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Parties fail to meet UEC deadline on white cards

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BARELY 10 parties have informed the Union Election Commission of their compliance with a recent law change that bans temporary ID card holders from being party members, according to a commission official.

Myanmar's 65 registered parties had been given until January 9 to comply with the change to the Political Parties Registration Law, which was signed by President U Thein Sein on September 30, four days after it was approved by parliament.

In November, the commission gave parties two months to remove members who fail to meet the criteria and submit updated membership lists.

However, commission deputy director general U Hla Maung Cho said on January 8 that few have complied with the order to remove holders of temporary IDs, which are commonly referred to as white cards.

"About 10 parties have informed us that they have removed white-card-holding members," he said.

U Hla Maung Cho confirmed that the National League for Democracy had requested and been granted an extra month to comply.

"They were the only party to request an extension," he said.

MORE ON NEWS 3



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PHOTO: YU YU

Pressure heats up on government over Letpadaung

Activists descended on the town of Monywa last week for a demonstration against the nearby Letpadaung copper mine, following the recent killing of a local resident by police. A government committee set up to implement the findings of the Letpadaung investigation commission has accused activists of inciting violence at the mine site, a charge they deny.

NLD denies report on Daw Suu speaker role

The National League for Democracy leader has not settled for a post-election position as speaker of parliament rather than fighting for the presidency, a senior member says. NEWS 3

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Watering the dry zone

Programs to improve water supply in Myanmar's semi-arid Central Dry Zone are changing the lives of residents.

BUSINESS 24

MIC clarifies oil and gas tax rate confusion

The investment commission has confirmed income tax of 25 percent on all projects, following confusion as to whether it should instead be 35pc.



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THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

Letpadaung: the land lost and the opportunity cost

In the wake of the December 22 shooting death of a 56-year-old peasant farmer at the Letpadaung copper mine site in Monywa, civil society and activists have been rather vocal in criticising the project.

An article on the matter appeared in the *Global New Light of Myanmar* on January 6, entitled "Committee for implementing [sic] Latpadaungtaung copper mine investigation report calls on people for being aware of instigations to prevent undesirable accidents."

To be clear here, 'instigations' refers to an unarmed (or, in some cases, crudely armed) collective of activists and farmers protesting land confiscation with a sit-in. Daw Khin Win demonstrating

against the confiscation of her land getting shot in the head by security forces is an 'undesirable accident'.

However, as with any such event, it's important to look to both sides. The Wanbao Myanmar PR team sprung into action, posting a statement voicing their sadness at this unfortunate turn of events.

"Yesterday, we lost a member of the extended Letpadaung family, Daw Khin Win," they wrote, somewhat audaciously.

The company uploaded photos on their website of their staff members injured by the rock-throwing protestors. One man appeared to have suffered grazes on his face. Another lifted his trouser leg to reveal a trickle of blood down his shin. There was also a picture of a car that will probably need its windscreen replaced. The company sought to rebut rumours that had spread online about Wanbao staff and Chinese

the hardships arising from the social conflicts during the process of democratization in Myanmar. Objectively, this is unavoidable," their website reads.

But, the company remains pragmatic and is united with the Myanmar authorities in focusing on the job opportunities and prosperity the project will afford the land's former residents. *(See image left)*

Not attending

Reasons cited in *Global New Light of Myanmar* for the KIA, TNLA, KNPP and CNF rebuffing the Union Minister's invitation to Independence Day Grand Military Review:

- lack of time
- long distances
- their leaders were already on trips

In brief:

Rakhine protestors dish out Korea advice to UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Myanmar, recommending that she focus on "harmonising" her "own" divided country. Observers say it's hard to decide which was the dumber idea: creating a bus lane on Anawratha Rd with no regard for the fact people still need to drive in and out of the side streets, or making Yaw Min Gyi St a one-way despite the fact it was already a "total nightmare" with the school dropoff zone on Nawaday.

Next week:

Expat woman moans about sprained ankle, seems hell-bent on making her inappropriate choice of footwear on already-treacherous footpaths everyone else's problem

Woman checks phone after five minute meeting to find she has received four text messages, all of which are unwanted data usage updates from Telenor

"If anything it has been Wanbao staff and contractors who have been at the receiving end of intimidation and beatings by activists and extremists as they carry out their work"

Wanbao Myanmar

- From statement on website

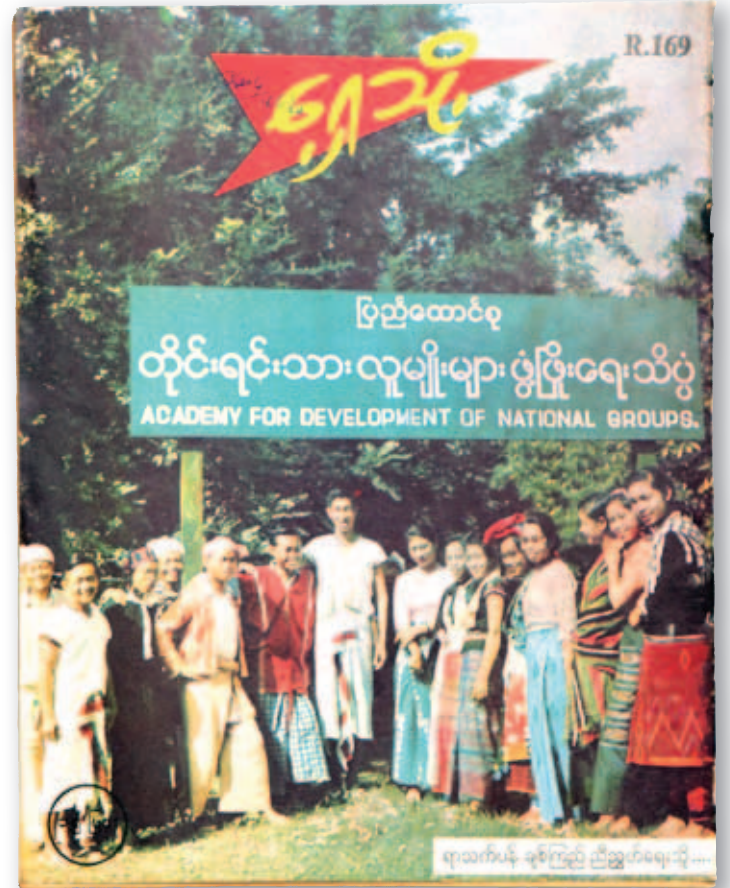
private security attacking villagers.

In fairness to Wanbao, this whole project must be a bit of a headache by this stage, what with the protests and the security forces using white phosphorous to disperse demonstrators and now this undesirable accident - not to mention the delays.

"In retrospect to the recent happenings as well as two years of delays in the construction of the Letpadaung copper project, Myanmar Wanbao, as one of the biggest foreign investors in Myanmar, has experienced

Once was Burma...

From 'The Myanmar Times' archives



The Academy for Development of National Groups graces the cover of the Ne Win-era socialist publication *Forward Magazine*, 1968.



Up to 10 acres lost: 1 job per household



Over 20 acres: 3 jobs per household



Up to 20 acres lost: 2 jobs per household

From the Wanbao website: figures on land lost vs job opportunities gained.



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IN PICTURES

PHOTO: AUNG HTAY HLAING

Women police officers take part in a military parade to mark Independence Day on January 4. The ceremony was the first time a civilian leader has overseen a military parade for Independence Day since the 1950s, according to the government.

NLD says Daw Suu has not settled for speaker

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A SENIOR National League for Democracy official has rejected a report that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has given up on the presidency and will instead settle for a speaker role in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The undated report was published on the website of the Myanmar-language *Trade Times* weekly last week and cited in international media. The report quoted U Aung Shin, a “confidante” of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as saying that there was not enough time to amend the constitution to make her eligible for the presidency but she “would be happy with being the head of the parliament”.

But NLD central executive committee member U Tun Tun Hein said no decision had been made on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s possible post-election role or whether the party would even take part in the vote.

“What U Aung Shin said about Daw Suu is perhaps his personal opinion. We have not made any decision yet,” U Tun Tun Hain said.

He said the NLD would decide only at mid-year whether it intended to participate in the general election, which the Union Election Commission says will be held in late October or early November.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi started the swirl of doubt late last year when she disclosed that the party had not yet decided to take part in the election.

U Tun Tun Hein said the party would make its decision based on how the political situation develops over the coming months.

“Now is about six months too soon to say. Whether we run in the general election or not will depend on the people’s desire. It will depend on the situation of the political playing field over the next six months,” said U Tun Tun Hein, who added that the party wanted to avoid announcing a decision now, only to change it in light of future developments.

The UEC has said it will announce the election date 90 days in advance of the poll. Campaigning guidelines released last year restricted parties to just 30 days of campaigning, but this has been extended to 60 days following widespread criticism.

CONTINUED FROM NEWS 1

Scores of political parties flout white card deadline

Fewer than one-fifth of registered parties had given the election commission updated member lists by deadline

U Hla Maung Cho refused to give the exact number or the names of the parties that had sent updated lists, or how many members they had removed.

All parties are required to send updated member lists regardless of whether they have removed members.

Under the previous version of the law, all citizens and “temporary certificate holders” were allowed to start or join a political party. The amendment, however, enables only full citizens to be central executive committee members – of which a party must have 15 – and bars temporary citizens from holding party membership.

After receiving updated member lists, the commission will verify them with the Immigration Department.

The UEC has previously warned that parties found to have or accept non-citizens as members could be abolished. However, it remains unclear what action parties that do not comply will face.

“We have not received any instruction from our superiors as to what we should do about those parties that did not inform us whether they changed their membership,” U Hla Maung Cho said.

In October, commission chair U Tin Aye said the UEC would investigate any complaints it receives of parties having a non-citizen among their ranks.

As *The Myanmar Times* has previously reported, the change will most affect the three parties formed by politicians who identify as Rohingya. Most hold temporary identification documents rather than the Citizenship Scrutiny Cards issued to citizens.

A spokesperson for one of these groups, the National Development and Peace Party, described the amendments as “unfair” but said the party had sent its updated membership list to the UEC last month.

“I believe this rule change is unfair and just targets [Rohingya] but we followed the law because we respect the law,” said Mohammad Salim.

Mohammad Salim was one of 1200 members of the NDPP who was forced to quit the party, as he does not hold a valid identity card.

“But many of those who hold white cards would be eligible for citizenship if the government implemented the 1982 Citizenship Law correctly. Now, they are trying to ban our participation in politics,” he said.

NLD spokesperson U Nyan Win said the party was in the process of complying with the order.

“We have instructed the village and township levels to make sure that our membership is in accordance with the amended law but we haven’t got [the members lists] back from them,” he

said. “They’re still working on [it] ... so we asked the UEC for more time ... and they agreed.”

U Thar Win, the Union Solidarity and Development Party’s Yangon Region general secretary, said the party had removed its white-card holders.

‘As an MP I have to respect the law, but personally I represent my people, and my people are feeling so bad.’

U Shwe Maung
Rohingya MP

He said the regional office had sent its updated lists to headquarters but he was unsure whether this had been forwarded to the election commission.

The process is also under way in northern Rakhine State, where the majority of Myanmar’s estimated 850,000 white-card holders live.

U Shwe Maung, the USDP MP

for Buthidaung and a self-described Rohingya, said that many white card-holding USDP members in his constituency feel betrayed by the new guidelines. “As an MP I have to respect the law, but personally I represent my people, and my people are feeling so bad,” he said.

He said he plans to submit a draft bill during the coming session of parliament, which begins on January 19, that would create a streamlined process for white-card holders to apply for citizenship. This would in turn allow them to participate in party activities in the coming national elections, he said.

“If this solution cannot be implemented before the election it will be a loss of human rights for my people.”

However, the political winds appear to be blowing against political rights for Rohingya, who are officially referred to as Bengalis by the government.

The amendment was proposed by the Rakhine National Party. Leader U Aye Maung said last week the RNP will “definitely be watching” whether other parties comply with the changes.

The RNP is also pushing for an amendment to electoral laws that would ban white-card holders from voting. – *Additional reporting by Bill O’Toole*

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Ethnic armed groups split over nationwide ceasefire proposal

KNU leads bloc in favour of February 12 signing, but KIO and NCCT leader Naing Han Thar remain unconvinced

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MOMENTUM may be gathering for a decision on the proposal of President U Thein Sein to sign the national ceasefire agreement on Union Day, February 12, even as some ethnic groups complain of being pressured – and say underlying problems have yet to be resolved.

The date was initially proposed last month by some leaders of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), which has been negotiating with the government on behalf of 16 armed ethnic groups – many of which have been in conflict with the central government for decades.

However, the proposal has created a rift within the NCCT, with the Karen National Union leading a bloc that wants to sign on February 12 and the Kachin Independence Organisation and NCCT leader Naing Han Thar reluctant to commit.

NCCT deputy leader Padoh Saw Kwe Htoo Win of the Karen National Union said last week he favours a Union Day deal. “We have reached agreement on almost all points. Signing would make that Union Day a historic day for our country. Both sides are trying to achieve that.”

But others say they the announcement of the Union day plan is an attempt to pressure them to sign on, and say there are issues – particularly on security sector reform – that need to be resolved before the signing can take place.

“I can’t say whether we will sign in February. It depends on our next meeting,” said U Naing Han Thar, leader of the NCCT. “The remaining points are military issues, so we cannot say how the Tatmadaw will respond.”

The issue has clearly divided the ethnic armed groups but so far none have floated the idea of signing the ceasefire individually, rather than as a bloc.

Senior Rakhine National Party official U Aye Thar Aung said ethnic groups should resist splitting over the issue, adding that firm commitments from the government are needed to ensure the peace is durable.

“It’s easy to sign on Union Day ... but signing the ceasefire without getting strong commitments could disrupt the whole peace process,” he



Karen National Union leader Mutu Say Poe speaks at a Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team conference in Laiza, Kachin State, in July 2014. Photo: Zarni Phyo

‘We believe political problems cannot be solved sitting around a table in Nay Pyi Taw and drinking coffee.’

La Nan
Kachin Independence Organisation

said. “We can clearly see two groups within the NCCT – some are willing to sign and others not. But I believe they should not sign on an individual basis – it should be all-inclusive.”

President U Thein Sein and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing have pledged to make every effort to secure genuine peace with the ethnic groups. At the Independence Day celebrations in Nay Pyi Taw earlier this month, 12 of the groups responded to an invitation from the president to

attend a military parade, after which the idea of a Union Day agreement was discussed further.

But four major groups – the KIO, the Ta’ang National Liberation Army, the Karenni National Progressive Party and the Chin National Front – did not accept the government’s invitation (see related story right).

The president told the ethnic groups that signing an accord would open the way to political dialogue.

The Union Peace Working Committee (UPWC) and the NCCT have been discussing a ceasefire since 2013. A proposed signing date of last October has already come and gone without agreement. But after further talks in December, both sides seemed closer to an accord.

“Out of 103 points, eight remain to be discussed. If we can get agreement on these points, it could be possible to sign a nationwide ceasefire deal on Union Day,” said the head of the government peace team, U Aung Min, on January 5.

At the centre of resistance stands the KIO, whose leaders have rejected offers to come to Nay Pyi Taw for talks with President U Thein Sein. One Nay

Pyi Taw source, who requested anonymity, said, “The main problem is the lack of trust. But if KNU leaders can come to Nay Pyi Taw and build good relations with the government, why is the Kachin Independence Organisation afraid of coming?”

But KIO spokesperson La Nan told *The Myanmar Times* said the group would only visit the capital once trust had been built.

“We believe political problems cannot be solved sitting around a table in Nay Pyi Taw and drinking coffee. Political problems can be solved only through political means,” he said.

He said his organisation would be happy to sign on the basis of genuine agreement and its commitment to the peace process was evident through its participation in the NCCT. “We’re accused of being stubborn. But if the NCCT told us they had a strong commitment from the government, we would accept it.”

U La Nan said the KIA wanted an agreement with the Tatmadaw to avoid further attacks like the one on a military academy near Laiza on November 19 that left 23 people dead. “We’ve had no reply yet to our request for a meeting,” he said, but confirmed that the KIO would attend talks scheduled for later this month.

Neither the NCCT nor the government’s negotiating team have confirmed a date for the talks.

President pushes Union Day agreement

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SEIZING the opportunity presented by Independence Day, President U Thein Sein discussed with the leaders of 12 ethnic armed groups the key questions of participation in the elections later this year and the signing of a nationwide ceasefire agreement.

The talks were held at Nay Pyi Taw’s International Convention Centre on January 5, a day after the leaders attended a military parade near the president’s residence.

A subsequent statement by the government said the president had urged the groups to sign the ceasefire agreement on Union Day, February 12, as well as to cooperate in the preparation for free and fair elections in October-November.

The president said the groups’ presence at the ceremony was a sign of their confidence in the government. A total of 16 groups were invited, but four chose not to attend, including the Kachin Independence Organisation, the Ta’ang National Liberation Army, the Karenni National Progressive Party and the Chin National Front.

U Thein Sein said that in order to stop the 60-year-long internal conflict, a mechanism should be formed to monitor the situation and help prevent skirmishes – otherwise, peace negotiations could go into reverse.

He told the ethnic representatives that his government would move as quickly as possible to meet the needs of ethnic minorities once the agreement was signed, including by promoting socio-economic development in the regions.

U Khun Okker, chair of the Pa-O National Liberation Organisation, who attended the ceremony, described the meeting as “remarkable and significant”.

Daw Saw Mya Yarzar Lin, an executive committee member of the Arakan Liberation Party, agreed that it was necessary to sign the ceasefire agreement once the text had been agreed, and the signing on Union Day would have special significance. “The president expressed the wish to build a stronger Union of Myanmar with all ethnic peoples,” she told reporters. – *Translation by Thiri Min Htun*

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Members of the Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability protest in Monywa on January 5. Photo: Yu Yu



Activists travel to Monywa for protest

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ACTIVISTS from across the country travelled to Sagaing Region last week to support hundreds of farmers protesting over land seizures at the Letpadaung copper mine and the killing by police of a local land owner.

About 60 members of the Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability travelled from five regions to back marches through the streets of Monywa, 136 kilometres (85 miles) northeast of Mandalay, and join the demonstrations on January 5 and 6, MATA leaders said.

The protests came after staff from the company developing the mine began to fence off about 3000 acres of land around the site in late December. Farmers seeking to prevent the fence being erected on December 22 were shot at by police, leaving one 56-year-old woman, Daw Khin Win, dead. The government says nine other demonstrators were injured, along with two police.

Members of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society and other activists joined last week's demonstrations. Also present were a number of monks, including at least one who bore severe scars he said were inflicted by police during a November 2012 raid on a protest camp. Police have been accused of using white phosphorous in the raid, leaving demonstrators with burns.

"The main issues are the current

seizures at the copper mine and the dead woman. [The activists] have come here not just for the woman's case, but also for the resources of the whole country and to protect people affected by land grabbing," said U Tun Myint Aung of 88 Generation.

Around 250 people gathered for the demonstration in central Monywa on the afternoon of January 5, calling for the right to speak out against land confiscations and demanding justice for Daw Khin Win's death.

'[Activists] have come here ... to protect people affected by land grabbing.'

U Tun Myint Aung
88 Generation Peace and Open Society

Dozens of protestors wearing MATA t-shirts and carrying banners marched alongside farmers who had travelled from around the Letpadaung site for the event. Unlike the December 22 protests, which witnesses said were attended by several hundred police officers, there was little police presence for the march, which had been given official

permission.

Following the January 5 protest, representatives from the activist groups then travelled to the local state hospital to meet some of those who had received gunshot wounds during the December 22 protest, before going on to offer support to relatives and neighbours of the dead woman at her family home.

Wong Aung of the Shwe Gas Movement said he travelled to Monywa for the protest because he believed it was important that those at Letpadaung knew "they had the support" of people across Myanmar.

Other MATA members said they had made a 13-hour trip from Shan State to offer their backing to the Letpadaung farmers.

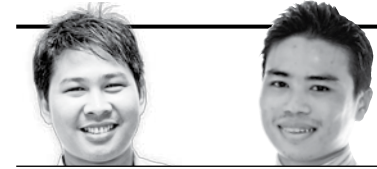
Ma Win Khine, 30, the elder daughter of Daw Khin Win, said she had not received a proper explanation from the authorities regarding the circumstances of her mother's death, and welcomed the support of MATA members. "I feel grateful to this group of people and really happy that they came," she said.

She added that even if her mother had not been killed and other villagers injured, she would still want the government to shut down the mining project which she said was "exploiting the life of the people and the environment".

On January 6 a larger group of over 300 people, mostly farmers, staged another demonstration in Monywa.

Pressure builds on Letpadaung committee

Report implementation committee launches attack on activists it says are stoking violence "behind the curtain"



WA LONE **PYAE THET PHYTO**

ACTIVISTS have attacked a parliamentary report that criticises them for whipping up hostility among local villagers to the Letpadaung copper mine project. Clashes over the project, which has been accused of grabbing farmland and damaging the environment, have left at least one person dead and scores injured in recent years.

Violence broke out again on December 22, when villager Daw Khin Win was killed and several demonstrators wounded during a further protest at the copper mine as police opened fire on demonstrators. The protest had been launched to stop the mining company from building a fence in territory disputed with local farmers.

The killing prompted hundreds of people to demonstrate in Yangon and Mandalay outside the Chinese embassy and consulate, while further demonstrations took place in Monywa last week (**see related story left**).

At the peak of the unrest, National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi criticised the government for failing to properly implement the findings of the commission she headed in 2013.

However, the Letpadaung Report Implementation Committee rejected the accusations, saying in a January 6 report that activists were to blame for inciting violence "behind the curtain".

"We have already charged those who are trying to stimulate the conflict," U Tin Myint, secretary of the implementing committee, told reporters on January 8 at the President's Office.

He also defended the committee's work, saying that 29 of 42 recommendations had already been implemented and others were in process. "We carried out the commission's recommendations as well as we could, if not 100 percent."

However, he added that the committee would take into account criticisms of the project provided they are voiced according to the law.

"We will listen with respect to the demands of local people and try to fulfill them as much as we can so there is no repeat of this violence," he said.

Letpadaung residents and activists alike rejected the committee's accusations, claiming the root problem is a lack of transparency about the mine project and the implementation committee's activities.

U Tun Myint Aung from the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society said the government should invite stakeholders for discussions to find a solution to the conflict rather than blame others for the unrest.

"The committee's accusations are ridiculous. It is the same kind of accusation that we have always heard from the military government."

Activists also blamed the refusal of the mine's investors to negotiate the amount of compensation.

"The main point is the company's lack of willingness to negotiate," said U Chit Khin, a Monywa resident who leads the Save Letpadaung Mountain Committee.

The copper mine project is a joint project between army-owned Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL) and Chinese company Wanbao, a subsidiary of arms manufacturer Norinco.

Wanbao spokesperson Dong Yunfei last week called for immediate government action against the activists who he said had egged the villagers on. "Every foreign investment in this country has faced criticism, whether it is from Japan, Thailand or China. It's important to avoid inflaming the situation for political gain," he said.

But Daw Khin San Hlaing, an NLD MP who sat on the Letpadaung Investigation Commission, said the company was responsible for the unrest. She also called for the immediate dissolution of the implementing committee.

"The problems at Letpadaung will not be resolved as long as Wanbao makes no effort to win trust locally and the government can offer no solutions," she said.

The implementation committee says adequate compensation was paid for the 6784 acres of land confiscated, with more than K10 billion paid out to the former owners.

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New rights envoy faces Rakhine fury

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MORE than 200 Rakhine waited hours at Sittwe Airport last week to protest the arrival of the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights, who they have accused of ignoring their concerns over the state's Muslim population.

About 500 people gathered on the afternoon of January 8 for envoy Yanghee Lee, but some left because her flight was delayed and did not arrive until 6pm.

After her arrival, Ms Lee visited camps in Sittwe and Myebon township that are home to some of the 139,000 people - mostly Muslim - who have been displaced by outbreaks of communal violence since 2012.

The protesters said they were angry at sections of Ms Lee's report to the UN General Assembly in October 2014 in which she criticized the lack of rights granted to the Rohingya, who are officially referred to as Bengalis and mostly denied citizenship.

She also recommended they be given access to full citizenship on an equal basis and the government recognise them by their preferred name.

"Everything she reported to the UN was wrong. She doesn't know the real situation here," said U Oo Thar Pwint, a member of the Rakhine State Emergency Coordination Center (ECC), which is coordinating relief activities in the state.

"After she visits [Rakhine State], the situation will only get worse. She

didn't listen to our [Rakhine] voices and always just talks about Bengalis."

Further angering the Rakhine demonstrators, the UN General Assembly in December approved a resolution urging Myanmar to provide "full citizenship" to the Rohingya community.

The government responded by reiterating its stance that there are no Rohingya people in Myanmar and that citizenship issues should be resolved according to the 1982 Citizenship Law.

The accusations of bias echo those levelled against Ms Lee's predecessor, Tomas Ojea Quintana, who held the position for six years until May 2014. Mr Quintana had a fraught relationship with Nay Pyi Taw and was routinely accused of pro-Muslim bias - including by the government - particularly on the issue of Rakhine State.

While Ms Lee has been spared similar criticism, at the conclusion of her first tour in July 2014 the President's Office decried her use of the term "Rohingya".

"The term has been maliciously used by a group of people with wider political agenda. The people of Myanmar will never recognise the term," the government said in a statement.

Ms Lee, however, said it was important that individuals be allowed to self-identify their ethnicity.

Ms Lee arrived in Myanmar on January 6 for her second tour since taking up the rapporteur job. As well as Rakhine State, the 10-day visit will take in rural communities in northern Shan State and the displaced persons camps in Rakhine. The UN refused to give further details about her itinerary on January 9.



Ethnic Rakhine hold signs as they wait for Yanghee Lee to arrive in Sittwe on January 8. Photo: Than Tun (Sittwe)

"I will review the situation in the camps for internally displaced persons and in isolated locations in the Rakhine State, to assess if there has been improvement in the critical conditions I came across on my first visit to Myanmar in July 2014," she said in a statement prior to her arrival.

On January 8 she met civil society groups at the United Nations Development Programme office in Yangon. Women's rights, the 2008 constitution and proposed "protection of religion" laws were major topics of discussion,

said Ma Khin Lay, the founder of Triangle Women's Group Support.

"The [protection of religion] bills do not meet international human rights standards," she said.

"I believe our country is trying to achieve reconciliation with ethnic minorities, so if we pass these laws it will discriminate against people of different religions and ethnic nationalities ... We told [Ms Lee] that we want those laws to be temporarily suspended."

Ms Lee also met Daw Thandar, the wife of journalist Ko Par Gyi, who died

while in military custody in October 2014.

Daw Thandar said she was afraid to ask for the rapporteur's help on the case because she was worried how the Tatmadaw would respond.

"She asked me about the legal response to his murder and how the UN can help us. I explained to her how difficult it was to take action against those who committed this crime.

"The police and Special Branch are always following me all the time since I asked to take action [over my husband's death] on October 25. They stop me whenever I travel, whether it's police at toll gates or the local administrators. Since my husband died I have been worried about my security every day."

In northern Shan State, Ms Lee will examine the human rights situation of religious and ethnic minorities, including claims of gender-based violence in the region's armed conflict.

In addition, she will "pay special attention" to four protection of religion bills that are likely to be discussed in the upcoming session of parliament.

"I am deeply concerned that if passed, these four bills will legitimise discrimination, in particular against religious and ethnic minorities, and against women," she said.

She will also examine political conditions and preparations for this year's election.

The statement said she would "discuss progress in the democratic process with authorities and civil society to encourage these forthcoming national elections to be transparent, inclusive, participatory, free and fair".

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Men search through rubble for jade at Hpakant in Kachin State. Photo: Kaung Htet

Hpakant jade mine landslide death toll expected to rise

At least four people killed on January 6 when 270-metre pile of mine waste collapsed following heavy rain



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FOUR people died and more are missing after a landslide near jade mines in Hpakant township, Kachin State, according to local sources, who say up to 20 people may have been killed.

The disaster occurred when a 270-metre (800-foot) high, 450m (1500ft) long spoil tip collapsed following heavy rain. The tip was formed by waste dug out by three mining companies - Yadanar Sinthiri, Wai and Unity.

Local sources say the collapse occurred at 7pm on January 6. The collapsed tip now covers an area 600m

(2000ft) wide, and of unknown depth.

"Four bodies have been recovered. But we don't know how many more bodies could lie under the earth," Hpakant township administrator U Tin Swe Myint told *The Myanmar Times* on January 8.

He is one of a 20-strong rescue team organised by local authorities and community groups. Mining companies are providing machinery to sift through the earth for survivors and bodies.

Another rescue team member, U Maran Jarla, also of Hpakant, said he feared the death toll may be 15 to 20 people. Some of the victims were living in tents at the foot of the spoil tip when it collapsed, he said.

The companies could not be reached for comment last week, and it was unclear whether the police would take any action against them.

U Tin Swe Myint denied reports

that hundreds may have been killed. "As soon as the rescue work began, we urged villagers by loudspeaker to tell us if they had family members missing. No one has done so, but we will continue to search," he said.

A local police official it was unclear how many people are missing.

"Rescue teams are using hoes to search for the missing people. We

'They are transient workers ... Whenever an accident happens, it's difficult to get exact figures.'

Hpakant township police officer

don't have a list of people who are working," he said. "They are transient workers ... Whenever an accident happens, it's difficult to get exact figures."

He added that mining accidents were common in the area with several recent fatalities caused by landslides.

Up to 90 percent of the world's jadeite - the most sought-after type of jade - is mined in Hpakant, feeding a vast appetite for the green stone in Asia, particularly in China where it is believed to ward off evil spirits and bring better health.

The famously murky jade trade in resource-rich Myanmar has seen lower sales in recent years in part because of an upsurge in fighting in Kachin State.

But it remains highly lucrative and observers say a slice of all jade revenue finds its way into the pockets of Kachin rebels, who have a large presence in the area. - *With AFP*

YCDC winner facing allegations of cheating

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ONE of Yangon City Development Committee's newly elected members, U Khin Maung Tint, is the subject of a complaint from his defeated opponent, who has accused him of illegal activities on election day.

Naw Hla Hla Soe says her rival breached electoral law by having his campaign literature, including his photograph, distributed to voters within the precincts of polling stations, allegedly including a mock ballot paper with a tick next to his name and photo. She said she expected similar complaints to be submitted

by other defeated candidates.

U Khin Maung Tint won the city-level seat, the highest category, for the northern district of Yangon. A business owner, he was previously a member of the Union Solidarity and Development Party but resigned to participate in the December 27 vote.

The YCDC elections were marred by criticisms that the number of voters was highly restricted, and most of the candidates barely known. A mere 401,000 voters were eligible for the city-wide election, and of those only about 106,000 actually voted.

U Khin Maung Tint received 10,078 votes in his district, according

to the election commission, which did not release the number of votes received by the five other candidates from northern district.

The chair of the election commission, U Tin Aye, said a special tribunal would be established to investigate any complaint received, adding that electoral law was unclear what would happen in the event that a complaint was upheld.

U Khin Maung Tint denied the allegations, saying, "I have never acted unjustly in my life. Everybody knows that." He said his rival had misunderstood his willingness to explain to his supporters how to go about voting for him, and the

location of polling stations.

"I didn't break the law or ask anyone else to do so," he said. "I don't want people to think I won by cheating."

Disputes have also arisen over the results of lower-level township seats, said U Tin Aye, without providing any details.

Unlike laws for national and regional elections, the YCDC election law does not specify a penalty against a complainant if their accusations are later found to be baseless or inaccurate.

Complainants must submit a non-refundable fee of K500,000 to make a complaint, however.

Action Plan being 'reviewed': govt

Chief minister says feedback from UN agencies and international NGOs on draft Rakhine State Action Plan is being considered



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THE Rakhine State government is considering amending a controversial plan drafted in response to outbreaks of communal conflict based on feedback from international NGOs and UN agencies, Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn said last week.

