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MORE ON PAGES 3, 4 & 7

US President Barack Obama and Yangon Heritage Trust chair U Thant Myint-U tour the historic Secretariat complex in Yangon on November 14. Photo: Kaung Htet

## Obama visits historic Secretariat complex

ZAW WIN THAN  
zawwinthan@gmail.com

US President Barack Obama toured the historic Secretariat complex in downtown Yangon as part of his visit to Myanmar last week.

U Thant Myint-U, chair of Yangon Heritage Trust, accompanied the president on November 14 through the central courtyard to the place where the country's independence was declared in 1948.

The location also contains a monument to Bogyoke Aung San and other founders of the nation who were assassinated here in 1947, and is also the site of Myanmar's first Constitutional Assembly and Parliament.

"The Secretariat is a place of immense significance to Myanmar's history," U Thant Myint-U was quoted as saying in a press release by YHT on November 14. "It's where representative government first took shape, where the founding fathers of the country worked after World War II to plan for an independent and democratic nation, where independence from Britain was declared in January 1948, and where our Constituent Assembly and Parliament met from 1948 until the military takeover in 1962."

Mr Obama was also driven through the proposed riverfront conservation area, a space of about 2 square kilometres that houses 144 religious sites.

### NEWS 4

#### Ban Ki-Moon raises ire over Rakhine State

The UN secretary general's use of the word "Rohingya" during a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw provokes condemnation from the government.

### BUSINESS 24

#### Stampede of Chinese capital affects local assets

A move to crack down on corruption in China is partly to blame for hot money flowing into Myanmar, affecting prices of goods like gems and real estate.

# Lower house rejects PR voting system

The Pyithu Hluttaw decided last week to retain first-past-the-post voting for the 2015 election, judging the other seven proposed alternatives as unconstitutional. **NEWS 7**



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# Page 2

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



## THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

### Journalists repressed in tent city

In a report from Eleven entitled "Eyewitness of poor management for ASEAN Summit", journalist Nay Tun Naing revealed the conditions the media were made to face while covering the thrill-a-minute affair. "Journalists are confined inside the media centres. Aside from blocking on access to information to related meetings during November 9-11, a shocking feature of this summit includes the temporary media toilet and media bus stop. They are similar to the roadside telephone stands built near bus stops when the government started building Nay Pyi Taw, which was used by nobody."

Others attending the conference found themselves with the unexpected complaint that the media centre, a large tent, was "too cold". One thing there was no whining

about, however, was the internet speed. One journalist said that while "there wasn't a whole lot to write about" he did "download like ten movies and played a lot of tetris".

A lack of access was a major complaint for many reporters including Eleven's Nay Tun Naing, who has covered previous summits in Vietnam, Cambodia and Brunei. "Based on my experience, the media repression taking place at the 25th ASEAN Summit currently taking place in Nay Pyi Taw is the worst."

### R U Sure?

Local graffiti artist Arkar Kyaw last week followed up on his 2012 welcome mural for President Obama, this time spraying a portrait of the POTUS with the words "Welcome to our city", with

"BTW R U sure?" at the bottom on a wall on Kabaye Pagoda Road. The mural was hastily covered up by the ever-vigilant YCDC just hours after it was painted, but photos spread quickly in local media. Arkar Kyaw's mural became one of the iconic images from the 2012 visit. He made headlines last year when he received a US\$100 fine for a mural he did in honour of President Thein Sein's birthday.

### K-I-S-S-I-N-G

Bastion of journalistic integrity *The Daily Mail* managed to find a unique angle on its coverage of Obama's post-ASEAN visit to Yangon, honing in on what was obviously the most significant aspect of his public appearance with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with the headline "Public Diplomatic Affection! Charmer in Chief Obama and Burma's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi share ANOTHER awkward kiss two years on from last visit".

The story on the Mail's website put its bullet point format summary to good use, offering the following four points for people who don't actually want to have to read a whole article (i.e. their target demographic):

- Obama and Suu Kyi's embrace during 2012 meeting caught public attention
- Obama's kiss was seen by some as inappropriate and in poor taste
- But this time Suu Kyi kissed him twice before pulling him in for a hug
- Tweets accused her of 'over compensating' and branded move 'awkward'



Students gathered opposite City Hall on November 14. Photo: *The Myanmar Times*

There was some other stuff further down the page about Suu Kyi and Obama both voicing concerns about backsliding in the reform process, but the comments section largely revolved around "whether or not there would be tongue next time"

### We don't need no education (law reform)

Following on from their protest opposite City Hall last Friday, students gathered on November 15 outside Yangon University to demonstrate against the education law reforms.

The gates of the university were locked, and a number of students breached it when their demands that it be opened were not met.

Once inside, the students gained access to what was once the site of the old student union building, where

they sang and defied the authorities to arrest them.

More on the education law reform protests on page 3.

### In brief:

Special Branch outnumber student protestors at demonstration against education law reform  
Lone tourist tearfully admits that their selfie stick is "a poor substitute for real friends"  
Volunteers shaking alms bowls with coins in them all day and into the night drives downtown residents mad

### Next week:

Prank call to police about Bon Jovi being "murdered" at Family KTV goes horribly awry  
INGO staff gone wild: You won't believe what happens next!

## Once was Burma...

*From the Pansodan Gallery archives*



The Hanthawaddy Journal, Friday, April 17, 1959.



Student activists make clear what they think of the reform process at Obama's Town Hall YSEALI address. Photo: Supplied



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# Students protest during Obama visit

LUN MIN MANG  
lunmin.lm@gmail.com  
KAYLEIGH LONG  
kayleighelong@gmail.com

HUNDREDS of students gathered in downtown Yangon on November 14 to demonstrate against the National Education Law, as US President Barack Obama paid a visit to the former capital.

Student groups had vowed to continue their pushback against the law, despite the authorities not granting permission for them to protest.

“We have not asked for permission from the authorities, but we informed them before we gathered and marched,” said All Burma Student Union spokesperson Ko Ye Yint Kyaw.

“Two times, on our way to the protest place, [we were] barred by the authorities.”

The National Education Law, which recently received the backing of President U Thein Sein, has been controversial as students believe it restricts their rights for

freedom of political association. “In one section of the bill, it says that it is full of democratic norms. However ... it says that the students must refrain from [taking part in] politics and religion,” Ko Ye Yint Kyaw told *The Myanmar Times*. Many feel the legislation was developed without proper consultation.

“The education bill does not [provide for] the students. The rights for the formation of student unions, teacher unions or similar organisations are prohibited by the bill. This has no freedom,” Ko Ye Yint Kyaw said.

“It poses a huge centralisation. The education bill does not cover the voices and the rights of students. It has passed through the parliamentary processes without considering the inputs proposed by the Nationwide Network for Education Reforms [NNER] and the students.”

U Than Htike Aung, a member of the All Burma Teachers Association, said the protestors had gathered to “call for the formation of a more student- and teacher-based educa-



Students shout slogans during a protest against the National Education Law in downtown Yangon on November 14. Photo: AFP

**‘They say that students must abstain from politics. Our country’s independence was attained only because students were involved in politics.’**

U Than Htike Aung  
All Burma Teachers Association

tion bill, not just for us but for future generations.”

“They say that students must abstain from politics. Our country’s independence was attained only because students were involved in politics. I [refer to] General Aung San. If they were not involved in politics, our independence would not have been possible,” he said.

There are also concerns about the legislation reducing the level of autonomy currently enjoyed by individual

universities – a sentiment echoed by teachers’ union member U Sai Khaing Myo Tun, who believes the legislation will serve to draw institutions further under the control of the Ministry of Education.

“I have the same wishes as the students. The education bill poses centralisation and will remove the autonomy of universities. It also lacks not only teachers’ rights but those of the students. The rights for formation of university organisations

are also prohibited,” said U Sai Khaing Myo Tun.

Student unions from southern and eastern districts of Yangon Region, Monywa district, Meiktila district, Kyaukse Technology University and Mandalay Yadanabon University have been participating in the ongoing protests. The group plans to stage its sit-in until 4pm every day until November 17, which marks International Students’ Day.

# Bus accident kills passenger

THIRI HTIN ZAW  
newsroom@mmtimes.com

A PASSENGER was killed and 10 others injured when a bus overturned on the Pyinmana-Taungnyo Road in Thapyay Kome village, Zabuthiri township, on November 11.

The accident occurred when the bus’s rear tyre blew out, causing the driver to lose control as the bus careered into oncoming traffic, colliding with a vehicle and roadside construction work.

U Aung Myin Kyaw Kyaw, Nay Pyi Taw director of the supervisory committee

for motor vehicles, known by its Myanmar acronym Ma Hta Tha, said vehicle inspections are carried out daily because of the rise in accidents.

“There have been three accidents on this road, but this was the first to cause a fatality. In most accidents, the main factors are driver error and vehicle roadworthiness,” he said.

He said the bus line would pay compensation.

Police are considering action against the driver of the bus, and the bus line could be closed down by Nay Pyi Taw council under Ma Hta Tha policy.

– Translation by Khant Lin Oo

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# Obama supports slow road to democracy

US President Barack Obama voiced optimism on November 13 that Myanmar was on the right path to democracy despite some worrying "backsliding" on its much-celebrated reform process.

Mr Obama delivered his cautiously upbeat assessment after holding separate meetings with Myanmar President U Thein Sein and a group of lawmakers, which included National League for Democracy Leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in Nay Pyi Taw.

"The democratic process in Myanmar is real," Mr Obama said following his hour-long talks with U Thein Sein. "We recognise change is hard and you do not always move in a straight line, but I'm optimistic."

Mr Obama was in Nay Pyi Taw for the East Asia Summit, gathering leaders from 18 nations for talks on issues ranging from regional territorial spats to economic integration and fighting terrorism.

But much of Mr Obama's focus on November 13 was on Myanmar's democracy efforts.

Earlier in the day, Mr Obama met Daw Suu Kyi, a fellow Nobel laureate, and about a dozen other Myanmar lawmakers to discuss the reforms.

He had set the tone for his three-day trip with hard-hitting comments on the pace of reforms in an interview with news website *The Irrawaddy* published to coincide with his arrival on November 12.

"Even as there has been some progress on the political and economic fronts, in other areas there has been a slowdown and backsliding in reforms," Mr Obama said.

"In addition to restrictions on freedom of the press, we continue to see violations of basic human rights and abuses in the country's ethnic areas, including reports of extrajudicial killings, rape and forced labour."

After meeting U Thein Sein, Mr Obama again emphasised the democratic process was "incomplete".

He specifically identified the plight of the nation's Muslim Rohingya minority as a concern.

Around 140,000 Rohingya languish

in fetid displacement camps in western Rakhine State after religious violence flared two years ago, leaving about 200 dead.

Mr Obama also criticised the failure to make important changes to the constitution ahead of elections next year. One key issue is a clause that bans Daw Suu Kyi from becoming president.

Still, Mr Obama also said there were many reasons to cheer the reform process so far, including the release of political prisoners and an end to the army recruiting child soldiers.

Speaking after meeting Mr Obama, U Thein Sein acknowledged there were problems but insisted his government was genuinely trying to reform the country.

"We're in the process of addressing these concerns. We definitely need to address these concerns," he told reporters.

Mr Obama has framed Myanmar's reform process as an example of the positive effects of US engagement.

His administration has in recent years made a foreign policy "pivot" toward Asia and - until now - Myanmar's democratic steps have been trumpeted as a success for that strategy.

Myanmar's government had hoped this week would be a celebration of the nation's democratic achievements, as it welcomed its biggest gathering of world leaders since the reforms began.

U Thein Sein hosted the heads of the other nine members of the ASEAN bloc for an annual summit on November 12.

ASEAN was then joined by Mr Obama and leaders from Japan, China, India, Australia, Russia, South Korea and New Zealand for the East Asia Summit.

At the summit, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang offered US\$20 billion in loans and a "friendship" treaty with ASEAN, in an apparent bid to defuse tensions over contested claims to the South China Sea.

Still, Mr Li warned, "China's resolve to safeguard territorial sovereignty is clear." - AFP



ASEAN leaders pose at the opening of the ASEAN Summit in Nay Pyi Taw on November 12. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

## ASEAN will remain 'outward-looking'

EI EI TOE LWIN

eieitoelwin@gmail.com

NYAN LYNN AUNG

29.nyanlynnaung@gmail.com

MYANMAR has used its time as chair of ASEAN to steer the regional organisation toward deeper engagement with its neighbours and stronger links with the rest of the world, President U Thein Sein said last week.

Reading out an ASEAN statement on the last day of the summit in Nay Pyi Taw, the president told an audience of world leaders, including US President Barack Obama, that ASEAN should continue to broaden its external relations and remain outward-looking.

"It's time to consider strategically expanding our external relations with potential trading and investment partners," the president said. "Our work to strengthen and deepen ASEAN's external relations is

progressing well."

The statement focused on strengthening the organisation's secretariat and reviewing its organs, addressing climate change, improving disaster management, combating extremism and infectious diseases, promoting humanitarian assistance, facing threats of violence of terror in Iraq and Syria, and stemming the spread of the Ebola virus.

The statement agreed to explore the possibility of Timor-Leste's participation in ASEAN activities.

The ASEAN statement also stressed the need to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea, against a background of tensions arising from disputes over islands involving China, Japan and some ASEAN members.

"We need a strategy to promote ASEAN's central role with our partners in a more substantive and effective manner," President U Thein Sein said.

ASEAN leaders have also agreed to consider further integration as a community.

Since assuming the chair last January, Myanmar has pressed for closer and broader external relations, including deeper engagement with the international group of governments known as the G20, which includes emerging as well as developed economies.

"We were pleased with the continued opportunity for ASEAN to share its views on current issues affecting the global economy through the regular participation of the ASEAN chair at G20 meetings," the statement said. "We should aim to increase trade and foreign direct investment along with our efforts to double ASEAN's GDP and reduce poverty."

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also urged ASEAN leaders to take responsibility to resolve their disputes peacefully through continuing dialogue.

## UN secretary general airs concerns about Rakhine

UNITED Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon last week urged the Myanmar government to accelerate the process of granting of citizenship to stateless Muslims living in northern Rakhine State.

Speaking at a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw on November 12, he said processes in northern Rakhine State have been carried out in accordance with Myanmar's national laws but they should also be conducted in line with international standards and guidelines.

He said even those people who do not meet criteria for citizenship must

be fully protected in order to respect their human rights and human dignity.

Mr Ban also urged authorities to avoid measures that could entrench the current state of segregation between communities in the region.

"It's a very important and serious issue," he said. "I am urging that the human rights and human dignity of people in Rakhine should be respected."

He also asked government to grant easy access to Rakhine State so UN agencies can move around freely to deliver humanitarian assistance for internally displaced people (IDPs).

"I also express my concern about

the Rohingya population who face discrimination and violence," he said. "I encouraged the leaders of Myanmar to uphold human rights, take a strong stance against incitement and ensure humanitarian access to Rohingya living in vulnerable conditions."

Mr Ban also praised Myanmar for its ongoing reform process. "I know there are still more challenges to overcome, but generally speaking I think that Myanmar is making progress in strengthening its democratic institutions, achieving rapid economic development and national reconciliation," he said.

Rakhine State Minister U Maung Maung Ohm sent a letter to Mr Ban expressing his deep disappointment over the secretary general's choice of words. "The international community's insistence on the use of the term 'Rohingya' has alienated the Rakhine population and further fueled their distrust of all the United Nations agencies and international organisations such as MSF that are providing much-needed assistance inside Rakhine state," the letter said.

In another press conference on November 13, Mr Ban responded to the letter by saying that the Rohingya/

Bengali name debate was an "unnecessary" distraction from more important issues. "People should pay more attention to ensuring human rights and the dignity of people rather than talking about terminology," he said.

But parliament on November 14 added to the backlash by passing an emergency proposal rejecting Mr Ban's speech.

MP U Thein Nyunt, who submitted the proposal, said the term Rohingya "cannot be accepted or acknowledged by our people" and was "an insult to our sovereignty". - Ei Ei Toe Lwin and Nyan Lynn Aung with AFP

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# Trial begins for man accused of assaulting American teacher

**JEREMY MULLINS**

jeremymullins7@gmail.com  
**KYAY MOHN WIN**  
kyaymonewin@gmail.com

THE trial is under way for a man accused of sexually assaulting an American grade-one teacher in Mandalay last month.

While the court sessions are being held *in camera*, Kristen Shaffer recounted her story to *The Myanmar Times* the day after taking the stand on November 11 for the first time.

The defendant, a 22-year-old from Sagaing Region, is disputing her version of events.

Ms Shaffer said in a November 12 interview that she took what she had thought was a motorbike taxi home near midnight in October.

Rather than dropping her at her home on 59<sup>th</sup> Street in Mandalay's eastern end, the driver instead deliberately crashed his motorbike into a nearby flooded field, where he proceeded to attempt to drown her eight times, strangled her 12 times and attempted to rape her three times.

"Every time I was in the water he held me under so long that I thought I was going to die. I think

when he saw that my body was surrendering and giving up life, that's when he pulled me out of the water," she said.

When the incident was finished and the man was distracted with extracting his motorbike from the field, Ms Shaffer said she flagged down two men passing by for help.

She said she then spent the next 12 hours going through checks at the hospital and interrogations at the police station, where she was supported by a Myanmar friend.

The defendant is being charged with attempt to murder, rape and unnatural offences - sections 307, 376 and 377 of the criminal code, according to Ms Shaffer's legal representative Daw Nandar Myint Thein.

Each crime carries a possible 10-year sentence. Proceedings are expected to wrap up as soon as this month.

The defendant's lawyer U Thiha said his client is not guilty and added that he disputed Ms Shaffer's version of events.

However, he declined to elaborate, saying his client asked him to keep his side of the story confidential.

"The trial is fair, and everyone is trying to be fair in this case because she is an American citizen," U Thiha said. "I'm also trying my best for my client."

The case is being handled by Mandalay's Number 3 Police Station near the intersection of 26<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> streets.

Officers at the station confirmed the trial is under way, but said their spokesperson was not immediately available to comment as of deadline.

Ms Shaffer previously taught at one school in Mandalay for about a year. She left Myanmar for 17 months and had returned to the city for one week when the incident occurred.

- Additional reporting  
by Than Naing Soe

**'The trial is fair, and everyone is trying to be fair in this case because she is an American citizen... I'm also trying my best for my client.'**

**U Thiha**

Lawyer for the defendant

# We must act now on TB before it's too late

**NANA ZARKUA**

newsroom@mmtimes.com

MÉDECINS Sans Frontières (MSF) recently released a report at the 45<sup>th</sup> Union World Conference on Lung Health held in Barcelona, Spain, entitled "Out of Step". Based on a review of key indicators from eight high-tuberculosis-burden countries, including Myanmar, MSF's findings revealed that we are not winning the fight against this highly dangerous and contagious disease.

Similarly, the latest alarming data from the *World Health Organisation Global TB Report 2014* shows that 9 million people are affected by TB and 1.5 million are killed by the disease each year worldwide. WHO estimates that 480,000 people have drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) but less than one-third of them are diagnosed, and only one in five receive proper treatment, which under current WHO accepted regimens takes around two years.

The number of people left untreated is increasing, leaving the disease to spread unabated, further fuelling drug resistance and costing lives. This is an extremely serious global health emergency that directly affects Myanmar, which is a WHO-classified high-burden TB country.

DR-TB, unlike other deadly contagious diseases that have been receiving so much media attention recently such as Ebola, can be transmitted by air. In some former Soviet Union states, MSF currently diagnoses DR-TB in more than one in three TB patients who have never been treated for TB before, indicating its direct spread from person-to-person. In Mumbai, India, our doctors see that direct transmission of DR-TB is likely driving the epidemic in hot spots like slums and within vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS.

We must not let the same dangerous trends continue to spread in Myanmar. There is no time for

complacency. With WHO estimating 8000 new DR-TB patients each year in Myanmar, all health actors in the country must strengthen and expand current efforts to fight the disease, together with the Ministry of Health's National TB Program (NTP).

Now is a pivotal point in the fight against DR-TB, with new tools and regimens emerging that offer the potential to reinforce and accelerate the global response and fight against the disease in Myanmar. In 2009, MSF, together with the Ministry of Health, launched the country's first pilot project to treat DR-TB. We continue to work in close cooperation with the NTP to explore new ways to improve

funding to ensure that Myanmar has the ability to pay the enormous costs involved in expanding an effective national response to the disease. The medicine alone for one DR-TB patient can cost up to US\$5000 for a two-year regimen, depending on the strain of the resistance and medication for side effects required. This does not include the huge investment in human resources, diagnostics, clinic construction, infection control and transportation, among other factors.

MSF began treating DR-TB in 1999 and we are now one of the largest INGO treatment providers of TB and DR-TB in the world. It has been incredibly frustrating to witness the inaction in the global pharmaceutical and medical industry, as well as among donors, to expand efforts to help countries with limited health budgets like Myanmar fight the disease. We currently face a crucial moment in the fight against DR-TB, with new tools and regimens emerging that offer the potential to make significant steps forward in the fight against this disease in Myanmar and around the world.

Now is the time that DR-TB research, diagnosis and development efforts must be prioritised and funded in a way that ensures the benefits of the latest innovations are maximised and new advances in DR-TB care can be implemented quickly to save lives both now and in the future.

DR-TB is a human-made disease that was born as a result of inaccurate, incomplete or wrong treatment of normal TB. It now has a life of its own and is spreading quickly among people who have never had TB before. It is the responsibility of all of us to act now to try to fix the mistakes of the past before the situation is beyond our control.

Dr Nana Zarkua is Myanmar country health director of MSF

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Cost of two years of drug-resistant tuberculosis treatment

and speed up DR-TB care in Myanmar across the country, and it remains a key priority for MSF in Myanmar in the years to come.

However, despite these efforts by Myanmar health authorities, much more support and help from the international community are required.

MSF's report reveals five key actions required to turn back the tide on DR-TB: improved access to drug-resistance testing, vastly more people diagnosed with DR-TB being able to access treatment, new and less costly models of care, the affordable rollout of promising new drugs and a dramatic increase in funding.

Donor countries and other organisations must step up and provide the



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| Wai Yan (တောင်ကြီး)  | 081200571   | မိုးကောင်းကင် (ပုဒုံ) | 05770087    |
| Myat Kaung (ရွှေဘို) | 09428002355 | လှိုင် (ပုဒုံ)        | 05325445    |

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Gandamar (ပိတောက်)  | 06423803 |
| Gandamar (ပန္နက)    | 0221183  |
| Gandamar (ရန်ကုန်)  | 01657315 |
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# Pyithu Hluttaw rejects PR voting

**HTOO THANT**  
thanhtoo.npt@gmail.com

THE Pyithu Hluttaw voted unanimously on November 14 to keep the existing first-past-the-post electoral (FPTP) system in place for the 2015 elections after the Constitutional Tribunal ruled that seven other proposed alternatives were unconstitutional.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann had earlier sent the eight electoral systems that the Electoral System Reviewing Commission had listed as possibilities to the Constitutional Tribunal to rule on their legality.

U Win Myint, a Pyithu Hluttaw NLD representative from Patheingyi township, said he was satisfied with Thura U Shwe Mann's backing of the tribunal's ruling.

"The speaker read about the reply of the tribunal today. The speaker is also just. It is clear that he will do what is fair," U Win Myint told *The Myanmar Times*.

He added that if the electoral system is changed to proportional representation (PR) then it would not accord with the constitution, and the legislature would be breaking the law.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Thein Tun from Amarapura Township, who is a member of the Electoral System Reviewing Commission as well as the government-backed Union Solidarity and Development (USDP) party, said he also agreed with the ruling.

"The hluttaw must respect and follow the decision of the tribunal. That's why the hluttaw accepted the tribunal's decision and agreed to it unanimously," he said.

In June the Amyetha Hluttaw approved a bill to change the system to PR, and such a system could still be enacted if the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw votes for the bill and the president then decides to sign it into law.

The NLD supports retaining the FPTP system since it views itself as the party likely to gain a majority of the vote in 2015, while the PR system generally favours minority parties.

For the USDP, adopting the PR system would mean that, even if it trailed the NLD, it would still be likely to gain a higher proportion of seats than it would under the FPTP system.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

# 'Hard work remains'

US president charismatic but cautious during Yangon visit, which included a town hall meeting with a young audience



REFORM in Myanmar has hit "a bumpy patch", NLD leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said on November 14 during a joint press conference with visiting US President Barack Obama that covered everything from press freedom to conflict in Rakhine State.

Both speakers took a cautious tone, resulting in a warm but less jubilant meeting than happened during Mr Obama's first visit to Myanmar in 2012, when reforms under President U Thein Sein were just getting under way and optimism was high.

"Our reform process is going through, let's just say, a bumpy patch," Daw Suu Kyi said. "But this bumpy patch is something that we can negotiate with commitment and with the help and understanding of our friends from all over the world."

She urged all sides not to take a "rosy view", nor to be overly despairing of the future.

"What we need is a healthy balance between optimism and pessimism. We need to view the situation for what it was. But at the same time, we all have to be confident that we will get there ... because that's what our people want," she said.

Addressing the reform process, Mr Obama listed a number of developments made since 2012.

"When I made my first historic visit to Burma, this country was just taking preliminary steps toward democracy. And in the past two years, important changes have been made. The economy has begun to grow. Political prisoners have been set free. There are more newspapers and media outlets. Children have been released from the military. And these are all important changes that have opened up greater opportunity for the people of Burma," he said.

"At the same time, as Aung San Suu Kyi just said, it's clear how much hard work remains to be done and that many difficult choices still lie ahead," he said.

Mr Obama also cautioned that, at this stage, reform is "by no means complete or irreversible".

"For many, progress has not come fast enough or spread far enough. People need to feel safe in their homes and not be subject to arbitrary harassment by authorities or individuals acting with impunity. People need to be empowered to pursue their dreams."

Calling for the "important" elections to occur as scheduled late next year, he said it will be "critical to ensure that all of Burma's people can participate in shaping the future of their country".



Barack Obama and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meet in Yangon on November 14.  
Photo: Zarni Phyo

Both criticised the constitutional article barring Daw Suu Kyi from being eligible for the presidency, due to her children holding foreign citizenship.

"The amendment process needs to reflect inclusion rather than exclusion," Mr Obama said. "I don't understand the provision that would bar somebody from running for president" because of who their children are.

Daw Suu Kyi branded the contentious clause as "unfair, unjust and undemocratic", adding, "It is not right to discriminate against one particular citizen."

The pair spoke to media after a closed-door meeting, which Mr Obama said covered the question of US assistance to Myanmar's democratic transition, and specifically the need for stronger rule of law; elections that are free, fair and inclusive; and continued constitutional changes to move Myanmar more fully toward civilian government.

"We spoke about how we can work together to promote national

**'For many, progress has not come fast enough or spread far enough.'**

**Barack Obama**  
US president

reconciliation and defuse sectarian tensions among Burma's diverse ethnic groups," Mr Obama said at the press conference.

"Specifically, I stressed the need to find durable and effective solutions for the terrible violence in Rakhine State - solutions that end discrimination, provide greater security and economic opportunities, protect all citizens, and promote greater tolerance and understanding. Strengthening human rights protections for all of Burma's people is an essential step to realising the vision we share for

the future of this beautiful country."

Mr Obama also met on November 14 with representatives of civil society groups and young leaders from Myanmar and across Southeast Asia at Diamond Jubilee Hall in Yangon University.

The town hall-style question-and-answer session saw serious political discussion punctuated by peals of laughter, as a relaxed Mr Obama took off his jacket and bantered with the mainly young audience, who cheered and applauded enthusiastically as Mr Obama quipped his way through a meeting that addressed everything from ethnic minority identity in the diverse and insurgency-prone country, to Myanmar's painfully slow internet.

But despite the banter - one group of friends were instructed by the leader of the free world to play "rock, scissor, paper" for the chance to ask a question - Mr Obama was also asked about some of the nation's grave challenges as it emerges from military rule.

He said the US was "deeply concerned" about the situation in strife-hit Rakhine State, and also acknowledged that "some reforms have not come quickly enough".

When several among the crowd briefly held up banners reading "reform is fake", he took the interruption in stride. "Oh, we have some signs ... That's why we are here, to talk," he said.

"You don't have [to] protest, you can ask questions directly"


One of the banner-carriers later said the nation's reforms were little more than cosmetic.

"I believe that the government says it is reforming the country toward democracy but actually they are just faking," Su Su said after the meeting. "They just want international investment."

Many among the audience were happy to put the thorny issues aside and just get close to the world's most powerful man. Dozens swarmed to shake Mr Obama's hand as he toured the hall.

Flora Ngun Zaw, a graduate from Chin State dressed in a colourful beaded headdress and bangles, was among those basking in the afterglow following Mr Obama's departure.

"It's awesome! I can't believe I touched the president's hand," she said. - *With AFP*




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## MYANMARTIMES

**Chief Executive Officer**

Tony Child

tonychild.mcm@gmail.com

**Editorial Director** – U Thiha Saw

editorial.director.mcm@gmail.com

**Deputy Chief Operating Officer** – Tin Moe Aung

tinmoeaung.mcm@gmail.com

**EDITORIAL****Editor MTE** – Thomas Kean

tdkean@gmail.com

**Editor MTM** – Sann Oo

sannoo@gmail.com

**Chief of Staff** – Zaw Win Than

zawwinthan@gmail.com

**Editor Special Publications** – Myo Lwin

myolwin286@gmail.com

**Editor-at-Large** – Douglas Long

dlong125@gmail.com

**Business Editor MTE** – Jeremy Mullins

jeremymullins7@gmail.com

**World Editor MTE** – Fiona MacGregor

fionamacgregor@hotmail.co.uk

**The Pulse Editor MTE** – Whitney Light

light.whitney@gmail.com

**Sport Editor MTE** – Tim McLaughlin

timothy.mclaughlin3@gmail.com

**Special Publications Editor MTE** – Wade Guyitt

wadeguyitt@gmail.com

**Regional Affairs Correspondent** – Roger Mitton

rogermitton@gmail.com

**Chief Sub Editor MTM** – Aye Sapay Phyu**Business & Property Editor MTM** –

Tin Moe Aung

tinmoeaung.mcm@gmail.com

**Timeout Editor MTM** – Moh Moh Thaw

mohthaw@gmail.com

**MCM BUREAUS****Mandalay Bureau Chief** – Stuart Alan Becker

stuart.becker@gmail.com

**News Editors (Mandalay)** –

Khin Su Wai, Phyo Wai Kyaw

**Nay Pyi Taw Bureau Chief** – Hsu Hlaing Htun

hsuhlainghtun.mcm@gmail.com

**DIGITAL/ONLINE****Online Editors** – Kayleigh Long, Thet Hlaing

kayleighelong@gmail.com, thet202@gmail.com

**PHOTOGRAPHICS****Director** – Kaung Htet**Photographers** –

Aung Htay Hlaing, Thiri, Zarni Phyo

**PRODUCTION**

zarnicj@gmail.com

**Art Directors** – Tin Zaw Htway**Production Manager** – Zarni**MCM PRINTING**

uhtaymaung@gmail.com

**Printing Manager** – Htay Maung**Factory Administrator** – Aung Kyaw Oo (3)**Factory Foreman** – Tin Win**SALES & MARKETING**

ads.myanmarntimes@gmail.com

**National Sales Director** – Jesse Gage

jesse.m.gage@gmail.com

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Chan Tha Oo, Nay Myo Oo,

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classified.mcm@gmail.com

**ADMIN, FINANCE & SYSTEMS****Chief Financial Officer** – Mon Mon Tha Saing

monmonthasaing@gmail.com

**Deputy HR Director** – Khine Su Yin

khinesu1988@gmail.com

**Director of IT/Systems** – Kyaw Zay Yar Lin

kyawzayartin@gmail.com

**Publisher** – Dr Tin Tun Oo, Permit No: 04143**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION****Yangon** – subscribe.mt@gmail.com**Mandalay** – mdydistribution.mcm@gmail.com**Nay Pyi Taw** – nptdistribution.mcm@gmail.com**ADVERTISING & SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES**

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www.mmtimes.com

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

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

**Nay Pyi Taw Bureau:** No (15/496) Yaza Htarni  
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Tel: (067) 25982, 25983, 25309, 21426  
Email: capitalbureau@myanmarntimes.com.mm

## EITI brings risk, influence

President U Thein Sein's decision to apply to join EITI has created opportunities for civil

**THOMAS KEAN**

tdkean@gmail.com

TEN floors above the tailors, hairdressers and small retail stores of Yangon's Myaynigone Plaza, half-a-dozen people sit quietly around a long table, intently tapping away on laptops with headphones in their ears. On the walls are handwritten notes and reminders for various meetings and activities, while a whiteboard is covered in upcoming appointments, including outreach activities with parliamentarians, media training programs and an office-opening ceremony in Mandalay.

Wong Aung sits in one of the smaller meeting rooms off to the side. The dominating object is a plastic-wrapped mattress on a new frame, beside a window that looks out over the rooftops of Sanchaung township. While it would seem somewhat incongruous in most offices, this humble bed is an essential part of the Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA) setup.

MATA was created by existing civil society groups to coordinate their engagement with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which aims to shed light on financial transactions in this often murky sector. Since being formally established in March, MATA has signed up hundreds of affiliate members from around the country. Each state and region is represented; most members are community-based organisations working on issues related to land ownership, human rights, environmental protection and natural resource extraction.

MATA was also formed out of concern that civil society participation in the EITI process would be used to burnish the government's reform credentials without resulting in real, positive change. While preparations for EITI candidacy are still largely confined to Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, MATA is outward-looking and seeks to funnel up the concerns and desires of smaller groups to decision-makers.

**‘Myanmar civil society has done a particularly good job of organising around these issues.’**

**Brendan O'Donnell**  
Global Witness

The alliance is well-placed to air these local concerns. All nine civil society representatives in the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) – a 21-member body formed to oversee the EITI application process that also includes six government and six private-sector representatives – are MATA members. Wong Aung, a MATA steering committee member who is also director of the Shwe Gas Movement, is one of the civil society representatives.

