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NEWS 4

Criticism over rights commission shake-up

Outspoken members are left out of reformed body, with one questioning whether the changes were in line with the new Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Law.

NEWS 6

Ministry bans milk powder promotions

Ministry of Health officials express concern about dodgy deals between milk powder companies and health staff aimed at promoting products to parents instead of breastfeeding.



BUSINESS 25

China deal spurs hope for rice trade boom

Traders express hope that a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding with China will lead to legalisation of rice trading – and support growth in exports.

PROPERTY 32

Govt suspends new city plan amid criticism

Four days after announcing project would be put to a vote in parliament, Yangon mayor announces indefinite suspension of US\$8 billion expansion to the west of Yangon.



Telenor SIMs are now on sale in Mandalay, though a slower than expected rollout means Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw will have to wait.
Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Game on: Telenor goes live

Almost two months behind rival Ooredoo, Norwegian firm Telenor launches its network in Mandalay, with rollout expected to continue to Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon over the coming weeks. **BUSINESS 24**

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THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

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‘Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. xx Don’t let the noise of other’s opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary. Xxxx’

Inspiring Facebook status update last week from Minister for Information U Ye Htut, quoting Steve Jobs. The kisses were his own addition.

Forward momentum

The Ministry of Rail Transportation has released cost estimates for upgrades to Yangon’s circular railroad, saying the works will tally up to more than US\$700 million. In a report from *Eleven* last week, it was announced that the circle line is set for an upgrade that will see its speed increase from “30 miles to 80 miles per hour” – which seems either a) incredibly fast or b) like a journalist accidentally added an extra zero, because generally speaking, it’s currently possible to outrun the train, even in a longyi and flip-flops.

The US\$700m figure cited for medium-term upgrades does not include the cost of the Sky Train or the Subway project. While the latter two seem fairly far-fetched at this point, CGI-rendered videos

from Japanese consortium JICA show that redevelopment of the Yangon station should be set to begin in 2018, with the implementation of a bus rapid transit system taking place around the same time. Their timeline shows plans for the first underground mass transit line to be constructed by 2025, with other routes to follow.

The subway walkthrough video takes the viewer to an underground train station that looks a lot like the future – aka Bangkok. Modern trains are shown to stop at regular intervals on the East-West red line, which apparently has stations at Sule and Chinatown. Intriguingly, the videos have some nifty web 2.0 ad integration, with CGI billboards and signs in the stations and on

the trains touting Nokia, Coca-Cola, Sony, Pepsi and Toshiba.

Taking a punt on the bold assumption that teleporting and magic won’t have been invented yet by 2035, JICA is shooting for that to be the year the circular railway becomes electrified. The mockups show a fairly extraordinary chunk of land set aside, with broad public concourses, car parking and green spaces. Just where that land will come from is not made clear, but these are mere details – all of this is a way off. Such developments would be no small undertaking, but if anyone is up to it, it’s probably the Japanese.

The videos – “Yangon subway project” and “New transport system of Yangon City” – can be viewed on YouTube, however the above descriptions ought to save you some buffering time. The latter is worth checking out, though, if only for the noodling musical composition that accompanies the video.

Boy soldiers

The release of 109 underage Tatmadaw troops last week, which took the total discharged since the 2012 accord to 472, was welcome news – and wonderfully timed, coming just one day before the joint task force was due to review progress on the child soldier action plan.

Obviously having kids actively employed in a military force is pretty far from ideal, and active recruitment of them is reprehensible. That said, people would do well to

remember that many underage soldiers ‘released’ in the past have tried to return to service. The reasons for this (and for enlisting in the first place) are complex and manifold, but poverty and lack of access to education are the primary drivers. While the discharge of some 472 children is a positive and commendable step, it’s also important to remember that upon leaving the military many of these boys aren’t necessarily going to be able to resume studies and shoot for completing secondary education instead – it will simply serve to bolster the labour force in the country’s teashops and beer stations.

In brief:

Latest round of ceasefire talks ends without resolution, an outcome bookmakers say they didn’t even bother to make odds on

Heated back-and-forth in comments section on lengthy article about historical basis of term “Rohingya” elegantly serves to point out the futility of arguing semantics on the issue

Reuters’ “NLD supports Shwe Mann” story reveals lack of strategy, desperate need for media training

Next week

Red shirts vs Blue shirts: Telenor v. Ooredoo promotion campaign ramps up, with betel nut vendors and mobile store owners alike faced with tough decision about who to side with



Yangon street rats reach record size.



Moe Hey Ko for *NOW!* Magazine.
Photo: Htet Aung Kyaw (Studio HAK)

Style Statement

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CATERING



Both sides insist no deadlock in talks

SANDAR LWIN
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LAST-MINUTE proposals to adjust the text of the draft ceasefire agreement have made it unlikely that the deal will be signed in October as hoped. Both sides have put forward revisions to the draft text already agreed, with the Tatmadaw pressing for military issues to be discussed in the context of a political roadmap.

The gaps emerged during talks between government negotiators led by U Aung Min and ethnic representatives led by Naing Han Thar at Yangon's Myanmar Peace Center from September 22-26.

Negotiations were supposed to finalise a ceasefire text, the majority of which has already been agreed. The effect of the Tatmadaw proposal would be to withdraw the military issues from the section on the political dialogue and make them part of the future political roadmap, a program for carrying out decisions reached in the political dialogue.

"The military has already agreed to discuss security sector reform. But we are now discussing if it should be included as part of the political dialogue or put in the roadmap," said Naing Han Thar, adding that the ethnic groups wanted to confirm that the issue will be discussed during political dialogue.

MP U Khat Htein Nan, a member of the Union Peace-making Work Committee (UPWC), said the two sides had agreed to set up working groups to iron out remaining differences arising from earlier talks. The military's proposal would be considered by one of those working groups.

The negotiators rejected suggestions that the process was deadlocked.

"There are some points put by both sides that need to be re-examined, including, for example, missing sentences and points," said Pado Kwe Htoo Win, deputy head of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT).

"The deeper the subjects the more difficult they are to discuss. If we discuss in more details, it will be more difficult ... We are working to have a firm ceasefire and to get concrete agreements."

Salai Lian Hmung Sar Khaung, another member of the NCCT, said despite the difficulties there was "no need to be worried about the peace process".

"Neither side is to blame," he said. "It's just a question of making the text better, more concrete and reasonable."

Military issues hold back progress on ceasefire deal



HOPES for signing a nationwide ceasefire in October have dimmed, with government, Tatmadaw and ethnic armed group commanders still wrangling over a range of military and related questions, negotiators said at the end of five days of intense discussions last week.

The latest round of talks between the Union Peace-making Work Committee (UPWC) and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), which is negotiating on behalf of 16 armed ethnic groups, was held at the Myanmar Peace Center in Yangon from September 22 to 26.

The talks were aimed at finalising a draft nationwide ceasefire agreement that would pave the way for political dialogue and, ultimately, end Myanmar's long-running ethnic conflicts.

While progress made at talks in August had given hope that a text could be agreed in the coming months, that appears to be in jeopardy. Negotiations last week stalled again on issues related to the military, with Tatmadaw representatives insisting armed groups adhere to its six principles, which had appeared to have been quietly dropped in recent months. In August, the military did not raise the issue of the principles. "We haven't reached any specific agreement," said Naing Han Thar, the leader of the NCCT. "The most difficult thing to accept is that [the government] told us not to expand our military forces and not to recruit soldiers."

Despite the apparent deadlock, both sides agreed to meet in October to discuss the issues further.

The six principles cited by the Tatmadaw include abiding by the existing laws and complying with the constitution - a requirement that armed groups fear could be used to force them to give up their arms prematurely.

Lieutenant General Myint Soe from the Commander-in-Chief's Office said nobody wanted peace more than the military but the six principles were not negotiable. "We need a stable state so we can build national unity," said Lt Gen Myint Soe, who was one of four senior military officers who participated in last week's talks.

Still on the table are questions such as the establishment of a union peace talks committee, the introduction of a federal system, the reorganisation of the military in line with federal principles, a framework for political dialogue and the introduction of a military code of conduct.

Salai Lian Hmung from the NCCT said the government wanted to discuss the code of conduct for the transitional



A member of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team speaks during last week's peace talks in Yangon. Photo: Thiri

'We have already agreed that the code of conduct must be included.'

Salai Lian Hmung
NCCT member

period during political dialogue but not include it in the draft. The ethnic armed groups, however, want military matters to be settled before signing the accord.

"They don't want to discuss military issues in the ceasefire agreement negotiations. We have already agreed that the code of conduct must be included, or at least written within a month of the signing," he said.

Failure to complete the draft during

the September talks means that no date has yet been set for the signing of the accord.

However, the government is still determined to conduct a nationwide ceasefire ceremony before proceeding to the political dialogue. "An agreement will pave the way for holding a political dialogue, so we are committed to make every effort to move to bring about this historic event," said U Aung Min, who led the government delegation.

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INVESTIGATION

Rights body shake-up under fire

Former members and activists express concern at lack of transparency from government over selection process for new members

BILL O'TOOLE

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A FORMER member of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission has questioned the legality of a recent commission reformation amid concerns that some of its more outspoken members have been jettisoned. Rights groups, meanwhile, described the changes as disappointing but said they were indicative of the broader failings of the commission, including a lack of transparency.

State media on September 25 announced the previous 15-member commission, set up in September 2011, had been disbanded and replaced by a new 11-member body.

The change was prompted by the enactment of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Law in March. Parliamentarians had refused to fund the previous body because it was formed by presidential decree rather than legislation.

The reformation saw seven junior members of the previous commission replaced but senior members, including chair U Win Mra, were kept on the new body. All members are former civil servants, including one from the prisons department.

The announcement was published the day that Burma Partnership, a coalition of Myanmar-focused NGOs, was due to release its report on the perceived failings of the commission since its formation three years ago.

Asked about the timing, U Win Mra said he had not yet read the report and had no knowledge of when it would be released. "I don't know ... whether it's a coincidence or not," he said.

He said he couldn't comment on the new make-up of the committee as it was the decision of President U



Activists protest in downtown Yangon to mark Human Rights Day on December 10, 2012. Photo: Kaung Htet

Thein Sein and his advisers.

Burma Partnership director Ma Khin Ohnmar said the government's announcement was both unexpected and disappointing, as she had expected a reshuffle to take place following a "transparent and participatory" process that included citizens and civil society members.

"We were not expecting the president to come in with his very top-down approach," she said. "[It is] quite a backsliding of the process that we hoped to see."

The announcement was also disappointing for at least two former commission members, who said they were surprised to have been dumped from the body.

Asked by email why he had been dismissed, U Lahpai Zau Goone, an ethnic Kachin who spent several decades in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

simply responded, "I wish I knew."

While U Lahpai Zau Goone said the reasons behind the reshuffle were likely complex, the nationalities of the purged commissioners made him suspicious. "A Karen, a Chin, a Shan and a Kachin member [were dismissed] ... Funny, isn't it?"

Former member U Hla Myint told *The Myanmar Times* that he had helped draft the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission Law and had written sections that were supposed to make the selection process for new members transparent.

This includes the formation of a selection board comprising the chief justice; minister for home affairs; minister for social welfare, relief and resettlement; attorney-general; a Bar Council representative; two Pyidaungsu

Hluttaw representatives; a representative from the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation; and two representatives from registered non-government organisations.

This committee is required to nominate 30 potential members, from whom the president, in coordination with the speakers of the upper and lower house, can appoint to sit on the commission.

U Hla Myint said he was unsure who had been selected to sit on the selection board, or if it had even been created. "Did they do the selection by the law? I'm not so sure ... I don't know how much they followed the law," he said.

Asked why he was dismissed, U Hla Myint said he had no idea but suggested it may be because he was one of the more "outspoken" members. "I had disagreement with the other members," he said. "Maybe they don't like me."

He said these disagreements were more about the functioning of the commission than specific human rights issues; U Hla Myint said he wanted to streamline the group's mechanisms for receiving and reviewing complaints.

A former ambassador to Australia and Ministry of Home Affairs official, U Hla Myint said President U Thein Sein had contacted several members of the committee, including chair U Win Mra, to seek their advice ahead of the reshuffle but he had not been consulted.

Lack of transparency was one of many issues highlighted in Burma Partnership's report on the commission. Titled *All the President's Men*, it "highlights the lack of effectiveness and independence of the MNHRC, covering significant events and trends of the latter half of 2013 and the first half of 2014."

The report states that the commission's ability to conduct fair and

independent investigations is limited because it receives funding directly from the President's Office, which also decides who sits on the body.

The authors cited examples from Kachin and Rakhine states where it said alleged human rights violations have been either ignored or not investigated properly. "An independent [National Human Rights Commission] should not be used as a tool to cover human rights atrocities committed by a state institution," it said.

Most damningly, the report states that "the MNHRC has still not successfully investigated and taken effective action on any case submitted to it".

But U Win Mra said the report had ignored much of the commission's important work, including its investigation of the alleged Du Chee Yar Tan clash in Rakhine State.

In Kachin State, the commission has helped to address the issue of land mines, child soldiers and torture, as well as called for more humanitarian assistance, he said.

"I think it's no use just criticising the [commission's] activities," he said, adding that members are committed to a longer-term strategy of building up awareness of human rights practices.

"We are concentrating a lot on the promotional aspect ... We have workshops for the government as well as other stakeholders [who] come to understand important core human rights conventions."

'I wish I knew.'

U Lahpai Zau Goone

Former member of the human rights commission, when asked why he had been removed

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Govt stands by citizenship pilot project in Rakhine despite protest

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RAKHINE State officials insist a citizenship scrutiny project in Myebon township has not been suspended, despite media reports to the contrary and protests from local Rakhine residents.

More than 1000 people have applied for citizenship through the pilot project. Of these, 209 were granted full or naturalised citizenship according to 1982 Citizenship Law at a ceremony on September 22, including 40 identified as Bengalis and 169 as Kaman.

However, Eleven Media reported the program had been stopped because of concerns that some Muslims were carrying fake documents identifying them as Kaman, an officially recognised Muslim ethnic group from Rakhine State.

U Maung Maung Than, a director general in the Ministry of Immigration and Population, said the reports were incorrect. "The program is continuing," he said. "The regional government is implementing matters related to scrutinising citizenship according to the law."

The pilot project enables those

eligible for citizenship to apply to become either full, associate or naturalised citizens. It has been controversial with some Muslims, as those who self-identify as Rohingya would have to register as Bengali, while some Rakhine have also opposed the program.

On the day of last week's ceremony, Rakhine residents in Myebon staged a silent protest because of the concerns that "Bengalis", who could be eligible for naturalised citizenship, were instead being given full citizenship as Kaman, said U Aung Win, the Rakhine State Hluttaw MP for Myebon.

"People protested silently by shutting the doors of their homes and closing their shops when the chief minister visited the town on September 22," he said.

U Aung Win added that the state government had received applications for citizenship from more than 200 Bengalis in Myebon.

"We want the authorities to be careful with this process. We don't want to give those Bengalis [full] citizenship," he said.

The government has sought to head off this sentiment elsewhere by discussing the issue with community leaders. At a meeting with monks and

town elders in Sittwe on September 23, Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn warned that they should respect the government's decision on who is eligible for citizenship.

It remains unclear, however, when the project will expand beyond Myebon. U Maung Maung Than from the Ministry of Immigration and Population said it was up to the Central Committee for Citizenship Scrutiny, a Nay Pyi Taw-based body that includes the ministers for border affairs, president's office, and immigration and population.

"The committee has not given any instructions to the regional government to expand the program into other areas," he said.

Despite concerns in Rakhine State, the program has been cautiously welcomed by the United Nations as "a step in the right direction," as it could lead to increased rights for stateless Muslims.

However, U Maung Maung Ohn told reporters on September 22 that the new citizens would not be able to avail themselves of those rights immediately.

"Because of the security situation, we can't allow them to travel freely in Rakhine State yet," he said.

Milk powde

Ministry issues order in response to concerns that



**SHWE YEE
SAW MYINT**

HTOO THANT

STATE health staff who promote milk powder products to parents of infants could face legal action under a recently introduced regulation, a senior Ministry of Health official says.

The order restricting the promotion and sale of breast-milk substitutes, such as baby formula, was introduced by the Ministry of Health on July 24. It seeks to reinforce the policy of recommending parents exclusively breastfeed their children to six months of age - a practice they say is being hindered by powdered milk companies offering incentives to health staff to promote their products to parents.

"I want to warn health staff not to become special customers of these milk powder companies," director general Dr Min Than Nyunt said at a ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw earlier this month.

"This could result in them violating this order and if that happens we will take action against them."

Those caught violating the policy face a fine of up to K300,000.

A senior member of the Myanmar Nurses Association, Daw Nan Htwan Hla, said the industry was already taking steps to comply with the ban.

She agreed nurses have enjoyed a "very friendly" relationship with companies selling breast-milk substitutes, and said it has been common for these firms to sponsor seminars, workshops or funfairs, at which they were allowed to advertise their products.

"Now we are avoiding taking support from these companies," she said. "But we need more time to share this policy with all nurses because some don't know about it yet in detail."

The policy bans many of these commonly used promotional techniques for breast-milk substitutes, including sponsorship of events, discounts, lucky draws and the use of celebrities and their families in advertisements.

Producers and distributors are also banned from donating their products to state and private sector health staff or facilities, as well as gifting promotional items, such as posters, stationery, calendars and toys.

They also cannot provide support or gifts to those who attend their workshops, or pay for health staff to attend international workshops. When conducting events, they must acknowledge the social and health problems caused by not feeding breast milk to infants.

However, the Ministry of Health can grant permission for health professionals to receive assistance from milk substitute companies in some circumstances.

The policy addresses many of the concerns outlined by health experts in an October 2011 article in *The Myanmar Times*, in which they called for a law to place restrictions on how powdered milk products can be marketed.

The rules were designed by the ministry's nutrition department with assistance from the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitute as well as other local and foreign experts, Dr Min Than Nyunt said.



A customer shops for milk powder in down

"The key intention of the provision is for children to be fed only natural breast milk to six months of age and then to keep being fed breast milk to two years. Importing and distributing breast-milk substitute products in the market creates other options for infant food," he said.

According to 2010 figures from the United Nations, less than one-quarter of all children in Myanmar were exclusively fed breast milk to six months of age. The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding to six months of age "for babies

'I want to warn health staff not to become special customers of these milk powder companies.'

Dr Min Than Nyunt

Ministry of Health director general

everywhere" as research consistently shows that it helps "achieve optimal growth, development and health" for children.

Deputy director Dr Htin Linn said the seven-chapter notification was issued as a supplement to the National Food Law by the Food and Drug Board of Authority, which was established in August 2013.

"We issued this provision so that people can more easily choose what is best for their children," he said.

Officials said that International Baby Food Action Network has offered to assist the ministry in conducting checks to ensure that the new rules are being followed, while the United Nations Children's Fund has also offered to help.

The main body responsible for



Tourism in Asia is booming with opportunities and challenges. In anticipation of TravelRave 2014, discussions on the future of the industry have already started. During a recent media roundtable organised by the Singapore Tourism Board, tourism leaders provided insight into "Developing Human Capital & Talent Management" in Asia.

"As key players of the travel and tourism industry, we need to focus on professionalising the industry as a whole. At the end of the day, we need to have a hard think about how we are appealing to the millennial generation."

- Ms. Neeta Lachmandas, Assistant Chief Executive, Singapore Tourism Board

"Let the young people come in and decide where they can make the change. Eight million jobs are waiting for them in the industry."

- Janet Tan Collis, President, Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers & Chief Executive Officer, East West Planners

"The strongest link within the organisation to retain talent is the middle management. Middle managers play an important role in creating an environment to encourage retention."

- Margaret Heng, Executive Director, Singapore Hotel Association & Chief Executive, SHATEC

"Veteran industry leaders need to change their current mindsets by rethinking the way they operate to attract younger employees. They need to place themselves in the younger generation's shoes and "break" the old system that has been in place for many years."

- Marc Dardenne, Chief Executive Officer, Patina Hotels and Resorts

The best travel minds will convene and collaborate at TravelRave 2014, held in Singapore between 27 to 31 October. Through conferences such as AIPC Asia Summit and Hotel Management Singapore Summit, issues on human capital will be discussed extensively, while The Future Leaders programme will focus on cultivating tomorrow's industry leaders.

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IN DEPTH

er firms reined in

milk powder promotions are harming exclusive breastfeeding campaigns



town Yangon earlier this month. Photo: Yu Yu

enforcing the rules will be the Food and Drug Board of Authority, which will submit its findings to the Food and Drug Administration.

But Dr Tun Zaw, director of the FDA's Food Safety Department, said his department was not yet ready to enforce the policy because it has not received enough information about the order from the nutrition department.

One product sales manager for a company selling pharmaceutical

products designed for children told *The Myanmar Times* he regularly saw milk powder promoters in the medical wards at state-run private hospitals. He said they visited with the permission of ward supervisors and medical superintendents.

"They approach nurses, obstetricians and gynaecologists, and child specialists to promote their product," he said. "Some do not agree but others say yes."

A spokesperson for a popular

milk powder company said it had received a copy of the new policy from the government and would do its best to adhere.

The spokesperson said the Health Department had given the company time to collect items they had donated or provided to public hospitals or other state health facilities, as well as to modify their marketing techniques to comply with the policy.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Ministry of Information to sue two publications

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THE Ministry of Information is preparing to take two publications to court after mediation through the Myanmar Press Council (Interim) failed to yield a result acceptable to both sides, according to minister U Ye Htut.

The ministry will file cases against weekly journal *The Myanmar Herald* - also known as *Myanmar Thandaw-sint* - and Eleven Media Group, publisher of *Weekly Eleven* and *Daily Eleven*.

It is unclear whether they will be criminal or civil cases but under the Penal Code defamation carries a jail term of up to two years.

The Press Council moderated several discussions between the parties in both cases, as required under the News Media Law. However, the talks failed to result in an out-of-court settlement, opening the way for legal action.

Daily Eleven published articles in which it said the ministry had paid US\$400,000 more for a printing press than what an Indian company had quoted Eleven for the same machine.

The articles, by senior reporter Marn Thu Shein and founder U Thein Myint, said ministry officials must have pocketed the difference. It then questioned the property and wealth of ministers and government officials, including U Ye Htut.

U Ye Htut told reporters last week that if news agencies and publications are interested in his financial assets they can undertake investigative journalism to examine the sources of his wealth. If he is found to be corrupt then he will face legal action, he said.

However, Eleven editor-in-chief U Wai Phyto said the company stood by the report.

"We have strong evidence and facts and we will take full responsibility for what we have published, even if this ends up in court," he said.

While Eleven initially attended mediation sessions arranged by the Press Council, it later told the council it would no longer meet with

government representatives to discuss the complaint.

In the case of *The Myanmar Herald*, meanwhile, the ministry alleges that interviews it published with political scientist U Myo Yan Naung Thein and National League for Democracy (NLD) patron U Tin Oo contained criticism of the president that was "extreme". The ministry asked for an apology from the journal's editors but they refused to comply.

"We are not wrong," said U Aung Kyaw Min, the deputy editor at the *Myanmar Herald*. "We just published the comments of a political scientist and an NLD leader on the flaws and inefficiencies of the government led by the current president."

'We have strong evidence and facts and we will take full responsibility for what we have published, even if this ends up in court.'

U Wai Phyto
Eleven Media Group editor-in-chief

"In September, we offered the ministry an apology to the extent possible but they were not satisfied and rejected it."

U Myint Kyaw, a member of the Press Council's Complaint Committee, said he believed *The Myanmar Herald* could not invoke a public interest defence against defamation accusations.

U Ye Htut declined to comment further when contacted by *The Myanmar Times*.

"As we are going to find a judicial solution, I would not like to comment further. We will let everyone know other necessary information when we file the lawsuits," he said.



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Proposal to reform State Secrets Act rejected

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OFFICIAL secrets in Myanmar are still protected by a 90-year-old law, adopted under colonial rule, whose text has not even been translated into the Myanmar language, MPs heard last week.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Thein Nyunt of Thingangyun attempted on September 25 to amend the country's venerable State Secrets Act, enacted in 1923 under British rule. But his bid failed when both his suggestions

were brushed aside by the government, and nobody else took the floor.

U Thein Nyunt said his amendments were necessary in order to bring the law into conformity with the 2008 constitution, and to reflect the rights of citizens and the news media.

"I agree that this act is essential for state security. But this law, enacted in 1923 under colonial rule, is oppressive," he said.

His proposed amendments concerned people who unwittingly intrude into prohibited areas, and the right of

journalists to ask questions of government officials on government premises.

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun said the proposed amendments would benefit offenders. "The amendment would prevent action against people intruding into a prohibited area," he said, adding that the amendments would effectively kill the law. In the absence of any other speakers, the hluttaw took no further action.

In July, five journalists from weekly publication *Unity* received 10-year jail

terms for violating the act. The charges stemmed from an article in January about a military facility that they alleged was making chemical weapons, a claim the military denies.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said that he would have the law translated into the Myanmar language, since it exists only in English. "It is difficult for some experts to understand. After that, we should review whether it is necessary to amend it or not, and what should be amended," he said. – *Translation by Thiri Min Htun*

Minister insists broadcast sector has full media freedom

Critics counter that censorship is unnecessary as licences are in the hands of government-friendly proprietors



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MINISTER for Information U Ye Htut has insisted that the broadcast media sector already enjoys full editorial freedom, despite it being controlled by a handful of proprietors hand-picked by the previous military regime.

U Ye Htut said broadcast journalists have as much freedom as their counterparts in the print media sector and that the ministry does not have a specific policy for what content can be broadcast on either radio or television.

"It is the job of the editorial departments of those broadcast media outlets [to use their media freedom] according to their own editorial policy," the minister told *The Myanmar Times*. "We don't discriminate between print and broadcast media. We don't apply different policies."

'How can we practice media freedom when there is no ownership independence?'

Editorial staff member
Myanmar National TV



A Mandalay FM presenter goes live to air. Photo: Kaung Htet

However, licences to enter the sector are tightly controlled. The owners of six FM radio stations and two television broadcasters all enjoyed close links to the former military regime. No new television or radio licences have been issued since 2010 and those already operating will have to renegotiate the terms of their agreements under the new broadcast media law, which is being drafted by the ministry.

Journalists working for these firms told *The Myanmar Times* last week

that the ownership makeup of the industry ensured content did not stray from parameters acceptable for the government, even if there was no explicit policy to limit editorial freedom.

"How can we practice media freedom when there is no ownership independence? We just do as much as we can," said a senior editorial staff member from free-to-air channel Myanmar National TV, which is run by Shwe Than Lwin Media.

Shwe Than Lwin is owned by U

Kyaw Win, a close associate of former minister U Kyaw Hsan and other members of the former and current government. The company's media arm also runs a radio station, Shwe FM, and has bankrolled *Democracy Today*, a daily newspaper that has caused ripples in the industry by selling copies for K100, below production costs. U Kyaw Win was the subject of both European Union and Australian sanctions, the latter until they were lifted in July 2012.

Media commentator Sithu Aung Myint said he also found the minister's comments "hard to believe".

"It is impossible to practise media freedom [in the broadcast sector] because there is no ownership freedom. This is very closely related to media freedom," he said.

He added that this was unlikely to change soon because the broadcast media law submitted to parliament appeared to place no emphasis on diversification of ownership.

But U Ye Htut rejected suggestions that the ministry could pressure broadcasters on content, or that proprietors had to be close to the military government in order to receive a licence.

He said the ministry's policy is to apply the Code of Conduct set by the Myanmar Press Council (Interim) to all media organisations, including state-owned outlets.

"All media just need to work according to journalism ethics. It is the only responsibility [broadcast outlets have to take]. When the News Media Council is founded, the council will continue looking at [the issue]," he said.

Government to launch second ethnic TV channel

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THE Ministry of Information plans to launch another ethnic affairs television channel before the end of next year, a senior official said last week.

The new channel follows the launch of the National Race Channel, which broadcasts in 11 minority languages, in October 2013.

However, recruiting and training journalists and presenters for the new channel is likely to be a challenge, said U Tint Swe, director general of Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV).

"Our priority is to expand the national races section [of MRTV]," he said last week. "But we have human resources difficulties. We have to recruit staff who can speak ethnic languages well and we have to train them to work for a TV channel. That can't be done overnight. But it will be possible

to launch [the new channel] at the end of 2015."

MRTV has not yet decided which ethnic groups will be represented on the new channel.

When the station launched last year, applicants were barely vetted before being appointed to the sections, he said. The only requirement was they could speak the particular ethnic language and held a bachelor degree, U Tint Swe said.

"We appointed all applicants," he said. "We just gave them basic journalism training and information on being a public servant and gave them cameras worth K20 million to K30 million."

The National Races Channel broadcasts ethnic programs in 11 languages from eight groups, namely Kachin, Kayah, east Poe Kayin, west Poe Kayin, Sgaw Kayin, Zomi Chin, Asho Chin, Mon, Rakhine, Shan and Wa.

Each gets two hours a day, except for the Kayin groups, which get one hour each. By early next year it will move to 24-hour programming with the introduction of Pa-O, Kokang and Danu sections.

"We are now recruiting ethnic staff. The additional programs will be on air in January 2015 at the latest," said MRTV director U Myint Aung.

Each section has 13 staff each and is creates its own programs according to the ministry's editorial guidelines.

U Myint Aung said that these guidelines include requirements includes to focus on the preservation of the ethnic culture. News about political parties is banned but public protests held with permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs can be broadcast.

Naw Su Mon, a staff member on the Sgaw Kayin program, said a basic principle at the National Races Channel is to steer clear of politics.

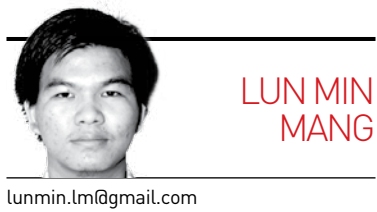
"However, I would like to broadcast political news that [is in] the interest of people, both targeted ethnic groups and other viewers," she said.

While the National Races Channel is currently under MRTV, the ministry plans to make it a separate department before the 2015-16 fiscal year, U Myint Aung said. This should enable the department to expand and ensure language sections are better equipped.

"We have created the basic principles of the new department. Each [ethnic group section] will be led by a gazette officer," he said, adding that the officer will be from the relevant ethnic group.

Naw Su Mon said she welcomed the plan. "At the moment we are very short-staffed," she said. "And currently staff mostly have the same rank and position, so there should be an officer who can lead."

Resettlement in Rakhine State likely to start in October: govt



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RESETTLEMENT programs for those displaced by conflict in Rakhine State since 2012 are expected to start in October, an official confirmed last week.

Building work on new dwellings for the displaced is expected to take around six months, with relocation likely to take place in April or May next year.

However, the program will be dependent on both funding and the

MILLION US\$

126

Amount needed for IDP resettlement in Rakhine State, according to the UN

cooperation of the Buddhist and Muslim communities, officials said.

The activities will be implemented according to the Rakhine Action Plan drawn up by the government, said U Moe Hein, secretary of the Rakhine State government. The buildings to be constructed included houses, schools, hospitals and offices.

“We will start these programs after the end of rainy season – maybe in October,” he said, adding that they would be implemented in coordination with NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies.

Communal conflict between Buddhists and Muslims in Rakhine State flared in 2012, leaving hundreds dead and more than 140,000 displaced, the majority Muslim. Many are still living in poorly resourced IDP camps in the state and are limited in their movement and economic activities.

U Ye Naing, head of office at the Ministry of Border Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw, said the priority was to return IDPs to where they formerly lived. He said Rakhine State Chief Minister is meeting leaders from both communities to explain the plan and gain their support.

“The victims of conflict will be relocated back to where they have come from and will be embraced by the



A man rides a bicycle past the Mizigwazon IDP camp in Sittwe, Rakhine State, on May 17, 2013. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

resettlement programs. For example, the ones who are from Kyaukpyu will have to return there. We are now explaining this plan to both communities,” he said.

“If they accept, it is okay and we can move forward. If they don’t [accept] ... We will have to take some more time, until they understand the plan and accept it.”

Under the resettlement plan,

homes for the IDPs will be built between October and March 2015, U Ye Naing said. “The victims of conflict will be relocated in April and May of 2015 ... if everything is okay.”

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs’ 2014 Response Plan, more than US\$126 million is needed for the resettlement and relocation programs in Rakhine State.

1.7m families to get power within 5 years

WITH financial support from international donors, the Ministry of Electric Power will extend electrical power to 1.7 million people over the next five years, deputy minister U Maw Thar Htwe told parliament last week.

“We will implement this five-year project with foreign financial assistance, of which 60 percent will come from World Bank and 40pc from international aid programs,” U Maw Thar Htwe told MPs on September 23.

The ministry is drafting a national energy policy with support from the Asian Development Bank, as well as a national electric power policy with the help of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and a national electrification plan with World Bank assistance.

The main objective of these plans is to distribute power to all parts of the country within the next 16 years, U Maw Thar Htwe said. The ministry would also expand power distribution networks nationally, while creating separate power grids with short-term plans in remote areas where network extension is likely to take longer.

Currently, access to electricity is enjoyed by about 30pc of the population, but it is expected to increase to 47pc in 2020, 75pc in 2025 and to the entire country by 2030. – *Htoo Thant, translation by Zar Zar Soe*

Mangrove planters get prison sentences

FOUR environmental activists were sentenced to jail terms by Ayeerwady Region court on September 23. U Tun Tun Oo, of the Human Rights Watch and Defence Network was sentenced to six months on three separate charges under the public order law in connection with his environmental activities Dedaye township.

