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# MYANMAR TIMES

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ISSUE 767 | FEBRUARY 9 - 15, 2015



## 'Myanmar Times' to launch daily paper on March 9

*THE Myanmar Times* will embark on a new phase of its ongoing development next month with the launch of an English-language daily newspaper - almost exactly 15 years after it pioneered the news weekly in Myanmar.

The newspaper, which will be the only local private daily in the market, will feature 24 pages of local and international news, commentary and features and be available at newsstands Monday to Friday.

The Friday weekend edition will also feature a 28-page lifestyle lift-out containing information on all the latest events in Yangon, together with features and news on arts and culture.

While Myanmar-language newspapers have proliferated since the government announced in early 2013 that it would lift a ban on private daily publications, the English field remains relatively open. The state-run *Global New Light of Myanmar* is the only locally published daily, while there is also competition from foreign papers, such as the *International New York Times*, *Straits Times* and *Bangkok Post*.

"The launch of the daily is a milestone in the history of *The Myanmar Times*," said chief executive officer Tony Child. "It is the result of much dedicated work by our staff. It will be an essential read and a valuable contribution to the development of the press in Myanmar."

MORE ON NEWS 9

### IN PICTURES

PHOTO: AFP

Soldiers from the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) leave in a pick-up truck following celebrations marking the 66<sup>th</sup> Karen Revolution Day at the KNLA 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade headquarters in Kayin state on January 31. A planned nationwide ceasefire suffered a fresh blow last week when fighting broke out between government armed forces and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army in northern Shan State, forcing up to 2000 people to flee their homes.

# KBC launches murder probe

Concerned at reports that police are intimidating residents in northern Shan State, the Kachin Baptist Convention has formed its own investigation team to watch over a government probe into the murder of two women in January. **NEWS 3**

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# Page 2

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



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

### Street cred

The Foreign Office last week post a gallery of images to its Facebook page entitled "Experiencing a bus-ride", which showed intrepid British Ambassador H.E. Andrew Patrick doing just that. He embarked on a bus journey from North Okkalapa to downtown in order "to get a sense of how Yangonites commute to work."

"The British Embassy employs a lot of staff who live a long way from the office. I wanted to experience how they commute every day. I've often noticed how old the buses are, and I hope that's going to change soon. I had a nice chat with people in the bus. It's always interesting to talk with local people about how they see the future of this country," said the Ambassador.

Pictures of the bus ride spread quickly on social media, with some speculating that maybe the Bus Ride Experience wasn't as authentic as it perhaps could have been.

"It seemed to me that it was a prearranged special bus trip for the ambassador. This is the first time I've ever seen such a roomy bus at rush hour", said one Facebook user. And, indeed, from the pictures it did seem to be a relatively new, large and empty bus, not the high-speed game of sardines on a World War II-era Hino thousands brave each day.

In order to achieve maximum transport street cred, the Foreign Office might want to consider a gallery series entitled "Experiencing Clinging to the Back of Pickup Next to Eight Other Dudes For an Hour of Erratic Driving", or "Experiencing Betel."

Others applauded the move. "President Thein Sein must do like What British Ambassador H.E Andrew Patrick Did So That He'll Know What People Suffering & How Struggling For Their Daily Life In Every Day," said one impressed Facebook user.

I'm quite into the idea of diplomats and politicians alike turning this 'dose of reality' transport diplomacy into a competitive pursuit. But perhaps that's not a good idea. As they say, it's all fun and games until someone develops a yaba problem.

that unchecked gold mining, large-scale deforestation and ongoing clashes between the Tatmadaw and KIA have all had a fairly major impact on tiger numbers. There's also the matter of poaching for parts. With tiger pelts, paws and penises readily available for purchase in Mong La and fetching premium prices, it's easy to see the economic imperative that drives unsustainable hunting practices. While Myanmar's plan to participate in a breeding program and crack down on illegal smuggling is good news, education and creating alternative livelihoods is probably just as, if not more, important. The other key issue is that demand doesn't seem to be going anywhere fast.

Education of would-be consumers is a valuable tool, with the "I'm FINished with Fins" anti-shark fin soup campaign featuring Chinese basketball star Yao Ming being a great example. In one video, he points to the fact that the much sought-after delicacy doesn't really taste like much. Similarly, it would be good if someone would spread the message that eating pangolins won't cure cancer, that tiger penis wine won't deliver a better boner than Viagra, and that the nutritional benefits of eating rhino horn are pretty well on par with chewing your fingernails.

### Vale, Air Chief Marshal Foo Foo

d. age 17 (81 dog years)  
Foo Foo, the beloved pet miniature poodle of Thailand's Prince Vajiralongkorn, has died at the ripe old age of 81 dog years - reportedly from natural causes. During his long life, Foo Foo enjoyed a privileged existence. In 2007, a video of a lavish poolside birthday celebration (from 2001) was released by Wikileaks. It showed the since-ousted Princess Srirasmi spoon-feeding Foo Foo cake, naked but for a G-string (her, not the dog). It is not known exactly when, but Foo Foo was awarded the rank of Air Chief Marshal - something noted in an outgoing cable by then-US ambassador Ralph Boyce.

"Foo Foo was present at the event, dressed in formal evening attire complete with paw mitts ... at one point ... he jumped up onto the head table and began lapping from the guests' water glasses, including my own."

Air Chief Marshal Foo Foo was given a civilian sendoff, cremated after four days of Buddhist funeral rites.

"We assumed we weren't really supposed to be camping on the top of a temple, but there weren't exactly any signs that read 'No camping on top of a temple', which was good enough for us."

- From the imaginatively named "Love Life Go Travel" blog. It would seem the concerns of Bagan authorities about cheapskate tourists camping out overnight in temples was not unwarranted - but maybe they should consider installing signs.

### In brief

Man unable to articulate specific details of 1982 citizenship law but "sure as hell" plans to demonstrate against white card holder suffrage

Port Authority trumps Autonomy, in a decision bound to shake investor confidence in the incongruously-swanky-in-comparison-to-its-surroundings hospitality sector. "If a Pun can't do it, who can?" asked one man, crying into his huevos rancheros

### Next week

Undercover Eleven Media Group reporter exhausted after two weeks of 14-hour shifts at apparently legit massage parlour, desperately seeking indication from editor on when assignment will end

NLD said to be toying with campaign slogans, sources say "We're not them" tested well in the focus groups

## Once was Burma...

Archival material courtesy of Pansodan Gallery

First floor, 286 Pansodan, upper block, Kyauktada township



Golden Hammer Journal 1970, "Progress and Harmony for Mankind"



Experiencing the bus via Facebook

### Big, rare, stripy cats

Myanmar's tiger population is dwindling, according to a report from Eleven last week, who cited forestry official sources saying there may be as few as 150 left in the country.

Myanmar boasts the world's largest tiger reserve in Kachin State's Hugaung Valley, which on the surface sounds pretty great and surprisingly progressive - were it not for the fact

# 27

The number of private newspapers that launched up until January 2015

# 12

The number of private newspapers remaining in circulation

Source: Figures cited by Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway in session last week, when a motion to promote further media freedom was quashed. He said if media act within the law, there should be no problems.

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# Tourism forum fizzles for Myanmar agents

**ZAW WIN THAN**  
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IT was supposed to be a showcase of the country's tourism sector, but companies that signed up to take part in last week's ASEAN Tourism Forum say the event offered poor value for money, with few prospective buyers.

The forum was held from January 22 to 29 in Nay Pyi Taw, with a two-day industry fair rounding out the event.

More than 300 Myanmar firms took part, including buyers, sellers and other trade participants. But sellers in particular came away underwhelmed by the organisation, venue, price tag and lack of interest from buyers, many of whom appeared uninterested in making sales.

# 300

Approximate number of Myanmar companies that took part in the forum

Sellers are typically local travel agents, while buyers are agents in foreign countries who sell packages from local-based agents to foreign tourists.

U Kaung Minn Khant, managing director of Asia Central Link, said that while the event looked crowded there were three times as many sellers as buyers.

"There should be more buyers than sellers, but now the sellers are struggling to get appointments," he said. "It's the first time we've hosted an international travel fair here so I feel I have

a duty to take part and network with regional and international contacts ... I didn't expect a lot from the ATF but I also didn't think it would be this bad."

U Saw Ko Ko Lwin, general manager of Asia International Link Travels and Tours, said organisers had also not done enough to match local companies up with buyers from their target markets.

"The organisers should be arranged pre-scheduled appointments with selected markets chosen by us," he said. "But here we had to make some of the appointments ourselves and also even though we chose to meet European buyers and the Japanese market, the organisers only matched us up with Asian buyers."

"I've been to a lot of travel fairs but I've never had an experience like this before where it was so hard to grab market opportunities."

He said the venue contained a number of small rooms rather than a large open exhibition hall, which disadvantaged some participants.

"Booths from some countries were virtually invisible because they had been put in the smaller conference rooms."

But not all left complaining. Daw Khin May Myint, director of Karaweik M & J Travels and Tours, said her experience at other trade shows and international contacts meant she could make the most of the opportunity.

But she also agreed that new travel agents who lacked industry connections struggled to meet potential buyers and would not have got value for money.

"They had to pay US\$3000 to \$4000 [for a booth and entry tickets], and some even more than that, but they got less attention than they expected," she said, adding that this was partly because of the convention centre layout.



A woman plays a traditional xylophone at the ASEAN Tourism Forum in Nay Pyi Taw on January 27. Photo: Douglas Long

She said the situation would have been helped if organisers had opened the venue to the public on the last day, as is practice at similar events in other countries.

"If the public is allowed to enter at least people can get some knowledge about tourism and learn about other countries in the region."

Other participants complained that many of the buyers seemed uninterested in doing deals with Myanmar travel agents.

"I met 17 buyers and of those only three seemed serious," said Ma Thi Thi Myint, general manager of travel company Seven Star.

"We know some buyers have got local partners already ... and are not really interested in finding other sellers,

but this is normal at a travel fair. What is important is who chose the buyers and who scheduled our appointments with buyers to match our desired market," she said.

But organisers said the event attracted about 2000 participants from 50 countries, including 300 government representatives and media.

Jason Ng, executive director of MP International, which co-managed the event, said about 45 percent of attendees were from Southeast Asia, followed by Europe with 33pc and elsewhere in Asia on 11pc. Myanmar had the largest contingent of sellers, taking up 35pc of the space, ahead of Thailand.

"All the key players, policy makers and key buyers from around the world are attending this forum and I believe

this is a big moment that [will] benefit for [the] further development of Myanmar tourism," he said.

U Phyo Wai Yar Zar, joint secretary general of the Myanmar Tourism Federation, said it was the first time Myanmar had hosted an event like the ATF so there might be some teething problems.

"However, we were glad that we got very positive feedback from ATF participants and the venue was also appreciated by many participants. I don't think there were any major issues," he said.

The annual tourism forum, which was launched in 1981, was hosted by the ministry, organised by MTF and managed by MP Singapore and Myanmar Ventures Group. It the first time it had been held in Myanmar.

# KBC forms murder investigation team



YE MON

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THE Kachin Baptist Convention has formed its own investigation team in an effort to ensure those responsible for the rape and murder of two female volunteers in January are brought to justice.

The KBC said the committee, which was formed on February 5, would support the government's own probe into the January 19 deaths in northern Shan State's Muse township.

KBC secretary Reverend Samson Hkalam, who will lead the body, said the government team is still

interviewing residents in Muse's Kaung Khar village as well as soldiers from the 503'd Light Infantry Regiment, which was stationed in the village when the deaths occurred on January 19.

He expressed concern at reports that some residents had been threatened by police officers on the investigation team and told not to talk about the circumstances surrounding the murders. He said they had been told their homes could be burned down if they spoke out.

"The committee was formed to prevent the local villagers being taken advantage of due to their honesty and lack of knowledge," he said. "We want to see the truth come out."

One villager, who asked not to be named, confirmed the report.

"Some villagers have been warned

not to say what they saw near the crime scene on the night of January 19. They are being pressured to withhold the truth," the resident said.

The 15-member KBC team includes legal experts and Christian religious leaders. The KBC has already informed President U Thein Sein of the committee's formation and the team has arrived in Kaung Khar late last week.

The Tatmadaw is also conducting its own investigation and is interrogating soldiers from the light infantry regiment. On January 29, the military published a statement in its *Myawady* newspaper saying it was "unlikely" any government troops were involved, without providing any further information. It also warned that those who accuse its members of being responsible for the killings would face legal action.

Neither the government nor the Tatmadaw team has issued any other statements about the status of their respective investigations.

Thailand-based rights watchdog Fortify Rights said last week it was concerned at the military's threat, which was later reiterated by the President's Office.

"[The] Myanmar authorities should stop prosecuting and threatening journalists and human rights defenders for reporting and speaking out about human rights abuses," the group said in a February 3 statement.

Executive director Matthew Smith said it was "worrying" that the military was "increasingly using the justice system as a tool to silence critics".

"The authorities should ensure swift justice for misconduct by soldiers

rather than shielding them from public scrutiny and accountability," he said.

KBC spokesperson La Mar Yaw said he was concerned the government was dragging its feet in uncovering who killed the women.

"I don't understand why they have not finished the investigation," he said. "They also have not announced anything regarding this case."

The two female volunteers, Maran Lu Ra, 20, and Tangbau Hkwan Nan Tsin, 21, were working for the KBC in Kaung Khar when they were killed. They had been teaching children whose education had been disrupted by persistent fighting. Their naked bodies were found the following day with stab wounds and head injuries, and villagers reported hearing screams in the night.

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# White card vote prompts call for ministry resolution

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THE status of holders of temporary IDs – widely known as white cards – should be clarified as soon as possible, a leading MP said last week, as parliament voted to give them voting rights in an upcoming national referendum. Meanwhile, the head of an ethnic Rakhine party said he plans to submit the issue to the Constitutional Tribunal.

U Zaw Myint Pe, chair of the Amyotha Hluttaw National Planning Affairs Committee, urged the Ministry of Immigration and Population to settle the matter without delay.

“If the problem persists into the next generation, it will be rather difficult to settle it. White card holders should not be allowed to vote. They should be recognised as citizens or foreigners,” said U Zaw Myint Pe said.

He made the comments on February 4, two days after the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw voted 328 to 79 to approve a proposal from President U Thein Sein that people who voted in the 2010 election should have the right to vote in a referendum scheduled for May.

The vote came following heated discussion between MPs, with a number of military and civilian representatives arguing for giving white card

**‘White card holders should not be allowed to vote. They should be recognised as citizens or foreigners.’**

**U Zaw Myint Pe**

Amyotha Hluttaw representative

holders voting rights. Most of those who spoke out against the president's proposal were ethnic Rakhine MPs.

Ethnic Rakhine representatives told the hluttaw that white cards were issued to immigrants as a temporary measure. As they are not citizens, they should not be allowed to vote, they argued.

“To preserve the nation's sovereign integrity, voting rights should not be offered to those who are not citizens,” Rakhine National Party chair U Aye Maung said.

Daw Khin Saw Wai, a Rakhine representative from Rathedaung township, said, “The white card doesn't recognise them as citizens. Letting them

vote in the referendum would contravene the 1982 Citizenship Law.”

Speaking after the vote, U Aye Maung said he would submit the case to the Constitutional Tribunal in view of the widespread opposition to the matter.

The Ministry of Immigration has given estimates varying from 500,000 to 1 million for the number of white-card holders in Myanmar. Most are in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin states, and the issue is particularly sensitive as it relates to the status of people living in Myanmar variously referred to as “Bengalis” or “Rohingya”.

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

## Sittwe residents begin protests

**LUN MIN MANG**

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PROTESTS in Sittwe against a parliamentary decision to allow temporary ID holders to vote in a planned referendum are to culminate in state-wide demonstrations on February 15, according to organisers.

On February 2, MPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of President U Thein Sein's suggestion to give holders of temporary IDs – known as white cards – the right to vote in the referendum, which is tentatively scheduled for May. They had earlier removed the provision at the suggestion of the National League for Democracy.

The issue is particularly sensitive in Rakhine State, as the majority of white card holders in Myanmar are Muslims who identify as Rohingya.

Following the decision, representatives from community-based groups met and agreed to launch seven days of protests, beginning on February 5.

“Every house in Sittwe is displaying a Buddhist flag and a letter written to disapprove of and object to the decision of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw



Monks and laypeople take part in a protest in Sittwe in March 2014. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

**‘There are three election laws and white card holders are allowed to vote under those laws.’**

**U Zaw Htay**

President's Office director

to let white card holders vote,” said Daw Nyo Aye, a member of a committee coordinating the protests.

The committee is planning to protest in other cities in Rakhine State on February 15, she said.

A senior official from the President's Office defended the president's recommendation to allow white card holders to vote, saying legislation on the issue should be consistent.

“There are three election laws

and white card holders are allowed to vote under those laws. White card holders already voted in the 2010 general election,” director U Zaw Htay said.

“The laws should all be the same. If white card holders should not have voting rights, then they should be banned according to all of the election laws,” he said.

However, Sittwe resident U Soe Naing said the election laws were

created by the military government so there did not need to be consistency.

“The conditions have changed. In 2010 there was a military regime but then an elected government took power and they said the country is democratic,” he said. “Those who are not clearly identified as citizens yet should not be eligible to vote, even if the military regime allowed them to do so before.”

## Yangon students to support marchers

**MRATT KYAW THU**

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STUDENTS in Yangon were planning to gather over the weekend to show their support for colleagues who are marching from Mandalay to Yangon.

The event was due to be held on February 8 at Bo Sein Hman football field in Tarmwe township.

It would be the first action in Yangon since students in Mandalay began marching to Yangon to protest against the National Education Law. The Yangon campaign has been called the “Mass support movement for student protests” and is organised by students from the National University of Arts and Culture, Thanlyin Technological University and Dagon University.

According to students, the marchers will arrive in Yangon at the end of next week, after which they will launch a sit-in strike with their counterparts from other cities.

Demonstrations against the law subsided after the government agreed to negotiations on January 28. Student leaders then met representatives of the government and parliament for talks in Yangon on February 1.

However, protests resumed on February 3 after the government postponed a follow-up meeting in Nay Pyi Taw until after Union Day, which is marked on February 12.

The government said the cancellation was the “result of different points of view on the agenda”.

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TNLA soldiers march during a ceremony to mark Revolution Day on January 12. Photo: Supplied/TNLA PSLF

## YCDC rep tries name-and-shame to improve city roads

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ENGINEERS responsible for road works should be prominently named so that they can be identified in the event of future deterioration of the work, a newly elected member of Yangon City Development Committee has urged.

U Khin Hlaing, who was elected in December as a city-level executive member of the committee from the western district, told *The Myanmar Times* on February 4 that the practice could help reduce initial construction costs and the need for repairs later on.

"The identity of the road-builder will be noted. If the road deteriorates, we can find the name of the engineer who built it, and make him repair it free of charge. There won't be any beating around the bush," he said.

U Khin Hlaing said he planned further reforms. "Later on, we will publish the names and phone numbers of contractors, as well as the cost estimates, so that the people can know everything."

U Tin Sein, an elected district-level member for the western district, said he believed the proposal was "a good system". "It might help improve the quality of the roads," he said.

Despite repeated requests from *The Myanmar Times*, no one from YCDC's Engineering Department (Roads and Bridges) would make themselves available to comment on the plan.

U Khin Hlaing said he was also investigating the cost and quality of road-building and repairs going back to 2010, and had requested township-level members to provide him with the necessary data.

He said the policy could be introduced without mayoral approval because elected YCDC members have "management authority" under the YCDC Law.

# Thousands flee homes after Tatmadaw and TNLA clash

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ARMED clashes between government forces and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, including an air raid, have displaced up to 2000 people, civil society groups in the area say.

Fighting broke out on February 2 and 4 when Tatmadaw helicopters and aircraft fired on a TNLA base and villagers in Mong Mit township, Shan State, according to the TNLA.

Ko Tar Maung, who lives in Shwe Nyaung Pin village, said villagers had fled their homes, taking refuge in camps or other villages. "I heard a pregnant woman died and many people were wounded," he said.

Civil society groups said the fighting has forced more than 2000 people to flee their homes. Mai Myo Aung, a member of the Ta'ang Students and Youth Union, told *The Myanmar Times* that two people had been killed and nine others seriously wounded. Villagers had fled into the mountains, he said. "We're trying to organise the displaced people and settle them in four monasteries in Mogok. There are 600 IDPs that we know about, but there are many in the forest and some are out of contact," he said.

Though the two armies are no longer in contact, the situation remains tense and unpredictable, said Mai Myo Aung. Both forces have taken up positions in deserted villages.

Nearly 900 students in six schools may not be able to take their final exams scheduled for next week, he said. "Children are always victims in these clashes. The government should take responsibility for them as soon as possible," Mai Myo Aung said.

TNLA communications officer Mai Aike Kyaw said the fighting began when two Tatmadaw helicopters strafed Saing Lain village near Mong Mit township on February 2, killing

at least five people.

"The attack was near Shwe Nyaung Pin village. Their aircraft are still flying over our positions," he said on February 5.

The reports could not be independently confirmed.

The TNLA also contests an account of the action reported in the Tatmadaw newspaper *Myawady*. The newspaper said the clash broke out after the TNLA detained two villagers, U Aik Nyal, 46, of Mann Pat village, and U Tun Kyi, 48, of Pyaung Pyan village, for refusing to pay K7 million in taxes to the armed group.

The TNLA says the two were detained for poppy cultivation. "The TNLA never demands money from our people. Why didn't the paper report the use of helicopters to attack our troops?" said Mai Aike Kyaw.

The TNLA is the armed wing of the Palaung State Liberation Front, one of the last armed ethnic groups to not yet sign a ceasefire

with the government.

Following prolonged talks throughout last year, the government wanted to sign a long-awaited nationwide ceasefire agreement on Union Day, February 12. But hopes have dimmed in the wake of clashes with first the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and now the TNLA.

U Hla Maung Shwe, a senior adviser with the Myanmar Peace Center, played down the severity of the fighting and said low-level clashes would not affect the peace process. "Skirmishes can occur between lower-level troops of both sides. But the peace talks must go on," he said.

A technical team of the MPC is due to meet the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, which represents ethnic armed groups, to discuss resuming peace talks next week.

However, armed groups say the signing of an agreement on Union Day, as previously proposed, will not be possible.

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# Students continue march as NLD expels education expert

Government postpones planned meeting in Nay Pyi Taw until after Union Day due to disagreements over agenda

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STUDENT protesters are continuing their march from Mandalay to Yangon after the government postponed a planned meeting in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss the National Education Law.

The National League for Democracy has also distanced itself from the students and reportedly expelled a prominent education expert, U Thein Lwin, from its leadership team for participating in negotiations on education reform in cooperation with the students.

Minister for the President's Office U Aung Min said President U Thein Sein had decided to postpone the February 3 meeting until after Union Day, which will be marked on February 12.

In a statement, the government said the meeting was delayed "as a result of different points of view on the agenda" for the talks. It said that they will only resume after agreement is reached "on the type and agenda of the meeting, which will take some time in order to avoid unnecessary conflict".

"The government side will arrange for the resumption of the talks on the date set by students after February 12," the statement said.

The cancellation was criticised as "one-sided" by student protesters, who said they will respond by stepping up their campaign against the law.

"U Aung Min met with three students and three people from the NNER. He said some things that seemed to question whether the representatives are really representing the protesting students," said Ko Nanda Sit Aung, a student representative.

"We will resume our march to let them know that we are in fact representing the protesting students."

The February 3 meeting was to bring together four parties: from the government, U Aung Min, Minister of Education Daw Khin San Yi and Minister for the President's Office U Tin Naing Thein; 15 representatives of university student groups; 18 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives; and members of the National Network for Education Reform, a civil society organisation.

It was scheduled after a February 1 meeting at Yangon University's Diamond Jubilee Hall failed to break the deadlock over the law.

During negotiations with the students on February 3, U Aung Min also questioned the links between NNER leader U Thein Lwin and the National League for Democracy. Media reports said the NLD had dumped U



Student leaders speak at a press conference outside the education ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on February 3. Photo: Mrat Kyaw Thu

Thein Lwin from its central executive committee.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi told reporters on February 3 that the party is "not associated" with the NNER.

"According to our rules and regulations, our party member cannot have duties in other organisations because it can lead to conflict. The NLD has already talked with Dr Thein Lwin. If he wants to participate in the NLD and NNER, he cannot be included in the central executive committee. He can participate in the party activities as a party member," she was quoted as saying by Eleven Media.

Prior to the decision, U Thein Lwin told *The Myanmar Times* his involvement with the NLD was none of U Aung Min's business.

"It is between my party and me. I will listen to the decision of my party. But I welcome the students' demands and I support them so I will continue to stand on their side," he said.

Student representatives were only informed of the cancellation after they arrived at the Ministry of Education in Nay Pyi Taw. The government stopped

other students and media from entering the ministry, permitting only 15 student representatives to enter.

They have also had difficulties finding accommodation. The Nay Pyi Taw City Development Committee guest-

**'I will listen to the decision of my party. But I welcome the students' demands and I support them.'**

**U Thein Lwin**

National Network for Education Reform leader and NLD member

house refused to give them lodging, while private hotels were too expensive for such a large group. Eventually most of the students slept on their bus.

The February 1 meeting was called following a tense standoff between marching students and police in Taungtha, Mandalay Region, on January 27. The police eventually let the students pass, and they later agreed to temporarily halt the march pending the outcome of the February 1 talks.

The march was launched on January 20, following the passing of a 60-day deadline that the students imposed on the government to amend the National Education Law.

Groups of students from Patheingyi in Ayeyarwady Region and Dawei in Tanintharyi Region are also marching to Yangon.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

# Rail firm backs off eviction order

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UP to a quarter of residents in Mottama appear to have staved off eviction at the hands of state-run Myanmar Railways following the intervention of MPs and the regional chief minister.

Residents in the town say they still plan to submit an appeal to President U Thein Sein against earlier orders to leave their homes. Around 900 households - about 4500 of Mottama's 20,000 residents - would have been affected.

Town elder Dr Than Oo said last week that community leaders and the heads of ward administration offices had formed a group to fight the decision.

Myanmar Railways gave the residents one month's notice to quit and warned it would take legal action against those who refused to leave under a 1955 law.

"Myanmar Railways says it owns the land, and has written to more than 200 householders. They are writing to 50 a week," said Dr Than Oo, who runs a medical clinic in Mottama, which is in Paung township.

But U Soe Shwe, Myanmar Railways' manager for Mon State, said the state's chief minister, U Ohn Myint, had ordered a halt to the evictions. While this has been reported to the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw, it has not yet issued any new instructions, he said.

He insisted that Myanmar Railways never intended to remove the families from the land anyway. "We just sent notices to residents informing them this is railway property. We didn't intend to evict them and we can't even if we want to," he said.

"We have stopped sending notices to them since Chief Minister U Ohn Myint ordered us on January 13. He said it would create chaos if we kept doing it."

Protest leader U Kyaw Swar Linn attributed the backflip to intervention by local Amyotha and Pyithu hluttaw representatives, who raised the issue with state officials. - Translation by Emoon

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# Slain journalist's wife sets deadline for govt action

Daw Thandar says government is trying to cover up the truth about her husband's death in military custody

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THE widow of a journalist killed while in army custody has called for legal action to be taken against those involved in the death of her husband, a freelance journalist. Officials from the government, the police force and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, however, appear unable to agree on who is responsible for making a decision on whether to press charges over the death of Ko Par Gyi in October.

His widow, Daw Thandar, has accused the government of burying the case following a human rights commission investigation. She said she will give the Ministry of Home Affairs 60 days to bring charges to court or she will seek legal advice in an effort to initiate action herself.

"On January 31 I asked the ministry to bring the case of my husband's death to court within 60 days," she said. "If nothing happens, I shall take the next step toward bringing the case to court myself."

**'I have heard nothing at all since the commission submitted its report to the president.'**

**Daw Thandar**  
Wife of Ko Par Gyi

Ko Par Gyi died while in military custody in Kyaikmayaw, Mon State, on October 4, 2014. The Tatmadaw released details of his death 19 days later, after Daw Thandar told police her husband was missing. The military statement said Ko Par Gyi had been shot while trying to escape.

The killing provoked widespread condemnation both inside Myanmar and abroad, and in response President U Thein Sein ordered the

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission to investigate.

Ko Par Gyi's body was exhumed in November for examination, and the commission sent a team to the scene of his death to interview 47 witnesses, including military personnel, local residents, a state minister, a monk and reporters.

On December 1, the commission issued its report to the president, recommending that a case be brought against unspecified individuals and heard in a civilian court.

However, police in Kyaikmayaw said last week the case was in the hands of "higher authorities" and they were unaware of its status.

U Zaw Htay, a director in the President's Office, directed enquiries on the status of the case to the human rights commission.

The commission's deputy leader, U Sit Myaing, said the body was no longer involved in the case as it has already submitted its final report to the president.

Daw Thandar said the government's failure to respond transparently to her husband's death was "completely wrong".

"I filed the complaint so long ago and there has been no action. There's definitely something not right with the way they are handling it," she said. "I have heard nothing at all since the commission submitted its report to the president."

Daw Thandar said she had also asked the state health authorities to release the post-mortem results of tests conducted on her husband's body.

Last month, United Nations special rapporteur on human rights Yanghee Lee also spoke out publicly about Ko Par Gyi's death, describing it as "an extreme example" of the "regular intimidation and harassment" Myanmar journalists face.

"I call on the government to initiate criminal proceedings as a matter of priority in an open and transparent manner," she said at a press conference on January 16, at the end of a 10-day visit to Myanmar.

Lawyer U Kyaw Win said it would be difficult for Daw Thandar to use



Daw Thandar speaks at a press conference held at the office of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society in October 2014. Photo: Thiri

the legal system to force the government to proceed with charges against her husband's killers.

"There is no statute of limitations but it is up to the government whether to file any charges," he said.

## Manual brings green practices to hospitality trade

**DOUGLAS LONG**  
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A HANDBOOK aimed at providing guidelines for the sustainable management of hotels and restaurants in Myanmar was launched at the ASEAN Tourism Conference in Nay Pyi Taw on January 27.

The 52-page *Manual on Sustainable Management in the Hospitality Sector in Myanmar*, written by Dörte Kasüske, was organised by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and the Myanmar Tourism Federation (MTF), with support from German NGO GIZ.

Petra Schill, GIZ's Myanmar country director, said at the launch ceremony that while growth in the tourism industry creates new economic opportunities, there are also risks related to adverse environmental and social impacts if tourism is not managed properly.

"Myanmar still has the opportunity to position itself ... as an environmental and cultural oasis, and as a prime destination for sustainable tourism," she said.

Toward this end, Ms Schill said that

the manual provides a comprehensive introduction to sustainable hospitality management. "It is enriched with real-life examples derived from a field study in the Inle Lake region, which will facilitate its application in the field," she said.

Nicole Haeusler - the senior advisor on responsible tourism for MTF/GIF, and the project coordinator for the manual - said research for the publication was conducted based on the *Destination Management Plan for the Inle Lake Region* published by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in 2014.

The research team visited 30 hotels and restaurants around Inle Lake in October and November 2014, conducting inspection tours and holding discussions about environmental management, community involvement and purchasing.

"The aim was to find local best-practice examples at the Inle Lake region," she said. "The team has collected all of these examples and put them together into one manual."

The book includes chapters on sustainable practices focusing on water, waste, energy, purchasing and

people, with each section including practical examples accompanied by photographs.

Also included are checklists for particular areas in hotels and restaurants, such as guest rooms, kitchens, office, laundries, gardens and swimming pools.

The laundry checklist, for example, includes the following suggestions: "Always run full loads in washing machines and dryers to make most efficient use of water and energy"; and "Train laundry staff to immediately report leaking and broken equipment to the maintenance department."

Ms Haeusler said the manual does

not aim to set up new standards, but rather to offer recommendations that are easily implemented.

"These checklists can help managers and staff to go into the laundry to check what have we achieved so far regarding sustainable management, and what can we improve," she said.

She said 200 copies of the manual have already been printed in English, and 700 Myanmar-language copies will be published by mid-February. They will be available to participants in training workshops and through regional branches of the Myanmar Hotelier Association. PDF versions will also be available.

In March, pilot training will be offered to hotel managers in five locations in Shan State: Inle Lake, Nyaungshwe, Kalaw, Hsipaw and Kengtung.

"Afterward, there will be an evaluation of the outcome of the training," Ms Haeusler said. "What has worked? What did the hoteliers and restaurant owners change, and what did they not change, and why didn't they change? So it's also a lesson-learning process for us, which we can then integrate into a second edition of the manual."

# 30

Hotels and restaurants in the Inle Lake area surveyed for the sustainable management manual



# UN official hits back over govt statement

WALONE

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A MYANMAR-BASED United Nations official has criticised a recent Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement that said the UN special rapporteur on human rights had created "discord" during her latest visit.

The statement, which was published in state-run newspapers on February 4, accused Yanghee Lee of "interfering on issues which fall within state sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction", including the use of the term Rohingya and four draft "protection of religion" laws.

A senior UN official, who asked not to be named because he was not authorised to speak about Ms Lee's mandate, questioned why the government was singling out the rapporteur for criticism.

He noted that the government had not issued similar statements condemning foreign leaders, such as President Barack Obama, who had also spoken out about the poor treatment of the Rohingya.

"The government doesn't dare to criticise the United States, for example. They just attack the UN because we have more limited avenues for responding," he said.

He said the government also failed to respond to derogatory remarks made about Ms Lee, including those by U Wirathu.

"Some Rakhine leaders even used very rude words in their meeting with the UN rapporteur [in January]," he said.

The statement was issued almost three weeks after Ms Lee left Myanmar on January 16, following a 10-day visit to the country during which she met government officials, parliamentarians, religious and community leaders, civil society representatives, victims of human rights violations and members of the international community.

At her final press conference she emphasised the need to focus on addressing urgent humanitarian and human rights needs

throughout Rakhine State. She also downplayed the importance of the Rohingya versus Bengali debate.

"Without wanting to invalidate either perspective, I would like to suggest that this fixation on which word to use has paralysed progress on important issues," she said.

The ministry's statement, however, saw it otherwise.

On the use of Rohingya, it said that "using this controversial terminology will only pose a barrier on the road to resolving this important issue. Use of such term by the United Nations would certainly draw strong resentments of the people of Myanmar making the government's efforts more difficult in addressing the issue."

**'The government doesn't dare to criticise the United States.'**

Senior UN official

It called on Ms Lee to "fulfil her mandate in a professional and prudent manner. Her visit should leave the country and people of Myanmar with discord, distrust and incitement," it said.

U Zaw Htay, the director of the President's Office, wrote on his Facebook page that the "Myanmar government always criticises Ms Lee's mandate. No special rapporteur got a visa under the Tatmadaw government."

While he refused to clarify his comment, he appeared to be suggesting that Ms Lee should appreciate the government's generosity in granting her a visa, in contrast to its predecessor.

U Sai Nyunt Lwin, secretary of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, said the statement might have been issued to "comfort" the Rakhine people.

Ms Lee will submit her report to the UN Human Rights Council on the situation in Myanmar in March.

# WWF calls for zero-poaching policy on Burmese star tortoise

WWF urges Asian governments to take action to save 10 species from poachers

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THE World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has urged Asian governments to adopt a zero-poaching policy for 10 species, including Myanmar's Burmese star tortoise. In a statement released on January 28, WWF said Asia was undergoing a poaching crisis driven by the unrelenting demand for illegal wildlife products.

"In many countries, wildlife crime remains a low-risk, high-profit venture and it's not just tigers, elephants and rhinos being slaughtered," the statement said.

At the Zero Poaching in Asia Symposium held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from February 2 to 6, discussion centred on 10 lesser-known Asian species that are being poached to supply a multi-billion-dollar black market. The species are the Siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*), sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*), Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*), Tokay gecko (*Gekko gecko*), Gold of Kinabalu orchid (*Paphiopedilum rothschildianum*), Thai rosewood

(*Dalbergia cochinchinensis*), Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*), Burmese star tortoise (*Geochelone platynota*), Javan slow loris (*Nycticebus javanicus*) and the proboscis monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*).

The star tortoise, a critically endangered species, is in high demand for meat and traditional medicines in Asia. It is also highly sought after for the international pet trade, with collectors in Europe and North America willing to pay thousands of dollars for an individual. Found only in Myanmar, the species appears to be so extremely depleted that there may now be no viable wild populations. Commercial harvest and trade of the species is illegal under Myanmar law though the export of captive specimens is permitted from one facility within the country.

WWF also said illegal trade in live elephants, ivory and hides across the Thailand-Myanmar border has become a serious conservation issue.

WWF is urging governments to commit to Zero Poaching by assessing anti-poaching efforts on the ground, adopting new tools and technolo-

gies, investing in capacity-building for rangers, strengthening prosecution processes, involving local communities, and building national and regional cooperation.

U Thein Aung, deputy head of the Myanmar Bird and Nature Society, told *The Myanmar Times* that a change in public attitudes toward poaching wildlife and using their products was needed. "There will be no poaching if there is no demand," he said, adding that effective law enforcement could aid conservation efforts. Supporting alternative livelihoods for poor people involved in the wildlife trade would also help.

Dr John B Sale, a tropical wildlife specialist, said action to stop wildlife trade could not be taken overnight. "If the Irrawaddy dolphin and other species disappear, that's a great shame. We have to find ways of changing people's outlook. Many of the people engaged in the trade are tribal, and hunting is part of their culture. It needs a lot of education, effort and persuasion to bring about change," he said.