He said the introduction of the plan has been delayed because of widespread opposition to a proposed citizenship verification process.

Details of the Rakhine State Action Plan were leaked to the media in October 2014, with some rights groups warning it was a "blueprint for permanent segregation and statelessness" for Muslims. The plan requires Muslims who do not hold citizenship to apply as Bengalis or face resettlement, together with those who are not eligible.

But Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn said the draft plan had not yet been finalised, and the government is still reviewing feedback and amending some sections of it.

"The action plan will soon be introduced but right now it is being edited,"

he told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

"Suggestions and recommendations from international non-government organisations and UN agencies are being considered. After these have been reviewed and considered for inclusion, the plan will be made publicly available."

U Maung Maung Ohn refused to reveal what suggestions had been received, while a spokesperson for a prominent international NGO operating in Rakhine State declined to comment last week.

139,000

People living in displaced persons camps in Rakhine State

He said the main reason for the delayed release of the plan was problems associated with a citizenship verification process in Rakhine State, which has been suspended since October 2014.

Some Muslims have opposed the plan on the basis it would require them to register as Bengali, while Rakhine activists have protested against



A Muslim man rides past Mizigawon IDP camp in Sittwe. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

the citizenship verification process because they say Bengalis should not be eligible for citizenship at all.

In September, Rakhine groups staged protests after more than 200 people, including about 160 who agreed to register as Bengalis, were granted citizenship or naturalised citizenship in the state's Myebon township under a citizenship verification pilot project.

Additionally, U Maung Maung Ohn said there had been complaints from some "ethnic nationalities" that the

program should be nationwide and open to all, rather than just Muslims in Rakhine State.

But while he has previously warned Rakhine groups not to oppose the verification process, U Maung Maung Ohn said that opposition from the Muslim community was mostly to blame for the program's delay.

"Their claim for a name that the state does not accept has stopped the citizenship verification process. As a result, we can see there is no progress," he said. "Previously we planned to

finish the verification and then move on to resettlement."

The nature of the resettlement process remains unclear and U Maung Maung Ohn declined to discuss the plan's contents in detail.

But a draft of the plan provided to *The Myanmar Times* states that the government will ask the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) for help to resettle those ineligible for citizenship in a third country.

In October, a UNHCR spokesperson told Reuters it would be impossible for the agency to assist resettlement because they would not be "recognised refugees who have fled persecution and conflict across international borders".

Meanwhile, the UN's special rapporteur for human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee arrived in Yangon on January 7 for her second visit to Myanmar since taking up the position in 2014. She travelled to Rakhine State on January 8 to assess human rights conditions.

U Maung Maung Ohn said he would likely discuss the recent UN resolution on human rights in Myanmar with the envoy "and make some clarifications".

"I will take her to the [internally displaced persons] camps and let her see the differences between the conditions last year and this year," he said.

President invites parties for talks

A SENIOR official from the President's Office has confirmed that the president is planning to meet representatives of a number of political parties this week, following a similar gathering late last October.

"Yes, the information is true. There will be a meeting on Monday [January 12]. That's all I can say," the official, who asked to remain anonymous, told *The Myanmar Times*.

A letter of invitation was sent from the President's Office to ethnic party leaders, ethnic affairs ministers and other political parties, according to U Khin Maung Swe, leader of the National Democratic Force (NDF). He said points of discussion were to include the democratic transition, the peace process and the coming general election.

"I will raise the issue of peace as the first priority. Without internal peace, political success can achieve nothing," U Khin Maung Swe said, adding he would emphasize the need for the election to be "free and fair".

U Aye Thar Aung, a central executive committee member of the Rakhine National Party, said his name had been on the party's invitation to the meeting rather than that of party leader U Aye Maung.

"I will discuss my point of views of possible solutions for overcoming the political deadlock, including the amendment of the constitution. The peace process will also be discussed," U Aye Thar Aung said.

The RNP's leader, U Aye Maung, said he did not know whether the invitation was meant to include him or not.

U Aye Maung recently criticised the president's commitment to dialogue in an interview following historic 14-party talks held October 31, a meeting which failed to produce a resolution and which some observers derided as being only for show.

- Lun Min Mang

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The Chin Tsong Palace on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road in 1920. Photo: Burma Oil Corporation/Wikimedia Commons

New chapter for historic building

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THE century-old Chin Tsong Palace on Yangon's Kabar Aye Pagoda Road - currently home to a Ministry of Culture fine arts school - will be repurposed as a cultural centre, the ministry has decided.

The move that has been welcomed by tourism industry leaders, who say it could prove a major attraction.

"This building has been maintained under our ministry as one of the heritage buildings. What we are trying to do is to further turn this building into a cultural centre where visitors can see and buy all kind of arts and crafts in one place," said U Htay Lwin, deputy director of the ministry's Fine Arts School Department.

The five-storey Chin Tsong Palace is a striking blend of Chinese and Western architecture. It is named

for Chinese immigrant, businessman and member of the Order of the British Empire Lim Chin Tsong, who built it between 1915 and 1919 as his residence at a cost of around 2.2 million rupees.

Under Japanese rule in 1941-45, the building was used for the All Burma Broadcasting Station, and in 1951 was transformed into Kanbawza Yeiktha hotel. The Ministry of Culture later took over the top floors, which offer a spectacular 360-degree view of the city, including landmarks such as Shwedagon Pagoda and Inya Lake.

U Htay Lwin said the "one-stop culture centre" will draw locals and tourists alike, and would be used to display and promote the arts, including hosting traditional cultural demonstrations and puppet shows in a small venue next to the building.

"The mini-theatre can accommodate 100 people and is ready to rent for interested show organisers

too," he said.

The ground floor will be rented out for displays of painting, sculptures, handicrafts, jewellery and more.

"Interested individual business-people, culture-related departments or any organisations can rent the spaces on the ground floor depending on their requirements as a short-term or long-term kind of contracts with us," said U Htay Lwin.

U Phyo Wai Yar Zar, chair of Myanmar Tourism Marketing, welcomed the plans.

"The history and the building structure itself are very interesting," U Phyo Wai Yar Zar said. "I believe it will attract the interest of visitors.

"Turning it into a cultural centre will allow visitors to learn many things at one place. They can learn about the building, and it will be a new attraction for tourists to see arts and crafts all in one place, as well as to enjoy the cultural show."

Govt orders re-formation of intelligence bureau: police

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MINISTRY of Home Affairs staff say they have received orders to re-establish the notorious National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), despite government denials. Presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut told state-owned media last month that no such plan was being considered.

But anonymous sources say the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an order to reorganise the various security-related forces into a single intelligence unit.

According to one Yangon-based officer, who asked not to be named, the new unit would include elements from the Special Intelligence Department (Special Branch), Bureau of Special Investigation, Military Security Affairs and the Ministry of Immigration and Population.

The original bureau was led by Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt from 1984 to 2004, when he was purged by former junta leader Senior General Than Shwe, who abolished it as part of an internal power struggle. The NIB was associated with the former regime's often brutal repression of dissent and widespread spying on citizens.

The Special Intelligence Department (Special Branch) and Bureau of Special of Investigation are part of the Ministry of Home Affairs, but sources say the Ministry of Defence would be responsible for the new organisation.

"The ministry ordered us to reorganise all forces. I don't know exactly who will be in which position and we're waiting to see what's next," said the Yangon-based second lieutenant, add-

ing that his family had urged him not to participate in the new unit because of NIB's fearsome reputation.

A police lieutenant from Kengtung said his station had also received the order.

"The order is confidential and I don't know exactly when [the bureau] is supposed to start," he said last week.

While NIB was primarily used in the past to crack down on dissidents, some say it is needed to combat the threat of transnational crime and conflict, including terrorism.

'The order is confidential and I don't know exactly when [the bureau] is supposed to start.'

Police lieutenant based in Kengtung, eastern Shan State

In November 2013, Yangon Region hltaw passed a proposal urging the Union government to re-establish the NIB.

U Khin Maung Swe, leader of the National Democratic Force, said that he supported the reestablishment of NIB provided it is not misused against Myanmar politicians. "The National Intelligence Bureau should be responsible for national security, such as border conflicts," he said.



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KIA rejects Tatmadaw timber charges

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TATMADAW troops say they have arrested nearly 150 people in Kachin State, mostly Chinese citizens, who were preparing to smuggle timber into China. The army says the illegal logging gang was authorised by the Kachin Independence Army, although the KIA denies permitting any such activity.

On January 6, the military-owned *Myawady* newspaper reported that troops had arrested 20 Myanmar citizens and 122 foreigners and seized 240 logs, a total of 455 vehicles, nine motorcycles, methamphetamines, opium and 12,000 Chinese yuan (US\$1920), as well a document appearing to permit illegal logging activities allegedly signed by Brigadier General Zaw Bote Htan of the KIA's business department.

The arrests were made in a number of villages in Waingmaw township, Kachin State.

The activities were said to have been permitted around the villages of Wa Shaung, Man Wun, Sinikuu, Man Taung, Law Khun Yan and Sadone, Waingmaw township. The Tatmadaw stated that troops had cleared the territory from January 2 to 4 to arrest the gang on the basis of air reconnaissance. The Myanmar citizens arrested may face charges under forestry laws, and the Chinese under immigration law.

An official from the Tatmadaw's Northern Region Command said the counter-smuggling operation is continuing in cooperation with police. "We believe there are more illegal



A truck seized by the Tatmadaw earlier this month is pictured carrying illegally cut timber. Photo: Supplied/Myawady

logging gangs in these areas," he said.

U Pyae Sone Myo, director of the environment ministry's forestry department, said the suspects were being held at police stations in Waingmaw and Myitkyina as investigations proceeded.

Forestry officials say this is the biggest haul of illegal timber in five years.

Between 2011 and November last year, more than 140,000 tonnes of illegal timber were seized, while 23,175 Myanmar nationals and 134 Chinese nationals were arrested.

The KIA said it had issued permits for a regional development project, but not for activities involving illegal timber, and had no knowledge of the

alleged gang.

"This could be a misunderstanding. KIA has given no permission to conduct illegal logging," said Major Tan Seng of the KIA.

U Daung Khar, leader of the KIO technical team based in Myitkyina, said the KIO did not take part in extracting timber but collected tax from

trucks that pass through its territory. "Most of the companies in the timber trade have been licensed by the government, or work with the local authorities," he said.

Although the government suspended legal exports of raw timber in April 2014, the illegal timber trade has increased in northern Shan and Kachin states against a background of persistent armed clashes between the Tatmadaw and armed ethnic groups, including the KIA.

240

Logs seized in a Tatmadaw raid earlier this month, along with 455 vehicles

On December 27, four Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry officials were killed in an armed attack near Wang Salong village of Lin Salong District, Shan State.

The government said the team was attacked by five unknown assailants while returning from Wan Salong to Lin Khe village. They had been examining 202 tonnes of timber seized the previous day.

The government said the logs were imprinted with the logo of the Shan State Army-South, but the Shan rebel group has denied any involvement in the killing.

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More delays for regional agreement on migrant work

Little progress was made on the agreement during Myanmar's tenure as chair of ASEAN

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ANOTHER year has brought further delay to a region-wide agreement on the migrant workers question. ASEAN was supposed to have finalised its declaration on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers by the end of 2014, during Myanmar's term as chair of the bloc. However, the grouping remains split on the issue with members unable to finalise the agreement, said Daw Khine Nwe Oo, deputy director general of the Ministry of Labour's migrant workers department.

When a December meeting in Laos failed to reach an agreement, the issue was postponed to this year, she said last week.

The problem of migrant workers has been before ASEAN since 2007, but the membership is divided into countries that export labour - such as Myanmar, the Philippines and Indonesia - and those that

receive it - Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. Nevertheless, both blocs have reached agreement on 58 of the 68 proposed points in the draft declaration.

Myanmar, as ASEAN chair, convened two meetings in Nay Pyi Taw without significantly advancing the issue. The Philippines and Indonesia, like Myanmar, share a strong interest in the question, but each has its own domestic reasons for not pressing the issue too strongly. Myanmar is the only country that can take a clear stand, says Ma Thet Thet Aung, an activist for migrant workers' rights and a member of 88 Generation Peace and Open Society.

"The Myanmar government should press labour departments in all member countries to finalise the declaration because most migrant workers in the region are Myanmar citizens," she said.

ASEAN analyst U Kyaw Lin Oo said that the government did not do enough to push the issue.

"Myanmar should have tried to achieve agreement while it had the chair of ASEAN, but did not. As a receiving country, [2015 chair] Malaysia seems unlikely to take a leading role during its tenure as ASEAN chair."

U Aung Htoo, deputy director general of the foreign ministry's ASEAN affairs department, said that Myanmar would not be urging Malaysia to complete the declaration during its tenure. "We'll just have to keep it on the table until there's a good result," he said.

'Myanmar should have tried to achieve agreement while it had the chair of ASEAN'

U Kyaw Lin Oo
ASEAN affairs analyst

Bringing water, and changing



CHERRY THEIN

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OLD habits die hard. Even as the crystalline water gushes unbounded from the newly installed taps, to the delight of old and young alike, some of the parents are worried: What if it dries up again?

Here in the dry zone, in the country's arid midsection, water is a rarity and running water a luxury. But that is starting to change.

"Yeee, we've got water," the women laugh. They fetch containers of all sizes to fill up, until they realise there is no longer any need - they can take it whenever they like. Children slurp from cupped hands, not caring how safe the water might be to drink.

"It's hard to forget the time when water was short," one resident said, as work proceeded to install metered water supply in these villages in Magwe Region.

Daw Tin Mya, from Kone Ba Lu village in Myaing township, said that she was still in water conservation mode. "I'm happy, but also worried it might run dry again. I tell my children too much free water can be a bad thing. I want them to practise discipline," said the 71-year-old.

She said people in dry zone villages used to draw water from lakes or springs, or even a hand-scooped waterhole.

"They will never know how we struggled to get a glass of water, or went without bathing for a week, or couldn't even use the toilet for lack of a flush."

Residents at Mon Taw village in neighbouring Pauk township said the installation of running water had changed their lives. "We used to spend almost the whole day fetching water," said U Thaug.

In some dry zone villages water can be found at a depth of 20-30 metres (65-100 feet), but in others



A woman draws water from a newly built well in Kone Pa Hlu village, Myaing township.

1000

Depth, in metres, that wells in some areas of the dry zone have to be sunk before hitting water

it lies more than 1000m (328ft) below the surface. Lack of water has consequences for the local economy and public health and in 2001 city development committees in the area launched a 10-year dry zone water supply project.

The project was reviewed in 2010-11 and extended through to 2015 with collaboration from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

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lives, in the dry zone



Magwe Region. Photo: Yu Yu

maintenance costs - normally between K3000 and K5000 a month.

Out of Myaing township's 55 villages, 23 have joined the system, with the others set to join this year, he said. The US\$1.9 million project is also being implemented in 25 villages in Pauk, 13 in Sagaing Region's Wetlet township and 17 in Mandalay's Natogyi township.

UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene officer U Khin Aung Thein said Myanmar lagged in household running water compared to its neighbours. According to UNICEF figures, only 3 percent of households in this country are connected, compared to 5pc in Cambodia, 8pc in Indonesia, 6pc in Laos, 9pc in Vietnam, 31pc in Thailand, 45pc in China and 14pc in India.

He said UNICEF plans to expand the project to other areas recommended by the Department of Rural Development this year.

Department director for Magwe Region U Kyaw Swe said the new system helped save time and protect against diarrhoea, in both humans and cattle. "People took their cattle to the water, and sometimes watered their cows with their own bathwater, or people washed their faces in the water they'd already used to clean rice," he said.

U Paw Oo, chair of the water supply committee in Kone Ba Lu village, Myaing township, said the scarcity meant residents regularly had to use poor quality water.

"We had to use what we could find. It's also been hard to raise the funds to build a tank, and most people can't afford to contribute. Water shortage has stunted our development," he said.

The community has organised a committee responsible for engine maintenance, meter reading and water tariff collection, which varies from village to village. Some villages use solar panels to run the pump engine.

U Tun Myint, head of Kan Ni village, said the system had been successful. "Our goal is to provide safe water," he said, "and we all contribute what we can afford."

However, the wells were often far from villages, so in 2014 the Department of Rural Development, working together with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and communities, launched a project to introduce metered water supply to 110 dry zone villages, the majority in Magwe. This brought the water from the well right into the villages, but also requires residents to pay for their water use in order to cover

One-third of Yangon homes off water grid

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IT might be 2015 but one in three Yangon residents - up to 1.7 million people - still does not have access to municipal water, according to the Yangon City Development Committee's sanitation department.

U Myo Thein, deputy chief engineer of the department, said that municipal water is supplied to only 67 percent of Yangon's population.

"The rest have to find other ways of getting water," he said. "Some dig artesian wells, while across the Yangon River, in towns such as Seikkyi Kanaungto and Dala, as well as villages in Kyeemyindaing township, we pipe water in from lakes."

YCDC data shows that 200 million gallons (910 million litres) of water are distributed daily. The national census conducted in 2014 revealed that 5.2 million people live in Yangon, meaning about 1.7 million people do not have access to municipal water in Myanmar's most populous city.

U Myo Thein added that YCDC had suspended water supply to some new townships because it could not guarantee a steady supply.

"Some townships are a long way from the established water pipes and get only a small amount," he said. "For example, if we give one house water supply and then add two or three houses nearby, very little water will be available for all houses."

He added that relying on digging more wells was not a viable option.

"When the water table is low, it is possible in some areas, such as those near the Nga Moe Yeik Creek, for salt water to mix with the fresh



Dala residents wait for water during the 2012 dry season. Photo: Kaung Htet

water and make it undrinkable, which is why we cannot rely on artesian water supplies in the long term," he said.

Daw Than Than Soe, a retired deputy director of the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development, said artesian wells are only a temporary measure.

"We need to be able to depend only on the city's water distribution network," she said during the Save Yangon Forum on December 20.

U Tha Aye, vice president of the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association, said relying on artesian water supplies for too long carries a high level of risk.

"In some townships, there is no piped water supply, which worries me because using underground water for a long time invites

landslides," he said. "After all the underground water has been piped out, the ground will sink a little because there's nothing to support it."

"There is a limit to how much water we can take from the ground. We can't overuse it."

YCDC is developing the Lagunpyin water supply station to increase supply capacity but it will not be finished until 2018, according to U Myo Thein. He said that the new station will alleviate many of the water supply problems the city is facing.

He added that YCDC plans to supply water into Yangon from all directions by refining river water from the Kukko Gwa and Toe rivers.

But increasing supplies is only part of the equation. Daw Than Than Soe said leakage through the pipeline network wastes about half of the water piped into Yangon.

"Finding ways to minimise waste in our existing supply is a better idea than finding new sources of water," she added.

U Myo Thein said plans to minimise waste are already cemented in the city's long-term urban plan, adding that the technical assistance and funding for this work has already been agreed.

40%

Estimated amount of Yangon's water lost each day through leaky pipes



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IN BRIEF

Police hand back vehicles after confiscating illegal exhausts

All is now quiet on the Yangon front. Sports cars seized by police because of their super-loud exhaust noise have now been given back to their owners - with the power exhaust removed.

For the year just ended, Yangon police seized a total of 51 motor vehicles, including sports cars and power exhaust-installed vehicles, for "undisciplined driving", said Police Lieutenant Colonel Win Bo, deputy head of Yangon Region police, last week.

In all, Yangon traffic police seized 90 vehicles during that period for various reasons. They will be returned to their owners later, depending on the date of seizure, he said.

Five of the confiscated vehicles were found not to be registered with the Road Transport Administration Department, police say.

Offending motorists were also fined K1500 - the maximum possible under the existing law, which dates to the 1960s - and had their driving licence suspended for a month.

Police have been lobbying the government and parliament to introduce stronger fines for traffic violations, and have proposed an increase to K50,000 for offences. - *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Thiri Min Htun*

Electrical fault blamed for Inle Princess fire

The December 30 blaze at the Inle Princess Resort hotel that destroyed half the bungalow accommodation could have been caused by an electrical fault, investigators believe.

Accounts director U Soe Thu Ya of Zagar Communication said last week the company was still investigating but believed it could have been sparked by a wiring problem.

He added that the hotel had refunded guests and travel agents for the disruption caused.

Four of the 18 bungalows damaged re-opened on January 7, and another four will open at the end of January. The rest will open over the next few months, he said.

"We are saddened by what has happened, but relieved no one was hurt," said Inle Princess Resort managing director Daw Yin Myo Su. - *Ei Ei Thu*



A child is vaccinated against measles at a ceremony to mark Measles Control and Elimination Day in 2007. Photo: Staff

Measles, rubella drive to target 17m children



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A US\$24 million campaign to boost immunisation against measles and rubella will get under way later this month, the Ministry of Health says.

Deputy director general for disease control Dr Soe Lwin Nyein said the January 19-28 campaign was aimed at suppressing larger outbreaks of the diseases.

The program aims to reach 17.4 million children in all 14 states and regions, with all children aged between nine months and 15 to be given the vaccine, he said.

"Experts have told us that if measles and rubella are not tackled in 2015 they could spread throughout the country," he said, declining to say who had advised the government of a possible outbreak.

The program is mostly funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, together with the Ministry of Health, the World

Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund.

The campaign will be run through schools and wards, while in conflict areas the government will work with local leaders to ensure all children are reached, said Dr Kyaw Kan Kaung, a deputy director in the Department of Health.

He said a shortage of medicines had resulted in many children missing out on immunisation in the past. As a result, 34 measles outbreaks were reported in 2011.

The following year the government received funding from Gavi to run a measles catch-up campaign that was

widely considered a success.

"Because of the vaccination program in 2012 we didn't see any measles outbreaks in 2015," he said. "However, if we don't keep up our fight against the virus with this campaign the number of people who are not immunised will rise, and there could be another outbreak later in 2015."

In 2012, a global campaign was launched to eliminate measles and control rubella by 2020. Vaccination is a key element of the strategy to achieving those targets, together with improved monitoring, management of outbreaks, community engagement, and research and development.

Under the strategy, 62 countries not using rubella vaccine, including Myanmar, were encouraged to combine it with their measles vaccination programs to protect against both diseases with one injection.

Myanmar applied for funding in 2013, receiving Gavi board approval for a \$13 million grant in May 2014.

In 2012, Gavi and its partners, including the WHO and UNICEF, helped Myanmar introduce both a measles second-dose vaccine and a pentavalent vaccine, which protects children from diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b.

Gavi has committed more than \$155.2 million to Myanmar over the period 2001-2020, with \$76.4 million distributed as of September 2014.

MILLION US\$

24

Anticipated cost of the measles and rubella immunisation campaign

Online tourist visa service expanded

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THE Ministry of Immigration and Population has expanded an electronic visa system to another 32 nationalities - meaning people from more than 100 countries can now use the faster, more convenient service.

Prior to January 2 the service was available to nationals from 68 countries. Newly eligible countries are mostly from Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South America, and include South Africa, Qatar, Iceland, Kenya and the Maldives.

The service enables tourists to skip applying for a visa at a Myanmar embassy and instead apply online. Applicants must have a passport valid for at least six months, submit one colour photo and should have a return ticket. The non-refundable US\$50 fee is paid by credit card and a letter of confirmation is sent within three days. This letter, which enables the applicant to enter the country within three months of the date of issue, must be printed out and shown on arrival at Yangon, Mandalay or Nay Pyi Taw airports.

Frankie Nyi Nyi, a product service manager from Yangon-based Grand Circle Travel, said the expansion was positive but would have a limited impact because Myanmar receives few tourists from the 32 countries.

"I support the idea of e-visa. Most of my clients are from the US and it saves quite a lot of work for us and them," he said.

Myanmar first announced it would introduce an e-visa system in 2012. Growing demand for visas to visit Myanmar meant tourists in some countries were often forced to wait more than a month for applications to be processed. Myanmar's network of embassies is also limited, with many countries having no embassy or consulate at which tourists could apply for a visa.

The online system was launched on September 1, 2014, after a month-long pilot project.

Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi said at the launch that the government also plans to introduce a business e-visa in the near future. Currently nationals of 51 countries are eligible to apply for a business visa-on-arrival at Yangon International Airport.

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New political prisoner body is 'just for show', say activists

Members of the former committee who were critical of the government have been left off the new body



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A REVAMPED committee to free remaining political prisoners is just for show, activists are complaining. The accusation follows a January 5 statement by the President's Office that a new "prisoners of conscience" committee will be set up to free people jailed for their opinions or political activity.

The issue is sensitive in the light of the June 2013 pledge made by President U Thein Sein to free all political prisoners - a matter of great concern to the international community - by the end of that year. While the government said it achieved the promise, activists say at least 30 were still in prison at the time, and that the number continued to rise during 2014.

Apparently in response to these criticisms, the government has replaced the Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee with the Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee - but the new body will no longer include former members critical of the government, activists say.

The new 27-member committee will be chaired by Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun, a deputy minister for home affairs. But two members of the former committee who have regularly criticised the government's handling of the issue, U Bo Kyi and U Nyo Tun, were not reselected.

The only former prisoners on the committee now are senior 88 Generation member Ko Ko Gyi and U Ye Aung of the Former Political Prisoners Society.

U Tate Naing, secretary of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), which is headed by U Bo Kyi, said the government had not informed the group of its intent to create the new committee.

"We don't understand the government's action. If the organisations engaged with the political prisoners issue are not involved, this [new]



A member of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners reviews political prisoner biographies. Photo: Yu Yu

committee can't make much progress," he said.

U Zaw Htay, a director in the President's Office, said the reasons behind excluding the AAPP and other former members will be revealed at the committee's first meeting.

He declined to comment further on the issue, saying he was not authorised to speak to the press.

U Ye Aung said the exclusion of the AAPP was problematic.

Formerly based in Thailand, the organisation is widely thought to have the most credible list of political prisoners.

"[The AAPP] are good at collecting facts, they're experienced and they drew up the list of prisoners," U Ye Aung said.

Former Political Prisoners Society member U Nyo Tun, who was not selected for the new committee, said the revamp was just meant to impress foreign observers following the political prisoner issue.

"I don't understand why the government formed this committee without the main political prisoner group [the AAPP]," he said. "I think the new committee is just for show to please the international community."

Committee member and Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Thein Nyunt said many details about its role remain unclear but he expected the new body to be more effective than its predecessor.

He said one positive step is that members would now be able to go into jails to meet political prisoners - something they could not do previously.

"We don't know the terms of reference of the new committee. Establishing and publishing them should be the first item on the agenda," he said.

The Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee brought about the release of 354 prisoners, according to the government.

It says that all political prisoners have now been freed and those who remain behind bars have been convicted of criminal, rather than political, offences.

However, AAPP says 170 prisoners of conscience remain behind bars, and 203 activists are facing trial for political offences. The organisation says despite its exclusion it will keep a close watch on how the new committee deals with the issue.

NLD party members begin walk to honour Aung San

MG ZAW

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TWO members of the National League for Democracy are to mark the centenary of the birth of Bogyoke Aung San by walking to his birthplace. They are trekking the 250 kilometres (160 miles) from Patheingyi, Mandalay Region, to Natnauk in Magwe Region - provided they get clearance from the authorities along the way.

Along with a dozen supporters, U Than Shwe, 58, and Ko Chit San Naw, 38, started their walk on January 5 from the party's office and reached Tada-Oo township the same day, said organiser U Thein Zaw, who is deputy chair of NLD's Patheingyi branch.

"We respect Bogyoke Aung San, and want the youth of today to be like Bogyoke and to share his spirit," he said.

The anniversary of the birth of independence hero Bogyoke Aung San - whose daughter, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leads the NLD - will be marked on February 13.

The route will take the marchers through Mandalay, Tada-Oo, Ngazon, Natogyi, Myingyan, Taungtha, Kyaukpadaung, Zayat-kone and Yarmon before they are scheduled to arrive on January 15.

However, as of January 6 the local authorities at Taungtha had not yet agreed to allow the marchers to pass, U Thein Zaw said.

The group is expected to arrive in Taungtha on January 10.

"They asked us to state the exact time we will arrive there and the exact number of participants, and say we could be arrested if our information turns out to be incorrect. We haven't reached a compromise yet," he said.

Taungtha is the constituency of U Aung Thau, a former minister for industry under the military junta and senior member of the rival Union Solidarity and Development Party.




- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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Members on the Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee, which was formed on January 5

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WCS members release the tortoises on January 4. Photo: Supplied

Star tortoises released to mark Independence Day

ENDANGERED tortoises marked their own Independence Day when conservation officials released them into the wild on January 4. The 300 rare star tortoises had been cared for by the Wildlife Conservation Society after being rescued from illegal wildlife traders, said U Thet Swe Aye, a communications officer for the society.

The release took place in the Min Sone Taung sanctuary in Natogyi township, Mandalay Region.

"The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry and WCS have been looking after the tortoises in seven turtle rescue centres. We also released tortoises in 2013," he said.

The tortoises have been marked and fitted with microchips so their location can be monitored.

Veterinarians from the Bronx Zoo in New York took blood samples from the tortoises last September, said U Thet Swe Aye. - Aye Sapay Phyu

Medicine use driving slow loris to extinction

Border town Mong La a hotspot for trade in rare venomous primate



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A LITTLE-KNOWN venomous primate may be heading toward extinction due to the high demand for its use in traditional medicine, says Traffic, the wildlife trade monitoring network, in a January 8 statement.

Surveys conducted last year by Oxford Brookes University and Traffic on the China-Myanmar border have revealed the scale of the trade in the rare Bengal slow lorises (*Nycticebus bengalensis*), the network said.

Much of this trade takes place across an international border, in contravention of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), while the Bengal slow loris is also a nationally protected species in Myanmar.

"Based on all the data collected in the border town of Mong La in recent years, we estimate that at least 1000 Bengal slow lorises are traded each year in that market town alone, and because of the inherent difficulties in conducting research on illegal activities, we expect the true number to be considerably higher," said Oxford Brookes Professor Vincent Nijman in the statement.

Traffic stated that slow lorises are primates comprising eight species occurring in South and Southeast Asia. They are the only known venomous primates and their bite can lead to severe anaphylactic shock in



A slow loris is displayed for sale in Mong La. Photo: Supplied/Vincent Nijman

humans. Bengal slow lorises are the largest of the species, weighing up to 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds). The species is listed as vulnerable to extinction on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of threatened species.

Slow lorises are threatened by a combination of habitat loss and over-exploitation, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the wildlife markets of Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar and southern China.

According to the IUCN, the Bengal slow loris is an arboreal, nocturnal species that inhabits tropical evergreen rainforest, semi-evergreen forest and moist deciduous forest. It feeds on fruits and gums.

While slow lorises in many parts

in Asia are traded as exotic pets, in Mong La the animals are killed, dissected and dried, with the individual body parts, such as the arms, legs, skin and skeleton, sold separately as medicine.

"Although international trade in slow lorises is regulated under CITES, enforcement of the regulations is minimal in certain border markets such as Mong La," said Chris R Shepherd, regional director of Traffic in Southeast Asia.

"Our studies reveal there are a number of different species within it: This makes the impact of trade on individual species perhaps far more severe than previously supposed," said Anna Nekariz, a professor and expert on slow lorises.

Study details illegal wild cat trade in two border towns

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THE trade in tiger and other wild cat parts from Myanmar into China has grown in recent years but diminished into Thailand, a new study released by wildlife trade monitoring group Traffic says.

The Traffic study scrutinises two decades of survey data in Tachileik, on the border with Thailand, and Mong La, within Shan State's Special Region 4 and on the Chinese border.

The report shows that the number of shops in Tachileik selling tiger and wild cat products fell from 35 in 2000 to six in 2013, while the number in Mong La more than trebled to 21 from six in 2006. The report states that Mong La caters almost entirely to Chinese customers, adding that both towns are situated on international borders and serve as sources for illegal cross-border trade.

It adds that all wild cat species are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and by national laws.

