which will follow the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the “Union Peace Conference”.

Moreover, they decided to add a statement that political dialogue will include all nationalities and is not only between the government and ethnic armed groups.

But ethnic leaders refused to accept the expression “to make political dialogue between eight groups – the government, hluttaw, the army, ethnic armed groups, political parties, businesspersons, experts and civil societies”, which the government peacemaking team has proposed.

Instead, ethnic leaders substituted the eight groups for three groups: the government, national ethnic armed groups and political parties. They said they did this because they were concerned that the government was adding groups to the dialogue process so that it would have more allies at the talks.

However, they said other groups will be able to participate in certain parts of the political dialogue.

“We don’t mean that they cannot participate. There are some sectors in which they need to take part,”

said Padoh Saw Kwe Htoo Win, general secretary of the Karen National Union.

The other decisions were not revealed in detail but affect issues such as military forces, transitional measures and a proposed joint monitoring mechanism.

Ethnic leaders said they were taking great care with the agreement because they are concerned that if they rush it will break down shortly after it is signed.

“We don’t want the kind of agreement that can be broken the day after it is signed. We need to consider the future of our people, including their livelihoods, education and health,” said Salai Lian Hmung.

Following the NCCT conference, a meeting of ethnic armed groups that are not members of the NCCT was held on July 30-31. This is included the All Burma Students’ Democratic front (ABSDF) and Restoration Council of Shan State, the political wing of the Shan State Army-South. However, the United Wa State Army, the National Democratic Alliance Army – known as the Mong La group – and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland did not attend the conference, which featured 155 participants from 18 ethnic armed groups.

Members push for new political prisoner committee

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FED up with government stalling, members of the state-led Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee have proposed the formation of a new body to lobby for the release of new political prisoners.

The government claims it achieved a pledge to release all political prisoners by the end of 2013, despite around 30 confirmed political prisoners still being in jail on December 31, according to the committee.

About 30 more have been sentenced so far this year and an estimated 100 are on trial, but the committee has met only three times and members say the government is not interested in listening to its recommendations. They have

also accused government bodies of failing to cooperate with efforts to examine the claims of prospective political prisoners and not allowing them to visit prisons as part of their work.

At a meeting on July 26 at the Myanmar Peace Center, members proposed the formation of a new body to rebuild momentum behind the issue.

Committee member U Nyo Tun, who is also from the Former Political Prisoners Society, said the proposal was discussed by members at the meeting and further talks are planned. Minister for the President’s Office U Soe Thein, the chair of the committee, did not attend the meeting, and while Deputy Minister U Aung Thein was present it remains unclear whether the government will support the move.

“We plan to discuss how and in

what form we should continue,” U Nyo Tun said, adding that the new body would focus on political prisoners jailed this year.

These prisoners include journalists and land rights activists. Committee members have also previously indicated that monks on trial following the

60

Estimated number of political prisoners, according to the Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee

Mahasantisukha Monastery raid may be eligible for political prisoner status.

“There still many things to consider, including what form the committee will take and what it will focus on,” said U Ye Aung, another committee member.

“But the situation no longer matches the title of the current committee so we plan to change the name and cooperate with political prisoner-related organisations, the government and other civil society groups,” he added.

President U Thein Sein promised to free all political prisoners by the end of 2013 during a visit to the United Kingdom in June of last year. While he announced several amnesties and the majority were freed, political prisoner groups say he has made no effort to tackle the problem this year.

Hit-run drivers to face life ban



THE head of Yangon's traffic police force has warned that hit-run drivers will have their licences suspended for life if they are caught.

Police Lieutenant Colonel Lin Htut said on July 25 that police will take a zero-tolerance approach to those who fail to stop after an accident.

"We will ban them from having a licence for life," he said.

However, he indicated this may not apply to those who fail to stop because they are worried about being injured – or even killed – by angry bystanders and instead hand themselves in to police later.

"Some people run away after an accident because the people nearby tried to start a fight," he said. "But others just try and avoid taking responsibility."

One lawyer said bystanders often "beat drivers for no reason" after an accident. While this is then reported to police, the chance of catching those responsible is almost zero, he said.

"Who will take action if the driver



Onlookers crowd around a damaged taxi on Phone Gyi Road in downtown Yangon. Photo: Ye Naung

dies or is injured? So many drivers flee and later come to the police station voluntarily," he said.

Police figures show that in 48 of the 140 accidents reported in Yangon between July 1 and July 24 the responsible drivers fled the scene.

But Police Lieutenant Zaw Myo

bus drivers normally do this – some run away together with their family," Pol Lt Zaw Myo Htun said. "They do not want to face problems and take responsibility for the accident."

In many cases, police are unable to find the culprits, particularly if there are no eyewitnesses to record the registration number.

"Even if witnesses remember the registration, they might have some of the numbers wrong. Only a few witnesses can say exactly so it is hard for us to find the criminals – even more so if the accident happens at night," he said.

For many families, this means no one is ever held responsible for the loss of their loved ones.

On July 6, Ko Thant Sin Htun's father was hit by a truck on Strand Road near Pansodan Jetty. He said the police have still yet to find the driver.

"My father would go for a walk every evening," Ko Thant Sin Htun said. "But that day he had not come home by 8pm so we went to look for him near Pansodan Jetty. We couldn't find him so we inquired at the police station. Finally we found him in the hospital."

Despite almost a month elapsing since his father's death, Ko Thant Sin Htun said he believed the police would catch the culprit soon.

Pedestrians killed in wild chase

A MAN is facing charges of culpable homicide and rash driving after allegedly killing two pedestrians who were sitting on a traffic island on Sule Pagoda Road. The 24-year-old Toyota Probox driver also allegedly injured five people and collided with four cars at about 10pm on July 28.

The man was reversing in front of the Myanma Posts and Telecommunications office on Mahabandoola Road when he hit a Honda Fit and a Nissan AD Van, police said. The driver then went the wrong way up Mahabandoola road, hitting two parked cars, a Honda Civic and a Toyota Corolla van, as a police officer who had seen the original crash clung on to the bonnet.

After turning onto Sule Pagoda Road, the driver again lost control of the car near the junction of Sule Pagoda Road and Bogyoke Aung San Road and mounted a traffic island, hitting six people, police said. A 25-year-old man and 50-year-old woman who were sitting on the traffic island were killed, while four people were injured, along with Police Lance Corporal Thet Paing Soe.

The driver and his four passengers abandoned the car and caught a taxi, and the driver was later arrested around midnight in Sanchaung, police said. – *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Khant Lin Oo*

IN BRIEF

Mandalay activists plan 8888 ceremony

Political parties and activists have been invited to a forum at the monastery of the monk who led the 8888 uprising in upper Myanmar to mark the 26th anniversary of the protest, during which up to 3000 people are thought to have been killed.

Activists who led the uprising said that they will donate robes and rice to 26 monks at Galon Ni Sayadaw's monastery in memory of the monks, citizens, students and comrades who died in the unrest.

"The purpose is to discuss with activists who fought during 8888. We will also encourage the younger generations [to get involved in politics] and discuss Myanmar's current politics and political activities," said U Soe Win Myint, a former protest leader.

He said the event was being held with support from 88 Generation students in Yangon.

"We will continue to work so that younger people become politically active," U Soe Win Myint said. – *Si Thu Lwin, translation by Khant Lin Oo*

Strong monsoon winds damage homes

About 40 buildings were damaged and one person injured when strong monsoon winds hit Yangon's Mingalardon township on July 29, the township's General Administration Department reported last week.

"The zinc roofs of 21 houses were destroyed and another 12 huts in the relocated quarter were damaged," department deputy head U Pyae Phyto Aung said.

"The wind also took the nails off the zinc roof of two staff houses in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation's compound in the township. A total of nine lampposts fell down but they have been repaired," he said.

The roofs of five huts in Lay Daung Kan quarter were also blown off, he said.

One man received a cut to his leg but no serious injuries were reported, U Pyae Phyto Aung said.

Residents had helped look after the affected families by providing them with food and repairing their homes, he added. – *Aye Sapay Phyu*

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IN DEPTH

Sangha avoids confrontation in Dala

Following criticism over its handling of the Mahasantisukha raid, the sangha committee is treading carefully in another ownership dispute



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THE Yangon Region religious authorities have warned a prominent say-adaw that they will remove him from his monastery by force if he does not follow a State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee order to leave. However, they said they are yet to enforce the order despite the deadline to leave having passed because they do not want a repeat of the Mahasantisukha Monastery raid.

U Kuthala from Kan Oo monastery in Dala township has been accused of dismantling the monastery's century-old teak structure, selling the timber without approval and replacing it with a new building. He also allegedly sold a Buddha image and later claimed that he had donated it to another monk.

The allegations have been levelled by U Bhaddanta Pawarabhivamsa, a former abbot of the monastery. He said that when he was studying abroad in 2007 he entrusted the monastery to U Kuthala, a former student, but has now accused him of failing to adhere to the contract they signed.

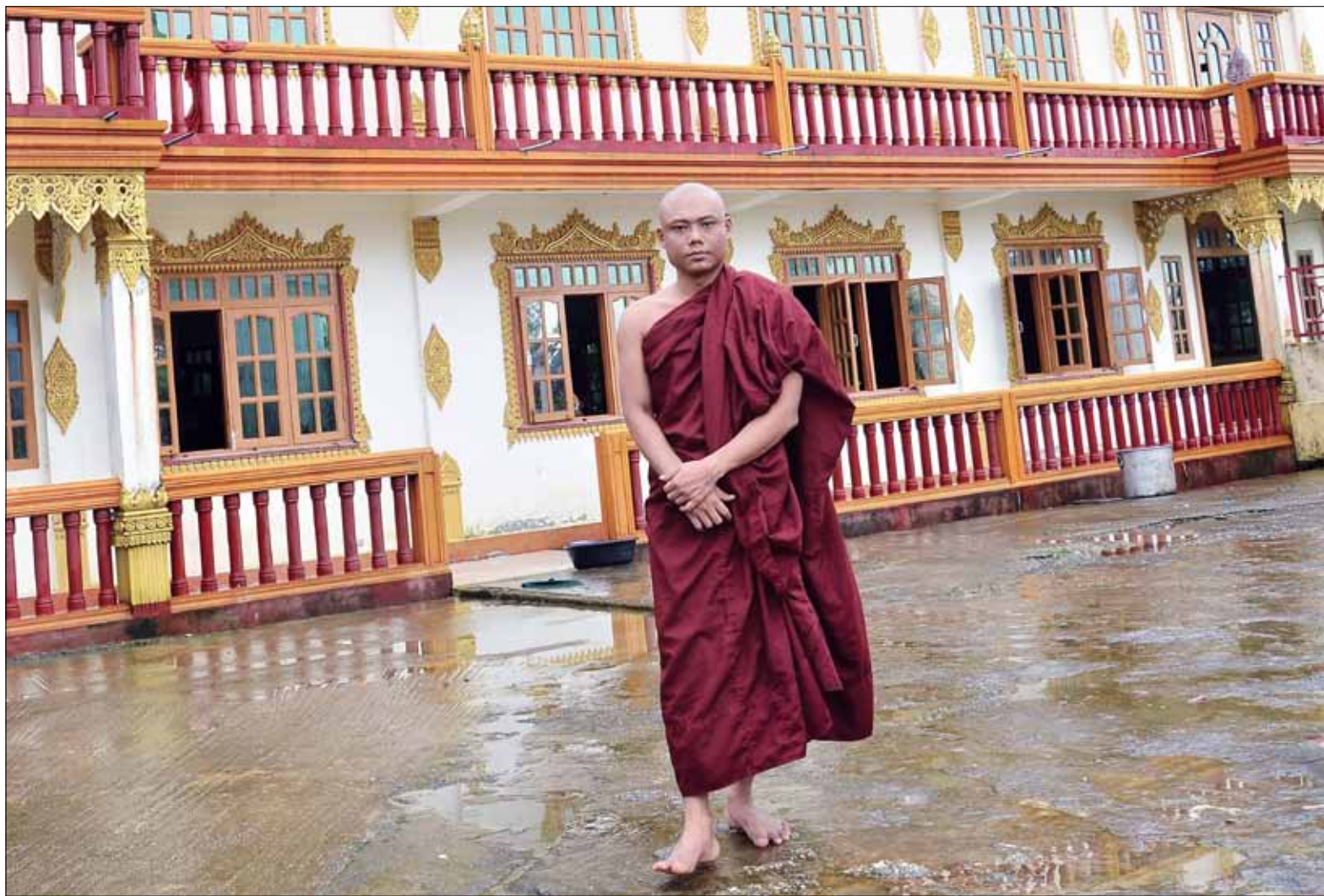
U Bhaddanta Pawarabhivamsa said the contract contained provisions that required U Kuthala to maintain the original building.

"I gave it to him as a place to live, not to own and do as he liked," U Bhaddanta Pawarabhivamsa said.

After considering the case, the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee then ordered U Kuthala to leave the monastery by July 6. While he has not yet left, U Gunarlinkarra, deputy chair of the Yangon Region Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, said senior Sangha officials were giving him some time to finalise his personal affairs. He said they were wary of using force because of the criticism of the June 10 raid on Mahasantisukha Monastery in Tarmwe township.

"I asked him to leave the monastery peacefully. We didn't force him to sign the pledge to leave the monastery," U Gunarlinkarra said.

"U Bhaddanta Pawarabhivamsa wants to remove him and appoint a new abbot. If he doesn't follow the



U Kuthala stands in front of the new building at Kan Oo Monastery in Dala township last week. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

decision of the [State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee], we will use our authority to make him leave ... But we are trying to implement all cases peacefully because monks are currently criticising us over the Mahasantisukha case."

U Kuthala told *The Myanmar Times* last week that the accusations were untrue and accused the other monks of "jealousy". He said he had replaced the original teak monastery in 2009 using donations from residents because it had been badly damaged by Cyclone Nargis the previous year.

"Also, the land prices in Dala have surged since 2010 so some people want to do business on the land owned by the monastery. They have

created conflict between me and U Bhaddanta Pawarabhivamsa," he said.

"I will leave the monastery as he requested me but I need some time be-

'I gave [Kan Oo monastery] to [U Kuthala] as a place to live, not to own and do as he liked.'

Bhaddanta Pawarabhivamsa
Abbot of Kan Oo monastery

cause I have to settle some issues, including the debt for the new building."

U Aung Naing, 34, from Dala's Tabinshweti ward, said most residents wanted U Kuthala to stay on at the monastery.

"Because of him the monastery has been developing. But [the State Sangha Committee] decided to remove him from monastery at the requested of [U Bhaddanta Pawarabhivamsa]," he said. "It is their right but we don't understand their rules and their actions seem very strong ... so residents can't accept their decision."

U Gunarlinkarra said failure to leave would see U Kuthala disrobed and charged.

"The State Sangha Committee has

made its decision. We are watching him and deciding whether to take action," he said. "If it is necessary then officials from the general administration department will take responsibility for carrying it out."

Shwe Nya War Sayadaw U Pan-yasara said it was hard for ordinary people to grasp the internal politics of the Sangha and many decisions made by the State Sangha Committee appear on face value to be unfair.

"They will be more likely to believe the presiding monk," he said. "The committee needs to be shrewd when handling these matters, such as urging all to work for Buddhism rather than to decide what is true and what is false."

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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School water supplies being fixed, govt insists

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WORK to ensure schools are supplied with clean water will finish by the end of July, Deputy Minister for Education U Zaw Min Aung told parliament last week.

The ministry is assessing how schools store and distribute water and what work is necessary to ensure children only drink and use clean water.

UNICEF and UNDP will help the ministry build reservoirs and install pipe systems in schools where running water is available, with large schools prioritised, he said.

While the national education budget has increased dramatically since U Thein Sein's government came to power, it is still not enough to ensure schools have basic infrastructure, parents said.

"My kid has been asked to come back home to go to the toilet because

the school doesn't have enough toilets," said the mother of a grade four student from a school in Pyinmana.

An Amyotha Hluttaw representative from Bago Region Constituency 8 said that in some schools children rely on their parents to supply them with drinking water and toilets cannot be used due to water shortages.

U Khin Maung Lay said more than half of the schools in his constituency do not have access to wells.

In Myanmar 1.8 million people, most of them children, die from diarrhoea each year. Using only safe drinking water can decrease the number of diarrhoea cases by a third, according to health experts.

The government has laid down a policy of getting safe water into every home and using toilets of an international standard by 2017.

- Translation by
Myat Su Mon Win

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IN DEPTH

New rapporteur highlights need for aid access in Rakhine

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A SENIOR United Nations official says Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) should be allowed to resume work in Rakhine State without hindrance, as she warned that health conditions in Rakhine State IDP camps have become “deplorable”.

The government invited MSF-Holland to resume work in Rakhine State on July 24, during UN special rapporteur for human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee's first visit to Myanmar.

As she left the country on July 26, Ms Lee told *The Myanmar Times* in an exclusive interview that she believes the international community should push the government to let MSF implement its activities freely.

“I want to be positive: The mere fact that they are invited back to work is one step forward. And I think that the international community should raise this issue and push the government to set up terms of agreement that will allow MSF to carry out its mission the best they can. The health situation in Rakhine is really alarming,” she said. “It is a very dangerous situation.”

Ms Lee said the expulsion of MSF had left gaping holes in medical data, including records of births, deaths and

malnutrition in many of Rakhine's IDP camps, where MSF focused much of its activities.

Monsoon season had also taken a toll on the camps. Ms Lee said that she waded through knee-high water to reach some residents, raising further concerns over sanitation.

The Nobel Prize-winning group was expelled from Rakhine State in late February amid accusations it was biased in favour of the state's Muslim population. A month later, the majority of INGOs pulled out of the state after their offices were targeted by Rakhine extremists. Most were later allowed to return, but the state government said it would not allow MSF to resume its activities in Rakhine.

The Rakhine State government and the Ministry of Health invited MSF to return on July 24. Marcel Langenbach, director of operations for MSF in Amsterdam, said that the group was “cautiously optimistic about this development”.

It remains unclear what MSF will be permitted to do if it returns to the state and what conditions will be placed on its activities. Hard-line Rakhine groups have already threatened to stage protests if MSF is allowed to return.

Ms Lee said that the situation in Rakhine remains “tense” for all aid organisations and that INGO and UN workers operate on a “tightrope”.

“It is difficult for UN and INGO workers because the mistrust and the hostility between the two [Buddhist and Muslim] communities is high.



UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee addresses a press conference at Yangon airport on July 26. Photo: AFP

And they – INGO and UN agencies – are trying to work with both communities. Then we have the state government who are suspicious of the UN and INGOs' work,” she said.

Ms Lee met with newly appointed chief minister U Maung Maung Ohn but said that she was not provided with any detailed information on how the state government aimed to address the state's humanitarian issues. She was given only a brief overview of the Rakhine State Action Plan but was not able to read the full report.

Three days after Ms Lee's departure, the government issued its response to her initial findings.

A statement from the President's Office on July 29 cautioned her over her use of the word “Rohingya”, warning that continued use of the term could hinder efforts to address humanitarian and rights issues in Rakhine State.

The statement said Ms Lee needed pay “serious consideration to [using] the term” if a “long-term solution” to problems in Rakhine are to be achieved.

“The term has been maliciously used by a group of people with wider political agenda. The people of Myanmar will never recognise the term.”

Ms Lee said that she was told repeatedly not to use the term during

her visit, but said that human rights laws respecting the freedom to self-identify drove her to do so.

“As a human rights independent expert, I am guided by international human rights law. In this regard, the rights of minorities to self-identify on the basis of their national, ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics is related to the obligations of states to ensure non-discrimination against individuals and groups, which is a central principle of international human rights law,” she said.

“I also note that various human rights treaty bodies and intergovernmental bodies, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which I chaired for four years and of which I was a member for 10 years, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly use the term ‘Rohingya’.

But the statement also welcomed Ms Lee's recognition of the Rakhine community, which it said Tomas Quintana, the former special rapporteur – whose later visits had been met with hostility, particularly in Rakhine State – had “consistently ignored”.

Derek Tonkin, founder of non-profit Network Myanmar and a former British ambassador to Thailand, said that Ms Lee's comments “reaffirmed broad continuity with her predecessor” but were likely to be better received in Nay Pyi Taw.

“The difference [with Mr Quintana] lies in the more sympathetic style of her presentation, and the balance of concern and sympathy she struck between Rakhine and Muslim communities, while making it clear that it is the Muslim community which has suffered the most.”

Ms Lee was appointed as the UN's special rapporteur in June 26. She will present her full report to the UN General Assembly in October.

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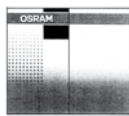
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MSF submits terms to Ministry of Health

Aid agency needs a new memorandum of understanding with the central government to be able to resume activities in Rakhine State, say officials

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THE Ministry of Health and Médecins Sans Frontières-Holland are negotiating the terms of a new memorandum of understanding that would enable the aid group to return to Rakhine State, a ministry official said last week.

However, the process could take up to one month, a separate ministry spokesperson said.

“MSF have submitted a draft MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] to the Ministry of Health. We are waiting for comments from other ministries [before moving forward],” said U Than Htike, a deputy director of the ministry's International Relations Department.

MSF-Holland confirmed it submitted the latest draft of its memorandum of understanding on July 4. “We have submitted two previous drafts of our MOU to the ministry regarding its renewal in November 2012 and January 2014,” it said.

On July 24, the government invited MSF to re-start work in Rakhine State, almost five months after it had forced the group to leave.

In an announcement published in state-run media, the Rakhine State government invited UN agencies and INGOs, including MSF, “to participate in development, humanitarian, education and healthcare programs in accordance

with the wishes of the Rakhine people”.

The invitation was made to implement the Rakhine Action Plan, which was developed following meetings on June 26-27 with members of the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC), UN officials, civil society representatives and officials from the Myanmar Peace Center, it said.

‘We understand that this is a sensitive environment.’

Marcel Langenbach
MSF director of operations

The government ordered the Nobel Prize-winning organisation to leave Rakhine State in late February amid accusations it was biased in favour of the state's Muslim population. A month later, all INGOs pulled out of the state after their offices were targeted by Rakhine extremists. All were later allowed to return except MSF-Holland and Malteser International.

U Aye Nyein, the head of Rakhine State's Health Department, said Nay Pyi Taw had not issued any instructions to allow MSF to resume operations. He said that this would likely only occur

after the new agreement is signed.

MSF has, however, reached out to the Rakhine State government. On July 29, it wrote to new Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn asking his opinion on the group's possible return but he has not yet replied.

However, the Arakan Civil Society Network said the chief minister told them in a meeting on July 28 that he would closely monitor the activities of all UN agencies and INGOs, and would ensure their activities are not discriminatory and do not cause tension.

MSF said in a statement on July 25 that it was “cautiously optimistic” about the government's invitation to return to Rakhine.

“Given that for many people in Rakhine access to medical services remains a major challenge, we hope that MSF can restart treating patients as soon as possible,” said Marcel Langenbach, director of operations for MSF in Amsterdam.

However, he said it was important that the government gives aid agencies “unfettered access to ensure people can receive medical care”.

“We understand that this is a sensitive environment, particularly with regard to inter-communal tensions,” Mr Langenbach said. “This makes it all the more important that independent international organizations can play their role in treating those most vulnerable.”

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A Ministry of Immigration official examines completed census forms in Nay Pyi Taw in May. Photo: Zarni Phyto

Census ethnicity data release delayed until after election

Officials say an unexpectedly high number of handwritten responses that did not fit into the 135 official ethnicity categories is to blame, but observers say political considerations may have also played a role



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CENSUS results on Myanmar's ethnic populations will not be published until after the 2015 general election, an official in charge of the census has told *The Myanmar Times*.

The revelation, which comes following concerns that figures on ethnicity and religion could prompt further communal conflict, has prompted some observers to conclude the results are being held back for political reasons. However, those involved in the process say the delay is due to data-input difficulties after a higher-than-expected number of people chose not to identify as one of 135 set ethnic groups on the questionnaire.

"The ethnic information cannot be released [as early as planned]," said Daw Khaing Khaing Soe, director of the Ministry of Immigration and Population's census technical team.

She said entering the details of those who self-described their ethnicity through the "other" option, rather than choosing one of the listed groups, would be "a very long process".

The question of ethnic identity was one of the most controversial elements of the census, which was conducted in March and April. Prior to the count, many international experts called for the question to be removed, or the entire census postponed, because of concerns it would exacerbate religious and ethnic tensions.

Those answering the question could choose from one of 135 officially recognised ethnic groups – a classification described by Human Rights Watch as "deeply flawed" – or the "other" option, which enabled them to describe their ethnicity in

their own words.

While the government had promised to allow anyone to self-describe their ethnicity, at the last minute it bowed to public pressure in Rakhine State and decreed that nobody would be allowed to enter "Rohingya" on the census form. While some Muslims in Rakhine State opted to identify instead as Bengali, most refused and were therefore skipped. In Kachin and Kayin states, some communities were also missed because they were in areas too insecure for enumerators to enter.

Despite Rohingya respondents being excluded, sources close to the census said a far higher number of people than expected had chosen to identify as "other". The range of ethnic identities people had used to describe themselves was far more diverse and complex than expected.

"The [figures on ethnic identity] were supposed to come out before the election, but it now it won't be until afterward. Far more people self-identified as 'other' than anticipated," one source said.

Each "other" response has to be entered by hand, which organisers said accounts for the delay in tallying results. However, one source told *The Myanmar Times* the government "did not seem to be any great rush" to get the information processed and made public before the election.

U Kyaw San Wai, a senior analyst at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, said he believed a primary reason for the delay is the government's desire to "minimise risk ahead of the 2015 elections".

"I would say that given the sensitivities of ethnicity, especially in Rakhine State with regards to the Rohingya, the government might be trying to pre-empt any possible sectarian unrest or ramifications the data might have," he said.

However, Rakhine State is not the only area of the country where the results on ethnicity may have

CENSUS

important political implications.

"There are many preconceptions and passionate views among ethnic minorities on ethnic identity, and ethnic groups have rough estimates of how big they are and where they are located. If the census data disagrees with these estimates, it might lead to accusations that the government had manipulated the results in favour of the Bamar in an attempt to perhaps undermine ethnic minority parties," he said.

Tom Kramer of the Netherlands-based Transnational Institute, which published a report condemning the

'The government might be trying to pre-empt any possible sectarian unrest or ramifications the data might have.'

U Kyaw San Wai
Rajaratnam School of
International Studies, Singapore

timing and methodology of the count, said many ethnic groups feared the use of the 135 ethnic groups would "further diminish" the political status of minority peoples.

"The scheduling of the census in the year before a key general election – and before political agreements have been achieved in the ceasefire talks – has only deepened concerns," Mr Kramer said.

"Unreliable data that results from the census could have [a] negative impact on political debate and ethnic nationality representation in the legislatures," he said.

But delaying the release of the results will only put off the potential for fallout, he said.

"Instead of just delaying the release of the information regarding questions of ethnicity and identity from the census, an inclusive debate about identity and citizenship in the country should first take place, and the failings and difficulties with the census need to be recognised."

The census cost an estimated \$74 million, with much of the funding coming from international donors, notably the British, Norwegian, Australian and Swiss governments.

Matt Smith of Thai-based group Fortify Rights said the delay confirms that the collection of data on ethnicity has political implications.

"Donors, UNFPA and the government repeatedly claimed the census was apolitical and in no way related to the elections, as if they could magically will that to be true just by saying it. Of course the census is political," he said.

Despite continued criticism of the census process, and an acknowledgment of problems in Rakhine and Kachin, organisers say the count has been an overall success. Officials also say they are working to find ways to include data about people who wanted to identify as Rohingya so that they are not missed completely.

Daw Khaing Khaing Soe also promised there would be "consultations" with ethnic minority groups on the census results before the figures are released.

A report from international observers was given to the government at the end of July and is due for publication imminently.

Initial data on the number of men and women in the country is due to be released at the end of August.

Experts recommend estimates to finalise count

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INTERNATIONAL experts commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund to advise on the census have recommended the government fill in data gaps by using Ministry of Immigration and Population estimates.

Preliminary results of the count set to be released by the end of August but data from Rakhine, Kachin and Kayin states is still incomplete. This will not contain any of the most sensitive data, including population breakdowns based on ethnicity or religion.

The International Technical Advisory Board (ITAB) revealed its recommendation for filling the data gaps at a press conference following a meeting with the government and UNFPA in Nay Pyi Taw late last month.

ITAB co-chair Werner Haug said census officials made broad estimates about the population of certain areas in the lead-up to the census, which can be used to "map" areas left out by the current count. Under the mapping system, the country was broken into more than 80,000 zones of about 100-150 households each.

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

It remains unclear how accurate the census figures will be if ministry estimates based on existing data are used. In an interview with *The Myanmar Times* in May, ITAB co-chair Paul Cheung said that the most "technically sound" solution would be to do another round of enumeration in the skipped areas. However, he said conditions on the ground must be taken into account.

"Technical solutions are straightforward, but political dynamics may not make them feasible. What is politically acceptable may also not be technically sound," he said.

Mr Haug indicated that there is still a possibility that such a recounting could take place.

"We are also advising the development of options for surveying the missed areas to collect information on the socio-economic profile of these specific groups of the population that were excluded from the enumeration," he said.

Preliminary census data, including the populations and genders of each state, will be released later this month.

Data on ethnicity will be tallied and analysed at a later point, officials said. Between May and October 2015, the focus will shift to all those respondents who self-described their ethnicity by selecting the "other" option, rather than one of the 135 official categories.

"We will analyse the ethnic groups thoroughly and we need to take some time to release it," Department of Population director general U Myint Kyaing said.

ITAB members said they would provide limited assistance to the government on this task as it is more political than technical.

"In analysing the ethnic group, we will help only with technical advice because defining the ethnic group is not relevant according to international standards. The Myanmar government should decide about ethnic groups according to the nature and conditions of Myanmar," said one ITAB member.

Team to begin Hkakabo Razi summit attempt this week



AYE SAPAY
PHYU

NINE members of the Yangon Universities Hiking and Mountaineering Association have their sights set on planting the Myanmar flag on Mt Hkakabo Razi in Kachin State – and possibly ending any speculation about whether it is Myanmar's tallest mountain.

The all-male group, who range in age from 24 to 33, are trekking to the base of the Himalayan mountain this week from the town of Putao and expect to summit the mountain, which has an official height of 5881 metres, or 19,296 feet, by the end of August.

The team has been training for the assault on Hkakabo Razi since the end of 2011 and climbed the 5200m-plus Haba peak in China's Yunnan Province in April as preparation. The trek will take about 16 days and the team believes it will need another five days to climb from the base to the summit, if the weather is obliging.

When the team returns to Yangon, most likely at the end of September, there may well be a storm brewing, however – over the actual height of Hkakabo Razi.

Last year a joint US-Myanmar expedition took global positioning satellite (GPS) measurements from the top of the nearby Gamlang Razi peak, which topped out at 5870m.

The official height of Hkakabo Razi is 5881m comes from a Survey of India map drawn up in 1925.



Members of the Yangon Universities Hiking and Mountaineering Association climb the Haba peak in China's Yunnan Province in April as training for an ascent of Mt Hkakabo Razi in Kachin State. Photo: Supplied

Satellite imaging confirmed the figure in the lead up to two summit attempts in 1995 and 1996, the latter of which was the first successful summit.

But post-World War II Russian and Chinese maps put Hkakabo

Razi's elevation at a mere 5691m, Google Earth puts it at 5780m and a Harvard Map Library researcher using two data-set extrapolation techniques estimated it at 5758m in 2013.

The US-Myanmar expedition's GPS measurement used a reference point some 1000 kilometres (600 miles) away in Lhasa, China. While still an appropriate distance from the summit for a reference point, it reduced the accuracy to plus or minus two metres, expedition leader Andy Tyson said in 2013.

Despite the controversy over Hkakabo Razi's height, the YHMA team insists it is not climbing the mountain to settle the dispute.

Team leader Ko Aung Myint Myat said the group's main objective is to plant a Myanmar flag on the summit for the first time.

"We will climb Hkakabo Razi to put the Myanmar flag as an ethnic Myanmar person at the top of the mountain," he said. "We believe we can do it because we trained for it systematically."

Takashi Ozaki, a famous Japanese climber, and U Nama Johnson, an ethnic Tibetan whom Ozaki recruited from a remote village near Hkakabo Razi, were the first people to summit the mountain, in 1996.

Mr Ozaki later died trying to summit Mt Everest in 2011.

Social security plans stall

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THE government has implemented only half of the social security systems mandated under a law enacted in April, the deputy minister for labour, employment and social security told parliament last week.

Daw Win Maw Tun told the Pyithu Hluttaw that only the health and social care, family assistance and employment injury benefit insurance systems were in operation.

Meanwhile, invalidity benefit, superannuation pension benefit and survivors' benefit insurance, and unemployment benefit insurance are yet to be offered.

While Daw Win Maw Tun did not say why the three systems have not been introduced, a Social Security Board director told state-run broadcaster MRTV last week it was because of financial constraints.