But ensuring strong links to communities is easier said than done, particularly when communication with remote areas can be difficult, and travel is often time-consuming and expensive. MATA's "biggest challenge", says Wong Aung, is simply keeping in touch with all of its members – hence the need to give them a place to crash in Yangon.

Additionally, while resource extraction is overwhelmingly focused on ethnic and rural areas, these communities currently enjoy few benefits from these projects. "We really need their voice and participation in the decision-making process," he says.

The hope is that the bedrooms in

the MATA office will get used less frequently as the EITI process develops. In October, the government agreed to establish regional MSG bodies in two states and two regions. MATA members have also formed their own five-member civil society committees in each state and region, and one member from each of these groups attends steering committee meetings in Yangon. Wong Aung says the alliance is trying to establish guidelines within which the regional committees could create their own action plans and decide which issues to focus on, rather than follow instructions from Yangon.

"We are trying to initiate this kind of framework rather than hold a lot of meetings and workshops in Yangon, because otherwise it's not sustainable," he said.

While it is still early days, this coordinated approach from Myanmar civil society appears to be making progress – and winning praise.

"Myanmar civil society has done a particularly good job of organising a network around these issues, which is a credit to them," said Brendan O'Donnell, head of oil, gas and mining at the international watch group Global Witness, and an alternate member of the EITI International Board. "Some countries have struggled to rally civil society in the same way."

**‘Stop and leave’: The local response to EITI**

While civil society has been able to work with senior government officials on the MSG, at the local level it is a different, and more mixed, picture.

Recently, Daw Moe Moe Tun, an MSG member and leader of the Pyin Oo Lwin-based civil society group Sein Lan Pyin Oo Lwin, led a local EITI delegation to Mandalay's Thabeikkyin township – a rich gold-mining area – for a site visit. They quickly ran into trouble, despite having the support of Mandalay Region's mining federation.

"The manager from the gold mining company [in Weikthay village] came and told us not to take photos. We replied that we are representatives from EITI. He responded that we needed to ask for permission from him first and that if there were 'problems' he couldn't take responsibility. It really sounded like a threat," she said in a recent interview.

This is not an isolated example. MSG members rattle off a host of cases where local officials have obstructed efforts to hold meetings explaining EITI to residents.

"At one place in Magwe Region, the local authorities asked us to stop because they don't know what EITI is. We had a similar experience in Rakhine State. That's why we want to see MSG created at the regional level," Daw Moe Moe Tun said.

"There are two major obstacles: stopping and threatening," agreed U Win Myo Thu, another MSG member. "We have seen problems at EITI awareness trainings conducted in Mon, Rakhine and Shan states."

"They asked us, 'What is EITI? Are your [activities] legal? We don't want you do it, so stop and leave.' In some regions, the regional authorities threaten us and say, 'Do you dare to come back here again?'"

As a result of these experiences, MATA leaders are doubtful EITI will be successful without both decentralisation of the process and a change in official attitudes toward civil society.

Following an October 11-13 meeting in Yangon, they issued a statement calling on the government to promote awareness of EITI among government officials and to "provide legal protection to the civil society organisations and individuals from different parts of Myanmar, who are implementing EITI process activities and facing harassments, restrictions and threats,



Ma Taryar, a civil society representative on the Multi-Stakeholder Group, speaks during a meeting.

including by some company representatives."

The government appears to have taken note of these concerns. At an EITI conference in Nay Pyi Taw on October 16, Deputy Minister for Finance U Maung Maung Thein – the head of the MSG – announced that the government would send letters to regional governments to inform them about the EITI process.

However, he also said civil society organisations could consider informing local authorities of planned visits and meetings – a suggestion that did not go down well with civil society leaders, according to one person present.

To some extent, the government has little choice but to address at least some of the civil society concerns. To become "EITI compliant", Myanmar must convince the EITI Board that it

**21**  
Members on the Multi-Stakeholder Group – responsible for overseeing Myanmar's EITI application – of which nine represent civil society

has met seven criteria by January 2017. One of these criteria is civil society participation; another is the MSG submitting its first EITI report by January 2016. As Myanmar civil society representatives noted in their statement, "A good comprehensive EITI report with public consensus can come out only when there is space for the people to participate freely."

The MSG's civil society members include some dozens of the sector. Their participation brings legitimacy to the EITI process – but if they chose to quit, the government could struggle to find credible replacements.

The EITI process has therefore given civil society leverage where previously none existed. MSG members have the opportunity to meet regularly

with senior government officials and examine issues that were previously off the table, such as beneficiary ownership and contract transparency.

But none of that progress is yet evident outside MSG. What community representatives see are the continued failure to address land confiscations, impunity for local government officials and the arrest of activists for protesting rights abuses – mostly issues that fall outside the EITI remit.

When MATA members pitch the benefits of EITI, it is understandable, then, that many are sceptical, particularly if they see little difference between the sectors covered by the process – mineral and energy extraction – and those that are not, such as disputes over agricultural land.

"Most people do not trust the existing government and EITI implementation process," concedes Wong Aung.

"Human rights defenders have been taken into custody and some have been sentenced to prison, which is very contradictory from the government ... since they have committed to implementing EITI."

Compounding this is the limited protection that civil society groups can expect from EITI. While the compliance criteria stress the need for governments to provide an "enabling environment" for their participation, in practice this is far from assured – even in EITI-compliant countries.

One recent example is Azerbaijan, which the EITI Board last month confirmed had breached its obligations by preventing civil society stakeholders from meeting, organising, accessing funds and speaking freely. While it has not suspended the country, the board has ordered a review of its progress to begin in January 2015.

**New EITI guidelines needed**

In most cases, however, restrictions on civil society are less clear-cut, making it harder for the EITI Board to respond. The EITI Secretariat has conceded as much; a July 2013 report said that "it can be difficult to define to what extent certain actions by stakeholders and limitations to them were directly linked to and have hampered the implementation of the EITI".

"In several cases, governments have



# for Myanmar civil society

society leaders, but they face both a sceptical public and recalcitrant local officials



a civil society workshop on EITI in Yangon on October 12. Photo: Yu Yu

argued that restrictions on civil society organisations were not linked to their involvement in the EITI,” the secretariat said in a July 2013 report.

Mr O'Donnell from Global Witness said this has prompted the board to start drafting clearer guidelines on civil society participation. Specific benchmarks are likely to be agreed at the next board meeting in February 2015.

“There was a consensus at the international EITI Board that [what constitutes an ‘enabling environment’] needed to be defined in more detail so that countries could be meaningfully and consistently assessed as to whether they were meeting these requirements,” he said last week.

“This is a very positive step as it enables countries to be clear what they will be assessed on, and makes it clearer to the international board, the validation committee and the validators what countries should be doing to meet the standard.”

He said the recent ruling on Azerbaijan had also sent an important signal that EITI standards on civil society are “not optional”.

“The implications for Myanmar are the same for all countries – that civil society participation is an essential part of the EITI and without it there is no meaningful EITI, so the rules must be respected in this regard,” he said.

For now, though, participation in the MSG and the EITI process still poses risks for Myanmar's civil society groups. Wong Aung speaks regularly of “balance” – the need to balance par-

ticipation without being used by the government to gloss over the country's rights problems. These issues are regularly raised at MSG meetings, even when they are not strictly focused on transparency in the extractive industries.

This also reflects the fact that MATA is broader than the EITI process; its members' activities focus on human rights, land tenure, labour rights, livelihoods and many other areas.

For Wong Aung, EITI is similarly just a “small part” of resolving the conflicts over resources that have plagued Myanmar for decades.

More important, he argues, is a decentralisation of decision-making power that would give control over resources to regional governments that are accountable to residents – something that would require extensive constitutional reforms, not to mention strong political will.

“If we really want sustainable natural resources development,” he says, “we need this kind of political system and accountability at the state and region level.”

For now, though, the focus is EITI, and on strengthening MATA's network of regional affiliates.

“Both top-down and bottom-up are required for a successful EITI process,” he says. “The government needs to change its behaviour by putting policy into practice, and civil society needs to work together strategically.”

– Additional reporting by Aung Shin and Khin Su Wai

# Children's Day to focus on conflicts

**CHERRY THEIN**  
t.cherry6@gmail.com

THE Myanmar Child Rights Network will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the National Theatre in Yangon on November 20.

The event will encourage 200 children to participate in dramatic performances that depict the lives of young people living in Myanmar's conflict zones.

U Arkar Soe Naung, the network's project manager, said this year's event aims to send a message to all sides that violent conflicts must cease so that children affected by them can have a future.

“Children in the country and all over world are the most vulnerable victims of conflict. They get mentally and physically traumatised, but most are neglected. They lose their dreams and future,” he said.

The event, which will be held from 1pm to 6pm, is open to everyone and will be sponsored by a collection of local and international NGOs.

“I'm sure the children are happy to participate and raise their own voices for their peers,” said U Nan Win, the director of the network. “They are smart and talented, but we need to support and appreciate them.”

The Myanmar Child Rights Network was established in 2012 as a collection of 12 civil society organisations led by Sayadaw Magadi Tharsi. Since then it has grown to 36 local groups.

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# Hard times for farmers displaced by Thilawa SEZ



BILL O'TOOLE



WA LONE

MORE than a year after being resettled, civilians displaced by the construction of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Thanlyin township, Yangon Region, say the government's promises of better homes and new livelihoods have yet to materialise.

Their testimonials were compiled in a report released on November 13 titled "A Foreseeable Disaster in Burma: Forced Displacement in the Thilawa Economic Zone" published by the US-based advocacy group Physicians for Human Rights (PHR).

The report came only one day after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe offered the Myanmar government a US\$22.4 million loan to complete the controversial industrial park, which is a joint venture between several Japanese and local corporations with special assistance from the Japan Investment Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The Thilawa SEZ, located 25 kilometres (15 miles) from Yangon, comprises 2400 hectares of farmland that are being converted into an industrial site. The project is expected to earn profits of more than \$53 million by 2018.

"The Thilawa project exemplifies how devastating forced displacement can be on local communities when governments completely disregard human rights laws for the sake of a business development," said Widney Brown, PHR's director of programs.

The Japanese embassy and JICA's Yangon office did not respond to requests for comment.

According to the report, which is based on interviews with roughly half of the 68 households resettled during "phase one" of the construction, the resettlement process fell well short of international standards from the very beginning, when the government ordered, and often threatened, the farmers off their land.

"Instead of providing affected families with an opportunity to challenge the displacement or offered compensation, as outlined in international standards, the government issued threats to Thilawa residents," the report said.

In addition, the researchers found that government-built housing for the displaced does not meet the bare minimum standards for a refugee camp, let alone a planned community.

"All of the wells and pumps provided by the government were improperly constructed and found to be contaminated with bacteria found in human feces," the report said.

The report also paints a bleak



Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

Work continues on the development of Thilawa Special Economic Zone in Thanlyin township, Yangon Region.

picture of the job prospects for the displaced.

"People who previously worked in nearby industries were forced to leave their jobs because the commute from the more isolated relocation site was prohibitively expensive.

"The average household income dropped by 78.1 percent after relocation, 26 households (89.7 percent) reported not having enough money to

meet their needs, and 23 households (79.3 percent) reported borrowing money to meet their needs."

For the authors of the report, recognising and rectifying the problems associated with the relocation is doubly important because the project will soon move into "phase two" of construction, which will involve the resettlement of 846 households.

"The Burmese and Japanese governments should work to improve the living conditions for those displaced by this misguided venture, and ensure that this disaster is not repeated when hundreds of other families are relocated for future development projects," Ms Brown said.

U Set Aung, chair of the Thilawa Management Committee, did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

U Mya Hlaing from the Thilawa Social Development Group, which represents residents living in the area, said JICA and the Myanmar government

had promised that the project would be carried out according to international standards.

"But this has not been the case. We have tried to negotiate several times but without success," he said.

The group submitted their objections to JICA's headquarters in Japan, and the agency sent an investigation commission to the impacted area in July.

The JICA investigators released a report on November 4, which concluded that there were no problems with the relocation of farmers, compensation or support for day labourers.

Ko Aye Khing Win, who is among those displaced by the project, said the Japanese commission visited the new village where he has been relocated and "saw the situation of the houses, water and sanitation". But the final JICA report did not reflect the real situation.

"They completely broke our hopes," he said.

**'The Thilawa project exemplifies how devastating forced displacement can be on local communities when governments completely disregard human rights laws for the sake of a business development.'**

**Widney Brown**

Physicians for Human Rights



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# Journalist death investigation continues



LUN MIN  
MANG

lunmin.lm@gmail.com

THE Myanmar National Human Right Commission (MNHRC) will soon send a team to Mon State's Kyaikmaraw township for a second time to investigate the death of a journalist, allegedly shot dead in military custody.

Ko Par Gyi, whose real name is Ko Aung Kyaw Naing, was detained on September 30 while covering fighting between the military and the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) in the township.

The Tatmadaw said he was killed

on October 4 while trying to escape. They also maintained that he was a DKBA member, a claim his friends and family deny. There have been widespread calls for an investigation into his death, and the MNHRC is investigating on the instructions of President U Thein Sein.

U Sit Myaing, who heads the MNHRC investigation team, said they will meet "some military officials and local reporters".

"If the medical investigation and postmortem result comes out within this month, our investigative team will be able to make the final human rights report of this case at the end of this month. Otherwise, we will have to make a third investigation," he said.

Ko Par Gyi's body was exhumed on November 5 from ground near Shwe

War Chaung village, two hours away from Kyaikmaraw township, and was

**'Section 343 of the constitution does not specify that crimes committed by military personnel cannot be judged by a civil court.'**

U Robert San Aung  
Lawyer

then sent to Mawlamyine's main hospital for a postmortem.

"On our first enquiry, we met more than 30 people, including military officials, police officers, local residents and a state minister of Mon State," U Sit Myaing said.

"We also met with two local journalists from Kyaikmaraw and Mawlamyine. On the second visit we will meet with another reporter in Hpa-an named U Aung Pa in order to make sure that Ko Par Gyi is a reporter or not."

If the team deems it necessary, it will also talk with ethnic armed groups, U Sit Myaing confirmed.

One lawyer involved with the case, U Robert San Aung, said he hoped it would be judged by a civil court rather than a military court.

"Section 343 of the constitution does not specify that crimes committed by military personnel cannot be judged by a civil court. Past examples of judgements in such cases can be found. We hope this chance would be given again," he said.

U San Aung has previously said that there were preliminary, but not conclusive, indications of bullet wounds to Ko Par Gyi's body.

Ma Thandar, Ko Par Gyi's wife, said she had been told by a lead forensic specialist that the forensic team will submit its report only to the court after the post-mortem, which is first submitted to the police, has been completed.

The president's office has ordered the MNHRC to submit its final report on November 30.

## Police prepare to establish info unit

TOE WAI AUNG

linnhtet.lt@gmail.com

YANGON police are to open up more to the media and the public, it was announced earlier this month. The police will establish a unit to issue news and update information, said EU Ambassador Roland Kobia. The EU has been providing training in community policing.

The scheme will later be extended across the country, he told a workshop on transparency issues.

"People will be able to see the reforms that have been made in the Myanmar Police Force and how much their thinking has developed," said the ambassador. "I want to see journalists interviewing the police, and the police answering their questions."

The police information centres will issue press releases and respond to media queries.

Yangon Region Police chief Colonel Thura Win Naing said, "In the

past, people misunderstood how the police work. Now, with the help of the media, we will be able to show them."

Yangon Region police opened an information centre in 2007 to educate people about crime, and uses social media to broadcast crime news. The establishment of the media unit would allow updates in real time, said Police Major Pyae Sone.

"In the past, we didn't dare speak to the media for fear of making mistakes," one officer said. "As a result of this training, we know that journalists have to keep the public informed in real time, and we must help them when they interview us."

One crime reporter, citing problems encountered in confirming information with ward- or township-level police stations, said he hoped the new information centres and the EU training would result in greater transparency.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



EU Ambassador Roland Kobia (right) goes on bicycle patrol with police in Yangon's Mingalar Taung Nyunt township.  
Photo: Supplied

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## CRIME IN BRIEF

**Balloon inflator ignites self**

Khalauk Chite District Police in Twante township, Yangon Region, say they are assessing whether a 67-year-old man from Twante Jaung Wine Lay village should be prosecuted after his cigarette ignited the gas balloon he was filling up from a gas container. U Maung Win was taken to Yangon Central Hospital on November 9 with burns to the chest, left leg and calf. He may be charged under section 236 of the penal code for using an explosive substance "rashly or negligently as to endanger human life".

**Taxi thieves abscond with car keys**

A group of passengers assaulted their driver on November 8, demanding money from him after they arrived at their destination in Thingangyun township, Yangon. After driver U Myat was choked and shouted for help, the three took off with his car keys. Police have arrested Nyan Lin Aung, Tin Shwe Aun and Paing Paing Soe, all aged 18 and from Yankin township.

**Plate bandits apprehended**

A security guard who tried to apprehend four men he caught stealing steel plates was threatened at knifepoint, police say. The men loaded the plates into a boat before making off. U Than Myint reported the incident at the jetty in No 1 International Jetty Construction Company compound on November 6. The six stolen plates were valued at K1.5 million. Police later arrested Ei Lay (22), Myint Khine (21) and Than Sint (33) at their homes, and seized a boat at Chaung Wine Lay village port, Twante township, Yangon Region.

**Vehicle collision under investigation**

Police are investigating an incident in which a taxi driven by U Nann Lin, 30, of Hlaing Tharyar township, was involved in a November 10 collision on the Aung Zeya Bridge with another vehicle in which the driver and a passenger died.

- Translation by Khant Lin Oo

# Government salaries to increase



HTOO  
THANT

thanhtoo.npt@gmail.com

AS state revenue skyrockets, parliament last week decided to raise civil service salaries, including the pay of soldiers and police.

About 1 million government workers will receive fatter pay packets next April.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw decided on November 12 to approve the proposal put forward by U Zaw Myint Pe, who represents Mandalay Region and who said civil service pay scales did not allow government

workers to make ends meet.

"They suffer the effects of insufficient salary every day," he told the hluttaw, adding that many bureaucrats were in debt. Sharp price rises had forced them to look elsewhere for income.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, praising the proposal, said it was necessary to help government staff to live with dignity, which in turn would make the government cleaner and more efficient.

A monthly allowance of K20,000 proposed by the speaker in 2012 was incorporated into the salary last year.

Seconding the proposal, Finance Minister U Win Shein said pay scales should take into account price rises, but added that a salary

increase could also push up prices.

Daw Le Le Thein, deputy minister for national planning and economic development, also supported the proposal. MP Win Myint suggested that inflation resulting from the pay rise could be controlled by buying buffer stock.

National revenue has roughly

**'They suffer the effects of insufficient salary every day.'**

**U Zaw Myint Pe**

Mandalay Region representative

tripled since the current government came to power. The ratio between tax revenue and GDP in 2011 was just 3 percent, and is now 9pc. GDP in 2012-2013 was K51 trillion but will reach K66 trillion in the 2014-2015 financial year. Over the same period, state income has risen from K6.8 trillion to K19.161 trillion.

U Zaw Myint Pe suggested that parliament should discuss the big gap between ministerial salaries and the pay of heads of departments. Union ministers earn 11 times as much as directors general and managing directors, and deputy ministers earn seven times as much as those senior officials, he said.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

## Htoo plans to establish search and rescue team

**AYE SAPAY PHYU**

ayephyu2006@gmail.com

HTOO Foundation, which led the search for two missing climbers on Hkakabo Razi in Kachin State in September, hopes to help establish an emergency search and rescue team, its chief executive officer announced last week.

"Our patron U Tay Za offered foreign instructors to conduct training in search and rescue operations," U Paw Myint Oo said.

"Htoo Foundation has opened the Myanmar Aviation Academy in Patheingyi. We will support our team from that academy in conducting search work from the sky if the government approves."

The foundation hired a Thai helicopter to find Aung Myint Myat and Wai Yan Min Thu after they summited Hkakabo Razi and then went missing. The helicopter then crashed while searching for them, killing Myanmar co-pilot Captain Aung Myat Toe.

"That is the big loss for me and my family," Capt Aung Myat Toe's wife told *The Myanmar Times*. "But I am proud of him because he did a great job saving other people's lives."

U Paw Myint Oo said Htoo Foundation spent about US\$2 million on



Supplies are carried from a military helicopter at Panangdin in Putao township on September 17 in support of a search for two climbers who went missing after summiting Hkakabo Razi. Photo: Kaung Htet

the search operation but had more expenses yet to pay.

A spokesperson from Htoo Foundation said the search for the bodies of

the two climbers had been suspended when heavy snow started falling.

U Thet Tun, an instructor at the Myanmar Hiking and Mountaineering

Federation, said searches were likely to resume in June or July after high-altitude snow on the mountain has melted.

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Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014



Costumed actors ride elephants during a parade in Taungoo on November 6. Photo: Thiri

# Taungoo festival marks city's royal heritage



**CHERRY THEIN**

t.cherry6@gmail.com

THE city of Taungoo in Bago Region last week marked the 504<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding as a royal capital with a festival celebrating its rich heritage.

The annual festival, which this year was held from November 2 to 6, highlighted the Taungoo dynasty, which founded the Second Myanmar Empire, and featured theatre performances,

literary talks, a fun-fair and a celebration of 28 city pagodas.

On the last day, a theatre performance chronicled the life of King Bayinnaung, who founded the largest empire in Southeast Asia's history. He was one of three kings - along with Anawratha and Alaung Paya - famed for uniting Myanmar at different times during its history.

Daw Mar Mar Wai, a member of the festival management committee, told *The Myanmar Times* that the festival was about celebrating the city's role in the country's history.

"We all felt that Taungoo is neglected and its people are sleeping, but we

are now waking them up through this event," she said. "We are not drawing back to monarchical days, but we are encouraging people to cherish the country and to be patriotic about its royalty."

Film actors U Paw Lay and U Ahyine Min also said they felt proud to participate in the performances.

"If you lose culture you lose the nation, but people have neglected it. We all need to be aware of this in time to safeguard our heritage," U Paw Lay said.

Festival organisers hope to feature royal dances and a military parade next year.

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# Parliament objects to new US sanctions

**HTOO THANT**

thanhtoo.npt@gmail.com

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw issued a statement last week blasting the US Treasury Department for placing influential lawmaker and businessman U Aung Thaung on a sanctions blacklist at the end of October.

U Aung Thaung, 73, was added to the US Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals List on October 31, ostensibly for blocking key reforms in Myanmar. US officials can now freeze any US-based assets he might have and ban Americans from doing business with him.

"Aung Thaung is actively attempting to undermine recent economic and political reforms in Burma and has been implicated in previous attacks on Burma's democratic opposition," the Treasury Department said.

"As the United States continues to support and monitor Burma's reforms, including democratic reform and the national peace process, we remain concerned that certain individuals have been working to counter these efforts."

Formerly the minister for industry and now an MP, U Aung Thaung is said to be one of the more hard-line members of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) led by President U Thein Sein.

U Win Than, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Ayeyarwady Region's Thabaung township and a USDP member, submitted a statement objecting to the sanctions to the Hluttaw, where it was approved without objection.

"If we look at this announcement, we will sorrowfully find that it won't provide for our country's democracy reform process, and it could even become an obstacle to it," U Win Than said, adding that he did not see how an MP could be told by another country what he can and cannot do.

U Aung Thaung, who is also chair of the Pyithu Hluttaw Banks and Financial Development Committee, said it is possible that the US blacklisted him to reduce the power of the USDP.

When asked about the blacklisting, National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi told reporters that it "is not a concern of the NLD".

Most of the factories and enterprises U Aung Thaung ran while serving as the industry minister suffered losses, which drew criticism from MPs in recent Hluttaw sessions.

U Aung Thaung is also father to U Nay Aung and U Pyi Aung, founders of the Myanmar conglomerate IGE Group, whose interests include natural resources, hotels and United Amara Bank, which was founded in 2010.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



## IN PICTURES

PHOTO: THAN NAING SOE

Firefighters put the finishing touches on dousing a blaze at a petrol station in Mandalay on November 10. Two people died and six were seriously injured when a 2800-gallon tanker truck caught fire during refuelling at 1:40pm. Fifty-five fire engines and 185 firefighters responded to the emergency call.



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Residents of Chan Mya Tharsi township in Mandalay Region attend a press conference on November 3. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

## Residents refuse to demolish their homes

SITHU  
LWIN



sithulwin.mmtimes@gmail.com

ANGRY residents are defying an order to demolish their own homes and move out. Mandalay City Development Committee had ordered the demolition of the nine homes by November 15 as part of a road-building plan.

The residents told reporters at a press conference on November 11 that they had petitioned President U Thein Sein for the right to keep their homes.

The demolition order came after MCDC reportedly abandoned an attempt on November 3 to destroy the buildings after a stand-off with the homeowners, said U Maung Maung Lay, one of the residents.

The buildings are located along the

Mandalay-Sagaing Road in Kyun Lone Oo Shaung ward, Chan Mya Tharsi township, where the new road is to be built.

"We've been living here more than 60 years without a problem. Why should they make us homeless now?" said resident Daw Moe Moe Aye. "We wrote to the mayor and the chief minister, but nothing happened. Now we've petitioned the president. We will not leave. We will stay here even if they kill us."

Ko Myo Gyi, a resident from the nine buildings, said, "We're planning to novitiate my son soon. But now it's

**"We will stay here even if they kill us."**

Daw Moe Moe Aye

impossible to plan for the future. It's not easy to rent elsewhere. Our house is not on the road or the approach. We paid the authorities in 1992 in exchange for a grant for the land. They can't make us move now."

At a meeting with residents on November 3, MCDC secretary U Khin Maung Tint said the area where the homes stand is included in the road project.

"We didn't select only these nine houses for demolition. We will gradually clear other houses squatting on the road area," he said.

He said MCDC had informed the residents of the need to move in 2008, but subsequent court action had yielded no result.

The residents are demanding that the authorities undertake a systematic review of the project to explain the need for the removal of the houses, but the MCDC secretary told them the committee has no plans to do so.

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# Daw Suu Kyi seeks ‘effective’ four-way meet

**MAUNG ZAW**  
mgzaw.mmtimes@gmail.com

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi told supporters earlier this month in Loikaw, Kayah State, that her recent historic meeting with Myanmar’s president, head of the armed forces and hluttaw speaker must be repeated if “national reconciliation” is to be achieved.

On October 31, the National League for Democracy leader met with 13 other leaders at the president’s residence in Nay Pyi Taw, including President U Thein Sein, Senior General U Min Aung Hlaing, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Election Commission chief U Tin Aye and the heads of four other political parties.

But the hastily arranged meeting made little progress, Daw Suu Kyi said afterward, because there were too many participants.

She told supporters in Loikaw’s Kayah Day Square on November 8 that a quadrilateral meeting should now take place that would include only herself, U Thein Sein, Sen Gen U Min Aung Hlaing and Thura U Shwe Mann.

“We are now asking for a meeting of these four people. It is very important for national reconciliation. There will be effective results for the country after the four groups have met and held discussions,” she said, adding that her requests for such a meeting have so far been rejected.

“Some people say that it is not enough with just four people. For me, I don’t want to meet just for show. I want to get effective results for the country,” she said.

Colonel Saw Lwin, the secretary of the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), which has an armed wing that agreed to a ceasefire with the government in 1994, said his party supported a meeting of the four people.

“There will be an effective result only if the quadrilateral meeting is held,” he said.



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with locals in Kayah Day Square, Loikaw, on November 8. Photo: Maung Zaw

“For Myanmar, it is necessary for the government and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet. But we totally object to the recent meeting with 14 participants because there was no special result. That’s why the government should accept the quadrilateral meeting.”

The KNLP has also sided with the campaign to amend section 436 of the constitution, which effectively prevents Daw Suu Kyi from holding the presidency.

Also last week, Daw Suu Kyi told a Union of Karenni State Youth member that no one should vote for a candidate who acts in a dictatorial way – including those representing the NLD. The member, whose name was not recorded, asked her, “What should we do if representatives of the ruling party are dictatorial in the democracy era under the new government reign?”

“You don’t need to vote for the candidate from any political party,” Daw Suu Kyi replied. “If people think that the candidate of the NLD is dictatorial, don’t vote.”

# Kachin jade mines operating again

**HLAING KYAW SOE**  
hlaingkyawsoe85@gmail.com

JADE mining in Kachin State has resumed as tensions caused by recent armed clashes ease, local observers say. A series of firefights broke out between Tatmadaw troops and armed groups in mid- and late October.

Forces from both sides still confront each other across Uru Creek in the Aung Bar Lay ward of Hpakant township in Kachin State, and soldiers conduct security checks on local residents moving around the area. But the mines and related markets are back in business, residents say.

“During the clashes, jade mining in the area was suspended. Now it has resumed, though both sides carry out security checks. There is a checkpoint near the government’s regiment on the road leading to Aung Bar Lay ward,” said U Daung Khar, a spokesperson for the Kachin Independence Organisation’s advisory team on technology.

KIO Regiment 6 is based on the east side of the bridge over Uru Creek, while government troops occupy the west side, about 8 kilometres (5 miles) from the KIO base, he said.

A local gem trader said the situation had returned to normal, and the local Lone Khim gem trading centre was thriving with gem traders from Mandalay.

“Jade mining has resumed. We have no difficulty moving around, despite thorough security checks by both sides,” he said, adding that the Lone Khim and Tar Ma Kham mines are now in full operation, and the Lone Khim gem trading centre is open daily.

“All businesses are doing well now. Other jade mines, like Maw Wyne Gyi and Sar Taung, have also seen activity,” he said.

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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# Views

## Sex, dogs and Malaysian politics



**ROGER MITTON**

rogermitton@gmail.com

ACCORDING to recent polls, nearly half the population of Malaysia distrust the national police force and the country's judicial system.

Most of them also disapprove of the man who has ultimate oversight of these agencies, namely Prime Minister Najib Razak.

The PM's latest approval rating has fallen to 48 percent, the lowest score he has ever recorded since becoming PM.

As for the National Front government he leads, its approval rating dropped to 38 percent and nearly half of all those surveyed said the country was "headed in the wrong direction".

Aside from the soaring cost of living and the racial and religious tension, it is not hard to see why Malaysians are losing faith in their government, especially when the press is full of tawdry sex-related stories that would besmirch the reputation of any country.

Indeed, the negative sentiments expressed are likely to have worsened by now, since the surveys were conducted shortly before the latest judicial battle began for opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim.

He has been dragged through the courts for what seems like an eternity as he fights charges that he committed sodomy with a former aide, Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

If Anwar, now aged 67, is convicted and jailed, not only will it rule out any hope he has of replacing Najib as PM, but it may also cause the opposition People's Alliance to break apart.

Said fellow oppositionist Syed Ibrahim Noh, "If Anwar goes to jail, then I think it is a move to end his political career."

It may also be a move that causes Malaysians to have even less faith in their law enforcement agencies, which have been criticised at home and abroad for being biased, especially against government opponents.

Recent criticism has been particularly intense over the way Najib's men have used draconian laws, like the Internal Security Act and the Sedition Act, to shackle political rivals.

And it has worked. The opposition had seemed to be on an unstoppable rise under Anwar's leadership, and it even won a majority of the popular vote in last year's general election.

Recently, however, it has stalled, partly due to its own missteps and partly due to Najib's controversial use of the Sedition Act to charge a slew of Anwar's colleagues and supporters.

As human rights activist Yap Swee Seng said, "It all highlights an increasingly systematic pattern of abuse that has a chilling effect on freedom of expression as well as civil society space in Malaysia."

Critics contrast Malaysia with its Muslim-majority counterpart Indonesia, where Joko Widodo, a little-known family man with a common touch and an aura of incorruptibility, has been elected president this year. Malaysia, meanwhile, has been controlled by the same racially biased Malay clique since independence

60 years ago and still uses partisan judges and colonial-era sedition laws to silence popular oppositionists.

And Najib, despite knowing the negative implications, lacks the steel to stand up to religious dogmatists who have gained more clout in his own party after its setbacks in last year's election.

These dogmatists have led crack-downs that have riled more tolerant members of the ruling coalition and caused dismay among many ordinary Malaysians.

Last year, for instance, they championed a court case that resulted in a ruling that Malay-speaking Catholics could no longer use the word "Allah", the Arabic word for "God", in their bibles.

This year, Cadbury had to pull several brands of chocolate from store shelves in Malaysia after they were alleged to be contaminated with pig DNA. Tests later found no traces of pork in the chocolate.

Recently, Najib's Islamist wing complained about an Oktoberfest beer event, saying it was as bad "as mass-promoted adultery", while others of that ilk condemned Halloween as a "planned attack" on Islam.

Earlier this month, there were demands that a mineral water bottler should be punished for upsetting some Muslims by using the image of a Hindu god next to a halal logo on its labels.

To cap all this insidious nonsense, a pet-a-dog event sparked an uproar from Muslim groups, who said it was insulting because dogs are viewed as unclean under Islam.

Othman Mustapha, head of the Islamic Development Department, which has the duty to protect the "purity of the faith" in Malaysia, claimed the doggie event challenged the authority of Islamic leaders.

As a result, the organiser of the event, a man known for community-based projects, received death threats and was forced into hiding. And Najib did nothing.

But many Malaysian Muslims have more backbone and exercise their right to own dogs, drink beer and wear trendy Western clothes – and when these rights are threatened, they naturally turn against the government.

Now, more and more members of Najib's own party are starting to fret at the way petty religious constraints are making ordinary Malaysians angry and was driving many of them into the arms of the opposition.

Said former minister Zaid Ibrahim, "Malays are now in danger of being classified as 'deviant' if they have slightly more liberal or progressive views about life and the world than those who call themselves Muslim scholars."

Others chastised the authorities for paying more attention to doggie issues than to the state of the economy, the troubles of Malaysian Airlines or the way jihadists are recruiting for Islamic State fighters in the Middle East.

That explains why the approval ratings of the judiciary and the PM have fallen – and will not improve until all the petty rules and the hateful condemnations over dubious religious rituals cease.

As Marina Mahathir, the daughter of former PM Mahathir Mohamad, said, "All we are getting these days is how to hate an ever-growing list of people and things. And how does that make us happy and better Muslims?"

It does not. And clearly more and more Malaysians know it.