The report, titled "Trade in tigers and other wild cats in Mong La and Tachileik, Myanmar - a tale of two border towns", was published in *Biological Conservation*, a December 22 press release said. The report studied information gathered from 19 surveys of wild cat trade in Tachileik between 1991 and 2013 and seven surveys between 2001 and 2014 in Mong La.

The media release stated that most of the 2000 parts recorded as being on sale were claws, skulls, teeth and skins.

Authors Chris R Shepherd, regional director for Traffic in Southeast Asia, and Vincent Nijman, professor of anthropology at Oxford Brookes University, argue that the decrease in Tachileik

could be due to greater enforcement action in Thailand, while the increase in Mong La may be linked to the rising buying power of China's consumers, and the apparent ease in smuggling illegal wildlife parts into China from Mong La.

"With little or no enforcement in Tachileik and Mong La it's open season for wildlife traffickers, with the contraband bought by those who have little fear of being stopped for their criminal actions," said Dr Shepherd.

The authors also suggest that trade in other illicit wildlife products, such as ivory, is also on the rise in Mong La, while Tachileik's customers from Thailand now mainly buy cheap clothing.

Although the dynamics of the trade in wild cat parts differed in the two border towns, in both clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) parts were the species most often seen in trade. Clouded leopard parts were observed in all but two of the surveys, representing at least 482 individuals.

Other wild cat species commonly found in trade over the decades included leopard cat, leopard, tiger and the asiatic golden cat.

Traders in both towns claimed that tiger and leopard products were mainly sourced from Myanmar and India. Previous studies reported that large cat skins and bones on sale in Tachileik also originated from Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. Smaller species were said all to be sourced from Myanmar.

The authors urged more effective enforcement and prosecution of wildlife criminals in Myanmar and called on neighbouring source and consumer countries, especially China, to allocate more resources to ramp up existing efforts to clamp down on illegal wildlife trade. "It's time for the relevant enforcement authorities to live up to their international commitments to address wildlife crime," said Mr Nijman.

Workers demand jobs back at privatised textile factory

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MORE than 700 factory employees are demanding that their employer reinstate locked-out workers on the basis of a 16-point agreement they said had been reached with the management a year ago. The workers say management of the Panda textile factory in Singu township, Mandalay Region, had reneged on the deal by excluding workers who refused to sign a new contract.

At a January 6 press conference, workers' leaders said the mass demonstration had taken place on December 22, but management had failed to respond.

The industrial action resulted from a December 12 decision by management to present what the workers called a one-sided employment contract that ignored last January's agreement. They said those who refused to sign found themselves locked out when they returned from a holiday break.

"Panda awarded us 10 days of leave on December 12. But when the factory reopened, they excluded those who had refused to sign the new contract. More than 700 workers staged a peaceful demonstration outside the factory to demand their reinstatement, but we've heard nothing from the factory. We refuse

to sign this new contract until it includes the points we have demanded," said Ma Zar Chi Win, secretary of the factory's labour union.

Workers demand that factory provide public housing, civil service rights and full payment of back wages in accordance with the original agreement, and say they will stage another protest outside the factory on January 8 and 9. They may decide to strike on January 12, said union member Ko Chit Moe Aung.

700

Workers who protested outside the Panda factory last month

The factory was formerly run by the Ministry of Industry as No 2 Textile and Garment Factory. Panda took it over under a lease, with an agreement to keep employing former civil servants after the privatisation.

The factory's management did not respond to requests for comment.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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Battery fishing begins at home, study finds



KHIN SU WAI

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A STUDY has found that battery fishing on the Ayeyarwady River is more of a local problem than many in the area are willing to admit. While fishermen regularly blame outsiders for the practice, a recent survey of fish stocks that involved meetings in 15 riverside villages in Singu and Madaya has determined residents are also involved.

Researchers from Yatanabon University found evidence of wire in some of the boats, suggesting fishermen in the villages also practice battery fishing, said U Swe Thwin, a retired professor and an adviser to the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

"This time we found electrical wire in several of the boats, from which we concluded that the villagers were doing battery fishing in their home waters when they got the chance," he said. "Even at the last village we visited, people told us that battery fishermen were coming from villages [in other townships] but they still had the wire in their boats."

The illegal fishing method involves putting lines of wire into water, connecting the two ends to a battery and passing an electric shock into the water. This stuns the fish, which then float



A battery and wires used to stun fish are stored inside a fishing boat on the Ayeyarwady River near Mandalay. Photo: Supplied/Wira

to the surface. The technique is indiscriminate, killing fish of all sizes. In some cases, it has also been responsible for the death of Irrawaddy dolphins, a critically endangered species.

The study was conducted as part of a one-year operation, with assistance provided by MYFish - a WorldFish-led project titled "Improving Research and Development of Myanmar's Inland and Coastal Fisheries" and funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and AusAid.

Workshops held in September at Kyaukmyaung and Singu townships revealed that the people living in those

townships were deeply concerned about the sustainability of fishing stocks in the Ayeyarwady. Some participants also related incidents where large boats, with up to 25 crew and able to battery fish on a large scale, threatened smaller boats and had the capacity to quickly destroy stocks.

U Soe Naing, Department of Fisheries head for Pyin Oo Lwin district, said during the September workshop that fisheries officers should be armed to tackle those practising battery fishing.

"When our fisheries officers have tried to catch the battery fishermen they have been attacked," he said.

CRIME IN BRIEF

Police flag High Court case for attention

Kyauktada police and the Department of Justice are investigating the hoisting of a World War II-era flag above a courthouse in Yangon's downtown on January 1. Those looking skyward near the Yangon Region High Court on New Year's Day were met with the tri-coloured design of the Myanmar flag, albeit with a peacock with spread plumage in the place of the current white star. The peacock design was the official flag of the State of Burma, as the nation was called from 1943 to 1945 during the Japanese occupation.

Employee falls from hotel roof

A hotel worker fell four storeys to his death in Bahan township after losing his balance while jumping on a mattress that was drying on the hotel's rooftop. Bahan township police answered the call at Academy Motel on January 1. Mg Aung Zaw, 19, was taken to Yangon General Hospital but died of his injuries.

'New Light of Myanmar' embezzlers make the news

Three people found guilty of misusing public funds at state-run newspaper *The New Light of Myanmar* were sentenced to 40 years in prison in West Yangon District Court on December 30.

The then-manager of the paper - which has since been rebranded as *The Global New Light of Myanmar* - plus two other former employees were found to have misused K288.6 million in publication and advertisement revenue. Executive editor U Hlaing Win reported the missing

funds in November 2011.

Manager U Tun Tun Lat, assistant manager U Win Myint and distribution manager U Zaw Min Oo were given 40 years' prison time each - 10 for each of four cases - under the 1963 public property protection act.

Elderly woman dead after apartment robbery

A violent robbery resulted in the death of a 70-year-old woman, whose body was found tied up and gagged in her fourth floor Mingalar Taung Nyunt apartment. Daw Mar Bi Yar, of Tapyay Kone ward, was discovered dead on January 3. Township police say that a gold necklace, two gold bracelets and a gold ring had been taken from her body, and that they are treating the matter as a homicide.

Rapist targets woman waiting for lover in Hlaing Tharyar

A jilted lover left waiting for her boyfriend to arrive so they could elope was threatened then raped by a man in Hlaing Tharyar township, police say. After her boyfriend told her he would not come, the victim was sitting alone on Hlaing Tharyar's Bogyoke Street when she was approached by a group of three men. They invited her to go with them to their home, saying it was unsuitable for her to be out alone. After she refused, two of the men left. The remaining man threatened to kill her if she didn't come with them and then raped her near the wall of a construction site. The man, 43, of Hlaing Tharyar township, has been charged with rape. - *Toe Wai Aung, translation by Khant Lin Oo*

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About 14 percent of Myanmar's Lisu population lives in Mogok, according to New Year festival organisers. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Party to push govt on Lisu naming conflict

SITHU LWIN



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AN ETHNIC group is to petition Pyithu Hluttaw in order to secure an official change of their name. The Lisu Dulay Party, based in Myitkyina, Kachin State, says the change will help make it easier to apply for identity cards and to contest this year's general election.

The Lisu, a minority amid the Kachin, are sometimes referred to as Lishaw.

Party chief U Aung Naing, who is also president of a Lisu traditional culture organisation, wants to replace the term "Lishaw" with "Lisu" in official documentation.

"Lisu is the real name of our ethnic group. It can be pronounced as 'Lishaw' or 'Lisaw' depending on the accent of the speaker, which can be confusing for out-of-state officials or during the census," he said. "An official unfamiliar with these variations can refuse to issue a national identity card because he thinks we're Chinese refugees."

While Lisu is one of the 135 officially recognised ethnic groups, whose members automatically qualify for full citizenship, the spellings Lishaw and Lisaw are not included.

U Chit Aye, who is also a member of the Lisu Literature and Culture Association, said the inability of some Lisu to secure identity cards deprived them of their rights as citizens, including joining a political party or standing for election.

"For example, if someone wants to stand for election, they need an [identity card]," he said. "The card would entitle holders to the same level of opportunity as any other citizen, the same as the other 135 ethnic groups in Myanmar."

U Aung Naing said he is planning to launch the party in Mogok to contest seats in the national and regional hluttaws. "We have more than 3000 members and are campaigning in every Lisu village," he said.

It would be the first party directly targeted at Lisu voters, although there are already two ethnic Lisu representatives in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

There are an estimated 700,000 Lisu people throughout the country, including more than 50,000 in Mogok, according to a survey of the Lisu ethnic group. - Translation by Emoon

Mogok ready to rock for New Year

SITHU LWIN

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THE Lisu ethnic group will hold a blow-out New Year event at the end of February, organisers say, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the annual festival.

Held in Mogok township on February 25-27 and marking the turning of a new year on the traditional Lisu calendar, the annual literature and culture festival helps keep Lisu

identity strong, said Ko Aung Naing, chair of the Lisu Literature and Culture Association.

"We celebrate the New Year festival so our literature and culture will not disappear," agreed U Aung Thein, head of a Lisu Buddhist organisation. "In the festival, we will have competitions for literature, traditional dance, traditional music, sports and other categories."

About 700,000 Lisu live in Myanmar, 50,000 of whom live in

Mogok, according to association data. This year's event is anticipated to be bigger and better-attended than ever, as Lisu living in other parts of the country are being encouraged to travel to Mogok and take part.

Part of the Kachin family of ethnic groups, the Lisu are a mix of Buddhists and Christians. The New Year festival is a non-denominational celebration.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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Views

No, YCDC, this is not democracy

Dodgy electoral laws, millions excluded and little transparency after polls closed – the December 27 municipal vote was a farce

THE election of Yangon City Development Committee representatives was held on December 27, shortly before the end of the year.

Some of the important questions we should ask about the election are who conducted it and for what purpose. Generally, elections are an important part of democracy. But was this municipal election really in line with democratic principles?

First, we should consider the election's purpose, the legislative foundation for it – the electoral law and by-laws – who is involved in the election commission, who are the eligible voters, how candidates conducted their campaigns and how the results were released to the public.

This election is held to choose four representatives for the city-wide YCDC, as well as members for district- and township-level municipal committees.

As a result of the election, YCDC has expanded to nine members, including the mayor, who is appointed by the president. The other four unelected members are normally appointed by the regional government. This composition makes the elected representatives a minority and means they are not empowered to make decisions.

In other countries, the mayor is elected by people. But this election was far from international standards and lacked the essence of democracy. How is it democratic to elect representatives who have no authority?

The election was set up in this way by Yangon City Development Committee's electoral law and by-laws. These were passed by the Yangon Region Hluttaw, which is dominated by representatives of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). Some



A Yangon resident votes at a polling station in Mingalardon township on December 27, 2014. Photo: Zarni Phyto

were allowed to send observers to each polling station, there was a lack of transparency in counting votes and announcing the results the next day. The election commission revealed only the names and number of votes of the winners.

The electoral procedures brought to mind the 2010 election, when the Union Election Commission similarly failed to meet even basic standards for electoral transparency.

This election lacked the essence of democracy. How is it democratic to elect representatives who have no authority?

In a city of Yangon's size – and with such a small number of voters – there's no need for vote-counting to take place overnight. Counting the ballots would not be a complex task. There are barely 1000 voting stations in the whole city, and the average number of voters for each station was around 100.

In conclusion, the YCDC election was held undemocratically according to an undemocratic electoral law and by-laws, with undemocratic electoral procedures implemented by a dishonest election commission. The representatives of the Yangon Region Hluttaw who supported those laws and all members of the election commission have made a farce of democracy.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

MPs who are actually in favour of real democracy opposed the YCDC law when it was discussed in parliament but most of the USDP representatives supported it.

The law strongly restricts the number of eligible voters. In the December 27 election, only the household leaders of about 400,000 households were able to vote out of the city's population of 5.2 million. Other residents, including tenants and those who hold only temporary household list certificates, lost any right to vote. Of those household leaders, those who were absent



SITHU AUNG MYINT

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when the voter lists were compiled also lost the chance to vote. The election commission

announced that more than 100,000 voted on the day of election – about 26 percent of eligible voters.

But the real number of voters could well have been less. The four representatives elected to YCDC got a combined total of just 35,000 votes – about one-third of all votes cast.

Regardless of the true number of voters, this means that those four YCDC members were elected by a tiny proportion of the city's residents – less than 0.7pc.

This is an ugly statistic. But this is not where the problems end. While representatives

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Views

Myanmar and the post-2015 develop

With a new development agenda on the horizon to replace the Millennium Development Goals, civil society participation and

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BOTH politically and economically, 2015 could be a transformative year for Myanmar. All eyes are on the build-up to the general election and the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community, which will reduce economic barriers within the region. A lesser-discussed event – but one that could have a significant long-term impact – is the announcement of the United Nations' post-2015 development agenda. This is expected following the UN General Assembly in September.

This post-2015 agenda will replace the current framework, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was agreed on in 2000 by all of the then-183 UN member states. The landmark agreement was made to facilitate cooperation toward eight universal development goals, which were divided into 21 specific targets, and ranged from the eradication of poverty to gender equality. This began with the dropping of vast "third world" debts and the allocation of larger and better-coordinated aid commitments from richer countries to developing ones.

Progress toward the MDG targets, which have an end-of-2015 deadline, has been mixed. While there has been general progress in most areas, some countries are yet to meet a single target. With many success stories skewed by statistics from populous countries like India, China and Brazil, it is also sometimes hard to differentiate the effects of international aid from those of particular domestic policies. Furthermore, while successes have been measured through meeting certain statistics by certain dates, critics will rightly point to the many social, human rights and environmental issues in developing countries that have not been adequately addressed even where traditional development indicators have improved.

Nonetheless, the MDGs galvanised a new level of commitment to development globally and have led to many

undoubted improvements, particularly in regard to access to clean water and improved health. There is hope, moreover, that building on lessons since 2000 the post-2015 agenda will take a more holistic approach, based on the realisation that successful, inclusive development depends on much more than cash commitments and technical programs. Rather, the new agenda looks set to incorporate a wide range of targets linked to messier problems related to equality, good governance, civil empowerment and peace.

There will also be a greater focus on the concept of sustainability, as the agenda will incorporate the "sustainable development goals" that have been in formation in parallel as part of climate change negotiations. Progress toward aims like eradicating extreme hunger will not simply entail ensuring that enough people have food in 2030,

Politically smart aid should be wary of fast-tracking the state's monopoly over developmental affairs until there is a truly responsive government in place.

but will also involve assurances that agricultural methods are sustainable enough to ensure food security is maintained for decades.

However, largely because of this added complexity, there are still huge questions about what the agenda will look like. Current proposed frameworks have included up to 17 goals and 169 targets (compared with the MDGs' simpler eight and 21), leading to concerns that they will become less universally appealing and discourage the widespread commitments needed. Key to the coming months of

planning will be striking the right balance between covering all the important issues while maintaining the catchiness and graspability that helped to generate widespread support for the MDGs.

The new aid paradigm in Myanmar

Until 2011, Myanmar was largely isolated from both international aid and commerce, both by its own government and Western sanctions. Though the country has met a few targets within a few of the MDGs – such as gender equality in school enrolment and access to clean water – it looks unlikely to achieve any of the goals in their entirety by the end of 2015. This failure has been common across countries affected by conflict, authoritarianism and political fragility: As the UN has reported, "no low-income fragile or conflict-affected country has achieved a single [full] MDG". This demonstrates that the challenge in Myanmar is largely a political one, and will not be addressed by the aid community simply providing funds and technical support.

Nonetheless, with its international relations now normalised and no shortage of developed countries looking to invest in the country, Myanmar will be considered a prime target for the post-2015 agenda. This comes at a time when the country is undergoing a much broader shift in its relationship with international aid. Prior to 2011, the meagre assistance that was received generally went to civil society, community-based organisations and entities linked to various opposition movements, including exile and ethnic national networks.

Today, in line with key international accords, aid is being geared increasingly toward strengthening the state's ability to provide basic services and facilitate economic growth. At the same time, this aid is designed and packaged in line with agendas set by donor countries and intergovernmental bodies. This leads to a somewhat paradoxical balance of global and local priorities, where broad concepts and policy directions are devised in Europe and the United States before



A woman sits among dried plants in a village in Magwe Region, in the heart of Myanmar's

being tailored into national-level strategies inside the country by the government alongside foreign agencies and consultants. Though the specifics remain in question, this kind of process will likely take place in 2016 to plan Myanmar's approach toward the post-2015 goals. Based on the international framework, the government will be assisted to produce a "national stakeholder report" for aid programs to be based around.

A focus on strengthening government capacity, often called "statebuilding", is particularly strong in aid policy frameworks for fragile and conflict-affected developing countries. This approach works on the understanding that the foundations for peace and prosperity are found in the existence of a responsive central government, and thus development aid must be centred on building the state's reach and capacity. Such an agenda is also considered crucial to global efforts to achieve integrative security and economic prosperity, which depend on close cooperation between well-functioning, authoritative states.

The importance of a strong civil society

For some, Myanmar represents a model candidate for "statebuilding", as its once-pariah leadership has shown unprecedented willingness to cooperate on economic reforms, getting to grips – almost overnight – with the aid lexicon and embracing development partners from all corners of the earth. Without the right precautions, however, the risk remains that aid will be delivered in an increasingly top-down manner driven by the priorities of Myanmar's autocratic leaders or even those of donors, undermining local agency.

While there is no doubt that the aid committed prior to 2011 was insufficient, it played a crucial role in fostering the rapid growth of civil society, building on impressive forms of social organisation that had grown out of communities as a result of decades of government neglect. The vast women's, youth, religious and other community-based networks, and the robust civil society organisations that partner with them, still represent a

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Views

ment agenda

oversight will be crucial to progress in Myanmar



central dry zone. Photo: Yu Yu

monopoly over developmental affairs until there is a truly responsive government in place. Furthermore, aid should be structured to encourage steps in this direction, building capacities for accountable, responsive and participatory governance where there are genuine gaps, while adding a degree of conditionality to disbursements of funds that test the government's commitment to meeting its people's needs.

Similarly, aid actors should be wary of fostering an aid environment dominated by international agencies. International organisations are taking an increasing percentage of the aid available in Myanmar, quite often acting as intermediaries - taking the bulk of overheads - while local partner organisations still carry out much of the implementation. While international organisations can bring certain skills, these are often implicitly prioritised over the crucial attributes of local organisations, such as contextual knowledge and trusting relationships with communities. This risks subjugating civil society actors that have been the fabric of Myanmar's social development while precluding local ownership of development processes. At the same time, international organisations have the funding to pay much higher salaries for national staff than local organisations, leading to a brain drain effect that weakens civil society further.

While the post-2015 agenda will present unmissable opportunities for the country's development, it will come at a fragile time. Considerations should be made to ensure civil society has a central role in the development, implementation and oversight of post-2015 strategies, complementing the roles of the state and international agencies. This will be central to ensuring the impacts are inclusive, sustainable and contribute to the country's ability to take development into its own hands.

.....
Kim Jolliffe is an independent researcher, specialising in security, development and humanitarian affairs in Myanmar.

core local capacity that should be at the heart of the country's progression, both in implementing development, and on keeping checks on the state and external actors.

Meanwhile, state development activities are - with the exception of specific services - largely carried out by the ministries of home affairs and border affairs. These are military-run and staffed, and tend to lack the will and capacity to operate in an inclusive and responsive manner. There are further complications in conflict-affected areas, where the state has most often been experienced as a violent and predatory intruder, and where ethnic national organisations have at times established more effective administrative and social service structures.

While the emergence of a strong and responsive state will be crucial to Myanmar's development and prosperity in the long term, aid agencies will need to be patient and appreciate the many political processes under way. Politically smart aid should be wary of fast-tracking the state's

Burn down the boats: New PM Jokowi shows he's no pussycat



ROGER MITTON

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LAST month, the Indonesian navy captured three Vietnamese fishing boats and blew them up. A fortnight later, two boats from Papua New Guinea were sunk. Soon after, a pair of Thai boats met the same fate.

That's pretty brazen: seven vessels sunk in barely three weeks. No clemency. Caught illegally fishing in Indonesian waters, the crew marched off, and the boats set ablaze and blown up.

Indonesia's new president, Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, clearly means business when he says he'll use "shock therapy" to curb the rampant maritime encroachment by foreign ships.

His tactic is especially impressive, given that most of the boats belong to fellow ASEAN countries who never thought that the always-smiling Mr Jokowi would ever do such a violent thing.

Somehow a perception had grown that the neophyte president was something of a soft touch - or, at the very least, an easy-going man of the people who would elevate human rights to the top of his agenda.

Fuggedaboutit. Unlike his aloof and rather smarmy predecessors, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Megawati Sukarnoputri, who both loathe each other, Jokowi is actually nice in a personal sense.

But he also knows that nice guys don't win battles. So, in a political and strategic sense, he is neither nice nor a soft touch, and he has used his first months in office to prove it.

As well as the audacious ship-sinking policy, he has ended a moratorium on capital punishment and authorised the execution by firing squad of five inmates on death row.

And he broke a 15-year tradition

and shocked Indonesia's human rights community by not naming a civilian as defence minister, but instead chose Ryamizard Ryacudu, a hardline and widely feared former army chief.

Ryacudu not only lauded troops convicted of murdering a noted Papuan independence advocate, he also tried to sabotage the Aceh peace accord and intensify military operations there.

President Jokowi, however, clearly views him as a strongman who will guard Indonesia's territorial integrity, both from internal and external threats. Of course, many of Jokowi's fervent admirers have been mortified at these moves and even independent commentators have chastised him.

Carlyle Thayer, a respected regional analyst, said, "Indonesia's new president could jeopardise bilateral relations and ASEAN unity with his maritime 'shock therapy'."

The therapy, however, seems to have worked - at least according to Jakarta, which claims that instances of illegal fishing in Indonesian territory have plummeted since the ship-sinking episodes.

Jokowi also has another motive: namely, to establish his credentials as a leader firmly in charge of the region's powerhouse nation and to appease military and religious conservatives at home.

"It seems some of the human rights and justice questions have been turned over to hardliners in his administration," observed Sidney Jones, director of the Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict.

Some reports objected to the boat-scuttling on the grounds that while foreign boats were fishing illegally, "Indonesia hardly 'loses' much, since the foreigners only are taking what Indonesian fishermen cannot."

This curious argument was not helped by asserting that "the answer to Indonesia's inability to protect its vast archipelago is hardly to apply such severe punishment to the foreigners violating its waters".

That doesn't wash with Jokowi, who argues that the sinking of alien boats will "teach them a lesson, so they will give up poaching in Indonesian waters" - which, he claims, costs Jakarta about US\$20 billion a year.

As for upsetting ASEAN harmony, he retorts that "it is a purely criminal issue and has nothing to do with neighbourly relations".

In any case, similar action has been taken by other countries in the region, notably Australia, which instituted a rigorous practice of preventing refugee boats from landing on its shores.

And Malaysia acted even more callously to keep out Vietnamese boat people when the then-deputy prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, said they would "shoot on sight any Vietnamese illegal immigrants entering our waters. We will be harsh on them."

When his remarks provoked outrage, he claimed risibly that he had said "shoo" them away.

Thailand has arguably an even worse record, as evidenced by the litanies of Rohingya refugee boats that are towed back out to sea to face almost certain sinking and loss of life.

Perhaps unappreciated in the outcry over Jokowi's hardline stance are three key points. First, the authoritarian regimes in Bangkok or Hanoi have not publicly complained. Nor has any other ASEAN government.

Second, the public response, at home and across the region, has been largely favourable.

Third, while appeasing hardliners may have been a factor, Jokowi's greater rationale was to signal to China that Indonesia will not sit idly by if Beijing's infamous "nine-dash" line seeks to ensnare the Natuna Islands.

Last month, Indonesia also captured 22 Chinese boats that were fishing illegally in its territorial waters. So far, they have not been destroyed.

Frankly, it is unlikely they will be. Most observers expect the Chinese boats will be returned. After all, Indonesia may be the big boy in ASEAN, but next to China it is a piffling power and could face horrid retribution.

China is also Indonesia's second-largest trading partner, its major source of tourists, and an expanding investor, with both sides recently inking a comprehensive strategic partnership.

That said, apprehending the Chinese boats sent a clear message to Beijing to rein in its recalcitrant vessels - and it further confirmed that Jokowi is no pussycat.

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Business

MPT flexes in telco fray as lower rate plan announced



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MPT announced new rates with its Swe Thahar plan on January 9, as the state-owned telco continues modernisation efforts against growing competition from Ooredoo and Telenor.

The Swe Thahar plan changes service charges and internet costs, as well as the fees for SMS and voice calls, and will start on January 12.

"Current customers can continue using their old MPT plan. The Swe Thahar MPT plan is a choice," said U Khin Maung Tun, MPT general manager.

KYAT

35

New per minute calling fee with MPT's Swe Thahar plan - though it's K10 above Telenor and Ooredoo

The new fees with the plan are K35 per minute for calls, K15 per SMS message and new rates for data - though the telco has already received criticism for not matching competitors' rates.

Mobile phone user Daw Aye Nyein Win said other operators charge K25 per minute for calling.

"I thank MPT for reducing call charges, but MPT should reduce

prices to the rates charged by other operators," she said.

MPT CEO Takashi Nagashima said prepaid customers who want to register for the new plan must send "SWE" by SMS to number 1332. It is also possible to unsubscribe from the plan.

Users of the new plan will also receive free services like call waiting, call forwarding and voice mail. It will also get rid of the previous K10,000 to receive internet access with a SIM.

MPT will also begin selling top-up cards in denominations of K1000 and K3000, and is trying to cover 70 percent of Myanmar by the end of 2016.

The plan covers only WCDMA and GSM customers, not CDMA customers. Mr Nagashima said CDMA users will also benefit from future plans, though some have criticised being left out of the process.

MPT CDMA user U Kyaw Tun said he is also an MPT user and should be able to access the new plan.

"MPT should reduce fees for CDMA customers, because we're MPT subscribers too," he said.

MPT was the country's sole mobile operator, and was often criticised for its service quality. In 2013 the government conducted an auction for two private telco licences which were ultimately won by Telenor and Ooredoo after dozens of firms competed.

The two foreign telcos began operating in the second half of 2014, bringing significant competition to a market that had previously been a monopoly.

During 2014, MPT also inked a joint operations agreement with Japan's KDDI and Sumitomo in an effort to help the firm modernise and compete in the increasingly competitive market.



MIC confirms disput



AUNG SHIN

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THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has confirmed the corporate income tax rate stands at 25 percent for companies registered under the Myanmar Companies Act or Myanmar Foreign Investment Law (FIL).

The statement follows several months of discussion between various government ministries that corporate rates for some projects such as offshore oil and gas ought to be 35pc.

Section 25 of the 2014 Union Tax Law said all income from foreign

investment was to be taxed at 35pc, though previous legislation has routinely pegged the rate at 25pc.

Some energy insiders say the dispute has held up signing of the Production Sharing Contracts for offshore blocks awarded last year, as oil and gas firms await clarity on what taxes they are due to pay.

MIC secretary U Aung Naing Oo said related ministries such as the Ministry of Finance had been invited to discuss the situation with the MIC, but no agreement was reached.

"That's why we asked for suggestions from the Attorney General's Office," he said. "It confirmed today [on January 7] that all FDI should be taxed at 25pc according to the law."

Investment entering under the

FIL law is taxed at 25pc, while non-FIL investment has a corporate tax rate of 35pc, according to a Myanmar tax update from legal firm DFDL released May 2014.

U Aung Naing Oo said the rate of 25pc will apply as per the law.

One senior official from the Ministry of Energy said international companies negotiating the terms of the Production Sharing Contracts had sent letters requesting official clarification from the ministry.

"International oil and gas companies got noisy due to the 35pc tax issue," he said. "We passed the issue on to the MIC for their input."

Four of the 20 PSCs for offshore blocks have been signed, with the rest due to be signed soon.

The Ministry of Energy official said foreign companies that really

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Fish farm flap over fees to make use of agricultural land

BUSINESS 26



Lots to do if Yangon is to be "saved", say experts

PROPERTY 34

Exchange Rates (January 9 close)

Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1210	K1220
Malaysia Ringgit	K307	K308
Singapore Dollar	K774	K780
Thai Baht	K31	K32
US Dollar	K1036	K1039

IN PICTURES

Photo: Zarni Phyo



The HAGL construction project on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road seen rising into the night sky. Yangon's supply for office space is set to significantly increase once the project is finished.

Barriers for bond popularity as Central Bank plans auction



AYE THIDAR KYAW

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THE Central Bank of Myanmar plans to begin auctioning government bonds on January 28 to support government spending programs, but bankers say the investments may be a tough sell.

Central Bank deputy governor U Set Aung said it will follow international standards when it begins selling treasury bonds later this month, aiming to fund part of the national debt through the auction. Maturity dates and interest rates have not yet been released.

While advocates of the process say it is important for nation-building, past treasury bond offerings have been met with a lukewarm reception. Bankers say previous government attempts to issue treasury bonds have been hit by high domestic interest rates and little capital readily available to purchase bonds.

The rate on normal bank deposits at leading banks is 8.25 percent.

Banking industry insiders say previous treasury bonds had similar rates of 8.75pc for two-year bonds, 9pc for three-year bonds and 9.5pc for five-year bonds.

Banks also do not often have excess capital available to purchase bonds, and for many, raising capital means accepting deposits at a minimum 8.25pc interest rate.

"So the plan for the bond auction is unlikely to be smooth," said Asia Green Development Bank executive director U Soe Thein.

There have been attempts at building a treasury bond market since 1993, though the interest rates offered with the bonds were generally unattractive, he said. Only a few banks bought large quantities of bonds.

"Potential buyers will ask questions

about how much liquidity and demand is in the market. Although bond buyers can then sell them to others or use them as collateral for a bank loan, it is important to ensure there is enough liquid capital to make purchases," he said.

The benefits of buying treasury bonds are not certain, said Co-operative Bank managing director U Pe Myint.

"The government is borrowing money from people, but people will not buy bonds if they are not profitable," he said.

Although banking industry insiders are tepid in their enthusiasm toward the treasury bond market, experts have said it is an important step for Myanmar to take.

'For the sake of Myanmar's financial and economic future, one must hope they can pull this off.'

Sean Turnell
Economist

The International Monetary Fund urged the Central Bank to start a treasury bond market as part of its Article IV consultations in October 2014. At the time, officials said the market would need attention, and an important step is converting old government debt into marketable treasury bonds with competitive interest rates for a range of maturities.

"The lack of enthusiasm amongst the local banks is understandable. All that they say about the uncertain nature of these new financial instruments is true, and the banks are familiar with the historical practices of forced bond purchases," said Sean

Turnell, an economist at Australia's Macquarie University.

"However, and all that said, developing proper debt instruments and a market for them has to start sometime, and hopefully that is indeed what we are seeing. The people behind these developments are skilled and sincere I think, and for the sake of Myanmar's financial and economic future, one must hope they can pull this off," he said.

U Set Aung said the first step is to implement the treasury bill auction, and the second step to develop an inter-bank treasury bill market. He has also said there are plans to ease restrictions on bank interest rates once the foreign bank licences are finished.