The Social Security Law requires compulsory payments from those working for firms employing two or more workers in the manufacturing, entertainment, transportation, ports, extractive industries and financial sectors, as well as all foreign-owned enterprises. The new law extends coverage to casual workers but only if they register with the Social Security Board.

Insurance contributions are fixed at between two percent to six percent of a person's income, with contributions equally shared between employer and employee.

As with income tax, however, social security is usually only paid by larger companies and their employees. Small businesses and casual workers rarely pay it. To date, the Social Security Board, which manages the program, has K17.8 billion saved, MPs were told.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

SKorean shoe factory officials face charges

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THE Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security has initiated legal action against officials from a South Korean shoe factory in Hlaing Tharyar township that closed abruptly at the end of June and has refused to compensate laid-off workers, a deputy minister says.

Deputy Minister Daw Win Maw Tun said the owners of Master Sports have been deliberately stalling in the face of ministry efforts to resolve the conflict with its workers.

She said that the ministry is also doing what it can to place them in other jobs. Another shoe factory has already said it will soon take 1000 workers, while 11 other factories collectively requested more than 600 workers.

"This is more than the number of people who have lost their jobs at Master Sports so I am sure that all of those workers can get new jobs soon," she said at a July 25 press conference.

Master Sports has been accused of pressuring workers to sign agreements waiving their right to compensation from the company. Under Myanmar law, they would receive compensation of an additional one month's wages.

U Win Shein, director general of the Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection Department, said the factory's managers had told the 755 workers they would only be paid

their June salary if they waived their right to the additional month's salary.

Only 58 workers signed the agreement. The 755 workers are collectively owed more than K130 million (US\$134,000) in salary and compensation, according to the ministry.

"Forcing workers to sign a pledge not to ask for any compensation for losing their jobs is not in accordance with the law. We have charged two officials from the factory," U Win Shein said, adding that one South Korean and one Myanmar citizen have been charged.

The ministry has asked the company's South Korean managing director to come to Myanmar to resolve the problem and also held talks with the South Korean ambassador in Nay Pyi Taw on July 12. However, it has "not seen any progress until now," he said.

However, a lawyer for the Master Sports workers, U Htay, said the Ministry of Labour had not done enough to include workers in negotiations.

"If [the government] invited and discussed the dispute with the factory's 13 labour representatives then I think it would be reconciled much more quickly," he said. "From the workers' side, they hope to solve the problem through negotiation rather than going to the court."

At the July 25 meeting, Daw Win Maw Oo told U Htay that she wanted to meet the 13 labour representatives and would arrange talks as soon as possible.



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47th STREET ☎ 01-200026, 298746 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	MYAY NI GHONE ☎ 01-510697 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	JUNCTION MAW TIN ☎ 01-218159 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	AKK (SHOPPING MALL) ☎ 01-8508515 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)
JUNCTION 8 ☎ 01-850778 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	ZAWANA ☎ 01-564532 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	THAMINE ☎ 01-654566 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	SOUTH DAGON ☎ 01-8100727 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)
FMI CITY ☎ 01-862323 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	SHWE MYA YAR ☎ 01-294063 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	JUNCTION SQUARE ☎ 01-527653 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	GOLDEN VALLEY ☎ 01-523800-43 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)
			PARKSON FMI ☎ 01-240894, 243031 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)

FOCUS

After abuses in China, rights groups call for labour treaty

Case of 42 migrants who escaped “atrocious conditions” in Fujian highlights need for bilateral agreement

BILL O'TOOLE

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THE plight of dozens of Myanmar workers freed from “atrocious” conditions in garment factories in Fujian Province has cast a fresh spotlight on migration to China, as the government begins initial negotiations for a formal labour agreement with its giant neighbour.

While workers from Myanmar have sought employment in China for decades, no government-approved and regulated system is in place to facilitate the outflow of workers. As a result, migrants are forced to go through illegal channels that often leave them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Pointing to recent cases of migrants facing shocking abuse in Chinese factories, human rights groups are pushing for both governments to work together to create a system and regulations that protect workers' rights.

In a joint statement published on July 23, the International Labor Organization [ILO] in Yangon and the 88 Generation highlighted the case of 42 migrants who recently returned to Myanmar after fleeing “atrocious

‘China’s industrial zones are facing a labour shortage but there is no legal system in place for migrants from Myanmar to fill these positions.’

Jackie Pollack

International Labour Organization



A monk from Myanmar walks past the Chinese customs house at the China-Myanmar border town of Jiegao. Photo: AFP

working conditions” in two unnamed garment factories in Fujian.

The workers were lured to the factory with the promise of US\$200 a month in salary and free room and board, the groups said.

“However, they reported that the garment factory in China did not pay them their due wages and gave no explanation for deductions from their salaries,” the statement said. “They reported being beaten when they asked for their salaries and told of one migrant who died because they were charged so much for health care that he did not visit the clinic.”

Though many in the group wanted to quit, their employers refused to arrange transport back to the border. Given their status as “illegal” migrants, the group was wary of making the trip without assistance.

The migrants contacted their families in Myanmar, who in turn sought help from the ILO, the 88 Generation and Anti-Trafficking Police Force. The migrants were then able to “persuade” their employers to arrange transport back to the border on July 11.

“It seems the employer got nervous and preferred to move them quickly,” said Jackie Pollack, a spokesperson for the ILO office in Yangon.

The Chinese embassy in Yangon

did not respond to questions about the trafficking case last week. However, Ms Pollack said it was far from an isolated incident.

“We had previously heard cases of Myanmar migrants being cheated by brokers in Ruili, and other cases of abuse, but now the cases are coming from further afield, like the recent ones from Fujian,” she said.

In the past month both the ILO and the 88 Generation have been contacted by relatives of dozens of migrant workers trapped in abusive or exploitative jobs in China, she said.

A lack of reliable data makes it difficult to estimate both the number of Myanmar migrants in China as well as the prevalence of abuse. But the ILO said the cases highlight the need for concrete rules and regulations for sending migrants to China.

“Given the large numbers of Myanmar workers in China, the ILO and 88 Generation urge the governments of both countries to develop agreements and mechanisms to protect the rights of these workers and to discuss possible legal channels through which the workers can be recruited and employed,” the groups said in a statement.

Deputy head of the Myanmar

Overseas Employment Agency Federation U Soe Myint Aung said his organisation and the Ministry of Labour are committed to developing such a system but said it was only in the “initial stages”.

He told *The Myanmar Times* that in the coming year representatives from the federation will hold regular meetings with their counterparts from the China to discuss the proposed system. A date for the first meeting had not yet been set.

Both the ILO and the Chinese embassy in Yangon said last week that they had not been informed about the proposed negotiations, but Deputy Minister for Labour U Htin Aung revealed the government plans to sign a memorandum of understanding with China in an address to parliament on June 26.

Ms Pollack warned that rising demand in China for cheap labour will only exacerbate the need for a formal system for sending Myanmar workers to China.

“China’s industrial zones are facing a labour shortage but there is no legal system in place for migrants from Myanmar to fill these positions,” she said. “This leaves migrants in a vulnerable position where they are finding it hard to demand their rights.”

Govt urges Singapore, HK to sign agreements on workers

HTOO THANT

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MYANMAR wants better protections put in place before it resumes issuing overseas work permits to women so they can find jobs as domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong, the deputy minister for labour, employment and social security told parliament last week.

The government wants Singapore and Hong Kong to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation to guarantee safe working conditions, U Htin Aung told the Amyotha Hluttaw.

The agreement would set guidelines on areas such as minimum pay, holiday entitlements and how workers can seek legal redress.

“We suspended the issuing of official documents to send workers abroad ... to protect Myanmar workers – so they can enjoy their rights fully and to ensure [they are] not exploited and [vulnerable to] forced labour,” U Htin Aung said.

In February, a group of 19 young women made history by becoming the first Myanmar citizens to legally travel to Hong Kong to work as maids. However, the government stopped granting permits after reports emerged that an Indonesian maid had been abused by her employer in Hong Kong. Fewer than 100 Myanmar women had been sent by the end of June when the program was temporarily stopped.

When the ministry stopped allowing women to take jobs as domestic workers in Singapore at the end of February because of similar concerns, Myanmar had allowed 130 women to travel to Singapore to take up jobs as domestic workers.

There are 202 agencies in Myanmar that are allowed to send workers abroad, of which 12 specialise in domestic workers, who are employed to cook, clean and look after children and the elderly. While the potentially dangerous working conditions have scared some off, Singapore and Hong Kong remain attractive because of higher pay and standards of living.

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

MoD to build apartments for retired soldiers

THE government plans to spend tens of millions of dollars from the military's welfare fund to provide housing for retired servicemen, the deputy minister for defence told MPs last week.

Each apartment is likely to cost K10 million to K12 million (US\$10,300 to \$12,370), Major General Kyaw Nyunt said, adding that this would be offset by using the lump-sum gratuity that military staff receive upon retirement, which is currently more than K5.5 million per person. More than K50 billion (\$51.55 million) from the welfare fund is likely to be spent if each apartment costs K10 million, he said.

He made the comments in response to a question from U Mann Kan Nyunt, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative from Kayin State, who said that military personnel often struggle in retirement because their gratuity is not enough to even buy a low-cost apartment. – Htoo Thant, translation by Zar Zar Soe

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CRIME IN BRIEF

Sisters accused of pawning fake gold jewellery

Two sisters have been charged with pawning fake gold objects at pawn shops in Insein township, police say.

The pair allegedly pawned 19 pieces that appeared to be made of gold but were actually copper covered in a layer of gold. Police were informed after one of them pawned a 6-gram ring at Zay Kome pawn shop in Insein township for K200,000.

Man cheated on Florida property deal

A woman has been accused of fleecing a Dagon township man of US\$51,000 by promising to buy him an apartment in the US state of Florida.

U Win Thihe Aung said he gave the money to the woman, who was introduced to him by his son-in-law, at an office in Botahtaung township in December 2013. He decided to buy an apartment for his daughter after the woman told him that prices in Florida were cheap. Police have charged the woman with cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property.

Man faces charge after train hits his cow

A man has been charged with delaying a train after the locomotive hit and killed his cow.

The Yangon-Pyay train was heading north when it hit Ko Thant Zin Aung's cow near Phar Lone village in Yangon Region's Taikkyi township at about 4:20pm on July 29. The cow died and in the process delayed the train by 20 minutes. Taikkyi police have charged Ko Thant Zin Aung under the railways act.

Foreigner accused of selling fake diamonds in 2010

An Indian national has been accused of selling a woman fake diamond earrings.

Daw Khine Sandar Lwin from Mayangone township said she bought the four sets of diamond earrings from the man, who she had known for 18 years, in January 2010 for K215 million (US\$221,000).

She filed a complaint to police on July 31, a day after discovering that the pieces were fake. — *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Khant Lin Oo*



Tatmadaw soldiers examine weapons in Thandwe township in October 2013. Photo: Kaung Htet

US to train security officials in Nay Pyi Taw

US instructors will lead workshop including about 30 mid-level security officials

TIM MCLAUGHLIN

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THE United States plans to further its nascent engagement with the Myanmar military next month through a workshop for about 30 mid-level security officials at the National Defence College in Nay Pyi Taw.

The workshop will be led by US instructors, and is part of Washington's efforts to help the Tatmadaw — and other security forces — professionalise and encourage it to come under civilian command.

The five-day workshop is being funded by the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, a Department of Defense research centre in Hawaii.

"This workshop will provide an opportunity for participants to expand their understanding of the concepts and best practices of modern civil-military relations, including promoting civilian control of the military and improving trust and understanding between civilian and military leaders," said a spokesperson from the US embassy in Yangon.

Military-to-military cooperation between the US and Myanmar has so far been limited to workshops and training as the two countries work to rebuild ties after years of sanctions and isolation. Fledgling military engagement began with a similar course undertaken by the US Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) in August 2013.

But Washington remains concerned by the Tatmadaw's formal role in politics and the current structure of the military, which does not have a civilian commander-in-chief or civilian oversight.

Under the 2008 constitution, the military is led by a serving officer — currently Senior General Min Aung

'Security assistance and professional military education are not simply rewards to partner countries.'

Mitch McConnell
US senator

Hlaing — who does not answer to the president. Both sit on the powerful 11-member National Defence and Security Council.

Lieutenant General Anthony Crutchfield, deputy commander of the US Pacific Command, addressed the issue in a speech to Tatmadaw officials at the National Defence College in June.

"Simply put, militaries possess capabilities that are too powerful to

be placed at the discretion of just a few people. Rather, they must be at the service of all people and used in accordance with the democratic will of the people," Lt Gen Crutchfield said.

The new course comes as a growing number of voices in Washington have begun to question the pace and direction of Myanmar's reforms. On July 9 Republican Ed Royce, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, called for the Obama administration to end military-to-military cooperation until the Myanmar government addresses concerns about its treatment of Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State.

However, Senator Mitch McConnell, one of the most vocal American politicians on Myanmar and a long-time supporter of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, last week expressed support for military-to-military cooperation focused on education.

"Security assistance and professional military education are not simply rewards to partner countries, as some view such programs," the Republican leader said in a July 24 speech to the US Senate.

"They are tools with which we advance our own foreign policy objectives. Helping the Burmese military to reform is in our interest but it cannot be done through mere exhortation. It needs to be done through training and regular contact with the highest professional military standards."

Farmers transferred to distant prisons

MAUNG ZAW

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FARMERS who have been jailed for leading a campaign to plough confiscated land in Sagaing Region have been transferred to distant prisons, relatives say.

Residents in Kanbalu township say nearly 400 farmers from Mayem-on, Htaut Shar Eian, Payegyvi, Ngapyaw Tine, Kha Ohn Tar and Bukone villages are facing charges, while about 90 farmers have already been sentenced and are in Shwebo Prison.

The charges stem from "plough protests" that saw them reoccupy land seized in 1997 by military-owned Myanmar Economic Corporation and Shwebo No 2 Supply and

Transport Battalion.

On July 27, 15 convicted farmers were transferred to prisons in Myingyan, Meiktila and Nyaung Oo in Mandalay Region, Pakokku in Magwe Region and Taungoo and Bago in Bago Region.

"I am not pleased that my husband has been sent away. It makes it difficult for us to visit them and the authorities should reconsider it. I want to know why they are making trouble for the families of those in jail," said the wife of one of the jailed farm leaders.

The previous military regime regularly transferred political prisoners to jails far away from their relatives but the practice appeared to have largely stopped under President U

Thein Sein's government.

"When President U Thein Sein took office, he gave a commitment that prisoners would be held in jails close to their families. This is not in accord with the president's commitment and is deliberately designed to embarrass families of jailed farmers," said local human rights activist Ko Myo Win.

An official from Shwebo Prison confirmed on July 29 that the prisoners had been transferred.

"It is true that farmers who are the alleged leaders of the protest were moved from Shwebo Prison. But we don't know why ... We did it in accordance with the instructions of our superiors."

— *Translation by Zar Zar Soe*

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(For. Allen & Gledhill LLP,

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Dated. 4th August, 2014

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Dated: 4 August 2014



IN PICTURES

PHOTO: PYAE THET PHYO

A member of a Nay Pyi Taw-based free funeral society donates blood to mark the second anniversary of the group's founding. Pay Sut Thu Myar Free Funeral Service Society members gave blood at the capital's 1000-bed public hospital on July 26. On August 3, they plan to donate rice, oil and educational materials to orphans staying at a monastery in Nay Pyi Taw's Pobbathiri township.

Govt unveils foreign scholarship program

Strict eligibility criteria might exclude some worthy applicants, MDRI official says

SANDAR LWIN



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A RECENTLY launched government scholarship program to send promising students to foreign universities may struggle to attract the best candidates due to its strict eligibility criteria, experts have warned.

President U Thein Sein launched the scholarship program on July 27 to enable Myanmar citizens to undertake further study at international universities in the 2014-15 academic year.

Upon completion of the program, they must return to work in the civil service for at least twice as long as they studied abroad, or face steep penalties.

Candidates must be Myanmar citizens and born of parents who are also both citizens, while they must also be single for all levels of study, including master and doctorate programs.

While the program has been widely welcomed, experts said the terms and eligibility criteria reflect the government's thinking on who will make the best contribution upon completing their studies abroad.

"It appears [the authorities] are worried about students staying abroad and not coming back," said U Tin Maung Than, a research coordinator at the Myanmar Development Resource Institute (MDRI).

"But I think this is just a stereotype and not based on evidence," he said. "Look at how many medical doctors who are full citizens have left. In my opinion, the level of citizenship of their parents is not a valid concern."

Excluding married men and

women from the scholarship scheme is impractical and would dramatically reduce the pool of potential candidates.

"If I had to arrange [the program], I would set a policy that gives me a broad spectrum of choice. I would not limit the potential candidates."

But writer Ko Tar, who runs the private Lumbini Academy in Yangon, said he thought the government's concerns are valid.

"If both parents are Myanmar citizens, there is a larger probability that the students will come back. Previously, some [foreigner registration card]

'I would set a policy that gives me a broad spectrum of choice. I would not limit the potential candidates.'

U Tin Maung Than
Myanmar Development Resource
Institute research coordinator

holders did not come back," he said, referring to those who took part in scholarship programs in the socialist era.

He said those who are not eligible for this program still have plenty of other opportunities to attain scholarships to study abroad.

"Each scholarship program has its own criteria and you can't necessarily compare one with another," he said. "But for outstanding young people, there are many opportunities ... They

can get something else instead."

It remains unclear how many scholarships will be awarded, which universities recipients will be able to attend and what the total cost of the program is.

The scholarships will be awarded by a selection board, although the government has not revealed who will sit on the board.

An official from the Minister for Education's Office said the scholarships could be awarded to study any subject and will cover the entire cost of a recipient's tuition fees, as well as accommodation, travel and food expenses.

"The application form just asks which subject the candidate is interested in studying. All subjects are eligible," said the official.

Public servants will be allowed to apply with the permission of their ministry but will not receive special treatment.

"Those who are best qualified will receive the scholarships," the official said.

The scholarship program covers undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Undergraduate applicants must be 16 to 20 years old and have achieved at least 500 marks on their matriculation exams or equivalent, or GCE "A" Levels. Graduates of any age can apply for scholarships to cover master and doctorate studies.

Scholarship recipients must sign a pledge to return to Myanmar and work in the civil service for twice the length of their study period, and those who fail to do so will have to pay three times the cost of their scholarship in compensation.

Application forms are available at all universities, degree colleges and colleges, and should be returned no later than August 30.



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"Thank you for inviting me to attend this seminar which has been very helpful for me in terms of understanding Myanmar's outlook."

Mr. Andrew Chen Hsi Bin,
CFO, Namchow China Group



"We received valuable information and clear concepts regarding Myanmar's recent investment circumstances. The speakers revealed many good points which will be important references and guidelines for our future strategies in Myanmar."

Mr. Ni Chih-Hao,
Vice President, Financial Division, Vedan Vietnam Enterprise Corp.



Views

Singapore: the good, the bad and the sad



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SITTING in a pleasant watering hole last week, no fewer than three people assured me that the media in Singapore is the most heavily censored in the region.

After listening in silence, while other bar flies chimed in with robust concurrence, it became impossible not to interject a note of reality.

Yes, the coverage of domestic politics in the Singapore press is controlled and partisan, though far less than it once was. However, its reportage of foreign affairs is impartial and unsurpassed by other regional publications.

The reason is not hard to discern: The *Straits Times*, Singapore's flagship newspaper, has staff correspondents based around the region and even farther afield, in Beijing, Tokyo, Delhi and Washington.

So, instead of merely reading wire copy and secondhand accounts from the *New York Times* or the *Guardian*, the paper's firsthand reportage includes perceptions and sensibilities of those who know this region.

Let me now disclose that I once worked for the *Straits Times*, as bureau chief in Washington and Hanoi, and that only one of my stories was ever killed – although some were provocative and not wholly pro-Singapore.

Modern Singapore is undeniably prosperous – but it always was.

So, yes, domestic coverage is flawed, but foreign reportage is excellent. In many ways, that discordant paradox sums up the island republic itself: It's never quite what it seems to be.

Recently, there was an attempt to illustrate this in a couple of articles in the *Globalist*, an online publication, based in Washington, whose editor-in-chief, Stephan Richter, I knew when living there.

Richter's views bore an intellectual veneer that had an outside chance of being validated sometime after the Antichrist arrives. He reminded me of the comic definition of a globalist: a man who puts goldfish farts in a spirit level.

That said, the *Globalist* stories about Singapore are worth reading because they capture its strange yin-yang dichotomy, especially last month's article entitled "Dazzling Singapore's Deep Contradictions".

Its author, John West, first notes the things that always impress first-time visitors: the MRT subway system, lavish hotels like the Fullerton and the Raffles, the giant Singapore

Eye Ferris wheel, spiffy Marina Bay and Sentosa Island and their huge new casinos.

He does not contrast these with "the four floors of whores" at Orchard Towers, or with down-and-dirty Desker Road or Geylang. Nor does he mention that the Singapore Eye is bankrupt and that the casinos are bringing all manner of strife.

But he does rightly note that "scratching below the surface reveals a system struggling for survival".

The fact is that there is something rotten in the state of Singapore and it is not the smell of durians; it is the exhaust of an administration led by the long-ruling and now tired and stale People's Action Party (PAP).

West is also correct when he says that after modern Singapore's founding father, Lee Kuan Yew – now 90 – kicks the bucket, "the loss of moral authority and historical legitimacy will test his successors".

Indeed, it is already doing that and they are not scoring highly in the test.

But when West goes on to voice support for the conspiracy theory put out by the Australian academic Michael Barr in his book *The Ruling Elite of Singapore*, he dilutes his argument and puts himself on the level of those misguided bar flies.

For Barr's claim that the system of rule in Singapore is "a deliberate project initiated and managed by Lee Kuan Yew, designed to empower himself and his family" is a tad over the top, to put it diplomatically.

So, too, are the comments in another *Globalist* article, "The upright and welcoming jewel of Southeast Asia", by Guy Pfeffermann, which sadly regurgitates many now discredited myths about the city state. Writing that it is "spotlessly clean", for instance, merely indicates that Pfeffermann can never have walked the side streets of Lee's former constituency in Chinatown and Tanjong Pagar before 9am.

But the most regrettable flaw in the *Globalist* articles, as in many others, is their repetition of the canard that Lee's government "turned a poverty-stricken swamp into the most prosperous nation in South-east Asia".

Modern Singapore is undeniably prosperous – but it always was. Take a look at the many YouTube videos of the pre-Lee era city in the 1940s and 50s.

It was a thriving entrepôt, with modern boulevards and hotels, a bustling harbour and major airport, and many banks and company HQs. These all made Singapore the region's financial hub and tourist mecca.

Poverty-stricken swamp? That still-parroted PAP claim, in the immortal words of HL Mencken, "is rumble and bumble, flap and doodle, balder and dash".

More and more Singaporeans know it and know that the PAP has brought them a kind of affluent social schizophrenia in a plush and glitzy dentist's waiting room.

Yes, it's comfortable and everyone's smiling and trying to look happy, but pain and discomfort surely lie ahead.

That contrapuntal situation, aside from giving Singapore's media a strong pro-and-con flavour, also leads to the high suicide rates – and the strong yearning to emigrate.



Myanmar Peace Center official U Hla Maung Shwe (right) talks to an ethnic leader at peace talks in April. Photo: Thiri

Is this the world's wordiest ceasefire?



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AT 20 pages, with seven chapters and about 120 different points, it's hard not to agree with the international conflict resolution expert who recently called Myanmar's draft nationwide ceasefire agreement as the world's lengthiest ceasefire deal.

Negotiating parties have spent the past nine months coming up with the current version of the agreement. At the beginning of the talks there were several different drafts. It took some time for negotiators to consolidate these into a single document, a feat achieved in April.

The nationwide ceasefire agreement is supposed to be a ceasefire text. To me, it is really more of a political document, and this may explain why it has taken some time to get to where we are now.

The Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), which is negotiating on behalf of 16 armed ethnic groups, has been meeting again in Laiza – the Kachin Independence Organisation headquarters – in recent days. The next round of talks with the Myanmar government is expected to take place in Yangon sometime in August.

As early as March this year, the Myanmar Armed Forces, or Tatmadaw, stated that it wanted to sign the ceasefire agreement before August 1. Through this, military leader showed their commitment to peace. Given the current situation, however, that objective will not be realised.

The nature of the conflict and negotiations, which involve multiple stakeholders, is such that no one actually knows when the talks can be concluded. Frustration sometimes tends to supersede patience and perseverance. But all groups have little choice but to remain patient and focus on reaching agreement.

Frustration aside, all parties are now unofficially aiming for a September deadline – which to me is very realistic – with the probable commencement of the political dialogue in January 2015.

But let's take a glance at the agreement, and see both what it contains and what remains to be negotiated.

As in any agreement, it starts out with a preamble with a pledge aimed at achieving durable peace based on equality and dignity. There is also a commitment to working collaboratively, transparently and accountably toward peace.

The first chapter is about basic principles. Here, all sides are to agree on union, rather than secession, and respect of sovereignty. Other key basic principles include a commitment to peaceful dialogue rather than war, inclusiveness and recognition of diversity, and establishment of pledges toward federalism rooted in multi-party democracy.

The second chapter focuses on the aims and objectives of the agreement, including the long-awaited political dialogue process and a ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

The third chapter deals directly with ceasefire issues. It talks about joint ceasefire monitoring mechanisms, troop relocations, freedom of movement without weapons for troops, freedom of movement for civilians, protection of civilians and humanitarian assistance. One word that is often repeated here is collaboration.

The fourth chapter is an agreement to draw up codes of conduct once the agreement is signed, which is a crucial step for strengthening ceasefires. Without these and the joint ceasefire monitoring, it would be impossible to maintain an effective ceasefire.

The next chapter focuses on political guarantees and the holding of a political dialogue. It sets out the key steps toward peace, starting with the nationwide ceasefire agreement, followed by the development of the framework for political dialogue, which is the basis on which political dialogue will be implemented.

The deadlines for this chapter are ambitious. It says the framework for political dialogue must be jointly developed within 60 days of the signing of the ceasefire agreement and political dialogue must commence within 90 days. In some other countries it has taken anywhere from four months to a year to develop a similar framework. In order to make the deadline feasible, stakeholders have begun informal

consultations on the framework in parallel with ceasefire negotiations.

The sixth chapter is about transitional arrangements and future plans. One of the most important agreements will be the suspension of the Unlawful Associations Act for all signatories to the agreement, which has been a thorn in the side of the peacemaking efforts.

Chapter 7 – the final chapter – deals with the official language, validity and signing of the agreement.

How much remains to be finalised? After several rounds of negotiations, both sides have agreed in principle on 75 percent of the text. The remaining 25pc therefore needs revisiting.

The majority of the outstanding issues are in the chapters dealing with the basic principles and transitional arrangements. Some others concern political guarantees in the draft. There are also some 20 to 30 words to be defined or redefined in the agreement, such as "federalism", "federal army", "revolution", "union" and "existing" – as in "existing laws" – just to name a few.

Despite some reservations and misconceptions, all sides have indicated that they will sign the agreement. It is for this reason that the negotiations have been given such prominence.

The purposes of the ceasefire are crystal clear. In October 2013, I wrote, "The NCA is a pragmatic attempt to end all hostilities in what has been a horribly destructive war. It will affirm the commitment of all armed groups, including the Tatmadaw, to peace and to the peaceful settlement of problems that confront Myanmar. It is a chance for political leaders on all sides to leave a legacy of peace – a legacy sorely lacking in Myanmar – for generations to come."

These are crucial political considerations and objectives for all stakeholders. Aside from these, the nationwide ceasefire agreement contains all the right language, attitude and commitment for peace. Importantly for ethnic armed groups, it does not force them to give up their weapons or territory if they sign the agreement. Even at first glance, then, the agreement is not a bad deal.

Aung Naing Oo is associate director of the Peace Dialogue Program at the Myanmar Peace Center. The opinions expressed here are his personal views.

Taking on Muslim-owned media



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COMMUNAL, or religious, violence started breaking out in 2012, shortly after President U Thein Sein's government took office. Rather than a fight between two groups of different faiths, it is more like a minority is being terrorised. This has been accurately reflected in much of the reporting on the violence and the international community in particular has spoken with one voice on the issue. During his visit to Asia in May, President Barack Obama also highlighted the persecution of Muslims. This is the bitter but indisputable truth.

While many have criticised the manipulators behind the scenes, nobody has come out with evidence showing that the government has been involved. There have, however, been accusations that it has encouraged those spreading hatred and inciting violence, and even deliberately turned a blind eye to those instigating riots.

The recent arrest of journalists at *Bi Mon Te Nay* might appear to be a violation of media, rather than religious, freedom. However, in this case it is both, because the owners are Muslim. The arrests have cast further doubt over whether the government and Ministry of Home Affairs are involved in oppressing minorities of different faiths.

In recent weeks, the ministry's Special Branch (SB) police summoned some journal publishers and editors and questioned their financial dealings. It was

widely condemned by local journalists, who argued it was a threat aimed at the media. They also questioned whether it was in line with the law for SB rather than the Bureau of Special Investigation to handle such an investigation.

Mon Te Nay and *Bi Mon Te Nay*, two journals with the same ownership, were included in the investigation. The police questions mainly focused on whether they have received financial support from international Islamic organisations, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation or local Muslim businessmen. The two journals denied the accusations.

But others see it differently. Ko Ye Min Oo, an information officer at an organisation that calls itself National Political Watch Group, was quoted in the *Myanmar Herald* on July 11 as saying that some publications are "giving undue prominence to different nationalities".

He said his group had collected data that shows about four or five online and print media groups have received financial support from Islamic organisations such as the OIC. However, he said, "We don't need to identify them so we just released an announcement discussing the issue generally and urging the Union Government to scrutinise these organisations."

The National Political Watch Group comprises laypeople and some monks, including former political prisoner Shwe Than Zin Ko Win Maw and the monks from Magwe Monastery who organised the campaign against telecoms operator Ooredoo.

Its accusations are very frightening – but are bereft of strong evidence. If the group was so sure it was right, it would publicly state the names of these publications. Despite the lack of strong accusations, it could have a significant effect on those who have been accused.

And that is what we have seen. *Bi Mon Te Nay's* editorial team was



President U Thein Sein delivers a speech at Yangon University. Photo: Boothee

arrested by SB on July 7 under the Emergency Provisions Act, the same day as President U Thein Sein gave a speech about the Mandalay conflict warning that the government would take legal action against publications that fan the flames of conflict. *Bi Mon Te Nay* had reported an announcement from the Movement for Democracy Current Force on its cover under the headline "Public elected Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic democratic forces as an interim government". SB said this article was designed to synchronise with the day that the MDCF planned to stage a protest.

Bi Mon Te Nay was not the only publication to print articles along these lines. It was, however, the only one to face legal action.

When they appeared in court on July 22, those who were arrested by SB were not allowed to speak. But U San Tin, husband of *Bi Mon Te Nay's*

publisher, and designer Ko Zwal were questioned. Again, this focused mainly on supposed financial links to both internal and external Islamic organisations.

It is very clear why SB arrested the journalists. Though it was ostensibly for their reporting on the MDCF announcement, actually SB targeted the publication for supposed financial dealings with Islamic organisations. That's why SB later made such an effort to also catch the owner of the publication, Ko Kyaw Min, even though he doesn't have any direct connection to the newsroom or editorial decisions.

In this case, the performance of the SB officers was unusually impressive. Ko Kyaw Min and his wife, Daw Ei Ei San, along with their two children and Ko Yin Min Tun, were detained in Mae Sot and finally handed to SB by Thai police. Recent reports say Daw Ei Ei San and their two children are now at home.

On July 20, presidential adviser U Nay Zin Latt wrote an article in the *Democracy Today* newspaper citing the announcement of the National Political Watch Group. When even the president's adviser is airing these accusations that are based on flimsy evidence, it has to raise doubts about the sincerity of the president.

"It is expected that the authorities could reveal surprising true facts [about the case] soon," he wrote. "Now authorities have investigated officials from that journal. This is a risky gamble and it is sure that the potential upside is not going to be small."

Mon Te Nay, *Bi Mon Te Nay* and other Islamic publishers entered the media industry after pre-publication censorship was lifted in August 2012.

But they are little different from any other publication. *Mon Te Nay* and *Bi Mon Te Nay* have separate editorial teams and most of their staff are Buddhists. Like other newspapers, they regularly publish news in favour of the opposition, especially Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, while criticising the government. This is not unusual.

But the two journals also printed translations of international news articles about Muslims in Rakhine State and communal violence that has broken out in Myanmar. When they reported on Rakhine, they used the term "Rohingya", in line with international media, instead of the Bengali that dominates among Myanmar publications. They would also translate and publish brief news about international Islamic issues. That's all.

Both journals have stopped publishing now.

The motives and desires of the Ministry of Home Affairs, SB and presidential adviser U Nay Zin Latt have become clear. It is not hard to see whether this case is about publishing a report on the MDCF or oppressing a religious minority. They couldn't conceal it for too long. – Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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Business

Campaign aims to snare tax dodgers

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TAX dodgers are being warned that authorities will begin a crackdown later this month.