His co-defendants, U Cho Lwin and U Khin Shwe, were sentenced to four months, while U Myint Lwin received a two-month sentence.

U Tun Shwe of HRWDN said they planned to appeal the verdict, but anticipated difficulties.

“The court sentenced Ko Tun Tun Oo on three charges of section 18. We think the law on peaceful protest is being used to jail people for any related issue,” he said, adding that U Tun Tun Oo would again appear in court on September 26.

Dedaye township police took the four activists to Pyapon jail, where they will serve their sentences.

All told, 11 activists, including U Tun Tun Oo, a leader in the mangrove plantation campaign, were charged under section 61 of the forestry law by a Dedaye township forestry officer.

Ayeerwady Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung gave oral permission to plant mangroves on grazing land, but a dispute over the location of the land arose with the survey department.

“The 11 activists sought permission from the minister, stating the exact location where they intended to plant, but the land the authorities located on the map has in fact been eroded in recent years,” said U Tun Shwe. “It is unbelievable that this should happen during a transition to democracy.”

HRWDN representatives met Ayeerwady Region government representatives on September 9 to ask them to reconsider the case, but without success, he said. – *Cherry Thein*

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Soldiers, civilian arrested after death in MDY

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THREE people, including two Tatmadaw soldiers and a Maha Aung Myay township resident, have been arrested in connection with the death of a man late on September 18 in Mandalay.

Ko Sithu Htet, 25, suffered injuries to his neck and head during the incident, which occurred at about 11pm on Kandawgyi Road in Chan Mya Tharsi township.

He was taken to Mandalay General Hospital for treatment but died the following morning at about 7:20am, his relatives said.

"My son went out that night to have dinner with his friends to celebrate their boss's success in his business," said Ko Sithu Htet's father, U Nyunt Wai, who lives on 41st Street.

"When they got into a quarrel, these two friends ran away and the other side beat and punched him."

He said he wanted authorities to take action against the alleged offenders, particularly the two soldiers.

"Can soldiers just beat people up like that?" he said.

The two soldiers were from No 33 Light Infantry Division based in Sagaing Region. They were detained by military authorities and will face a military tribunal.

The civilian has been arrested by police.

"The man [who died] was drunk. When he fell from his motorcycle, he attacked some bystanders. That's how the [fight] started," a police officer from Chan Mya Tharsi township said. - Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Myanmar seeks to seal regional deal on migrants

Divisions between source and receiving countries could derail agreement on ASEAN workers' rights pact

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LABOUR rights groups have expressed concern that a regional treaty on migrant workers may not be completed by the end of the year as the issue has divided ASEAN between countries that send and those that receive migrant workers.

With Malaysia set to take over from Myanmar as chair at the end of the year, rights groups say the treaty could be put off until at least 2016 if it is not finalised in the coming months.

ASEAN members have been negotiating the terms of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers since 2007. Despite an end-of-2013 deadline, they have reached agreement on only 58 of 68 sections as of the most recent meeting, which was held in Nay Pyi Taw from September 1-3.

Two more meetings - one in Malaysia from October 27-29, the other in Laos in December - will be held to discuss the issue before Myanmar hands over the chairship at the end of the year.

Ministry of Labour deputy director U Thein Win said the main stumbling block is that receiving countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Brunei, have "strongly objected" to giving migrant workers the same labour rights as citizens.

Meanwhile, sending countries, including Myanmar, are "enthusiastic" about the prospect of greater rights for their workers abroad, he said.

Myanmar is thought to have several million citizens working elsewhere in the region, mostly in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

While Singapore rejects the idea of equal rights outright, Thailand and Malaysia do not want it to be extended to



A migrant worker from Myanmar in Chiang Mai. Photo: Kaung Htet

both documented and undocumented workers, U Thein Win said.

He said he remains hopeful that the declaration can be finalised this year and said Myanmar will make every effort to complete it during its chairship of ASEAN.

"Myanmar has two chances to complete it this year as two meetings are left. One is in Laos and the other is in Malaysia," U Thein Win said.

However, the fact that one of the countries opposed to more rights for migrant workers is hosting a meeting may prove problematic.

Yuyun, a human rights activist from Indonesia and regular observer of ASEAN affairs, said Malaysian officials would be reluctant to raise the 10 outstanding sections of the draft.

"The meeting in Malaysia might end with disputes ... The Laos one is a big chance for Myanmar" to finalise the treaty, she said.

She added that it was important for the treaty to be implemented by the launch of the ASEAN Community in 2015.

'Migrant workers can demand their rights according to the text of the declaration.'

Daw Khin Nwe Oo
Ministry of Labour

"There will be no ASEAN Community without the protection of the rights of migrant workers," she said.

U Thein Win echoed the sentiment. "We must try to finalise the declaration during our period as chair. If that's not possible then we will have to finish it in 2015," he said.

Daw Khin Nwe Oo, a deputy director general in the Ministry of Labour, said the declaration would give workers greater legal protection in all countries across the region, and improve on the patchwork of bilateral agreements.

"For example, at the moment we discuss migrant worker problems between Myanmar and Thailand as well as Myanmar and Malaysia through bilateral talks. But after the declaration comes out we could resolve these problems as a bloc," she said. "Migrant workers can demand their rights according to the text of the declaration."

The declaration's section on the obligations of receiving states mentions that they must intensify efforts to protect the fundamental human rights, promote the welfare and uphold the human dignity of migrant workers.

They must also work toward the achievement of harmony and tolerance between receiving states and migrant workers, and provide migrant workers, who may be victims of discrimination, abuse, exploitation and violence, with adequate access to their legal and judicial systems.

Despite the potential implications for workers, U Moe Gyo, chair of the Joint Action Committee for Burmese Affairs based in the Thai border town of Mae Sot, said most were not aware of the declaration. He said they were generally sceptical of any promises to provide greater protection as bilateral agreements had previously been ineffective.

"Despite making promises to resolve migrant worker problems, most governments ... fail to protect them and the problems haven't diminished. If anything, they have increased," he said.

Ma Theint, who has been working in Malaysia for the past seven years, said she would be happy if the declaration had a practical impact on her rights.

"We don't know anything about the declaration - nobody has told us about it," she said. "We want our rights to be protected whether the declaration is introduced or not. At the moment, we are looked down upon. If we are shown some respect, we will also respect the country in which we are staying."

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Concerns as agencies take over training

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EMPLOYMENT agencies could be facing a conflict of interest in taking over the training of Myanmar citizens preparing to work overseas, a migrant workers' advocate has warned.

Reiko Harima, managing director of the Asian Migrant Centre, said the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agency Federation (MOEAF) increased their members' profits by sending more workers overseas, and so was "unlikely" to provide information that might deter them from going.

Pre-departure training, which is conducted in Yankin township, Yangon, is meant to inform migrants of the labour laws and cultural norms of the countries they are being sent to. Previously run by the Ministry of Labour, the MOEAF began conducting the courses on August 31.

"Employment agencies are unlikely to provide information that might put migrants off going overseas," such as details of low pay and long hours, Ms Harima said.

She said the decision to allow employment agencies to regulate much of the migration process in Indonesia and Cambodia, which send thousands of workers abroad each year, had negatively affected prospective workers.

"These include recruitment when not enough jobs are actually secured by agencies, resulting in a long waiting period for workers" and insufficient information about workers' rights, she said.

"Employment agencies might decide to not recruit migrants who are confident about demanding their rights," she said.

MOEAF vice chair U Soe Myint Aung said controlling training would lead to better supervision of migrants. He also said that because the agency negotiates labour agreements with its foreign counterparts it was best suited to train the migrants.

But Ms Harima said protecting the migrants was a job for governments. "It's rather unrealistic to expect agencies to play a front-line role in protecting domestic workers' rights. It is the responsibility of governments to protect their citizens and workers, and it should be the government's responsibility to strictly monitor the operation of recruitment agencies."



Visitors walk through the Kandawgyi National Gardens in Pyin Oo Lwin in 2008. Photo: Staff

Gardens to hold photo, logo contests

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PYIN Oo Lwin's National Kandawgyi Botanical gardens will hold photo and logo competitions in December as part of their ninth annual flower festival and 10th annual music festival.

Anyone can take part in the logo competition by submitting three designs that capture the

"essence" of the gardens, said U Aike Mann, who is supervising the logo contest. The winner will receive K500,000. The deadline for entries is November 1.

The photo competition features three categories: flower, flower and model, and flower bouquet. Entrants can submit up to six photographs before the November 14 deadline using any type of camera, according to organisers.

The winners will receive from K300,000 to K500,000 and will have their work on display during the festival.

The flower festival will run for the whole month, while the music festival will take place December 19-21 and feature the Myoma Nyein music band. Entry to the festival will cost K4000 to K5000 a day.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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Low budget holds back power line safety plans

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UNDERFUNDED electricity budgets may have cost lives, parliament was told last week. Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Aung Than Oo told the Amyotha Hluttaw on September 23 that the four-year (2011-2015) allocation had been insufficient to ensure safety.

He was responding to a question from U Myat Nyarna Soe, representing constituency 4 of Yangon Region, concerning fatalities caused in Yangon by falling electrical cables. He said that although electricity prices had increased, supply was erratic and often of a low voltage, while accidents and electrocutions are common.

"The budget is not only insufficient for replacing old electrical cables and upgrading existing substations, it is also insufficient for expanding [infrastructure]," said U Aung Than Oo.

The ministry has raised power capacity for each of the past four years as its budgets have risen. Since 2011, the ministry's budget has increased from K40.9 billion to K87.7 billion, during which time capacity has risen from 1591 megawatts to 2300MW.

But U Aung Than Oo said the ministry would need a three-fold increase to ensure safe supply by replacing unshielded insulated cables with shielded cables - or up to 10 times as much for an underground cabling system, which would be even safer.

Police figures show that in Yangon alone, 121 people died from electrocution between January and August, a sharp rise on the 109 deaths in 2013 and 105 in 2012.

In some cases, the ministry is already replacing old cables - some of which are almost 50 years old - with newer and safer variants, U Aung Than Oo said, but the vast majority of upgrade work is using unshielded insulated cables. "We plan to install shielded cables when we build the new 11KV and 400KV grids in cities, including Yangon and Mandalay. We'll start doing that this year," he said.

Depending on the voltage, the cost of ranges from K558 million to about K930 million per mile if the cables are shielded, he said.

- Additional reporting by Toe Wai Aung, translation by Zar Zar Soe



Riot control police line up during a crowd management training session in Yangon in February. Photo: AFP

Police tighten security after Al-Qaeda threats



YE MON

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YANGON authorities have tightened security ahead of upcoming religious festivals as a result of threats made by terrorist group Al-Qaeda, a regional minister said last week.

On September 3, the head of Al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, announced the launch of a new branch in South Asia to "wage Jihad against its enemies" in India, Myanmar and Bangladesh and "revive the caliphate".

While the group's capacity to perpetrate attacks in Myanmar is unclear, the regional government said it was taking no chances ahead of Eid al-Adha on October 4 and Thadingyut on October 8.

Yangon Region Minister for Border Affairs and Security Colonel Tin Win said on September 22 that security has been ramped up, particularly near religious buildings,

in response to the possible threat of Al-Qaeda attacks. Security has also been increased at airports and border gates, he said.

"They [Al-Qaeda] will pay money to local people to create violence in our country. Eid will be held in October and we have tightened security so there is no conflict," he said.

Myanmar's commander-in-chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, has also touched on the issue, saying in a speech at the National Defence College that he was concerned Al-Qaeda will instigate violence in Myanmar under the guise of the country's

'They [Al Qaeda] will pay money to local people to create violence in our country.'

Colonel Tin Win

Yangon Region Minister for Security

ongoing religious conflicts.

"This threat has become a challenge for us," he was quoted as saying in the army-run *Myawaddy* newspaper.

Myanmar Muslims have condemned the Al-Qaeda announcement, with the Burmese Muslim Association issuing a statement on September 5 describing it as "morally repugnant".

"The marginalised minority Muslims in Burma will never accept any help from a terrorist organisation," it said. "Muslims are fully integrated into the fabric of Burmese society and belong [to] and support the Burmese nation."

Col Tin Win said he also believed that Muslims in Myanmar would "never accept" Al-Qaeda.

The minister added that the government is cooperating with other governments in the region to prevent terrorist attacks. He also called for public cooperation to fight the threat of terrorism.

"People should inform the police if they see anything suspicious," Col Tin Win said. "Information from the public is very important for us."

Accidents on highway fall after crackdown: government

TRAFFIC accidents on a fatal stretch of highway have halved in number since April, as police crack down on speeding, drug and alcohol use among drivers, and fake documents, parliament was told last week. The crackdown followed the deadly Yar Zar Min bus accident of May 12, in which 14 passengers died.

Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation U Chan Maung told the Pyithu Hluttaw on September 22 that police teams on the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay highway had taken action against more than 3000 drivers caught speeding, as well as four who were found to have fake licences.

The deputy minister was responding to a question from representative Lieutenant Colonel Khin Maung Swe about bus safety, including the licensing of drivers, drug or alcohol use, and documentation.

He told representatives that there had been 60 accidents on the highway in April, falling to 29 in June, 27 in July, 26 in August and 10 accidents as of September 10.

Starting on May 13, the day after the bus accident, the transport ministry set up inspection teams throughout the country. By August 28, he said, they had checked nearly 60,000 vehicles, without finding a single driver under the influence of alcohol. The teams were empowered to impound vehicles found not be roadworthy.

U Chan Maung said teams could close down a bus line temporary or permanently if one of its vehicles was involved in accident involving a fatality. The deputy minister said the permit to run the Yar Zar Min bus line on the Yangon-Mandalay highway had been revoked as of May 15, and that Shan State government had revoked the permit of Kaindayar bus line in Shan State on June 16 because three people were killed in an accident on May 28 in Pinlaung township.

- Htoo Thant, translation by Thiri Min Htun



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Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Govt scraps plan to build small dams on Ayeyarwady

HTOO THANT

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THE government has abandoned a plan to build 16 dams on the Ayeyarwady River to regulate water flow on the recommendation of the World Bank.

Instead, it will improve navigation, river maintenance and water resource management based on the World Bank's advice, Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung told MPs last week.

He was speaking at a session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on September 19 at which MPs approved a request from the government for a US\$100 million from the World Bank for the integrated river management project on the Ayeyarwady.

"When we discussed building low dams with the World Bank, they advised us not to build them right now because Myanmar does not have enough data [on the proposed dams]," U Nyan Tun Aung said.

During the debate, MPs discussed

the current problems with river management, especially the silting of waterways and collapse of riverbanks.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said the regular flooding in riverside towns such as Pyay, Danubyu and Hinthada showed the need for more maintenance to be carried out.

The World Bank loan will carry no interest rate but will incur a 0.75 percent annual service charge. It will be paid back over 38 years.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

MILLION US\$

100

Amount loaned by the World Bank to improve river systems management



IN PICTURES

An elderly Mandalay resident stages a protest near the city centre on September 18, accusing the government of illegally confiscating his land. U Khin Maung Win said he would prosecute the authorities over the confiscation of the land in Aung Myay Thar San township, which was later used to build a public dispensary. He staged the protest with official permission, marching from the site of his former property, on the corner of 16th and 61st streets, to the corner of 62nd and 22nd.

PHOTO: SI THU LWIN

Military frees child soldiers before review

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THE military has released more than 100 underage recruits, taking the number of child soldiers discharged to 472 since a joint action plan to eliminate the practice was signed in June 2012, the United Nations Children's Fund said.

A total of 109 children were released on September 25 – the largest single discharge since the action plan was signed – at a ceremony attended by Minister for Defence Lieutenant General Wai Lwin. In August, 91 children were released.

UNICEF said the discharge was the result of recent discussions as to how the process of freeing child soldiers could be sped up.

"We are witnessing an increasing number of children coming out of the Tatmadaw, indicating the accelerated efforts of the government of Myanmar and the Tatmadaw to put an end to the harmful practice of recruiting and using children," said Renata Lok-Dessallien, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar, who also co-chairs the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on grave violations against children (CTFMR).

The release came a day before both

sides were due to discuss progress made as a result of the action plan and identify remaining steps to end the recruitment and use of children by the government armed forces.

The statement said the task force wants the government to strengthen the legal framework, strictly implement age verification procedures and reinforce accountability mechanisms to prevent further underage recruitment.

Bertrand Bainvel, UNICEF representative to Myanmar and co-chair of the task force, said the joint action plan had resulted in the task force being given access to military facilities, as well as a new directive being issued to prevent the enrolment of children at the battalion level.

The joint action plan, which was signed by the CTFMR and the military in June 2012, sets out measures to end and prevent the use and recruitment of children.

If these are achieved, the Tatmadaw will be removed from the UN secretary-general's list of parties to conflict who recruit and use children. Seven non-state armed groups in Myanmar, including the Kachin Independence Army, the Karen National Liberation Army, the Shan State Army-South and the United Wa State Army, are also listed but have yet to sign an action plan.

MPs warn govt to expect scrutiny on foreign loans

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PARLIAMENTARIANS have warned government ministries seeking approval for foreign loans that they should expect close scrutiny of their spending, amid concerns that Myanmar may be taking on unnecessary debt.

National League for Democracy representative for Zabuthiri Daw Sandar Min said an NLD government would inspect the books with a fine-tooth comb if elected.

"The new government has taken a lot of international development loans so ... all ministries that are working in

the interests of the country and people should not reluctant to have their spending audited when they transfer their duties to newcomers," she said at a Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session on September 19.

"The government shouldn't put these debts on the shoulders of incoming governments."

Her concerns were echoed by other MPs from a range of parties but were brushed aside by Deputy Minister for Finance U Maung Maung Thein.

He said Myanmar's external debt of almost US\$9 billion was relatively small but conceded it was growing quickly under the current government.

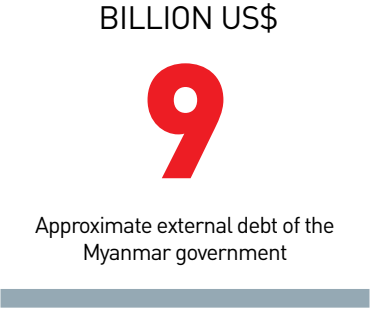
"Myanmar's debt ... seems like a large amount but the United States, which is the world's largest economy, has outstanding debts of \$17.7 trillion," he said.

He said the government is only seeking foreign loans after assessing their impact on its creditworthiness.

He said the loans were needed because the government lacked the means to carry out all necessary development tasks on its own.

"It is important that we use the loans for good causes," he said.

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe



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CRIME IN BRIEF

Villagers alert grandfather to sex crime

A man has asked police to press charges against the stepfather of his 14-year-old granddaughter for allegedly getting her pregnant. Neighbours alerted the man, 63, from Taikkyi township that his granddaughter was carrying the baby of her stepfather, 47. He reported the stepfather to police, who are investigating.

Tourist collapses in downtown

An Australian tourist has been assisted by tourist police after collapsing in downtown Yangon.

The man collapsed near the corner of Anawrahta and 33rd streets while walking on September 21. He was sent to Kyauktada police station where officers assessed his condition and searched a bag that he was carrying for clues as to his identity. Inside the bag officers found a hotel business card. After contacting the hotel manager, the man was sent back to his hotel, where he was met by his wife and two daughters.

Longyi heist caught on camera

Two shoppers have been busted taking a five-finger discount on more than a dozen longyis.

One man, 33, was caught on CCTV camera allegedly stealing 10 longyis from a City Mart branch in Mayangone township on September 21. His female partner in crime, 33, was caught stealing an additional five longyis. Each were priced at K12,500. Both have been charged by police.

Illegal teak traders busted

Officials from the Forestry Department have charged a truck driver and company manager after confiscating more than 100 teak doors and 50 logs that were from illegal sources.

The Hlegu Forestry Department team and police stopped a Hino truck travelling from Pyu in Bago Region to Yangon. It was found to be carrying the wood concealed inside paddy bags.

Officers from the Hlegu station have charged the driver, 34, and the manager of the transportation company, 38.

Couple accused of forging ownership documents

A woman has been drawn into a property battle after allegedly being given false ownership documents for an apartment she bought in March.

Daw Khin Hla purchased an apartment in the Shwe Padauk Yeikmon housing development in Kamayut township on March 20 from a couple, who told Daw Khin Hla that they had inherited the apartment.

Daw Khin Hla then discovered that the ownership document for the apartment was forged and that the couple who had sold it were continuing to live there. After reporting the issue to Kamaryut police, officers charged the couple cheating, trespassing and forgery.

Money reported missing from UMFCFI

A senior official from the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCFI) has reported that nearly K2 million has gone missing from the group's offices.

UMFCFI chief executive officer U Tint Swe told officers at the Lanmadaw police station on September 22 that K1.9 million had gone missing on September 13 from a cabinet in the group's Federation Management Department. Police are investigating the complaint. — *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Khant Lin Oo*

Landmark project m without 'critical' leas

Property development with an estimated cost of more than US\$400 million still

TIM MCLAUGHLIN



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RESTORATION efforts are ongoing on the centrepiece building of a major development project in Yangon backed by business tycoon Serge Pun, despite continued difficulties in securing a critical lease extension for the mixed-use property.

Major work on the Landmark Project, estimated at more than US\$400 million and spread over more than 10 acres of prime downtown land, has been delayed for more than a year due to the inability to secure a lease extension for the site from the Ministry of Railways.

The site contains the heritage-listed Burma Railways headquarters building, constructed in the 19th century, along with FMI Center and the now-shuttered Grand Mee Ya Hta Executive Residences.

But Mr Pun, who chairs public company First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Serge Pun & Associates (Myanmar) and Singapore-listed Yoma Strategic Holdings, said last week that investors had agreed to move ahead with the project under the existing lease terms.

While efforts continue to secure the longer lease, restoration work on the railways building, which will be turned into a luxury hotel, will continue to move forward.

The project was announced in November 2012 and is a venture between Yoma and SPA that also involves the International Finance Corporation, Asian Development Bank and partners from Japan and Hong Kong.

Following the project's announcement, Mr Pun applied to the ministry to extend the original 1995 lease for the maximum 70 years — 50 years, with two 10-year extensions — allowable under current investment laws. To date this extension has not been approved.

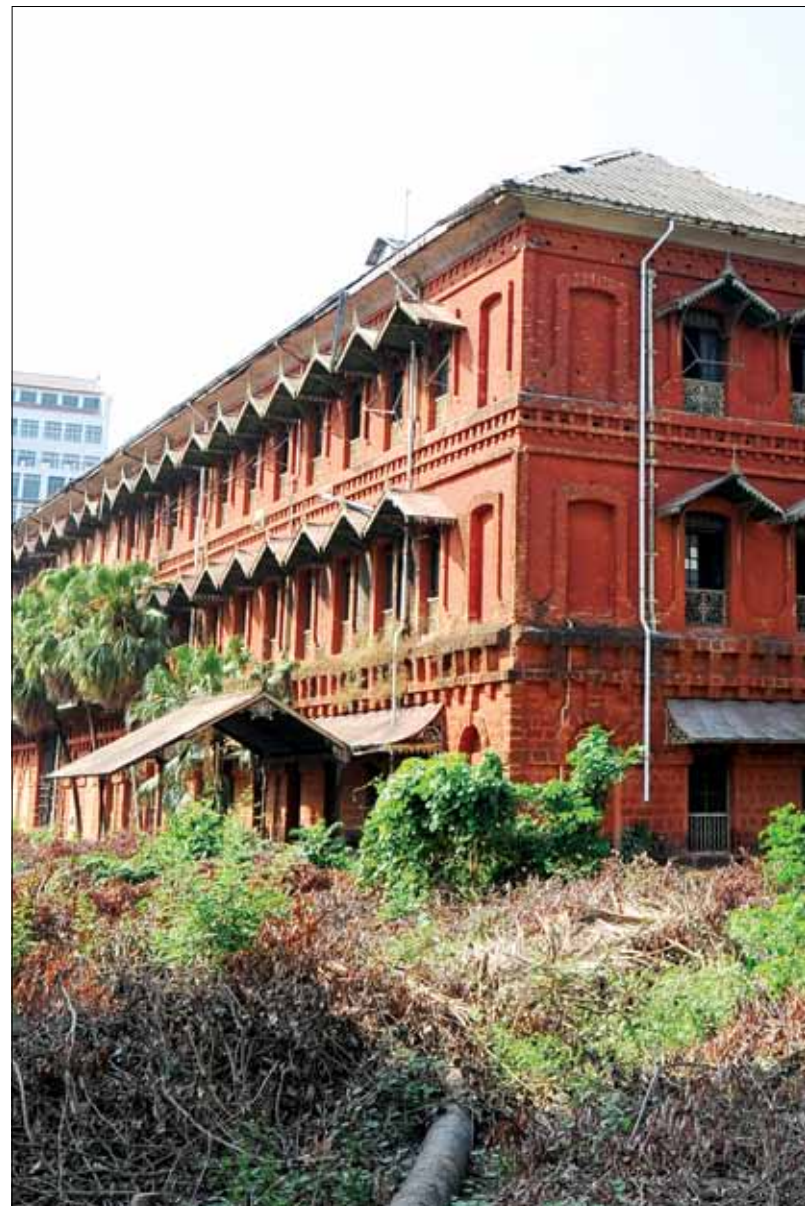
Yoma announced in June that instead of acquiring 80 percent of the Landmark site from SPA on the longer lease terms as originally planned, it will now acquire the site with its existing leases — two smaller plots with 24 and 26 years remaining on the leases — with a first payment of US\$43.2 million.

The remaining payment of up to \$38 million will be paid to SPA when the lease extension is secured. The acquisition will be funded by a 1-for-8 rights issue at \$0.38 that Yoma is expected to conduct by October. SPA is also expected to gain approval for the transfer of the site from the Myanmar Investment Commission to Yoma by the end of December 15.

Mr Pun, who met recently with Minister for Rail Transportation U Than Htay, said he remains confident that the maximum lease will be granted to SPA but conceded that the timeline remains unclear.

"I have absolutely no doubt it [the lease extension] will come through. I am hopeful that it will be as soon as possible," Mr Pun told *The Myanmar Times*. "It is just bureaucratic procedures. It takes its time and its toll."

An official from the Ministry of Railways said that the ministry was still scrutinising the proposal



The disused former Burma Railways headquarters, constructed in the late 1800s,

and that no decision had been made on whether to grant the extension. The official gave no reason for the delay in granting the lease, but said that the ministry was not malicious in its intent or purposely trying to prolong the process.

In a note to investors dated June 17, Eli Koksiong Lee, an analyst at OCBC Investment Research, said this two-step process would allow construction to begin on the office,

'You don't invest half a billion dollars unless there is visibility on the underlying lease.'

Vikram Kumar
International Finance Corporation
resident representative

retail and hotel components of the project but pre-sales of the residential piece of the project would be delayed until the maximum extension is obtained. Mr Lee said the target date for the new lease is now the end of 2015.

The Burma Railways building will be developed into the Peninsula Hotel Yangon in partnership with Hong Kong-based HK & Shanghai Hotels (HSH Group).

In April, Martyn Sawyer, HSH Group director of properties, told *The Myanmar Times* that the

group was satisfied with the progress being made on the property and it was taking a long-term view on the project.

A spokesperson for HSH Group said that their position had not changed following the June announcement. An opening date for the hotel has not been set, but Mr Pun said that he expected the project to take around three years to complete.

The IFC and ADB have each agreed to invest US\$70 million in a separate portion of the project, comprising \$50 million in debt and \$20 million in equity. Financing from the IFC, which is a member of the World Bank Group, was approved by its board on September 4. The ADB declined to comment on any aspects of the project, citing confidentiality. A post on the group's website said that approval for financing is pending.

Vikram Kumar, resident representative for the IFC — which is working with Yoma on three projects in Myanmar — said investors consider it "critical" that SPA is able to secure the lease extension.

"As financiers, of course, we would prefer the lease to be in place before we invest, along with the Japanese investors," Mr Kumar said. "You don't invest a half a billion dollars unless there is visibility on the underlying lease."

In an earlier interview Mr Pun said that changes at the top of the Ministry of Railways had led to the lease delay. The ministry has had two different ministers in as many years and the most recent change came in July 2013, when U Zeyar

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(For. LINDNER/BLAUMEIER,

Attorneys at Law, Germany)

Dated. 29th September, 2014

oves forward e extension

waiting on Ministry of Rail Transportation approval



is slated to become a luxury hotel. Photo: Staff

Aung was replaced by U Than Htay, while a long-serving deputy minister, Thura U Thaug Lwin, was moved to another position.

Mr Pun was hesitant to place the blame on any specific individuals last week but he did point out that U Than Htay had now been on the job for more than a year.

“I was hoping that it would have started much earlier, but that is how it is,” he said.

MILLION US\$
140

Amount being contributed by the ADB and IFC to Landmark, of which \$100 million is debt and the rest equity

The project has planning approval in principle from Yangon City Development Committee, complies with its new zoning plan and faces no objections from heritage campaigners.

If permission to extend the lease is secured from the Ministry of Railways, it would then need to be cleared by the Myanmar Investment Commission.

Studio Lapis, a Singapore-based heritage consultancy that specialises in architectural conservation, started its assessment of the building in April 2013 and is outlining

restoration needs.

Ho Weng Hin, a partner at Studio Lapis, said that the building's mix of local and imported materials reflected the fact that Yangon – then Rangoon – was a bustling port at the centre of the British Empire when it was built.

The building's lower floor is constructed from laterite blocks – rich clay-like soil cut from Myanmar's riverbeds that gives the building its distinctive red colour through its high iron oxide content. The intricate cast-iron canopies that frame the hundreds of windows in the building were imported from Scotland.

The construction firm that will carry out the work will be selected through a tender process.

In addition to the Peninsula, Yoma signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding with Mitsubishi Corporation and Mitsubishi Estate in October 2013 that will see a separate business hotel, serviced apartments, a high-end condominium, and retail and office space developed. Mitsubishi Corporation and Mitsubishi Estate declined to comment when contacted by *The Myanmar Times*.

The business hotel was originally linked to US-hotel management chain Starwood but Mr Pun said no decision had been made on which firm would manage the property. A number of international hotel chains had shown considerable interest in the project, he said.

“You can name any [hotel chain] and there is probably a good chance” they have expressed interest, Mr Pun said. – *Additional reporting by Aye Nyein Win*

The price of history: restoring the former railways headquarters

RESTORATION work is never straightforward but the former Burma Railways headquarters poses particular challenges for those hoping to turn it into a luxury hotel in the coming years.

The building, according to project backer Serge Pun, was built on a slab that is around 60 centimetres (2 feet) deep, but lacks any footings to anchor it to the ground. To fix this, the building will need to undergo a process of underpinning, which would see piles driven 30 to 40 metres into the ground, after which the building can be re-laid on this new foundation.

“That [underpinning] has never been done in Yangon but it is a very, very common method of preserving old buildings in London, Paris, in Singapore, and everywhere else. If you look at the diagram it's basically giving it new legs that go right down,” Mr Pun told *The Myanmar Times*.

Once this process is complete, work will be able to begin on replacing support beams, load-bearing walls and other structural elements. The entire building will be braced with a series of brackets to ensure it remains structurally sound during the process.

The estimated cost of the entire Landmark project now stands in ex-



An interior of the former Burma Railways headquarters. Photo: Supplied/SPA

‘Restoring this building will cost me twice as much as if I rebuilt it, brand-new ... That’s the essence of restoration and preserving heritage.’

Serge Pun
Landmark developer

cess of US\$400 million. While Mr Pun did not put a figure on the cost of restoration, preserving a piece of history undoubtedly carries a hefty price tag.

“Restoring this old building will cost me twice as much as if I rebuilt it, brand-new, [in a way] that looks identical to what it looks like today. That's the essence of restoration and preserving heritage. You can build a brand-new building that looks identical but it's not a historic building.”

The building dates from the late 1800s but was constructed in phases as the country's private railway companies merged before becoming a state-run enterprise. Ho Weng Hin, a

partner at Studio Lapis, a Singapore-based heritage consultancy that has been hired to assess the building, said because of this it tells the larger history of Myanmar, through the colonial and post-independence periods.

While nearly every piece of the building, from windows to floorboards, will need major restoration, one element of the building that will not be changed, according to Mr Ho, is the teak doors. Cut from the famed Myanmar hardwood, many of the doors remain in good condition despite being exposed to Yangon's tropical climate for more than 100 years. – *Tim McLaughlin and Thomas Kean*

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Lack of satellite phone hindered search

Six team members waiting at Hkakabo Razi base camp also lacked equipment to search for two missing climbers above 5000 metres



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PHYU**

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SIX surviving members of the Hkakabo Razi expedition were unable to search for two missing colleagues above 4938 metres (16,200 feet) because of a lack of mountaineering equipment, they said last week upon their return to Yangon.

The team also lacked a satellite phone that could have been used to seek help earlier, U Myo Thant, the head of the Invitation of Nature Foundation, which arranged the trip, confirmed at a September 21 press conference.

However, he said that the missing pair had enough climbing and communications equipment, including two-way radios, a global positioning system device to show their location and equipment to send emergency messages.

‘We think that they must have got injured and didn’t even have an opportunity to use the [GPS] device.’

U Myo Thant

Invitation for Nature Foundation

“We think that they must have got injured and didn’t even have an opportunity to use the device,” said U Myo Thant, who is also chair of the Universities Hiking and Mountaineering Association.

Ko Aung Myint Myat and Ko Wai Yan Min Thu were last heard from on August 31, when they reached the



Four of the eight team members pose for a photo on the hike to Hkakabo Razi. Photo: Supplied

summit of the 5881m (19,294-foot) Hkakabo Razi, in northern Kachin State. They were the first all-Myanmar team to climb the mountain.