Non-bank organisations and individuals were formerly able to buy treasury bonds of various denominations, from K10,000 to K10 million, through Myanma Economic Bank branches and Myanmar Security Exchange Centre since 1997.

The upcoming sales are to start on January 28, when details of interest rates and volumes will be released, said one Central Bank official.

The government is planning to sell about 10pc of its debt value, he added.

There will be no international rating from rating agencies on the bonds, as it is a promissory note for the domestic market only, though the government stands behind the value, he said.

Winners of the auction will be the bank that can bid for the large quantity at the lowest rate. While it may appear this means only the biggest banks can win, the official said the excess liquidity of a bank is the most important factor in determining what firm should make a purchase.

"The main theme is to appear near the rates driven by the market," he said. The Central Bank is also mindful of trying to keep rates in line with market conditions to avoid unnecessary inflation.

ed tax on FDI

wanted to invest would sign even with tax rates of 35pc. "But in terms of business models, international companies cannot agree to all sorts of immediate changes as they have a long-term model," he said.

The corporate income tax is only one of the various taxes and fees that must be paid by oil firms. Once the PSCs are signed, companies must pay data fees, signature bonuses and other costs for development. After production begins, other fees kick in, including the corporate income tax.

The Ministry of Energy official said there has been a large dispute on the issue between various government ministries, showing a lack of cooperation between different parts of the government.

"It is not good for the image of the country if it changes its policies so quickly and is not consistent," he said.

International oil giants declined to directly comment on the dispute on rates, but said they are keen to see the PSCs inked.

"Shell understands and respects that each country has its own approach and processes in managing their natural resources. We are looking forward to signing PSCs soon," said a spokesperson of Anglo-Dutch energy firm Shell.

Foreign direct investment into Myanmar totaled US\$6.3 billion from April 1 to December 31 period last year, 50pc more than the previous year's total figure of \$4 billion.



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Got something to say?
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Fishers are not amused by the need to pay fines. The fish probably has other things on her mind. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Fishermen petition vice president to end fines for fish farms

**ZAW HTIKE**

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FISHERIES businesspeople are calling for the repeal of a fine levied against agricultural land used for other purposes.

The fine of K1 million (US\$964) an acre is preventing fish farmers from expanding their businesses, hampering the industry's export growth, said Myanmar Fishery Federation general secretary U Win Kyaing.

Fishery farmers face a double standard, where officials are pushing for more industry investment but hampering it by making it difficult to acquire land, he said.

The previous land law required land designated as agricultural to be used only for farming paddy. This changed with the latest land law was passed on March 31, 2012, which allowed all types of crops to be planted on agricultural land - though not fish farms.

U Win Kyaing said the policy of fining businesspeople who use land for other purposes is generally reasonable, pointing to petrol stations, factories and home-building as businesses which already have large investments.

Fish businesspeople, however, struggle with capital in what is a low-margin business, according to U Win Kyaing.

"Even now we are struggling to continue operating our businesses - how can we pay that large a fine?" he said during an exclusive interview. "If we have to pay this, many farms will collapse."

The Myanmar Fishery Federation has submitted a proposal to the government through vice president U Nyan Tun asking for an exemption from the fine for fish farmers that properly follow the other regulations.

"Though our fish farms are not in line with the new land law, under the previous government [fish farmers] began obtaining official permits," said U Win Kyaing.

The 1989 Fishery Act was intended to help develop a fishing industry. Previously there had only been about 6300 acres used for fish farms, but many more opened in the Act's wake.

Fish have been one of the country's main exports, though figures have dropped over the past few years.

There are now 450,323 acres dedicated to fish farms, according to statistics from the Ministry of Fisheries, Livestock and Rural Development.

Farmers estimate only about 10 or 15 percent of these farms have received the proper permits, while the remainder did not and will be forced to pay the fine.

'Our ministry needs to consider the fact that the country's food security is not complete only with rice.'

U Win Kyaing
Myanmar Fishery Federation

Many of the farms are small-scale, comprising no more than 4 or 5 acres, making it difficult for them to pay.

"It's true there are many large-scale fish breeders, but on the other hand there are many small-scale fish farmers struggling with difficulty to survive," said U Win Kyaing.

Farmers also sometimes transition flooded paddy land to fish ponds, particularly in Ayeyarwady, Yangon and Bago regions, he added.

U Win Kyaing also said officials

from the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation said fish breeders are not as poor as paddy farmers, so should pay the fines.

"Flooded land is already of low quality for agriculture," said U Win Kyaing. "And fish farms make more money than growing paddy - so it is good for both farmers and the country."

"Our ministry needs to consider the fact that the country's food security is not complete only with rice. It needs other products like meat and fish," he said. "If we don't have good sources of fish products, what will the people eat?"

U Tadoe Aung, deputy general secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation's Settlement and Land Records Department, said that fines of misused paddy laws are given out following the guidelines of the 2012 Land Law.

"Management committees for land use in the various regions and states are monitoring this issue," he said.

"According to the law, if you use agricultural land for other uses, you have to pay fines. We are handling this issue in accordance with the law," he said.

Although it is the Myanmar Fisheries Federation that is most vocally pushing for change, others would also like to see land use policies modified.

U Thein Aung, chair of the Myanmar Freedom Farmers League, said many farmers want to do more with their land than simply use it for crops.

"I think the land law has many weak points," he said. "It does not allow farmers to use land as they wish. Farmers want to combine our agribusiness with other industries like fish breeding or livestock."

"The government doesn't allow us to use flooded fields as fish farms, but they allow rich people to set up factories or industrial areas on paddy-growing land near motor roads."

U Thein Aung said it is common practice for farmers to set up small-scale fish farms to help generate additional income.

Gear shift for car importing policy

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YANGON Regional government has somewhat eased a surprise restriction on importing vehicles that was announced late last year.

On December 18, the region's supervisory committee for car imports announced in state-owned newspapers that would-be car importers must obtain a recommendation letter from their Township Administrative Officer declaring they have room to park each vehicle.

The committee subsequently announced that vehicles imported under a substitution scheme, which sees old vehicles replaced with new imported models, will not be required to obtain the letter proving a parking space.

Although the follow-up announcement was dated on January 1, it did not come to light until January 6, said U

'I don't think there are many people who turned over their car in 2014 ... and have not yet imported another.'

U Soe Htun
Automobile dealer

Aung Than Win, chair of the Myanmar Automobile Trade Association.

"The Ministry of Commerce did not issue permits for vehicles imported using the substitution scheme until January 6. They said they didn't receive an announcement letter - so we didn't dare to believe whether it was actual policy," he said.

The ministry confirmed the change in policy on January 7, and began issuing permits to these importers without requiring the proof of parking space, said car dealer Ko Zaw Wait.

"It's a fair policy, because we're getting rid of an old car and replacing it with a new import, so there's no need for an additional parking space," he said.

However, so far the policy has only been extended to importers who turned over their old car to the government in 2014 - meaning those planning to hand over their old vehicle starting in January will need to show proof of a parking space despite already owning a vehicle.

"I don't think there are many people who turned over their car in 2014 to the government and have not yet imported another - maybe around 100," said U Soe Htun, chair of the Myanmar Automobile Manufacturers and Distributors Association.

Some dealers say all importers who receive an import permit from turning in an old car should have authorities waive the requirement to show a parking space.

"Importers turning in old vehicles aren't getting a fair chance," said U Aung Than Win.



Eucalyptus seedlings grown in a Mandalay lab. No word yet if they've tried out koalas. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Eucalyptus moves south

SI THU LWIN

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THE time is ripe for fast-growing eucalyptus trees to be planted in lower Myanmar, according to industry officials.

There are existing plantations of the tree in Shan State as well as Sagaing and Mandalay regions in upper Myanmar, though Great Wall Company aims to bring them to farmers in Ayeyarwady Region,

along with Kayin and Mon states.

"Eucalyptus can generate more income than other crops, and farmers from lower Myanmar are interested in growing it," said Great Wall managing director U Tin Maung.

The trees can be sold as firewood or used for pulp and paper, plywood and furniture. It is superior to indigenous trees as eucalypti grow at a high average annual rate of 1.5 cubic metres, he claimed.

U Tin Maung said Great Wall plans to sell seedlings for K120 a tree. The company will provide technical assistance for growing them and then purchase timber

from the farmers.

Some farmers claim to have success with the tree.

Eucalypti can be pruned for lumber every four years, or about 15 times during their 60 year life cycle, U Tin Maung claimed.

U Soe Myint, a farmer in Madaya township, Mandalay Region, said he planted eucalyptus in 2010 as a trial and was able to make his first harvest in 2014. He added his revenue was several times larger from eucalyptus as from other crops.

"I plan to expand eucalyptus plantations, while still growing other crops," he said.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



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Little glitter foreseen for gold

Precious metal market likely to be quiet in 2015, as gold closes out a disappointing year on local markets

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GOLD prices muddled through last year at low rates, and local dealers say they are anticipating more of the same in 2015.

Strength in the US dollar kept downward pressure on gold in international markets last year, particularly in the last quarter of 2014, though gold on the local market saw a slight uptick in value.

Gold traded for between K650,000 and K670,000 a tical (1 tical is 0.576 ounces or 0.527 troy ounces) on local markets for most of 2014, though in October it fell to lows of K630,000, according to dealers.

Local traders say the domestic market precious metal is dependent on two main factors - the international price of bullion, and the US dollar-kyat exchange rate, as international gold is usually priced in dollars.

On international markets, gold posted an annual decline of about 1.5pc in 2014 as gains in the US economy signaled prospects for higher interest rates, cutting demand for the metal as store of value.

On January 8, gold futures for delivery in February cost US\$1208.50 an ounce on the Comex in New York.

Meanwhile, local prices ended 2014 at K663,500 a tical, a moderate 2.2pc increase on the K648,000 it traded for on January 1, 2014, according to industry website naungmoon.com.

"Sometime the world gold price goes up and nothing happens to the local price, because the [kyat-dollar] exchange rate is unfavourable," said U Zaw Aung, owner of Teit Sein gold shop. "Though local gold prices mostly follow international prices."

The kyat lost about 6pc of its



Salespeople handle gold at a Yangon shop. Photo: Zarni Phyo

value against the US dollar last year, though experts have said this was based more on the greenback's international strength rather than weakness in Myanmar's currency.

Unless an international event prompts a lift in world gold prices

or local inflation starts to get out of hand, traders anticipate a quiet market for the metal in 2015. Still, gold has several attributes that other assets such as property do not have.

Gold trader U Nay Myo Htet said many businesspeople appreciate holding gold as it is easy to sell.

"If someone wants to immediately buy a new house and the banks are closed, this can cause difficulty," he said. "So it can be easier to do business with gold rather than through bank savings."

Local traders have also discussed setting up a dedicated gold market as early as this year. It aims in part to make the precious metal available to international traders from within Myanmar.

Myanmar Gold Development public company officials and local bankers have visited Beijing and Hong Kong to study how international gold markets operate.

"We are trying to set up a gold exchange this year, similar to the Yangon Stock Exchange," said U Kyaw Win, senior vice president of Myanmar Gold Development and owner of the U Htone gold shop.

"It's an ongoing process, and we need to study how other countries' markets work in terms of banking as well as rules and regulations," he said.

U Nay Myo Htet said if the market works out, it will make it easier to invest in gold. It can also help guarantee trust in the market.

- Additional reporting Bloomberg

THOUSAND
K663

Price of gold per tical - or 0.576 ounces - as of the end of 2014

Oil price prompts PTT plans to change

THAI state-owned energy firm PTT Exploration and Production has changed how much capital it will spend on projects over the next five years, according to a statement.

The firm has adjusted its five-year investment plan as the world oil price fluctuates. International benchmark Brent crude fell to US\$50.52 a barrel on January 6, the lowest since April 2009.

PTTEP says its revised plan calls for about \$24.3 billion in capital and operational expenditures over the next five years. Investment will reach \$4.8 billion in 2015, with 80 percent flowing to projects in Thailand and the rest of Southeast Asia. Some 20pc of the total is to fund Myanmar projects.

"The fluctuating global oil prices have inevitably impacted our operations, forcing us to adjust our 5-year investment plan," said PTT president Tevin Vongvanich in a statement.

PTTEP plans to spend on existing and new projects in Myanmar. It aims to invest to maintain production levels of its Zawtika project and develop block M-3, as well as study three onshore blocks - PSC G, EP-2 and MOGE-3 - and offshore blocks MD-7 and MD-8.

"We will closely monitor movement of crude oil prices. If prices fall below our projection, we have a room to adjust investment budget downward in order to maintain our liquidity and performance," he said.

PTTEP has been in Myanmar for 25 years, operating a number of oil and gas projects. A press release last year said it planned to invest \$3.3 billion in the next five years in Myanmar.

Although PTT has adjusted its investment plans due to falling oil prices, it expects to boost its global sales volumes by 6pc in 2015 compared to 2014, to 343,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day from its gas projects. The firm singled out Zawtika, an offshore Myanmar project, as well as assets in Thailand and Algeria, as fueling the increase.

-Aung Shin



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MANDALAY

Jade jitters at market after poor 2014



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AFTER a bad 2014, anxious Mandalay jade dealers are predicting an even worse 2015.

A shortage of quality stones coming to market, reduced interest from China and continued fighting in jade-rich Kachin State are the main reasons, according to the traders.

Mandalay jade dealers are largely dependent on interest from Chinese buyers for their products, though dealer Ko Soe Nyunt said sales had been falling for much of the past year.

"Last year had record poor sales, mainly because of the scarcity of [quality] stones," he said, also pointing to armed skirmishes in Kachin State, the main source for jade.

Chinese traders, once enthusiastic buyers, have also been conspicuous by their absence. "The market is cool when they don't come. This is the hardest year for the jade market. Investment has dried up," he said.

Ko Zaw Naing, a sliced jade dealer, said traders could no longer forecast how the market would turn

out. Interest in the Nay Pyi Taw gem emporiums fell last year, and market restructuring was inevitable.

"We have jade, but we can't sell at a profit. The market is dominated by Chinese traders, and they won't give us a fair price," he said.

China has also conducted a high-profile crackdown on its own corrupt officials, which some are blaming for falling interest from the country's buyers.

"The jade market is directly concerned by Chinese policy," said Ko Zaw Naing.

Ko Min Min, a dealer in cut and polished stone, said last year jade would go for between K300,000 and K500,000, but the picture for 2015 was dark. "Only 1 percent of traders can sell at last year's prices, and that was the worst year ever," he said. "Gem traders can't handle these low prices, and the market is getting worse."

Jewel trader Ko Kyaw Swar said last year's sales were flat as Chinese traders stayed away from the Maha Aung Myay gem trading centre, which specialises in sliced jade, jade bracelets, cut and polished jade, and jewellery. Those who did come bid so low the traders wouldn't sell. And even jewellery traders who took their wares to Ruili, a border city in China that is also called Shweli, did poor trade.



Mandalay jade traders are not optimistic about the 2015 market. Photo: Hlaing Kyaw Soe

"Traders in the Ruilli jade market aren't buy any more jewellery because they are already holding so much. They can't get a fair price for it. So it was a

wasted journey for us," he said.

Gem broker Ko Min Min Latt said some traders were looking for a new line of work after going days without

a sale. "Many gem brokers are moving to other business. It's getting hard to make ends meet," he said.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

Small industry branches expanded

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THE Small Scale Industry Department at the Ministry of Cooperatives has begun blanketing every state and region in the country with offices, according to director U Swe Tint.

There are existing offices in Mandalay covering upper Myanmar and in Yangon covering lower Myanmar, but the expansion, which starts January 1, aims to better cover the country.

The new branch offices are intended to help create job opportunities and raise incomes by helping private small-scale industries in each region to develop manufacturing capacity.

"The offices we are setting up will provide more effective support in other regions and states," said U Swe Tint.

'Once the branch offices are open, officials can be more hands-on.'

U Swe Tint
Small Scale Industry Department

Department staff nearly doubled since May, from 577 to 1149 employees.

U Swe Tint said the expansion would support the development of small-scale industries in the country's regions. "So far, it has been head office that has been offering training and providing technology for small enterprises," he said.

However, localised officials will be more familiar with local difficulties and opportunities. "Once the branch offices are open, officials can be more hands-on," he added. - Translation by Emoon

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SHANGHAI

Xiaomi bites into Apple

WHEN the charismatic founder of upstart Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi took the stage at an internet conference, he was open about his ambition: world domination.

"In the next five to 10 years, Xiaomi has the opportunity to become the world's number one smartphone company," Lei Jun told the Chinese-organised World Internet Conference.

Xiaomi, which takes its name from the Chinese word for millet, has excelled in China's cut-throat smartphone market by delivering high-performance products at cheap prices.

In less than five years, the Chinese company has become the world's number three smartphone vendor, behind only Apple and South Korea's Samsung, shipping 17.3 million phones in the third quarter of 2014, according to International Data Corp (IDC).

Xiaomi claims sales of more than 61 million smartphones last year, up 227 percent from 2013, with turnover more than doubling to \$12 billion.

But critics say the firm has simply copied the look of Apple's iPhones, thriving because of weak intellectual property protection in China.

Apple has never taken legal action against Xiaomi, but in a veiled reference to the firm, the US giant's senior design vice president Jony Ive has called similarities between their products "theft", the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

A spokesperson for Xiaomi's marketing department said: "We hope these biased people can put down their tinted glasses, examine Xiaomi's practices and experience our products and then make a fair appraisal."

'Millet and rifles'

Beijing-based Xiaomi has come from nowhere, growing from a 2010 start-up in Zhongguancun - China's "Silicon Valley" - to a company valued at \$45 billion after its latest funding round in December, when the founder of e-commerce giant Alibaba, Jack Ma, was among the investors.

Like Apple founder Steve Jobs, Mr Lei, 45, has a fondness for black tops and jeans, and he told a panel at the Internet conference in Wuzhen in November: "In this magic land, we

produced not only a company like Alibaba, but a small miracle like Xiaomi."

A serial entrepreneur and angel investor, he has a string of successful companies and investments, including software developer Kingsoft and online retailer Joyo.com which was bought by Amazon.

Explaining why he chose the name Xiaomi, Mr Lei has said, "We want to conquer the world using millet and rifles," using a phrase coined by Chinese leader Mao Zedong.

The second character "mi" can also stand for mobile Internet or "mission impossible" in English, he added.

One analyst called Mr Lei "the last but most important ingredient for the success of Xiaomi".

The firm has scooped up talent from Microsoft, Motorola and Yahoo, with president Lin Bin and global operations vice president Hugo Barra hailing from search-engine Google.

'In this magic land, we produced not only a company like Alibaba, but a small miracle like Xiaomi.'

Lei Jun
Founder of Xiaomi

Apple pie

In China, Xiaomi ranks second with a 13.5pc share of the domestic smartphone market, according to consultancy Analysys International. Samsung is first with 15.4pc and Apple lags at 6.9pc as of the second quarter last year, the latest available figures.

Xiaomi initially left alone the "high-end mobile phone market dominated by Apple and Samsung", said Zhang Yi, chief executive officer of China-based iMedia Research, and took on "the vast middle- and low-end markets not satisfied by other domestic phone makers".

It created a user-friendly interface based on Google's Android operating system, he said, "seized the growing trend for mobile internet in China and topped its peers with high-performance but low-priced products".

Xiaomi's devoted users are indifferent about accusations of imitation.

"I don't mind whether it is really copying Apple. Xiaomi's user experience is pretty good and I won't buy an Apple because of high prices," user He Ling said.

Xiaomi's high-end Mi 4 lists for \$410 with 64 GB of memory, less than half the \$998 Chinese retail price of a comparable Apple iPhone 6. Its newly-launched Redmi 2 budget model is only \$115.

For its part Apple's products are popular in China, but it has faced problems in the massive market, only linking up with the country's biggest mobile phone service provider in late 2013.

Last year's iPhone 6 launch in China was nearly a month later than other major markets as Beijing delayed regulatory approval and called for improvements in security of personal data.

Indian pickle

But while Xiaomi is a major player in China, analysts say that patent issues and low brand recognition outside its home market are obstacles to the international expansion necessary to realise Lei's dream.

"What remains to be seen is how quickly the company can move beyond its home territories to drive volumes higher," market intelligence provider IDC said.

Xiaomi has launched products outside mainland China in Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as Southeast Asia, but the company suffered a setback in India.

In December, Sweden's Ericsson won a court order blocking sale of Xiaomi devices in India over patents, Bloomberg News reported.

Wang Jun of Analysys International said, "Even if Xiaomi were able to sort out all of its intellectual property problems in overseas markets, it would still take years for it to overtake Apple's market position." - AFP

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IN PICTURES

Photo: Bloomberg

Pedestrians walk through Singapore's central business district. Singapore's prime office rents are set to post their biggest increase in at least four years in 2014, and may extend gains this year in a supply-constrained market.

NEW DELHI

Indian official sacked after 24-year sick break

AN Indian public official has been sacked for taking leave 24 years ago and never returning to his desk in the country's notoriously work-shy bureaucracy, the urban development ministry said on January 7.

Assistant executive engineer AK Verma went on leave in 1990 after joining India's central public works department (CPWD) a decade earlier.

Mr Verma defied bosses' orders to return to work after his requests

for additional leave were denied, but it took until 2007 for formal dismissal charges to be brought against him, the ministry said in a statement.

Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu ordered his dismissal in order to "streamline the functioning of CPWD and to ensure accountability", it said.

India's civil servants have long been notorious for arriving late, taking long lunches or spending

parts of their day on the golf course.

A 2012 survey by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk consultancy rated India's bureaucracy as the worst among major Asian countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he was shocked by what he saw in the corridors of power after moving to New Delhi following his landslide election victory in May last year.

During his first few months in

office, Mr Modi developed a reputation for paying unannounced visits to government offices.

Fear of being caught playing truant triggered a rise in attendance levels among civil servants and Delhi's main golf course has reportedly been largely deserted on week days.

Mr Modi has said he aims to implement wide-ranging economic reforms after taking office in India last year.

- AFP

IN BRIEF

Heineken plans East Timor plant

Dutch brewer Heineken said on January 8 it will begin building a beverage plant in East Timor this year that will manufacture a range of drinks including beer, soft drinks and water, according to a statement.

The company said it had signed an agreement with the East Timor government to build the facility, which will require an investment of between US\$30 million and \$45 million, according to a press release issued from Singapore.

- AFP

Dunkin' plunges into China

Dunkin' Brands entered a franchise agreement to add more than 1400 Dunkin' Donuts restaurants in China in the company's largest development agreement ever.

A joint venture of Jollibee Foods and Jasmine Asset will open and operate the restaurants as franchisee, Canton, Massachusetts-based Dunkin' said.

The company already has 16 restaurants in China and more than 2200 in its Asia-Pacific region. - Bloomberg

Hanoi devalues the dong

Vietnam's central bank said it would devalue the dong currency in a bid to contain inflation and bolster economic growth.

The State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) will devalue the reference rate by one percent to 21,458 Vietnamese dong per US dollar to "control inflation and ... push up economic growth", it said in a statement. The move - the second devaluation in eight months - is "in accordance with the developments of the domestic and international financial markets, creating a solid stability for the forex market", the SBV said. - AFP

Malaysian banks consider deal

CIMB Group and RHB Capital are considering changing the terms of a proposed US\$12.9 billion merger that would create Malaysia's largest banking group, people with knowledge of the matter said.

RHB investors may oppose the all-stock deal after CIMB shares tumbled 24 percent as of December 8's close since the transaction was announced in October, said the sources.

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SINGAPORE

Big chance for Asia from cheap oil

Gas-guzzling economies to get a shot in the arm from declining prices, while indebted governments can unwind subsidies, according to experts

THE plunge in crude prices will give a much-needed boost to Asia's oil-guzzling economies and provides governments a "golden opportunity" to implement crucial structural reforms such as cutting expensive energy subsidies, analysts say.

A slowdown in the key export markets of Europe, China and Japan, the end of US stimulus measures, and an expected US rate hike - fuelling a flight of foreign cash in search of better returns - has left some governments having to make tough decisions to get back on track.

But experts say lower oil prices would ease inflationary pressures throughout much of Asia, allowing many central banks to either keep monetary policy on hold or reduce interest rates.

And the Asian Development Bank last month said developing countries could see an additional 0.5 percentage point of growth on average this year if oil prices remain low.

However reforms are needed, analysts say, and among the most crucial and controversial is the removal of fuel subsidies, which in the past been the catalysts for sometimes violent protests across the spectrum, from the impoverished to the region's growing middle class. While global equity markets are being strafed by a continuing slump in the prices of black gold - they have fallen more than 50pc since June to five-and-a-half-year lows - analysts said countries should grab the opportunity

and move now. Malaysia, Indonesia and India have already made cuts to the populist but economically disastrous subsidies, which have contributed to government fiscal deficits.

Shang-Jin Wei, chief economist at the Manila-based ADB, said in a statement that easing oil prices "present a golden opportunity" for oil-importing countries to introduce the reforms.

And Rajiv Biswas, Asia Pacific chief economist at global consultancy IHS, warned if they fail to move, leaders "will miss the window of opportunity and face public resistance to removal of fuel subsidies if oil prices strengthen significantly in future years".

Previous efforts in Indonesia to slash fuel subsidies sparked violent protests, but the country's new president Joko Widodo has vowed to tackle the problem despite risks to his popularity. Mr Widodo, who took office in October, wants the money diverted to overhauling infrastructure and helping the country's poorest.

An attempt by former Indonesian president Suharto to reduce the subsidies triggered riots that helped end his three-decade dictatorship in 1998.

India also experienced similar protests in the past when it tried to cut the subsidies - diverted government funds used to artificially keep fuel prices low.

Removing the payouts allows market forces to determine prices and free them from political manipulation.

The softer crude prices will also provide some respite for the region's



McClintock No 1, the world's oldest continually producing oil well, seen in 1915, is still going after 153 years, quietly churning out about one-10th of a barrel each day. Photo: Bloomberg/ Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

oil-reliant economies, facing global headwinds from slowing in their key export markets.

Mr Biswas said "most of the Asian economies are large net importers of oil and gas, and will benefit from lower oil import costs and significantly reduced fuel costs for consumers".

"This positive boost helps to mitigate the negative effects of China's moderating growth rate and Japan's

slump back into recession in late 2014," he said.

Analysts expect India, Asia's third largest economy, to be a major beneficiary as it imports nearly 80pc of its oil.

Like China and South Korea, the lower prices should keep inflation in check and allow the central bank to implement much-needed interest rate cuts with less fear of stoking inflation.

Among the top winners is the

airline sector, while shipping and energy-intensive heavy manufacturing industries such as steel will benefit across the region.

Shukor Yusof, founder of Malaysia-based aviation research firm Endau Analytics, said jet fuel accounts for about a third of airline operating costs in Asia.

"You're likely to see airlines posting profits for the fourth quarter of 2014 and for this coming quarter," he said.

"Given the trend in falling oil prices, we should see a corresponding correction in air fares as well."

However, oil and gas exporters including Malaysia and Brunei stand to take a hit.

With petroleum-related earnings accounting for 30-40pc of Malaysian government revenues annually, the ringgit currency has fallen almost 11pc against the US dollar over the past six months as oil prices sank.

Malaysia in October forecast economic growth of 5-6pc for 2015, but the World Bank projects the expansion at 4.7pc due in part to lower oil prices.

And there could be further falls in the oil price from the present levels of \$47.90 for West Texas Intermediate and \$50.82 for Brent.

Daniel Ang, an investment analyst with Phillip Futures, said he expects WTI to hit bottom at \$46 and Brent to hover at \$50-\$53 in the second quarter of this year.

But Mr Ang and other oil market watchers say further price falls to below \$40 would not surprise them. -AFP

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PATH, an international nonprofit organization, currently seeks qualified candidates for the **Program Advisor** position (01) in our Yangon office.

The PATH program in the Mekong is currently implementing a broad portfolio of activities on a range of health issues. This includes work on vaccine and immunization, nutrition, reproductive, maternal and child health, and infectious diseases. PATH is seeking to locally recruit:

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For full job descriptions and information on the application process, please visit the jobs section of the PATH website (www.path.org).

Deadline for on-line application submission: **January 21st, 2015.**



The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Myanmar is seeking for qualified applicants to fill the following position:

- 1) **Associate Field Officer (P-2)**
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- 2) **Senior Field Assistant (GL-5)**
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- 3) **Field Associate (Shelter) (GL-6)**
(UNOPS Contract – LICA, Sittwe)
- 4) **Senior Field Assistant (GL-5)**
(UNOPS Contract – LICA, Maungdaw)
- 5) **Driver (GL-2)**
(UNHCR Contract – Temporary Appointment, Myitkyina)

Closing date: **20 January 2015**

The detailed Terms of Reference for these positions are available on request from UNHCR offices in Yangon, Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Sittwe, Myitkyina, Bhamo, Mawlamyine, Hpa-An, Loikaw, Dawei and Taungoo.
www.unhcr.org



European Commission
DIRECTORATE GENERAL HUMANITARIAN
AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION OFFICE - ECHO
Yangon - Myanmar

Vacancy Announcement – Programme Assistant (1) Post

The European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection (ECHO), funds relief operations for victims of natural disasters and conflicts outside the European Union. For humanitarian aid, the Commission works with about 200 operational partners, including United Nations agencies, the Red Cross/Crescent movement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Aid is channelled impartially, straight to victims, regardless of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

ECHO Office in Yangon recruits **ONE Programme Assistant** for an initial period of one year.

The following requirements must be fulfilled by the candidate:

- A relevant university degree or equivalent professional experience
 - Minimum 5 years of relevant experience at national or international level in supporting programme / project operations, including at least 2 years of experience with NGO, donor or (inter)national organisation
 - Solid knowledge of the humanitarian aid context in Myanmar
 - Good knowledge of international humanitarian organizations
 - Excellent written and oral communication skills in Myanmar and English
 - Able to work under pressure and tight deadlines
- In addition, applicants must have the following experience and qualifications:
- Practical experience in project/programme management; analysing, monitoring, reporting and evaluating
 - Willing and fit to carry out regular missions across the country
 - Sound judgment, flexibility and adaptability, cultural sensitivity and effective team participation

This vacancy is opened for all Myanmar nationals or holding valid work permit. Applications including cover letter, detailed CV, copies of academic and employment certificates of the interested candidates should be sent to:

ECHO-Administration.Yangon@echofield.eu

Application should be clearly mentioned as: **Application for the post of Programme Assistant at ECHO Myanmar** and must be received in ECHO office not later than

26 January 2015 at 17:30.

Only the short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Any form of canvassing, soliciting or influencing will be treated as a disqualification.

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Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Jeremy Mullins | jeremymullins7@gmail.com

Deal for property website

MALAYSIA-BASED Frontier Digital Ventures will invest an undisclosed sum in two Myanmar web-based startups, including a property site, according to a press release.

The investments in Myanmar-CarDB.com and iMyanmarHouse.com come as skyrocketing internet penetration and mobile phone adoption is making Myanmar a potentially high-growth market for digital businesses.

"Hong Kong and US companies have made contact with us," said U Wai Yan Lin, CEO of MyanmarCars-DB.com. "But Frontier Digital Ventures has expanded its presence in emerging markets like Myanmar to invest in an automotive and a property site. They are very interested in Myanmar. So we made a business partnership with them."

iMyanmarHouse.com managing director U Nay Min Thu said Frontier will provide not only capital but also know-how.

— Ko Ko Aung



IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

Investigators work at the scene where scaffolding collapsed in a construction site at Tsinghua High School in Beijing on December 29. The scaffolding collapse at the school killed 10 people and injured four.

Correction Notice

With reference to our previous cautionary notice in the name of **Gallothai Co., Ltd.**, dated December 22, 2014, on Page No. 42 of the Myanmar Times in connection with the trademark "CHOCOCITY Design," Reg. Nos. 5995/2011 and 13197/2014, please be advised that the correct address of this company is **No. 16** (not No. 11, as shown in the publication on December 22, 2014) Soi Prasertsit, Sukhumvit 49-14 Road, Klongton Nua, Wattana, Bangkok 10110 Thailand.