An anti-tax avoidance campaign will be launched in August and announced in state-run newspapers in a bid to increase the Ministry of Finance's revenue generation by 20 percent for the 2014-15 fiscal year, said Internal Revenue Department director of the Companies Circle Tax Office U Tin Tun Naing.

"The action plan calls for severe charges [for dodgers] following the public announcements," he said.

A tax advisory board recently found 20 percent of Yangon's enterprises in industrial areas - or 400 of the total 2000 enterprises - paid no tax last year, while many others are thought to have paid less than they actually owed.

Tax authorities in Yangon Region will work with the Yangon City Development Committee - who handle local business registrations - and Ministry of Home Affairs to launch the crackdown and chase tax avoiders, according to a notice.

At the most severe end, tax dodgers who still claim innocence despite being convicted could be sent to prison from three to seven years, and have their businesses closed.

U Tin Tun Naing said tax policies formerly were designed to levy penalties of 10pc for those who unintentionally failed to pay taxes and 50pc on those who failed intentionally, but the increased measures are warranted to deal with the problem. Some businesspeople had been taking advantage of IRD's flexibility, and its weakness in staff capacity and technology, he added.

"IRD has compassion for people who make little revenue, but now we are going to imitate international practices," he said. "Reforming the laws is not the main way to raise revenues - but a serious action plan will be effective."

About 8200 of 20,000 registered firms nationwide did not pay tax in the 2013-14 fiscal year, though many of those are simply inactive, he said. However, others are used for social stature.

"If someone's son wants to get married, and they want to put 'managing director' on the name in the invitation cards, they register a company that doesn't do anything," he said.

Proof that taxes are paid are part of requirements to extend business registration, but often companies negotiate with township authorities to avoid paying much of their taxes, using methods such as showing artificially low profits on their financial statements.

Businesspeople told *The Myanmar Times* that there are lots of tax avoidance methods, though there are some solutions as well.

U Soe Tun, a rice exporter and managing director of Farmer Auto Sales Centre, said traders cannot easily avoid paying taxes if they use banks for all of their activities.

"We want everyone to follow the rules and pay taxes," he said.

U Soe Tun added that tax officers should actively visit companies in the pursuit of tax dodgers, in a similar manner to sales and marketing shops.



Farmers in Yangon Region's Twante township work in their fields. Photo: AFP

Landowners join rural exodus



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BIG cities are luring small and medium-scale farm owners to sell their land and follow labourers in pursuit of higher incomes.

Some 90 percent of landowners have 5 acres or less, according to a previous survey by the Myanmar Rice Federation, but farmers' groups say the trend is changing as smaller landowners gravitate to urban opportunities.

Farmers also complain of inadequate access to capital, being in debt most of the year and insufficient family income, and often see working in the cities as the solution, said U Thein Aung, chair of the Freedom Farmer League, a farmer-advocacy group.

Land is often snapped up by larger land-owners, meaning smaller farms are disappearing, while large farms grow in size, he added.

"Small-scale farmers have begun disappearing speedily, while the bigger farmers have become bigger and bigger," he said. "It's tough for small farmers to survive with what they earn from growing rice."

One factor is the small yields of Myanmar paddy fields. While some experts peg annual rice yields at 2.5 tonnes per hectare, many farmers achieve far less, he said.

A June World Bank report on Myanmar's rice market said only Cambodia had a lower 2010-12 average yield per hectare of 2.41 tonnes, while Vietnam had highs of 5.6 tonnes.

U Thein Aung is a farmer in his own right, and has recently purchased 10 acres from his neighbours, bringing his farm to 30 acres total - though he says it is still not enough.

"I still have to struggle," he said. "My current income is no more than K300,000 a month."

"If I work only on 20 acres of land, the profit I have is not totally enough for my family and I still, now, have to struggle working on 30 acres of land to make both ends meet," said U Thein Aung.

Look landowners confirm they are feeling pressure to leave.

Bago Region medium-scale farmer U Aung Htay said he reckons about 30pc of small landowners in his area have sold their land and left in the last three years.

"Sometimes, no matter how hard a farmer works, it's impossible to make ends meet," he said.

U Aung Htay has a small business in addition to his 15 acres of land, he said. He added the business is the main reason he is able to survive financially.

"If I didn't have my business I

would also have left for the cities," he said.

Small and medium scale farmers warrant increased support, especially given the importance rice production plays in the rural economy, he said.

"When the rice price increases a little, people get annoyed, but if the

'Small-scale farmers have begun disappearing speedily, while the bigger farmers have become bigger.'

U Thein Aung

Freedom Farmer League chair

price for tea or snacks increases, nobody notices," he said.

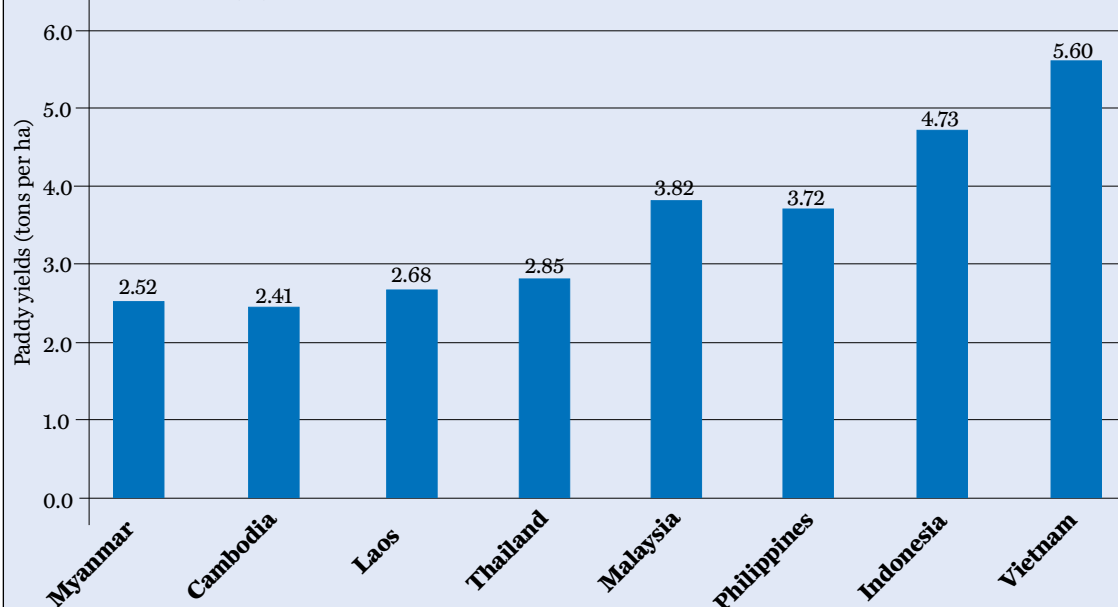
Myanmar Farmer Association chair U Soe Tun said that mechanisation is the future for farmers.

The movement of labourers and small and medium landowners to urban areas will likely continue, and only mechanisation will allow production to continue growing, he said.

However, he added that farmers also need access to capital to purchase the machinery, requiring a strong commitment from the government. Still, the exodus is likely to continue.

U Soe Tun points to Twante Township in Yangon Region. Three years ago, he said the average farm size according to a MFA survey was about 5 acres - now it is probably closer to 30 acres. Some landowners have increased their holdings, and others have sold and left.

Paddy yields in selected ASEAN countries, 2010-2012



Source: World Bank: Myanmar Rice Export Opportunities report

Insiders contemplate banking without Standard Chartered

BUSINESS 30



Residents sell rights to low-cost housing, despite the rules

PROPERTY 34

Exchange Rates (August 1 close)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1308	K1309
Malaysia Ringitt	K305	K306
Singapore Dollar	K782	K786
Thai Baht	K30	K31
US Dollar	K971	K973

Agreements inked for onshore blocks

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MYANMA Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) signed contracts for four onshore blocks on July 30 after several months' delay, according to a statement from the Ministry of Energy.

The four contracts are the first of the 10 production sharing contracts (PSCs) and three improved petroleum recovery contracts that need to be signed before exploration can begin on the blocks.

The Ministry of Energy held a tender for 16 onshore blocks, with the winners announced in October 2013. However, the agreements needed to be signed before exploration and production could begin on the blocks.

'[We will] further leverage our 18-year track record of rehabilitating mature fields in Myanmar.'

U Moe Myint
MPRL chief executive

State-owned MOGE finally inked four of the much-delayed agreements on July 30. Two of the agreements were improved petroleum recovery contracts with British Virgin Island-registered MPRL E&P and Myanmar Petroleum Exploration and Production (MPEP), which are both part-owned by prominent Myanmar oil and gas businessperson Michael Moe Myint.

The two other signed agreements

are production sharing agreements headed by Italian firm Eni.

MPEP is Eni's local partner in two blocks.

The companies must now conduct environmental and social impact assessments in their respective blocks within six months, the statement said.

The firms also need Myanmar Investment Commission approval to proceed after completing the assessments.

"The companies will cooperate with local authorities to develop the regions," MOGE's statement said.

MPRL chief executive officer U Moe Myint welcomed the signing of the contracts in a follow-up statement. He said, "The award and signing of Blocks IOR-4 and IOR-6 now enables us to further leverage our 18-year track record of rehabilitating mature fields in Myanmar."

MPRL will conduct a number of activities on the sites in the next 12 months, including pilot programs in enhanced oil recovery, production acceleration and further exploration drilling activities, as well as working on its environmental and social impact assessments.

MPRL has managed the Mann field since 1996 in a joint venture with MOGE.

MOGE will also receive \$26.01 million after having the four agreements signed, the ministry statement said.

MOGE will have the right to purchase 15 to 25pc of the share for each block when production starts. Another 5pc of production will be transferred to MOGE as research and development fee according to the contract, with Myanmar receiving 83pc of profit from every onshore block in the production stage.

Italy-based Eni officials had not returned requests for comment as of deadline.



An Asian Wings airplane sits on the tarmac. Photo: AFP

Competition grounds ANA, Asian Wings deal

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A PLANNED partnership between All Nippon Airways and a private Myanmar airline, Asian Wings, has been cancelled because of concerns over the viability of the project, the two sides announced on July 30.

The two airlines signed a partnership agreement in August 2013 under which ANA, Japan's largest airline group, was to pay US\$25million for a 49 percent stake in Asian Wings. It was touted as the first deal between an international airline and a domestic carrier and the ensuing joint venture would have had 10 Airbus A320 aircraft in operation by 2018.

However, Asian Wings confirmed

that ANA was later put off by the small size of the domestic market and strong competition from more than half-a-dozen other domestic carriers.

"It is true that ANA cancelled the deal because the market is too small and competition is getting high. There are now 10 local airlines," said Asian Wings chief executive officer U Kyi Win.

The decision was taken after ANA conducted a market survey following the signing of the agreement, he said, adding that Asian Wings is now on the lookout for other partners.

"We are losing [money] this monsoon season but we look forward to another foreign partnership in the future. To date we have invested about \$25 million in our airline."

ANA indicated in a statement announcing the end of the deal that it had sought to change the terms of the original arrangement and Asian

Wings had refused to budge.

"Competition between new and old airlines in Myanmar has intensified. It brings rapid changes in environment calling into a question the assumptions made at the time of original decision," said a Travel Daily Asian report, quoting ANA's statement.

"Ultimately negotiations for capital participation with Asian Wings were unable to reach an agreement and the investment plan was cancelled as a result," it said.

Asian Wings Airways was registered in September 2010 as a Myanmar-owned private airline. Investors are said to include air ticketing agency Sun Far and tycoon U Tay Za, owner of rival Air Bagan.

Asian Wings launched its flights in early 2011 and services 13 domestic destinations with two aircraft.

U Kyi Win denied the airline has any links to U Tay Za.

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Foreign fuel tender to come in October

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FOREIGN firms will be likely be invited to compete to form a joint venture to distribute fuel in October, said Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPE) director U Myint Zaw.

Private fuel importing has been allowed since 2010, but foreign firms have so far been prevented from setting up shop. The successful firm in the joint venture with state-owned MPPE will first be invited to update 12 state-owned petrol stations as a first step, then move into expanding locations, he said.

"There are no limits for the foreign partner after we have signed the joint venture," said U Myint Zaw.

The three main reasons to invite a partner are to improve quality, quantity and price of imported fuel.

"These are the challenges we face right now," he said. "We want competition to improve the market quality."

The Ministry of Energy was once a main petrol vendor in the country with over 260 stations, but divested all but 12 of its stations as part of the post-2010 reform process. There are about 1012 privately owned station in the country at present.

The ministry is also planning to take action against petrol stations that do not meet standards and regulations.

Thai bank joins SME program

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THAILAND'S Kasikorn Bank has inked a deal to provide loans to small and medium enterprises, aiming to kickstart businesses that historically have seen little credit.

The Thai bank will provide an undecided amount in loans to local banks for on-lending to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in a program partly under the auspices of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

The program's first phase will see small business receive between K300 and K500 million in loans, said UMFCCI vice president U Zaw Min. Businesspeople will be offered the loans through five government and non-government banks, including SMIDB and CB Banks.

SMEs have received increased interest in recent years from international institutions. SMIDB in particular had previously received its financing mostly through state-run banks, but some foreign institutions have increasingly cooperated through providing lending and expertise.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is conducting a survey to compose a list of best practices to provide loans and interest rates.

UMFCCI has also signed up other foreign corporations and technical advisors to the program, including Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Bank.

Kasikorn and Sumitomo Mitsui are also among the 25 foreign banks still vying for licences to set up shop in Myanmar this year. There are three other Thai banks and two other Japanese banks in the hunt.

Trade finance plans stalled



ZAW HTIKE

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CB Bank is keen to start a program where the Asian Development Bank (ADB) guarantees some of its trade finance lending, but is still waiting for higher-level approval, said CB managing director U Pe Myint.

Trade financing is in its infancy in Myanmar, with few loans being given for trade, generally leaving exporters and importers to pay at the same time as shipment.

Rather than paying immediately, many businesses would prefer to import and export through a letter of credit system, where a bank guarantees the seller of goods will receive its payment from the buyer on time. The bank is then on the hook if the buyer fails to pay, but by having this arrangement the exporter is able to ship products before receiving payment.

"Normally foreign banks do not accept offers for letter of credit transfers from CB Bank because they don't know it well," said U Pe Myint.

The agreement with the ADB will see the development bank guarantee CB's letter of credit for trade, making CB's letters of credit more acceptable internationally, he said. He added the

A container ship sails past Bohtataung port. Photo: Staff



ADB will step in if CB is unable to meet its trade obligations.

However, the program is being held up on the ADB side, as it waits for government approval to proceed, said U Pe Myint.

Ministry of Commerce trade department director U Than Aung Kyaw said the letter of credit system has been approved since May 2013 for imports and only recently for exports.

He added the ministry is on the lookout for firms undervaluing their shipments when applying for import or export licences in order to avoid paying taxes.

Businesspeople told *The Myanmar Times* they are keen to take part in more sophisticated trade financing arrangements.

Rice trader U Soe Tun said improved financing will make it easier

to export, but not fully remove all problems. Current trading often ties up large amounts of capital, making it difficult to expand business, he said.

"Even if Myanmar traders use the letter of credit money transfer system, however, trades will continue with artificial prices through Singapore," he said. "There are so many problems that still need to be solved to promote Myanmar's foreign trade."



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Eyeing the most popular electronics

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ROBUST quality is crucial for domestic electronic consumers, say shop owners.

"People coming to our shop are mostly looking for quality. If they see something that's affordable, they buy it," said U Saw Moo Ler Htoo, assistant manager at Technoland computer sales.

Buyers of most electronic rarely upgrade, he said. They often purchase products with plans to use them until the end of the device's lifespan – though mobile phones are the exception.

Chinese firm Huawei currently dominates sales at the Technoland shop, with Samsung in second by volume, he said.

One reason is that customers are keen to change their handsets at a minimum of once a year, meaning they need affordable products.

Samsung is the second-most popular due to its brand value.

Although U Saw Moo Ler Htoo has a relatively small sample size at his shop, his findings are backed up by a survey conducted by local firm Catalyst and its international partner GfK.

The firms' recent retail audit in Myanmar says Huawei is the most popular brand of phone and people are price-conscious when buying electronics.

GfK Thailand managing director Craig Griffin said that more mature markets such as Singapore are reaching saturation for electronics, but Myanmar offers lots of long-term growth opportunities.

Smaller retailers will likely continue expanding into chains, he said.

"The concentration of retail outlets will take place over a period of 10 to 20 years," he said. In Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia the top three to five electronics operators are local firms that started as independent shops.

"The opportunity is there for the local guy to become huge," he said.

GfK Asia regional retail director Lawrence Yeow said the aim of its recent audit into electronics is to assist businesses with making proper decisions.

The firm also called its work an audit rather than survey, as it collected sales data rather than simply surveying companies, he added.

Interesting electronic facts

- Huawei is the most popular smartphone maker
- 50pc of desktop computer market is under K500,000
- Samsung and LG have 50pc of washing machine market share – though Panasonic does alright too
- Phone sales strongest in post-Thingyan period
- December is peak sales time for most electronic such as flat-screen TVs, digital cameras and CRT-TVs
- ACER and Lenovo have 80pc market share for desktops
- 84 pc of all phones sales are in Yangon

Source: Catalyst and GfK Consumer Electronic retail audit

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Dated: 4th August, 2014

ANALYSIS

Taking stock of StanChart's absence

Experts point to trouble in London to explain the bank's hesitance in Myanmar



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SOME local bankers are linking Standard Chartered's decision not to proceed in the race for a Myanmar banking licence to reports of a possible management shakeup at its United Kingdom headquarters.

Industry observers said the United Kingdom-based bank has the most international reach of the 42 banks with a Myanmar representative office. However, Standard Chartered did not appear on a July 15 list by the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) revealing the names of 25 banks participating in the second phase of attempts to get a licence.

Myanmar plans to allow between five and 10 foreign banks to open representative offices this year, though they will face restricted licences partly in a bid to foster growth in local banks.

While its moves locally have been closely watched, the firm is also drawing international headlines over a rumoured change in leadership.

"The board of Standard Chartered notes rumours in some media outlets on succession planning for the group chief executive, and chairman," said a statement issued to the London stock market on July 31.

"The board wants to be absolutely clear that it is united in its support of both [chief executive] Peter Sands

and [chair] Sir John Peace, and the management team, in delivering the refreshed strategy, restoring the bank to profitable growth and delivering returns for our shareholders."

The Financial Times had reported that Mr Peace himself is weighing a succession plan under which long-serving Mr Sands would be replaced, and may himself resign once a new chief executive joins.

Joe Barker-Bennett, a consultant at Myanmar's Tun Foundation bank, said Standard Chartered's decision to withdraw from the Myanmar licensing race is a reflection of the concerns over leadership at its London headquarters.

"[Myanmar] is totally unimportant to the decision making [at Standard Chartered] and the two guys at the top of the tree. Why [Standard Chartered has] ducked out of here is they need to put in US\$75 million worth of capital for which they will get very little return for the foreseeable future," he said.

Mr Barker-Bennett said rather than allowing in foreign banks – who would be inclined to push at the bounds of their restricted licences – it would be better to relax restrictions on local banks in areas such as interest rates and what constitutes acceptable collateral.

"Do you want your banking industry controlled, and the decisions made by activist shareholders and analysts in London, or by people who are actually on the ground, understand the economy and are working on it on a day-to-day basis?" he said.

Other local bankers claimed it

will be difficult to postpone the introduction of foreign banks.

U Phyo Aung, managing director at Ayeyarwady bank, said that while some local bankers oppose foreign banks, Ayeyarwady has taken the view that they are coming and so it is best to prepare.

He added that it would have been useful to learn from Standard Chartered, as it has lots of global experience – including in Myanmar many years ago, when its predecessor Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China was active in Yangon.

Standard Chartered's head of corporate affairs for Thailand and Greater Mekong, Raymond Francis, said that the bank has decided not to apply for an onshore branch licence at present due to commercial reasons.

"We will seek to establish a branch in Myanmar when and where appropriate and when it makes commercial sense to do so," he said.

Central Bank of Myanmar director Daw May Toe Win declined to comment on Standard Chartered's absence, other than pointing to the July 15 press release listing banks through to the next part of the process.

Meanwhile, UK ambassador to Myanmar Andrew Patrick said the decision by Standard Chartered to withdraw was their own, not the result of any UK policy or request.

"They are an independent commercial entity, and entitled to make their own decision," he said, adding the introduction of foreign banks will increase foreign investment in the country. – *Additional reporting Aye Thidar Kyaw and AFP*

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BEIJING

China graft probe to help economy

CHINESE President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption drive has breached the highest ranks of power. The most important beneficiary may be the economy.

This week's Communist Party announcement of a probe into former security chief Zhou Yongkang shows Xi has amassed enough backing to take down a top figure and his network of supporters. That greater clout can now be deployed to embed policy shifts that reduce the state's role in the economy and help sustain growth, said BNP Paribas SA and Bank of America Corporation analysts.

Implementation of the broadest economic reforms since the 1990s has been gradual since plans including opening state-owned enterprises to more competition were unveiled after a November conclave of party leaders. Mr Xi is trying to sustain expansion amid a property slump and rising bad debts in the world's second-largest economy, which is projected to grow this year at the slowest pace since 1990.

"This is definitely beneficial for SOE reform - it won't be hard to drive it anymore," said Chen Xingdong, chief China economist at BNP Paribas in Beijing. The Zhou investigation signals Xi has consolidated power, as it's "not the decision of a single person," Chen said.

The probe escalates an 18-month campaign against corruption to the

highest level in the party's 65 years in power, representing a tightening grip on power by Mr Xi. Mr Zhou was a member of the party's most powerful Politburo Standing Committee until November 2012, when Mr Xi took over as party chief.

The Politburo discussed the economy on July 29, the same day the Zhou probe was announced, saying after a meeting that "more effort is needed to maintain steady economic growth" and that the country must balance reform, development and stability in the second half, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

Reforms will concentrate on investment management, simplifying administrative-approval procedures and opening monopolies to competition, Xinhua said.

China earlier this month picked six SOEs, including State Development and Investment Corporation and Cofco Corporation, for trials that would allow more-independent business management, freer hiring of top executives or mixed-ownership structures.

"All reform roads lead to and through SOE reform," said Stephen Green, head of Greater China research at Standard Chartered Plc in Hong Kong. Leveling the playing field between SOEs and private companies in competitive parts of the economy



Then-Chinese state councilor and minister of public security, Zhou Yongkang (centre), talks to then-President Hu Jintao (left) and Premier Wen Jiabao (right) at a 2003 Beijing meeting. Photo: AFP

such as real estate, steel and auto production "will have a huge impact on productivity and job generation," Mr Green said.

The more than 100 companies directly controlled by the central government accounted for a quarter of industrial output in 2011, according to a report by Fan Gang, head of the Na-

several people with connections to Zhou and China's oil industry, where Mr Zhou spent three decades and rose to lead state-owned China National Petroleum Corp. in the 1990s. Mr Zhou later oversaw hundreds of thousands of police and paramilitary forces with an annual budget of more than \$100 billion.

Shares of PetroChina Co, the listed unit of CNPC, rose 3.1pc in Shanghai on July 29, the most in five months.

"With some high-profile arrests under its belt, we believe the focus of the new government can start to shift from the anti-graft campaign to real institutional reforms, which are badly needed for China's long-term economic health," Lu Ting, Bank of America's head of Greater China economics in Hong Kong, said in a note.

The anti-corruption drive has hurt some areas of the economy, reducing demand for luxury goods and hospital-ity services. It may have also played a role driving real estate prices lower by discouraging officials from buying multiple properties.

While news of the Zhou probe is welcome from an economic perspective, going after additional "tigers" may increase political tensions and hurt the economy, said Xu Gao, chief economist at Everbright Securities Company in Beijing. - Bloomberg

IN BRIEF

Kerry criticises India's WTO stance
America's top diplomat told India's new Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 1 his country's position on key WTO trade talks was at odds with his desire to open up the Indian economy.

John Kerry met Mr Modi for the first time on August 1, a day after the World Trade Organization said its members had failed to agree a landmark global customs pact following India's insistence that it be allowed to stockpile food.

Mr Kerry has voiced optimism about expanding cooperation between the world's two largest democracies after Modi's right-wing government won a decisive electoral mandate. - AFP

Thai company CP opens Australia food and beverage outlets
Thailand's Charoen Pokphand Foods is planning to roll out up to 500 quick-service Thai restaurants in Australia, a market it sees as ripe for a fast-food explosion, reports said Tuesday.

The food arm of Thailand's largest agriculture-based company also plans to expand into the booming ready-to-eat meals segment as its Australian investments grow to more than Aus\$200 million (US\$188 million) over the next five years.

"The best-practice model for restaurants and franchises globally is in Australia," regional general manager Richard Lovell told The Australian newspaper ahead of opening the company's first restaurant in the country, 1000Wat, in Melbourne. - AFP

Gunmaker targeted in graft probe
US gunmaker Smith & Wesson was hit with \$2 million in fines last week for bribing officials in Indonesia, Pakistan and other countries to gain sales deals.

The US Securities and Exchange Commission accused the company, whose handguns are popular in law enforcement and military services, of facilitating bribes of US\$11,000 worth of cash and free guns to Pakistan police officials in 2008 to obtain a supply contract.

One year later, the SEC said, Smith & Wesson employees made or authorized bribes in Indonesia to win a contract with a local police department, though the deal ultimately fell through. - AFP

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Dated: 4 August 2014

OPINION

Caution urged over a sovereign wealth fund

OLIVER GILBERT
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SWEEEPING reforms have increased the opportunity for foreign investors to develop Myanmar's 11.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 50 million barrels of crude oil, potentially worth more than US\$60 billion over the next 30 years. This anticipated influx of investment in the petroleum sector raises concerns that Myanmar should implement resource management strategies to mitigate problems generally associated with the "resource curse".

The resource curse is a paradox that refers to countries with an abundance of natural resources counterintuitively experiencing negative economic growth for a variety of reasons, including government mismanagement and declining economic competitiveness.

Among leading proposed resource management strategies is a suggestion by former World Bank Chief Economist and Nobel Prize in Economics winner Joseph Stiglitz that Myanmar should establish a sovereign wealth fund (SWF) to manage petroleum revenues.

Sovereign wealth funds are special state-owned investment funds, separate from normal national budgets, which generally use foreign exchange reserves, such as a country's petroleum profits, to achieve a variety of economic or strategic goals.

Multiple countries have established resource-funded SWFs with mixed results; however Myanmar's current political and economic landscape cannot support the creation of a responsibly managed SWF at this stage in the country's national development for three primary reasons.

Myanmar lacks basic prerequisites for establishing a well-managed SWF

According to Martin Skancke, the Director General of the Norwegian Ministry of Finance, SWFs must be funded with actual budget surpluses, otherwise assets in a SWF will not represent actual savings.

Myanmar currently maintains a budget deficit and investing in a SWF would detract from the country's ability to meet existing financial obligations. Put simpler, investing in a SWF without existing savings would be like someone borrowing from a bank to gamble at a casino.

Aside from budget surpluses, after decades of isolation, Myanmar also has very little international financial or legal management experience applicable toward creating a well-managed SWF.

Sean Turnell, an Australia-based expert on Myanmar's economy, commented in a 2012 research report that the country's economic governance is limited "to a handful of individuals skilled in policy formulation, and fewer still schooled in the attributes necessary for institution building".

Mr Turnell added that "the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have found few, if any, legally qualified ... counterparties in the Myanmar government" that can assist the drafting of laws, like SWF guiding legislation, without the potential bias of foreign consultants.

Myanmar can diversify its economy to prevent resource curse concerns without a SWF.

Resource-dependent countries that fail to diversify their economies can suffer a range of negative economic conditions, including exchange rate and commodity price stability problems. As a result, multiple petroleum-rich states aim to create economic diversification by using SWFs to make wide-ranging international investments.

Myanmar currently lacks the basic inputs, needs or governance to responsibly manage a SWF.

Nonetheless, there is wide consensus that countries should prioritise establishing domestic economic diversification over creating a financial safety net to protect against economic volatility caused by not diversifying.

Myanmar has existing options for economic diversification, including significant teak, hardwood, gemstone, beans, pulses and garment industries. In addition, tourism grew by 40 percent from 2011 to 2012 and Myanmar is currently working on a master tourism plan with the Asian Development Bank and the German-based Hans Seidel Foundation to further expand tourism infrastructure and services.

Myanmar was formerly known as the "rice bowl of the world". According to the International Rice Research Institute, the country can improve and

regain its agricultural sector's former status by expanding access to credit for farmers, increasing storage and production facilities, and improving transportation systems.

Lastly, SWF experts Ashby Monk and Adam Dixon have argued that funds, "do not offer an alternative to developing a capable and active workforce", and establishing a SWF would not increase the human capital required to build a sustainable, vibrant economy.

Myanmar lacks anti-corruption safeguards necessary to protect a SWF.

Contrary to theories that SWFs can safeguard wealth with foreign assistance, a report by Quartz said SWFs do not consistently lead to reductions of corruption in petroleum states and SWFs can serve as slush funds for additional corruption.

In fact, a survey of 2,662 investments by 29 SWFs made between 1984 and 2007 by a team of Harvard Business School (HBS) researchers found that the "political process can introduce short-run pressures on SWFs to accommodate public demands for job creation and economic stabilisation within the country" and lead to political intervention that sharply deviates from a SWF's originally stated objectives". The HBS team also found that each point of additional national corruption, rated by the International Country Risk Guide, a widely accepted metric of state corruption, creates a 10.8pc greater likelihood that countries will direct investments domestically, and perhaps away from initial fund objectives.

Given Myanmar's history of corruption, if Myanmar's leaders could successfully bias fund objectives to make domestic investments, as described above, a Myanmar SWF could be used as a seemingly legitimate way for corrupt leaders to redirect SWF "investments" towards illegitimate crony interests under the guise of domestic economic development.

Ultimately it is important for Myanmar to develop safeguards to guide the use of its petroleum wealth and maximise economic growth. However, Myanmar currently lacks the basic inputs, needs or governance to responsibly manage a SWF.

This article is an abridged version of, "Global Analytical Lessons for Evaluating a Myanmar Sovereign Wealth Fund", published in the *University of Washington's Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal*.

PARIS

BNP posts loss after giant fine

BNP Paribas bank revealed a net loss of 4.3 billion euros (US\$5.75 billion) for the second quarter on July 31, holed by charges for a record US fine for breaking sanctions against Iran, Sudan, Myanmar and Cuba.

The French bank, a leading bank in Europe, said the overall loss was also weighed down by charges for new compliance procedures to ensure that such errors do not occur again.

Shares in BNP fell in initial reaction to the results but then rallied for a slight gain of 0.06 percent to 49.91 euros by mid-afternoon trading.

The results showed the impact of the record US fine of \$8.9 billion (6.6 billion euros) after the bank pleaded guilty to the charge at the beginning of July.

But excluding such exceptional

items, net profit leapt by 23.2pc from the same figure last year to 1.9 billion euros driven by the finance and investment bank activities.

"This result reflects a very high level of commercial activity given the context which was difficult for our teams in the second quarter," manag-

BILLION

\$8.9

BNP's fine for breaking sanctions

ing director Jean-Laurent Bonnafé told a press conference, referring to turmoil over the sanctions case.

That case, which caused France to appeal for clemency to US President Barack Obama and also cost heads at the top of the BNP Paribas management, put the bank into the first quarterly loss since the collapse of US bank Lehman Brothers.

BNP Paribas, knowing that it faced heavy penalties for allowing countries to get round a US ban preventing them from doing transactions in dollars largely for trading in oil and gas, had put aside provisions of 798 million euros. In the results on July 31 it took an additional charge of 5.75 billion euros for the fine and 200 million euros for setting up new compliance procedures. — *AFP*



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Email: myanmar.office@unfpa.org

For further details, please see the vacancy announcement posted at UN billboard. No.6, Natmauk Road, Yangon and also at UNFPA website (<http://myanmar.unfpa.org>)

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THE WORLD BANK

Resource Management Officer (Vacancy # 140821)

The World Bank is seeking a Resource Management Officer to take the lead responsibility for overseeing the resource management, administration, accounting, IT, and security management functions to support Myanmar's growing program and portfolio. The positions will be based in Yangon or Naypyitaw (depending on the business need). The incumbent will work under the direct supervision of the Country Manager and the general direction the EAP Chief Administrative Officer (based in Washington DC), and ensure that the RM unit provides professional, efficient and effective services in business and resource planning, budgeting, works program planning, risk management and internal controls. The RM Officer will contribute to the integration of the country and regional strategies with unit work plans, in close collaboration with the country management team. The RM Officer will coach and mentor RM colleagues in the country offices on institutional practices and policies and appropriate analytical methodologies and tools. The RM Officer will play a key role in the evaluation of cost effectiveness and impact of the resource allocation decisions and work programs including identification of cost drivers and alternative country business priorities. This is a locally- recruited position with a 3- year renewable term appointment with extensive opportunity for career development

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities:

Financial Management of Country Office Expenses

- Responsible for effective financial management of the country offices expenses
- Business Planning and Indicators: Assists Country Office management in the formulation of staffing strategy and its resource implication; Assists in planning of expenses for day to day running of the country offices; Contributes to the development of indicators for the country office; May provide assistance in the country work program planning; In case of country office relocation or renovation, plans for capital budget;
- Cost Analysis and Effectiveness: Compiles and analyzes performance measurement data at the country office level; Measures cost effectiveness performance and proposes solutions to issues identified.
- Monitoring: Independently monitors and reviews budgets, external funding, chargeback, expenses, performance indicators etc., identifying/resolving issues, and discussing them with country office management, working groups and other RM staff; Ensures that unit has optimum cash balance to include funds management and cash flow projections; Reviews accounting transactions, reconciliation reports, open-item reports, monthly accounting reports

Financial Accounting Controls and Fiduciary Responsibilities

- Supports internal controls framework of country offices financial transactions and business operations
- Within the SAP framework establishes and coordinates specification for and implements new or enhanced country office specific reporting systems to meet management and Institutional requirements
- Works with Country Manager to ensure a strong control environment in the office, providing advice on control issues.
- Ensures that audit, quality assurance review and COSO recommendations are implemented.