As *The Myanmar Times* reported last week, senior officials from Htoo Foundation, which says it has spent K5 billion searching for the two missing climbers, said the team was not adequately prepared for the attempt on Hkakabo Razi, which has only been climbed once previously.

Members of the team said at the press conference they had waited for the lost climbers at the 4024m (13,200-

foot) base camp until September 5, before launching a two-day search the following day.

They said communication difficulties had hampered efforts to look for the pair.

“Ko Wai Yan Min Thu reported to base team by walkie-talkie at 4:28pm [on August 31] that they had arrived at the peak. After both teams ... sang the national and association anthems, Ko Wai Yan Min Thu said that the battery on their device was low and then dropped out of contact,” said Ko Han Lin Htun, one of the six

hikers that provided support from base camp.

“We waited for them at the base camp until September 5, as per our original plan, but they didn’t appear ... A local guide from the Ta Hon Dam village went up to 15,800 feet [4816m] and waited there for three hours but the team was not found. Then we searched for the summit team to a height of 16,200 feet [4938m],” he said.

Ko Han Lin Htun said that it was too risky for the team to go above that height without additional climbing equipment.

They searched at just below 5000m for two hours on September 7 before returning to base camp and deciding to submit a report on the situation to Yangon.

They descended from base camp the next day, arriving in Ta Hon Dam village where they hoped to use a satellite phone owned by U Na Ma Johnsein - a noted mountaineer who was in the first team to climb Hkakabo Razi - to call Yangon.

The base team made the descent to Ta Hon Dam, the nearest village to Hkakabo Razi, by the evening of September 9, although it normally takes five days.

Ko Han Lin Tun said that if U Na Ma Johnsein had not been in the village, they would have had to continue walking to Naung Mon - an eight-day trip on foot - to be able to make contact with Yangon. “Fortunately, he was in the village and we could report the situation to Yangon,” he said.

While a major search operation was launched, it has failed to turn up any sign of the two climbers.

Htoo Foundation, which is contributing significant resources to the effort, said on its Facebook page on September 21 that it would continue looking until September 27. Its patron, U Tay Za, said he will give K100 million to the person or team that finds the men.

U Myo Thant said that Invitation of Nature Foundation would continue the search after September 27 if the pair has not been found.



U Myo Thant, head of Invitation of Nature Foundation, speaks at a September 21 press conference. Photo: Thiri

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IN DEPTH

Night of terror after illegal dam bursts



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IT was the night a village drowned. A dam burst after days of heavy rain unleashed a 2.4-metre (8-foot) wave that devastated Yay Myat village, sweeping away homes as parents clung to their children, and destroying livelihoods.

Ko Myo Ko, 20, was awakened by loud thunder. His little house was shaking as the waters rose. When he went outside to find out what was happening, the strong current was already pounding his house with rocks. It was already too late to run.

As Ko Myo Ko tightly hugged his two-year-old son, Mg Pyae Sone Oo, his wife, Ma Khaing Soe Wah, clasped the house's central roof-pole. But in the inky darkness, the waters had already swept the house off its foundations. Ko Myo Ko carried his son through a hole in the roof, where another surge snatched the boy from his grasp, carrying him away while sweeping Ko Myo Ko into a tree. "I tried to save my son, but I couldn't," he sobbed. His wife is still missing.

'I've lived here for 40 years and never seen anything like it.'

U Chit Tin
Yay Myat resident

The flash flood struck just after midnight on September 17 in Singu township, northern Mandalay Region. Residents said they were completely unprepared for the ferocity.

"I've lived here for 40 years and never seen anything like it," said U Chit Tin.

But villagers, who earn their living from farming and gold mining, said this disaster was man-made.

A dam had been built, without planning permission, at the junction of two mountain streams about 1.6 kilometres (1 mile) above the village, and was used to irrigate nearby fields. After three days of heavy rain, the 90m (300-foot) wide, 6m (20-foot) high dam crumbled.

Villagers said the person who built the dam was from neighbouring Kyi Tauk Pauk village. It was unclear



Volunteers help to dig out a house in Yay Myat village, Mandalay Region, that was buried under sand during a flash flood. Photo: Than Naing Soe

whether he would be charged for constructing it without permission: While Yay Myat villagers said they wanted action to be taken, local police said they had no intention to do so.

"Our family of three had to run to a nearby hill empty-handed," said shopkeeper Daw Aye Than. Her entire stock, worth more than K3 million, was lost in the torrent. "How can I make a living now?" she said, pointing to her empty house.

Neighbour Daw Amar Yin said, "My house is one storey. As the water level rose, we had to climb up on the roof. My son and I were very afraid, and shouted for help. But nobody could hear."

When morning came, 40 houses were covered with sand and 14 more had disappeared entirely. The body of Mg Pyae Sone Oo was found about 300m from the village, but there is to date no trace of his mother, Ma Khaing Soe Wah, or another missing girl, 7-year-old Ma Yadana Soe.

Since the disaster villagers have been searching the banks of the stream for those who were lost. "We saved a pregnant woman, Ma Zin Mar Soe," said U Aung Win.

The Mandalay Region government and local social welfare organisations have provided some relief supplies. "There have been many donations, from at least 20 groups a day," said village administrator U Maung Naing.

Resident U Aung Win said he had been planning to hold a donation ceremony in October. His stockpiles of rice, oil, salt, dried fish and other goods were all lost. "Although my donation ceremony was destroyed, I am at least glad nobody in our family was killed," he said.

But not all were so lucky.

Triple taxi taxes set to continue, insists YCDC

AYE NYEIN WIN

ayenyeinwin.mcm@gmail.com

YANGON City Development Committee has denied reports that it plans to scrap the city taxi registration scheme, saying responsibility for registration will instead be transferred to another association.

"We will not do the city taxi registration in the future but it does not mean there is no need to do the city taxi registration," U Nyi Nyi Oo, the deputy head of YCDC's managerial department told *The Myanmar Times*. "We can't say exactly who will manage it in future. For now we are still accepting city taxi registrations."

Confusion has reigned over the issue ever since Ma Hta Tha, the Yangon Region Supervisory Committee for Motor Vehicles, announced it would take over responsibility from April 1, 2013. This never happened and while a clarification was published in state media last year many taxi drivers remain confused over the registration process.

Many taxi drivers argue that they should not have to pay the YCDC tax. Currently they have to pay three registration fees: one to YCDC, another

to the Road Transport Administration Department (RTAD) and a third to the Business Licence Office.

"RTAD already has a record of our address and vehicle. [Having to register with YCDC] makes us busier and costs more. We need to do three steps and it costs three times as much," said Yangon taxi driver U Maung Maung.

Some drivers said they object more to the inconvenience than the cost, which is around K65,000 a year all up. The RTAD tax is K30,000, the business office K20,000 and YCDC about K15,000.

"It's not too much - I think it's a reasonable amount," said taxi driver Ko Myint Oo Naing.

In February this year local officials also began restricting the issuing of business licences to Yangon-plated vehicles, even though many taxi drivers wish to ply their trade in the city using cars registered in other parts of Myanmar.

At the time many taxi drivers said they heard the crackdown on taxi licences was part of a government attempt to reduce traffic jams in Yangon by limiting the number of commercial vehicles.

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JUNCTION 8 ☎ 01-550778 (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 ☎ 01-682323 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	SHWE MYA YAR ☎ 01-294063 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	JUNCTION SQUARE ☎ 01-527053 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	GOLDEN VALLEY ☎ 01-523840-43 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)
			PARKSON FMI ☎ 01-246000 243031 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)

Views

US dollar exchange scam lingers, despite Central Bank instruction



SITHU AUNG MYINT

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ON September 11, U Aung Kyaing, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Nyaung Oo constituency, submitted a question in parliament as to why private banks and even state-owned banks don't accept old or ink-stained US dollar notes.

U Set Aung, a deputy governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, responded that the Central Bank has already instructed all private and state-owned banks to accept all dollar notes in reasonable condition that are genuine.

More controversially, he insisted that both state-owned and private banks are accepting genuine dollar notes that are old, creased or have blemishes, such as ink, spots or stamps.

However, we all know his answer is not grounded in reality. So what is the real situation and what is the root of the problem?

Private money exchange counters and banks, including state-owned banks, don't accept dollar notes that are even very slightly old or creased. They often give the reasons that illegal money-changers had made fake notes with similar serial numbers.

Another problem is that many of the US dollars abroad bear a seal or stamp from foreign banks that show the notes have been checked

This tradition of exploiting those with old greenbacks is a big business, and the public has lost out.



Photo: Kaung Htet

Where is a US dollar not always a US dollar? In Myanmar, of course.

and found to be genuine. These notes are often also not accepted by local banks or money exchange counters.

The root of the problem is dishonest – some would say corrupt – practices within state banks. Private banks, businesspeople and many ordinary citizens have to use government banks if they deal in foreign currencies, including US dollars.

But officials at these state institutions who are in charge of foreign currency management have refused to accept old dollars for many years. This is still the case.

They had the power to decide what kind of notes would be accepted in Myanmar. Nobody could argue with them if their notes were rejected. The custom of refusing old dollars probably developed from this.

Officials who are in charge of accepting foreign currency at state-owned banks have been accused of allowing old or moderately damaged notes if the owner of the notes conducted some "pre-negotiations" prior to the transaction – in other words, paid a bribe.

At the same time, dealers on the black market cut the rate for old notes. For example, those trying to sell 10 notes would get a lower rate if some of them were not in perfect condition. Private banks would even regularly refuse to accept slightly worn notes withdrawn from another private bank in Myanmar,

and instead advise the customer to return them to the branch where they had got them.

In other countries, a dollar is a dollar. Here, a dollar is a dollar for some – and not for most ordinary people. This tradition of exploiting those with old greenbacks is a big business, and the public has lost out.

The Central Bank has shown it can't even force state-owned banks to comply with its instruction. It is clear that money changers and staff from government banks are greedily exploiting the currency exchange rates. This hurts the country at a time when it is trying to shed its old image as a haven of corruption and attract foreign investors.

In order to resolve this problem, the Central Bank must strictly supervise state-owned banks and ensure they follow its instruction. After that, private banks and money exchange counters must follow suit. One option that should be considered is forcing them to put a public announcement on their premises saying that they accept old dollar notes and include some sample photos.

Only through measures such as these will the custom of exploiting the public through cutting the exchange rate of old greenbacks will disappear. Then we will have a currency exchange market that functions as it does in other countries.

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Southeast Asian



ROGER MITTON

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LAST week, Singapore billionaire Peter Lim bought a 50 percent stake in Salford City, a lower league English football club based in a satellite borough of Manchester.

The publicity-shy Lim, who is said to be worth around US\$2.4 billion, is an avid supporter of Manchester United and runs a group of sport bars festooned with the club's regalia.

Four years ago, he made an audacious but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to buy Liverpool football club, Man Utd's most bitter rival in the English Premier League.

And in May this year he mounted an equally brazen \$570-million bid to seize control of the top-flight but debt-laden Spanish club Valencia.

Now, along with his Salford City co-owners, who are all former Man Utd stars, he aims to turn the relatively obscure club into a powerhouse in Europe.

He may well succeed.

His venture has many parallels over the past two decades, as a growing number of Asian tycoons have acquired control of top English and continental football clubs.

The flamboyant boss of Malaysia's Berjaya Corp, Vincent Tan, now owns Cardiff City, while his equally flamboyant compatriot, Air Asia's head honcho Tony Fernandes, has bought Queen's Park Rangers.

Thai tycoons got into the act when former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra took over Manchester City for \$134 million in 2007 but later sold it to Abu Dhabi investors.

Two years ago, a fellow Thai magnate, Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, who owns King Power Duty Free, bought Leicester City, who beat Lim's star-studded Man U 5-3 just a week ago.

And earlier this month, after long negotiations, a trio of Thai investors led by businesswoman Sasima Sri-vikorn bought the UK Championship

Thailand's Chanathip Songkrasin (left) vies for the ball with Indonesia's Rasyid Assahid Bakri during their first round match of the 2014 Asian Games at the Incheon Football stadium in South Korea on September 22. Photo: AFP



side Reading FC.

Not to be outdone, Indonesia's Erick Thohir, head of the media-based Mahaka Group, bought a controlling stake in Italy's foremost club Inter Milan last year.

It is all fine and good. We live in a globalised world and there's no reason why this region's most successful businessmen should not invest in foreign soccer clubs.

After all, the popularity of footy, especially the English Premier League, is second to none. In the pre-season, top clubs like Arsenal and Chelsea visit Southeast Asia and play friendly matches before crowds of up to 80,000.

What is perplexing, however, is why no country from this region has ever been able to produce a half-decent team of its own.

According to the rankings of FIFA, the world body governing football, this region's top national side is from the Philippines – and it comes in at a miserable 134th out of 208.

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football: a load of balls



Vietnam is next up at 142nd, Myanmar 143rd and poor Cambodia trails in at 199th, with the others in between.

Staggeringly, given the fanatical support for the game and the rich sums of money it can draw upon, not once since the World Cup began in 1930 has a team from Southeast Asia qualified for the finals.

It is quite shocking and almost defies belief, especially when one notes that places like Bosnia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Togo, Tunisia, New Zealand, Slovenia, and Trinidad and Tobago have all qualified in the past.

What the heck is going on? Small Slovenia, not even one-tenth the size of Malaysia and with only 2 million people, a fraction of the population of Bangkok, has made it to the World Cup finals.

Togo, one of the smallest and poorest countries in Africa, which largely survives on cocoa exports and has a per capita GDP of only \$584, 16 times smaller than Indonesia's, has qualified.

It is pitiful. And there are many

more examples of nations smaller in size, population and wealth than ASEAN's members, regularly qualifying, while this region's football-mad nations never do.

Despite this, there is a cock-eyed plan afoot to nominate ASEAN as host for the 2030 World Cup. It is a risible idea that will go nowhere.

Meanwhile, the likes of Peter Lim, Vincent Tan, Tony Fernandes, Erick Thohir, Sasima Srivikorn and Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha wisely put their money in European clubs.. They know damn well there's no future for the game in their own region.

In some ways it's rather baffling, but that's the way it is: The support here all goes to English teams, not to the local boys.

I have witnessed it myself many times. In Singapore, I saw Arsenal play Liverpool in front of a raucous, sold-out crowd at the National Stadium. No local game could ever match such fervent support.

And in Hsipaw, up in Shan State, I

was once having a stroll after dinner when I saw a crowd of people standing in front of a wooden cinema where an old James Bond flick was about to finish.

I asked the manager why the people were waiting. He said that in a few minutes, he was going to screen a live satellite transmission of Newcastle United versus Stoke City. Go figure.

Presumably, the overpowering obsession with the English game comes in part from the lack of quality home fare.

But just why is soccer so bad here? It's a given that the influence of politics and betting syndicates on the woefully administered local leagues is a key factor, but there's got to be more to it than that.

I have asked people about this many times and received many different answers, some of them quite silly – and among the silliest is the excuse that players here don't have the physical build or stamina.

What hogwash. Look at the all-time greats like Puskas, Pele, Maradona and Keegan, and the current stars like Messi, Silva and Sterling. They are all little guys, no bigger or more muscular than most Asians.

And kids here have amazing ball skills. Watch a group playing sepak takraw and you wonder why Thailand or Malaysia aren't in the World Cup Finals every time.

As for the other excuses, yes, they have some validity – the degree of corruption in this region's football is appalling and appears to have official connivance or else it would not be so pervasive and endemic.

Players in Malaysia, for instance, are known to routinely receive death threats unless they obey bookies who run the betting syndicates. And disillusioned fans know this.

At a recent Malaysian Premier League game between Kuala Lumpur and Sime Darby, irate supporters waved banners that said "Bookie 5 – Fans 0", and that was the score at the end of the match.

So let's accept that our rich, sporting-mad tycoons are just facing reality when they invest their millions in English teams rather than trying to build up the sport here.

They know that even lowly Salford City is a better prospect than any team in the whole of ASEAN.

Face it fans, football is a lost cause in this region.

ASEAN should not forget smallholder farmers

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CIVIL society representatives from a range of ASEAN countries met on September 18 to discuss regional agricultural policy. Their recommendations were directed to the annual meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) held in Nay Pyi Taw from September 23 to 25.

Participants at the September 18 meeting called on the ministers to protect smallholder farmer interests in future policy and argued for increased protection from land grabs.

All ASEAN countries should adopt the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure. Farmers can then register their land more easily, which will encourage investment and increase production. Other key priority areas discussed include nutrition, trade liberalisation, rice policies and agricultural investments.

Participants warned that free trade policies between ASEAN countries offer threats and opportunities for smallholder farmers, and the risks need to be addressed. Government should closely monitor the impact of this liberalisation and put in place measures to protect smallholder farmers. Governments should also ensure farmers are competitive against larger agribusinesses, through measures such as ensuring they can trade their products freely within their own countries, without monopolies being developed on certain products.

Civil society also called for agricultural policies to ensure that production contributes to improved nutrition. Crops that ensure a balanced diet should be promoted, alongside education on healthy eating, especially among pregnant women and young children. Improved rice policy is an important issue. Participants called on ASEAN countries and the ASEAN Secretariat to ensure the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve is an effective buffer

in case of calamity. Rice reserves at the national level should be administered efficiently, without corruption, and should support stable rice markets.

Regulatory frameworks should be put in place to protect small farmers, agricultural workers and the environment. In recent years agricultural investments have increased significantly in a number of ASEAN member countries. Investment is needed to improve and increase production, and should be welcomed. But responsible investments that work with smallholder farmers on their own land are preferred over large land acquisitions that dislocate farmers.

Agriculture is the main source of income in most countries in the ASEAN region and the dominant farm model is small scale. Significant investment across the region is going toward large-scale agribusiness but research – such as by Oxfam, which published *Delivering Prosperity in Myanmar's Dry Zone* in July – shows that with the right policies, investment in small-scale farming can help to reduce poverty and inequality, and strengthen food security. So that this happens, ASEAN ministers must ensure that inter-regional agreements listen to farming communities and address the investment needs of small-scale farmers.

As general recommendations participants called on ministers to put in place effective monitoring mechanisms and inter-ministerial coordination for the implementation of the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework 2015-2020, which was on the agenda of last week's meeting. Finally, they called for enhanced involvement of civil society organisations in policy discussions at both the national and regional level. Together we would like to work toward a food-secure ASEAN region.

.....

Ohnmar Khaing is coordinator of the Food Security Working Group, Shwe Thein is chair of the Land Core Group, Marlene Ramirez is secretary general of AsiaDHRRA and Esther Penunia is secretary general of the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development.



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Business

Introduction of K5000 notes closely watched

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AN updated K5000 note will enter circulation on October 1 in a bid to fight counterfeiting, but authorities say they are being careful to make sure the move will not upset the money supply and lead to inflation.

The plan is to gradually introduce the new note, which appears similar to the existing red-coloured white elephant note except it includes a watermark elephant, a security thread and a layer of varnish on both sides.

The Central Bank of Myanmar is introducing the note in a bid to prevent counterfeiting, though the existing K5000 note will continue to be legal tender.

A Central Bank official said the amount of new notes being printed is confidential, "but the main purpose is to prevent harm [from counterfeits] when citizens withdraw money".

The government has attempted to head off any problems from introducing the revamped K5000 note in part by devoting half of the front page of the September 19 *New Light of Myanmar* to announcing the new bill.

High denomination notes are particularly likely to be counterfeit, the Central Bank's website said. It added that steps to discover a forgery include checking to see if the suspect note is too smooth, or has no security thread or watermark. The Central Bank also claims there are relatively few counterfeit notes in circulation in Myanmar.

U Thaw Zay Ya, general manager at Kanbawza Bank's Botahtaung branch, said counterfeit notes often end up at the bank, where they are demolished by punching holes in the note, as long as the customer agrees.

"We discuss the problems of counterfeiting with the customer first and tell them it can't enter the market," he said. "The customer is responsible if they don't accept our advice."

The Myanmar economy is still

largely cash-based, and there is a widespread problem of having old, worn-out notes accepted. Though the Central Bank's policy is that banks must accept worn-out but genuine notes, it is not universally adhered to.

U Thaw Zay Ya said it can be difficult accepting larger denomination K5000 and K10,000 notes if they are hard to reissue. It also becomes more difficult to tell counterfeit and genuine notes apart as they get older – though even newer bills can still be counterfeit.

"Even the US has to update its notes [due to counterfeiting]," he said.

Still, introducing new bills to make counterfeiting more difficult comes with its own set of perils.

Experts say Myanmar has mishandled some previous currency schemes, including two large-scale demonetisations of existing currency and introduction of bills with odd face values like K45 and K90 in the 1980s. Excessive money printing has also been blamed for high inflation rates in the past, though the Central Bank official said it is keen to avoid repeating this mistake.

Whether the new notes will lead to inflation depends on how they are introduced, said economist U Khine Htun.

If the new K5000 notes are used to replace old notes in a one-for-one exchange, or if the total new money supply is less than the rate of GDP growth, it should not result in undue inflation.

"But if it's not done this way, printing new money will be the primary reason for inflation," he said.

Inflation has been on the government's radar. U Kan Zaw, minister of national planning and economic development, said last month that it is something the government seeks to address, partly through its efforts to ease trade flows and production.

The Asian Development Bank said it estimates inflation at 6.6 percent in 2014, to rise to 6.9pc next year. It anticipates GDP growth at 7.8pc for both 2014 and 2015, according to its website.



Customers queue for SIMs in Myanmar's second city on September 27. Mandalay is the early winner in the race to connect

Telenor takes on Ma



CATHERINE TRAUTWEIN

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TELENOR became the third mobile operator in Myanmar after launching services in Mandalay on September 27, as the company positions itself to serve the mass market in an increasingly competitive telecoms landscape.

Like its rivals, the Norway-based telco has faced challenges in receiving permissions to build

towers as well as constructing them in the rainy season, leading to its decision to delay launching in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon until early October.

Telenor has a commitment to launch services in Myanmar before October 5 – a deadline it will meet in Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw. However, its Yangon service will not launch until about a week after the deadline, said Telenor Myanmar CEO Petter Furberg.

"The reason we are delayed is partly related to building permits. The government has done a very good job supporting us in terms of building permits, but Yangon for

was instance very slow in terms of giving out build permits," he said.

"And we also emphasised to the government it is important for Telenor to have good quality before we launch. We cannot sell and charge for something that isn't real," he said.

The firm has informed the regulator in writing about the delay, Mr Furberg said at a press conference on September 25.

Meanwhile, the residents of Myanmar's second city were able to officially purchase SIMs on September 27.

More than 1500 Mandalay shops and nine proprietary Telenor

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Dated: 29 September 2014



Telenor CEO Petter Furberg (right) speaks at a press conference. Photo: Thiri Lu

Dangerous work in construction comes without insurance

BUSINESS 27



Yangon city expansion plans shelved after public criticism

PROPERTY 32

Exchange Rates (September 26 close)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1255	K1273
Malaysia Ringitt	K305	K306
Singapore Dollar	K780	K788
Thai Baht	K30	K31
US Dollar	K991	K994



Myanmar, now being served by three telcos. Photos: Si Thu Lwin

Mandalay first

stores started selling the telco's K1500 SIM cards on September 27. Though Mr Furberg declined to disclose the exact number of SIMs Telenor provided to stores, he said the figure was in the millions and is more than enough to meet consumers' needs without resorting to the black market.

The order in which service will come to Myanmar's cities and rural areas depends on the state of the Telenor network there, according to Mr Furberg, as the company emphasises good coverage above all else. Yangon's tower build has been hampered by heavy rains and regulatory delays.

"While it's been raining and raining and raining in Yangon, it's been sunshine in Mandalay," Mr Furberg said.

Telenor has also taken a mass-market approach partly by using a mix of 2G and 3G coverage, in contrast to Ooredoo's 3G-only approach. It will charge K25 per minute to make calls to anyone in

'We came to this market to be part of bringing mobile phones to those that did not have mobile phones.'

Petter Furberg
Telenor Myanmar CEO

Myanmar, while messaging will cost K15 per SMS.

Mr Furberg also downplayed concerns that a mass-market approach could mean missing out on the most lucrative subscribers, saying the firm is working to bringing telecoms to those who previously did not have access.

"We actually see the mass market as the most lucrative segment. We came to this market to be part of bringing mobile phones to those that did not have mobile phones," he said.

"Our focus has never been on the people in Yangon that already have big, fat smartphones and were able to afford a SIM card for US\$200."

The company is also offering two different types of internet plans, one aimed at users who make use of less bandwidth-intensive services such as Facebook, email and Viber, and the other aimed at heavier users who want to stream content.

Its My Internet plan is standard, delivering internet speeds of up to 300kbps for K6 a megabyte, while its Smart Internet plan costs K10 a megabyte for speeds capped at 2mpbs. Both plans have pack upgrades that give mobile users that pay more upfront for better deals on more megabytes of data.

Mr Furberg also highlighted the firm's add-ons, such as free Wikipedia and its partnership with Facebook, as well as its My Tune music service.

The telco aims to cover more than 90pc of Myanmar in five years, with its products sold across 100,000 points of sale.

First step made for a legal China rice trade

Rice traders eye huge opportunity as officials ink an agreement on rice health standards



ZAW HTIKE

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LEGAL rice exports to China took a step closer to becoming reality last week, as Chinese and Myanmar officials inked an agreement as part of a move to ensure rice quality.

Two years ago China was a small-scale buyer of Myanmar rice, but it has transformed to become Myanmar's largest rice export market, as border trade rose from a negligible amount in 2010-11 to 752,000 tonnes in 2012-13.

China became a net importer of rice only in 2011, and has been offering prices well above the world average in recent months. Yet Myanmar needs to improve its rice quality to meet challenges from countries like Vietnam and Cambodia, according to a World Bank report on the rice market from earlier this year.

Myanmar has also been disadvantaged through not having the formal agreements necessary to legally export rice to China. However, negotiations between the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and Chinese officials from the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), and supported by the Myanmar Rice

Federation, are under way.

A memorandum of understanding on agricultural standards was signed by AQSIQ and ASEAN members during the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry in Nay Pyi Taw on September 25. Traders say it gives them hope the other agreements needed to begin legal exports to China can be signed.

"We've just signed the first-step MoU on quality, but the market's not officially opened," said U Soe Tun, joint secretary of the Myanmar Rice Federation. "We can't get much out of just this agreement, as we need to sign other government-to-government agreements."

Traders say a sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement on health standards need to be signed, as well as further negotiations over quotas and taxes, before exports can formally begin. Legal shipments will then likely leave Yangon port by ocean-going vessel, through the Straits of Malacca to the Chinese ports.

However, without the benefit of legal trade, rice exports are confined to informal, overland routes.

The trade to China went from being nearly non-existent two years to presently comprising over 50 percent of total exports. With the major reorientation in export market, the trade routes have also shifted.

Rice from the major growing areas in Ayeyarwady Region are usually shipped to Yangon by small boat or

road, and then on to Mandalay. Sometimes Ayeyarwady rice, as well as rice from Sagaing or Bago, is shipped directly to Mandalay by barge on the Ayeyarwaddy river.

From Mandalay, rice travels overland to the Muse border crossing in northern Shan State – the main point of entry for Myanmar rice to China.

One rice trader said it costs about K80,000 per tonne to ship rice from Yangon to Muse using a combination of truck and river traffic. The cost is about double that of shipping from Yangon port to Myanmar's traditional markets in Africa.

Large-scale rice trader and MRF joint secretary U Lu Maw Myint Maung said the cost could drop significantly if the China trade becomes legalised and traders were instead able to ship by water.

With ocean shipping to China now impossible due to the legal situation of rice, the overland route predominates. The Muse commodity exchange centre is full of brokers who have connections to Chinese buyers, who then purchase the rice, often for use as an ingredient in food like noodles or snacks.

U Myo Thura Aye, a former joint secretary of the MRF, said Muse brokers are used to doing business with the Chinese, and are an integral part of this new trade.

"They have had relations for many

MORE ON BUSINESS 28

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Building up the local banks

The financial landscape in Myanmar is set to be significantly altered when licences arrive for foreign banks, with local bankers calling for greater clarity on the rules governing the sector



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LOCAL bankers are holding their breath ahead of the plunge of foreign banks receiving licences and setting up shop in Myanmar.

About five to 10 foreign banks are to receive licences this month. They will face a number of restrictions, such as a prohibition from entering the retail trade, a US\$75 million capital requirement and a one-branch limit, designed to keep them from competing too much with local banks.

But some local bankers say they will nevertheless face challenges from the foreign banks.

U Sein Maung, chair of First Private Bank, told *The Myanmar Times* that it is still unclear exactly what roles local and foreign banks will be permitted to play.

"If the Central Bank cannot handle the issue [of foreign banks] well, our monetary market could be colonised, and this is a serious issue," he said on the sidelines of the Myanmar Global Investment Forum in Nay Pyi Taw.

After years of domination by state banks in Myanmar, private financial institutions are slowly gaining ground. U George Soe Win, a banking and investment consultant, said more pri-



NYAN
LYNN
AUNG

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vate banks are offering more products, but still they are dwarfed by foreign institutions.

"The largest [private] bank in Myanmar in terms of capitalisation, Kanbawza, has been growing a lot in the last two years, but it is still 200 times smaller than DBS Bank in Singapore," he said at a workshop held at UMFCCI in Yangon on September 25. "We have a long way to go in the future."

Local banks lag behind international banking standards in many areas, not only in size.

Daw Kim Chaw Su, head of Kanbawza's international banking division, said a lack of infrastructure, restrictions on financial products and a shortage of skilled labour will make it difficult for domestic banks to develop, as the foreign banks likely to receive licences have much more capacity. The international banks that set up shop will also look for trained Myanmar bankers, which they may poach from local banks.

Daw Kim Chaw Su said there is not yet enough skilled labour to go around in the banking industry.

"Without skilled labour, it's very difficult to progress," she said.

Other local bankers said it is

important that the rules governing foreign banks are made available.

Transparency on the licensing process for foreign banks and firm Central Bank regulations will be important to help the local banking sector survive, said AYA Bank deputy managing director U Min Wint Oo.

U Set Aung, deputy governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, said at the Nay Pyi Taw conference on September 16 the reform process is moving forward, though it is not without its challenges.

He also told *The Myanmar Times* last week that there is no delay in announcing the licences. The Central Bank said previously the winners will be announced in September.

The Central Bank is also considering gradually easing financial restrictions on domestic banks, although they are still at an early stage of development.

Currently, domestic banks face an

'The largest [private] bank in Myanmar ... is still 200 times smaller than DBS Bank.'

U George Soe Win
Banking consultant

8 percent limit on interest for deposit accounts and a 13pc limit on loans – though the spread in practice is narrower through additional rules such as a reserve requirement. Banks are also limited on the range of products they can offer and the collateral they can accept.

Even with the restrictions, experts say the banking sector has been showing signs of improvement.

U San Thein, an expert on financial sector development with German development agency GIZ, said the sector is showing signs of improvement.

The deposit rate at domestic banks is growing faster than the loan rate, with annual growth at 27pc and 11pc respectively. Meanwhile, commercial banks are growing in terms of assets, saving and deposits.

The figures may increase further in 2014, though Myanmar lags behind other regional countries in most measures, he said.

Still, challenges remain in the sector. State-owned banks have more than 66pc market share, while the sector is handicapped by poor human resources, a need for reforms for the state-owned banks, and requirements for liberalisation, transparency and accountability.

"Commercial banks are still not aware of corporate governance and ethical standards, but this will be important when competing with foreign banks," said U San Thein.

The banking sector could also offer a range of well-paying employment.

MANDALAY

India's rare call for rice imports

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INDIA is calling for bidders from Myanmar in a rice tender for the north-eastern corner of the country, the first such large request in years, according to rice dealers.

India has long been one of the world's largest rice exporters and a frequent competitor with Myanmar in third-country markets, but a September 19 Reuters report said a plan to broaden a railway in the northeast requires temporary rice imports.

Myanmar traders say they are keen to begin exports to India, which has seldom required rice imports, as it may lead to chances for future trade.

"It's a good opportunity for Myanmar," said U Chan Thar Oo, vice president of the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre. "The Myanmar rice market currently depends on China – but the more markets we have, the better."

While Indian officials had initially targeted finishing the first tender by September 23, the process was delayed due to technical reasons, according to Indian newspaper *Business Standard*.

Myanmar rice traders said the country's exporters should take advantage of its position between the world's two most populous nations.

Although the tender is not too big, it may begin long-term relationships, said U Aung Than Htun, president of the Mandalay Rice Association.

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ကုန်ထုပ်ပိုးမှု ပြင်ဆင်ပေးသည့်ကုမ္ပဏီ

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บริการทุกระดับประทับใจ

Insuring workers now on the agenda



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MOST construction workers are building up Yangon without any personal insurance, as insurers say they must do more to spread knowledge of their services.

Construction is a notoriously risky industry to work in, but even long-time labourers say they usually have no protection in the case of accidents.

"I've been working in construction for ages," said labourer Ko Htin Aung Thwin. "But I know very little about insurance."

He said he understands insurance pays money in the event of a workplace accident, but is not aware of how to get coverage unless his employer chooses to do so. Still, Ko Htin Aung Thwin said insurance would likely be helpful.

"If we have insurance, we don't need to worry for our family's future," he said.

Yet it is not only workers who claim limited knowledge of insurance. Several developers told *The Myanmar Times* they have only passing familiarity with the concept, though some have since

looked into buying insurance for their labourers.

U Hla Maung Shwe, owner of Pyae Phyo Kyaw Construction, said he had previously not bought insurance for his workers as he did not understand it, until he researched it and decided insurance was worth the investment.

