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INSIDE  
NEWS

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# MYANMAR TIMES

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## In Kokang, Tatmadaw comes in from cold

WA LONE

walone14@gmail.com

A BABY kisses a photo of a deceased soldier, surrounded by the fallen man's crying relatives. A celebrity photographer posts a staged photo of a Tatmadaw soldier and a young woman, about to part as he leaves for the front lines, with the message "May all Myanmar soldiers return safely to their families". Members of the public - from a business tycoon to a popular newspaper - donate cash to the relatives of deceased and injured soldiers. Facebook users change their profile images to those of Tatmadaw regiments based in northeastern Shan State.

These are not scenes that have accompanied Myanmar's recent ethnic conflicts, be they with Kachin, Shan, Palaung or other ethnic groups. In those cases, the Tatmadaw is normally seen as the aggressor, even the villain. The recent fighting in Kokang region has prompted a public outpouring of support for the military that is unprecedented in recent times.

It has also been fed by the government's own reporting of the conflict. In a departure from the past, state media has published regular reports, including rare admissions of casualties.

Sai Leik, a spokesperson for the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, said the public sentiment had been influenced by the government's decision to release more information than it has in the past. "The government has used a different policy in regards to media propaganda during the Kokang conflict," he said.

MORE ON NEWS 6



PAGE

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PHOTO: ZARNI PHYO

People displaced by conflict in the Kokang region disembark from trucks at the Mansu Shan Monastery in Lashio on February 19. Many of those fleeing to safe havens in Shan State are migrant workers, yet they say that rather than return to their hometowns they want to get back to Kokang as soon as possible and resume work.

## Up to 100,000 flee into China

Displaced civilians on the Chinese side of the Kokang conflict say official figures have understated the size of the refugee crisis over the border in Yunnan province, where up to 100,000 may have sought refuge in recent weeks. **NEWS 3**

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# Page 2

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



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

### Once was Burma...

*Archival material  
courtesy of  
Pansodan Gallery*

First floor, 286 Pansodan, upper  
block, Kyauktada township



**Bogyoke Aung San on cover of  
socialist magazine Forward, 1970**

#### **FUDDY-DUDDY, HOITY-TOITY, JIGGERY-POKERY PERSONS**

In a fairly unhinged-sounding and somewhat uncharacteristically anarchic 1263-word rant published last week, a regular *Global New Light of Myanmar* contributor going by the name of Tommy Pauk took aim at the three types of person who will hinder progress in society. Pauk, presumably an English schoolgirl toff from 1950, identified these three groups as: "fuddy-duddy, hoity-toity and jiggery-pokery persons".

Because you're probably wondering, I've taken the liberty of lifting Pauk's definitions below – so you'll know what to look out for and hopefully be able to use that knowledge to prevent the collapse of society as we know it.

##### **Fuddy-duddy:**

"Fuddy-duddies... want to grip their old-fashioned ideas and principles firmly. The youths pay due respect to them, but unfortunately fuddy-duddies do not take interest in the endeavor or modern concepts or outlook of the youths."

##### **Jiggery-pokery:**

"The persons who act jiggery-pokery intend to gain some unjust or unfair winning over others. This situation can be seen in both developed and developing countries in the world. The gullible people are indeed cheated by the act of jiggery-pokery. This kind of trick is especially used for the contestation in political field. e.g In some countries, the elections for Presidency or Parliament members or Multi- Parties were being rigged."

Pauk reports some businessmen "use the technique of jiggery-pokery among themselves to win the award of business licence or permit from the authorities concerned."

##### **Hoity-toity:**

"The manner and behavior of hoity-toity persons are absolutely disgusting. The simple people do not want to deal with them.... A hoity-toity person is hated by the majority people in the society. However, those subservient people around him or her can tolerate his or her haughty behavior because the subservient people gain some benefits from him or her for themselves."

And now you know.

#### **Page 2 Lonely Hearts Club**

Last week's Valentine's Day personals ads proved such a resounding success, creating several new couples and one polygamous union (oops!), that this will now be a regular feature. Please send your missed connections, replies and personals ads through to the email at the top of the page.

"We locked eyes across the room at the interfaith meeting we both attended, which was aimed at tackling tensions in the community by promoting peace and understanding between people of different religions – because as you said, maybe we're both young and idealistic, but that seems like a positive and constructive way forward. I know I just met you and this is crazy, but if we want to be

together and not have to deal with a whole lot of paperwork, we should probably get married before this bill is enshrined into law. How about it?"  
– *Hasty, Hasty Hindu, Ahlone township*

#### **In brief**

Conflict in the northeast sends shockwaves through ATS market

Unconfirmed eyewitness reports emerge that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has had "rule of law" tattooed across her knuckles

Sheer number of phone shops in Myanmar "still baffling", even though SIM cards are affordable now

Journalists compare contents of bug-out bags prepared "just in case", mostly cigarettes

Prolific litigious publishing group Eleven Media reportedly considering "just becoming a law firm"

#### **Next week**

Full brunt of foreigner's cumulative rage over line-cutters at Ruby Mart heaped upon undeserving elderly woman

Exotic animals "should just stop being so delicious", says slow loris carpaccio enthusiast

Doctor suspected of receiving kickbacks from Tiger Balm and antibiotics distributors after prescribing them consistently for every presenting ailment in ten years

Woman disappointed new legislation likely to thwart her personal goal of decimating her uterus by giving birth as often as possible

"The government has done its part. I would like to advise the students that Rangoon is deep water for them. If they venture into deep water, whether they can swim or not, there is a chance that they might drown under unfortunate circumstances."

– *Deputy Education Minister Thant Shin gives a vaguely sinister sounding word of warning to would-be student protestors last week (via DVB)*

**Tweet of the week** goes to a Yangon-based foreign journalist, who came out with this zinger: "Population Control Bill": You know when a piece of legislation is bad when it sounds like a serial killer nickname"

Infant mortality rate  
(per 1000 live births)

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Eastern Myanmar, 2012. This compares with the country's overall average of 41.

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A migrant worker displaced by conflict around Laukkai sits in a monastery in Lashio on February 19. Photo: Zarni Phyo

# Displaced in Lashio hope for an early return to jobs in Laukkai

YE MON  
yeemontun2013@gmail.com

PEOPLE displaced by heavy fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) in the Kokang Self-administered Zone in northern Shan State say they want peace to be restored so they can go back to work.

At least 50 government soldiers have been killed, as well as an estimated 100 civilians, since the fighting broke out on February 9. Tens of thousands of civilians – some reports say up to 100,000 – have been driven from their homes. At least 30,000, mostly ethnic Chinese, have crossed into China's Yunnan province, while others have scattered across northern Myanmar.

Thousands of migrant workers who moved to the Kokang area have fled through Lashio, the largest city in northern Shan State. Some travelled by car, while others walked – a journey of almost 150 kilometres (93 miles).

"I think 10,000 people have already arrived in Lashio as of February 20. Most are originally from Mandalay," an official from the Lu Mhu Thitsar society, who requested anonymity, told *The Myanmar Times*.

At least 400 people are arriving at Mansu Shan Buddhist monastery from Kokang every day, the official said.

The displaced families receive rice and curry twice a day, funded by public donations. When the refugees

arrive, the leader registers them with the authorities and they are allocated a space to sleep. When *The Myanmar Times* visited Mansu Shan Monastery in Lashio on February 19, children who had only recently fled the conflict zone were playing in the monastery compound.

"I got at least K10,000 allowance and a place to stay there. They will help us return to Mandalay free of charge, but I really want to stay in Kokang and keep working. But the situation is impossible," said Ko Min, who fled Hopang township, just south of the Kokang capital Laukkai.

Most of those who fled are migrant workers employed to chop sugarcane or as stonemasons in Laukkai, earning K500,000 a month or more.

"The bosses pay K200 per bunch of 10 sugarcanes, which amounts to at least K25,000 a day. Most of the bosses are Chinese and Wa," said Maung Naing, who worked in Laukkai and comes from Yamethin township, Mandalay Region.

He says he spent K100,000 travelling to Laukkai to find work.

"Now, I have no money, no job and no choice. I don't want to return home. I want the fighting to stop, and the government to act," he said.

A nurse working in the monastery camp said some of those who fled are still in shock because of their exposure to the fighting.

Ma Poe Poe Chit, 19, was shot while on the road between Laukkai and Chinshwehaw in a Red Cross convoy. She says she thought she was going to die, and thanked God for saving her.

"They attacked us from the valley. Bombs dropped around us, but we were saved by keeping our heads down. Two Red Cross workers were wounded," she said.

Like most of those fleeing, she is now unemployed and unsure how she will find work. "Now I'm going home to Ayeyarwady Region," she said, "but I'm worried about my friend, who is still in Laukkai."

On February 20, the Tatmadaw renewed its air and ground offensive to drive the rebels from the town of Laukkai amid further heavy fighting and casualties on both sides, according to state media.