Reporting, Communications and Liaison

- Proactively establishes and maintains interface with the client, internal and external. Participates in team meetings.
- Advises/liaises with staff in the country offices in order to improve knowledge and awareness with respect to budget methodologies, policies, internal control policies and procedures;
- Administers country office RM policies and procedures including guidance, advice and interpretation, and recommends solutions to managers
- Ensures compliance with specific institutional and regional guidelines through ongoing dissemination of information to the administrative team and the staff of country offices
- Provides information and first level analysis to managers and RM Officers with respect to the management of resources
- Provides support to managers and staff in choosing, accessing and interpreting management reports available in SAP and other information systems;
- Maintains consistency in the application of accounting rules and procedures, including safeguarding of cash and checks;

Team Lead Role

- Guides and supervises other RM and Administration staff on agreed processes, and coordinates the integration and consolidation of country office inputs during planning and allocation exercises;
- Exercises significant Team leadership, encourages and promotes team spirit within the RM team and coaches junior RM staff.

Selection Criteria:

- Education: A relevant Advanced Degree, preferably MA/MBA (e.g., Finance, Accounting, Business, Economics, etc.) OR a relevant Bachelor's Degree plus an internationally recognized professional accounting qualification (e.g., CPA, CA, ACCA) OR completion of the RM Board-sponsored Supplementary Education Criteria Program (SEC).
- Minimum Years of Relevant Experience: 5 years experience either in Administration, Finance or Operations at the World Bank, or in an international private or public sector setting

Details (vacancy #140821) are available in the World Bank Careers website: www.worldbank.org/careers. All applications must be submitted through this website. The World Bank Group is committed to achieving diversity in terms of gender, nationality, culture and educational background. Individuals with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. Closing date is **August 13, 2014**

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(1 Post in Yangon)

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Qualifications: The Copy Controller will be fluent in both Burmese and English, will be able to type, will be able to use computers and will take pride in keeping accurate records.

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(2 Posts in Yangon, 2 Posts in Mandalay)

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Property

Govt plan aims at tempering market

MYAT NYEIN AYE

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REALTORS say they welcome government plans to create a comprehensive policy to rein in runaway property prices.

Land values particularly in Yangon and other urban areas have been increasingly rapidly each year since the 2010 political reforms opened up the country's economy, and some analysts now say local property prices rival developed international markets like Singapore and Los Angeles.

Yet the jump in values is making it difficult for businesses to find locations to operate and for everyday people to buy their own homes, realtors said.

"Property prices are extremely high because of an inequality between supply and demand," said Shwe Kan Myae real estate agent U Khin Maung Aye.

"Even though demand is growing, the supply side is not keeping up."

Yangon City Development Commission city planning and land administration deputy head U Toe Aung said different groups of national and local government officials have worked on a comprehensive plan to cool the market since last year.

Officials hope to have the plan in place by 2015, but there are wide range of opinions complicating drafting - a total of five drafts of the plan have been finished so far, he said.

"My suggestion is that the market can be brought under control

through taxes, with vacant land facing extra taxes," he said.

U Toe Aung added there are currently no plans for hard caps on land prices.

Realtors said there are a number of ways to improve the market.

U Khin Maung Aye said the government should be more accommodating when issuing permits to build, particularly in the outskirts, and should not restrict construction based on land types.

"If they gave permission to developers to build on any type of law, and they will implement more lower-cost apartments suitable for more families," he said.

Prices even on Yangon's outskirts have rapidly risen beyond the means of many mid- and lower-income families. Realtors contacted by *The Myanmar Times* quoted a range of prices between K70 million (US\$71,795) to K250 million for a 2400-square-foot lot in the outskirts.

Presidential economic advisor U Aung Htun Thet said the focus should be on matching supply and demand to stabilise land prices.

"Part of this is the government needs to implement more and more land for development," he said.

"That's one part of controlling prices."

People need land to live, but rampant speculation has led to lots of investment in property, and little actual construction.

Action can be taken by the government in other areas, such as a strong set of laws for land and condominiums, he said. More subdued land prices would have other side effects that are beneficial for the economy.

Myanmar Real Estate Service Association executive member U Maung Aye said property investment is a strong business at the moment, so lots of people are getting involved as brokers, dealers and investors.

"People who have quite a bit of money are active in investing and buying, much more than selling," he said. As land prices get driven up, there are comparatively few people who can afford it - leaving many without the means to buy a home.

A sidecar passenger takes in the sights at Bo Ba Htoo development.
Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing



Fair-cost housing sold

Secondary market grows for low-income housing, despite government restrictions



NOE NOE AUNG

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AN active resale market for government housing projects is complicating efforts to provide affordable homes to lower-income households.

Units in government-constructed low-cost housing in North Dagon township originally cost between K20 million (US\$20,513) and K34.7 million when they were sold early in 2014, but have all climbed by a minimum of K5 million - and often much more, say realtors.

Units were offered to winners of a Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) lucky draw, who were told they could not sell the units for five years. After five years, owners had to report to YCDC and sell only with its permission.

"These rules are meant to protect against price inflation due to speculation," YCDC said in a statement.

U Khin Maung Aye, from Shwe Kan Myay real estate, said prices for the original K20 million units have reached upward of K30 million, and in some cases near K50 million.

"If the authorities do not restrict the chaotic trading in time, there'll be no benefit to the low-income people targeted," he said. "There are many people who really need a place to live and the authorities really need to

help them."

Even though there are many interested buyers, there are few sellers - as people anticipate future price climbs in the housing projects, said Galaxy real estate agent Ko Wai Linn.

North Dagon's Bo Min Yaung housing is in particular demand as it is well-designed and built, he added.

Bo Min Yaung is one of four projects in North and East Dagon built by YCDC, also including the Bo Ba Htoo housing projects in North Dagon. Units at both these projects were sold to winners of the lucky draw in early 2014.

Ko Wai Linn said there are many reasons that the draw winners want to resell their apartments.

Some cannot afford the installments, some see a way to meet unexpected expenses, while others simply do not want the property, he said.

"A few are selling because they

'A few [owners] are selling because they have financial problems ... [and] it's an easy way to make money.'

Ko Wai Linn
Area realtor

have financial problems ... [and] it's an easy way to make money to meet their difficulties."

YCDC's rules for participating in the lottery stipulated that applicants could not own another property. They also did not receive official ownership until the last installment is paid.

Applicants were also told they were not allowed to rent out the apartment, and only the applicant and their family were allowed to stay.

Yet while the secondary market is small, YCDC officials say they have no plans to crack down on it.

YCDC Building Department deputy head U Nay Win said the rules had been drawn up assuming some people would try to on-sell their apartments.

"There is no need for the committee [governing the apartments] to be too strict," he said. "During the next five years we won't be changing the rules."

Some residents told *The Myanmar Times* they are interested in selling, but want to do so quietly.

One taxi driver who requested anonymity said he will resell his property as he is unable to afford the payments.

He met the first K7 million payment, but follow-up payments are proving too expensive, he said.

"At first I dreamed of owning an apartment for my family, but later I realised I couldn't afford it," he said.

Applicants can pay either through a four-year installment plan or through bank loans.

MILLION

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The minimum price realtors say standard plots of land fetch on Yangon's outskirts - out of reach for many



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“At first I dreamed of owning an apartment for my family, but later I realised I couldn’t afford it.”

— Disappointed home owner

Drug-resistant malaria a growing worry
WORLD 44

HOUSE OF THE WEEK
Pulling up in style in Golden Valley

It's the awning that matters. It's the awning that tells *House of the Week* it's arrived at a top-notch home. And there's no better time for an awning than the height of rainy season.

After pulling up in style to this week's house, *House of the Week* was pleased to alight not in a giant puddle, which is normal this time of year, but under a sheltered overhang.

A tour of the house revealed all the high-end finishings you'd expect in a brand new, three-storey home. There are four master bedrooms, six bedrooms and a complement of a kitchen, dining room and maid room. It's a big house at 3600 square feet, with lots of space for a large family.

It boasts large, pleasant windows with lots of light, and pleasant views of trees and rooftops through Yangon. Its large veranda is a particularly pleasant



place to enjoy some time to relax, in the brief moments the rain stops.

It's a western-style home with a range of amenities including nine air conditioners. Furnishings are not complete, but rental prices are negotiable.

Located quite near downtown, it's a great location. You are paying a premium, though, but it might just be worth it to keep you out of the rain.

— Tin Yadanar Htun

- Location : Shwe Taung Kyar Lane, Bahan township
- Price : US\$10,000 per month (negotiable)
- Contact : Estate Myanmar Real Estate Agency
- Phone : 09-43118787, 09-43031699

MANILA

Philippine cult opens world's largest arena

PHILIPPINE President Benigno Aquino last week apresided over the opening of what is billed as the world's largest indoor stadium, erected by a politically influential religious sect.

The US\$175-million Philippine Arena, which can seat 55,000 people, was hailed as a showcase that will serve as a major venue for concerts and sports events as well as gatherings for its owners, the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) sect.

“You have all proven that the Filipino can

reach great heights, that we can have achievements as lofty as any in the world,” Mr Aquino said in a speech to Iglesia members at the July 28 launch.

He hailed the 15-storey structure as “the largest domed arena in the whole world”, saying its capacity was “even double that of the Staples Center in Los Angeles”, a major sporting and entertainment venue.

The Philippine Arena has a total floor area of about 99,000 square metres, or 1.065 million square feet.
— AFP



Diverted industrial land hinders development for Mandalay businesses

KHIN SU WAI
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THE Ministry of Industry is considering ways to improve access to land for businesspeople, including looking at ending speculation and housing on industrial property, said deputy industry minister U Thein Aung.

The ministry is creating a list of land granted to businesspeople, aiming to find a solution to vacant lands and plots where people have set up homes rather than businesses, before submitting the findings to the state, he said.

“If the industrial businessmen cannot perform under the rules with which they were given the land, the industrial businessmen will give their granted land to the government,” he said at a July 25 meeting in Mandalay. “We will tackle this problem smoothly.”

U Thein Aung said at a May 16 meeting that the high prices of land, driven up by speculators, is hindering business development. Some sell the property for use as housing

instead of for businesses, or let the property sit idle in hopes of selling at a higher price.

The Union government has prioritised industrial projects, with 25 different sites planned, said U Thein Aung.

Yet who owns the industrial land can be difficult to discover, as often buyers do not register the land when it changes hands, sometimes in a bid to avoid transaction taxes.

“The new government has about 20 months left [before the 2015 election],” he said. “We want to solve the problem of high land prices in this period.”

Mandalay-based officials said that much of the industrial land is lying empty, partly due to speculation.

There are 593 industrial businesses on the Mandalay Industrial Zone, though some occupy more than one 40 by 60 foot plot, said U Mg Mg Oo, secretary of the governing committee.

“We can say that only 50pc of the businesses are left,” he said.

U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, an official from the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development, said a number of industrial plots have been turned into houses and shops.

“The strict regulations for the industrial zone do not allow for private houses,” he said. U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin added that those buying and renting land must inform the zone's administrative committee.

Mandalay city has three industrial zones – zone 1, 2 and 3. Zone 1 began in 1990, zone 2 was opened in 1998 and zone 3 from 2003.

‘The strict regulations for the industrial zone do not allow for private houses.’

U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin
Housing department official

Mandalay industrial zones

	Total plots	Industrial plots	Housing plots	Warehouse plots	Vacant plots	Other
Zone 1	1758	695	551	56	445	11
Zone 2	1598	829	353	56	260	100
Zone 3	252	77	6	19	141	9

One plot measures 40 feet by 60 feet, and it is possible for a business to span several plots. Source: Mandalay Industrial Zone Governing Committee

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Reg. No. 6537/2013

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for **JANSSEN R&D IRELAND**
P. O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 4 August 2014

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P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416

Dated: 4th August, 2014

Science & Technology

Consumers react to new Ooredoo offerings



AUNG
KYAW
NYUNT

aungkyawnyunt28@gmail.com

THOUGH only a small number actually have their hands on the company's SIM card, consumers in Yangon and Mandalay already have strong opinions, both positive and negative, about Ooredoo's new services.

Both on social media and speaking to *The Myanmar Times*, many were excited about the private firm's historic entry into the market. "It's immensely exciting. Time has come when people in Myanmar can buy new shiny mobile SIM cards from a telco other than MPT," said twitter user Ko Wai Phyo Kyaw.

However, some consumers are already expressing concerns about Ooredoo's pricing scheme for internet usage. Using MPT, customers were charged K50 for every minute they were online.

Under the pricing system unveiled by Ooredoo on August 2, consumers will be charged K25 per every megabyte of data they use - a small detail



Photo: Yu Yu

that will nonetheless make using mobile internet much more expensive for consumers used to MPT.

"I like the system of MPT to collect internet charges because I am

familiar with it, and I don't understand Ooredoo's system," said U Kyaw Myo Htut, mobile phone user from Sanchaung township in Yangon. And we have to consider how much data we can use. But MPT's system is not difficult for us because we just look at minutes."

Seemingly anticipating these concerns, Ooredoo Myanmar CEO Ross Cormack used the launch event to emphasise that charging according to data usage was standard practice around the world, and that the rates being offered by Ooredoo are actually cheaper than what consumers in other Southeast Asian nations enjoy.

U Htoo Myint Naung, CEO of the Yangon-based Technomation company, agreed with Mr Cormack.

"Around the world wide, internet charges can be collect by data. So this system in line with international standard" he said.

The CEO went on to say that as internet speeds improve, MPT will likely start charging according to data usage too, as it is the most accurate measure of how much someone is using the internet.

"Collecting internet charges according to minutes is meaningless," he said.

WASHINGTON

NASA rover breaks out-of-this-world distance record

THE US space agency's Opportunity rover has now clocked more miles on Mars than any man-made vehicle to reach another celestial body, NASA said July 28.

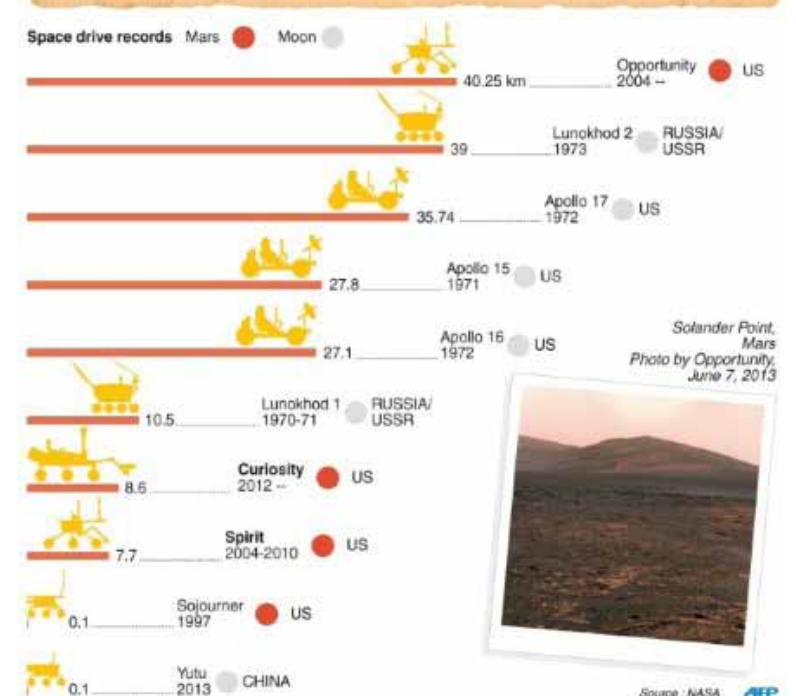
Since arriving on the Red Planet in 2004, the solar-powered robot has journeyed across 25 miles (40 kilometres) of Martian terrain.

That surpasses the previous record, held by the Soviet Union's Lunokhod 2 rover, which landed on the Moon in 1973.

"Opportunity has driven farther than any other wheeled vehicle on another world," said Mars Exploration Rover Project Manager John Callas of NASA's Jet Propulsion

Martian road trip

After taking 10 years to travel 40km NASA's Opportunity breaks the space record for wheeled vehicles



Kilometres

40

Distance travelled on Mars by the Opportunity rover since 2004

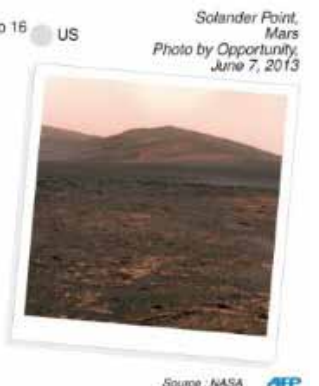
Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California.

"This is so remarkable considering Opportunity was intended to drive about 1 kilometre and was never designed for distance."

Opportunity and its twin rover, Spirit - now defunct - discovered wet environmental conditions on ancient Mars, some of which are mild enough to have been favorable for life.

Opportunity is now exploring the Endeavour Crater on Mars.

Its next-generation robotic counterpart, the Curiosity rover, launched in 2012 and is tooling around near the Gale Crater on Mars. - AFP



Source: NASA AFP

MPT announces promotion ahead of Ooredoo launch

BILL O'TOOLE
botoole12@gmail.com

IN an apparent response to the launch of new telecoms operator Ooredoo, state-owned Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) has announced a range of new promotions for the month of August that will allow MPT customers to call select family members at discounted rates.

MPT said in a statement on July 30 that the “friends and family campaign” will allow owners of MPT GSM and WCDMA cards to add up to three phone numbers that can be called at the rate of K25 a minute until August 31, a 50 percent decrease from the normal rate of K50 a minute.

Subscribers to the service will also have to pay a K2500 subscription fee.

“From today to August 31, we would like to invite prepaid card users of GSM and WCDMA mobile phone owners to register and enjoy discounts,” the provider said.

The timing of the promotion is significant, as many expect the private firm Ooredoo to officially began selling SIM cards following a “special” press conference on August 2.

Founded by the British in 1884, MPT has enjoyed almost complete control over the domestic communications industry for more than 100 years. This control is now threatened by private competitors like Ooredoo and Telenor as well as a customer base that has grown increasingly frustrated with the company’s spotty service.

Ooredoo SIM cards are already on the streets in Yangon and Mandalay, while Telenor says it expects to launch its network in September.

The “friends and family campaign” is one of several promotions and giveaways the company has rolled out in recent months to shore up its customer base.

SAN FRANCISCO

Amazon launches 3D printing store

AMAZON announced July 28 the launch of an online store for 3D printed items to allow consumers to customize and personalize items like earrings, pendants, dolls and other objects.

The store offers more than 200 items including nylon wallets, wax seals, cookie cutters and bobbleheads.

“The introduction of our 3D printed products store suggests the beginnings of a shift in online retail – that manufacturing can be more nimble to provide an immersive customer experience. Sellers, in alignment with designers and manufacturers, can offer more dynamic inventory for customers to personalize and truly make their own,” said Amazon’s Petra Schindler-Carter in a statement.

The store “allows us to help sellers, designers and manufacturers reach millions of customers while providing a fun and creative customer experience to personalize a potentially infinite number of products at great prices across many product categories.”

The new store also allows designer the opportunity to offer new items that can be customized. Consumers will be able to view the item from any angle with a 360 degree rotatable view.

Amazon will work with companies that make 3D printed items including Mixee Labs and the French-based Sculpteo.

“The online customer shopping experience will be redefined through 3D printing. When you take into consideration the investment needed for manufacturing products, 3D printing offers a cost effective alternative that benefits customers by limitless product options,” said Sculpteo co-founder and chief executive Clement Moreau.

“With 3D printing, a customer’s wants are no longer limited to what is in stock but instead by what they can imagine.” -AFP

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BRIEF

Washington
Drones thrill Martha Stewart... and US prison convicts

Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart is singing the praises of personal drones and marveling at their untapped potential – although smuggling contraband into a prison might not be what she has in mind.

In an essay for *Time* magazine, the 72-year-old entrepreneur and domestic goddess confessed to being “hooked” on small drones since getting a camera-equipped model for her birthday and flying it over a beach in Maine.

“My mind started racing and I imagined all the different applications for my drone,” said Stewart, who has since used her Parrot device to capture a bird’s eye view of a party, a mountain hike and her landscaped gardens.

“It is hard to imagine Andre Le Notre laying out ... the magnificent Chateau de Versailles (with) no drone to show him the complexities of the terrain,” she added, citing the celebrated 17 century French landscape architect.

In South Carolina, meanwhile, the

state Department of Corrections asked the public for help July 30 in identifying a second suspect in a failed attempt to airlift contraband into a prison filled with hardened criminals.

Mobles phones, marijuana and tobacco made up the illicit payload of the small drone that crashed before it could get inside of the Lee Correctional Institution, which houses about 1,000 convicts.

It was discovered in bushes in April, and one person has already been take in into custody. But the case only went public this week as law enforcement released surveillance images of a potential second suspect.

“This is definitely a new and interesting way” to smuggle contraband into a prison, Department of Corrections spokesperson Stephanie Givens told AFP by telephone.

In November last year, four people were arrested in Georgia after a sharp-eyed prison guard spotted a small drone being used to ferry 2 pounds (nearly 1 kilogram) of tobacco to waiting inmates.

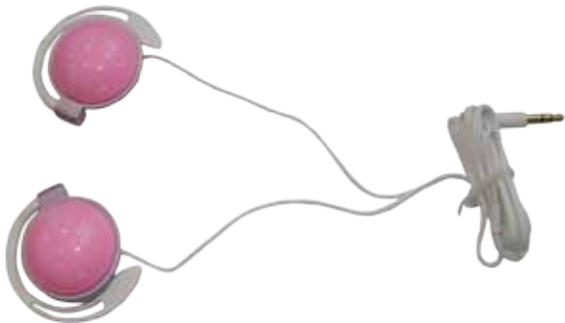
- AFP

Gadget Round-up

by Myo Satt



Speaker
This waterproof Bluetooth speaker is perfect for listening to music or even talking on the phone while in your pool or shower. Includes a suction cup on the bottom to expand placement options.
K15,000



Kworld (Venus)
The colour and design is cute, and the sound quality is excellent. A stylish yet sensible pair of headphones.
K3000



Bluetooth Bracelet
Tired of taking your phone out of your pocket? This bracelet is for you. This device syncs with your phone, allowing you to talk and send text messages straight from your wrist.
K34,000



Power Bank
This light weight and small battery packs a charge of 2600mAh. Great for when your device runs out on the go.
K5000



M-Shoot For Android
For those who need more options for their selfies, this external camera is just the gadget. Connects with Samsung and Android phones.
K4000

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

GAZA CITY

Three days to find a truce

ISRAEL and Hamas began a 72-hour ceasefire on August 1, alongside a diplomatic push for a more durable end to the bloodshed after almost four weeks of fighting.

Hopes of an end to the bloodshed rose early that morning after US Secretary of State John Kerry announced that Israel and Hamas had agreed a three-day ceasefire. Both sides swiftly confirmed their commitment to a truce, after 25 days of bloody confrontation.

Just hours before the ceasefire came into force 14 more Palestinians were reported killed by Israeli tank and air fire in the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile the Israeli army said that five of its soldiers died in mortar fire near the Gaza border, underlining the need for a negotiated truce.

"Israel has accepted the US/UN proposal for a 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire beginning 8:00am Friday [local time]," a source in the Israeli prime minister's office said.

While the proposal was accepted by Hamas, a spokesperson stressed it was dependent on Israel reciprocating.

"Hamas and all the resistance movements have accepted a 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire from 8:00am Friday [August 1] which will be respected by all these movements if the other party also observes the ceasefire," Fawzi Barhum said.

Their deaths brought the toll on the Palestinian side to 1450 since the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip began on July 8. UN figures show that around two-thirds of the victims were civilians, drawing sharp criticism from around the world.

Meanwhile the Israeli army said in a statement that "Five IDF [army] soldiers were killed during operational activity along the border with the Gaza Strip when a mortar was fired at the forces".

Their deaths bring the Israeli military toll to 61 since the beginning of "Operation Protective Edge", the statement added.

The ceasefire announcement came after the UN Security Council expressed "grave disappointment" that repeated calls for a truce had not been heeded, and demanded there be a series of humanitarian breaks to ease conditions for civilians trapped in the war-torn territory.

Egypt has invited Israel and the Palestinian Authority to send delegates to Cairo for truce talks, after the 72-hour ceasefire in Gaza was announced.

"Egypt emphasises the importance of both sides committing to the ceasefire so the negotiations can take place in a favourable atmosphere," the Egyptian foreign ministry said in a statement.

The delegation was expected to start arriving in Cairo later on August 1. Frank Lowenstein, the US Middle East envoy, was also expected to depart that day for the Egyptian capital, a State Department official said.

Despite rising international concern over the civilian death toll in Gaza, Washington said it had agreed to restock Israel's dwindling munitions supplies.

The announcement came as the White House said there was little doubt that Israeli artillery was the source of a "totally indefensible" strike on a UN school in northern Gaza that killed 16 people on July 30.

The school was sheltering more than 3000 Palestinians made homeless by the relentless fighting which on August 1 entered its 25th day.

"It does not appear there's a lot of doubt about whose artillery was involved in this incident," spokesperson Josh Earnest said.

The Israeli army has suggested the deaths may have been the result of a misfired Palestinian rocket.

The European Union also condemned the hit on the school, saying it was "unacceptable" that those who had been forced out of their homes by the fighting, and at the request of the Israeli army, had been killed.

"These incidents must be investigated with immediate effect," it said.

With one in seven people of Gaza's 1.8 million population forced to flee their homes due to the fighting, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, which is sheltering most of them, warned it was stretched to breaking point. — AFP

3000

Homeless Palestinians sheltering in a UN compound at a school that was hit during Israeli assaults

Speaking in New Delhi earlier, Mr Kerry said after the ceasefire went into force, Israeli and Palestinian representatives, including from Hamas, would also begin more durable truce talks in Cairo in a move confirmed by Egypt. But he said Israeli forces would remain inside Gaza.

On July 31, Israel vowed it would not accept any ceasefire that did not allow troops to continue destroying tunnels used by militants to attack Israel.

The ceasefire was a joint US-UN initiative and will give civilians "a much needed reprieve", Mr Kerry said.

"This is a respite, a moment of opportunity not an end. It's not a solution," he warned, saying Israel would still be allowed to carry out "defensive" operations to destroy tunnels.

The 14 latest reported Palestinian victims included a woman and at least two children killed by Israeli tank fire in the southern Gaza Strip early on August 1, a spokesperson for the local emergency services said.



Palestinians who lost relatives in an Israeli strike on a compound housing a UN school in the northern Gaza Strip mourn in Beit Lahia on July 30. Photo: AFP



WASHINGTON

Global fears rise as Ebola

WEST Africa's Ebola-hit nations imposed stringent new rules to tackle the world's worst-ever outbreak of the tropical virus and agreed to launch a US\$100 million response plan at an emergency regional summit last week.

The leaders of Sierra Leone and Liberia cancelled trips for a US-Africa summit in Washington and instead arranged to meet in Guinea on August 1 to take the response to a new level, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

The three countries are struggling to contain an epidemic that has infected more than 1300 people since the start of the year, hit major cities and sparked alarm over its possible spread to other nations.

The WHO raised the death toll by 57 to 729 on July 31, announcing that 122 new cases had been detected between July 24 and 27.

"The Ebola virus disease poses an extraordinary challenge to our nation," Sierra Leone's leader Ernest Bai Koroma said in a televised address to the nation.

"Consequently ... I hereby proclaim a state of public emergency to enable us to take a more robust approach to deal with the Ebola outbreak."

Mr Koroma confirmed he had cancelled a trip to the summit of around 50 African leaders in Washington this week.

He announced a raft of measures as part of the state of emergency, including quarantining Ebola-hit areas and cancelling foreign trips by ministers.

Sierra Leone, which has seen 233 deaths, on July 31 buried medic Umar Khan, described by Koroma as a

"national hero" who saved the lives of more than 100 Ebola patients before succumbing to the tropical bug.

The current outbreak of Ebola, which started at the beginning of this year, has killed 55 percent of those it has infected. The virus causes severe muscular pains, fever, headaches and, in the worst cases, unstoppable bleeding.

Although it is not a particularly robust virus, it isn't airborne and can be killed with soap and hot water, it is spread through contact with bodily fluids, meaning anyone in close quarters with a patient could be at risk.

Fears that it could spread to other continents through air travel have been growing with European and Asian countries on alert alongside African countries outside the Ebola crisis zone.

Leading medical charity Doctors Without Borders warned the crisis would only get worse and said there was no overarching strategy to handle the spreading outbreak of the disease.

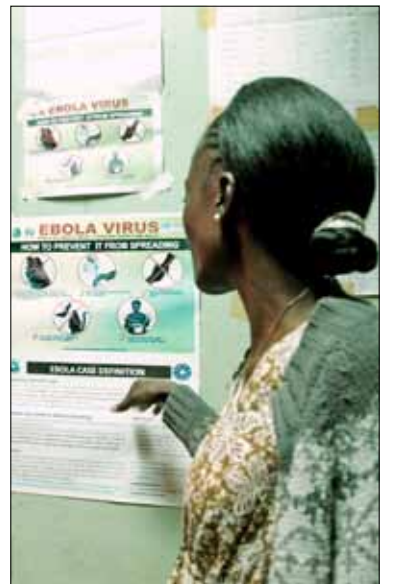
Sierra Leone's announcement comes a day after Liberia, which has seen 156 deaths, said it was shutting all schools and placing "non-essential" government workers on 30 days' leave.

A Liberian government spokesperson said President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had also cancelled her trip to the US-Africa summit and would instead send a deputy.

Guinea's President Alpha Conde said he would keep to his commitment to be in Washington from August 3 but did not say whether he would personally attend the Ebola

meeting beforehand.

US Christian charity Samaritan's Purse said it was temporarily withdrawing its non-essential staff from Liberia, citing regional "instability and ongoing security issues".



A woman reads a poster about Ebola on a wall of a public health center in Monrovia on July 31. Photo: AFP

The US Peace Corps announced on July 30 it was pulling hundreds of volunteers from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Elsewhere in Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Democratic Republic of Congo, home to some of the continent's largest transport hubs, said they had enhanced screening at border points and airports.

Hong Kong announced quarantine



Khmer Rouge trial begins in Phnom Penh

WORLD 41

Acid attacks on the rise in Pakistan

WORLD 42



Pet owners fear as cat meat trend grows in Vietnam

WORLD 45



IN PICTURES
PHOTO: AFP/KCNA

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un walks through the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun in Pyongyang as he pays tribute to former presidents Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il (his grandfather and father) on July 27 to mark the 61st anniversary of the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. The picture was released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency on July 27.

spreads

Timeline of an epidemic

measures for suspected cases. One woman arriving from Africa with possible symptoms tested negative.

The EU said it was ready to deal with the threat. France, however, advised its nationals to avoid travel to the affected west African nations.

Australia, which has already warned against travel to the Ebola-hit countries, said it was well prepared in the unlikely event that the virus should reach its shores.

Meanwhile, Japan and Thai health authorities said they had ordered all hospitals to monitor patients for any symptoms, particularly nationals or foreign tourists who had been in the outbreak area.

In Britain, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said it was regarded as “a very serious threat”.

A British doctor volunteering in Sierra Leone treating Ebola patients told *Metro* newspaper that medical staff were swamped.

“The main challenge here, though, is that the health authorities just don’t have the infrastructure to cope. They’re overwhelmed,” Benjamin Black said.

Togo-based pan-African airline ASKY, which serves 20 destinations, has halted all flights to and from Liberia and Sierra Leone following the death of a passenger from the virus.

The 40-year-old man, who travelled from Liberia, died in Lagos on July 25 in Nigeria’s first confirmed death from Ebola.

The virus crossing borders for the first time by plane could lead to new flight restrictions aimed at containing outbreaks, the world aviation agency said.

– AFP

MARCH 2014
22: Guinea identifies the Ebola virus as the source of a highly contagious epidemic raging through its southern forests, as the death toll rises to 59.