## DDR and the peace

Armed ethnic groups must get over their aversion to disarmament, demobilisation



**AUNG NAING OO**

newsroom@mmmtimes.com

IN 2008, I asked an ethnic leader if his group would be interested to learn about DDR.

I explained to him what I meant: I could train his group on DDR, the understanding of which could help his group immensely in their negotiations with the government. But he looked at me with suspicion and disbelief and said, "Out of the question!"

DDR stands for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. It is an important process in the journey from active military engagement to post-conflict settlement. It is a process all of us in the peace process should understand.

Its definition is best explained in the UN secretary general's note to the General Assembly on May 31, 2005, which said DDR is "a process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods".

But in Myanmar, DDR is frowned upon by ethnic armed groups. It is considered a demon whose name cannot be mentioned lest it strike fear into the hearts of all who hear it.

Following my conversation with the ethnic leader in 2008, word spread that I was trying to disarm the ethnic groups. For the next few years, I could not utter a word about DDR among these armed opposition groups.

But DDR is necessary to the peace process. It is crucial for post-conflict security and stability. Without clear DDR objectives, transparency and an accountable implementation process, the conflict can spiral back into active armed hostilities.

Most importantly, though, DDR is a process that cannot be carried out without political agreement between the protagonists.

But it is often the case that when it comes to DDR, non-state armed groups only focus on the word "disarmament" rather than on the other key aspects, such as the importance of the social and economic reintegration of armed combatants.

I understand their fear. Ethnic armed groups have long relied on "armed struggle" to fight for their rights. They believe that by means of weapons and armed struggle, they have been able to protect their territory and their people.

Recent history has also demonstrated that those who give up their weapons without a comprehensive political agreement are likely to find themselves significantly disadvantaged. This happened to some ethnic leaders as far back as the 1950s, with schemes for armed groups to exchange "weapons with democracy" ending in failure.

Such failure is often blamed on the Myanmar military or on successive governments that have battled armed insurgency since independence in 1948.

It is true that ill-prepared disarmament is bad, but in reality the disarmament of a particular group in a conflict area where rival militias



**A Tatmadaw soldier stands guard in Myawaddy, Kayin State, where fighting broke out between the Tatmadaw and the Benevolent Army (DKBA).** Photo: Kaung Htet

or larger ethnic armed groups exist always has repercussions.

This is because once a group is disarmed, it will no longer have the means to protect itself. The remaining armed groups in the area will battle to gain control of the disarmed group's former territory. This is known among some security personnel in Myanmar as the "filling the blank" theory.

Thus disarmament without clear security arrangements or political

**It is often the case that when it comes to DDR, non-state armed groups only focus on the word "disarmament" rather than on the other key aspects, such as the importance of the social and economic reintegration of armed combatants.**

agreement will become a terminal sin for any armed group to commit. In some cases, it may not be the government forces they are concerned

about, but rather their rival neighbours who are equally well-armed.

Whether armed resistance has helped them realise their aims after more than six decades of armed conflict is not important. What we must understand is the high value they place on weapons and their fight for freedom.

Weapons cannot simply be given up. Any mention of disarmament is met with a hostile reaction. In Myanmar, with its history of protracted conflict, DDR is an uphill battle.

But this phenomenon is not confined to Myanmar. In the Philippines, which has faced a similar dilemma, the term DDR is not even used; they call it "normalisation". And the country has experienced devastating results from ill-conceived DDR programs.

The government of Myanmar clearly understands what is at stake when it comes to DDR issues.

President U Thein Sein, following our meeting with him at the Myanmar Peace Center on July 12, told us about an important policy decision. "Do not mention anything about disarmament in your talks with the ethnic armed groups," he said. "If you do, the process will fail even at the beginning. DDR issues will be carried out at the end of the peace process in accordance with the international standard."

Experts at the Folke Bernadotte Academy in Sweden, where I was trained on DDR issues, said, "Overall, the DDR concept is peace-building." They said all armed forces are part of crisis/conflict management. They also emphasised that no two DDR programs are alike,



# Views

## process in Myanmar

and reintegration processes to help peace talks move forward and bear fruit.



in September between government troops and the ethnic Democratic Karen

meaning all such programs must be tailored to the unique situation on the ground and as spelled out in the peace agreement. DDR contributes to security and stability, but it alone does not bring them about. It is implemented in complex social, economic, political and development settings.

For DDR programs to succeed, several conditions must be met. Chief among them are a political agreement, political will, trust in the peace process, a minimum guarantee of security, small arms and light weapons control measures, a national recovery program and sufficient funds.

The UN has been involved in DDR processes in more than 30 countries. Most of them are in Africa, including Sudan, Sierra Leone, Angola, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Somalia, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

In Asia, the UN has been involved in such processes in Aceh (Indonesia), Timor Leste, Nepal and Cambodia.

If I am not wrong, it is the UN Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations that take charge of DDR operations. IN 2006, the UN published a DDR Operation Guide known as ID-DRS. In addition, some 17 UN agencies are involved in DDR issues.

DDR operations are not cheap. The cost of such operations in Burundi, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Haiti, Liberia, DR Congo, Sierra Leon and Sudan, involving more 67,000 armed combatants, was nearly US\$3.8 billion in 2005.

What about Myanmar, which has an estimated 100,000 non-state armed combatants? We may not be as expensive as African DDRs, but the cost will be staggering.

Who will foot the bill? What about the timeline?

In Myanmar, DDR issues will fall under security talks or discussions about the future of ethnic armed groups during the political dialogue. How the negotiations will transpire is not yet known. But it may be the last agenda of the political negotiations, and many different ideas have been informally discussed.

But whatever is decided at the end of this peace process, we must bear in mind that DDR is linked with security, stability, political settlement, post-conflict recovery, development and reintegration, and that it is a demon that we must confront to secure an enduring peace.

Aung Naing Oo is the associate director of the Peace Dialogue Program, Myanmar Peace Center. Opinions expressed here are his own.

## Time to stop showing off and get to work



SITHU AUNG MYINT

newsroom@mmtimes.com

FOURTEEN of Myanmar's key political figures met in Nay Pyi Taw on October 31.

Among them were President U Thein Sein, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

On the surface, the meeting appeared to hold great promise for Myanmar and its citizens - it was an unusual gathering of leaders who have rarely been seen together in the country's new era.

But many observers have condemned this optimism as a spurious impression. While the meeting did bring these leaders together, none of the participants received any prior information about what subjects would be covered, nor were they allowed to conduct face-to-face conversations with one another. At the end, no definite outcomes were discussed.

So what kind of meeting was it?

Long ago, Daw Suu Kyi had requested a four-way meeting that would have included the president, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker, the commander-in-chief and herself.

The request was never granted. Instead, President U Thein Sein said that Daw Suu Kyi was merely a party leader, and there were more than 60 registered political parties in Myanmar. It was therefore not appropriate to meet with her exclusively.

President U Thein Sein later called a meeting of leaders from all political parties, but not everyone was allowed to take part in the discussions. Only 10 parties, chosen by random draw, were permitted to ask questions.

This approach surely reflected the

influence of former military officers who have long dominated the government and who have consistently refused to accept Daw Suu Kyi as a political leader.

It is therefore safe to say that the national reconciliation process has not yet started. President U Thein Sein's government has not achieved success in peace talks with ethnic armed groups. Meanwhile, the process of amending the constitution, despite being discussed in parliament, still has not reached a resolution.

It was amid such uncertainties that the president held the political talks with 14 leaders. Some critics say the October 31 meeting was aimed at creating the illusion that the government was still on track with reforms. The fact that the participants were not given any advance information about the meeting has done nothing to quell this impression.

During the meeting, President U Thein Sein talked about the constitutional amendment process and the incomplete peace negotiations.

The other participants were each given about 10 minutes to speak, but according to U Hkun Htun Oo, leader of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), this was barely enough time for Daw Suu Kyi to bring up any other issues. The late invitation had meant that she did not have time to call a party meeting or to otherwise prepare in advance.

That was how the meeting unfolded, but photographs released by the government were intended to give the public and the international community a positive impression.

The government's retrogressive reform process signals an urgent need to start national reconciliation as soon as possible. For that reason, there needs to be a serious and genuine meeting of leaders.

This country has seen much artifice in its recent history: artificial socialism, artificial elections, an artificial national convention, artificial referendums, an artificial market economy and artificial democracy.

A genuine gathering must be called to seek a good resolution for the sake of the country and people.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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# Business

## Chinese stampede upsets markets

Hot capital outflows fleeing China's corruption crackdown are finding a home in Myanmar assets like real estate, gems and jade



AYE THIDAR  
KYAW

ayethidarkyaw@gmail.com

BILLIONS of dollars from opaque sources in China may be flowing into Myanmar each year, causing excessive volatility in areas such as the local real estate market, according to experts.

Flows have increased recently as Chinese political and business leaders respond to efforts to curb corruption, causing many to look abroad to store their ill-gotten money.

These capital flows are distorting markets through the region, and, to some extent, the world, said Sean Turnell, associate professor of economics at Australia's Macquarie University.

One manifestation of this is felt in the rising Myanmar real estate market, but this experience is mirrored in many countries, including Australia - where hot Chinese money is creating a very serious real estate "bubble" in Sydney, he said. Experts say these "hot" money inflows are often entering Myanmar asset markets, such as real estate, gems and jade, sometimes in a bid to be beyond the reach of Beijing authorities.

Although the real estate sector is notoriously volatile in Myanmar, the jade and gems sector are also affected by similar flows. Mr Turnell said jade is a simple, ancient and easily understood and negotiated instrument for storing and transferring value, and it has seen large swings in export volumes in recent years. "It is no accident that jade sector has been volatile," he said.

Of official jade exports, US\$1.3 billion out of a total \$1.5 billion goes to China each year, according to the Ministry of Commerce's statistics, while far more is thought to exit the country through illicit channels. "Hot Chinese money will create difficulties for macroeconomic management, not just as setting monetary policy, but also in the emergence of market bubbles whose 'bursting' can cause great



People enter Myanmar from the Chinese city of Ruili. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

damage - not just the losses that follow, but also for notions of market integrity," he said.

While managing these inflows is important, it will also be difficult to stem the tide. Even countries with well-established regulatory regimes have difficulty with these "hot" capital flows, though it is crucial to attempt to address the problem.

China has launched a well-publicised anti-corruption drive initiated by president Xi Jinping, which has contributed to the recent capital flows to Myanmar. Mr Turnell said some Chinese political officials and businesspeople are responding to Beijing's efforts to get a handle on their internal corruption by joining a "stampede" of capital out of the country.

"The volumes are so large, the problem so acute. In all of it we have

to ascribe blame too where it is primarily due - China," he said. "China is exporting its instability, its corruption, its lack of faith in its own institutions," he added.

Government officials say that while they generally have strong cooperation with their Chinese counterparts, money laundering is one area where connections need to be improved. China's Yangon embassy did not return several requests for interviews for this article.

The Chinese government has asked for Myanmar assistance in areas like robbery or finding fugitives, but has yet to ask for assistance in a money laundering case, said U Kyaw Win Thein, Financial Investigation Unit deputy chief and a police colonel.

Although these Chinese capital flows are a significant problem, they

are not the only instance of money laundering that occur in the country. Myanmar is working to be removed from international body Financial Action Task Force (FATF)'s annual list that designates high risk and non-cooperative jurisdictions.

**'China is exporting its instability, its corruption, its lack of faith in its own institutions.'**

Sean Turnell  
Myanmar-focused economist

The FATF noted that Myanmar has made a high-level political commitment, but has not made sufficient progress in implementing its action plan, in an October update. Myanmar for its part has passed a new anti-money laundering law in March 2014 but yet to publish the follow-up regulations governing how the law will work in practice. While Myanmar's Financial Investigation Unit has signed agreements with seven countries on combating money laundering, China is not yet one of them.

"China is also a member of FATF," said U Kyaw Win Thein. "But we will only be able to cooperate in cross-border [money laundering] affairs after signing an agreement, which is very complex." He added there have been some successful anti-money laundering moves. The government has also seized about \$200 million worth of kyat during about 70 anti-monitoring stings over the past decade. Still, the government's anti-money laundering efforts could be more pointed.

A Central Bank of Myanmar director requesting anonymity said it is not just the burden of the Central Bank to prevent money laundering, as coordinated action must involve several government branches. The director said he advocated for one single government unit to be set up and become responsible for overseeing the issue.

Currently, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Myanmar Investment Commission are to check the background of money when it enters the country as an FDI inflow, while the Central Bank's Financial Information, Inspection and Survey Department is responsible for money remittances.

Much of this illegal Chinese capital ends up in the property market. Though Myanmar has not allowed foreigners to buy property for most of its recent history, some foreigners have used local citizens' identity. Some regional governments seem to fail to inform the central government when this happens, said Ministry of Commerce

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BUSINESS 27

Singapore property giant to set up Yangon sales office

PROPERTY 34

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|------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Currency                           | Buying | Selling |
| Euro                               | K1243  | K1261   |
| Malaysia Ringitt                   | K302   | K303    |
| Singapore Dollar                   | K791   | K798    |
| Thai Baht                          | K31    | K33     |
| US Dollar                          | K1030  | K1035   |

# Yangon Electricity Supply Board denies plans to invite private investment – for now

AUNG SHIN  
koshumgtha@gmail.com

THE Yangon Electricity Supply Board does not yet have concrete plans to allow private investment to take an equity stake in the business, though private firms are meeting with the board to look for opportunities.

Some media has reported the board, which is a state-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Electric Power, is planning to allow in private partners as part of its ongoing corporatisation process – which aims to see it run professionally at arms’ length from the ministry. However, officials from the board faxed a letter in response to questions from *The Myanmar Times*, stating that it will be some time before this happens.

“The Yangon Electricity Supply Board will be the Yangon Electricity Corporation after its corporatisation is finished,” said the letter. “The Yangon Electricity Corporation needs good corporate governance standards to operate on business terms.”

“At the moment there are no plans to invite private investment. It can happen when the Corporation succeeds in business like a private

company,” the letter said.

Although the board claims to not have any plans to invite private investment, it has been inviting representatives from local companies to take part in meetings on the corporatisation process.

“We have done planning to transform Yangon Electricity Supply Board into a joint private-public company in the future,” said board secretary U Toe Aung. He added there are about 10 companies working with the board in areas like electricity generation and distribution.

Zeya and Associates is one private company currently working with the board. Its chair U Zeya Thura Mon told *The Myanmar Times* that the board is currently constrained by its reliance on the state budget.

“It can’t do enough investment to update the aging power transmission and distribution lines in Yangon,” he said.

The corporatisation process is an attempt to run the board professionally, and will create good results, according to U Zeya Thura Mon. He added his firm is discussing whether there are any investment opportunities, as there will be many changes with the corporatisation process.

The electricity price is also likely to increase in the long term, as it must be realistic to cover the price of production, he added.

An official from the Yangon Electricity Supply Board finance department said it purchases power from K60 a kilowatt hour to K450kwh. The board’s monthly income is now about K31 billion (US\$30 million) a month after prices were raised earlier this year, and had formerly been about K20 billion.

The board has earned K159 billion from April to August, though only K2.1 billion is profit, after accounting for taxation and other running costs.

‘We have done planning to transform Yangon Electricity Supply Board into a joint private-public company’

U Toe Aung  
Yangon Electricity Supply Board

# Chinese capital stampede

economic advisor U Maung Aung.

While Mandalay has gained a reputation as the property market that is the most affected city by Chinese capital outflows, there have been other areas that have attracted foreign buyers, such as areas in Yangon Region.

“Regional governments or [the Ministry of] Home Affairs must know this information – probably they are ignoring it,” he said. “Even senior Chinese officials are involved in this tangle, and businesspeople as well,” he said.

The problem can impact domestic security, as well as serving as a barrier to legitimate foreign direct investment. Bankers say the amount of unofficial money circulation may be larger than the legitimate size of flows. Kanbawza Bank vice president and former deputy governor of the Central Bank U Than Lwin said

banks may control 40pc of money circulation while the black market comprises 60pc.

“Money coming from outside the country should flow through the banks to more easily control [money laundering]. The Central Bank should set strong policies to narrow the market,” he said.

Property is not the only asset that has been used for money laundering. Automobiles, gold and US dollars have also been affected by speculation in Myanmar, said U Win Myint, secretary of parliament’s Bank and Monetary Affairs Development Committee.

“A lack of law enforcement and authorities avoiding their duty to watch speculators are the main reasons,” he said. “On the other hand, the government doesn’t have a lot of experience.” U Win Myint also said that Chinese buyers are not the main cause of the real estate price spike.

# Taking timber firms public

TIN YADANAR HTUN  
yadanar.mcm@gmail.com  
MYINT KAY THI  
newsroom@mmmtimes.com

CHANGES are planned for state-owned timber companies that could see them transition to public companies – though they will likely remain partially state-owned. Minister of Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Htun said it is the government’s policy to professionalise its public enterprises, although state-owned timber businesses are usually profitable every year.

“Although Myanmar businesses are changing with the market economy, [the timber industry] has not clearly changed until now,” he said. “So to complete the change to a market economy, we will open as companies in the sector as public firms. We will change all [state] enterprises to public firms eventually, or some enterprises to public firms, as possible.”

A total of 12 timber state-owned firms and 3 furniture state companies will transition to being public companies. If these transitions are successful, the remaining 69 timber companies will likewise be changed.

Although Myanmar has no modern stock exchange at present, it does allow public companies to form and raise capital through over-the-counter share sales. There is also an outdated exchange with two listed companies called the Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre.

To transition to being a public company, a business must have a minimum of seven shareholders and file a prospectus with the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration,

as well as meet a number of reporting requirements.

U Win Htun made these comments at the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting of the Forest Products Joint Venture Corporation (FPJVC) on November 7. FPJVC is already a public company, though the government-owned Myanmar Timber Enterprise directly controls 45 percent of the firm and the Forest Department 10pc, with the remaining 45pc owned by public shareholders.

FPJVC is also one of two companies that are listed on the existing Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre stock market. However, trading in the company’s shares is light, as the share price is capped at K20,000, though annual dividends reach K3000 – resulting in a dividend yield of 15pc, according to its 2013 annual report.

Given the high dividend yield, its owners are generally reluctant to part with the shares, particularly as they are currently capped from appreciating in value at the exchange. U Win Htun said officials are preparing FPJVC to be able to list on the Yangon Stock Exchange slated for 2015, though he added no definite decision has been reached on whether it will join the more modern market.



Stacked timber on a boat awaits shipment to ports further down the Ayeyarwady river. Photo: Kaung Htet

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**Brunei**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1984  
Population: 0.4 million  
GDP: \$17 billion  
GDP per capita: \$42,500

**Cambodia**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1999  
Population: 15.1 million  
GDP: \$15.5 billion  
GDP per capita: \$1026

**Indonesia**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1967  
Population: 249.9 million  
GDP: \$868.3 billion  
GDP per capita: \$3474

**Laos**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1997  
Population: 6.8 million  
GDP: \$10.9 billion  
GDP per capita: \$1603

**Malaysia**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1967  
Population: 29.7 million  
GDP: \$312.4 billion  
GDP per capita: \$10,505

**Myanmar**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1997  
Population: 62.8 million  
GDP: US\$59 billion  
GDP per capita: \$939

**Philippines**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1967  
Population: 98.4 million  
GDP: \$272 billion  
GDP per capita: \$2764

**Singapore**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1967  
Population: 5.4 million  
GDP: \$295.7 billion  
GDP per capita: \$54,759

**Thailand**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1967  
Population: 67 million  
GDP: \$387.2 billion  
GDP per capita: \$5779

**Vietnam**

Year of entry to ASEAN: 1995  
Population: 91.7 million  
GDP: \$171.2 billion  
GDP per capita: \$1867

Data from McKinsey Global Institute's November 2014 report *Southeast Asia at the crossroads: Three paths to prosperity*.

# The slow struggle to economic int



JEREMY MULLINS

jeremymullins7@gmail.com

THE 10-member ASEAN bloc is still in its early stages, and bears some resemblance to the United States – in 1776 – according to David Carden, partner in charge of Asia at legal firm Jones Day and former US ambassador to ASEAN.

Like post-independence America, ASEAN is a place with border disputes, no common currency, and weaknesses in education, infrastructure and environmental protection.

Yet with strong leadership and focus on improvements in the right areas, the bloc has a huge amount of potential to grow in the years to come.

“If ASEAN is going to find the future, it is going to find it together,” said Mr Carden. “The challenges are too great, productivity is too low, the demand for infrastructure is too high. So much needs to be done that there’s no way it can be accomplished unless the people are brought together.”

Mr Carden was one of six panelists speaking on Inclusive Connectivity at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2014, which ran parallel to the ASEAN Summit from November 11 to 13 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar has been chair of the ASEAN bloc this year, which has launched an ambitious series of proposals to grow regional business links. ASEAN is set to enact an Economic Community at the end of 2015, aiming to ease restrictions in trade of goods, flows of services and capital throughout the region.

Yet it is increasingly clear that ASEAN member countries will struggle to meet all of their commitments on easing a host of restrictions by the deadline of the last minute of 2015. Much of the reluctance to drop barriers stems

from a desire to protect local businesses from foreign competition, a force powerful enough to lead some to question whether an integrated Economic Community will indeed take form at all.

Simon Tay, chair of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, said it will take at least five more years before the region starts operating as an integrated market.

“There is no big bang [coming in 2015], but it’s opening the door, and after a while people will start going through,” he said.

The ASEAN region is quite diverse. Southeast Asia may be united by multiple threads of history, culture and common geopolitical concerns, but differences abound, according to McKinsey Global Institute’s November 2014 report *Southeast Asia at the crossroads: Three paths to prosperity*.

The report highlighted the significant differences in the region’s political systems, culture, language and religion.

“Indonesia is almost 90pc Muslim, while the Philippines is more than 80pc Roman Catholic and Thailand is more than 95pc Buddhist,” it said.

There are hundreds of languages spoken across the region. While English is ASEAN’s official working language, countries such as Singapore and Philippines have proportionately far more fluent speakers than others such as Thailand.

Despite the differences, the collective opportunities for the bloc are evident.

Already ASEAN has a larger economy than India, Brazil or Russia, and boasts real GDP growth of 5.1pc between 2000 and 2013 – behind only India and China among major economies, the report said.

Southeast Asian countries have generally enjoyed significant growth, and if viewed as a single entity would represent the seventh-largest economy in the world – larger than India, Brazil or Russia.

The 10 nations boasted average real GDP growth of 5.1pc between 2000 and 2013 – behind only India



President U Thein Sein (left) bangs a gong to get the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit on, as U Win Aung watches. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

and China among major economies, the report said.

The region also has a large, young population of 600 million people, and generally low government debt, it added.

However, restrictions still abound between neighbours in areas like trade, investment and labour flows. Experts say these restrictions need to be tackled if the goal of an integrated Economic Community is to be achieved.

**‘ASEAN is like a mini-Disneyland with all the political systems in the world put into one.’**

**Kavi Chongkittacorn**  
Nation Media, Thailand

While tariffs on trade have generally been lowered across the bloc, for instance, non-tariff barriers remain a serious issue.

“There is still a high degree of protectionism in the countries within ASEAN, and this is not helping,” said Richard Owens, DHL executive vice president and regional head of customer relations and innovation. “This is not helping trade.”

Among the more bizarre examples of protectionism are the restrictions against foreign trucks entering Myanmar – requiring shipments to be changed to a local driver and truck when entering into the country.

Each member country has its own concerns it seeks to protect. For instance Thailand and Indonesia have up to half their populations working on farms, yet the sector contributes a relatively small portion of the countries’ total GDP, said Mr Carden.

“One of the greatest challenges

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that presents itself to ASEAN is rising nationalism and protectionism,” he said.

Often these measures are put in place to protect vested interests from the worst impacts of globalisation – and it will require strong leadership to overcome such concerns.

The concept of a collective ASEAN having a joint identity is also relatively weak, making it difficult to galvanise countries behind the concept.

“ASEAN is like a mini-Disneyland with all the political systems in the world put into one [body],” said Kavi Chongkittacorn, assistant group editor for Nation Media in Thailand.

While he said he advocated for strengthened symbols to pull the region closer together, other experts disagree.

“I’m not sure anyone here can sing the ASEAN anthem,” said Mr Tay.

“The symbols will come later. They will come naturally, rather than trying to rush them.”

A more pressing concern than flags or songs is the significant disagreement on what role the ASEAN Secretariat – its permanent administration – should take.

Mr Carden said often the bureaucracy of the European Union is brought up as something ASEAN must avoid – but the organisation’s Jakarta headquarters are a long way off from becoming Brussels.

“The EU headquarters has 33,000 people; the ASEAN secretariat has 300. We don’t have to worry about this,” he said.

While Mr Carden said he would like to see more spent on the secretariat, others say it shouldn’t be handed a blank cheque.

Mr Tay said he would like to see a better monitoring system for government action.

“The governments have promised to have an AEC, but the tracking of it, the non-tariff barriers, all these complaints need to go somewhere. They can’t just go to each government,” he said.

Despite the disagreements, experts say an integrated ASEAN economic community will still arrive – eventually.

# U Thein Sein to grow ties

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein looked to strengthen business ties with regional economic heavyweights at the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, including pushing for international support for its ambitious Dawei special economic zone plan.

The president discussed promoting measures for economic growth with his Japanese, Indian and Indonesian counterparts on the event’s sidelines, which was held November 12 to 13 in Nay Pyi Taw. Progress was made on securing support from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for the ambitious Dawei special economic zone, according to officials. Located in Tanintharyi Region, the zone is a joint Thai-Myanmar project, but has a troubled history to date.

Japanese assistance has been touted as a key to developing the project, which aims to provide an overland link from the Andaman Sea to Bangkok and the Gulf of Thailand.

“The Japanese government promised they will assist, and President U Thein Sein called on the Japanese government to invest in the Dawei deep sea port to promote the development of ASEAN,” said deputy information minister U Pite Htwre.

U Thein Sein also met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, partly to promote Dawei. Meetings with senior Indonesian and Russian leaders were also aimed at promoting economic ties.

– Ei Ei Toe Lwin and Nyan Lynn Aung

# Local firm bags an ASEAN-wide award

**JEREMY MULLINS**  
jeremymullins7@gmail.com

BLUE Ocean Operating Management is the only Myanmar firm to win one of six ASEAN-wide business awards handed out November 11 in Nay Pyi Taw. The firm won the Young Entrepreneurs ASEAN Business Award, which aims to recognise excellent companies that are founded and actively managed by a businessperson under 45. Blue Ocean was founded in Myanmar in 2007, and now operates a number of businesses such as a contact centre for Telenor and a



hotline for the nationwide census, claiming over 400 employees at present. U Wai Phy, UM-FCCI vice

president, said that while Myanmar businesses face challenges, he hoped the awards inspire improvement.

“An unfavourable environment, lack of entrepreneurial spirit and little access to capital are some of the problems that budding entrepreneurs face in Myanmar,” he said. “Our hope is that these six businesses will inspire other entrepreneurs in Myanmar.” Singapore was the big winner for the ASEAN Business Awards, winning 4 of the 6 ASEAN prizes.

A total of over 500 firms had initially applied for consideration from across the regional block, with 121 completed applications being submitted. The companies first competed on a national level, and then the winners in the 6 categories went head-to-head on the regional stage. However, the winners, runners-up, and second-runners-up for the ASEAN awards came exclusively from four of the 10 ASEAN countries – Myanmar, Singapore, Philippines and Vietnam.

The awards were part of an event launching the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit, which runs parallel to the ASEAN Summit over November 12 to 13 in Nay Pyi Taw. President U Thein Sein opened the event by saying developing regional economies depend on implementation and resource access.

“It is important that member states develop gradually from resource-based [economies] to

technology-based [economies] and then to innovative and advanced [economies],” he said. He also highlighted ASEAN’s regional potential, noting improving trade links with India, China, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand are bringing together some 16 countries with 3 billion people and a combined GDP of US\$17 trillion.

U Win Aung, chair of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said that while the regional economy is relatively strong and the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community is around the corner in 2015, much

still needs to be done.

“Other issues such as corruption and the rise of economic nationalism are also becoming key hindrances to the promotion of economic regionalism with ASEAN. In order to address such challenges, ASEAN and more important its member states are required to pursue long-term investment on structured economic reforms.”

U Win Aung also provided perhaps the most humorous moment of the award ceremony, when he appeared to accidentally refer to Cambodian Prime Minister “samdech” Hun Sen as “Saddam Hussein”.

| Who took home the prizes?           |                                 |  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Award                               | Myanmar winner                  | ASEAN region winner  |
| ASEAN Centricity                    | Myanmar Airways International   | UOB (Singapore)  |
| Young Entrepreneur                  | Blue Ocean Operating Management | Blue Ocean Operating Management                                    |
| Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises | Kelvin Chia Yangon              | Absolute Kinetics Consulting (Singapore)                           |
| Innovation                          | Fame Pharmaceuticals            | Cyclet Electrical Engineering (Singapore)                          |
| Women Leader                        | City Mart Holdings              | Community Health Education Emergency Rescue Services (Philippines) |
| Corporatæ Excellence                | Kanbawza Bank                   | Keppel Land (Singapore)  |

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# Unseasonably late rain destroys paddy, beans



ZAW HTI KE

zawhtikemjn1981@gmail.com

FARMERS are being flooded out by heavy rainfall in early November, which in some areas has destroyed up to 30 percent of the rice and bean harvest.

Portions of the rice baskets of Ayeyarwady and Bago regions are the hardest hit, leaving some farmers counting their losses after an already poor season, as prices tumbled as much as 20 percent on international and local markets this year.

The rice harvest peaks next month, but some farmers have already begun harvesting, hoping to plant a bean crop.

However, U Thein Aung, chair of the Myanmar Freedom Farmers League, said low-elevation farms have been hit particularly hard, though harvested paddy at higher elevations is also susceptible to rainstorms because of the poor warehousing system being used.

"This harvesting season, paddy prices have fallen and farmers hoped to recover by planting more beans. But now, everything is gone," he said.

Some farmers are now harvesting their rice early, to keep it from being ruined by more heavy rain. However,

many are not able to do so because of a lack of manpower, and are offering to split the harvests with whoever will help them, said U Thein Aung.

U Soe Tun, chair of the Myanmar Farmers Association, said the exact amount of damage is not yet known, though the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is currently assessing the harvest.

**'There might be some ways to reduce farmers' losses temporarily ... but we need a strategy for the long term.'**

**U Ye Min Aung**  
Myanmar Rice Federation

"However, all paddy, whether harvested, being harvested, or still in the fields, the quality is degraded by being too wet," he said.

"The problem is that no trader would like to buy wet paddy, as it can be ruined in a short amount of time." When damp, harvested paddy spoils easily and must be parboiled - or boiled in the husk, U Soe Tun added.

There is a shortage of local millers able to properly process paddy into parboiled rice, however. Farmers' advocates say they are holding out hope the government will step in to buy rice paddy and support farmers. The government is contemplating buying paddy to drive up falling prices after China froze out Myanmar rice exports in October, though it remains to be seen how much the weather will affect prices.

"The government has said it is going to buy up rice stock, but now many paddy fields are ruined and the program will not reduce farmers' losses," said U Thein Aung. "All will be in vain."

U Soe Tun said the Myanmar Farmers Association may be able to negotiate with the government to extend farmers' loan terms, adding farmers are also requesting subsidies directly from the government.

The Farmers Interest Promotion Bill, passed in October 2013, has provisions for government support of the sector, though the bylaws have yet to come out that will govern how this is to work in practice.

U Ye Min Aung, general secretary of the Myanmar Rice Federation, said other solutions such as crop insurance are necessary over the longer term. "There might be some ways to reduce farmers' losses temporarily when there is flooding or raining," he said. "But we need a strategy for the long term."

# Korean loan comes for power lines

AUNG SHIN

koshumgtha@gmail.com

AYE THIDAR KYAW

ayethidarkyaw@gmail.com

THE Ministry of Electric Power has signed an agreement with Korea's Export Import Bank for a US\$100 million loan to fund a 500-kilovolt transmission line.

The project is the first to receive funding from South Korea's Economic Development Cooperation Fund during the period of the civilian government, though there had previously been several planned projects worth up to \$240 million, said Export Import Bank chair Lee Duk-hoon.

The 500kv transmission line will connect Taungoo with Kamanat, both in Bago Region, to improve energy transmission closer to Yangon. It will stretch 188 kilometres, aiming to help improve electricity consumption in the country.

While the project will ultimately benefit domestic electricity users, there is also a political element to the project.

"It can be assured that [the transmission line] plays a main role in the economic cooperation between Korea and Myanmar," he said.

U Htain Lwin, managing director of Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise, said the agreement is still quite general and there are more details to be agreed on.

"We are going to use Korean equipment and technology through

the loan program once we have chosen an appropriate contractor," he said.

The loan bears an interest rate of 0.01 percent and is repayable over 40 years - with the first 15 years being interest free.

Deputy Minister of Electric Power U Aung Than Oo said the agreement to implement this line had been signed in July.

The transmission project will meet international standards, helping to avoid frequent energy shortfalls.

"Electricity consumption is increasing year by year, therefore this project is important to reduce electricity losses and other problems," he said.

South Korea's ambassador to Myanmar, Lee Baek-soon, said Yangon has long had an infrastructure shortage even as the local economy has improved.

Embassy figures show total approved foreign investment from South Korea to Myanmar was at \$2 billion by July, while January to September bilateral trade stood at \$9.6 billion.

State-owned Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise is attempting to build more transmission lines in the country, though there are several areas outside the national grid.

Lines are being extended in Chin and Mon states in the next financial year, while lines in Rakhine State will be completed this year, he said.

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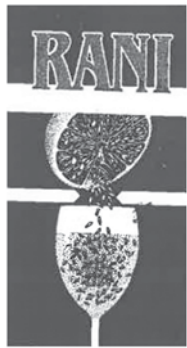
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Dated: 17 November 2014

# U Myint to lead overhaul of statistical indicators

THOMAS KEAN



tdkean@gmail.com

ONE of Myanmar's leading economists has been tasked with overhauling the government's statistical system and restoring credibility to financial indicators that were regularly manipulated by previous government for political reasons.