U Kyi Naing, LL.B., LL.M., (H.G.P.)

For Gallothai Co., Ltd.

Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd. No. 1608,

16th Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road,

Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com, Dated: 12th January, 2015

Yangon's future prompts expert call to action

Heavy development is taking a toll, and must be conducted properly if Yangon is to thrive in the years to come, according to experts at the Save Yangon Forum



MYAT NYEIN AYE

myatnyeinaeye11092@gmail.com

THERE is no question development is arriving in Myanmar's largest metropolis. The swift pace of change has already begun reshaping Yangon, and the city is teeming with more people and buildings than ever before.

Urban areas are bursting at the seams from this influx, which shows few signs of slowing down. Questions swirl as to whether the city will be able to cope as it continues to grow.

Yangon has about 5.2 million people - meaning about 10 percent of people in Myanmar live in the city. Around one-third of all Myanmar residents of urban areas come from Yangon, said Daw Hlaing Maw Oo, an urban planner from the Department of Housing Development and Human Settlement.

Yangon's initial infrastructure was based around the six downtown townships. It has since expanded to 33 townships, in every direction from the original city.

Population density is already high in the city, and it shows no signs of slowing down, she said at the 'Save Yangon Forum' held at the end of December.

In 1989, downtown Yangon had a population density of about 450 people per hectare (1 hectare is about 2.47 acres). By comparison, Bangladesh's capital Dhaka is one of the most densely populated cities in the world, with 555 people per

hectare.

Even the more remote Yangon townships boast these kind of population densities, while some of the densest communities now have over 1000 people a hectare.

"We have been conducting conservation work on Thiri Street in Sanchaung township," said Daw Hlaing Maw Oo.

'Children under five are showing rising incidents of breathing trouble. It's a sign we need to correct urban living before it gets worse.'

U Win Myo Thu
EcoDev Myanmar director

"The population density is horrible - in one particular hectare there are 1452 people. This is much worse than Dhaka. Among the townships in Yangon, Sanchaung is likely the worst."

Growing population density not only can make living uncomfortable, but causes stress on the infrastructure supporting the city, such as roads, sewers and electricity.

One particular danger is the density of buildings. Yangon is increasingly crowded, but new buildings are not being added in a systematic way, said Daw Hla Su Myat, execu-

tive from the Association of Myanmar Architects.

Government rules call for inclusion of empty space around buildings, particularly high-rises. However, often these provisions are avoided, meaning buildings end up too close together.

"That can cause more danger from fire and traffic jams," she said.

Yangon's initial infrastructure was based around the six downtown townships. It has since expanded to 33 townships, in every direction from the original city.

There is also a problem of rapidly disappearing public space. Land is often being set aside for high-rise buildings and retail shops, leaving little room for citizens to exercise outdoors.

EcoDev Myanmar director U Win Myo Thu said shrinking public space negatively affects public health.

"Children under five are showing rising incidents of breathing trouble. It's a sign we need to correct urban living before it gets worse," he said.

Water supply also continues to be a challenge. Salt water often seeps into those relying on wells, given Yangon's proximity to the ocean, said Daw Than Than Soe, a retired urban planner. She pointed to Hlaing Tharyar township as an area particularly afflicted by the problem.

Yangon may be rapidly expanding, but experts agree there are a host of problems afflicting the city. Solutions won't come easy, and will require close work between citizens and the government.

Still, experts say they have a common message - "Please save Yangon."



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“Developing proper debt instruments and a market for them has to start sometime, and hopefully that is indeed what we are seeing.”

- Sean Turnell, economist

Thailand impeachment trial begins for Shinawatra

WORLD 43

Yangon Region unveils low-cost housing plans



NOE NOE AUNG

noeaeag@gmail.com

YANGON Region has set aside K100 billion (US\$97 million) to build 10 affordable housing projects in the 2015-16 fiscal year, according to a senior official from the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development.

The funds are to be combined with other capital to build lower-cost housing developments in Yangon as well as Patheingyi and Mawlamyine cities.

Plans - including building designs and cost estimates - are already in the works, and private companies will be invited to participate in an open tender in the next few months.

“It will adhere to a policy of ‘No profit - no loss’ from the government’s side,” he said. “Actually, the funds will not cover all 10 projects, which will create a total of 18,000 affordable units. We will build a few buildings first and sell them, using the funds to build the next one,” he said.

Each project should take about two years to build, with seven of the projects in Yangon and the other three in Ayeyarwady Region and Mon State.

It is too early to decide the exact price the units will be sold at, though the projects will be on government land, so land prices won’t be factored in.

Prices will be determined from the construction costs as well as water and electricity supply charges, aiming for an affordable price that ensures the government also doesn’t lose money.

It is likely the units will be sold for about K10 million each, as construction is anticipated to cost about K7.5 million per unit and infrastructure hook-ups an additional K2.5 million.

The move to build these units follows a mid-2014 announcement from the Ministry of Construction that it

aimed to address a shortage in low-income units, not just in Yangon but also regional cities.

The department claims to have completed 98 affordable housing projects in Yangon from 2013-14, with another 294 under way in Yangon and 79 in Mandalay, Monywa and Magway cities.

The official said there are plans for hundreds more projects, targeting middle-income people, such as civil servants and staff workers.

“There will be more affordable housing in the future,” the official said.

Interested buyers will be called once the projects are completed.

Generally, large numbers of applications are accepted, with a lucky draw determining which applicants will be able to purchase a unit, the official added.

Fast facts on the 10 projects

Yangon

Dagon Seikkan township
35 buildings of 18 storeys,
10,080 total apartments
South Dagon township
4 buildings of 6 storeys,
384 total apartments
Thingangyun township
10 buildings of 6 storeys,
240 total apartments
Mingalardon township
76 buildings of 8 storeys,
2592 total apartments
Thanlyin township
40 buildings of 6 storeys,
1440 total apartments
Hlaing Thar Yar township
52 buildings of 5 storeys,
1000 total apartments
40 buildings of 6 storeys,
1920 total apartments

Nearby

Patheingyi, Ayeyarwady Region
7 buildings of 3 storeys,
336 total apartments
8 buildings of 4 storeys,
192 total apartments
Mawlamyine, Mon State
12 buildings of 4 storeys,
176 total apartments

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Undulating view in Golden Valley

This house has a lovely view. Well, many of the houses investigated by *House of the Week* have a lovely view, but this one was particularly spectacular.

From its front balcony the view is gorgeous rolling foliage all the way to Shwedagon. In fact, the view was so nice there was serious consideration in replacing the photo of the house with a photo of the view.

However, this is not *View of the Week*, and the home itself has a lot going for it as well. Besides the pleasant view, it offers equally enjoyable surroundings to kick back and relax - until the weekend comes and you can host a party.

It’s a foreign-infused home, though with excellent use of wood as a decoration in the interior. The building is three storeys tall, with four large bedrooms and everything else you’d need for a large family.

There is also 7200 square feet of outdoor space for outdoor activities, when the weather cooperates.



It also boasts a good location in Golden Valley. Prices are negotiable, but it’s a fine option - particularly if you’re keen on a great view.

- Tin Yadanar Htun

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Dated: 12th January, 2015

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Phone: 372416

Dated: 12th January, 2015

Airfare hike for security



CATHERINE
TRAUTWEIN

newroom@mmtimes.com



EI EI THU

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TICKETS for flights to and from Yangon International Airport were quietly slapped with a surcharge beginning late last year to pay for an initiative designed to streamline passenger arrivals.

The Myanmar Advance Passenger Processing System (MAPPS) will screen passengers flying into and out of the country’s international airports to check on boarding eligibility before people get on planes. The program, which increases ticket prices by US\$3.25 each and began rollout at Yangon International Airport on November 30, aims to cut down on cases of inadmissible travellers to Myanmar, boost security and ease arrivals at the airport.

“Passenger pre-screening” occurred at Immigration or when non-Myanmar citizens attempted to get visas, according to U Ye Htut Aung, Department of Civil Aviation director of aviation security. MAPPS “allows the Myanmar Government to issue interactive directives to the airline check-in agent to board or deny boarding of passengers”, he told *The Myanmar Times* by email.

The Advance Passenger Processing (APP) system comes from Australia, where it was established in 1998. It is also used by New Zealand, Bahrain, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and UAE. While Myanmar will be the first ASEAN country to integrate APP into its border security procedures, Malaysia and Thailand both intend to put the system into practice, according to U Ye Htut Aung.

The National Aviation Security Working Group “formalised” an APP Task Force at the beginning of 2014 to run the program, with members from government organisations such as DCA, Immigration, Myanmar Customs, and the National Police, according to U Ye Htut Aung.

As a system, MAPPS starts when people check in for flights. It utilises passenger information like a flyer’s name, birth date and nationality – so-called biometric identity details – and determines in real time whether passengers will be barred from boarding or bid welcome, U Ye Htut Aung explained.

The program aims to nip a few problems in the bud, as the DCA director said it helps airlines earn fewer fines, which are imposed for letting inadmissible passengers get to Myanmar, and shaves down overhead connected with these travelers.

Augmenting security and easing travel seem the program’s main priorities. “MAPPS aims to improve security through enhanced threat analysis and detection,” U Ye Htut Aung said.

Global current events seem to have provided motivation for the system’s rollout. U Ye Htut Aung pointed to the Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and a United Nations Security Council Resolution whose 9th Item “calls upon member states to require that airlines operating in their territories provide advance passenger information to the appropriate national authorities in order to detect the departure from their territories, or attempted entry into or transit through their territories”, according to its text.

Meanwhile, U Ye Htut Aung said the system will make getting through airports simpler. “[MAPPS] ... expedites the processing of air passengers who pose no or little risks,” he said. “It has been experienced by other governments that passenger processing at border points can be expedited after having implemented APP.”

Whether a passenger gets the green light will be “based on set of confidential business rules determined by the APP Task Force”, U Ye Htut Aung said.

Admitted entry or not, customers are paying for the new initiative as costs of putting the system in place

‘[The cost] is unacceptably high compared with what other countries are using.’

Industry insider

– \$3.25 per ticket – have been passed on to consumers.

One industry insider claimed the project’s cost seemed singular in its steepness.

“[The cost of the initiative] is unacceptably high compared with what other countries are using,” the person said.

But Chris Mosebach of the Myanmar Aviation Centre called the fee fair, so long as the APP initiative incorporates technology and services and puts the system to work against human trafficking, money laundering and other organised crimes as planned by its implementers.

“If you have additional software behind it, that does screening and checks the documents against Interpol and other databases for abnormalities ... [then] the fee is quite reasonable,” Mr Mosebach said, noting it is fairly common for fees to get forwarded on to consumers.

Myanmar Airways International started with the APP system at Yangon International Airport on December 1, the firm’s marketing and public relations manager Daw Aye Mra Tha told *The Myanmar Times*.

“We just obeyed DCA’s rule to run with the APP system. We explained to the customers that the included tax cost is not our ticket price, so we haven’t had problems with passengers for that,” Daw Aye Mra Tha said.

The fee for the APP system will function in a similar manner to existing airport taxes, with the airlines directly paying DCA the fees collected from each ticket. It remains to be seen how DCA will deliver services for the prices increase, according to MAI.

“If this system would increase customer security, that is great,” said Daw Aye Mra Tha.

Myanmar has adopted a user-pay basis to fund the implementation and operations of APP, in the same manner as Australia, New Zealand, the US and Canada, as well as nations in the Middle East and Europe, said U Ye Htut Aung.

Australia’s Department of Immigration has been providing support for Myanmar’s border control policies and passenger processing.

In November the two countries’ immigration organisations signed a memorandum of understanding announcing a five-year plan to aid Myanmar with immigration and border control, according to U Ye Htut Aung.



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– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

PANGKALAN BUN

Black box signals aid Air Asia search

PING signals believed to be from the black box data recorders of crashed AirAsia Flight 8501 were detected on January 9, a senior Indonesian search official said, offering strong hopes of explaining the disaster.

"A ship detected the pings. The divers are trying to reach it," said SB Supriyadi, who is stationed at the search headquarters of Pangkalan Bun.

"The location of the ping is reported to be near where the tail was found."

The plane crashed into the Java Sea on December 28 during stormy weather as it flew from the Indonesian city of Surabaya to Singapore, claiming the lives of all 162 people on board.

Stormy weather has slowed multinational efforts to find the wreckage of the plane and determine why it crashed.

The black boxes are regarded as crucial to explaining the cause of the disaster, as they should contain recordings of the pilots' final words and general flight data.

The black boxes are designed to give a ping signal for 30 days after a crash so that the recorders can be found.

The tail of the plane, where the black boxes were housed, was discovered on January 7 partially buried in the seabed 30 metres (100 feet) underwater. But no pings were initially detected.

Search officials then focused their efforts on and around the tail, believing the black boxes should be there unless they had been dislodged.

Dozens of elite Indonesian military divers have tried but failed to thoroughly search the tail area because of strong currents and the fact it is partially buried in the seabed.

Mr Supriyadi said divers would continue searching underwater to track the pings to the black boxes.

"Today's search was really hampered by strong currents," search and rescue agency chief Bambang Soelistyo told reporters in Jakarta after a day of repeated but fruitless probes to the tail.

Divers travelled by rubber boat

from the KRI Banda Aceh warship that was being stationed close to the site of tail wreckage.

Mr Soelistyo said retrieval experts would try to lift the tail off the seabed, using special airbags or a crane.

Mr Soelistyo said the other top priority was the search for bodies, with just 43 found by January 9.

Many of the others are believed to be inside the wreckage of the plane's main cabin, which has not been found.

All but seven of those on board were Indonesian.

The search, involving US, Russian, Chinese and other foreign military assets, was being conducted from Pangkalan Bun, a town on the island of

'The location of the ping is reported to be near where the tail was found.'

SB Supriyadi
Search official



Members of the Indonesian Navy prepare equipment to be lowered into the water from the vessel KRI Banda Aceh during operations to lift the tail of AirAsia flight QZ8501 from the Java Sea on January 9. Photo: AFP

Borneo which has the closest airstrip to the crash site.

The Indonesian meteorological agency has said weather was the "triggering factor" of the crash, with ice likely damaging the engines of the Airbus A320-200.

But a clearer explanation is not possible without the black boxes.

Indonesian authorities also said the plane was flying on an unauthorised schedule when it crashed, and AirAsia has since been suspended from flying the Surabaya-Singapore route.

Indonesia's transport ministry said on January 8 that it had fired one transport official and disciplined several others in a crackdown following the crash.

It was expected to announce on January 9 the results of a deeper investigation into how the flight was able to depart without permission.

AirAsia Indonesia has declined to comment on allegations it violated its permits.

The airline is a joint venture involving Malaysia-based budget carrier AirAsia, which previously had a solid safety record. — AFP



PARIS

Police shoot dead as global terror

FRENCH forces killed the two brothers behind the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo* and an Islamist ally on July 9 after three blood-soaked days that left 17 other people dead and shook the nation to its core.

Police were still hunting for another suspect, the girlfriend of one of the men, hours after the fiery showdown with the gunmen who had kept France on edge since killing 12 people on January 7 at the offices of the satirical weekly.

The heavily armed brothers were cornered in a small town northeast of Paris while a third man took terrified shoppers hostage in a Jewish supermarket, where four died and seven were hurt including three police officers.

Explosions rang out at sunset at the two hostage sites as police moved in.

As France's bloodiest week in decades drew to a close, the mood began to turn to one of grim national reflection.

President Francois Hollande said he would attend a march of unity in Paris on January 11 which was expected to draw hundreds of thousands of people as well as the leaders of countries including Germany, Britain, Italy and Spain.

Questions were also mounting over how the three men, brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi, and supermarket gunman Amedy Coulibaly, had slipped through the security net after it emerged that all three were known to the intelligence agencies.

Coulibaly's girlfriend Hayat Boumeddiene, who was wanted by police in connection with the killing on January 8 of a policewoman, was

still on the loose.

With fears spreading in the wake of the attack, the United States warned of a global threat, telling its citizens to beware of "terrorist actions and violence" all over the world.

Mr Hollande, meanwhile, warned the threats facing France "weren't over".

He described the attack on the supermarket as an "appalling anti-Semitic act" and said, "These fanatics have nothing to do with the Muslim religion."

The Kouachi brothers were cornered in a printing business in Dammartin-en-Goele outside Paris on January 9 after a firefight with police that Paris prosecutor Francois Molins said left Said with a minor neck wound.

The brothers took the manager hostage, later releasing him after he helped Said with his wound, while a second man hid beneath a sink upstairs, said Mr Molins.

The second man was able to text security forces information from inside the premises, a source said, and survived the assault unharmed.

The gunmen had a hefty cache of arms including Molotov cocktails

'These fanatics have nothing to do with the Muslim religion.'

Francois Hollande
French president

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Sri Lanka's president concedes election defeat

WORLD 40

Shinawatra faces court in Bangkok

WORLD 43



Philippine miracle procession draws 5.5 million

WORLD 44

IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP



A woman holds a *Charlie Hebdo*'s front page reading "Love stronger than hate" during a gathering at the Place de la Republique in Paris, on January 7, following an attack by unknown gunmen on the offices of the satirical weekly. France's Muslim leadership sharply condemned the shooting at the Paris publication that left at least 12 people dead as a "barbaric" attack and an assault on press freedom and democracy.

PARIS

'I saw horror,' recalls journalist

WHEN a masked gunman burst into the *Charlie Hebdo* editorial meeting shouting "Allahu akbar" and fired off a hail of bullets, journalist Laurent Leger threw himself behind a corner table and hid as horror unfolded around him.

The journalists were wrapping up their weekly meeting when they heard what sounded like "fireworks" outside, said Mr Leger, one of few survivors of the bloodbath. He looked like a member of the special forces, "he was masked, dressed all in black, he was holding his weapon with both hands," Mr Leger told France Info radio.

He said the gunmen called out "Charb!" the name of editor-in-chief and cartoonist Stephane Charbonnier who was living under police protection after receiving death threats for the

magazine's provocative content mocking Islam.

"And then the shooting started, the smell of gunpowder ... By chance I threw myself behind the table and he didn't see me ... A few seconds, and everyone was on the ground," he said, adding the gunman had shot at random.

Mr Leger said that as the satirical *Charlie Hebdo* team were "jokers," he at first thought it may be some kind of a prank. But the reality quickly sank in as one by one his colleagues crumpled to the ground, while the veteran reporter huddled tightly in his hiding place.

"I saw the others on the ground, the sound of explosions, then suddenly there was silence. A long silence."

Mr Leger said he heard footsteps and realised the gunman was returning. He heard the man ex-

change a few words with someone else and realised there were two attackers.

"I thought they were going to walk around to find survivors," he said. But they were unable to walk around the cramped room and left.

When the coast was clear he and others who were not hit got up to try and help their colleagues.

"I saw a lot of blood, I saw half the editorial team on the ground," he said. "I saw horror. I still don't know how I managed to escape."

Mr Leger said it was "important" to publish the next edition.

"I don't want it to be an issue about death. I want a magazine on the challenge to exist, to say things, to fight against idiocy, against human stupidity, against all fundamentalism." - AFP

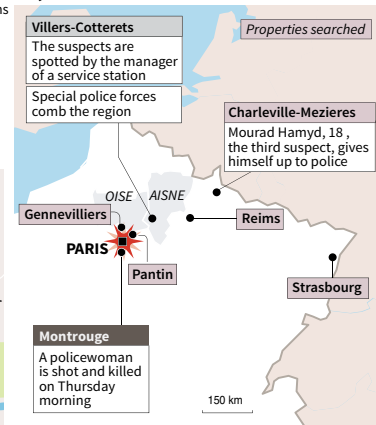
The massacre

7 January 11:30
Two masked men carrying heavy automatic weapons open fire at satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo
11 people are killed
"We have avenged the prophet! Allahu akbar" (God is great)
While making their escape they shoot 3 times at policemen at the scene, killing one officer They hijack a motorist and make their getaway



The manhunt

81,000 police mobilised



The victims

Director	Cartoonists				
Age: 47	Age: 76	Age: 80	Age: 57	Age: 73	Age: 60
Frederic Boisseau	Elsa Cayat	Mustapha Ourrad	Proof-reader		
Maintenance worker	Charlie Hebdo contributor				
Age: 42	Age: 54				
Bernard Maris	Michel Renaud	CHARLIE HEBDO			
Economist	Former journalist	• Founded in 1970			
Age: 68	Age: 69	• Received threats after publishing cartoons portraying Mohammed in late 2011			
Franck Brinsolaro	Ahmed Merabet	"I would prefer to die standing than live on my knees" (Charb)			
Policeman	Policeman				
Age: 49	Age: 42				

11 wounded, 4 seriously

d 'Charlie' killers warnings raised

and a loaded rocket-launcher. One witness described a terrifying face-to-face encounter with one of the suspects, dressed in black, wearing a bullet-proof vest and carrying what looked like a Kalashnikov.

The salesperson told France Info radio that one of the brothers said, "Leave, we don't kill civilians anyhow."

As French elite forces moved into place around the building, a fresh drama was unfolding in eastern Paris with a hail of gunfire around lunchtime.

There, Coulibaly stormed a Jewish supermarket hours before the Sabbath, killing four shoppers and taking others hostage.

A small group, including a three-year-old boy, survived hidden inside a refrigerator for five hours, with police pinpointing their location using their mobile phones.

Police swarmed to the Vincennes area, ordering terrified residents to stay indoors.

As the sun set shortly after 5pm local time, the two *Charlie Hebdo* gunmen charged out of the building with guns blazing before being cut down.

Shortly afterward security forces moved in on the supermarket, where Coulibaly had just knelt to do his evening prayer when the special forces struck.

BFMTV revealed police were able to exploit a lapse in his defences as he had not hung up his phone after speaking to one of their reporters.

A security source told AFP Coulibaly had also called friends from the scene urging them to stage fur-

ther attacks. Meanwhile, questions mounted as to how the three men could have slipped through the security net.

As the drama reached its climax, links emerged showing the brothers and Coulibaly were close allies and had worked together.

Mr Molins, the prosecutor, said Coulibaly had "threatened to kill all the hostages" if police moved in on the Kouachi brothers, and he had said the supermarket was booby-trapped.

All three had a radical past and were known to French intelligence.

Cherif Kouachi, 32, was a known jihadist who was convicted in 2008 for involvement in a network sending fighters to Iraq.

His brother Said, 34, was known to have travelled to Yemen in 2011, where he received weapons training from AQAP.

It also emerged that the brothers had been on a US terror watch-list "for years".

Cherif told French TV he was acting on behalf of the Yemen-based al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula while Coulibaly said he was a member of the Islamic State group.

Coulibaly, 32, who met Kouachi in prison, was sentenced to five years in prison in 2013 for his role in a failed bid to break an Algerian Islamist, Smain Ait Ali Belkacem, out of jail.

While the immediate danger appeared to have cleared, a chilling new warning came from AQAP whose top sharia official Harith al-Nadhari threatened France with fresh attacks, the SITE monitoring group said. - AFP

The suspects

Two brothers born in Paris

Cherif Kouachi
"Abou Issen"
Age: 32
Known jihadist
2008: Received a jail term for helping jihadists travel to Iraq

Said Kouachi
Age: 34
Less well known to the authorities

Islamic State radio: **لا إله إلا الله**
"Jihadist heroes have killed 12 journalists..."

The people's reaction

100,000 demonstrated on Wednesday
#JeSuisCharlie

January 8

- Day of mourning
- 12:00 A minute's silence throughout the country
- The Eiffel Tower's lights go out as a tribute to the victims
- Religious leaders call for unity

A call for National unity
French President Francois Hollande (right) with opposition leader Nicolas Sarkozy

International support

The attack is "cowardly and evil"

Pope Francis issued a strong condemnation of the "horrible attack"

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Dated: 12th January, 2015

COLOMBO**Sri Lanka's president concedes vote defeat**

MAHINDA Rajapakse has conceded defeat in Sri Lanka's presidential elections, officials said on January 9, after a bitter campaign that saw Asia's longest-serving leader brought down by allegations of corruption and a failure to bring about post-war reconciliation.

After the island's tightest presidential vote in decades, a top aide to Mr Rajapakse said the one-time strongman accepted the decision of voters who turned out in force on January 8.

"The president concedes defeat and will ensure a smooth transition of power, bowing to the wishes of the people," presidential press secretary Vijayananda Herath said, adding that the defeated leader had already vacated his main official residence in a symbolic gesture of defeat.

Official sources said opposition presidential candidate Maithripala Sirisena, a former minister who united a fractured opposition to pull off an unlikely victory, had an unassailable lead in results announced.

With nearly a third of the ballots officially declared, Mr Sirisena had 52.49 percent of the vote and Mr Rajapakse 46.21pc.

"The president has seen a clear majority for the opposition candidate and there is no way to overcome that," a source close to the outgoing president said.

Mr Herath said Mr Rajapakse had conceded defeat during a meeting with Ranil Wickremesinghe, who leads the opposition in parliament and who Mr Sirisena has said would be appointed as his prime minister.

Opposition lawmaker Harsha de Silva said transitional arrangements were being discussed with Mr Rajapakse, and that Mr Wickremesinghe had "guaranteed him and his family security".

Mr Rajapakse had seemed assured of victory when he called snap polls in November seeking an unprecedented third term, five years after crushing a violent separatist rebellion that had traumatised the country for decades.

But he has become unpopular in recent years, dogged by accusations of increasing authoritarianism and corruption, and a failure to reach out to minority Tamils after a decades-long civil war. Mr Sirisena's surprise decision to defect from the government and stand against him galvanised



Former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapakse attends a religious ceremony on June 22, 2014. Photo: AFP

disparate opposition groups.

Despite sporadic campaign violence including the death of one opposition party worker, the vote passed off largely peacefully, although there were some reports of intimidation in Tamil areas.

Police said they had made 175 election-related arrests, but described the polls as some of the most peaceful in Sri Lanka's recent history.

The president had come under international pressure after opposition reports that he was mobilising the military, with US Secretary of State John Kerry this week urging him to ensure the election was peaceful and credible.

The polls came days before a visit to the island by Pope Francis which some Catholic leaders had said should be cancelled in the event of violence.

Election monitors said large numbers of people had voted in the heavily militarised former war zones of the north and east, whose largely Tamil population had boycotted previous national elections.

The head of the Campaign for Free and Fair Elections Keerthi Thennakoon said before Mr Rajapakse's concession that the high participation could favour the opposition.

Tamils are Sri Lanka's largest minority, accounting for 13 percent of the population, and were in a position

to decide the election if the majority Sinhalese vote split between Mr Rajapakse and his main opponent.

Mr Sirisena was a relative unknown until he became the main opposition candidate, but his decision to run triggered a slew of defections and became a rallying point for disaffection with Rajapakse and his powerful family.

Mr Rajapakse won a landslide election victory in 2010, but critics say he failed to bring about reconciliation in following his crushing victory over the Tamil Tiger separatist group in 2009.

Mr Rajapakse had promised a judicial inquiry into allegations troops killed 40,000 Tamil civilians at the end of the civil war, although he had refused to cooperate with a UN-mandated investigation.

The 69-year-old president removed the two-term limit on the presidency and gave himself more powers soon after winning his second term.

Opposition figures accused the president of skimming large amounts of money from infrastructure projects funded through expensive foreign loans, often from China, his strongest foreign political and economic ally.

He is also accused of undermining the independence of the judiciary and has packed the government with relatives, sparking resentment even within his own party. — AFP

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Dated: 12 January 2015

**IN PICTURES**

Photo: AFP

Visitors walk in an ice maze at the China Ice and Snow World on January 4 on the eve of the opening ceremony of the 16th Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang province.

LAHORE

Execution halted after family pardons militant

AUTHORITIES in Pakistan's central Punjab province on January 8 cancelled the hanging of a convicted sectarian militant after the victim's family pardoned him, officials and a family member said.

The case is seen as a test of the government's plan to execute convicted terrorists in the aftermath of a school massacre that claimed 150 lives in the country's deadliest terror attack.

The stay of execution came as a roadside bomb killed four Pakistani security officials in a region where the military has been battling Taliban and al-Qaeda militants for more than a decade.

The pardoned militant, Ikramul Haq, is a member of banned Sunni militant outfit Lashkar-e-Jhangvi who was sentenced to death by an anti-terror court in 2004 for killing a Shiite Muslim three years earlier.

He was set to be hanged in the eastern city of Lahore early on January 8, but his family came to a deal with the victim's relatives the night before, Mr Haq's lawyer, Ghulam Mustafa Mangan, said.

Murder can be forgiven under Pakistani law in exchange for blood money, while rival militant groups may choose to pardon each others' convicted killers.

"The hanging was cancelled after we reached a compromise with the

complainant's family. They have pardoned my client," Mr Mangan said.

Under the compromise Lashkar-e-Jhangvi will pardon two Shiite convicts and Shiites will pardon three other Lashkar convicts languishing in different jails of Punjab for sectarian killings, he said.

Altaf Hussain Shah, a representative of local Shiite community, confirmed the deal.

Ehsanul Haq, brother of Ikramul Haq, confirmed the cancellation of the hanging.

A senior prison official also confirmed the move, adding, "A magistrate has recorded the statements and

'The hanging was cancelled after we reached a compromise with the complainant's family.'

Ghulam Mustafa Mangan
Lawyer for the condemned

the execution has been stayed. Now the court will decide whether the person [should] be acquitted or not."

Pakistan last month lifted a six-year moratorium on the death penalty in terror cases in the wake of the Taliban's horrific massacre at an army-run school in the city of Peshawar, and has so far executed nine people.

The attack on December 16 left 150 people dead, the vast majority of them children.

Pakistani officials have said they plan to hang 500 convicts in the coming weeks, drawing protest from international human rights campaigners.

Also on January 9, a roadside bomb ripped through a vehicle carrying three paramilitary troops and a policeman in the restive northwestern Kurram tribal district, highlighting the parlous state of security in the region.

"An improvised explosive device planted along the roadside went off as a vehicle of paramilitary Frontier Corps [FC] passed by, killing three FC men and one local tribal police official," a senior government official said.

The attack took place in the Thal area of the Lower Kurram tribal district along the Afghan border, which is rife with Taliban attacks and violence between Shiite and Sunni Muslims.

- AFP

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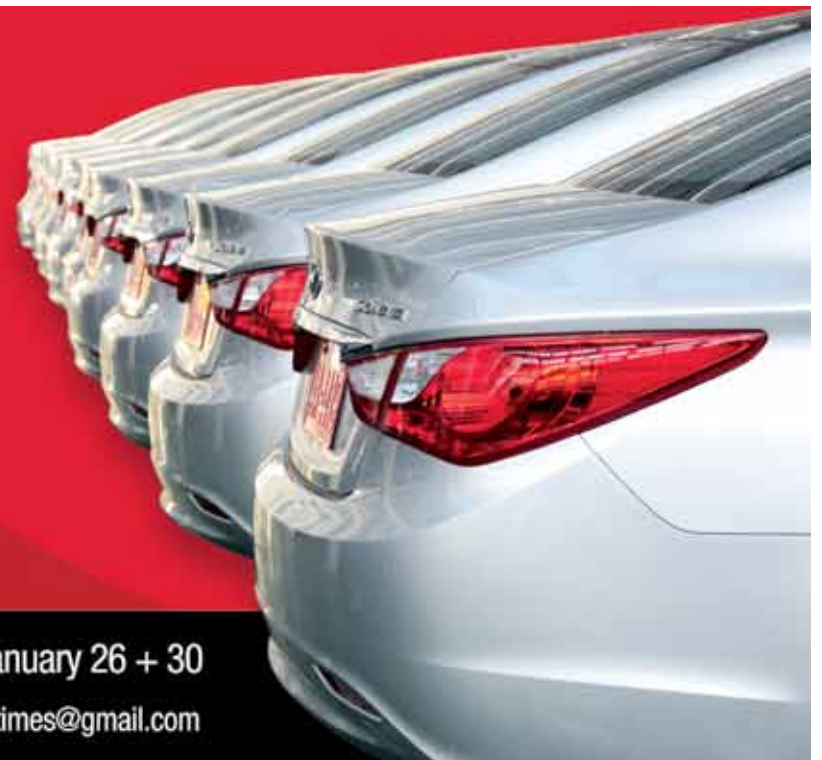
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BANGKOK

Shinawatra's impeachment trial begins

OUSTED prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra arrived at Thailand's military-stacked legislature on January 9 for the start of impeachment proceedings that could see her banned from politics for five years and reignite the country's bitter divisions.