Experts had been unable to identify the disease, whose symptoms were first observed six weeks ago, but scientists studying samples in the French city of Lyon confirmed it was Ebola.

27: Ebola spreads to Guinea’s capital Conakry.

31: Liberia confirms two cases of the virus.

APRIL
5: West African countries mobilise against an epidemic of haemorrhagic fevers, including Ebola. The measures include the deployment of medical teams at Conakry airport.

8: The UN’s health agency, the World Health Organization, says the Ebola outbreak is among the “most challenging” for health workers since the deadly disease emerged elsewhere in Africa four decades ago.

10: International aid organisations launch a series of emergency measures across west Africa in a bid to contain the outbreak.

15: Mali says it is clear of Ebola.

30: Guinea’s Ebola outbreak is under control, but the death toll could rise above the current 74, President Alpha Conde says during a visit to Geneva.

MAY
26: Sierra Leone confirms its first death from Ebola and said it is restricting travel in some areas to stop the fever from claiming more lives.

JUNE
18: Fresh data from the WHO confirms the outbreak to be the deadliest ever, with 337 deaths since January, a 60 percent increase in two weeks.

21: The WHO says the recent rapid spread of Ebola in the three countries has come in part because efforts to contain the deadly virus have been relaxed.

23: The outbreak is now “out of control” with more than 60 outbreak hotspots in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the medical charity Doctors Without Borders says.

JULY
3: The WHO says at the close of a regional summit of health ministers on the crisis it expects the Ebola outbreak to continue for at least “several months”.

25: The virus spreads to Africa’s most populous country Nigeria, as a Liberian national dies in quarantine in Lagos. A day later the country places its ports and airports on alert.

27: A woman suffering from the first confirmed case of Ebola in Sierra Leone’s capital, Freetown, dies.

29: After Nigeria’s main airline Arik, pan-African airline ASKY suspends all flights to and from the capitals of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

30: Doctors Without Borders warns there is a risk of Ebola spreading to other countries.

Liberia announces it is shutting all schools and placing “non-essential” government workers on 30 days’ leave.

31: Countries across the world announce stringent new security measures to contain the epidemic.

Sierra Leone declares a state of emergency. The WHO raises the death toll by 57 to 729.

ROZSYNPNE

Foreign air experts brave fighting to reach MH17 site

INTERNATIONAL experts were last week attempting to begin a stalled investigation at the crash site of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 as Ukrainian forces threaten to resume their offensive against pro-Russian rebels after a one-day halt.

The international probe into the downing of flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine inched forward on August 1 as experts risked attack to reach the site for the first time in nearly a week after Kiev announced a halt to its military offensive.

A small team of Dutch and Australian experts accompanied by international monitors accessed the vast site of the Malaysia Airlines jet on July 31 after days of fierce fighting between government forces and rebels had stopped them reaching the area.

Dutch police heading up the international probe said the situation around the crash site remained perilous despite the small team managing to access the scene.

“The security situation is still very unstable,” Pieter-Jaap Aalbersberg, head of the mission to repatriate the remains of the victims, told journalists in Kiev.

“We are not absolutely sure if we can reach the crash site with the whole team of experts in the near future, but we are more hopeful than we were,” he said.

In a sign of the continuing insecurity, an AFP team following some minutes behind the convoy on July 31 heard loud blasts just a few kilometres away from the site and saw black smoke rising from a village close to where some of the plane wreckage is lying.

Ukraine’s military had earlier announced a “day of quiet” across the entire east after a plea from UN chief Ban Ki-moon to halt fighting around the crash site, where the remains of some of the 298 victims still lie in the sun two weeks after the jet was shot down over rebel territory.

Kiev has repeatedly blamed pro-Russian rebels controlling the site for blocking the probe and warned that insurgents were still shelling its troop positions across the region. The rebels responded that Ukraine had not stuck to its truce.

On a visit to the Netherlands, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak appealed for an “immediate cessation in and around the crash site by both Ukraine and separatist forces”.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said the July 31 site visit went well and gave a guarantee that experts would be able to work daily at the scene on August 1 in a phone call with the Australian and Dutch prime ministers, calling on rebels to respect

a 20-kilometre (12-mile) ceasefire zone around the debris.

The West says the insurgents likely shot down the plane with a missile on July 17, but Russia and the rebels said it could have been blown out of sky by a Ukrainian jet.

Russia’s aviation authorities said a team of their own experts had arrived in Kiev and were hoping to reach the crash site.

Meanwhile, negotiators from Kiev and Moscow began talks in the Belarusian capital Minsk. Past talks have proved unproductive and there was little hope for a major breakthrough despite Russian media reports that the rebels were also attending.

That came as lawmakers in Kiev ratified agreements with The Hague and Canberra that could see the two nations send some 950 armed personnel to secure the location where many of their nationals died.

However, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told journalists in Kiev that the pact was only an “insurance policy” and insisted there were no plans for officials to take armed forces to the crash site, wary of becoming entangled in a murky conflict that has claimed over 1100 lives in more than three months of fighting.

Despite the brief lull, the death toll has continued to climb, with Ukraine’s army saying that 11 soldiers had been killed over 24 hours while local authorities said clashes in the rebel stronghold of Lugansk had left three civilians dead, including a five-year-old child.

The rising toll comes against the background of fresh threats from the West that they could tighten the screws still further on Russia over its role in the Ukraine conflict.

In Europe, concerns that tougher sanctions against Moscow could hurt the region’s economy saw the continent’s main stock markets fall on July 31, with German sportswear giant Adidas warning its profits could be hit by worsening relations with key market Russia.

Some EU diplomats expressed concern that the tighter sanctions may in fact embolden President Vladimir Putin, convincing him that he no longer has anything to lose by further escalating the Ukraine conflict.

NATO’s top commander said on July 30 that Russia had boosted the number of troops along the border with Ukraine to “well over 12,000” and that the figure was on the rise.

Russia also ratcheted up tensions by announcing fresh war games involving surface-to-air missiles along its southern flank. – AFP



Ukrainian tanks stand guard near a field in the village of Debaltseve, in the Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine, on July 31. Photo: AFP

MALIN

Search for landslide victims continues

Rescue workers in western India are battling strong rain and winds as they hunt for survivors of a mudslide that has claimed up to 150 lives

RESCUERS looking for victims of a landslide in western India that buried dozens of homes on July 30 feared the death toll could reach 150 as the search entered the weekend.

By August 1, 42 people were confirmed dead and eight had been pulled alive from the mud and debris in Maharashtra state, but with rain and strong winds hampering rescue efforts, hopes of finding any more survivors were fading.

"Miracles do happen, we will keep looking, but under current conditions it is very, very bleak," said Alok Avasthy, a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) commander at the scene, who added about 160 people were thought to have been living in the dozens of damaged houses.

'Miracles do happen ... but under current conditions it is very, very bleak.'

Alok Avasthy
National Disaster Force

Relatives told of losing whole families after the hillside gave way early on July 30 in a remote area of Pune district, sending tonnes of earth and trees crashing onto a village below.

"I lost my dad, mum, nephew, my

whole family. What will I do? I have nothing left," said inconsolable Usha Vilas Gavar, 30, from close to the scene.

Twisted metal utensils and shreds of clothes lay among the debris from the landslide which hit Malin village while most of its residents were sleeping.

The NDRF said eight survivors had so far been pulled from the site, but rescue efforts were slow going, with heavy machinery halted at one point because of the rains.

Mr Avasthy said that by late on July 31, the bodies of 42 victims had been discovered by rescuers, who were working into the night, after lights powered by portable generators were set up.

Among the handful rescued were Pramila Lembe, 25, and her three-month-old baby Rudra, who were recovering with no major injuries in hospital having been shielded by their home's tin wall.

"I was breastfeeding the baby when I heard a loud thunder-like clap. I tried to run but the wall collapsed," Ms Lembe said.

"I held the boy somehow. I tried to shout but heard no one," she added. The pair were found by rescuers about eight hours after the landslide.

Dramatic footage of the landslide showed a chunk of hillside giving way with a cascade of mud, rocks and trees, sending up clouds of dust below.

"The mudslide must have been



Villagers look for belongings in the debris of homes at the scene of a landslide in Malin village in Pune district, in India's western state of Maharashtra, on July 30. Photo: AFP

massive and very quick considering it has covered an area roughly the size of a football field with nearly 10-15 feet [3-4.5 metres] of debris," Mr Avasthy said.

The NDRF mobilised 378 rescue workers to help with the search, although its vehicles had difficulty accessing the site along narrow, damaged roads. The army arrived to help on the afternoon of July 31.

Sniffer dogs remained locked up in a village health centre because the

animals were unable to pick up scents in the incessant rains, while workers faced the risk of further landslides.

India's Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who visited the site, raised the issue of environmental damage from deforestation.

"We have to ensure that we maintain environmental balance along with development," he told reporters.

The alarm was first sounded when a bus driver failed to see the usual hamlet dwellings as he drove past the

area, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

PTI said the victims were members of a tribal community that survived by paddy farming on hill slopes in the once densely forested region.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the loss of life as "saddening" on Twitter.

While India's annual rains are a lifeline for the Indian economy, flooding and building collapses are frequent during the monsoon season. — AFP

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PHNOM PENH

Khmer Rouge trial begins

TWO former Khmer Rouge leaders began their second trial at a UN-backed court in Cambodia last week on charges including genocide of Vietnamese people and ethnic Muslims, forced marriages and rape.

The complex case of the regime's two most senior surviving leaders has been split into a series of smaller trials, initially focusing on the forced evacuation of people into rural labour camps and related crimes against humanity.

The first trial against "Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea, 88, and former head of state Khieu Samphan, 83, was completed late last year, with the verdict, and possible sentences, set to be delivered on August 7.

At the opening hearing of the second trial, judge Nil Nonn read out the charges against both suspects, including genocide and other crimes against humanity, as more than 300 people watched the proceedings from the public gallery.

Mr Nuon Chea did not attend for health reasons, while Mr Khieu Samphan sat in court alongside his defence team. Both men deny all charges.

Anne Heindel, a legal adviser to the Documentation Center of Cambodia, which researches the country's bloody history, said the second trial was

"immensely important for survivors".

"The subject matter of the first proceeding was quite limited, discussing only a narrow set of events that occurred while or shortly after the Khmer Rouge took power.

"[This new trial] focuses on crimes that occurred after the Khmer Rouge were entrenched and implementing long-standing plans for transforming Cambodian society, yet for which no one has ever been held accountable," she said.

The mass killings of an estimated 100,000 to 500,000 ethnic Cham Muslims and 20,000 Vietnamese form the basis of the genocide charges against Mr Nuon Chea and Mr Khieu Samphan.

Before these charges were filed, the treatment of the minority Muslim group and Vietnamese community was rarely discussed.

Kob Tiyum, a 65-year-old Cham survivor of the Khmer Rouge's 1975-1979 regime, said the trial would "recognise our suffering".

She lost two of her children, her father and her brother who died of starvation while working at a labour camp under the regime.

"The Khmer Rouge killed Chams because they wanted to eliminate the



Former Khmer Rouge leader head of state Khieu Samphan attends the courtroom at ECCC in Phnom Penh on July 30.

Photo: AFP

race. They did not allow us to speak the Cham language or to pray," she said after attending the hearing.

Mr Nuon Chea and Mr Khieu Samphan also face a string of other charges for the deaths of up to two million people through starvation, overwork or execution during the regime.

Most of these deaths do not fall under the charge of genocide, which is defined by the United Nations as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group".

It is not known how long the second trial will last, but court

spokesperson Lars Olsen estimated it may go on until 2016 with hearings covering crimes committed at Khmer Rouge labour camps and prisons including the notorious Tuol Sleng, also known as S-21.

"This trial is very important for me as a victim who lost both parents in Tuol Sleng," said 45-year-old Nong Chan Phal, one of just a handful of survivors from the prison.

"Those criminals who committed genocide and killed their own people must be punished seriously"

Led by "Brother Number One" Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer

Rouge dismantled Cambodian society in a bid to create an agrarian utopia.

The new trial will also provide the first forum for justice for tens of thousands of husbands and wives forced to marry, often in mass ceremonies, as part of a Khmer Rouge plan to boost the population.

The rape charges refer to rape within the forced marriages.

In its historic debut trial, the court in 2010 sentenced former Tuol Sleng prison chief Kaing Guek Eav to 30 years in prison - later increased to life on appeal - for overseeing the deaths of 15,000 people. - AFP

MANILA

Journalist and lawyer among those honoured in Asia's 'Nobel Prize'

AN influential Chinese journalist and a crusading environmental lawyer from China are among this year's winners of Asia's Magsaysay awards, the organisers announced on July 31.

The Manila-based Ramon Magsaysay Award, named after a Filipino president who was killed in a plane crash, was established in 1957 to honour people or groups who change

communities for the better and is often described as Asia's Nobel Prize.

Among this year's six awardees is Hu Shuli, 61, founder and editor of *Caijing*, a business magazine famed for its groundbreaking investigative reporting that has had a profound impact on China.

Its reports on illegal trading, "government cover-up of the true extent

of the 2003 SARS epidemic", and corporate fraud led to the ousting of high public officials, prosecution of business leaders and stock market reforms, the foundation said.

"Hers is a journalism that works within the system but preserves the critical distance that is journalism's strength," the award citation said of Ms Hu.

Another winner was Chinese lawyer Wang Canfa, 55, founder of the Centre for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims, which has handled thousands of environmental complaints and beaten powerful industrialists in court.

"As long as we persist, the goal of establishing Chinese environmental rule of law will be achieved someday," the award quoted Mr Wang as saying.

Also honoured were Indonesian anthropologist Saur Marlina Manurung, National Museum of Afghanistan director Omara Khan Masoudi, Filipino teacher Randy Halasan, and the Pakistani non-government group The Citizen's Foundation.

This year's winners will be invited to Manila for an awards ceremony on August 31. - AFP



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QUETTA

‘Religious motive’ in acid attacks

A RECENT spate of acid attacks in a region of Pakistan previously untouched by the crime has sparked an impassioned debate about rising Islamisation that is forcing an increasing number of women to stay at home.

The horrific crime, which disfigures and often blinds its overwhelmingly female victims, has long been used to settle personal or family scores with hundreds of cases reported every year.

But two fresh attacks on consecutive days in the restive southwestern Baluchistan province last week, where until a few years ago such assaults were unheard of, suggests a new pattern is emerging.

On July 22, two men on a motorcycle sprayed acid using syringes on two teenage girls who were returning from a market in Mastung town, 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the provincial capital Quetta.

The day before, four women aged between 18 and 50 had suffered the same fate in Quetta, in the market area of Sariab. They were partially burned.

“In accordance with our Baluch traditions, they were wrapped in big shawls as well as covering their faces. That ... saved [them] from severe injuries,” said Naz Bibi, mother of two of the victims.

Asked about the attackers, she said, “I can only request that they should not treat women in such a cruel way.”

In most acid attack cases around Pakistan, the majority of victims know their attackers. When caught, relatives found guilty speak of punishing their victims for having sullied their “honour” or that of their family with “indecent” behaviour.

But, in these latest cases, the victims had no known connection to their assailants, which has led campaigners to suggest the attacks are part of rising religious extremism in the province.



Pakistani activists from a regional Baluchistan Nationalist party chant slogans during a demonstration outside the Bolan Medical Complex in Baluchistan province on July 23. Photo: AFP

Vast and sparsely populated but rich in resources, Baluchistan has long been racked by a separatist insurgency that has staunch leftist secular elements, including strong participation by women, and which reveres Communist icons like Argentine revolutionary Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara.

Separatists say the attacks on women are the latest battlefield in an ideological war between the rebels, who are fighting for a greater share of the region’s mineral and gas wealth, and state-backed Islamist proxies who want to terrorise the population into acquiescence.

“The aim of these inhuman acts is to prevent women from participating in education as well as social, political and economic aspects of life by creating a climate of terror,” said Jahanzaib Jamaldini, vice president of the Baluch National Party, which is fighting for greater autonomy.

This week, three more women suf-

fered injuries to their legs and feet in yet another attack, though police and senior officials have so far said the latest incident was a case of a “family feud”.

In the Sariab district of Quetta, the scene of one of the most recent attacks, Islamist groups like the Ahle-Sunnat Wal-Jammat (ASWJ), are increasingly coming to the fore.

Dressed in Arab garb, they are able to roam the area armed with automatic weapons without fear of molestation leading many to believe they are given tacit state backing.

“ASWJ controls the area with dozens of armed men,” said one young resident, adding that their presence scared families into preventing women from being out in public.

The group said the accusations were “without any basis”. “We condemn these attacks,” Ramzan Mengal, the group’s leader in Baluchistan said.

The acid attacks also fit a wider pattern of a steady erosion of wom-

en’s rights, especially in separatist and erstwhile relatively secular strongholds.

Al-Furqan, an obscure militant group, recently appeared in the one-time separatist rebel stronghold of Panjgur district, which borders Iran, threatening private schools over the teaching of girls, according to residents.

In an atmosphere rife with fear, no suspects have so far been arrested and no group has claimed responsibility.

The first recorded acid attack in Baluchistan came in 2010, with two more reported in 2012.

Leading English-language daily newspaper *Dawn* said in an editorial last week, “Baluchistan has been steadily radicalised over the years, and a plethora of shadowy, extremist religious groups increasingly exercise their malign influence over society, diligently seeking to restrict women’s agency, and deprive them of their rights. – AFP

TOKYO

Chicken-free McNuggets

MCDONALD’S restaurants in Japan are turning to time-honoured Asian soul food, tofu, as the chain scrambles to minimise the damage from an embarrassing tainted meat scandal in China.

Last week the fast-food giant’s more than 3000 restaurants in Japan started selling “Tofu Shinjo” nuggets modelled on a traditional side dish that meshes tofu, vegetables and fish.

For 249 yen (US\$2.40), customers can sink their teeth into four pieces of the chicken-free creation.

The rollout comes days after the firm said that its Japanese restaurants had stopped sourcing poultry products from a nugget supplier in Shanghai, in response to a scandal that saw expired meat sold to fast-food giants.

On July 29, McDonald’s Japan president Sarah Casanova made a televised apology, as she warned the “appalling” incident and subsequent switch to chicken suppliers in Thailand to plug the gap would depress company profits.

The disgraced factory and other Chinese distributors had supplied nearly 40 percent of the chicken used for McDonald’s Japanese restaurants.

A company spokesperson said that, despite its fortuitous timing, the tofu offering had been in the works before China’s latest food safety scandal.

“It is a part of wider, limited-time-only offering for the summer featuring a Japanese-style menu,” she said.

At the chain’s restaurants in mainland China, notices posted at every cash register told customers in Chinese and English, “We regret to let you know that currently we will only be able to provide a limited menu at our restaurant.

“At McDonald’s we strictly comply with the applicable laws, regulations and the related standards. Thank you for your understanding.”

In Shanghai, where the factory at the heart of the scandal has been shut down by authorities, the chain’s trademark Big Macs and Chicken McNuggets were unavailable. – AFP

BEIJING

Senior imam murdered

THE head of China’s largest mosque has been killed after conducting morning prayers, the local government in far western Xinjiang said last week, amid intensifying violence in the turbulent region.

Jume Tahir, the government-appointed imam of the 600-year-old Id Kah Mosque in the city of Kashgar, was killed on July 30 by “three thugs influenced by religious extremist ideology”, the Xinjiang government web portal Tianshan said.

Police launched an all-out investigation and shot dead two of the alleged assailants while capturing the other at about noon on July 30 as they violently resisted with “knives and hatchets”, Tianshan said. It added Mr Tahir’s killing was “premeditated” and that the suspects intended to commit a “ruthless murder”.

Tianshan identified the suspects by their names in phonetic Chinese. The official Xinhua news agency in an English-language report gave their names as Turghun Tursun, Memetjan Remutillan and Nurmemet Abidilimit. Neither Tianshan nor Xinhua initially identified who among them was shot dead and who was apprehended. Mr Tahir was found dead in a pool of blood outside the mosque’s prayer house, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported.

Xinjiang, home to China’s mostly Muslim Uighur ethnic minority, has seen escalating violence which in the past year has spilled over into other parts of China. – AFP

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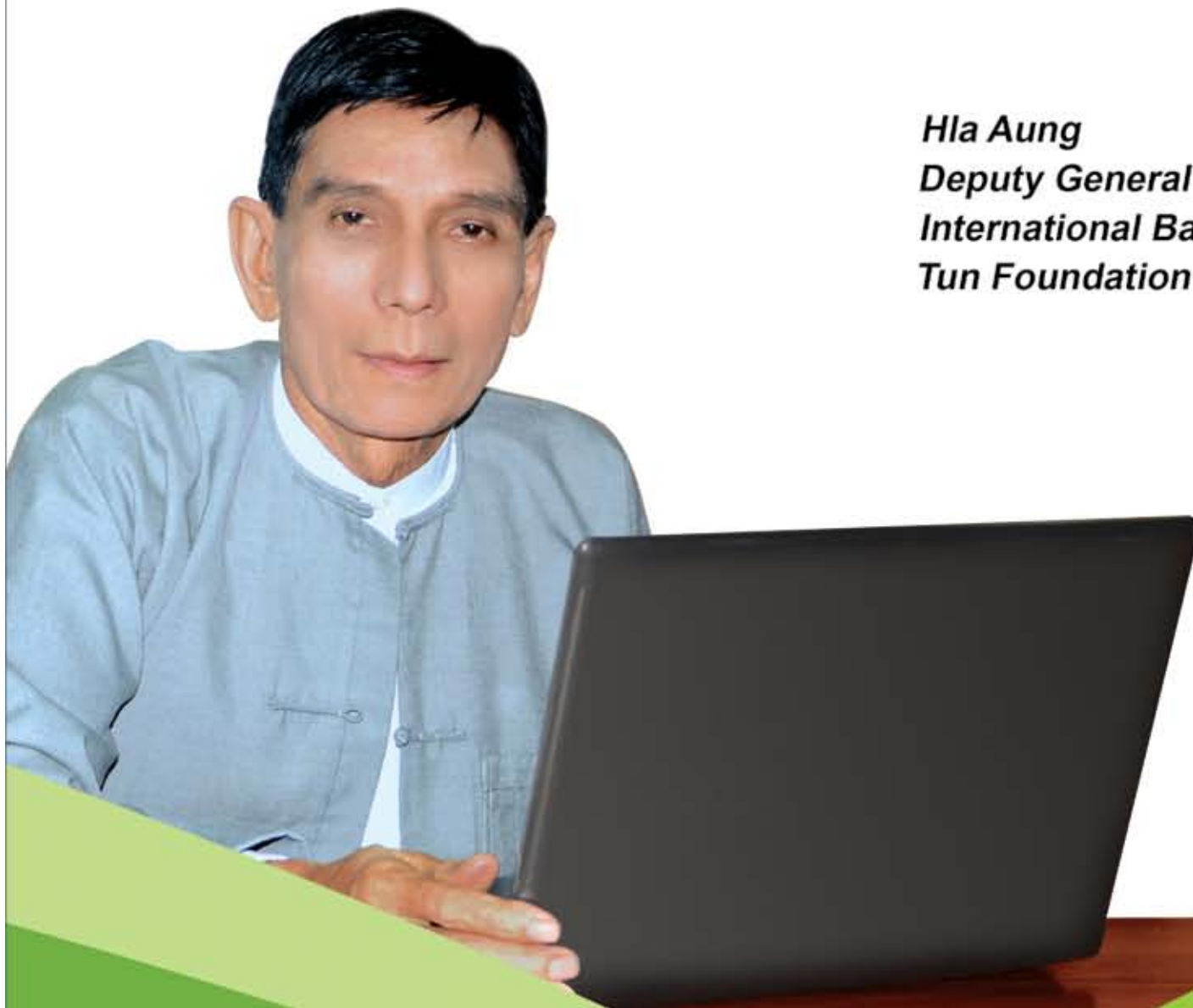
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BANGKOK

A worker lays out shark fins to dry on a road in Hong Kong on July 31. Photo: AFP

Airline joins shark fin boycott

THAI Airways has banned shark fin from its cargo flights as part of a growing global campaign against the popular delicacy in Asia.

The carrier joins a host of other airlines in taking a stand against shark fin, highly prized by many in the region, especially in Hong Kong and China where it is commonly served as a soup at wedding banquets and corporate parties.

"As part of the world community sharing in the great concern for the protection of endangered species

and the environment, Thai Airways International has implemented its own official policy to place an embargo on the shipping of shark fin products," the airline said in a statement on July 29.

Conservationists say booming demand for fins has put pressure on the world's shark populations, prompting calls for measures to restrict their trade.

Thai Airways officially stopped flying shark fin from July 15 but has avoided shipping fins for over a year,

according to the statement.

The move brings the carrier into line with a number of other Asian airlines including Philippine Airlines, which said in April it had stopped flying shark fin cargoes.

Air New Zealand as well as South Korea's two largest airlines, Korean Air and Asiana, separately announced last year that they would ban shark fins from their cargo flights, a year after Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific also stopped shipping them. - AFP

PARIS**Drug resistant malaria on the rise in SE Asia**

DRUG-RESISTANT malaria parasites are now firmly established in border regions in four Southeast Asian countries, imperilling global efforts to control the disease, experts warned on July 30.

Blood samples taken from 1241 malaria patients found that parasites which are resistant to the frontline drug artemisinin have spread to border areas in western and northern Cambodia, eastern Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, they said.

There also signs of emerging resistance in central Myanmar, southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia, but none in the three African states Kenya, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that were included in the sampling.

The study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, said doubling the course of antimalarial treatment, from three days to six, could help fight the resistance problem but time was short.

"It may still be possible to prevent the spread of artemisinin-resistant malaria parasites across Asia and then to Africa by eliminating them, but that window of opportunity is closing fast," said Nicholas White, a professor of tropical medicine at Oxford University, England.

"Conventional malaria control approaches won't be enough. We will need to take more radical action and make this a global public health priority, without delay."

Southeast Asia has been the source of growing worries that artemisinin is losing its edge as the weapon of choice against malaria.

If so, it will be the third time in little more than half a century that a drug will have been blunted by parasites that became resistant to it,

a process that has claimed millions of lives.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, parasites that were resistant to the drug chloroquine spread from Asia to Africa.

Chloroquine was then replaced by sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP), resistance to which emerged in western Cambodia and then spread to Africa.

'We will need to take radical action and make this a global health priority without delay.'

Nicholas White

Professor of tropical medicine

SP was followed by artemisinin, a drug derived by Chinese scientists from a herb called sweet wormwood.

"The artemisinin drugs are arguably the best anti-malarials we have ever had. We need to conserve them in areas where they are still working well," Elizabeth Ashley, a University of Oxford researcher who led the study, said in a press release issued by Britain's Wellcome Trust.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that for uncomplicated malaria involving the *Plasmodium falciparum* strain of parasite, artemisinin be used in a combination therapy, rather than a monotherapy, to get the best chance of eliminating all the parasites.

When a therapy is stopped prematurely, or fails to kill all the parasites, the surviving parasites are able to mutate, handing on resistant genes.

The study, carried out at 15 sites in Southeast Asia and Africa, entailed measuring blood samples to see the rate at which parasites were killed.

A benchmark for elimination called the "parasite clearance half-life" ranged from 1.8 hours in the DRC to seven hours at the Thailand-Cambodia border, a hotspot for resistance that leapt to notoriety in 2005.

Researchers in Kenya meanwhile have discovered antibodies to produce new vaccines targeting the most virulent form of malaria, in a potentially significant boost.

For the study, published on July 30 in *Science Translational Medicine* magazine, scientists tested a library of proteins from *Plasmodium falciparum* with antibodies formed by the immune systems of a group of infected children in Kenya.

The tests sought to determine which proteins elicited a response from the children's immune systems, revealing previously unidentified antigens as possible targets for vaccines.

"Resistance to malaria drugs is an increasing problem so vaccines are desperately needed to battle the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite before it has a chance to make people sick," lead author Faith Osier from the Kenya Medical Research Institute said in a statement.

"This study presents us with a large number of new vaccine candidates that offer real hope for the future."

Malaria killed an estimated 627,000 people in 2012, mostly among African children, according to the WHO.

- AFP

HANOI

Taste for cat hard to stomach

A growing fashion for cat meat has left Vietnamese pet owners fearful their animals will be stolen and eaten

BY CAT BARTON

THE enduring popularity of “little tiger” as a snack to accompany a beer in Vietnam means cat owners are living in fear of animal snatchers, despite an official ban.

At an unassuming restaurant next to a carwash in central Hanoi, a cat is prepared for hungry clients: drowned, shaved and burned to remove all fur before being cut up and fried with garlic.

“A lot of people eat cat meat. It’s a novelty. They want to try it,” said the establishment’s manager To Van Dung, 35.

Vietnam has forbidden the consumption of cats in an effort to encourage their ownership and keep the capital’s rat population under control.

But there are still dozens of restaurants serving cat in Hanoi and it is rare to see felines roaming the streets. Most pet-owners keep them indoors or tied up out of fear of cat thieves.

Such is the demand from restaurants that cats are sometimes smuggled across the border from Thailand and Laos.

Mr Dung said that he had never had problems with the law. He buys his cats from local breeders but also so-called cat traders, with few checks on their sourcing.

“Little tiger” is typically enjoyed at the start of each lunar month, unlike dog meat which is eaten at the



Cooks prepare cats for diners at a Hanoi restaurant on June 19. Photo: AFP

end.

On a busy day, the restaurant can serve around 100 clients.

“I know in the United States and Britain they don’t eat cat. But here we do,” Nguyen Dinh Tue, 44, said as he chewed on a piece of fried cat meat.

“I don’t kill the cat! But this place sells it so I like to eat it,” he added.

Vietnam’s penchant for eating animals that are considered pets in many other countries came about largely as a result of circumstance, said Hoang Ngoc Bau, one of Hanoi’s few trained vets.

“The country was once very poor,

and we had a long war. We ate everything we could to stay alive,” he told said. “Insects, dogs, cats, even rats ... It became a habit.”

Mr Bau decided to become a vet after his pet dog saved him from a poisonous snake when he was a child. “From that time, I had a debt to dogs,” the 63-year-old said.

Dramatic changes to society and cultural attitudes in the once tightly-controlled communist country in recent decades mean that a growing number of Vietnamese now share his love of animals.

But old eating habits die hard and pet owners have a battle on

their hands.

“No one is breeding dogs and cats for slaughter. So nearly all the animals in restaurants are trapped and stolen,” Mr Bau said.

“For me and other pet lovers in Vietnam, they’re our best friend,” added the vet.

Yet some people manage to reconcile society’s dual affection for cats.

Le Ngoc Thien, the chef at one Hanoi cat meat restaurant, keeps a cat as a pet, but when it is big enough he will cook it and get a new kitten.

“When my cats become old we kill them because according to our tradition when a cat gets old we need to change it and get a younger one,” he said.

“Eating cat meat is better than eating dog as the meat is more sweet, more tender than a dog,” Mr Thien said.

A cat sells for between US\$50 and \$70 depending on how large it is and how it is prepared.

Many pet owners get fed up of the risks of letting their cats go outside.

Phuong Thanh Thuy owns a Hanoi restaurant and has cats to keep rats in check, but she has had to replace them regularly.

“My family is sad because we spend a lot of time and energy raising our cats. When we lose a cat we feel pain,” she said as a newly purchased batch of kittens played at her feet. – AFP

BANGKOK

Army officer charged with extortion

A THAI army general has been arrested on suspicion of extortion in a notorious Bangkok red light district, officials said on July 31, in a rare case of authorities prosecuting a member of the military.

Major-General Jenronnarong Detwan, 56, was arrested by the military early on July 30 at a hotel near the seedy Patpong area charged with extorting money from street vendors, the Defence Ministry said.

“He is the most senior member of the military ever arrested for extortion,” said the ministry’s Lieutenant Colonel Burin Tongprapai, who led the arrest.

Patpong is a strip of go-go bars catering mainly to foreigners attracted by Thailand’s huge sex industry.

The military, who took power in a May 22 coup, began investigating the general after complaints from street vendors who hawk everything from cut-price DVDs to counterfeit handbags and watches.

Mr Jenronnarong has denied the charge.

“But he said he took money from traders to pay the owners of the copyrighted goods,” according to Mr Burin, who added the general is now under both criminal and military investigation.

The military also arrested four civilians accused of working with Mr Jenronnarong. – AFP



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MANILA

Mass evacuation after gang rape and beheading

THE Philippines is to charter ferries to speed up the removal of 13,000 nationals from Libya, officials said July 31 a day after a Filipina nurse was abducted and gang-raped there.

The foreign ministry confirmed the sexual assault of the woman in the Libyan capital Tripoli on July 30.

It occurred 10 days after discovery at a hospital in the port of Benghazi of the beheaded remains of a Filipino construction worker who had been abducted earlier.

“We condemn these crimes that have been committed against our people,” President Benigno Aquino’s spokesperson Herminio Coloma told reporters in Manila.