**Ko Min**  
Displaced migrant worker

**'They will help us return to Mandalay free of charge, but I really want to stay in Kokang and keep working.'**

# Refugees pour across border into China



REFUGEES fleeing into China from fighting between Myanmar troops and Kokang rebels say the exodus is far greater than reported by official media on both sides, and that civilians have been shot and shelled by Myanmar government forces.

Two ethnic Han Chinese refugees contacted by telephone across the border area told *The Myanmar Times* that they believed some 100,000 people had fled. They were said to be living in the open or in a camp identified as Number 125 as well as in nearby towns and villages. Basic aid in the form of food and water is said to have been supplied by the Chinese authorities.

"Almost all the [ethnic] Chinese population of Kokang has fled, like I did," said a man who identified himself as Yang, one of the original clan names of the Chinese military contingents that occupied the area in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.

A woman volunteer worker from the main town of Laukkai, who asked to remain anonymous, also said the total number of refugees "could be 100,000", adding that some were unable to flee because of continued clashes. "The whole area has evacuated," she said.

Radio Free Asia quoted a worker of the Chinese Red Cross in Yunnan province as saying more than 100,000 refugees had crossed the border into China's Zhenkang county since the clashes began.

Chinese state media have reported that 30,000 refugees have crossed the border since fighting erupted on February 9, while official reports in Myanmar have only referred to those fleeing inland and receiving assistance, a number reported last week to be just over 3000.

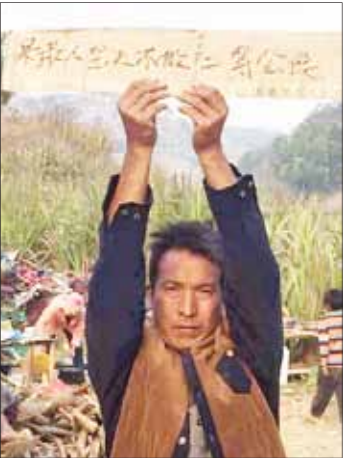
Both Mr Yang and the volunteer worker said civilians had been killed by Myanmar government forces. Mr Yang put the possible death toll at 120 and said some had been shot. The volunteer worker said she personally knew of 10 friends and relatives, including her grandfather, who had been killed. Asked how they died, she said they had been caught in government shelling. She also confirmed reports of raids by government aircraft.

Restrictions on journalists' movements on both sides of the border

make such accounts hard to corroborate. Myanmar officials have given scant information on civilian casualties and deny that government forces specifically target civilians.

More than 50 Tatmadaw soldiers are also reported to have been killed by Kokang rebels since February 9.

Local and foreign media have gained access to Laukkai itself, as well as refugee populations in Lashio and Mandalay. However, the number of internally displaced people appears likely to be dwarfed by those who have moved to China. The volunteer worker said contact with Laukkai itself was not possible, with phone lines down.



A Kokang man holds a sign that reads "Guogan [Kokang] people ... cannot be made second-class citizens." Photo: Supplied

Images of those displaced have circulated on Facebook, but more widely on the Chinese social networking site Sina-Weibo. The *New York Times* reported images of casualties on the network were being censored. China's tight controls over web content mean posts on Weibo are actively deleted by censors, and online discussions are guided in favour of the Communist party line by a cyber squad referred to as the 50 Cent Party - the name a reference to their reported per-post payment scheme.

Images obtained from the border by *The Myanmar Times* depicted displaced people on the Chinese side. One man holds a cardboard sign bearing the message "Guogan [Kokang] people ... cannot be made second-class citizens". Another held by an elderly woman reads "I just want to go home for Chinese New Year". But with no ceasefire or talks on the immediate horizon, it is unclear just when a return will be possible.

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# Blow by blow: Timeline of the conflict

**February 8-9:** Sustained fighting erupts in the area around the border town of Laukkai in northern Shan State between government forces and the rebel Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army.

**February 10:** A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson says refugees have crossed the border and are receiving government aid. Chinese media say 30,000 people have fled the fighting. The ministry calls on the Myanmar government and the MNDA to cease fire and solve their dispute through talks. Army helicopters and MIG-29s attack MNDA positions.



A woman cries after seeking refuge in a Lashio monastery from fighting in the Kokang area. Photo: AFP

**February 13:** The state-run *Global New Light of Myanmar* says 47 government troops were killed and 73 injured from February 9 to 12. Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets leaders of other armed ethnic groups in Nay Pyi Taw and accuses some of siding with the Kokang rebels, even while holding ceasefire talks with the government.

**February 14:** The army fights for total control of Laukkai, seizing weapons and narcotics and killing 18 rebels, pro-government media reports. Eight seriously wounded rebels are reported to have died while receiving medical treatment from Tatmadaw soldiers.

**February 16:** The MNDA sends an open letter to the president asking for ceasefire talks. The president and senior military commanders visit injured soldiers in hospital and donate money to families of the wounded and killed. The president "vows not to lose an inch of Myanmar's territory", state media reports.

**February 17:** President U Thein Sein imposes martial law in the Kokang area - the first use of a military administration in Myanmar since his government took office in 2011. The evening announcement came after two volunteer Red Cross workers were wounded when their clearly marked convoy was attacked by unidentified gunmen. Media report three more army fatalities and two civilians killed over past three days.

**February 18:** The government rules out ceasefire talks. Sporadic fighting continues. Army reinforcements heading to Laukkai along three routes are attacked by Kokang rebels backed by Kachin Independence Army, Ta'ang National Liberation Army and Shan State Army (Wanhai) fighters, according to official reports. The MNDA earlier said it had received support from the TNLA and Arakan Army, but other groups have denied reports of cooperation.

**February 19:** Military courts established in Laukkai may use "summary proceedings and the death sentence" among other punishments, official media report. Armed forces fight Kokang rebels who had cut off major routes into Laukkai. One soldier is reported killed. U Zaw Htay, an official in the President's Office, issues a statement on Facebook saying Myanmar and China must cooperate "on the understanding that terrorist attacks on Myanmar are not allowed from Chinese territory".

- Guy Dinmore

# Military rule descends

Government shows it means business as it attempts to restore order following dramatic

**EI EI TOE LWIN**  
**HTOO THANT**  
newsroom@mmmtimes.com

THE decision to temporarily hand power in the Kokang region to military authorities has provoked a mixed response, with some expressing concern that it could lead to human rights abuses.

On the night of February 17, President U Thein Sein announced the introduction of martial law in the Kokang Self-administered Zone - comprising Konkyan and Laukkai townships - for 90 days.

It was the first time he had exercised this option under section 412(a) of the 2008 constitution since taking office.

A curfew had been introduced on February 12, but the president said it had not been effective to "control chaos and to manage administration sector [while] lives and property of civilians are under threat from conflicts".

To ensure "community peace and tranquility and prevalence of law and order" in the zone, the president granted administrative and judicial power to Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing under section 413(b) of the constitution.

The following day, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing gave Colonel Saw Myint, the commander of Regional Control Command (Laukkai), administrative and judicial powers in the region. These powers include the right to summarily try suspects in a military court and potentially hand down the death penalty for a range of Penal Code offences, including high treason, libel against the government, murder, manslaughter, rape, mugging, robbery, corruption and offences under eight other laws.

National League for Democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who leads the parliamentary rule of law committee, said she believed the decision was warranted in the circumstances.

"The Tatmadaw has to defend [the country]. I think [the order] is

necessary to fulfil military objectives" in the Kokang region, she said.

However, she warned that the military must not deviate from legal procedures while exercising its authority in Kokang. "Whatever administrative system is in place, you cannot ignore law and order," she said.

Political analyst U Sithu Aung Myint said granting administrative power to military was unnecessary and could lead to human rights violations.

He also expressed concern that relations between Myanmar and China could be harmed if the military misuses the strong powers granted it by the martial law order.

"The military has suffered many casualties in the fighting so they will probably exercise their powers vigorously. For example, if they just shoot whatever they see, it will send more civilians fleeing over the border," he said.

"There will also be no mechanism to investigate [the actions of the Tatmadaw] while martial law is in place."

Already reports are emerging of civilian casualties at the hands of the Tatmadaw, although they are difficult to verify because of restrictions on access to the area. According to U Haw Shauk Chan, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Kunlong, which is next to the Kokang zone, nearly 50 civilians

**'We absolutely agree with the decision to put in place a military administration ... There won't be any harm done to residents.'**

**U Kyaw Ni Naing**

Kokang Pyithu Hluttaw representative



Soldiers patrol in Laukkai on February 16. Photo: AFP

have been killed and almost 90,000 have fled clashes in the Kokang Region. At least 30,000 have crossed the border into China's Yunnan province.

Chinese state media in Yunnan province have reported that the Tatmadaw fired on civilians while fighting Kokang soldiers on February 16.

Meanwhile, Yangon-based *7Day Daily* reported on February 17 that one elderly Kokang resident of the Kokang region arrived at a refugee camp on the Chinese border after being wounded in a Tatmadaw attack.

However, a Tatmadaw official said the reports were untrue. "We never attack civilians. It is very clear that we are now trying to save their lives and help them go back to their homes," said a military official, who asked not to be named.

But while some political observers have criticised the introduction of martial law, others have been more supportive.