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#### CONTINUED FROM NEWS 1

*The Myanmar Times* has been a market leader since launching its English weekly in February 2000, and a Myanmar weekly the following year. In 2007 it began publishing a fashion and lifestyle magazine, *NOW!*.

In 2012 it became the first Myanmar publication to receive a major international prize when it won an award from the Society of Publishers in Asia for opinion writing. Over the next two years it won four more awards.

In 2014, Myanmar Consolidated Media, the parent company of *The Myanmar Times*, was taken over by business entrepreneur U Thein Tun.

Heading the editorial team will be U Thiha Saw, who joined the company as editorial director last year. In 2013 he launched *Myanmar Freedom Daily*, the first private English daily in Myanmar in more than 50 years.

"We want to be the independent voice of Myanmar," U Thiha Saw said.

- Staff Writers

# Protest planned over inaction on industrial zone wastewater

MAUNG ZAW



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SICK of the stink of the river whose water they used to drink, a group of Mandalay Region villagers say they will take to the streets in protest unless something is done to stop the pollution of the Dokehtawaddy River by industrial waste.

Villagers also complain of diarrhoea and skin diseases they say are caused by the pollution in the water, where wastewater from Mandalay Industrial Zone is dumped.

"We can't enjoy the scents of the season anymore," said U Min Han, of Nyaung Pin Ni village in Amarapura township. "In the past, we used to relax on the riverbank beside the Dokehtawaddy, but now we stay away as much as we can because of the terrible smell. We've been complaining to Mandalay Region government and Mandalay City Development Committee for the past two years, but without response."

About 20 villages lay along the river bank in the affected area. Residents said the mosquito breeding rate is also high throughout the year, and fish



Polluted water flows near the Mandalay Industrial Zone in Amarapura township. Photo: Supplied

populations have been depleted as a result of the pollution.

"We used to be able to drink the river water in the past. But now it is hard even to bathe in it," said Ko Nay Lin, a resident of Kanbe village. "We now face water scarcity. We fear the river is being ruined."

Mandalay Industrial Zone was established in 1990. The number of factories has grown significantly starting from about 2002, after which more and more wastewater was dumped in the river.

U Tin Thint, who works with an environmental conservation group called

Sein Young So, said his research team could "barely stand to spend an hour there" when it visited the area.

"We can only imagine how much the residents have to put up with. The environment will continue to deteriorate unless the authorities take action to resolve this problem," he said, noting that the Dokehtawaddy flows into the Ayeyarwady River.

A fisherman from Talin Gyi village said the number and quality of fish were deteriorating. "In the past, there were plenty of fish to catch. But edible fish species are gradually disappearing, and being replaced by white suckers that are not fit to eat," he said, asking not to be named.

"Our village has become unliveable because of the foul smells from the river, as well as a nearby crematorium," said Ko Myo Lwin, 40, a resident of Min village.

U Tun Kyi, a member of Mandalay City Development Committee, told *The Myanmar Times* on January 28 that a wastewater treatment plant would "soon" be built in the industrial zone.

Residents said they plan to stage a protest this month of 500 people from the 20 villages affected to demand action from the Union government if regional authorities fail to ban the dumping of wastewater.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

## IN BRIEF

### Police prepare security for election

Drawing on advice from overseas, the police have begun making security arrangements for the general election to be held later this year, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun told a press conference on February 3.

The deputy minister said more than 60 political parties would be eligible to field candidates in the election, which will take place in late October or early November. Police officers of all ranks throughout the country had already begun training in electoral law and practice, he said.

"We've also consulted other countries with experience of the successful conduct of elections," he told reporters, adding that police from Indonesia had recently shared the expertise they had gained during last year's election in that country.

"We also need to train civilians who will serve as polling officials. In Indonesia, about 2 million civilians were deployed for the election," he said.

More than 75,000 officers would be engaged in electoral security, said Brig Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun. - Pyae Thet Phy, translation by Zar Zar Soe

### Stolen motorbikes returned to owners in Nay Pyi Taw

Motorcycles stolen from housing estates, allegedly by a gang, were last week restored to their owners at a ceremony at Nay Pyi Taw Council offices. The 20 motorbikes were handed back to their owners, who included civil servants from 14 ministries.

Most of the bikes were stolen from Kantkaw, Padaung and Khayay housing estates. Already this year a total of 64 thefts have been reported, from which 45 motorbikes have been recovered, and seven people arrested in Yamethin, Lewe and Pyinmana townships.

Colonel Myint Aung Than, a member of Nay Pyi Taw Council, said the remaining stolen motorbikes would also be returned if their owners could be confirmed.

The council has called on the respective ministers to improve security at the housing estates, where a suspected gang has also stolen kitchen equipment.

"Thieves come from other towns and work here as motorcycle couriers. They hang around building sites and commit crimes at every opportunity," said Police Colonel Ko Ko Aung of Nay Pyi Taw Police Force.

Last October, 11 stolen motorcycles found in Lewe township were given back to their owners in Zabuthiri township. - Pyae Thet Phy, translation by Zar Zar Soe

## MAWLAMYINE

# Mon push for regional minister in Tanintharyi govt

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ETHNIC Mon residents of Tanintharyi Region are seeking their own ethnic affairs minister but may be thwarted by a lack of formal identity documents.

Section 161 of the constitution grants ethnic groups that have a population of at least 0.1 percent of the total national population - or 51,200 people, based on the results of last year's census - within a single state or region a dedicated minister in that state or region's government.

Mon community-based groups in Tanintharyi formed a committee in December 2013 to tally the region's

Mon population.

In January 2014, the committee applied to the Tanintharyi Region government and its Immigration and Population Department for permission to conduct a survey of the Mon population. The census was launched later that month, with four groups of volunteers eventually surveying Mon residents in 181 villages spread throughout Tanintharyi Region's 10 townships.

"When the list was closed in November, it was found that there were 62,366 Mon people in the region, half of whom are living in Yebyu township," committee member Mi Ngwe Lay said at a press conference in Mawlamyine on February 2.

Of these, however, 39,582 do not

hold Citizenship Scrutiny Cards, said another committee member, U Kyaw Khine Win.

He said in the past it was time-consuming and expensive for people to get CSCs, which are issued by the Ministry of Immigration and Population.

Only 16,283 are over 18 years old. The survey also found another 8981 people who want to be identified as Mon but are currently registered as other national races, he said.

The constitution does not state how the population of a minority should be counted, or what citizenship documentation they should hold. It says only that ethnic groups will receive a regional minister if they are "determined by the authorities

concerned as having a population which constitutes 0.1pc and above of the population of the union" in a single state or region.

U Kyaw Khine Win said the addition of a Mon ethnic affairs minister to the Tanintharyi Region government would lead to more benefits for Mon people, including greater security and cultural development.

U Hein Lin Htet, deputy director of Mon State election sub-commission, said his organisation had received a copy of the committee's report.

"It's for Tanintharyi Region so it doesn't concern us," he said. "But they will get a Mon ethnic affairs minister if their survey is in line with the existing law." - Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2015

Lawyer U Kyaw Win speaks to reporters outside Pabedan Township Court in October 2014. Photo: Zarni Phyo

## Two 'Bi Mon Teh Nay' staff submit final appeal

**LUN MIN MANG**

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A LAWYER acting for two jailed staff from the *Bi Mon Teh Nay* journal made his closing arguments in a request for a revision of their sentence. The presentation was heard in the the Yangon Region High Court on January 29.

U Kyaw Win said his submission was the same as that submitted to lower courts, which had rejected it without giving a reason.

Five staff, including the publisher as well as editors and reporters, were arrested last year and charged with incitement under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code after *Bi Mon Teh Nay* published a false statement of a political activist group in July.

In October Pabedan township court sentenced each of them to two

years' imprisonment, the strongest penalty possible under the section. The Western District Court rejected a first appeal for a revision.

"The Pabedan township court gave no strong reason [for sentencing the group] when the sentence was handed down," said U Kyaw Win, who is representing publisher U Kyaw Min Khaing and editor-in-charge U Win Tin.

"The journal just published a statement from a political activist group

**'We hope the sentence will be reduced ... But really, the whole case should be thrown out.'**

**U Kyaw Win**Lawyer for two *Bi Mon Teh Nay* staff

that had no connection with the journal."

He said he had questioned why the men were charged under the Penal Code rather than the News Media Law. He cited the example of *Myanmar Thandawsint*, also known as *The Myanmar Herald*, which was sued under the media law due to a publication of an interview with a political expert in which the president was criticised with extreme language.

"A court in Nay Pyi Taw allowed [*Myanmar Thandawsint*] to be sued under the media law. But for us, the media law was not applied," he said.

The Myanmar Press Council (Interim) has raised its concerns about the case with the government and presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut has previously said he would discuss it with the president. However, he also said that the government has no right to interfere with the judiciary.

"We hope the sentence will be reduced," U Kyaw Win said. "But really, the whole case should be thrown out."

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KACHIN STATE

# Govt blocks UN aid to Kachin IDPs

No permission for cross-line missions has been granted since September because of security concerns and bureaucratic delays



LOCAL aid groups in Kachin State have been forced to increase their support to IDP camps in response to the government's refusal to allow any United Nations aid convoys into Kachin Independence Army-controlled territory since September.

In the first nine months of 2014, the UN conducted 30 missions reaching a total of almost 186,000 people

in IDP camps. However, those convoys came to a halt at the start of October and have not resumed.

The government has blocked the missions primarily for security reasons, although the UN says "bureaucratic delays" have also been an issue.

"Since September 2014, cross-line convoys have been delayed, pending Kachin State government approval for travel authorisations for international staff," said Mark Cutts, head of office in Myanmar for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The delays meant around 27,500 displaced people - including more than 12,000 children - in camps

around Laiza and east of Bhamo were not able to receive items such as blankets and warm clothes from UNICEF and the UNHCR ahead of the winter months. An estimated 50,000 people are displaced in areas outside government control.

Mr Cutts said the most "urgent needs" resulting from the delays were being met by local NGOs but the government's refusal to grant travel permission has damaged the humanitarian response, particularly in shelter, food, winter kits, water and sanitation.

In December 2011 the UN sent one aid convoy to KIA-controlled territory but did not subsequently

get permission for another mission until September 2013. It then sent around three a month until the latest stoppage.

Ko Ja Nu, a program coordinator with the Metta Development Foundation, one of the largest local NGOs providing aid to IDPs in Kachin State, said the stopping of the convoys had resulted in a lack of basic food items in camps.

Residents have also been "discouraged due to the uncertainty this has created", Ko Ja Nu said.

"Nevertheless, local actors like Metta and others have remained active and this reduced the potential negative impact that could have had,"

he said. "While continuing to try and get access, the UN should use the local NGOs to reach out to the desperate IDPs ... They have the capacity, access and trust from all sides, including the government ministries and the IDPs."

Ko Ja Nu also criticised the government for not allowing the missions, saying that humanitarian aid should not "depend on political agendas".

"There is a fundamental right to receive and offer humanitarian assistance that all actors should protect and promote."

Government spokesperson U Ye Htut was not available for comment.

# Humanitarian groups appeal for more support

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NINE aid organisations engaged in assisting people affected by the conflict in Kachin State are appealing for extra funding as fighting continues. While the United Nations is seeking US\$190 million to support more than 500,000 vulnerable or displaced people this year, including many in Kachin State, the aid groups say they fear donors are showing signs of fatigue just as hopes of peace spurred by ongoing talks over a national ceasefire agreement seem to be fading.

Clashes between the Tatmadaw and Kachin Independence Army since June 2011 have prompted more than 100,000 to flee their homes for camps in Kachin State. Despite intensified talks last year toward a resolution, a proposed nationwide ceasefire is yet to be signed.

Myanmar Times that international funding for Kachin had been decreasing yearly, even as the number of displaced people increased. "The camps at Hpakant and Putao had to be enlarged because of the recent clashes," he said.

Karuna, Kachin Baptist Convention, Metta Development Foundation, Shalom Foundation, Wunpawng Ninghtoi, Bridge, Kachin Relief and Development Committee, Kachin Women's Association and Kachin Development Group are struggling to secure funds from international organisations, including UN agencies.

In anticipation of a looming aid shortfall, the organisations say they are planning to initiate fundraising drives among members, local donors and volunteers.

KBC expects to spend only half the US\$4 million it spent last year, and Shalom Foundation's funding is set to fall from \$1 million to \$100,000. "We didn't get direct donations, but only through INGOs. Most of the money they get goes to their staff costs. They've asked us to target our aid - for example, to the 100 most needy [in a camp] - which means they want to limit the funds," U Gun Mai said.

"They should be giving us more, not less, as the situation is getting worse," he added.

Metta Development Foundation's assistant aid manager, U Gun Sha Aung, said the nine NGOs had urged UN agencies and donors to reconsider the request to target aid.

"The situation is obviously getting worse, and we need more assistance, not less," he said.

The NGOs have also asked the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to provide more detailed information about the breakdown in international aid provided to the Kachin and Rakhine conflicts, including how much was spent on food, accommodation, shelter and other areas in each state.



A displaced Kachin family sits in a bamboo home in an IDP camp near Laiza in July 2012. Photo: Kaung Htet

The UN and its humanitarian partners are seeking \$190 million to assist 536,400 vulnerable people in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan states as part of the Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan for 2015.

This includes some 240,000 people who remain displaced in these three states as a result of the fighting that restarted in Kachin in 2011, and the inter-communal violence that erupted in Rakhine in 2012.

Of the \$190 million, about 36 percent is being requested for Kachin and northern Shan states, according to

UNOCHA. The 2014 request, for \$192 million, including \$66 million for Kachin State, was 59pc funded, with more than \$113.2 million received by the end of the year.

Mark Cutts, head of office for OCHA in Myanmar, said Myanmar was one of the best-funded appeals globally in 2014, above the average of 42pc.

However, he said humanitarian needs around the world are expected to be higher this year due to major emergencies in Syria, South Sudan and other places, and this could affect

support for Myanmar's crises.

"Finite levels of funding from international donors are being asked to address greater needs," he said. "Global funding constraints could affect overall funding availability in 2015, including for the humanitarian response in Kachin for both international and national organisations."

On the question of whether funding was being cut to local NGOs, Mr Cutts said they "have been, and will continue to be, central to the humanitarian response in Kachin and northern Shan states".

MILLION US\$

190

Amount requested by the UN in 2015 to support more than 500,000 displaced or vulnerable people in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan states

Even as peace dialogue continued, several clashes erupted late last year in Kachin, driving 3000 more villagers into expanded camps at Hpakant, Putao and Tanai in December.

The project manager for humanitarian assistance with Shalom (Nyein) Foundation, U Gun Mai, told *The*



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# Dozens of unmarked war graves to get memorials

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UP to 50 unmaintained or unmarked graves of Commonwealth soldiers who died in Myanmar during World War II could receive new recognition from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in coming years, a commission spokesperson said last week.

The comments come after the commission installed a personalised pedestal marker at the Mawlamyine grave of an Anglo-Burmese medic who died in 1947.

Private Rupert Mellican, who served with the British Royal Army Medical Corps, was buried with relatives at a family vault at St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cemetery in the Mon State capital. The son of Aloysius and Therese Mellican, of 21 Blundell Street, Pvt Mellican was 25 when he died and left no widow.

It is the first time an "alternative commemoration" has been undertaken by the CWGC in Myanmar in recent years. CWGC Myanmar manager U Thet Mon said it was "deeply rewarding" that efforts to commemorate Pvt



The grave of Private Rupert Mellican in Mawlamyine. Photo: Supplied/CWGC

Mellican have reached fruition.

"The grave will be regularly inspected and cared for and will ensure his sacrifice, and those of other Commonwealth servicemen and women in Myanmar, is never forgotten," he said.

A CWGC spokesperson said Pvt Mellican's grave was chosen "due to its immediate accessibility" but the commission is planning similar commemorations at other sites around the country, particularly in areas that are

now opening up due to ceasefires with armed ethnic groups.

Media and publications officer Barney Cullum said the commission had recently identified nearly 50 graves like Pvt Mellican's around the country.

"Over the next two years the CWGC aims to install an appropriate and fitting grave marker at each accessible grave site and ensure the grave - whether it is a scattered grave or one situated in a cemetery like that of Pvt

Mellican - is kept to the same high standard as all other Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves globally," Mr Cullum said.

Mr Cullum said one of the grave sites being considered for alternative commemoration is that of Lieutenant Colonel Sydney Wigginton, who is buried near Mewaing, between Papun in Kayin State and Bilin in Mon State.

Lt Col Wigginton died when the Dakota he was flying in with 15 others crashed into mountains northeast of Yangon on September 7, 1945.

As *The Myanmar Times* reported last year, Lt Col Wigginton's son, Gavin Wigginton, has been attempting to visit the burial site, which is inside a monastery in Mewaing. An application to visit in November 2014 was rejected by the Office of Military Security Affairs on "security grounds".

An associate of Mr Wigginton later visited the site but was detained by both government and Karen National Union soldiers. On an earlier visit in 2014, the grave site in Mewaing was confirmed by an 87-year-old resident who helped bury the men.

## Direct-to-your-door taxi service planned

TOE WAI AUNG  
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A SATELLITE-GUIDED, on-call taxi service will soon be available in Yangon to take passengers direct from their homes to their destinations. U Aung Win, managing director of Yaung Ni Oo company, says GPS systems are now being fitted to more than 100 vehicles in preparation for the launch of the service.

"Our home delivery service will begin in April," he said.

His company will work with an Indian logistics firm and the Hello Cabs taxi service, he said.

Passengers needing transport will call a central number, and the call centre will send a car direct to their home. Passengers will be notified in advance of the taxi's number and the driver's name.

"The company will ensure the security of our passengers, and the system will be much safer than a cab hailed off the street. They will operate according to GPS systems controlled via satellite. Passengers will know exactly where they are going and the time of arrival," he said, adding that drivers were now undergoing training in customer relations.

All cars would have a meter and air conditioning.

"We will also invite qualified car owners who are interested in participating, and whose cars can be fitted with the GPS," said U Aung Win.

Hello Cabs will provide a range of vehicles for service. "We will also expand the service to carry goods, including perishables," said Ayush Keshan of Dogon Logistics. "The location of every vehicle and its petrol consumption will be monitored by the company."

- Translation by Khant Lin Oo

# Authorities shutter exhibit of photos from 'U Thant Crisis'

LUN MIN MANG  
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A LANDMARK show exhibiting photos of the 1974 unrest known as the U Thant uprising has been delayed, after local officials demanded the photographer seek regional government approval on the eve of the opening.

The show, previously scheduled for February 1 to 5 at Pazundaung township's Orchid Hotel, has now tentatively been pushed back to February 25 to March 1 - pending government approval.

Photographer U Htein Win told *The Myanmar Times* that he was told by the Pazundaung township general administrative office on January 31 that the show could not take place unless he

received permission from the regional government.

"I have no idea why the authorities want to ban it. When I went to the township administrative office and asked for an official letter stopping the show, the person in the office said that they did not have it," U Htein Win said.

"They just called me and said that I must have permission from the Yangon Region government to do the show but I have not received any official letter yet."

He has now submitted a request through the township administrative office to the regional government to hold the show.

The photos depict the events of the U Thant crisis in December 1974, when students snatched the body of the recently deceased former United

Nations secretary-general from where it was being displayed at Kyaikkasan Racecourse and took it to Yangon University, in protest against a perceived lack of respect from General Ne Win's government. After several days of failed negotiations, police stormed the university, firing on unarmed students, an unknown number of whom were killed. U Htein Win was studying at the university when the events unfolded.

They have already been published as a book, *The U Thant Crisis*, in December 2014 to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the protests.

On December 15, *The Myanmar Times* published several of the images, along with U Htein Win's account - titled "Forty years on, fresh images emerge of U Thant's funeral" - of how

the photos were clandestinely captured, lost and then rediscovered.

Daw Phyu Ei Thein, the owner of River Ayeyarwady Gallery, said that photo and other art exhibitions are still technically required to have prior approval from the authorities, although often they do not bother.

She said for political-themed shows it is better to be on the safe side and seek permission for the censorship office on 38<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Yangon. "When I arranged an exhibition about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi I got permission from that board."

The Pazundaung township administrative office declined to comment when contacted, while the regional government could not be reached for comment.

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# Mon State government backs Ramsar listing for Gulf of Mottama

Up to 80,000 acres of wetland across two townships would be protected under plan

**MYINT KAY**  
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CONSERVATIONISTS are to meet next month in a bid to protect wetlands around the Mon State townships of Kyaikto and Bilin, it was announced last week. After years of lobbying from conservation groups, the regional government has agreed to support the nomination of a section of the Gulf of Mottama for designation as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Daw Saw Mon Theint, executive director of the Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA), said the initial proposed site would be located in the eastern part of the Gulf of Mottama, which is home to at least half of the world's population of spoon-billed sandpipers.

A forum will be held in the first week of March to build momentum for the application for Ramsar listing, she said.

Mon State Minister for Forestry

and Mining U Win Maw Oo said at a ceremony on January 31 that the regional government would work with BANCA to conserve the area.

Earlier in January, the regional government agreed in January to support the listing of a 32,000-hectare (80,000-acre) section of the Gulf

# 400

Estimated global population of mature spoon-billed sandpipers

of Mottama, said U Pyae Phyo Aung, joint secretary of BANCA.

He said the wetlands cover 200,000 acres but the area was too large to list in its entirety.

"The government agreed to include sections of Kyaikto and Bilin

townships. It is likely to be between 60,000 and 80,000 acres but the exact area is yet to be finalised," he said.

He said the forum was the "first step" toward conserving the gulf and that conservationists were conscious of the need to protect local livelihoods.

"Some residents in the area worry that Ramsar listing will result in them losing their homes, their lands and their livelihoods. We will make sure this does not happen," U Pyae Phyo Aung said.

BANCA has been seeking the designation of the Gulf of Mottama as a Ramsar site since 2008.

Myanmar's only Ramsar site is Moeyingyi wetlands, situated in Bago Region, about two hours north of Yangon. It was listed in 2004, again after lobbying by BANCA.

The site boasts 100 square kilometres (40 square miles) of wetlands, 2.56 sq km of which are now Ramsar-protected, making it a safe haven for vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered species.

# With general MPs gather fo

Four years after first convening, the national parliament



**HTOO THANT**

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AS the country gears up for elections later this year, observers and practitioners have been discussing the effectiveness of the nation's parliament. Initially so inexperienced it was known as the "half-hour hluttaw", the bicameral body - first convened four years ago on January 31 - has made some gains in staking out new territory in the transition to democracy.

Perhaps the clearest instance of how the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw sees itself as a check on the executive in the interests of the voters has been its decisions to cut projects from the government's budget bill if MPs believe they fail to benefit the people.

It also emerged as the winner in a tangled dispute with the first incarnation of the constitutional court when the court's entire membership stepped down after being criticised for saying members of parliament were not "Union-level persons". The fight was seen as a test of MPs' power to oversee government departments.

These disputes highlight that while the executive and the legislature may share common goals, their views on how to carry out their respective tasks can be very different.

"Some people think the hluttaw seeks confrontation with the government. That's not true. But in any democratic country, there is a naturally adversarial relationship between the parliament and the executive," the National League for Democracy Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Patheingyi, U Win Myint, told *The Myanmar Times*.

But the hluttaw is not without its detractors. Amyotha Hluttaw



Military members of parliament confer before

representative U Phone Myint Aung said he agreed with those who complain some MPs lack experience or are uninterested in debate.

However, he attributed this to the fact that many representatives

**'Some people think the hluttaw seeks confrontation with the government. That's not true.'**

**U Win Myint**  
Pyithu Hluttaw representative

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Phone: 372416  
Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2015



# election looming, r final year in office

has established itself as an important institution in Myanmar's political landscape



ore a Pyithu Hluttaw session. Photo: Christopher Davy

are former government officials who were instructed to take part in the 2010 election. "But some ex-government staff have become among the most energetic members of parliament. They have made the most of their new surroundings and have been able to get international experience as well," he said.

Over the past four years, the hluttaw has passed 64 new laws, amended 55 outdated laws and repealed 14

laws, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said at a ceremony to mark hluttaw's achievements so far.

Among the new measures are laws on private school registration, peaceful assembly and procession, foreign investment, foreign exchange management, land use, anti-corruption, special economic zones, the minimum wage, and the protection of farmers' rights and promo-

tion of farmers' interests. Starting from 2012-13 they have passed bills concerning budgets, taxes and national planning.

While noting that some, including students, had protested against its actions, the speaker said the parliament's performance had received plaudits not just at home but also overseas.

U Ye Tun, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party, said it was unreasonable to expect laws to be "perfect" from the start.

"But we can make it perfect later on by passing whatever amendments are needed," he said.

U Htay Oo, deputy leader of the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party, appealed to civil society organisation and others for their input in the drafting and discussion of laws.

"To achieve success on the road toward democracy path, people need to know what the executive estate and political parties are doing. We need people's participation to be successful in our quest for democracy," he said.

Amyotha Hluttaw speaker U Khin Aung Myint, however, said the hluttaws and their members had a great deal of hard work ahead, with less than a year to go before parliament could present a convincing balance sheet to the voters.

Thura U Shwe Mann agreed, saying parliamentarians should make the most of their final year in office. "I conclude by urging all MPs to continue to act in the best interests of the nation and people."

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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# Officials kick off census of rare Irrawaddy dolphins

MAUNG ZAW

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GOLD mining, battery fishing and the use of poison are being blamed for a decline in the numbers of rare Irrawaddy dolphins, conservationists say. Next month, a census will be taken to determine how many dolphins are left, amid fears that only a few dozen still survive.

The 10-day census, an annual event,

will take place along their Ayeyarwady River habitat between Mandalay and Bhamo township in Kachin State, said an official of the Irrawaddy dolphin conservation group, a collaboration between the Department of Fisheries and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

"From the census we can learn whether the number of dolphins has increased or decreased. We will also survey the impact on dolphin numbers of gold mining along the river,"

he added.

The survey, which will start on February 10, will also take into account the impact of destructive fishing practices, including the use of poison and batteries to electrocute the fish, as well as the entry of migrant birds to the riverine ecology.

"We're researching the condition of dolphins living along the river," said WCS project manager U Kyaw Hla Thein.

Two dolphins died in the protected zone in December, and another died in the upper reaches of the river. "Last year's census counted 63 dolphins. Two were born last May, but the three deaths in December would mean the figure will be lower," said U Kyaw Hla Thein.

The protected zone, established in 2005, extends between Mingun village and Yaddaw Pagoda in Kyauk Myaung, which are both in Sagaing Region.

Within this 74-kilometre stretch, dolphins have been observed to help local fishermen by directing them to shoals of fish. Dolphins outside the zone do not do this.

The Irrawaddy dolphin's population rose from a low of 31 in 2002 to 72 in early 2014. They are endangered because of destructive fishing practices, said U Maung Maung Oo, secretary of the Sein Yaung So conservation group.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Farmers turn out to support U Zaw Win (seated) during a hearing at Pyin Oo Lwin Township Court in October 2014.

## Lawyer launches hunger strike

SI THU LWIN

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FARMERS' champion U Zaw Win, who has been detained for staging a solo protest against "impropriety" in the judiciary, has started a hunger strike in Mandalay's Ohbo prison after his application for bail was rejected. His wife, Daw San Ki Thar, says he is in poor health and is not receiving medical attention.

Speaking to *The Myanmar Times* on February 3, Daw San Ki Thar said U Zaw Win had applied for bail on January 30 at Mandalay's Aung Myay Thar San Township Court because the plaintiff, a Pyin Oo Lwin police captain, was unavailable to

appear in court. The judge rejected the application.

"Since then he has been on hunger strike. His health is poor and his condition is serious. We're very worried about what might happen," said Daw San Ki Thar, who last saw her husband at the prison on January 2. She said U Zaw Win suffers from liver and kidney ailments and a persistent cough.

On December 30, prosecutors changed the venue of his trial from Pyin Oo Lwin to Aung Myay Thar San on the grounds of security. U Zaw Win, a higher grade pleader whose licence was once revoked, fought the attempt to shift the case, arguing it would make it difficult for

defence witnesses to appear in court.

"These constant delays mean I have had to stay in jail ... They are using the law as a weapon," U Zaw Win said after a November 26 hearing.

Well-known for representing local farmers in land-grab cases, U Zaw Win has now spent the last seven months in detention. He has repeatedly complained of impropriety in the judiciary, but no action has been taken as a result of his complaints. Following his one-man protest in Pyin Oo Lwin, police charged him under the peaceful protest law last May. All his applications for bail have been rejected. His next court hearing is scheduled for February 6.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

## New domestic airline to begin flights in March



ZAW WIN THAN

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A NEW domestic carrier, Apex Airlines, will be among the first in Myanmar to offer dynamic pricing when it starts flying next month, a senior company official says. Chief operations officer Selva Kumar said Apex's first aircraft, an ATR 72-600, would arrive in Nay Pyi Taw in mid-February, with a launch planned for late March.

"A second aircraft will arrive between June and July and a third will arrive between September and October," he told *The Myanmar Times* on the sidelines of the ASEAN Tourism Forum.

Apex will be based in Nay Pyi Taw, initially serving domestic destinations such as Yangon, Dawei and Myeik, and later Myitkyina, Mandalay, Bagan, Sittwe, Thandwe, Kawthoung, Heho, Kengtung and Tachileik.

The airline also plans to offer international flights using Airbus aircraft. "We are not just looking into flying to Southeast Asian nations but also South Asian destinations such as India and Bangladesh," he said.

Pricing will change depending on demand and season, he said. While common practice internationally, fares

on most existing domestic airlines are relatively stagnant, changing only between high season and low season.

Customers will also be able to book online through a computer reservation system, with booking confirmation by email and SMS.

The decision to base the airline in Nay Pyi Taw was made because facilities at the city's airport, which opened in December 2011 and has a capacity of about 3.5 million passengers a year, are of a high standard, while Yangon is becoming increasingly crowded.

Mr Kumar said Nay Pyi Taw also had significant potential as a "MICE" destination - a term in the tourism industry for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions. "[There] are many international and local hotels, and two big convention centres ... so we are very confident about being based in Nay Pyi Taw," he said.

Apex was incorporated as a public company in November 2012. It is chaired by Tanintharyi Region businessperson U Khin Soe, who also heads fisheries firm Anawar Hlwam, Apex Gas & Oil Public Company, Apex G&O Group Hotel and Dawei Development Public Company.

The nine existing domestic airlines are Air Mandalay, Yangon Airways, Air KBZ, Mann Yadanarpon Airlines, Air Bagan, Asian Wings Airlines, FMI Air Charter, Golden Myanmar Airlines and Myanmar National Airways.

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## MANDALAY

## After fire, residents protest new fuel stations

RESIDENTS have branded petrol stations a fire hazard after two people were injured in a blaze at a filling station in Mandalay last month. They have pledged to protest if any more stations are allowed to open in Maha Aung Myay township.

The residents have already lodged complaints against the petrol stations with the heads of the ward and township administration offices and the fire brigade.

"We have lodged formal objections but received no response. Most of our residents depend on daily wages, so not only their properties but also their livelihoods are at risk in the event of a fire. We don't want any more petrol stations," said U Maung Maung Oo, who lives in the township's No 528 ward.

On January 29, fire broke out at Aung Myittar petrol station while fuel was being transferred from one container to another, injuring two people.

"There are two stations already in our ward, and at least one more is preparing to open here. We're collecting signatures to present a petition to the chief minister of Mandalay Region. We don't want to hurt their business, but we don't want any more petrol stations in our ward. We're worried about the fire hazard," said U Win Kyaw Myint, of No 521 ward. - *Kyaw Ko Ko, translation by Thiri Min Htun*

# Ministry begins living cost survey to set minimum wage

Teams begin collecting data from households in Yangon and Bago regions ahead of national rollout

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A COST-OF-LIVING survey that will help determine a national minimum wage got under way on January 26 in Yangon and Bago regions. Investigators will use questionnaires to examine the living conditions of business owners, public servants, workers earning a bare living and unemployed people.

Daw Tin Tin Ye, an official with the labour department of Shwe Pyi Thar township, Yangon Region, said the survey would focus on how much families spend each week on food, as well as other living costs.

"Generally, a family unit will spend between K8000 and K10,000 on food for a week," she said.

In Yangon Region, the two-month survey is being conducted initially in three villages - Zee Gone, Thar Du Kan and Hlawkar - and three wards - 6, 9 and 16 - in Shwe Pyi Thar township.

It will eventually cover 108 townships throughout the country, including Nay Pyi Taw Council. The work will be carried out by representatives



Teams interview residents of a village in Yedashe township, Bago Region, for a living costs survey that will be used to set a minimum wage. Photo: Ko Ko Naing

of the labour department, employers, local administrative staff and volunteers, and their reports will be sent to the Ministry of Labour, which is considering what level to set the minimum wage in each.

Survey teams collected data on 34 households in Bago Region's Yedashe township on January 26, said team member U Ko Ko Naing.

"On average a family will spend K300,000 to K400,000 a month. In some cases, their expenditure exceeds their monthly income," he said,

adding that after Yedashe they would conduct the survey in Swar and Thargara.

While the Myanmar Trade Union Federation and the Federation of Trade Unions Myanmar have been invited to take part, the government has refused requests to allow other labour groups to join the survey as volunteers.

"The ministry did not invite other groups to collaborate despite our request," MTUF leader U Aung Lin said.

U Tun Tun Naing, a member of the Cooperative Committee for Trade

Unions (CCTU), said his group was one of those frozen out of the survey.

But U Aye Myint of the Ministry of Labour said the government had tried to cooperate with representatives of both labour and employers in creating job opportunities, resolving labour problems and improving conditions for labour. "We are collaborating with them. The minimum wage will be fixed by the survey result," he said after the January 20 meeting.

Director general U Myo Aung said the minimum wage would not be fixed this year. "It's not clear that the representatives of labour and the employers will recognise the results. If not, it won't be possible to [set the minimum wage]," he said.

U Soe Lwin, owner of Diamond noodle factory, who is serving as an employers' representative in the survey team, said it was too early to discuss the results of the survey, as families surveyed so far had been mostly middle class and had higher living expenses than working-class families.

More time would be needed to achieve a comprehensive result, he said. "It's too early to say what the minimum wage will be because we need to cover all kinds of family units and their living standards," he said.

He added that the wage should be about K4000 or K5000 per eight-hour day, or about K150,000 a month.

Secret Garden

JUNCTION SQUARE

COMING SOON..

# Petition calls for reforms at Union Election Commission



LUN MIN MANG

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REFORM of the Union Electoral Commission is vital to the holding of free and fair elections, a new political action group is claiming. The Mass Movement Acceleration Network (MMAN) has launched a petition to bring about the change it says is required.

Ko Myat Kyaw, a member of the group, said they do not think the coming election would be free and fair unless the current commission is reformed.

"It is not in accordance with the law. The UEC chair is a former military officer and a leader of the ruling Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP), and the whole commission is composed of ex-officers. It's hard to believe that the election can be free and fair with them in charge," he said.

U Tin Aye, the chair of the UEC, was elected in 2010 as a representative of Tada-Oo, Mandalay Region. President U Thein Sein appointed him chair of the electoral body when it was formed in August 2012. Last December, U Tin Aye was criticised for telling an audience with actors and actresses in Yangon on voter education that widespread unrest could lead to an army coup.



Union Election Commission chair U Tin Aye. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

"How can someone who is supposed to be an impartial referee, in an election that will be scrutinised by the entire international community, say such a thing?" said Ko Myat Kyaw.

At a public meeting on January 25 in Dagon Seikkan township, Yangon Region, the MMAN collected about 200 signatures for the petition.

U Ko Ni, a High Court lawyer

and a member of the opposition National League for Democracy, said the UEC's composition violated the constitution and electoral law. "U Tin Aye has never served in the Union Supreme Court or a High Court in the states and regions. Nor has he served as an advocate for a minimum of 20 years. He is just an ex-general and former political party leader," he said.

"His party, the USDP, backs the Tatmadaw. The president should reform the UEC in accordance with the 2012 UEC Law and section 398 of the constitution, or huttaw should take up the matter," he added.

In response to a question at press conference last September on the composition of the UEC, U Tin Aye

**'It's hard to believe that the election can be free and fair with [the current commission] in charge.'**

**Ko Myat Kyaw**  
Mass Movement Acceleration Network member

told reporters he had never been "notorious" as an army officer, and his appointment was in accordance with the law, which says the UEC chair should be a "distinguished person".

U Ko Ni said, "That means someone like a retired professor or ambassador."

The UEC declined to respond to a request for comment from *The Myanmar Times*.

## IN BRIEF

### World Maritime University alumni gather in Yangon

Master mariners from across Asia, including about 50 Myanmar officers, gathered last week for a two-day conference at Yangon's Shangri-la Hotel on maritime education and training. They were participating in the World Maritime University's first regional alumni conference, organised with the help of the Department of Marine Administration.

Other participants were from Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, said department director U Maung Maung Oo.

The general secretary of the UN's International Maritime Organisation, representatives from the International Association of Maritime Universities and international maritime experts addressed the conference and exchanged their experiences.

The WMU, located in Malmo, Sweden, is a world centre of maritime education and research.

Its 46 master's-degree holders from Myanmar serve throughout the industry, which has traditionally attracted high-quality Myanmar mariners.

Currently, more than 60,000 Myanmar seafarers are serving on ships.

- Shwegu Thitsar, translation by Thiri Min Htun

### Air KBZ to launch flights between Yangon, Chiang Mai

Privately owned domestic carrier Air KBZ is planning to launch flights between Yangon and Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, in May, targeting both Thai and International travellers.