U Myint, President U Thein Sein's chief economic adviser, said he was given the mandate to reform the statistical system during a meeting with the president in September, and would coordinate the process with Union ministers and donors.

He said better statistics were a "crucial governance tool" to guide planning, implementing and monitoring of policies.

"The key objective of U Thein Sein's government, since its inception, has been to adopt and implement strategies and policies that will transform Myanmar into a modern democratic nation. Getting facts and figures right is an essential requirement to attain this goal," he said in a statement.

The process is likely to lead to amendments to Myanmar's 1952 Central Statistical Authority Act and reform within the Central Statistical Organization (CSO). The aim, U Myint said, is to ensure data collection meets accepted international standards and takes account of changes that are taking place in

Myanmar and in the Asian region, particularly in terms of international trade. Support is likely to come from multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and United Nations.

"The need for the CSO to perform its mandated functions is crucial," said U Myint, a former UN economist who also heads the Centre for Economic and Social Development at the Myanmar Development Resource Institute.

**'Confidence and trust in the statistical system suffered. That trust has yet to be restored.'**

**U Myint**

Presidential economic adviser

"Restoring its central role, coordination function, independence, technical competence, outreach, capacity, and availability of manpower and financial resources to undertake the tasks above are areas requiring careful thought and action."

A new focus is likely to be analysing value chains for key commodities, such as rice, rather than simply export figures.

"A chain is as strong as its weakest link. CSO should therefore be provided with the mandate, capacity and resources to identify weak

links that need to be taken care of, for reforms and the economy to move forward."

The reforms will aim to rebuild the credibility of the government's statistical agency after decades of manipulation. Under previous socialist and military regimes, statistical indicators, such as gross domestic product, were regularly doctored to give the impression that misguided policies were working, but these were widely ignored by the international community.

U Myint said the consequences of this interference were "disastrous".

"Official statistics lost credibility with the people - from all walks of life, but particularly for the poor. Official pronouncements and reports of robust growth bear no relation to the ground realities in the country. Confidence and trust in the statistical system suffered. That trust has yet to be restored."

He called for a review and revision of previous figures, including the 2010 Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment, which put the poverty rate at about 25 percent.

While acknowledging that "some high officials in the government circles have expressed reservations" about revising the 2010 figure, U Myint said that getting a clearer picture of poverty would ensure that "more poor people will benefit from poverty alleviation measures".

"What is important is for the poverty alleviation measures to be properly implemented and benefits are delivered to the poor in concrete terms," he said.

## Garment industry could expand with planning

SU PHYO WIN

suphyo1990@gmail.com

GARMENTS could be the most promising sector for foreign investment over the next 10 years, particularly if an effective strategy is drawn up and executed, industry experts said.

Yet the sector is fiercely competitive, and Myanmar faces competition from places like Bangladesh and Cambodia that have extensive experience in the business.

Obtaining a higher quantity and more stable orders as well as higher profits is an ongoing process, according to members speaking at the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association annual meeting in Yangon last week.

The association is launching a project management team to operate starting at the end of the year, aiming to work with the government to improve the industry, said association president U Myint Soe.

"Although we did an estimated US\$1.5 billion worth of exports this year, if our strategy works we could have \$10 billion in exports within 10 years," he said.

The challenge, particularly for the low-margin, high-volume cut-make-trim garment production that Myanmar specialises in, is to provide a more compelling place to set up a factory than its competitors. Bangladesh for instances has more than 200 million people and \$20 billion in exports - 20 times Myanmar's export volumes - but also has its disadvantages. Some investors are worrying the industry has reached saturation in Bangladesh, which is also prone

to man-made and natural disasters.

There is an opportunity to take the best practices from Bangladesh.

U Myint Soe said the garment sector is also quite important as an employment generator. It will require many workers as it expands, potential providing millions of jobs.

With the preferential market access offered by the European Union and signs that the China market may also be opening to imports, the portents look strong for the sector.

"On average one factory a week is opening, with up to 2000 workers. And this trend will spread beyond the outskirts of Yangon to the states and regions," said U Myint Soe.

However, the sector must overcome significant hurdles if it is to realise its potential.

Key constraints include the weak banking system, taxes on imports and exports, infrastructure and training and technology. These areas will need government support and a comprehensive strategy to overcome, said U Myint Soe.

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Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association's target for exports in 10 years' time.

## GE to extend investment in Myanmar

AUNG SHIN

koshumgtha@gmail.com

AMERICAN giant General Electric has signed an agreement to extend its investment in Myanmar by upgrading gas turbines at state-owned Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE).

The refurbishment could see up to an additional 30 megawatts of power generated from the turbines, using the same amount of fuel, General Electric (GE) said in a press release on November 12.

"This investment underscores GE's commitment to partner with the Myanmar government to help expand the much needed supply of reliable electric power in the country," said Stuart Dean, chief executive officer of GE ASEAN, in the release.

GE still needs to finalise the agreement to repower and upgrade the existing turbines over the next six months, the statement said.

"It is a general agreement. GE is going to observe existing gas turbines in the Yangon area, and then we will decide the proposed renovation cost," said U Htain Lwin, MEPE managing director. The Ministry of Electric Power expects to be able to upgrade the existing 30MW gas turbines at Hlawka and Alon, as well as the 16MW turbines at Ywarma plant.

There are 10 state-owned gas-powered plants in the country, with 27 gas turbines that have in some cases date to 1972. There are also seven privately owned plants under way, some of which began operations last year.



IN BRIEF

Warner makes West's first China music streaming deal

Warner Music announced a partnership on November 13 with Chinese internet company Tencent that will include streaming.

The Warner Music Group, whose roster of artists ranges from Prince to Coldplay, said the deal would let it distribute to Tencent's platforms across China including QQ Music, a start-up streaming service similar to Spotify.

The deal is the first for one of the three global label conglomerates in China, where international companies have long complained that rampant piracy has slashed revenues. – AFP

Taipei loses a competitive step after Korea-China trade pact

Taiwan's government expressed alarm on November 10 at China's free trade agreement with South Korea, the island's strong trade competitor, and urged the opposition to stop boycotting a planned services pact with Beijing.

South Korea announced earlier on November 10 it had effectively reached a free trade deal with its giant neighbour China. Taiwan's government spokesperson Sun Lih-chyun described the news as a "most worrying event" for the island.

Taiwan competes fiercely with South Korea in products ranging from textiles to semiconductors. – AFP

In the seas, Indonesia will triumph: President Widodo

President Joko Widodo is targeting almost US\$6 billion in projects to expand ports across the world's biggest archipelago, where investors are deterred by logistics costs that amount to a quarter of the economy.

Mr Widodo plans to expand five ports on the nation's main islands, seeking to reduce shipping delays and boost trade. At his inauguration, Jokowi likened himself to a "captain trusted by the people" and said it was time for Indonesia to return to "Jalesveva Jayamahe", the naval motto meaning "in the seas we will triumph." – Bloomberg

Mexico stuns China in rail deal

Mexico stunned the winning Chinese-led bidder for a high-speed rail project by scrapping the US\$4.3 billion award, citing public "doubts and concerns", and ordering a new competition to open before month's end.

The surprise revocation late November 13 came three days after the project was awarded and ahead of Pena Nieto's visit to Beijing this week, a trip intended to deepen ties between the two countries. The contract for China Railway Construction Corp and four Mexican partners marked Mexico's first large investment in transportation by a Chinese firm. – Bloomberg

Amazon buries the Hachette

Publisher Hachette and Amazon ended on November 13 an acrimonious feud over online book sales that highlighted Amazon's market dominance and fuelled protests from leading authors like John Grisham and Stephen King.

The spat over who sets retail prices for online sales, especially e-books, had outraged Hachette authors who saw their book sales sink after Amazon leveraged its power as the largest book retailer in the United States.

The two said in a statement that the deal, which came as the holiday shopping season opens, would be a plus for both authors and readers. – AFP

Juncker frets pro-business label

EU Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker has denied a claim that he was the "best friend of big business", amid uproar over huge tax breaks top global companies enjoyed when he was Luxembourg premier.

An under-fire Mr Juncker went on the counter-offensive, announcing the Commission, would push for fair rules.

"Do not describe me as the best friend of big business. Big business has much better friends in this house," he said. – AFP

NEW DELHI

Modi's 'Make in India' drive still stalled by red tape

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi is seeking to turn India into a global manufacturing hub by curbing red tape.

Tell that to Tata Steel, which closed one of its largest iron-ore mines in September over permit delays. Or to Steel Authority of India, which shut one of its top-yielding quarries the same month pending renewal of its lease. And JSW Steel's plan to start mining in eastern Jharkhand state has been hampered by a probe begun last month into mine allocations.

Mr Modi is set to trumpet his "Make in India" initiative this week at the Group of 20 summit in Australia as he vies with China to woo manufacturers. But the mine closures show lingering bureaucratic obstacles to his push, stemming from court rulings and officials in India's 29 states that lie beyond Mr Modi's direct control. India slid two places to 142<sup>nd</sup> out of 189 economies in the World Bank's latest ease of doing business rankings.

"There are things beyond the government's control," said Taimur Baig, chief economist at Deutsche Bank in Singapore. "If a court makes

a pronouncement there is nothing really that the executive can do. For better or for worse, India has many more layers of checks and balances."

Mr Modi introduced the "Make in India" drive in September to lure investment and revive economic growth after sweeping to office in a landslide victory in May. His government aims to boost manufacturing's share of India's US\$1.9 trillion gross



Mr Modi (left) meets U Thein Sein at the ASEAN Summit. Photo: AFP

domestic product to 25 percent from about 15pc currently.

The government needs abundant iron ore supplies as it vies with nations such as Thailand and Indonesia to become a production hub. The ore is used to make steel, which in turn is used to manufacture everything from cars to railway lines.

Yet judicial mining bans over environmental and regulatory lapses led to a drop in iron ore production in four of the past five years. That's stoked local prices even as global rates fell, and some buyers are turning to imports.

Spot prices of iron ore in Odisha, the biggest producing state, have gained 31pc in the past year to 3200 rupees (US\$52) a tonne, said Gunjan Aggarwal, an analyst at commodities consulting firm CRU Group. Prices at China's Qingdao port have slid 44pc to less than \$76 a tonne as of November 9.

Tata Steel said it is meeting the shortage through local purchases and imports of the material.

"There are challenges in procurement due to logistics constraints and hence we are facing difficulty in op-

erations," spokesperson Chanakya Chaudhary said.

Mr Modi's changes since taking power include faster environmental approvals for major investment projects, more market-based energy pricing, fewer foreign-investment curbs and steps toward ending the state's grip on commercial coal mining.

He expanded his cabinet two days ago as he seeks faster decision-making to speed up growth in Asia's third-largest economy. His administration has vowed to press ahead with amending land, labour and investment laws to make business easier.

At the same time, regulatory hurdles continue to constrain iron ore production. CRU estimates iron ore imports may surge to 15 million tonnes in the year ending March 31 compared with the prior 12-month period.

"We are being squeezed," said Jayant Acharya, marketing director for JSW Steel. "While the international iron ore prices are at a five-year low, our own domestic prices are going in an opposite direction." – Bloomberg

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As a Credit Admin Manager, you need to drive, manage the credit administration and loan management function including legal documentation and ensure achieving the service standard set and handling challenging business volume in loan documentation and disbursement by offering proper support and guidance with highly efficient tracking mechanism with regular monitoring.

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# Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Jeremy Mullins | jeremymullins7@gmail.com

## Singapore's Far East Organization to open Yangon office



MYAT NYEIN AYE

myatnyeinaeye11092@gmail.com

SINGAPORE'S largest private property developer Far East Organization will open a sales office in Yangon, officials said on November 12.

The company will join with local firm Min Zin Agency for sales and marketing of their units in Singapore to Myanmar customers.

Far East Organization has already been expanding their sales and marketing efforts into Myanmar, said Ko Kyaw Min Zin, managing director of Min Zin Agency.

**'Now they want to make the place a base of operations. That's why they will open an office in Yangon.'**

**Ko Kyaw Min Zin**  
Min Zin agency

"They already have Myanmar customers for their Singapore properties. Now they want to make the place a base of operations. That's why they will open an office in Yangon very soon."

The office should be open before the end of the year, with Min

Zin's assistance. It will offer units from 20 projects. Founded in 1960, with its first residential development completed in 1962, Far East Organization says it has over 750 developments in Singapore's residential, hospitality, retail, commercial and industrial sectors, including 45,500 - or one in every six - private homes in Singapore.

"Far East has been selling their Singapore units to Myanmar buyers since 2009," Ko Kyaw Min Zin said.

Singapore has few restrictions on foreigners owning condos, which along with its close geographical proximity makes it a good place for Myanmar people to live or to invest, he added.

The firm is also considering future investment in Myanmar's property scene.

Company officials have come twice, but have yet to commit to a development.

There are, however, a number of differences between the two markets. One impediment in Myanmar is the legal situation governing the property sector, as it is still evolving, while Singapore has had its condominium law for over 20 years, said Ko Kyaw Min Zin.

Foreigners are currently barred from owning property in Myanmar, though under the most recent draft of the long-awaited condominium law, foreigners will be allowed to own land in certain situations, if the law is approved.

Once a Myanmar condominium law is strongly in force, customers will buy able to buy without worrying for the future of their condos.

Property is also quite expensive in Myanmar compared to the average person's salary, particularly as their are no long-term, low-interest loans, while in Singapore, more middle-class people can afford condos.

### HONG KONG



## Struggle pits farmers

HONG Kong farming villages bordering mainland China are locked in a bitter struggle against property developers accused of "land hoarding", as resentment of the city's vast wealth gap fuels democracy protests.

Now in their second month, the protests were sparked by Beijing's insistence on vetting candidates in Hong Kong's next leadership elections in 2017 - but the perceived cosy relationship between the government and the

city's powerful business elite is also a key source of anger.

While developers snap up valuable real estate across the city, soaring house prices and rental costs leave the majority of the population struggling to afford private housing.

Farmers in the outlying New Territories near the mainland border are now joining the push-back against the government and developers as their land comes under threat.

A multi-billion dollar government project will see scarce agricultural land developed, and thousands uprooted to make way for townships that officials say will help to meet demand for housing.

But with only a tiny sliver of the proposed 614 hectares area reserved for public housing - and a bigger slice for commercial complexes as well as private flats beyond the reach of most Hong Kongers - villagers argue that the

### MANILA

## Urban Philippines shows signs

RECORD bids for two plots of land in a Manila business district have lifted prices to a 17-year high, raising concerns that a property bubble is forming.

The 1600-square-metre (17,200-square-foot) site in the former military camp of Bonifacio fetched 732.8 million pesos (US\$16.3 million) and 800 million pesos each at a government auction in September. That was a record half-a-million pesos per square metre, about 80 percent higher than the previous government land sale in the area, according to the local associate of Savills Plc.

"Philippines is at risk for an asset bubble," said Antton Nordberg, a property analyst at KMC MAG Group, Savills's associate in the country. "The price of the land is just too high."

The record bid "has an effect on property prices and rents," said Kash Salvador, a Manila-based investment manager at broker CBRE Group Inc. "It could create the belief that anyone is able to lock in value seen usually in

top-tier property."

Land values in at least seven cities tracked by Colliers International UK Plc climbed in the last quarter to the highest since the 1997-1998 Asian crisis, property analyst Romeo Arahan said. Manila home prices have surpassed 2008 levels and office space is near a six-year high, according to Colliers, as the Philippine economy expanded more than 6pc in nine of the last 10 quarters to the end of June.

Closely held Goldenwill and Focus Palantir outbid a unit of Robinsons Land, the second-largest operator of shopping malls in the Philippines, at the September 23 auction of the land sold by the Government Service Insurance System in Bonifacio. The Social Security System sold a Bonifacio property for 277,000 pesos per square metre a year earlier.

Based on the maximum of 12-storey building height allowed in the area, average construction cost of about 60,000 pesos (US\$1335) per square metre and an average profit margin

of 40pc, the developers may fetch 170,000 pesos (US\$3783) per square metre, KMC MAG's Mr Nordberg said.

That will be 21 percent higher than current prices for office space and 30pc more than apartments in Bonifacio, KMC MAG said in a note. The developers didn't give details about their buildings plans.

At 170,000 pesos per square metre, investors must be ready to accept yields closer to 5pc, Mr Nordberg said.

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“One of the greatest challenges that presents itself to ASEAN is rising nationalism and protectionism.”

— David Carden, Jones Day legal firm and former ambassador to ASEAN

China offers \$20 billion in support to ASEAN

WORLD 40



Hong Kong's farmers are joining the democracy struggles, as development increases. Photo: AFP

# against tycoons

project is designed mainly to enrich real estate giants.

“Ordinary people like me can only dream of affording the apartments that will be built here,” said Yung King-yu, a 19-year-old resident of Ma Shi Po, one of the affected villages.

“So how will this project meet Hong Kong’s housing needs?” asks Mr Yung, who regularly camps at one of the democracy protest sites.

Given the area’s proximity to

the border, the project has also spawned concerns that it will cater more to wealthy Chinese mainlanders, who are often blamed for driving up Hong Kong property prices.

The farmers’ anger is only one part of the ongoing democracy protests on the former British colony, as democracy activists have taken to the streets to protest against Beijing’s action since late September.

– AFP

# of property bubble

Yields are 9pc for office space in Manila and 7pc for residential, according to CBRE data.

Residential condominium prices and rents increased about 5.7pc and 5pc in the third quarter from a year earlier, respectively, according to Colliers. Office rents added 7.1pc in the three months through September, while capital values rose about 7.4pc, the broker said.

While prices may be rising too fast in some parts of the property market, overall “you don’t see any clear evidence of a real estate bubble,” Central Bank governor Amando Tetangco said on October 29. Tighter lending measures should help prevent a “sharp and abrupt” correction, Mr Tetangco said.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas raised its benchmark interest rate twice this year, to 4pc, from a record-low 3.5pc.

The central bank said last month it will release an index to better gauge how real estate prices affect the economy.

Property loans will moderate in the next two years after Bangko Sentral last month ordered lenders to cap the collateral value of real estate mortgages at 60pc, said Michael Wan, a Singapore-based economist at Credit Suisse Group AG.

A correction in the housing market is overdue, said Jose Sio, chief financial officer at SM Investments Corp, which controls one of the nation’s biggest builder.

Sales at Megaworld, the nation’s largest provider of space for outsourcing companies, continue to do well, said an official. – Bloomberg

## Correction

In our recent Property supplement (“Luxury living in Yangon”, November 10, 2014), the construction dates of the GEMS development were listed incorrectly. Construction will last from October 2013 to late 2015. The Myanmar Times regrets the error.

## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

# A lot to live up to in Mayangone

This house has a great lot. Coming in at 8000 square feet, there is plenty of room to stretch. It’s a work in progress, meaning it’s up to you to tailor it to your tastes – whether that’s a garden, a space for sports or grazing cattle.

Located in Mayangone township, it has modern decorations and furniture already in place. There’s also the facilities needed to invite over guests, with room for indoor and outdoor parties.

The house is a little small given the size of the compound, coming in at 1750 square feet. It has three master bedrooms, two smaller bedrooms, and an assortment of living rooms, a shrine, kitchen and four bathrooms.

It also boasts seven air conditioners and all the rest of the amenities you’d expect with the price. It’s some distance from downtown, but is a decent price for a nice place – and one you might be able to negotiate.

– Tin Yadanar Htun



|          |   |         |                                     |
|----------|---|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Location | : Lane off of A1 Road, near Pyay Road, Mayangone township | Contact | : Estate Myanmar Real Estate Agency |
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**PUN HLAING SCHOOL**  
Managed by world famous British HARROW International Management Services (HIMS). This major investment into an “Early Years Centre” provides young students aged 3-10 years with an international enriching curriculum. Classes open now. Plans for upper school 10-16 years underway.

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This exciting new bridge to Hlaing Tharyar and Pun Hlaing Golf Estate is **NOW OPEN**. It reduces travel time to Yangon City Center by up to 30 minutes.

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# SuleTech, a new community centre and office space, brings the future downtown



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ONLY a handful of buildings in Yangon are taller than MAC Tower. Its 11-storey stature affords a fresh perspective of the downtown proper, including Sule Pagoda – a landmark that lends its name to a new office and community and co-working space called “SuleTech” coming to MAC Tower’s top floor.

Two tenants are moving in: Ooredoo’s entrepreneurial arm and start-up incubator Ideabox, as well as a new non-profit group from Code for Change Myanmar founder David Madden called Phan Dee Yar. Both will make MAC Tower’s 11<sup>th</sup> floor their home base, but by no means will be the only ones sharing the space. Rather, much of the almost 6000-sq-ft storey will be open to the public.

Its name seems appropriate, as “Sule” sometimes becomes shorthand for the centre of downtown Yangon and SuleTech seeks to serve as a hub for anyone in and around the tech industry in Myanmar. Designed to appeal to more than the usual suspects – techies and their ilk – the space means to become a crossroads where individuals across industries meet, as well as a place “for ideas to collide”, said Julian Gorman, Ideabox co-founder and Ooredoo Myanmar director of digital services.

Lack of community represents a particular pain point in Myanmar. Three-quarters of those surveyed participants in the country’s second-ever hackathon knew less than 20 percent of the people at the event, according to Mr Madden. SuleTech’s logic seems to run that the remedy to a disconnected network is networking, which a physical gathering place can help with.

“A key ambition ... is that [SuleTech] becomes a real community place. Instead of all the people going and sitting in the bottom of Trader’s hotel for internet access, they’d actually much rather come here,” Mr Gorman said. “It’s more about when you come here, who else am I going to meet in this space?”

In an ecosystem like Myanmar’s, building a start-up gets complicated

when entrepreneurs don’t have different types of industry workers in their rolodex.

“Creating that vibrant rich community is about interaction,” he continues. “Everyone talks about Sergey Brin and those guys building Google in a garage ... [They] spent a [load] of time talking to other people.”

Recent initiatives from Ideabox and Code for Change Myanmar such as conferences, hackathons, and networking groups have brought the tech community out of the woodwork and to IRL meetings. Now, events like monthly networking meetup Mobile Monday can be held at SuleTech.

“To get anything good out of a city, like entrepreneurs, it’s like making a good recipe – you need the right ingredients and you also need the cooker,” said Kevin Miller of the Go Project, a startup sponsored by Ideabox. “Spaces like these create [the] productive collisions where people meet each other and magic happens.”

Ideabox and Phan Dee Yar will set up shop, but won’t be sectioned off, in the wings of the 11<sup>th</sup> floor. Both will put on events, while the former will run its incubation program and the latter will push “civic tech” endeavors forward – with civic tech a buzz word used abroad to describe tech for the public’s benefit.

“How do we ensure that part of what is happening in the tech ecosystem in Myanmar is energy and efforts towards building the kinds of things that are going to actually improve people’s lives?” Mr Madden said.

Phan Dee Yar, whose name combines Phan dee (to create or make)

**‘Spaces like these create [the] productive collisions where people meet each other and magic happens.’**

Kevin Miller  
Go Project



View from the top: the vista from SuleTech in MAC Tower features Maha Bandula Park, City Hall and Sule Pagoda.

Photo: Catherine Trautwein

and Yar (a word for place), evolved from Code for Change Myanmar into a broader effort to put technology in Myanmar to good use. The innovation lab targets getting three specific groups involved in the scene: the tech community (the cornerstone of the whole space, according to Mr Madden), to be connected with civil society and independent media.

“Phan Dee Yar is not just going to create the space, build it and hope they come. We’re going to run programs,” Mr Madden said. At a recent start-up event in Singapore, he said the non-prof’s main objectives were building out Myanmar’s pool of tech talent, helping civil society and independent media utilise technology and bringing people together.

The organisation can help locals forge links among themselves as well

as with others across the country’s borders – a development crucial to the nation’s future if its efforts to digitally leapfrog years of technology are to come off well.

“We’re trying to connect up this civic-minded tech community with the broader global community,” Mr Madden said.

“The less time that you can spend going down roads that others have gone down that are dead ends, or accelerating down a road because there’s already a bunch of stops along the way that have been prepared for you, the better,” he continued.

In time, SuleTech hopes to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mr Madden explains Internews and Omidyar Network – the charitable investment firm from eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and his wife – are teaming up to provide

backing for Phan Dee Yar.

“We’ll create some really simple, affordable way of people being able to access and use the place and we want it to be open and accessible, so it’ll be quite reasonable,” Mr Madden said. “I think they’ll be opportunity to rent parts of Phan Dee Yar as well as the central, common area.”

Instead of roving to different locations for events, the community can make it home at a new permanent address: SuleTech. Up 11 storeys, the view from the new space allows for a look at Yangon that makes the city feel slightly smaller and perhaps more navigable.

Though its height can’t offer a 30,000-foot perspective, it can give those that visit a better idea of a whole industry, with insight on who’s accomplishing what, in Myanmar and beyond.



FOOD & DRINK

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# Fiber connection freeze from leading ISPs

**AUNG KYAW NYUNT**  
aungkyawnyunt28@gmail.com

TWO of Myanmar's largest internet service providers have stopped accepting applications for fiber service in order to expand on internet bandwidth.

Both state-owned telco Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) and Yatanarpon Teleport (YTP) have set to work building capacity – a process that could help boost internet speeds but leave new users without a fiber connection out of luck for now.

**‘YTP has to get internet bandwidth from MPT, so it depends on MPT’s procedures.’**

**U Shane Thu Aung**  
Yatanarpon CEO

YTP obtained permission from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to increase the firm's internet bandwidth. At the same time, the telco is in talks with MPT's management – which includes officials from Japan's KDDI – to accomplish the upgrade, said U Shane Thu Aung, Yatanarpon CEO.

“Foreign investment has entered Myanmar,” U Shane Thu Aung said. “YTP has to get internet bandwidth from MPT, so it depends on MPT's procedures. We can't use the amount I want to invest.”

Though its upgrade has stalled, YTP said it will give customers fiber connections in two weeks after the firm has added enough bandwidth to its service.

An official from MPT confirmed the telco has also shelved new applications for fiber connections.

“We are working to get faster internet speed,” the official said. “We are expanding capacity and internet speed is a little faster than before.”

The official also said MPT's current plan – to increase bandwidth from 4GB to 10GB – isn't final.

# Robot probe Philae makes contact

ROBOT probe Philae uploaded a slew of data to Earth last week from a deep-space comet that it drilled into long after its onboard battery was feared to have died.

Data started streaming in as soon as late-night contact was re-established between Europe's robot lab and its orbiting mothership Rosetta on November 14– ending an anxious wait by mission controllers worried they might never hear from it again.

Philae's data collection from a comet travelling at 18 kilometres (11 miles) per second, currently at a distance of 510 million kilometres (320 million miles) from Earth, crowns a 10-year mission to study the origins of Solar System some 4.6 billion years ago, and maybe even life on Earth.

“Science from an alien world,” said an official tweet from ESA (European Space Agency) Operations around 2300 GMT. “Info now flowing from @ Philae2014.”

In the latest in a series of jaw-dropping achievements, the robot lab which landed in a dark ditch after a bouncy touchdown November 12, also managed to lift itself four

centimetres (1.5 inches) and rotate its solar panels to absorb as much energy as possible to be stored for a possible wakeup later.

It was too late to recharge Philae's batteries sufficiently for an immediate life extension, and the lander was expected to go into hibernation very soon.

“So much hard work...getting tired... my battery voltage is approaching the limit soon now,” said a tweet around midnight GMT.

But mission engineers hope they may be able to revive the lander for renewed contact in the coming months as the comet, with Philae still perched on its surface, moves closer to the Sun.

Philae landed after a nail-biting seven-hour, 20-km descent from Rosetta, which had travelled more than a decade and 6.5 billion kilometres (4 billion miles) to meet up with comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko in August this year.

The touchdown did not go entirely as planned, when Philae's duo of anchoring harpoons failed to deploy and it lifted off again twice.

The lander finally settled in a crevice in a location that remains a mystery, but data revealed it was shadowed from battery-boosting sunlight that could have extended its 60-hour core mission.

The 1.3-billion-euro (US \$1.6-billion) mission aims to unlock the secrets of comets, which some astrophysicists believe may have “seeded” Earth with some of the ingredients for life.

Rosetta, with Philae riding piggyback, was hoisted into space in 2004, and reached its target in August this year, having used the gravitational pull of Earth and Mars as slingshots to build up speed.

– AFP



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by Myo Satt

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**K155,000**

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Snapping a selfie alone or with friends can be easier with this little device, which users click to take a picture when they're far – up to 10 metres – from their phones. Compatible with Android and iOS.  
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# World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

## CANBERRA

## ‘Stop bullying’, Cameron tells Putin ahead of G20 summit

BRITISH Prime Minister David Cameron on November 14 told Vladimir Putin to stop bullying smaller states as Australian counterpart Tony Abbott accused the Russian leader of trying to relive the “lost glories of tsarism”.

The Russian president was due to arrive in Brisbane for the G20 summit at a time of heightened tension with host Australia, which has sent three ships to its northern coast after a flotilla of Russian navy ships appeared there last week.

Mr Abbott said the appearance of the four Russian vessels, which include a heavily armed cruiser and destroyer, were “part of a regrettable pattern” of growing Russian military bullishness.

Russia on November 14 warned France of “serious” consequences unless Paris this month delivers a warship whose handover has been delayed by the Ukraine crisis, setting the stage for confrontation with European leaders at the G20 talks.

Mr Cameron, speaking to the Australian parliament, warned Russia it faced further sanctions if it did not commit to resolving the conflict in Ukraine, calling Moscow’s actions “unacceptable”.

“It is a large state bullying a smaller state in Europe. We’ve seen the consequences of that in the past and we should learn the lessons of history and make sure we don’t let it happen again,” he said.

The West’s relations with Moscow have grown increasingly tense since the downing of a Malaysia Airlines jet over territory controlled by pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine in July, killing 298 passengers and crew including 38 Australians.

Kiev and the West claim the plane was blown out of the sky with a missile supplied by Russia, an allegation Moscow denies.

The British leader described Russia’s activities as a “large state bullying a smaller state in Europe”,

while Mr Abbott told Mr Putin to “come clean and atone” for the shooting down of Flight MH17.

“Russian action in Ukraine is unacceptable,” Mr Cameron told reporters before heading to the summit of the world’s richest nations.

“If Russia takes a positive approach towards Ukraine’s freedom and responsibility, we could see those sanctions removed. If Russia continues to make matters worse, we could see those sanctions increase. It’s as simple as that.”

The European Union, the Unit-

**‘It is a large state bullying a smaller state in Europe. We’ve seen the consequences of that in the past.’**

**David Cameron**  
UK prime minister

ed States and Australia are among countries that have imposed sanctions on Russia for what they see as Moscow’s desire to redraw modern Europe’s borders.

Russia on November 13 dismissed the West’s claims that it has been sending fresh military hardware into eastern Ukraine, which could fuel a return to all-out conflict.

Pro-Russian rebels have been fighting Ukrainian government forces since April in a war which has claimed more than 4000 lives and driven hundreds of thousands of people from their homes.

The Australian navy said on November 14 it had sent a third ship to help monitor the Russian fleet that has appeared in international waters off its north coast, which

also includes a tug boat and a refuelling vessel.

Mr Abbott said in a joint press conference with Mr Cameron that Russia was “being much more assertive now than it has been for a very long time”.

“Whether it’s the bullying of Ukraine, whether it’s the increasing Russian military aircraft flying into the airspace of Japan, European countries, whether it’s the naval task group which is now in the south Pacific, Russia is being much more assertive now than it has been for a very long time,” Mr Abbott said.

“Interestingly, Russia’s economy is declining even as Russia’s assertiveness is increasing.

“Russia would be so much more attractive if it was aspiring to be a superpower for peace and freedom and prosperity ... instead of trying to recreate the lost glories of tsarism or the old Soviet Union.”

Mr Abbott’s remarks followed a highly anticipated exchange between the two leaders at a trade summit in Beijing earlier last week.

Mr Abbott has famously vowed to “shirtfront” Mr Putin – an Australian football term in which a player charges an opponent – in Brisbane over the downing of the Malaysia Airlines flight, but the Beijing encounter passed off without incident.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on November 14 during a visit to New Zealand ahead of her arrival in Australia that she remained worried about “the violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine”.

The German leader reiterated that EU member states were considering adding pro-Russian separatists to existing sanction lists imposed on Moscow, but added that “beyond that, further economic sanctions are not planned at the moment”. – AFP



## BAGHDAD

## IS ‘Baghdadi aud

THE Islamic State group has released a defiant audio recording it said was of chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, after air strikes on jihadist leaders in Iraq sparked rumours he had been wounded or killed.

In the 17-minute message, the man purported to be Mr Baghdadi vowed that IS, which has overrun swathes of Iraq and Syria, will continue to expand despite international air strikes, and that its opponents will be drawn into a ground war.

“Be assured, O Muslims, for your State is good and in the best condition. Its march will not stop and it will continue to expand,” said the man in the recording, whose voice sounded like Mr Baghdadi’s, but whose identity could not be independently confirmed.

“Soon, the Jews and Crusaders will be forced to come down to the ground and send their ground forces to their deaths and destruction,” he said.

**‘From our perspective we cannot confirm his current status.’**

**Steven Warren**  
Pentagon spokesperson

US President Barack Obama has announced plans to double the number of US military personnel in Iraq to up to 3100 to help advise and train Baghdad’s forces, a move the man in the audio recording said was the start of the ground war between the two sides.

The message on November 13 was the first said to be from Mr Baghdadi since a video released in July, shortly after IS proclaimed a “caliphate” over parts of Iraq and Syria, of the jihadist leader delivering a sermon in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

While the most recent recording

seemed aimed at dispelling speculation that Baghdadi was seriously injured or dead, it did not mention the strikes against IS leaders.

But it did reference the decision by Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, Egypt’s deadliest militant group, to pledge allegiance to Baghdadi and IS, which was announced after the strikes.

The United States said that coalition aircraft launched strikes targeting IS leaders in the area of their northern hub of Mosul the previous week, setting off a flurry of speculation that Mr Baghdadi was wounded or killed.