Ms Yingluck, Thailand's first female premier and the sister of self-exiled former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, was removed from office by a controversial court ruling shortly before the army seized power in a coup on May 22.

She faces impeachment over her administration's loss-making rice subsidy program which, while popular among her rural power base, cost billions of dollars and was a driving force behind protests that toppled her government.

Analysts say the impeachment hearing is the latest attempt by Thailand's royalist elite to neuter the political influence of the Shinawatras, whose parties have won every election since 2001.

A guilty verdict from the junta-appointed National Legislative Assembly carries an automatic five-year ban from politics, but could also galvanise her family's "Red Shirt" supporters to protest after months of silence under martial law.

A smiling Ms Yingluck, dressed in a black suit and pink shirt, arrived at the hearing flanked by security and a handful of her party members.

Asked if she felt confident of being vindicated she replied, "Let's wait and see."

At the start of the hearing, National Anti-Corruption Commission commissioner Vicha Mahakhun said Ms Yingluck stood accused of dereliction of duty "causing gross damage to the country".

A successful impeachment needs three-fifths of the 250-strong assembly

'If they go all out against Yingluck ... they risk aggravating Thailand's political conflict.'

Thitinan Pongsudhirak
Chulalongkorn University

to vote in favour. A verdict is expected by the end of January.

Impeachment proceedings have already begun against the former parliament speaker who was a member of Ms Yingluck's toppled government and the former senate speaker.

Prosecutors are also in the process of deciding whether Ms Yingluck should face a separate criminal case over the rice subsidy scheme.

Ms Yingluck's supporters say the proceedings and the criminal charges are part of a wider campaign to cripple the Shinawatra clan and disempower their voters, who are drawn mainly from the poor but populous northern part of the country.

But the move is not without risks. A vote to impeach Ms Yingluck could stir the Red Shirts to protest, ending months of relative calm since the army grabbed power and imposed martial law.

Thai politics expert Thitinan Pongsudhirak said the impeachment proceedings pose "a dilemma" for the junta and their supporters.

"On the one hand they want to see her disqualified from Thai politics," said Mr Thitinan, who is director of the Institute of Security and International Studies at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

"But if they go all out against Yingluck - by pushing for a ban or criminal charges - they risk aggravating

Thailand's political conflict by stirring up the pro-Thaksin camp."

Ms Yingluck's billionaire brother Mr Thaksin, who was deposed as premier in a 2006 coup, sits at the heart of Thailand's deep schism, despite living overseas to avoid jail for a graft conviction.

He is loathed by the Bangkok-centred establishment, its supporters in the south and among the judiciary and army, but still draws deep loyalty in the north and among the urban middle and working classes.

Since Mr Thaksin swept to power in 2001, Shinawatra governments have been felled by two coups and bloodied by the removal of three other premiers by the kingdom's interventionist courts.

The Shinawatras' electoral dominance comes as concerns mount over Thailand's future once the reign of revered 87-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej ends.

The junta says Thailand needs a new constitution to end years of political turmoil and rid the kingdom of endemic corruption.

But critics say those crafting the charter are mainly anti-Thaksin figures seeking to erase his legacy and protect the interests of the elite, rather than create a robust political system to move the country forward.

- AFP



Ousted Thai prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra greets members of the media after facing impeachment proceedings by the military-stacked National Legislative Assembly at the parliament in Bangkok on January 9. Photo: AFP

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MANILA

Manila 'miracle' procession draws 5.5 million followers

AROUND 5.5 million barefoot devotees paraded a centuries-old icon of Jesus Christ through Manila on January 9 in the Philippines' biggest religious festival, held just before Pope Francis visits Asia's bastion of Christianity.

In fervent displays of devotion, huge crowds of men, women and children chanted "Viva! (Long live!)" as they marched on trash-strewn streets in light rain for the annual procession of the Black Nazarene.

"The Lord is my healer," Lina Javal, 58, declared after waiting in line for hours to kiss the life-sized ebony statue, showing an AFP reporter the healed incision from throat surgery she underwent last month.

"It's an extraordinary feeling. It's like the Holy Spirit is entering my body," said the clerk from nearby Laguna province.

The procession, got under way mid-morning after organisers took nearly two hours to control huge crowds surging dangerously toward the icon to rub white handkerchiefs against it.

Many Filipinos believe the statue holds miraculous healing powers and make lifetime vows to join the annual parade, many wearing T-shirts emblazoned with an image of Christ crowned in thorns.

Isko Moreno, the vice mayor of Manila city, told ABS-CBN television that about a million people took part at the start of the procession, and many more were waiting along a circuitous route through Manila's old quarter.

One man died when he suffered a heart attack near the statue, Johnny Yu, head of the Manila disaster office, told the television station.

Eight in 10 of the Philippines' 100 million people are Catholics, and the Black Nazarene festival is a display of the vibrance of the religion ahead



Devotees carry the image of the Black Nazarene to a carriage during an annual religious procession in Manila on January 9. Photo: AFP

of the papal visit which begins on January 15.

During his four-day trip Pope Francis will comfort victims of deadly Super Typhoon Haiyan in central Leyte island, and celebrate mass for millions in the capital's largest outdoor park.

First brought to Manila by Augustinian priests from Mexico in 1607, decades after the archipelago was colonised by Spain, the Nazarene statue is believed to have acquired its colour after it was partially burnt when the

galleon carrying it caught fire.

"I pray that the Nazarene continues watching over my grandson, that he is kept healthy," Manila laundry-woman Imelda Santiago, 62, said.

She carried the two-year-old boy, who is blind in his right eye, to the parade, shielding him from the rain with a blanket.

Construction worker Angelo Pamarca, 30, walked an hour to join the procession with his six-year-old daughter perched on his shoulders.

"I ask the Black Nazarene to

forgive my many sins and give me strength to resist temptation," Mr Pamarca said with a mischievous grin, declining to elaborate.

Aileen Amandy, 48, joined the parade with her teenage daughter to seek divine intervention in helping her children complete their studies.

"He always grants my prayers," Ms Amandy said, crediting the Black Nazarene with healing a son suffering from high fever and convulsions, and keeping another son, a policeman, safe from harm. - AFP

SEOUL

N Korea planning nuclear sub

RECENT satellite images offer fresh evidence that North Korea is developing a marine-based missile system that would give the state a survivable second-strike nuclear capability, a US think-tank said on January 9.

The commercial satellite pictures suggest the conning tower of a new North Korean submarine, first seen in July last year, houses one or two vertical launch tubes for either ballistic or cruise missiles, the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University said.

"The boat could serve as an experimental test bed for land-attack missile technology which, if successful, may be integrated into a new class of submarines," the institute said in an analysis posted on its closely followed 38 North website.

Development of a submarine-launched missile capability would take the North Korean nuclear threat to a new level, allowing deployment far beyond the Korean peninsula.

However, the institute noted Pyongyang possessed no such capability as yet and stressed that its development would be an extremely "expensive and time-consuming endeavour" with no guarantee of success.

North Korea's small submarine fleet is comprised of largely obsolete Soviet-era and modified Chinese vessels, but suggestions that it is experimenting with a marine-based missile system have been around for a while.

The South Korean Defence Ministry cited intelligence reports in September that Pyongyang was understood to be developing a vertical missile launch tube for submarine use.

'The boat could serve as an experimental test bed for land-attack missile technology'

US-Korea Institute

Ministry spokesperson Kim Min-Seok said the North's 3000-tonne Golf-class submarine could be modified to fire medium-range ballistic missiles.

And in October, a separate satellite image analysis by the US-Korea Institute identified a new missile test stand at the Sinpo South Shipyard in north-eastern North Korea.

The size and design of the stand suggested it was intended to explore the possibility of launching ballistic missiles from submarines or a surface naval vessel, the institute said.

While submarines carrying ballistic missiles could provide the North Korea with a survivable second-strike nuclear capability, the institute again stressed that Pyongyang was likely "years" from achieving the required technology. Although there is no doubt that North Korea has an extremely active ballistic missile development program, expert opinion is split on how much progress it has made.

In 2012, Pyongyang demonstrated its rocket capabilities by sending a satellite into orbit, but it has yet to conduct a test that would show it had mastered the re-entry technology required for an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM).

The other key question is whether the north will be able to miniaturise a nuclear device that could be fitted on the tip of a missile. In a white paper published earlier this month, the South Korean defence ministry said the North had already taken its miniaturisation technology to a "significant" level. - AFP

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BEIJING

China prosecutions for political offences soar

ALMOST 1400 people were prosecuted for political offences in China in 2013, the vast majority in secret, an advocacy group reported last week as the ruling Communist party continues a crack-down on dissent.

A total of 1384 people were indicted on charges of "endangering state security", an increase of 32 percent on the previous year, the US-based Dui Hua Foundation said.

It was the second-highest year on record for state security indictments, it said, behind only the 1407 of the year of 2008 when the figure was swollen by Tibetan protests.

Citing statistics from China's central prosecution office, Dui Hua also said 937 people were arrested in 2013, but it was not clear how many of them were included in the indictments figure.

Another US-based group, Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), issued a separate report on January 8 detailing the alleged torture and illegal detention of artists and activists in three Chinese cities.

The offence of "endangering state security" replaced that of "counter-revolution" in the 1990s, and is primarily aimed at suppressing political dissent, but also applies to espionage.

In recent years it has been applied to members of Tibetan and Uighur

minority ethnic groups who have demanded greater civil rights or spoken out against alleged government abuses.

Dui Hua said that the names of just 31 of the suspects were made public, adding, "A lack of transparency in endangering state security cases continues to be a serious hurdle."

The majority of those whose cases were known to Dui Hua in 2013 appeared from their names to be Tibetan or Uighur, despite such groups making up a small minority of China's population.

Since Xi Jinping became China's president in 2013 the Communist party has launched one of its toughest crack-downs on political critics in decades.

'A lack of transparency in endangering state security cases continues to be a serious hurdle.'

Dui Hua report

The number of arrests and indictments for endangering state security was around three times that of a decade ago, when Mr Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao took power, Dui Hua said.

The rise came despite authorities' increased use of non-political charges which would not count as endangering state security, such as "picking quarrels" and "running an illegal business", to prosecute dissidents.

China has also cracked down on fringe religious groups under Mr Xi, with official statistics showing 1554 trials in 2013 for membership or leadership of "illegal cults", a 60 percent rise year on year, Dui Hua said.

Figures for 2014 have not been released, but the year saw several high-profile state security cases, including Uighur academic Ilham Tohti, who was convicted of separatism and sentenced to life in prison. His conviction drew outrage from rights groups, who said he had been punished for his persistent moderate criticism of China's policies in the mainly Muslim far-west Uighur homeland of Xinjiang.

Separately, CHRD said in its report that four detainees - Wang Zang, Li Biyun, Sun Desheng and You Baofen - "have been subjected to torture and other ill treatment by police or prison guards" in recent weeks. - AFP

PHNOM PENH

Khmer Rouge trial suspended

A FORMER Khmer Rouge leader was hospitalised last week during his trial for mass murder, forced marriage and rape in the 1970s, forcing Cambodia's war crimes court to suspend the proceedings.

Judge Nil Nonn, president of the UN-backed chamber, adjourned the hearing on January 8 after the regime's ex-head of state Khieu Samphan, 83, complained of feeling dizzy and was sent to hospital for treatment.

He had begun the day in court alongside his defence team, but after brief testimony from a witness whose 12 family members were arrested and whose father was killed by the Khmer Rouge, Khieu Samphan complained of feeling sick.

"Khieu Samphan feels very dizzy and his blood pressure is very high,"

the judge said, adjourning proceedings.

Co-accused, Nuon Chea, 88, known as "Brother Number Two", was already following proceedings from his holding cell because of ill-health. Health fears have long hung over the tribunal, with the octogenarian defendants suffering from varying ailments.

Both men were given life sentences in August for crimes against humanity - the first top Khmer Rouge figures to be jailed from a regime responsible for the deaths of up to 2 million Cambodians from 1975-1979.

Their genocide trial - which kicked off in July - has been repeatedly delayed since mid-October after the defendants' lawyers refused to attend, demanding the disqualification of the trial judges and more time to file full appeal documents.

All lawyers for the defendants attended the January 8 hearing.

Both men face genocide charges for the killings of ethnic Cham Muslims and Vietnamese, as well as fresh counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes. They deny all charges.

The complex case against Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan was deliberately split into a series of smaller trials in 2011 in a bid to obtain a fast verdict against the two men, both of whom are elderly and frail.

The August convictions of the pair followed a two-year trial focused on the forced evacuation of around two million Cambodians from Phnom Penh into rural labour camps, and on murders at one execution site.

Both men have lodged appeals against their convictions. - AFP

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cases, cosmetic bags sold empty, sports bags included in this class, bags for athletic equipment, shoulder bags for ladies, leather shopping bags, school bags, garment bags for travel, suit carriers for travel, shoe bags for travel, beach bags, diaper bags, backpacks, Boston bags, traveling trunks, duffel bags, overnight bags, carry-on bags, satchels, vanity cases (not fitted), hides, cases and boxes made of leather, bags made of leather for packaging, leather straps, umbrellas, leather leashes, coats, jackets, trousers, skirts, tops, raincoats, overcoats, belts, braces for clothing, suits, stuff jackets, jumpers, jeans, dresses, cloaks, parkas, shirts, T-shirts, sweaters, underwear, baby-dolls being nightwear, bathrobes, bathing costumes, negligée, swim suits, dressing gowns, shawls, scarves, ties, neckties, sweat shirts, under shirts, polo shirts, body suits, shorts, stockings, socks, shoes, slippers, overshoes, galoshes, wooden clog, soles for footwear, footwear upper, boots, ski boots, half boots, esparto shoes or sandals, sandals, bath sandals, gloves, mittens, hats and caps, visors (headwear), appliances, machines and devices for sports games, for sport and for physical exercises, video game machines, bags and knapsacks for sporting articles, decorations for Christmas trees, except illumination articles and confectionery, toys, gloves for games and gloves for playing sports, plush toys, skis, snowboards, dolls' clothes, accessories for dolls, excluding the transport thereof, enabling customers to conveniently view and purchase those goods." - Class: 35

"Sporting and cultural activities." - Class: 41

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Phone: 372416

Dated: 12th January, 2015**WASHINGTON****US aid hits \$4 billion but Haiti goals not met**

US officials admitted last week that Washington had been over ambitious in its plans to help Haiti in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake five years ago, despite pledging about US\$4 billion in aid.

Five years after the 7.0 quake levelled much of the capital Port-au-Prince on January 12, 2010, more than a million survivors left homeless have been rehoused.

But thousands still live in canvas makeshift shelters as Haiti's own efforts to get back on its feet have been hampered by political instability and by a cholera outbreak blamed on UN peacekeepers' poor hygiene.

US officials said there had been a lot of progress made in health and security, as well as in encouraging economic growth and "incredible gains in the agricultural sector" with yields in some crops up 300 percent.

But a senior State Department official told reporters, "The US government was very ambitious in terms of what we expected to accomplish as far as the shelter sector is concerned."

"We had expected many more donors to come forward to partner with us to build new homes, new settlements. And those funds did not materialize," he said.

Even before the quake hit, there had been a 500,000-unit housing shortage in the capital, a gap which on its own would have cost \$15 billion to fill. The total amount of international aid pledged for Haiti between 2010 and 2020 was \$16 billion.



Haitian police remove a barricade of burning tires placed by anti-government protesters during a march against Haitian President Michel Martelly in Port-au-Prince on January 8. Photo: AFP

"So, I think you can understand the resources really aren't there to do everything."

"We realized that we are certainly not going to be able to come anywhere close to building the kind of housing stock that Haiti requires," the official added.

Now the US administration is working with the Haitian government to help Haitians build homes, shifting its focus on housing finance and unlocking funds from financial institutions.

With the impoverished Caribbean nation also mired in a political crisis, another official admitted that in

democracy building "we haven't been as successful, quite frankly, because a lot of that depends on the government of Haiti taking certain actions."

"We were I think greatly optimistic about how far and how fast they would be able to go over the last five years."

Long-delayed elections have now been put off until early next year, under a deal signed by President Michel Martelly.

Mr Martelly has called for the parliament to convene on January 12 to endorse the appointment of new Prime Minister Evans Paul, who will be tasked with forming a government.

- AFP

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As they see it



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AMID the hustle and bussle of Yangon's Lanthit Jetty, a small girl adjusts the zoom on her camera. Unnoticed by the fishermen hauling their catch from their boats, she waits for the right moment before pressing the shutter, freezing the busy waterfront scene in a single shot.

At just 10 years old, Yoon Yoon is an unlikely photographer. Most of her time is spent helping her family sell fruit at their small stall on the waterfront. But every weekend she attends a photography workshop at Yangon's TSI Gallery along with other children from around the jetty.

"My parents told me about the class so I joined and now I'm learning all about photography and making new friends," said Yoon Yoon excitedly.

"We learned how to zoom in and out and how to take portrait photos. My favorite photo is a black-and-white one of a girl with an umbrella because I love umbrellas and I mostly take photos of people with pretty umbrellas," she said.

The workshops are the brainchild of photographer Don Wright, who started the project after seeing an exhibition of photographs taken by street children in northern Vietnam, where he spent several years teaching craft workshops for disabled children.

"They had given local children cameras so that they could explain their lives through photos. I was interested in doing something similar myself,

and I thought it would be good to give disadvantaged children here a chance to tell the stories of their lives using photography," Wright said.

"The kids took to it quickly and were out there clicking away. A lot of these kids have never had the chance to take photos. They enjoy it, and it gets them thinking creatively."

Wright, originally from Scotland, teaches the workshops using compact cameras donated by friends and members of the public. With the help of gallery staff for translation, he teaches the children about composition and creative techniques and encourages them to practise their skills by taking photos of life around the jetty "as they see it".

"I select the best photos and we discuss them in the next class. We're planning to have an exhibition of the children's photos at the gallery early this year. Hopefully any profits made will go back to the kids - I'd like to buy them a camera each so they can continue their photography," he said.

Wright, who worked as a carpenter for over twenty years before moving to Southeast Asia and also leads photography tours around Yangon for tourists and expats, says he hopes to start similar projects with other disadvantaged communities in Yangon.

"We let the kids take the cameras home with them so they can show what their lives are like. I'd like to work with other communities in Yangon to help them tell their stories through photographs," he said.

Nathalie Johnston, director of exhibitions at the TSI Gallery - which



PHOTOS TAKEN BY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS



PHOTO: THIRI LU



Kids capture jetty life through photographs

hosts exhibitions of contemporary art by Myanmar artists - says that when Wright approached them about delivering the workshops they were delighted to help.

"We spoke to parents around the jetty and told them about the workshops. A lot of them were really interested in sending their children along," she said.

Kyaw Ko Ko, 13, travels to the jetty every weekend by boat from Kha Naung To village to attend the workshops.

"Our teacher lets us bring our cameras home during the week. I explain to my family about the camera and show them my photos," said Kyaw Ko Ko proudly.

"My teacher printed out our photos and I took them to school. I told all my friends about photography and now they all want to attend the class too," he said.

Kyaw Ko Ko says he is really happy when he attends the workshops and hopes to continue taking photographs in the future.

"When I am older I want to be a photographer," he said.

You can support the project by donating any unwanted cameras at the TSI Gallery, Transit Shed 1, between Lanthit Jetty and Kaing Dan Jetty, Yangon. If you are interested in delivering photography workshops with other communities in Yangon, Don Wright can be contacted directly through his website www.donwrightimages.com



A window to the past

STUART ALAN BECKER
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AS you walk around the quiet shelves with Aung Myint Oo, custodian of Mandalay's Ludu Library, he carefully pulls down a thick, aged volume with yellowed pages called *The Pacification of Burma* by Sir Charles Crosthwaite, published in London in 1912 - just one of the treasures that lie in wait for researchers trying to discern how Burma became the Myanmar it is today.

Tucked behind a steel gate in a quiet alley in the Let Se Kan quarter of Chan Aye Thar San township, the library has been the dwelling place and printing house of perhaps the most famous Myanmar literary family for generations.

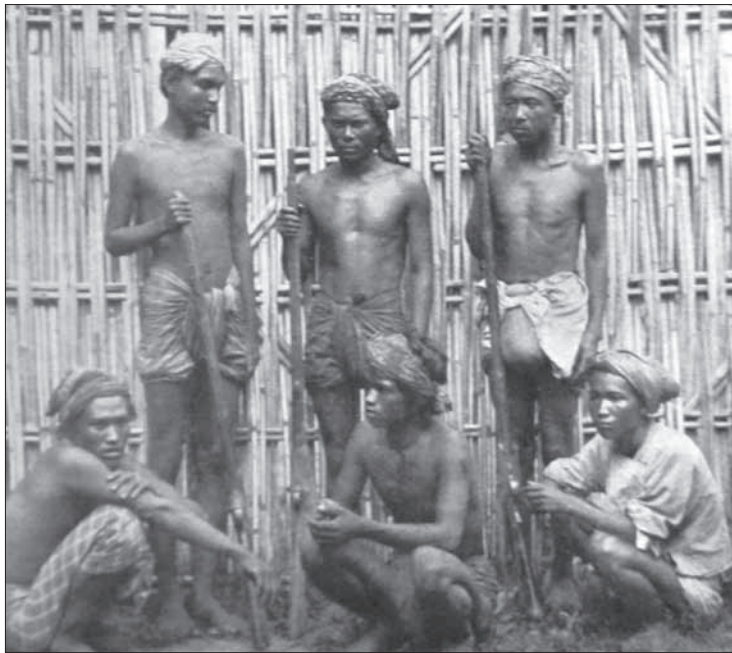
The Ludu Library is the legacy of the late Ludu Daw Ahmar and her husband Ludu U Hla. Ludu is a kind of honorific meaning "the people". The library houses a lifetime's collection of old books and periodicals, about 80 percent of them in the Myanmar language. Aung Myint Oo helps scholars from Cambridge, Yale and London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) pick their way through Myanmar's history.

The collection includes back issues of the Mandalay newspaper *Yadanabon*, as well as bound volumes of *The Light of Burma* from the 1930s. There is also a book about the newspaper scene in lower Burma in 1874, much of it derived from *Myanmar Thandawsint*, also known as the *Burma Herald*.

Open every day except Sunday, Ludu Library is accessible from the narrow alley entrance fronting 32nd Street, just next to the home and office of Daw Than Yin Mar, a medical doctor, and daughter of Ludu Daw Ahmar and Ludu U Hla.

Recent distinguished visitors to the library include Cambridge professor of anthropology and history Alan Macfarlane, who visited in November. Operating her medical clinic and treating patients during the day, Daw Than Yin Mar walks around the corner to the three-storey library to receive the visiting scholars.

"We have to do good deeds in our lives. We build monasteries and pagodas, we give away money. My parents built this library to share knowledge with those who need it



A book from the shelves of Ludu Library depicts a group of Burmese dacoits or bandits circa 1912. Photo: Stuart Alan Becker

and to preserve our literature," she said.

The Ludu Library is not a tourist attraction, but rather a special repository of knowledge. Daw Than Yin Mar shows the library's visitors' register where, in February 2012, Yale University Sterling Professor of Political Science James Scott wrote: "This library and its collection and its creators and its staff is a great and brave tribute to the lives, convictions, courage and not least, talents of Ludu U Hla and Daw Ahmar. I know that it has not been easy; it could all have so easily disappeared. One hopes that this library will not just be a fitting memorial to Ludu U Hla and Burmese intellectual life and political courage in general, but will help recreate a vibrant democratic discourse and vibrant intellectual life by the research and new writing that it encourages."

Ludu Daw Ahmar met her husband U Hla first by correspondence when she was at university in the early 1930s and the two fell in love. After a year, they got married in Mandalay.

"My father posted two letters daily to my mother and those letters are a real history," said Daw Than Yin Mar.

The family, which still operates the press today, lived in a village outside Mandalay during the Second World

War and afterward suffered the dynamiting of their press in 1949, one year after independence from Britain. The family, the press and the library have all endured the hardships of modern history - all the while being a refuge for intellectuals with a multitude of political views.

Anna Allott, former head of the SOAS Burmese department, wrote in the guest book last year: "It is a fine realization of Daw Ahmar's dream of a research library for all to consult. Her entire family are to be praised and thanked for realising her vision."

Ludu Daw Hmar's centenary, November 29, 2015, will be celebrated by her family and well-wishers this year. Daw Than Yin credits her father U Hla (1910-1982) with the idea of a library for posterity.

"When my father was publishing the youth magazine [*Kyi Pwar Yay*] in Yangon, he started to collect old books because he knew that they would one day be very valuable. He collected books throughout his career," she said.

Scholars and researchers may contact the Ludu Library by email at: ludulibrarian@gmail.com

Workplace reforms "A light at the end of the tunnel" say Myanmar's disabled

ZON PANN PWINT
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SINCE graduating with a degree in Korean from Yangon's University of Foreign Languages, Ma Aye Thinzar Maung has dreamt of becoming a university teacher. Unfortunately, it is a dream that is unlikely to come true. In Myanmar, only physically able people are eligible to apply for jobs in government departments. And Ma Aye Thinzar Maung is blind.

"I don't understand why physical disability is a criteria for assessing a person's ability to do an education-related job. After I graduated, I felt like I'd never be able to achieve my ambitions," said Ma Aye Thinzar Maung, who lost her sight as a result of a nerve-related disease in childhood.

The fact that Ma Aye Thinzar Maung even attended university is remarkable. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement in 2009, people with disabilities make up 2.3 percent of the country's population. Only 2 pc of disabled people are educated to high school level, however, and only 1 pc graduate from university.

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) estimate, there are 9 million disabled people in Myanmar.

Many disabled people are able and want to work, but they face myriad barriers. Yangon's congested roads and dilapidated pavements pose a serious hazard, making it impossible for many disabled people to leave their homes without the help of an assistant. Querulous bus conductors often prevent disabled people from boarding buses, and the majority of schools and buildings are inaccessible to wheelchair users.

In Yangon, there are only two state-run schools that offer inclusive education. As a result, many disabled children are forced to seek places at non-government schools such as the Myanmar Christian Fellowship of the Blind, the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf and the Eden Center - a school for disabled children.

Despite being unable to apply for teaching jobs, Ma Aye Thinzar Maung refused to give up.

"Because I am not eligible to work in governmental departments, my teacher helped me apply for a job as a telephonist at an embassy. I was chosen for the position but later they had second thoughts and said they couldn't employ me. They said I would have trouble with transport," she said.

Eventually, Ma Aye Thinzar Maung found a job at the Association of

Myanmar Disabled Women Affairs, where she works as a trainer.

"People with disabilities find it difficult to find employment in the private sector. The government has never done anything to improve the lives of disabled people," said Ma Nge Nge Aye Maung, chair of the Association of Myanmar Disabled Women Affairs.

"In Buddhism, a common belief is that if a man is disabled, he brings bad luck. Socially, some people hold condescending attitudes toward disabled people. Worst of all, disabled children are sometimes abandoned because their parents are ashamed of them. People with disabilities have had enough of being treated like second-class citizens," she said.

There are no official figures for the number of disabled people employed in mainstream private sector-jobs, but numbers are thought to be small. Like Ma Aye Thinzar Maung, many people with disabilities find work in non-governmental organisations that campaign on behalf of disabled people.

MILLION

9

The number of disabled people in Myanmar

"One hotel in Yangon employs three deaf people from the Mary Chapman School for the Deaf to work in the kitchens. I heard that the Sule Shangri-La hotel employs some disabled people, but companies should be employing more," Ma Nge Nge Aye Maung said.

On December 31, a draft law on rights for people with disabilities was published in state-run newspaper *The Global New Light of Myanmar*. The draft reforms provide a basis for realising equality by protecting disabled people from discrimination in employment, allowing them to apply for roles in government departments and ensuring they receive equal salaries.

Ma Nge Nge Aye Maung says a change in the law cannot come soon enough.

"The draft law will be discussed in parliament and I pray that it is enacted soon. It is a light at the end of the tunnel for people with disabilities."



Ma May Zin Aung works as a web designer at Shwe Min Thar Enterprise. Shwe Min Thar Foundation campaigns on behalf of disabled people. Photo: Staff



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Domestic workers from Myanmar forced into modern slavery

Agencies continue to send domestic workers to Singapore for work despite a government ban

CHIT SU
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UNABLE to move except for her head, Thuzar Myint lies motionless in the hospital bed. The bones in her right leg and back are broken and the bones on the left side of her body are cracked.

"I was unconscious for two weeks. Even now, three months later, my condition is not good. My fingers are still sore and I can't hold anything," she said.

On September 19, Thuzar Myint fell from the fifth floor of a building in Singapore where she had been working as a maid for three months.

"Some people think I jumped from the fifth floor to commit suicide. I didn't. I was just trying to escape from my work, which was the same as being in hell," she said.

Sadly, Thuzar Myint's story is just one of many told by Myanmar domestic workers who have suffered abuse and exploitation at the hands of their employers. In September 2014, the Myanmar government banned agencies from sending Myanmar citizens to Singapore as domestic workers following a series of scandals about the abuse of migrant workers engaged in such jobs.

According to the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEFA), there are currently 30,000 Myanmar domestic workers in Singapore.

MOEFA says it will sustain the temporary ban until the federation reaches an agreement with its Singapore counterpart on issues such as workers' rights.

"The Singaporean government has not responded to our requests to sign a memorandum of understanding on this issue. We tried to discuss the MOU with agencies in Singapore, but they didn't reply. It may be because there are many maids working in Singapore illegally," U Kyaw Htin Kyaw, secretary of MOEFA, told *The Myanmar Times*.

Despite the ban, domestic workers have continued to go to Singapore in large numbers to work. For women

such as Ma Wutyee, 30, the benefits of working overseas outweigh the risks of breaking the law.

"I can't make enough money to pay for my daughter's education in Myanmar," said Ma Wutyee, who worked as a maid in Singapore for two years. "I can make US\$300 a month in Singapore. So I have to go back there whatever happens."

Ma Wutyee found work in Singapore through an agent that was not registered with MOEFA. She was told she would receive a monthly bonus of \$30 in addition to her salary and that she would have every Sunday off. In return, she was told she would have to pay agent fees equal to 6 months' salary. Instead, Ma Wutyee received only \$20 a month and worked seven days a week with no holidays - and the agent kept nine months of her salary in so-called fees.

Most maids working in Singapore are unaware of their rights and are afraid to ask, for fear of being sent back to Myanmar.

"If I'd complained, I knew I'd find it hard to find another employer," Ma Wutyee said.

Thuzar Myint, 35, is a former garment factory worker. When the factory she worked at was closed following a wages dispute, she says she was left with no choice but to go to Singapore for work.

Like Ma Wutyee, she also found work through an agent who forced her to pay a fee, and even forced her to have her hair cut. But that was only the beginning of what was to become a nightmare for Thuzar Myint.

"The family I worked for disliked me and scolded me all the time. I asked them to return me to the agency, but they didn't send me back and tortured me instead. Some days, I didn't get anything to eat all day," she said.

After suffering months of abuse, Thuzar Myint eventually tried to escape from the family's fifth-floor home by sliding down the guttering. She lost her grip and fell.

Migration experts have warned about poor working conditions for Myanmar nationals in domestic roles in Singapore. Stories of abuse and



'My work was the same as being in hell'

Thuzar Myint
Domestic worker

exploitation of domestic workers are commonplace.