U Myat Thu, chief commercial officer of Air KBZ, said the route would be using ATR72-600 aircraft on two flights a week.

"We also plan to launch a service between Mae Sot and Mawlamyine by code-share agreement with Nok Air of Thailand," he said.

"We have eight aircraft and we're planning to add more next year as we look into other regional markets to expand our routes," he added.

Air KBZ was established in June 2010 and links 15 domestic destinations. Like Myanmar Airways International, it is owned by Kanbawza Group of Companies.

It is one of nine airlines flying domestic routes in Myanmar. A 10<sup>th</sup>, Apex Airlines, will launch at the end of March (see related story page 16).

- Zaw Win Than

## President focuses on cooperation at green forum

### HTOO THANT

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MYANMAR should move toward a green, sustainable, low-carbon, economy, President U Thein Sein told an environmental forum last week. Speaking at Nay Pyi Taw's International Convention Centre on February 3, the president told the Fourth Green Economy Green Growth Forum that the government would work with others to develop human resources for science, technology and management.

U Thein Sein said cooperation was required to help prevent natural disasters that were becoming more frequent and intense. Myanmar should make the transition to a green economy in accordance with international agreements such as the Rio+20 declaration issued at the Earth Summit 2012 in Brazil, he said.

Such an economy would focus on using energy effectively and developing renewable energy sources, adopting a continuous agriculture system, protecting forest biodiversity, water resources and the ecosystem,

developing systematic land-using policies, building sustainable green cities, managing waste disposal, preserving the oceans, seas and coastal areas, and minimising the impact of extracting natural resources.

U Thein Sein said Myanmar would benefit more from receiving technological and human resources assistance than financial aid.

A consultant with the non-profit Myanmar Green Economy Green Growth Association, U Khin Maung Lwin, noted that U Thein Sein had adopted a different tone at this

year's event than the forum held in 2013. At that time he said that those who destroy the country's natural resources are destroying the country, but this year called on stakeholders to scale up collaboration activities to sustain natural resources.

"It looks like the president is trying to make more friends instead of enemies," he said. "At the moment, collaboration is weak and this is making it difficult to implement policies."

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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## IN DEPTH

# To prevent a backlash, create equality

Forum in Mandalay searches for ways to provide affordable housing and better infrastructure – and close the gap between haves and have nots

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NARROWING the gap between rich and poor may be the best way to preserve social harmony as Myanmar's economic, social and political transition advances, a workshop on affordable housing heard last week in Mandalay.

A former Ministry of Health director said measures should be taken to avoid a possible backlash against the pace of change and the potential for inequality it left in its wake.

Dr Khin Maung Lwin was speaking to *The Myanmar Times* on the sidelines of a workshop convened by the Asian Development Bank that was also attended by officials from the Mandalay City Development Committee.

The retired civil servant is now an ADB adviser and works with the Green Economy and Green Growth Myanmar. "Once the democracy torch is lit, nobody will want to kill the light," he said.

"I don't want to see our citizens deeply divided. I'm trying my best to raise the quality of life of the poorest of the poor, not with money, but with skills, knowledge and capacity to choose."

During his years with the Ministry of Health, Dr Khin Maung Lwin visited hundreds of villages and trained more than 100,000 people, focusing on programs including nutrition for pregnant mothers and their babies.

"Our people are very difficult to govern. We like freedom and we keep buffers to divert external pressure," he said. "That's the reason why we have managed to withstand pressure from 2.5 billion people in India and China."

He said the challenge was to overcome discrimination between the "haves" and the "have-nots" by ensuring that poor people were



A woman cooks food on a stove in front of a bamboo home in Mandalay. Photo: Phyo Wai Kyaw

involved in the planning process that would guarantee shelter and security for all.

"Unless we provide safe water and sanitary facilities and basic necessities, the poor will waste what little money they earn and spread disease. This is a nationwide problem and we are losing our labour force because our poor people seek jobs overseas," he said, adding that there was a need to translate good policies into action.

Linda Adams, ADB's senior social development specialist, said the idea was to create a dialogue among potential partners in civil society, government and the private sector.

"More than 16,000 applied for residences in the 1344 units under construction. That gives you an idea of the demand and the shortfall. We want to commend the MCDC's initiative to find finance themselves," she said.

Participating banks include

Myanmar Oriental Bank (MOB), the Construction and Housing Development Bank (CHDB) and Yadanabon Bank.

Ms Adams said the government had prioritised housing applicants including civil service retirees, the disabled and the military, adding that ADB's role is to look for partners in the public and private sectors.

"Myanmar law has ceilings on loan amounts, duration and the ability for institutions to lend to each

other. When you look at the policy environment, you need 10 years. If they had more flexible terms they might be able to offer these products," she said.

Peter Brimble, the ADB's deputy country director, said the workshop was held as part of a US\$4 million pro-poor project – one of several projects the bank plans to support in Mandalay.

Approval for a \$140 million Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project is expected by the middle of this year, he said, with \$60 million coming from ADB and \$80 million from the French government.

## 16,000

Mandalay residents who applied to buy apartments in a low-cost housing development with just 1344 units

"The project aims at strengthening urban infrastructure in Mandalay including water supply, wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal," said Mr Brimble.

During the late 1980s, the bank provided \$15 million for the Mandalay Water Supply Project and Mr Brimble said he was amazed at how well Mandalay officials had taken care of the infrastructure.

"This project builds on our earlier project and the Mandalay government has done a stellar job of maintaining what has already been built," he said.

"Everybody has begun to see Mandalay as the hub of northern Myanmar, with China on one side and India on the other. Underlying our whole motivation is that Mandalay can play a stronger role in upper Myanmar. We'd like to see this project as contributing to the whole economic corridor between India and China through Mandalay."



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Capt. Kyaw Kyaw & Dr. Mya Sandi Aung

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## MCDC meets civil society to build 'inclusive' city

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IMPROVED drainage and water supply were among the topics discussed at a workshop last week in Mandalay, when the city's development committee met with civil society organisations.

Many problems date back to the late 1980s, when squatter communities were relocated to the outskirts of major cities, but little or no provision was made for basic services, including drainage, piped water supply, roads, street lighting or electricity.

"We should take more account of the views of people who live in the wards concerned, as well as heeding the advice of the Asian Development Bank," MCDC committee member U Tun Kyi said at the January 28 workshop. "That way, the people who live on the outskirts of the city will have the same chance as people downtown."

He added that with the help of the ADB, MCDC should be able to supply water to 95 percent of Mandalay households by 2020. A project funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to pipe

water to Pyigyitagon township is due for completion in 2017.

Mandalay still faces a significant squatter problem, amounting to an estimated 4000-5000 households. Officials complained that some of these households have been given land on the city outskirts several times and later sold it.

**'We should take more account of the views of people who live in the wards concerned.'**

U Tun Kyi  
Mandalay City Development  
Committee member

"Whenever we relocate them, they make their way back to their old place. We have to provide them with infrastructure at their new location," said the head of the city cleaning department, U Nay Win Myint.



A journalist films a gate that once stood at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's residence in Yangon. Photo: AFP

## Yours for just \$200k: Daw Suu's discarded gate put up for sale

A SET of gates that became an enduring symbol of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's years under house arrest are to be auctioned, a businessman who now owns them said on January 31.

The gates - painted in the yellow and red colours of her National League for Democracy (NLD) - were once located at the entrance to the crumbling Yangon mansion where Myanmar's most famous political prisoner was confined for much of the 1990s and 2000s because of her outspoken opposition to military rule.

"They are my own property. I bought them while I was working on landscaping in Daw Suu's compound after her release from house

arrest," said U Soe Nyunt, a restaurant owner.

The businessman, an NLD supporter, said he would sell the gates to raise money both for the construction of the party's new headquarters and for upcoming centenary celebrations marking the birth of General Aung San, an independence hero and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's father.

He will not accept less than US\$200,000 for the gates, he added.

"I think the international community will be interested. So I will wait some time before personally auctioning them," U Soe Nyunt said. "Of course, I will sell to whoever can give more."

During brief moments when

restrictions against Daw Aung Suu Kyi were relaxed she would often greet well-wishers from the gates.

When her house arrest was finally overturned in November 2010 - shortly before military rule was replaced with a quasi-civilian reformist government - large crowds of jubilant supporters surrounded the gates, clamouring to catch a glimpse of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and hand her bouquets of flowers.

The gates have since been replaced.

"If this great door can speak, it can narrate about the history of Burmese democracy combat for 25 years," U Soe Nyunt wrote on his Face-book page. - AFP

# Vocational training begins in Mon, Kayin



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POLITICAL and economic reform and a return to peace promised by the national ceasefire agreement process have opened up opportunities in the southeastern part of the country for better training and jobs, a Swiss development agency said last week.

Swisscontact program director Michael Mechthold-Jin told a launching ceremony that the vocational training program in Kayin State aimed to support employment and self-employment, raising incomes for disadvantaged people who lived there.

"We chose to carry out the program in Kayin and Mon states to benefit residents with little access to job training," he said.

The US\$20 million (19 million Swiss francs) program is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by a consortium consisting of Swisscontact, Swiss Foundation and the German company Institute for Vocational Training, Labour Market and Social Policy (INBAS), said Mr Mechthold-Jin.

Deputy Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security U Htin Aung said the program would support preparations for the ASEAN economic community, which, scheduled to come into force next year,

would allow free trade and the free movement of labour, goods and services. "This program will help our efforts to issue skills certificates that will enable people fully to participate in the ASEAN economic community," he said.

The Swiss-German project, known as VSDP, will train people in the hotel and hospitality industry, support vocational training for disadvantaged women and men, and

# 3000

People to receive vocational training in Mon and Kayin states under a Swiss government-funded program

support the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA), a regulatory body that tests and certifies skills levels.

About 3000 people will be trained in hotel work in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, and 3000 more in local schemes in Kayin and Mon states, while advice and equipment will be provided to the NSSA, which is run by the labour ministry.

The program ensures that the training provided is practical and imparts skills relevant to the needs of employers. The program will also help graduates acquire an NSSA certificate.

## Govt signs deal with WMU

SEAMEN will be able to share their knowledge and experience and develop their education and training thanks to an agreement reached last week between the Department of Marine Administration and World Maritime University.

At a signing ceremony at the Shangri-La Hotel, Yangon, on January 27, the department's director general, U Maung Maung Oo, said the agreement would help Myanmar's maritime sector to engage with the global maritime community through the establishment of an education network.

Courses taught by World Maritime

University professors and an online distance-learning program will be open to Myanmar seamen.

"Reaching the goal of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for a safe water transport system in clean seas will depend on the skills our seamen acquire. Courses in maritime knowledge, safety, security, environmental management and navigational technology will be conducted during the agreement's five-year term," he said.

WMU will also conduct postgraduate diploma courses in Myanmar.

- Shwegu Thitsar, translation by Zar Zar Soe

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# Views

## Charting a new path to peace

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UNION Day - February 12 - has been set as the new deadline for the signing of a nationwide ceasefire agreement. The most challenging part is walking the last mile, so it may be timely to revisit history.

It is not so that "it all began with Ne Win", as one foreign expert recently asserted. General Ne Win's contribution is the dominant role of the military since 1962, and the way this has influenced people's minds.

But as professor James Scott has very convincingly documented in his book *The Art of Not Being Governed*, obstacles to a peaceful co-existence in Myanmar date as far back as the time when people with different ethnic backgrounds migrated from the north and east and either settled in the valley along the Ayeyarwady River or inhabited the surrounding hills, both of which today makes up Myanmar.

These groups were never at ease with each other. Apart from periods in history where powerful kings were able to assert a level of control over extended areas, lowlanders and highlanders mainly kept each other at bay, either through warfare or by the people in the hills paying tributes to monarchs in the lowlands.

British colonial power did little for state-building. Their main purpose of government was security and profit. In fact, under colonial rule Myanmar was administered as two entities: Ministerial Burma or Burma proper, under the governor; and the Karenni (Kayah) and Shan States, Kachin, Chin, the Trans Salween Area (Kayin) and the Naga Hills under indirect administration of the Office of the Frontier Service.

The first independent government was tasked with the challenge of incorporating and moulding loosely independent mini-states and numerous ethnic and tribal communities into a cohesive mutually supportive unit. Independence from Britain was essentially negotiated by the Bamar people of the plains, while a number of ethnic groups in the surrounding highland regions agreed to the terms of independence from the British, but without a real commitment to the national entity that was Burma.

Any hope of reconciliation and state-building soon faded. The U Nu government struggled for 14 years from one political and constitutional crisis to another, until General Ne Win seized power, effectively bringing to an end whatever remained of the trust that had been based on the Panglong Agreement. The intensified efforts of the Burmanisation propaganda that followed made relationships even more strained and, combined with attempts to rewrite history, caused many Bamar people to be unaware of the full background for the conflicts.

On assuming power in 2011, U Thein Sein's government found itself confronted with the same distrust that has plagued Myanmar throughout its history. However, this distrust marks not only relations between the majority Bamar and other ethnic groups but also among the general population. A recent survey by the Asia Foundation revealed an astoundingly low level of social trust: 77 percent of all respondents to the survey believed that generally most people cannot be trusted.

Though these low levels of trust have historical roots, they need to be openly acknowledged and addressed before Myanmar can move toward a lasting peace. Without serious efforts to achieve some sort of reconciliation, it is questionable if peace can be secured. Concessions, or at least some concrete actions, are required that can establish the foundations of trust, and thereby move the peace process toward a genuine political settlement along the lines a federal system, tailored to the varying capacities of ethnic states and communities.

In his 2013 report, *Creating a Future: Using Natural Resources for New Federalism and Unity*, David Dapice, a professor from Harvard University, pointed out the opportunities for a peaceful co-existence based on fair sharing of the natural resources revenue.

However, most of this revenue currently goes to private, well-connected business interests. As control over Myanmar's vast resources remains a key element of the conflict, Dapice's model may well serve as an inspiration for negotiators.

President U Thein Sein has reached out to ethnic leaders from

the first days of taking office and stated several times that federalism is on offer. It was further articulated in a letter by Minister for the President's Office U Soe Thane published by the *New York Times* on November 14, 2014, in which he stated, "We are committed to a federal union formed under the principles of democracy, equality and self-determination."

These are very positive tones. And with global political realities in 2015 as a backdrop, there is little reason for the Bamar majority to fear that a federal system will lead to a split of the country as could possibly have occurred in the past. While the constitution of 1947 gave Shan and Kayah states the right to secede from the Union after 10 years, separatism is today out of fashion. All major ethnic groups have committed themselves to the non-disintegration of the union.

In today's environment, which nobody can deny is more peaceful than it has ever been during the last 60 years, there is now a chance for the Tatmadaw to test the will of the ethnic armed groups: by announcing a unilateral ceasefire. This would be a genuine show of confidence in the peace process and a confirmation of the military's support to a democratic Myanmar. It could create a level of trust in the Tatmadaw and represent a significant contribution to the political negotiations that are the final goal.

Such a gesture could also pave the way for financial and technical assistance from international donors to remote border areas, which are important for achieving inclusive economic and social development. Directing a disproportionate slice of development assistance to the ethnic areas would not only reduce extreme poverty and address appalling social conditions in isolated communities, it would also help level out the inequality felt by the minorities. As a result it would also contribute to removing the mistrust and subsequent political problems that have plagued Myanmar for centuries.

.....  
Joern Kristensen is executive director of the Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development ([www.mniid.org](http://www.mniid.org)), which specialises in Myanmar's upland regions.

## Singapore's PM commits a ma



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THINGS have taken a distinct turn for the worse for Singapore's long-ruling People's Action Party, which is often, and naively, touted as super-efficient and incorruptible.

In a way, it's the Lance Armstrong Syndrome: No one thought an all-American boy who won the Tour de France seven times, beat cancer and raised funds for charities could be a dope-fuelled, lying, thuggish cheat.

Those who tried to reveal the truth were often ridiculed - at least, until the facts piled up and Armstrong's denials became increasingly implausible until finally he confessed.

So it is with Singapore, and the likewise ridiculed attempts to unveil the real situation. But listen up, for those attempts received an unexpected boost last week from Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Interestingly, he homed in on the very thing that people often mention when they try to convey what they regard as being so admirable about the place: its litter-free cleanliness.

Everyone knows the stories about former PM Lee Kuan Yew stopping his limo to pick up some litter he's spotted on the pavement. These days, though, the poor chap would not get to the end of the street.

His son, the current PM, recently berated his fellow Singaporeans for leaving piles of litter on the ground after an outdoor concert last month.

He contrasted this with the behaviour of Myanmar's civic-minded football fans, who picked up their litter after the national team played



Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

Singapore last November.

Lee was not the only one to get fired up. His predecessor, former PM Goh Chok Tong, warned that the country could end up as a "garbage city".

"Our reputation as one of the world's cleanest cities is going down the rubbish chute. It looks like a case of 'monkeys see, monkeys do,'" Goh said. "Cleanliness is a character thing. It shows who you really are."

Unfortunately, there is growing evidence that Singaporeans are not a clean lot. Their own leaders even compare them to monkeys.

Another minister later revealed that 19,000 summons for littering were issued last year, more than double the number in 2013.

Singapore's clean image seems to be going the way of Armstrong's and as if that were not bad enough its economy has dipped.

Even the famed strength of its dollar has taken a beating. The Singapore currency has fallen dramatically over the past six months, dropping almost 7 percent against the US dollar - a greater depreciation than even the Indonesian rupiah. Financial analysts predict it will stay weak for the first half of this year, in part due to worsening problems at home.

Last month, Singapore's Business Optimism Index dropped to its lowest



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# M-in-waiting Major blunder



Speaks to reporters on February 3. Photo: AFP

in 2003 he had warned that the free trade agreement Singapore signed that year with the US would only help the business elite to exploit cheap labour.

He claimed that the evidence after more than 10 years has proved that he was right: Income inequality in both countries has become horrendously high and in Singapore is even worse than in the US.

The city-state, said Chee, has the highest proportion of millionaires in the world, yet nearly 5 percent of its workforce has a pitiful annual income of less than US\$5000.

For good measure, he added that Singapore's pension system is broken and that a generation of workers is in danger of having an insufficient retirement income. He blamed all this on the lack of democratic rights in Singapore - and he followed up that theme in his second article which focused on what he alleged is Singapore's repressive and highly controlled media.

It was over the top and would not have rated much attention had Chan, the PAP's rising star, not decided to fire off an ill-considered rebuttal.

In his lengthy missive to the Huffington Post, Minister Chan ignored the points made by Chee, but lambasted the website's decision to publish them.

"You perhaps believe he is a weighty political figure in Singapore. He is nothing of the kind," said Chan, adding that Chee is a "political failure" who has fought and lost three elections. He claimed Chee only writes for the overseas press because "foreign journalists don't know him as well as Singaporeans and he believes he can beguile them into believing he is the Aung San Suu Kyi of Singapore politics".

Wow. In fact, it was Chan's rant that seemed to thrust a Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-like aura over Chee, who is an intelligent man but a flawed politician.

Still, given Singapore's deepening problems and the way its leaders treat him, it is not unlikely that Chee and many of his opposition colleagues will defeat their PAP rivals in next year's general election.

level in two years, while a sudden jump in interest rates threatens to further weaken the already languishing domestic property market.

As well, exports are struggling, tourism is flat and not only have the two massive new casinos seen their profits plummet, but they have contributed to increased drug-use, crime, corruption and, yes, littering.

In response, PM Lee has proposed stern new anti-corruption measures.

Oh, you thought there was no corruption in Singapore? Well, think again, for several recent high-profile corruption cases involving senior officials have shattered that myth.

Transparency International now ranks Singapore seventh in its Corruption Perceptions Index, down two places in the past three years.

Naturally, resurgent oppositionists have tried to take advantage of the government's woes and they have been helped by the stumblebum performance of a man many tout as Lee's likely successor, the Social and Family Development Minister Chan Chun Sing. His farcical escapade began when Chee Soon Juan, the secretary-general of the opposition Singapore Democratic Party, wrote two articles for the Huffington Post, an online news portal in the United States.

In his first piece, Chee noted that

## Where are the 'protection of religion' laws leading us?

MPs need to listen to the voices of ethnic and religious minorities on draft laws



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AT the lobbying of the Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion, four draft "protection of religion" laws were submitted to parliament by the government, and are now being discussed by MPs.

It's worth considering what the 2008 constitution says about freedom of worship. Section 34 states, "Every citizen is equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practise religion subject to public order, morality or health and to the other provisions of this constitution."

While section 361 states recognises the "special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens of the union", section 362 also recognises Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism as religions being worshipped in Myanmar at the time the constitution came into effect. Section 363, meanwhile, states that "the union may assist and protect the religions it recognises to its utmost".

The most controversial of the four laws is that on interfaith marriage. It has sparked controversy around the country and criticism from the international community. It was originally developed by the Committee for the Protection of Nationality and Religion, better known as Ma Ba Tha.

According to the constitution, Myanmar has four major religions and animism, not to mention many different ethnic groups. In this situation, a marriage law that affects people of all religions should first be discussed among the leaders of

the four major religions.

Rather than do this, however, President U Thein Sein submitted it to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann. This was irresponsible.

After that, however, Thura U Shwe Mann should have conducted a series of discussions involving ethnic representatives or MPs of different faiths as a first step, before taking a decision from the majority of MPs as to what kind of law is needed, if any, and who should be assigned to draft the law. But he didn't. Instead of following parliamentary procedures, he made a decision alone to assign the task of drafting the interfaith marriage law and three others to the government.

**It makes one wonder whether the president and two speakers are taking advantage of the draft laws to gain support from Buddhists.**

It makes one wonder whether the president and two speakers are taking advantage of the draft laws to gain support from Ma Ba Tha and other Buddhists for political gain. Whatever the reasoning, the four draft laws are now in parliament and some of them are already being discussed.

During discussion on the Religious Conversion Law on January 26, U Zone Hlal Htan, an Amyotha Hluttaw representative from Chin State, strongly condemned the draft, likening it to religious extremism.

Similarly, J Yaw Wu, a representative from Kachin State, opposed the bill, saying protection of religion in this manner was not the responsibility of a government.

U Aung Kyi Nyunt, a representative from the National League for Democracy, and U Phone Myint Aung, an opposition MP from Thingangyun, also pointed out unfair points and contradictions within the bill.

However, other Buddhist representatives - mostly from the Union Solidarity and Development Party and military representatives - expressed support for it.

According to the draft of the Religion Conversion Law, religious conversion can no longer take place with the approval of the respective religious leaders. People who want to convert to another faith need to apply for permission to a group called the "Scrutinising and Registering Team for Religious Conversion". This team would feature 10 members, six of whom are from township religious affairs bodies, the township administration office and immigration department. The other four will be community leaders of the four major religions selected by the township administrator.

This means that most of the group's members are likely to be Buddhists. The next important point in the draft is that the scrutinising process can be performed by just five members. This creates an opportunity for Buddhist members to make decisions without members of different faiths present.

We should pay careful attention to what MPs, particularly non-Buddhists, have said in parliament. While the majority of MPs are Buddhists, it does not mean they should enact legislation by sheer weight of numbers over the objections of minorities. If they do, the resulting legislation will never benefit the nation and its citizens.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe



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# Business

## Ophir to be the first offshore block winner to explore

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OPHIR Energy is to begin exploring its block for energy after signing one of the first offshore Production Sharing Contracts (PSC) with Myanmar Oil and Gas in December last year.

It is the first international company to have won an offshore block in 2013 to have begun actively exploring its block.

The company will conduct 3D seismic surveys in block AD-3 off of Rakhine State from February 1 to May 10, according to a notice to mariners from the Fishery Department dated January 27.

Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise officials confirmed the company is beginning exploration.

"They have begun exploration activities in AD-3 and received their permit," said one official, who requested anonymity. "Myanmar Oil and Gas officials will also participate.

Ophir will carry out its exploration across the 10,500 square kilometre (4054 square miles) block using a Sanco Sword surveying vessel. Dolphin, the world's largest offshore service company, won the 3D seismic

survey contract for Ophir, according to an industry geologist.

Ophir Energy Asia director Andrew Brown said Myanmar Oil and Gas enterprise has approved the seismic contract, adding the firm is still awaiting formal approval of its environmental impact report from the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry and the Myanmar Investment Commission.

"We anticipate [receiving] this approval very soon and to commence seismic acquisition and complete the survey prior to the next rainy season," he said.

Ophir submitted three proposals for the 2013 licensing round, and won block AD-3. It is the first time Ophir is to enter Myanmar, though the firm has several investments in Africa.

At the signing of the production sharing contract in December, the firm's chief operating officer Bill Higgs revealed an investment plan covering six years' exploration at a cost of US\$258.3 million.

"We will move forward quickly to reach the next step," he said in December. "We will look to begin our first drilling in late 2017."



A Dolphin vessel carries out a seismic survey. Photo: Supplied

### IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

Shipbuilders construct a small vessel. While there are a number of smaller-scale ship workshops, Myanmar Shipyards plans to increasingly move into manufacturing larger vessels. *For more see 'Myanmar Shipyards partners with Vietnam company' on Page 27*



## Taxis left unregistered as drivers point to red tape



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ONLY 3 percent of the city's taxis have registered with Yangon's vehicle supervisory committee, nearly six months after it assumed registration responsibilities.

Drivers say they are reluctant to sign up with Ma Hta Tha as they are already forced to register with two other government agencies, duplicating time and expense.

Yangon City Development Committee had been one of the three government bodies registering taxis in Yangon, but it transferred its registration duties to the Yangon Supervisory Committee for Motor Vehicles in September 2014.

The supervisory committee, which is generally known by its Myanmar language abbreviation Ma Hta Tha, is not a direct branch of the government, but is closely associated with Yangon City Development Committee.

Ma Hta Tha chair U Hla Aung said there were 55,131 taxis registered in the city when YCDC transferred its authority to register vehicles last year - though he added the number may not be completely accurate. Another government agency, the Road Transport Administration Department, has registered over 57,000 taxis.

More recently, the number of

registrations collected by Ma Hta Tha has fallen short, with only 1742 taxis current registered.

"After we became responsible for the task, 630 new taxis registered and 1112 taxis extended their registrations," said U Hla Aung.

U Hla Aung said that while taxi drivers are usually aware of the necessity of registering, they often avoid their responsibilities. Ma Hta Tha officials have distributed pamphlets to educate drivers.

"All taxis in Yangon must register as a city taxi. All taxi drivers and owners should cooperate with us," he said.

To register, drivers need a book proving car ownership, records of place of residency, drivers licence and copy of national identification card. The fee is K3000 to Ma Hta Tha, while additional costs preparing documents and painting the taxi logo on the vehicle costs K11,500.

U Hla Aung said Ma Hta Tha is reviewing whether the cost is a burden to owners.

"After the review, we will present our findings to Yangon Regional government and will look to reduce the amount," he said.

Some drivers have also complained about waiting times, which is currently about two weeks. U Hla Aung said authorities are looking to reduce the time as much as possible.

The 1964 Motor Vehicle Law allows government authorities and traffic police to take action against unregistered city taxis.

"We don't want to take action, so

we urge drivers to be disciplined," said U Hla Aung. "We want taxi drivers to be clean and systematic, to follow the road rules and to make it easy and convenient for local and international passengers."

Taxi drivers often do not see the need to register, claiming there is too much red tape already for their industry.

Drivers say they face registration from three different government bodies, including YCDC, as well as the Road Transport Administration Department and the Business Licence Office. It is the Business Licence Office that issues the red licence plates that are required for taxis.

"I don't see a need to do city registration. The Road Transport Administration Department already collects our addresses and documentation, so going to one more agency makes us busier and costs more," said taxi driver U Maung Maung.

"If we do everything three times, it costs us three times as much."

City taxis have also transitioned to English language from Myanmar, aiming to make it easier for tourists.

Ma Hta Tha could also see its responsibilities increase if new laws on traffic are passed. Laws are currently being drafted which could see significant changes to taxi registration, said U Hla Aung.

"We know a law is being drafted. After that we will reform Ma Hta Tha and also reform taxis," he said. "There will be designated taxi stands and fixed price meters in the cabs."

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Energy giant Shell inks its production sharing contract

**BUSINESS 31**



Authorities aim to preserve Shwedagon pagoda views

**PROPERTY 36**

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Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1158	K1177
Malaysia Ringitt	K307	K308
Singapore Dollar	K762	K768
Thai Baht	K31	K32
US Dollar	K1027	K1031



## Myanma Shipyards partners with Vietnam company

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MYANMA Shipyards will link up with a Vietnamese shipbuilder to form a joint venture company, according to officials.

The agreement between the Ministry of Transport's Myanma Shipyards and Dong A Shipbuilding Industry Joint Stock Company was inked on January 31, and will see US\$175.4 million invested in the firm.

Myanma Shipyards will invest \$89.5 million to take a 51 percent share in the project, with Dong A Shipbuilding holding the rest of the project.

The joint venture is aimed at attracting more foreign orders for domestically-produced vessels.

Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung said Myanma Shipyards has become recognised among Southeast Asian buyers, but would like to extend its production further afield.

"Myanma Shipyards is standing as a state-owned enterprise, and has been mainly repairing and building vessels

for 45 years," he said at the signing ceremony for the new Myanmar Shipyards Dong A Joint Venture Company Limited.

"Myanma Shipyards has also accepted order from foreign countries. It needs capital, technology and markets to enlarge the enterprise, which is why we invited foreign investment."

Partnering with a Vietnamese firm will allow the joint venture to build larger vessels at an international standard, he added. The new company is to be capable of building vessels of up to 22,000 deadweight tonnes (dwt) and repair vessels of up to 30,000 dwt, as well as conduct other ship building-related enterprises.

There will seven members of Myanma Shipyards Dong A board, with four from Myanmar and three from the Vietnamese half of the company.

"We believe that this enterprise will provide technical support to develop the country and the economy," said U Nyan Tun Aung. "We see there are more achievements when we cooperate, and exchange our experience and knowledge."

Plans with the agreement call for a new dockyard capable of handling modern, larger vessels, as well as upgrades to existing shipyards, human resources improvements, more support for finding international markets and greater access to capital.

Myanmar is to provide land, shipbuilding facilities, machines, equipment and materials, under the agreement. - Translation by Emoon

**'Myanma Shipyards ... needs capital, technology and markets to enlarge.'**

**U Nyan Tun Aung**  
Minister of Transport

# First government debt auction underwhelms



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DEMAND was slow out of the starting gate for the first national debt auction under civilian government.

Less than half of the K50 billion (US\$48 million) up for auction was ultimately bought, with most purchased by state-owned banks.

"It marks a strong beginning," said a Central Bank official.

The auctions will be held every fortnight to assist with funding the government deficit and also reduce pressure on printing more kyat.

A total face value of K22 billion worth of government bonds with a 98-day maturity were sold.

Similar to short-term US Treasury bills, the Myanmar bonds have no coupon payments, and were instead sold at a discount to par value that equates to an 8 percent annual yield. State-owned Myanmar Economic Bank purchased K20 billion, while privately-owned AYA Bank bought K2 billion.

Government bonds are a hard sell for the privately-owned commercial banks.

U Soe Thein, executive director of Asia Green Development Bank, said there was little private banking

confidence in entering a bid, as most do not have much cash surplus and already receive 13pc interest rates on loan.

While government securities are more liquid than loans, it will take some time for the private banks to become involved.

"I assumed there is not much potential in the beginning, because almost all demand is coming from state-owned banks," he said. "Commercial banks were not interested in this."

The government is dealing with a widening budgetary deficit in recent years, as expenditures continue to out-pace government income.

One initiative to close this gap has been increased emphasis on tax collection efforts.

The government is also trying to finance its long-term budget deficit through selling debt securities, though they are still working to control inflation.

"The government needs to struggle and take time to implement a proper treasury [bill] market," he said.

Other experts say that while the January 28 auction could have gone better, it is an important step.

Myanmar economics expert Sean Turnell said that while the incomplete bond sale was "not ideal", it was a "good and necessary step forward".

He added shortfalls were not uncommon even in developed markets and that the 8pc yield was "not a bad rate to achieve for Myanmar government debt in the present environment".

"Now we just need [the] government to get its fiscal policy right, and so reduce the pressure to sell such bonds to finance government spending," he said.

Myanmar had previously issued government bonds in 1993 and 2010.

- Additional reporting by AFP

BILLION KYAT

**22**

Face value of the government debt sold on January 28, well below the K50 billion that was put up to auction.

U Soe Thein added that the high interest rate of 8pc may be difficult to sustain in the long term, pointing out that short-term US government debt sells for 0.48pc.

Continuing with high interest rates may be a financial drain, he said.



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# State-owned Economics Enterprises ripe for reform

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STATE-OWNED enterprises are a prominent area of Myanmar's economy that ought to be reformed, according to a World Trade Organization official.

While there are a number of areas that need work, state-owned enterprises - also called state-owned economic enterprises (SEE) - often suffer losses, representing a drain on government resources, WTO trade policy analyst Usman Ali Khilji said on January 23.

The view was established out of analysis of the domestic economic

environment after Myanmar requested a trade policy review by WTO in 2013. The review document was subsequently published in 2014.

Other identified barriers include a lack of a healthy financial system, poor technology, and lack of market access and skilled labour.

Government officials said that while they acknowledged the WTO's view, it is up to the government to take action.

Directorate of Trade deputy director general U Minn Minn said the current government administration is keen to avoid past mistakes when privatising state-owned

firms. He added it has already changed begun changing the ways that state firms are funded.

"The government isn't giving budgets directly to state firms anymore. Instead, they are borrowing money or forming joint ventures," he said. "We have already changed our policies and are moving on."

Although Myanmar has privatised many of its state-owned firms, there are still many government owned companies across a variety of business sectors.

Some state firms have come under fire before, such as last July when Amyotha Hluttaw member and chair of Zakyabar Construction

U Khin Shwe said the government had spent millions of US dollars in a futile attempt to keep an environmentally unfriendly pulp and paper mill open.

Data obtained from the Ministry

**'We have already changed our policies and are moving on.'**

**U Minn Minn**  
Directorate of Trade

of National Planning and Economic Development show about 170 enterprises have transitioned from state-owned to private firms since 1995.

A number of other joint ventures and corporatisations process are currently being conducted by state-owned companies.

The WTO's Usman Ali Khilji also said he welcomed government policies such as providing telecoms licences to foreign firms, allowing 100-percent foreign ownership in hotel, efforts by the Central Bank of Myanmar to move the nation's financial sector forward, as well as improvements in the country's services sector.

# Financing still not certain for Dawei



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WHILE Thai and Myanmar officials say they are moving forward with the first phase of Dawei Special Economic Zone, there is still no announcement about financing the ambitious project.

Dawei has been repeatedly delayed

while organisers attempt to secure financing for the project, which has been slated to eventually rise as high as US\$50 billion.

On January 30, Reuters news service said the Thai government had said Italian Thai Development and Rojana Industrial Park will sign a \$1.7 billion deal in March to develop the first stage of the large project. However, the report also stated Thailand would provide soft loans of about \$119 million for road construction, leaving open the question about the

sourcing the rest of the funds. Dawei SEZ has been a joint project between Thailand and Myanmar.

Located in southern Myanmar's Tanintharyi Region, the SEZ is set to provide port facilities on the Andaman Sea and land connections with Bangkok, which is about 250 kilometres (155 miles) directly to the east. Among other benefits, it would allow goods to be shipped from overseas to the Dawei port, then overland to Bangkok, without the need to pass by ship around Singapore and through the crowded straits of Malacca.



Commuters pass a signboard for Dawei city. Photo: Sann Oo



BILLION US\$

**1.7**

Size of the deal to be signed by two Thai companies in March

The SEZ is also slated to include housing and industrial estates, a small port, power, water and modern transport links with Thailand, according to a statement from Myanmar's President's Office.

Thai and Myanmar authorities have requested support from Japan, which is a major investor in both countries. Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in November proposed a three-way meeting, which took

place on January 30 in Bangkok.

Myanmar was represented by vice president U Nyan Tun and other officials at the meeting, according to a statement from the President's Office.

"Japan confirmed the importance of the Dawei project and said Japan would consider the way to cooperate to develop the port and road of Dawei. But how to finance the project is not yet solved," said Masaki Takahara, managing director of Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) in Yangon.

It is also possible more agreements on Dawei could be finalised

during a visit by Thai officials including the prime minister to Japan on February 8 and 9, he added.

Financing the sprawling project has consistently been a challenge for Dawei. It was initially to be developed by Italian-Thai Development. Myanmar officials revealed in June 2013 that the firm would step aside from the developer role due to a lack of funds, but would bid for work on the project.

Officials involved with organising the project have so far not returned request for comment, though one official said that there is possible progress on the issue.



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**INSURANCE**

# Traction tough for beans and pulses



ZAW HTI KE

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THE low quality of domestic beans and pulses is holding back export potential in the market, according to experts.

Myanmar is routinely one of the world's two or three largest beans and pulses exporters, competing with industry leader Canada, as well as countries like Australia and Tanzania.

While Myanmar exports can reach 1.4 million tonnes worth US\$1 billion, there is more space in the market for the country's produce, according to Sunil Seth, chair of the Overseas Agro Traders Association of Myanmar (OATAM) as well as country head of TATA International.

About 80 percent of the industry's current exports heads to India. Additional markets could be opened if there was domestic capacity to produce finished products, as it could then export to other markets, such as the Middle East. "Less than 10pc of the total volume of Myanmar's pulses and beans involved value-added products," he said. "If Myanmar can produce more value-added products, it will be able to make much more money from this market."

Beans and pulses businesspeople



Bean traders make a deal. Photo: Staff

say that while they would like to produce more finished products, it often involves more capital than they are able to acquire.