Providing insurance makes for a happier workforce, as they have peace of mind that they will be looked after if they are injured on the job.

"If employers buy insurance for their workers, they will take their work seriously," he said.

While most international-class developers buy insurance as a matter of course, smaller firms often do not.

Workers tend to float between different small-scale developers, finding temporary employment for a specific project. This makes it difficult to arrange insurance for workers, especially when there is high employee turnover.

For those who do purchase insurance, the most common plan for construction workers is a group plan costing K5000 per worker a year, with a payment of K500,000 in the event of death, and different amounts for other injuries. Terms can range significantly between one month and 45 years, with premium



Insurance may come in handy when your work environment includes young men and construction tools. Photo: Zarni Phyo

payments to match, according to industry sources.

While group insurance requires a minimum of five members in a plan, there is also personal insurance available, which can last between one and five years.

A 2013 move to end Myanmar Insurance's monopoly and allow private companies into the sector has also improved knowledge on the issue, as private insurers look to attract customers. U Hla Maung Shwe said a private insurance company

assisted him with explaining the benefits of insurance, after which he purchased their products.

Ayeyar Myanmar Insurance official U Than Zaw said it is important to explain the different types of insurance, such as the different types of life insurance, when signing up customers.

Firms can for instance offer term and permanent insurance, with different sets of criteria for groups, endowment or snake-bite insurance.

Myanmar Insurance sends its representatives around to different construction companies to explain the benefits of having insurance, said U Saw Sein Lin, assistant manager from Myanmar Insurance.

There are different premiums for different classifications of risk type for personal insurance, but the schemes are "being implemented widely," he said. "The new [private] insurance companies are also implementing it enthusiastically."

"But some employers stint on paying money and don't want to buy insurance, while others don't know about insurance," he said.

While there are a number of private insurance companies now selling products, the services they offer and the premiums they charge are restricted by the Insurance Business Supervisory Board.

— Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Partnerships prevented by myths, says DICA

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THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) is promoting joint ventures between foreign and local firms, with officials saying misunderstanding over minimum capital requirements is hindering projects.

Setting up smaller-scale joint ventures has the potential to ease local companies' access to capital and technological know-how while benefiting local people and providing an investment avenue for foreign firms, said Daw Nilar Mon, the section head of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration's (DICA) Company section.

Before the 2012 investment law, a minimum capital of US\$300,000 was required for foreign-local joint ventures in the services sector, while \$500,000 was required for other sectors. However, this restriction was removed with the 2012 law, she said.

"Investors can now easily found a joint venture without a minimum capital requirement," she said.

"There is no limitation for citizens or for foreign investors."

The MIC is the government agency that approves foreign investment, while DICA is the implementing agency.

There is also no longer a centrally set ratio determining how much of a company a foreign entity can own, though a handful of sectors are restricted while others have the ratio determined by the relevant government ministry.

"For instance the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism set the maximum capital ratio for foreigners in tourism companies at 60c, while the Ministry of Transportation set a 20pc limit for transportation services," said Daw Nilar Mon.

Recent updates to the foreign investment rule allows joint or full investment in all sectors except 10, while another 64 areas require a foreign firm to have a local partner.

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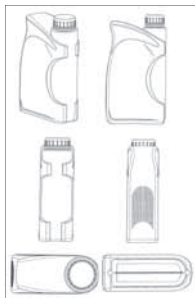
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Dated: 29th September, 2014

YTP close on partner search

JEREMY MULLINS

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THE fourth planned mobile service provider is getting closer to picking its foreign partner, according to a senior company official.

While MPT, Ooredoo and Telenor have all launched service, Yatanarpon Teleport (YTP) is a Myanmar-owned company that is set to receive the last mobile licence for the country.

YTP officials have highlighted the importance of partnering with an experienced telecoms firm to assist in technical areas, building HR capacity and improving access to finance, among other areas.

YTP head of business development and corporate affairs Ma Nilar Aye said the decision on a partner will be made “very soon”.

The company had a shortlist of 16 foreign firms that were interested in partnering with it as of late last year. It has been holding discussions with potential partners over what form a joint venture would take, and has narrowed down the list. Officials from some potential suitors have said their negotiations are on hold.

Ma Nilar Aye said YTP will remain a majority-Myanmar owned company, though the exact size of the stakes are still a matter of discussion. Still, the ongoing negotiations are important for the firm.

“We are very excited,” she said. “This is a very challenging and very

interesting [period] – we are the second Myanmar operator so this is our future.”

With Telenor’s launch on September 27, there are now three active mobile operators.

However, Ma Nilar Aye said that while YTP may be late to the race, it will have a chance to learn from the good and bad experiences of the other telcos.

“There is success and failure everywhere,” she said.

It may also be easier to lease bandwidth and share towers after the other three telcos have gotten further in their builds.

YTP aims to cement its partnership before applying for a mobile licence – though it already has an integrated licence allowing it to be an internet service provider. The firm will also sell shares to the public, and is currently working to transition to a public company.

Ma Nilar Aye said that while working on forming a partnership is a main goal, there are many other activities

that are going on at the same time.

“We are thinking about the best service

all the time, and we would like to provide the latest technology,” she said.

The company has existing internet clients, and is also preparing for more anticipated competition once the telecoms regulations are created and allow for more ISPs.



Ma Nilar Aye speaks at Myanmar Connect.
Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

CONTINUED FROM BUSINESS 25

years – so finding buyers for them is not very difficult,” he said.

Usually about 30 or 40 rice brokers enter from the Chinese city of Ruili when the border gates open at 8am Myanmar time. Brokers and buyers then meet to discuss the price and terms of contracts, before returning to Ruili.

Myanmar traders are usually required to get the rice across the border by using trucks with Chinese licences that are owned by Myanmar traders, often with shipments of up to 20 tonnes a truck. From Ruili, the rice is sold in other areas in China.

U Min Thein said many Myanmar traders have bank accounts in Ruili to make payments easier.

“If you have a Myanmar national registration card, you can open a bank account in Ruili,” he said.

Yunnan Province is the main area in China that buys Myanmar rice, partly due to its proximity to Shan State, but there are another three or four provinces that have active demand. Much of it gets used to make food, with prices well above international rates.

High-quality Thai 100pc B Grade fetched about US\$450 to \$460 a tonne on international markets last week, according to the industry website www.oryza.com

Myanmar traders say Chinese demand has been much stronger since June, when a flare-up of tension in the South China Sea made it politically difficult to purchase rice from Vietnam, traditionally its largest source of the staple.

Yet because Myanmar’s trade is illegal from China’s point of view, it is subject to various confiscations at the border, which traders say have recently limited the amount that has flowed across the border.

U Min Thein said that while usually border crackdowns simply see some goods confiscated, there have recently been cases of businesspeople being arrested.

“One Chinese man was arrested [on September 18] and has not been released yet. Since then, only three or four Chinese traders a day are coming to Muse for rice trading,” he said. However, he said the market may soon return to normal.

Yet Myanmar is not being singled out by the Chinese policy, said U Soe Tun.

Other countries that also illegally ship goods to the People’s Republic periodically face repercussions, so it is difficult for the Myanmar Rice Federation to ask for special treatment, he said.

Although a memorandum of understanding has now been signed, an actual SPS agreement must be inked, as well

as regulations governing quotas, said U Lu Maw Myint Maung.

The quotas allow a fixed quantity of imports to proceed without tariffs, he said.

“We’re hoping Myanmar will get a quota of a million tonnes of rice a year,” he said.



SHANGHAI

Two years have passed since Japan-China relations deteriorated over the Senkaku Islands, but the economic relationship has yet to improve, with Japan's direct investment in China continuing to decline.

Japan's direct investment in China from January to June dropped 48.8 percent from the same period last year to US\$2.4 billion. This indicates Japanese companies' efforts to make inroads into China have lost steam.

– *The Yomiuri Shimbun*

India's economy shows promise of a "turnaround" following Narendra Modi's election, while Asian markets will likely ride out the effects of further stimulus tapering by the United States, the Asian Development Bank said September 25.

The Manila-based lender was bullish on India's future in a supplement to its 2014 economic outlook for the region saying it expected gross domestic product (GDP) to grow 6.3 percent next year, up from an earlier projection of 6pc.

“After winning a decisive parliamentary victory, the new (Modi) government is better positioned than the old to pursue the reform necessary to unlock the economy’s growth potential,” the bank said in its summary. — *AFP*

Apple broke its sales record for an opening weekend of a new iPhone model, delivering 10 million in the first three days and boasting it could have sold more if it had them.

"Sales for iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus exceeded our expectations for the launch weekend, and we couldn't be happier," Apple chief executive Tim Cook said on September 22.

"We could have sold many more iPhones with greater supply and we are working hard to fill orders as quickly as possible." – AFP

The US Treasury took action to halt a rising torrent of US companies moving offshore to cut their tax bills, saying the surge in so-called inversions threatened government income.

The move to close loopholes that encourage US companies to merge with a foreign firms and relocate their tax residences offshore could stifle takeovers announced this year worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Those include several high-profile medical industry deals, including AbbVie's US\$55 billion purchase of Shire and Medtronic's \$43 billion merger with Covidien, as well as Burger King's \$11 billion tie-up with Tim Hortons, and Chiquita Banana's proposed \$1 billion merger with Fyffes.

The Treasury said it was moving after Congress failed to act on the issue. — AFP

Indonesian banks are cutting deposit rates from a five-year high as demand for cash declines, allowing the world's most profitable lenders to benefit from the slowing economy.

The average interest rate paid on one-year deposits was 8.51 percent in July, the highest since October 2009, with Bank Rakyat Indonesia, Bank Central Asia and Bank Mandiri saying they see room to reduce the rate they pay savers as slower lending growth damps competition for cash. The one-month Jakarta interbank offered rate, or Jibor, dropped 22 basis points this month to 7.36 percent, falling below Bank Indonesia's 7.5 percent policy rate for the first time in 2014.

– Bloomberg

China's richest man is Jack Ma

THE largest stock offer in history has made Jack Ma, founder of e-commerce giant Alibaba, China's richest person with a fortune of US\$25 billion, an annual wealth ranking for the country showed on September 23.

Mr Ma, who had to persuade friends to give him \$60,000 to start Alibaba just 15 years ago after being rejected by US venture capitalists, now leads a company valued at more than \$200 billion after listing on the New York Stock Exchange.

"It has been an amazing year for China's best tycoons despite the jitters about the Chinese economy," said China-based luxury magazine publisher *Hurun Report* in its annual rich list.

Mr Ma reaped more than \$800 million from selling shares through the initial public offering in Alibaba, based on company filings, with the value of his remaining stake of 7.8 percent surging to more than \$17 billion by September 22.

Last year the estimated wealth of the former English teacher turned internet entrepreneur was just over \$4 billion, which did not even place him in the top 20 in the 2013 survey.

Mr Ma's parents were poorly educated and his father depended on a monthly retirement allowance of just \$40 to support the family, ac-



Who's the richest person in China? This guy, following Alibaba's record IPO in New York. Photo: AFP

cording to Chinese state media.

Alibaba's listing raised a total of \$25 billion.

Only one other of Alibaba's 18 co-founders made the rich list this year, according to the *Hurun Report*. He is Simon Xie, now vice president of Alibaba in China, with \$1.6 billion.

Mr Ma pushed property tycoon Wang Jianlin, whose Wanda company bought US cinema chain AMC Entertainment, into second place from first last year with a fortune of \$24.2 billion. The bursting of China's real estate bubble chased most developers out of the top 10, *Hurun Report* said.



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The Fine Print

Legal & tax insight

Choice of law clauses

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ONE of the most important clauses in a contract with parties from different countries is the choice of law clause.

In the choice of law clause, parties lay down which law should govern the contract. An investor from, for instance, Thailand will of course want agreements to be interpreted according to the standards of Thai law as the Thai legal system is familiar to him, just as, naturally, the Myanmar side will be unlikely to accept this proposal and suggest that the contract be governed by Myanmar law instead.

Sometimes, the parties agree on the law of a third country such as Singapore so as to avoid one party having an advantage over the other by understanding more about the law governing the contract. However, this is often not an option.

For one thing, the application of Myanmar law is sometimes mandatory, for instance in contracts for the cross-border sale of goods. Furthermore, contracts with government entities such as a state-owned enterprise usually have to be submitted to the Union Attorney General's Office (AGO) for review. The AGO will – most likely – refuse approval if the contract is governed by foreign law.

If the Myanmar side is a private party, negotiations may fail if the foreign investor does not concede on

the choice of law issue. Furthermore, choice of foreign law may cause problems if the contract has to be submitted as part of the application procedure for a permit.

Many foreign investors fear that the outcome of disputes will become intolerably unpredictable if Myanmar law is chosen. However, is this fear justified?

The laws of Myanmar – especially the laws dealing with contracts – are largely the laws as they were in place in British India; they have not been amended much post-independence. There is hardly any case law post-independence dealing with business disputes. On the positive side, this also means that there is not much surprising case law that could interfere with the interpretation of a contract. Of course this depends on the contents of the specific contract, but many contracts are governed by only one law, the Myanmar Contract Act of 1872. This law upholds the freedom of the parties to agree, with very few exceptions, on whatever pleases them; its

The laws of Myanmar ... are largely the laws as they were in place in British India

text is available in English. If the contract is drafted in a clear fashion with words that are easy to understand, there should not be much room for surprising interpretations.

There is of course uncertainty as one can expect old colonial-time laws to be gradually replaced with new laws. However, it is difficult to imagine a government, through the channels available to it, trying to create laws that deliberately aim at ousting investors from a specific contractual position (unless, perhaps, the investor is involved in a big project of vital interest to the government). Again, the clear drafting of contracts should be a powerful tool against unpredictable changes of laws.

Furthermore, even government entities have become more and more accepting of dispute resolution clauses that submit disputes to (well-functioning) arbitration in Singapore. This reduces the risk of one-sided decisions. The enforceability of foreign arbitral awards is still very much in question in Myanmar, but it may actually increase the likelihood of enforceability if the arbitrators decided the case on the basis of Myanmar law as this should make it easier for the Myanmar judge enforcing the award to understand it.

Agreeing on Myanmar law may not be such a risky thing, after all.

Sebastian Pawlita and Nan Kin Kham are consultants with Polastri Wint & Partners Legal and Tax Advisors.

Trade keeps China in check: Aquino

PHILIPPINE President Benigno Aquino said his country's territorial dispute with China over the South China Sea may be controllable because the world's second-largest economy will hesitate to jeopardise trade routes.

"Is it a cause for concern? Yes, but at the end of the day China needs to continue growing," Mr Aquino, said in an interview in New York. "It's not in their interest to forestall trade within this particular sector."

The Spratlys, a collection of more than 100 islands or reefs that dot the waters of the southern South China Sea, have been at the center of regional tension for decades, claimed in part by China, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines. In the adjacent East China Sea, China contests islands administered by Japan.

China bases its claims on a "nine-dash line" map extending hundreds of miles south from its Hainan Island to equatorial waters off the coast of Borneo, through which some of the world's busiest shipping lanes run.

China, whose international trade is the world's largest with imports and exports totaling US\$4.2 trillion last year, is dependent on export demand to weather a property slump. The Asian nation's trade surplus reached a record in August with exports helped by increased shipments to the US and Europe.

More than half of the world's annual merchant tonnage – about \$5.3 trillion of goods from iron ore and

oil to computers and children's toys – passes through the Straits of Malacca, Sunda and Lombok, with the majority continuing on to the South China Sea, according to a US Energy Information Administration report.

China is the Philippines' largest trading partner, accounting for 19 percent of its imports and exports last year. Trade with the Philippines made up less than 1pc of China's total.



Benigno Aquino. Photo: Bloomberg

"Trade between China and the Philippines continues to grow," Mr Aquino said. "We sent them 800,000 tourists, they sent us 200,000 tourists. We invested \$2.5 billion in their market, they invested \$600 million in ours. This is very beneficial to them." Chinese ships loaded with construction materials ply the waters near the Spratly Islands, carrying out work that will see new islands rise from the sea.

– Bloomberg



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JOB WATCH

EMBASSY OF DENMARK Yangon

JOB VACANCY LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT THE NORDIC HOUSE

The Nordic House is the home of the offices of the four Nordic Diplomatic Missions in Myanmar: The Embassy of Denmark, The Embassy of Norway, The Diplomatic Mission of Finland and The Embassy of Sweden, Section Office Yangon. The four diplomatic missions have common premises and administration.

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Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Jeremy Mullins | jeremymullins7@gmail.com

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



Living a secure life

PEACE of mind is important when choosing a home. Everybody's heard a scary tale of a home invasion, like the crazy-man that broke into the US White House with a knife on September 19 or the time *House of the Week* forgot which apartment they lived in and caused a moderate shock to an elderly Japanese couple one floor up.

If you're keen to prevent crazy-men with knives or a disoriented *House of the Week* from barging into your abode, this week's house is worth looking into. Designed with the latest twist of embassy chic, it boasts a casual colour scheme, modern décor and an impressively secure fence.

While security is stressed, it also doesn't lack the other amenities you'd

expect for one of Yangon's newer homes.

It has four large bedrooms and a smaller bedroom, plus the usual living and dining room and kitchen – though no panic room, yet. The house is within easy commuting distance to several office complexes. It could also be used for an office. – *Tin Yadanar Htun*

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U Kyi Win Associates
 for **Del Monte Foods, Inc.**
 P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
 Phone: 372416

Dated: 29th September, 2014

Yangon new city plan suspended indefinitely



YE MON

yeemontun2013@gmail.com

THE Yangon Region government has ended weeks of controversy by indefinitely shelving a massive expansion plan on the city's western fringe.

Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint told a special session of the Yangon Region Hluttaw on September 26 the regional government had decided it needed more time to study the plan and whether it was viable.

Just four days earlier, the government had said the project, which would cover 30,000 acres, would go ahead and promised to conduct a transparent and fair tender. It asked MPs to approve the plan at a vote on September 26.

U Hla Myint said it was unclear how long the project would be suspended for.

"We haven't set a time limit," he said.

MPs approved the request to suspend the proposal. Daw Nyo Nyo Thin, a representative for Bahan who has been the most outspoken critic of the plan, said she had expected the plan to be approved, and described the decision to suspend it as "great".

She said she had submitted a request to the speaker on September 24 to suspend the proposal and discuss it at the next session instead.

Another critic, U Kyaw, said the decision had defused a potentially ugly dispute with parliament over the issue. "If they didn't suspend it, MPs would blame the regional government," he said.

Some MPs, however, said they were disappointed. Daw Kyi Kyi Mar, a Union Solidarity and Development Party representative for Kyeemyindaing, said she did not accept parliament's decision.

"Some people [in my constituency] wanted the new city to be built because it would help to develop their township. I'm very sad for them," she said.

Other MPs from the USDP, which has a majority in the hluttaw, said they believed that the plan would be resubmitted in future.

"I think the government is giving us more time to study and discuss the plan and it will come back again to parliament," said U Tin Hlaing, a representative for Dagon Seikkan.

In his presentation, Mayor U Hla Myint said on September 26 that the new city would create economic opportunities for companies, investors and ordinary people, as well as bringing infrastructure to an undeveloped area adjacent to the city.

The 30,000 acres slated for the project lies between the Pan Hlaing and Hlaing rivers and Twante Canal, and the project has an estimated price tag of US\$8 billion.

'If they didn't suspend it, MPs would blame the regional government.'

U Kyaw

Critic of the new city plan

"We estimate 400,000 people will get [job] opportunities as a result of this plan," he said.

However, concerns have been widely raised about the lack of clarity over several areas of the project, such as financing and relocation, as well as the decision, announced on August 22, to award the contract to Myanma Saytannar Myothit Public Company without a tender.

According to the Myanmar Investment Commission, Myanma Saytannar Myothit was registered at the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development as a public company in December 2013.

Construction industry sources said it is run by two Chinese businesspeople, Xiao Pun and Xiao San. Both have close relations with former top military officials, including current Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe.

In response to public criticism, the government announced on August 28 that it would instead conduct a tender.

Since the initial announcement, land prices have exploded in the mostly rural areas to the west of Yangon. Plots in villages that were previously about K7 million immediately rose to K15 million an acre, though land with road access stood at closer to K100 million an acre. Reports said plots had peaked at K1 billion, prompting some to question whether the project was created simply to inflate land prices in the area, but trading has since been quiet.

"Land prices have been steady after the mayor submitted the proposal to parliament again on September 22," said Ko Min Min Soe of the Mya Pan Thakin real estate agency. "The government's decision to suspend the project is likely to hurt speculators who bought land."



IN PICTURES

Prospective buyers take a look at a model of Marga Landmark's Dagon City 1 project. The firm has said its first phase of residential towers are to be launched in 2014 near U Htaung Bo traffic circle, with the project ultimately slated to include a number of 8-storey towers, retail, offices and a 5-star hotel.

Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

“We actually see the mass market as the most lucrative market.”

— Petter Furberg, Telenor Myanmar CEO, on his firm’s strategy

Outrage as Australia pays Cambodia to take refugees

WORLD 42

Historic Rowe & Co building lives on with a new purpose

NOE NOE AUNG
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YANGON Heritage Trust is touting a building owned by AYA Bank as a fine example of historical repurposing, awarding it a blue plaque to mark its historical designation on September 25.

The building at the corner of Mahabandoola Road and Mahabandoola Garden Street next to Yangon City Hall was formerly the location of prominent department store Rowe & Company.

“We are extremely pleased with the renovation of the old Rowe & Company building and hope it might inspire the renovation of many other privately owned heritage buildings in Yangon,” founder and chair of the trust, U Thant Myint-U, said in a press release.

The building is the second to receive a blue plaque, with the first going up at Yangon City Hall.

Rowe & Company was once among the most opulent department stores in Asia, known for its top quality products until falling victim to a wave of nationalisation in 1964. The building then housed government offices such as the Department of Immigration and Manpower, and finally fell vacant until prominent businessperson U Zaw Zaw, chair of Ayeyarwady bank, purchased the property and transformed it for use by the bank in 2012.

Although the building is now well maintained – unusual compared with many of Yangon’s heritage buildings – some say it was even more impressive in its heyday.

Nearby resident U Tin Sein, 68, said the renovated building is not as opulent as it was as a department store.

“The renovation is a good thing,



The repurposed Rowe & Co is now home to AYA Bank. Photo: Yu Yu

much better than abandoning it or using it with no maintenance. But in my view, the old building was once more grand and inspiring,” he said.

Although there were other department stores in downtown Yangon, Rowe & Co had stood out, he said.

It was originally painted brown and yellow, and was unique compared with nearby buildings.

“Rowe department store was next to City Hall. At the time, City Hall was painted beige, and Rowe was bigger and brighter even than City Hill,” he said.

“I still remember the signboard, with white lettering on a green background. In my eyes, even the signboard was simple and elegant,” U Tin Sein told *The Myanmar Times*.

According to Yangon Heritage Trust, the store contained some of

Yangon’s earliest electrical elevators, ceiling fans and basements, attracting a mixed clientele of Europeans and wealthy Asians particularly for luxury and imported goods.

“I went to the Rowe & Co store with my parents when I was 14 or 15 years old. I was always proud to shop at Rowe,” said U Tin Sein.

“When our relatives living in rural areas came to Yangon, we always took them on a special visit to the store.”

“I still remember the delightful feeling of leaving the store with a paper shopping bag in my hand stamped with the ‘Rowe & Company’ logo,” he said with a laugh.

Yangon Heritage Trust and Royal Philips company plan to unveil more plaques denoting heritage places in the coming months.

Accor hotels set for further expansion

TIN MCLAUGHLIN
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FRENCH hotel group Accor is set to expand its Myanmar presence with three budget properties, following its return to the country in 2013.

The group will manage two properties in Yangon and one in Bagan under its Ibis brand, according to Accor’s local partner, property developer U Thant Zin Tun, a key member of Myanmar Golden Star group of companies, founded by his father U Thein Tun.

A spokesperson for Accor declined to comment as the deal has not yet been finalised. It would be the company’s third major deal in Myanmar in the past 18 months.

The Ibis properties will be located on Inya and Kabar Aye Pagoda roads, according to U Thant Zin Tun. Both are awaiting final approval from Yangon City Development Committee before construction can begin. The Kabar Aye property will likely have 99 rooms, while the Inya Road location will have about 120, he said.

U Thant Zin Tun, who is also a member of the board of Myanmar Consolidated Media, which publishes *The Myanmar Times*, said he hopes to have these two hotels open by the end of 2015.

They will provide options for travellers looking for mid-range options in Yangon, which has to date been a neglected segment of the market, with foreign investment mostly concentrated at the high end.

“These [hotels] are very simple. Not five-star or four-star hotels. They will be economical with a reasonable price,” he said.

Land has also been acquired for a third 150-room hotel in Bagan but more time will be needed to secure permission to build because of heritage protections in the area.

Ibis is Accor’s economy brand and had properties in 59 countries as of 2013, including in neighbouring Thailand and Indonesia.

U Thant Zin Tun said that he plans to open 3000 hotel rooms in Myanmar over the next five years through foreign hotel ventures on the back of strong growth in the tourism industry.

“Myanmar does not have a lot of tourists yet, but one day ... a lot of tourists will come for sure,” he told *The Myanmar Times* in an exclusive interview.

Foreign arrivals are up 40 percent this year, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, and Myanmar is on pace to see 3 million total visitors in 2014, up from 2.4 million in 2013. It is targeting 5 million visitors by 2015.

Accor has worked previously with U Thant Zin Tun in Mandalay when it managed a hotel under its Novotel brand from 1993. The hotel was built by LP Holding, of which U Thant Zin Tun is a partner and director.

Accor also added two hotels in Yangon but departed in 2002 due to the deteriorating political and economic climate.

LP Holding also constructed the Centrepoint Tower in Yangon, which was slated to house a hotel from Accor’s Sofitel brand but the project never materialised.

In March 2013, Hilton announced that it would manage the 300-room Centrepoint Tower hotel but the project has missed several estimated opening dates.

The three Ibis hotels would bring Accor’s Myanmar portfolio to nine hotels since the company re-established a presence in Myanmar in February 2013.

Accor first partnered with Max Myanmar Group, owned by tycoon U Zaw Zaw, to develop Novotel Yangon Max, along with hotels in Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

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AULBACH LIZENZ AG, a Company incorporated in Switzerland, of Grabenstrasse 15, 7002 Chur, Switzerland, is the Owner of the following Trade Mark:-



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Fraudulent imitation or unauthorised use of the said Trade Mark will be dealt with according to law.

Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L.
for **AULBACH LIZENZ AG**
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
P. O. Box 60, Yangon. Dated: 29 September 2014

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Federal-Mogul Friction Products Limited, of Manchester International Office Centre, Styal Road, Manchester M22 5TN, United Kingdom, is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following Trade Mark:-

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Reg. No. 7900/2011

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P. O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 29 September 2014

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De Rigo S.p.A., a company registered under the laws of Italy, which is located at Z.I. Villanova, 12/ 32013 Longarone (BL) - Italy, is the sole owner of the following trademark:

POLICE

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U Kyi Naing, LL.B., LL.M., (H.G.P.)
For **De Rigo S.p.A.**
Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd. No. 1608, 16th Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com
Dated: 29th September, 2014

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A sampling of the products available at Ads.com.mm Photo: supplied

Web classifieds start-up looking to expand



CATHERINE
TRAUTWEIN

newsroom@myanmartimes.com.mm

MORE than 100,000 people stop by Myanmar's largest free classifieds site, Ads.com.mm, every month. Among the thousands of listings that have appeared on the portal, potential buyers might find anything from mobile phones to mobile toilets.

The Rocket Internet startup, which works similarly to Craigslist, hopes to become one of Myanmar's most-frequented websites. With up to 150,000 visits monthly, Ads.com.mm is well on its way, especially considering Myanmar's internet penetration, said the company's country

manager Nico Poma. Last year, 1.2 percent of Myanmar was accessing the internet, according to UN data and the International Telecommunications Union.

A community zone boasting jokes, poems and event announcements draws users to Ads.com.mm, as do the categorised pages of products and services featuring musical instruments, electronics, and "anything else". The platform drives roughly 40,000 leads for sellers monthly and racks up 1 million page views a month. Currently, the site hosts more than 7000 listings.

The mobile section proves a hot destination for customers. In this category especially, the site helps Myanmar consumers shop confidently. "[The business model] creates price transparency," Mr Poma said. "The monopolies that we hear with certain shops sell-

ing phones, for example, for very high prices - it's not that easy for them anymore, because people can also trade secondhand phones."

Ads.com.mm wants to raise its profile past the borders of Yangon. The company emphasizes an everyone, everywhere ethos; as a web connection is all that's necessary to buy and sell, users can conduct business from Sittwe to Taunggyi, Mr Poma said.

The startup also fills the role of quality-control gatekeeper and arbiter of good taste. Arms, drugs and scams aren't allowed at Ads.com.mm; neither are postings that breach ethics or laws. Perhaps the most memorable violation of this policy involves one entrepreneurial user that listed his kidney and liver. "The male was saying he was 30 and very healthy," Poma said. "That was the craziest thing I saw."

We're batty for batteries!

by Myo Satt

Elecom (DE-M01L-5220)

This rechargeable mobile battery can store 5200 mAh. Capable of charging two devices at the same time, but USB chord is not included.

K45,600

**Elecom (DE-M01L-10440)**

With a whopping 10400mAh worth of storage, you can charge up to three devices at the same time with this battery. The four LED lights on top keep you updated on how much juice is left.

K85,200

Anitech (PB36)

These batteries have 11200 mAh power storage and a compact design that can travel easily.

K40,000

**Anitech (PB40)**

This sleek power bank has 12000mAh power storage. You can easily recharge your devices such as PC, Smartphone and Apple products.

K40,000

**Anitech (PB39)**

The slim, light battery holds 8000mAh and at 5.5 V, but contains only one outlet.

K 32,000



- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Available: Banana Junction Centre (Maw Tin) Ph: 09- 30096377

VMG looks to cut costs as internet-calling market heats up

AUNG KYAW NYUNT
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AS consumers move toward newly available foreign internet-calling options like Viber, local firm VMG telecom is looking to cut costs to keep their international calling business afloat.

When the company first launched its Y-talk calling services app in 2012, it had a virtual monopoly in the then-niche market using data or the internet to make calls.

But in a few short years, as the nation's internet connections have grown in scale and quality, locals have flocked towards foreign services like Viber and WeChat. Viber alone boasts 5 million users nationwide, putting it neck-and-neck with Y-talk, according to VMG's internal figures.

Where once the company made a tidy profit selling prepaid calling cards for their services, U Zaw Pyae Hmu, sales and marketing supervisor for VMG, said that now just the expense of printing the cards at K500 a piece had

become too costly for the company.

"We will change Y-talk international calling cards to a digital system," he said.

By switching to payments through the Y-talk application and terminals at affiliated vendors, U Zaw Pyae Hmu says the company can cut down on overhead and make the service cheaper.

In particular, he hopes that the company's low rate for international calls will help retain and expand its customer base.

RIO DE JANEIRO

Election apps bring smartphone democracy

HAVE you ever wanted to pelt a politician with a tomato? Or wished for that perfect candidate to come along and sweep you off your feet?

In Brazil, where the explosion of smartphones is putting a new twist on next month's elections, there's an app for that.

Mass internet access is reshaping the campaign for the presidential, congressional and state polls in Brazil, where more than 100 million people - half the population - are now online.

Smartphone sales rose 47 percent in the first half of the year, according to a market survey by research firm Nielsen-Ibope, and 30 percent of Brazilians now own the devices.

One popular app is "Voto vs Veto", a program inspired by popular dating app Tinder that aims to help users find the right presidential candidate.

The program presents users with candidates' campaign pledges - with no name attached - and asks them to "vote for" or "veto" them.

After the user clicks on one of the two buttons, the candidate's name appears. With enough clicks, users are supposed to find their political soul-mates.

The app is programmed with the official platforms of all 11 presidential candidates and provides statistics on how many times each statement has

been voted for or against.

It has been downloaded by 100,000 people.

The app was developed by computer science student Walter Nogueira, who said he expects more apps like it in future.

"Mobile apps related to politics are still in their infancy in Brazil," he told AFP. "But they're growing."

Another popular application called "Dirty Slate" tells users which candidates have criminal records - helpful information for voters in this country weary of corruption scandals.

Its name is a play on the so-called "Clean Slate" law passed in the run-up to the October 5 polls, which has blocked 250 would-be candidates from running because of past corruption cases.

Another app lets users check candidates' official asset declarations. Yet another lets them throw virtual tomatoes at their faces.

Even the country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal has launched an app, giving users easy access to data on all 26,156 candidates.

With so many choices, voters may need help keeping everything straight. So news portal UOL developed an app to store the ballot numbers of users' preferred candidates, as well as delivering election news, poll numbers and

politician profiles.

For voters who dream of taking a selfie with presidential contender Marina Silva, the popular environmentalist whose late entry into the race has rattled incumbent Dilma Rousseff's re-election campaign, her coalition has launched an app to Photoshop yourself into a picture alongside her.

The mobile revolution is giving a new political voice to young voters in Brazil, where the minimum voting age is 16.

Nearly 40 percent of voters - 56.3 million people - are between 16 and 34 years old.

That demographic also owns 55 percent of the country's smartphones, according to a Nielsen study sent to AFP.

But smartphone use is still mainly limited to educated and middle- or upper-class social groups - part, but not all, of the demographic that took to the streets in mass protests last year calling for better education, health and transport.

The sprawling South American country ranks third in the world in Facebook users (76 million) and second in the world in Twitter users (41 million).