But the story doesn't end there. On March 5, 2014, Than Than Win - a migrant worker from Myanmar - was charged with murdering her employer, an 85-year-old Singaporean woman.

Many Myanmar citizens believe that Than Than Win was driven to commit the crime as a result of mistreatment by her employer.

Myanmar maids are paid less than domestic workers from Indonesia or the Philippines, who receive on average \$100 more than their Myanmar counterparts and work only six days per week. The reason is that, unlike most Myanmar maids, many Indonesian and Filipina domestic workers can speak English.

"Language is sometimes a big problem for [maids from Myanmar]. You have to repeat yourself many times and things don't get done. Some of them will just pretend they understand you, but they don't," a Singaporean employer commented on a Singapore-based online parenting forum.

Agents hiring domestic workers from Myanmar operate a debt bondage system. The initial cost of a woman's

air ticket, visa and accommodation expenses is paid by the agent, and she is then expected to work until she has paid off her debt. What this often means, however, is that women are made to work for 6-12 months without pay, leaving them with nothing to send back to their families. Most women and girls who leave Myanmar to work in Singapore don't understand this system of debt bondage, which is akin to slavery.

According to Singapore law, employers can send workers back to Myanmar without reason or pay. Even if migrant workers are sent home, however, agents still force them to pay off their debts.

Many domestic workers like Ma Wutyee, however, feel they have no choice but to continue being exploited.

"I don't want to, but I have to go back to Singapore for my daughter's future," she said.



Agencies hiring domestic workers operate a debt bondage system, forcing women to work for months without pay.



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AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



People's actions depend to a great extent on fear of loss. Power resides not in aggression but in conscious choices. Don't let your emotional reactions determine what you can or can't have in life. Work to enhance, rather than destroy, new relationships. Clear your soul, as clarity and purity are the main sources of mental power.

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



All development is self-development. The prize for good work is excellent motivation for more good work. Your decision-making skills will be recognised as an essential ingredient for management. The easiest thing you can do is listen to the complaints of others, from which you can learn much about the value of different points of view.

LIBRA | Sept 23 - Oct 22



A fearful soul is undeserving of gain, and courage without knowledge has no chance of taking the prize. Don't be afraid to take risks in your life based on your own decisions. Remember to love and value who you are and what you have to offer. Social relationships will enrich your life by providing great opportunities.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



A friend is easier lost than found. Use leading questions to get others to talk about their own interests. Remember that you are not responsible for what other people think of you. A true friend will never speak disparagingly about you. Avoid arguments and disagreements at all costs. A big dream may come true according to your desires.

CANCER | June 21 - July 22



Increase your personal faith by standing on a foundation of strong social values. It is important to look with a purposeful eye while seeking value in the unexpected. There is no greater adornment - and no greater basis for the flow of insight-wisdom - than purity of conduct. Inspire yourself to change fear and hatred into a life free from causing pain to others.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



Make everything as simple as possible, as a simple idea can have inspiring effects on the world. Contemplate deep questions with faith and confidence, and your subconscious will take over and answer for you. Your next logical step should be to pray for peace, harmony and understanding for others. Use your positive nature to tune into the purity of love.

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19



Calamity is the touchstone of a brave mind. Do not mistake folly for fate, but let the pause get a little longer or a little more awkward. Going too fast in the beginning can make people wary, suspicious, tense and sometimes even panicky. You should start out slowly and build trust, and then everything will fall into place more quickly and easily in the long run.

LEO | July 23 - Aug 22



View your relationships through the lens of understanding and humanity. Take a leader's vision and make it reality. A difference of only a few minute can add up to a big difference on a cumulative basis. Decide what you must do in order to gain time for contingency plans. Seek encouragement from your lover and learn to value suggestions in all aspects of your life.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



The principle of reciprocity is essential in any relationship. Believing in your capacity is the first step to achieving anything you wish to achieve. Your decision-making process needs to be compatible with your past emotional experiences. Overcome your inner tensions by keeping your mind clear and stable. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality and love.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20



Stop living by others' rules and start functioning according to your own desires. You are in charge of yourself. Be courageous and able to say "no" to things you don't want, and don't be afraid to go after the things you do want. With an appropriate amount of motivation and effort, you can be anything you choose. You are the sum total of your choices.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sept 22



Nothing is more powerful than an individual acting out of his or her own conscience with the aim of bringing the collective conscience to life. The first step in changing your own world is to observe yourself with honesty. Take the time to get a realistic sense of the direction in which your life is headed. You must learn to relate to yourself before you can relate to others.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



Seek genuinely optimistic people as your potential partners and make enthusiasm a daily habit. Success in any sphere is the result of strong effort and concentrated attention. Being true to yourself is an important step in the development of freedom of thought. Love and education must be bound together to make the right decision.

The Global Gossip

British actor Stephen Fry to wed boyfriend

British actor Stephen Fry said that he was "very happy" as he confirmed that he planned to marry his 27-year-old boyfriend. Fry, one of Britain's best-known entertainers, became famous for his roles in comedy shows *Blackadder* and *Jeeves and Wooster* and now hosts the BBC panel show *QI*. "Oh. It looks as though a certain cat is out of a certain bag. I'm very, very happy of course but had hoped for a private wedding. Fat chance!" said Fry in a Twitter post on January 6.



Stephen Fry attends the world premiere of *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* in central London on December 1. Photo: AFP/Leon Neal

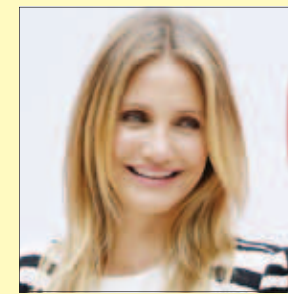
The entertainer has given formal notice to wed Elliott Spencer at a register office in the market town of Dereham, Norfolk - close to where he grew up.

Fry's personal assistant said no date for the wedding had yet been fixed.

"Stephen Fry is very happy and proud to say that he has set the wheels in motion for a wedding some time in the future but no date has been set due to a busy work schedule."

The broadcaster recently published the latest volume of his autobiography in which he writes about his 15-year drug addiction, admitting taking cocaine at a string of prestigious venues including the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace.

Cameron Diaz marries punk band boyfriend



US actress Cameron Diaz. Photo: AFP/Patrick Kovarik

A-list actress Cameron Diaz has married her musician boyfriend Benji Madden in a private ceremony at their Beverly Hills home, reports said on January 6.

"We couldn't be happier to begin our new journey together surrounded by our closest family and friends," the couple said.

Forty-two-year-old Diaz and 35-year-old Madden - who plays guitar in punk band Good Charlotte, formed with his twin brother Joel - held an "intimate" rehearsal dinner over the weekend, reports said.

WASHINGTON Rare glimpse of Obama daughter causes online stir

After years of careful White House control over her few public appearances, a mysterious online image of first daughter Malia Obama, 16, has gone viral.

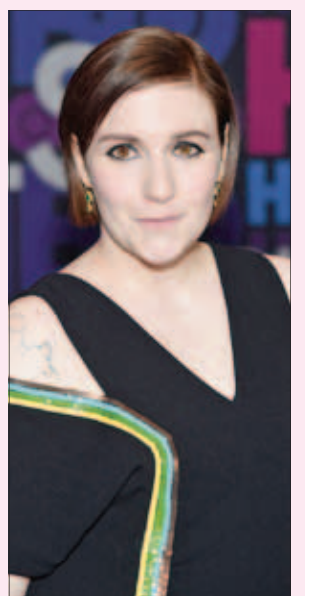
The rare glimpse of a personal side of President Barack Obama's oldest daughter - sister Sasha is now 14 - shows her wearing a T-shirt printed with the name of the Brooklyn rap group Pro Era.

The photo shows the lanky high school student - or someone who looks very much like her - mouth agape, looking directly into the camera as she arranges her long ponytail.

But no one seems to know who took the picture, or how it came to be circulated on the internet.

The viral dissemination of the image underscored the perils of life in the White House fishbowl - particularly when its occupants are trying to raise children there - in the age of the internet and social media.

The White House - which has jealously guarded the Obama girls' privacy - so far has not commented on the photo. - AFP



Lena Dunham attends the *Girls* season four premiere at the American Museum of Natural History on January 5 in New York City. Photo: Jamie McCarthy/Getty/AFP

SOUTH KOREA Activist to drop 100,000 copies of 'The Interview' on North Korea by balloon

International tensions over *The Interview* may not be dying down just yet.

A South Korean activist has dreamed up a way to deliver the comedy - which is about an assassination plot against the leader of North Korea and stars Seth Rogen and James Franco - directly to the isolated country.

Activist Park Sang-hak said he will use balloons to start dropping 100,000 DVDs and thumb drives containing the movie over North Korea as early as January. The balloon airdrops will be done clandestinely, Park said, with the pace picking up in March, when he expects wind direction to be more favourable.

"North Korea's absolute leadership will crumble if the idolisation of leader Kim breaks down," Park said.

The *Interview* has been at the heart of increasing tensions between the United States and North Korea. The computer systems of Sony Pictures were hacked in a cyber attack that appeared to be motivated by animosity toward the film. After the FBI blamed North Korea, North Korea denied responsibility. Then, internet access in North Korea went down - and the dictatorial regime of Kim Jong Un blamed the United States for what appeared to be a counterattack in retaliation for the attack against Sony. However, it is not clear whether the US government or independent hackers was behind recent problems with the internet in North Korea.

It is unclear how successful Park's efforts will be, however, in bringing *The Interview* directly to North Koreans. Many in the country may not have access to a computer, but access to televisions and DVD players is believed to be more widespread. - *Washington Post*

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THE EVOLUTION

THE NEW AGE OF HIP HOP

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From sunset to midnight, the unexpected rhythms of hip-hop raged on relentlessly at Botahtaung Port. Helmed by some of Myanmar's most talented hip-hop artists, Myanmar Beer's biggest and most exclusive music bash – The Evolution – had party-goers dancing wild with delirious fun alongside top celebrities and models. Missed it?

Chill everyone, and stay tuned...

The Evolution continues! More details to come!

PARIS

As old as the Republic: France's satirical press soldiers on

CHARLIE Hebdo, the magazine targeted in the January 7 massacre in Paris, is one of the few publications carrying on a French tradition of mocking religion and rulers in cartoons dating back to the Revolution.

"Here in France we hit hard and use drawing in a militant way - to challenge, denounce and demolish barriers," Guillaume Doizy, an expert on the history of press cartoons, said.

Famed for its irreverent style, *Charlie Hebdo*, which was attacked by extremists claiming a mission to "avenge" cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed, is unique in France for its broad thematic sweep.

"It's not only political satire but social critique, from ecology to economy and finance," said historian Christian Delporte.

Blending biting irony and black humour, *Charlie*, as it is simply called by admirers, and *Le Canard Enchaîné* - its investigative, somewhat subtler counterpart - are the custodians of a libertarian, anticlerical tradition which reached its pinnacle in the 19th century.

"These magazines know no taboos," said Delporte, although as Cabu, one of the five cartoonists among the 12 victims of last week's attack, once noted, "At *Le Canard Enchaîné*, there are limits. At *Charlie Hebdo*, you can say and draw anything."

Charlie Hebdo is the spiritual heir to *L'Assiette au beurre*, a satirical, anarchist paper from the early 20th century that was anticolonial, anticlerical, anticonformist and antimilitarist.

Blending strong prose with a powerful pencil stroke, the paper "took on tyranny and all forms of authority at the time", Delporte said.

Hard-hitting words and images were not, however, the sole preserve of leftist satirists.

During the infamous 1894-1906

Dreyfus affair - in which a Jewish army captain was wrongly convicted of leaking military secrets to Germany - and later in the inter-war years, right-wing and far right illustrators were "every bit as ferocious and talented", Doizy said.

Press caricatures were a century old by then, having first made an appearance in the turbulent days of the French Revolution.

Back then King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were favourite targets of cartoonists, who drew the former as a pig and his spouse as a serpent. The clergy were also pilloried in printed comic strips.

But press cartoons really took off in the 19th century, peaking under the Second Empire of Napoleon III.

The Catholic Church and the Vatican were prime targets for caricaturists of the day, with churchmen often drawn in embarrassing postures. - AFP



French cartoonist of satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* Jean Cabut shows the frontpage cartoon on August 15, 2011. Cabu was among the victims of a deadly attack led by armed gunmen on January 7. Photo: AFP/Miguel Medina

What's on

JANUARY 12 - 18

Got an event? List it in What's On! whatsonmf@gmail.com

ART

Until Jan 15 "The Final Exhibit" Featuring more than 100 paintings and illustrations by 21 Myanmar artists across different mediums (oil, acrylics and water-colours). Gallery 65, 65 Yaw Min Gyi Road 10am-6pm

FILM

Start times at Mingalar (1, 2), Top Royal, 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 *Exodus: Gods and King*. Directed by Ridley Scott. Biblical epic. *I Fine Thank You Love You*. Directed by Mez Tharatorn. Thai comedy drama. *Bugs 3D*. Directed by Yan Jia. Chinese 3D science fiction thriller.

Mingalar Cinema 2, at Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone *I Fine Thank You Love You*.

Shae Shaung Cinema, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada *Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb*. Directed by Shawn Levy.



Adventure-filled family film. *Pyramid*. Directed by Grégory Levasseur. American supernatural horror.

Junction Square Cineplex, Kamaryut *The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies* Directed by Peter Jackson. 3D epic fantasy adventure film.

Mingalar San Pya Cineplex, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw *Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb*. *I Fine Thank You Love You*.

MUSIC

Jan 12 Monday Blues. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 9:30-11:30pm

Jan 13 Piano and guitar. Sky Bistro, 20th floor Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada 7-10pm

Jan 15 Folk on Fire with L'N'R Band.

Mojo, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 9:30pm

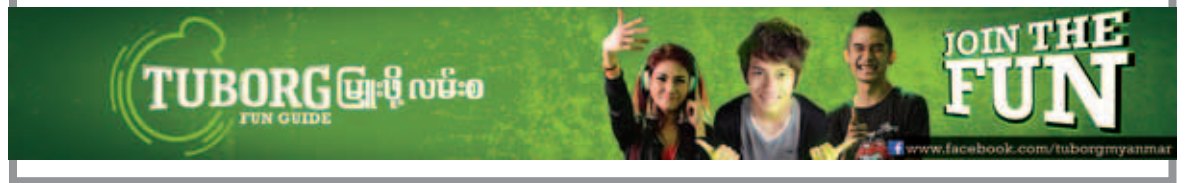
Jan 16 Jazz and world music. Aaron Gallegos Trio performs classic and modern art songs. Gekko, 535 Merchant St, Kyauktada. 7pm

MISC

Jan 13 Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada, 7pm-late

Jan 7-Feb 28 Myanmar cultural show. An enchanting evening of Myanmar performing arts, taking you on a journey into the very heart of Myanmar history and culture. Sein Lann So Pyay Garden, Inya Road, Kamayut 7-9pm. Tickets US\$13-19

Jan 17 Burmese Language Club. Pansodan Scene, 144 Pansodan Street, 2nd floor, Kyauktada 4pm



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food

GARBANZO BEAN SALAD

- 1 can garbanzo beans
- 200g tomatoes
- 1 small red onion
- ½ cup coriander leaves
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (extra virgin preferred)
- 1½ tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2/3 tablespoon honey



Wash the tomatoes and cut them into halves. Next, slice the onions and soak them in water before squeezing out the excess water and patting them dry.

Drain the beans and rinse. Set aside.

To make the dressing, add the olive oil, lemon juice, honey, garlic and smoked paprika to a jar and cover. Shake well to combine.

Add the tomatoes, onions, beans, coriander leaves and dressing to a bowl and toss together.

Serve with grilled meat, seafood or curry.

Alternatively, I like to use this salad in wraps to make a quick and easy TV dinner. Try filling a roti or tortilla with mutton curry or barbecue chicken and then layer the garbanzo bean salad over the top before rolling into wraps.

MY New Year's resolution is to be more active and to eat a healthier diet. If, like me, you have resolved to drop a dress size, you are probably already feeling gloomy at the thought of a year spent eating boring vegetables.

But dieting doesn't have to be dull. These quick and easy salads are colourful and delicious, and make a great accompaniment to any meal. Perfect for a healthy work lunchbox or as a complement to an evening meal, they are sure to get your taste-buds watering.

Try making two portions of the carrot salad – store one portion in an airtight container in the fridge for a few days to make a delicious pickled carrot accompaniment for Asian, Mediterranean or Western dishes.

CARROT SALAD

6 servings

- 3 large carrots
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons caster sugar
- ½ cup mint leaves
- ½ teaspoon chilli flakes
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

- 1 tablespoon salt

Peel the carrots and cut off both ends. Next, use a peeler to cut the carrots into long ribbons. Using your hands, mix the ribbons in a bowl with the salt and set aside.

Mix the apple cider vinegar and sugar in a sauce pan and heat on a low heat until the sugar dissolves.

Soak the carrot ribbons in the vinegar mixture and set aside.

Just before serving, mix the remaining ingredients into the carrot salad. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Restaurant Review

New Mandalay Hot Pot restaurant causes a stir



Photos: Stuart Alan Becker

STUART ALAN BECKER
stuart.becker@gmail.com

IN the southern part of Mandalay's vast network of busy streets, a new restaurant called the Yummy Buffet Rotating Hot Pot opened in Mahar Aung Myay township on Christmas day.

Located on 66th Street at the corner of 43rd Street, Yummy is jointly owned by a sisterhood of four family members from Shan State, led by Tiffany "Thi Thi" Khaing and her younger sister-in-law Yin Hlan.

Yummy is the first hot-pot restaurant in the area and the tables all have built-in, individual hot plates. The base soup can be ordered spicy or non-spicy and there's a rotating sushi-bar-style conveyor from which customers can load their plates with meat, vegetables, tofu and a variety of noodles for cooking in the hot-pot.

Open 10am to 4pm for lunch, the buffet costs K6000 for adults and K3000 for children aged 3 to 10. Dinner starts at 4pm and costs K7000 for adults and K3500 for children.

Seafood choices include prawns, fresh crab and squid. There are also cubes of chicken blood available for more adventurous diners. Beverages include fresh fruit juices and, for dessert, ice cream, cake and fresh fruits are offered.

The Christmas day opening at Yummy started with a very early ceremony of Buddhist monks carrying out a blessing of the establishment followed by a full house of family, friends and well-wishers – many of whom arrived from Taunggyi.

I chose the spicy chilli soup base which I loaded with sliced beef, noodles, various vegetables and mushrooms. You can adjust the heat

on your own hot pot when your food is cooked to your liking, making this a perfect venue for even the most particular eaters. The choice of hot-pot ingredients on offer also makes this an ideal place to visit with vegetarian friends looking for an escape from the standard veggie option of vegetable fried noodles.

Overall, the Yummy experience was professional, clean and family-

oriented. The novelty of cooking your own food is one that never seems to wear off, making this a fun dining option for meals out with family or friends. The sisters have invested a lot in the purchase of the hot-pot tables and rotating buffet bar, providing a high-quality, affordable offering that – as the first of its kind in the area – is likely to be a hit with Mandalay restaurant-goers.



Yummy Rotating Hot Pot

Corner of 66th Street and 43rd Street, Mahar Aung Myay, Mandalay

Restaurant Rating
★★★★★

Food	8
Beverages	6
Value	6
Service	7
Xfactor	7



Aye Thida and Htwe Hla Han



Marisa De Angelis, Annie Zhou, Theodor Strohal, Anna Mauosa and Jeannine Hollaus



Johnathan and Nathalie



Pwint Nadi Maung and guest

A New Year knees up

Guests got to know each other over wine and finger food at the InterNations New Year networking event held at the Governor's Residence hotel in Yangon.



Daw Moe Moe Aye, U Khin Maung Htwe and guests



Cat Frazer and Monlco

Couch potatoes stay at home

Guests celebrated the opening of the Balance Fitness gym in Bahan, Yangon on December 4. The running machines were turned off for the night and guests sipped on wine instead - safe in the knowledge that they could burn off the calories later.



Model

Rinnai anniversary bash

Guests celebrated the 9th anniversary of Rinnai electricals in Yangon on January 8.



Naing Lin



Win Naing and Kyaw Ni Khin



Thidar Kyaw and Khin Hnin



Model



Kyaw Zin and Zin Aye Min



May Zin Kyaw, Khin Htwe and Khin Eain Mon

Putting on the glitz

The opening of new Yangon jewellery store Htay Paing saw guests get dressed up on January 1. Ladies were given a glimpse of the store's sparkly jewellery range, no doubt giving their husbands cause for concern...



Models



Model



Nan Sandar Hla Tun



Ja Dim and Pye Sone



Models

Invicta grand opening

Guests mingled with models at the opening of automobile specialist Invicta in Yangon on 3rd January.



Mimi Wu and Henry



Staff

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DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW table with columns: Flight, Days, Dep, Arr

NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON table with columns: Flight, Days, Dep, Arr

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FMI = FMI Air Charter

K7 = Air KBZ

W9 = Air Bagan

Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

YH = Yangon Airways

YJ = Asian Wings

Subject to change without notice

Day legend table with columns: Day, 4=Thursday, 5=Friday, 6=Saturday, 7=Sunday

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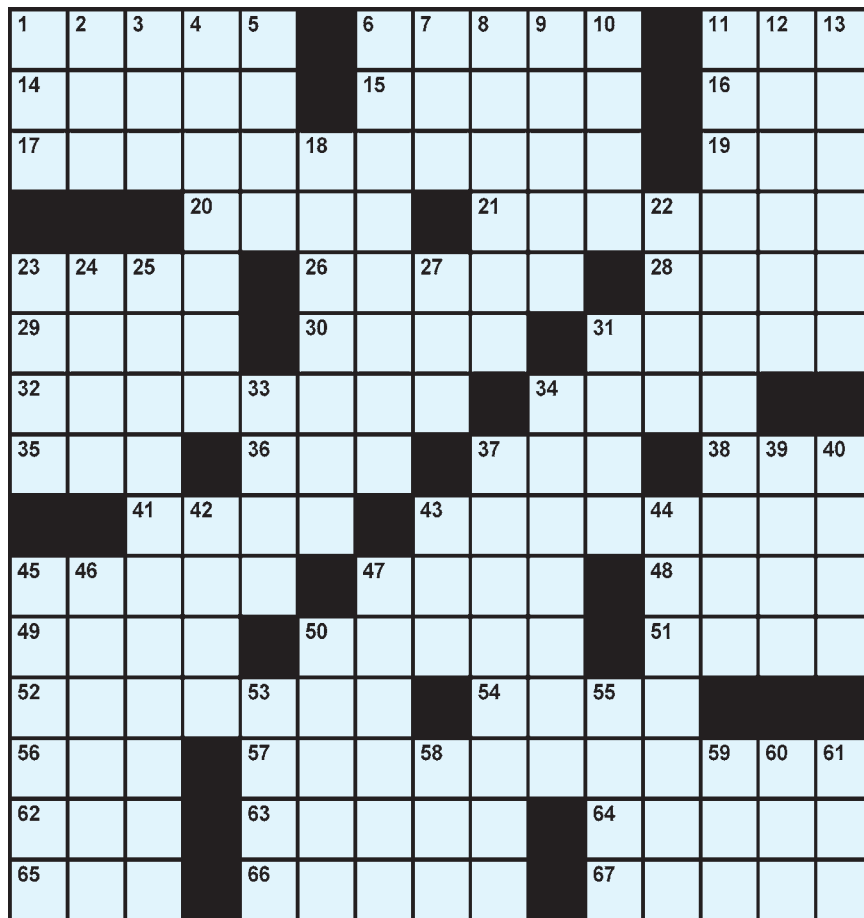
ACROSS

- 1 Parrot with bright colors
- 6 Monastery's main man
- 11 Violin part
- 14 Drop in one's two cents
- 15 Beast of burden
- 16 What some winners take
- 17 With very little strength
- 19 Thai's neighbor
- 20 Russian mountain range
- 21 Destinies
- 23 Big clumsy goofs
- 26 Thesaurus man
- 28 Pub pours
- 29 Fort location, sometimes
- 30 Wildebeests
- 31 Denzel Washington Oscar film
- 32 Arctic ocean covering
- 34 Equestrian sport
- 35 Boo-hoo
- 36 Come- (inducements)
- 37 To's counterpart
- 38 College party staple
- 41 Worst finish
- 43 Stack of logs
- 45 Not foggy-headed
- 47 Low- diet
- 48 Pt. of MIT
- 49 Moore of films
- 50 About
- 51 Improves, as cheese
- 52 Postal worker
- 54 Touchdown guesses
- 56 Room lender
- 57 Useless
- 62 Curtain support
- 63 Linenlike fabric
- 64 Team racing event
- 65 Widths of some spaces
- 66 King-size antelope
- 67 Uneven, like a leaf edge

- 2 Hairy creature
- 3 Secretive government agency
- 4 Elephant goads
- 5 Gradual deterioration
- 6 California seafood treats
- 7 "Mac" alternative
- 8 Car stoppers
- 9 Circle, as planets
- 10 Dolls, balls, etc.
- 11 Appearing sickly, in a way
- 12 Click beetle
- 13 Certain photo type

- 18 "Bewitched" actor Dick
- 22 Teen's hangout spot
- 23 Elevator pioneer
- 24 With a bow, to the orchestra
- 25 They're not think tank material
- 27 Instinctive, as a reaction
- 31 "Nice!"
- 33 Party thrower
- 34 Estate court
- 37 Compelled to eat
- 39 "If all ___ fails ..."
- 40 Comes down with

- 42 Seed covering
- 43 Major conflict
- 44 Former Turkish coin
- 45 Hold in esteem
- 46 Get emotional support from
- 47 Picture theater
- 50 Barge route
- 53 Boggy area
- 55 Piece of farmland
- 58 Shark "trademark"
- 59 U.N. workers' agcy.
- 60 "___ in victory"
- 61 Pupil's location



DOWN

- 1 Do a suburbanite's chore

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.



1/15

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

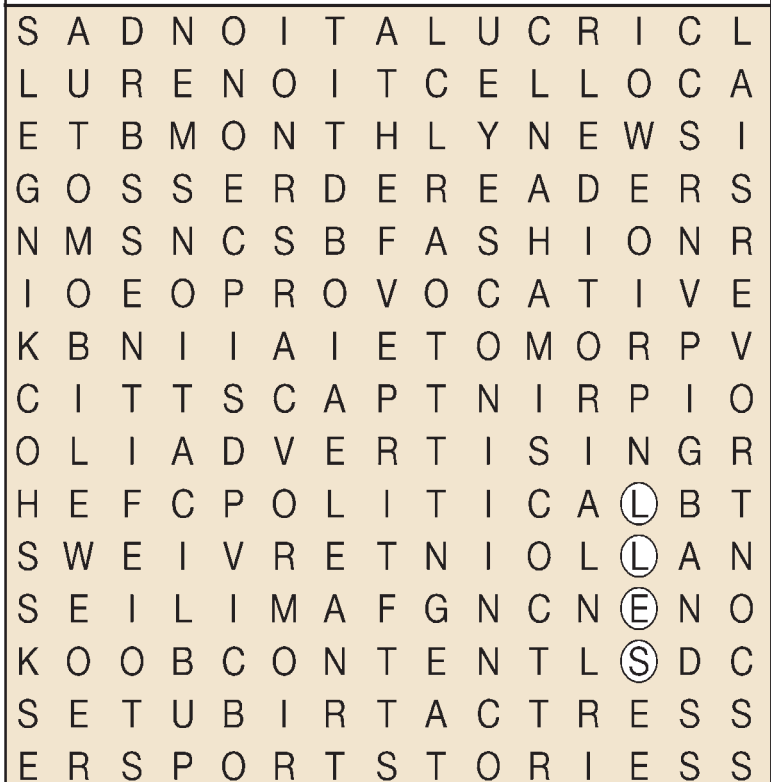
WONDERWORD

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.

MAGAZINE COVERS

Solution: 9 letters



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1/12

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GOOD Neighbors Int'l (GNI) is seeking (1) **Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator** : Myanmar National. Bachelor degree, statistics, social or development related studies, 3 years of community development project. (2)**Project Coordinator** 2 posts in (Sinbaung Wae Tsp, Magway Region), Sun Ta Nee Office- Nyaung Done Tsp : Myanmar National. Degree in management, business, or equivalent in development field & 3 years experience. Please full up GNI's Application form. Certificate of College/ University. Copy of NRC. Copy of Father's NRC. Recommendation letters from Previous or Current organization to 21, Ywar Ma Kyaung St, (1) Ward, Hlaing, Yangon. Email: gnmrhrho.hr@gmail.com.

LEADING online recruitment & employ ment service company in Yangon since 2012. We provide online recruitment solution (huge CV database & job offers posting opportunities) for any

employer in Myanmar. We preselect short list of candidates or search for executive functions positions as well. Contact our staff to help you to choose the right service or package for you. Tel: 01-2306103, Email: info@jobsinyangon.com, www.jobless.com.mm, www.jobinyangon.com, https://www.facebook.com/Jobinyangon.com

Overseas

SINGAPORE job (Spass) **Driver @ Seafood Co.**, (1 M) Salary S\$1200 + S\$200 for Housing, **Class 3 Driver** (1 M) Salary S\$1400 + S\$200 for Housing + OT 1.5x, **Kitchen Helper @ Restaurant** (1 M) Salary S\$1200 + 2 Meals, **Chinese General Worker @ Mini Market** (1 M) Salary S\$1100 + S\$200 for Housing + Meal, **Forklift Driver @ Car Parts & Supplies-Whole Co.**, (1 M) Salary S\$1100 + S\$200 for Housing, **Driver & General Worker @ Factory** (1 M) S\$1000 + Housing + Meal, **Tailor @ Sofa Factory** (2 M/ F) S\$1400 + OT, Hair Stylist (2 F) S\$1400 + Commission. Ph: 09-732-55437, 09-732-55438, a.pex.resourcemm@gmail.com. No. 41, 2nd Flr, 22 St, Latha, Yangon

Local Positions

WE are looking for **tuition teacher** Subject: Mathematics (International School Syllabus), Language: Must be teach in English. Standard: Grade 9 Year 10), Ph: 556899, 553759, 543376. Daw Khin Myo Myat: 094210-26116. **WE** are seeking **Admin Staff**: Female 1 Post, Any Degree Holder, Japanese speaking is preferable, English speaking is also OK, Good computer proficiency, Able to work independently with high integrity. Interested Candidates can able to send the email to myattazin.fujita@gmail.com or sent the CV to No (37), Room No (810) 8th Floor, La Pyayit Wun Plaza, Alan Pya Pagoda Rd, Dagon Tsp, Ph: 373634.

LOLC Myanmar Microfinance Company Ltd is seeking **HR Manager** 1 Post in Yangon Office: Possess minimum of 2 - 3 years of managerial level experience. Age 30 to 50. A degree in HR or any equivalent professional qualification is a must. A strong competency in spoken and written English is essential. Interested and qualified candidates are to submit a cover letter & CV to Careers@lolcmyanmar.com.

WE are one of most promising construction equipment companies in Myanmar, seeking career oriented personnel for the under mentioned positions. (DOOSAN/ POWERLINK/ Bobcat/ MAN/DISD, JUNJINCSM - Brand equipment) (1) **Sales Executive** - M 5 Posts, Any graduate (More Preferable BE or B.Tech (Mechanical)), At least 3 years experience in related field. 25-30 age. More preferable who has valid driving license. (2) **Sales Engineer** - M/F 10 Post : Any Graduate (More Preferable A.G.T.I or B.Tech). 20-25 age. good look appearance and good communication skill. (3) **Engineer Trainee** - M 5 Posts : BE, B.Tech or AGTI (Fresh Graduate). 20-25 years. Be Good Health & can travel away from Yangon. (4) **Office Driver** - M 2 Posts : 5 years experience, Kha - valid driving license.