"We absolutely agree with the decision to put in place a military administration," said U Kyaw Ni Naing, the



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# ds on Kokang

atic offensive by ethnic Kokang rebel soldiers



DAA), which has received support from the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Arakan Army. The MNDAA launched the offensive to win back ground that it lost to the Tatmadaw in 2009.

Fighting has been fierce, with the state media reporting on February 13 that 47 Tatmadaw soldiers had been killed and another 73 wounded. In the past the government has rarely acknowledged Tatmadaw losses in its battles against armed ethnic groups.

Both President U Thein Sein and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing have made it clear from the start that they view the offensive as an infringement of Myanmar's sovereign territory that will not be tolerated.

The president has vowed not to "lose an inch" of territory to the MNDAA, and both have toured hospitals in Pyin Oo Lwin and Lashio filled with injured Tatmadaw soldiers.

During a meeting with armed ethnic groups who attended the Union Day celebration in Nay Pyi Taw on February 12, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said the Tatmadaw has strong evidence that some ethnic armed groups have been involved in this fighting. He warned that those groups must take responsibility for their participation.

"We will never give up," the senior general said when he met soldiers in Lashio on February 16 who had been injured in the Kokang fighting.

The government has also rebuffed an MNDAA offer of peace talks. In an open letter sent to President U Thein Sein on February 16, the group said the Kokang region is the home of the ethnic Kokang people and it will continue to fight to regain its territory.

**MORE ON NEWS 6**

Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Laukkai.

He added that ethnic Kokang will cooperate with the Tatmadaw to preserve the stability of the region.

"We understand that we can get peace and stability as soon as possible if we cooperate with the Tatmadaw for these 90 days," U Kyaw Ni Naing said. "We rely on the Tatmadaw and stand ready to cooperate with them. We plan to form a foundation for rehabilitation projects."

He dismissed concerns about potential human rights violations under the military administration.

"There won't be any harm done to local residents," he said.

Clashes broke out on February 9 between the Tatmadaw and the ethnic Kokang Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MN-

## Voices from the street: Laukkai fighting

**AUNG KYAW MIN**  
**NAY ZAW AUNG WIN**  
newsroom@mmtimes.com

**U Myo Lwin, 41, teashop owner, Botahtaung township**

Pheung Kya-shin was long a drug criminal under the former government but was never given any sort of punishment. Only now the hostility has intensified against him. So, is this a political move? It is hard to answer this question because these developments are more like reality than a mere political trick.

Lately, people are saying that one product of this conflict is that people have become positive toward the Tatmadaw. In reality, people had a negative attitude toward the Tatmadaw in the past only because of the wrong and ruthless leadership.



**U Htein Linn, 55, sailor, Thaketa township**

This news hits close to home for me because a neighbour of mine in the Tatmadaw just died in a recent clash. I expressed condolences to his family. I don't really know what caused this [conflict] or who is behind it ... but I would like to say that no war has a good outcome. To be frank, the Laukkai news has caught the attention of people more than any other news right now. The question is whether this is one of the government's moves to distract attention. I do feel that way.

### VOX POP



**Ma Ei, 21, student, Patheingyi township**

Although I rarely follow the news via newspapers or journals, I do read updates on Facebook, which also includes information on the current ethnic conflicts. There are poems that make me cry and pictures that induce empathy in me for the victims there. I am not really interested in politics, but I am constantly being notified by social media and by friends about current affairs. Anyway, I really feel sorry for those who lost their lives in the war.

On Facebook, I see both denunciation and support for the war.

**U Ye, 59, newspaper seller, Dawbon township**

These days, daily newspaper sales have reached a peak. The cause of this is, I guess, the student protests going on and these ethnic conflicts in Shan State. Another thing is because Daw Suu has decided to say something about this Kokang matter. The sales of daily newspapers have doubled within a week. People are yearning for true news so I think the Tatmadaw should convey an accurate account of what is happening in the conflict zones. The government used two different words in addressing Kokang: *meikswa*, which connotes a rather superficial relationship, and *taingyinnthar*, which in contrast suggests that the Tatmadaw recognises Kokang. This only created ambiguity among the public, which is now uncertain whether to consider Kokang as a friend or an enemy.

**U Maung Htay, 42, street vendor, Dala township**



This news has been reaching everyone's ears lately, but I haven't really been paying any attention. I'm quite occupied with my job. Following political news would not feed me and my family, and I only care about my family. If there is one thing that I do think about every minute, it would be how to free my family from poverty.

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## CONTINUED FROM NEWS 5

"We understand the return journey will take so long and be very difficult but we will go until we reach our goal in cooperation with other ethnic groups," the letter said.

Bertil Lintner, a Swedish journalist who has been writing about ethnic issues and Myanmar politics for decades, said he did not think the Kokang or any other ethnic conflict could be resolved through military means alone.

"There are reasons why some people resort to armed struggle against the government, and those reasons would have to be addressed before any solution can be found," Mr Lintner told *The Myanmar Times* last week.

The conflict has also prompted questions about China's role in the border area. The government has refused to openly criticise China, saying only that it will continue to maintain the stability and security of border areas in accordance with the so-called "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence" agreed upon by both sides.

On February 18, presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut said on Facebook that the minister for foreign affairs called the Chinese ambassador to Myanmar on February 17 and discussed ways to work together to prevent more violence inside Myanmar.

While the government appears determined to resolve its border issues through diplomatic means, Mr Lintner said it would also be aware that the United Wa State Army, a 20,000-strong fighting force located just south of Laukkai, has been supplying the MN-DAA with arms and ammunition.

"The conflict is bound to have repercussions on China-Myanmar relations. Almost the entire arsenal of the UWSA has been obtained in China, and now some of those munitions are being used in the Kokang war," he said.

However, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said any accusations against China must be backed up with evidence. "If not there will be unnecessary problems," she said.

Meanwhile, China has promised to continue to play a constructive role in promoting the peace process in Myanmar. State agency Xinhua quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesperson as saying at a press briefing on February 16 that China will never allow any organisations or individuals to use Chinese territory to undermine China-Myanmar relations or stability in its border areas.

## CONTINUED FROM NEWS 1

# In Kokang, the Tatmadaw comes in from the cold

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Despite the public support, he said the conflict was one of the government's making.

"The government created the problem themselves because they didn't have any framework for political dialogue after ceasefires. They just gave economic and other opportunities in the region. Then in 2009 the government put pressure on the Kokang army to become a Border Guard Force," he said.

The main factor driving support for the Tatmadaw appears to be the conflict's regional dimension. The ethnic Kokang army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, was formed by Pheung Kya-shin after the collapse of the Burma Communist Party in 1989. He quickly signed a ceasefire with the military regime but in 2009 the Tatmadaw invaded the Kokang region, pushing the MNDA forces over the border into China.

While there is little public evidence to support the perception China is involved in the MNDA offensive launched on February 9, it is a widely held view - and one that appears to have official support.

On his Facebook page last week, presidential spokesperson U Ye Htut, who is also minister for information, shared a post about President U Thein Sein - who, as a young officer, fought against the BCP in the Kokang region - consoling injured Tatmadaw soldiers. He wrote, "Pheung Kya-shin robbed the country in cooperation with



Above: A woman reads coverage of the Kokang conflict in private and state-run publications. Below right: A photo posted on Facebook on February 13 by the "Zero Snipers Group" purports to show grieving relatives of a Tatmadaw soldier killed in the conflict. Photos: Aung Htay Hlaing, Facebook

another nation ... The KIA and Palaung are brothers, even though we are fighting with them."

Anti-Chinese sentiment has stirred this newfound support for the armed forces, including among those making donations.

On February 14, Eleven Media Group, publisher of the *Daily Eleven* newspaper, donated K2 million to the Yangon Region military brigade.



"We donated to the bereaved families of the soldiers who have

given their lives," said chief editor Ko Wai Phyto, "while protecting the sovereignty of the country in the China-Myanmar border region."

China has denied involvement, and said it remains committed to peace on the border. The Chinese embassy in Yangon has also denied the accusations and questioned the lack of evidence to support the theories.

U Min Zaw Oo, director of the conflict resolution team at the Myanmar Peace Center, dismissed suggestions that Beijing was behind or involved in the conflict.

However, he said it was difficult to discount the possibility of regional government support in Yunnan province.

"Beijing policy is different from that of the regional government in Yunnan. They might have an interest in this," he said, adding that Chinese regional authorities and businesspeople have business relations with armed ethnic groups on the border.

He said Chinese forces are positioned well back from the border, which allows the Kokang fighters to drop back with ease after they confront Tatmadaw troops. There may also be Chinese mercenaries fighting alongside the MNDA, he said, noting that nine Chinese had been caught with guns in Tamu on the Indian border last year.

But U Sithu Aung Myint, a political analyst and regular contributor to *The Myanmar Times*, said the conflict was an internal problem. He added that there was no evidence of influence and intervention by other nations.

"People shouldn't support one side, whether the government or armed groups," he said. "That only makes peace all the harder to achieve."