On Facebook, meanwhile, the three top candidates each have more than a million followers. - AFP

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World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

BEIJING

Chinese government admits 40 killed in violence ahead of Uighur sentencing

FORTY “rioters” were killed in China’s far-western Xinjiang region following a series of explosions on September 21, the worst incident of violence in months, the regional government has said after a four-day news blackout.

Residents on September 26 described heavy security in place days after the violence.

Six civilians, two police officers and two auxiliary police were also killed in the attacks in Xinjiang’s Luntai county, with 54 civilians injured, the regional government’s news portal Tianshan said late on September 25.

Two “rioters” were captured, it added, while the main suspect, whose name was given as Mamat Tursun, was shot dead.

The violence took place just two days before the sentencing of prominent Muslim Uighur scholar Ilham Tohti, who was on trial on charges of separatism.

Chinese state media had previously only stated that two people had been killed in the incident. The ruling Communist Party tightly restricts access to the restive region, and information is difficult to independently verify. Such a delay in the release of details is not uncommon.

Staff at hotels in Luntai county described a continuing heavy security presence. “Security forces are still in the street,” said one receptionist.

Mr Tohti, a former university professor who has been critical of Beijing’s policies in the vast western region, was sentenced to life in prison on September 23.

The United States, the European Union, and several human rights groups have called for the release of Mr Tohti, 44, whose prosecution risks silencing moderate Uighur voices and cutting off the possibility of dialogue, analysts say.

Critics also warned his conviction could add to tensions in the restive region. Teng Biao, a leading human rights lawyer and friend of Mr Tohti, wrote this week that rather than a life sentence, the academic should be awarded a Nobel Prize.

“The Chinese communist authorities, with their excessive violence, have created hostility, division and despair in Xinjiang and Tibet,” Mr Teng wrote in *The Guardian* newspaper.

“Tohti has denounced violence and devoted himself to bridging the divide and promoting understanding and tolerance,” he added.

‘With their excessive violence [authorities] have created hostility, division and despair.’

Teng Biao
Human rights lawyer

But the *Global Times*, a tabloid run by the official Communist Party mouthpiece *People’s Daily*, said in a column on its editorial page September 26 that Mr Tohti’s case should be seen as warning to anyone trying to break China apart.

“Chinese separatists must be fully aware of the red line drawn by the Chinese constitution and criminal law,” it said.

“Tohti could serve as a lesson for them to realise what price they have to pay if they continue their

dangerous pace.”

According to the Tianshan report, the “organised and serious” attack comprised four explosions that took place on the evening of September 21, targeting two police stations, an outdoor market and a shop.

Among the 54 civilians injured were 32 members of China’s mostly Muslim Uighur minority and 22 Han Chinese, it said. The 40 “rioters” killed had either blown themselves up or were shot by police, Tianshan said.

Police said that Mamat Tursun, the alleged ringleader of the attack, had been “gradually developing into an extremist” since 2003 and had “called on other people to join his terrorist group when working on construction projects”, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

In the past year, escalating violence between locals and security forces in Xinjiang, the traditional homeland of the Uighurs, has claimed more than 200 lives and prompted Beijing to launch a security crackdown.

Among the most shocking attacks was a May assault on a market in the regional capital Urumqi, where more than 30 people were killed.

Beijing blames ongoing unrest in the region on organised terrorists seeking independence from China, while rights groups say cultural and religious repression of Uighurs has stoked violence. China’s supreme court on September 21 distributed new wide-ranging guidelines on prosecuting terrorism cases.

“Making and showing banners and other material of religious extremism will be criminalised,” the state-run Xinhua news agency said.

Xinjiang, a resource-rich region which abuts Central Asia, is home to about 10 million Uighurs, who mostly follow Sunni Islam. — *AFP*

Xinjiang unrest

The most recent attacks took place days before the sentencing of a prominent scholar accused of “separatism”



DAMASCUS

Fresh US air strikes Britain votes on j

A US-LED alliance launched new air strikes against the Islamic State group in Syria on September 26, targeting oil facilities for a second day, as Britain weighed joining the campaign in Iraq.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group reported fresh strikes in the oil-rich eastern province of Deir Ez-zor, and northeastern Hasakeh, both of which were also targeted a day earlier.

Both sets of raids included strikes on oil facilities in the two provinces, where IS jihadists extract crude for sale on the black market.

Experts say sales of oil from Syria and Iraq are among the group’s biggest source of funding, netting it between US\$1 million and \$3 million a day.

In Britain, meanwhile, lawmakers were preparing to vote on whether the country would join air strikes against the group in Iraq, though participation in the strikes on Syria is not on the table.

“We are facing an evil against which the whole world must unite. And, as ever in the cause of

freedom, democracy and justice, Britain will play its part,” Prime Minister David Cameron told a United Nations summit in New York, before flying home for the vote.

Mr Cameron has urged Britain not to be “frozen with fear” about re-entering conflict in a country that its troops only left in 2011.

Washington is eager to build the broadest possible coalition to tackle IS, which has seized large swathes of territory in Syria and neighbouring Iraq, declaring an Islamic “caliphate”.

‘We are facing an evil against which the whole world must unite ... and Britain will play its part.’

David Cameron
UK prime minister



Vietnam reviews its prostitution policy with new fine system

WORLD 41

Australia pays Cambodia \$35m to take in refugees

WORLD 42



Hong Kong students take to streets in democracy march

WORLD 43



IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

A JFK Hospital guard waits to greet patients, some suspected of suffering from the Ebola virus, in Monrovia on September 25. World leaders were asked to pledge urgently needed aid to battle Ebola in West Africa as Sierra Leone quarantined one million people in a desperate bid to beat back the deadly virus. US President Barack Obama warned that not enough was being done to tackle the crisis that has left close to 3000 dead and is spreading at an alarming pace.

kes on Syria target oil as oining Iraq campaign

Speaking at the UN this week, US President Barack Obama urged greater participation in the alliance against what he dubbed a “network of death”. If, as expected, the British parliament votes to take part, the Royal Air Force will join jets from the United States, France, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Jordan hitting IS targets. Both France and Britain have ruled out carrying strikes in Syria however, unlike the Arab allies taking part in the aerial campaign. Belgium and the Netherlands also plan to send six F-16 fighter bombers to take part in the campaign in Iraq. The Netherlands will also deploy 250 military personnel and 130 trainers for the Iraqi military, and Greece said it would send arms to Kurdish forces battling the jihadists. Turkey has so far declined to take part in military action, and denied claims its airspace or airbases have been used by coalition forces. But when Mr Obama spoke to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

on September 25 in New York the Turkish leader suggested for the first time that his country could offer logistical, intelligence or even military support to the operations. Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani, however, blamed Western “blunders” for creating extremist havens, and said outside interference would not solve the problem. “The right solution to this quandary comes from within the region ... with international support and not from outside,” he told the UN General Assembly, warning otherwise there would be “repercussions for the whole world”. IS’s brutal abuses against civilians, rival fighters and Arab and Western hostages, as well as its success in recruiting Western members, have raised fears in the international community. On September 25, police in London arrested nine people suspected of links to Islamic extremists, including a notorious radical preacher. And the FBI said it identified the Islamic State jihadist who has appeared in videos showing the beheading of two US journalists

and a British aid worker, though it declined to give further details. In France, Muslims groups were planning a September 26 demonstration outside Paris’s main mosque to denounce the group. The coalition strikes in Syria are reported to have killed at least 140 jihadists as well as 13 civilians, though the Pentagon said it was still investigating reports of civilian casualties. Fighting between troops from the regime and rebels has continued on the ground in Syria alongside the international air strikes, with the army recapturing a key strategic town near Damascus on September 25. The conflict that began in Syria in March 2011 as an uprising against President Bashar al-Assad’s regime has spawned a massive refugee crisis, with more than three million Syrians now taking refuge from the war abroad. Many have sought to reach Europe by boat, including hundreds aboard a ship that ran into trouble off the coast of Cyprus on September 25 forcing a nearby cruise ship to rescue them. – AFP

BAIKONUR, KAZAKHSTAN

First woman cosmonaut in 17 years blasts off for Intl Space Station

A RUSSIAN Soyuz spacecraft carrying an American astronaut and two Russian cosmonauts, including the first woman cosmonaut in 17 years, blasted off on schedule on September 16, Russian mission control said. The Soyuz-TMA14M spacecraft took off at 12:25am Moscow time from Russia’s Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan to start the journey to the International Space Station (ISS). “The Soyuz-FG space rocket successfully launched to put the Soyuz TMA-14M spacecraft into orbit,” the Russian space agency Roscosmos said in a statement. The crew members were doing well, it added. Yelena Serova is the first Russian woman to fly to the ISS. She is accompanied by fellow cosmonaut Alexander Samokutyaev and NASA astronaut Barry Wilmore. Their spacecraft was set to dock with the ISS at 0215 GMT on September 26 after taking a six-hour fast-track route. They were due to join the ISS commander, Russia’s Maxim Surayev, his American colleague Reid Wiseman and German Alexander Gerst from the European Space Agency onboard the space laboratory. The new ISS crew members are scheduled to spend a total of 169 days in space. On September 25, the trio took part in pre-flight rituals such as signing the door of their Baikonur hotel and receiving a blessing from a Russian Orthodox priest, before boarding a bus to the launchpad to cheers from relatives. They then entered their Soyuz-TMA14M capsule around one-and-a-half hours before lift-off on a dark, cloudy night. Ms Serova is just the fourth Soviet or Russian woman cosmonaut.

The first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova, made her only space flight in 1963. The following two women made two space flights each: Svetlana Savitskaya in 1982 and 1984, and Yelena Kondakova in 1994 and 1997, before a 17-year-long hiatus. “My flight is my job,” 38-year-old space engineer Ms Serova said at a press conference last week, where she had to fend off questions about her hairstyle and how her daughter would cope in her absence. “I’ll be the first Russian woman who will fly to the ISS,” she said. “I feel a huge responsibility toward the people who taught and trained us and I want to tell them: We won’t let you down!” Both Ms Serova’s colleagues in the cramped Soyuz capsule have space mission experience. Wilmore, 51, known as Butch, made his first space flight as the pilot of the US shuttle in 2009, while Samokutyaev, 44, who is commander of the Soyuz spacecraft, spent 164 days on the ISS in 2011. Russia is currently the only country that can send astronauts to the ISS after the United States stopped its shuttle program. NASA has vowed to continue co-operation aboard the ISS despite a major chill in relations over Moscow’s role in the Ukraine crisis. But Russia has hinted that it may turn down Washington’s request to extend the lifespan of the ISS by four years through 2024, saying it is only needed until 2020. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who oversees the space sector, jokingly suggested in April that the United States would have to use a “trampoline” to get to the ISS after it imposed sanctions over Russia’s annexation of Crimea. – AFP



Russia’s Soyuz TMA-14M spacecraft carrying the International Space Station (ISS) crew blasts off from the launch pad at the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome on September 26. Photo: AFP

Dagon City 1 - Yangon's Best Location

Making Myanmar More Beautiful

Yangon is a sprawling city of seven million people which makes choosing the perfect location for your home and work a decision of vital importance. Dagon City 1 trumps all other possibilities, as the 22 acre mixed-use development is nestled in an area of unparalleled convenience. Dagon City 1 is located on U Htaung Bo Circle, which is just a five minute drive from the bustling downtown area and 30 minutes away from Yangon International Airport, which is Myanmar's aviation hub.

A Location in Close Proximity with National Beauty

Direct footbridges will link Dagon City 1's exquisite apartments, branded retail zones, international grade A offices and five-star hotel with the country's national landmarks, including the dazzling 2,500-year old Shwedagon Pagoda. Dagon City 1 offers the best platform for Myanmar people to experience the glowing beauty of their most sacred site, while visitors are provided a glimpse of their host country's rich culture. The panoramic views from Dagon City 1 of Shwedagon Pagoda will imbibe guests and residents with a sense of calm and tranquility, allowing them to pay their respects from within their own homes.

An elegant, more serene lifestyle awaits you at Dagon City 1: whether it be walking to the sprawling Yangon Zoological Gardens or Kandawgyi Park. Taking time out to enjoy the simple things of life has never been easier, as there you will find a convenient respite from the hustle and bustle of nearby downtown Yangon.

A Hub for Local and International Businesses

Meanwhile, companies operating from their Grade A offices at Dagon City 1 Towers will benefit from the convenience of being in the heart of Yangon and a short drive away from

Yangon International Airport.

Dagon City 1 Towers will create a centralized location for both local and multinational companies seeking international standard offices in a well-designed modern environment. It will be the perfect place to network and forge new business relationships.

A Location to Experience Upscale Lifestyle

Dagon City 1 Plaza will offer the residents of Yangon a premier luxury shopping experience comparable to the elegant promenades of Paris and New York City. Pedestrian-friendly and unrivaled in extravagant and irresistible offerings for every taste, its vast array of branded retail stores will also promote international and local consumers. Easy-access footbridges in close proximity to the city's most culturally significant sites surrounding the area will provide a safe and convenient way for pedestrians to commute.

A Location that Attracts Investment Opportunities

From Marga's extensive experience across the globe, the group is confident that Yangon has all the right ingredients to become one of the top cities in Asia.

Dagon City 1's prime location is also important in terms of promoting real estate investment. For a potential buyer considering the possible investment returns, Dagon City 1's

state of the art location, design, property developer and property management are certain to appeal.

A Location to Call Home

Dagon City 1 will present its residents the opportunity to

it will also connect the tenants to the city's hottest new shopping plaza, the top cultural landmarks and Dagon High School.



live in the heart of Yangon while enjoying an elegant lifestyle. Its 12-story residential towers will offer apartments as part of its world class community. The residence not only will provide a variety of features to complement modern living, including a luxury clubhouse, a fitness center, outdoor swimming pool, restaurant and indoor golf, but

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NEW DELHI

Modi starts his US visit

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi left for New York on September 26 on an official visit focused on boosting trade and resetting ties with the world's largest economy.

Mr Modi said ahead of his departure he was "confident that the visit will mark the start of a new chapter in our strategic partnership."

A bitter diplomatic row broke out last December when US authorities arrested and then strip-searched an Indian diplomat in New York. Mr Modi headed to New York hours after launching "Make in India", an initiative to attract global manufacturing to his country.

He was scheduled to have breakfast in New York on September 29 with heads of top global firms including Google's Eric Schmidt and PepsiCo's Indra Nooyi.

"I look forward to meeting business leaders to invite them to participate more actively in India's economic growth and transformation," he said in a statement.

Mr Modi will kick off his maiden US visit in New York, where he will address the UN General Assembly and address people of Indian origin at Madison Square Garden.

Last week he said he would press for reform of the United Nations "to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in dealing with the challenges of the 21st Century" and urge stronger global commitment on issues including Ebola, climate change and poverty.

On September 29 he is due to head to Washington for private meetings with Obama, marking a transformation of fortunes for a man refused a US visa in 2005 over charges he failed to prevent anti-Muslim violence as chief minister of Gujarat state. Mr Modi has always denied any wrong-doing.

The prime minister, who led his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to a crushing victory on a promise to revive India's flagging economic fortunes, has said India and the United States are "natural allies". — AFP

JAKARTA

Local election polls scrapped in 'democracy set back'

INDONESIA'S parliament has voted to end direct elections for local leaders, despite angry protests against the move and criticism that it will roll back a key democratic reform of the post-Suharto era.

After a heated debate lasting more than 10 hours, 226 lawmakers voted in favour of ending the current system of mayors, provincial governors and district heads being chosen by the public in the world's third-biggest democracy.

Instead, local parliaments will be given the power to pick them, which critics says is a blow to the process of democratisation that was started after the downfall of dictator Suharto in 1998 following three decades of authoritarian rule.

Opponents of the bill lost a huge bloc of support in the final stages of the debate when the ruling Democratic Party, which had been expected to vote against the move, walked out after conditions they had demanded could not be agreed on.

Only 135 lawmakers chose to retain the elections, in a vote which came after pro-democracy activists demonstrated the level of public anger at the plan by burning tyres outside parliament in Jakarta during a noisy protest.

"Democracy in this country has suffered a setback," tweeted Ridwan Kamil, the directly elected mayor of Bandung, a city on the main island of Java.

As well as being seen as an attack on Indonesia's young democracy, critics view the move as revenge by opponents of Joko Widodo, who won the presidency in July and came into politics by being directly elected as a local mayor.

Supporters of the plan argued that the hundreds of polls which have been held across the world's



Indonesian protesters who oppose the new bill on local elections chant during a noisy protest outside the parliament building in Jakarta on September 25. Photo: AFP

biggest archipelago nation every few years since 2005 are enormously costly and in reality only allow the wealthy to win election.

However critics saw the move as an elite power grab, and also argued it would increase corruption as would-be leaders may have to strike deals with local MPs to win office.

Widodo, known by his nickname Jokowi, had spoken out against the plan and its victory is a blow as it suggests his new government could face problems in getting crucial legislation through a hostile parliament.

Ahead of the vote, Widodo said

abolishing direct elections of local leaders "would be a big step back for democracy".

"Directly elected leaders have a moral obligation to the people. They have to look after the people, because they were chosen by the people," he said.

Up until the final stages of the debate, it was not clear how the vote would go but the shock decision by most MPs from the Democratic Party to walk out ensured victory for those who supported the plan.

Outgoing President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono had ordered mem-

bers of his Democrats to vote against the proposal -- but divisions quickly appeared in the party.

The bill was pushed by parties that backed Widodo's opponent for the presidency, Prabowo Subianto, an ex-general with a chequered human rights record.

Five parties who had backed Prabowo at the election supported the proposal, and only three were opposed.

While it ends the system of local leaders being picked by the public, it still allows for the election of local legislatures. — AFP

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NEW DEHLI

India-China border deal reached

A military stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops that lasted nearly two weeks and overshadowed a key summit in New Delhi has ended, India's foreign minister said.

Troops were being pulled back from the disputed border area on September 26, Sushma Swaraj said, after meeting her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in New York.

"Timelines have been drawn ... by September 30, it (withdrawal) will be completed. Whichever positions were occupied by the armies on September 1, they will go back to those positions," she said.

Hundreds of Chinese troops had moved into a territory claimed by India ahead of a visit by China's President Xi Jinping last week, sparking the stand-off on the remote mountainous frontier of Ladakh.

The two countries have long been embroiled in a bitter territorial dispute and small incursions occur frequently across the Line of Actual Control, the de-facto border that runs 4000 kilometres (2500 miles) across Ladakh.

But the number of troops involved and the timing of last week's incident raised alarm. Indian defence sources said construction by both sides had triggered the stand-off in the Chumar area of the far-flung region. — AFP

HANOI

Vietnam debates future of sex trade

FOR Vietnamese sex workers such as Do Thi Oanh, being caught touting for business used to carry a long stint in forced “rehabilitation”, but as fines replace detention, many detect a shifting attitude toward the world’s oldest profession.

In 2008, Ms Oanh was sent to one of Vietnam’s notorious rehabilitation camps on the outskirts of Hanoi, joining hundreds of prostitutes and drug addicts detained without conviction for taking part in a “social evil”.

The 32-year-old was held for 18 months in the centre where detainees worked for free raising poultry, gardening or making handicrafts.

Last year Vietnam suddenly replaced compulsory rehab for sex workers with fines of between US\$25 to \$100, releasing hundreds of people from centres across the country.

Ms Oanh, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, said the legal move points to a wider liberalising attitude toward sex work in the communist nation.

“I think that society today is much more tolerant with people like me,” said Ms Oanh, who has herself given up prostitution but remains in sex work, running a massage parlour in the capital.

Prostitution is illegal in Vietnam, but hundreds of thousands of sex workers ply their trade in a deeply conservative society which is still dominated by Confucian social mores.

Prostitution is considered a social evil, along with drug addiction and homosexuality.

Drug addicts continue to be sent to compulsory rehab.

But in recent months a fierce debate over whether to legalise and regulate the sex industry has sprung up online and in the official press, airing views that were long considered taboo.

Even the National Assembly is due to address the issue at its next session in October.

Despite decades of official suppression, Vietnam’s sex industry has flourished in parallel with the economy since market reforms of the late 1980s opened up the socialist system to international trade and investment.

‘I see the police arrest prostitutes one day. The next day they’re back on the streets.’

Nguyen Thi Hoa
Hanoi shop owner

Researchers estimate there are around 200,000 sex workers in Vietnam, full-time or occasional, of whom up to 40 percent are believed to be HIV-positive.

“We should legalise prostitution because it is part of human rights. Everybody has the right to enjoy sex,” said sociologist Le Quang Binh.

Legalisation could help “protect sex workers and their clients and bring in revenue for the government through taxes”, he added.

In the southern business hub of Ho Chi Minh City, police statistics show there are at least 30,000 establishments linked to the sex trade from massage parlours and karaoke lounges to more traditional brothels.

Many popular Vietnamese beach towns even have open brothels operating under the protection of criminal gangs, sometimes with the complicity of corrupt local officials.

“As we are not able to eradicate prostitution, we will have to manage it,” said Trinh Thi Khiet, a Hanoi-based parliamentarian.

“We shouldn’t encourage the sex trade but we have to look at this issue in

the face. We need to save women from mafia networks.”

The debate over how to tackle prostitution, however, remains sharply polarised.

Authorities in Ho Chi Minh City last year proposed to implement experimental “red zones”, not yet in place, where prostitution would be allowed or at least tolerated.

But in Hanoi authorities have suggested publicly disclosing the names of punters caught by police to deter others from buying sex.

Despite high-profile “clean-up” campaigns, prostitutes operate openly on major roads in the city, much to the distress of some residents.

Nguyen Thi Hoa, who owns a clothes shop, says she has stopped listening to regular news reports showing “half-naked young girls” arrested in police raids on hotels.

“I see the police arrest prostitutes one day ... The next day they’re back on the streets. The fight against prostitution has made hardly any progress,” she said.

While objections to prostitution abound, sociologists urge a pragmatic response to an age-old industry.

“We are totally incapable of controlling prostitution,” said Khuat Thu Hong, director of the Institute for Social Development Studies.

“We have to accept the truth,” she



A young woman appears on stage at a night bar in Hanoi on September 15. Photo: AFP

said, adding the “oldest profession in the world” would only disappear “when humans no longer exist”.

“We must not penalise it ... I support legalisation because it would help to combat trafficking in women,” she added.

And while Vietnamese children continue to learn in school that the “social evil” of prostitution destroys moral and cultural values, the taboo around sex will remain an obstacle to legalisation.

For now, the government line is that “prostitution cannot be considered a

job”, according to Le Duc Hien, deputy director in charge of the fight against vices within the labour ministry.

“Legalisation is really a great challenge for us,” she said, adding that “this issue is still too sensitive” in Vietnam. – AFP

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SYDNEY

Australia pays Cambodia \$35m to take in refugees

AUSTRALIA plans to start sending asylum-seekers to Cambodia by the end of the year and will pay the South-east Asian nation US\$35 million to accept them, the government said on September 26.

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison, who was in Phnom Penh on September 26 to sign the controversial resettlement deal, defended the plan and said it would help fulfil the government's vow that no boatpeople would be resettled in Australia.

“This is about a regional solution. This is about providing genuine resettlement in a third country which is Cambodia, a signatory to the Refugee Convention,” he told national radio.

“It enables us to fulfil on the policy which says no-one will be resettled in Australia.”

Rights groups have slammed the move, claiming Canberra was violating its international obligations and that Cambodia was not a safe third country.

Mr Morrison said there were no caps on how many refugees might be sent but only those currently housed in offshore detention on the tiny Pacific outpost of Nauru would be considered initially.

Under Canberra's immigration policy, boatpeople arriving since July 2013 have been sent to Nauru, which mostly houses women, children and families, and Manus Island in Papua New Guinea.

They are resettled in those countries if their refugee claims are approved.

‘It enables us to fulfil on the policy which says no-one will be resettled in Australia.’

Scott Morrison

Australian immigration minister

“It should begin later in the year but we still have some more work to do on the implementation arrangements,” Mr Morrison said on when transfers would start, adding that resettlement would be voluntary and permanent.

Rights groups have condemned the proposal with the United Nations

Human Rights Commissioner voicing concern about “a dangerous precedent for refugee protection around the world”.

Amnesty International called it “a new low in Australia's deplorable and inhumane treatment of asylum-seekers”, questioning Cambodia's human rights record.

“In January the Australian government condemned Cambodia's human rights record at a UN human rights hearing, but will now relocate vulnerable refugees, possibly including children, to the country,” spokesperson Rupert Abbott said.

Mr Morrison said Australia would give Phnom Penh \$35m over four years to “support various overseas development aid projects” in return for taking the refugees.

“The most important thing we're giving them is our expertise. Cambodia wants to be a country that can resettle refugees properly and they're seeking our advice and expertise on how we can do that,” he added.

Cambodia is recognised as one of the world's poorest and most corrupt countries but Mr Morrison brushed off concerns, saying stringent checks would ensure the money went where it was intended. – *AFP*

GENEVA

Refugee numbers heading for 20-year high

THE number of asylum-seekers in industrialised countries has risen by nearly a quarter, driven by the wars in Syria and Iraq as well as instability in Afghanistan, Eritrea and elsewhere, the UN refugee agency said on September 26.

In the first six months of this year, the total number of people requesting refugee status in such countries rose to 330,700, a 24-percent increase on the same period in 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said.

“We are clearly into an era of growing conflict,” said UNHCR chief Antonio Guterres in a statement on his agency's latest *Asylum Trends* report.

“The global humanitarian system is already in great difficulty. The international community needs to prepare

their populations for the reality that in the absence of solutions to conflict more and more people are going to need refuge and care in the coming months and years.”

Mr Guterres also said that as things stand, it does not appear that resources and access to asylum procedures will be available for those in desperate need.

The report was based on data received from 44 governments in Europe, North America and parts of the Asia-Pacific region.

Based on historical norms of higher numbers of asylum-seekers in the second half of each year, it said the 2014 total could hit 700,000.

That would mark a 20-year high for industrialised countries, and a level unseen since the Balkan wars of

the 1990s sparked by the break-up of Yugoslavia.

The bulk of new asylum claims was in just six countries: Germany, the United States, France, Sweden, Turkey and Italy. Central Europe, in particular Hungary and Poland, as well as Australia. – *AFP*

24%

Rise in the number of asylum-seekers in industrial countries in the first six months of 2014



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Thousands join student democracy march

Chants calling for Mr Leung to step down were repeated, while a large

"I need to fight for democracy now so the next generation can have a better life," economics major at Shue Yan, Saxon Lam, said. The two students were



Occupy Central, a prominent grassroots pro-democracy group, has vowed to take over Central if its demand

Last month China said Hong Kongers would be allowed to vote for

Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" agreement which allows it civil liberties not seen on the mainland, including free speech and the right to protest. — *AFP*



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Myanmar can learn from India’s new leader

CURTIS S CHIN, MEERA KUMAR

AS India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues his landmark visit to the United States, with scheduled stops including the United Nations General Assembly, the White House and even a speaking event at New York’s famous Madison Square Garden arena, the one-time military leaders of Myanmar may well be hoping for a similar US embrace of their own one day.

Mr Modi’s reception is a marked change for the 64-year-old former chief minister of the Indian state of Gujarat who was denied a U.S. visa in 2005, perhaps in part due to suspicions of his ties to a tragedy in his home state.

Sectarian rioting had killed more than 1000 people, mainly Muslims, several years prior in Gujarat. Supporters of Mr Modi, who denies wrongdoing, note that India’s new leader has been exonerated by an India Supreme Court probe.

Now more than 100 days in office, Mr Modi has changed both the mood of the country and the dynamics of India’s relations with foreign leaders. Optimism, palpable within this nation of 1.2 billion, is encapsulated in the belief that better days are ahead.

Expectations are high, just as they continue to be in places such as Indonesia and many parts of Myanmar given changes that continue to sweep a region increasingly under new leadership.

Mr Modi’s ascent to the helm of the world’s largest democracy is a remarkable compliment to India for several reasons. He is a man of humble origins with little or no formal education.

The transfer of power also was

smooth and in accordance with constitutional law.

Most importantly, for the vast majority of his fellow citizens, Mr Modi represents the “real India” speaking Hindi, the language of the common man and demonstrating in dress and outlook, that he has shaken the colonial legacy of elitism.

It is a tribute to India and the man that he started life serving tea in a traditional teahouse, or chaikhana, and broke the back of the old guard. In Gujarat, he demonstrated a “can do” spirit and a business friendly environment that impressed many domestically and internationally.

However, it was during his term in Gujarat that the notorious race riots took place, a fact that has tarnished his image somewhat and caused fear amongst some that India is headed for a muscular revival of Hindu nationalism, or “Hindutva.”

To his detractors he demonstrates a dictatorial strain; to his supporters he is resolute.

It remains to be seen what changes India’s most dynamic leader in recent years can bring about in a country too often wedded to the past, too urgently in need of overhaul.

Russell Green, the Clayton Fellow at Rice University’s Baker Institute and a former US Treasury Attaché to India, states: “Modi has made a fast start on both weedy implementation and broader reforms – not house-on-fire fast, but still impressive. He though has yet to explain his big economic reform vision in enough detail to revive corporate investment and pull the public onboard.”

But winning power is distinctly different from retaining power. And that too is a message for all of Asia’s new and would be leaders.

Here are four considerations on which India’s citizens as well as foreign business leaders and would-be investors should measure the country’s new leadership. Myanmar citizens should also take note as they ponder leadership changes of their own.

First is the question of economic growth and macro-economic stability. With 50 percent of India’s population under the age of 30, job creation must be foremost in the minds of the nation’s leaders. Nothing is more dangerous than unemployed youth roving the streets, their frustrations rising and, sooner or later, finding expression in public disharmony.

‘Myanmar citizens should take note as they ponder leadership changes of their own’

Concurrent with the emphasis on growth is the need for macro-economic stability. Past government’s attempts to win goodwill through populist subsidies and by creating welfare programs are unsustainable. It is time for India’s leaders to come to terms with economic

fundamentals and budget deficits, and restore macroeconomic stability.

Second, India has adopted the institutional structure of a modern democratic state; now it is important to ensure these institutions function in an honest and credible manner. If the public cannot trust the judiciary, or have faith that the police force works in their interest, it will resort to unfair means to achieve its goals.

Mr Modi must address head-on a plethora of issues that relate to the high level of corruption and poor governance, which keep the nation low on the ranks of the World Bank’s annual Doing Business survey. India dropped from 131 to 134 in the latest World Bank ranking of 189 economies. (Myanmar ranks 182nd.)

Third, is the deplorable state of India’s infrastructure. Sadly insufficient change has come to India’s core infrastructure despite hundreds of millions of dollars from numerous bilateral aid agencies and development banks. In the India of today, much like the India of yesterday, even in urban areas access to water and to reliable electricity cannot be counted on.

Mr Modi’s slogan of “toilets before temples” needs to be translated into action. His promise to clean the rivers must find credible action points. He must provide power so that school children can do their homework at night. And he must address India’s health needs.

Finally, an urgent task awaiting the new government is the need to build cohesion out of diversity. Here too the parallels to Myanmar’s

challenges are obvious. The Muslim population of India is close to 15 percent and this community is a vibrant part of India.

Yet, on every economic and social measure, this segment of the population ranks low. While the reasons for this are complex, the reality of their weaker economic and political power has rendered many disgruntled.

The new government in India must focus on this community’s grievances and demonstrate an approach that is inclusive and credible to the Muslim population. Governments are often defined by their failures, and given what was seen by many as anti-Muslim rhetoric during the Modi campaign, real progress in addressing this community’s specific needs as part of an “all India” economic drive can help prove naysayers wrong.

In India, democracy defines itself by its ability to “get the government.” The Modi government should continue to bear that in mind as it moves forward to manage, if not meet, the incredible expectations that its election has engendered among not just foreign business leaders and elsewhere but also its own people. Perhaps that too is also a message for Myanmar.

Curtis S. Chin, a former U.S. ambassador to the Asian Development Bank, is Senior Fellow, Asia, at the Milken Institute. Meera Kumar, a former staff member of the ADB, is a New York-based freelance writer. Follow on Twitter at @CurtisSChin and @MeeraKumar212.



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GET YOUR FINGERS ON IT

the pulse



Three young migrants from Myitkyina, Mawlamyine and the delta region left their families for the prospect of a better life in Yangon. While living together in a youth hostel, one works at a call centre, one is a taxi driver and one is a student. Currently, only the driver sends money home to his parents. Photos: Yu Yu



ZON PANN
PWINT

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As new economic pressures and opportunities threaten the traditional responsibility of adult children to care for their parents, both generations reflect on what it means for families and the social security of elders

When no one stays home

WHEN Daw Nyo's adult children could no longer spare the time to care for her, the 73-year-old, who lives on a small pension, started to visit the Day Care Centre for the Aged, located near her home on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road. So far, none of her three children has invited her to live with them since her husband passed away nine months ago, she said. "My daughters are struggling to support their own children, and they don't have time to talk with me even when I visit them," Daw Nyo said, adding that they do give her dinner regularly.

By tradition, adult children are expected to take responsibility for the care of their parents as they age. Historically there's been no public safety net for poor retirees and the elderly, leaving the burden of care to fall on adult children.

Unlike decades past, however, today more young people are leaving home to seek work in the cities, making financial and social security problematic for elderly parents. Even those elders who have earned a comfortable living find that loneliness is often the result of their children's departure. New economic pressures and opportunities for the young generation are playing no small part in the change.

For May Sabei Wah, 30, head translator at Skynet broadcasting, it's difficult to make ends meet, yet she has willingly taken on the role of breadwinner. "I've never felt that I am shouldering the burden of my family," said May Sabei Wah, who is supporting her mother and two younger brothers (one a college student, one a high-school student) on a monthly salary of K470,000. The amount barely covers the costs of tuition, clothing, housing and transportation for all four of them, she said. She can't put any money aside for the future.