"Producing finished goods takes capital over a long time," said U Min Ko Oo, secretary of the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association. "But most Myanmar businessmen in this industry do not have adequate capital for that. So most focus on exporting raw materials rather than finished goods, as trading raw goods

means a faster time to recover capital than finished products."

Mr Seth said that India may be increasing its demand for Myanmar beans and pulses in the years ahead.

"However, Myanmar needs to promote the quality of its products ... It has a huge opportunity in the world market for pulses and beans," he said.

Mr Sunil added that OATAM was formed with advice from the Ministry of Commerce, and aims to help foster the industry.

The members of the organisation are experienced companies from Singapore and Myanmar. It aims to improve the quality and supply information to the local industry.

While it is working with Singaporean inspection agencies to ensure quality standard, it is particularly important it cooperates with India's Pulses and Grains Association for gaining market share. However, the domestic industry faces a range of challenges, such as a poor logistics

system, inadequate capital, a strong variety of seeds and technology.

"One thing about promoting [the beans and pulses] industry is that the Myanmar government is focusing a lot of its effort on the rice market. It should also focus on beans and pulses," he said.

Currently, beans and pulses exports are usually double the \$500 million generated from the country's rice exports, counting as the largest private-sector export item from Myanmar.

Mr Seth also said the local industry is beset by middlemen running commodity speculation businesses.

"This can distort the market," he said. "We need to streamline the process."

Some previous speculations in Myanmar have gone awry, often with investors caught without the means to pay for a position they had taken in the market.

Other experts agree there are plenty of challenges facing the domestic industry.

U Min Ko Oo said he thinks quality seeds and modern agricultural technology are crucial areas that need to be improved for the industry's future.

Traders are currently reliant on what farmers produce. The Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association is looking at ways to improve the quality of its finished products, which will open more markets.

## JICA head calls for inclusive future

WHILE 2014 was a strong year for Myanmar's development, it is clear the country has a long way to go, according to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) president Akihiko Tanaka.

Mr Tanaka is due to speak at the third annual Myanmar Development Forum in Nay Pyi Taw beginning February 7. The event has been taking place annually since 2013, bringing together government officials and development partners, including donors and NGOs, to discuss future development in the country.

JICA provided an advanced copy of Mr Tanaka's speech to be given at the event. It said that "Myanmar's historic reform is now forging ahead", pointing to increasing Foreign Direct Investment and successfully holding the ASEAN chair as evidence of reform.

"It is also clear that Myanmar still has a long way to go. Myanmar's reform process is in its early stages, but this is not where Myanmar should be," it said.

There is large domestic potential, and manufacturing is starting to shift to the country from China and other ASEAN economies.

"This leads us to ask the question: what is the most important development issue for Myanmar?" it said.

It is important that growth remains inclusive, where all people enjoy its benefits. "In the economic sphere, achieving inclusion is difficult without economic growth. It is essential to promote the continued growth of competitive manufacturing sectors and innovative service industries, as well as increase in foreign direct investment. However, growth in and of itself is not enough."

Mr Tanaka called on Myanmar to sustain its strong commitment to reform and to continue on the path toward "Inclusive Development".

— Jeremy Mullins



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# Banks scramble to meet rising capital requirements

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DOMESTIC banks will be required to increase their paid-up capital to meet the requirements laid out in the new Financial Institutions Law.

The move is expected to affect newer and smaller banks the most, as each institution must have minimum paid-up capital of K20 billion (US\$19.5 million) under the new draft Financial Institutions Law. Under the old law enacted in 1990, the minimum was up to the Central Bank to set, though in practice the amounts were usually significantly lower than the new minimums.

Businesspeople have been keen to open banks specialising in narrow sectors. Banks specifically targeting gems, tourists and farmers are trying to receive licences. Shwe Rural and Urban Development Bank, which received its licence in mid-2014, had been approved with K10 billion in capital, meaning it will need to add another K10 billion under the draft law.

Some new banks are searching for shareholders through newspaper messages or marketing in their relevant sectors, said banking consultant U George Soe Win.

"The new policy will be a burden for small-sized bankers," he said.

Small and new bankers say they are working toward meeting the requirements for paid-in capital.

U Yone Mu, chair of the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association, said after discussion with banking experts, it has been decided that gem traders wishing to buy shares in Gems Association bank must contribute a minimum of K400 million a share. The association is also preparing its licence application.

"We will get shareholders and partners, the amount isn't too high, and hopefully everything will go okay," he said.

Banks have to prove their paid-up capital meets the requirements of the Central Bank before receiving a licence.

The Financial Investigation Unit under the Ministry of Home Affairs inspects sources of shareholders' money as an additional step before granting licences. This step gained prominence after Asia Green Development Bank attempted to transfer a large portion of its shares to a new shareholder in mid-

2014, after which the Central Bank began pushing for the Financial Investigation Unit to check the source of money, according to U George Soe Win.

"This policy obviously intends to strengthen finance, but it is important to carefully check for money-laundering problems," he said.

There are 23 commercial banks with licences from the Central Bank, though the latest, Shwe Rural and Urban Development Bank, has yet to begin running after receiving a licence last year.

Some experts have voiced concern there may be too many banks operating in the country. There are also another four state-owned banks operating in the country.

Small banks do not have much competitive power and can have challenges gain public trust, as they cannot provide as many services as larger banks, said Kanbawza Bank vice president U Than Lwin.

"Raising the capital requirement is a good sign," he said. "Capital is necessary to overcome obstacles faced by banks."

U Than Lwin's Kanbawza Bank is the country's largest private, commercial bank, and rivals the large state banks. He said smaller banks can merge with each other or change to public companies to become larger.

Global Treasure Bank director U Kyaw Lwin said the bank is trying to extend its services as well as reach a larger capital size. "To achieve bigger capital, we are contributing our profits and selling shares as well," he said.

Of the at least 26 banks, experts say the 10 largest have about 90pc of the industry's total assets. A Central Bank of Myanmar official said about 30pc of private banks will need to add more capital to meet the rules in the draft law. Some banks have a large hill to climb, starting with less than one-10<sup>th</sup> of the K20 billion requirement.

"These small banks may not like the new law, but both private and state-owned banks have to try out their own strategies," he said.

Foreign banks granted licences will have a separate requirement of US\$75 million, more than double the requirement for domestic banks. State-owned banks also have to raise their capital.

An official at Myanma Economic Bank said it is gradually raising its paid-up capital with a long-term goal of eventually reaching K500 billion.

## SMALL BUSINESS



A car gets a hose-down from one of dozens of shops that have sprung up in Yangon. Photo: Staff

# Companies clean up from the car craze



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BUDDING entrepreneurs would do well to target the growing number of automobiles on the road when looking for a profit-making opportunity.

While the number of petrol shops and stereo outfitters are on the rise, perhaps no automobile-related business has the low barrier to entry of car-wash shops.

Setting up basically requires a water supply, some labour and a place to park the cars for cleaning. Small, informal shops and professional outfits that offer a wider range of services are popping up across Yangon - though not everyone is pleased, particularly by the unregulated spread of the smaller shops.

Many people are simply opening shops on the road by their house, said Ko Wai Yan, 25, who also works as a taxi driver. While this is an easy route for entrepreneurs, it also means repurposing public space for private use, without any official green light.

"We've operated this business since 1998. We do it in front of my house using water from my well," said the owner of one shop from South Okkalapa township. "I don't think there's any reason to have a licence to operate this business, because we're doing it with our own skills and effort."

Still, the owner said he cannot ignore Yangon City Development Committee, and often ends up paying them money. He added it is important he takes care about the immediate environment, as his neighbours can ask him to close the shop.

Up to 100 cars a day come for a cleaning - with taxi drivers making up the majority of their customers.

"Our business is good, and it's the

**'I don't think there's any reason to have a licence to operate this business.'**

South Okkalapa car cleaner

only job we need to survive," he said.

That shops costs K500 a car, while at more expensive shops it can be K1500 or K2000 apiece.

Yet the expensive shops often deal with a number of costs the simple roadside shops don't have.

The informal shops generally don't pay rental costs, instead occupying a piece of public land for their business. They also often do not have the costs of formally registering the business and paying the appropriate fees and taxes.

An official from of the official shops, La Kabar Service Station, said the shop in Tarmwe township has been moving away from cleaning.

"We cannot focus just on cleaning cars," he said. "If we did, we can't get more than 50 cars a day."

The shop, which performs other maintenance on vehicles, would like to receive more customers for its cleaning services, but simply cannot compete.

Still, the La Kabar Service official said was reluctant to push for stricter control of cleaning stations, as they are local businesses run by families.

"I have no comment for shops without licences. They only do cleaning, and we don't focus on this work," he said.

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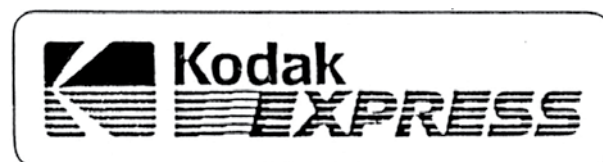
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Dated.

NAY PYI TAW

# Shell plans exploration after offshore contract



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A CONSORTIUM led by Royal Dutch Shell has signed production sharing agreements for three blocks with state-run Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, with future plans for a significant investment in exploration activities.

Shell and Japanese firm Mitsui Oil Exploration signed the agreement on February 5 in Nay Pyi Taw, which sets out the terms for exploration and production for blocks AD-9 and AD-11 in the Rakhine basin and MD-5 in Tanintharyi basin.

Shell is one of the first offshore firms to sign a production sharing contract, following a tender held in 2013 for several offshore blocks. The first offshore production sharing contracts were signed in December last year.

Energy Minister U Zay Yar Aung said energy resources are essential for Myanmar's economic development.

"To discover more and more hydrocarbon reserves is the long-term goal of the ministry of energy," he said during a speech at the signing.

Signing the agreement marks Shell's return to Myanmar, after it was one of the big winners in the 2013 round,

snagging three blocks.

"We are pleased to be able to sign PSCs to operate three deep-water blocks with the Myanmar government and our partner [Mitsui]," said Graeme Smith, vice president exploration Asia and Australia at Royal Dutch Shell.

The three blocks cover about 21,000 square kilometres (8108 square miles), located 300 kilometres offshore in depths between 1800 and 2700 metres (5905 and 8858 feet).

"The blocks offer an exciting frontier exploration opportunity to apply advanced deep-water technical capabilities we have built up around the world over the past three decades," said Mr Smith.

A Ministry of Energy official requesting anonymity said Shell and its partner were planning to invest US\$1.215 billion over 8 years in the project. Shell did not confirm this figure.

The agreement also marks the first

**'The blocks offer an exciting frontier exploration opportunity.'**

**Graeme Smith**  
Royal Dutch Shell

time in recent years that Myanmar has allowed international companies to conduct offshore oil and gas exploration in deepwater areas.

A total of 18 international companies were awarded 10 shallow-water and 10 deepwater blocks in the 2013 bidding. So far, production sharing agreements for 4 other of the blocks have been signed, leaving 13 to go.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise managing director U Myo Myint Oo said blocks AD-9 and AD-11 are very close to Daweoo International's blocks A-1 and A-3, while the geological settings are similar to Shwe gas field.

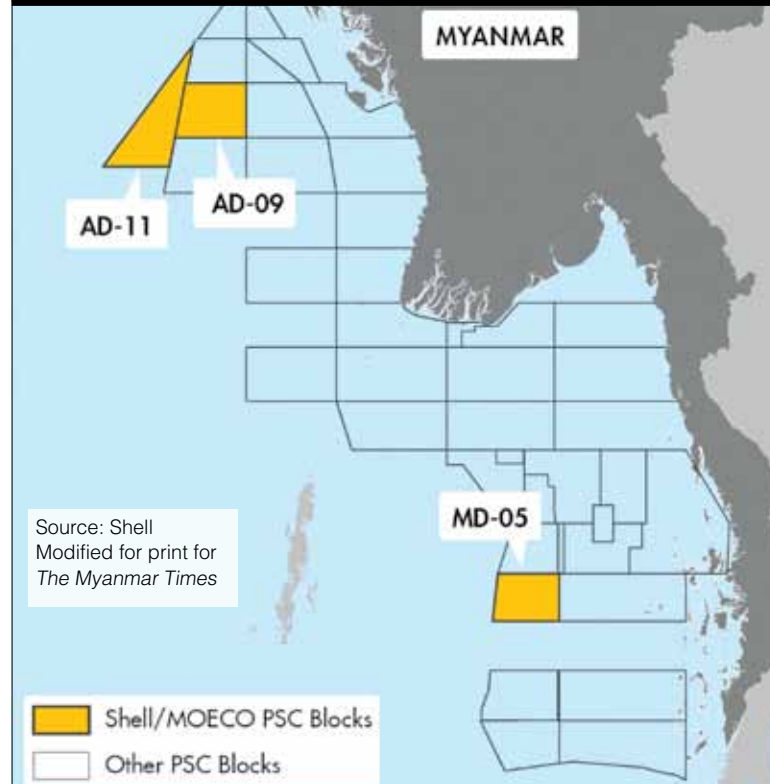
Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise will receive a \$300,000 data fee for the three blocks. This is much lower than with other agreements, but comes as the enterprise has supported less research in the three blocks than in some others. It also stands to receive a signature bonus.

Shell is hold 90pc of the three blocks with the remainder held by Mitsui. Shell has experience with other deep-water blocks around the world. Its project in the Gulf of Mexico is the deepest offshore production facility in the world, at about 2900 metres. In Asia is currently has investments in Malaysia, Brunei and Philippines.

The firm had previously operated in Myanmar, but left the country during the period of tightening Western sanctions in the 1990s.



Shell's Graeme Smith (left) meets Minister for Energy U Zay Yar Aung. Photo: Supplied/ Shell



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# PR firms talk future as industry changes fast



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YANGON'S newest public relations firm occupies a modest office in a quiet ward. It's perhaps 20 by 50 feet, with sparse furnishings and only two desks. Including the country manager, there are only three people in the room.

But the Singapore-based company is focused on Southeast Asia, and it has big growth hopes for its little Myanmar office.

Rice is hoping to get the jump on competitors by opening locally, though it's far from the first PR company in town. It launched in Yangon about one month ago, as changing PR needs in the market mean new firms are entering and old firms are re-tooling for the new landscape.

Rice Communications partner James Eng Jin Brasher said the PR market will continue to grow steadily - though won't boom overnight.

"It will take time, but the PR market and the appetite for PR services will continue to increase," he said.

Multinationals are continuing to open their doors in Myanmar.



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They generally want to communicate their messages to the general public, but, like in many other facets of their business, face human resource constraints. PR firms aim to manage information flows from different organisations to the public through a variety of channels, and plays an important part in businesses around the world.

"Because of the economic growth in the past few years, I am confident the PR market in Myanmar will grow," said Mr Brasher.

He added he expects to see lots of growth in oil and gas, tourism, mining and communications.

Although large PR firms are expanding their presence to Myanmar, a range of local businesses have also been opening up. Many are in the hands of young people, who hope their local market knowledge can win out over foreign competition.

Blink is one of a number of Myanmar-based firms, also including companies like Mangosteen and Zagar, which are working in the country. Blink launched in April 2014, and must be able to adapt

to compete with larger firms, said its co-founder and CEO Stephen Kyaw.

"We can't pay the high salaries of international firms," he said.

The lack experienced employees is perhaps the biggest challenge for local firms like Blink. Many larger potential clients want a full suite of capabilities when choosing a PR firm. This is difficult to achieve if staffing levels are too low.

Local businesses are also not often aware of the requirement to have PR representation. PR firms are trying to explain the importance of these services, using examples such as a propensity for seemingly small incidents to blow up on social media. Insiders point to one recent case at a prominent local store chain, where a customer was insulted by a security guard. A video of the incident ended up being widely shared and derided online, damaging its brand perception among the public.

Other local businesses confuse PR and marketing. Some local firms are content holding events and advertising their products, but those functions are not necessarily filling PR's requirements, said Mr Kyaw.

"The PR market in Myanmar is still at an immature stage," he said. "Some people are still mistaking PR services with marketing and advertising."

COLOMBO

# Surprise approval for China's Sri Lanka port

SRI Lanka's new government gave the green light for China's US\$1.4 billion port-related project in the capital despite warning while in opposition that it would scrap the controversial venture.

Government spokesman Rajitha Senaratne said the cabinet had approved the Colombo Port City project, under construction alongside an existing giant Chinese-built container terminal, in what is the island nation's largest single foreign investment.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe vowed during last month's election to halt the project, branding it "haphazard" and damaging to the island's west coast where legions of tourist hotels are located.

"We have now found that the port city project had done an environment impact assessment and that says there is no harm [to the environment]," said Mr Senaratne who is also the health minister.

The government's U-turn on the project came after Beijing sent a special envoy, Liu Jianchao, on February 5 on a two-day visit for talks with Sri Lankan leaders.

The two sides will discuss Chinese-funded projects, official sources said.

They added that Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera would visit Beijing later this month and new President Maithripala Sirisena would make a state visit to China in March.

Launched under the previous

government during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Sri Lanka in September, the project aims to give Beijing a firmer foothold in the Indian Ocean region.

It had also been a symbol of previous leader Mahinda Rajapakse's heavy reliance on Chinese funding for infrastructure work in the island nation.

Beijing has been accused of seeking to develop facilities around the Indian Ocean in a "string of pearls" strategy to counter the rise of its Asian rival India and secure its own economic interests.

Officials said Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Sri Lanka before President Sirisena travels to China.

Mr Sirisena is also due to travel to India from February 15 to 18 marking his first foreign visit since coming to power at the January 8 elections.

China's huge investments in Sri Lanka and other South Asian nations in India's neighbourhood have caused unease in New Delhi.

Indian diplomats have privately raised concerns about the port city venture, as it gives China ownership of one third of the total 233 hectares (583 acres) of reclaimed land.

Sri Lanka is a midway point on one of the world's busiest international shipping lanes that Beijing wants to secure as a maritime silk road for the 21st century.

- AFP

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**IN BRIEF**

**Signs of a turn-around appear at Japan's struggling Sony**

Sony shares surged on February 5 to their highest close in nearly five years as an improved earnings outlook offered a glimmer of hope for the struggling electronics firm.

The Tokyo-listed stock, which was up 18 percent earlier in the day, finished at 3101.5 yen (US\$26) in heavy trading, 12pc above the previous day and at its highest level since April 2010.

After Japanese markets closed on February 3, Sony said it now expects to lose 170 billion yen (US\$1.4 billion) in its fiscal year to March, a hefty shortfall but much narrower than the 230 billion yen previously forecast.

It also projected an operating profit of 20 billion yen, turning around an October estimate that it would lose 40 billion yen.

**Fuel costs drive down Indonesian inflation rates, data shows**

Indonesia's inflation rate slowed in January, official data showed on February 2, after the cost of fuel in Southeast Asia's biggest economy fell on the back of lower oil prices.

Inflation rose 6.96 percent year-on-year, slowing from an 8.36pc rise in December, according to data from the national statistics agency.

The rate had accelerated in recent months after the new government reduced huge subsidies on petrol and diesel, pushing up the cost of transportation and delivering goods.

But after the price of oil fell dramatically, the government decided to scrap the subsidy regime for petrol entirely, and put a fixed subsidy on diesel.



**Two's a crowd for Greek and German finance ministers**

Greek minister faced criticism and a stern reminder of his commitments to his EU partners on February 5 as he met his tough-talking German counterpart for the first time to ask for debt forgiveness.

Wolfgang Schäuble voiced "scepticism" over proposals by Greece's new anti-austerity government as he and Yanis Varoufakis failed to find common ground at a bruising meeting in Berlin to discuss the country's massive debts.

"We had long and intensive discussions, but we were not in complete agreement," Mr Schäuble told a highly anticipated news conference in Berlin, seated next to Mr Varoufakis after their first face-to-face meeting.

"We agreed to disagree," he added, while Mr Varoufakis retorted, "We didn't reach an agreement. It was never on the cards that we would. We even didn't agree to disagree from where I'm standing." - AFP

**Apple bond sales fuels US interest rate speculation**

Apple's mega bond sale is fueling speculation US interest rates are poised to increase.

The iPhone maker issued US\$6.5 billion of debt on February 2, locking in borrowing costs for as long as three decades. The sale follows a plunge in benchmark Treasury yields, with US 30-year yields falling to a record last week. They may not stay this low if forecasts for the Federal Reserve to raise rates are correct.

An Apple bond sale in 2013 coincided with the record low in company borrowing costs.

- Bloomberg

**SINGAPORE**

# Asia noodle-lovers key for Oz

WHEAT farmers in Australia, the world's fourth-biggest shipper, will face an increasing challenge keeping up with their neighbours' appetite for bread and noodles.

Demand from Indonesia, the Philippines and three other Southeast Asian nations is set to jump 40 percent to 13.2 million metric tonnes by 2020, said Greg Harvey, chief executive officer of Interflour Group. That may outpace the ability of Australia to supply the variety used in soft bread and noodles, he said in an interview in Singapore.

Faster growth and an expanding population are boosting consumption of everything from wheat and sugar to cooking oils in the region, which has more people than the European Union. Indonesia will become the world's second-largest wheat importer this year and has overtaken India as the top user of palm oil, the US government estimates. The United States, Canada and Russia could fill any shortages in Australian supply, he said.

"It's a bullish story for Australian wheat," said Mr Harvey, whose company is a venture between Salim Group in Indonesia and CBH Group, Australia's biggest grains shipper. "There will be more demand in 2020 than the ability to supply, at least on



Aussie wheat is whetting Southeast Asian appetites. Photo: AFP

paper. That's a good problem to have."

Wheat in Chicago entered a bear market last month as world stockpiles of grains excluding rice head for the highest since the mid-1980s, the International Grains Council estimates. Prices fell 13pc this year to US\$5.11 a bushel on February 5.

The states of Western Australia and South Australia, top producers of the low-protein white wheat used in noodles and soft bread, are the country's main suppliers to Southeast Asia, Mr Harvey said. His projections assume that farmers will have difficulty increasing exports from the 11.1 million-tonne annual average in

the five years to 2014.

Dry weather and limits on the amount of land suitable for cultivation are already curbing supplies. Total wheat shipments from Australia may drop 7.2pc to 16.99 million tonnes in the 12 months to June 30, the lowest in five years, after the hottest spring on record, according to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences.

While wheat imports by Southeast Asian countries from all origins will reach 17.75 million tonnes in 2014-2015, or 8.6pc more than the average in the past five years, exports from Australia are estimated to be 8.2pc be-

low the five-year average, US Department of Agriculture data show.

"We have a productivity growth rate at about 1pc a year and I hope this will continue," said Simon McNair, chief executive officer at Australian Grain Growers Co-Operative. "There's a finite amount of farmlands. There's competition from other agricultural products like cattle, and other crops," he said by phone from Adelaide.

Southeast Asian nations are still expanding. The International Monetary Fund forecast last month that growth in the five-biggest economies will accelerate to 5.2pc in 2015 and 5.3pc in 2016 from 4.5pc last year.

Demand for wheat flour will increase at the fastest pace in Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, with the average exceeding 7pc a year in the decade through 2020, Harvey said January 28. Consumption per person in the region will climb to 29 kilograms in 2020 from 20 kilograms last year, he said.

Interflour will complete a mill at Subic Bay in the Philippines by mid-2016, the seventh in the region, boosting combined annual capacity by 175,000 tonnes from 1.5 million tonnes now, he said. Interflour also owns a mill in Turkey.

- Bloomberg

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# ANZ takes stock of 'Asia's uncut gem'

RAJESH AHUJA



newrooms@mmtimes.com

MYANMAR is not just at one cross-road, it is at several. The country is endowed with Asia's most outstanding location and its economy is the most strategically positioned to benefit from the dual economic ascension of China and India. To achieve this potential, however, it must quickly embrace a global system of capitalism that has evolved around it during 50 years of economic isolation.

Since opening our representative office in March 2013, I have witnessed signs of major transformation such as significant improvements in internet access, mobile phone coverage, numerous new construction sites of residences and offices and increasing number of cars on the roads in Yangon.

From a development perspective, Myanmar is on the cusp of an industrialisation process that should see it rapidly build out its domestic manufacturing capacity and become a magnet for foreign direct investment.

From a markets and investment perspective, Myanmar is an exciting new frontier economy. It is well-documented that the promise and potential the country holds is almost unprecedented given its strategic location, rich

hydrocarbons, arable land and water resources, large working age population, minerals and metals resources. Myanmar has roughly five decades of economic catch-up ahead that we expect to broadly play out over the next five to ten years.

The immediate period ahead, following five decades of economic isolation, is not however without significant risks. The isolation has resulted in poorly capitalised financial institutions, untested regulatory structures that may have too heavy or too light a hand and a workforce with a skill-set entirely unsuitable to the production platforms the rest of the region is now attracting.

The government has taken tremendous strides during the last three years, including some dramatic reforms such as the unification of exchange rates, foreign investment law, Special Economic Zone law and easing of foreign exchange restrictions.

**The immediate period ahead, following five decades of economic isolation, is not however without significant risks.**

The recent award of banking licences was an extremely constructive and transparent process. The Central Bank of Myanmar's approach was to keep the playing field level and it acted in the best interests of creating a vibrant banking sector in Myanmar. The tender process involved an effective question and answer session, where the Central Bank made clear what their direction was - and most of our questions were answered in a very efficient manner.

The foreign banks entry into Myanmar will quickly improve the country's access to external finance and ultimately contribute to the growth of the domestic financial sector. It will also lead to expansion of trade and investment in the country.

The Thilawa Special Economic Zone has been a significant success and major international firms will establish manufacturing projects there next year. This should provide a broader template for the industrialisation and more efficient utilisation of Myanmar's large, youthful labour force.

There is significant effort ongoing amongst western legal firms to overhaul some key laws, such as the Companies Act, that will further improve the investment environment.

Government officials in Nay Pyi Taw have been working hard to maintain the momentum of economic reforms and are focused on continuing the reform agenda: They are investor-friendly and want the business climate to be conducive to

growth. In general, the local business community has a preference to align with western investors.

Indeed, in the coming years Myanmar is going to give every indication that its economy is fundamentally overheating. Growth is currently accelerating in Myanmar and we expect the economy to experience sustainable growth of between 8 and 9 percent over the next five years; growth in some periods could be as high as 10pc. The current account will widen as capital goods and technology are imported, and monetary growth will be extremely fast as transactions are increasingly monetised for the first time.

By its very nature, the ambitious reform program that is aimed at opening up the economy is going to lead to large capital inflows and elevated metrics on many of the measures that economists typically use to assess overheating. Still, the medium-term potential growth rate of Myanmar is probably in excess of 7.5pc for the foreseeable future.

To sustain economic transformation, it is important that workers up-skill and production moves up the value-added chain. Again, the public sector has a key role to play here in providing the vocational training and education infrastructure to up-skill the workforce. The private sector also plays a complementary role, via technology and skills transfer, aligned with higher value-added foreign direct investment. As regards the financial services sector, ANZ is

committed to work alongside other foreign banks that have been granted preliminary licences on the creation of a banking institute to develop the pool of talent in the country. A key theme of our banking licence application to the Central Bank was our capacity building programs that included launching of our flagship financial literacy program in three cities viz Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay, where more than 700 people participated.

If Myanmar is able to set up transparent institutions and an FDI-friendly environment, then inward FDI should enable the skills and technology transfer needed to rapidly transform Myanmar's economy from agriculture and resources to manufacturing. The pace at which that transformation occurs could be the fastest industrialisation episode Asia has ever witnessed.

**Rajesh Ahuja is the chief representative of ANZ Myanmar. ANZ was announced among a group of nine foreign banks to be granted preliminary approval for a banking licence by the Central Bank of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in October 2014. The bank established a representative office in March 2013 and will open a branch this September, providing corporate banking services to foreign companies, joint ventures and local financial institutions. It has just published an economic study "Myanmar - Asia's Uncut Gem: The remarkable transformation underway in Asia's last frontier".**

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Pictured here, with glasses, is IGT's CSR Manager Tin Tun Zaw with a group of headmasters and staff from various schools in Upper Myanmar at the Myanmar Times new Mandalay Bureau.

This special educational program - aimed at poor and rural students - is offered at a discount subscription rate and is open to all companies, NGOs and associations that promote literacy and English training for needy students anywhere in Myanmar. If your company would like to participate in our NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION program, please contact *Myanmar Times* Subscriptions Manager Thuzar Winn at thuzarwinn@gmail.com or by telephone on 392928 or 253642. We will stamp each newspaper with your company logo and we can help locate needy schools for you in a specific areas of Myanmar where your company would like to support education. This is a great way especially for foreign companies coming to Myanmar to engage in effective CSR.

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### VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a Japanese governmental organisation responsible for implementing Official Development Assistance (ODA) such as Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans and Grant Aid in developing countries, Myanmar Office is seeking qualified Myanmar nationals for a Programme Assistant post for its expanded works in Myanmar.

**1) Programme Assistant: Job Description-** The Programme Assistant will work closely with Programme Officers and be responsible for:-

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Eligible candidate for Programme Assistant should possess following qualifications:

- University Graduate
- Fluent in English (Reading, Writing, Speaking)
- Age between 35~45 years (Preferable)
- Good relationship with Myanmar governmental offices
- Ability to work in a team and maintain harmonious relationship with other staff
- More than or 12 years of working experience in the organisation/s
- Good computer skills and knowledge of Word, Excel & Power Point

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**How to apply:** Qualified and interested persons are requested to send the applications with updated C.V, educational credentials and references to JICA Myanmar Office, Room 701, 7th Floor, Sakura Tower, No. 339, Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, not later than **5:00 p.m., 27 February, 2015.**

Note: Only short listed candidates will be contacted for subsequent interviews.

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# Property

BUSINESS EDITOR: Jeremy Mullins | jeremymullins7@gmail.com



A view of Shwedagon pagoda is one of the highlights for those living in Yangon. Photo: Boothee

## Take two for Tarmwe market

**NOE NOE AUNG**  
noenoeag@gmail.com

TARMWE market will be rebuilt as a six-storey building this year, marking another attempt to move forward with a project that has floundered so far.

A previous plan to force out the market vendors and replace it with a condominium project fell apart in 2012, as the vendors and shop owners vigorously protested the move.

Government officials are now discussing putting in a new building at the site, but they aim to meet vendor concerns by opening the bottom stories of the structure to vendors and shop owners. The previous plan would have seen the vendors and shop owners forced to move to a new location.

**‘Every seller, including small vendors, will get their shop back.’**

YCDC official

# Authorities keep eye on high-rises near Yangon landmarks



**MYAT NYEIN AYE**

myatnyeinae11092@gmail.com

YANGON is growing taller by the day, but with all the construction there is also growing concern some of the city's landmarks could be crowded out of the skyline.

City residents have taken to social media to call for protection of the city's best views, particularly of its famous pagodas.

Government officials involved in urban planning are keenly aware of the requirement to protect the skyline, adding there are mechanisms in place to check buildings above 12 storeys for a number of factors, including whether they crowd out the view.

YCDC Department of Engineering (Building) head U Than Htay said the department is working to preserve views of Shwedagon, the city's landmark, but added that so far no nearby developer has submitted

plans for a nearby skyscraper.

"We will review all [tall] buildings that are very close to Shwedagon pagoda," he said.

If buildings are over 12 storeys, they must be approved by YCDC's Committee for Quality Control of High-rise Building Projects.

U Soe Thein, a Union Minister of the President's Office, has also waded into the discussion of tall buildings near Shwedagon. In response to reporters' questions, he said it is ultimately up the Yangon Region's chief minister to limit tall buildings near Shwedagon.

Local officials, however, say that Yangon-area approval is often the last step for large scale developments.

YCDC urban planner U Toe Aung said that developments must first receive approval from the Myanmar Investment Commission and related ministries, a process which does not involve Yangon-level approvals.

"Projects usually don't initially consult with YCDC," he said. "After they receive Myanmar Investment Commission approval, they then make proposals to us. Sometimes the

proposals are different from the real plans, but we negotiate with them.

Some experts worry that while companies may declare they are under the 12-storey height limit, it is possible some will try to exceed the height. U Kyaw Latt, an advisor in urban planning, said he is not just worried about preserving views of Shwedagon, but other of Yangon's heritage pagodas as well.

Perhaps the most prominent development currently underway near Shwedagon is Dagon City 1, a project located on Zoological Garden Road

near the U Htaung Bo traffic circle.

Officials from its developers Marga Landmark say their project is not considered a high-rise, as "our design strictly adheres to the height restrictions imposed by YCDC taking into consideration the historic and cultural sites near to the development."

"The restrictions permit us to build 11 floors above ground, while still allowing for our best international design and intended spacious headroom," an official said in an email to *The Myanmar Times*.

"We have heard of the discussions around development projects near Shwedagon, and therefore we have recently re-engaged relevant authorities for a thorough analysis of our design. They are very happy with the care we have placed in devising a low impact construction approach, incorporating state-of-the-art techniques such as diaphragm walls," the email said.

Some 50 percent of the area of the Dagon City 1 will be accessible to the general public, with the plan calling for green elements and breezeways, the email added. — *Additional reporting Jeremy Mullins*

STOREYS  
**12**

Maximum height of buildings in Yangon before they need separate approval as skyscrapers from officials.

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“Now we just need [the] government to get its fiscal policy right, and so reduce the pressure to sell such bonds to finance government spending.” - Sean Turnell, economist

Taiwan pilot hailed as a hero as he avoids buildings in crash  
WORLD 42

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Living near a place for exercise



Fitness is too easy to overlook in a modern Yangon lifestyle. There are not always as many facilities as one would like for daily exercise, and health can suffer as a result. That's why distance to a park should not be underestimated. This week's house near Mya Kyun Thar park is great for people who like their daily exercise. Apart from park proximity, this home has a lot of other things going for it. Built with a medium-sized family in mind, it covers 1800 square feet on a 3200 square foot lot. It's modern, with a full slate of

trendy decorations inside. It boasts two master bedrooms, two smaller bedrooms, as well as a dining room, kitchen and bathrooms. There are five air conditioners, a telephone line, lots of car parking and other amenities. It also comes fully furnished, so no need to waste time shopping around. It's located in Yankin township, which is a little out of the way for those commuting downtown, but great for those who work in the area. Prices are negotiable, but it's a great option, particularly if you like to stretch your legs. - Tin Yadanar Tun

- Location :** Lane off of Moe Kaung Road, Yankin township
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- Contact :** Estate Myanmar Enterprise Ltd.
- Phone :** 09-43118787  
09-43031699

Second phase launched for Golden City project

MYAT NYEIN AYE  
myatnyeinaeye11092@gmail.com

GOLDEN City launched the second phase of sales for their ambitious project in Yankin township on January 31. The project is set to include several 33-storey towers that will house residences, office space and a hotel on 8.4 acres. Phase 1 consists of four towers and is due for a September 2016 completion, while Phase 2 is to be finished in December 2017. Phase 2 is to include five total structures at a cost of about US\$80 million, out of a total cost of \$230 million for the project. Unit prices are between \$280 and \$300 a square foot, for units ranging from 517 to 1516 square feet. Golden City managing director Jeffrey Lu said Yangon's real estate demand is still high, though there is less supply than in neighbouring countries.

“Not only local developers but also those from overseas will be making long-term investment in the real estate sector in Myanmar,” he said. Golden City aims to fulfill some of the demand for residential and office space. Mr Lu said that Myanmar has some ways to go to catch up with its neighbours. Yangon has only about 2 percent of the total office space of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and about 5pc of Bangkok's total hotel space. A lack of supply in the domestic market helps keep prices buoyant, though if supply exceeds demand, prices would likely decline. Mr Lu said Golden City company officials had been keen on the potential of the Myanmar real estate market. After deciding to invest, it acquired land on build-operate-transfer terms. “We want to be involved in real estate development in this country,” he said.

S&P settles lawsuits from financial crisis

STANDARD & Poor's, the world's leading credit rating agency, will pay US\$1.5 billion to settle US allegations of inflated ratings linked to the financial crisis that unleashed the Great Recession. The settlement agreements announced February 3 resolve civil lawsuits filed by the US Justice Department, 19 states, the US capital and the nation's largest pension fund. S&P, a unit of McGraw Hill Financial, will pay \$1.375 billion to resolve lawsuits accusing it of bilking investors by hiding the true risks of mortgage bonds linked to the financial

crisis, the Justice Department. Half will go to the Justice Department and the other half to the 19 states and Washington, DC. Separately, S&P will pay \$125 million to California state pension fund CalPERS to settle allegations of fraud that led to its investment losses. The Justice Department and the states sued S&P two years ago for giving undeservedly rosy ratings to bonds that were backed by sub-prime mortgages, risky home loans that defaulted in droves as the housing price bubble collapsed. - AFP

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Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2015



BarCamp Yangon was held at MICT Park last week and attracted multitudes of Myanmar techies; upward of 4000 people registered. Attendees signed up to give talks on everything from drones to Google Cardboard, 4G communications to mobile money – even endeavouring to tackle “a brief history of life on Earth” at one point. Photo: Catherine Trautwein

## Startup meets showbiz on reality TV program

**CATHERINE TRAUTWEIN**  
newsroom@mmtimes.com

LOCAL start-up entrepreneur Ko Min Zeya Phyo didn't plan on entering the competition which won his company the chance at more than S\$2 million. Now the Code2LAB founder – not by nature a PR man – has found himself in a surprising place: in front of the camera.