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Government rejects MNDAA offer for ceasefire negotiations

Offensive against government in Kokang region was an attack on Myanmar “sovereignty”, says official



YE MON



LUN MIN MANG

THE government has ruled out opening negotiations with the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), a Kokang armed group, following clashes that have left scores of soldiers dead on both sides.

U Zaw Htay, a director in the President's Office, made the pledge on February 18.

The MNDAA had sent an open letter to President U Thein Sein on February 16, in which it asked the government for ceasefire talks.

“Launching offensives against a self-administered zone to oust the mandated Kokang autonomous body is an offence to the sovereignty of the

zone. We can't let this happen. We have no plans to negotiate a ceasefire,” said U Zaw Htay.

With no agreement likely, fighting is continuing in northeastern Shan State. State-run media reported on February 19 that more fighting had taken place between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups, including the Kachin Independence Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the SSA (Wanhai) on the main route to Laukkai.

A statement published in *Kyemon* (The Mirror) said three soldiers had died and one officer and 26 soldiers were wounded between February 15 and 17.

Since fighting erupted on February 9, thousands of residents from regional capital, Laukkai, have fled across the border into China, as well as to Lashio and Mandalay.

Tensions have been running high following a February 17 ambush of a

Myanmar Red Cross Society convoy transporting refugees out of the Laukkai area. The attack prompted the president to declare martial law in the Kokang Self-administered Zone, handing over administrative and judicial powers to the Laukkai Regional Control Commander.

U Zaw Htay condemned the attack on the convoy, adding that the Tatmadaw had initiated rescue operations. “Targeting civilians and the Red Cross is inhumane. The Tatmadaw has launched rescue operations and is evacuating civilians from the area,” he said.

Tatmadaw Regional Control Command in Laukkai is leading the evacuation of the remaining residents of Laukkai.

Although the number of civilian deaths to date is unclear, Ta Pan Hla, deputy communications officer of the TNLA, said it “may be in the hundreds”.

He said the TNLA, which has been helping the MNDAA in its efforts to capture Laukkai from the government, has ordered its troops not to target civilians. It has promised to investigate whether any of its soldiers were involved in the incident.

“If they were involved, then we will take action,” he said, adding that the TNLA had sustained about 10 casualties over the 10 days of fighting.

While the government insists it will not enter talks with the MNDAA, U Aye Thar Aung from the Rakhine National Party said it should seek a peaceful end to the conflict.

“Instead of carrying out ground operations, it would be better if the government could engage in round-table talks,” he said.

“The offer should not be rejected. Talks can better ensure a certain amount of stability in the area than fighting.”



An injured Myanmar Red Cross Society volunteer lies on the ground after a rescue convoy was attacked near Laukkai on February 17. Photo: AFP

Red Cross halts assistance after convoy attack

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RED Cross volunteers will no longer provide assistance to people displaced by the intense fighting that erupted in northern Shan State, Myanmar Red Cross secretary general U Khin Maung Hla announced last week.

The decision came after two Red Cross volunteers were wounded when unidentified gunmen attacked their aid convoy on February 17.

“For the sake of the safety of our own staff, we cannot provide any more assistance in the conflict area. We will resume our aid operations after the fighting stops,” he said.

The two Myanmar Red Cross volunteers from Kunlong township, northern Shan State, were wounded

as their convoy transported civilians from Lankan to Kunlong, he said. The wounded have been named as U Moe Kyaw Than and Ko Zaw Min Soe. The convoy, transporting about 100 civilians and several journalists, came under sustained attack on the road, said U Khin Maung Hla.

One volunteer suffered head wounds and the other abdominal wounds. They are both in Kunlong public hospital, and one volunteer underwent surgery overnight. Their condition is described as stable. The Red Cross branch leaders and volunteers from Hopang were due to travel to Kunlong last week to gather further information and support the wounded men.

Both the United Nations country office and the United States embassy in Yangon have condemned the

attack. The embassy said in a statement that attacks on humanitarian workers were “unacceptable”.

“We honour the brave work of the MRCS team, and of all others providing services to those in need in Kokang and throughout the country, and call on all parties to allow the safe passage and full protection of humanitarian staff in accordance with international humanitarian standards,” the statement said.

The volunteers were wearing Red Cross vests at the time of the attack. It remains unclear who was responsible for the incident. Media reports suggest there were no Tatmadaw units in the vicinity of the area where the attack occurred.

The Myanmar Red Cross is providing assistance to more than 3000 people displaced by the fighting

between the Tatmadaw and Kokang rebels, which broke out on February 9. Thousands of migrant workers from other parts of the country fled the fighting, and 30,000 local villagers reportedly crossed the border into Yunnan province, China. Large numbers of displaced families arrived in Lashio, Pyin Oo Lwin and Mandalay. Myanmar Red Cross has sent an assessment team to Lashio to assist, said U Khin Maung Hla.

U Hla Shwe, president of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, condemned the attack on humanitarian workers.

“It is very sad to hear that our volunteers were wounded while carrying out a strictly humanitarian function to help the victims of fighting,” he said.

“They should be respected and not be made the object of attack.”



# Govt accused of misleading parliament on land returns

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HLUTTAW Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann has acted to speed up the restitution of land seized from its former owners by ordering the two bodies concerned, the Farmland Investigation Commission and the Land Utilisation Management Committee, to work together. The speaker acted following MPs' complaints that they were not being given a true picture of the situation.

The Farmland Investigation Commission was set up by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, and the Land Utilisation Management Committee was formed by the Union government. Working separately, neither seems to have been able to overcome delays in restoring confiscated farmland to its former owners.

Members of parliament have said that the situation as described to hluttaw by the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brigadier General Kyaw Zan Myint, who is responsible for the land-grab issue, does not resemble the true situation.

The speaker told the hluttaw on February 17 that he believed that "co-ordination between the sub-commissions and the Land Utilisation Management Committee would improve matters".

The decision came after commission chair U Tin Htut said the



Protesters call for the return of land confiscated by Yuzana in Kachin State during a May 2014 demonstration. Photo: Thiri

settlements reported by the deputy minister existed only on paper. "The deputy minister said more than 310,000 acres of land had been given back to their former owners. But in the real world, there are a lot of people who haven't got their land back," he said.

U Tin Htut also said some low-ranking members of the Land

Utilisation Management Committee were themselves land-grabbers, accusing them of improper conduct in the handling of confiscation issues.

Commission members U Sein Win of Maubin township, U Thein Tun Oo of Amarapura township, U Thein Tun of Kyaung Kone township, and U Htay Win of Lewe township

have also complained that the deputy minister's account was at odds with the real situation.

More than 11,000 cases of land confiscation have been presented by the Farmland Investigation Commission to the government, but only a few hundred have been settled to date.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

## MPs get last call on funding for projects

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YOUR time is up – that's the message Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint has given MPs trying to secure funding for development projects.

He said on February 16 that projects not included in the draft National Planning Law will not receive funding in the budget, and will therefore have to be put off until 2016.

For many MPs, that could be after political retirement, as their first term ends after this year's general election.

"Activities included in the National Planning Bill will be included in the budget. Proposals not in this year's budget will have to wait until 2016-17. That will be for the new hluttaw and the new government to deal with," he said.

The national planning and budget bills were submitted to parliament last month but are yet to be approved.

U Khin Aung Myint said MPs should consider this when submitting questions during the year.

"Please review your questions. You all need to know that you cannot demand projects be fulfilled that are not included in this year's budget and national planning laws," he said.

However, he added that ministries could make a note of an MP's proposal if it was deemed urgent.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



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# Armed groups delay informal talks

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THE Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team last week delayed informal peace talks that were due to start in Chiang Mai on February 18, in a move that is likely to push back the next formal meeting – and any chance of signing a nationwide ceasefire – to at least early March.

The NCCT and the government's Union Peace-making Work Committee had agreed earlier this month to meet after Union Day, which is marked on February 12, with some hopeful the talks could bring about an agreement on a draft nationwide ceasefire.

While the NCCT, which is negotiating on behalf of 16 armed ethnic

groups, had initially proposed to meet from February 18 to 21 in northern Thailand, Myanmar Peace Center official U Hla Maung Shwe said that the meeting had now been delayed.

"[The NCCT] asked [chief government negotiator] U Aung Min to send a request letter to the Thai government for that meeting, which he did. Then yesterday they informed us that they can't hold the meeting on those dates any more," he said on February 17.

"We had planned to hold an official meeting in the last week of February in Yangon. Now we can't say exactly when [the meeting will be]. It is up to them."

While U Hla Maung Shwe said the delay was due to the unavailability of some NCCT members, NCCT leader Naing Han Thar said armed groups wanted clarification on the framework for political dialogue before agreeing to further talks.

"The government is saying that

we are just making these demands because we don't want to sign the nationwide ceasefire," he said. "We are asking for some guarantees on political dialogue but not too much."

One of the guarantees they are seeking is on the number of participants in political dialogue. The NCCT says there should only be three groups – the government, armed

**'The government signed [the deed of commitment] just to look good internationally.'**

**Naing Han Thar**

Ethnic peace negotiator

ethnic groups and democratic forces – but the government has so far refused to accept the proposal.