She's contemplated a change of career, she said, but she feels stressed by the risks involved for the family. "Whenever I think of making a career move, I wonder who will support my family when I am unemployed, until I find a new job? The thought always stops me," she said.

The Day Care Centre for the Aged is a comfortable place run by the Department of Social Welfare. The two-storey building has a large prayer room, a parlour with sofas and televisions, a clean dining hall and a karaoke room.

Yet those who opt to bring their parents to the centre face derision from neighbours and family who see them as shirking their responsibilities. Nonetheless, the number of people using the day-care and the more permanent Home for the Aged is increasing, said a representative. It accepted 50 people when it opened in November 2013. Now it's increased to 70. Representatives of the home say the country should adopt policies to address the situation, such as raising the retirement age and increasing pensions.

Ageing populations are a worldwide phenomenon. Last April, Thailand released statistics that show the proportion of persons aged over 60 now accounts for 13 percent of the total population. Over the next 20 years, the aged population is expected to account for 25 percent.

In Myanmar, the exact population of the elderly has not yet been released since the census conducted last March. The Department of Social Welfare has estimated that the nation's percentage of people over age 60 is 9-10 percent. Yet since the population has been revealed to be smaller than previously thought – about 51 million, rather than 60 million – it's probable that new demographics will also reveal a population older than suspected, requiring a policy to secure elders' future as more and more adult children are unable to care for their parents.

Those who live in the countryside are moving to the city to work, and those who live in the city are travelling abroad, said Dr Maung Aung, an adviser at the Union Minister's Office, Ministry of Commerce. "As the country opens up and the economy grows, the issue will get bigger," he said.

A year ago, Ko Chit Ko Lynn, a freelance photographer at YAT Group, left his home town of Mawlamyine to pursue a career in photography. When he was living at home, he said, he had no time to indulge his passion for photography. He is his family's only

adult son, and so he worked in his parents' business.

When Ko Chit Ko Lynn's elder sisters were undertaking further studies and his younger brother and sisters were still at school, it would have been selfish to leave his parents alone to struggle to support the rest of the children, he said.

"Now they [his siblings] are working and supporting my parents, so I decided to settle in Yangon for my hobby," he said. It has meant giving up the idea that he will be able to provide for his parents.

"I can't support them financially, but I regularly call and show my warmth and respect for them, and I often visit them on Sundays and on public holidays," he said. "They understand that I am struggling and can't support them, and they don't blame me."

He said that once young people move away from home, the idea of caring for parents gets lost.

"It depends on each individual's feelings. Some children feel bitter toward their parents and don't want to return home," he said.

Ma Ny Ny Maung, a former teacher trainer, is one of those who doesn't want to live with her mother, who didn't approve of her daughter changing careers to become an artist.

"Over six years, I worked as a teacher trainer, which my mother loved. But when I changed my career to pursue what I love, she got annoyed with me about it," she said.

She wants complete freedom to do as she likes, and her mother doesn't show much understanding.

Her mother used to work outside the city as a government official. As a second-year college student, Ma Ny Ny Maung went to live alone in Yangon to work as a trainer in order to support her mother and younger sister. "When my mother retired, we lived together. I felt I had lost the freedom I had known when working alone in Yangon," she said.

She said she's given up hope of her mother ever understanding her perspective, but she still experiences family-related stress.

"Every day, I have to take on the challenges of my new career. When I get home, I'm tired out. At that time, if I get a scolding from my mother, I lose control and snap back. Then I feel guilty for lacking respect," she said.

Some blame the isolation of elders on increasing exposure to foreign values, which are supplanting traditional culture. In the West, children leave home as early as 16. In Myanmar, children live with their parents until they are married, and even some married children live at home their whole life.

Pau Sian Zam, 29, who has eight siblings, left his home town of Kalay, Chin State, two years ago to teach at a private language school in Yangon. He feels secure about his ageing parents because his two youngest sisters remain in Kalay and the rest of the siblings are working nearby.

Yet living in Yangon, Pau Sian Zam is aware of the struggle of isolated elders. He experienced a big change in lifestyle when he moved to Yangon. For the first time, he saw elderly people living alone in small apartments, and that neighbours weren't as friendly in the city as they were in the rural community. In apartment living, he said, it's easy to bottle up feelings of loneliness and resentment.

"In Kalay, my neighbours are like relatives. If the children go to work and to school, the adult neighbours look after the ageing parents who live next door. But the way of life in Yangon is different," he said.

The city is home to many charity organisations, yet relatively few work for the benefit of the aged – although Buddhists see helping the elderly as a good deed. It's widely believed that those who look after their parents without complaint will never face danger on their journey through life, and will enjoy good luck.

When today's young get old, they will need it.



What's on

ART

Sept 25-Oct 5 Contemporary Dialogues. Conversations, performances and exhibitions about culture in Myanmar, at locations around Yangon. Free entry. Visit contemporarydialogues.tumblr.com

Sept 20-Oct 1 Solo exhibition by Zaw Lu Min, Lokanat Galleries, 1st floor, 62 Pansodan St, Kyauktada 10am-7pm

Sept 27-Oct 3 "Ayeyarwaddy Strength" watercolour exhibition. River Ayeyarwaddy Gallery, 134 35th Street, Middle Block, Kyauktada 9am-6pm

Sept 27-Oct 1 "To Value Something" second solo show by Zaw Yan Naing. Pansodan Gallery, Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 9am-9pm

Sept 26-Nov 1 "The Mirror: Reflecting Society." Painting, sculpture, installation and photography by four Burmese contemporary artists. TS1 Gallery, between Lanthit Jetty and Kaing Dan No 1 Jetty, Seikkan 10am-6:30pm

FILM

Sept 25-Oct 5 23rd European Film Festival. Ten films from seven European countries with free entry. Nay Pyi Taw Cinema, near Sule Pagoda. Films start daily at 3:30pm and 6:30pm.

Start times at Mingalar (1, 2), Thwin, Shae Shaung (1,2) and Nay Pyi Taw cinemas are 10am, noon, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm and 8pm.

Start times at Junction Square and Maw Tin are 10am, 1pm and 4pm daily and 7pm and 9:30pm on Friday and Saturday.

Start times at Mingalar San Pya are 10am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm.

Nay Pyi Taw Cinema, near Sule Pagoda

Minuscule: Valley of the Lost Ants. Directed by Helene Giraud and Thomas Szabo. Rival ant colonies battle for the remains of a picnic (animation).

The Purge: Anarchy. Directed by James DeMonaco. American action-thriller.

Step Up All In. Directed by Trish Sie. The fifth film of the American dance series.

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 5

Got an event? List it in What's On! whatsonmt@gmail.com

Mingalar Cinema 1, at Theingyizay, Latha

The Maze Runner. Directed by Wes Ball. A group of boys trapped in a maze must find an escape.

Mingalar Cinema 2, at Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone

Minuscule: Valley of the Lost Ants.

Shae Shaung Cinema, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada

The Maze Runner.

The Swimmers. Directed by Sophon Sakdaphisit. A Thai horror film with English subtitles.

Junction Square Cineplex, Kamaryut

The November Man. Directed by Roger Donaldson. American spy thriller starring Pierce Brosnan.

Threesome. Directed by Tanwarin Sukkhapisit. A Thai romantic comedy with English subtitles.

Mingalar San Pya Cineplex, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw

The Purge: Anarchy.

The Maze Runner.

Minuscule: Valley of the Lost Ants.

MUSIC

Oct 2 Side Effect. Myanmar indie rock. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 9pm

Oct 3 "Eye Contact." Celebrating Myanmar and Germany's 60th year of relations, Hein Tint's Hsaing Waing Ensemble and Tim Isfort's jazz group will perform accompanied by live drawings by artists Soe Thaw Dar and Malte Jehmlich. Tickets at the Goethe Institute, Institut Français, Pansodan and Gitameit, or email ticket@yangon.goethe.org. National Theatre, 7pm



The face of beauty, Myo Ko Ko San. Photo: Supplied

Myanmar transgender beauty to compete in international pageant

CHIT SU
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A YOUNG man is to take part in the Miss International Queen competition to be held in Pattaya, Thailand, next month. Student Myo Ko Ko San, 20, won the title for Myanmar last November in his hometown of Mandalay, in an event organised by the Rainbow Organisation.

The aims of the pageant are to counter gender discrimination, raise transgender rights awareness among communities, build friendship, and exchange ideas among international lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. The criteria are personal talent and beauty, plus a good command of general knowledge. Pattaya is well known for its gay beauty pageants.

Contestants must have been born male, may be pre- or post-operation and aged between 18 and 36.

Myo Ko Ko San admits to

facing attitudinal difficulties, starting with his own family, who had misgivings about his feminine side. "I hid the preparations for competing in the pageant from my family because I didn't want them to feel hurt. It was my friends who helped me win."

He has also taken heat on social media for "abandoning male behaviour" after announcing that he would take part in the pageant. "Some people might oppose me on religious grounds because I am gay, which they think is ignoble. But I think it's noble to contribute to society, and I'm happy and grateful when people judge my actions without gender discrimination," he said.

Now he says his family is more understanding. "They were worried that committing to the gay life would be the ruin of me. But when I won the crown last year and was chosen to represent my country, their attitude changed. They have confidence now, and I'm going to Thailand with their blessing."

Myo Ko Ko San has not

undergone gender transplantation surgery and his 5'7" frame is a willowy and well-proportioned 33-33.5-inch chest, waist and hips.

When not pursuing his studies in English, he keeps his skin beautiful and takes tips from Tanyang Maung, a former contestant in the Miss International Queen competition of 2013, on how to study for the general knowledge section of the pageant, and for moral support and advice on competing in general.

Myo Ko Ko San's hope is that he can help educate people to learn more about LGBT issues and bring them to a higher understanding. "I want people's thinking of LGBT issues to change, so I project courtesy not just for myself, but because I am representing both Myanmar and LGBT society," he said.

In 2013, 25 transgender and gay entrants competed in the Miss International Queen beauty pageant, which was won by the Brazilian beauty Marcela Ohio. Tanyang Maung participated as a representative of Myanmar.

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 5, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



Challenge and change can come from embracing the unexpected. Learn as much as possible about whatever it is that makes you happy and peaceful. Happiness in your life will bring business success. Know that highly effective people never blame circumstances for their lack of results. Someone may try to undermine your confidence.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



A bad attitude will get you fired sooner or later, regardless of your skills. The more you judge people, the more you will push them away. Know that credibility is essential to producing results with ease, and the root of credibility is honesty. Never use strong words. Never say "yeah". Say "yes". You must develop objectivity to understand the value of social challenges.

ARIES | March 21 - April 19



Assess the appropriate level of risk for you in any situation. If you're not aware of who you are or what your potential is, then you don't have the tools to recognize how to improve. Realise that time goes by quickly. You have to go from a zone of certainty to one of uncertainty. Motivate yourself to be courageous for right challenges.

TAURUS | April 20 - May 20



Think what is the worst that could happen in a situation, and go forward with all your energy without wasting time on unproductive worrying. You should take a chance for the hell of it. Know that confrontation is a good thing that is at the core of honesty and your intellectual level. You have an unexplored possibility to change your mindset.

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



The more you are willing to accept responsibility for your actions, the more credibility you will have. Know that more opportunities will result in any relationship where perfunctory activities are replaced with those driven by necessity. Never make a proposal until you know what the other person wants and why.

CANCER | June 21 - July 22



Learn how to judge your own limitations. Know that nothing is gained by delusional and inflated ideas about your abilities. Say something real and see where it takes you. Stop pretending to be so damned polite, because being polite often means being dishonest. Take more responsibility for what you are actually communicating to others.

LEO | July 23 - Aug 22



Leadership is always up for grabs, and it's a common human trait to assume it. Know that threatening circumstances reveal the true leaders. Sound logic, openness and articulate expression of the things you believe may feel far away. You should smooth yourself out and define yourself as quickly as possible.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sept 22



Keep a close watch on your self-confidence meter. Great leaders play within their own sphere of talent, knowing that creeping over-confidence can wipe them out. Know that you control your thoughts, or your thoughts will control you. You should govern your habits or your habits will govern you. An envious person may attempt to undermine you with fear.

LIBRA | Sept 23 - Oct 22



Do good things, no matter how insignificant they seem, and don't worry about what you accomplish in the process. Never forget to be restrained and deliberate with your intellectual power. Attend to the realities of people today, not the mysteries of tomorrow, which can change against your expectation. Your impending change of love might be permanent.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



Contemplate yourself. Recognise the speck of contempt in your heart, and consider the various ways it can spread unhappiness and ineffectiveness through you. Turn and grow in a safer direction. Know that an echo is the reflection of its original voice, and extraordinary things happens sometimes. Love is unpleasant because of insurmountable obstacles.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



Strong willingness separates leaders from followers. Know that scars are part of the leadership landscape, and a willingness to endure them is part of accepting the job. You should get experience in sharing truth from the heart. Leaning on crutches of sympathy or high connections is a road leading to a blind alley. You can let your emotional success be known.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



Destiny rules wealth and wisdom moulds the long healthy life. Trifling annoyances get magnified as a result of major underlying problems. Remember that effective work is possible only with mental harmony. Hurrying or fretting over any task will not get it done faster or more efficiently. Don't let your emotions be greedy in love affairs.

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The Global Gossip



Actor Matt Damon takes part in the “Cities as Labs of Innovation” plenary session at the Clinton Global Initiative’s 10th Annual Meeting in New York on September 23. Photo: Michael Loccisano/ AFP

LOS ANGELES
Farrell, Vaughn to star in new ‘True Detective’ series
Irish star Colin Farrell and US actor Vince Vaughn are to co-star in the second series of the hit police drama *True Detective*, program makers announced September 23.
Farrell will play a detective under the thumb of a mobster and Vaughn a career criminal in the award-winning show, US cable network Home Box Office (HBO) said.
The first series of *True Detective*, co-starring Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson on the hunt of a serial killer in Louisiana, was a critical and popular hit, winning five Primetime Emmy awards.
The new season will tell the story of “three police officers and a career criminal (who) must navigate a web of conspiracy in the aftermath of a murder”, HBO said in a statement.
Filming of the new series, to air next year, will begin in the next few months in California.

PARIS
Record-breaking year for contemporary art
The contemporary art market experienced a record-breaking year in 2013-14, according to new figures released on September 23.
US artists Jean-Michel Basquiat, who died in 1988, Jeff Koons and Christopher Wool remain the market’s biggest stars, accounting for sales at auction of 339 million euros (\$436 million), according to Artprice, a Paris-based organisation.
In the year from July 2013, sales of contemporary art at public auctions reached \$2.046 billion dollars, up 40 percent on the previous year, Artprice’s annual report said.
Pop artist Koons currently holds the record for the most expensive work of art by a living artist ever sold at auction. His Balloon Dog went under the hammer in November 2013 at Christie’s in New York, for a record \$58.4 million.



A Balloon Dog sculpture by artist Jeff Koons sold for US\$58.4 million at Christie’s last fall, making it the most expensive piece by a living artist to sell at auction. Photo: AFP

The rest of Artprice’s top ten is made up of Zeng Fanzhi (China), Peter Doig (Britain), Richard Prince (US), Martin Kippenberger (Germany), and three more Chinese artists – Luo Zhongli, Chen Yifei and Zhan Xiaogang.



A model showcases a Pascal Millet dress at the Paris 2015 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear fashion show on September 23. Photo: AFP/ Bertrand Guay

SAN FRANCISCO
New comic book stars Facebook’s Sheryl Sandberg
The life of billionaire Facebook executive and *Lean In* author Sheryl Sandberg has been distilled into a 32-page comic book released last week.
Female Force: Sheryl Sandberg will be available in print and digital versions, according to publisher Bluewater Production. The publishing company’s Female Force line of biography-based comics has also spotlighted Hillary Clinton, Michelle Obama, Melinda Gates, Martha Stewart and Madonna.
“Sheryl Sandberg is a hero to many women,” Bluewater said. “So becoming a comic-book superhero was the next logical step.”
Sandberg, 45, a former Google executive, was catapulted onto the billionaire’s list by her stake in California-based Facebook, which saw its shares close at \$76.80 on the Nasdaq exchange on September 22.

NEW YORK
Radiohead hints at new album
Experimental rock giants Radiohead are working on a new album – or at least it would appear so from the cryptic messages of frontman Thom Yorke.
In recent days, Yorke made a series of suggestive tweets, including a link to an untitled picture of a white turntable, in between his calls for the world to fight climate change. In his most explicit message, Yorke said that he and Stanley – presumably longtime friend Stanley Donwood, who has designed Radiohead’s cover art – were “going through 15 years of discarded words and pictures”.
Yorke said that Radiohead has done “overdubs” in its studio but that the British rockers were in their “second day only”.
The hints would confirm a statement earlier this year by Radiohead lead guitarist Jonny Greenwood, who told the BBC that the band would start recording a new album in September.
The album would be Radiohead’s first since 2011’s *The King of Limbs*, which the band sold digitally from their website without a record label.



A model presents a creation by Christine Phung during the 2015 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris on September 23. Photo: AFP/Patrick Kovarik

PARIS
Guy Laroche serves up ‘no-nonsense’ looks for Paris fashion

HELEN ROWE JURGEN HECKER
GUY Laroche designer Marcel Marongiu opted for modern, feminine looks at the Paris ready-to-wear show on September 24 with a “no-nonsense” collection featuring streamlined graphic shapes, plunging necklines and experimental materials.

On day two of Paris fashion week, Marongiu teamed light silk overalls with bikini tops and tuxedos with shorts for a “light, effortless” silhouette.
Experimental materials included luminous acrylic glass on strappy *bain de soleil* dresses and light scratched leather that gave a rough sheen to bags, shoes and details on coats.
Marongiu, artistic director at Guy Laroche since 2007, is one of a raft of designers such as Hedi Slimane at Yves Saint Laurent and Alexander Wang at Balenciaga currently working to reinvent fabled fashion names for the modern market.
Prior to his appointment the house had seen a revolving door of designers attempt to breathe new life into it including Alber Elbaz, now at Lanvin, and Herve Leroux, founder

of the Herve Leger label.
The French-Swedish designer, who in the past has looked to David Bowie for inspiration, said the idea for his latest collection came from someone even closer to his heart than Bowie.
“The starting point of this is actually a picture of my mother,” he told AFP ahead of the show.
“My mother had a very interesting sense of style. She mixed freely. She was [a] very independent, intellectual woman.
“She could one day have cropped jeans with my father’s pea coat and the next day an embroidered little dress with a really tight waist. She played with everything. She was far from a fashion victim,” he said.
Marongiu’s summer 2015 collection, which came in a palette of butter yellow, eggshell, claret red, and navy, also featured dresses with laser-cut designs and tri-colour leather panels.
As well as his mother, Marongiu said he was inspired by the US designer Claire McCardell (1905-1958) who was renowned for her stylish yet affordable women’s sportswear.
Marongiu’s objective this season was to be both stylish and simple to wear.
“The collection opts for ... an overall no-nonsense approach,” the



Photos: AFP/Patrick Kovarik

house said in a statement.
Label founder Guy Laroche, who died in 1989, was known for clothes which were both wearable and high fashion. Signature looks included plunging neck and back lines.
“I don’t like throwing away fashion. I don’t like fast fashion,” Marongiu added.
“The work I’ve been doing for Guy Laroche is not much about fashion, it’s about style ... [it’s] not about a dated garment for one season,” he said.
Nine days of Paris ready-to-wear shows for spring/summer 2015 run until September 31. – AFP

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VITABIOTICS WHERE NATURE MEETS SCIENCE

Mission impossible in Patheingyi

I WAS sitting in a minivan with three local friends, and we were prowling the streets of Patheingyi on a mission.

Patheingyi is the fourth-largest urban area in the country, the capital of Ayeyarwady Region and a lively port at the centre of the delta's rice trade. We were trying to get our hands on a copy of a particular Myanmar-language book that told its history.

We located a cramped bookstore near the Central Market. The owner was familiar with the book, but said no copies were available as the writer had passed away two years ago. Given that the invention of the printing press has, for the past 500 years or so, obviated the need for living authors to crank out freshly handwritten originals, we found this rather odd reasoning.

Still, we soldiered on. Our next stop was the city's public library, which we found to be unburdened by printed material of any description. An underworked watchman in the lobby informed us that the knowledge-starved citizenry of Patheingyi had cultivated a habit of borrowing books but not returning them, thereby depleting the collection into nonexistence.

Our last hope was a mysterious cultural museum. It was not listed in the latest edition of *Lonely Planet*, but I had encountered a passing reference to it (sans address) online. One of my travel companions had heard about it too – from the friend of a friend. But none of the four Patheingyians we queried were aware of there being a

museum in their town.

Fortune smiled upon us when we noticed a bilingual sign for the Cultural Museum of Ayeyarwady Region as we passed its location on Mahabandoola Road, two blocks up from Strand Road.

The museum, established in 2012, held no books but did boast an array of colourful and copiously illustrated text panels crammed with useful information about the industries for which the area is famous, including paddy cultivation, salt production, mat weaving, *halawar* cookery and, of course, parasol making.

But the few panels dealing with “history” offered some questionable theories as fact, including the much-debated claim that the Pyu civilisation extended into areas of southern Myanmar traditionally rooted in Mon culture.

Another panel sought to impose an ethnic identity upon a 40-million-year-old fossil found near Mandalay, ostensibly proving that “Myanmar started from Myanmar”. This grandiose and insupportable attempt to politicise archaeology dates back to the dark ages of junta rule, and should probably be consigned to the propaganda archives rather than displayed in a museum.

Okay, forget about the history of Patheingyi.

We departed the museum and decided to spend the rest of the late afternoon taking photographs around the city.

About three minutes after this course of action was agreed upon, rain began pummeling us from the



DOUGLAS LONG

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sky and did not stop until 15 minutes after sundown, at which point we managed to get a few shots of the modest nighttime vegetable market along the river. We then retreated to a dimly lit restaurant for agreeably piquant steamed fish and cold beer.

Our goal for the next day was to visit Mawtinsoun Pagoda on the southwestern tip of Ayeyarwady Region.

It's possible to get there by boat along the Patheingyi River at a cost of only K3500 for locals and foreigners alike. Such a trip requires an overnight stay near the seaside pagoda before returning to Patheingyi the following day, and local authorities will call ahead to arrange basic monastic accommodation for travellers.

Unfortunately, our group didn't have time for an overnight trip, so we took our minivan instead. I had imagined this to involve a simple drive on a straight road through deltaic flatlands, but the outbound



Photo: Douglas Long

No guidebook? Sometimes that's when the adventure begins

trip turned into a five-and-a-half-hour odyssey on a surprisingly twisty, hilly and increasingly bumpy road through the southern reaches of the Rakhine Yoma.

When we arrived at Mawtin Point, there was no town to meet us: The road simply ended at the grey unruly ocean.

The complete lack of facilities was made more surprising by the fact that 30 minutes earlier we had seen a Coca-Cola delivery truck heading back toward Patheingyi. Despite the bold claim on the side of the vehicle that it was the “real thing,” the mystery of where this delightfully refreshing apparition had originated remained unsolved.

Mawtin Point sports two golden pagodas: Mawtinsoun Pagoda on a hilltop overlooking the sea, and Phaung Daw Oo about 100 metres offshore. The latter is said to mark the spot where King Alaung Sithu – who ruled Bagan from 1113 to 1160, and was renowned for his wide-ranging travels – once berthed his royal barge.

These pagodas teem with activity during the annual Mawtinsoun Pagoda Festival, held in the week leading up to the full moon of the lunar month of Tabaung (February or March). But during our visit we had the wild, beautiful coast to ourselves.

I was tempted to curse the lousy weather as my efforts to take photographs were complicated by ongoing struggles to control my wind-whipped umbrella with one hand while wielding my camera with the other.

But conditions weren't to blame. It was a pleasant day for walking, and the rain was only annoying insofar as it threatened to ruin my electronic gadgets.

The reality was that I would have enjoyed the pagoda experience to a much greater extent had I not felt obligated to commemorate the experience with my camera, and had

I granted myself the freedom to relax, get wet and register the moment in my own memory instead of on an SD card.

But I kept snapping away, at the behest of my 24.1-megapixel slave master, pausing only to light some candles at a shrine under the curious eye of a deaf, elderly pagoda attendant who was happy and helpful in a way that is rarely seen outside of Myanmar.

We descended a steep, narrow stairway from Mawtinsoun and waded out to Phaung Daw Oo along a concrete walkway that was slippery with algae. The footing was rendered even less sure by the steady assault of waves rolling across Mawtin Point from two directions at once – the Bay of Bengal on one side and the Andaman Sea on the other.

Before we departed the coast, we stopped at the lone restaurant onsite, a modest hut with a dirt floor and one item on offer: steamed rice and fried eggs. Our bellies full but unsatisfied, we then hastened back to Patheingyi at all possible speed, inspired to make the return journey in less than five hours by the promise of a decent dinner and a few bottles of beer.

Our last day in Patheingyi dawned sunny and bright. As we ate breakfast on the rooftop of Htike Myat San Motel, we could see dozens of white egrets roosting in an expansive tree near the river.

We took advantage of the good weather to buzz around town collecting the photos we had missed on our first day: serene Shwemokhtaw Pagoda, the forest-green façade of St Peter's Cathedral, the crowded Central Market. At the riverfront, we watched women haul rocks from a barge while men sat nearby playing games.

We also dedicated an hour to wandering around the delightfully

MORE ON PULSE 52



A woman paints a giant parasol at the Shwe Sar Umbrella Workshop. Photo: Douglas Long

Sleep

Htike Myat San Motel
8 Mahabandoola Road
042-22742, 09-422521866,
09-422521877

La Pyae Wun Hotel
30 Mingyi Road
042-24669

Day to Day Motel
Jail Street
042-23368

Eat

Myo Restaurant
5 Aung Yadanar Street

Top Star Restaurant
Strand Road

Other stuff

Shwe Sar Umbrella Workshop
653 Tawakyaung Road
042-25127, 09-250732227

Getting there

Buses depart Yangon from Hlaing Tharyar bus station west of the Yangon River and take about four hours each way (K6000). For those with more time, a far more interesting way to reach Patheingyi is on government-run ferries, which make the trip in 20 hours. Tickets cost US\$8 (K2070 for locals) for the deck and \$40 (K5160 for locals) for grungy cabins, and can be purchased at the Inland Water Transport Office on Mahabandoola Road.

Muang Thai Life Assurance opened the Representative Office in Yangon, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Eying to be ASEAN Hub



H.E.Dr. Maung Maung Thein Deputy Minister : Ministry of Finance & Revenue , H.E.Pisanu Suvanajata Ambassador of Thailand to Myanmar and Mr. Sara Lamsam President and Chief Executive Officer, Muang Thai Life Assurance Public Company Limited Jointly presided over Muang Thai Life Assurance Public Company Limited's Inauguration ceremony of the Representative Office in Yangon, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, where many representatives from both public and private sectors from Thailand and in Myanmar kindly attending this event.

The Representative Office, located on U Wisara's Road in downtown of Yangon, has an aim of serving as a center to provide service of information, advice and recommendation of relevant network concerning life insurance.





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Pantry recipes to pull out in a pinch



Photos: Phyo

food



QUICK STEWED BAKED BEANS
Serves 6

- 2 small onions
- 2 ripe tomatoes
- 1 can of baked beans in tomato sauce
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 7-8 fried dried chillies

Halve the onions and cut each half into six or eight slices. Halve the tomatoes and slice them into four or five wedges.
Add the oil to a wok and heat



PHYO ARBIDANS
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on high. Then turn the heat down and sauté the onions.
When the onions become translucent, add the tomatoes and fry for 1 minute more. Then add the baked beans. With 3 tbsp of water, rinse and add the leftover sauce from the tin. Let it boil.
When the beans start gently bubbling, add the fried dried chilli and stir through. Leave a minute.
When the sauce thickens, it's ready to serve.
Serve with rice or toast.

MY daughter passed the flu to me over the weekend, so I was totally crashed out on my bed last Sunday. All my shopping and photo plans for the column fell apart. I ended up checking my pantry to see what I could produce. Honestly, I wanted to cook something very easy and yummy that might renew my appetite.
I keep green and red curry pastes and sambal paste in my pantry, and some mince is always in the freezer in case I have to multiply the meal to accommodate surprise guests or don't get a chance to go to the market.
A few weeks ago, I found an MSG-free Thai curry paste called Dancing Chef at Marketplace, so I bought a few to stock up. So I made stir-fried pork mince with spicy red curry paste. To dilute the heat, I added the juice and zest of an orange.

I also saw that John had bought baked beans in tomato sauce for his breakfast and lunch, so I took one of the cans and made it into a stew with inspiration from a recipe of my mum's friend.
Well, things didn't turn out the way I planned. Writing this, I myself still don't feel well. But luckily the "plan B" menu worked.
RED CURRY PORK MINCE IN ORANGE SAUCE
Serves 6

- 500g pork mince
- 1 tsp ginger, grated
- 1 tbsp Kikkoman soya sauce
- 2 tbsp red curry paste
- 4 onions
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 orange (zest and juice)

Using kitchen paper, pat the pork mince dry. In a glass bowl, mix it

with the soya sauce and 1 tbsp of the red curry paste. Leave it for an hour at least.
Cut the onions roughly. Add the oil to a wok and heat it on high. Turn down to medium and sauté the onions. When they become transparent, add the garlic and ginger. Fry until the aroma of the garlic emerges.
Add the remaining red curry paste and fry for 1 minute more. Adjust the heat to control the oil spitting.
Add the mince to the wok, and use a wooden spatula to crumble it. Stir it well, bringing the heat back to medium-high.
After all the water in the mince has been cooked off, add the orange juice and ¼ cup of water. As soon as it starts bubbling, turn the heat down to simmer. Then add the orange zest and stir well. Simmer for 5 minutes to infuse the flavours.
Serve with rice.

Local seafood chain still dishing up fresh and flavourful Rakhine specialities

ZON PANN PWINT
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FOR the coastal-dwelling Rakhine, seafood and fish are central to the diet. They love to eat fiery, sour curries featuring coriander, lemon grass, chillies and lemon juice. Locally, this food is served at a long-running Yangon establishment called Minn Lan Rakhine Traditional Hand-pressed Monti & Fresh Seafood Restaurant.
The name of the restaurant derives from the street where the owners first opened, in Minn Lan, south Sayasan Ward, Bahan township. There are now five branches in Yangon. The other part of its name derives from the fact that the menu features Rakhine *monti* – a bowl of sour and spicy soup with fish slices, accompanied by rice noodles and seafood brought fresh from Chaungtha beach. Last week I visited the location in Thingangyun.

The restaurant is a lovely place. The tables are made of rough wood bevelled at the edges. There is also a large car park, and it is a short distance away from the main road so that the noise of traffic is hardly heard.
The restaurant's famous dish is seashell curry (K3500), in either a spicy or sweet style. We ordered a bowl of the spicy curry, but we asked the staff to reduce the spiciness because our taste buds aren't used to so much chilli. We also ordered sides of rice, seaweed salad (K1000) and a fried sweet vegetable (K1500).
About 10 minutes later, our seaweed salad arrived. Shrimp and fish pastes are used as condiments, as

are thinly sliced onions and small dried fish. Moments later our main course came.
The curry was sour and light but very delicious, although the meat of the seafood was rather tough to eat. The seaweed itself was fresh but the sauce very spicy; it went well with rice.
There was nothing special about the fried vegetables, which in style and ingredients were what you'd find in a Chinese restaurant.
The restaurant also offers fried or roasted crabs and giant prawns, as well as a spicy crab curry. But these items are significantly more expensive, ranging from K7500 to K15,000.
Fresh juice is also available. Rakhine foods are sour, spicy and also particularly salty, and you can find them at many food stalls in Yangon. But the quality of Minn Lan's seafood, directly imported from the beach, makes it stand out.

Restaurant Review



Serving up a bowl of piping hot seafood *monti*. Photos: Yu Yu

Minn Lan Seafood Restaurant

Near Aung Yadanar Clinic,
Waizayandar Road, Thingangyun
Phone 01-558548, 09-30170200

Restaurant Rating
★★★★★

Food	7
Beverage	7
Service	8
Value for money	8
X-factor	8



Midweek at Mojo

Friends gathered to enjoy spins by DJs Nice and Y at Mojo bar on September 24.



DJ Nice and DJ Y



Wai Yan



Min Zayar Oo



Thet Htoo



Saw Nang and Hong Sar



Film festival opens

The 4th Wathann Film Festival got under way at The Yangon Gallery on September 25. The festival, founded by filmmaker Thu Thu Shein, featured independent films by local and international directors as well as a filmmaking master class and a wrap-up party with Side Effect at Institut Français on September 28.



TRI

Men / Shirt

100% Cotton





Myanmar haute-couture

The Yangon fashion industry gathered at Myanmar Event Park on September 19 and 20 for a major show of the Myanmar Fashion Designer Group. The 28 designers each showed 17 new creations in what was their biggest event since their founding in 2010.



Family Brunch at The Emporia Restaurant

5 October 2014 (Sunday), 11.30 am to 2.30 pm

US\$ 30.00 nett per person

Buffet Brunch with a glass of Wine, Beer or soft drink.

"Meet & Greet with Mickey Mouse & Minnie Mouse at 12.00 o'clock"

Chance to win Lucky Draw for Disney Live! Three Classic Fairy Tales show tickets.



KIDS SPECIAL

Children Under 5 years FOC and Under 12 years HALF PRICE.