The woman was seized outside her residence and taken to an unknown location, where she was sexually assaulted by up to six youths, foreign department spokesperson Charles Jose told reporters.

She was released about two hours later and a Filipino consular team took her to hospital for treatment, he added.

The Philippines ordered all 13,000 of its citizens in Libya to leave following the beheading, with a consular team organising evacuation by land to neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt.

However, only just over 700 had left Libya by July 30, according to a foreign ministry tally, despite the rapidly deteriorating situation, with warring militias battling for control of key population centres.

‘We condemn these crimes that have been committed against our people.’

Herminio Coloma
Presidential spokesperson

The Philippines has also barred its nationals from travelling to Libya.

The government evacuated thousands of its nationals from Libya during the 2011 upheaval that toppled the late dictator Moamer Kadhafi, some boarding ferries that took them to Malta

where they later caught flights back to the Philippines. Many of them later returned to their jobs there.

“Just like what we did before, the Department of Foreign Affairs has hired ships to ferry and evacuate Filipinos,” Mr Coloma said.

“We reiterate our appeal to those Filipinos still in Libya to comply with the mandatory evacuation [order],” Mr Coloma said.

Mr Jose, the foreign department spokesperson, said he had no information to share for the time being on how many vessels would be chartered, which port would the Filipinos be taken in and where they will be offloaded.

“We’re working on it,” he added.

About 10 million Filipinos live and work abroad, many of them in the Middle East, in search of better-paying jobs.

Many were “hesitant to come home even if the country where they work” was in crisis or undergoing political conflict, said Labour Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz.

The government had a “re-integration” program to help returning Filipinos displaced by conflicts in Libya and elsewhere, she said. – *AFP*

HANOI

UN rep condemns religious violations

VIETNAM was accused of “serious violations” of religious freedom by a UN expert on July 30, despite the communist country making some progress on easing tight state control of matters of faith.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, said his 10-day visit had been “unfortunately interrupted” by police and security agents.

Mr Bielefeldt said he was “closely monitored” by police and security agents and not able to speak freely to people, in breach of the conditions of his visit.

While stressing that he had not

made a comprehensive assessment of individual cases, he said, “There are serious violations of freedom of religious belief taking place in this country”

Witnesses had told him of “concrete violations, including repeated summons by police, harassment, house arrest, imprisonment, destruction of houses of worship, vandalism, beatings”

But he also noted positive developments, adding that the “space for practice [of religions] has been cautiously widened”

Vietnam’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Le Hai Binh told reporters the Vietnamese government “did everything in its capacity ... to meet demands of the

delegation during his visit to Vietnam”.

All religious activity remains under state control but the government says it respects the freedom of belief and religion.

Religious practices were tightly-controlled for decades by the communist regime but restrictions were gradually lifted after the “doi moi” economic reforms opened up the country in the 1990s.

According to the Vietnam’s national committee for religious affairs, nearly a third of the population considers themselves as religious, equivalent to some 24 million out of a population of some 90 million. – *AFP*

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VITABIOTICS
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the pulse

Homecon a returner's to Yangon

BY HTET MYET OO htet@theburmasideoflife.com

Downtown Yangon is where this beautiful, frenetic and often-misunderstood city was born, and to this day, this is the part of town where the heart and soul of the city remain. It can be a bit intimidating though, can't it? The old adage of "less is more" doesn't particularly apply here.

In fact, as if manoeuvring around the maze of one-way, two-way and no-way streets of downtown weren't tiring enough, there are more cars, dogs, people and chaos than ever before, running in an almost perpetual motion of madness – madness in which I have managed to find my own little pockets of peace and tranquility.

I'd like to add the caveat that these are the places that have come to shape my personal experience and my love affair with the city, and this list is meant only as encouragement for everyone to share their own story.

Thu Kha Yeik Teashop

Corner of Nawaday Rd. and Bo Yar Nyunt St.
If you're the type, like me, whose senses require a weekly dose of tea and mohinga or anything that resembles a carb-heavy, hangover-friendly plate of food, then add this to your list of must-go places around town. Their egg-fried bread and *pe paratha* would sit happily on my list of favourite things to eat anywhere I've been. Friends and family who have followed up on my recommendation of Thu Kha Yeik have never come back unsatisfied, so if you're just a little bit hungry and in the area, please head over and eat yourself silly.

Ko Nyi Nyi Antique Dealer

28th Street (middle block), between Anawrahta Road and Mahabandoola Road, 0973121974

I was probing for antiques opposite Scott Market, like everybody else, sweating, delirious from the heat. I had just bought some metal containers and was in search of more. The shopowner told me about his friend who sold out of his home – no gimmicks, just straight up *old objects*. Ten minutes later I was alone, neck deep, now delirious from the dust off of a taxi-meter from 1930. I am now the proud owner of way too many metal containers and an avid one-time collector of *Esquire* magazines from the 1940s. This is the most unique experience you'll have in Yangon. Call a day in advance, and please wear some comfortable pants.

Pattar Myar Myay (Shan Noodle Shop)

25 Aung Tha Pyay Street (behind Yuzana Plaza)

Shan Pyi is somewhere that my family has long had an association with, a part of the country that my *amay* feels particularly attached to. She grew up in Lashio. Shan food is a cuisine that I feel particularly grateful for too. The cold mornings, the family sitting together around bowls of Shan noodles: This is the food that takes me back home. At Pattar Myar Myay you get a smile and a bowl of the best *san-see* (sticky rice) Shan noodles in town, and you eat until your heart is content. This is how Shan food is supposed to be eaten.

Ko Aung's Antique Furniture Store

Corner of Yankin Road and Maegin Street (near Yangon Children's Hospital)

I was fortunate enough to meet Ko Aung back when I was renovating my apartment, and he

saved me. Only those who have ever attempted to buy furniture in Yangon will fully understand what it is that he saved me from. Ko Aung sells reclaimed, vintage pieces that he sources from all over the country. He's humble, he loves what he does and he's a pretty funny guy. On my most recent visit, I saw an oxcart parked in front of his shop alongside a 1920s coat hanger and a 1940s bed frame. He has two shops, two sheds and too much furniture for his own good.

Thabawa Yoghurt,

Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Bohtahtaung Pagoda Road

I try and go here whenever I can. Thabawa, roughly translated in English, means *innate* or *natural*. So here you are, sat on an uneven sidewalk, paying US\$1 for a tradition that came from India, on the side of a post office built by the British, and it all tastes expletively, insanely good. I know, it's easy to dwell on the things this city doesn't have, on how we managed to get here. I've been there, trust me, but I stopped trying to figure Yangon out the moment I was mature enough to understand that the measure of a great city isn't how many people drink coffee served out of paper cups. I come, I sit and it transports me back in time. How many cities in the world can give you that?

Sapphire Lounge,

Rooftop Alfa Hotel, Nawaday Road

Any description of the visual impact of Shwedagon Paya could only fall short. It's the sort of hair-raising, eye-flinching experience that you have to live through to understand how it feels. It's one of those rare experiences where the farther you go, the larger it feels.

Its presence is everywhere. The Sapphire Lounge isn't a place you come only to unwind, with what happens to be the pagoda in the background: You come to pay homage to the view, uninterrupted by loud music or shoddy artwork. I've long thought of the view from Alfa Hotel as a live mural of the city, forever evolving, always changing. So if you're ever in need of a little reminder of why you're here over a beer and a hell of a view, you know where to go now.

Streetside bookstalls

Corner of Pansodan Rd and Merchant Rd.

The Pansodan/Merchant Street corner is probably my favourite part of the city, not least because I live there but also because it's where old town meets the epicentre of the new city: the taxis, the people, the never-ending construction. It's always in these great times of change that little details get lost or overshadowed. The little bookstalls that line the pavements where the two streets meet refuse to go, and long may they last. My many purchases, including *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx, are almost all hardback, and the print date goes as far back as 1965. Even if all you're looking for is something nice to line your shelves at home, they're another one from the time capsule.

Shwe Kyin Taing Tayar Kyaung Monastery,

Kabar Aye Pagoda Road (near the Shwegondine flyover, opposite Shwe Kaung Hotpot and The Avenue)

The story goes that in the mid-1860s King Mindon Min asked Queen Victoria to donate money toward the building of a monastery in what was then Rangoon. From that, the Taing

ning: guide



Photos: Htet Myet Oo

Tayar Kyaung was erected. The name Taing Tayar (100 pillars) is of course derived from the structure of the building, based on the 100-plus pillars on which it was built. Like most of the old monasteries in the city, it's grand and it's fragile – I still get nervous every time I see through the floorboards. I'm not sure how much longer it will last, but I'm hopeful.

Htet Myet Oo was born in Myanmar. He then emigrated to the UK at the age of four. Eighteen years later, he returned in 2002 as a graduate of City University London with a Bachelor in Economics. He has worked as the public relations officer at the Yangon Heritage Trust, and is now opening a tea-shop-inspired Burmese restaurant in downtown Yangon later this year. Check out his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/theburmasideoflife



Born in Myanmar, Htet Myet Oo emigrated to the UK at the age of four. These are his favourite spots in Yangon, a city he is rediscovering street by street.



Inside out

Artist finds hope in a bottle



Ma Phyu Phyu Thant's Yangon shop is one of the last strongholds for Myanmar bottle art. Photo: Chit Su

CHIT SU
suwai.chit@gmail.com

WHEN people see the decorative bottles, most do a double-take and wonder *how* the artist managed to get the paint inside at all, let alone execute a level of detail that sees the forms of people, animals and landscapes take shape.

With the entrance to the bottle being narrow, the level of intricate detail the artist manages to achieve is impressive. The image is, essentially, created in reverse. The artist must plan each layer of colour, giving careful thought to how this will appear on the outside. It is a painstaking operation, requiring absolute concentration – as well as skill, imagination and tenacity.

It's a form that emerged at the beginning of the 19th century in China. Bottle art in Myanmar has traditionally been unique to Bagan. Now, with the opening of the Myanmar Culture Valley mall near the west gate of Shwedagon Pagoda, the form could be opened up to a whole new market.

The owner of the bottle art shop, Ma Phyu Phyu Thant, got the idea to sell bottle art in Yangon after she traveled to Bagan. Getting the artist on board was the easy part – it's the supply of bottles that's proved the problem.

"I have difficulty to get bottles to paint. The wine bottle is easy to get, but not for beauty. Transparent bottles are more beautiful than others," she says.

Initially, she used medicine bottles sourced from hospitals, selected for their pleasing shape, as well as the key qualities of being made from clear glass and therefore easy to paint. But now the hospitals are increasingly moving toward using plastics.

"I don't know how to arrange to get sustainable support for the bottles yet," she said.

Another difficulty Ma Phyu Phyu Thant has encountered with her current business model is the matter of having only one artist supplying the goods.

U Yaw Na Than labours over his bottle art at his workshop in Bagan, where his work over the years has garnered the appreciation of many tourists.

He has to curve a brush just so, in order to paint inside the bottle. It requires an extraordinary amount of patience – not least because the oil paint required must dry for each layer, lest the colours blend. For this reason, the current levels of production are relatively low.

"I take one week to finish five bottles," U Yaw Na Than said.

In order to become a master of

The image is essentially created in reverse. The artist must plan each layer of colour, giving careful thought to how this will appear on the outside.

bottle art, U Yaw Na Than had to develop his drawing and painting skills. This was something he learned from his brother U Nyo Lay – Myanmar's original, pioneering bottle artist.

U Nyo Lay had suffered polio as a child, which was followed by a string of health-related misfortunes that severely impacted his mobility. He taught himself to draw and paint in the style of Myanmar's grand masters, before turning to the bottle. He only ever had two pupils – his two brothers. One gave it up when he got married, leaving U Yaw Na Than to carry on the family tradition.

The two brothers have markedly different styles, says U Yaw Na Than. U Nyo Lay leaned toward the traditional school of art, filling bottles with depictions of lotus stems, buds and blossoms.

"I draw only the modern style now. The traditional style is harder and needs more time. I am not skillful in this," U Yaw Na Than concedes.

He says he manages to eke out a living with his bottle art, bringing in enough income to support his family. He hopes his product reaching Yangon will provide a further boost. But he worries about the future, and is concerned his is a disappearing art form.

"I want to teach someone who wants to learn how to draw the bottle art. But I have no one [yet]," he says.

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that's HOT

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- မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရဲ့ အထက်တန်းအား မော်ဒယ်တွေ၊ မိတ်ကပ်ပညာရှင်တွေ၊ ဆံပင်ပညာရှင်တွေနဲ့ တွေ့ဆုံလုပ်ကိုင်ခွင့်ရခြင်း
- စုတင်အဖွဲ့ပေးအားပေးတဲ့ ကြိုဆိုပေးဆောင်ရွက် အောင်မြင်စေတဲ့ ခိုက်ကူးစီစဉ်မှုကိုပါ ပေးမည်မှာပါ။

ပါတွေအားလုံးအတွက် ကွသင့်တွေက **ဒေါ်လာ ၅၀၀** ဆိုပေးတဲ့ အခု **ဒေါ်လာ ၂၅၀** နဲ့ ခန့်ဝင်ပါ။ စက်တင်ဘာလ ၁ ရက်နေ့ မတိုင်မီ ကြိုတင်စာရင်းဝင်ပြီး **၅၀ ရာခိုင်နှုန်း** လျှော့နည်းတဲ့ စာရင်းလိုက်ပါ။

အချိန်ဆွဲမနေဘဲ **၀၁-၃၂၂၂၂၂ (သို့) ၂၅၃၆၄၂** ကို အခုပဲ ဖုန်းခေါ်လိုက်ပါ။

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One of U Yaw Na Than's creations. Photo: Chit Su



Costume sales boom as Yangon cosplay turns three

Japanese anime-inspired subculture is gaining some serious traction among Yangon’s youth, writes Nandar Aung.

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“THE cosplay costume is different from other designs and is difficult to make. Some costumes I’ve never seen in my tailoring life before,” says Joker, a designer.

Ma Joker took out a design award in local competition “Miss People 2006”, and in 2011 she opened a tailoring shop of her own in 13th St of Yangon’s bustling downtown area. She has become a well-known tailor in Yangon’s small but dedicated cosplay community.

“I don’t know why they are so mad on the hobby. They go crazy making their costumes and spend all their money on tailor fees,” she said.

Joker started to make the anime and cartoon outfits around two years ago, when the cosplay events were first held in Myanmar. She now receives more than 10 costume orders a month from the cosplayers.

Some costumes are difficult to make because of the fiddly accessories and details or specific types of fabric, she explains.

“My staff are afraid and want to go away when the cosplay costumes orders arrive to my shop,” she added.

Ma Joker receives K20,000 to K80,000 for the tailoring fees but, as one of her regular customers Ko Aung Pyae Sone noted, this is still cheaper than most tailors and decidedly more cost- (and time-) efficient than ordering from foreign websites.

“First I decided to make [outfits] with my sister who is a tailor, but it is not easy to find the right colour or clothes. So I decided to place an order with a professional tailor,” explains 19-year-old cosplayer, Aung Pyae Sone.

“As it is my main hobby, I don’t care how much it will cost,” he says.

Ever since Aung Pyae Sone was child he used to watch Japanese animation, and dreamed of becoming

an anime character. In 2012, a small cosplay celebration hosted by the Japanese Products Expo allowed this dream to become a reality, if only for a day. Since then, he has not given up on cosplay, investing in elaborate costumes, wigs, boots, make-up and other props.

“While I wear the costume and act like my favorite anime, I feel in my mind just like him. I like that feeling,” Aung Pyae explains.

“Also, I make new friends from the cosplay parties and I have a lot of fun with them,” he says.

He is currently preparing to dress as his favorite anime character Sora from the Japanese animation *No Game No Life*, when he competes in the 3rd ‘Myanmar Otaku & Cosplay Festival’ on August 3.

Like Aung Pyae Sone, many Myanmar teenagers and young people were familiar with Japanese anime characters before cosplay parties had come onto the scene in Yangon.

Since censorship was lifted and social networks gained popularity in Myanmar, young people have been able to order imported products (including phone covers, apparel and accessories) indirectly through online shopping sites. Many of these products featured anime, cartoon, manga and video games characters.

Local cosplay group MMOtaku – the first to organise a cosplay even in Yangon – gave young anime lovers a chance to show their talent. Now, after some 10 cosplay parties and festivals, their numbers are still increasing.

MMOtaku organiser Ko Lin Aung Kyaw said most cosplay enthusiasts in Myanmar are aged between 14 and 20 years old.

“All of the people who were there [at the early events] made cosplay their hobby,” the 23-year-old explains. “Now [with the third annual MMOtaku event] there has been more anime coming out, and [we’ve seen] better costume quality – but

some of them still need to improve their make-up skills,” he concedes.

Ko Lin Kyaw fell into cosplay at the age of 21, and now plays host to three cosplay conventions each year. For each event, he adds competitions for the cosplayers to take part in. With the support of sponsors he has been able to give out at least four awards, some of which are worth up to K200,000.

“When I organised [a cosplay event] for the first time in 2012, there were over one hundred people who joined – some were ashamed to do this, but after that the number has grown more and more each year,” he said. And, as he says, why not? “Despite the fact that it can be costly, the cosplay hobby doesn’t have other bad aspects.”

To dress convincingly like a Japan anime character the average cosplayer spends between K100,000 and K300,000 per costume. This can include wigs, accessories and other props. Some choose to compete, while others are happy just to get into cosplay and enjoy the spectacle.

20-year-old Pann Lae was the winner of the Best Female Award at the 2nd Myanmar Otaku & Cosplay Festival in 2013. She says cosplay is the most important thing in her life.

She was a model before stepping into the cosplay world, when her friend convinced her it was worth a shot.

“A cosplayer should love her anime and try to look like her anime while performing on the stage,” she says, sharing her secrets for cosplay authenticity. “If the anime character is a murderer, the cosplayer should act like that. Not at all like a studio model.”

The 3rd Myanmar Otaku & Cosplay Festival was held on August 3. Over 100 cosplayers and some 1000 lookers-on took part.



Photos: Supplied

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Manage a series of interconnected urban and rural media campaigns to create a positive product association and capture the hearts of our consumers with strong call to action. Ability to work with a diverse group of colleagues to ensure clear coherence of actions.

Budget: Annual media market development budget and accounting for functional expenditures.

Essential Personal Qualities: Dynamic positive Team player, with drive and spirit to succeed in this fast-paced environment.

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Manage a network of distribution operators to ensure appropriate stock levels and product conditions are maintained. Dynamically develop, manage and evaluate performance targets for all distribution operators while ensuring motivation and performance are maximised to achieve the Company's sales growth targets.

Budget: Manage associated distribution budgets and accounting systems.

Essential Personal Qualities: A details and results-oriented mindset with an ability to motivate and objectively evaluate personnel and contractor performance

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Manage a series of supply relationships with major and minor suppliers to the business and the outwards flow of finished products to distribution centres. Coordinate with Company staff to ensure appropriate input quantities are available to supply production forecasts and outward product flows are allocated to the appropriate markets.

Essential Personal Qualities: A focused but dynamic "big picture" thinker with the ability to drill down into the details when needed.

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Experience: Dairy/food/beverage/ process manufacturing industry, preferably in multinational corporations with leadership roles in production, maintenance and planning. Strong knowledge of cGMP, HACCP, and aseptic working environments.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with strong interpersonal and leadership skills.

EQUIPMENT MANAGER:

Provides guidance and direction to a team of Equipment Engineers during project phase and operation phase. Lead installation and acceptance of dairy processing and packaging equipment and continue to up-keep systematically and improve their performance during production.

Budget: Manage associated equipment maintenance budget of the plant

Experience: Dairy/food/beverage/ process manufacturing industry, preferably in multinational corporations with leadership roles in equipment maintenance and improvement. Strong knowledge of cGMP, HACCP, and aseptic working environments.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with strong interpersonal and leadership skills.

PROCESS EQUIPMENT ENGINEER:

Lead dairy processing and CIP equipment installation, commissioning then upkeep the equipment in production. Lead troubleshooting, root cause finding, repair and improvement of processing and CIP equipment. Create Procedures, Work Instructions and other relevant documentation for operation and maintenance of processing and CIP equipment.

Experience: Equipment maintenance and improvement experience in dairy/food/beverage/ process manufacturing industry, preferably in process equipment.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with strong interpersonal skills and willingness to learn better practices.

PACKAGING EQUIPMENT ENGINEER:

Lead dairy packaging equipment installation, commissioning then maintain the equipment in production. Create Procedures, Work Instructions and other relevant documentation for operation and maintenance of packaging equipment.

Experience: Equipment maintenance and improvement experience in dairy/food/beverage/ process manufacturing industry, preferably in packaging equipment.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with strong interpersonal skills and willing to learn better practices.

BUILDING & UTILITIES MANAGER:

Provide guidance and direction to Building and Utilities Engineers during project phase and operation phase. Lead the design development of the site, factory building, building services and utilities and continue to operate and maintain them in operation phase

Experience: Facilities projects and operation experience in manufacturing industry, preferably in multinational corporations with leadership roles in equipment maintenance and improvement.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with strong interpersonal and leadership skills.

FACILITIES PROCESS ENGINEER:

Oversee the design, construction, and commissioning of the Process Facilities systems (steam, water treatment, waste water treatment, and more). Create Procedures, Work Instructions and other relevant documentation for operation and maintenance of facilities process systems.

Experience: Project, operation and maintenance experience in process utilities and mechanical systems preferably in manufacturing industry.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with strong interpersonal skills and willingness to learn better practices.

SAFETY ENGINEER:

Create, disseminate and enforce safety rules, regulations and ensure safety promotion during construction project and later in the factory operation. Lead safety induction courses, education, consultation and enforcement during construction project and later in the factory operation.

Experience: Knowledge of EHS legislations, risk assessment, fire safety and environmental compliance in construction and production sites.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with a details oriented mindset who is able to work in a dynamic environment. Should possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills.

CIVIL ENGINEER:

Oversee the design, development, construction and acceptance of the Site, plant and buildings in terms of structural, architectural, space management, civil works, etc. Continue to maintain the Site, Plant, Buildings, Furniture and provide facilities services during operation.

Experience: Project experience in structural, construction and quality control for steel structure industrial buildings.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player with strong interpersonal skills and willing to learn better practices.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEER (E&I):

Lead Electrical, Automation and Instrumentation systems design, development, installation, maintenance and support of the Yangon UHT plant. Create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Work Instructions (WIs) and other relevant documentation for operation and maintenance.

Experience: Minimum 3 years operation and maintenance experience in E&I systems. Strong understanding of control philosophies and troubleshooting procedures. Experience in PLC and BMS/SCADA systems as well as fire alarm, CCTV, access card systems, and other networks.

Essential Personal Qualities: A Team player who possesses strong interpersonal skills, technical insight, and innovative approaches to issues.

PLANNING ENGINEER:

Lead project scheduling and coordination, and update project progress status to ensure the project is on schedule. Plan production, materials and maintenance, and report the status to shopfloor and management.

Experience: Working knowledge of MS Project, project scheduling and resource planning and reporting. Experience in planning and leading decision-making meetings with an array of personnel.

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Myanmar's oldest Japanese restaurant bounces back to life

NYEIN EI EI HTWE

nyeineiehtwe23@gmail.com

FURUSATO is a restaurant that has lived through many different social, political and economic changes in its 30 years. Situated on West Shwegonedine road, Bahan township, it was also Myanmar's first Japanese restaurant.

"We wanted to give a feeling of home for Japanese workers in Myanmar who were homesick," said Ma Yuki Ko, who runs the restaurant.

The restaurant was opened in 1988 by her Japanese mother and Myanmar father, now 73 and 82 respectively. Ma Yuki Ko was 15.

"At that time, my mother was working as a beautician and she made money, but when my father decided to build a restaurant by his own design, she has automatically become a Japanese chef for our restaurant. Me...I became a waitress," she recalled.

Now, Ma Yuki Ko manages the whole restaurant.

The building is in traditional Japanese style, with black woods ceilings, glass, and sliding doors. It was designed and built by shop owner U Maung Maung.

The family had difficulty keeping



Furusato's interior design is traditional Japanese, complete with sliding doors and dark wood ceilings. Photo: Zarni Phyo

their restaurant afloat, as Myanmar experienced political changes and economic strife.

"After my mother threw her profession of beautician away and became a chef, the airport project was rejected and all Japanese workers went back to Japan," said Ma Yuki Ko.

"The most difficult moment was during the 1988 revolution when the restaurant was closed for months," she said bitterly. During the whole period of

the 88 revolution, her family was afraid of being robbed, so did not dare to open restaurant.

"We asked our Myanmar neighbors for help and they gave strength, so my parents thank Myanmar."

During the 90s, there was more demand for Japanese food. Sailors and embassy staff began to spend time at Furusato, and the restaurant was once again crowded.

At that time, there were no Japanese

products for cooking, so they had to be creative to make real Japanese tastes from scratch.

Ma Yuki Ko said they home-made all ingredients, with a primary focus on customer health.

"There were big pots behind of this restaurant, filled with bean curds, soured vegetables and sauces because we couldn't buy anything for our dishes in that time, not like now. My mother even went to the sauce industry to find the best fish-sauce matching Japanese sauces."

Ma Yuki Ko went to Japan to learn her parent's trade for three years, then she helped her mother in the restaurant's kitchen.

Now, she has hired chefs. The dishes are true to the original Furusato taste, and the recipes have never changed.

"[Since 88] we never closed our restaurant even [when we had] big problems."

Including 2007, when the world was in economic crisis mode – and Myanmar was subject to the fluctuations in the US dollar.

There are many Japanese restaurants in Yangon now, but the family behind Furusato is not the competitive type. "We do not aim to change the tastes and service for our customers. We do not think about incomes or branches

opening. We want to service each customer deeply," she says.

Ma Yuki Ko says it is now much easier to source ingredients.

As owner and chef of Furusato for 20 years, Mrs Fujiko Tsuneyoshi said she truly felt the stress of her husband.

"My husband who designed and built our restaurant was more deeply interested in restaurant. There were many difficulties, including customers who didn't give money in worst days," 73-year-old Ms Fujiko said.

However they still boast loyal customers who continue to dine with them since 1986.

Ms Fujiko added their restaurant is newly crowded in the last year or so because there are more Japanese people coming to Myanmar.

The restaurant is well-known among international tourists and is highly acclaimed in traveller books and guides.

"My friends and customers suggested that we should expand our restaurant but we have no idea how. We just want to maintain my father's design for generations," Ma Yuki Ko said.

She hopes her two daughters, who are learning to cook in the Japanese tradition, will continue to run Furusato for many more years to come.



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- Junction 8 Branch: G 21 to G 24, Junction 8 Shopping Mall, Kyaik Waing Pagoda Road, Mayangone Tsp., Yangon. T +95 (1) 650 771-2 ext: 109-173-178-302
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- Ocean Mandalay Branch: 73th Street, between Thazin St. & Ngu Shwe Wah St., Chan Mya Tharzi Tsp., Mandalay




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Abandoned

Ten percent of Myanmar's elderly are in need

As rainy season drags on, the situation grows gradually worse for Myanmar's ageing homeless

ZON PANN PWINT
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FOR hours, hard rain had been falling on Yangon.

In his office at Yangon General Hospital, medical social officer U Tun Linn was reading reports about patients who suffered from various social problems.

After he was finished reading, U Tun Linn prepared to leave his office. The rain was still bucketing down, but he couldn't wait for it to stop – he had to help a recovering patient move into a home for the aged.

Several days before, 60-year-old U Tan Khar had been brought to the hospital after he was found lying on the ground near Kyautawgyi Pagoda in Lanmadaw township.

He had been sheltering at night in a roadside betel nut shack near the pagoda, and spending his days selling ice lollies outside a nearby school.

But living in such a flimsy, unprotected shelter while monsoon rain swept across the city day after day had taken a toll on his health, until he was finally struck down by a stroke.

"His body was terribly cold when he was brought to the

hospital," U Tun Linn said.

Doctors were able to provide treatment that helped U Tan Khar regain his health over the course of several days, but they were unable to trace his family. Afraid that he would suffer a relapse if he returned to living in the streets, doctors arranged for him to move to Thabawataya Yeiktha, a home for the sick and the aged in Thanlyin township.

U Tan Khar is one of 11 patients with social difficulties who were brought to Yangon General Hospital in July. During most months, four or five such patients are brought in.

Some were brought in by family members who then disappeared, never returning to care for their ill relative. Others were found lying sick in the streets, having been abandoned there by their children or by other family. And some didn't have families who could even be traced or contacted.

"We shouldn't always blame their children," U Tun Linn said. "They might be struggling hard to earn a living and can't take care of the elderly family members."

He said Yangon General Hospital "provides whoever is sick with free medicine, treatment and care" and



An elderly woman wades through an open sewer in Yangon. Photo: Yadanar

"even serves meals until the patient gets better".

"But the hospital doesn't accommodate those who have nowhere else to go. After they are discharged by the doctors, we have to find a place for them to live."

If U Tun Linn is able to find a patient's family, he sends them home. If they don't have a home, or if their families refuse to accept them, he arranges a place for them to live at homes for the sick and aged such as Thabawataya Yeiktha or Sisaryeik.

"Some family members are unwilling to accept these patients. When we contact them, they don't give us a warm reception," U Tun Linn said.

"In these cases, we try very hard to persuade the family to allow the patient back into their home, but there can be a lot of bitterness."

He recounted the story of one elderly man who spent most of his time living on the street but who was sometimes supported by his daughter.

One day he was brought to the hospital by someone who had found him lying in the street in Bayintnaung township. His daughter never visited him in the hospital, and after he recovered, he obstinately refused to live

in his daughter's house. Finally, he was sent to Thabawataya Yeiktha.

"This July we saw many patients who had not been cared for by their families. The heavy rain affected their health because they lived outside instead of inside a warm home," U Tun Linn said.

He said such patients are often brought in by social aid groups such Thway Myittar, which helps homeless people find medical help, or by people working for Yangon City Development Committee.

Ministry of Social Welfare figures indicate that in 2012, 9.1 percent of Myanmar's population was aged over 60, and 10pc of those were in need of social care.

While single people must often fend for themselves, some elderly couples are getting by with help from social aid groups.

In Shwepyithar township on the outskirts of Yangon, U Ant Sein – who is approaching 100 – and his wife Daw Ohn Shwe, 89, live in a thatched house built by the Team for the Aged humanitarian group.

Last week U Ant Sein was lying sick in the house. He had been discharged from the hospital in

June after suffering stroke.

The couple used to lived on the premises of a factory where U Ant Sein worked as a watchman, while his wife sold yogurt in Hlaing township to supplement their income. But health problems eventually forced to U Ant Sein to resign.

"We had to find somewhere to live because we weren't allowed to stay in the factory compound after my husband stopped working," said Daw Ohn Shwe, who was waiting for her eldest daughter to bring dinner as she did nearly every evening.

"Fortunately, my customers who always bought my yogurt helped build this house on rented land. They pay the monthly rental fee and provide K20,000 worth of rice and food every month."

The couple has three daughters, but the eldest is the only one who regularly visits.

"Life is hard. All my daughters struggle hard to live with their families. They can't come and see us, and we can't help them either," Daw Ohn Shwe said.

"Normally, we eat what the neighbours give us. Sometimes, I feel they are better than my children."

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

AUTUST 4 - 10, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 – Feb 18



According to Louis Pasteur, chance favours the prepared mind. The world of achievement has always belonged to the optimist. Almost every day of your life, you must negotiate with endurance – but sometimes in unexpected ways – to gain social favour. A positive mental attitude will boost your powers of persuasion and make you a better negotiator. Love requires a simple heart.

PISCES | Feb 19 – March 20



Establish your objective. Lead by personal example whenever possible, and focus on social contributions rather than personal gain. High morale is an inner feeling of well-being that is independent of external factors. Keep your cool and doggedly persist in getting your point across. Maintain a high level of personal integrity based on emotion.

ARIES | Mar 21 – Apr 19



Use virtue to surmount the difficulties and hardships of your life's journey. You should first arm yourself with fortitude and courage. Faith stimulates success, and hope sustains it. Big changes require balancing your own pursuits with discipline. Social problems should not be challenged, but rather managed using your intellectual experiences and social power.

TAURUS | Apr 20 – May 20



You must be yourself to be at peace. Choose what is right instead of what is politically correct. Your every action should have a clear purpose. Learn more about the power of silence. Take note of the difference between a rash decision and a prompt one, and take the time to achieve the right balance in decision making. Consult your conscience, and forget nothing about yourself.

GEMINI | May 21 – June 20



Time is the gift of healing, and healing is the gift of hope. Power dwells with cheerfulness, hope puts us in a working mood, while despair has no value and only serves to dissipate working power. Make sure all the ingredients are present before putting the cake in the oven. Love demands nothing but promise, and accepts everything that you have to give.

CANCER | June 21 – July 22



Don't be anxious about your unknown future. Your past might be different from the present, and likewise your future will not be the same as the present, but you can use your self-confidence to change things for the better. Women should not feel obligated to change their behaviour merely based on the needs or interests of men.