30-40 years. Be Good Health & can travel away from Yangon. Applicants are requested to mail covering letter, curriculum vitae, two passport photo & photocopies of the graduation certificates, national registration card, labor registration card, police clearance, household census list to Aung Chan Tha Trading Co., Ltd. Human Resources Manager, No.54 A, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Near Nawaday Intersection, Mayangone, Yangon, Tel: 657066, 657067, Email: act-hr@act.com.mm, hr.aungchantha@gmail.com to within 2 weeks.

THE International Rescue Committee (IRC) is seeking **Community Driven Development Specialist** 1 post in Yangon : An advanced university degree and at least 3 years of field experience. Proficient in MS Office, MS Word, MS Excel & MS PowerPoint. Fluent in English, both verbally and in writing. Interested and qualified candidates are to submit a Cover Letter and Curriculum Vitae to the Human Resources Department not later than 5 pm of 18 January, 2015. Applications will be accepted by e-mail at: WaiMar.Naing@rescue.org

FU XING Brother Group of Companies (Trading) is seeking (1)**Secretary** - Female, age 21-28, Chinese language four skills ,computer skills, driving skill, 2 years experience, (2) **Receptionist** - Female, age 21-24, Chinese language, good communication skill * 1 year experience. (3)**Sales Drive** - Male, age 20 - 30, 3 years exp, holding valid driving license. Ph: 09-310-56674, 554140. Add : U Chit Mg Housing, U Chit Mg Rd, Tamwe.

A LEADING Shipping Company, based in Singapore with business activities in freight forwarding services is seeking (1)**Sales & Marketing** - 5 Posts : Be a degree holder from a recognized university, Age above 25, Have good grasp of the English, Be a Computer literate. (2)**Customer Service** - 2 Posts (3) **Documentation** - 4 Posts : Be a degree holder from a recognized university, Able to speak and write English, Able to use computer effectively. (4)**Receptionist** - 2 Posts (Urgent) Be a degree holder from a recognized university, Have positive attitude in learning, Able to speak English, Able to use computer effectively

and efficiently; (5)**Driver** 3 posts (Urgent). Please send resume and cover letter with a recent photograph by email to star2013.collette@gmail.com **IKON** Trading Company Ltd is seeking **HR Manager** - M/F 1 Post: Any graduate, Diploma in HRM is preferred, 5 years experiences at Manager level in related field, Age over 35, Fluent in English & Myanmar, Knowledge about labor laws & Social welfare is an asset, Basic knowledge in Accounting, While all applicants required : Application together with update CV & related documents, Labour registration card & police force to 328/A, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung, Yangon. (Near Mahar Myaing Hospital) Ph: 01 534216, 527705, 501429, 503914, Email: hr.ikonmart@gmail.com Within 2 weeks.

BRAINWORKS - Total are a unique group of integrated schools offering Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, IGCSE and A Level education seeing (1). **Pre-School teacher** - 1 post (2)**Primary Teachers** - 2 posts (3)**Trainee Teachers** - 3 posts (4)**Lab Technicians/ Teachers** - 3 posts (4) **Reception desk officers** - 5 posts (5)**Librarians Assistant** - 5 posts : Hold an Undergraduate or a Postgraduate degree in discipline. Excellent English language skills, Good computer proficiency. Please enclose the following as a part of your application: A detailed covering letter telling us about you as a person & why you think you should be chosen to join our awesome team. A current CV, A recent photo, Copy of NRC & Labor registration card, Copy of family registration, Copy of teaching credentials, certifications, endorsements, etc. & any other document which you may feel necessary to: Branch 1 : No.1 Thumngalar St, 16/4 Quarter, Thingangyun, Yangon. Branch 2: No.336, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung, Yangon. Or email to adminjobs@brainworksschool.com

HOTEL Shwe Gone Daing, Yangon, (1) Kitchen Department: **Commis I, Commis II, Commis III, Kitchen Helper, Steward, Kitchen Dimsum**, (2)HK Department: **HK Supervisor, Room Attendant, PA Attendant, Laundry Supervisor, Laundry Attendant, Linen Attendant**, (3)F & B Department: **F & B Manager, F & B**

Supervisor, F & B Ass: Supervisor, F & B Cashier, F & B Waiter, (4) Entertainment Department: **Cashier, Waiter, Bar Waitress, Cleaner, Bell Boy**, (5)FO Department: **FO Supervisor, Receptionist, Bell Boy**, (6)Finance Department: **Driver, Store Supervisor, Storekeeper, Logistics**, (7)IT Department: **CCTV Operator**, (8)M & E Department: **M & E Operator**. Hotel Shwe Gone Daing, No. (273/A), Shwe Gone Daing St, Bahan, Yangon, Ph: 552583, 552585, Email: monyeekeyaw@gmail.com

VINTAGE LUXURY Yacht Hotel is seeking: (1)**Executive Sous Chef** - M/F 2 Posts (2) **Chef de Partie** - M/F 1 Post (3)**Front Office Manager** - M/F 1 Post (4) **Duty Manager** - M/F 1 Post (5)**Front Office Supervisor** - M/F 2 Posts (6)**Reservation Supervisor** - M/F 1 Post (7)**Bell Driver** (Salary + others) above 250000 M/F 3 Posts (8)**Sales & Marketing Asst: Manager** - M/F 1 Post (9)**Sales & Marketing Assistant** - M/F 1 Post (10)**Purchasing Supervisor** - M/F 1 Post (11)**Painist** - M/F 1 Post (12)**Villinist** - M/F 1 Post (13)**Guitarist** - M/F 1 Post. CV form to be submit to HR Department: No. 6, Botahtaung Jetty, Seikkan Tsp. Ph: 09-2544-43327.

WE are seeking (1)**GM/ Sr. Manager** (Special Project) (2)**Personal Asst:** To CEO (Manager Level) (3)**Planning & Control Manager** (4)**Operation Manager** (Trading) (5)**BD Manager** (Structural Steel) (6)**Marketing Manager** (Dairy Farm). Please send CV & cover letter, including salary expectations to Email : thelondoner007@gmail.com. You can see more details of Job Description from www.myanmarjobsdb.com, www.myanmar-network.net, www.work.com.mm. The successful candidates can expect high competitive salary and benefits.

(1)**SECRETARY of Executive Deputy MD** - M/F 3 Posts (2)**PR Specialist** - M 5 Posts (3)**Customer Specialist** - M 5 Posts (4)**Chinese Project Coordinator** - M/F 10 Posts (5)**Chinese Translator** - M/F 10 Posts (6) **Maintenance Staff** - M 20 Posts (7)**Chinese Accountant** - M/F 5 Post (8) **Driver** - M 10 Posts. Myanmar Fiber Optic Communication Network Co., Ltd: 2nd Fl, Right, Bldg 12, MICT Park, Hlaing Tsp. Ph: 09-7958-36084, 09-3600-7316. **OUR COMPANY** is

extending new business linking up with international insurance agency .If so we would to recruit the following position with highly fringe benefit. (1).**Sale Executive** - F 3 Posts: Must be good looking & smar, must be fluent in English, must be graduated, Can go aboard for training and Business Purpose, Basic salary will be started from 400 USD & commission onward. In Mai Kha Co.,Ltd : 1103/1104, Bldg-D, Bandoola Condo, Mahar Bandoola Rd, Pazundaung, Yangon. Ph : 01-8610253, 8610254, 09-4318-7145 Email : inmaikha2011@gmail.com

G STAR HOTEL (Yangon) is seeking (1) **HR Manager** - F 1 post (2)**Assistant HR** - F 1 post (3)**Accountant** - M/F 2 posts (4)**Chief Account** - F 1 post (5) **HK Supervisor** - M 1 post (6)**Security** - M 3 posts. Please submit to 20/B, C, Thukhawati St, West

Yankin. Ph: 09-3210-9590, 09-3210-9591 **PARKWAY CANCER** Centre is seeking **Medical Doctor** - F 1 post : M.B.B.S Graduate with SA MA registration, 2 years experience in medical field, Good in English, Able to use computer, internet and Microsoft application with excellent skills, We welcome the candidates who are trust worthy, self-motivated with positive working attitude. Pls submit: CV with relevant certificates, documents, recommendation letter attach & documents & expected salary to Rm (G-07), G Flr, Diamond Center, Pyay Rd, Kamayut. Tel : 532 438, 532-447, 09-513-6584, **URGENT** wanted (1) **Waitress** - 1 post (2)**Chef** - M/F 1 post (3)**Kitchen Assistant** - 3 posts. Contact ph: 09-4253-13406, 09-4202-83170. **WE ARE** seeking (1)**CE** - 2 posts : Contact person between client & supplier,

Has updated knowledge of current status of al media in Myanmar, Must know how the Myanmar media industru works, Manage deadlines, Control production quality & timelines. (2) **Graphic Designer** - 1 post: Graduated, 2 years experience, Professional in graphic design, Be able to create nice looking graphic content. (3)**Media Buyer** - F 2 Posts: Graduated, Age 20 ~ 35, (4)**Operation Staff** - M/F 5 Posts: Graduated, Age 25 ~ 40, 3 years experience, (5)**Activation Planner** - 1 Post: Graduated, Age 25 ~ 40, 3 years experience, (6)**PR staff** - F 1 posts: graduated, Age 20 ~ 35, (7)**English Translator** - F 1post : Graduated, Age 20 ~ 45, For all posts: Fluent in English, Can use Microsoft office & email, internet. Please submit to 8, NguWar (3) St, Ward (5), Myakanthar Villa, Hlaing, Yangon. Tel: 01-505724, 538552

Vacancy Announcement

Yangon International School (YIS) is looking for candidates for the following position.

Teacher Assistant Requirements

A bachelor degree holder, good command of both English and Myanmar languages and ability to work with expat teachers.

Please send a CV and a brief cover letter to twphyo@yismyanmar.com or YIS, 117, Thumngalar Lannmagyi, Thumngalar Housing, Thingangyun Township, Yangon. Ph : 01 578171, 01 573149. The position is open until filled.

Vacancy Announcement (Power 7 Real Estate)

- (1) **General Manager (Foreigner)** M (1)
- At least already in Yangon (1) year ago.
 - (2) **Manager** M/F (5)
- must interesting real estate service
- fluently in English (4) skills.
- have experience communication with foreigner.
 - (3) **Computer** M/F (1)
- (word, page maker, excel)
 - (4) **Driver** M (2)
- at least have (2) years experience.
- Contact No. 09-4921 4276, 09-2570 3331**

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
Legal Researcher - Myanmar

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is a worldwide network of judges and lawyers united in affirming international law and rule of law principles that advance human rights. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is seeking to recruit Legal Researcher - Myanmar who will be responsible for the successful candidates will have:

RESPONSIBILITIES
Reporting directly to the Regional Director at the Asia Regional Office in Bangkok and working closely with the rest of the team at the Asia regional office in Thailand and the team in Myanmar, Legal Researcher has the following responsibilities:

- Gather information on relevant laws on investment, financial reform, and economic development in Myanmar and English; Conduct field research into human rights issues related to law and justice in Myanmar with a particular focus on business and human rights; Monitoring and analyzing business and human rights as well as rule of law developments in Myanmar; Develop networks of human rights activists and community based organizations in Myanmar; Develop and participate in training and capacity building exercises for civil society organizations; Develop and maintain relationships with Myanmar government policy makers who play a role in economic reform and the legal, political and academic communities in Myanmar; As agreed with the Regional Director implement strategies to strengthen, inform and mobilize the ICJ Network of Commissioners, National Sections and Affiliated Organizations in the region and engage them in the work of the ICJ; Actively maintain supportive working relations and seek opportunities for joint work with the staff of other regional and international programmes.

QUALIFICATIONS
• Degree in Law, Public Policy or Development. Further academic studies in International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law or International Business Law is desirable; Three to five years progressive relevant experience as a human rights researcher, or civil society activist in Myanmar; Experience in managing human rights or development programmes in the filed. Fluent in English (written and spoken) and in Myanmar. Knowledge of any other language used in Myanmar is desirable; Knowledge of Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, Powerpoint; Knowledge of international human rights and humanitarian law and international and regional human rights jurisprudence; Strong analytical, planning and organizational skills; Excellent Communication and interpersonal skills and ability to work as part of a multi-cultural team; Openness and flexibility, capacity to adapt to changing priorities and needs; The ICJ is an equal opportunities employer and offers a competitive salary package. The deadline for application is January 30 2015 and application should be sent by email to : kyawmin.sann@icj.org

Job Vacancy

Software Developer

Responsible for : Installation, customizing & maintenance of Kualii system software.

Experience/Skill

- Web Application, Open-source Environment
- HTML, CSS, Java, JavaScript, PHP, Apache, Oracle or My SQL
- At least 2 years of Web application development
- Diploma or Degree in Computer Science or equivalent
- Fair or good command of English
- Salary negotiable

Database Assistant

Requirement

- A Bachelor or Diploma degree in Computer Science or relevant field with significant professional experience.
- At least one year relevant professional experience working in emergency, development, community.
- Experience and knowledge of database system (Ms Access, SQL Server).
- IT skills - particularly with Microsoft Office suite (strong Excel skills with VBA) and Visual Basic NET.
- Good working knowledge of English.

Interested candidates may apply in person to HR Department at No.34, Lay-daunt-kan Road during office hours (8:00 am - 4:00 pm). Ph: 545720, 556298

SYDNEY

Football: Match-fixing scrutiny for Asian Cup

FEARS of match-fixing will lurk in the background at the Asian Cup as the stain of corruption proves hard to shift despite efforts to clean up football.

While most attention will focus on the big matches in Australia, games between smaller teams will also be under scrutiny for potential manipulation by illicit betting rings.

Swiss-based Sportradar, which has a partnership with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), will monitor for unusual betting patterns.

Smaller teams, where players are usually paid less, are considered more vulnerable to match-fixers who may offer them bribes to throw a match.

"Any time you have meaningless matches, pool games where the result means nothing, or teams where the players are poorly rewarded... there is a risk," betting industry expert Scott Ferguson told AFP.

Match-fixing, along with doping, is one of the biggest threats to the integrity of sport and is fuelled by a multi-billion dollar illegal betting industry.

A crackdown on several fronts has yielded results, with scandals uncovered in Australia and England and a leading suspect now detained for more than a year in Singapore.

But incidents persist, creating the damaging perception that any unusual results -- especially in hotspot Asia -- have been manipulated.

Last month, Vietnamese football officials raised concerns about their own national team after their AFF Suzuki Cup semi-final loss to Malaysia. No suspicious betting patterns were detected.

And in November, Saudi club Al Hilal cried foul over their AFC

Champions League final defeat to the Western Sydney Wanderers after a string of penalty appeals were waved away.

Ferguson, a former head of education at bookmakers Betfair who runs the Sport is Made for Betting website, said the risk of match-fixing at the Asian Cup was "fairly low", given the event's high profile and anti-corruption efforts in Australia.

But organisers will remain on their guard. In September, Sportradar said betting patterns showed a strong likelihood of fixed football matches at the Asian Games.

Elsewhere, Japan's coach Javier Aguirre will appear in a Spanish court in February over accusations of match-fixing in 2011, when he was in charge at Zaragoza.

Major scandals have been uncovered in many countries in Asia, including China, where officials were jailed in a mass clean-up, and South Korea, where a player committed suicide following revelations of fixing in the K-League.

Monitoring betting is a key weapon in the fight against fixed matches, giving an instant indication of whether a shock result is legitimate or down to foul play.

"Shock results do actually happen, given a large - enough sample size. It's only in recent years we ponder if there was anything suspicious behind it," Ferguson said.

"Highly sophisticated logarithmic models derive most betting markets these days," he added.

"When markets deviate from this and heavy monetary support continues to force prices further away from numbers derived from databases of tens of thousands of matches, alarm bells ring." - AFP

Football: Asian Cup

Kicks off January 9

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Australia (AUS)	Uzbekistan (UZB)	Iran (IRI)	Japan (JPN)
S.Korea (KOR)	Saudi Arabia (KSA)	UAE (UAE)	Jordan (JOR)
Oman (OMA)	China (CHN)	Qatar (QAT)	Iraq (IRQ)
Kuwait (KUW)	N.Korea (PRK)	Bahrain (BRN)	Palestine (PLE)



Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
				9		11
					KOR v OMA UZB v PRK AUS v KUW	UAE v QAT IRN v BHR
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
JPN v PLE JOR v IRQ	KUW v KOR OMA v AUS	PRK v KSA CHN v UZB	BHR v UAE QAT v IRN	PLE v JOR IRQ v JPN	AUS v KOR OMA v KUW	CHN v PRK UZB v KSA
19	20	21	Quarter finals			25
IRN v UAE QAT v BHR	IRQ v PLE JPN v JOR		1 v 1 1 v 2	1 v 1 1 v 2		
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Semi finals				3rd and 4th place	Final Sydney	

Source: afcasiacup.com

AFP

NEW YORK

American sportscaster Stuart Scott passes away at 49

STUART Scott, an ESPN sportscaster whose use of pop culture references and wordplay earned him a loyal following among US fans and the athletes he covered, died on January 4 at the age of 49.

ESPN, the network he joined in 1993, said Scott died of cancer, having battled recurrent bouts of the disease since he was first diagnosed in November of 2007.

Scott's signature expression, "Booyah!" spread beyond the sports world and he peppered his reports and commentary on athletes and their exploits with other lively phrases such as "Cool as the other side of the pillow" or "Just call him butter, 'cause he's on a roll."

Scott anchored ESPN's flagship SportsCenter shows, hosted the NFL pre-game show Monday Night Countdown and served as the lead host for NBA coverage on ESPN and the ABC network.

In July, he delivered an eloquent speech upon accepting the Jimmy V Award for Perseverance at the 2014 ESPY Awards, an honor named for Jim Valvano, the North Carolina State basketball coach who died of cancer in 1993 at 47 after working as a commentator for ESPN.

'When you die, it does not mean you lose to cancer. You beat cancer by how you live, why you live, and the manner in which you live.'

Stuart Scott
1965-2014

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L.
for A&E Television Networks, LLC.
P.O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 12 January 2015

Looking frail, Scott told the audience: "When you die, it does not mean that you lose to cancer. You beat cancer by how you live, why you live, and in the manner in which you live."

Scott was ESPN's most prominent black sportscaster, and although it prompted criticism from some quarters he infused his reports not only with references to Shakespeare but also with hip-hop slang that resonated with a young black audience.

"What u did for our culture, bringing that Swag to reporting can only be copied," NBA superstar LeBron James wrote on his Instagram account on January 4 as tributes to Scott poured out on social media.

"Thank you so much for being u and giving us inner city kids someone we could relate to that wasn't a player but was close enough to them," James wrote.

Golf star Tiger Woods took to Twitter with a word of support for Scott's wife and teenaged daughters.

"Stuart wasn't covering heroes & champions, it was the other way around," Woods tweeted. "Thinking of my friend & his daughters."

US President Barack Obama, an avid sports fan, said he would miss Scott.

"Twenty years ago, Stu helped usher in a new way to talk about our favorite teams and the day's best plays," Obama said in a statement. "Over the years, he entertained us, and in the end, he inspired us -- with courage and love." - AFP

WASHINGTON

Boston voted 2024 Olympic candidate

BOSTON was chosen on January 8 as the US candidate to host the 2024 Olympics, hopeful of showing the world's finest athletes its determined recovery from the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing tragedy.

Boston outclassed Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington in voting by the 15-member US Olympic Committee (USOC) board of directors, after multiple rounds of voting and "spirited discussion" to decide among the finalists in a 22-month evaluation process.

The United States chases its first Summer Olympics since the 1996 centennial edition in Atlanta. Boston's candidacy follows failed bids by New York for the 2012 Olympics, Chicago for 2016 and no entry for 2020 in order to re-evaluate plans.

Three people were killed and more than 260 others were injured from bombs that exploded near the finish line of the 2013 edition of Boston's distance racing classic.

Runners and citizens fought to recover from the horrific attack with a spirit that became known by the catchphrase "Boston Strong"; one evoked by the White House in sending US President Barack Obama's congratulations to Boston.

"The city has taught all of us what it means to be Boston Strong," the White House said in a statement. "The President and First Lady couldn't be prouder of this accomplishment and all of our nation's athletes and strongly support the effort to bring the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games to the United States. We hope to welcome athletes from around the globe to

compete in Boston in 2024."

But Boston will enter a global field expected to include solid candidates from Italy, Germany and France as well.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) will select a 2024 Olympic host at its meeting in Lima, Peru, in mid-2017.

"We're excited about our plans to submit a bid for the 2024 Games and feel we have an incredibly strong partner in Boston that will work with us to present a compelling bid," said USOC chair Larry Probst.

"The deliberative and collaborative process that we put in place for selecting a city has resulted in a strong US bid."

The United States has won the most medals at the last five Summer Games and is home to many of the richest corporate sponsors of the Olympic movement, as well as its top-paying television rights partners.

The US seeks a fifth Summer Olympics hosting opportunity after St Louis in 1904, Los Angeles in 1932 and 1984 and Atlanta.

Next year's Summer Olympics will be staged in Rio de Janeiro with the 2020 Games being hosted by Tokyo. The 2018 Winter Olympics will be staged in Pyeongchang, South Korea, and the IOC will decide the 2022 Winter Games host at a July 31 meeting in Kuala Lumpur between finalists Beijing and Almaty, Kazakhstan.

In the 2024 fight, Rome heads a multi-city Italian candidacy while Germany plans to offer Berlin or Hamburg. Paris is widely expected to seek an Olympics to be staged on the 100-year anniversary of the last Summer

Games in the French capital.

Boston offers a bid that is geographically compact, helpful to the logistics of staging and securing the multi-sport event, and relies largely on existing venues, including the home arena of the NBA's Boston Celtics.

"It is an exceptional honour for Boston," said Marty Walsh, the city's mayor. "This selection is in recognition of our city's talent, diversity and global leadership. Boston hopes to welcome the world's greatest athletes to one of the world's great cities."

A removable Olympic stadium would host athletics and the opening and closing ceremonies, and an Olympic village for athletes would be changed after the event into student housing.

"A Boston Games can be one of the most innovative, sustainable and exciting in history and will inspire the next generation of leaders here and around the world," Boston bid committee chair John Fish said.

IOC executive board member Anita DeFrantz and Angela Ruggiero, a four-time Olympic medalist as an ice hockey defender, will be vital support builders among IOC members for Boston.

"The United States has something unique to offer the athletes of the world," Ruggiero said. "I couldn't be more excited to share Boston's athlete-focused vision for the Games with my IOC colleagues."

The largest city in the New England region at the northeast edge of the United States, Boston has more than 7.5 million people in the metropolitan area and is one of America's oldest cities, its roots dating to 1630. - AFP

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Reg. No. 1730/1955

in respect of "Motor road vehicles and chassis therefor, Internal combustion piston and turbine engines, variable gearings being parts of machines for motor vehicles aircraft and ships, and parts of all the aforesaid articles".

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

Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **ROLLS-ROYCE p.l.c.**

P. O. Box 60, Yangon

E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm

Dated: 12 January 2015

TRADEMARK CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Tiger Airways Holdings Limited, a company organized and existing under the laws of Singapore and having its registered office at 17 Changi Business Park Central 1, #04-06/09 Honeywell Building, Singapore 486073, is the owner and sole proprietor of the following Trade Mark:

TIGERAIR

Myanmar Registration Number. 4/7069/2014

Used in respect of :-

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Business administration services relating to air transport and franchising; business management services relating to air transport and franchising; business advisory and consultancy services relating to air transport and franchising; direct mail advertising; business advisory and business management services; advertising services; display services for merchandise; publicity services; marketing and promotional services, market analysis and research; import-export agency services; procurement services (purchasing goods on behalf of a business); window dressing; advisory and consultancy services relating to the aforesaid; all the foregoing provided on-line from a computer database or the global communications network; the bringing together, for the benefit of others, of a variety of goods, enabling customers to conveniently view and purchase those goods in a store, on an aircraft, from a general merchandise catalogue by mail order or by means of telecommunications, or from a general merchandise global communications network web site; compilation of mailing lists; ordering services (for others) by means of mail, telephone and all other communication and telecommunication; all included in Class 35.

Class 39

Air transport services; tourist office and travel agency services for arranging travel; package holiday services; travel booking, reservation or information services; tourist information; air passenger transport services and air cargo transport services; courier services; transport and delivery of goods; transportation of passengers' luggage; luggage storage services; vehicle rental, charter and parking services; handling of baggage, cargo and goods; advisory and consultancy services relating to the aforesaid; all the foregoing provided on-line from a computer database or the global communications network; all included in Class 39.

Class 43

Arranging and booking of holiday accommodation; hotel reservation services; provision of food and drink; catering services; advisory and consultancy services relating to the aforesaid; all the foregoing provided on-line from a computer database or the global communications network; all included in Class 43.

Any unauthorised use, imitation, infringements or fraudulent intentions of the above marks will be dealt with according to law.

Tin Ohnmar Tun, Tin Thiri Aung & The Law Chambers

Ph: 0973150632

Email: law_chambers@seasiren.com.mm

(For. Amica Law LLC, Singapore)

Dated. 12th January, 2015

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NOTICE is hereby given that **Rottapharm Ltd.** a company organized under the laws of Ireland and having its principal office at Damastown Industrial Park, Mulhuddart, Dublin 15, Ireland is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademark: -

GO-ON

(Reg: Nos. IV/4833/2007 & IV/15798/2014)

in respect of :- "Pharmaceutical and veterinary preparations; sanitary preparations for medical purposes; dietetic substances adapted for medical use, food for babies; plasters, materials for dressings; material for stopping teeth, dental wax; disinfectants; preparations for destroying vermin; fungicides, herbicides" - Int'l class: 5

"Surgical, medical, dental and veterinary apparatus and instruments, artificial limbs, eyes and teeth; orthopaedic articles; suture materials" - Int'l class: 10

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

U Kyi Win Associates
for **Rottapharm Ltd.**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416
Dated: 12th January, 2015

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **Thai Storage Battery Public Company Limited**, of 387 Moo 4, Soi Patana 3, Bangpoo Industrial Estate, Sukhumvit Road, Praekasa, Samutprakarn Province, 10280, Thailand, Telephone No. 662-7093535 and E-mail address Tsb_marketinginfo@3kbattery.com is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademarks:-



(Reg: No. IV/809/2002)

in respect of: - "Battery"



(Reg: No. IV/3792/1993)

in respect of: - "different kinds of battery"



(Reg: No. IV/2985/1993)

in respect of: - "Automotive Battery and Motorcycle Battery"

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

These trademarks are genuine and the trademark owner will reward any person providing information on fraudulent use to enable them to prosecute imitator(s).

U Kyi Win Associates
for **Thai Storage Battery Public Company Limited**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416

Dated: 12th January, 2015



IN PICTURES

Mongolian-born sumo grand champion, or 'yokozuna', Kakuryu (right) performs a ring-entering ceremony beside wrestler Tachimochi Ikioi (left) during a New Year ceremony at Meiji shrine in Tokyo on January 7, 2015.

Photo: AFP

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Notice is hereby given that Alpha (Fujian) Bio-technology Co.,Ltd. Registered office No.36 Guobao Road, Dongqiao Economic Development Zone, Ningde City, China, is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademark: -

Best Youth

(Registration No :IV/20532)

Tangulator

(Registration No :IV/20533)



(Registration No : IV/20534)

Heri-PAG

(Registration No :IV/20535)

HeriPoly

(Registration No : IV/20536)

Hepa Tect

(Registration No : IV/20537)



(Registration No :IV/20538)

Bone Extra

(Registration No : IV/20539)



(Registration No : IV/20540)

In respect of: -

"Dietetic food adapted for Medical, Health Supplement, Commodities, Cosmetics and Medical equipments. (International Class 05.)"

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

U NyeinKyaw
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E-mail: nyeinkyaw9@gmail.com
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FIFA election heats up

FIFA Vice President Prince Ali bin Al Hussein on January 6 threw down the gauntlet to incumbent Sepp Blatter for the leadership of football's scandal-tainted world governing body.

The 39-year-old Jordanian prince said he would be a candidate against Blatter, 78, who will seek a fifth term, when FIFA holds a presidential vote on May 29.

Prince Ali, an ally of Blatter rival Michel Platini, the UEFA president, said he had been encouraged by other FIFA members to stand.

He is guaranteed nearly all the 54 UEFA votes and must now aim to sway enough FIFA members from his Asia region and other confederations against Blatter to get 105 backers at the election.

The rivalry threatens to become bitter.

The prince said his campaign would be based on getting FIFA away from 'controversy'.

"I am seeking the presidency of FIFA because I believe it is time to shift the focus away from administrative controversy and back to sport.

"The headlines should be about football, the beautiful sport, not about FIFA."

FIFA has been dogged by scandal since 2010 votes that awarded the 2018 World Cup to Russia and 2022 event to Qatar. The prince, a FIFA vice president for Asia since 2011, has been among leaders who want the full release of an inquiry into the vote process.

"This was not an easy decision. It came after careful consideration and many discussions with respected FIFA colleagues over the last few months," Prince Ali said.

"The message I heard, over and over, was that it is time for a change.

"The world game deserves a world-class governing body -- an International Federation that is a service organisation and a model of ethics, transparency and good governance."

Prince Ali, a son of the late King



Prince Ali of Jordan walks past press following his announcement last week. Photo: AFP

Hussein of Jordan, was one of the most senior FIFA officials to call for the full publication of lawyer Michael Garcia's report into the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bids.

FIFA's executive has voted to release an "appropriate" edited version of the report and Blatter has ruled out any suggestion that Qatar could lose the right to host the 2022 tournament.

UEFA's Platini and European federations have led calls for Blatter to keep an earlier promise to stand down when his fourth term ends.

But the 78-year-old Swiss official says he has a "mission" to finish.

Blatter has long been a controversial figure, and FIFA, which oversees a multi-billion dollar industry, has never been far from scandal.

Prince Ali is FIFA vice president for Asia, head of Jordan's Football Association and founder of the West

Asian Football Federation.

The prince will need five of FIFA's 209 member federations to nominate him before a January 29 deadline. But UEFA's backing should make this a formality.

Prince Ali is in a battle for influence with AFC head Bahrain's Sheik Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, who has publicly supported Blatter's campaign for a new term.

Africa's 54 members have pledged their support for Blatter.

Europe and Asia account for about 100 members of FIFA, meaning that the prince and Blatter will be fiercely lobbying North and South American nations as well.

"FIFA exists to serve a sport which unites billions of people from all over the world, people of differing and divergent political, religious and social affiliations, who come together

in their enjoyment of 'the world's game,'" the prince said.

The only other declared candidate in the race is Jerome Champagne, a French former FIFA official and diplomat.

He said the election should not be "about personal ambitions or fights between institutions.

"It is about football, its governance but also its future with a clear choice."

He said there could be "continued inner rivalries and image problems for FIFA and football. Or reconciliation, inclusion and re-building of the reputation."

The FIFA leader made no immediate comment on the candidacy of Prince Ali, a major general in Jordan's armed forces who was educated in the United States and Britain.

- AFP

National archery team training with South Koreans



KYAW ZIN HLAING

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THIS year's SEA Games may not begin until June, but the national archery team is already drawing their bows.

This week, the team will wrap up a three-week-long intensive training program in Nay Pyi Taw which allowed them to train alongside a delegation of archers and coaches from the South Korean national team.

The training program is the first half of an exchange program that will also see the team travel to Seoul to both train and take part in the national archery world cup.

"We hope for more success in coming Singapore SEA games," said Daw Kay Thi, secretary of the Myanmar Archery Federation. "I think Myanmar archery athletes will increase their skills and refine their technique during this joint training."

In the last several decades, South Korea has emerged as a dominant force in the world of competitive archery. Since team events were added to the Olympics in 1988, the South Korean men's squad has earned gold medals in four out of six summer games. The women's squad has gone six for six.

While less renowned internationally, the Myanmar team is quickly building a profile on the regional circuit.

During the most recent SEA Games in Nay Pyi Taw, the national team took 1 gold and 4 bronze medals.

In the 2013 Southeast Asian Archery Championship, also held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar had the largest total medal count, winning nine gold, four silver and three bronze.

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