It has previously put forward a proposal for six participants: the government; parliament; military; political parties; ethnic armed groups; and economists and civil society organisations.

"The government wants to have more pro-government participants like the [National Convention]," he said, referring to the body that drafted the 2008 constitution. "If they won't agree [on the number of participants] how can we move forward?"

Meanwhile, he said a Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation signed by representatives of the government, parliament, military and political parties on Union Day was "meaningless" for the NCCT.

"The government signed it just to look good internationally. This

commitment doesn't make any sense to us."

The deed states that signatories will "build a union based on democratic and federal principles in the spirit of Panglong and in accordance with the outcomes of political dialogue to ensure freedom, equality, justice and self-determination for all citizens".

While most NCCT members declined to sign the deed, the Karen National Union was among the four armed ethnic groups that put their name to the commitment on February 12.

This has been widely interpreted as a sign of the group's support for the nationwide ceasefire, and Naing Han Thar said he believed the KNU could even sign the document alone, without other NCCT members.

"Most NCCT members ... didn't sign that paper but the KNU did. I think they want to find other ways for peace."

## Students call halt to marches as MPs consider law changes

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STUDENT demonstrators called a temporary halt to their march on Yangon last week, giving MPs until the end of February to pass amendments to the National Education Law.

The main column of student marchers, which set off from Mandalay on January 20, stopped at Letpadan in Bago Region on March 18, two days after other groups agreed to halt in the face of government warnings not to enter the country's largest city. They said they would resume their march if the amendment bill was not enacted by March 1.

An amendment bill finalised at four-way negotiations on February 14 was submitted to parliament on February 16.

The bill contains 11 "facts" demanded by the students, including the right to establish teacher and student unions, to reduce central control over educational institutions, to reform the university

entrance system, to spend 20 percent of the national budget on education and to enable minorities to use their languages in classrooms.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann led a closed-door discussion on the amendments at parliament's Zabuthiri Hall on February 17. However, the bill is not likely to be discussed in the chamber until this week, and could take weeks or even months to become law.

MPs who took part in the February 14 talks promised to submit student leaders' demands to parliament, but said they could offer no assurances the bill would be approved without change.

Experts from the National Network for Education Reform (NNER) and Ministry of Education representatives also took part in the talks, which followed a marathon 10-and-a-half-hour meeting on February 11.

On February 13, the government announced through state media that it would use force to stop any student protesters who attempted to enter



Student demonstrators who set off from Mandalay on January 20 arrive in the Bago Region town of Minhla on February 16.  
Photo: Supplied/Action Committee for Democratic Education

Yangon. Police set up roadblocks in Okkan, near the border of Yangon and Bago regions, the following day.

While the students initially refused to comply, most groups halted their

marching on February 16, a day after Sitagu Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissara urged them not to attempt to enter Yangon.

Of the groups, one comprising students from Monywa, Dawei and Maylat stopped at Bago, about 126km (78 miles) from Yangon. Another band marching from Ayeyarwady Region also stopped on February 16.

One of the leaders, Ko Zayar Lwin, said they agreed to cease their demonstration because the government had

agreed to all of their demands, and all that was left was to pass the bill in parliament. He said they were also concerned that the protests would disrupt exams for primary students.

Another protester, Ko Aung Hime Sann said he hoped that the bill would be approved within a week. "The government is again trying to use the reason of 'security' to stop us. They say this all the time to try and get us to stop," he said.

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## OPINION

# Making education inclusive: Why language choice matters



KYUNGAH  
KRISTY BANG

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"WHY is mother tongue-based multilingual education important?"

It's a question I've been asked often over the past five years in my role as the coordinator of the Asia Multilingual Education Working Group, which advocates on behalf of removing barriers to quality education for ethnolinguistic minorities in this region.

Let me begin with my story.

The first day of school after my family emigrated from South Korea to Canada was the most frustrating and alienating experience I had ever had. I felt like I was lost on another planet where people spoke a different language. I could hear my teachers and classmates but couldn't communicate with them. Once an active and talkative student, I grew quiet and shy. School was no longer the fun place it had been and I felt excluded most of the time.

A few months later, I started to make progress. Utilising my strong reading and math skills in my mother tongue, Korean, I was able to translate and convert concepts and catch up on learning in English. With support from teachers, classmates and my parents, I slowly started to speak and raise my hand in the classroom, and finally felt a sense of belonging in school and in Canadian society.

The theme of this year's International Mother Language Day on February 21 - "Inclusive education through and with language: language matters" - resonates with my experience. It also speaks to the challenges faced by some 2.3 billion people worldwide who don't have access to education in their mother tongue and are excluded as a result. For many of them, the challenges I faced are made more daunting by poverty and other barriers.

Language is a key to inclusion. If children cannot understand, they won't learn. Unfortunately, monolingual education systems pose many barriers to students from ethnolinguistic minorities accessing quality education.

Even if such students manage to enrol in school, they are often unable to follow classroom instruction and end up being pushed out of the education

system. This in turn results in further marginalisation and exclusion from society.

When language barriers are combined with other marginalising factors, such as gender, ethnicity, disability and geographical remoteness, the chances of children entering and completing basic education become very low. According to a recent UNESCO-UIS report, children from marginalised groups in India and Laos, for example, are two to three times more likely to be out of school.

Looking back on my own experience, I realise that the most crucial factor in successfully transitioning from one language - and one education system - to another was the fact that I had a solid grounding in my mother tongue. During my six years of primary education, I developed a strong understanding of concrete and abstract ideas, learning vocabulary and concepts that were transferable to my second language. Without this foundation, it

**Looking back on my own experience, I realise that the most crucial factor in successfully transitioning from one language to another was the fact that I had a solid grounding in my mother tongue.**

would have been extremely difficult for me to become functionally bilingual and continue my education.

Research has increasingly shown that teaching in a mother tongue early on in school is an effective means of reducing dropout rates and makes education more engaging for marginalised groups. Children who benefit from mother tongue-based multilingual education also perform better in their second language. Unfortunately, ethnolinguistic minority children who don't have

the opportunity to build their basic literacy and numeracy skills in their mother tongue miss out on these benefits.

When I was studying in my mother tongue, my parents took a more active role in my learning than they were able to after we emigrated. This parental engagement is important for children's intellectual and social development, and is a good indicator of school completion rates. For ethnolinguistic minority students, parents are often unable to provide this support.

Mother tongue-based multilingual education programs also bridge the gap between the culture at home, and that in school and mainstream society. They not only improve learning; they also broaden outlooks, increase tolerance and foster a respect for cultural diversity. These programs are one of the most effective ways through which we can promote a culture of peace, and build equitable and inclusive societies.

Initially, multilingual education costs more than monolingual education. The long-term benefits, however, far outweigh the initial investment - provided there is adequate funding allocated toward promoting the use of mother tongues, the development of multilingual teaching materials and teacher training. Monolingual education is not sustainable in multilingual nations, and thus these programs are likely to result in considerable savings over the long term, while also tapping into the previously untouched potential of millions of ethnolinguistic minority students.

It has been my privilege to be involved in the multilingual education movement in Southeast Asia, which has been among the most dynamic in the world over the past decade. Cambodia and the Philippines are among the countries in this region where governments have shown increased support and commitment to language education policy that ensures the language of instruction reflects the way in which children learn and teachers teach. Successes such as these are turning what were once alien worlds for children into welcoming ones, benefiting these young learners and their societies as a result.

Kyungah Kristy Bang is the project officer for multilingual education at UNESCO Bangkok and the coordinator of the Asia Multilingual Education Working Group. For more, visit [www.asiapacificmle.net](http://www.asiapacificmle.net)

# Johns Hopkins Yangon Univ

Hopes for rekindling of cooperation dating back to the 19



WA LONE

THOMAS KEAN

A RENOWNED United States university has pulled out of a project at Yangon's arts and sciences campus after failing to secure a memorandum of understanding guaranteeing academic freedom.

Launched to much fanfare little more than two years ago, the International Center of Excellence (ICOE) re-established ties between Johns Hopkins University and Yangon University that dated back to the 1950s, and was lauded as an early but important step forward for education reform.

However, in November 2014 Johns Hopkins abruptly cancelled the project, despite 67 students having been accepted for its 2015 intake.

Johns Hopkins did not respond to request for comment last week, while Karl Jackson, a professor from Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies who led the establishment of the centre, referred questions to U Phone Win of the NGO Mingalar Myanmar.

He told *The Myanmar Times* that the main reason for the suspension was Johns Hopkins' failure to secure an MOU with Yangon University, which meant that it could not access USAID funding for 2015.

A USAID spokesperson from the embassy in Yangon deferred questions to John Hopkins University but insisted there were "no new restrictions on USAID projects regarding MOUs".

The centre had been established through a letter signed by former Minister for Education U Mya Aye. In the letter he guaranteed the centre complete academic freedom and also free use of buildings at Yangon University - not only for classes but also accommodation for professors visiting to teach classes.

However, U Mya Aye passed away in December 2013 and was replaced early last year by Daw Khin San Yi. Another personnel change that affected operations was the replacement of Yangon University rector U Tin Tun with U Aung Thu, formerly of Taungoo University, by President U Thein Sein.