LEO | July 23 – Aug 22



Your social situation could soon become unmanageable and disappointing. Test your decision-making and problem-solving skills by accepting new challenges that will help you discover the extent of your brainpower. Use your mental strength to develop the intellectual emotions necessary to determine the factors relevant for social communication.

VIRGO | Aug 23 – Sept 22



Prepare for total confusion. Brevity is the soul of wit in social negotiations, but not all truth will be told. Setting an example is better than enforcing precepts. There should be no law in necessity, and no man is so indispensable that he is able to prove the rule by simple exception. A true word spoken in common knowledge never leads to ruin, but rather acts as a foundation for proper action.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

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Tel: 09-731-35632, Email: williameastel@gmail.com

LIBRA | Sept 23 – Oct 22



Empathy plays a role in all great quests and is necessary for all creative endeavours. Keep the commitments you make, and make conditional agreements accordingly to continue ascending the social ladder. The relentless pursuit of glamour at all costs is a selfish activity that will not enhance your status in the community. Disagreements can sometimes reveal your courage.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 – Nov 21



Fear can provide the energy to do your best in new situations. Many people do not see the comfort zone as a limitation, but rather as providing a free atmosphere for optimistic thought. Never allow yourself to rewrite the memory of an experience, especially in the service of careless evil. Self-indulgence has no power to rule over affairs of the heart.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 – Dec 21



Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm: Every work of genius must be the product of keen passion and interest. Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties. Use your imaginative power to generate new ideas as well as the courage to challenge cynicism. Empower yourself by developing your listening skills, and wait for the right time to make social challenges.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 – Jan 19



Do not confuse self-management with destiny. You life will continue shifting according to your environment, the circumstances of fortune and misfortune, and your constructive or destructive drive. Know the value of becoming a leading light in social situations: Never allow the light to dim, but keep it steady and bright to illuminate the way forward.

Flash in the pan

Quick veggie meals for lent



For those going vegetarian for Buddhist lent, Phyo has a few suggestions for dishes that forego meat, but don't compromise on flavour.

SWEET SHITAKE MUSHROOM STEW

Serves 6

- INGREDIENTS
- 12 shitake dried mushroom
 - 2 onions
 - 1 tablespoon of brown sugar
 - ¼ cup of vegetable oil
- PREPARATIONS
- Rinse the mushrooms to make sure there is no dirt or dust left on them. Soak them in two cups of hot water. When they become soft and squelchy, take them out. Keep the water. Slice the mushrooms finely. Dice the onions and set aside.
- Add the oil to the saucepan and bring the mushrooms to a medium heat. Saut0 the onions for a minute, or until they become translucent. Add the mushrooms and saut0 for another minute. Add sugar and let it sit for another minute. Take a cup of the mushroom water and allow it to



PHYO ARBIDANS
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boil. Once it reaches bubbling point, turn the heat down. Replace the lid and let the contents of the pot simmer for half an hour.

If it becomes too dry, add more of the mushroom water. Once the mushrooms are sizzling, salt for taste and serve with wither steamed plain rice or Chinese steamed buns.

food



Photos: Phyo

THIS week, I'm looking to Chinese cuisine for inspiration on some hearty vegetarian dishes. Hard tofu (*Pae Pyar* in Burmese) is used for a multitude of vegetarian dishes.

I pan-fried it in a black bean paste that is, at once, both salty and spicy. The caramelised fried onions (shallots) set a strong contrast against the powerful taste of the sauce. This is very simple and can be prepared in no time at all.

A few weeks ago, I found a few varieties of pastes available from Lee Kum Kee brands at a large supermarket. I took the opportunity to stock up on my favorites ones, so I can be ready at a moment's notice to throw together something quick and delicious.

The second dish is a shitake mushroom stew, but I keep it very simple. I love the texture and strong, earthy flavours of these

mushrooms. This is a dish that might be best served alongside some fresh, good-quality Chinese steamed buns.

FRIED HARD TOFU WITH SPICY AND SALTY BLACK BEAN PASTE STEW
6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 4 hard tofu
- 1 cup of fried shallots/onions (you can buy the ready-made pack at any supermarkets)
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 tablespoon of spicy black bean sauce
- ½ cup of vegetable oil

PREPARATION

Wash the hard tofu and drain it well. Cut it into five even pieces per block and pat dry with kitchen paper. Crush the garlic.

Add the oil to the wok or

frying pan and crank it to a high heat. When the oil is hot enough, fry the tofu for a minute. Once this is done, turn the heat down to medium.

Keep frying the tofu until it becomes golden. Turn the pieces over from time to time. Transfer the slices onto a plate and drain the excess oil by lining the plate with kitchen paper.

Be sure not to fry the tofu for too long as it can become rigid and chewy.

Leave three tablespoons of oil in a wok and add the fried shallots and black bean paste. Fry this on a medium heat for a minute. Bring the fried tofu back into the wok and add a cup of water. Stir well, and turn the heat down. Simmer for half an hour with a closed lid.

In order to ensure that the shallots do not stick to the bottom, stir the ingredients from time to time. When it's sizzling, it's ready.

Serve with steamed rice.

Outposts of the (ever-expanding) empire:

Parami Pizza open for business

GWAY PYAN GYI

PARAMI Pizza, the latest offering from the Union-Gekko hospitality juggernaut, provides a family-friendly venue poised to cater to the apparently booming expat population out toward 8 Mile.

Recently opened, the restaurant was near-full on the Thursday night when we paid our visit.

The interior of the building, which sits on the corner of Parami and Malikha, has been gutted and given a stripped back, rustic look with tables

either fashioned from shipping pallets or made to look as though they were. At the counter there are strategically placed bags of imported flour, just in case you forgot it was an Italian restaurant.

The two long tables with bench seats make it a good location for group dining – however, the restaurant's acoustics leave something to be desired. No one there appeared to be talking that loudly, but there was still a bit of a din. If dining in a large group, you would be well advised to ensure whoever you're sitting next

Restaurant Review

Parami Pizza

No [11/8], Corner of Malikha Road and Parami Road
Mayangone Township.
01 667 449



The restaurant boasts decent cocktails in a rustic setting.

to is someone you want to talk to, because they're probably the only one you're going to be able to hear properly. If planning to go with a group, it's probably best to call ahead.

The menu has something for everyone, from salads and generous entree portions to pastas and pizzas. The tuna carpaccio was slightly tart, but fresh and reasonably priced. The panzanella salad contained all the expected ingredients, all of which were fresh and tasty, and they didn't scrimp on the cheese or croutons. The quality of cheese and use of Italian basil show a commitment to authentic flavours. The mushroom risotto was somewhat lacklustre, but entirely edible.

The Parami team reportedly imported an oven, in order to achieve an authentic woodfired flavour – a welcome idea given that the vast majority of pizza in Asia could perhaps be more correctly classified as cake, and should really be stripped of the right to use the word pizza by some sort of international Italian standards enforcement board.

Now, of course, when it comes to pizza in Yangon the question has to be: how does it stack up next to Papa Pizza?

This is where opinions diverged. The tomato paste Parami used seemed somewhat sweeter than

Papa's, and the dough was pretty much on par. Parami's four cheese pizza pales in comparison to Papa's three cheese, despite the latter having one less type of cheese. The ham, however, was "miles" better in terms of quality, according to one companion.

Parami has a well constructed drinks menu, with a strong wine list. Its cocktail menu has something to cater to all tastes but, somewhere between US\$6 and \$10 a pop, the bill can tend to mound up quickly. When it comes to beer selection, it's slim pickings – more an indictment on Myanmar's import regulations than choices made by whoever designed the menu, I'm sure.

As for desserts, we can't testify to their quality as there were none available on the night. The explanation for

this was somewhat confusing, as the tiramisu was in plain sight behind a counter. The waitress helpfully suggested another cocktail, which was not really the same thing but we took her advice.

All in all, Parami is a solid pick for anyone with a hankering for a hearty Italian meal up that end of town.



Restaurant Rating

★★★★★

Food:	6
Beverage:	7
Service:	8
Value for money:	7
X factor:	6.5



Jess and Kate

First Mojito Night

On July 20, The Lab launched his first Mojito Night. Now and on every Wednesday, there is no reason not to put some cuban sun and minty lime in the Yangon rainy night. Probably the best Mojito selection in town (strawberry, passion fruit, creole, and more) with a buy-one-get-one-free deal all night long.



Shiivani and Raman



Clémence and FG



Andrew, future president of Sierra Leone



Stacy, Susiana and Saskia



Adeana, Rommel and Jack



James and Jeffery



Abdul



Kassy



Bo Kyaw and Ko Myo Min



Ko Myo Min



Karen, Valentina and Aude



Pyae Phyo



Matyas



Daniel Collins and Zoe Hauser



Spike and Borbala

Opening of 'City of Small' photo exhibition

Thursday 31st July, photographer Thet Htoo opened his newest photographic exhibition 'City of Small', a series of intimate images exploring urban migration in Myanmar. The Witness Yangon Documentary Arts Space will be open every Thursday evening for social events allowing the people of Yangon the chance to engage with photography and film over a few drinks. Address : 3rd Floor, Pyan Hlwar Building, 4A Parami Road (Chawtwingone Junction).



Khun Lat and Khun Li

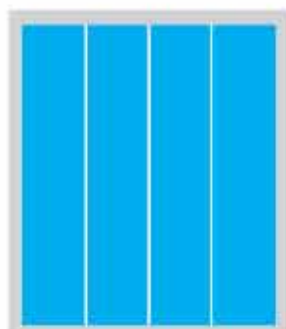


Lynn Bo Bo

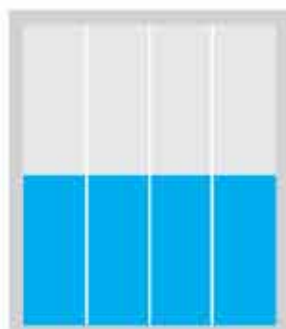


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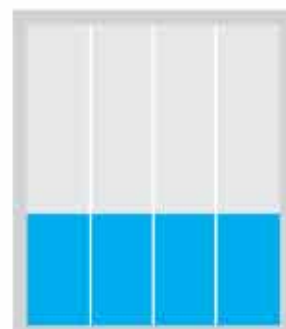
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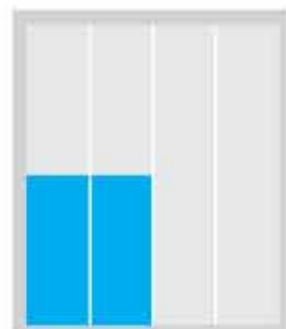
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Khin Maung Kyaw and Sai Kong Kham



Open-mic of my MOJO

A month ago, on July 3rd, TS1 was hosting the first MY WORD, an open-mic organized my MOJO and featuring talented Myanmar and foreign musicians. A groovy night that should be re-edited very soon.



Rachel and Namsai



Rachel and Alan



Ada and Suu



Yu Yu and Sindhu



Laura



Ahnut, Luke (Break the Chance), Bong Bong, Naw San (Mongolid)



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DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 828	2	7:00	8:10	
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	

YANGON TO MANDALAY				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 775	Daily	6:15	7:25	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	6:20	8:25	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	8:30	
6T 401	1,3,6,7	6:20	8:25	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	8:40	
YJ 201	2,3,4	6:30	7:55	
YJ 233	1,6	6:30	7:55	
YJ 211	5,7	6:30	7:55	
YH 826	4	7:00	8:40	
YH 824	1	7:00	8:40	
YH 828	2	7:00	9:10	
YH 828	6	7:00	11:25	
7Y 851	1,3,7	7:05	11:20	
W9 201	Daily	7:30	8:55	
7Y 741	2,5	9:00	13:45	
7Y 841	4,6	10:00	14:15	
YH 727	1	11:00	13:10	
YH 729	4,6	11:00	14:00	
YH 729	2	11:00	14:30	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	13:10	
W9 151/YJ 7151	1,3,6	11:00	14:45	
W9 7153/YJ 153	2,5,7	11:00	12:25	
7Y 631	2,4,6	11:15	12:40	
YH 731	3,5,7	14:30	16:40	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	16:35	
6T 501	2,4	14:30	16:30	
6T 501	6,7	14:45	16:45	
YH 731	1	15:00	17:10	
6T 501	1,5	15:30	17:30	
W9 211	1,2,3,5,6	16:00	17:25	
W9 7211/YJ 211	4	16:00	17:25	
Y5 234	Daily	17:45	18:55	

YANGON TO NYAUNG U				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	7:45	
6T 401	1,2,3,4,6,7	6:20	7:40	
6T 411	5	6:20	7:40	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	6:20	7:40	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	7:50	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	17:25	
YH 731	3,5,7	14:30	17:25	
6T 501	2,4	14:30	17:20	
6T 501	6,7	14:45	17:35	
YH 731	1	15:00	17:55	
6T 501	1,5	15:30	18:20	
W9 211	1,2,3,5,6	16:00	18:10	
W9 7211/YJ 211	4	16:00	18:10	

YANGON TO MYITKYINA				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 211	5	6:30	9:20	
YJ 233	1,6	6:30	9:20	
YJ 201	2,3	6:30	9:20	
YH 826	4	7:00	10:05	
YH 824	1	7:00	10:05	
YH 828	6	7:00	10:00	
YH 828	2	7:00	13:25	

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	

MANDALAY TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 233	Daily	8:05	9:15	
YH 918	Daily	8:30	10:25	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	8:40	10:05	
6T 402	1,3,6,7	8:45	10:45	
K7 223/7Y 112	Daily	8:55	11:00	
W9 201	Daily	9:10	11:05	
YJ 212	5	11:30	16:30	
W9 153/YJ 7153	7	12:45	19:30	
W9 153/YJ 7153	2,5	12:45	18:50	
YH 827	4	13:20	14:25	
YH 825	1	13:20	14:25	
7Y 742	2,5	14:00	18:18	
YJ 235	6	14:00	15:25	
YH 730	6	14:00	19:00	
YH 829	6	14:15	15:40	
YJ 235	1	14:25	15:50	
YJ 203	2	14:25	15:50	
7Y 852	1,3,7	14:25	18:40	
7Y 842	4,6	14:30	18:15	
YH 730	2	14:30	19:00	
YH 829	2	14:50	16:15	
W9 7152/YJ 152	1,3,6	15:05	16:30	
YJ 213	7	15:15	16:40	
7Y 632	2,4,6	16:15	17:40	
YH 728	1	16:30	17:55	
YH 732	3,5,7	16:40	18:45	
6T 502	2,4	16:50	18:55	
K7 225/7Y 222	Daily	16:50	19:00	
6T 502	6,7	17:05	19:10	
YH 738	3,5,7	17:10	18:35	
YH 732	1	17:10	19:15	
YH 730	4	17:45	19:10	
6T 502	1,5	17:50	19:55	
Y5 776	Daily	19:35	20:45	

NYAUNG U TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 918	Daily	7:45	10:25	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	7:55	10:05	
6T 401	1,2,3,4,6,7	7:55	10:45	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	8:05	11:00	
YH 918	4	8:35	10:40	
6T 412	5	8:40	10:00	
YH 732	3,5,7	17:25	18:45	
6T 502	2,4	17:35	18:55	
K7 225/7Y 222	Daily	17:40	19:00	
6T 502	6,7	17:50	19:10	
YH 732	1	17:55	19:15	
W9 211	1,2,3,5,6	18:25	19:45	
W9 7211/YJ 211	4	18:25	19:45	
6T 502	1,5	18:35	19:55	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 827	4	11:55	14:25	
YH 825	1	11:55	14:25	
YH 829	6	12:50	15:40	
YJ 203	4	12:25	15:15	
7Y 852	1,3,7	13:00	18:40	
YJ 212	7	13:20	16:40	
YH 829	2	13:25	16:15	

7Y 851	1,3,7	7:05	12:45
W9 7151/YJ 151	1,3,6	11:00	13:15
W9 7153/YJ 153	2,5,7	11:00	13:55
7Y 631	2,4,6	11:15	14:35
YH 826	4	14:00	16:40

YANGON TO HEHO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	9:15	
6T 401	2,4	6:20	8:35	
6T 401	1,3,6,7	6:20	9:20	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	9:30	
YJ 201	3	6:30	11:30	
7Y 851	1,3,7	7:05	10:35	
W9 201	Daily	7:30	9:40	
7Y 741	2,5	9:00	13:03	
7Y 841	4,6	10:00	13:30	
YH 729	6	11:00	17:50	
YH 729	2	11:00	12:25	
YH 727	1	11:00	12:25	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	12:25	
YH 731	3,5,7	14:30	15:55	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	15:45	
6T 501	2,4	14:30	15:40	
6T 501	6,7	14:45	15:55	
YH 731	1	15:00	16:25	
6T 501	1,5	15:30	16:40	

YANGON TO SITTWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 611	6,7	11:15	12:40	
6T 607	1	11:15	12:40	
6T 605	5	11:15	13:15	
W9 7311/YJ 311	4	11:30	13:20	
W9 311	2	11:30	13:20	

YANGON TO MYEIK				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 633	3,4,5,7	7:00	9:15	
K7 319/7Y 531	Daily	7:00	9:05	

YANGON TO THANDWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
6T 605	5	11:15	12:10	
6T 607	1	11:15	13:50	

YANGON TO DAWEI				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 633	3,4,5,7	7:00	8:25	
K7 319/7Y 531	1,3,5	7:00	8:05	
K7 319/7Y 531	2,4,6,7	7:00	8:10	

YANGON TO LASHIO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 211	7	6:30	8:55	
7Y 741	2,5	9:00	10:38	
YH 729	4,6	11:00	13:00	
YH 729	2	11:00	13:30	

YANGON TO PUTAO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 826	4	7:00	11:00	
YH 824	1	7:00	11:00	
W9 7153/YJ 153	2,5,7	11:00	15:05	

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 9607/YJ 7607	4,7	14:20	16:10	

W9 7152/YJ 152	1,3,6	13:35	16:30
7Y 632	2,4,6	14:50	17:40
W9 7154/YJ 154	7	16:35	19:30
W9 7154/YJ 154	2,5	16:35	18:50
YH 827	4	16:40	19:05

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
MI 533	4,6	15:55	20:50
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

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

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

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 715	1,3,5,7	19:30	22:50

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

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

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

HONG KONG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 250	3,5,7	21:45	23:30

TOKYO TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:00	15:40

GAYA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 602	3,5,6	9:20	12:30

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

SINGAPORE TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 533	4,6	11:35	15:00
Y5 234	Daily	15:35	18:55

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

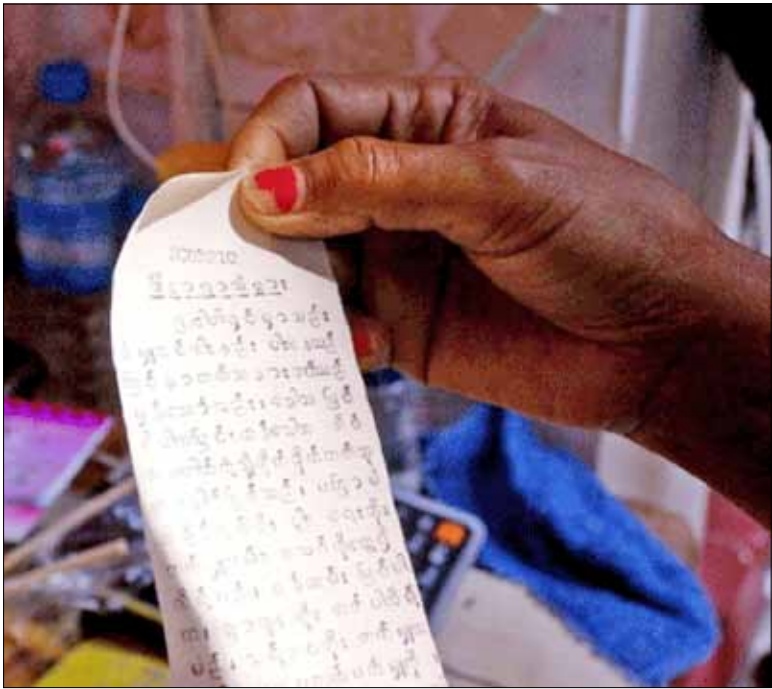
International Airlines

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 : 303]									
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									
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									
3K = Jet Star									
QR = Qatar Airways									
KE = Korea Airlines									
NH = All Nippon Airways									
SQ = Singapore Airways									
MU=China Eastern Airlines									
DD = Nok Airline									
BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines									
TR = Tiger Airline									
Subject to change without notice									
<table><tr><td>Day</td><td>4 = Thursday</td></tr><tr><td>1 = Monday</td><td>5 = Friday</td></tr><tr><td>2 = Tuesday</td><td>6 = Saturday</td></tr><tr><td>3 = Wednesday</td><td>7 = Sunday</td></tr></table>		Day	4 = Thursday	1 = Monday	5 = Friday	2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday	3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday
Day	4 = Thursday								
1 = Monday	5 = Friday								
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday								
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday								

Street Scene

This weighing machine and horoscope reader has been at Bogyoke Market since the 1970s. It's the unique centrepiece of a drinks stand at the southern edge of the main hall. It's rarely used, but if you fancy checking out your weight or glimpsing into the future, you can operate it by dropping one of the old square-shaped coins (available for K200) into the slot. It just might be the only vending machine in the country.

Words and photos by Ewan Gaoblai



Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

SWEET! By Henry Quarters

ACROSS

- 1 Not now or the future
5 Tolkien villains
9 Tea-producing state in India
14 Creative input
15 Not a happy fate
16 Neutral shade
17 Very pleasing
20 Arm counterparts of fibulae
21 Parceled out
22 Continuing indefinitely
25 Van Gogh lost one
26 Primitive percussion instrument
28 Filly, after maturing
32 Collapsible topper
37 Ready for a break
38 Good time for a walk hand-in-hand
41 Chats
42 Become very thin
43 Lid lump
44 Mortal danger
46 Appliance with blades
47 Violent storm
53 Birds of a region
58 Helper, essentially
59 Like some suburban roads
62 Bring to mind
63 Saharalike
64 Masseuse's supplies
65 Palindromist's principle
66 Long-gone bird
67 Twiggy digs

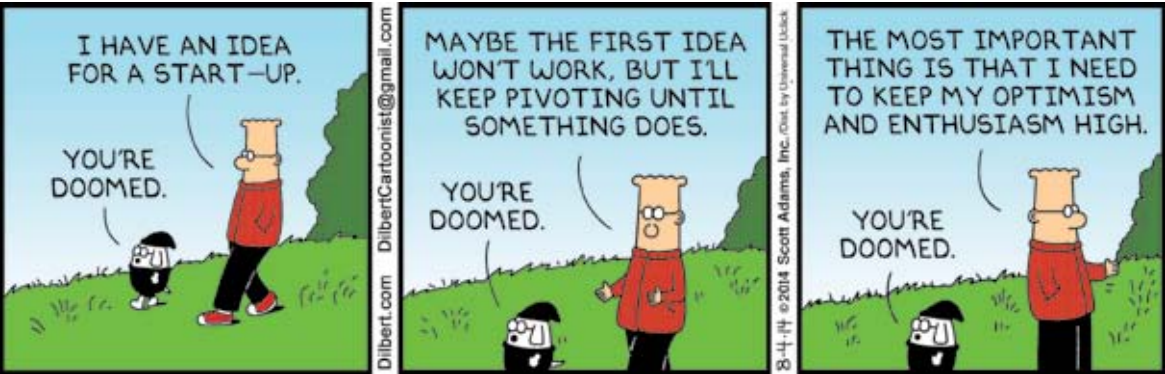
DOWN

- 1 Excite, as interest or curiosity
2 Grown up
3 View from the Left Bank
4 Golden Horde member
5 ___ man out
6 Sturgeon product
7 Carbonated beverage
8 Grin bearer
9 More than hate
10 Small paving stone

11 Recipe directive
12 Malaria symptom
13 Pinochle combo
18 Poetic time after dusk
19 Feeling happy appreciation
23 Turkish commander (Var.)
24 Give money, and expect it back
27 Absolute
28 Kind of computer
29 Stirring solo performance
30 It's overhead
31 Honer's target
32 Withdraws (with "out")
33 Land map part
34 Hard to hang on to
35 Tool for deciduous foliage
36 Cousin of a zebra
37 Gumshoe
39 Send out matter
40 Dell, poetically
44 Revere in history
45 Cluster of nine
46 Diamond side
48 Daisy ___ of Dogpatch
49 Blame for, as a crime
50 Murphy who played Klumps
51 Unloads
52 Secret encounter
53 Lookout, perhaps
54 On the qui ___ (watchful)
55 Macintosh screen symbol
56 Bag-shaped fish trap
57 Prominent '70s hairstyle
60 Get ___ of (discard)
61 Words of commitment

DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



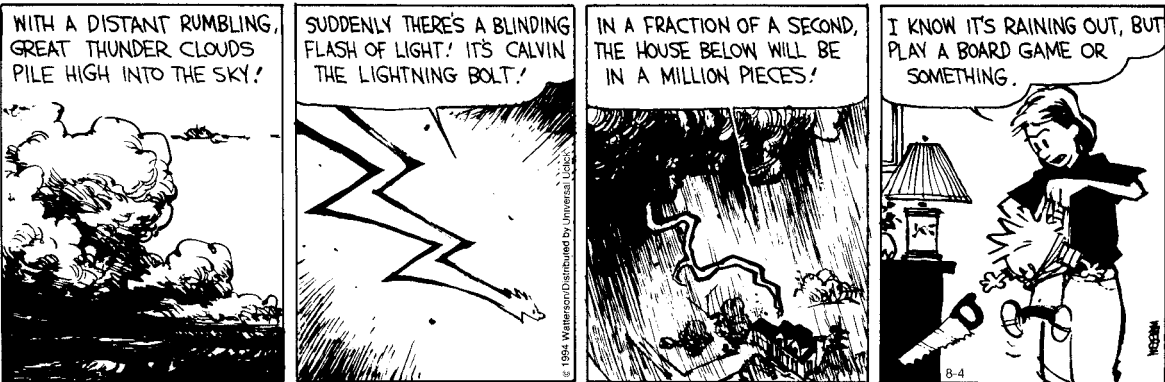
PEANUTS

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.

				9	8			1	2
		9	6			2	4		
					3				
7				9	5	2	4		
				7	6	1			
	6	5	4	2					9
				1					
		3	2				9	8	
2	4			5	3				

8/7

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.

DENTAL CROWNS

Solution: 7 letters

N	T	C	H	E	W	A	N	I	M	U	L	A	P	R
O	I	C	O	T	C	I	M	A	R	E	C	A	E	E
I	N	G	E	V	U	G	O	L	D	E	I	S	R	N
S	L	L	R	T	E	O	D	O	V	N	I	N	S	O
S	E	A	A	A	O	R	M	O	I	N	I	H	S	T
E	E	T	T	Y	M	R	R	M	O	C	A	P	N	S
R	T	R	H	E	O	P	P	I	K	P	A	E	V	D
P	S	O	T	M	M	L	T	E	E	C	N	M	E	E
M	S	P	O	I	A	A	L	L	E	A	O	D	N	L
O	E	P	O	N	R	T	U	A	M	L	N	N	E	E
C	R	U	T	O	N	R	E	R	A	O	I	T	E	M
O	P	S	T	E	R	D	E	R	B	I	S	M	R	A
L	M	S	M	E	T	P	L	P	I	E	V	A	S	N
O	E	E	F	R	O	N	T	O	A	A	B	I	T	E
R	C	H	R	O	M	I	U	M	H	T	L	A	E	H

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8/4

Alloy, Alumina, Bite, Bonded, Cement, Ceramic, Chew, Chromium, Color, Compression, Cover, Empress, Enamel, Ferrule, Front, Gold, Health, Hold, Implants, Improve, Margin, Material, Metal, Model, Molar, Mouth, Nickel, Onlay, Oral, Pain, Permanent, Protect, Resin, Restoration, Save, Shape, Smile, Space, Steel, Stone, Support, Taper, Tooth, Veneers

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

1	9	7	3	5	8	6	4	2
5	8	6	7	4	2	3	1	9
5	8	5	6	1	9	8	7	5
4	2	4	3	6	1	9	8	7
6	9	1	7	8	2	4	5	9
3	5	8	1	9	7	4	2	6
9	4	6	2	5	6	3	1	8
7	6	9	3	4	1	3	4	2
8	3	8	7	2	5	9	6	1
5	1	2	9	8	6	7	3	4

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. 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: 52910-19

UNICEF 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, Kyauktada. Tel: 375527-32, unicef.yangon@unicef.org.

UNODC 11-A, Malikha Rd., Ward 7, Mayangone. tel: 01-9666903, 9660556, 9660538, 9660398. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org

UNOPS 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 Myanmar 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), Kytewine Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 09-8631392, 01 656913-9

Chatrium Hotel

40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe. tel: 544500. fax: 544400.



No. 7A, Wingabar Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : (951) 546313, 430245. 09-731-77781-4. Fax : [01] 546313. www.cloverhotel.asia. info@cloverhotel.asia

Clover Hotel City Center

No. 217, 32nd Street (Upper Block), Pabedan Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : 377720, Fax : 377722 www.clovercitycenter.asia

Clover Hotel City Center Plus

No. 229, 32nd Street (Upper Block), Pabedan Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : 377975, Fax : 377974 www.clovercitycenterplus.asia

Confort Inn

4, Shweli Rd, Bet: Inya Rd & U Wisara Rd, Kamaryut, tel: 525781, 526872



No. (356/366), Kyaikkasan Rd, Tarmwe Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 542826, Fax: 545650 Email: reservation@edenpalacehotel.com

Hotel Grand United (Chinatown)

621, Maharbandoola Rd, Latha Tsp, Yangon. Tel: (95-1) 372256-58

(21st Downtown)

66-70, 21st Street (Enter from Strand Rd), Latha Tsp, Yangon. Tel: (95-1) 378201

(Ahlone Branch)

35, Min Ye Kyaw Swar Rd, Ahlone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: (95-1) 218061-64; Email: grandunited.head@gmail.com, www.hotelgrandunited.com

Hotel Yangon

91/93, 8th Mile Junction, Tel : 01-667708, 667688.

Inya Lake Resort Hotel

37 Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 662866. fax: 665537.

KH Hotel, Yangon

28-A, 7 Miles, Pyay Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Ph: 95-1-652532, 652533

MGM Hotel No (160), Warden

Street, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. +95-1-212454-9. www.hotel-mgm.com



No. 205, Corner of Wadan Street & Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: (95-1) 212850 ~ 3, 229358 ~ 61, Fax: (95-1) 212854. info@myanmarpandahotel.com http://www.myanmarpandahotel.com

PARKROYAL Yangon, Myanmar

33, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd, Dagon tsp. tel: 250388. fax: 252478. email: enquiry.prygn@parkroyalhotels.com.



Royal White Elephant Hotel

No-11, Kan Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. (+95-1) 500822, 503986. www.rwehotel.com

Savoy Hotel

129, Damazedi Rd, Kamayut tsp. tel: 526289, 526298,

Sedona Hotel

Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yankin. tel: 666900.

Strand Hotel

92 Strand Rd. tel: 243377. fax: 289880.

Summit Parkview Hotel

350, Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp. tel: 211888, 211966.

Sule Shangri-La Hotel

223 Sule Pagoda Rd. tel: 242828. fax: 242838.



VINTAGE LUXURY YACHT HOTEL

No.6, Botahtaung Jetty, Botahtaung Township, Yangon. Tel: (951)9010555, 9010535 Fax : (951) 9010536 info@vintageluxuryhotel.com www.vintageluxuryhotel.com

Winner Inn

42, Than Lwin Rd, Bahan Tsp. Tel: 503734, 524387. email: reservation@winnerinnmyanmar.com

Windsor Hotel No.31, Shin

Saw Pu Street, Sanchaung. Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 95-1-511216-8, www.hotelwindsoryangon.com

Yuzana Hotel

130, Shwegondaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, tel : 01-549600

Yuzana Garden Hotel

44, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Tsp, tel : 01-248944

ACCOMMODATION LONG TERM

Golden Hill Towers

24-26, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Bahan Tsp. tel: 558556. ghtower@mptmail.net.mm.



HAPPY HOMES REAL ESTATE & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Tel: 09-7349-4483, 09-4200-56994. E-mail: aahappyhomes@gmail.com, http://www.happyhomesyangon.com

Marina Residence

8, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. tel: 6506 51-4. fax: 650630.



MiCasa Hotel Apartments YANGON, MYANMAR

17, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yankin Tsp. Tel: 650933. Fax: 650960. Email : micprmd@myanmar.com.mmwww.myanmarmicasahotel.com

Sakura Residence

9, Inya Rd, Kamaryut Tsp. tel: 525001. fax: 525002.