Some reports meanwhile pointed to another alleged strike near Iraq’s border with Syria, saying Mr Baghdadi was hit there instead. But officials in both Iraq and the United States made clear that no one was yet certain about Mr Baghdadi’s fate.

Pentagon spokesperson Colonel Steven Warren said November 10 that “the bottom line from our perspective is we simply cannot confirm his current status”.

And senior Iraqi officials from the interior and defence ministries and the intelligence service said investigations were ongoing.

The death of the elusive IS leader would be a major victory for the US-led coalition, but with both areas where strikes were rumoured to have hit Mr Baghdadi far from government control, confirming anything there will be difficult if not impossible.

Rumours of Mr Baghdadi’s demise have surfaced before and the absence of video in the November 13 release by the IS group’s media arm is likely to fuel further speculation he was indeed wounded.

IS spearheaded a militant offensive in June that overran Iraq’s second city Mosul and then swept through much of the country’s Sunni Arab heartland, adding chunks of a second country to territory it already held in Syria.

It has carried out atrocities in both countries.

The group has killed hundreds of Iraqi and Syrian tribespeople who opposed it, attacked members of the



Britain’s Prime Minister David Cameron (second from right) and Australia’s Prime Minister Tony Abbott (right) are welcomed by Queensland state Premier Campbell Newman (third from left) and his wife Lisa (second from left) at the airport in Brisbane ahead of the G20 Summit on November 14. Photo: AFP





Tiger on the loose brings fear to the streets of Paris

WORLD 40

Japan calls for deeper defence ties with Australia, US

WORLD 41



Fury over India's mass sterilisation deaths

WORLD 49



IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

Soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army take part in a training session in Heihe, northeast China's Heilongjiang province. China has steadily increased its defence budget for years, with funding projected to rise more than 12 percent to \$132 billion in 2014.

OUAGADOUGOU

Burkina Faso leaders agree transition pact

BURKINA Faso's army last week reached an agreement with opposition parties, civil groups and religious leaders for a transition to civilian rule, almost two weeks after the ouster of president Blaise Compaore.

The different factions on November 13 "unanimously voted" in favour of a transition charter, said Henry Ye, president of the commission representing the main power players in the west African country.

Under the deal, an interim civilian president will be chosen by a special electoral college, delegates at the talks said.

The president will appoint a prime minister, either a civilian or a military figure, who will head a 25-member transitional government.

A civilian will also head a 90-seat parliament, known as the National Transitional Council. News of the deal was greeted with applause and a rendition of the national anthem by those taking part in talks.

The agreement was immediately backed by some of the country's politicians and leading civil society activists.

Ablasse Ouedraogo, a former social affairs minister, said the future

of Burkina Faso had been "protected" and said the deal would open up new opportunities for the young.

Adama Kanazoe, a young politician who heads up the opposition Youth Alliance for the Defence of the Independence of the Republic, said the agreement was a sign of the country's "great maturity".

"They have succeeded where many thought they would fail," said the youth leader, who also described the day as "extraordinary" and "historical".

Barkissa Konate, a civil activist, spoke of her "pride" of being "a young Burkinabe". "The revolution is on. Now we have a real democracy," she said.

Mr Compaore was forced to quit on October 31, after mass protests against his bid to extend his 27-year rule by changing the constitution.

The army installed Lieutenant-Colonel Isaac Zida, the 49-year-old second-in-command of the presidential guard, as the new leader of the landlocked former French colony of some 17 million people.

But the military has faced mounting international pressure to transfer power to an interim government.

- AFP

io' disputes death claims

Yazidi and other minorities, sold women as slaves, executed scores of Iraqi security personnel, and beheaded Western journalists and aid workers on camera.

IS is one of the most powerful forces in Syria's civil war, a blood-soaked conflict that, combined with former Iraqi premier Nuri al-Maliki's divisive policies, facilitated the group's rise.

Hours after the Baghdadi recording was announced, the US said it had launched fresh air strikes against an al-Qaeda offshoot, the Khorasan group, in Syria.

"We can confirm that US aircraft struck a target in Syria earlier today associated with a network of veteran

al-Qaeda operatives, sometimes called the 'Khorasan group,' who are plotting external attacks against the United States and our allies," spokesperson Colonel Patrick Ryder said.

Activists and a monitoring group said on November 13 that United Nations aid has reached the last rebel-held area in the central Syrian city of Homs for the first time in six months.

"On Tuesday and Wednesday, 30 trucks of aid arrived in Waer for the first time in six months," Rami Abdel Rahman of the Syrian Observatory of Human Rights said.

IS meanwhile claimed responsibility on November 13 for a suicide bombing targeting police in Iraq the

day before, saying it had been carried out by a Dutch national.

It was the second attack allegedly involving a suicide bomber from a Western country in less than a week, after a British national blew up a truck packed with explosives in a northern town the preceding Friday.

In Arbil, the capital of Iraq's region of Kurdistan, a breakthrough was reached on November 13 between the autonomous local government and the federal authorities on a long-standing budget and oil dispute. A resolution of the dispute was seen as key to improving cooperation between Arbil and Baghdad in their common fight against IS. - AFP



A man stands in front of a wall bearing graffiti about ousted Burkinabese president Blaise Compaore in Burkina Faso, on November 12. Photo: AFP



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Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

**NAY PYI TAW**

# Beijing offers ASEAN \$20 billion in loan deals

CHINA on November 12 offered US\$20 billion in loans and floated the possibility of a "friendship treaty" with Southeast Asian nations, in an apparent bid to defuse regional tensions which spiked this year over contested seas.

Attending the East Asia Summit in Myanmar, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said \$10 billion would be made available to the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in cheap loans and a further \$10 billion for infrastructure projects.

"These measures will help speed up the building of regional connectivity," Mr Li added, in the official translation of his speech.

Beijing also agreed to set up a hotline to help avert flashpoints in the bitterly disputed South China Sea, and stood ready to sign a "treaty of friendship and cooperation" with the bloc, according to Mr Li.

Four ASEAN states, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, claim parts of the South China Sea, a key shipping lane believed to be rich in undersea gas deposits.

But China says almost all of the sea is its own, including waters near to the shores of its smaller neighbours.

A series of incidents earlier this year led Vietnam and the Philippines to decry Chinese acts of aggression at sea, plunging relations with Beijing to a nadir.

Both China and ASEAN need "peace and stability", Mr Li said in a speech at the East Asia Summit which included ASEAN leaders, US President Barack Obama and other visiting dignitaries.

He also backed a hotline for unspecified "maritime contingencies" between senior foreign ministry officials across the region and for joint search and rescue missions, but did not offer specifics.

The hotline has been among the proposals in low-level talks between ASEAN and Chinese officials on a legally binding code of conduct (COC) to ease tensions in the sea.

**'China's resolve to safeguard territorial sovereignty is clear.'**

**Li Keqiang**  
Chinese premier

**PARIS**

## Tiger spotted on the loose near Paris sends residents into panic

SCORES of French police armed with tranquiliser guns and assisted by a helicopter resumed the search for a tiger on the loose near Paris on November 14, as authorities ordered residents to stay home.

A dozen or so soldiers from a nearby army base prepared to join the hunt for the fearsome beast which has eluded all attempts at capture since being spotted prowling around a supermarket car park the previous morning.

A chopper equipped with thermal imaging equipment circled over the search zone, a wooded area near the small town of Montevrain, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) east of Paris.

And police guarded the entrance to schools as children arrived on November 14.

Meanwhile, authorities were still scratching their heads as to where the

tiger could have come from.

Montevrain is a stone's throw from the popular Disneyland Paris but owners insist that tigers are not among the theme park's attractions.

Authorities have also made enquiries at a big-cat wildlife park 30 kilometres away.

Suspicion initially fell on a circus that had set up its big top in the supermarket car park a few days ago, but town mayor Christian Robache said it "did not have a tiger".

A local woman sounded the alarm early on the morning of November 13 after spotting the animal in the supermarket car park.

Several more people later came forward saying they had seen the tiger on the prowl.

More than 100 police officers and firefighters armed with tranquilising guns spent the day combing the area

in the Seine-et-Marne district near the French capital, without success.

Authorities ordered residents to stay indoors and use cars to pick their children up from school.

Experts were sure the animal on the loose was a tiger.

"There is no doubt, it's a tiger," said Robert Picaud, the head of a local group responsible for regulating pests, who took part in the search.

"The footprints are real and they were not made by a man. These prints and photos leave no room for doubt."

Police were also using thermal cameras in a bid to find the big cat, estimated to weigh around 70 kilograms (155 pounds), according to Mr Robache.

A dog trained in tracking bears and large game was also brought in to help with the search effort.

As darkness fell, officials suspended the search until daybreak. The helicopter with thermal imaging continued through the night but "the search proved fruitless," a police source told AFP.

Authorities have said they hope to catch the tiger alive.

"If it's possible, we'll try and put it to sleep. If it becomes dangerous or aggressive, the order will be given to kill it," police said.

A source close to the search operation said the hunt for any tiger would be made more difficult because if the big cat behaved in typical fashion, it would nap a lot, possibly spending hours unnoticed sleeping in a tree.

The PETA animal rights group called on authorities to "show restraint and compassion in dealing with this tiger on the loose".

"This situation, however upsetting, is entirely preventable and should serve as a wake-up call to the public about the perils of keeping wild animals in captivity," the group said in a statement.

— AFP



An Asian tiger snuggles up to another at a zoo in Mulhouse, eastern France, on November 13. Photo: AFP

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IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

Participants prepare kimchi along with some 2000 others during a kimchi-making event organised by the local government outside the city hall in Seoul on November 14. The kimchi produced during the event is distributed among South Korea's poorer households, and traditionally marks the start of the winter season. Kimchi is a traditional Korean dish of spicy fermented cabbage and radish.

BRISBANE

# Abe seeks to boost defence

JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on November 14 he wanted deeper defence ties with the United States and Australia to ensure peace throughout the Asia-Pacific region, in remarks likely to irk Beijing.

Mr Abe outlined his vision for expanded military cooperation ahead of the weekend's Group of 20 leaders' summit, which was being hosted in Brisbane by Japan's "best friend" Australia.

"As the United States is the most important ally for Japan and Australia, I am determined to expand tri-lateral cooperation between the three countries, to realise a peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the Asia-Pacific region," he said in an op-ed article for the *Australian Financial Review*.

"I also hope that our countries will work closely together to support the resolution of global issues."

Mr Abe is expected to take part in a three-way meeting with Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and US President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the G20 summit.

The prospect of a stronger tripartite alliance could stoke fears in Beijing that Japan, the United States and Australia are ganging up to limit China's increasingly assertive expansion in the region.

China claims rights over Tokyo-administered islands in the East China Sea, with several other countries in the region also at loggerheads with Beijing over territorial disputes.

Beijing has repeatedly warned of what it says is the danger of Japan "remilitarising" under Mr Abe, and regularly lambasts Tokyo for its apparent lack of repentance for past misdeeds.

Mr Abbott has denied closer defence ties with Japan will damage relations with China, his country's biggest trading partner.

Chinese President Xi Jinping told the *Financial Review* that Beijing was also ready to increase defence cooperation with Australia. – AFP

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IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

Chandra Bahadur Dangi, from Nepal, the shortest adult to have ever been verified as such by Guinness World Records, poses with the world's tallest man, Sultan Kosen from Turkey, in London on November 13 to mark Guinness World Records Day. Chandra Dangi, measures 1 foot 9.5 inches (0.54m) while Sultan Kosen measures 8 feet 3inches (2.51m).

SEOUL

# UN to pursue N Korea on humanity crimes

A UN investigator on November 14 ruled out any compromise on efforts to have North Korea answer formal charges of crimes against humanity, saying holding the regime to account, including supreme leader Kim Jong-Un, was “paramount”.

Marzuki Darusman, the UN’s special rapporteur on human rights in the North, also stressed that Mr Kim’s refusal to halt human rights atrocities instigated by previous regimes would make him legally “complicit” in such crimes.

A UN General Assembly is expected to vote next week on a resolution

– drafted by the EU and Japan – that recommends referring North Korea’s leadership to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague.

The resolution followed a comprehensive UN inquiry, based on testimony of North Korean exiles, that detailed a vast network of prison camps and documented cases of torture, rape, murder and enslavement.

Pyongyang has launched a diplomatic campaign to have key provisions of the resolution scrapped, and even offered Mr Darusman a full-fledged visit if clauses on Mr Kim’s accountability and referral to the ICC are

dropped.

“Let me be very clear,” Mr Darusman told reporters in Seoul. “Achieving accountability is paramount.”

“At no time, more than now, is it so important to firmly keep the line,” he added.

Mr Darusman, who was on the three-member UN Commission of Inquiry, said the “massive” rights violations it documented included those committed before Mr Kim came to power following the death of his father, Kim Jong-Il, in December 2011.

“But the nature of these crimes is ongoing,” Mr Darusman said.

“Having been informed of these violations, and no action being taken, renders [Kim Jong-Un] culpable of complicity in crimes against humanity,” he said.

Rights abuses by North Korea have been known about for years, but the inquiry’s exhaustive report carried the UN stamp of authority and has put Pyongyang under unprecedented pressure, which would only intensify further if the ICC were to take up the case.

It is especially sensitive to the prospect of Kim Jong-Un being personally inducted, even if he would never

willingly appear before the court.

Referral to the ICC requires the approval of the UN Security Council, which China – North Korea’s main ally and diplomatic protector – would likely veto.

“It would not be a surprise,” Mr Darusman acknowledged.

North Korea’s recent surprise release of two jailed American citizens was widely seen as part of Pyongyang’s campaign to escape the corner it has been forced into by the pending UN resolution.

Such “dramatic” gestures were, Mr Darusman argued, an effort by the North to “create, perhaps, a perception that the draft resolution should not go as far as it does”.

Pyongyang does have some allies at the United Nations, including Cuba which has circulated an amendment to the EU-Japan draft resolution that would delete language on referring Pyongyang to the ICC.

Another potential ally is Russia, which along with China wields a veto in the Security Council.

North Korean state media reported on November 14 that Kim Jong-Un was sending a close aide as a “special envoy” to Russia.

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**‘Let me be very clear. Achieving accountability is paramount.’**

**Marzuki Darusman**  
UN special rapporteur

It gave no details regarding the purpose of the trip or whom the envoy might meet, but the timing would suggest it is related to the moves at the United Nations.

Last month, Australian judge Michael Kirby, who chaired the UN commission of inquiry, urged the United Nations to reject the “charm offensive” from Pyongyang and seek war crimes prosecutions for the regime.

Mr Kirby described signs of openness as “crumbs thrown to the international community” and said tough action on North Korea should not be “traded away”.



## SINGAPORE

# Migrant workers to be 'used again' in mock riots

OFFICIALS under attack by rights groups for using South Asian workers in a mock riot defended the exercise on November 13 and said similar operations will be carried out to preserve law and order.

The drill took place in a migrant workers' dormitory on October 26, less than a year after South Asian workers staged the worst riot in the city-state since the 1960s.

Rights groups have criticised it for "reinforcing stereotypes" and "dehumanising" the workers.

In a joint statement, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) and Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) said such exercises are regularly conducted in worker dormitories to ensure processes are in place to deal with potential incidents.

They said the workers involved were volunteers.

“SPF and SCDF will continue to conduct similar exercises in other foreign worker dormitories around Singapore,” the statement said.

National Development Minister Khaw Boon Wan set off a furore on November 11 when he posted photographs on Facebook of the anti-riot drill featuring police, civil defence forces and migrant workers playing the role of rioters.

The photographs showed workers standing next to flames and confronting police officers decked

in riot gear. One image showed workers kneeling on the ground surrounded by police officers.

Responding to online criticism, Mr Khaw took to Facebook again late on November 12 to reiterate that the exercise was a “meaningful collaboration” that was “well received by the various stakeholders”, including the workers.

He said he was visiting China during the exercise and was later briefed about it by organisers.

The dormitory where the exercise was conducted houses only South Asian workers, and is located in Mr Khaw's parliamentary district.

The campaign group Humanitarian Organisation for Migration

**‘[This] reinforces the stereotype that [south Asian] foreign workers ... are more prone to violence.’**

**Humanitarian Organisation for  
Migration Economics**

Economics (HOME) said the exercise reinforced “the stereotype that foreign workers, especially those of South Asian origin, are more prone to violence and riots”.

Another local group called Transient Workers Count Too said the portrayal of foreign workers as rioters “is reinforcing stereotypes and dehumanising all those who made family sacrifices” to work in Singapore.

But some online commentators defended the minister and the exercise, saying the participation of migrant workers was necessary to ensure the drill was realistic.

A riot by an estimated 400 South Asian workers in Singapore's Little India district on December 8 last year left 39 people, including SPF and SCDF officers, injured and 25 vehicles destroyed.

It began after an Indian worker was crushed to death under a bus, and was the worst outbreak of violence in tightly controlled Singapore since racial disturbances in 1969.

More than 50 Indian workers were deported in the aftermath of the riot while 25 others are serving jail sentences, have been repatriated after prison time or are awaiting trial on rioting charges.

– AFP



**Masatoshi Sone shows a fossil tooth of an ornithischian dinosaur at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur on November 13. Photo: AFP**

**KUALA LUMPUR**

# 140m-year-old dinosaur tooth from 'new species'

A DINOSAUR tooth found in Malaysia is at least 140 million years old and belongs to a new species within the “bird-hipped” Ornithischian order, researchers announced last week.

While still unsure of the exact species of dinosaur, lead researcher Matsatoshi Sone from the University of Malaya said the discovery means "it is plausible that large dinosaur fossil deposits still remain in Malaysia".

"We started the program to look for dinosaur fossils two years ago. We are very excited to have found the tooth of the dinosaurian order called Ornithischian in central Pahang state" last year, he said on November 13.

Researchers from Japan's Waseda University and Kumamoto University also took part in the project.

Ornithischian, or “bird-hipped”, is a major group comprised of herbivorous dinosaurs such as triceratops.

The dinosaur would have been about as big as a horse, Mr Sone said.

The darkened tooth fossil, 13mm-long (0.5-inches) and 10.5mm-wide, was discovered in a sedimentary rock formation by a team of Malaysian and Japanese palaeontologists.

It was found close to where the first Malaysian dinosaur fossil, estimated to be at least 75 million years old, was discovered in 2012.

That fossil was found to belong to a fish-eating predator belonging to the family of dinosaur known as Spinosaurid, believed to be semi-aquatic. The exact location of the discoveries is being kept secret in order to preserve it. — *AFP*



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Got something to say?  
**The Myanmar Times**



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**BANGKOK**

# Trafficking fears over 100 missing Uighars

MORE than 100 migrants thought to be from China's Uighur minority have escaped from shelters in Thailand, with authorities fearing they have fallen into the hands of a human trafficking ring, an official said on November 12.

Thailand has held dozens of the migrants since March, when they were discovered during a raid on a suspected people-smuggling camp in the kingdom's deep south and sentenced for illegal entry.

Police had said they were waiting to identify the nationalities of the group before deciding their fate. The migrants claimed to be Turkish, but US-based Uighur activists identified them as Uighurs: A Turkic-speaking, predominantly Muslim group from China's northwestern Xinjiang region.

The latest annual US human rights report said that China carries out "severe official repression" of Uighurs in Xinjiang, with the Thai raid in March prompting the US State Department

to urge Thailand to offer the group protection.

"Only 40 of around 160 women and children remain at the two shelters. They ran away together at night between November 1 and 5," Jaras Chumpan, chief of the social development and human security office in Tsouthern Songkhla province said.

"I am concerned that they might have been trafficked," he added. "They want to go to Turkey. They do not want to go back to China."

**'I am concerned they have been trafficked. They want to go to Turkey.'**

**Jaras Chumpan**

Social development spokesman

Songkhla immigration police chief Thatchai Pitaneelaboot confirmed authorities were searching for the missing women and children.

"We still don't know their identities. We are waiting for their identity proofs," said Mr Thatchai, adding police thought they were from China or Turkey.

In March a southern Thai court fined around 120 adults \$124 each for illegal entry, holding the men in detention centres and the women and children in shelters.

"The men have been detained in detention centres across the country," said Mr Thatchai, adding that more than 300 men, women and children were discovered in the March raid - raising a previous estimate of roughly 200 people.

Under pressure from Beijing, countries including Cambodia, Malaysia and Pakistan have all in recent years forcibly returned Uighurs to China. Thailand has a generally cordial relationship with China. - AFP

**BANGKOK**

# UK book banned for 'defaming' king

THAI police have banned a British journalist's book about politics in Thailand for "defaming" the monarchy, an official said on November 13, in a country with one of the world's strictest lese majeste laws.

The sale and distribution of *A Kingdom in Crisis* by freelance journalist and author Andrew MacGregor Marshall, formerly based in Bangkok, has been banned in Thailand a month after it was published by London-based Zed

Books.

"The content insults, defames and threatens Thailand's monarchy," said national police chief Somyot Poompanmoung in a statement. "The book is a danger to national security and peaceful and orderly society."

The statement added that anyone found breaching the ban imposed on November 11 could face up to three years in jail, a fine of 60,000 baht (\$1800) and destruction of the book.

Thailand's tough royal defamation rules mean anyone convicted of insulting the king, queen, heir or regent faces up to 15 years in prison on each count.

Mr Marshall's book, which explores Thailand's turbulent political landscape including the taboo issue of royal succession, has been banned under the printing act rather than lese majeste legislation in a move that seemingly widens the legal net to prevent debate about the monarchy. - AFP

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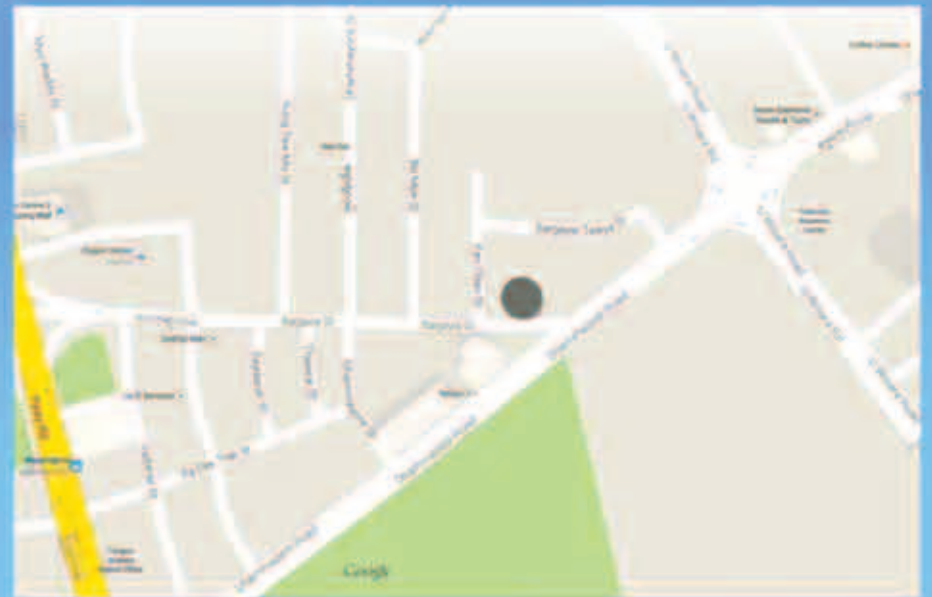
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## BEIJING

# US and China agree historic climate deal

THE United States and China last week announced an action plan on greenhouse emissions as part of a “historic” pact that was acclaimed by climate scientists but denounced by US Republicans as a job-killer.

At a Beijing summit on November 12, the leaders of the world's two biggest polluters put their stamp on attempts to breathe new life into action against global warming ahead of international talks in Paris next year.

US President Barack Obama said the joint announcement on the two countries' emissions targets was a "historic agreement" and a "major milestone in the US-China relationship".

Chinese President Xi Jinping said, "We agreed to make sure that international climate change negotiations will reach an agreement in Paris."

Attempts to deal with climate change, which scientists warn is approaching a potentially catastrophic point of no return, have long been held up by the unwillingness of the United

**‘We have a special responsibility to lead the worldwide effort against climate change.’**

**Barack Obama**  
US president

States and China to work together on the problem.

But China set a target for its greenhouse gas output to peak “around 2030”, which Mr Obama commended as an effort to “slow, peak and reverse the course” of its emissions.

And Mr Obama, who faces scepticism as well as outright denial about climate change in the US Congress, set a goal for the United States to cut its own emissions of greenhouse gases by 26-28 percent from 2005 levels by 2025.

"We have a special responsibility to lead the worldwide effort against climate change," Mr Obama said at a joint news conference with Mr Xi.

"We hope to encourage all economies to be more ambitious," he added.

China and the US, which together produce around 45 percent of the world's carbon dioxide, will be key to ensuring a global deal on reducing emissions after 2020 is reached next year.

The two countries have long been at loggerheads over global targets, with each saying the other should bear more responsibility for cutting emissions of gases blamed for heating up the atmosphere.

But after the 2009 Copenhagen Summit nearly ended in fiasco, salvaged only by a last-minute deal brokered by Mr Obama and China's then-premier, Washington and Beijing have started to move closer towards agreement.

The World Resources Institute, a US-based environmental group, hailed the Obama-Xi pact as a breakthrough.

"It's a new day to have the leaders of the US and China stand shoulder-to-shoulder and make significant commitments to curb their country's emissions," the institute's president Andrew Steer said in a statement.

"They have both clearly acknowledged the mounting threat of climate change and the urgency of action," he added.

But while it was the first time China agreed to a target date for emissions to peak – officials have previously only spoken of doing so “as soon as possible” – the commitment was qualified, leaving considerable room for maneuver.

China has trumpeted its efforts to reduce dependence on coal and oil in the past, and is the world's largest hydropower producer, with a growing nuclear sector.

But economic growth remains a vitally important priority and has seen demand for energy soar.

Much of Mr Obama's action on climate change meanwhile has been done with executive orders rather than cooperation from an often confrontational legislature.

The deadline for Mr Obama's new pledge is in more than a decade's time but he only has two years left in his presidency. He faces a Congress now set to be controlled by opposition Republicans in both houses after this month's mid-term elections, which will make passing environmental legislation even more difficult.

In an early portent of the battles to come, the US Senate's new Republican



A man wears a mask on November 12 amid heavy smog in Shanghai. Photo: AFP

leader was quick to slam Mr Obama's proposed greenhouse gas reductions.

"This unrealistic plan, that the president would dump on his successor, would ensure higher utility rates and far fewer jobs," Senator Mitch McConnell said.

The European Union pledged last month to reduce emissions by at least 40 percent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

But efforts to make meaningful progress on climate change will be stymied unless the US sets “a concrete and ambitious” goal to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, Connie Hedegaard, EU climate commissioner, said in October.

The EU accounts for 11 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 16 pcfor the United States and 29 pcfor China. — *AFP*

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## BRISBANE

## UN calls on G20 to up Ebola aid

THE United Nations on November 15 called on G20 leaders to intensify their response to the deadly Ebola outbreak in west Africa, warning of a major food crisis if they fail to act.

Speaking in Brisbane, where the two-day G20 leaders meeting is being hosted by Australia, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon joined with international aid agencies in urging concrete actions to fight the disease.

"I would also like to stress the need to intensify the international response to the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa," Mr Ban told reporters.

"As rates decline in one area, they are rising in others. Transmission continues to outpace the response from the international community. I urge the leaders of G20 countries to step up."

Mr Ban said the secondary impacts of the health crisis could spiral into other areas, including a food crisis, caused by disruption in farming due in countries affected by the outbreak including Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The G20 is under pressure to adopt a hard-hitting financial response to the Ebola epidemic as health workers battling horrific working conditions plead for more resources.

A joint petition from international aid groups including Oxfam and Save the Children urged the G20 to band together to ensure the right resources are made available in terms of personnel, equipment and funding. — AFP

## OPINION

## View from Berlin: Defining and dividing a world of rich and poor

CURTIS S CHIN

BERLIN, Germany: From celebrations here in united Germany marking the 25th anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall to those in the United States over midterm elections delivering a more evenly divided Washington, what a week it has been for division, past and present.

How apropos it has been to watch the US midterm election returns from here in this once divided capital city of Germany. And, indeed, perhaps this country that came back together against seemingly insurmountable odds might offer hope for a politically divided Washington or an East and Southeast Asia region increasingly worried, if not split over territorial issues as well as cross-border environmental and migration challenges.

Just a few days after his party lost control of the US Senate in what has been termed a Republican wave sweeping aside numerous incumbent Democratic leaders at national, state and local levels, U.S. President Barack Obama is now in Asia for summit meetings in China, Australia and Myanmar. Unequal economic growth and sputtering efforts to strengthen cross-Pacific trade are all on the collective agenda of the Asia Pacific Economic

Cooperation (APEC), East Asia and G20 summits.

The United States could well face two years of political gridlock under the watch of a weakened Democratic president and a US Congress now fully under the control of Republican leadership. What that might mean to the so-called U.S. pivot, or rebalance, to Asia is still to be determined.

A divided Washington also might not bode well for those seeking greater China-US cooperation and strengthened international engagement by the United States, as attention in that country understandably shifts to key domestic issues of concern to the American voting public.

The US electorate's support for efforts to increase the minimum wage paid to workers in some states, a policy position more often associated with Democrats, though also suggests an opportunity for America, Asia and large parts of the world to come together on. That is policy action to address a growing divide between the rich and the poor -- an issue that Myanmar too increasingly faces.

According to a recent Pew Research Center 2014 Global Attitudes Survey, despite long-term optimism that exists in many nations, widespread concerns about inequality continue. Majorities in all 44 nations polled, including China, Japan, South

Korea and Thailand in Asia, as well as Germany and the United States, say the gap between rich and poor is a big problem facing their country. Majorities in 28 nations ranging from France to India and Pakistan say this gap is a very big problem.

**Myanmar, this year's venue for the [ASEAN] summit, is in many ways a showcase for an economy gone wrong.**

Asia as a whole has enjoyed tremendous growth these past decades and has much to be proud of. Some of this was on show at APEC. The world should welcome Asia's rise, including China's success in lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty. But so too on show were the consequences of growth, often unequal, as Beijing also took steps to remove cars and close factories so as to reduce the pollution that too often

plagues China's capital city.

Underscoring Asia's unequal rise, Myanmar, this year's venue for the East Asia summit, is in many ways a showcase for an economy gone wrong.

This past week, a united Germany celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall, and many will marvel at the transformation of the one-time East Germany. Others may well focus on the persistent divide between the haves and the have nots.

Whether once separated by physical walls or split by existing political ones, today's leaders in Asia, the United States and Europe -- including newly elected members of the U.S. Congress -- should also think about how much has been and can be accomplished when barriers come down, and engagement flourishes.

At commemorative ceremonies, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the fall of the Berlin Wall "showed that we have the power to shape our destiny and make things better". Powerful words -- and leaders from Washington to Beijing, Yangon to Sydney, and all points in between should take them to heart.

Curtis S Chin served as US Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank (2007-2010). He is managing director of advisory firm RiverPeak Group, LLC. Follow Curtis on Twitter at @CurtisSChin.

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RAIPUR

# Protests after state sterilisation deaths

TEN women died and dozens more were in hospital, some in a critical condition, last week after an Indian state-run program that pays women to undergo sterilisation went badly wrong.

Sterilisation is one of the most popular methods of family planning in India, where the government provides cash and other incentives to try to control the country's billion-plus population, but rights groups say the system is often abused.

More than 60 women fell ill after undergoing the surgery over the weekend in the central state of Chhattisgarh, and 10 have now died, said local official Sonmani Borah.

"The death toll in the family planning operation-related case has gone up to 10," Mr Borah said on November 11.

Around 80 women had the procedure at the local government-run sterilisation camp.

The women suffered vomiting and a dramatic fall in blood pressure, said Mr Borah, the commissioner for Bilaspur district, where the camp was held.

It was not immediately clear what caused the deaths, but doctors in the state said the women's symptoms suggest the drugs they were given after the relatively simple procedure may have been the cause.

State governments in India frequently organise mass sterilisation camps under a national program whereby women are given 1400 rupees (US\$23) as an incentive to have the operation.

Under pressure to meet targets,

some local governments also offer other incentives such as cars and electrical goods to couples volunteering for sterilisation.

Although the surgery is voluntary, rights groups say the target-driven nature of the program has led to women being coerced into being sterilised, often in inadequate medical facilities.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh suspended four top health officials over the deaths, while a police complaint was lodged against the surgeon who performed the operations.

Mr Singh also announced compensation of 400,000 rupees (\$6500) for each of the families of those women who died.

Angry residents took to the streets of Bilaspur where many of the women have been hospitalised demanding action against those responsible.

The women had undergone laparoscopic sterilisation, a process in which the fallopian tubes are blocked, usually under general anaesthesia.

The *Indian Express* daily said the surgeries were carried out by one doctor and his assistant in around five hours.

"There was no negligence. He is a senior doctor. We will probe [the incident]," the chief medical officer of Bilaspur RK Bhanghe told the newspaper.

Last year, authorities in eastern India came under fire after a news channel unearthed footage showing scores of women dumped unconscious in a field following a mass sterilisation.

The women had all undergone the procedure at a hospital that local officials said was not equipped to



Indian Congress party activists argue with police as they demonstrate against the deaths of women who were sterilised in a government-run program, in Raipur on November 12. Photo: AFP

accommodate such a large number of patients.

In 2011, the government issued guidelines outlining the standard operating procedures for sterilisation services in camps. But a 2012 report by Human Rights Watch urged the government to set up an independent grievance redress system to allow people to report coercion and poor quality services at sterilisation centres.

It also said the government should prioritise training for male government workers to provide men with information and counselling about contraceptive choices. But despite the recommendations to the national government, problems persist on the ground.

India's family planning program has traditionally focused on women, and experts say that male sterilisation is still not accepted socially.

— AFP



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AMAURY LORIN



# Beguiled by the frontier

A journey up the  
Chindwin River,  
the Ayeyarwady's  
largest tributary in  
the northwest of the  
country and one of  
the world's most  
remote rivers, offers  
our correspondent  
a glimpse of an  
Myanmar most will  
never get to see







Photos: Amaury Lorin

**W**E woke to the soft lapping of water against the hull and the sun rising through a white mist.

A graceful ballet of flying fish and egrets escorted the boat, which snaked through narrow channels and whirlpools, and between submerged sandbanks under skies changing from electric blue to flashy orange.