Johns Hopkins had pushed to



A man walks in front of a sign for the International Center of Excellence (ICOE) at Yangon University last week. Photo: Thiri

turn its agreement with U Mya Aye into a memorandum of understanding with the ministry, but the new minister instead insisted that an agreement be made directly with the university, according to sources familiar with the project.

Daw Khin San Yi also no longer accepted the validity of the letter signed by her predecessor, U Phone Win said. When talks opened with the university on agreement, it refused to agree to Johns Hopkins' demand for total academic freedom, he said.

"The main reason for John Hopkins suspending the ICOE was the government cancelling the agreement guaranteeing academic freedom," he said.

"Because Johns Hopkins didn't have a legal document of agreement with the government, it could not get USAID funding for 2015."

He said Johns Hopkins had been willing to wait until after new education-related legislation had been enacted for the academic freedom promises to come into effect. However, no agreement could be reached

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# YCDC to begin air pollution monitoring at 15 locations

Fixed and mobile testing machines will measure about 15 major pollutants at sites around Yangon



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IN an attempt to combat worsening air quality, Yangon City Development Committee are installing 15 air quality control machines throughout the city, assistant chief engineer of the pollution and cleansing department U Aung Myint Maw says.

The machines, which will measure levels of dust, carbon dioxide and a dozen other known pollutants, will be positioned in locations assessed to be the most polluted in the city, he said.

"Three permanent machines will be located at Maha Bandoola Garden, near the Hledan overpass and in Mingalardon township. Other locations will use mobile machines," he said, adding that they had been bought under the committee's annual budget.

"On the basis of the results, we will draw up a plan for reducing air pollution."

A 2012 study conducted by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization found many places in Yangon where the air contained more than 100 parts per million (ppm) of dust, especially in the cold and dry seasons, exceeding WHO standards, said U Aung Myint Maw.

Coarse particulate matter - particles with an aerodynamic diameter smaller than 10 micrometres (PM10) - was measured at 80 micrograms per cubic meter, above the WHO's guideline level of 50 micrograms averaged over a 24-hour period.

But sulfur dioxide and nitrogen

dioxide concentrations were much lower than the WHO's safe levels of 100 and 150 micrograms per cubic metre respectively, according to the Ministry of Health.

The 2012 readings were undertaken in January at Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone, the department's office in Ahlone township and a residential area in Bahan township. While the department began measuring air pollution at three locations in 2009, it could not give earlier data for comparison.

But rates are likely to have risen since 2012 due to increases in population, car use and industrial output.

## 80%

Percentage of Myanmar's registered cars that are in Yangon

Yangon's population of about 5.2 million represents more than 10 percent of the country's total population of 51.2 million people. It is home to one-third of all urban dwellers and about 80pc of its cars. The city is ringed with 24 industrial zones, and population density is growing.

According to a World Bank survey, between 2000 and 2010 Yangon's area grew from 370 to 390 square kilometres. Its population grew at a more robust 2.6pc a year, the World Bank said.

More details of the air quality improvement plan will be announced once the findings of the machines have been analysed.



Firefighters help a man from the Gamone Pwint shopping centre on February 19. Photo: Zarni Phyto

## Firecrackers spark Gamone Pwint fire

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A MAN has been charged with negligence leading to the outbreak of a fire at the Gamone Pwint shopping centre on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road in Yangon's Mayangone township. Nearly 300 firefighters and 64 fire engines were called to the scene in the early hours of February 19 after a member of a party of Chinese residents in the complex

set off firecrackers to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

A fashion shop and ceilings in the first and second floor of the centre sustained fire and smoke damage, causing losses estimated at K9.5 million.

Ko Han Zaw Shein, senior supervisor of the complex, reported the fire to police at about 5:30am.

He reported hearing firecrackers from the third floor at about 9:15pm. On going there with the centre's

electrician, Naing Naing Latt, Ko Han Zaw Shein said he saw a 45-year-old Chinese man, who lived in a third-floor apartment with three other Chinese, setting off fireworks to celebrate the New Year.

Using an extinguisher, he put out a fire in a drainpipe leading inside the shopping centre, but later discovered that fire had also broken out on the first floor, and called the fire service.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

## Experts warn of 'urgent' need to prepare Yangon for earthquakes

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EARTHQUAKE experts met in Yangon last week to draw up plans to limit the damage that a seismic event could inflict on the city and its inhabitants. The Yangon city seismic hazard assessment project, which aims to develop a sustainable city plan, was

launched on February 19.

The immediate result of the project will be a hazard map, showing the areas thought to be at greatest risk.

The one-year project is supported by UN-Habitat - through the Myanmar Consortium for Community Resilience, under the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department's Disaster Preparedness Programme - and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Bijay Karmacharya, head of agency at UN-Habitat - formally known as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme - said that preparations for an earthquake were urgently needed in Yangon, whose population has increased 10-fold in the past 80 years.

He said that of the 500 people killed in the magnitude 7.0 earthquake in 1930 in Bago Region, 50 were in Yangon, at a time when the city had a population of just 400,000.

"Yangon's population is now more than 5 million and the city is undergoing rapid transformation. An earthquake now would have a significant impact," he said.

The study will be undertaken under the guidance of the regional government, Yangon City Development Committee and Myanmar Geo-Science Society.

U Myo Thant, a lecturer at Yangon University and secretary of the hazard section of the Myanmar Earthquake Committee, said the project would identify seismic sources, estimate source parameters and calculate seismic hazards. "The result will be maps showing active faults, engineering considerations, liquefaction potential and earthquake potential," he said.

U Soe Thura Tun, vice president of the Myanmar Earthquake Committee, said the hazard and risk maps would

assist in disaster risk reduction.

"With hazard and risk maps, the government knows where the priority areas for hazard management are. A legal system for each location can be formalised. Developers know how to establish their business in representative locations. People can know the true condition of their homes and workplaces. Hazard management systems, preparedness and emergency response will be possible for all," he said.

**'An earthquake now would have a significant impact.'**

**Bijay Karmacharya**  
UN-Habitat

Yangon Region Minister for Social Welfare U Myint Thein said the maps would help prepare the city for future disasters.

"The maps will show which areas are vulnerable. Based on that information, we can construct earthquake-resistant buildings and make safety preparations such as earmarking open areas where people can gather," he said.

In recent years, the Myanmar Earthquake Committee, the Myanmar Engineering Society and the Myanmar Geo-Sciences Society in partnership with the Relief and Resettlement Department and UN-Habitat have conducted seismic risk assessments for the cities of Bago, Sagaing and Taunggyi. Yangon lies close to the Sagaing Fault, which stretches about 1500 kilometres (932 miles) and is the most active fault in the country.

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# CSOs edge closer to deal on poll code



LUN MIN MANG

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ELECTORAL civil society organisations are continuing to work closely with the Union Election Commission in preparing for the general election later this year. The UEC met the CSOs on February 16 at Yangon's Parkroyal Hotel to discuss the finalisation of the code of conduct for electoral observers and the accreditation process.

The precise nature of the collaboration between the UEC and civil society groups is apparently, however, still being worked out. Some groups objected to what appears to be an attempt by the UEC to oblige them to report back to it on the conduct of the election.

Representatives said after the February 16 meeting that the UEC had now agreed to withdraw a number of "restrictions" in the draft code of conduct.

"For example, the submission of compulsory reports has been negotiated. Some CSOs are new to electoral work, and some only came into this as the election was just about to start," said U Myint Aung Moe of Mandalay-based Wisdom Banner.

"It will be hard for them to write a report on the whole electoral process. However, observers who can't submit a report in the coming election must submit their report the next time."

UEC chair U Tin Aye said after the meeting that civil society has an

important role in election monitoring.

"They have to record the whole process of the election and then submit their reports to the UEC. They have also to monitor the parties' exploitation of the media to win the election and report on that," he said.

The UEC will present a final version of the draft code of conduct to the CSOs at their next meeting, U Tin Aye said, adding that their proposals would be taken into consideration when the commission revises the draft.

The UEC chair suggested that the CSOs should be independent of political parties, adding that voter education conducted by the CSOs should be in accordance with existing electoral law, rules and directives.

"The UEC will send us the results of the meeting in the next few days. We will then make further comments, and the final version of the code will be released after our next meeting," said U Myint Moe Aung.

The accreditation process was also discussed during the meeting.

"We couldn't discuss very much because of time constraints, but we're pleased with the outcome of the meeting," said U Banyar Oo of Myanmar Panorama, which was attending its first meeting with the UEC.

"Some groups are new to this, and had trouble keeping up. But the overall result of the meeting is positive and good," said U Thant Sin of the New Myanmar Foundation.

The UEC also held talks with representatives from the Myanmar Press Council (Interim) and political parties in separate meetings on February 17.



Phil Blackwood (left) leaves court after a hearing in Yangon on February 17. Photo: AFP

## Final arguments next month for 'Buddha bar' defendants

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FINAL arguments in the "Buddha bar" court case are expected in early March, with the bar's New Zealand manager and two Myanmar nationals facing more than four years' prison.