Last year, restaurant management platform provider Code2LAB won a Yangon start-up bootcamp put on by Lithan University College, earning Ko Min Zeya Phyo US\$2000 and a spot on Channel NewsAsia's second season of Start-UP, a Singapore-based reality television show which aired its first episode last week. The entrepreneur has survived the cut to eight finalists, and is in the midst of filming episodes that see Code2LAB and fellow ventures face challenges and try to crowd-fund their start-ups.

Ko Min Zeya grew up in Myanmar and at age nine moved to Singapore for more than two decades. However, his thoughts frequently wandered home. "The strange thing is that all the time I'm there, I have the urge to come back here," he told *The Myanmar Times* from his office in 6-Mile.

He worked in a relatively autonomous department of a large company in Singapore. When his department decided not to launch the product they'd been working on, he found that corporate life no longer suited him. The timing lined up with some important developments in his home country. "With Myanmar opening up, I decided maybe I should give it a try here," he said.

Code2LAB had earlier aimed to tackle tourism but found they were too close to the bleeding edge to succeed in Myanmar. Ko Min Zeya Phyo turned his attention to a major issue plaguing restaurants here: human resources. A local restaurant, Shwe Palin, told the start-up founder of difficulties like staff training and turnover. "They have 101 problems that I thought could be solved easily," Ko Min Zeya Phyo said.

He said the company started when it deployed its flagship product, a restaurant management system run on tablets called SmartSales, for Shwe Palin – its first customer. With SmartSales, waiters take orders on the floor and then send them to the kitchen and

cashier at the same time, he explained. The result: fewer man-hours spent on orders, benefits for waiters that didn't have to pay for mistakes and better customer service, according to Ko Min Zeya Phyo.

The company took its product to Lithan University College's StartUp bootcamp last year. Ko Min Zeya Phyo only threw his hat in the ring after a friend and fellow start-up founder pushed him to apply.

Red Dot Ventures founder and managing director Leslie Loh, who will judge companies on Start-UP and also acts as chair at Lithan Education, said Code2LAB proceeded on from the bootcamp to the show because of its team and solution.

"It's a combination of capable management and having a product that is right for a specific marketplace," he said.

Ko Min Zeya Phyo echoed this sentiment. "When the [startup bootcamp] was held, I think I had the right product that actually solved problems for local businesses," he said. "I was able to present a good story to the judges."

Code2LAB's narrative encompasses what makes Myanmar a unique – and uniquely challenging – environment. For example, the company's product had to work in the face of blackouts with the potential to stop the system in its tracks.

"In the whole process of building this product, we've become so adaptive to the environment," he said. "We've actually implemented a closed network GPS system so that every device that is connected is all battery-powered and we can run for hours."

Ko Min Zeya said he has changed as a result of Code2LAB. The company originally had three founders; now he heads it up alone. With his technical background, he says speaking up might have made him nervous two

years ago. And he has faced personal challenges – his family, including his 5-year-old child, remains in Singapore, and the distance can be wearing.

"Whatever I'm doing I have to make sure that it's justified for being here," he said. "When I left Singapore ... I gave up everything and came back here in the hope it would be something that's meaningful – as a milestone in my life at the same time, look – Myanmar is opening up – I did something for the community as well."

The show can illuminate a budding scene that has been cordoned off for so long.

"In a way it will help local startup community as well," Ko Min Zeya Phyo said. "The whole startup ecosystem has been trying to bring the standard up ... we want to tell the world that look, there is potential here. There's a market for start-ups as well. We want to bring in incubators, accelerators, investors."

Though the founder has mostly kept Code2LAB bootstrapped, the company has received two rounds of funding. One saw an investment of US\$100,000 for 10 percent equity, thereby valuing the company at \$1 million.

While SmartSales took it to Start-UP, the company is working on a second cloud-based iteration which will feature a marketplace for customers, a scorecard for restaurants, and a new Software-as-a-Service subscription business model meant to cater to companies as they develop.

With more than 30 clients, Code2LAB earns revenue – about US\$120,000 inside its first year, Ko Min Zeya Phyo said. Though its near-greenfield home market means the company will face less competition, Ko Min Zeya Phyo also says the firm has the potential to succeed in more than Myanmar.

More than one company can succeed on the Singapore show, as judges can choose to divide the S\$2 million among at most four entrepreneurs that wish to accept terms of investment. Funds won on the program could provide fuel for the new product, according to Ko Min Zeya Phyo.

In the meantime, he's having some friends over to watch the first episode of Start-UP. With it, Ko Min Zeya Phyo has made major moves into the spotlight of the regional stage, bringing Myanmar along with him.

**'We want to tell the world that look, there is potential here.'**

**Ko Min Zeya Phyo**  
Founder, Code2LAB

# Ecommerce services for payment to start



AYE THIDAR KYAW MYAT NOE OO

LOCAL consumers are increasingly taking to the web to make a deal, yet paying for products is still a major headache.

While services like US-based PayPal and China's AliPay are making it easy for seamless e-commerce around the world, Myanmar is still a cash-based society, with few of the solutions that has helped drive online shopping in the rest of the world.

The Myanmar Payments Union, an enterprise owned by the domestic banks, is planning to launch a service allowing for online payments. It is already working with Cooperative, Myawaddy and United Amara, and is actively attempting to recruit more banks to take part in the service, said MPU chief executive U Zaw Lin Htut.

Currently most local e-commerce requires some form of cash payment. Some shops request pre-payment, meaning customers find a product they like on a website store but must pay a company representative cash before the order is filled. Since many shops import from overseas, this can add to the delay.

Other shops request payment after the good is delivered, but this leaves the shop owner at risk if the customer chooses not to pay.

MPU has been issuing essentially pre-paid credit cards since September 2012, with about 850,000 in use in the country. While the number of users is growing, U Zaw Lin Htut said it is still not enough for the country's population.

"We need to widen our base, but still be thinking about the number of customers who use the banking system," he said.

After MPU's e-commerce service kicks off, its cardholders will be able to use their card number

online to complete the purchase. This will remove the cost and risk from collecting payments - though retailers said they still have to see the service before signing up.

"I don't want to use e-commerce until it has attracted enough customers, because I worry about its inconvenience," said Daw Thwe Khaing Zin, owner of Target for Chance online shopping.

Still, she acknowledged payment is a problem. Her shop no longer accepts pre-payment, as delays with distribution meant she was forced to break her promises too often.

Daw Thwe Khaing Zin also said it is important that fees to use the e-commerce service are kept low, or shop-owners will be reluctant to sign up.

THOUSAND  
**850**

Pre-paid MPU credit cards in use from September 2012.

Rules governing e-commerce are still in the works, and the Central Bank of Myanmar may have to relax some restrictions before allowing the service.

Cooperative Bank managing director U Pe Myint said e-commerce is a frequent topic of conversation, with the bank planning to hold a workshop on the issue later this month. "Some customers using online shopping will use these services," he said.

U Pe Myint added that transfers outside the country are currently not allowed, meaning international e-commerce payments may take some time to develop.

But with MPU, services could launch closer to home soon.

# Google goes offline for developing countries

Local techies download content kits and spread them to Myanmar cities



newroom@mmtimes.com

A NEW initiative from Google helps make online materials available offline through physical kits, allowing developing-country developers to work even when the internet doesn't.

Google announced at the beginning of December it would enable developers to access about 30 GB of certain materials - videos, software development kits (SDKs), documents and more - offline through DVDs and thumb drives. Targeted at "software developers or students of software development in regions of the world where steady access to the internet is expensive, unreliable or non-existent", Google has already spread upward of 2000 kits across India, Bangladesh and Sub-Saharan Africa, the company said.

With blackouts and internet outages a common trope in Myanmar, the country seems a prime candidate for the program. But a kit hasn't come its way just yet. Ko Ye Lin Aung, Google Developer Group Yangon community manager, said the corporation has been busy with the holidays and filling far-reaching orders. So he and friends took matters into their own hands.

Instead of waiting for the postman, they decided to work around a workaround and download and disseminate the information themselves. "We put it on memory sticks and then we distributed it," he said.

"Even in our offices, the internet is slow most of the time and fast like one hour a day ... and

some of the time, there is no internet at all," he continued. "[With] offline content ... we don't have to wait for the internet."

Ko Ye Lin Aung and his friends put the contents of the kits on sticks and dispatched them to campuses around Myanmar. Delivery took a more circuitous route than usual, as the resources made their way by physical roads rather than the information superhighway.

"I just sent the memory stick with an express bus," Ko Ye Lin Aung said. "We're sending the offline content with the offline process. That's the traditional way."

**'I just sent [it] with an express bus ... We're sending the offline content with the offline process.'**

**Ko Ye Lin Aung**

GDG Yangon community manager

Though winding, it's a path people will find familiar as the web has yet to trump offline measures in some other industries.

"If you want to send money, there is no online banking," he continued. "You just send [with] people or banks or something like that."

Ko Ye Lin Aung said about 15 people have requested the offline content - most of which he has already sent.

Items on the DVDs and thumb drives include Google Cloud Platform documents with SDKs for App Engine, the whole Android

website with Android SDKs and more, documents on material design and web fundamentals, Udacity online learning videos and other content, the company said.

Google also suggests kit users put the content to good use, highlighting hackathons, viewing parties and self-study.

"You will no longer have to worry about ... spending 30 minutes to watch a 10-minute video tutorial on the latest API due to constant buffering," the company said in a post on the Google Developers Blog.

Crucially, the kits provide developers what they need to begin manufacturing apps: SDKs.

"If I want to make an Android app, I need the Google SDK," Ko Ye Lin Aung said, adding that materials in the software kit mean developers don't have to start from square one. "If you don't have the SDK, you cannot do anything."

While helpful, offline content can't compete with real-time aspects of the internet. The kits are up-to-date as of August 2014, the company said - any updates past that time won't be incorporated.

Though not the be-all, end-all, "it's a point where you can get started," Ko Ye Lin Aung said. "After that, we have to move on to update the stuff and you can continue because you already know how [stuff] works."

Despite limits, Ko Ye Lin Aung said people are enthusiastic and excited.

"They need a starting point and they need the stuff, so we gave [it to them]," he said.

"We told them, 'It's all your own. Take your time and learn whatever you want with the stuff, build stuff and if you need anything, just tell us. We will support you but we might not be able to tell you the whole thing.'"

## Smartphone can test for HIV, syphilis: study

US researchers have found a way to turn a common smartphone into a quick and easy device to conduct field tests for HIV and syphilis.

Using an attachment that costs \$34 to make -- a far cry from the standard \$18,000 for diagnostic tests -- blood drops are tested for the diseases' antibodies in minutes instead of hours, said the research led by Columbia University engineers.

When plugged into a smartphone's audio jack, scientists said it mimicked the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), a well-known test for HIV, and "performed almost as well." The initial study, involving 96 women in Rwanda, is published in the journal Science Translational Medicine.

Experts hope that this lab-on-a-chip device could be a helpful tool, especially in places where field clinics are set up to help remote or underserved populations.

The team, led by Samuel Sia, associate professor of biomedical engineering, is aiming for larger clinical trials first.

"Our work shows that a full laboratory-quality immunoassay can be run on a smartphone accessory," said Sia.

"Coupling microfluidics with recent advances in consumer electronics can make certain lab-based diagnostics accessible to almost any population with access to smartphones. This kind of capability can transform how health care services are delivered around the world."

The study was funded by a Saving Lives at Birth transition grant -- which is backed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Gates Foundation, government of Norway, Grand Challenges Canada, the World Bank and the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation. - AFP

# World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

**MOSCOW**

## EU leaders take peace plan to Moscow

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande were in Moscow on February 6 after getting Kiev's tentative backing for a crunch peace plan aimed at ending surging violence in Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said talks with Ms Merkel and Mr Hollande late on February 5 had raised "hope for a ceasefire" after the duo jetted into Kiev in the biggest push yet to resolve the ten-month conflict.

The two European leaders were set to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, who the West sees as the mastermind behind Ukraine's pro-Moscow rebellion, to try to get him to sign up to their peace plan.

The frantic diplomacy to end the

worst East-West crisis since the end of the Cold War came as US Secretary of State John Kerry also visited Kiev, with Washington mulling supplying Ukraine with arms to battle pro-Russian rebels.

"President Putin can make the choices that could end this war," Mr Kerry said after meeting Ukrainian leaders, voicing support for the "helpful" Franco-German plan to be put to the Russian leader on February 6.

Hundreds of civilians have been killed over recent weeks in east Ukraine as fighting spiralled after insurgents tore up an earlier truce and pushed into government-held territory.

Before setting off on the surprise diplomatic push, Mr Hollande said in Paris that he and Ms Merkel would

"propose a new solution to the conflict based on the territorial integrity of Ukraine".

Few details had emerged before the Moscow meeting of what exactly the new peace proposal contained and there was much disquiet in Kiev after the collapse of previous peace deals.

The plan appeared to have come from a back-and-forth between Mr Putin, Ms Merkel and Mr Hollande and, according to a report in German newspaper *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, would give separatists greater autonomy and territory they have captured in recent days, although German officials have denied this.

Despite the diplomatic momentum behind the new plan, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk insisted Moscow should just stick to a widely flouted truce accord agreed in Minsk last September.

"To have a new deal, not to execute the previous one, seems to me a trap," Mr Yatsenyuk told journalists.

Mr Yatsenyuk warned that the Russian strongman could be seeking to "split the unity between the EU and the US" at a time when the White House is edging closer to starting weapons deliveries to Ukraine.

After his meetings in Kiev, Mr Kerry said that US President Barack Obama would decide "soon" on whether to arm Ukraine, but stressed his preference for a diplomatic solution.

Russia, accused by the West of arming the separatists, warned that any US move to send weapons to Ukraine would cause "colossal damage". - AFP



Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko (centre), German Chancellor Angela Merkel (left) and French President Francois Hollande shake hands prior to their talks in Kiev on February 5. Photo: AFP



**AMMAN**

## Jordan launches IS sites after pilot

JORDAN said its warplanes launched dozens of new strikes against the Islamic State group last week, after vowing a harsh response to the burning-alive of a pilot captured in Syria.

The news came as scores of people were killed when rebels unleashed rocket fire on Damascus and President Bashar al-Assad's forces retaliated.

Jordan's military said "dozens of jet fighters" struck IS targets on the morning of February 5, "hitting training camps of the terrorist groups as well as weapons and ammunition warehouses".

It did not say where the targets were located - IS holds swathes of Syria and Iraq - but said they were destroyed and the aircraft returned home safely.

American F-16 and F-22 jets provided security to the Jordanian fighter planes, with additional support from refuelling tankers and surveillance aircraft, US officials said.

Washington has also deployed aircraft and troops to northern Iraq to boost capabilities to rescue downed pilots fighting with the international coalition that is battling IS, a US defence official told AFP.

IS have released a highly choreographed video of the horrifying murder of pilot Maaz al-Kassabeh, whose death led to grief and deep anger in Jordan.

Jordan's military has pledged to "destroy this terrorist group and kill the evil in its own place", saying it would punish IS for the "heinous

act" of burning him alive. King Abdullah II visited the airman's family, who have urged the government to "destroy" the jihadists, to pay his condolences.

Jordan has conducted regular raids against IS across the border in Syria as part of a US-led campaign against the Sunni extremist group.

More than 200,000 people have died since anti-government protests erupted in Syria in early 2011, escalating into a multi-sided civil war that brought jihadists streaming into the country.

At least 66 people, including 12 children, were killed by regime air strikes and shelling on rebel areas around Damascus on February 5, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The assault on the Eastern Ghouta region came after rebels fired more than 100 rockets at the city, killing 10 people including a child,

**'The blood of martyr Maaz al-Kassabeh will not be in vain and the response of Jordan ... will be severe.'**

King Abdulla II of Jordan

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## Pilot's heroic attempt to save crashing plane

WORLD 42

## War of words over Bangkok bombs

WORLD 45



## Indonesia's minorities hoping for new safeguards

WORLD 46

### IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

A Sri Lankan traditional dancer performs in front of the Gangarama Temple during the Navam Perahera festival in Colombo on February 3. Monks, drummers, dancers and some 50 trained elephants, mostly from the central part of the island, thronged into the city from various regions of Sri Lanka to participate in the city's biggest two-day annual Buddhist procession starting February 2.

# s airstrikes on ot's murder

the Britain-based group said.

The gruesome murder of Mr Kassasbeh, captured by IS in December after his F-16 crashed in Syria, has increased support in Jordan for stepped-up military action against the jihadists.

"Jordan will wage all-out war to protect our principles and values," government newspaper *Al-Rai* wrote in an editorial.

The execution led to outrage in Jordan and protests in Amman and Karak, bastion of Mr Kassasbeh's influential tribe.

Solidarity demonstrations with the family were planned for nationwide after Friday's weekly Muslim prayers on February 6.

Mr Abdullah cut short a US visit and returned to Amman on February 4 after the video of Mr Kassasbeh's killing emerged.

"The blood of martyr Maaz al-Kassasbeh will not be in vain and the response of Jordan and its army after what happened to our dear son will be severe," he said afterwards.

On February 4, in response, Jordan executed two Iraqis on death row, female would-be suicide bomber Sajida al-Rishawi and al-Qaeda operative Ziad al-Karbolli.

Mr Abdullah travelled 120 kilometres (74 miles) south of Amman on February 5 to Karak, where a traditional mourning tent was set up for Mr Kassasbeh's family.

Hundreds of people gathered as the king sat next to the 26-year-old first lieutenant's father.

Safi al-Kassasbeh branded IS "infidels and terrorists who know no humanity or human rights",

and said the "international community must destroy" the group.

IS had offered to spare Mr Kassasbeh's life and free Japanese journalist Kenji Goto, who was later beheaded, in exchange for Mr Rishawi's release.

Mr Rishawi, 44, was sentenced to death for her role in triple hotel bombings in Amman in 2005 that killed 60 people.

She was closely linked to IS's predecessor organisation in Iraq, and was seen as an important symbol for the jihadists.

Jordanian television suggested Mr Kassasbeh was killed on January 3, before IS offered to spare him and free Mr Goto in return for Ms Rishawi's release.

Following the airman's capture, another member of the US-led coalition, the United Arab Emirates, withdrew from air strike missions over fears for the safety of its pilots, a US official said.

On February 5, the US military said it was "repositioning some assets" to northern Iraq in a move designed to shorten the response time needed to reach pilots who end up in IS-held territory.

US President Barack Obama, who hosted King Abdullah in a hastily organised meeting before his return to Jordan, decried the "cowardice and depravity" of IS.

IS had previously beheaded two US journalists, an American aid worker and two British aid workers in similar videos. It has also killed a second Japanese hostage.

- AFP

### SYDNEY

## Beleagured Abbott fights to keep job

PARTY critics of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott launched a dramatic bid on February 6 to unseat the unpopular conservative leader after less than 18 months in office, but he vowed to fight on.

The move comes after Mr Abbott's much-ridiculed decision to award Britain's Prince Philip a knighthood sparked two weeks of turmoil in his Liberal Party, exposing discontent over months of policy failings and plunging poll figures.

"I think we must bring this to a head and test the support of the leadership," West Australian Liberal MP Luke Simpkins said in an email to colleagues announcing he will initiate a challenge.

"The reality is people have stopped listening to the prime minister," Mr Simpkins later told Sky News, ahead of a meeting of the 102 Liberal parliamentarians on February 10 when the secret ballot will take place.

Mr Abbott hit back immediately, saying he had the support of his deputy Julie Bishop, whose strong performance as foreign minister had seen her touted as one of the contenders for the leadership.

"They are asking the party room to vote out the people that the electorate voted in," the prime minister said.

Mr Abbott rose to power promising stable government and an end to the brutal internal warfare that undermined the previous Labor administration, but amid plunging popularity and policy reversals, now finds himself in a similar position.

Under Labor, Julia Gillard first ousted Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2010 only to be overthrown herself three years later by Mr Rudd, who was then defeated in elections that installed Mr Abbott as leader.

"We are not the Labor Party ... and we are not going to repeat the chaos and the instability of the Labor years," Mr Abbott said, adding that he and Ms Bishop would "stand together in urging the party room to defeat this particular motion".

"We have a strong plan ... and we are determined to get on with it," he said.

Mr Simpkins appealed to the best interests of the country in asking the party room, made up of 102 Liberal members of the lower and upper houses of parliament, to "either endorse the prime minister or seek a new direction".

Chief government whip Philip Ruddock confirmed he had received notice of the leadership "spill" move and that it would be on the agenda at the February 10 Liberal Party meeting in the capital Canberra.

Earlier last week several lawmakers openly revolted against the prime minister and called for a leadership vote, and Mr Simpkins said he had been inundated with emails and questions about the "direction the government is being led in".

Mr Abbott's personal decision to award 93-year-old Prince Philip a knighthood "was for many the final proof of a disconnection with the people", he said.

If the leadership is declared vacant, the favourite for the prime ministership is Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull who led the party before Mr Abbott ousted him by a single vote in 2009.

The ruling Liberal-National coalition stormed to power in Sep-

tember 2013 elections, but in polls last week it trailed the opposition Labor Party 46 to 54 percent. Mr Abbott's personal rating tumbled to just 34 percent.

The seed for questions about Mr Abbott's leadership was planted early with his first budget in May last year which slashed spending in a bid to rein in deficits, said Haydon Manning of the politics department of Flinders University in South Australia.

"The first budget of the Abbott government surprised Australians, they were ill-prepared for any austerity after a decade of boom," he said.

But the decision to award Prince Philip a knighthood on Australia's national day was too much to bear, alienating even his core constituency because it "overwhelmingly pointed to the Australian people that this prime minister is out of touch".

"Everything that had been difficult for him up to now was simply exacerbated," Mr Manning said.

"All these die-hard Liberals are knocking on the door saying, 'Tony Abbott is an idiot. Why should we put up with this anymore? We've got to get somebody else in to win the next election.'" - AFP



Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott speaks during a press conference in Sydney on February 6. Photo: AFP

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## TAIPEI

# Crash pilot hailed as hero

THE pilot of a TransAsia plane that crashed in Taiwan last week was still clutching the joystick when his body was found in the cockpit, after he battled to avoid populated areas, it was reported on February 6.

The TransAsia Airways ATR 72-600 crashed shortly after take-off from Songshan airport in Taipei on February 4, hitting an elevated road as it banked steeply away from buildings and into the Keelung River.

Pilot Liao Chien-tsung, 41, was among at least 35 people who lost

their lives in the accident. Fifteen people survived and rescuers were still searching the river and submerged wreckage for another eight who remain missing as the airline faced sanctions over the fatal incident.

Mr Liao has been hailed as a hero for apparently making a last-ditch attempt to steer the turboprop plane, with 53 passengers and five crew on board, away from built-up areas during its steep descent, avoiding more deaths and damage.

His body was found in the cockpit still holding the joystick with both hands, and with his legs badly fractured, the Taipei-based *China Times* newspaper said.

"He struggled to hold onto the joystick till the last moment before the plane plunged into the river, in an attempt to control its direction and to reduce casualties," the report said, citing unnamed prosecutors investigating the case.

Taiwanese leaders and citizens have mourned Mr Liao, with major newspapers running front-page tributes hailing him for saving many lives.

As hundreds of rescuers and divers



Passengers' belongings are placed in front of the wreckage of the TransAsia ATR 72-600 turboprop plane on the Keelung riverbank outside Taiwan's capital Taipei on February 5. Photo: AFP

**'We have imposed a one-year ban on TransAsia from applying for new routes as a penalty.'**

**Lin Tyh-ming**

Civil Aeronautics Administration director

battled bad weather to search for those still missing, with four more bodies retrieved on February 6, authorities banned the airline from applying for new routes for one year in the wake of the latest incident.

The February 4 accident, which occurred on a domestic route to the island of Kinmen, was the second fatal crash for TransAsia after a July disaster that left 48 people dead.

"We have imposed a one-year ban on TransAsia from applying for

new routes as a penalty," said Civil Aeronautics Administration director Lin Tyh-ming.

Taiwanese media said the authorities were looking into allegations against the airline including labour shortages and insufficient training which could have affected safety standards.

"There is a manpower shortage of pilots ... TransAsia has to recruit pilots with less experience from other companies after more than 20 of its pilots

went to two newer airlines," the *Apple Daily* said, citing unnamed sources.

Calls were also mounting from politicians for TransAsia to suspend its operations.

"This is a serious issue that two crashes occurred in just seven months. The company must immediately adopt an in-depth review of its management regarding problems such as workload and salaries," lawmaker Lin Teh-fu of the ruling Kuomintang party said.

— AFP

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TOKYO

# Women weigh in on sumo fights

SAYAKA Matsuo lies on the tatami mat as a personal masseur works on her neck and shoulders to squeeze out the knots.

But this is no pamper package with relaxing music or detoxifying mist. Ms Matsuo, 19, is warming up for a head-clashing bout of Japan's national sport - sumo.

Strapping her mawashi (loin cloth) over her lycra bike shorts, she squats into position, her 60-kilogram (132-pound) frame squaring off against a man more than two-and-a-half times her weight.

The huge size difference is no obstacle for Ms Matsuo, whose determination and technique shuffle her massive opponent across and out of the ring.

"I started sumo as a hobby. I feel a lot of pressure from my dad and my goal is to win the women's Sumo World Championship one day," she said.

As the daughter of a former professional sumo wrestler, whose ring name was Sadanohana, Ms Matsuo had a leg up into a sport not usually associated with women, and started to wrestle at just five years old.

Now she is part of a small but growing band of female grapplers who are turning the tables on one of Japan's oldest boys' clubs.

Opening up the sport to women is part of an effort to legitimise sumo as a possible future Olympic event, Tokyo University's Sumo Club coach Toshiaki Hirahara said.

But Mr Hirahara is also quick to point out that the top-level wrestling millions of Japanese watch on television needs to preserve its religious and spiritual origins.

"I think the fact that women cannot enter the sacred national *dohyo* [ring] is understandable as it is the realm of the gods," he said.

"But the amateur league has nothing to do with gods, so let girls and boys do it equally."

Sumo traces its origins back 2000 years to a time when it was an



Anna Fujita (right) fights with a teammate during training at Tokyo University's sumo club on January 21. Photo: AFP

integral part of the rituals of Japan's native Shintoism, an animistic religion. But the sport's stock has fallen in recent years with claims of bout-fixing, illegal betting and bullying, including the death of a young apprentice wrestler in 2007.

It has also struggled to slough off claims that it is linked to the Yakuza, the country's mafia.

The sport's popularity among the general public has suffered because of Japan's failure to produce champions. All three of the present *yokozuna* (grand champions) are Mongolian, including record-breaking Hakuho, who in January became the most successful wrestler ever after bagging his 33rd tournament title.

Establishing a parallel amateur sport, with proper weight divisions,

could be a good way to help boost sumo, says Mr Hirahara.

It might also get around the negative associations sumo wrestlers can have among Japan's image-conscious women, who balk at the idea of eating an astounding 20,000 calories a day, as Hakuho, who tips the scales at over 150 kilograms, does.

"I want to remain in the under-65kg weight category so I try to eat well-balanced food," Ms Matsuo says, although she admits she has a weakness for *chankonabe*, a traditional sumo stew of vegetables, meat and rice.

Fellow grappler Anna Fujita, 21, is also happy to stay on the lighter end of the sumo scale, and wrestles in the same under-65kg category.

"If I get bigger I'll fall into the

heavyweight category and have to fight against girls weighing more than a 100 kilograms," she says.

And eating lots is too expensive anyway.

"I'm a student and have no money," she says, adding she lives on Corn Flakes, rice and vegetables.

The proportion of female sumo wrestlers remains small. There are almost 300 boys taking part in the sport for every girl in Japan's elementary schools, according to the Japan Sumo Federation. But despite the gap in numbers, female strength often wins out.

"Because the girls grow at a younger age, they are stronger than the boys," coach Hideto Tsushima of Nihon University says.

- AFP

HANOI

# Seized cats are buried alive

VIETNAMESE authorities have buried thousands of seized cats - many believed to have been alive at the time - after the felines were smuggled from China to feed the nation's illegal cat meat trade.

A truck containing three tons of live cats crammed into bamboo crates was impounded last January 27 in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, with police initially undecided how to deal with the animals.

But on February 4, a police officer told AFP they had been buried in accordance with Vietnamese law on smuggled goods.

"The cats were from China, with no official origin papers and no quarantine," an officer from the Dong Da district environmental police said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Several of them had died, there was a terrible smell that could affect the environment and carried risks of future diseases," he said.

"Therefore, we culled them by burying them," he said, declining to confirm how many were alive at the time of burial.

Animal protection groups, who pleaded in vain for the cats to be spared, fear many of the creatures were alive when they were buried. Other smuggled animals, including chickens, are routinely disposed of in a similar way.

The Asian Canine Protection Alliance, a regional coalition of animal rights groups, said it had heard "inhumane stories as to how the [cats] may have been destroyed".

"Our request for any visual evidence of their fate has been denied," the group said in a statement on February 4, calling for the "practice of inhumane killing of trafficked animals" to be stopped.

Photographs of the cats crammed into dozens of bamboo crates stacked on top of one another prompted widespread calls for the felines' lives to be spared.

One petition on change.org urging Vietnamese authorities "to change their animal handling policies" had garnered more than 23,000 signatures from across the world by February 4.

But Professor Dang Huy Huynh, chair of Vietnam's Zoology Association, said the cull was necessary to prevent the spread of disease and deter future smuggling.

"The best way to cull the illegally imported animals is burning them. But this might cost more, so authorities may choose to bury them alive - still complying with procedures in accordance with laws," he said.

Vietnamese authorities could also have checked all the animals individually for disease before deciding whether to cull them, he said.

Either way, "we do not want these animals to be on the dining table at restaurants," he added.

Cat meat, known locally as "little tiger", is a delicacy in Vietnam and although officially banned it is widely available in specialist restaurants.

Vietnam has long banned its consumption in an effort to encourage cat ownership and keep the country's rat population under control.

But there are still dozens of restaurants serving cat in Hanoi and it is rare to see cats roaming the streets as most pet-owners keep them indoors or tied up fearing they could be stolen.

Such is the demand from restaurants that cats are sometimes smuggled across the border from China, Thailand and Laos.

Cat meat is not widely eaten in China but can be found at some restaurants, particularly in the south.

Vietnamese customs officials routinely seize large volumes of dead animals, including tigers and pangolins, smuggled into the country for use in traditional medicine or specialty dishes. - AFP

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BANGKOK

# Bomb raises junta and Red Shirt tensions

THE leader of Thailand's opposition Red Shirts last week accused the junta of trying to provoke them into a "fight" as the movement falls under suspicion for a bomb attack and the circulation of a forged document on the revered king's health.

The Red Shirts are loyal to the toppled government of Yingluck Shinawatra, who was banned from politics last month by the junta-picked National Legislative Assembly.

The group, who fall under the umbrella of the United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), has been a powerful force in Thailand's near-decade of sometimes deadly political turmoil.

**'I don't believe you [the junta] want reconciliation. Instead you want us to go out and fight.'**

**Jatuporn Prompan**  
Red Shirt chair

But the movement was winded by last May's coup and has, until now, softened its rhetoric as martial law blankets the country, stifling debate and banning political gatherings.

Police last week arrested a Red Shirt member, Krit Buddeejin, on suspicion of defaming the royal family after he was accused of spreading online a hoax report on the health of ailing 87-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

But Red Shirt chair Jatuporn Prompan defended 25-year-old Mr Krit, saying he had believed it was a genuine palace statement and did not intend to harm the monarchy, which is protected from criticism by a draconian law carrying up to 15 years in jail.

On February 2, Thailand's junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha said a minor bomb blast near a Bangkok shopping mall the day before was the work of opponents to the coup. However he stopped short of directly blaming the Red Shirts.

Speaking on Red Shirt television, Mr Jatuporn accused those in power of using the two incidents to provoke a reaction.

"I don't believe that you [the junta] want reconciliation. Instead you want chaos and want us to go out and fight," he said on Peace TV.



Thai police officers patrol the site of two small explosions on a walkway leading to a luxury shopping mall in Bangkok on February 2. Photo AFP

"There is no reason for Red Shirts to take part in either case since we do not benefit from either incident," he said, adding the group are loyal to the king.

His comments come as anger simmers among the Red Shirts who fear their movement is being eviscerated by politically motivated legal moves, nine months after a government they helped elect was swept aside by the coup.

The political ban on Ms Yingluck, the sister of billionaire self-exiled former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, rules her out of an immediate political comeback in the next election, which

the junta says it wants to hold by early 2016.

She now faces criminal charges linked to a botched rice subsidy scheme which was welcomed in the poor, rural Red Shirt heartlands.

The previous week Mr Jatuporn was bailed after receiving a two year jail sentence for defaming a former premier in comments made in 2009.

Thailand has been riven by bitter political divisions since 2006, when Thaksin Shinawatra's government was ousted in another coup, again backed by the Bangkok-based royalist

establishment.

They despise the Shinawatras, whose parties have won every election since 2001, accusing them of poisoning Thai politics with corruption and cronyism.

Mr Prayut says the junta is steering much-needed reforms to the political system, including the crafting of a new constitution to curb corruption and populist politics.

But critics say the coup is a pretext to destroy the Shinawatras' political network and weaken the electoral clout of their rural base. - AFP



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**JAKARTA**

Congregation members of the Taman Sari Batak Christian Protestant Church cry as they witness the demolition of their church by local government personnel in Bekasi on the outskirts of Jakarta on March 21, 2013. Photo: AFP

# Hopes for new religious tolerance under Widodo

Minority faith groups, who faced persecution under previous regime, believe fresh legislation will protect them from violence and destruction of worship sites

INDONESIAN Ahmadis are no strangers to persecution, with attacks and discrimination rife, but leader Iskandar Gumay hopes better days are ahead for the minority Muslim sect under new President Joko Widodo.

The cleric has witnessed attempts to torch his mosque and seen worshippers elsewhere prevented from burying their dead. However he believes a draft law shows Indonesia's leader is committed to tackling religious intolerance.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, has seen its image as tolerant and pluralist suffer due to a spike in religious violence. As well as Ahmadis, minority Muslim Shiites and Christians have been targeted in the Sunni-majority country.

The Indonesian constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Six faiths are officially recognised: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

But this has not stopped attacks, and Ahmadis in particular have been targeted by hardline groups who oppose the sect's belief that a lesser prophet followed Mohammad.

Mr Gumay says Ahmadis are sometimes denied ID cards, and that his sister was refused a marriage certificate because the authorities claimed she was not a Muslim.

Just west of Jakarta his fellow Ahmadis have faced much worse, with three adherents of the sect murdered by a mob in 2011 as police stood by.

Mr Gumay believes the new president faces a challenge addressing this scourge but is confident Mr Widodo, a reformist who has pledged to defend religious minorities, is up to the task.

"If the spirit of Jokowi ... comes down through the government to the people, I think things will get better," he said, referring to the president by his common nickname.

The new legislation, expected to go before parliament in April, is an ambitious step toward bolstering protection.

The bill, which is still being drafted, will guarantee religious minorities protection from persecution, the head of research in the ministry of religious affairs, Abdurrahman Mas'ud, said.

It will outlaw the destruction of houses of worship and aim to offer protection not just to those whose religions are recognised under the constitution, but all minorities.

The law is being pushed by new Religious Affairs Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, who has been praised for his progressive attitude.

Many different belief systems are practised in Indonesia, from animism to those that mix aspects of Islam with local tribal customs, although more than 90 percent of Indonesians describe themselves as Muslim on their ID cards.

In another move that won praise, the new government recently ended the requirement for people to select one of the officially recognised religions on their cards, instead allowing them to put nothing.

The new approach is a stark contrast to Mr Widodo's predecessor, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

He was criticised for inaction on hardline groups during his 10-year tenure, and for remaining quiet as politicians rammed through changes that activists claimed were a backward step for religious freedom.

Strict new approval processes for houses of worship ushered in during 2006 prompted the closure of hundreds of churches, while another ministerial decree two years later that outlawed the spread of Ahmadiyah teachings prompted an increase in attacks against the sect.

The courts meanwhile took a soft approach to perpetrators of religious violence, with the accused often given light sentences or going unprosecuted altogether.

Twelve men charged with beating the three Ahmadis to death in 2011 were given sentences of three to six months, despite the entire grisly incident being captured on video and widely circulated throughout the country.

Persecution has continued in recent years, with regular reports of minority Muslims and Christians being targeted.

**'If the spirit of Jokowi comes down through the government to the people, I think things will get better.'**

**Iskandar Gumay**  
Ahmadi cleric

While there is optimism about the new government's approach, there is also much scepticism in a country with a poor record on protecting minorities.

Even if the law gets through parliament, some are concerned that local authorities in the sprawling archipelago, where power is heavily decentralised, may continue to pass discriminatory bylaws that enable persecution.

Others question Mr Widodo's long-term commitment to helping minorities.