A crew member at the prow was sounding the bottom of the river with a long bamboo pole, trying to anticipate the caprices of the versatile Chindwin River – the water level can rise by about 10 metres within a couple of hours – and its strong currents. These difficulties of nature, safely overcome by the reliable, concentrated captain at the helm, added an extra thrill to our discovery of a remote area of Myanmar during a two-week river journey along the foothills of the Himalayas.

At some points our leisurely getaway seemed more like an expedition, having many surprises in store for us. The Chindwin is one of the rare places in the world today where a traveller can sense he is walking the line between tourism and exploration. Of course there is no real exploration going on. But the impression of reaching “disappearing” Myanmar seemed invaluable as the long-isolated country is quickly attracting greater tourist traffic. On the river we saw landscapes and ethnic tribes that I hadn’t encountered elsewhere during my two years of travels in Myanmar.

The low draft of our boat (4 feet 6 inches, or 1.37 metres) was especially designed to permit navigation of Upper Myanmar at specific times of the year right after the rainy season and as near to the shore as possible. From the deck we observed rural life and wildlife along the muddy shoreline that shimmered with pagodas and venerated shrines.

Originating in the isolated Hukaung Valley (Kachin State), famous for hosting since 2004 the largest tiger reserve in the world, the 750-mile (1207-kilometre) course of the beguiling Chindwin remains largely unspoiled due to the difficulty of access. Trying to find roads is futile: Navigating the river is the only way to penetrate this remote region.

After departing from Mandalay and the confluence of the Ayeyarwady and the Chindwin rivers, our boat headed to the right and started a patient upstream navigation toward Homalin, 1600 kilometres (994 miles) to the north.

Flanked sometimes by dense jungle, sometimes by steep-sided gorges, sometimes by endless rice paddies, the cruise offered dramatic, rugged scenery. Among coconuts, areca nut trees, bamboo and many diverse tropical broad-leaved trees, omnipresent white stupas launched their golden shafts toward the sky, capped often by a *hti* – a sort of umbrella with small bells.

Villagers spontaneously and joyfully greeted our coming from pile-built houses on the shore. An excursion to a hilltop village and bustling markets, where cheroot-smoking women sold gorgeous products, gave us many memorable moments of interaction with smiling villagers and laughing children. Indeed, communities this far north have had little contact with the outside world over the past five decades. Yet the villages did not strike us as impoverished. The abundance and variety of fresh products in the markets suggested a quality of life missing in some more urban locales.

In Monywa, we enjoyed visiting Bodhi Tataung – the site of a magnificent 424-foot (129-metre) standing Buddha, one of the largest in the world, where 7000 human-size Buddhas cover a field planted with 7000 Bodhi trees – and the somewhat kitschy Thanboddhay Pagoda, an unusually colourful and carnivalesque temple from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The latter depicts over a half-million

Buddha images aside its walls, and, inside, the largest ones stand under electric flashing rays like at a funfair.

In Maukkadaw, a teak port with many houses built in the traditional style, the economic importance of teak and other hardwoods in Myanmar seemed palpable. Indeed, timber extraction is an essential industry along the Chindwin River, and specialists estimate that the forests hold about 75 percent of the world’s teak reserves and that approximately half of the country is still covered with forest. Cranes perched near the shore appeared to wait for the extraordinary convoys of long bamboo rafts that transport the timbers to Yangon’s harbour and, from there, all over the world.

At sleepy Mawlaik – where the Upper Chindwin District Council’s office moved in 1918, and where an administrative centre for the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation was located in the 1920s and 1930s – we explored the abandoned, rambling Edwardian brick mansions and a nine-hole golf course built in 1936 and still associated with London’s St Andrew Golf Club. Many British men used to work in the surrounding forest running teams of elephants to extract the precious teak.

James Howard Williams (1897-1958), a young Cornishman, arrived here in 1920 to take a post as a forest assistant with Bombay Burma. His book *Elephant Bill*, published in 1950, beautifully captures his adventures in the jungle and his work with the Fourteenth Army during the Burma Campaign of WWII.

Still further north, brilliant emerald-green paddy fields lined our way to the pagoda that overhangs the river at Sithhaung, population 200. The village was used as a shortcut to India by British troops and other Allied forces withdrawing from Burma during WWII when the Japanese had cut off sea access. The road to India – it’s just 58 kilometres (36 miles) from Tamu, where an Indo-Myanmar friendship gate now stands – is an important trade gateway as well as one of the main overland connections between the two countries.

Our most northern destination, Homalin, proved the highlight of our journey. We reached the foothills of the bluish Manipur Hills finally after eight days of navigation at a speed of 5 knots against the current. In the surrounding mountains live Naga ethnic tribes, some of whom welcomed us with folk songs and traditional war dances to the beat of drums. We sampled dried pork in banana leaves and drinks served in bamboo pipes. Many people in this society of martial and athletic hunters – who once practised headhunting and still wear impressive headgear decked with horns, teeth, fur and feathers – were converted to Christianity by British protestant missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Expert craftspeople, the Naga continue to produce beautiful beaded jewellery and textiles.

The cruise back down the Chindwin at 11 knots took only three days. We joined the Ayeyarwady River again and some of the 3000-plus pagodas and stupas of Bagan’s historical plain came into view.

The difficult access to the Chindwin River will certainly protect it for long years from the dangers of overexploitation by mass tourism – unlike the Ayeyarwady between Mandalay and Bagan, which seems destined to become an “Asian Nile”. The journey had confirmed the well-known traveller’s dilemma of wanting both accessibility and authenticity. Often we so fervently wish to be brought to “unknown” frontiers – to discover, like the first Western explorers and travellers did, the quintessence of a country. Impossible hopes maybe, but this time the memories warranted the pursuit.





# What's on

NOVEMBER 17 - 23

Got an event?  
List it in What's On!  
[whatsonmt@gmail.com](mailto:whatsonmt@gmail.com)

## ART

**Nov 15-23** "Silent Sweat." Than Kyaw Htay solo show. River Gallery II, Chindwin Chambers, 33/35, 37<sup>th</sup> & 38<sup>th</sup> Street 6-8pm  
**Nov 16-20** "True Image." Lokanat Gallery, Pansodan Street 10am-7pm  
**Nov 15-21** "Winter In Colour." Golden Valley Art Gallery, 54D Golden Valley 9am-6pm  
**Nov 14-18** "Diary of Life." Photos by Kyaw Win Hlaing. The Yangon Gallery, People's Park, Ahlone Road 9am-9pm

## FILM

Start times at Mingalar (1, 2), Thwin, Shae Shaung (1,2) and Nay Pyi Taw cinemas are 10am, noon, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm and 8pm. Start times at Junction Square and Maw Tin are 10am, 1pm and 4pm daily and 7pm and 9:30pm on Friday and Saturday. Start times at Mingalar San Pya are 10am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm.

**Nay Pyi Taw Cinema**, near Sule Pagoda *Fury*. Directed by David Aye. A World War II flick starring Brad Pitt.  
*Big Hero 6*. Directed by Don Hall and Chris Williams. A brilliant robotics prodigy falls into a criminal plot.  
*John Wick*. Directed by David Leitch. An ex-hitman gets back into the game to take down gangsters who ruined his life.  
**Mingalar Cinema 2**, Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone  
*Big Hero 6*.  
**Shae Shaung Cinema**, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada  
*Happy New Year*. Directed by Farah Khan. An Indian caper in which a team of "losers" carry off a diamond heist.  
*Bang Bang*. Directed by Siddharth Anand. A bank receptionist and a charming vigilante go on a transcontinental chase.  
**Junction Square Cineplex**, Kamaryut  
*Babadook*. Directed by Jennifer Kent. A monster enters a home through pages of a children's book.  
*Left Behind*. Directed by Vic Armstrong.

What happens when millions of people disappear into thin air.

**Junction Mawtin**, Lanmadaw  
*Babadook*.

**Mingalar San Pya Cineplex**, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw  
*Big Hero 6*.  
*Happy New Year*.

## MUSIC

**Sept 5-Dec 31** Live Music. Thiripyitsaya Sky Bistro, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sakura Tower 7-10pm  
**Nov 17** Monday blues. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 9:30pm-11:30pm

## MISC

**Nov 18** Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 7pm-late  
**Nov 20** Topsy Travel Talk Thursdays. Discuss alternative travel in Myanmar over drinks. Off the Beaten Track Café, Kandawgyi Oo Yin Kabar, Kandawgyi Park, Mingalar Taung Nyunt

## WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

NOVEMBER 17 - 23, 2014

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



Greater focus on your primary objective will produce increased effectiveness and allow you to maintain integrity in

whatever you do. Know that trust is the foundation of all good relationships. Being passionate will increase your attraction to others. Look upon your relationship as sacred.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



The more you are willing to accept responsibility for your actions, the more credibility you have. Make your emotions subordinate to

your commitments. Know that most assumptions are inaccurate and that you must be in a state of equilibrium to deal with social controversies.

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19



Challenge yourself. Put your faith in yourself to change your life, and stop waiting for change to come from somewhere else.

Confrontation is a good thing when it is at the core of honesty and can help you ascertain the truth in a given situation. A reconciliation will follow a lover's tiff.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20



Good fortune will befall you. You will step into a brighter future but may have to battle for what you want. Know that the position and

authority in your hands do not belong to you. The more you reciprocate, the more advantage you will create. Rise above your emotional problems.

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



The moment you blame, you depreciate your reputation. The moment you accept responsibility, you appreciate your

reputation. The best time to ask for a raise is when you are given additional responsibilities. Love and hope depends on your persistence.

CANCER | June 21 - July 22



Secrets are imprisoning, but a big person has a different kind of secret for hidden challenges. Become more aware of

who you are, and don't think that you already know how people really feel about you. You should open yourself up to the possibility of change and question your reality.

LEO | July 23 - Aug 22



Decisions fuel the drama of life. Learn the rules of whatever game you're playing. Know that your success becomes dependent

on things and not on yourself. Try to keep your perspective when you monitor your investing progress. Investment is a means to an end of good, not an end in itself. You can't buy love.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sept 22



Great leaders are seldom blindsided. Problems never stop, but people can stop problems. Enthusiasm is

how you feel about a problem. Positive thinking does not change your circumstance, but it will always make you bright. Get concrete examples of an individual's performance and listen to what is not being said.

LIBRA | Sept 23 - Oct 22



There is a law in physics to the effect that action is equal to reaction. The law is also true in the realm of influence. Motivation is not

going to strike you like lightning. It is a by-product. You will act yourself into feeling as much as you feel yourself into action. Say the right words every day.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



Dissatisfaction can inspire or it can lead to a critical spirit. It can lead to apathy or to action. Remember, give and it shall be given to you. Don't be

insensitive. Make people your priority. Stop talking and develop the art of really listening. Show your sensitivity.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



People skills are essential for success. Be able to get along with a wide variety of people. Know that people's minds are changed more

through observation than through arguments. Listen well enough to lead through eyes, and relate well enough to communicate through hearts.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



Winners are not superstitious. You must be ready to welcome challenge with optimism. Don't waste time in unproductive

thought. Focus on what is important to the people who share your frame of vision. Open your eyes to creative challenges, and do not blame others or yourself.

# Taunggyi to host Shan New Year festivities



A dancer performs during Shan New Year celebrations in 2008. Photo: Staff

**CHIT SU WAI**  
[suwai.chit@gmail.com](mailto:suwai.chit@gmail.com)

**T**RADITIONALLY, according to the Shan (Tai) calendar, the New Year is celebrated during the first moon of the first lunar month. This year, 2109, it falls on November 21.

Celebrations are planned to take place in Taunggyi, organised by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS).

People in 54 townships of Shan State, as well as Shan literature and culture associations and Tai-kinship groups from Thailand, Laos, China, Vietnam and India, will participate in the events.

"We are celebrating the New

Year in the place where we live before the government and the ethnic armed groups will start peace talks," said Colonel Sai La, spokesperson for the RCSS/Shan State Army (South). "All kinds of Shan ethnics can gather. I think it could reduce some of the conflicts between each other."

There are two parts to the New Year celebration. From November 18 to 20, there will be cultural exchanges and academic seminars. From November 21 to 24, there will be traditional sporting competitions, food vendors and dance performances.

The celebrations are important, said the RCSS, because the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has organised cultural exchanges

and seminars in line with ASEAN socio-cultural community building, and people in Shan State are willing to cooperate on this ASEAN objective.

Ethnic Shan people believe that the beginning of the Shan calendar dates back to the time of the *saophas* (kings or chieftains) that existed as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.

The New Year hope is for peace, Col Sai La said.

"Only peace can solve the political problems we face now. We hope to achieve the political framework that all expect from political dialogues after a nation-wide ceasefire."

Shan New Year 2108 was held in Kyaingtong on November 23, 2013.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 113, Thmain Bayan Road, Tarmwe township, Yangon.  
 Tel: 09-731-35632, Email: [williameastegmail.com](mailto:williameastegmail.com)



Oscar buzz  
swirls around  
MLK film  
‘Selma’

A POWERFUL new film about civil rights icon Martin Luther King, *Selma* triumphed at its premiere in Los Angeles this week – while critics are predicting awards season glory.

Co-starring Oprah Winfrey and rising British star David Oyelowo, the film received a standing ovation in Hollywood as industry journal *Variety* forecast “considerable box-office and awards-season gold”.

The film, due for limited release on December 25 to qualify for the Oscars, focuses on a short period after the 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act, the law that abolished segregation in the US South.

But African Americans still faced bullying tactics to prevent them registering to vote.

The movie opens with a racist bomb attack on a church in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed four black schoolgirls, but rapidly turns to Selma, another town in the southern US state known as the cradle of the civil rights struggle.

Former talk show queen Winfrey plays Annie Lee Cooper, a modest and dignified nurse trying to register to vote but being blocked and humiliated by a small town official.

King – who had already won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 – heads to Selma to lead demonstrations and a celebrated march on the Alabama capital, Montgomery.

The violent clampdown on so-called Bloody Sunday, March 7, 1965, sparked a national scandal and triggered a movement that forced president Lyndon Johnson to proclaim the Voting Rights Act later that year.

Co-produced by Pathe, Winfrey and Brad Pitt’s Plan B production company, the film has Oyelowo – currently starring in *Interstellar* and soon to be in *A Most Violent Year* – playing King as determined and charismatic, yet human.

It depicts the US Secret Service’s attempts to trip him up by bugging his conversations, shadowing him and trying to get at him through his wife, Coretta Scott King, played by Carmen Ejogo.

Coretta was in fact harassed by the FBI with anonymous racist threats and also with recordings of her pastor husband allegedly frolicking with other women. – AFP

Women in business share  
knowledge at forum

Local leaders, mentors and NGOs celebrate Entrepreneurship Day

NANDAR AUNG  
nandaraung.mcm@gmail.com

WITH development in social, technological, education and economic sectors, people’s lifestyles are changing too. And particular international attention has been paid to changes affecting women.

Life today is not as simple as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when girls studied in early years then married and passed their life as wives and mothers.

“We’ve been through a difficult period for 50 years, and now we have a good opportunity. We need to stand forth without hesitation,” said Daw Cherry Aung Khin, a designer and businesswoman who owns Rakhine restaurants in Yangon, Mandalay and Bagan. She will be a speaker on November 19 at a forum marking international Women’s Entrepreneurship day.

The event is hosted by Partnership for Change and The Kavli Trust – two Norway-based INGOs conducting social change in Myanmar since 2012 – and will take place at Sedona Hotel. International guests and 150 Myanmar women will talk about their experiences as female entrepreneurs. Aspiring businesswomen will have a chance to learn about obstacles and opportunities, how to attract investors, how to access domestic and international markets and develop dynamic marketing strategies.

“We want to help and encourage those women who want to start strong businesses and improve their livelihood,” said Barbara Bauer, an executive officer at Partnership for Change.

Many women now dream of starting their own business, to get more income for themselves and their families. These dreams raise many questions. What kind of business to make? How to assemble enough capital? How to make the right connections?

The proof of the power of such forums and business-mentorship programs to help women gain



Rosi owns a start-up marketing fair-trade ethnic Chin fabrics. Photo: Supplied

life-changing skills is evident in the success stories cropping up around Yangon.

May Thi Bo, a 24-year-old part-time software programmer, wants to do business in order to better support her family of six. But she wasn’t sure how to start.

After she accomplished her computer training in 2012, she worked for a year in the training centre’s sales department. Then she joined a company writing computer programs. She delayed pursuing her business dream.

Then in June of this year she started a six-month training at Project Hub Yangon, a nursery for start-ups founded by two foreigners. The program mentors gave her sound advice, and she met other young women who also wanted to start businesses.

“I would be bored as company staff all my life,” she said. “I don’t like that life – going to the office in the morning and coming back home in the evening every weekday.”

She decided to start an online business related to her skills as a programmer and began preparing a website. Her business will advertise the discount programs of restaurants and spas, and she will get income from their fees to advertise.

In her free time, she visits shops to introduce her business. So far she’s visited dozens of shops and is nearly ready to launch her website.

In another example, Rosi, a 26-year-old Chin doctor, has also started a business since attending trainings at Project Hub. She will also attend the forum on November 19, she said.

Previously, her busy schedule at

the hospital and her clinic kept her from following a dream of marketing ethnic Chin people’s handiwork.

“I knew what would happen in my life as a doctor. It wasn’t exciting. Business is interesting and exciting,” she said. “If I continued as a doctor, I could save lives but I couldn’t create job opportunities for people. If I choose the business life, I can help my people.”

Rosi’s goal is to offer traditional weavers a living wage and create jobs for the jobless. She thinks there is a market for upscale casual wear made from ethnic cotton cloth.

She has started selling Chin fabric priced K20,000 to K80,000 from her Facebook page. It’s proving popular.

“It’s become difficult to find real hand-woven cloth,” she said. “Only women in their 50s know how to weave at a hand loom, and it’s tiring because the weaver has to use her hands and waist a lot. It takes a month to make a shawl.”

In order to compensate the weavers fairly, Rosi aims to sell the fabrics to lovers of hand-woven fabric who will pay an appropriate price.

“If I can bring their product to those who value it, I can ensure their livelihood and show our traditions at the same time,” she said.

The fabric she sells comes from Tiddim, Aizaw, Tamu, Falam and Haka. She is planning to turn the fabric into garments and take them into the international market.

Currently, she has tens of regular clients for her Chin traditional fabric, and half of them are foreigners. In September she sold her Chin fabric at a pop-up shop. She is planning more promotion.

“The intention of Project Hub is to raise entrepreneurs ... like eggs which have been incubated. But whether they hatch or not depends on the eggs,” she said, noting that while she thinks she’s “hatched”, she’s still growing. – Translated by Thiri Min Htun and Win Thaw Tar

*Women’s Entrepreneurship Day forum takes place at Sedona Hotel, 9am-6pm on November 19. RSVP at <http://goo.gl/forms/b20XDwFVbf>.*



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## Book review

# Expatriate guide covers survival basics

## Expatriate in Myanmar: A Guide for Newcomers

Janice T Merchant  
227 pages, 2014

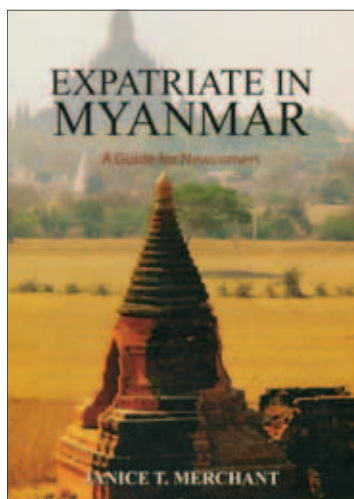
JOE WOODS

**B**OOKSTORE shelves are filling up with new guides to Myanmar, and so the arrival of a more specific tome is a welcome sight. With all the appearances of a guidebook, this one addresses the situation of expatriates, new and experienced alike.

Author Janice Merchant has moved many times around the globe, and she notes how beneficial it's been for her family to have a guide of sorts upon arrival in a new country. That experience inspired her to write this one.

She also acknowledges the difficulties of doing so. On the one hand, an expatriate guide to Yangon has to have added value over, say, the *Golden Guide to Yangon*, which is both comprehensive and updated on an annual basis. On the other, the internet competes as the best source to keep up with the city's rapid pace of change.

The book contains 16 chapters, from "Housing" and "Household Staff" to "Enjoying Your New Life in Yangon" and "Establishing a Business". Throughout, her advice is sensible and sound. She lists certain useful requirements in the search for a rental property, but my experience



is that you drop most requirements when you find something half-suitable and grab it, such as the shortages and inequities of the property market in Yangon.

The "Country Overview" chapter could have done with more material, as I think any new expatriate would want details of recent history, especially political. Merchant is more thorough in areas such as "Home Health" and "Health and Safety".

While she deals extensively with expatriate children in Yangon

– everything from culture shock to schools to shopping for baby supplies – I felt an entire chapter could be devoted to the topic. The family-friendliness of Yangon soon disappears when trying to negotiate a footpath with a pram or even crossing a road. She covers the various international clubs that provide very necessary relief to parents with young children here, but details on how to become a member would be useful.

Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw each get a chapter, but the overall emphasis of the book is directed at the majority of expatriates who are based in Yangon.

The book is peppered with fine photos taken by the author's husband, Rajeev Merchant, and a number of maps and appendices (some more useful than others, and some available on the internet).

The book is a pricey US\$25, the same amount as the *Lonely Planet Guide to Myanmar*, but proceeds from the sale of this book will be used to fund scholarship and educational initiatives.

*Expatriate in Myanmar* is an attractive book, and, while definitely not the last word on the matter, it's certainly one to have on arrival.

Myanmar Book Centre **US\$25**

## The Global Gossip



Actor David Oyelowo attends the *Selma* first look during AFI FEST 2014 at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood on November 11. Photo: AFP/Mark Ralston

### NEW DELHI Tourists land in India jail after balloon drifts

Two foreign tourists on holiday in India unwittingly landed in jail this week after strong winds blew their hot air balloon off course.

The two sisters from the West Indies were enjoying a ride over the desert in the western state of Rajasthan on November 11 when the balloon's pilot lost control, forcing him to make an emergency landing.

Indian media said the balloon landed in the prison yard, to the consternation of officers.

"When the operator saw that they were sailing over the Anasagar Lake, he got alarmed and tried to control the movement of the balloon," the *Indian Express* quoted local police inspector Hanuman Vishnoi as saying.

"The nearest landing was the police lines and even though he steered towards it, the strong winds made the balloon travel further up to Ajmer jail."

Authorities have responded by cancelling balloon rides over the area, Indian media reported.

### NEW YORK Kenny Rogers plans last tour of Australia, New Zealand

Country music legend Kenny Rogers on November 11 announced a tour of Australia and New Zealand and said that, at age 76, it will certainly be his last trip Down Under.

The Texas-born singer – whose crossover appeal has helped him top the charts with a string of songs including "The Gambler", "Lady" and "Islands in the Stream" – said he was not retiring but that his January-February tour would be the last to Australia and New Zealand.

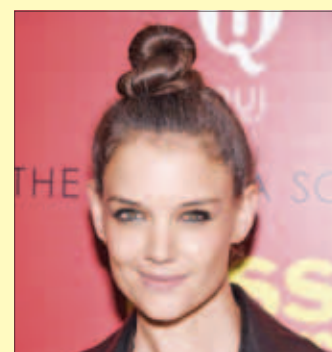
"For all of the travelling I've done around the world, Australia and New Zealand remain two of my favourite places to perform," he said in a statement.

"They have a great sense of humor, and they've always treated me with such great respect, so for that, I say thank you," he said.

Besides his solo work, Rogers is known for his collaboration with Dolly Parton and appearances on films and television programs including *The Muppet Show*.



Knows when to fold 'em. Photo: AFP/Robyn Beck



Actress Katie Holmes attends a screening of *Miss Meadows* at Neuehouse in New York City on November 12. Photo: Dimitrios Kambouris/Getty/AFP

### PARIS Artist tries to find needle in haystack

Italian artist Sven Sachsaler set out to try to find a needle in a haystack – quite literally – in a performance at a Paris museum.

The artist will spend November 13 and 14 looking for the elusive needle – pre-inserted into the haystack by museum head Jean de Loisy – at the Palais de Tokyo, a contemporary art gallery in the French capital.

The 27-year-old is an adept of extreme performances. He once spent 24 hours in his room with a cow, and another time he cut all the branches from a tree on which he was perched.

### LONDON Cumberbatch announces engagement in newspaper ad

British actor Benedict Cumberbatch announced his engagement the old-fashioned way on November 12 – by placing a notice in *The Times* newspaper.

The 38-year-old star of *Sherlock* and *The Imitation Game* is to marry British theatre director Sophie Hunter, 36. The couple have been dating for several months.

The notice said simply, "The engagement is announced between Benedict, son of Wanda and Timothy Cumberbatch of London, and Sophie, daughter of Katharine Hunter of Edinburgh and Charles Hunter of London."

Cumberbatch is one of Britain's most successful actors, known for playing complicated but brilliant figures such as super-sleuth Sherlock Holmes and computing pioneer Alan Turing.

The announcement threatens to break the hearts of many of his devoted fans, who are known as "Cumberbitches".

*The Times* "Births, Marriages and Deaths" section is the traditional place for well-connected Britons to announce key milestones in family life. – AFP



Sorry Cumberbitches, he's taken. Photo: AFP/David McNew

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## TOKYO

## Beauty queens get political as 'world peace' mantra fades

ALASTAIR HIMMER

FOR those who dismiss beauty contests as parades of dream girls gushing about world peace, Puerto Rican bombshell Valerie Hernandez Matias offers a twist – a serious political agenda.

The newly crowned Miss International told AFP she hopes to pay back her country's education system for the opportunities it afforded her, after crediting teachers with helping her overcome learning difficulties as a child.

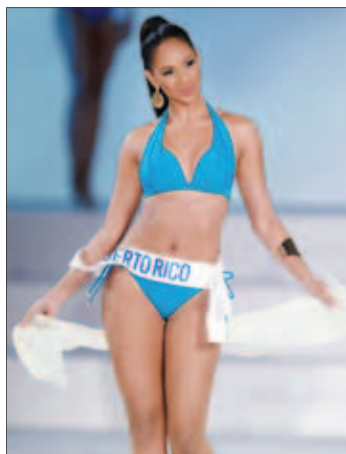
"My plan for the future is not only to work for my country on social problems which affect us, but also to set an example for people to follow in order to achieve a better future," the 21-year-old said in an interview, eyes dried and make-up restored after her emotional win at a November 11 gala in Tokyo.

"One of the biggest social problems affecting Puerto Rico is in education. In high school I was in a special education program. I suffered from attention deficit disorder but I managed to beat my condition thanks to the help I received from my teachers and people around me.

"Sadly, that type of help is declining nowadays," she added, after a knockout victory over Mexican Vianey Vazquez, considered by many as the favourite.

"I would like my Puerto Rico to use me as an example – now that I've won such an important title – as a spokeswoman for campaigns, to visit schools and help children," she added.

Before delivering her manifesto, Hernandez Matias strolled through the swimsuit category in a blue number reminiscent of Halle Berry's famous bikini scene in the



Miss Puerto Rico strikes a winning pose. Photo: AFP/Toru Yamanaka

007 movie *Die Another Day*.

Amid the tears, hugs and squeals of joy and despair, politics was never far away in the competition. World peace was a common mantra, but runner-up Zuleika Suarez of Colombia vowed to tackle racial intolerance and Britain's Victoria Tooby took aim at poverty and unemployment.

"I would love to be the face that gives people hope," said platinum blonde Tooby. "With hard work, patience and determination you can achieve anything you want and change for the better."

Punika Kulsoontornrut of Thailand valiantly forced a smile as her abundant charms and calls for world peace only brought her third place.

But Frenchwoman Aurianne Sinicola struck a blow for couch potatoes by winning the "Miss Perfect Body" category.

"I'm surprised," she laughed. "I'm not very sporty. I really don't work out much at all. I just have a very healthy diet." – AFP

## Living well in Myanmar

## No test may be best

CHRISTOPH GELSDORF, MD

livingwellmyanmar@gmail.com

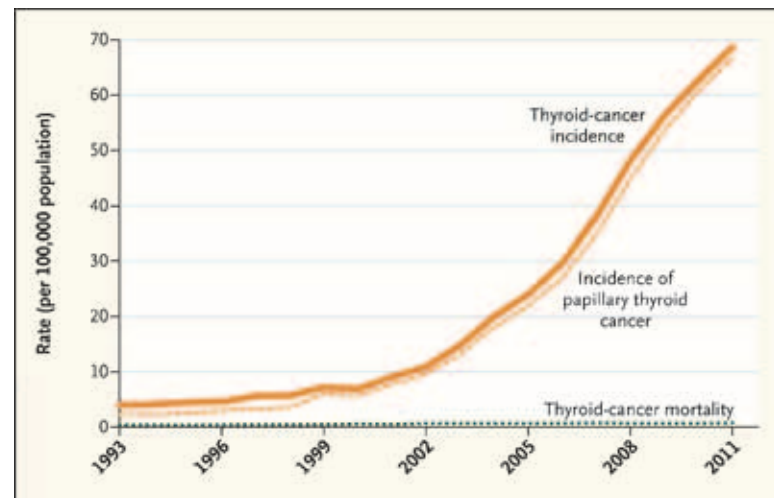
IN attempting to access the best possible medical care for their families, patients often assume that getting a variety of medical tests will help them avoid disease and live longer. For the growing middle-class of Myanmar and the expatriates who have chosen to live here, there is a perception that getting checked for many different types of cancers will help avoid the negative outcomes associated with those cancers.

Readers of *Living Well in Myanmar* will know that this is not always the case. Just because a screening test indicates that you might have cancer doesn't necessarily mean you actually have it. Even more difficult to understand is that even if you have a cancer, it may never cause a problem.

A great example comes from new research out of South Korea. In the late 1990s the South Korean government started a national cancer-screening program hoping to improve the health of their population regarding diseases such as breast, cervical, colon and stomach cancers.

In addition, many doctors and hospitals included thyroid-cancer screening by selling patients an ultrasound examination of the neck. The result has been a fifteen-fold increase in thyroid cancer in South Korea, making it the most common cancer in the nation.

One might expect that finding all of this previously undiagnosed disease is improving health in South Korea by reducing the number



Diagnoses of thyroid cancer go up but deaths remain unchanged. Graphic: New England Journal of Medicine

of people who die from thyroid cancer. In fact the death rate from thyroid cancer has remained unchanged – and it was low to begin with. This means that all the cancer cases that were found and treated didn't actually save people's lives.

The South Korean experience is a stark example of over-diagnosis – finding disease that would be better left undiscovered because its treatment is unlikely to benefit the patient. The implication for patients and the healthcare system is not only excessive worry and cost, but also unnecessary harm, because cancer-removal surgeries can damage vocal cords. Furthermore most patients have to take thyroid-replacement therapy for the rest of their lives after the thyroid gland has been removed.

Interestingly, some of the most meaningful advances in preventative healthcare have involved learning to stop or alter how we use cancer-screening tests. A prominent example

is the PSA test for prostate cancer, which many medical societies now advocate avoiding altogether. Guidelines on cervical and breast cancer screenings are also being revised to advocate reducing the scope and frequency of who gets tested and when.

We keep learning that many cancers are best left undiscovered. About a third of people who die of other causes are found on autopsy to have thyroid cancer that never bothered them in their lifetime. A similarly high percentage of men are found to have had prostate cancer that never affected them. Identifying the cancers while these people were alive wouldn't have improved either the length or quality of their lives.

Once screening tests do happen and patients are told they have cancer it becomes difficult to discuss delaying or avoiding treatment. Fears surrounding cancer and the desire by doctors to do the procedures for which they have been trained tends to push patient-doctor decisionmaking toward pursuing an intervention. Therefore national public-health departments are obligated to encourage responsible screening practices by government and private medical systems.

Many laboratory and imaging tests that are known to cause more harm than good are currently sold in Myanmar and neighbouring countries. The process of engineering responsibility and accountability into our healthcare system will be difficult because of both the profit motive for medical professionals and the desire of people to access the "best medical care available". In the meantime, the best hope is a well-educated patient.

Christoph Gelsdorf is an American Board of Family Medicine physician who sees patients in Yangon and California ([www.gelsdorfMD.com](http://www.gelsdorfMD.com)). He is a member of the General Practitioner Society of the Myanmar Medical Association. Reader thoughts and questions are welcomed.

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# Mohinga made Aunty Kyu’s special way



PHYO ARBIDANS  
phyo.arbidans@gmail.com



More salad than soup. Photo: Phyo



**SOUP ACCOMPANIMENTS**  
800g rice vermicelli (*mohinga phet*)  
½ cup roasted chickpea powder (Pyin Ma Nar brand)  
¼ cup fish sauce  
1 cup fried red onions (*kyet thun ni si chet*)  
Coriander or snake beans, minced

Prepare the noodles and mix with 1 tbsp chickpea powder, 1 tsp fish sauce and 1½ tbsp oil. Mix gently. Pour a ladle of soup over the salad. It should not be soupy. To make the fried onions, add

1 cup of vegetable oil to a wok and heat over medium. When hot, add 1/8 tsp of turmeric powder and stir into the oil. Add 2 sliced onions. Fry until they start to turn crisp and golden, then turn down the heat. Continue cooking until colour is even, then transfer to a plate and let cool. (You can keep these for a few weeks in a sealed jar.)  
Garnish the salad with the fried onions and minced coriander or snake beans.  
Add fish sauce to taste.  
Alternatively, you can serve the salad and soup separately.  
Prepare the handful of noodles to mix with 1 tablespoon of roasted chickpea powder, 1 teaspoon of fish sauce and 1 ½ tablespoon of sic het (oil). Mix gently. Pour a ladle of soup over the salad. It’s not soupy. Just with a bit of soup. Garnish with fried onions and oil. Serve with finely chopped or sliced coriander or snake beans. Fish sauce for taste.