VGastro Bar manager and New Zealand national Phil Blackwood was arrested together with co-manager Ko Htut Ko Ko Lwin and owner U Tun Thurein on September 10, 2014, and charged with two counts of insulting religion and one of disobeying a civil servant's instruction.

The charges stem from a flyer for a Buddha-themed cheap drinks night at VGastro Bar in Bahan township that featured an image of the Buddha wearing headphones and was distributed online.

They were charged following protests by the hard-line Patriotic Buddhist Monks Union, which has in the past generated headlines for disrupting public talks by Muslim speakers.

They were denied bail and have been held in Insein Prison since their arrest.

All have pleaded not guilty to the charges. During questioning at previous court dates, Ko Htut Ko Ko Lwin and Ko Tun Thurein said they were unaware of the promotion, while Mr Blackwood said he had no intention of insulting religion.

The section 295 charge only applies in cases where there is an "intent to insult" religion, while the section 295(a) charge refers to "deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feeling".

On February 17, Mr Blackwood, U Tun Thurein and Ko Htut Ko Ko Lwin pleaded not guilty to the

section 188 charge of "disobeying a direction from a public servant to abstain from a certain act or to take certain order with property in his possession or under his management", which carries a jail term of up to six months.

The prosecution alleges that the distribution of the flyer constituted a violation of a pledge made to the local authorities in order to get a licence for VGastro Bar. The pledge included a provision not to create conflict or violate traditional or religious customs.

U Tun Thurein said he had followed all instructions issued by the authorities in relation to the bar. No witnesses were called for the defence.

Final arguments are due to be heard at the next session, on March 3, according to the defendants' lawyer U Mya Thway.

## UEC, press council to develop election reporting guide

JOURNALISTS covering the general election later this year will be given a "guidebook" jointly produced by the Union Election Commission and the Myanmar Press Council (Interim). The guide, which could be released by World Press Freedom Day, May 3, will contain a code of ethics, say the two bodies.

The UEC met with members of the press council at the Yangon Region Election Commission Office on February 17, the same day the UEC held a workshop with the political parties.

"Our main focus is the role of the media in gathering and publishing information about the election in terms

of freedom and fairness," said press council secretary U Kyaw Min Swe.

"We are going to develop a guidebook for reporters which will contain dos and don'ts in reporting the election, and what reporters should know about electoral rules, laws and directives."

He said the press council will draft the book in coordination with the election commission in accordance with international norms and Myanmar's electoral rules.

"We will try to distribute the guide in time for World Press Freedom Day, which falls on May 3," he said.

Press council vice president U Khin Maung Lay said the commission had promised to provide journalists with information while they cover the election.

"By presenting information accurately during the election, we can help them show to the world that the

election is free and fair," he said.

UEC chair U Tin Aye said the commission was concerned about the possibility that the big parties could misuse the media, impairing the freedom and fairness of the poll.

"We don't want parties to win by using their strength against the media. The playing field must be equal for all. We will conduct a free and fair election, and we request the media to report the news fairly," he said at the end of a meeting with civil society organisations on February 16.

- Lun Min Mang



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# Tribunal rules white-card voting unconstitutional

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann informs parliament of advice from tribunal on controversial decision



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THE Constitutional Tribunal has instructed parliament that people holding temporary citizenship documents – so-called white-card holders – cannot vote in the forthcoming referendum on possible amendments to the constitution. The February 16 judgement came following a request from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker Thura U Shwe Mann that the tribunal rule on the controversial issue.

It is the latest twist in a saga affecting some 700,000 residents who were issued with white cards instead of the pink Citizenship Scrutiny Cards that denote citizenship. About 600,000 of them, who live in Rakhine



Protesters in Sittwe hold placards against a law granting voting rights to white-card holders on February 15. Photo: AFP

## 700,000

Estimated number of white cards in circulation, according to the government

State, are Muslim Rohingya, widely known as “Bengalis”. The remainder are held by members of other minority groups, including in border areas.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann read out a letter from tribunal chair U Mya Thein to MPs in which he said

that he believed “specifying white-card holders as voters for the referendum is not consistent with the constitution”.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Bill Joint Committee will now consider the tribunal’s assessment, the speaker said.

The February 10 law authorising the constitutional referendum allowed white-card holders to vote, a decision that caused a storm of protest, including heated debate in parliament and demonstrations in the Rakhine State capital of Sittwe and elsewhere. In response, the government announced that the validity of white cards would expire on March 31. Holders would then have to apply for citizenship in

accordance with existing legislation.

While this is likely to make the question of white-card voting moot, the Constitutional Tribunal decision means that MPs will likely have to amend election laws to bring them into line with the constitution.

It also raises questions about why the military regime and then U Thein Sein’s civilian government allowed white-card holders to vote in the 2010 general election and 2012 by-elections.

Representative U Aung Kyi Nyunt of the National League for Democracy told *The Myanmar Times* that the tribunal’s opinion was helpful.

“This is the direct reply of the chair of the constitutional tribunal to

the speaker’s question. From the legal point of view, we can say that the decisions of the tribunal are based on the law,” he said.

U Aung Kyi Nyunt added that it was no longer necessary for the group headed by Rakhine National Party leader U Aye Maung to present the case to the Constitutional Tribunal.

U Ba Shein, a Rakhine ethnic hluttaw representative for Kyaukpyu township, who participated in the intense hluttaw debate, welcomed the clarification.

“I opposed the proposal [to allow white-card holders to vote] because it is wrong. The law is clear.”

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

## School for the blind to hold physio training

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THE Kyeemyindaing School for the Blind is inviting applications for a three-month course for physiotherapy starting in March.

The course is the fifth that the school has hosted, and is co-organised by the Blind Massage Development Foundation and the Old Students’ Society for the Blind.

It will focus on Japanese physiotherapy methods as well as anatomy and business management, a spokesperson for the school said, adding that 12 students would be selected.

The course will be taught by experienced physiotherapists from both Japan and Myanmar and will be free of charge. It will run from March 9 to June 5 and students will receive free accommodation and meals. The interview for the course will be held on March 6. The deadline for applications is February 27.

Physiotherapy is a form of massage treatment that relieves muscle strain and alleviates the effects of illness or injury.

U Zaw Htwe Oo, a teacher and physiotherapist at the school, said the aim was to teach blind people a vocational skill that could help them earn a living.

“Physiotherapy is emerging as a viable job opportunity for people who are blind or have impaired vision,” he said. “I think the profession will be promoted in the future because civil society is getting aware about people living with a disability.”

More information on the course is available by calling 09-4480-19031 or visiting the school at 132 Pan Pin Gyi Road in Kyeemyindaing township.

## Workers get national-level skills certificates

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MYANMAR has taken a step toward enabling its workforce to function at an international level by setting a national-level skills test. Of the 157 skilled workers who took the exam last November, 133 passed, the government announced on February 15.

The successful candidates were awarded a competency certificate at a ceremony on that day attended by ministers and officials.

Applicants came from a range of trades and professions, including waiters, welders, carpenters, furniture makers, air-conditioning installation staff and electricians.

## 25

Occupations that will be accredited through national-level skills tests

Officials said at the awards ceremony that the certification system would help Myanmar workers when applying for jobs both at home and overseas. The certification process is also part of the preparing for entry into the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which is to enable the free flow of both

goods and services across the region.

Applicants from 51 government organisations and private companies took the tests after a three-day introductory training period. No limits were placed on age or educational level.

The National Skill Standard Authority, which is chaired by a deputy minister for labour, employment and social security, administered the exam.


“The national skills certification mechanism is a significant turning point for our workforce and for quality development in Myanmar,” Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Aye Myint said at the ceremony.

“I strongly believe that this is an important step forward, as the development of a skilled workforce is the key to the success of economic reform.”

Ko Thein Zaw Soe, who was awarded an electrician’s certificate, said his skills had improved as a result of the course. “I think the certificate will open up more [employment] opportunities,” he said.

Experts from international NGOs, including Germany’s GIZ, Switzerland’s Swisscontact and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) worked with Myanmar experts to devise the exams. Awards as assessors were also handed out to 50 people and six organisations at the ceremony.

The exam will be extended to other cities, including Mandalay, and the testing fields will also be expanded to 25 occupations, said the director general of the department of labour, U Myo Aung.



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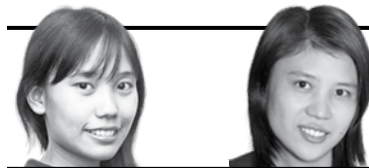
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# Government pushed to act on nutrition 'crisis'

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SAW MYINTMYINT  
KAY THI

A SILENT crisis threatens to rob millions of children of the future they deserve, a senior health official has warned. Dr Yin Thandar Lwin, deputy director general of the Department of Health, says 2.5 million children in Myanmar suffer from inadequate nutrition.

Dr Yin Thandar Lwin was speaking at the launch of the Sun Movement - Scaling Up Nutrition - that aims to eliminate all forms of malnutrition in Yangon on February 17.