Lot of activities for the kids.

Special Kids Menu with ICE CREAM CORNER.

For reservation, 95 1 544 500 Ext:6253 (or) fb.chry@chatrium.com

CHATRIUM
HOTEL
ROYAL LAKE - YANGON

40 Natmauk Road, Tarmwe Township,
Yangon, Myanmar
T + 95 1 544500 | F + 95 1 544500
E info.chry@chatrium.com
www.chatrium.com/chatrium_hotel_yangon

DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
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	
YJ 891	2,4,5,6,7	6:00	8:05	
YH 917	1,2,3,4,7	6:10	8:30	
Y5 775	Daily	6:15	7:25	
6T 401	5	6:20	8:25	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	6:20	8:25	
YJ 891	1,3	6:30	8:35	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	8:40	
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	2,4,6	11:00	14:00	
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	
YJ 601	6	11:00	12:25	
YJ 761	4	11:00	12:55	
YJ 201	2	11:00	12:55	
YJ 211	5,7	11:00	12:25	
YJ 761	1	11:15	13:10	
7Y 631	2,4,6	11:15	12:40	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	16:35	
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	
YJ 891	2,4,5,6,7	6:00	7:20	
YH 917	1,2,3,4,7	6:10	7:45	
6T 401	3,5	6:20	7:40	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	6:20	7:40	
YJ 891	1,3	6:30	7:50	
YH 917	5,6	6:30	8:05	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	7:50	
6T 411	7	7:00	8:20	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	17:25	
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	
YH 824	1	7:00	9:40	
YH 828	2,6	7:00	10:00	
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	
YJ 201	2	11:00	14:20	

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	
YJ 891	2,4,5,6,7	8:20	10:15	
YH 918	1,2,3,4,7	8:30	10:25	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	8:40	10:05	
6T 402	5	8:45	10:45	
YJ 891	1,3	8:50	10:45	
K7 223/7Y 112	Daily	8:55	11:00	
W9 201	Daily	9:10	11:05	
W9 153/YJ 7153	7	12:45	19:30	
W9 153/YJ 7153	2,5	12:45	18:50	
7Y 742	2,5	14:00	18:18	
YH 730	4	14:00	19:15	
7Y 852	1,3,7	14:25	18:40	
7Y 842	4,6	14:30	18:15	
W9 7152/YJ 152	1,3,6	15:05	16:30	
YJ 602	6	15:40	17:05	
YJ 212	5,7	16:00	17:25	
YJ 202	2	16:00	17:25	
7Y 632	2,4,6	16:15	17:40	
YH 728	1	16:30	17:55	
YJ 762	4	17:45	19:10	
K7 225/7Y 222	Daily	16:50	19:00	
YH 738	3,5,7	17:10	18:35	
YH 730	2,6	17:45	19:10	
YJ 762	1	18:00	19:25	
Y5 776	Daily	19:35	20:45	

NYAUNG U TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	7:35	10:15	
YH 918	1,2,3,4,7	7:45	10:25	
6T 401	5	7:55	10:45	
W9 7143/YJ 143	Daily	7:55	10:05	
6T 401	3	8:00	10:10	
YJ 891	7	8:05	10:45	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	8:05	11:00	
YH 918	5,6	8:05	10:10	
6T 412	7	8:40	10:10	
K7 225/7Y 222	Daily	17:40	19:00	
W9 211	1,2,3,5,6	18:25	19:45	
W9 7211/YJ 211	4	18:25	19:45	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 825	1	9:40	12:05	
YH 829	2,6	10:00	12:25	
7Y 852	1,3,7	13:00	18:40	
W9 7152/YJ 152	1,3,6	13:35	16:30	
YJ 211	5,7	14:05	17:25	
YJ 202	2	14:35	17:25	

YJ 211	5,7	11:00	13:50
YJ 761	4	11:00	16:05
YJ 761	1	11:15	16:20
7Y 631	2,4,6	11:15	14:35
YH 826	4	14:00	16:40

YANGON TO HEHO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	2,4,5,6,7	6:00	8:50	
YH 917	1,2,3,4,7	6:10	9:15	
6T 401	3	6:20	8:40	
6T 401	5	6:20	9:20	
YJ 891	1,3	6:30	9:20	
K7 222/7Y 111	Daily	6:30	9:30	
YH 917	5,6	6:30	9:00	
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	
YJ 201	2	11:00	12:10	
YJ 761	4	11:00	12:10	
YJ 751	3	11:15	12:25	
YJ 761	1	11:15	12:25	
YH 727	1	11:00	12:25	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:00	12:25	
YH 729	4	11:00	17:50	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	14:30	15:45	

YANGON TO SITTWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
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 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	
7Y 741	2,5	9:00	10:38	
YJ 761	1	11:00	15:40	
YJ 751	3	11:15	13:30	
YH 729	2,4,6	11:00	13:00	

YANGON TO PUTAO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
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	

7Y 632	2,4,6	14:50	17:40
YJ 762	4	16:20	19:10
YJ 762	1	16:35	19:25
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

HEHO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 918	5,6	9:00	10:10	
6T 402	3	9:00	10:10	
YJ 891	2,4,5,6,7	9:05	10:15	
YH 918	1,2,3,4,7	9:15	10:25	
YJ 891	1,3	9:35	10:45	
6T 402	5	9:35	10:45	
K7 223/7Y 112	Daily	9:45	11:00	
W9 201	Daily	9:55	11:05	
YJ 201	2	12:25	17:25	
YJ 761	4	12:25	19:10	
YJ 761	1	12:40	19:25	
7Y 741	2,5	13:15	18:18	
7Y 841	4,6	13:45	18:15	
7Y 852	1,3,7	15:10	18:40	
YH 728	1	15:45	17:55	
K7 224/7Y 221	Daily	16:00	19:00	
YH 738	3,5,7	16:25	18:35	
YJ 752	3	17:30	18:40	
YH 730	4	17:50	19:15	

SITTWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 7311/YJ 311	4	13:35	15:00	
W9 311	2	13:35	15:00	

MYEIK TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 634	3,4,5,7	11:25	13:25
K7 320/7Y 532	1,3,5	11:20	13:25
K7 320/7Y 532	2,4,6,7	11:30	13:35

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	1,2,3,5,6,7	9:50	11:45
PG 702	Daily	10:30	12:25
TG 302	Daily	14:55	16:50
PG 708	Daily	15:20	17:15
8M 331	Daily	16:30	18:15
PG 704	Daily	18:20	20:15
TG 306	Daily	19:45	21:45

YANGON TO DON MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4231	Daily	8:00	9:50
FD 252	Daily	8:30	10:15
FD 254	Daily	17:50	19:10
DD 4239	Daily	21:00	22:45

YANGON TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 233	Daily	10:10	14:40
SQ 997	Daily	10:35	15:10
3K 582	Daily	11:20	15:50
8M 231	Daily	12:45	17:10
MI 533	4,6	13:45	20:50
MI 517	Daily	16:40	21:15
TR 2827	Daily	19:05	23:40
3K 584	Daily	19:15	23:45

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	3,7	23:50	0550+1

YANGON TO GUANGZHOU			
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	18:25
MU 2032	2,4,5,6,7	14:50	18:20

YANGON TO HANOI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 956	1,3,5,7	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	8:00	11:10

YANGON TO SEOUL			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:35	9:10
KE 472	Daily	23:35	7:50

YANGON TO HONG KONG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	1,2,3,4,5,7	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	4	19:45	21:00
BG 061	1	21:45	23:00

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 MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 245	1,2,4,6	12:45	15:00

MANDALAY TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	14:40	17:30

MANDALAY TO GAYA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 603	4	11:10	12:15

NAY PYI TAW TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 722	1,2,3,4,5	19:30	22:30

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 303	1,2,3,5,6,7	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 MUEANG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4230	Daily	6:20	7:05
FD 251	Daily	7:15	8:00
FD 253	Daily	16:20	17:00
DD 4238	Daily	19:30	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	4,6	11:35	12:55
MI 518	Daily	14:20	15:45
TR 2826	Daily	17:05	18:25
Y5 234	Daily	15:35	17:05
3K 583	Daily	18:00	19:30
8M 232	Daily	18:15	19:40

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	1,3,5,6	12:50	13:50
8M 9507	Daily	13:30	14:40
MH 742	Daily	13:30	14:40
AK 502	Daily	17:50	19:00

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 715	3,7	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	2,4,5,6,7	13:30	14:00

HANOI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 957	1,3,5,7	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	20:20	6:25+1

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	1,2,4,5,6,7	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	4	16:30	18:45
BG 060	1	18:30	20:45

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	1,2,4,6	10:50	12:15

KUNMING TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2029	Daily	13:55	13:50
MU 7524	1,3,5	18:20	21:00

GAYA TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 604	4	13:15	16:20

BANGKOK TO NAY PYI TAW			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:00	19:00

International Airlines			
Air Asia (FD) Tel: 251885, 251886			
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, 255265. Fax: 255119			
Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BG) Tel: 371867-68. Fax: 371869			
Condor (DE) Tel: 370836-39 [ext: 303]			
Dragonair (KA) Tel: 255320, 255321. Fax: 255329			
Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5) Tel: 09400446999, 09400447999 Fax: 8604051			
Malaysia Airlines (MH) Tel: 387648, 241007 [ext: 120, 121, 122] Fax: 241124			
Myanmar Airways International (8M) Tel: 255260. Fax: 255305			
Nok Airline (DD) Tel: 255050, 255021. Fax: 255051			
Qatar Airways (QR) Tel: 379845, 379843, 379831. Fax: 379730			
Singapore Airlines (SQ) / Silk Air (MI) Tel: 255287-9. Fax: 255290			
Thai Airways (TG) Tel: 255491-6. Fax: 255223			
Tiger Airline (TR) Tel: 371383, 370836-39 [ext: 303]			
Vietnam Airlines (VN) Tel: 255066, 255088, 255068. Fax: 255086			

Airline Codes	
3K	= Jet Star
8M	= Myanmar Airways International
AK	= Air Asia
BG	= Biman Bangladesh Airlines
CA	= Air China
CI	= China Airlines
CZ	= China Southern
DD	= Nok Airline
FD	= Air Asia
KA	= Dragonair
KE	= Korea Airlines
MH	= Malaysia Airlines
MI	= Silk Air
MU	= China Eastern Airlines
NH	= All Nippon Airways
PG	= Bangkok Airways
QR	= Qatar Airways
SQ	= Singapore Airways
TG	= Thai Airways
TR	= Tiger Airline
VN	= Vietnam Airline
Y5	= Golden Myanmar Airlines
Subject to change without notice	

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

TURN UP THE A/C By Gary Cooper

ACROSS

- 1 Extensive tale
- 5 First murderer
- 9 Allotted (with "out")
- 14 Cattle-moving tool
- 15 Certainly not pro
- 16 One place to step
- 17 College professors travel in them
- 20 Cause for a crime
- 21 Holiday entree
- 22 Coop mom
- 23 Bookworm, scornfully
- 25 Computer fare
- 27 Grand ____ (wine designation)
- 30 It might have the shakes
- 32 Annoy continually
- 36 Polaroid inventor Edwin
- 38 Stewpot, or its contents
- 40 Household insect, briefly
- 41 Political money-raiser
- 44 It might rock your world
- 45 City on its own Great Lake
- 46 Goes against God
- 47 Early round, perhaps
- 49 Army and fire insects
- 51 Word between two surnames, for women
- 52 Narc chaser?
- 54 Galena and 69-Across
- 56 "Hold on just a ____!"
- 58 Garden store offering
- 60 "Sudden ____" (Eastwood film)
- 64 South Pole area
- 67 Brown in a pan
- 68 Flowing Roman garment
- 69 Wrinkle remover
- 70 Employed a keyhole
- 71 Seed covering
- 72 Attains

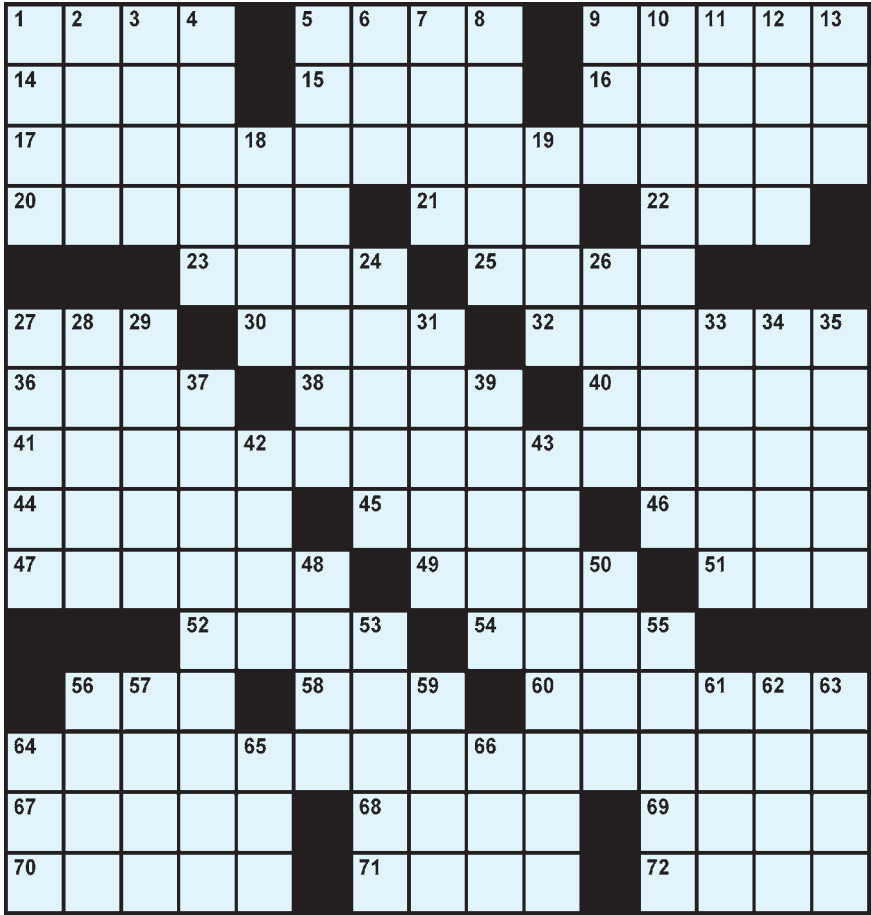
DOWN

- 1 Junk mail, Internet-style

- 2 With a bow, to Stern
- 3 Nanny, for one
- 4 Contribute during preparation
- 5 Highest peak on Africa's west coast
- 6 Vanna turnover?
- 7 Calamine-lotion target
- 8 Rechargeable battery
- 9 Scuff or scratch, e.g.
- 10 Type of onion plants (Var.)
- 11 Flat piece for floor
- 12 Genesis garden
- 13 ____ Plains, Ill.
- 18 "... happily ____ after"

- 19 Mosque prayer leader
- 24 Fellini's "La ____ Vita"
- 26 Aaron Spelling's actress daughter
- 27 Hold firmly and tightly
- 28 Indy 500 participant
- 29 Loosen, as shoes
- 31 Botanist's interest
- 33 Dine at home
- 34 It may be stolen while hundreds look on
- 35 "We hold ____ truths ..."
- 37 Put out of place, as a shoulder
- 39 Type of acid
- 42 Skip by
- 43 Composed in verse

- 48 File-drawer label
- 50 Big rig on the road
- 53 Terra ____ (brown-red)
- 55 Mistletoe branch
- 56 Click, as the fingers
- 57 Vanity case for milady
- 59 Christian of fashion
- 61 43,560 square feet
- 62 "Colt" anagram
- 63 Change for a hundred
- 64 Horse's kin
- 65 Wine selection
- 66 Some film special effects, for short



DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



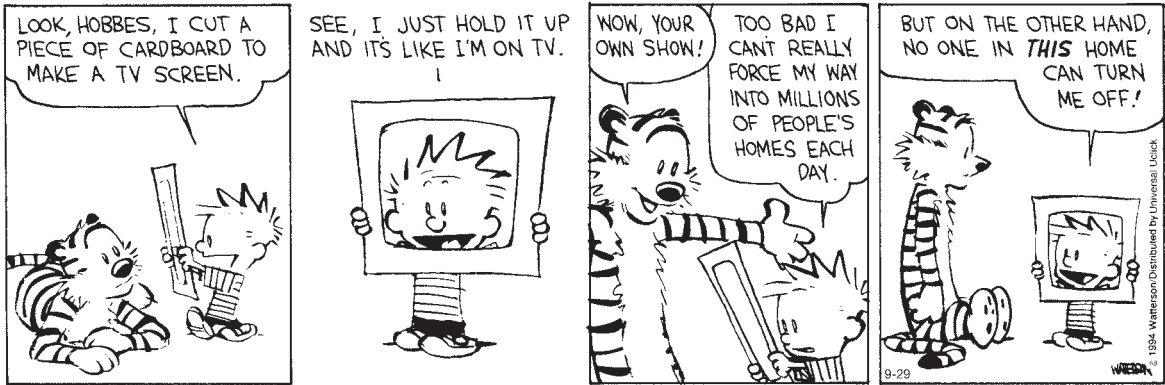
PEANUTS

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.



10/2

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

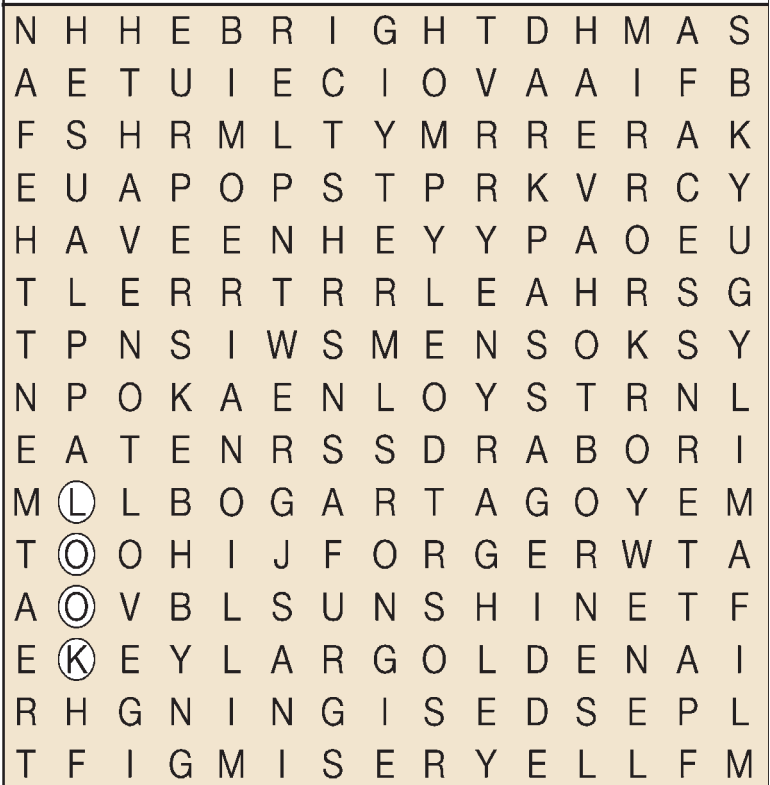
WONDERWORD

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.

LAUREN BACALL (1924-2014)

Solution: 8 letters



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9/29

Applause, Betty, Bogart, Bright, Dark Passage, Designing, Faces, Family Guy, Film, Forger, Gift, Golden, Grew, Harper, Have Not, Horn, Humphrey, Jason, Key Largo, Leaf, Leslie, Look, Love, Marry, Millionaire, Mirror, Misery, Mr. North, New York, Patterns, Perske, Robards, Sam, Shock, Stephen, Sunshine, The Big Sleep, The Fan, To Have, Treatment, Voice, Yoga

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France 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 212178, 212520, email: ambaf rance. rangoun@diplomatie.fr

Germany 9, Bogyoke 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

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Japan 100, Natmauk Rd, Yangon. Tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643

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Netherlands 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

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Switzerland No 11, Kabaung Lane, 5 ½ mile, Pyay Rd, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 534754, 507089.

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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 Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673.

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4, Shweli Rd, Bet: Inya Rd & U Wisara Rd, Kamaryut, tel: 525781, 526872



No. (356/366), Kyaikkasan Rd, Tamwe Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 542826, Fax: 545650 Email: reservation@ edenpalacehotel.com



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(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.



186, Lu Nge Thitsar Street, on Thitsar Road, Yankin Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: +951-8550 283, +951-8550 284, +959-2540 63632, E-mail: enquiry@hotelyankin.com, www.hotelyankin.com

Inya Lake Resort Hotel

37 Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. tel: 662866. fax: 665537.

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28-A, 7 Miles, Pyay Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Ph: 95-1-652532, 652533



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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.

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42, Than Lwin Rd, Bahan Tsp. Tel: 503734, 524387. email: reservation@winner innmyanmar.com

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Yuzana Garden Hotel

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 Police emergency ☎tel: 199.
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 Red Cross ☎tel:682600, 682368
Traffic Control Branch ☎tel:298651
Department of Post & Telecommunication ☎tel: 591384, 591387.
Immigration ☎tel: 286434.
Ministry of Education ☎tel:545500m 562390
Ministry of Sports ☎tel: 370604, 370605
Ministry of Communications ☎tel: 067-407037.
Myanma Post & Telecommunication (MPT) ☎tel: 067-407007.
Myanma Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs ☎tel: 067-412009, 067-412344.
Ministry of Health ☎tel: 067-411358-9.
Yangon City Development Committee ☎tel: 248112.

HOSPITALS

Central Women's Hospital ☎tel: 221013, 222811.
Children Hospital ☎tel: 221421, 222807
Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital ☎tel: 543888.
Naypyitaw Hospital (emergency) ☎tel: 420096.
Worker's Hospital ☎tel: 554444, 554455, 554811.

Yangon Children Hospital ☎tel: 222807, 222808, 222809.
Yangon General Hospital (East) ☎tel: 292835, 292836, 292837.
Yangon General Hospital (New) ☎tel: 384493, 384494, 384495, 379109.
Yangon General Hospital (West) ☎tel: 222860, 222861, 220416.
Yangon General Hospital (YGH) ☎tel: 256112, 256123, 281443, 256131.

ELECTRICITY

Power Station ☎tel:414235

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General Post Office 39, Bo Aung Kyaw St. (near British Council Library). ☎tel: 285499.

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Yangon International Airport ☎tel: 662811.

YANGON PORT

Shipping (Coastal vessels) ☎tel: 382722

RAILWAYS

Railways information ☎tel: 274027, 202175-8.

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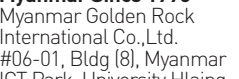


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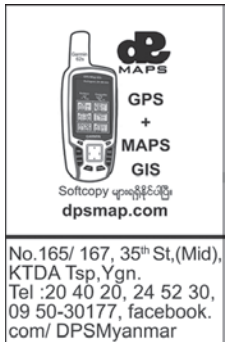
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WE DO teach Myanmar language 4 skills for Foreigners by Teacher TUN. Available home & group class. Basic Class - 3 months, Intermediate Class- 3 months, Advanced Class-3 months. English for adults and young learners. We do teach 4 skills face or group class. Available home tuition or group class. Chinese language for all grades & classes. Taiwan Teacher Mr. Lin; William Lin (BM, IDCS (UK), TW Civil (Taiwan), USB Accounting, Yunan Uni Dip (China)) teach 4 skills to be a native speaker. Intend to go abroad study or work students. Can contact us. Basic Class - 3 months, Intermediate Class- 4 months, Advanced Class- 6 months, Super Advanced Class- 6 months. We do service of interpreting Chinese-Myanmar service. Japanese for all students who want to go to Japan for work or study. We do teach 4 skills and

practice very well. Mr. William Lin : Ph: 09-4211-47821.

Training



We provide the following Training, CISCO, CCNA, CCNP, MICROSOFT, MCSA, MCSE, LAB, EC-COUNCIL CEH, SECURITY ADMIN. www.facebook.com/imcscompany, 09-4500-16040.

ROYAL JOURNEYS, Learn English for life : How to make English part of your lifestyle, English communication skills, Business English, Hospitality & tourism Management, Management leadership & superiortraining. 61, 1A Flr, 13 St, Bet: Anawrahta Rd & Mahabandoola Rd, Landmadaw tsp. Ph: 09-4316-6443.

CUSTOMIZED Web Development, Customized Web Development starting from as cheap as 500USD. Pls contact at 09-520-8455

WEB DESIGN Training Sat & Sun: 8:00am - 10:00pm. Contact: 09-4211-44937

WEB DEVELOPMENT with Drupal CMS. Sat & Sun: 1:00pm-3:00pm. Ph: 09-4211-44937.

BASIC, DTP (Page maker, Corel Draw, Graphic Design (Page maker, Corel Draw (or) Illustrator, Photo shop), Web Design, AutoCad (2D/3D), AutoCad (CIVIL Only), AutoCad (Mechanical Only), 3dsMax, Micro station, Excel special, Ms Access, LCCI I, II (Mon, Tue 7-9 am, Fri, Sat 6-8 pm), LCCI III, MYOB, UBS, Peachtree, Auto Count, Japanese language (N-5, N-4, N-3) ICTC Computer Technology Center. Ph: 09-2540-86001, 09-4925-5368

YOGA CLASS only for females by Indian instructor. Interested persons pls contact at shilpi_19sep@rediffmail.com or shilpi.19sep@gmail.com

Travel

TESUAN Travel & Tour, Travel Agent License: Kha-2375, Tour programs - Yangon & Environs 1 Day Tour. Yangon

& Pyu city Package Tour. Yangon-Golden Rock Optional Tour. Buddhist Pilgrimage Tour, Adventure & Eco Tour, Hotel & Air Ticket Reservation, Car Rental & Travel Insurance, Office: 3/B, Ground Flr, Hledan 1st St, 3rd Qtr, Kamayut, Yangon, Tel: 511298, 09-302-85183, 09-732-38306, Email: tesuantour.co.mm@gmail.com, www.tesuanmyanmar.com

SWAN SAUNG YEE Travel & Tours Co., Ltd. Bldg (D/B), Rm (002), Thitsar Residence, South Okkalapa, Yangon. Kyaik Hti Yoe (1N/2D)-80,000/-ks per pax. Chaung Tha (2N/3D)-93,000/-ks per pax. Bagan-Popa (3N/4D)-138,900/-ks per pax. Mandalay-Sa-ga-i-n-g-l-n-n-w-a-(3N/4D)-156,000/-ks per pax. Ph: 01-562917, 09-8611-864

TAXI, Service Near, Parkroyal Hotel, Air Conditioner Car, English Speaking Driver, One hour 5000 kyats, 09-317-75734.

GO GO UP Travel & Tours Limited : Hot price to Thailand Bangkok - Pattaya, USD 460 (Hot Price) 4 days 3 nights. Bangkok - Pattaya - Ayutthaya, USD 560 (Hot Price) 5 days 4 nights. Honeymoon Package @ Paradise Island USD 550 (Hot Price) 4 days 3 nights. Tel : (01) 523602, 09-732-07333, 09-4480-13235

MYAT THU Car Rental, Various types of car rent for daily or monthly use. Alphard, Surf, Prado, Super Custom, Grand Carvin. Ph: 09-4500-20233, 09-540-1236 Email: mt.carbusiness@gmail.com.

"ASIAN Bliss Myanmar" Travel & Tour (Car Rental Services) Bldg 289, room 3 east yankin 09-519-1785, 09-731-18957

Public Notices

TRAINED Domestic Helper available. Knowledge of all household works, including infants and elderly people care. Tel : 09-315-75765, 09-2506-49927.

MITA Myanmar Investment, Trade & Technology Conference, Workshop and Exhibition will be held during 25-27 Sept 2014 UMFCCL, Yangon. The Best Conference, Exhibition & Workshop @ Reasonable Fees in Myanmar! for more info, please visit: www.mita-myanmar-investment-trade-technology-conference.com, Ph: 09420110451, 09-4201-10666, Email: maizar@mitaservices.com.sg

Property

Housing for Rent

OFFICE SUITES for Lease, Pearl Centre, Bahan Township, Kabar Aye Pagoda Road, 500-10,000 sq-ft available at affordable rates. Contact: 09 430 30 288 slee888@gmail.com

HILAING THAR YAR, (Ware house & Factory) (1)11000 sqft, 315 KVA (2)12000 sqft, 315 KVA on land 2 Acre. Ph: 09-4237-55335.

ON PYAY ROAD, 7 mile, single house, land (60 x 90), teak wood ceiling & flooring, 2MB, 3AC, near Norwegian Embassy & UNOPS, quiet residential area, suitable for expats, USD 2,500. No agent. Ph: 09-515-6769.

THANGAN GYUN, Mya Yamon Water Front Villa, 3 Storey with fully furniture, swimming pool, steam room, water fall. For foreiner only. Ph: 320334, 09-510-3207.

BAHAN, Near Chatrium Hotel, Po Sein Road, Quiet Surrounding, Small two-stories house, 3 rooms, with toilet, AC, teak parquet flooring, with cable phone., with wide carparking, with materoom. USD 2500 per month, No brokers sees, Contact: 09-430-24808, 09-2500-26350.

OFFICE SPACE TO LET 3100 sqm available over 5 floors in a 12-storey building with car park, restaurant, multi function hall and apartments. Please contact - Ph : 09-431-34381. Email : office-mm@uniteammarine.com, web : www.facebook.com/officespaceyangon

DAGON, Near Parkroyal Hotel, Condo with lift, 1250 sqft, 3 AC, fully furnished, with cable phone, one master bed room, one single room with balcony, 250 USD per month, Contact: 09-430-24808.

(1).Pansodan Tower 1800 sqft, 2 Rooms, 2-lifts, New building (2). 2RC Hlay Tan, Near by the Diamond Condo (3). Mingalardon Industry zone factory, 100'x100', store 80'x80', New building (4). 7 miles Si Taw Gyi Condo, 3400 Sqft, Hall. Ph: 09-731-54071, 514802.

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(1).Near Sayar San Rd, Suitable for office, single

house, land (60x100), 2 RC, USD 4000 (2).Near Yankin center, suitable for office, Showroom, restaurant, 3 stories, one stories, 800 Sqft, USD 3600. (3).On the Shwegondine Rd, 3 stories, good for use office, good for use show room, one stories 1000 Sqft, USD 4000. (4).Near Japan Embassy, single house, 2 RC, 4900 Sqft, 4 MBR, 1 SR, USD 7000. Ph : 09-4921- 4276, 09-4211-77105

CLASSIC STRAND Condominium, (1)suitable for office, 2280 sqft (2,500 sqft with mezzanine), 3rd floor, wide open space, 14 ft ceilings, face river. New building with gym, car park, cafe, facilities. Prime downtown location between Strand Rd and Merchant St, close to strand hotel/union bar. 6,000 USD per month. (2) 1,500 sqft, 8th floor, 3 bedroom corner unit with excellent view of river. New building with gym, car park, cafe, facilities. Prime downtown location between Strand Rd and Merchant St, close to strand hotel/union bar. 3,600 USD per month. wongyifj@gmail.com. Ph: 09-4200-04585, 09-4211-02223, 09-2544-08789

M Y A N I G O N E, Sanchaung, Min St, First Flr, All furniture. One bed room, one kitchen, one bathroom (The balcony), 1 RC, 1 month) 600 US, Shan Shan, Ph: 09-731-92603, Moe Hein, Ph: 09-4250-18442.

BAHAN, Sayasan Rd, In Pyidaungsu Lane, conveniently located close to schools, businesses, restaurants & offices. House is completely renovated with beautiful wood flooring, tiles & all western style bath & kitchen. 3,800sqft, 3MBR, 2SR, 4 bathrooms total, located on over 7,500 sf of land. Also located in quiet residential neighborhood. Suitable for residence or office, immediately available. Please call Myat Thu at 09 2543 82482.

CONDO, Near Parkroyal Hotel, Nawaday Rd, Nawaday Condo, 25'x50', 1MBR, 1SR, 3AC, 1 Cable phone, with lift, Car parking. Ph: 09-312-87827, 09-317-75734.

Housing for Sale

CONDO, 650 sqft. Star City Building 1. Including Well furnished. Offer price: 1250 lkhs. Contact: 09-2506-38104 (Aung San Htun)

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CLASSIC STRAND Condominium suitable for office, 2280 sqft (2,500 sqft with mezzanine), 3rd floor, wide open space, 14 ft ceilings, face river. New building with gym, car park, cafe, facilities. Prime downtown location, close to strand hotel/union bar. wongyifj@gmail.com. 09-4200-04585, 09-4211-02223, 09254408789

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Employment

UN Positions

THE UNITED NATIONS World Food Programme, is seeking (1)**Senior Logistics Assistant** (CTS) GS-7, Yangon (2) **Field Monitor Assistant** GS-4, Magwe. For more information, please visit to <http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals>. Please Email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org <<mailto:wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org>> COB 03 October 2014.

Ingo Position

THE INT'L Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking **Field Manager** 1 post in Muse, Northern Shan State : University degree in Management, Community Development or equivalent field. 5 years of senior management experience and/or community development. Fluently in English/Burmese and excellent report writing skills. Computer skills in Microsoft Office; Excel and Strong Computer skill. Please send a Cover letter, CV & all relevant documents to the HR Department to email at WaiMar.Naing@rescue.org or by delivery to the IRC Office : 33/A, Natmauk Lan Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Qtr, Bahan, Yangon. Closing date : 6th October, 2014.