**M**Y little daughter has been asking for mohingar at breakfast, lunch and dinner. That might be coming from her Burmese side. We’ve been cooking or buying take-away mohinga every week. She is okay with that, but I need alternatives, and from speaking with a friend I had the idea to make the special mohinga that is native to my grandparents’ town.  
When my grandpa fell ill, I went to Lewe for nearly a month to take care of him. All my aunties and their family took care of us in return, always asking what I would like to eat. One day, it was mohinga. I missed it and was very excited.  
But when I saw the meal set on the table, I was wondered why they were offering me this plain rice vermicelli salad. I ate it anyways, and a few extra servings. The salad was mixed with roasted chickpea powder,

fried onion oil (*kyet thun ni si chet*) and fish sauce. A small ladle of clear fish stock was poured over. Delicious.  
I used to make this mohinga in Sydney as I could buy dried rice vermicelli and roasted chickpea powder easily, and I didn’t have the confidence to cook delta-style mohinga. First time I made it, John had a taste, then took my bowl away and brought it back empty. “What is it?” he asked when it was all gone.  
I got the recipe below from my Aunty Kyu in Nay Pyi Taw. Thank you Aunty.  
In this recipe, good quality roasted chickpea powder is very important. So next time when you are in Nay Pyi Taw, get some Pyin Ma Nar brand powder. Or ask your friends who visit Nay Pyi Taw to bring you some.  
**LEWE MOHINGA SOUP**  
Serves 6-8  
700-800g catfish or similar

2 cloves garlic  
2 slices ginger  
2 tbsp vegetables  
1/8 tsp turmeric powder  
½ tsp fish sauce  
8 small shallots  
Add the cleaned fish to a stock pot with ginger and fish sauce. Add 2.5 litres of water and simmer to make the broth. When the fish is cooked through, discard the bones and skin. Drain the stock into another pot. Set aside.  
Add oil to a sauce pan and heat on medium. Add the tumeric and stir. Add the crushed garlic. Sauté until you can smell the aroma, then add the fish flesh and fry for 3-5 minutes. When the fish is coated evenly, transfer into the fish stock and bring to a boil.  
When the soup is bubbling, add the shallots and cover with a lid. Simmer on low heat for 40 minutes. Add salt to taste.

## Fish and turmeric bring the taste of Inle at ethnic Shan chain

### Restaurant Review

**ZON PANN PWINT**  
zonpann08@gmail.com

**TURMERIC** has multiple medicinal purposes. At Inle Lake, the Inthar people believe it also provides protection against malaria and fever and thus incorporate it into their cuisine.  
Fish yellow rice – a mixture of rice, turmeric and a sprinkle of fish – is the mainstay of the Inle diet.  
Last week, my colleague and I visited a branch of Innlay Ahmataya restaurant in Dagon, where staff showed us how the Inthar people eat to suit the weather and geographical location.

The restaurant was quiet and cool thanks to a large shade-giving tree. Inside the dining room was decorated with Pathein umbrellas hung from the ceiling over each table.  
We ordered *hin htote* – steamed rice powder with onion leaves, and flavoured with *ju myit* (an edible root) and fried garlic, (K1200) – fish yellow rice (K1200) and fish “hidden treasure” – a banana-leaf wrapped, steamed carp with slices of onion and peanut oil (K1200). All are Inle specialties.

We also ordered wanton soup (noodle soup with chicken, fish or pork, K1200).  
First I tried the fish hidden treasure. The taste was good but the food wasn’t hot, and it seemed to have been cooked hours ago. The fish was soft and the onion was sweet and spicy a bit. The dish was accompanied by red chillies and garlic.  
Inthar people eat *hin htote* as a morning snack. I felt full after eating one piece, as they are made of rice powder. These can be

ordered vegetarian, or you can choose from a variety of fish and pork.  
I couldn’t smell turmeric in the fish yellow rice, but what I did smell – steamed fish – was mouthwatering. The taste was pretty good but, again, it wasn’t hot and seemed old.  
Each dish was mildly spicy and stimulating to the taste buds. Overall, I was impressed by the variety of Inle dishes on offer. The menu even offered regionally made honey and grape wine.  
Service was quick, except on soup orders.



Photos: Zarni Phyo

Restaurant Rating  
★★★★☆

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Food            | 7 |
| Atmosphere      | 8 |
| X-factor        | 7 |
| Service         | 8 |
| Value for money | 7 |

**Innlay Ahmataya**  
126 Manawhari Street, near Kan Taw Min Park, Dagon  
Phone 09-73048375  
Open daily 6:30am-7:30pm





David Horvath, GM of Jotun, and Dan Davies, associate director of Colliers International



Peter Beynon, Peter Crowhurst and Aung Htun



Andrew Patrick, British ambassador



Ma Su Su Tin and guest



Myat Myat Moe, Alice Kwong and James Smith

## British Chamber of Commerce mixer

The British Chamber of Commerce Myanmar held its monthly networking event at Dagon City 1, a new property development at the heart of Yangon, on November 10. The event was hosted by Jotun and Dagon City 1 and attended by the chamber's members and the international and local business community.



Richard Lan, Jessica Dada and Jeff Ho



Jeff Ho



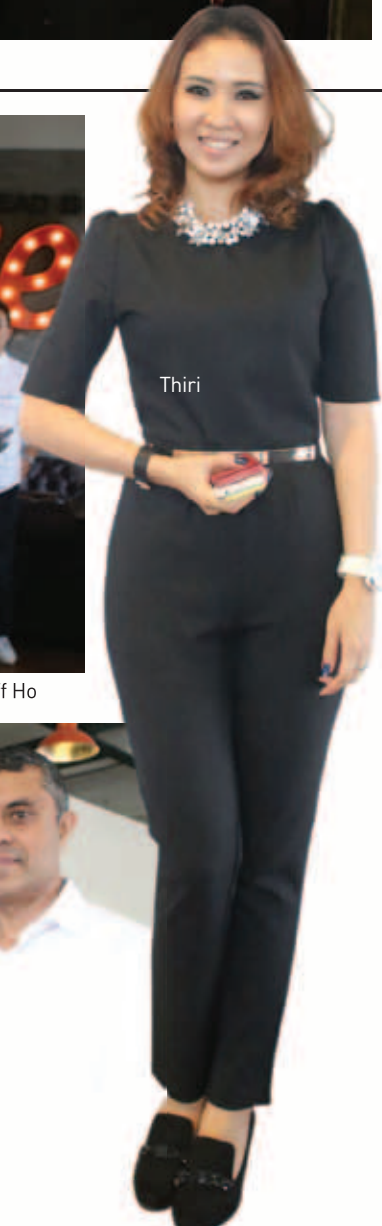
Leena

## Cocktail bar opens

The Rangoon Bar, a new cocktail bar conceptualised with the help of Jeff Ho of Jekyll and Hyde bar in Singapore, opened its doors in the Union Business Centre on November 4. The watering hole is serving "Signature Punchbowl" cocktails like "Kipling's Last Toast" (Champagne, lychee, brandy) and "Burmese Daze" (JW Black Label, Triple Sec, lemon, syrup).



Okkar, Thiri and Kevin Gomes



Thiri







### Streetball teams compete

The 10<sup>th</sup> Horizon Streetball Tournament, jointly organised by the Ministry of Sport, the Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Yangon), the Myanmar Basketball Federation and Horizon International Schools, drew players and fans to the Horizon Shu Khinn Thar campus on November 8 and 9. Altogether the event 140 teams comprising 550 players from state high-schools, international schools and universities compete in nine categories. It was one of the biggest basketball events yet seen in the country.



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DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

| YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW |           |       |       |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flight                | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| FMI A1                | 1,2,3,4,5 | 7:15  | 8:15  |
| FMI B1                | 1,2,3,4,5 | 10:45 | 11:45 |
| FMI C1                | 1,2,3,4,5 | 17:00 | 18:00 |

| YANGON TO MANDALAY |             |       |       |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Flight             | Days        | Dep   | Arr   |
| 7Y 111             | Daily       | 5:50  | 7:55  |
| 7Y 133             | 2,5,7       | 5:55  | 8:00  |
| Y5 775             | 1,2,4,5,6   | 6:00  | 7:10  |
| Y5 775             | 3,7         | 6:00  | 7:30  |
| YH 909             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 6:00  | 7:40  |
| K7 262             | Daily       | 6:00  | 8:10  |
| YH 917             | 6           | 6:00  | 7:40  |
| YH 917             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 6:10  | 8:30  |
| 6T 401             | Daily       | 6:20  | 8:30  |
| YH 831             | 6           | 7:00  | 8:40  |
| W9 201             | Daily       | 7:00  | 8:25  |
| K7 266             | Daily       | 8:00  | 10:05 |
| K7 244             | 1,3,5,6,7   | 8:15  | 9:40  |
| 7Y 815             | 3           | 10:30 | 11:55 |
| 7Y 813             | 7           | 10:30 | 11:55 |
| YH 835             | 7           | 10:30 | 12:10 |
| 7Y 707             | 2,5         | 10:30 | 14:45 |
| 7Y 815             | 1,4,6       | 10:30 | 14:45 |
| YH 911             | 2           | 11:00 | 12:40 |
| YH 831             | 4           | 11:00 | 12:40 |
| YH 729             | 2,4         | 11:15 | 14:15 |
| YH 737             | 3,5,7       | 11:15 | 13:25 |
| W9 251             | 2,5         | 11:30 | 12:55 |
| YH 729             | 6           | 11:30 | 14:30 |
| YH 829             | 5           | 11:30 | 13:10 |
| 6T 807             | 2,4,6,7     | 11:30 | 13:30 |
| 6T 805             | 1,3,5       | 11:30 | 15:30 |
| K7 822             | 2,4,7       | 12:30 | 16:55 |
| YJ 151/W9 7151     | 1,3,6       | 13:00 | 16:45 |
| K7 622             | 1,3,5,7     | 13:00 | 14:25 |
| K7 226             | 2,4,6       | 13:30 | 14:55 |
| K7 224/7Y 241      | Daily       | 14:30 | 16:35 |
| YH 731             | 1,2,3,4,7   | 15:00 | 17:10 |
| 7Y 221             | Daily       | 15:00 | 16:55 |
| Y5 234             | Daily       | 15:20 | 16:30 |
| YJ 211/W9 7211     | 7           | 15:30 | 16:55 |
| W9 211             | 4           | 15:30 | 16:55 |
| YH 731             | 5,6         | 15:30 | 17:40 |
| 6T 501             | Daily       | 15:30 | 17:30 |

| YANGON TO NYAUNG U |             |       |       |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Flight             | Days        | Dep   | Arr   |
| 7Y 111             | Daily       | 5:50  | 7:10  |
| 7Y 241             | 1,3,4,6     | 5:55  | 7:15  |
| K7 262             | Daily       | 6:00  | 7:20  |
| YH 909             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 6:00  | 8:25  |
| YH 917             | 6           | 6:00  | 8:25  |
| YH 917             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 6:10  | 7:45  |
| YH 909             | 6           | 6:10  | 7:45  |
| YJ 141/W9 7141     | Daily       | 6:20  | 7:40  |
| 6T 401             | Daily       | 6:20  | 7:40  |
| 6T 351             | Daily       | 6:30  | 7:50  |
| YH 633             | 1,2,5,7     | 7:00  | 8:35  |
| K7 242             | Daily       | 7:00  | 8:20  |
| Y5 649             | Daily       | 10:30 | 11:50 |
| K7 224/7Y 241      | Daily       | 14:30 | 17:25 |
| YH 731             | 1,2,3,4,7   | 15:00 | 17:55 |
| K7 264             | Daily       | 15:00 | 17:10 |
| 7Y 221             | Daily       | 15:00 | 17:40 |
| YJ 129/W9 7129     | 2,5         | 15:30 | 17:35 |
| W9 129             | 1,3,6       | 15:30 | 17:35 |
| W9 211             | 4           | 15:30 | 17:40 |
| YH 731             | 5,6         | 15:30 | 18:25 |

| YANGON TO MYITKYINA |         |       |       |
|---------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Flight              | Days    | Dep   | Arr   |
| YH 835              | 1       | 7:00  | 9:40  |
| YH 831              | 6       | 7:00  | 10:35 |
| YH 835              | 7       | 10:30 | 13:35 |
| YH 831              | 4       | 11:00 | 14:35 |
| W9 251              | 2,5     | 11:30 | 14:25 |
| YH 829              | 5       | 11:30 | 14:35 |
| YJ 151/W9 7151      | 1,3,6   | 13:00 | 15:15 |
| K7 622              | 1,3,5,7 | 13:00 | 15:55 |
| YH 826              | 3       | 14:00 | 16:40 |

| YANGON TO HEHO |         |      |      |
|----------------|---------|------|------|
| Flight         | Days    | Dep  | Arr  |
| 7Y 111         | Daily   | 5:50 | 8:40 |
| 7Y 241         | 1,3,4,6 | 5:55 | 8:10 |
| 7Y 133         | 2,5,7   | 5:55 | 8:45 |
| K7 262         | Daily   | 6:00 | 9:55 |

| NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON |           |       |       |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flight                | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| FMI A2                | 1,2,3,4,5 | 8:35  | 9:35  |
| FMI B2                | 1,2,3,4,5 | 13:30 | 14:30 |
| FMI C2                | 1,2,3,4,5 | 18:20 | 19:20 |

| MANDALAY TO YANGON |             |       |       |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Flight             | Days        | Dep   | Arr   |
| YH 910             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 7:40  | 9:45  |
| Y5 233             | 1,2,4,5,6   | 7:50  | 9:00  |
| Y5 233             | 3,7         | 7:50  | 9:20  |
| 7Y 112             | Daily       | 8:10  | 10:05 |
| 7Y 134             | 2,5,7       | 8:15  | 10:10 |
| K7 262             | Daily       | 8:25  | 12:25 |
| YH 918             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 8:30  | 10:45 |
| W9 201             | Daily       | 8:40  | 10:35 |
| 6T 402             | Daily       | 8:45  | 10:50 |
| YH 918             | 6           | 9:10  | 11:05 |
| K7 244             | 1,3,5,6,7   | 9:55  | 13:00 |
| K7 267             | Daily       | 10:20 | 12:25 |
| 6T 807             | 2,4,6,7     | 13:45 | 17:45 |
| YH 832             | 6           | 13:50 | 15:15 |
| 7Y 816             | 1,4,6       | 15:00 | 18:45 |
| 7Y 708             | 2,5         | 15:00 | 19:18 |
| YH 912             | 2           | 15:30 | 17:25 |
| 6T 806             | 1,3,5       | 15:45 | 17:45 |
| 7Y 814             | 7           | 16:00 | 17:25 |
| YH 832             | 4           | 16:00 | 17:25 |
| YH 830             | 5           | 16:00 | 17:25 |
| 7Y 816             | 3           | 16:40 | 18:05 |
| K7 225/7Y 242      | Daily       | 16:50 | 19:00 |
| YH 836             | 7           | 16:50 | 18:15 |
| YJ 152/W9 7152     | 1,3,6       | 17:05 | 18:30 |
| Y5 776             | Daily       | 17:10 | 18:20 |
| YJ 211/W9 7211     | 7           | 17:10 | 19:15 |
| W9 211             | 4           | 17:10 | 19:15 |
| 7Y 222             | Daily       | 17:10 | 19:15 |
| K7 823             | 2,4,7       | 17:10 | 18:35 |
| YH 732             | 1,2,3,4,7   | 17:10 | 19:15 |
| K7 227             | 2,4,6       | 17:20 | 18:45 |
| YH 738             | 3,5,7       | 17:25 | 18:50 |
| K7 623             | 1,3,5,7     | 17:40 | 19:05 |
| YH 730             | 6           | 17:50 | 19:15 |
| 6T 502             | Daily       | 17:50 | 19:55 |
| YH 732             | 5,6         | 17:40 | 19:45 |
| YH 730             | 2,4         | 18:00 | 19:25 |
| W9 252             | 2,5         | 18:15 | 19:40 |

| NYAUNG U TO YANGON |             |       |       |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Flight             | Days        | Dep   | Arr   |
| 7Y 111             | Daily       | 7:25  | 10:05 |
| 7Y 241             | 1,3,4,6     | 7:30  | 10:30 |
| YH 918             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 7:45  | 10:45 |
| YJ 141/W9 7141     | Daily       | 7:55  | 10:55 |
| 6T 401             | Daily       | 7:55  | 10:50 |
| YH 634             | 3,7         | 8:05  | 10:10 |
| 6T 351             | Daily       | 8:05  | 11:10 |
| YH 910             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 8:25  | 9:45  |
| YH 918             | 5           | 8:25  | 11:05 |
| K7 242             | Daily       | 8:35  | 11:45 |
| YH 634             | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 8:35  | 10:40 |
| YH 910             | 5           | 9:35  | 10:55 |
| K7 263             | Daily       | 11:05 | 12:25 |
| Y5 650             | Daily       | 13:55 | 15:15 |
| K7 265             | Daily       | 17:25 | 18:45 |
| K7 225/7Y 242      | Daily       | 17:40 | 19:00 |
| YJ 129/W9 7129     | 2,5         | 17:50 | 19:10 |
| W9 129             | 1,3,6       | 17:50 | 19:10 |
| 7Y 222             | Daily       | 17:55 | 19:15 |
| YH 732             | 1,2,3,4,7   | 17:55 | 19:15 |
| YH 732             | 5,6         | 18:25 | 19:45 |
| 6T 502             | Daily       | 18:35 | 19:55 |

| MYITKYINA TO YANGON |         |       |       |
|---------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Flight              | Days    | Dep   | Arr   |
| YH 832              | 6       | 12:25 | 15:15 |
| YH 832              | 4       | 14:35 | 17:25 |
| YH 830              | 5       | 14:35 | 17:25 |
| YH 836              | 7       | 15:25 | 18:15 |
| K7 623              | 1,3,5,7 | 16:10 | 19:05 |
| YH 827              | 3       | 16:40 | 19:05 |
| W9 252              | 2,5     | 16:45 | 19:40 |

| HEHO TO YANGON |         |      |       |
|----------------|---------|------|-------|
| Flight         | Days    | Dep  | Arr   |
| 7Y 242         | 1,3,4,6 | 8:25 | 10:30 |
| YJ 141/W9 7141 | Daily   | 8:50 | 10:55 |
| 7Y 112         | Daily   | 8:55 | 10:05 |
| 7Y 134         | 2,5,7   | 9:00 | 10:10 |

|                |             |       |       |
|----------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| YH 917         | 6           | 6:00  | 9:55  |
| YH 917         | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 6:10  | 9:35  |
| YJ 141/W9 7141 | Daily       | 6:20  | 8:35  |
| 6T 401         | Daily       | 6:20  | 9:20  |
| 6T 351         | Daily       | 6:30  | 8:45  |
| K7 242         | Daily       | 7:00  | 9:15  |
| W9 201         | Daily       | 7:00  | 9:10  |
| YH 633         | 1,2,3,5,7   | 7:00  | 9:30  |
| K7 266         | Daily       | 8:00  | 9:15  |
| K7 244         | 1,3,5,6,7   | 8:15  | 10:30 |
| Y5 649         | Daily       | 10:30 | 12:45 |
| 7Y 815         | 3           | 10:30 | 12:40 |
| 7Y 813         | 7           | 10:30 | 12:40 |
| 7Y 815         | 1,4,6       | 10:30 | 14:00 |
| 7Y 241         | 2           | 10:35 | 11:45 |
| YH 505         | 1,2,3,4,5   | 10:30 | 11:55 |
| YH 737         | 3,7         | 11:15 | 12:40 |
| 6T 805         | 1,3,5       | 11:30 | 12:40 |
| 6T 807         | 2,4,6,7     | 11:30 | 12:40 |
| YH 505         | 6           | 11:30 | 12:55 |
| K7 828         | 1,3,5       | 12:30 | 13:45 |
| K7 822         | 2,4,7       | 12:30 | 13:45 |
| K7 224/7Y 241  | Daily       | 14:30 | 15:45 |
| YH 731         | 1,2,3,4,7   | 15:00 | 16:25 |
| K7 264         | Daily       | 15:00 | 16:25 |
| 7Y 221         | Daily       | 15:00 | 16:10 |
| YJ 129/W9 7129 | 2,5         | 15:30 | 16:40 |
| W9 129         | 1,3,6       | 15:30 | 16:40 |
| 6T 501         | Daily       | 15:30 | 16:40 |
| YH 731         | 5,6         | 15:30 | 16:55 |

| YANGON TO MYEIK |       |       |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flight          | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| Y5 325          | 1,5   | 6:45  | 8:15  |
| K7 319          | 2,4,6 | 7:00  | 9:05  |
| Y5 325          | 2     | 15:30 | 17:00 |

| YANGON TO SITTWE |       |       |       |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flight           | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| 7Y 445           | 3,4,6 | 11:00 | 12:50 |
| 6T 605           | Daily | 11:15 | 13:10 |
| YJ 309/W9 7309   | 5     | 11:30 | 12:55 |
| W9 309           | 1,3,6 | 11:30 | 12:55 |
| K7 422           | Daily | 13:00 | 14:55 |

| YANGON TO THANDWE |           |       |       |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flight            | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| 7Y 241            | 1,3,4,6   | 5:55  | 9:25  |
| YJ 141/W9 7141    | 1,2,3,4,5 | 6:20  | 9:50  |
| YJ 141/W9 7141    | 6         | 6:20  | 8:35  |
| 6T 351            | Daily     | 6:30  | 10:00 |
| K7 242            | Daily     | 7:00  | 10:35 |
| K7 244            | 1,3,5,6,7 | 8:15  | 11:50 |
| YH 505            | 1,2,3,4,5 | 10:30 | 13:10 |
| 7Y 241            | 2         | 10:35 | 13:00 |
| 7Y 445            | 3,4,6     | 11:00 | 11:50 |
| 6T 605            | Daily     | 11:15 | 12:10 |
| YJ 311/W9 7311    | 2         | 11:30 | 13:20 |
| YJ 309/W9 7309    | 5         | 11:30 | 13:50 |
| W9 309            | 1,3,6     | 11:30 | 13:50 |
| YH 505            | 6         | 11:30 | 14:10 |
| Y5 311/W9 7311    | 4         | 11:45 | 12:35 |
| K7 422            | Daily     | 13:00 | 13:35 |
| Y5 421            | 1,2,4,6   | 15:45 | 16:40 |

| YANGON TO DAWEI |       |      |      |
|-----------------|-------|------|------|
| Flight          | Days  | Dep  | Arr  |
| K7 319          | 2,4,6 | 7:00 | 8:10 |

| YANGON TO LASHIO |       |       |       |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flight           | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| 7Y 707           | 2,5   | 10:30 | 12:08 |
| YH 729           | 2,4,6 | 11:15 | 13:15 |
| K7 828           | 1,3,5 | 12:30 | 14:50 |

| YANGON TO PUTAO |           |       |       |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flight          | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| Y5 775          | 1,2,4,5,6 | 6:00  | 7:10  |
| Y5 775          | 3,7       | 6:00  | 7:30  |
| YH 831          | 6         | 7:00  | 11:30 |
| YH 835          | 1         | 7:00  | 10:35 |
| YH 835          | 7         | 10:30 | 14:30 |
| W9 251          | 2,5       | 11:30 | 15:25 |
| Y5 234          | Daily     | 15:20 | 16:30 |

| YANGON TO CHIANG MAI |       |       |       |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flight               | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| Y5 251               | 2,4,6 | 6:15  | 8:05  |
| 7Y 305               | 1,5   | 11:00 | 12:50 |
| W9 9607              | 4,7   | 14:30 | 16:20 |

|                |             |       |       |
|----------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| 6T 352         | Daily       | 9:00  | 11:10 |
| W9 201         | Daily       | 9:25  | 10:35 |
| K7 243         | Daily       | 9:30  | 11:45 |
| YH 634         | 1,2,3,5,7   | 9:30  | 10:40 |
| YH 918         | 1,2,3,4,5,7 | 9:35  | 10:45 |
| 6T 402         | Daily       | 9:35  | 10:50 |
| YH 918         | 5           | 9:55  | 11:05 |
| K7 263         | Daily       | 10:10 | 12:25 |
| K7 245         | 1,3,5,6,7   | 10:45 | 13:00 |
| K7 267         | Daily       | 11:10 | 12:25 |
| YH 506         | 1,2,3,4,5   | 11:55 | 14:00 |
| 7Y 241         | 2           | 12:00 | 14:05 |
| YH 506         | 6           | 12:55 | 15:00 |
| 7Y 816         | 1,4,6       | 14:15 | 18:45 |
| 7Y 813         | 7           | 15:15 | 17:25 |
| 7Y 816         | 3           | 15:55 | 18:05 |
| K7 224/7Y 241  | Daily       | 16:00 | 19:00 |
| K7 829         | 1,3,5       | 16:10 | 17:25 |
| K7 823         | 2,4,7       | 16:20 | 18:35 |
| 7Y 221         | Daily       | 16:25 | 19:15 |
| YH 732         | 1,2,3,4,7   | 16:25 | 19:15 |
| K7 264         | Daily       | 16:30 | 18:45 |
| 6T 806         | 1,3,5       | 16:35 | 17:45 |
| 6T 808         | 2,4,6,7     | 16:35 | 17:45 |
| YH 738         | 3,5,7       | 16:40 | 18:50 |
| YJ 129/W9 7129 | 2,5         | 16:55 | 19:10 |
| W9 129         | 1,3,6       | 16:55 | 19:10 |
| 6T 502         | Daily       | 16:55 | 19:55 |
| YH 732         | 5,6         | 16:55 | 19:45 |



INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

| YANGON TO BANGKOK |       |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights           | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| PG 706            | Daily | 6:05  | 8:00  |
| 8M 335            | Daily | 8:40  | 10:25 |
| TG 304            | Daily | 9:50  | 11:45 |
| PG 702            | Daily | 10:30 | 12:25 |
| TG 302            | Daily | 14:50 | 16:45 |
| PG 708            | Daily | 15:20 | 17:15 |
| 8M 331            | Daily | 16:30 | 18:15 |
| PG 704            | Daily | 18:20 | 20:15 |
| Y5 237            | Daily | 19:00 | 20:50 |
| TG 306            | Daily | 19:50 | 21:45 |

| YANGON TO DON MUEANG |       |       |       |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights              | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| DD 4231              | Daily | 8:00  | 9:50  |
| FD 252               | Daily | 8:30  | 10:20 |
| FD 256               | Daily | 12:50 | 14:40 |
| FD 254               | Daily | 17:35 | 19:25 |
| FD 258               | Daily | 21:30 | 23:15 |
| DD 4239              | Daily | 21:00 | 22:55 |

| YANGON TO SINGAPORE |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| Y5 2233             | Daily | 9:45  | 14:15 |
| TR 2823             | Daily | 9:45  | 2:35  |
| SQ 997              | Daily | 10:25 | 15:10 |
| 3K 582              | Daily | 11:20 | 15:50 |
| 8M 231              | Daily | 14:30 | 18:55 |
| MI 533              | 2,4,6 | 13:45 | 20:50 |
| MI 519              | Daily | 16:40 | 21:15 |

| YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR |       |       |       |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights                | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| 8M 501                 | 1,3,5 | 7:50  | 11:50 |
| AK 505                 | Daily | 8:30  | 12:45 |
| MH 741                 | Daily | 12:15 | 16:30 |
| MH 743                 | Daily | 16:00 | 20:15 |
| AK 503                 | Daily | 19:05 | 23:20 |

| YANGON TO BEIJING |       |       |        |
|-------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Flights           | Days  | Dep   | Arr    |
| CA 716            | 1,5,7 | 23:50 | 0550+1 |

| YANGON TO GUANGZHOU |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| 8M 711              | 2,4,7 | 8:40  | 13:15 |
| CZ 3056             | 3,6   | 11:35 | 15:55 |
| CZ 3056             | 1,5   | 17:40 | 22:10 |

| YANGON TO TAIPEI |       |       |       |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights          | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| CI 7916          | Daily | 10:50 | 16:15 |

| YANGON TO KUNMING |             |       |       |
|-------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Flights           | Days        | Dep   | Arr   |
| CA 906            | Daily       | 12:30 | 15:55 |
| MU 2012           | 3           | 12:20 | 18:50 |
| MU 2032           | 1,2,4,5,6,7 | 14:50 | 18:15 |

| YANGON TO HANOI |           |       |       |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flights         | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| VN 956          | 1,3,5,6,7 | 19:10 | 21:25 |

| YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY |       |       |       |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights                    | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| VN 942                     | 2,4,7 | 14:25 | 17:05 |

| YANGON TO DOHA |       |      |       |
|----------------|-------|------|-------|
| Flights        | Days  | Dep  | Arr   |
| QR 919         | 1,4,6 | 7:55 | 11:40 |

| YANGON TO SEOUL |       |       |      |
|-----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Flights         | Days  | Dep   | Arr  |
| OZ 770          | 4,7   | 0:50  | 8:50 |
| KE 472          | Daily | 23:35 | 7:45 |

| YANGON TO HONG KONG |       |      |      |
|---------------------|-------|------|------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep  | Arr  |
| KA 251              | Daily | 1:10 | 5:25 |

| YANGON TO TOKYO |       |       |      |
|-----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Flights         | Days  | Dep   | Arr  |
| NH 914          | Daily | 22:10 | 6:45 |

| 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   |
| W9 607            | 4,7  | 14:30 | 16:20 |

| MANDALAY TO BANGKOK |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| PG 710              | Daily | 14:15 | 16:40 |

| MANDALAY TO SINGAPORE |           |       |       |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flights               | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| MI 533                | 2,4,7     | 15:55 | 20:50 |
| Y5 2233               | 1,2,4,5,6 | 7:50  | 14:15 |

| MANDALAY TO DON MUEANG |       |       |       |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights                | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| FD 245                 | Daily | 12:50 | 15:15 |

| MANDALAY TO KUNMING |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| MU 2030             | Daily | 13:50 | 16:40 |

| NAY PYI TAW TO BANGKOK |           |       |       |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flights                | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| PG 722                 | 1,2,3,4,5 | 19:45 | 22:45 |

| BANGKOK TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights           | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| TG 303            | Daily | 8:00  | 8:45  |
| PG 701            | Daily | 8:45  | 9:40  |
| Y5 238            | Daily | 21:30 | 22:20 |
| 8M 336            | Daily | 10:40 | 11:25 |
| TG 301            | Daily | 13:05 | 13:50 |
| PG 707            | Daily | 13:40 | 14:30 |
| PG 703            | Daily | 17:05 | 17:55 |
| TG 305            | Daily | 18:05 | 18:50 |
| 8M 332            | Daily | 19:20 | 20:05 |
| PG 705            | Daily | 20:45 | 21:35 |

| DON MUEANG TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights              | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| DD 4230              | Daily | 6:20  | 7:15  |
| FD 251               | Daily | 7:15  | 8:00  |
| FD 253               | Daily | 16:20 | 17:05 |
| FD 255               | Daily | 11:35 | 12:20 |
| FD 257               | Daily | 20:15 | 20:55 |
| DD 4238              | Daily | 19:30 | 20:15 |

| SINGAPORE TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| TR 2822             | Daily | 7:20  | 8:45  |
| Y5 2234             | Daily | 7:20  | 8:50  |
| SQ 998              | Daily | 7:55  | 9:20  |
| 3K 581              | Daily | 9:10  | 10:40 |
| MI 533              | 2,4,7 | 11:30 | 12:45 |
| MI 518              | Daily | 14:20 | 15:45 |
| 8M 232              | Daily | 19:55 | 21:20 |

| KUALA LUMPUR TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights                | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| AK 504                 | Daily | 6:55  | 8:00  |
| MH 740                 | Daily | 10:05 | 11:15 |
| 8M 502                 | 1,3,5 | 12:50 | 13:50 |
| MH 742                 | Daily | 13:50 | 15:00 |
| AK 502                 | Daily | 17:20 | 18:25 |

| BEIJING TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights           | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| CA 715            | 1,5,7 | 19:30 | 22:50 |

| GUANGZHOU TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| CZ 3055             | 3,6   | 8:35  | 10:35 |
| CZ 3055             | 1,5   | 14:40 | 16:40 |
| 8M 712              | 2,4,7 | 14:15 | 15:50 |

| TAIPEI TO YANGON |       |      |      |
|------------------|-------|------|------|
| Flights          | Days  | Dep  | Arr  |
| CI 7915          | Daily | 7:00 | 9:50 |

| KUNMING TO YANGON |             |       |       |
|-------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Flights           | Days        | Dep   | Arr   |
| MU 2011           | 3           | 8:25  | 11:50 |
| CA 905            | Daily       | 11:10 | 11:30 |
| MU 2031           | 1,2,4,5,6,7 | 13:30 | 14:00 |

| HANOI TO YANGON |           |       |       |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flights         | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| VN 957          | 1,3,5,6,7 | 16:40 | 18:10 |

| HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights                    | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| VN 943                     | 2,4,7 | 11:45 | 13:25 |

| DOHA TO YANGON |       |       |        |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------|
| Flights        | Days  | Dep   | Arr    |
| QR 918         | 3,5,7 | 19:45 | 0459+1 |

| SEOUL TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights         | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| KE 471          | Daily | 18:30 | 22:40 |
| OZ 769          | 3,6   | 19:30 | 23:40 |

| HONG KONG TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| KA 250              | Daily | 21:45 | 21:30 |

| TOKYO TO YANGON |       |       |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights         | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| NH 913          | Daily | 11:45 | 17:15 |

| DHAKA TO YANGON |      |       |       |
|-----------------|------|-------|-------|
| Flights         | Days | Dep   | Arr   |
| BG 060          | 4    | 16:30 | 18:45 |
| BG 060          | 1    | 18:30 | 22:55 |

| INCHEON TO YANGON |      |       |       |
|-------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Flights           | Days | Dep   | Arr   |
| W9 608            | 4,7  | 17:20 | 18:10 |

| BANGKOK TO MANDALAY |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| PG 709              | Daily | 12:05 | 13:25 |

| SINGAPORE TO MANDALAY |       |       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights               | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| Y5 2234               | Daily | 7:20  | 16:30 |
| MI 533                | 2,4,7 | 11:30 | 14:50 |

| DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY |       |       |       |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights                | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| FD 244                 | Daily | 10:55 | 12:20 |

| KUNMING TO MANDALAY |       |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Flights             | Days  | Dep   | Arr   |
| MU 2029             | Daily | 12:50 | 12:55 |

| BANGKOK TO NAY PYI TAW |           |       |       |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Flights                | Days      | Dep   | Arr   |
| PG 721                 | 1,2,3,4,5 | 17:15 | 19:15 |

| International Airlines   |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
| <b>Air Asia (FD)</b><br>Tel: 09254049991-3   |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Air Bagan Ltd.(W9)</b><br>Tel: 513322, 513422, 504888. Fax: 515102                    |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Air China (CA)</b><br>Tel: 666112, 655882   |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Air India</b><br>Tel: 253597-98, 254758. Fax 248175                                   |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Bangkok Airways (PG)</b><br>Tel: 255122, 255265. Fax: 255119                          |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BG)</b><br>Tel: 371867-68. Fax: 371869                     |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Condor (DE)</b><br>Tel: 370836-39 [ext: 303]  |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Dragonair (KA)</b><br>Tel: 255320, 255321. Fax: 255329                                |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5)</b><br>Tel: 09400446999, 09400447999<br>Fax: 8604051     |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Malaysia Airlines (MH)</b><br>Tel: 387648, 241007 [ext: 120, 121, 122]<br>Fax: 241124 |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Myanmar Airways International (8M)</b><br>Tel: 255260. Fax: 255305                    |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Nok Airline (DD)</b><br>Tel: 255050, 255021. Fax: 255051                              |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Qatar Airways (QR)</b><br>Tel: 379845, 379843, 379831. Fax: 379730                    |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Singapore Airlines (SQ) / Silk Air (MI)</b><br>Tel: 255287-9. Fax: 255290             |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Thai Airways (TG)</b><br>Tel: 255491-6. Fax: 255223                                   |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Tiger Airline (TR)</b><br>Tel: 371383, 370836-39 [ext: 303]                           |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Vietnam Airlines (VN)</b><br>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   |  |

|               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| <b>Day</b>    | <b>4 = Thursday</b> |
| 1 = Monday    | 5 = Friday          |
| 2 = Tuesday   | 6 = Saturday        |
| 3 = Wednesday | 7 = Sunday          |

Pack these nine apps

CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT



Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

CUTE COUPLE By Janet Wise

ACROSS

- 1 Fare listings
- 6 Not at all emotional
- 11 Ballerina's step apt for this puzzle
- 14 Like Bo-Peep's charges
- 15 Terra-\_\_
- 16 "Lemon" attachment
- 17 Crafty and involved plot
- 19 Sawbuck
- 20 Batteries' ends
- 21 Revealed
- 23 Decorative flaps
- 26 Mexicali men
- 27 Pass, as time
- 28 Iranian city
- 30 Legendary actor Grant
- 31 Chorus member
- 32 \_\_ Tome
- 35 Invoice abbr.
- 36 The folks
- 38 The works
- 39 French king
- 40 Buenos \_\_
- 41 Some Nintendo products
- 42 Bugs Bunny's favorite food
- 44 Mode of standing
- 46 Like some soups
- 48 Abbreviate
- 49 Knuckleheads
- 50 Passing bad checks
- 52 Biochemistry abbr.
- 53 Many are hyphenated
- 58 "Star-Spangled Banner" preposition
- 59 One-named pop star
- 60 "South Pacific" hero
- 61 " \_\_ Doubtfire"
- 62 Type of orange
- 63 Historic Alabama city

DOWN

- 1 May honoree apt for this puzzle
- 2 "Die Meistersinger" heroine

3 Actor Cage, familiarly

4 Down in the dumps

5 Fishing nets

6 A lot

7 Bag type

8 Elevator name

9 "What was \_\_ do?"