"With the focus on economic development, ideas that are in the long term important, like religious freedom and human rights, will be put on the back burner by the Jokowi government," said Tobias Basuki, from think tank the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

- AFP



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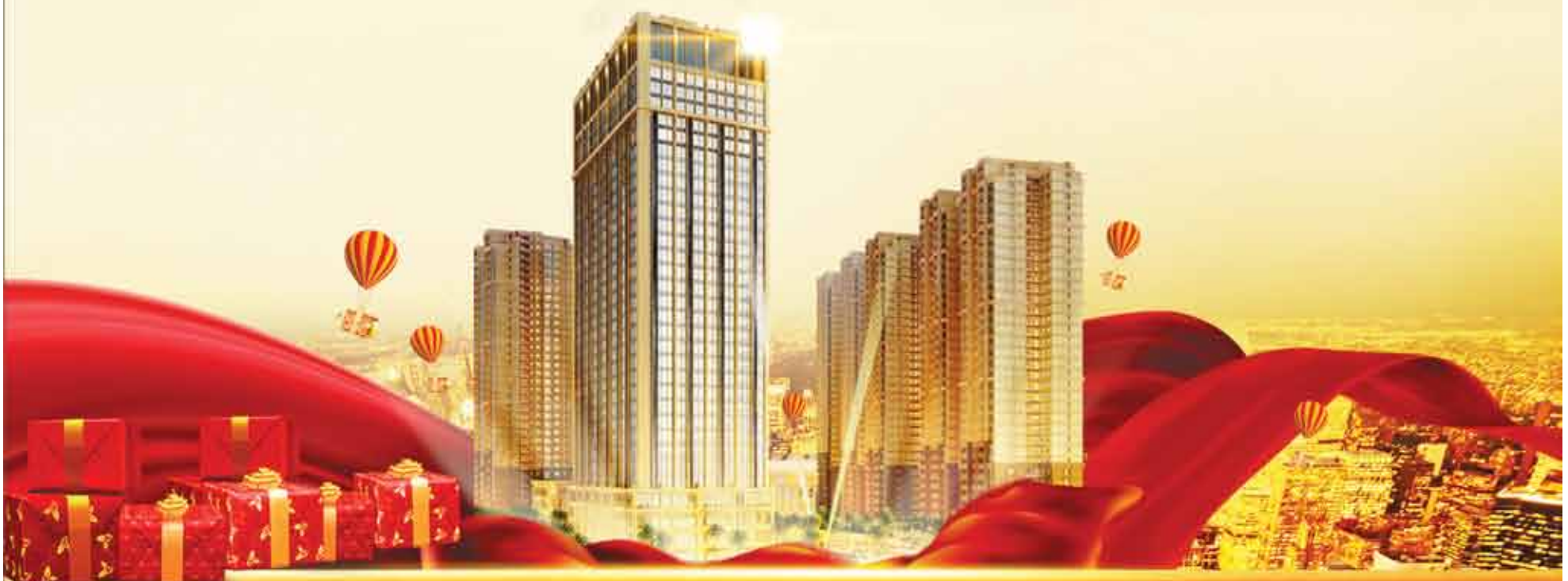
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လစဉ်အနည်းဆုံး ကျပ်ငွေ (၂၄)သိန်း ပေးသွင်းရုံဖြင့်

နိုင်ငံတကာအဆင့်မှီ ကွန်ဒိုကိုပိုင်ဆိုင်ဖို့ အခွင့်အလမ်းပေါ်ထွက်လာပါပြီ

အတိုးမရှိသော (၄၈)လ အရစ်ကျငွေပေးချေမှုစနစ်



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## KUALA LUMPUR

## Vacuum ad insults Indonesian maids

INDONESIA has formally protested to the Malaysian government over a vacuum cleaner ad it says is "utterly insensitive" to the hundreds of thousands of its citizens working as maids in the country.

The outrage emerged just as Indonesian President Joko Widodo was to arrive on February 5 for an official visit, his first since being elected last year.

The advert by the Malaysian distributor of RoboVac automatic vacuum cleaners declared, "Fire your Indonesian maid now!", according to versions seen on social media.

# 400,000

Foreign domestic workers in Malaysia

"The ad by the private company Robovac is utterly insensitive and demeaning to the people of Indonesia," the Indonesian embassy in Malaysia said in a statement.

The embassy said it had sent a formal protest note to Malaysia on February 3.

"We urge Malaysian authorities to ban the ad," it said, adding that it was considering further legal action against the company.

Relations between the two Southeast Asian neighbours have repeatedly been strained over the treatment of Indonesian domestic helpers in Malaysia.

Recurring reports of physical and other abuse by Malaysian employers or recruiters prompted Jakarta to angrily cut off the supply of domestic workers in 2009.

It was resumed two years later following an agreement to provide maids better protection and working conditions.

The Indonesian embassy said the ad has since been removed from circulation.

In 2012, a flyer advertising cut-rate maid services emerged in Malaysia declaring "Indonesian maids now on sale!"

The issue went viral among angry internet users in Indonesia and triggered a phone call by Indonesia's foreign minister to his Malaysian counterpart to complain.

Last year a Malaysian insurance commercial depicting a male Chinese actor as a Filipina maid drew similar outrage in Hong Kong amid accusations of racism.

Aimed at the employers of the southern Chinese city's 300,000 maids, who mainly hail from Indonesia and the Philippines, the ad from Malaysia's Hong Leong Bank showed the Chinese actor wearing dark orange make-up and a curly wig as he plays clumsy maid "Maria".

It was withdrawn after the outcry.

One of Southeast Asia's more affluent countries, Malaysia has long attracted aspiring maids from its poorer neighbours, the vast majority being Indonesian women.

An estimated 400,000 foreign domestic workers are now employed in Malaysia. - AFP

## COLOMBO

## Sri Lanka's new leader redeploys the military

SRI LANKA'S new President Maithripala Sirisena has renewed orders allowing for troops to be deployed across the island, dampening hopes of a lower-profile military presence under his rule.

Mr Sirisena's election last month had been expected to lead to a lessening of the numbers of troops in towns and cities - particularly in former war zones - which had been a prominent feature of his hardline nationalist predecessor Mahinda Rajapakse's tenure.

During the build-up to his election victory, Mr Sirisena promised to confine the military to their barracks and call them out only in the event of an emergency or a threat to national security.

But, according to a presidential decree seen by AFP last week, Mr Sirisena has now renewed a monthly authorisation for the deployment of troops across the island.

"By virtue of the powers vested in me, I, Maithripala Sirisena, do by this order call out all the members of the armed forces ... for the maintenance of public order," read the order.

The presence of large numbers of troops is particular contentious in the mainly Tamil northern and eastern provinces that bore the brunt of a 37-year separatist conflict, which was brutally crushed by the army in May 2009.

During a speech on February 4 to mark the 67th anniversary of the



Military personnel attend Sri Lanka's Independence Day celebrations in Colombo on February 4. Photo: AFP

former British colony's independence, Mr Sirisena had stressed his desire for a national reconciliation which Mr Rajapakse is accused of failing to deliver.

Suresh Premachandran, a Tamil lawmaker, said the president should explain why he felt it necessary to call out troops nearly six years after the end of the war.

"We have been asking for the withdrawal of troops from the north and the east, but this order only serves to continue the army presence," Mr Premachandran said.

"I strongly believe that there is no need to deploy troops anywhere in the country."

"He [Mr Sirisena] promised

change, but if he is going to continue what the previous government did, then we are back to square one."

The Free Media Movement (FMM), a leading local rights groups, said it had expected Mr Sirisena to confine troops to barracks.

"We think this is a retrograde step in dismantling the role of the military in our day to day life," FMM spokesperson Sunil Jayasekera said.

Sri Lanka lifted a state of emergency in August 2011, two years after security forces crushed Tamil Tiger rebels and declared an end to war but the previous government had deployed the military alongside the police. - AFP

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The above three trademarks are in respect of :-  
"Alarm clocks; key rings; jewelry, brooches [jewelry], earrings; necklaces, ornaments for mobile telephones." Class: 14

"Handbags; wallets, leather briefcases and document cases; cases for keys (leatherware); travelling bags, school satchels; sports bags; walking sticks; clothing for animals; umbrellas;" Class: 18

"Clothing for children; babies' pants, bathing suits, blouses, shirts, jumpers, cardigans, tee-shirts, skirts, pullovers, polo shirts, sweaters, vests, underwear, girdles [underwear], evening dresses; knitwear; gloves [clothing], hats, caps, swim caps, ski gloves, scarves, shawls, neckties; socks, sports stockings, tights, shoes." Class: 25

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"Clothing for children; babies' pants, bathing suits, blouses, shirts, jumpers, cardigans, tee-shirts, skirts, pullovers, polo shirts, sweaters, vests, underwear, girdles [underwear], evening dresses; knitwear; gloves [clothing], hats, caps, swim caps, ski gloves, scarves, shawls, neckties; socks, sports stockings, tights, shoes." Class: 25

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"Furniture, mirrors, picture frames; seats; armchairs; desks; cupboards; mattress; tables; pillows; cushions; umbrella stand; Infant walkers" Class: 20

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"Coffee, tea, cocoa, rice; bread, pastry and confectionery; sugar, salt; mustard; vinegar, sauces (condiments); spices." Class: 30

"Retail sale of cosmetics, perfumery, clothing, footwear, bags, spectacles and sunglasses, jewelry, belts, clocks, advertising and promotional services, especially via electronic means; providing information on commodity sales; import-export agencies; sales promotion for others." Class: 35

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*It may have been a while coming, but Yangon has finally woken up and smelled the coffee*

JEROME TAYLOR

# The middle-class



Photos: AFP

**B**EHIND a wooden counter in downtown Yangon's Coffee Club, the unmistakable hiss of a barista steaming milk briefly drowns out a funky soundtrack piped through a room filled with students glued to their smartphones. In any other Asian capital it would be a ubiquitous sight. But here it is something new.

Long absent from the region's booming cafe culture, Myanmar's commercial capital is now witnessing a surge in swish coffee bars providing an alternative to the treacherous instant coffee served by thousands of street carts.

It is a trend that points both to the changing tastes of the country's emerging middle class – but also the widening gap between them and the nation's poor.

Nyi Nyi Tun, a doctor, is typical of the newly aspirant customers relishing consumer goods that were either far beyond their reach or simply unavailable until recently.

"I came here to read," he said, sipping an Americano and perusing the web on a tablet. "With friends, a streetside tea shop is better. But if you want to be somewhere alone and quiet, then this kind of coffee shop is good."

To escape the noisy onslaught of Yangon's increasingly vehicle-clogged streets, Nyi Nyi Tun is willing to fork out as much as US\$2 – ten times what a traditional coffee made from pre-mixed sachets and condensed milk costs at roadside stalls.

In the last few years, around two dozen speciality coffee shops have opened up in Yangon alone.

"You will witness exponential growth of the coffee industry in the next three years," said Ye Naing Wynn, managing director of the Nervin Cafe chain – Myanmar's oldest – which now boasts five outlets including in Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

"People have been closed up for so many years. The natural human reaction is they want to experience new things," he added.

Initially it was the large influx of expats and tourists that helped foster Yangon's nascent coffee scene. But owners say locals now make up the majority of drinkers.

"That's my target audience going forward, to be honest ... because any food and beverage business that relies 70 percent on locals ought to do well in the long run," says Thura Ko Ko, who returned to Myanmar from overseas four years ago and opened The Coffee Club above another of his businesses – a mobile phone shop.

It helps, he adds, that speciality coffee is seen as something aspirational and trendy.

"Sometimes I sit in and I overhear some new local customers try and they're not quite sure what a cappuccino is, but they've seen it on the TV and online and that's been a big influence in lifestyle as well, everything from Korean soaps to films," he says.

The economic potential of Myanmar's growing middle class is not lost on international companies who are scrambling to access one of Asia's last untapped markets.

In 2013 Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz hinted during a trip to Thailand that he was eyeing Myanmar while Carlsberg is also hoping to break into the beer market – an area currently monopolised by the military.

Management consulting giant McKinsey believes up to a quarter of Myanmar's population could be living in large cities by 2030 – up from 13 percent in 2010 – while the economy, if managed properly, could quadruple from US\$45 billion in 2010 to \$200 billion by 2030.

"The size of the urban middle class is expected to double over the next decade, with annual double-digit growth in middle class incomes over the next five years," says Rajiv Biswas, Asia-Pacific chief economist at IHS.

"This will generate very rapid growth in urban consumer demand for retail goods, including consumer durables such as autos, motorcycles, refrigerators and air conditioners, consumer electronics such as mobile telephones and tablets, and basic consumer goods such as food and beverages," he adds.

But Sean Turnell, an expert on Myanmar's economy at Macquarie University in Australia, warns against overhyping the potential of the middle class in a country where the vast majority of its 60 million population are the rural poor.

"Serious consumption usually starts for people with disposable incomes above around \$5000. There would be few in Myanmar with this sort of spending power," he says.

However much buzz is created by the opening of the next hip coffee joint, for people like Ko Phyto, who runs a photography shop in Yangon, a latte will likely remain far outside his budget.

"It's too expensive for ordinary people," the 33-year-old says while sipping a sweet brew in one of the city's traditional, cheaper tea shops.

"It's 10 times more expensive in those places. Only the middle classes can afford that." – AFP



Photo: Charlotte Rose



# coffee boom



Photo: Charlotte Rose

# General Aung San to return to his birthplace

**NANDAR AUNG**  
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**S**ILENT and motionless amid the bustle of artists, sculptors and stylists who surround him, sits a simply dressed man in civilian clothes reading a book. If his strong chin denotes a man of action, his broad brow and his air of absorption reflect his power of contemplation. The sculptor has striven to unite these strands in his subject, who was born 100 years ago this month and was assassinated six months before independence in 1947.

The silicon sculpture of General Aung San, father of the nation, is the work of Aung Kyaw Tun and his colleagues, who have been working to produce this likeness at the Dasagiri building in Kyauk Myat Shin Street, Bahan township. The studio is named for the artist's successful solo exhibition in Singapore in 2009.

The centenary of Bogyoke's birth, at Natmauk, Magwe Region, on February 13, will be the focus of celebrations there and throughout the country, conducted not only by the party now led by his daughter, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, but countless other groups, organisations and individuals.

The sculpture empowers the general to fulfil the ambition he never achieved in life: "When I grow old, I want to read books and spend the rest of my life as a peaceful writer." Instead, along with his companions in the pre-independence interim government, he met his death at Yangon's Secretariat Building in a hail of bullets fired by Galone U Saw and his accomplices on July 19, 1947, known since as Martyrs' Day.

Working with hairstylist U Kyaw Naing, Aung Kyaw Tun, 46, completed the sculpture after a flurry of final touches on January 31, in time to be sent to Natmauk for the centenary celebrations.

"I respect our Bogyoke, and I remember learning at a very early age of his birthday. One of the first things I remember drawing was the image of him I saw on a K5 note. Being asked to sculpt his image made me very nervous, but was also



Hair stylist U Kyaw Naing makes the finishing touches to Aung Kyaw Tun's silicon sculpture of General Aung San. Photo: Naing Wynn Htoon

a source of happiness for me. It's right that the man who died for our country should be commemorated in this way."

Silicon sculpture, which Aung Kyaw Tun studied for more than seven years, has over the past 10 years replaced the traditional waxwork, thanks to its superior resistance to heat and wear. He has already made more than 50 silicon sculptures of famous people, as well as another 2.5-metre (9-foot) sculpture of Bogyoke in fibre to be displayed in Taungoo.

"The strong square jaw, wide forehead and round chin were characteristic of the general," he said.

Aung Kyaw Tun, from Bago Region, learned painting and the techniques of traditional sculpture under the late Min Thu and U Kyaw Kyaw Win. By 2000 he was exhibiting his paintings, celebrating the beauty of Myanmar in international locations such as Hong Kong and Thailand before staging his first solo performance in Singapore in 2009.

# International festival to get Yangon juggling

**ZON PANN PWINT**  
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YANGON'S first international juggling festival, featuring a fire show and performances by top local and international jugglers, is to be held from February 9-15 at different venues across the city.

One of the highlights of the festival - which has been organised by non-government organisations Serious Fun and the Smile Education and Development Foundation - will be the "big show spectacular" on February 11 at Kandawgyi Park, hosted by young comedians Thura Thein and Jo Ker and featuring spellbinding acts never seen before in Yangon.

"We have wanted to hold a juggling festival in Myanmar for 16 years, and after waiting for so long we are very excited to be holding this festival, which will feature jugglers from all over the world," said juggler and event organiser Jude Smith.

Myanmar has a long history of juggling. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, juggling masters travelled from Myanmar to Europe and America and wowed audiences with never-seen-before shows.

"Unlike European jugglers, who juggle with their hands, in Asia, jugglers use their feet. Chinlone is a type of juggling," said Smith.

"Among the jugglers from Myanmar, Mounq Toon is amazing. He juggles with hollow glass balls, which is very difficult since glass balls will break if they are dropped," she said.

Since December, Serious Fun has been teaching juggling skills to disadvantaged children at the Boys Training Center in Thanlyin, the Eden Center for Disabled and the Karen Children's Hostel in Yangon.

"The children don't have the money for education and entertainment. The idea of teaching them juggling is just to do something healthy. Juggling is good for balance, coordination and happiness because you laugh a lot when you juggle and it boosts confidence," said professional performer Jules Howarth, who started juggling over 25 years ago.

U Kyaw Oo, headmaster of the Boys Training Center in Thanlyin, said he was surprised to see how quickly the children picked up juggling.

"The children at the centre have little contact with outside world. I saw how they felt happy and confident and gained team spirit," he said.

The organisation first tried to host a juggling festival 16 years ago, when public gatherings were still illegal. Organisers were treated with suspicion by the authorities and were not granted permission to hold the event. But Jules Howarth believes now is the time to bring the popularity of juggling to Myanmar.

"We don't have a political message; we just come here to have fun," he said.

The international juggling festival will be held from the 9-15 February at various venues across the city. Entry is free for all events. A full program of events can be found on the Serious Fun in Yangon Facebook page.



Children at the Boys Training Center in Thanlyin have been learning to juggle in the lead-up to the international juggling festival. Photo: Supplied

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# Put a little love in your art at the Yangon Photo Festival



Yangon Photo Festival will celebrate romantic love with a collective exhibition entitled "Love Umbrellas" starting on February 14 at Junction Square.



The festival will culminate in the Best Photo Essay Awards of the Year on February 21 at Institut Français de Birmanie, which will be judged by a panel presided over by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Photos: Supplied

**NYEIN EI EI HTWE**  
nyeineiehtwe23@gmail.com

**T**HE eagerly awaited seventh Yangon Photo Festival (YFP) is to be held in the city from 13-21 February. Fifteen photo exhibitions will be held in the gardens of the Institut Français de Birmanie and six other venues throughout the city, with more than 40 internationally renowned photographers exhibiting on the theme "I love you".

The week-long program of events will include exhibitions, screenings and lectures, as well as photography workshops for both aspiring and professional photographers.

One of the organisers of the festival, Sebastien Bris, said the size and popularity of the event has grown considerably since the

first festival in 2009.

"The quality of the event has improved year on year, and we're delighted that we're able to continue hosting it," said Mr Bris.

Under the patronage of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the annual event aims to train Myanmar photographers for the international art scene as well as Myanmar's burgeoning media. Photography courses have been held throughout the year in different parts of the country, and student's work will be exhibited during the festival.

"We hosted photography courses throughout the country, even in rural areas. On the final day of the festival, the best photo series will be judged by a panel of internationally renowned photographers," said Christophe Loviny, YPF artistic director and photography master-class trainer.

The festival will include lectures on a range of subjects, from taking the perfect selfie to the business of photography. Among the other events is a performance on February 13 by the Inner Light project, which uses photography, dance, music, art and theatre to develop life skills among street children and former child soldiers.

The program of events will culminate in the Yangon Photo Night event on February 21 at Institut Français, in which Myanmar photographers will compete for the Best Photo-Essay of the Year award. Their works will be screened in front of the public and a jury presided over by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

A full program of events is available on the Yangon Photo Festival Facebook page and on the website [www.yangonphoto.com](http://www.yangonphoto.com).

## WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

FEBRUARY 9 - 15, 2015

**AUNG MYIN KYAW**

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 113, Thmain Bayan Road, Tarmwe township, Yangon.  
Tel: 09-731-35632, Email: [williameastel@gmail.com](mailto:williameastel@gmail.com)

**AQUARIUS** | Jan 20 - Feb 18



Mental balance is essential to a life lived in the glow of health. Take care to contemplate the future rather than dwelling on what has gone before. Waste no time fretting over events you cannot influence. Believe that humans enjoy free will whatever the constraints. And accept no proposal without reflection, no matter how tempting. Take up an offer around the 13<sup>th</sup>.

**GEMINI** | May 21 - June 20



The hindrance that prevents you from enjoying freedom and new experiences is embedded in your own psyche. Stop living by rules devised by others, and frame commands according to your own philosophy to live within your spiritual means. Your own values and personal history have taught you that depression has no power over you. Learn to live in a culture of self-interest.

**LIBRA** | Sept 23 - Oct 22



This week, focus on giving rather than receiving. Know that there are forces in life that correct the imbalances of those who take excessively. Your integrity should lend weight to your beliefs and constructive thought must strike a balance with your dreams. You may be finding it difficult to balance your social and work life at the moment. Do not neglect either, but know that neither is worthy of anxiety.

**PISCES** | Feb 19 - March 20



Taking on higher and heavier responsibilities represents a change for the better. No one says you have to do it all yourself. Don't play hide and seek in relationships. Start your new year today and remember, anyone can make a resolution but very few people can keep one. Know that determination is what keeps you following the right road and helps insure you against risk.

**CANCER** | June 21 - July 22



Amid daily risks, you must continue to develop your own internal growth by overcoming challenges. Only by knowing your own heart can you build a foundation for enhancing your ability to read others' feelings. Find sound solutions to social problems and engage in innovative activities to promote your role. A welcome surprise will come your way mid-week.

**SCORPIO** | Oct 23 - Nov 21



The Chinese symbol for "crisis" is a combination of the characters for "danger" and "opportunity". Know that the biggest opportunities for success are hedged about with possible risk. You need to look into those courses that appear risky and assess the potential for both harmful and favourable results. Don't overspend this week or you'll regret it later.

**ARIES** | Mar 21 - Apr 19



Try to build on the sequence of cause and effect that has brought you to where you are. Inexperience born of timidity can easily descend into ignorance, which exerts a constantly discouraging and depressive effect. Don't labour under false impressions. You should feel worthy of yourself and extend your range to contact your higher nature. Avoid snakes.

**LEO** | July 23 - Aug 22



Don't be afraid to risk being real and eschew hidden agendas. Your attention may flow inward toward the private world of ideas. You should not perceive and judge primarily from a subjective point of view, without logical cause and effect. Choose honesty in your communications, and take note of interruptions that could teach you something.

**SAGITTARIUS** | Nov 22 - Dec 21



Consultation is never out of date. Even the righteous have need of counsel in making the right decision. Evil society invites dangers all the time. Protect yourself from the man who has nothing to lose; beware of the dog that does not bark; and be wary of still waters. Practise the art of self-questioning to see behind the screen. You will face a difficult decision later in the week.

**TAURUS** | Apr 20 - May 20



Maintain a steady focus to perfect and clarify your image. Your mind-set should be carefully balanced in a positive light to present yourself as beautiful and bright. Be courageous and deft as you endure strong and sharp social interference and difficult communications. Any change required in your nature should come from within, not from any external source.

**VIRGO** | Aug 23 - Sept 22



Every cloud has a silver lining and every sunny day a cloud. Once you grasp that to live is to suffer, suffering is normal not a debilitating shock. Unless you master the knack of placing events into perspective, you may find yourself at the mercy of the tides. You should cultivate a sound philosophy of life. This week, be wary of saying too much to a colleague.

**CAPRICORN** | Dec 22 - Jan 19



It is time to show someone your true feelings about them. It may be difficult, but it will be worth it. Make a change today to signal a new mental and emotional turning point. Orient yourself in a new and different way towards a greater understanding of your surroundings. The key to success is to understand the roots of misunderstanding.

# MRTV to broadcast first ever legal drama

**NANDAR AUNG**  
nandaraung.mcm@gmail.com

**D**RAMA meets headline news in a new series about to start on MRTV. The eight episodes will focus on highly topical matters of national interest and importance to the country's political, economic and social reform process.

With its star-quality leads and its up-to-the-minute plots, *The Sun, The Moon and The Truth* will be a window into modern life, as it brings to the small screen tales of land rights, industrial disputes, human trafficking, defamation, wrongful dismissal and fraud, not to mention compelling stories of romance and betrayal, the producers say.

In production from March to August last year, the series, totalling eight hours and 45 minutes, will begin airing on February 13, the centenary of the birth of Bogyoke Aung San.

Director Aung Ko Latt, a prolific director, cinematographer, editor, storyboard artist and musician for more than 30 years, worked with producer Grace Swe Zin Htike to create the show.

After completing an intensive film training program at the New York Film Academy in 1999, his first feature film *Kayan Beauties* (2013) was a local success.

The eight episodes of *The Sun, The Moon and The Truth* will grapple with issues of justice and conflict.

"I'm completely satisfied with the creation. I think it will touch the lives of people throughout the country, and I learned a lot during the shooting," said Aung Ko Latt, adding that justice and the rule of law were important to supporting society and building peace.

"This project is very close to my heart," he said.

The show will be broadcast nationwide on Friday evenings at 9:30pm, featuring an entirely Myanmar cast and crew.

The series was produced with the help of the Myanmar Legal Aid Broadcasting Consortium consisting of Aung Ko Latt Motion Pictures, Communications Services Group, Myanmar Legal Aid Network, Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation, Pyoe Pin Program and Yangon Film School.

Su Pan Htwar plays May Hnin Si a talented legal aid lawyer, Hpone Thaik is Nay, a successful lawyer, Moe Yan Zun is the handsome young policeman Sai Thura, and Khin Zar Chi Kyaw portrays the talented schoolteacher Khin Khin, set against a scenic backdrop and court and police procedural.

Writers Patrick Burgess and Phillip Gwynne from Asia Justice and Rights were funded by DFID (UK AID), Sida and Danida.

# What's on

FEBRUARY 9 - 15

Got an event?  
List it in What's On!  
whatsonmt@gmail.com

## ART

**Until Feb 21** "Muted Consciousness"

An exhibition of black & white photographs, paintings and documents from the 1950s. TS1 Gallery, between Lanthit Jetty and Kaing Dan, Transit Shed 1, Oo-Pa-Sa Street 10am-6pm

**Feb 7-15** "Apples in colors." Solo art show by Min Zayyar Oo. Trish Gallery, ground floor, flat C, Excellent Condominium, 46A Min Yaung Street 9am-6pm

**Feb 13-21** 7<sup>th</sup> Yangon Photo Festival. Exhibitions and events at Institut Francais and other venues across the city. A program of events can be found at www.yangonphoto.com

## FILM

Start times at Mingalar (1, 2), Top Royal, Shae Shaung (1, 2) and Nay Pyi Taw cinemas are 10am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm.

Start times at Junction Square and Juntion Maw Tin are 9:30am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm and 6:30pm daily and 9:30am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm 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 *Taken 3*. Directed by Olivier Megaton. Action thriller.

*Seventh Son*. Directed by Sergei Bodrov. Fantasy film.

*I Fine Thank You Love You*. Directed by Mez Tharatorn. Thai comedy drama.

**Mingalar Cinema 2**, at Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone

*The Taking of Tiger Mountain*. Directed by Tsui Hark. Hong Kong-Chinese 3D action film.

**Shae Shaung Cinema**, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada

*Project Almanac*. Directed by Dean Israelite. Science-fiction thriller.

*Taken 3*.

**Junction Square Cineplex**, Kamaryut Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw

*Kantemir*. Directed by Ben Samuel. Mystery thriller.

**Junction Mawtin**, Lanmadaw

*Doat Hon*. Directed by Tran Ham.

Vietnamese horror film.

**Mingalar San Pya Cineplex**, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw

*The Taking of Tiger Mountain*.

*Project Almanac*.

## MUSIC

**Feb 9** Monday Blues. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 9:30-11:30pm

**Feb 11** Jazz music & dinner. The Rendez-Vous, French Institute, 340 Pyay Road, Sanchaung 7:30pm

**Feb 12-14** Live Music. Kokine Bar, 34 Kokine Swimming Club Lane, Saya San Road, Bahan 6-11pm

**Feb 14** Lover's Day Music Concert. Snare, Nine One, Jouk Jack, Wai La and others will perform. Tickets K7500 from Bo Bo Entertainment. Kandawgyi Park 3pm

## MISC

**Until 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, Kamaryut 7-9pm. Tickets US\$13-19

**Feb 10** Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 7pm- late

**Until Feb 27** Funky Friday Disco Night. Dance the night away with Latin expert dancer Gisbrt and music by DJ Bay Tar. Free Entry. Club Rizzoli, Chatrium Hotel, 42 Natmauk Road, Tarmwe 7pm

**Feb 11** International juggling festival big show spectacular. Top international and local performers including comedian Thura Thein and Jo Ker, featuring thrilling, dangerous and spellbinding acts never seen before in Yangon. Free entry.

Karaweik Garden, Kandawgyi Park 6:30pm

**Feb 13** Inner Light Project special performance by children who learnt juggling with the Yangon Photo Festival. Free entry. French Institute, 340 Pyay Road, Sanchaung 6:30pm

**Feb 14** International juggling festival juggling show, competitions, workshops and theatre acts. Free entry. Karaweik Garden, Kandawgyi Park 9am-3pm

**Feb 14** Fire show starring international performers and Yangon band The Wheel. Free entry. Mahabandoola Park Unplugged Stage 6pm

**Feb 14** Valentine's Day at Belmont Governor's Residence. Enjoy a romantic dinner and be entertained by a saxophone player and energetic juggling performances. Booking at 01229860. Belmont Governor's Residence, 35 Taw Win Road, Dagon 6:30pm



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Living Well in Myanmar

# Added sugar not so sweet

CHRISTOPH GELSDORF, MD



livingwellmyanmar@gmail.com

In the last edition of *Living Well in Myanmar* I wrote briefly about the dreaded "double burden" of disease facing the country. While much of the population is at risk from the threat of infectious illnesses like tuberculosis and malaria, an increasing number are also contracting lifestyle diseases such as heart attack, stroke and diabetes.

The drivers of these lifestyle diseases are varied, but clearly food consumption plays a major role. Particularly worrying for residents of Myanmar is the amount of added and processed sugar consumed on a daily basis. From streetside tea and juice shops and rice and jelly desserts to the increasing proportion of packaged products in the average diet, it seems that sugar is being added to almost everything.

The reason this matters is illustrated by a review article published last week in the medical journal *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*. The authors present a series of basic science and research studies supporting the hypothesis that sugar added to food is more dangerous than sugar which occurs naturally in food. By way of example, they cite a clinical trial in which two groups of equally matched patients were given the same amount of calories to eat, but from different sources. The first was given 5 percent of their daily calories from sugar added to food, while the second was given 20-30pc of daily calories from added sugar. After six weeks the second

group had higher insulin levels, leading the authors to conclude that both total calories and the type of calories matter in the growing epidemic of diabetes.

A simple explanation of why higher insulin levels are problematic is based on the understanding that the body needs sugar for energy. In order to make energy, sugar has to get inside cells. Insulin is the "key" that opens the door which allows sugar to cross into cells. The pancreas manufactures insulin. So when a person eats food the pancreas is alerted and begins to secrete insulin into the bloodstream so that any consumed sugar can make it into cells.

The energy that the body requires can come from sugars that occur naturally in foods, like the sweet taste in an apple or the carbohydrate content of rice. Or that energy can come from sugar added to foods, like a can of soda that has corn syrup in it or a *shwe keyi* cake that has been baked with lots of sugar. The key difference, according to accumulating research, is that sugar that is added artificially to foods requires the body to produce more insulin than sugar that occurs naturally.

When more insulin is needed to get a sugar into a cell, the pancreas has to work harder to make that insulin. If this occurs with enough frequency and intensity, the pancreas gets overburdened and can "break", resulting in diabetes.

But while the problem of added sugar seems relatively straightforward, the question of what to do about it on a societal level is certainly much tougher. Dietary guidelines for Myanmar might be a first step. At the moment the World Health Organization recommends that less than 10pc of an entire day's caloric intake come from added sugar. Although I don't



Research suggests that added sugar, found in things like juice drinks and packaged food, is more dangerous than sugar which occurs naturally in food. Photo: Staff

have research to back it up, I would guess that most of Myanmar's aspiring middle class consumes far above that 10pc target. A local public health message should emphasise that there is no biological need for extra sweetness in the diet. Sugar and carbohydrates occurring in natural foods provide sufficient energy for the body's daily metabolic needs. Finding ways to empower people to make healthy food choices for their families would mitigate the intensity of the looming double burden.

Christoph Gelsdorf is an American Board of Family Medicine physician who sees patients in Yangon and California ([www.gelsdorfMD.com](http://www.gelsdorfMD.com)). He is a member of the General Practitioner Society of the Myanmar Medical Association. Reader thoughts and questions are welcomed.

## The Global Gossip

### 'Mockingbird' author Harper Lee to publish second novel

American author Harper Lee is to publish a second novel, more than half a century after the release of her much-loved classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, HarperCollins announced on February 3.

*Go Set a Watchman* was written in the 1950s and features many of the same characters as *Mockingbird*. It was recently rediscovered and will be released on July 14, the publishing house said.

Lee won the Pulitzer Prize for *To Kill a Mockingbird* - a searing tale of racial injustice in the Great Depression-era South that was published in July 1960.

The novel - standard reading in American classrooms for decades - has been translated into more than 40 languages and made into a film that won three Oscars, including one for lead actor Gregory Peck.

*Go Set a Watchman* was actually written earlier than *Mockingbird* but was set aside and presumed lost after Lee's editor persuaded her to write a novel from the point of view of a young Scout, set 20 years earlier.

She was "humbled and amazed" that the manuscript was to be published after so many years, not realizing it had survived.

The reclusive Lee, 88, who lives in her native Alabama, said in a statement, "I am humbled and amazed that this will now be published after all these years"

HarperCollins said it was "thrilled" to be publishing the new novel. "This is a remarkable literary event," said Jonathan Burnham, Harper publisher and senior vice president.



Pulitzer Prize-winning author Harper Lee collects the 2007 Presidential Medal of Freedom at the White House in Washington, DC, on November 5, 2007. Photo: AFP



Actress Mila Kunis arrives at the premiere of *Jupiter Ascending* at TCL Chinese Theatre on February 2 in Hollywood, California. Photo: AFP/Frazer Harrison



Actor Colin Firth poses during a photocall of the movie *Kingsman: The Secret Service* on February 2 in Rome. Photo: AFP/Gabriel Bouys

### Cancer movie wins top prize at Sundance

*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, a moving drama about a teenager who befriends a classmate with cancer, won the top prize at the Sundance Film Festival on February 1.

Sundance winners regularly go on to critical and awards success at Hollywood's main prize-giving ceremonies. Last year's top winner, *Whiplash*, is nominated for best picture at this year's Oscars.

The US documentary award meanwhile went to *The Wolfpack*, while in the non-US categories the main prizes went to a Scottish filmmaker and a movie about Ukraine's ongoing struggle in the shadow of its former Soviet masters.

*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Alfonso Gomez-Rejon took the Grand Jury Prize for a US drama at the end of a two-hour awards ceremony in the Utah mountain resort Park City.

The win came against what was considered strong competition this year from other entries that stirred considerable buzz at Sundance, including *The Witch* and the coming-of-age hip hop drama *Dope*. - AFP

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# Throw another shrimp on the barbie



food

Photos: Phyo

**PHYO ARBIDANS**  
phyo.arbidans@gmail.com

**S**TROLLING around Bogyoke Aung San Market, you cannot avoid the hollering of juice vendors touting their popular avocado shakes. But while avocados make a great drink, I prefer eating them. Right now, market stalls are brimming with large, fleshy avocado pears, and I couldn't resist incorporating them into this week's recipe.

Having moved back to Myanmar almost three years ago, I really miss Australian summers and the seafood barbeques with family and friends. This dish is inspired by the flavours of an Aussie summer: The fruity avocado salsa is the perfect accompaniment to fresh seafood. Shelling fresh prawns can be a pain,

so I like to do it the Aussie way – serve them with the shells on and let your guests shell them themselves. Easy peasy.

## GRILLED PRAWNS WITH AVOCADO SALSA

6 servings

- 6 giant prawns (sometimes called lobsters) or 12 large prawns
- 4 cloves garlic
- 2 avocado pears
- 250g grape or cherry tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Toasted bread and lemon wedges to serve

Gently rinse and drain the prawns. Remove the head and legs. Store the prawns in a covered container and

refrigerate until you are ready to grill them.

To make the salsa, cut the tomatoes into halves. Next, peel the avocados and cut into cubes about a centimetre thick. Peel and thinly slice the garlic. Put the chopped ingredients into a large bowl and pour over the olive oil and lemon juice. Mix well to combine. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Grill the prawns on an open fire (or on a wire rack over a gas stove) for 10-15 minutes, turning them frequently until they are orange in colour. To check that they are cooked, cut the back of the prawn shell with scissors.

Toast the bread and brush with olive oil.

Serve the grilled prawns with lemon wedges and the toasted bread, accompanied by the avocado salsa.

## PRAWN AND AVOCADO SALAD

6 servings

- 700g medium prawns
- 4 cloves garlic (crushed)
- 2 avocado pears
- 1 small bunch chives (diced)
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



Gently rinse and drain the prawns and set aside. In a pan, boil about 3 litres of water. When the water is bubbling, add 1 tablespoon of salt to the pan before adding the prawns to the water.

Boil the prawns for 5 minutes. When they have boiled, remove them from the pan and refresh them in ice-cold water. Drain the prawns and store in the fridge until the dish is ready to serve.

Peel the avocados and cut into cubes about a centimetre thick.

Put the avocados, diced chives, lemon juice, crushed garlic and mayonnaise in a bowl and stir to combine. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Shell the prawns remove the head and legs. Arrange them on buttered bread with the avocado salad.

## Delightful dishes, though not a doner kebab in sight

### Restaurant Review



**CHARLOTTE ROSE**  
charlottelola.rose@gmail.com

**TURKEY** has given the world many delights: belly dancing, catchy Eurovision hits and, of course, opinion-dividing cubic sweets. But most importantly, the Turks are also the genius creators of what is undoubtedly the world's greatest food export: the doner kebab.