ACCOMMODATION- HOTELS (NAY PYI TAW)



ROYAL KUMUDRA HOTEL (Nay Pyi Taw)

Reservation Office (Yangon) 123, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Dagon Township Tel : 951- 255 819-838

Royal Kumudra Hotel, (Nay Pyi Taw)

Tel : 067- 414 177, 067- 4141 88

E-Mail: reservation@maxhotelsgroup.com



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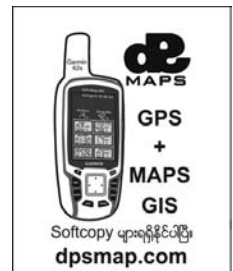
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(1) **PANSODAN TOWER**, 1800 sqft, 2 privates Rooms, 2 Hall, 2 Bath Rooms & 2 Toilets, 2 lifts, parquet floor (New Rm) (2). 2RC, Near by diamond condo, 2MBR, 3BR, Parquet floor. Ph: 09-731-54071.

BAHAN, Moe Ma Kha St, a pleasant location inside, 30' x 110', 3 stories, fully furnished containing 5 bedrooms with air-cons, 3 BR, toilets, spacious living room, dining room, kitchen, 6 AC. car garage, servant quarter. USD \$5200 per month (negotiable). Ph: 09-500-0520, 09-2560-29866.

TAMWE, Po Sein Rd, 65'x80' USD \$5000 (negotiable). Ph : 09-2506-49342, 09-507-3521.

BAHAN, Moe Myint San Codo, 2400 sqft, Fully furnished, Ph: 09-518-8320.

INYARD, 2RC, 3008 sqft, 3 MBRE, 2 BR, 1 living, 1 dining, 1 praying, 1 kitchen, 1 common toilet, 1 car garage, 2 store room, 1 ph line, AC 6, water heater 5, Internetline, All bedroom are bathroom attached. Price 3500 US\$, quite & power save place. 30/1, Inya Rd, kamayut, near Inya hotel. Ph: 09-512-6285, 09-3224-9796.

KAMAYUT, (1) Pyay Rd, Diamond condo, 1600 sqft, 1 MBR, 2 BR, 3 AC, f.f. US\$ 3200. (2) New University Avenue Rd, Walk up apt(4 F), f.f 1250 sqft, 1 MBR, 1 BR, US\$ 1200. (3) 8 Miles, MTP Condo, 1500 sqft, 2 MBR, Ph, 3 AC, f.f. Owner : 09-518-8320.

(1) **7-MILES**, Pyay Rd, Sitawgyi Condo 3400sqft, Hall Type (2). Pansodan Condo, 50sqft, 2 Rooms, 3 Aircon with lift (New) (3). Mingalardon Industry, 100'x100' new factory, 80'x80' store. Contact : 09-731-54071

(1) Near Inya Lake, 50'x40', 3MBR, F.F, 2RC, 60'x80', 1MBR, 3BR, F.F, 2RC, \$7000 (3). Near Yuzana Plaza, 1250Sqft, 2MBR, 1BR, Lift, 10Lakhs (4). Near Sakura Tower, 1500Sqft, 1MBR, 1BR, F.F, lift, 10Lakhs (5). Near Park Royal, 1200Sqft, 2BR, F.F, 9Lakhs (6). MAC Tower, 2000Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, F.F, Lift, \$2500. Ph: 09-4211-77105.

(1) Near Haldan Center, 1400Sqft, 1MBR, 1BR, F. F, Lift, 17Lakhs (2) Near 50 St, 1500Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, F.F, Lift, 15Lakhs (2) Near Yankin Center, 1260Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, F.F, Lift, 18Lakhs (3) MTP Condo, 1500Sqft, 2MBR, 1BR, F.F, Lift, 20 Lakhs (4). Near Yae Kyaw St, 1000Sqft, 1MBR, 1BR, F.F, Lift, 12Lakhs, (5). Ga Mone Pwint Condo, 1800Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, f.f, Lift, \$4000. Ph: 09-4921-4276

MAYNIGONE, Sanchaung, Min St, First flr, all furniture, 1 BR, 1 kitchen, 1 bathroom. 1 month US\$ 600. Shan Shan : 09-731-92603, Moe Hein : 09-4250-18442.

HLAING THAR YAR Industrial Zone (2), land - 1.5 acre, building - 30,000 sqft, running condition. Negotiable for all options. Please fee free to contact to 09-4308-3781 or dr.thihathit@icloud.com.

OFFICE SUITES for Lease, Pearl Centre, Bahan Township, Kabar Aye Pagoda Road. 500-10,000 sqft available at affordable rates. Contact: 09-4303-0288 slee888@gmail.com

MINGALARDON, near airport, land only, 60'x180, Ph: 01-514802, 530756

A CONDO of 1450 sqft to rent with 3 fully furnished bedrooms and air-cons. Washing machine, fridge and internet will be provided. Price: 18lakhs (1,800,000) contact: 09-732-05178

60Lakhs (2). Golden Velly, 60'x80', 1MBR, 3BR, F.F, 2RC, \$7000 (3). Near Yuzana Plaza, 1250Sqft, 2MBR, 1BR, Lift, 10Lakhs (4). Near Sakura Tower, 1500Sqft, 1MBR, 1BR, F.F, lift, 10Lakhs (5). Near Park Royal, 1200Sqft, 2BR, F.F, 9Lakhs (6). MAC Tower, 2000Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, F.F, Lift, \$2500. Ph: 09-4211-77105.

(1) Near Haldan Center, 1400Sqft, 1MBR, 1BR, F. F, Lift, 17Lakhs (2) Near 50 St, 1500Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, F.F, Lift, 15Lakhs (2) Near Yankin Center, 1260Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, F.F, Lift, 18Lakhs (3) MTP Condo, 1500Sqft, 2MBR, 1BR, F.F, Lift, 20 Lakhs (4). Near Yae Kyaw St, 1000Sqft, 1MBR, 1BR, F.F, Lift, 12Lakhs, (5). Ga Mone Pwint Condo, 1800Sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, f.f, Lift, \$4000. Ph: 09-4921-4276

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MAWLAMYINE, 2RC (water + electricity included), 60'x80', on Bogoyoke Aung San Rd, near Mawlamyine University. Price: negotiable. Ph: 09-515-8738.

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KAMAYUT, (1) Pyay Rd, Diamond condo, 1600 sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, 3AC, 4800 Lakhs. Owner : 09-518-8320.

HOTEL LAND, Hotel Premission 8 Acre or (3.24 Hectare) of land at Prime location with 360 degree view to Inle Lake. Ph: 09-2042-457.



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Employment

Embassy

EMBASSY of the Republic of Korea is seeking (1)**Admin Assistant** - M/F 1 Post : Fluent in both written & 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 koreaembassyymm@gmail.com .

Ingo Positions

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking(1)**Project Assistant** - 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw/ Yangon: Relevant educational background (accounting, finance, administration or equivalent). 2 years experience in a similar position. Effective English language skills. Effective computer knowledge. (2) **Field Officer**- 1 post in Minbya Tsp: Bachelor's degree. 1 years experience in disaster management. Effective English languageskill & computer knowledge skill. (3)**Field Supervisor** - 1 post in Nant San Tsp: Any graduate or University degree holder. 2 years experience in at INGOs / NGOs. Good knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel & Power Point is desirable. Good knowledge of English is an asset. Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 10-8-2014.

JHPIEGO has worked to prevent the needless deaths of women and their families is seeking (1) **MNCH Quality Improvement advisor**: 8 years' experience in developing MNCH HR structures and policies with a Bachelor's degree in health, education, or related field; Master's degree preferred. (2)**MNCH Clinical Advisor**: 5+ years of mid- to senior-level experience designing & implementing clinical field-based programs in MNCH. (3)**Midwifery Education Advisor**: 5+ years demonstrated experience implementing & managing field based education programs in MNCH with an advanced clinical or educational degree in midwifery or nursing (MPH preferred). (4) **In-Service (Clinical) Training Advisor**:

Midwife or health worker with 5 + years of experience as a midwifery clinician and tutor. With knowledge of clinical training content. (5)**Monitoring & Evaluation Manager**: 8 years experience (preferably in MNCH) plus a masters in public health, epidemiology, statistics, or related social science degree (6)**HR for Health / MNH Qality Improvement Advisor**: 8 years' experience in program development / management experience in program development / management in pre-service education with a bachelors' degree in health, education, or related field. Please submit a detailed CV & a letter of interest, including the position for which you are applying, on or before August 22, 2014 to career@myanmarhumancapital.com. www.jhpiego.org. PlscontactMaTazinAung at 09-3635-5516. www.myanmarhumancapital.com

THE Association of Medical Doctors of Asia is seeking in Nantmu Tsp at Lashio (1)**Field Officer**: Bachelor's degree in health related discipline or an equivalent combination of relevant education and experience. 3 years relevant professional experience in a similar role. Excellent in English and Myanmar, Knowledge of Shan. Strong computer skill. (2)**Community Development Facilitator Team Leader** (CDF-TL)" for Nantmu at Lashio Field Office: Any degree holder with 2 years professional experience in community development work, preferably in the NGO/INGO sector. Good computer skills. Good command of English and Myanmar languages, knowledge of Shan and/or Palaung language is an asset. (3)**Administrative/ Financial Officer** 1 Post in Yangon: University degree in Accounting/ Financing with 2 years experiences (INGO experience would be an asset). Strong computer skill. Good written and oral communication skill in Myanmar and English. Please apply by sending a cover letter, C.V. with 2 references & a recent passport photo to Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Country Office, 19 B, Thukhawaddy St, Yankin, Yangon. Tel: 578353, Email: afo.namtu.amda@gmail.com Closing date: For 1 & 2 : 14 August, For 3 : 11 August.

JHPIEGO has worked to prevent the needless deaths of women & their families is seeking : (1)**Monitoring & Evaluation Officer** : 3 years experience in M&E plus an advanced degree in public health, epidemiology, statistics, or related social science. (2)**Program Officer** : 3 ~ 5 years experience in MNCH plus a bachelors degree (3)**Program Assistant** : 3 years of MNCH experience, handling administrative

& programmatic matters, and a bachelor's degree (4)**IT Officer** : 3 ~ 5 years experience as a system administrator and a degree in Information Technology, or related field (with equivalent certifications & experience) (5) **Logistics Officer**: 4 years in Logistics management plus a bachelors degree (6) **Procurement Officer**: 3 years' experience plus a bachelors degree (MBA preferred) (7)**Field Coordinator**: Advanced degree in public health or education with 3+ years' experience. Please submit a detailed CV & a letter of interest, including the position for which you are applying, on or before August 22, 2014 to career@myanmarhumancapital.com. www.jhpiego.org. PlscontactMaTazinAung at 09-3635-5516. www.myanmarhumancapital.com

(1) **FIELD OFFICER** (Minbyar) 1 Posts (2) **Field Supervisor** (Nant San) 1 Posts (3)**M & E Officer** (NayPyiTaw/ Yangon) 1 Post. Please send application letter, CV and related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Email: Ommrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com For more information & application, please visit to www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

THE International Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking **Supply Chain Coordinator** 1 post in Yangon: University

degree in Supply chain Management, Supply Chain, Business Management or related field. 3 years progressive management & leadership experience. Pls submit a Cover letter & CV to the HR Department by email at: MaiMyaMyintZu.Tin@rescue.org or IRC office : 33/A, Natmauk Lane Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Quarter, Bahan, Yangon, Closing date : 5th August 2014.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking (1)**HR Officer** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon (Yangon 75%): University Degree. 3 years experience. Well developed computer skills, with demonstrated competence in Excel, Word & Power point (English & Myanmar), Page Maker. (2)**Deputy Manager** (Admin & Finance) 1 post in Hpa-An Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre Hpa-An, Kayin State: Myanmar National. University degree. 3 years experience. Effective English language skills & computer knowledge. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 4.8.2014.

(1)**DY.DIRECTOR** (Admin & Finance) - 1 post (2) **National Consultant** - 1 post (3)**HR Officer**- 1 post. Application process: Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ommrcshr

recruitment@gmail.com For more information & application, please visit to www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position title" in subject if you apply.

Local Positions

BES GROUP Myanmar is seeking **Engineers** for the following Positions. Scope to undertake commercial construction Yangon. Very High Level of English Language Skill. Having overseas work experience highly regarded. Initial application by email only. Senior Electrical Engineers with Auto Cad skill. Senior Mechanical Engineer with Auto Cad Skill. Senior Mechanical Engineer Plumbing with Auto Cad skill. Senior construction Scheduler with Q/S skills. Q/A engineers. Supervisor/ junior engineers all trades. Salary offered will be in line with experience. Start date July – September. BES Group email: hrbes.yangon@gmail.com

ELEGANT Myanmar Travels & Tours is seeking **Operation Assistant** - M/F 2 posts : Any graduate, Please submit CV, Photo with necessary documents to 20/E, Pearl St, Mya Yeik Nyo Hotel Compound, Bahan. Ph: 01-401261, 09-4211-07472. email : info@elegantmyanmar.travel

GREAT Golden Glory Co., Ltd. is seeking (1) **Technical Sales Representative** - M/F 2 Posts: Graduate in B.E. (Chemical) or B.Sc. (Chemistry, IC or Microbiology). 25 ~ 35 years of age, Fluent in written & spoken English. Good computer skill. (2) **Assistance**

Accountant - F 1 Post: Graduate in BA. Eco. or B.Com, LCCI (Level 1, 2). 25 ~ 30 years of age, Fluent in written & spoken English. Good Computer skill. (3) **Customer Service** - 1 Post: Any graduate. Fluent in written & spoken English. Good communication skill. Those who are qualified and interested, please contact to:- Great Golden Glory Co., Ltd : 85-87, 3rd Floor, 32nd St, Pabedan, Yangon. Tel: 387366, 387431, 376841. Email: 3g@ggglory.com.mm, 3gmyanmar@gmail.com. Closing Date: 22 August 2014.

TRADING Company is seeking (1)**Assistant Engineer** (Civil) - M 1 post, (2)**Business Development Executive** - M 1 post, (3) **Senior Accountant** - F 1 post (4) **Cashier** - F 1 post (5)**HR Department** Ph: (01)651888, 651999, email : hr.ho@pristinemyanmar.com

F&N Foods Pte., Ltd (Yangon Branch Office) is currently seeking highly energetic and motivated candidates for (1)**Admin Manager** - 1 post (2)**Finance Manager** - 1 post. Please apply with full CV/Resume indicating expected salary, position of interest, qualifications, educational background and recent photo not later than 7.8.14. For all posts : Good command in English & computer skill. Only short list candidate will be notified by phone for interview. Please submit to 39, Aung Theikdl Avenue, (1) Lane, Ward (3), Mayangon, Yangon. Tel: 01-522674 (or) Email: 100plusmyanmar@gmail.com

B A G A N THIRIPYITSAYA Sanctuary Resort is seeking: (1)**Front Office Manager** - 1 post, (2) **F&B Manager** - 1 post: For all posts: 3~5 years experience in related field, any graduate, fluent in both written and spoken English, Good communication skill, leadership skill, problem solving and Computer literate. Interested candidate shall submit an application letter, CV with a recent photo, copies of NRC & Labour registration card, Educational certificate & others testimonials to HR Department not later than 14th August 2014. Address: Bagan Archeological Zone, Old Bagan, Mandalay Division. Email: pm.thiribagan@gmail.com Tel: 061 60048~49

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

PRO 1 ONE STOP Home Centre is seeking (1)**Project Sales & Marketing Manager** (2) **Project Marketing Asst; Manager** (3)**Project Sales & Marketing Asst; Supervisor** (5)**Asst; Manager** (6) **Asst; Supervisor** (7) **Purchasing & Account Assistant** (8)**Buyer / Purchaser** (9)**Surveyor** (10)**WareHouse Asst; (or) Store Asst; (11) Stock Control** (For Inventory) (12)**Driver** (13)**General Worker**. Ph: 640469 email : pro1hrho@gmail.com

WE ARE urgently looking for (1).**Skilled Photo-Shop & Graphics Designer** - F/M (2). **Architect** - M/F : uses skillfully 3D-Max & Auto-Cad - F/M - Compulsory 4 skills English. Age 25 to 35 years. University Graduate with general computer literate. Email: patrickrobert09@gmail.com

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

ASAHI GLASS CO.,LTD , Japanese Firm ,biggest manufacturer of glass in the world is looking for appropriate candidates for the staff, especially for Marketing in Myanmar.

Applicants to be

1. University graduate
2. Age between 30 and 45 years, preferable.
3. Versed in English and Myanmar Languages
4. With experiences in foreign companies as marketing staff- more than 5 years, preferable.
5. With Technical knowledge is for architecture is preferable.

Interested persons should send an application letter along with a current CV, passport sized photograph and copies of any references or testimonials to the address below before Aug 22,2014.

Room No..802, Shwe Hnin Thar Tower (A), Shwe Hnin Thar St, Hlaing Tsp. Yangon.

Gmail- o.ikeya@gmail.com

Yaung Ni Oo Services Co., Ltd

Vacancy Announcement

Yaung Ni Oo Services Co., Ltd is currently searching the qualified and dedicated people for the following position.

1) Service Manager Male (1) Post (USD 1000 to 2000)

- Any graduate
- Age between 30 to 50 years
- More than (7) years experience in related field, especially in car service centre
- 4 Skills in English
- Must have Car Technologies and repairing knowledge
- Good computer literate and familiar with email, Microsoft Office Application
- Good communication and interpersonal skill

Qualified & interested person are invited to submit the updated CV, a passport size recent photo and copy of labor registration card & NRC and other supportive documents to the following addresses within one week of this announcement.

Human Resources Section

Address: No.19, Baho Road, Sanchaung Township, In front of Asia Royal Hospital.

Ph: 01-2304801, 01- 2304802

E-mail: htethtetapple@gmail.com

JOB VACANCY

Finance Officer

Salary range 745.000 – 1.404.000 Kyats per month (Depending on skills and experiences)

DanChurchAid (DCA) DCA is an international development and humanitarian organisation working in more than 20 countries. Currently DCA is seeking to recruit a qualified and enthusiastic person to fill the position of Finance Officer located based in Yangon with occasional monitoring visits outside. A detailed Job Description is available on request from Ms. Hlaing Phyu Min, hpmi@dca.dk

The applicants should submit motivated application (why are you qualified for this position), CV and contact details of two referees with any other relevant documentation to HR Unit by email hpmi@dca.dk and adj@dca.dk not later than 15th August 2014. Please quote reference: 'DCA Finance Officer – application'. (Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interviews.)

JOB VACANCY

As a leading global company, Daewoo International Corporation (Myanmar E&P) is seeking an energetic, reliable and qualified person to fill a position for its ongoing operations of Oil & Gas Industry in Myanmar.

Subsea Engineer (1 post)

- University Graduate (prefer relevant Engineering discipline)
- Minimum 3 years professional experience in a relevant field
- Demonstrated competency in Subsea Control Systems, Subsea Pipeline, Subsea Xmas Tree, Subsea Manifolds & Structures, Subsea IRM
- Knowledge in CMMS systems and functions
- Strong analytical ability, communication and presentation skills
- Proficiency in English language and Computer MS Office Suite.

Application closing date is 18th August 2014

Interested persons who meet the above mentioned qualifications are invited to submit their CV, application letter, recent photo and copies of academic transcripts to the following address:

HR & Admin Department
Daewoo International Corporation (Myanmar E&P)
International Business Center
No. 88, Pyay Road, 6¹/₂ Miles, Hlaing Township, Yangon.
Or e-mail to hr.recruitment@daewooenp.com

ZABU THIRI HOTEL
NAY PYI TAW

Address : No.(8) Hotel Zone (1), Yarza Thingaha Road
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Tel : (95)-(067)-422042, 422050, 422080
Fax : (95)-(067)-422041
Email: zabuthirihotel@gmail.com
Web : www.zabuthiri-hotel.com

Royal President Hotel
Nay Pyi Taw

Block 3-4 , National Guest House Compound, Dekkhinathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
Ph: 067-8105136, 8108137-40
Fax : 067-8105143
Email: hotelroyalpresident@gmail.com
Website: www.royalpresidenthotel.com

Seven years in the slammer for match fixers New Zealand rules

NEW Zealand is to slap a seven-year jail term on anyone caught match-fixing under a new law due to take effect before it hosts the Cricket World Cup and Under-20 FIFA World Cup next year.

The Match-Fixing Bill, introduced to parliament on July 31st with unanimous political support, would apply the lengthy sentences to anyone caught trying to influence or benefit from the outcome of a match or race.

"Match-fixing is a growing problem internationally and has been described as the number one threat to the integrity, value and growth of sport," Sports Minister Murray McCully said.

"As we have seen from recent events, New Zealand is not immune to this threat."

Former New Zealand cricketer Lou Vincent was recently banned for life from the sport after admitting to fixing, while Chris Cairns, who has denied match-fixing, remains under investigation.

Opposition sports spokesperson Trevor Mallard said the bill made an important change to existing laws to make it "very clear that match-fixing is a crime. This puts it beyond any doubt whatsoever."

An International Centre for Sport Security report released earlier this year estimated that more than US\$140 billion is laundered annually through sport betting "and 80 percent of global sport betting is illegal".

- AFP



IN PICTURES

Brotherly love

Prince William (R), Duke of Cambridge, and Prince Harry play 5-a-side football during their visit to a Coach Core project at Gorbals Leisure Centre in Glasgow, Scotland, on July 29, 2014. Photo: AFP

NEW YORK

Liverpool wins in Yankee stadium

LIVERPOOL rallied twice against Manchester City and triumphed 3-2 in a penalty shoot-out July 30 after their pre-season friendly at baseball's Yankee Stadium ended 2-2 with extra-time.

Stevan Jovetic scored twice for Manchester City, but Jordan Henderson and Raheem Sterling answered for Liverpool in the clash between last season's top two teams in the English Premier League.

Brendan Rodgers' Liverpool dominated in the shootout, with two saves from Simon Mignolet.

Montenegro's Jovetic opened the scoring in the 53rd minute after a defensive miscue from Liverpool midfielder Steven Gerrard.

Jesus Navas had fired a cross from the right and Gerrard was unable to block it. The ball trickled through his legs and Jovetic pounced to fire it home.

Henderson equalised six minutes later with a fine finish after solid work from Sterling and Daniel Sturridge.

But Jovetic restored the Premier League champions' lead in the 67th.

It was the second match in a row that Jovetic scored two for the Premier League champions. He netted a brace in Sunday's 5-1 friendly tri-



Steven Gerrard of Liverpool and Matija Nastasic (#33) of Manchester City vie for the ball during the International Champions Cup 2014 at Yankee Stadium on July 30. Photo: AFP

3-2

Final score in Liverpool victory over Manchester City

umph over Italy's AC Milan in Pittsburgh.

England international Sterling tied the score at 2-2 in the 85th with a well-taken strike - and had a goal disallowed in injury time for offside.

After a lively performance throughout, Manchester City were lacklustre in the shoot-out, with Aleksandar Kolarov, Yaya Toure and Navas all failing to convert from the spot.

The match drew a crowd of 49,653 to Yankee Stadium, home of storied Major League Baseball team the New York Yankees.

Manchester City are the majority owners, along with storied Major League Baseball franchise the Yan-

kees, of Major League Soccer expansion club New York City Football Club, which is slated to begin play in 2015 at the baseball ground in the Bronx.

On the night, however, Liverpool fans outnumbered City supporters at the match which was part of the International Champions Cup - a friendly tournament featuring eight European clubs all preparing for the start of their own domestic campaigns.

Manchester City had the better of possession in the scoreless first half, but Liverpool had arguably the best chance to score when Rickie Lambert's header from point-blank range was denied by City keeper Willy Caballero. - AFP

IN BRIEFS

San Antonio

American football rumours take flight about "San Antonio Raiders"

The Oakland Raiders, whose stadium lease expires next year, are reportedly looking at San Antonio as a possible new home should the National Football League team decide to relocate.

The *San Antonio Express-News*, citing unnamed sources, said Raiders owner Mark Davis and two others with the team met with key people in the Texas city, including former mayor Julian Castro and city manager Sheryl Sculley.

The Raiders would play in the Alamodome, which opened in 1993 and seats 65,000 for American football.

- AFP

London

Former manager Moyes escapes trouble from bar-room brawl

Former Manchester United manager David Moyes will face no action following an investigation into reports he was involved in a bar-room altercation, British police announced on July 31st.

"After careful consideration of all the circumstances in this case it has been decided that no further action will be taken against anyone," said a spokesperson from Lancashire Police.

Moyes, who was sacked by United in April, was investigated after 23-year-old builder Josh Gillibrand claimed to have been attacked at a wine bar in the town of Clitheroe in northwest England on May 21. - AFP

Liberia

Football halted nation-wide amid Ebola virus fears

The Liberian football association LFA said on July 29 it has suspended all activities in the country as a measure to prevent the spread of the deadly Ebola virus.

LFA had decided "to cease operations of football activities considering that football matches are contact sports and Ebola is spread through body contacts with an infected person," LFA chief Musa Bility said in a statement.

Meanwhile the finance ministry in Liberia, where 127 people have died of the disease, said it had placed several senior officials under observation for three weeks after a top ministry official died from the virus. - AFP



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PARIS

Is Nibali a winner for Kazakhstan?

After its Astana team win the Tour de France Kazakhstan hopes to bury the Borat image forever

HOLLYWOOD unleashed Borat on Kazakhstan's image, so the oil-rich Central Asian nation hit back with Italian rider Vincenzo Nibali and it believes his Tour de France victory helps put the record straight.

Nibali's triumph on the Champs Elysees on July 27 concluded an eight year campaign by his Astana Pro Team – named after the Kazakh capital and funded by the country's sovereign wealth fund – to get people talking about the world's biggest landlocked nation.

"This has been a very successful project, if you took the mathematics, how many times Astana was named in social media and in newspapers and on TV," said Kairat Kelimbetov, president of Kazakh Cycling, governor of the country's central bank and a former deputy prime minister.

The team's tribulations with drug-tainted riders and financial crises could have reinforced

the reputation built by Sacha Baron Cohen's 2006 mockumentary "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan."

The country ruled by President Nursultan Nazarbayev since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 also struggles with a poor human rights image.

"The power of sport is very strong," Kelimbetov told AFP in an interview after the Tour victory by the team's star Italian rider.

"Astana is part of a big PR strategy to just give people an idea that there is a state in central Asia, that is big, the size of Western Europe, the ninth biggest in the world, and we are part of the global community," he added.

The cycling team has made global headlines with a modest budget of US\$15 million out of the \$100 million a year spent on the Astana Presidential Sports Club, according to Kelimbetov.

And the

Club aims to make itself seen and heard even more in cycling and other sports.

The Club has seven professional sports teams, including a \$50 million a year ice-hockey squad and a football team, all with the aim of "projecting a positive image" of Kazakhstan abroad and encouraging sport at home.

"It is like a Real Madrid in Kazakhstan," said Kelimbetov.

The Astana Arlans boxing team won the inaugural World Series of Boxing title last year. The Club also supports Ilya Ilyin, a double Olympic champion weightlifter, and Denis Ten, who won figure skating bronze at the Sochi Winter Olympics this year.

The cycling team was set up in 2006, just as Borat was being released, though Kelimbetov said there was no link between the two.

The club was set up to support Kazakhstan's star rider Alexander Vinokourov who won the Tour of Spain that year for the team.

But soon after he was involved in a doping scandal in 2007 that led to a two-year ban.

Vinokourov, a "national hero" in Kazakhstan, is now Astana's general manager.

Astana later signed Alberto Contador who won the Giro d'Italia and Vuelta a Espana in 2008. In 2009, seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong came out of retirement and joined Astana.



Vincenzo Nibali is congratulated by his Astana teammates as he crosses the finish line and wins the Tour de France on July 27. Photo: AFP

Contador won the 2010 Tour de France but had the title taken away after failing a drug test. Armstrong, later stripped of his record seven Tour de France titles for doping, left that year in a dispute over the return of Vinokourov.

That was when Kelimbetov took control to sort out its finances and its scandals. The team set up a programme with cycling's governing body, the UCI, to avoid doping violations.

"Actually Astana was probably the first team who really started five years ago to clean up the house and we are now following all these rules," he said.

Kelimbetov said that before his arrival, the authorities had considered closing the cycling team.

As a leading voice on the Astana Presidential Sports Club, Kelimbetov said it was determined to prove that Nibali was not a one-off. "We would like this to be a long sporting story," he said. – AFP



Vincenzo Nibali winning the Tour de France on July 27. Photo: AFP



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Sport

Kazakhstan hopes the Tour de France buried Borat forever

SPORT 67

SHANGHAI

Horseplay a rich man's game

GRIPPING his mallet, Peng Zhichun gallops toward goal on a Chinese polo field, one of a growing number of the country's wealthy elite discovering the joys of the saddle and the whip.

"New clubs are opening, people are more into equestrian sports, into polo, there are more international players coming, so it's growing really fast," the young man, dressed in an expensive leather helmet, boots and white trousers, said after dismounting.

Mr Peng, who was taking part in a luxury lifestyle event in the northern port of Dalian earlier this month, spent several years in the United States and is typical of China's emerging upper class, with a keen interest in travel and Western leisure activities.

Among the privileged minority, chosen sports are indicative of status - usually tennis and golf to start off with, graduating to skiing or riding.

It is fertile ground for luxury brands such as the Swiss watch manufacturers for which the country has become a major market.

In June, Shanghai hosted a stage of the Longines Global Champions Tour for the first time, a five-star showjumping event, the highest in the International Equestrian Federation's rankings.

At Beijing's Tango Polo Club members are "select" and wealthy, says deputy chair Chen Xie, and their numbers are growing steadily.

"Polo is special. Members have to be rich enough to afford the membership. Courage is also needed as you can see, the sport is quite fast, intense and dangerous on the field," he said.

"The major customers are those above white-collar workers, say, entrepreneurs, or at least 'golden-collar'."

It is undoubtedly a rich man's game. Club members have spent as much as three million yuan (US\$500,000) on a polo pony, and in one case 80 million yuan on a racehorse, Chen said - sums which are



Polo players jostle in Dalian, China on July 5. Photo: AFP

lifestyle expenses rather than investments.

"Horses are like humans, they go down in value when they pass their peak," China has a long equine history, with the first cavalry troops recorded in the Spring and Autumn Period of 770BC-476BC and ceramic horses unearthed alongside the later Terracotta Warriors.

Chen also claims polo had its origins in Tang dynasty China before a British army officer imported it from India, although he acknowledges that "We all agree modern polo started from England."

Nonetheless indigenous Chinese horse breeds are too small for many modern equestrian disciplines, he admits.

The country's main equine stock is descended from Mongolian strains, but for centuries the animals of the steppe were bred primarily for stamina, rather than explosive speed.

Most polo ponies are imported - with three-quarters of animals at the Tango club coming from Argentina.

China imported fewer than 300 horses in 2005 but the number has risen tenfold in less than a decade.

Now the country has about 500 riding clubs and half a million amateur enthusiasts, according to Wutzala, an ethnic Mongolian who uses only one name and runs the www.horse.org.cn website.

But equestrian sports are far beyond most people's budgets, he says, with riding courses generally costing "250 to 400 yuan per hour plus coaching fee" and needing 30 hours to complete.

For more populist disciplines - in particular racing - the picture is different. Gambling is illegal in China except where it is run by the government or the proceeds donated to charity, and the state-sanctioned lotteries do not offer betting on foreign

horse races, unlike football games.

The ruling Communist Party associates racing with what it sees as the decadence and national humiliation of foreign occupation in the first half of the 20th century.

In Shanghai, the colonial-era racecourse, once one of the largest in the world, was replaced by People's Square - the site of the local government headquarters - and a park.

The global industry salivates at the prospect of a vast new market opening up, and in recent years French gambling representatives have visited China several times to promote Tote-style betting on races, with the bookmakers financing the sport.

But while rumours of a relaxation in the rules have seen entrepreneurs invest in infrastructure, they have been left with abandoned courses hosting neither races nor spectators.

- AFP

Could Rooney be England's next captain?

WAYNE Rooney has what it takes to succeed Steven Gerrard as captain of England, his former Manchester United teammate Rio Ferdinand believes.

The England skipper's vacancy is available after Gerrard's retirement from the international scene following the World Cup.

Other possible contenders being considered by manager Roy Hodgson are thought to include goalkeeper Joe Hart and Gary Cahill, but Ferdinand believes Rooney is the man.

"I think Wayne has grown and he is growing into that role," Ferdinand, who captained England for 13 months from February 2010, was quoted as saying in various British media on July 30.

Ferdinand added, "he's experienced now, he has played at the top level and he's won a lot of things."

"He knows the game. He's got the right tools for that. And I think you have to look at who is going to start."

Rooney has scored 40 international goals since making his debut as England's youngest-ever player against Australia in February 2003.

Heavy scrutiny followed the 28-year-old's underwhelming performances in his country's first-round knockout in Brazil but he answered some of his critics with a second-half goal in the defeat to Uruguay.

"You look at other countries, the natural progression would be Wayne getting it now," Ferdinand continued.

"With other countries it's usually the guy with the most caps, or who is most influential."

"And I think Wayne is the most influential player that England have got at the moment, now Steven has gone."

"It would seem like a natural progression."

With Gerrard gone, the pressure on Rooney to deliver will only increase, but Ferdinand believes wearing the armband should not be a burden.

"With the captaincy, especially in England, we maybe go a bit overboard on it," Ferdinand added.

"You need as many leaders out on the pitch as you can get."

- AFP

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