10 Capital of Australia

11 Certain guardian

12 Doe follower, in song

13 Mails

18 Piece of correspondence

22 Santa \_\_ winds

23 '70s compact

24 "Remember the \_\_!"

25 Details

26 Boutique

28 Basic belief

29 Means justifiers

31 Hawaiian tuber

33 "The Brady Bunch" housekeeper

34 Football Hall of Famer

36 Sharpshooter

37 Breezy

41 Pentagon brass exercise

43 Hill dweller

44 Bad place for a splint

45 Metric heavy weights

46 Kind of drive

47 Blade sharpener

48 Symbol of strength

50 Capital on the Dnieper

51 Not being used

54 Orthodontists' org.

55 .001 inches

56 "A Nightmare on \_\_ Street"

57 Where the buoys are

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.

Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

11/20

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.

KING TUT'S WORLD

Solution: 8 letters

Grid of letters for the Wonderword puzzle.

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11/17

Akhenaten, Amenhotep, Ankheseenamun, Ankheseempaaten, Archaeological, Architecture, Belief, Cairo, Cataract, Discoveries, Empire, Euphrates, Gods, Gold, Heir, History, King, Kiya, Nefertiti, Nile, Pharaoh, Queen, Rule, Show, Smenkhkare, Symbol, Temples, Thebes, Throne, Tiye, Tomb, Tutankhamun, Wealth, Worshipping, Yuya, Yuyu

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Sudoku solutions for the 11/20 and 11/17 puzzles.



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## The Essentials

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Tel: 222886, 222887, Egyptembassy86@gmail.com<br><b>France</b> 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 212178, 212520, email: ambaf rance. rangoun@diplomatie.fr<br><b>Germany</b> 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 548951, 548952, email: info@rangun. diplo.de<br><b>India</b> 545-547, Merchant St, Yangon. Tel: 391219, 388412, email:indiaembassy @mptmail.net.mm<br><b>Indonesia</b> 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Rd, Yangon. Tel: 254465, 254469, email: kukygn @indonesia.com. mm<br><b>Israel</b> 15, Khabauing Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il<br><b>Italy</b> 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. Tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang. mail@esteri.it<br><b>Japan</b> 100, Natmauk Rd, Yangon. Tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643<br><b>Kuwait</b> 62-B, Shwe Taung Kyar St, Bahan Tsp. Tel : 01-230-9542, 230-9543. Fax : 01-230-5836.<br><b>Laos</b> A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 222482, Fax: 227446, email: Laoembcab@mptmail.net.mm<br><b>Malaysia</b> 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 220248, 220249, email: mwkyangon@mptmail.net.mm<br><b>Nepal</b> 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. Tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb @mptmail.net.mm<br><b>Norway</b> , No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp,Yangon. Tel: 01 – 9669520 – 17 Fax – 01- 9669516<br><b>New Zealand</b> No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2306046-9 Fax : 01-2305805<br><b>Netherlands</b> No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2305805<br><b>North Korea</b> 77C, Shin Saw Pu Rd, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 512642, 510205<br><b>Pakistan</b> A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange)<br><b>Philippines</b> 50, Sayasan Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 558149-151,Email: p.e.yangon@gmail.com<br><b>Saudi Arabia</b> No.6/S, Inya Yeiktha St, 10 <sup>th</sup> Qtr, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon, Tel: (951) 652-344, 652-344, Fax: (951) 657-983<br><b>Russia</b> 38, Sagawa Rd, Yangon. Tel: 241955, 254161,<br><b>Serbia</b> No. 114-A, Inya Rd, P.O.Box No. 943, Yangon. Tel: 515282, 515283, email: serbemb @ yangon.net.mm<br><b>Singapore</b> 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 559001, email: singemb_ ygn@_sgmfa.gov.sg<br><b>South Korea</b> 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@omofat.go.kr<br><b>Sri Lanka</b> 34 Taw Win Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222812,<br><b>Switzerland</b> No 11, Kabaung Lane, 5 ½ mile, Pyay Rd, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 534754, 507089.<br><b>Thailand</b> 94 Pyay Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 226721, 226728, 226824<br><b>Turkey</b> 19AB, Kan Yeik Thar St, Mayangone Tsp,Yangon. Tel : 662992, Fax : 661365<br><b>United Kingdom</b> 80 Strand Rd, Yangon. 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Tel: 375527-32, unicef.yangon@unicef.org.<br><b>UNODC</b> 11-A, Malikha Rd., Ward 7, Mayangone. tel: 01-9666903, 9660556, 9660538, 9660398. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org<br><b>UNOPS</b> 120/0, Pyi Thu Lane, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp. Tel: 951-657281-7. Fax: 657279.<br><b>UNRC</b> 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE Tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator),<br><b>WFP</b> 5 Kan Baw Za St, Shwe Taung Kyar, (Golden Valley), Bahan Tsp. Tel : 2305971-6<br><b>WHO</b> No. 2, Pyay Rd, 7 Mile, Mayangone Tsp, Tel : 650405-6, 650416, 654386-90.<br><b>ASEAN</b> Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Tsp. Tel: 225258.<br><b>FAO</b> Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673. |  |
|---|--|

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No. 277, Bogyoke Aung San Road, Corner of 38<sup>th</sup> Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar.  
Tel : (951) 391070, 391071. Reservation@391070 (Ext) 1910, 106.  
Fax : (951) 391375. Email : hotelasiaplaza@gmail.com

**Avenue 64 Hotel**  
No. 64 (G), Kyitewine Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 09-8631392, 01 656913-9

  
**BEST WESTERN Green Hill Hotel**  
No. 12, Pho Sein Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon Tel : (95-1) 209299, 209300, 209343 Fax : (95-1) 209344 bestwestern.com/ greenhillhotelyangon.com

**Chatrium Hotel**  
40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe. tel: 544500. fax: 544400.

  
No.7A, Wingabar Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : (951) 546313, 430245. 09-731-77781-4. Fax : (01) 546313. www.cloverhotel.asia. info@cloverhotel.asia

**Clover Hotel City Center**  
No. 217, 32nd Street (Upper Block), Pabedan Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : 377720, Fax : 377722 www.clovercitycenter.asia

**Clover Hotel City Center Plus**  
No. 229, 32nd Street (Upper Block), Pabedan Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : 377975, Fax : 377974 www.clovercitycenterplus.asia

**Confort Inn**  
4, Shweli Rd, Bet: Inya Rd & U Wisara Rd, Kamaryut, tel: 525781, 526872

  
No. (356/366), Kyaikkasan Rd, Tamwe Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 542826, Fax: 545650 Email: reservation@ edenpalacehotel.com

  
M-22, Shwe Htee Housing, Thamine Station St., Near the Bayint Naung Point, Mayangone Tsp., Yangon Tel : 522763, 522744, 667557. Fax : (95-1) 652174 E-mail : grandpalace@ myanmar.com.mm

**Hotel Grand United (Chinatown)**  
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**(21<sup>st</sup> Downtown)**  
66-70, 21<sup>st</sup> 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, 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

**KH Hotel, Yangon**  
28-A, 7 Miles, Pyay Rd, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Ph: 95-1-652532, 652533

  
No.1, Wut Kyaung St, Yay Kyaw, Pazundaung Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 01-8610640, 01-202187, www.mkhotelyangon.com

**MGM Hotel** No (160), Warden Street, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. +95-1-212454-9. www. hotel-mgm.com

  
No. 205, Corner of Wadan Street & Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road, Lanmadaw Tsp, Yangon. Myanmar. Tel: (95-1) 212850 ~ 3, 229358 ~ 61, Fax: (95-1) 212854. info@myanmarpandahotel.com http://www. myanmarpandahotel.com

**PARKROYAL Yangon, Myanmar**  
33, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd, Dagon tsp. tel: 250388. fax: 252478. email: enquiry.prygn@ parkroyalhotels.com.

  
**Royal White Elephant Hotel**  
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**Savoy Hotel**  
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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.

**Windsor Hotel** No.31, Shin Saw Pu Street, Sanchaung, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 95-1-511216-8, www. hotelwindsoryangon.com

**Winner Inn**  
42, Than Lwin Rd, Bahan Tsp. Tel: 503734, 524387. email: reservation@winner innmyanmar.com

**Yuzana Hotel**  
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**Yuzana Garden Hotel**  
44, Alanpya Pagoda Rd, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Tsp, tel : 01-248944

  
No.183, 35<sup>th</sup> St; Bet; 77<sup>th</sup> & 78<sup>th</sup> Street, Mahar Aung Myae Tsp, Mandalay. Ph: 02 67 404, 67 405, 67 406, 67 407, 67 408, website:www. yuanshenghotel.com, Email: sale.yuanshenghotel @gmail.com

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**Golden Hill Towers**  
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**MiCasa Hotel Apartments**  
YANGON MYANMAR  
17, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yankin Tsp. Tel: 650933. Fax: 650960. Email : micprmi@ myanmar.com.mmwww. myanmar.micasahotel.com

**Novotel Yangon**  
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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.  
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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

**POST OFFICE**  
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.



**Marina Residence**  
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Mayangone Tsp.  
tel: 6506 51-4. fax: 650630.

**Sakura Residence**  
9, Inya Rd, Kamaryut Tsp.  
tel: 525001. fax: 525002.

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Ph: 02 72506

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80-A, Inya Rd, Kamaryut Tsp.  
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**Beauty Bar by La Source**  
Room 11004, Sedona Hotel,  
Tel : 666 900 Ext : 7167  
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**La Source Beauty Spa**  
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bet: 26-27, bet: 62-63,  
Chanaye Tharzan Tsp.  
Tel : 09-4440-24496.  
www.lasourcebeautyspa.com

**Lemon Day Spa**  
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Yangon Int'l Airport.  
• # 87/2, Crn of 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>  
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Fax : 384850 (Mdy Ph: 09-  
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www.viewsonic.com, www.  
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#### UN Position

##### THE UNITED NATIONS

World Food Programme, is seeking (1) **Programme Officer/ Deputy Head of Programme NO-C** Yangon. 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 26, November 2014.

#### Ingo Position

##### POST TITLE : Senior

##### Project Manager,

Location : Nay Pyi Taw with frequently travel to Yangon and other States/Regions Reporting to : HelpAge Assistant Country Director Responsible for: raining and Workshop Coordinator, Social Protection Officer and M&E Coordinator Other relationships: Social Protection Advisor, HelpAge Country Director, Regional Programme Manager, Deputy Country Director, Senior staff of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Social Protection Secretariat, other HelpAge project staff, Social Protection National Committee, Social Protection Sub Working Sub-Group, Poverty Research (SPRRG), INGOs, CSOs and academics Contract : one year contract (6 months probation and extendable) Introduction HelpAge International is a global network of not-for-profit organizations with a mission to work with and for disadvantaged older people worldwide to achieve a lasting improvement in the quality of their lives. HelpAge International's East Asia Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) is responsible for the regional programme, working in partnership with affiliates and partner organizations in more than 20 countries in the region. The Myanmar Country Office is responsible for managing the programme in country and is headed by a Country Director. Currently, HelpAge, in collaboration with relevant Government agencies and partners, is implementing several projects that support older people and other vulnerable groups strengthening their livelihood and food security, health and DRR capacities in Ayea wardy, Mandalay, Sagaing and Yangon Regions as well as Mon and Kayin States. In particular, the project activities focus on promoting participatory development approaches for the formation and capacity

development of Self Help Groups and inclusive Village Development Committee(for older person and other vulnerable groups). The overall aim of the programme is to reduce poverty and vulnerability in general and to facilitate older people's participation in community development. The social protection challenge of children, older person with disabilities and other groups fall under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement's (MSWRR) mandate, which has specifically requested support from HelpAge has received funding from LIFT multi-donor trust fund for a 3-year project called "Strengthening" the Ministry of Social Welfare to Fulfill Its Role in Expanding Social Protection". The project will contribute directly to LIFT's aims, particularly Output4:"Effective social protection measure that increases the incomes, enhance the livelihood opportunities or protect the livelihoods assets of chronically poor households." This project aims at supporting the conception, development and implementation of social protection policies in Myanmar. The project will be implemented in collaboration with the MSWRR, where the project's Nay Pyi Taw team will be based. Overall Purpose of the Job: The job purpose of this role is lead s c h e d u l i n g , implementation and management of the project in close consultation and collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, MSWRR. The incumbent will be responsible for project implementation, management and achievement of project goal and objectives. Duties and Responsibilities Project planning and management•Develop, in consultation with DSW social protection focal person and the Social Protection Advisor, quarterly detailed activity implementation plans, get them approved by the Country Director of HelpAge and implement project activities as per project plan. •Contribute to the regular review of the Project Strategy and

alignment with the strategic planning tools. • Guide and support the M&E coordinator to ensure that appropriate monitoring and impact assessment mechanisms and tools are being implemented. • Guide and support the Training/Workshop Coordinator and support in planning and execution of all workshops and other events of the project. • Seek formal and informal technical expertise from the Social Protection Advisor and other managers and senior colleagues in HelpAge in discussing work plans, any new initiatives, reports, and in requesting them to provide support as appropriate. • Provide technical back stopping to the partner, regularly visit the field, do process monitoring and provide feedback to partners. Ensure all the objectives along with indicators as outlined in the project proposal are met while ensuring high quality. • Compile and draft project donor reports and regular internal reports. • Take full responsibility of the respective budget assigned. Prepare monthly budgets and regularly update them, take approval as per organizational procedure and ensure quarterly budget variance remains within tolerance level. • Assist Assistant Country Director and Finance Management in reviewing the project spends and/or variance and discussing the same with DSW to have suggestions. • Line managing all staff assigned to the position, responsible for conducting probation reviews and annual performance reviews as per HelpAge HR policy. • Provide on the job training and mentoring support to the project staff. Networking and Advocacy • Establish and maintain close relationships with other organizations actively engaged in social protection in the country. • Ensure that line management is updated with latest information on key developments in the partnerships with regional/state governments. • Develop draft advocacy strategy for older people component for discussion with HelpAge senior management. • Develop effective functional

networks with other actors working for the furtherance of social protection and older person's rights and support DSW to effectively implement social protection strategy, ageing policy etc. • Represent HelpAge before the Government and its departments, partner organizations, donors and the public as well as within the wider organization as appropriate for experience sharing and learning from the project. • Liaise with government officials and be in frequent contact with ministries and relevant officials for purposes of policy advocacy with guidance from DSW. Others • As part of the DSW Social Secretariat, contribute as appropriate to discussion on policy, practice and strategy. • Participate as appropriate in assessments and responses in the case of humanitarian emergencies. Knowledge, skills and experience requirements: • A minimum of 3 years of experience in designing managing interventions for vulnerable groups in and INGO/NGO/other appropriate organizations: proven management skills. • An in-depth understanding of rights of vulnerable groups, protection and development issues pertaining to vulnerable groups including older person • At least university degree in social sciences or related discipline • Ability to manage a strong team, provide leadership and build capacity within the team. • Strong knowledge of grant and project budget management • Excellent writing skills and ability to draft high quality project reports • Experience in implementing programme interventions based on rights perspective • Knowledge of laws and policy making mechanism is highly desirable. • Strong focus on delivery of result and ability to overcome hurdles. • Experience of working with government departments; ability to work closely with government departments at various level and to foster a strong partnership management approach • Problem solving ability, diplomatic skills

and cultural and political sensitivity. • Rich experience in advocacy at local, provincial and national level by working on and with communities, NGOs and donors. • Proficient in Microsoft Package. • Strong analytical, interpersonal, communication, negotiating and networking skills. • Ability to work independently as well as in team with a commitment to high quality work. • Willingness to travel extensively, Applicants should submit their Application letter, current CV with complete contact details & 3 professional referees to HR Unit, HelpAge Myanmar, No.25A/1, New University Avenue Road, Kokkine, Saya San Ward, Bahan Tsp., Yangon or email to hr.helpagemyanmar@gmail.com. Deadline for all applications: 23rd November 2014. Only short listed candidates will be invited for interview.

#### MYANMAR Red Cross

Society is seeking (1) **Finance Officer** 1 Post in Nay Pyi Taw. (2) **Assistant Manager IT** 1 Post in Nay Pyi Taw. (3) **Programme Manager** 1 Post in Nay Pyi Taw. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Road, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrcruitment@gmail.com, Closing date for (1) & (2) 19-11-2014, for (3) 24-11-2014.

#### THE KOREA Int'l

Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Myanmar Office offers job opportunity for the posts of **Program Officer and Receptionist**. For more details, please visit to <http://www.facebook.com/koca.myanmar> and [www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals](http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals) and please contact to KOICA Myanmar Officer at 01-539572, 01-538204.

#### Local Positions

##### THE CARTER CENTER

English interpreter and field Assistant (2) posts An initial three-month period, with a possibility of extension. Interested candidates should submit a CV and brief cover letter by email to [MyanmarEOM@mail.cceom.org](mailto:MyanmarEOM@mail.cceom.org) by 21 November.

##### THE CARTER

CENTE finance and Administrative Officer (1) Post Previous accounting and administrative experience. Written and spoken English, and be proficient in Microsoft Excel. Interested candidates should submit a CV and cover letter by email to [MyanmarEOM@gmail.com](mailto:MyanmarEOM@gmail.com) or by 21 November 2014. **PARTNER Associates** is seeking (1) **Associate, Business Development** - F 2 Posts: Bachelor Degree, 2 years experience, (2) **Executive, Customer Service** - F 2 Posts: Bachelor Degree, 1 years experience, for all

posts: Good in English & computer skills. Please submit a detailed C.V. to email [nguwa.khaing@partnerassociates.com](mailto:nguwa.khaing@partnerassociates.com) (or) Partner Associates Int'l Co., Ltd: 2-B MTP Tower, No.115, Pyay Rd, Mayangone

##### THE Hotel@Tharabar

Gate, Old Bagan is seeking **HR Manager** 1 post: Spoken & written English, computer knowledge, leadership skills. 3 years experience in similar position. Salary according to experience. Position based in Bagan. Please send CV with 1 recent photo, labour registration card relevant certificates and testimonies to 14, Rm 2H, No.22/24, Sa Mon St, Natwarat Condo, Dagon Tsp, Yangon or mail to: [gm@tharabargate.com](mailto:gm@tharabargate.com). 27 November, 2014.

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## XALAPA

## Cuban athlete defects while in Mexico

A CUBAN athlete due to take part in the Central American and Caribbean Games in Mexico has deserted and is headed to the United States, Mexican and Cuban officials said last week.

Sandra Mustalier, 28, was a table tennis player with the Cuban team at the games, which opened on November 14 in the eastern city of Veracruz.

"Do not look for me, I am fine. I wish everyone good luck," Mustalier wrote on her Facebook page, according to Carlos Padilla, president of the Mexican Olympic Committee.

He said Cuban athletes often desert their delegations at international competitions to try to avoid returning home.

"It is part of what the essence of each individual's freedom requires," Padilla said.

Mustalier's decision became apparent when she failed to show up November 13 to register for the competition. "She preferred to travel to the United States rather than compete," said Maria Luisa Fernandez, the Cuban consul general in Veracruz.

The games bring together nearly 8000 athletes from 31 countries and run through November 30.

The Cuban delegation was large, with about 500 athletes competing in 34 events.

Last year Cuba eliminated a 50-year-old migration rule that forced Cubans to obtain a permit if they wanted to travel abroad.

The reform was welcomed but air fares are exorbitantly expensive for most Cubans and it is hard to get entry visas into some countries. — AFP

## DAMASCUS

## For fans, a respite from civil war as car racing returns to Syrian streets

AS cars roar around a track on the outskirts of Damascus, motorsport fans for a moment forget the misery of Syria's civil war and revel in the thrill of the race.

For the first time since Syria's devastating conflict broke out in March 2011, the capital's regular "drift racing" championship has returned this autumn.

For the fans, and for drivers like Zaher Dahkul, the races offer a rare chance to switch off from the violence.

"The most beautiful thing about this sport is that when you put on your helmet and fasten your seat-belt, you can just forget about all the country's problems," said Dahkul, a championship hopeful who has won several local and international prizes.

Last organised in 2010, the races were once a regional draw, attracting drivers and hundreds of fans from across Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

In the past month, drift racers have brought the championship back to life on Fridays, with the number of contestants rising steadily.

Brought to wider attention by *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* - the 2006 entry in the popular Hollywood racing film franchise - "drifting" involves drivers forcing their cars to slide sideways during turns and makes for spectacular races.

Some of the drivers are professionals, but many are amateurs, paying to enter the race and using their regular vehicles.

Close to the Damascus airport road, the privately owned Zaman al-

Khair (Good Times) racing circuit was until recently closed by fighting between rebel forces and President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

But the area around the airport fell squarely back under government control in recent weeks and now the races and their fans have returned.

"Everyone is happy that the races are back ... Now that the place is safe, the crowds are growing every time," 18-year-old university student Mohammad al-Afghani told AFP, excitedly watching a recent race despite the rain.

Syria's war has left more than 195,000 people dead, forced millions

from their homes and thrown more than half the population into poverty.

Afghani said he would love to join the race with his own vehicle but he cannot afford the 3000 Syrian pound (US\$15) entry fee.

"I don't have the resources. I barely have enough to support myself," he said.

Organisers were still able to attract 20 contestants to a recent race, which they described as "an amazing turnout".

One of the organisers, Khaled al-Atassi, said the Syrian automobile club he once headed started organising drifting championships "because of their popularity, and because of

their relatively low cost in comparison to other car races".

Atassi said he hopes the competition will be a stepping stone to bringing back other, bigger races, like the yearly Discover Syria rally that was launched in 2003 but interrupted when the war began.

Usan, a 26-year-old law student and fan, said she sees in the return of drift racing a sign that Syria will eventually get back on its feet.

"Things are getting better," she told AFP, waiting for the race to begin.

"We may not be able to get back our old lives immediately, but we will make it, step by step." — AFP



## IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

Hector Santiago of the California Angels learns to drink Japanese green tea from a geisha girl during a ceremony in Tokyo on November 14, 2014. Major League Baseball (MLB) all-stars are in Tokyo to play against Japanese all-star players. — AFP

## NEW YORK

## NBA commish calls for legal gambling

NBA commissioner Adam Silver called for changes to US laws that ban gambling on sports events in most states last week, saying American attitudes have changed regarding such betting.

Silver, who replaced David Stern as the NBA's boss last February, expressed his opinions in an editorial posted November 13 on the *New York Times* website even as a federal judge is set to rule next week on neighbouring New Jersey's push for Las Vegas-style gambling on sports at struggling casinos and racing tracks.

Under a 1992 law, state-backed US sports betting on single games is

allowed only in Nevada.

To help make his case, Silver cited the gambling done on NBA games beyond US borders as global interest in the league has grown over the past two decades.

"Outside of the United States, sports betting and other forms of gambling are popular, widely legal and subject to regulation," Silver wrote. "In England, for example, a sports bet can be placed on a smartphone, at a stadium kiosk or even using a television remote control.

"In light of these domestic and global trends, the laws on sports betting should be changed. Congress should adopt a federal framework that

allows states to authorize betting on professional sports, subject to strict regulatory requirements and technological safeguards."

Among Silver's requirements would be mandatory monitoring and reporting of unusual betting-line movements, a licensing protocol to ensure legitimate betting operators, minimum-age verification measures and geographical blocking technology so betting is available only where it is legal.

A major issue regarding gambling and sports leagues has been to protect the integrity of games and performances from any notion of match fixing.

The NBA was hit with a betting

scandal in 2007 involving referee Tim Donaghy, who was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to two charges related to a federal investigation on whether or not he made calls over his final two seasons that influenced the point spreads in certain games to aid gamblers.

The scandal prompted Stern to change the way officials are assigned to games and tighten background checks on NBA referees.

Silver's support of gambling comes with stress that no compromises can be made with regard to the integrity of game results.

"Let me be clear: Any new ap-

proach must ensure the integrity of the game," Silver said. "One of my most important responsibilities as commissioner of the NBA is to protect the integrity of professional basketball and preserve public confidence in the league and our sport. I oppose any course of action that would compromise these objectives.

"But I believe that sports betting should be brought out of the underground and into the sunlight where it can be appropriately monitored and regulated."

Last week, the NBA signed an exclusive four-year deal with FanDuel, a sports fantasy draft league business. — AFP

## SYDNEY

## Australia defends World Cup bid

FOOTBALL Federation Australia said last week that it was seeking further information from FIFA's ethics committee over claims Australia used taxpayer money to buy votes for its 2022 World Cup bid.

A FIFA investigation into Qatar's successful bid for the 2022 World Cup cleared the host of any wrongdoing, but accused Australia of breaking ethics rules, trying to buy votes and then attempting a cover-up.

Australia spent almost Aus\$46 million (US\$40 million) on its rival bid to host the event but received just one vote.

"FFA says it will seek advice from the FIFA Ethics Committee on the next steps in the process," Australia's top football body said in a statement.

"The Australian Bid team cooperated fully with the inquiry and provided transparency on the conduct of the [World Cup] bid."

The report by FIFA's Ethics Committee found Australia's team had tried to divert government funds intended for development projects in Africa "towards initiatives in countries with ties to FIFA executive committee members with the intention to advance its bid."

FFA was also accused of making "certain payments" to the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF).

"The Australia 2022 bid team appears to have reached the conclusion to provide financial support

under the title '(football) development projects' preferably in some areas home to FIFA executive committee members," a summary of the report said.

"The FFA was well aware of the ramifications such a pattern of conduct might imply."

The long-awaited report into the race for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups was thrown into turmoil on November 13 when its own investigator complained that a summary misrepresented his conclusions.

Football's world governing body had earlier cleared Qatar and Russia of corruption and ruled out a re-vote for the tournaments despite widespread allegations of wrongdoing. — AFP

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Mr. Aung Thet Lwin, Head of Sales

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Mr. Chin Kee Minn, MD, CCAM (Myanmar)



Yangon and the type of available fuel only suitable type of engines like the Euro4 which can accept Octane 95 are imported. Even the same model & year car imported from a third-party source will have problems, as they are not tailored for Myanmar.

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# Sport

## Drag racing returns to Damascus

SPORT 70

STAMS

# A ski-champ 'factory'

**M**ANY of the world's top skiers have walked its halls and at this year's Olympics, its alumni swept 12 medals. For nearly half a century the ski high school in Stams, Austria has been churning out champions like a factory.

The tiny village, set in a green Tyrolean valley below snowy peaks, launched the careers of top skiing names from Stephan Eberharter to Anita Wachter or Toni Innauer, and more recently Gregor Schlierenzauer, Marlies Schild and Felix Gottwald.

Not just alpine skiers but budding ski jumpers, snowboarders, biathletes and cross-country skiers now come here in the hope of emulating their idols.

But the road to glory is a tough one.

Six-day weeks from the age of 14, a tough entrance exam and a tight schedule with six hours of class every morning followed by afternoon training - in the gym or on the slope - more studying in the evening and weekend races: Attending this school is no walk in the park.

For hungry youngsters dreaming of world titles and Olympic gold, it's nevertheless worth it.

"I'd rather train than go to school, that's why I'm here ... It's a bit stressful sometimes, but it's part of it," ski jumper Johanna Haselwanter, 15, told AFP.

Stams also affords a glimpse at the pressure they'll face later on.

"[The level] is very high. You always have to give everything in races and in training, because there are so many who are just as strong as you," said alpine skier Pascal Fritz, 17, who hopes to make the Austrian ski team after he graduates this year.

"A lot is expected of these students. They have a really tight schedule. They have little free time when they're in school. But they learn to deal with it," said snowboarding coach Martin Kraetschmer.

In the dorm rooms - four boys or two girls to a room - boot bags and



Students prepare equipment at the elite Austrian ski school in Stams. Photo: AFP

sports holdalls are piled high on top of cupboards and race suits hang from every available hook.

About 60 teachers and 27 trainers - many with links to the Austrian ski team - cater to the 170-180 students who spend four or five years here depending on whether they do a high school diploma or choose the business college (Handelsschule) option.

Stams is just one of five specialised ski schools in Austria, but it is one of the most successful.

"I think the recipe for our success is our consistency. The whole team is behind the program, from the academic side and the sports side," said men's alpine ski coach Thomas Reiter, himself a former pupil.

In the winter, when students are busy training and racing - some already compete at FIS (International Ski Federation) or Europa Cup level

- there are no school tests. Teachers then catch up at the end of the season, when competitions wind down.

These days the school draws not just Austrians, but students from Italy, Liechtenstein or Switzerland, including in recent years World Cup skiers Sandro Viletta and Tina Weirather.

"They enrich the program ... we do look during the selection that they push our Austrian students and compete at the same level as them. They spur each other on," said Reiter.

Keegan Sharp, 17, chose Stams over the many top ski academies in North America, hoping to build on his skills with a stint in the "powerhouse nation of skiing", despite already finishing high school in Canada and now facing classes in German.

"Clearly, this school has been

doing something right for a number of years... with all the great racers it's produced," said the Banff, Alberta native.

Enrolling here doesn't come cheap at 8,150 euros (US\$6600) per year on top of pricey equipment - Sharp said he brought 10 pairs of skis with him along with boots, poles and race suits.

But it's still much less than it would be in other countries and many students have sponsors who provide equipment.

After all this, only one in 10 graduates will become a competitive athlete. But it won't stop them from trying.

"It's a long road [to Olympic gold] but I have dreams, I have a goal, and I'm working hard," said Fritz.

"If I don't get injured, it can definitely happen." - AFP

## International chess tournament coming in November

KYAW ZIN HLAING

kyawzinhlaing.mcm@gmail.com

YANGON will host its second international chess competition this November at the city's Central Hotel from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>.

This event is being organized by Myanmar Chess Federation with support from the Kasparov Chess Foundation Asia-Pacific.

In all, 38 international chess players will compete against 70 local players for a chance to win the first prize.

U Maung Maung Lwin, president of the Chess Federation, said the tournament is meant to train and encourage a new generation of local chess masters.

While the last international competition was in 2011, U Maung Maung Lwin said that the federation hopes that the coming competition will be the beginning of an annual tradition.

Awards include US\$3000 for the overall winner and \$1600 for the first runner-up. The cash prizes descend in value from there, but the 12<sup>th</sup> place finisher will still walk away with \$200.

According to U Maung Maung Lwin, the federation decided to increase the prize values to attract more top-shelf international players.

The games will proceed according to the Swiss system, wherein players will have 30 seconds to make each move.



Players clash at the 2011 competition.

Photo: Staff

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