It may have become a post-pub favourite in Western countries, but I am a firm believer that the doner is more than just a grease-fest for the squiffy late-night reveller. Unfortunately, my kebab fetish is hampered by the city's lack of Turkish restaurants: It's Yangon not Constantinople.

The Olive Garden – not to be confused with the popular Italian chain eatery of the same name – is a Mediterranean restaurant with a focus on halal and Turkish specialties, including doner kebabs on Saturdays and Sundays. At least that is what it says on the menu. My friends and I visited on a weekend and, much to my dismay, the doner was mysteriously unavailable.

The recently opened restaurant, located on the lower block of Bo Aung Kyaw Street, is somewhat lacking in the ambiance department. The interior, while pleasant, has a hotel lobby feel to it, and the atmosphere wasn't helped by the fact that we were the only guests during our visit except for one solitary diner.

Unperturbed by the deathly silence, we turned our attention to the drinks menu, and then, seeing no alcoholic beverages available, quickly



turned it away again.

Resigning ourselves to a quiet evening, we ordered an array of dishes to share. According to the restaurant's Facebook page, their executive chef was once the personal cook of Jennifer "Lopaz". It might be worth giving Lopaz a call before you visit to ask for recommendations, as the food ranges from delectable to dismal.

Topping the thumbs-down list was the lentil soup (K4000), which was unseasoned and tasteless. The hummus (K3500), served with white toast, was also on the dry side and likely to disappoint Mediterranean-food lovers. The verdict: Give the other appetizers a miss and go for the stuffed eggplant (K3500), which was fresh, delicious and disappeared in seconds.

When it came to the mains, we were more sanguine. The meat-stuffed Turkish bread (K5000) and vegetable *sebzi pide* (K4000) were a carb-lover's dream. Most impressive though was the lamb rack (K16,000) – the evening special – which was among the most heavenly lamb dishes I have ever eaten. After just one bite of the succulent, perfectly cooked meat the evening's doner scandal was quickly forgotten.

Sadly, the service at The Olive Garden was on the wrong side of

quirky. The restaurant, it seems, has only two copies of the menu: our party of five was given one, and when we asked for another it was hastily seized from the hands of our neighbouring diner. Service was slow, and the serving staff do not speak much English which made ordering difficult, especially as many items on the menu were unavailable during our visit – including three of the four desserts.

There is certainly room for improvement, especially in the seasoning of the appetisers, and the restaurant would benefit from some jaunty music and a few more menus. But with several delicious Turkish dishes on the menu, The Olive Garden offers a refreshing alternative to the city's plethora of Asian eateries – doner kebab or no doner kebab.

## The Olive Garden

170-176 Bo Aung Kyaw Road (lower block), Botahtaung, Yangon, Ph: 09260171413

Restaurant Rating  
★★★★★

Appetizers	4
Mains	8
Beverage	6
Service	4
Value	5
X-factor	6



Photos: Charlotte Rose



Henry and Paul



Matt, Birgitte and Dan and Mads



Thu Thu and Aye Mi San



Hannah and Eena



### Myanmore dining and nightlife awards 2015

Over 600 people donned their glad rags to attend The 2nd Annual Myanmar Awards at the poolside of the Chatrium Hotel. The evening's biggest winners were L'Opera Italian restaurant and MOJO, who walked away with 4 awards each. Among the other winners in the 28 categories were Sharkey's, The Lab and Sabai Sabai.



Leena Salim and host



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**Australia Day 2015**

Guests celebrated Australia Day on January 26 at the Australian Club in Yangon. The ceremony started with an opening speech by Australian Charge d'Affaires Carla Guica, who said that Australia will remain committed to supporting the democratic and economic reforms in Myanmar.



Ross Dunkley and Kaung Myint Htut



Ma Phyu Phyu Myint, Ma Pyone Thinzar Soe and Ma Eaint



Mark Brown, Peter Dove and Ross Bray



**Game, set match**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Horizon Open Table Tennis Championship 2015 competition was held on January 31 and February 1 at Horizon International School, Yangon.



Championship winners

**YIUS graduation ceremony**

The Yangon Institute for University Studies held a graduation ceremony for students on January 31 at the Sedona Hotel.



Wutt Hmom Yee and Hlaing Win Thawdar

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## DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
FMI A1	1,2,3,4,5	7:15	8:15	
FMI B1	1,2,3,4,5	10:45	11:45	
FMI C1	1,2,3,4,5	17:00	18:00	
FMI A1	6	8:00	9:00	
FMI A1	7	15:30	16:30	

YANGON TO MANDALAY				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 775	Daily	6:00	7:10	
YH 909	1,2,3,4,5	6:00	7:40	
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	8:05	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	8:10	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	8:30	
YJ 811	3	7:00	8:25	
W9 201	Daily	7:00	8:25	
YH 835	1,7	7:00	8:40	
YH 826	3	7:00	8:40	
YH 831	6	7:00	8:40	
7Y 131	Daily	7:15	9:20	
K7 266	Daily	8:00	10:05	
8M 6603	4	9:00	10:10	
YH 751	5	10:45	14:50	
YJ 211	5,7	11:00	12:25	
YJ 601	6	11:00	12:25	
YJ 201	1,2,3,4	11:00	12:25	
YH 911	2	11:00	12:40	
YH 831	4	11:00	12:40	
YJ 761	1,2,4	11:00	12:55	
YJ 233	6	11:00	12:55	
YH 729	2,4,6	11:00	14:00	
YH 829	5	11:00	15:05	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:15	13:25	
YH 727	1	11:15	13:25	
W9 251	2,5	11:30	12:55	
7Y 941	1,3,4,6	11:45	13:10	
7Y 841	2,5	11:45	13:10	
7Y 943	7	11:45	13:10	
K7 822	4,7	12:30	16:55	
K7 622	1,3,5,7	13:00	14:25	
K7 226	2,4,6	13:30	14:55	
7Y 241	Daily	14:30	16:25	
YH 731	2,3,4,5,6,7	15:00	17:10	
Y5 234	Daily	15:20	16:30	
W9 211	4	15:30	16:55	

YANGON TO NYAUNG U				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	7:20	
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	7:20	
YH 909	1,2,3,4	6:00	8:25	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	7:45	
YH 909	1,6,7,5,4	6:30	8:05	
YH 633	5	6:30	8:10	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5,7	6:45	8:05	
YJ 801	6	7:00	8:20	
K7 242	Daily	7:00	8:20	
7Y 131	Daily	7:15	8:35	
7Y 121	1	8:20	9:40	
Y5 649	Daily	10:30	11:50	
K7 264	Daily	14:30	16:40	
7Y 241	Daily	14:30	17:10	
YH 731	1	15:00	17:20	
YH 731	2,3,4,5,6,7	15:00	17:55	
W9 129	1,3,6	15:30	17:35	
W9 211	4	15:30	17:40	

YANGON TO MYITKYINA				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 835	1,7	7:00	10:05	
YH 826	3	7:00	10:05	
YH 831	6	7:00	10:05	
YH 829	5	11:00	13:40	
YJ 201	1,2,3,4	11:00	13:50	
YH 831	4	11:00	14:05	
W9 251	2,5	11:30	14:25	
7Y 841	5	11:45	14:35	
K7 622	1,3,5,7	13:00	15:55	

NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
FMI A2	1,2,3,4,5	8:35	9:35	
FMI B2	1,2,3,4,5	13:30	14:30	
FMI C2	1,2,3,4,5	18:20	19:20	
FMI A2	6	10:00	11:00	
FMI A2	7	17:00	18:00	

MANDALAY TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 910	5	7:40	9:05	
YH 910	1,2,3,4	7:40	9:45	
Y5 233	Daily	7:50	9:00	
YJ 891	Daily	8:20	10:15	
K7 283	Daily	8:25	11:30	
YJ 811	3	8:40	10:05	
YH 918	Daily	8:30	10:45	
W9 201	Daily	8:40	10:35	
7Y 132	Daily	9:35	11:30	
K7 267	Daily	10:20	12:25	
YJ 762	4	13:10	17:00	
YH 836	1,7	13:20	14:45	
YH 832	6	13:20	14:45	
YH 827	3	13:20	14:45	
YJ 212	7	15:00	16:25	
YJ 752	5	15:05	16:30	
YH 830	5	15:05	18:55	
YH 912	2	15:30	17:25	
YJ 202	2,4	15:30	16:55	
YJ 202	1,3	15:30	17:35	
YJ 602	6	15:40	17:35	
YJ 762	1,2	16:35	18:00	
7Y 242	Daily	16:40	18:45	
YH 728	1	16:45	18:10	
Y5 776	Daily	17:10	18:20	
W9 211	4	17:10	19:15	
K7 823	2,4,7	17:10	18:35	
YH 732	2,3,4,5,6,7	17:10	19:15	
8M 6604	4	17:20	18:30	
K7 227	2,4,6	17:20	18:45	
8M 903	1,2,4,5,7	17:20	18:30	
YH 832	4	17:20	18:45	
YH 738	3,5,7	17:25	18:50	
K7 623	1,3,5,7	17:40	19:05	
YH 730	2,4,6	17:45	19:10	
YJ 234	6	17:45	19:10	
W9 252	2,5	18:15	19:40	

NYAUNG U TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	Daily	7:35	10:15	
YH 918	Daily	7:45	10:45	
YH 910	6,7	8:05	9:25	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5,7	8:20	10:25	
YH 910	1,2,3,4	8:25	9:45	
YH 801	6	8:35	9:55	
K7 242	Daily	8:35	11:45	
7Y 131	Daily	8:50	11:30	
7Y 121	Daily	9:55	14:10	
K7 283	Daily	10:10	11:30	
Y5 650	Daily	13:55	15:15	
YJ 212	5	15:45	17:05	
YJ 202	1,3	16:15	17:35	
K7 265	Daily	16:55	18:15	
YH 732	1	17:20	18:40	
7Y 242	Daily	17:25	18:45	
W9 129	1,3,6	17:50	19:10	
YH 732	2,3,4,5,6,7	17:55	19:15	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 202	2,4	14:05	16:55	
YJ 202	1,3	14:05	17:35	
YH 836	1,7	11:55	14:45	
YH 832	6	11:55	14:45	
YH 827	3	11:55	14:45	
YH 832	4	15:55	18:45	
K7 623	1,3,5,7	16:10	19:05	
YJ 234	6	16:20	19:10	
YH 830	5	16:30	18:55	
W9 252	2,5	16:45	19:40	

YANGON TO HEHO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	8:50	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	9:00	
YH 633	5	6:30	9:05	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5,7	6:45	9:00	
K7 242	Daily	7:00	9:15	
7Y 131	Daily	7:15	10:05	
K7 266	Daily	8:00	9:15	
7Y 121	Daily	8:20	10:35	
Y5 649	Daily	10:30	12:45	
YH 505	1,2,3,4,5,6	10:30	11:55	
YJ 751	7	10:30	11:40	
YJ 751	3,5	10:45	11:55	
YJ 761	1,2,4	11:00	12:10	
YJ 233	6	11:00	12:10	
YH 727	1	11:15	12:40	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:15	12:40	
7Y 941	1,2,4,6	11:45	13:55	
K7 828	1,3,5	12:30	13:45	
K7 822	2,4,7	12:30	13:45	
K7 264	Daily	14:30	15:45	
7Y 241	Daily	14:30	15:40	
YH 731	Daily	15:00	16:25	
W9 129	1,3,6	15:30	16:40	

YANGON TO MYEIK				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 325	1,5	6:45	8:15	
7Y 531	1,5	7:00	8:38	
K7 319	2,4,6	7:00	9:05	
Y5 325	2	15:30	17:00	

YANGON TO SITTWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 309	1,3,6	11:30	12:55	
K7 422	Daily	13:00	14:55	

YANGON TO THANDWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 242	Daily	7:00	10:35	
YH 505	1,2,3,4,5,6	10:30	13:10	
W9 309	1,3,6	11:30	13:50	
7Y 122	Daily	12:15	13:05	
K7 422	Daily	13:00	13:35	
Y5 421	1,3,4,6	15:45	16:40	

YANGON TO DAWEI				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 319	2,4,6	7:00	8:10	
7Y 531	1,5	7:00	7:48	

YANGON TO LASHIO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 751	7	10:30	12:45	
YJ 751	3,5	10:45	13:00	
YH 729	2,4,6	11:00	13:00	
7Y 741	1,5	11:30	13:18	
K7 828	1,3,5	12:30	14:50	

YANGON TO PUTAO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 835	1,7	7:00	11:00	
YH 831	4,6	11:00	15:00	
YH 826	3	7:00	11:00	
W9 251	2,5	11:30	15:25	

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 251	2,4,6	6:15	8:05	
7Y 305	1,5	11:00	12:50	
W9 9607	4,7	14:30	16:20	

HEHO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 634	5	9:05	10:15	
YJ 891	Daily	9:05	10:15	
K7 283				

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 706	Daily	6:05	8:20
8M 335	Daily	8:40	10:25
TG 304	Daily	9:50	11:45
PG 702	Daily	10:30	12:25
TG 302	Daily	14:50	16:45
PG 708	Daily	15:20	17:15
8M 331	Daily	16:30	18:15
PG 704	1,2,3,4,5,6	18:20	20:15
PG 704	7	19:30	21:45
Y5 237	Daily	19:00	20:50
TG 306	Daily	19:50	21:45

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 303	Daily	8:00	8:45
PG 701	Daily	8:45	9:40
Y5 238	Daily	21:30	22:20
8M 336	Daily	11:55	12:40
TG 301	Daily	13:05	13:50
PG 707	Daily	13:40	14:30
PG 703	1,2,3,4,5,6	16:45	17:35
PG 703	7	17:55	18:45
TG 305	Daily	18:05	18:50
8M 332	Daily	19:20	20:05
PG 705	Daily	20:15	21:30

YANGON TO DON MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4231	Daily	8:00	9:45
FD 252	Daily	8:30	10:20
FD 256	Daily	12:50	14:40
FD 254	Daily	17:35	19:25
FD 258	Daily	21:30	23:15
DD 4239	Daily	21:00	22:55

DON MUEANG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4230	Daily	6:30	7:15
FD 251	Daily	7:15	8:00
FD 255	Daily	11:35	12:20
FD 253	Daily	16:20	17:05
FD 257	Daily	20:15	20:55
DD 4238	Daily	19:25	20:15

YANGON TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25
Y5 2233	Daily	9:45	14:15
TR 2823	Daily	9:45	2:35
SQ 997	Daily	10:25	15:10
3K 582	Daily	11:45	16:20
MI 533	2,4,6	13:35	20:50
MI 519	Daily	16:40	21:15
3K 584	2,3,5	19:30	0:10+1

SINGAPORE TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TR 2822	Daily	7:20	8:45
Y5 2234	Daily	7:20	8:50
SQ 998	Daily	7:55	9:20
3K 581	Daily	9:10	10:40
MI 533	2,4,6	11:30	12:45
8M 232	Daily	13:25	14:50
MI 518	Daily	14:20	15:45
3K 583	2,3,5	17:20	10:40

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 501	1,2,3,5,6	14:00	18:00
AK 505	Daily	8:30	12:45
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30
8M 9506	Daily	12:15	16:30
MH 743	Daily	16:00	20:15
8M 9508	Daily	16:00	20:15
AK 503	Daily	19:05	23:20

KUALA LUMPUR TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AK 504	Daily	6:55	8:00
MH 740	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 9505	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 502	1,2,3,5,6	19:10	20:10
8M 9507	Daily	13:55	15:05
MH 742	Daily	13:55	15:05
AK 502	Daily	17:20	18:25

YANGON TO BEIJING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 906	3,5,7	23:50	0550+1

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 905	3,5,7	19:30	22:50

YANGON TO GUANGZHOU			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 711	2,4,7	8:40	13:15
CZ 3056	3,6	11:35	15:55
CZ 3056	1,5	17:40	22:10

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CZ 3055	3,6	8:35	10:35
CZ 3055	1,5	14:40	16:40
8M 712	2,4,7	14:15	15:50

YANGON TO TAIPEI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7916	Daily	10:50	16:10

TAIPEI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7915	Daily	7:00	9:50

YANGON TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 416	Daily	12:30	15:55
MU 2012	3	12:40	18:50
MU 2032	1,2,4,5,6,7	14:50	18:15

KUNMING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2011	3	8:25	11:50
CA 415	Daily	11:10	11:30
MU 2031	1,2,4,5,6,7	13:30	14:00

YANGON TO HANOI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:25

HANOI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:40	18:10

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:05

HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 943	2,4,7	11:45	13:25

YANGON TO DOHA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 919	1,4,6	7:55	11:40

DOHA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 918	3,5,7	19:45	0459+1

YANGON TO SEOUL			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:50	8:50
KE 472	Daily	23:55	07:45+1

SEOUL TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	Daily	18:30	22:30
OZ 769	3,6	19:30	23:40

YANGON TO HONG KONG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	Daily	1:10	05:25

HONG KONG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 252	2,4,6	22:20	00:15+1
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:50	23:45

YANGON TO TOKYO			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	Daily	22:10	06:45+1

TOKYO TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:45	17:15

YANGON TO DHAKA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 061	2	11:45	13:00
BG 061	5	19:45	21:00

DHAKA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 060	2	8:30	10:45
BG 060	5	16:30	18:45

YANGON TO INCHEON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 724	1,3,5,6	12:50	14:45
W9 607	4,7	14:30	16:20
8M 7702	Daily	23:55	07:45+1

INCHEON TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 723	1,3,5,6	11:00	11:55
W9 608	4,7	17:20	18:10
8M 7701	Daily	18:30	22:30

YANGON TO GAYA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 601	1,3,5,6	10:30	11:50

GAYA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 602	1,3,5,6	12:50	16:00

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 710	Daily	14:15	16:40

BANGKOK TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 709	Daily	12:05	13:25

MANDALAY TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 533	2,4,6	15:45	20:50
Y5 2233	1,2,4,5,6	7:50	14:15

SINGAPORE TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 2234	Daily	7:20	16:30
MI 533	2,4,6	11:30	14:50

MANDALAY TO DON MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 245	Daily	12:50	15:15

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 244	Daily	10:55	12:20

MANDALAY TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	13:50	16:40

KUNMING TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2029	Daily	12:55	12:50

NAY PYI TAW TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 722	1,2,3,4,5	19:45	22:45

BANGKOK TO NAY PYI TAW			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:15	19:15

### International Airlines

<b>Air Asia (FD)</b> Tel: 09254049991-3
<b>Air Bagan Ltd.(W9)</b> Tel: 513322, 513422, 504888. Fax: 515102
<b>Air China (CA)</b> Tel: 666112, 655882
<b>Air India</b> Tel: 253597-98, 254758. Fax 248175
<b>Bangkok Airways (PG)</b> Tel: 255122, 255265. Fax: 255119
<b>Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BG)</b> Tel: 371867-68. Fax: 371869
<b>Condor (DE)</b> Tel: 370836-39 [ext: 303]
<b>Dragonair (KA)</b> Tel: 255320, 255321. Fax: 255329
<b>Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5)</b> Tel: 09400446999, 09400447999 Fax: 8604051
<b>Malaysia Airlines (MH)</b> Tel: 387648, 241007 [ext: 120, 121, 122] Fax: 241124
<b>Myanmar Airways International (8M)</b> Tel: 255260. Fax: 255305
<b>Nok Airline (DD)</b> Tel: 255050, 255021. Fax: 255051
<b>Qatar Airways (QR)</b> Tel: 379845, 379843, 379831. Fax: 379730
<b>Singapore Airlines (SQ) / Silk Air (MI)</b> Tel: 255287-9. Fax: 255290
<b>Thai Airways (TG)</b> Tel: 255491-6. Fax: 255223
<b>Tiger Airline (TR)</b> Tel: 371383, 370836-39 [ext: 303]
<b>Vietnam Airlines (VN)</b> Tel: 255066, 255088, 255068. Fax: 255086

### Airline Codes

3K = Jet Star
8M = Myanmar Airways International
AK = Air Asia
BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines
CA = Air China
CI = China Airlines
CZ = China Southern
DD = Nok Airline
FD = Air Asia
KA = Dragonair
KE = Korea Airlines
MH = Malaysia Airlines
MI = Silk Air
MU = China Eastern Airlines
NH = All Nippon Airways
PG = Bangkok Airways
QR = Qatar Airways
SQ = Singapore Airways
TG = Thai Airways
TR = Tiger Airline
VN = Vietnam Airline
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

Subject to change without notice

<b>Day</b>	4 = Thursday
1 = Monday	5 = Friday
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday

### ARBIL



Iraqi street vendors display items at a market located at the bottom of the Arbil Citadel on January 13 in Arbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq. Photo: AFP/Safin Hamed

# Iraqi Kurdistan tourism in tatters as war drags on

**B**ILLBOARDS still read "Welcome to Arbil, 2014 Arab Tourism Capital," but most of the visitors Iraq's Kurdistan region welcomed last year were people made homeless by a jihadist offensive.

It was supposed to be tourism's takeoff year, but the Islamic State (IS) group's June onslaught dashed those hopes overnight when it plunged Iraq into chaos.

"I cannot even talk about a decline in numbers, it's more like everything collapsed," said Hearsh Ahmad Karem, the manager of the Kurdistan Hotels and Restaurants Association.

What was a growing US\$1 billion sector in 2013 came to a screeching halt when IS fighters took over large parts of Iraq north and west of Baghdad

**Universal Crossword**

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

**I'M TORN** By *Gia Kilroy*

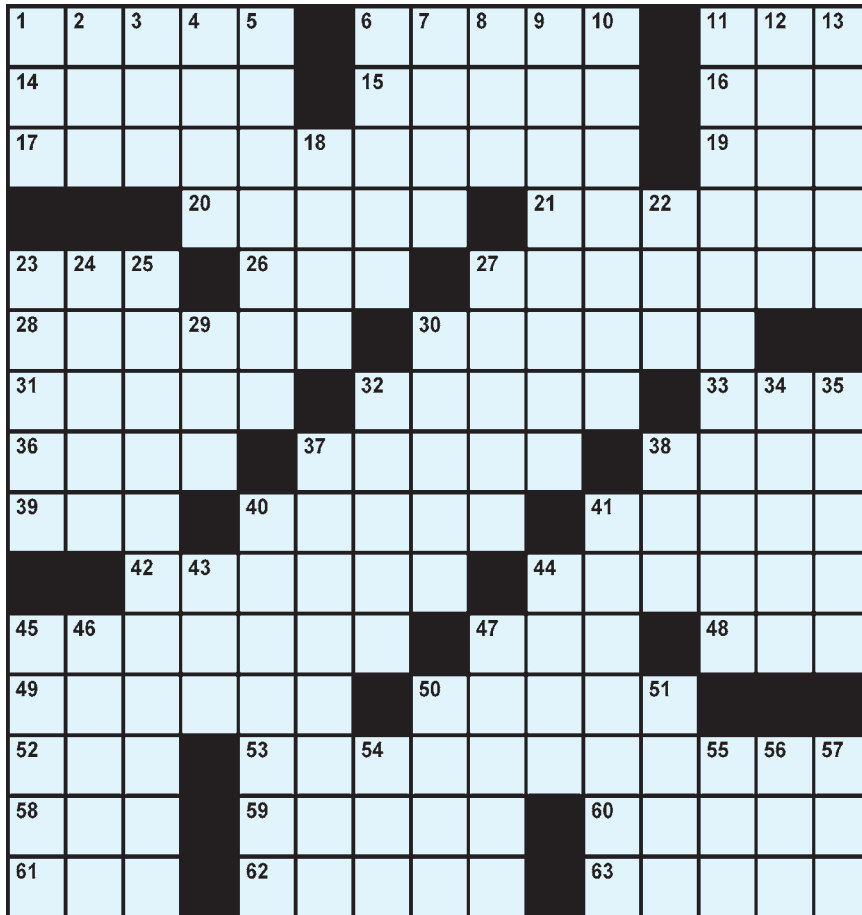
**ACROSS**

- 1 Word before "beware!"
- 6 Extraterrestrial realm
- 11 "If I only \_\_\_ a brain"
- 14 Cloudless sky color
- 15 Two points in time?
- 16 "\_\_\_ it or lose it"
- 17 Vigorous
- 19 "The city that never sleeps," for short
- 20 Amarillo's state
- 21 Major impact evidence
- 23 Venus, to Serena
- 26 It may be cut or paste?
- 27 Transparency
- 28 Insight
- 30 Horror director Wes
- 31 Very good-looking people
- 32 Unlike chickens?
- 33 Guy's honey
- 36 Campus concern
- 37 Bellyache
- 38 Sicilian landmark
- 39 A miner matter?
- 40 Clothes lines
- 41 Slit open, ironically
- 42 Be about to cry
- 44 Granitlike rock
- 45 One who's left holding the bag?
- 47 Ungentlemanly type
- 48 \_\_\_ Wee Reese of baseball fame
- 49 Beat to the finish line
- 50 Felony fire
- 52 Hockey legend Bobby
- 53 Make confetti
- 58 Half a cocktail?
- 59 Turnpike travelers, briefly
- 60 Mama Judd
- 61 "Got that right"
- 62 Islamic leaders
- 63 Word with "singing" or "Bible"

- 3 Relative of 61-Across
- 4 "While" lead-in
- 5 Breaks a promise
- 6 "Get out!"
- 7 Florists' needs
- 8 Boxing's "Greatest"
- 9 Secret meeting
- 10 Carve on, as a monument
- 11 It may involve dogs and foxes
- 12 Heretofore
- 13 Complain about
- 18 Cart pullers
- 22 "We" may precede it
- 23 \_\_\_ Domingo

- 24 Comparatively frosty
- 25 '60s TV show (with "77")
- 27 Vegas shooting game
- 29 Encountered
- 30 Angular hair wave
- 32 Big name in electric shavers
- 34 Biscotto flavoring
- 35 Spell of forgetfulness
- 37 Garden flower
- 38 180 deg. from WSW
- 40 Warrior of old Japan
- 41 Cause of ruin

- 43 Always, in verse
- 44 Breathe laboriously
- 45 Pirate's plunder
- 46 Distinctive atmospheres
- 47 Symbol of Christianity
- 50 Bit of matter
- 51 Within reach
- 54 After-school bake sale org.
- 55 Pigeon's utterance
- 56 Down Under bird
- 57 Sample, as hot tea

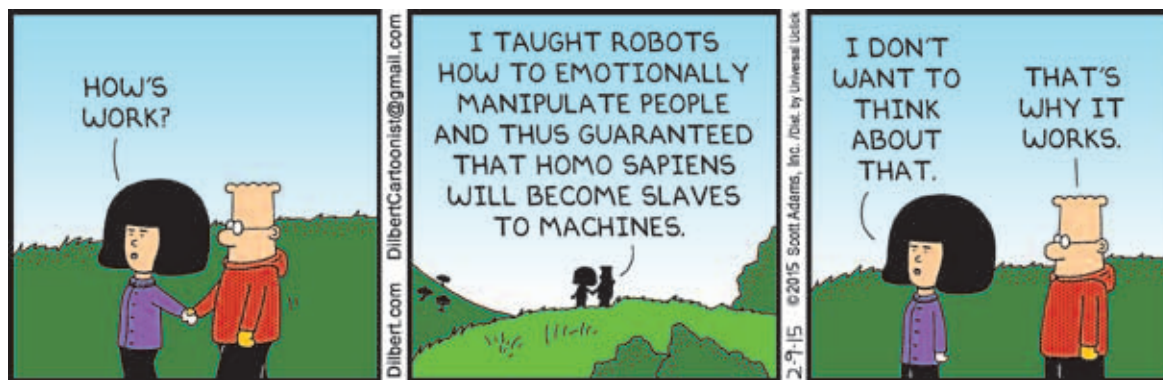


**DOWN**

- 1 Word with "cross" or "crow"
- 2 Action film staple

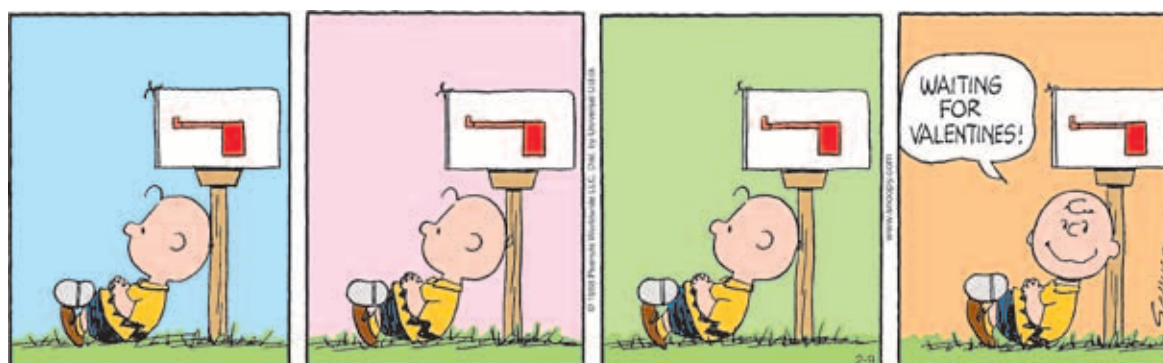
**DILBERT**

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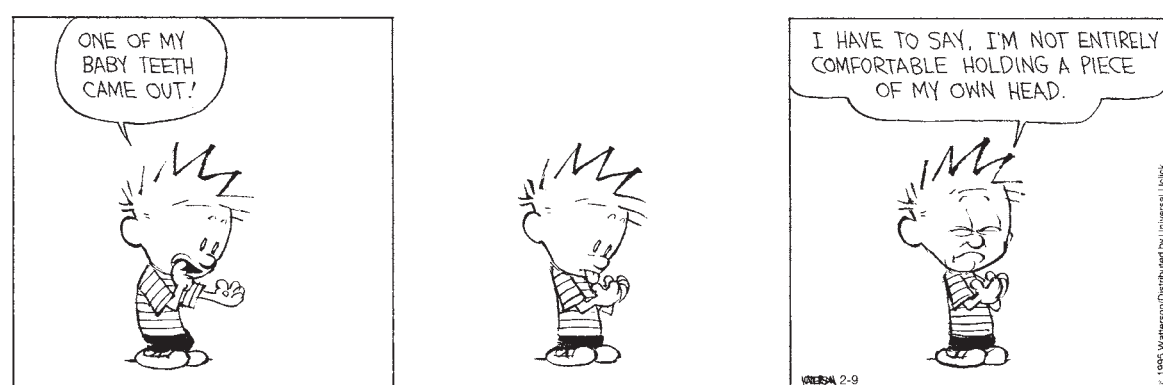
**PEANUTS**

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.



2/12

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.

DOES THE LAUNDRY EVER END???

Solution: 5 letters



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2/9

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**UNFPA** 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029.

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**UNIC** 6, Natmauk St., Bahan, tel: 52910-19

**UNICEF** 14-15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, Kyauktada. Tel: 375527-32, kyauktada. Tel: 375527-32, kyauktada@unicef.org.

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**UNRC** 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE Tel: 542911-19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator),

**WFP** 5 Kan Baw Za St, Shwe Taung Kyar, (Golden Valley), Bahan Tsp. Tel : 2305971-6

**WHO** No. 2, Pyay Rd, 7 Mile, Mayangone Tsp, Tel : 650405-6, 650416, 654386-90.

**ASEAN** Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Tsp. Tel: 225258.

**FAO** Myanmar Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673.

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Red Cross ☎tel: 682600, 682368  
Traffic Control Branch ☎tel: 298651  
Department of Post & Telecommunication ☎tel: 591384, 591387.  
Immigration ☎tel: 286434.  
Ministry of Education ☎tel: 545500m 562390  
Ministry of Sports ☎tel: 370604, 370605  
Ministry of Communications ☎tel: 067-407037.  
Myanma Post & Telecommunication (MPT) ☎tel: 067-407007.  
Myanma Post & Tele-communication (Accountant Dept) ☎tel: 254563, 370768.  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs ☎tel: 067-412009, 067-412344.  
Ministry of Health ☎tel: 067-411358-9.  
Yangon City Development Committee ☎tel: 248112.

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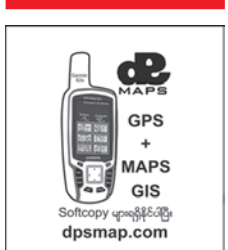
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#### Travel

**JPM Journeys** Princess Myanmar Travel & Tours : Domestic & Int'l ticketing, Hotel accommodation bookings, Package tours, Visa on arrival, Public buses, trains, river boats, Off the beaten track. Individually tailored incentive tours, Special event tours, Expert guides for all journeys princess Myanmar tours. Ph: 09-731-45835, 09-252-030997. Email : jpm.sales3@

gmail.com, jpm.rsvn@gmail.com

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**MANDALAY** Computer: Computer for Kids, Basic Accounting for Job-Office, Advanced Excel Course, DTP Course, MYOB Software, Peach Tree Software, Window Shortcut Course, Email & Internet Course Mp3, Mp4, Video Editing, Multimedia Course. Ph: 09-4440-11279(MDY)

**ART BASIC**, Perspective, Interior Design, Exterior Design & Colour Theory. Learn Art 5 months to be a professional architect. Only 2 months for Special classes. Home tuition also available. New Vision Art Gallery and Center, No 132 lift no: 4 Bagaya Rd, Sanchaung, Shann Lann Bus top, Ph: 09-2542-57911

#### Public Notices

**COMMUNITY** Partners International, Yangon office relocated to the following address- No. (12/B), Hnin Si Lane, Parami Road, Chaw dwin gone, Yankin Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: + 95 1 657909

**THE ROYAL** Embassy of Saudi Arabia is pleased to invite pre-qualified companies to tender for supply and installation of Physical Security System at Embassy Building. All interested Tenders are required in advance to purchase the Documents for specification and General Contractual terms, which will be obtained from: The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia : No.6S, InyaYeiktha Street, Ward 10, Mayagone, Yangon, Myanmar Ph: 09-500-2313

### Property

#### Sell / Rent

**KAMAYUT**, Diamond Condo, Pyay Rd, 1600 sqft, 1MBR, 2BR, 3A/C, f.f, 4300 Lakhs & 35 Lakhs, Call Owner: 09-518-8320

#### Housing for Rent

**PABEDAN**, 3rd Flr, 27<sup>th</sup> St (Middle), 25'x50' (Lift), 2SR, 1MBR, 2 aircon, 7 Lakhs, Ph: 09-510-4881, 09-730-73226.

**BAHAN**, (1) Pearl Condo NewBld. 1600sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, f.f, 25Lakhs. (2) New University Ave Rd, 2 Flr, 40'x60', 3MBR, 5A/C, Ph, f.f, 25 Lakhs, (3) Yankin Centre, 1705 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, Ph, 4A/C, f.f, 15 Lakhs (5) New University Ave Lane, 2Flr, 22'x55', 1MBR, 1SR, f.f, 15Lakhs, Maureen: 09-518-8320.

**OFFICE SUITES** for Lease, Pearl Centre, Bahan Township, Kabar Aye Pagoda Road, 500-10,000 sqft available at affordable rates. Contact: 09 430 30 288 slee888@gmail.com

**BRAND NEW** 3 bedroom Condominium on Strand Rd with beautiful Pagoda view. All rooms with brand new aircons. International standard renovation, high quality marble & teak timber floor. Partial/ fully furnished. Monthly rental US\$2,900. (2) New 4 bedroom condominium 2000 sqft near Parkroyal Hotel for rent. Top quality renovation - 6 Brand new aircons, beautiful marble floor, all bedroom high quality teak wood flooring. Partial/fully furnished. US\$4000. Please call 09-4210-50471 or email yangonproperties@gmail.com for viewing.

**CONDO**, Near University avenue st & Yankin center, 1200 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, fully furniture, USD 2500. Near Chatrium hotel, 1200 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, fully furniture, USD 1500. Good for office and coffee shop, 1200 sqft, G flr, hall type, inside 3 flat, USD 1800. Kandawgyi Condo, 1250 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, fully furniture, facing to Kandawgyi view. USD 2500. Driving from Sedona Hotel 10 minutes, Chan dar gon young condo, swimming pool, Gem, 5 stories, free car park, 1250 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, fully furniture, USD 1600. No need agent, Ph: 09-250 270 3331.

**SANCHAUNG**, 5th Floor, Tha Yett Taw St, 12.5' x 50', Hall Type. Other Inclusive: Sunshade & Iron Bars on all windows & doors. Negotiable price: Ks 550 Lakhs. Ph: 09-500-2313

**GOLDEN VALLEY**, 7800 Sqft, 3 stories, 5MBR, fully furnish, 5 car park, USD 25000. Golden Valley, 5600 Sqft, 2 stories, 4MBR, USD 10000. Near Parami Rd & Kaba Aye Rd, 4500 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, Europeans house style with lawn, 2 car park, USD 5000. Near USA Embassy & Seik Le Kan dar St, 6300sqft, 2 stories, 2MBR, 2SR, semi furniture, USD 7000. Near Weizayandar St, 3000Sqft, 3 stories, 2 MBR, 2SR, new building, semi furniture USD 5000. Ba Ho St, 6500 sqft, 2 stories, 8MBR, USD 10000. No need agent, Ph: 09-2527-9 3331

**HERITAGE** office space for rent, Fully renovated office for rent, based in a 100 year old heritage building in downtown Yangon on 44th street. Total about 130 m2 (including mezzanine and rooftop terrace) on the first floor. Separate entrance with impressive antique wooden staircase, high ceilings and many beautiful authentic finishing's. Ideal for small organization (5-8 staff) looking for a representative and tasteful office space with character. 1500 Usd / month - 3 year contract and monthly payment possible. Available from 1 February 2015. Contact: edwinbrils@gmail.com or 09-7319 9668

**HIGHLAND** Avenue, 7 Mile Pyay Rd, (Near WHO, UNODC, UNOPS, Sweden, Denmark, Norway & Brazil Embassies) 100x100, 4MBR, 6AC, Semi Furnished, Internet, USD 6000, 9666745, 09-201-5143, Email: yinyinkyi16@gmail.com

**MYAYNIGONE**, Newly decorated apartment, good lighting & ventilation <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ventilation\_%28arc\_hitecture%29-high floor, clear view to Shwe Dagon Pagoda at quiet location, walking distance to Myay Ni Gone City Mart, Dagon Centre, close to Uwisara Rd. Rental fee \$1,000/month. Ph: 09-2500-84265, 09-2500-84265, 09-4306-7111.