THE Association of Medical Doctors of Asia is seeking **Nurse** (2 positions). Sub-offices, (Tar Shwe Htan, Shaokai & Kone Gyan base): Nurse certificate or related degree holder. Two-year post registration experience (Experience in the development sector would be an asset). Good language skills in Chinese (Kokang) & Myanmar (other language skills such as Palaung & Myaung Zee would be asset). Please enclose a C.V, copies of testimonials (references) & photo to Senior Officer, Admin/Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Program Office, 19/B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin, Yangon. Email: sr.afo.amda@gmail.com Closing date : 30th September 2014.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking (1) **Livelihood Project Coordinator** 1 post in Sittwe : Myanmar National. Relevant University degree. 3 years experience in livelihood field with increasing responsibilities in project/program management. Computer literacy in both Myanmar & English. (2) **Assistant Manager** (IT) 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: BE (IT) or B.C.Sc or IADCS, MCSE, CCNA and IT Diploma. Experience in SQL server database & web development. Cisco Router & Switch configuration & troubleshooting. 5 years experience in IT field. Knowledge of the Microsoft Virtual Server platform and associated System Centre services. 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 mrshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 29-9-2014.

THE Association of Medical Doctors of Asia is seeking **Medical Coordinator** 1 post in AMDA Laukai Field

Office : M.B.B.S, 2 years experience (INGO experience would be an asset). Strong data analysis skills. Good command in writing and speaking in English. Strong computer skill. Senior Officer, Admin/ Finance Unit, AMDA Myanmar Program Office, 19/B, Thukhawaddy Rd, Yankin, Yangon. Email: sr.afo.amda@gmail.com

THE INT'L Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking **Field Health Officer/ Health Service Quality Officer** in Paletwa, Chin State: B.NSc/ B.CommH/ Diploma in Nursing. 2 years experience in primary health care and sexual and reproductive health care services. Please submit a Cover letter & CV to the HR Department by email at: WaiMar.Naing@rescue.org or by delivery to the IRC office : 33/A, Natmauk Lane Thwe (1), Bocho (2) Quarter, Bahan, Yangon. Closing date : 30 September 2014.

(1)**BRANCH WASH Officer** (Falam, Mogok, Sagaing, Matupi) 4 Posts (2)**Field Supervisor** (DeMawSo) 1 Post (3)**Assistant Field Supervisor** (LoiKaw) 1 Post (4)**Program Assistant** (Yangon) 1 Post (5)**M & E Officer** (Matupi) 1 Post. Application process: Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org

PACT GLOBAL Microfinance Fund (PGMF) is a licensed Microfinance Institution. PACT Global Microfinance Fund is currently seeking motivated, experienced & dedicated candidates for the position of **HR Assistant** - 2 Posts : Duty Station : PGMF, Yangon (Need to travel to field offices as necessary), Duration : 12 months full time initially (including 3 months-probation) Qualifications : University Degree (Bachelor Degree - preferably in HR or related fields), Proficiency in Microsoft Office, 1 year of experience in a human resources position, Able to serve long working hours if required, Ability to work quickly

and accurately under time pressure and tight deadlines, Strong verbal and interpersonal skills with the capability to build trust and respect within the organization. Pls submit application letter & detail curriculum vitae along with relevant supporting documents, a recently taken passport photo, contact details & 2 referees to HR Manager, PACT Global Microfinance Fund : 497, 1st Flr, Tower B, Diamond Condominium, Pyay Rd, Kamaryut, Yangon. Closing date: 30th September, 2014. Ph : 501373, 501379. Email: teihtwe@pactworld.org (1)**ASSISTANT Manager** (IT) 1 Post (2)**Livelihood Project Coordinator** 1 Post. (3)**Program Support Officer** (CBHD-MNCH) 1 Post. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

(1) **DEPUTY MANAGER** (Finance & Admin) (Hpa-An) 1 Post (2) **Field Supervisor** (CPP, Lashio) 1 Post (3) **Field Assistant** (CPP, Lashio) 2 Posts (4) **Field Supervisor** (CBHFA, Twenty) 1 Post (5) **Admin Assistant** (NayPyiTaw) 1 Post (6) **Security** (NayPyiTaw) 1 Post. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org Please mention "Position Title" in subject if you apply.

Local Positions

ESSENCE of Myanmar is seeking (1) **Tour Operations Manager** - M/F 1 Post: Any graduate with certificate, At least 5 years experience in tourism field, English language (Four Skills) must be fluent (French language ability will be an advantage), Good communication and skills social dealing, Computer literate (Very good knowledge of Excel/ PowerPoint/ Word/ Internet/ Email), Fully give back the time on the job if necessary many working. (2) **Assistant Tour Operations Manager** - M/F 1 Post : Any

graduate with certificate, 2 years experience in tourism field, English language (Four Skills) must be fluent, Good communication and skills social dealing, Computer literate (Very good knowledge of Excel/ PowerPoint/ Word/ Internet/ Email), Fully give back the time on the job if necessary many working. Please submit an application letter, CV with recent photo, copies of NRC. Educ& and other testimonial to : 6 Shwe Gong Daing Rd (Near SSC Women Center) Bahan, Yangon. Tel: 01-8604279 or 01-401589. Email: zani@inspirationmyanmar.com.mm, znb197@gmail.com

BUSINESS Development Executive (50 positions) A Multi National Company in collaboration with Royal Futures Trading Co, require candidates who has passion and talent. Requirements: Candidate must possess a Degree or at least a Pre-U, Diploma in any field. Fresh Graduate from oversea is encourage to apply. No work experience required. Must be able to speak and understand simple English Speaking. Benefit: Lucrative income highly achievable. Good Career Advancement Opportunity. Overseas working opportunity. Intensive training provided. Other benefits and rewards are subjected to company's approval based on performance. Please send CV with recent photograph; Closing Date : 7th October 2014 Attention To: Mr. Chris Hunter Lee, Senior Business Manager, Royal Futures Trading Co., Ltd. No. 166, 12 Fl, MMB Tower, Upper Pansoden Rd, Mingalar Taungnyunt, Yangon.

CARDNO EMERGING Markets has been short listed by the Department of Rural Development to tender for two townships as part of the Myanmar National Community Driven Development Project funded by the World Bank and are looking for Myanmar consultants for the following positions: (1) **Finance Officer** - 2 posts (2) **Procurement Officer** - 2 posts (3) **Monitoring & Evaluation & MIS Officer** 2 posts (4) **Infrastructure & Safeguards Specialist** 2 posts (5) **Social Accountability & Gender Specialist** 2 posts. The two townships that we are bidding for are Tatkon

Township, Nay Pyi Taw and Htantabin, Yangon. Cardno Emerging Markets is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to child protection in all fields. Apply with CV and cover letter to cardnorecruitment@icloud.com ASAP.

WE ARE a leading tour company and are looking for 1.) **A sale representative** for Outbound trips to Cambodia 2.) **A junior accountant**. Interested candidates can contact the following details. email: info@enchanting-myanmar.com, Ph: 09-4211-40414, 09-316-09262, 011-221570. Ph/Fax: 01 370 836~9 Ext:806

WE ARE a GERMAN company & looking for new employees to be based in our new Yangon Office that we are going to set up very soon! We are looking for **sales Engineers** to fill the following positions 1. Graphics and Printing Supplies 2. Food Processing Equipment 3. Plastic and recycling Equipment 4. Pharmaceutical Equipment 5. Building Equipment and Preparation Equipment 6. Machine Tools and Metal Production Equipment. The candidates should be proficient in English as well as Burmese. Comprehensive training will be given to the right candidates. Please send CV to email: h.shweyeemg@rieckermann.com

SALES GIRLS - Female 2 posts (2) **Accountant** - Female 1 post : Graduate, neat and tidy person . No need to have experience. Please contact: 40 Aung Myay Yadanar St, Thu Mingalar housing, Thingangyun, Yangon. Ph: 09-732-20460, 09-2540-45560.

A WELL - established company is looking for highly-motivated **engineers** ((Male only)). Successful candidates will be employed as service engineers for installation & maintenance of advanced medical equipments including CT scanner. Candidates must: a Bachelor Degree in Electronics or equivalent, good command of written and spoken English, good basic knowledge of electronics, willing to travel within and aboard Myanmar, Be hard-working and adaptable. Previous working experience is preferable, but not a necessity as the company will provide the necessary training. Please submit application form along with the C.V & recent photo to Rm 2-C, Shwe Padauk Condominium: 99/A, Myay Nu St, Sanchaung, Yangon. Ph. 01-525748 (Within two weeks)

PARKWAY CANCER Centre, is seeking (1) **Medical Doctor** - F 1 post : M.B.B.S Graduate with SA MA registration, 2 years experience in medical field, Good

communication in English, Must be able to use computer, internet and Microsoft application with excellent skills. (2) **Accountant** F 1 post : A minimum degree from university preferably accounting and marketing background. (LCCI Level-3), Age above 35, Good communication in English, 2 years experience, Able to use computer, internet & Microsoft application with excellent skills. We welcome the candidates who are trustworthy, self-motivated & outstanding, willing to learn and able to focus on work, be polite and hospitality, able to communicate in courteous manners and must have positive working attitude. Please submit: CV with relevant certificates, documents, recommendation letter attach, documents & expected salary to Rm (G-07), G Flr, Diamond Center, Pyay Rd, Kamayut. Tel: 532-438, **CENTER** for Vocational Training (CVT), Yangon is seeking (1) **Commercial Assistant Professional Teacher** - M/F 1 post : Bachelor Degree from University of Economic or relevant knowledge. (2) **Cabinet Maker Profession Senior Teacher/ HoP** - M/F 1 post: Have relevant certificate concerned with furniture making or civil engineering degree. Experience in wood based industry is preferred. (3) **Election Professional**

Teacher - M/F 1 post : B.E (EP), AGTI (EP), or CVT graduate in electrician. Experience in Electrical Installation field & Engineer Degree holder is preferred. (4) **Hotel & Gastronomy Assistant Profession Teachers** - M/F 2 posts : Must be a certificate holder of Room division (Housekeeping, Front Office). Experience in hotel management. (5) **English Teacher** - M/F 1 post : Graduated in B.A (English) or Diploma in ELTM (or) ELT (or) FCE. Prefer the M.A (English) with 3 years experience. (6) **Financial & General Administration Assistant** - M/F 1 post : Bachelor of Commerce, LCCI Level-3 degree holder or the same education. Working experience in accounting is preferred. 5 years experience & 2 years teaching experience for 1 to 5 positions. Good command in English (4 skills) is preferable & using a computer (Microsoft Office). Periodically revise the curricula and up to date level of profession know-how and actively participate in Team Work. Please submit an application letter with CV or CVT Application, recent passport photo, Copy of relevant documents and labour Card to the reception counter or by email before 30th September 2014. Contact: 3rd Flr, MRCS Bldg 42, Strand Rd, Botahtaung, Yangon. Email: hrcvtmyanmar@gmail.com



Golden Myanmar Airlines Public Co., Ltd. (GMA)

Vacancy Announcement

Commercial Department

Chief Commercial Officer Male / Female (1) Post

Responsibilities

Responsible for setting-up and managing the various aspects and function of the Commercial Department, in particular sales, distribution, market strategies, profitability analysis, agency set up, pricing strategy, revenue management, planning, forecasting, marketing and all related business and Responsibility of Commercial activities.

Reporting to MD / CEO

Qualifications and Experience

CCO plays an important role in the overall success of the company; therefore the following qualifications and experiences are required:

- University Degree
- A minimum of 7 years of progressive hands-on experience in the airline industry, preferably few years with Low Cost Carriers.
- A minimum of 10 years management experience
- In-depth knowledge of the various functional aspects of running an airline commercial dept

Base: Yangon, Myanmar

Requirement

Ideal candidate should be familiar with Regional, Myanmar Aviation and Network Route Planning Knowledge of designing and improving relevant airline-related commercial processes Previous experience in Low Cost Carrier would be of advantage Self starter, should have proven ability to plan and accomplish commercial tasks

Requested foreign Languages : English: proficiency level

Personal and relationship competences : Effective interpersonal, coaching, consulting and project management skills. Strong organizational skills and attention to detail.

All interested and qualified candidates are invited to submit applications with

- Cover Letter explaining how education, skills and experience meet the requirement for the applied position
- Detailed and complete curriculum vitae with two passport size photos
- Copy of NRC card
- Certificate of graduation

Only short listed candidates will be informed. Kindly indicate on the back of the envelope: sender's name, address and contact telephone number, and at the bottom left hand corner on the front of the envelope, mark you're applying position.

All application must be received not later than **16th October 2014 at 5:00 PM** at GMA office address below:-
3th Floor, Saya San Plaza, Corner of New University Avenue and Saya San Road, Bahan Township, Yangon. Phone: 95 1 401484, 95 1 8604035, 37~38 (Ext: 120 , 128).



GOLDEN CLOVER TRAVEL is looking for

Tour Operation Manager M (1) Post
At least 5 years of experience in tourism field.

Chief Accountant M/F (1) Post
At least 5 years of experience.

Programmer M/F (1) Post
At least 5 years of experience in ICT field.

For all positions:
Any graduate with certificate.
English language (Four skills) must be fluent.
Good communication and skills social dealing.
Computer literate (very good knowledge of Excel/ PowerPoint/ Word/ Internet/ Email)

Interested candidate shall submit an application letter, CV with recent photo, Copies of NRC, Educational certificate and other testimonial to Golden Clover Travel & Tours.

No.48, Room (E-3), 2nd Floor, Gyar Taw Ya Oat Road, Shwe Nanthar Quarter, Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar.
Tel: +95-18603244/45, 0949297848
E-mail: info@goldenclover.com.mm

SAN FRANCISCO

EA kicks off 'FIFA 15' video game

ELECTRONIC Arts on September 23 kicked off the US launch of its *FIFA 15* video game, hyping the latest installment of its long-running soccer franchise as its most realistic yet.

More than 5.5 million people have taken part in a demo period for the game, which was released worldwide last week, according to EA.

"We believe we have built a game in *FIFA 15* that delivers the most immersive and responsive game play experience ever in the FIFA franchise," said EA Sports vice president David Rutter.

"We can't wait for the millions of fans to start their season and experience all of the innovations."

EA is letting virtual soccer stars in *FIFA 15* get psyched, or angry, on field just like their real-world inspirations.

The game infuses on-screen players with "emotional intelligence" designed to let them show how they feel about missed passes, brutal tackles, teammates, opponents and more.

"We want our fans to feel the highs and lows of the drama that is football,

and experience the emotional rollercoaster that plays out during a match," Rutter said during a glimpse at the title earlier this year.

"We're now able to immerse you in the game and let the story of the match unfold based on new

MILLION

5.5

Gamers who trialed EA's *FIFA 15* prior to its worldwide launch

commentary, crowd activity, and the natural reactions of the players, which make every game unique."

FIFA 15 on-screen players express ranges of emotions that evolve based

on how a game is going, and have attitudes about on-field allies and opponents.

California-based EA said it tapped into the improved power of Xbox One and PS4 to make gameplay and graphics more realistic.

"Visually, this is the biggest step the FIFA franchise has ever taken," Rutter said.

"We set out with the goal of creating atmosphere, players, crowds and pitches that not only look like they do on match day, but also feel like they do when you play or watch football - it's a level of immersion we've never been able to bring to the game before."

Versions of the game are also tailored for prior generation Xbox and PlayStation consoles, along with personal computers powered by Windows software.

The new title is priced at US\$60.

A *FIFA 15 Ultimate Team* version of the game is available for free to play on smartphones or tablets powered by Apple, Android or Windows software.

- AFP

PONFERRADA

Paris-Roubaix and hour record new goals for Wiggins

HAVING finally added the world title to his Olympic time-trial crown from two years ago, Bradley Wiggins has set himself two new targets: winning Paris-Roubaix and setting a new hour record.

The 34-year-old Briton beat three-time reigning champion Tony Martin of Germany to the world title in Ponferrada, Spain, on September 24, with Dutch youngster Tom Dumoulin

taking third place.

But now the 2012 Tour de France winner, a four-time Olympic champion and winner of prestigious races such as the Criterium du Dauphine (twice), Tour de Romandie and Paris-Nice - not to mention lower key events such as his home Tour of Britain and the Tour of California - says he will target Paris-Roubaix and the world hour record next year, before focusing

on the track and the team pursuit at the Olympics in Rio in 2016.

But he said he will not compete at another World Championships, having won silver medals in 2011 and 2013.

"To add the World title on the road to the Olympic one - I had a couple of second places - [but] I could have lived with it if I never won it in my career so it's always nice to add it," said Wiggins, a six-time world champion on the track in individual and team pursuits.

"I always said after London [the Olympics] that anything else I got was a bonus. It's nice to end the season like this having missed the Tour and stuff through the year.

"I worked toward this and trained specifically for this event since the Commonwealth Games in July, so yes, it's been good."

Although he will return to the track for the next Games - and the hour record is also attempted in a velodrome - Wiggins said he's not quite finished with road racing.

He finished ninth at Paris-Roubaix in April and believes that's a race he can win.

"This time next year it will be less than a year from the Olympics in Rio so I will be in full track mode for the team pursuit," he said when explaining why this would be his last World Championships.

"I can't imagine doing a trip to America to do the Worlds next year. I just don't see it fitting in.

"Post-Rio I'm not going to go to Qatar to ride. I will be 37 then so I'm not going to do the Masters this will be the last one."

He added, "I'd love to win Roubaix, obviously I was up there this year. I want to focus more on it next year and off the back of that really focus on the hour record rather than trying to go for the hour record next week off the back of this.

"[I want to] focus on that and do it as a project and get the most out of that one attempt (on the hour record)," Wiggins said, just a week after 43-year-old German Jens Voigt set a new hour world record of 51.115 kilometres.

"Also it will give me something to do next year [as he won't be on Sky's Tour team] and also to finish off with hopefully another shot at another gold medal in Rio with the team pursuit would be a nice way to end it all"

- AFP

WUHAN

Tennis 'only after father

Chinese tennis star Li Na reflects on the career as she looks forward to her retirement



Chinese tennis star Li Na waves to the crowd at a ceremony marking her retirement.

CHINA'S Li Na said her ground-breaking career can be traced back to the death of her father when she was 14, a pivotal moment which meant tennis success was her "only chance."

Li, in candid comments following her shock retirement last week, said she had to grow up quickly when left to support her mother, a realisation which shaped her life.

"I think I was a pretty normal girl in the way I grew up [but] what totally changed my life was when my father passed away," she told AFP in an interview in Wuhan.

It sowed the seeds of a career which yielded two Grand Slam singles titles, the first for an Asian player, and brought tennis to China's masses.

The reigning Australian Open champion was speaking to AFP in her home city, days after she tearfully called it quits over persistent knee injuries.

Li, 32, made special mention of her father in her retirement statement last week, saying, "You've remained the sunshine in my life and

I am who I am because of you."

Late in her career, it was another fatherly figure in the form of coach Carlos Rodriguez who would prove influential as he brought Li out of a slump to win the Australian Open in January.

Under the Argentinian, Justine Henin's former mentor, Li became a different, composed more player - and less confrontational off the court.

"He said, 'You are a good player, or a great champion,'" Li said.

"I was like, 'It is the same. Why?' And he said, 'No, it is not the same. A champion has to be like everywhere a champion, not only on court.'"

But Li said her split with Rodriguez in July, because he wanted to focus on his work at a Beijing tennis academy, did not influence her decision to retire.

Her family had struggled financially after her father, Li Sheng-peng, died of a rare cardiovascular disease when she was taking her first steps on the tennis circuit.

But with the determination that would mark her ascent to world number two, the young Li focused



Bradley Wiggins competes in the men's time trial at the 2014 UCI Road World Championships in Ponferrada on September 24. Photo: AFP

chance' 's death: Li

role a tragedy played in shapingher
ement from the sport



Photo: AFP

at the Wuhan Open tennis tournament in Wuhan, China, on September 23.

on the tennis court to navigate the family out of hardship.

“I was thinking, ‘You are a pretty big girl, you have to take care of your mom,’” she said.

“When the father passed away I think that was when I would say: ‘The only chance is you have to be a good player.’”

Li chafed at authority from an early age. She has spoken of her displeasure at being forcibly switched from badminton, which her father played professionally, to tennis by China’s sports system after coaches noticed her strong arms.

Two years after her father’s death, Li joined the national team, but despite showing considerable promise she turned her back on tennis to study journalism.

“I never talked to my mom to say how [I] was feeling, even during the time I didn’t like tennis,” she said. “I used to tell her, ‘I love tennis. I want to continue.’”

Later, after returning to tennis, she would opt out of China’s state sports system as a pioneering “fly alone” athlete able to arrange her own coaching and endorsements.

As her career progressed, Li’s rebellious streak showed in her heated exchanges with Chinese media as she was criticised for a perceived lack of mental fortitude and patriotism.

“In the beginning, I could not hang in there, [with] the pressure,” said Li, admitting she struggled with the weight of her giant country’s expectations.

“Because I was thinking about, ‘I am only a tennis athlete, why should I carry so many things I did not want to carry.’”

Eventually Li, one of the world’s highest-earning female athletes, was embraced by her homeland and at her retirement press conference, one Chinese journalist was in tears.

Fans were also crying when she appeared on centre court at the site the Wuhan Open, a premier-level WTA event created in her honour.

“She is China’s greatest. She is the pride of China and the pride of Wuhan,” one spectator shouted, while others held aloft huge banners saying, “We love you sister Li.”

– AFP

RIO DE JANEIRO

Rio golf course in legal bunker

THE return of golf to the Olympics after what will be 112 years by the time Rio hosts South America’s first Games in 2016 comes amid accusations environmental laws were got round to build the facility in a nature reserve, horrifying ecologists.

Golf made a brief foray into the history of the Games with appearances in 1900 and 1904. But its appearance on the Rio timetable has dragged city authorities as well as the course developer into a legal spat.

Ecologists have decried the construction as an environmental crime meriting a legal challenge to force design concessions limiting the site’s impact on the local ecosystem.

When the International Olympic Committee announced in 2009 that Rio had won hosting rights they added that golf was back and that rugby sevens would be featuring as a new Olympic sport.

The course is being built to Olympic specifications on private land in the western Rio suburb of Barra de Tijuca, which will host the bulk of Olympic events.

But campaigners are aghast at the choice of a site within the Marapendi Environmental Protection Area (APA), whose vegetation had already suffered

from decades of mining activity nearby before authorities slapped a preservation order on it, opening the way to regeneration.

The Rio prosecutor suggested the developers create a 400-metre (1312-foot) wide corridor home to thick vegetation and rich fauna around the course which would allow wildlife to reach wooded and wetland areas either side.

The prosecutor initially called for the suspension of the construction licence before urging modifications of course designer Guy Hanse’s plans.

A September 17 hearing ruled the project should continue, with the proviso it includes the bulk of the mooted 400-meter corridor.

Lawyers for constructors and land owners Fiori protested that means at least five holes will need revamping, putting the heat on as they bid to ready the site in time for a test event next year.

Prosecutor Marcus Leal rejected the firm’s offer to limit modifications to three holes, citing the need to preserve the area’s ecosystem.

The city hall said it would consider accepting a course in “legacy mode” – that is leaving the site as it is for the Games and undertaking

modifications afterward.

Magistrate Eduardo Klausner urged Fiori and the mayor’s office to table a new proposal inside 45 days which would meet Olympic requirements while keeping environmental damage to a minimum for the 60 million reais (US\$27 million) project, which began a year behind schedule.

By mid-August it was 59 percent complete.

Local pressure group “Golf for Who” has loudly condemned the use of the site for the Games.

Most Rio residents do not closely follow a sport regarded as being for rich people – there are just two private courses in the city.

The one being fashioned for the Games will be Rio’s first public course and organisers hope it can give the discipline a boost.

The organising committee and the International Golf Federation (FIG) considered neither private course was suitable for 2016, though one has previously hosted pro events.

Citing the need for a new course they plumped for the site within the Marapendi protection area.

Pre-Games course testing is scheduled for 2015 – if the organisers can hole out of their legal bunker. – AFP

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INCHEON

Maldives says medals don't matter

THEIR swimmers train in the Indian Ocean and the women soccer and handball players haven't managed a goal between them at the Asian Games, but the Maldives says it does not care about success – yet.

Getting 142 athletes from the poor islands, best known as a honeymoon paradise, to the Games in Incheon, South Korea, has already been an achievement, according to team leaders.

And a Muslim nation insisting that at least a third of the team should be women has also raised eyebrows among fellow Islamic states.

South Korean fans have taken to their hearts the athletes from a nation of less than 350,000 who have yet to win a medal at the Asian Games or Olympics.

The swimmers are often still battling in the pool long after rivals have finished. The women's footballers conceded 38 goals in three matches without scoring and Japan beat their handball team by a huge 79-0.

But Maldives Olympic Committee secretary general Ahmed Marzooq said the results do not matter.

"Just before we came I told the athletes that there would be criticism and comments. But I told them, 'We don't care about any result that comes, just perform, just enjoy the Games.'"

In an indication of the difficulties their athletes face, swimmers Nishwan Ibrahim and Aishath Sajina have to train in the Indian Ocean – at night – off the capital Male.

"We swim in the sea and there's a current and lots of rubbish, and it's dark," Ibrahim told AFP. "We don't have any swimming pools. It's really different from the pool here. It's difficult in the pool: the sea is more buoyant."



Ismail Sajid carries his national flag as he leads the Maldives delegation parade during the opening ceremony of the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon on September 19. Photo: AFP

Ibrahim got a standing ovation after clocking 2 minutes, 45.23 seconds in the men's 200 metres medley heats, in his first ever attempt at the event.

But after completing the last lap in complete solitude to finish over 45 seconds behind the quickest qualifier, Ibrahim discovered he had been dis-

qualified for an illegal turn.

"It kind of sucks because I was last!" he said with a smile.

Coach Ismail Faruhaan said swimmers train in a 25-metre ocean pool fashioned from floating blocks for sides and touchpads. They share it with fish and coral.

"Back home we don't have any facilities to practice turns," he said.

"The swimmers have to focus on the currents and they don't know when they're going to touch the pads because it's dark. Most of the time they crash into them."

"The first time I went to the deep

end I felt really scared," said Sajina. "I didn't like the fish and stuff. I wanted to get out as soon as possible."

But now she is a leader in the biggest contingent the Maldives has ever taken to an international sporting event.

Sajina swam almost two lengths of the pool alone in the women's 4x100m freestyle relay and triggered an enormous cheer when she stopped the clock almost a minute and a half behind heat winners Japan.

"It felt motivated when I heard them," she said with a giggle. "I think I swam even faster. It felt good."

Olympic committee chief Marzooq has motivated funding from foreign governments and sports bodies to get the swimmers and others to Incheon.

Some of that is being used to press a minimum 33 percent quota for women in all Maldives teams going to international contests. There are more than 50 in this team, while Saudi Arabia has none and just 20 percent of Iran's squad is women.

"There is some opposition," Marzooq said. Other Olympic Council of Asia representatives confirmed that the Maldives had made some other Muslim nations nervous.

But Maldives has no regrets, despite all the slow swims and the conceded goals.

"It has changed a lot how women do sport," said Marzooq. "The girls now know that there is a chance for them to go out of the country to perform."

"It gives them life skills. I can see their confidence building. I am not thinking about medals at these Games. What I want is to take these women out of the kitchen and empower them," he said. – AFP

MADRID

Break key to Ronaldo's stunning form, says Ancelotti

REAL Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti believes Cristiano Ronaldo's three-week break at the start of the season to ease knee and hamstring injuries is the reason for the Portuguese's sensational form.

Ronaldo scored four goals in a 5-1 thrashing of Elche on September 23 to register his 25th hat-trick for the club and his second in four days after also scoring three in Real's 8-2 humiliation of Deportivo la Coruna on September 20.

The club captain now has 12 goals in just eight appearances this season.

However, he missed his country's embarrassing 1-0 home defeat to Albania this month, as well as Madrid's 4-2 loss to Real Sociedad to rest after a gruelling schedule as Los Blancos won their 10th European Cup in May before he travelled to the World Cup.

"It is clear that has helped because he needed a period of time to work

with the seriousness and professionalism he has," said Ancelotti.

"At the moment he is physically in very good shape, he is very motivated and he is scoring a lot."

Ronaldo's night at the Bernadene on September 23 hadn't gotten off to the best start as he gave away a penalty as he tried to clear inside the area and Edu Albacar fired Elche into a shock lead from the penalty spot.

"Although I complained to the referee, it was a penalty. I have to admit it," said Ronaldo.

"I didn't expect it. It all went very quickly, but the referee made the right decision."

Madrid were only behind for 5 minutes, though, as Gareth Bale headed home his fourth goal of the campaign before Ronaldo put the hosts in front with a penalty of his own.

Ronaldo doubled his tally for

the evening with a towering header to make it 3-1 and added two more goals in the final 10 minutes as he dispatched a second penalty before slotting home from Bale's fine through-ball.

"To score four goals is very difficult. I thank my teammates for passing me the ball to be able to score."

"It was a very good game for us. We started a little badly, I gave away the penalty, but we responded well with two quick goals."

Ancelotti had taken the opportunity to make four changes to his side from the one that routed Deportivo.

Keylor Navas replaced under-fire captain Iker Casillas in goal and the Italian praised the contribution of those that came into the side.

"At the moment rotating is very important because we have all the players motivated and we have a lot of games." – AFP



Cristiano Ronaldo (centre) vies with to Elche's goalkeeper Manu Herrera (left) at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on September 23. Photo: AFP



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INCHEON

Controversies hit Asian Games

QATAR'S women's basketball team stood defiant over a ban on their Muslim headscarves on September 25 as a second doping case and match-fixing fears overshadowed the Asian Games.

The Qatari women forfeited a second game in Incheon because under International Basketball Federation (FIBA) rules they are not allowed to play in hijabs or other headgear.

"We are not going to the stadium today and for the other matches, as we will not be allowed to play because of the International Basketball Federation," a Qatar Olympic Committee official told AFP.

Mounting controversies stole attention from world records in archery and shooting and an improved performance by South Korea's Park Tae-Hwan in the 100 metres freestyle heats.

Qatar's women were to play Nepal on September 25 a day after they walked on court to face Mongolia but quickly departed when told they could not play.

FIBA's ban on headwear in international competition is motivated by safety but it has raised hackles at Asia's Olympics, which includes several Muslim nations.

"It's an insult to us. They don't respect religion," Qatari player Rafaa Morgan Mohammed told AFP.

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), which runs the quadrennial Asian Games, criticised FIBA. Other sports such as football allow religious headwear.

"Every athlete has the right to represent their country's flag without discrimination," OCA director general Husain Al-Musallam said late on September 24.

Cambodian soft tennis player Yi Sophany, 18, became the second athlete caught in the doping net when she tested positive for the banned stimulant sibutramine.

She follows 20-year-old Tajik footballer Khurshed Beknazarov, who was kicked out for doping on September 23 and has been provisionally banned by Asian football authorities.

And authorities launched an investigation after betting analysis company Sportradar said it "strongly" suspects match-fixing in the men's football competition.

"We can say that we strongly believe there have been manipulated matches at the Asian Games," Andreas Krannich, managing director of strategy and integrity, told *The New Paper* in Singapore.

Krannich did not reveal the teams involved but said attention was

focusing on at least one group game where late goals were scored.

"The odds movements and the deviations caused alerts, belying clear betting evidence that could never be justified in a regular contest," he said.

The OCA said it would work with the Asian Football Confederation and world body FIFA to investigate the claim.

"OCA takes this matter seriously and works with the Asian federation and international federation [FIFA] for a proper and full investigation," an official told AFP.

In swimming, China's women's 4x100m medley team were disqualified in the heats, giving a boost to Japan who are trailing their rivals 8-15 in gold medals in the pool.

"The girls allowed themselves a little pump of the fist," Japanese coach Yoshiaki Takemura told AFP following the decision to throw out the Chinese

after lead-off swimmer Wang Xueer failed to surface before the 15-metre mark.

"We caught a break there. We've been getting whacked a bit over the last few days."

South Korea's former Olympic champion Park timed quickest in the 100m freestyle heats with 49.76 seconds as he bids for his first gold medal after demoralising defeats in the 200m and 400m.

"I'm just trying to stay calm," Park told reporters. "I'm trying not to think about the expectations."

South Korea celebrated their first world record of the Games when their women's compound archery team scored 238 points out of a possible 240 in the quarter-finals.

And China broke the world record to take gold in the men's 50m rifle prone team event. — AFP



Saw Yan Paing lands a right cross against Poe K during their fight on September 21 in Yangon. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Htun Htun Min KO's Saw Nga Mann

KYAW ZIN HLAING

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CHALLENGER Htun Htun Min has taken the Myanmar traditional boxing title after knocking out veteran fighter Saw Nga Mann last week.

The undefeated Htun Htun Min, 22, dropped Saw Nga Mann, 34, in the fourth round of their fight on September 21 in Yangon with a strong knee to the head to keep his unbeaten streak intact.

Htun Htun Min, Last year he collected a gold medal the Southeast Asian games in Nay Pyi Taw, looked quick and powerful throughout the match, keeping Saw Nga Mann on the defensive as he looked to be trying to cling to his title, rather than take down Htun Htun Min.

From the opening bell Saw Nga

Mann was faced with a flurry of blows. He only briefly appeared to threaten Htun Htun Min in the second, when the young challenger suffered a cut around his left eye.

"Htun Htun Min is talented boxer and has a lot of experience even though he is young," said U Daung Ni, chief judge at the Myanmar Traditional Boxing Federation.

"I don't think an opponent will be ready for Htun Htun Min this year. I think he will fight soon against some foreign boxers."

The convincing knockout by Htun Htun Min won him some new fans outside the ring, as well as the title.

"Both boxers are talented but Saw Nga Mann is older than Htun Htun Min. This was an advantage. Htun Htun Min deserves to be champion," said fan U Myint Aung, who attended the fight.

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