**BAHAN**, Near Chatrium Hotel, Po Sein Rd, 2 RC house, 3 Rooms with Toilet, 3AC, 2 Cable phones, wide Car Parking. USD 1700 per month. Ph: 09-312-87827, 09-7958-84155.

**SOUTH OKKALAPA**, Innwa St, Block 6, 75 meters away from Thitsar Road & Wayzayantar Rd, 15 minutes drive to Sedona Hotel, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. 19'x58', 5th Flr, Pile Foundation, 1MBR, 1SR, Kitchen, living Rm, 1 Bathroom, 1 Toilet for common use, Korea Parquet Flooring, full furnished, 3 AC, Beds, Mattresses, Gas Cooker, Fridge, Washing Machine, Settee for living room, Water heaters for Bathroom, Own Meter & Motor for Water Filling, Underground Water Tank, 1000 L Overhead Water Tank. Call 959250 282 178, 95 9 513 7629

**MODERN** House for Office / Residential : No.112 (D), Thanlwin Rd (former windermere) Golden Valley (1), Bahan, 2 1/2 Storey-Building, 1MBR (Bathroom attached), 3SR, Dinning Kitchenette, Spacious living room,

Broad verandah Sky-view, Nice Lawn & Good ventilation, 3000 sqft (total), Line phone connected with internet, 6/8 Cars parking space available, Main Thanlwin Rd, Connection both to University Avenue Rd and to Inya Rd, Subject to negotiation on interest. Ph : 09-502-1117.

(1) **NEAR SHWEDAGON** Pagoda, near Embassy area, new condominium, 1800 Sqft, 3 MBR, fully furniture, USD 5000. (2) Near Kandawgyi lake, 1250 Sqft, 1 MBR, 2 SR, semi furniture, USD 2500. (3) Near Junction Square and SK hot pot, 4 Flr apartment, 1200 sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, semi furniture, 1500 USD. (4) Near Park Royal hotel, condominium pen house, 2000 Sqft, 1 MBR, 2 SR, fully furniture, 4500 USD. (5) Near Kandaw gyi hotel, condominium, nice view, 2500 Sqft, 2 MBR, 2SR, fully furniture, 5000 USD. Ph: 09-4921 4276.

(1) **GOLDEN VALLEY**, Inyar Myaing St, 5600 Sqft, 3MBR, 1SR, fully furniture, 7000 USD. (2) Golden valley, Than Lwin street, 2RC, 7500 Sqft, 5 MR, fully furnished, USD 12000. (3) Yankin, near Aung Zayya St, 3RC, 5600 Sqft, 2MBR, 2SR, good for residence. USD 4000. (4) Thuwana, Bo Joke quarter, 2RC, 7800 Sqft, 1MBR, 3SR, good for use office, USD 4000. Ph: 09-2527-03331.

**OFFICE SPACE TO LET** 3100 sqm available over 5 floors in a 12-storey building with car park, restaurant, multi function hall and apartments. Please contact - Ph: 09-2523-59355. Email : office-mm@uniteammarine.com, web: www.facebook.com/officespaceyangon

**BAGAN LAND** for sale 10, acres. (US\$ 3.5 lakhs) only. Contact: Victor: 09 4236 60602. Viber Ph: 61 469 049 713.

**HMAWBI** just off street land 12 acres for sale suitable for to build up factory, ware house and etc., just for US\$ 3.75 Lakhs only. Contact Victor: 09-4236-60602. Viber mb: +61 469 049 713 Email: vtchit@gmail.com

**MAYANGONE**, Muditar Condo 1, 8 th Flr, 650 sqft, Parquet, lift, Special Discount (Until 2014 Dec) Price - 275 lakhs. Ph: 09-2542-09327, 09-730-28441, 01-226885

**MAWLAMYINE**, 2RC (water + electricity included), 60'x80', on Bogoyote Aung San Rd, near Mawlamyine University. Price: negotiable. Ph: 09-515-8738

**KANDAWGYI CONDO**, nice view with all big glass window around, 2 rooms, 2 bathrooms and toilets, hot water system., decorated with european style and standard quality, eighth floor, 2200 sqft, 4000 Lakh. (nego:) Ph: 09-7954-13742

(1) **PEARL CONDO**, 1750 sqft, New building, Good water for 3500 Lakhs. (4) Pyay Rd, Diamond Condo, 1650 sqft, Nice View, Newly Rm, Nobody Stay there. 4500 Lakhs. Call Maureen: 09-518-8320.



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**Employment**

**Ingo Position**

**(1) NATIONAL Mine Risk Education Coordinator** (Yangon) 1 Post (2) **Mine Risk Education Coordinator** (Myitkyina) 1 Post (3) **Supporting Officer** (Lashio) 1 Post. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, myanmarredcrosssociety.org

**MYANMAR Red Cross Society** is seeking (1) **Branch WASH Officer** 1 post in Mogok: University Degree in Civil Engineering, Geology, Hydrology or related fields. Effective computer knowledge and English language skills. (2) **Field Assistant** 1 post in Maikar: At least minimum high school level. 1 year previous experience. Good knowledge of English is an asset. Red Cross volunteers are preferable. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 12.2.2015.

**(1) BRANCH WASH Officer** (Mogok) 1 post (2) **Field Assistant** (Malaria) (Maikar) 1 post (3) **Field Assistant** (CP (Bago)) 1 post (4) **Field Supervisor** (CPP) (Pyay/Bago) 2 posts (5) **Monitoring & Reporting Officer** (Nay Pyi Taw / Yangon) 1 Post. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org.

**(1) LEGAL ADVISOR** (Nay Pyi Taw / Yangon) 1 Post (2) **Logistics Development Officer** (NayPyiTaw) 1 Post (3) **Restoring Family Link (RFL) Coordinator** (Nay Pyi Taw / Yangon) 1 Post. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org

**(1) COMMUNICATION OFFICER** (Nay Pyi Taw) 1 Post. (2) **Program Coordinator** (Nay Pyi Taw / Yangon) 1 Post (2) **Logistics Officer** (Myitkyina) - 1 Post. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org

**Local Positions**

**SMC Myanmar** is seeking the following short teams (6-8 months) positions to support its project team with respect to environmental and social impact assessment procedures for a proposed large infrastructure project. Senior-Government liaison and stakeholder Specialist. 15 years of experience in leading, conducting and organising stakeholder consultation. Position is based in Yangon but frequent travel to shan state. Environmental impact Assessment Specialist. 10 years experience in environmental and social impact assessment and related fields. Position is based in Yangon but frequent travel to shan state. Hydrology, Sediment and Water Quality Specialist. The applicant should have tertiary qualifications in environmental sciences or water resources

engineering knowledge and experience in environmental & social impact assessments. Position is based in Yangon but frequent travel to shan state. Please email applications and any enquiries to myanmar@smec.com by February. Ph: 01-8603578.

**MYANMAR COSCO Ltd** is seeking (Full time) (1) **Accountant**: B.Com, Diploma in Accounting (LCCI), CAT & ACCA with 2 years experience; or equivalent combination of education & experience. Good command of English. Chinese is preferable. Computer literate. (2) **Cashier**: University Degree in Finance/Accounting or Diploma in LCCI or CAT. 2 years in related job(s) by handling cash payments, bank process & treasury management. Good command of English. Chinese is preferable. Computer literate. Excellent accounting skills. (3) **Senior Executive** (Admin Department): ABE diploma in business management is preferable, University graduate, 5 years experience, Good command of English & Mandarin. Good experience in using a variety of software packages, such as Microsoft Word, Outlook, Powerpoint, Excel, Access, etc., to produce correspondence & documents and maintain records, spreadsheets & databases. Pls send CV to admin@cosco.com.mm. (151), Rm (B-503), 5th Flr, Myawaddy Bank Luxury Complex, Corner of Bogyoke Aung San St & Warden St, Lanmadaw, Yangon. Closing date: 16.2.2015.

**MYANMAR TRAVEL** is seeking 3 **Tour Operation & Reservation** (Myanmar Citizen only): 1 year experience as Tour Operator for the inbound travel company. Fluency in English both speaking and writing. Possess computer proficiency: Microsoft Office, Excel. Interested person send CV (with photo attached) to Ma Nway Nway Eai, Country Manager, Email: resal@myanmartravel.com, Ph: 09-430-74201.

**INTERNATIONAL** Managed 4 Star Hotel with 111 rooms, 3 F&B Outlets and Wellness Center has vacancy for the followings: (1) **HR & Training Manager**: Responsible for Hotel Human Resource and training program, 3 ~ 5 year experience in Hotel HR dept. (2) **Executive Secretary**: PA to General Manager with overall

Administration. Speak and write good English. Able to do Reports and Minutes. (3) **F&B Secretary**: 2 ~ 3 year experience in F&B Admin. Admin. staff in hotel can also apply. Computer usage is compulsory. (4) **Business Centre Supervisor**: Administration of Center with Guests relation experiences. All Guests administration duties for a business center. (5) **Room Reservation: Reservation Supervisor**: 2 ~ 3 years of hotel reservation administration. (6) **Drivers**: 2- 3 years experience with good and clean driving record. Able to converse in basic English. Required to pick up international guests. Knowledge of local sights. Those with International Hotel locally or oversea experience are preferred. Apply with confidence with headline of job apply to skyeogi@gmail.com. Closing date 28 Feb. 2015.

**MYANMAR FOOD Co., Ltd** is seeking (1) **Brand manager** (2) **HR assistant** - M/F 1 post (3) **Store Keeper** - M/F (4) **Service Provider** - M/F 20 posts (5) **Customer Service Executive** (Hostess) M/F 2 posts (6) **Admin Executive** - M/F 1 post (7) **Quality Control** - M/F 1 post (8) **Service Engineer** - M 1 post. Please submit to Myanmar Food Co., Ltd, ph: 09-730-99383, mfft.hr@gmail.com

**MYANMAR LIFESTYLE Co., Ltd.** is seeking (1) **Marketing Manager** - M/F 1 post (2) **Retail Operation Manager** - M/F 1 post (3) **Brand Manager** - F 3 posts (4) **Sales & Marketing Operation Assistant** - F 1 post (5) **Admin Executive** - M/F 1 post (6) **Operation assistant** - M/F 1 post (7) **Graphic Designer** - M/F 1 post: Age 20 ~ 35, Experiences - 1 year in some related fields. Please submit to Myanmar Lifestyle Co. Ltd., Ph: +95 9 3361 1110, sevenfridaymm@gmail.com

**(1) TRAINEE Accountant** - M/F 1 Post (2) **Assistant Accountant** - M/F 1 Post (3) **Senior Accountant** - M/F 1 Post (4) **Office Secretary / Executive Secretary** - F 1 Post (5) **Estate Coordinator** - F 1 Post (6) **Technical Assistant** - M 1 Post. For all posts must be speak English. Please submit CV with necessary documents to 17, Shwe Tha Pyay Yeik Mon 2, Nawarat St, 10 South/North quarter,

Thaketa. Email- wai.strategypartner@gmail.com Ph: 09-4211-66892

**INTERNATIONAL** Managed 4 Star Hotel with 111 rooms, 3 F&B Outlets and Wellness Center has vacancy for the followings: (1) **EAM**: Assisting Hotel GM in overall operations, Strong Sales background, with International hotels experience (2) **Sales Managers**: Responsible for overall Hotel, Banquet & Membership sales. Managed Team of Sales Executives. Speak and write good English with a good PR approach. (3) **Sales Executives**: Reporting to Sales Manager for the success of Sales Team (4) **Wellness Manager**: Able to managed Center with Gym, Salon & Wellness. Responsible for P&L and membership promotion. (5) **Salon Supervisor**: Able to managed the Salon with profitability. Good incentive. (6) **Wellness Supervisor**: Managed wellness center profitability with incentive. F&B Dept: (7) **F&B Manager** to managed F&B Operation with Good Banquet operations background. Staff training & under stand local market environment. (8) **Restaurant Manager**: Must able to managed Western Restaurant and Banqueting. (9) **Sous Chef**: Int'l Trained cooks. (10) **Guest Relation Officer**: Must speak and write English. University graduates. (11) **Lobby Duty Manager**: With Int'l hotel experience. Speak and write English. Have a good PR approach. (12) **IT Manager**: Incharge of Hotel IT system. Int'l Hotel locally or oversea experience are preferred. Apply with confidence with headline of job apply to skyeogi@gmail.com Closing date: 28, Feb. 2015.

**INTER GROUP** of companies is seeking (1) **Administrative Assistant** - F: Degree Holder, 3 years experience, Excellent in English, Computer literate. (2) **Accounts Executive** - M/F: ACCA or B.Com, 3 years experience in full set of Accounts preparation, Must have experience in MYOB, Great team player with excellent communication & interpersonal skills, Able to multi-tasks and meet tight reporting deadlines, Excellent in English, Computer literate, Willing to travel overseas for training and must hold valid passport. Please submit detailed CV in person or by email, stating your current & expected

salary, date of availability, reason for leaving and a recent passport photo to: 7(D), 1st Flr, 6 Miles, Pyay Rd, Hlaing, Yangon, Tel: 09-7310 5353, 09-7310 5340 Email: hr-ygn@icononline.net

**(1) MARKETING Manager** - F 5 posts must be interesting in real estate business, age between 25 to 35, good looking (2) **Computer** - F 3 posts word, Excel, page maker, photo shop (3) **Driver** - M 3 posts 5 years license, Age between 30 to 45 years old. contact phone: 09-4201-14749, 09-4211-77105.

**WANTED Office Staff.** Must be graduated. Fluent in English, Good knowledge in MS word/excel. Able to work in door/out door. Interested person apply CV to No.243, 4<sup>th</sup> Flr, Bo Aung Kyaw St, Middle Block, Kyauktada, Tel: 09-420 731246.

**RESTAURANT** is looking for a **general manager**. 300,000 - 450,000 k\$/month and 5% profits, cookiehustler@gmail.com. 09-9729-93330

**TURQUOISE mountain** is seeking experienced **architect** (individual or practice) required to undertake full measured and condition survey of historic building. Please contact, email: harry@turquoisemountain.turquel: 09-979-786 575.

**ENGLISH speaking & writing staff** for English magazine. cnucontents@hanmail.net ph: 09-4500-65916

**GYMBOREE PLAY & Music** is seeking **Marketing**: at least 1 year experience, Good English speaking, Basic computer skill, Good character & responsibility. Job Details: to initiative business development activities. Conduct market research. Contacting prospects, negotiation and clients visit. Job Location: Pearl Condo, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd, Yangon. Type of Employment: Full time. About the company: Gymboree Play & Music is the world's leading parent-child interactive play, music and arts program for children ages newborn to five years. Address: Block C, Pearl Condo, 2 Flr, Bahan. Ph: 09-259-999113.

**EXOTRAVEL** is seeking (1) **French Speaking Travel Consultant**: 2 years experience in Tourism Industry or Related field, Pro-active, team spirit, good organisational & problem solving skill, Strong sales & customer service focus, Possess computer proficiency: MS office, Excellent command of written & spoken in French. (2) **English Speaking**

**Travel Consultant**: 2 years experience, Pro-active & Team spirit, good organizational and problem solving skill, Excellent interpersonal skills & communication skills, Strong sales & customer service focus, Possess computer proficiency. Good communication in English. (Only those with a genuine interest in joining a professional travel company for long-term commitment need apply.). Please send a detailed resume mentioning the reason of leaving and attached recent photo and other relevant documents to HR Manager at memecho@exotravel.com

**GOLDEN HILL Tower** is seeking **F&B Manager** - M/F 1 post: Proficient in English four skills. Proven experience using computers especially Office Application. A university degree holder. 2-3 years experience. Excellent interpersonal & communication skills. Able to work under pressure. Commencing Salary - US\$600 Please submit to HR Dept of Golden Hill Tower No. 24-26, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Bahan Tsp

**AUNG Chan Tha Trading Co., Ltd.** is seeking (1) **Sales Executive** - M 5 Posts: Any graduate (More Preferable BE or B Tech (Mechanical)). 3 years experience. Age 25-30. (2) **Sales Engineer** - M/F 10 Post: Any graduate (More Preferable A.G.T.I or B Tech). Age 20-25. (3) **Engineer Trainee** - M 10 Posts: BE, B Tech or AGTI (Fresh graduate). Age 20-25. (4) **Office Driver** - M 2 Posts: 5 years experience. Kha - valid driving license. 30-40 years. Interested applicants are requested to mail covering letter, curriculum vitae, 2 passport photo & photocopies of the graduation certificates, national registration card, labor registration card, police clearance, household census list to HR Manager, Aung chan Tha Trading Co., Ltd. 54

A, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Near Nawaday Intersection, Mayangone, Yangon within 2 weeks.

**BULGOGI BROTHERS** Korean BBQ Restaurant is seeking (1) **Kitchen Staff** - M/F 15 posts (2) **Service Staff** - M/F 15 posts (3) **Cashier** - F 2 posts (4) **Driver** - M 1 post. All post have basic English and work experience in similar field. No.135/5, Mawyawaddy Lane, 8.5 Mile, Mayangone, Yangon. Ph: 01-667061, 09-796-307128, 09-730-90465. Email: bulgogibrothers.myanmar@gmail.com

**MACHINERY & Solutions Co., Ltd** is seeking (1) **Project Manager (Government & Foreign Investment Project)** - Any graduate with MBA. 5 years experience in Engineering field. Age 35 ~ 45. (2) **Logistics Manager** - 3 years experience in Logistics/ Freight Forwarding field. Well conversant in English. (3) **Business Development Executive** - BBA or B.A (English). Age 21 & above. (4) **Management Trainee** - Any engineering graduate. (5) **Project/ Proposal Engineer (Mechanical/ Electrical/ Petroleum/ Electronic)** - Any engineering graduate or technical diploma holder. 1 year experience. (6) **Site & QS Engineer (Civil)** - AGTI or BE (Civil). 1 year experience. (7) **Jnr. Geologist** - B.Sc (Geology) Graduate. (8) **Accountant** - Any graduate with LCCI Level 3 Holder. 1 year experience. Experience or Training in Computerized Accounting Software. (9) **Finance Manager** - 5 years experience in Finance field. ACCA, CP/ CPA qualification. (10) **Engineer/ Technician (Valves Repair Service)** - Experience in Valves Repair Service. Prefer with overseas experience. (11) **Travel Coordinator** - Any graduate with Travel & Tour Experience. Mainly, Fluent in English. (4 skills). Age 20 ~ 40. (12) **Drivers** - 3 years driving experience. Accommodation can be

provided. Competitive salary shall be provided to relevant personnel with experience. Please send complete resume with expected salary to hr.mnsenergy@gmail.com, by 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2015

**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, Yangon. Ph: 01578171, 01573149. The position is open until filled.

**OUR ORGANISATION** is a leading provider of Project Engineering and Engineering Supply based in Myanmar. We are in collaboration and develop joint venture with MNCs in Power, Real Estate, Dairy Farm and Agriculture Sector is seeking (1) **Project Planning Manager** (2) **General Manager** (Special Project) (3) **Business Development Manager** (4) **Personal Assistant to CEO** (Male Only) (5) **Operation Manager** (Trading / Power Industry) (6) **Project Sales Manager**. Please send CV & cover letter, including your salary expectations, to Email- hr.stcl@supreme-companies.com. You can see more details of Job Descriptions from www.myanmarjobsdb.com, www.myanmar-network.net, www.work.com.mm. The successful candidates can expect high competitive salary and benefits.

**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.



**Positions Available (Hotel Industry)**

As the first Yacht Club on Myanmar's Bay of Bengal, we strive for providing an excellent home for both sun seekers and sailing enthusiasts from all over the world. With a new resort in Ngwe Saung Beach's hotel zone, we are seeking applications from dynamic and highly motivated candidates for the following positions:

- General Manager (Local or Expatriate) - 1 position**
- Minimum of Bachelor degree.
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Dated. 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2015

**BERLIN**

Fighters from the Swedish team Goteborg get ready to battle during the Rise of the Knights III tournament in Bernau, Germany, on January 31. Photo: AFP

# Modern-day knights do battle in bone-crunching combat

**T**HE sound of swords crashing onto steel armour resonates around the municipal sports hall as two teams of heavily armoured knights commence a ferocious battle.

One combatant launches himself into another, hauls his opponent to the ground, and then regains his footing to smash his sword into another's helmet.

Welcome to Rise of the Knights III – the third edition of a medieval combat tournament held in an innocuous sports hall in Bernau, near Berlin.

Teams from across Europe clashed in a day-long series of five-against-five battles on January 31.

Forget about choreographed re-enactment battles where no one gets hurt. Medieval combat is a full-contact sport where armour-clad participants attack each other armed with an array of weapons.

A small team of referees ensure the strict rules are followed during the violent clashes in a fenced-off area.

Rather than kill an opponent, as in medieval times, victory means putting your opponent on the floor, and the winning team is decided by who is left standing in the best of three rounds.

Blows to the neck, feet, back of knees, groin and throat are strictly prohibited, but punching, kicking and tripping your opponent is allowed.

The swords must not be sharpened, while the armour, which costs around 1200 euros (US\$1357) for a set, has to all come from a specific historic period.

It's neither for the unfit nor faint-hearted as each combatant carries roughly an extra 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of armour. The weapons, ranging from long swords to polearms (wooden shafts with a blade on top), are blunt on all sides, but the fights are very real.

"We had one guy sent to hospital with a cut near the eye, lots of bruises, a broken arm and a broken leg," said organiser Adam Nawrot, vice president of the governing body, the International Medieval Combat Federation (IMCF).

The event has grown from a handful of teams in 2013 to 30 teams from across Europe this year.

Poland I defeated the 2014 champions Battle Heritage Lions, made up of

the English and Welsh national teams, 2-1 in this year's final.

The tournament served as a warm-up for the world championships held at Malbork Castle, a world UNESCO site, near Gdansk, Poland, from April 30 to May 3 when the USA will defend their title.

"I used to be involved in re-enactment groups, but I got frustrated because I had a weapon I couldn't really use properly," said Frenchman Julien Roumaud, wearing his replica 14<sup>th</sup>-century armour.

The 33-year-old carpenter from Clermont-Ferrand had driven 18 hours across Europe with the French national team to compete.

**"It's the complete sport. You have to be in top shape to cope with running around carrying heavy armour. It's why I don't drink anymore."**

**Julien Roumaud**  
Knight in shining armour

"It's the complete sport. You have to be in top shape to cope with running around carrying heavy armour. It's why I don't drink anymore," he said.

"I train for about eight hours per week – skills and strategy, plus lots of cardio work like boxing. The fights look like a big mess, but it's very organised. The adrenaline takes over – sure you are afraid, but it's a good fear. It focuses the mind."

During one bout, the referees struggled to stop a combatant who rained down blows on a floored opponent, which earned a yellow card.

"Sometimes the red mist comes down when you're in there," explained

Pawel Kurzak, 36, of the Battle Heritage Lions.

"All sorts get involved, from computer geeks to bankers and lawyers. There's even a rocket scientist in the Germany team. Western culture has evolved so that no one wants to upset or offend anyone. But here, you get two teams who accept the dangers and challenge. We're friends outside the arena, but in there it's a very, very different story."

A part-time security officer and fitness instructor, Kurzak played rugby after arriving in London from Poland in 2007, but was hooked when he first saw medieval combat.

Kurzak's desire to earn a place on the England team for the world championships is evident as he floors opponents in the early rounds with his polearm.

"I'll happily sing both the Polish and English anthems if I'm selected for Malbork," he said with a grin.

His strapping teammate Luke Woods, another former rugby player who teaches archery and makes bows, uses his bulk to flatten opponents.

"For someone my size, wrestling is important. If I just stand there hitting you, I'm wasting energy," said the 28-year-old from Caterham, Surrey.

"It's like rugby or American football: There is a place for everyone, no matter what your size or shape. I've always liked the idea of having a scrap – what little boy doesn't want to hit someone with a sword? For me, it encompasses everything I like about rugby, fighting and history, so I was hooked."

Woods explains how concussions occur if helmets are not fitted properly, while dislocated knees and shoulders are common.

"It tends to be joints giving way when two guys clash. It's a lot of weight to put on a pivot," he added.

A bout is quickly stopped when one combatant's helmet flies off with the force of a blow.

"Most important is the steel cod-piece," said Ingo Teske, from Battle Heritage South Africa, who was in Bernau on a fact-finding mission with hopes of sending a team to the world championships. "That's the piece of equipment you most want to protect." – AFP



## IN PICTURES

## Yadanarbon suffer penalty heartbreak

Myanmar National League champion Yadanarbon FC crashed out of the Asian Champion's League qualifying last week after losing 6-5 on penalties to Warriors FC of Singapore, the current S-League title-holders. The match, at Mandalay's Mandala Thiri Stadium, ended nil-all after 90 minutes, and each team scored a goal in extra time. – *Kyaw Zin Hlaing*

PHOTO: SI THU LWIN

## EPL clubs in record \$1.4 billion spend: report

PREMIER League clubs spent a record £950 million (US\$1.4 billion) combined in the 2014-2015 pre-season and mid-season transfer windows, according to a report published by financial analysts Deloitte on February 3.

The report said spending in the January transfer window that concluded on February 2 equalled the £130 million amount during last year's corresponding buying period.

Although last week's deadline day was relatively low key, with Premier League leaders Chelsea's signing of

Colombia winger Juan Cuadrado from Fiorentina the headline purchase, clubs still spent more on the final day of this particular window - £45 million - than they did at the climax of the January 2014 market (£35 million).

However, the final figure of £130 million was well below the record January spend of £225 million in 2011 when Chelsea broke the record for a transfer between two British clubs by signing striker Fernando Torres from top-flight rivals Liverpool for £50 million.

Nevertheless, the total spent by clubs

across the two windows has surpassed the previous highest of £760 million in the 2013-2014 season and is a further example of the increased financial strength of leading English clubs, who have benefitted from increased television and other broadcast revenues.

"Given the record level of spending seen in the summer [pre-season], it is not entirely surprising that we haven't seen a new record for the January window," said Dan Jones, partner in the Sports Business Group at Deloitte.

- AFP

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## SYDNEY



Australia's Tim Cahill lifts the AFC Asian Cup football trophy after beating South Korea at Stadium Australia in Sydney on January 31. Photo: AFP

# New kids Australia scale summit

## Dramatic extra time win over South Korea secures first silverware in Asia for the Socceroos

**B**OLD, brash Australia proved they belong at the peak of Asian football and gave a huge boost to the sport in their country after overcoming the region's best to win the Asian Cup.

The Socceroos are newcomers in the Asian confederation after joining in 2006 but they have quickly reached the summit by winning the continent's showcase tournament at just their third attempt.

Dozens of other teams have fallen short after decades of trying, but Australia has now become the first to unite the Asian national and Champions League club titles.

Australia's women were also crowned Asian champions in 2010, but the country's success has not been uniformly welcomed, with reported rumblings of discontent among some regional rivals.

Such reports prompted loud boos when Asian Football Confederation officials appeared at the January 31 final, but the Socceroos did their talking on their pitch.

And after a successful tournament

attended by nearly 650,000 fans, Australia's gripping 2-1 extra-time win over South Korea was a fitting finale.

"It's a massive moment for Australian football," said the team's talismanic striker, Tim Cahill, as he celebrated their historic achievement. "This is one of the biggest moments in sport for Australia."

The nation's expectations were somewhat modest at the start after the Socceroos managed just one victory in 11 games last year. On a chilly night in Melbourne, Kuwait's Hussain Fadel rocked the hosts when he headed the tournament's first goal.

But Australia hit back in dazzling style with Cahill, Massimo Luongo, Mile Jedinak and James Troisi all scoring in a 4-1 win to get the team off to a flying start.

It was a long way from Swindon to Sydney for Luongo, who was voted player of the tournament after a string of high-octane performances, capped by a wonder goal in the decider against South Korea.

Holder Japan gave Palestine a sobering introduction to the Asian Cup, thrashing them 4-0 in Canberra, while

fellow heavyweights South Korea and Iran also started with wins.

United Arab Emirates set tongues wagging when they came from behind to beat Qatar 4-1, their extravagant playmaker Omar Abdulrahman catching the eye with his silky skills in midfield.

**'This is one of the biggest moments in sport for Australia.'**

**Tim Cahill**  
Socceroo striker

It quickly became a break-out tournament for the mop-haired star, who never found the net but helped sharp-shooter Ali Mabkhout finish as top scorer in the UAE's run to third place.

China have long under-achieved at the Asian Cup but the twice runners-

up enjoyed a storming start - aided by a helpful ballboy who told goalkeeper Wang Dalei the right way to dive to save a penalty.

The Chinese won all three group games but they were undone in the quarter-finals by Cahill's magical bicycle kick, followed by a trademark header, in a 2-0 Australia win.

Ray Wilkins and his Jordan side had a turbulent campaign which hit a low when striker Ahmed Hayel vomited and lost consciousness during a doping test, forcing him to miss the next game.

It was the cue for third-choice striker Hamza Aldaradreh to smash four past Palestine - evoking rather fanciful memories for Wilkins of England's Geoff Hurst at the 1966 World Cup.

Referees were in the spotlight and organisers fined Japan's Keisuke Honda and Iran coach Carlos Queiroz for outbursts before subsequently banning questions about officiating in press conferences.

The issue reached boiling point when controversial Australian referee Ben Williams sent off Iran's Mehrdad

Pooladi for simulation in a fiery quarter-final which they lost to arch-rivals Iraq on penalties.

Iran launched a last-ditch attempt to stay in the tournament when they protested in vain that Iraq's Alaa Abdulzehr had failed a drugs test last year and was ineligible.

Defending champions Japan came unstuck in the quarter-finals when they were stunned by UAE, with superstars Honda and Shinji Kagawa both missing in the penalty shootout.

Iraq's 2007 final-winner Younis Mahmoud starred with two goals - and a nerveless "panenka" penalty kick against Iran - before the Lions of Mesopotamia were tamed by South Korea in the semi-finals.

Australia scored twice in the first 15 minutes as they ended UAE's fairytale run to reach their second straight final.

In the championship decider, Australia were headed for a 1-0 win until Son Heung-Min's last-gasp equaliser forced extra time, but substitute James Troisi fired the winner on 105 minutes to spark wild celebrations at Stadium Australia. - AFP

## LONDON

## Transfers not behind QPR exit: Redknapp

**HARRY** Redknapp resigned as manager of Premier League strugglers Queens Park Rangers on February 3, saying impending knee surgery, not a row over transfer policy, prompted his departure from Loftus Road.

Redknapp's announcement came just a day after QPR chairman Tony Fernandes tweeted there would be "no more cheque book" at the west London club as the January transfer window closed on February 2.

Veteran English manager Redknapp, 67, had repeatedly said he had the full support of Malaysian businessman Fernandes, the founder of the AirAsia airline, amid reports his position was in jeopardy with QPR currently second-bottom in the table.

Head of football operations Les Ferdinand, a former QPR striker, took

temporary charge ahead of the league match at home to Southampton over the weekend as Fernandes seeks a permanent replacement for Redknapp.

"Sadly, I need immediate surgery on my knee which is going to stop me from doing my job in the coming weeks," Redknapp said in a club statement. "It means I won't be able to be out on the training pitch every day, and if I can't give 100 percent I feel it's better for someone else to take over the reins."

Renowned for his dealings in the transfer market, former West Ham, Portsmouth and Tottenham Hotspur manager Redknapp had long argued he needed to do significant business in the January window if QPR, who've won just five league games so far this season, were to beat the drop.

However, Fernandes called a halt on the final day of the mid-season window when he tweeted, "No more cheque book. We have good players. Bought all the players manager asked for in summer."

"Our players not mercenaries. Good guys."

But in an interview with the *Daily Mail* on February 3, Redknapp - who needs surgery on both knees - was adamant QPR's transfer policy hadn't led to his resignation.

"I haven't got the hump, we haven't had a row," Redknapp told the *Mail*.

QPR, with only Leicester below them in the table, are one point shy of safety and a favourable result against Southampton, another of Redknapp's former clubs, could see them climb out of the bottom three. - AFP

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# Sport

## Neo-knights gather for Berlin bash

SPORT 68



NEW YORK

### German wins Empire State footrace

CHRISTIAN Riedl of Germany won the 38<sup>th</sup> annual run up the Empire State Building on February 4 with a time of 10 minutes and 16 seconds, his first victory at the Manhattan skyscraper.

Singapore's Suzy Walsham won the women's heat with a time of 12:30, her record sixth victory.

About 200 people raced the 86 floors - 1576 steps in all - from the lobby of the building to the observation deck. Runners in eight different heats, some competing for charity, others having won lottery entrance, took to the stairs in a staggered start at the Midtown Manhattan office building.

Riedl, 34, was ranked third in the 2014 year-end Towerrunning World Cup rankings.

Walsham, 41, previously won the Empire State Building Run-Up in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2013 and 2014. She was the top-ranked woman in the 2014 World Cup rankings.

This year's race was organised by NYC RUNS, its first year managing the race that began in 1978. In previous years it was organised by New York Road Runners, the group that puts on the New York Marathon.

The course record of 9:33 was set in 2003 by Australian Paul Crake.

- Bloomberg News



Runners get ready to start the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Empire State Building Run-Up in New York on February 4. Photo: AFP

LONDON

# Sledging remains a slippery issue for cricket

THE Cricket World Cup promises to feature plenty of big hitting and dramatic bowling, but will there be verbal fireworks too? Not if the International Cricket Council can help it.

"Over the last six months, or even going back further to the last Ashes series, there have been too many examples of player behaviour going too far and overstepping the boundaries of acceptability," ICC chief executive David Richardson said.

"The amount of sledging [verbal abuse] and disrespect shown by players to each other was bad," the former South Africa wicketkeeper added as he promised match referees would come down hard on sledging at the World Cup, which will take place in Australia and New Zealand from February 14 to March 29.

Many of the best remembered "sledges" have been relatively amusing, but there has been little humour in the obscene or crude taunts of recent times, with Australia captain Michael Clarke telling James Anderson to "get ready for a broken arm" when the England tailender was batting during the last Ashes series.

Fiery Australian opener David Warner was involved in several altercations during India's recent tour, but coach Darren Lehmann said he was happy with the batsman's aggression.

"If the ICC decides we cross the line, then they'll come down on us," Lehmann said. "We're always going to teeter pretty close to it. That's the way that we play. We've just got to make sure that we don't cross it."

With cricket unusual among many major team sports in that its leading teams come from a variety of cultural backgrounds - European, Asian and Afro-Caribbean - the problem is that where Australia draw the line may well be different from their opponents.



Australian batsman Michael Clarke celebrates his century on the second day of the first test cricket match between Australia and India at the Adelaide Oval on December 10, 2014. Photo: AFP

Such was Australia's dominance in the 1990s and 2000s, when skipper Steve Waugh gave sledging the rather more dignified status of "mental disintegration" that many sides followed suit, even though plenty of the game's most greatest players - such as legendary West Indies fast bowler Malcolm Marshall - rarely bothered with "verbals" and were often rather more "aggressive" than the sledgers they came up against.

Given the fines imposed are rarely a deterrent and don't tend to lead to suspensions - although Lehmann himself was banned for five one-day games for a "racially motivated obscenity" after he had been run out by Sri Lanka in 2003 - most players carry on as they always did.

New Zealand great Martin Crowe has called for the introduction of a yellow and red card system into cricket, which has traditionally prided itself on being a "gentlemen's game".

Ian Chappell has said he fears it

can only be a matter of time before things get so heated that a physical clash ensues. However, Chappell's remarks may provoke a wry reaction.

When New Zealand won their first Test match against Australia in Christchurch in 1974, they did so on the back of a hundred in each innings from Glenn Turner.

The batsman asked for an apology from Chappell - Australia's captain in that match - for the abuse he had been subjected to on the field, with the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* commenting it was not the first time the skipper had lost his self-control on the field.

But the forthright Chappell was in no mood to apologise, saying, "I believe what happens on the field should stay there."

However, as Chappell knows only too well in his role as a respected television commentator, modern technology means that's rarely the case. - AFP

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2015

Past winners

Champions in previous World Cup events

- 1975 West Indies wins by 17 runs v Australia
- 1979 West Indies wins by 92 runs v England
- 1983 India wins by 43 runs v West Indies
- 1987 Australia wins by 7 runs v England
- 1992 Pakistan wins by 22 runs v England
- 1996 Sri Lanka wins by 7 wickets v Australia
- 1999 Australia wins by 8 wickets v Pakistan
- 2003 Australia wins by 125 runs v India
- 2007 Australia wins by 53 runs v Sri Lanka
- 2011 India wins by 6 wickets v Sri Lanka

Source: ICC Cricket World Cup 2015/cricinfo AFP

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