The movement is an alliance of government, civil society organisations,

donors, the UN and the private sector.

Andrea Menefee, a nutrition adviser with Save the Children, said the British branch of her organisation had provided two years' funding for Sun activities, including staff and other operating costs.

"The main goal of Sun is to get the government to make nutrition a priority

and focus funding on good food," she said, adding that the biggest nutrition problem in Myanmar was that mothers are not breast-feeding to six months.

Sun Myanmar supports the implementation of the revised National Plan of Action on Food and Nutrition (2011-2015) and advocates the integration of activities under the National Comprehensive Development Plan (2011-2030) that prioritises better nutrition.

"We are here today to launch the Scaling Up Nutrition civil society alliance, Sun CSA," said Dr Yin Thandar Lwin, adding that its activities would help resolve the "silent crisis" that affects 2.5 million children in Myanmar.

"Civil society alliance members will play an important role in bringing the voice of the people to help strengthen the national nutrition agenda. It will ultimately improve the lives of malnourished children in Myanmar."

MILLION

**2.5**

Children in Myanmar who suffer from inadequate nutrition



Four Dutch women who are cycling 14,000 kilometres (8700 miles) to promote awareness of women's rights stopped by Yangon's Mahabandoola Park last week. Photo: Supplied

## Peddalling for women's rights

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FOUR Dutch women are cycling half way round the world to help raise awareness of women's rights. They reached Myanmar on February 2, having passed through Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and they say they won't stop till they get back to the Netherlands.

After leaving Myanmar, the women, who call their project "Ride 4 Women's Rights", will pass into India at Tamu, and then on to Bangladesh on their 14,000-kilometre, 400-day bikeathon.

While in Myanmar, the team will pass through Kyaikhto, Yangon, Bago, Pyay and Monywa.

"Women are being restricted because of gender but they are not alone, and we care about their rights of gender equality. Women in Holland and women in Myanmar and all over the country, we are connected," R4WR's fellow, Lidewij Ponjee, told *The Myanmar Times* during a stop in Yangon last week.

She said her team wanted to raise awareness to help women make a greater contribution, with participation from men. "Everything is possible. If you want change, then change. We care for all women in the world," she said.

During their trip, the women visit projects designed to empower women, particularly in education, gender equality and family rights. They talk to girls and women from different backgrounds, and learn more about women's rights in the countries they pass through.

R4WR rider Carlijn Bettink said they expect to engage topics such as prostitution, migrant workers, domestic slaves, child marriage and denial of education. In countries like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the problems they may face are still unknown.

"Our way is to contribute to gender equality," she said.

Once they return to the Netherlands, the women will share photos, videos and blogs, their experiences of R4WR, and collected stories and profiles

of women in different countries.

"We want to create a bridge between the Netherlands and other countries in terms of gender equality, which is a worldwide issue. We should all fight together to improve this," said Ms Bettink.

"We will give lectures, talks and presentations at schools and symposia. In this way, we hope to ensure that our peers see the relevance of our mission and spread the thought that everybody can start something similar," she said.


They will place all the information on R4WR's Facebook page.

Daw Thuzar Win, the head of Taw Win Khaye, a civil society organisation working for the welfare of HIV-affected women, said she felt encouraged by her meeting with the R4WR team.

"There is still discrimination among women themselves despite thousands of campaigns in favour of people living with HIV," she said. "There are many young and educated women in this country. For the welfare of all women, we need more cooperation and contributions."



# Kokang needs a political solution



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FIGHTING between government forces and the army of Pheung Kya-shin – known as the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) – has resumed in the Kokang region of Shan State for the first time in more than five years.

The Kokang region traces its roots to the anti-Chinese riots that broke out in June 1967 under General Ne Win. A series of attacks on Chinese people took place in Yangon and other towns. During the riots, the Chinese embassy was also attacked. A lot of Myanmar-born Chinese fled in the aftermath of the riots, which incensed the Communist Party of China and its leaders.

Some armed groups that took refuge in China, including those of Kachin leader Naw Saing and Kokang leader Pheung Kya-shin, took part in a massive Burma Communist Party (BCP) push into Shan State on January 1, 1968. The BCP force also included a lot of Chinese volunteers. Some of these volunteers would go on to hold senior positions in the BCP.

Chinese advisers and BCP leaders chose to launch the offensive into Myanmar from the Kokang region. On January 1, a combined force of BCP, Chinese and Naw Saing's troops captured the camp of the Tatmadaw's No 45 Infantry Regiment at Mone Koe in Kokang region.

Two days later, Chinese troops, together with Pheung Kya-shin forces and BCP soldiers, occupied Lone Htan, another Tatmadaw military position in Kokang. The Kokang region became the first Myanmar territory to succumb to BCP forces with the help of Chinese soldiers.

The BCP army consisted of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and a "liberated region" appeared later in northeast Myanmar. This region included what were known as the Kokang, Wa, Mong La and Kachin War Zone 101 areas.

General Ne Win was so concerned by the Chinese occupation of northeast of Myanmar that he took steps to rebuild relations with China.

Later on, the Communist Party of China gradually stopped its support for the BCP. The BCP grew weaker, surviving on income from poppy cultivation and heroin trafficking.

BCP leaders tried to blame the ethnic leaders, especially Pheung Kya-shin, Kyauk Nyi Lai and Pauk Yu Chan for the party's problems. The politically astute Pheung Kya-shin initiated a rebellion against the BCP central committee in 1989.

His rebellion angered the BCP leadership, which described Pheung Kya-shin and his Kokang troops as traitors. However, when it sent Comrade Soe Thein, who was a politburo member and northeast region commander, to crush the Kokang, he soon found the ethnic Wa BCP troops had little desire to fight their ethnic brethren.

Comrade Soe Thein and Comrade Mya Than, the Wa's northern district commander, were interned. The Wa BCP troops moved back to Panghsang, the current Wa headquarters and then BCP headquarters, and staged a coup against the BCP leadership.

They seized power on April 17,

1989, and expelled the BCP leaders, including Thakin Ba Thein Tin. They took refuge in China and reorganised their troops to attempt a push back into Myanmar with support from the Communist Party of China.

They chose to re-enter Myanmar through Kokang region, stationing troops on either side of Mone Koe, where the BCP had stockpiled its weapons. Pheung Kya-shin received information about the BCP plan. He pretty quickly signed a ceasefire with the Myanmar military government, which had seized power in a military coup, and invited the Tatmadaw to help repel the BCP troops.

These preparations ensured the BCP never regained a foothold in the area, and instead they shifted their focus to the Kan Pai Tee region of Kachin State.

The Kokang group never reached a political settlement with the government. But the ceasefire was useful for the military regime, as it enabled it to focus its forces on the Karen National Union and other armed groups in southern Myanmar.



MORE ON NEWS 22 Tatmadaw soldiers patrol in Laukkai, the main city in the Kokang region, on February 16. Photo: AFP

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# Views

CONTINUED FROM NEWS 21

But the military government rarely followed through on promises for equal rights for ethnic minorities and a political settlement. Instead, it ratified by force the 2008 constitution and forcibly pressured armed ethnic groups to come under Tatmadaw control as Border Guard Forces.

The Wa, Kachin, Mong La and Kokang groups were among those that refused to accept the Border Guard Force plan. The Tatmadaw responded by planning an attack against an ethnic armed group to send a warning. For the government, the Kokang region was an obvious target because Tatmadaw troops were already stationed there.

The Tatmadaw attacked and drove Pheung Kya-shin and his troops out of the area.

Given the history of the Kokang region, it's not hard to imagine that Pheung Kya-shin would have been bitter at losing his warlord status. He would have felt betrayed by the military government that he supported for two decades.

He has now reestablished his troops. According to an MNDAA spokesperson, he has about 1000 under his command. We don't know how he managed to get this many, but the number is not insignificant.

The conflict, however, highlights the difficulty of settling the problem of ethnic armed groups through force alone, as the government has tried in the past.

Those who are now running the country need to realise that only political solutions will resolve political problems. They would be wise to accelerate amendments to the constitution to bring about a charter that all Myanmar people, including ethnic minorities, can accept.

— Translation by Thiri Min Htun and Zar Zar Soe

## Najib's slow death



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LIVING under the tawdry and sinking regime of Prime Minister Najib Razak must seem to Malaysians like death by treacle.

They are drowning in a gluey black sea of venality the likes of which has not been seen in this region since the days of President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines.

The mounting litany of shameful episodes that have riven that nation all appear to be traceable to the hapless PM, who is also the head of the dominant political party, the United Malays National Organisation.

Things are so bad that last week the UMNO-owned newspaper, *Utusan Malaysia*, carried an outrageous editorial that tried to exonerate Najib and shift the blame elsewhere.

It failed, of course, because it was arguing against facts that indicate to all Malaysians that Najib is steadily sinking into the treacherous pit of corruption and maladministration into which he has plunged his country.

If you think this is over the top, just consider a few of the more damning indictments against the PM and his band of gangsters, cheats and philanderers.

First, there are the missing billions of taxpayers' money. It is hard to truly comprehend the full magnitude of this gigantic, nepotistic malfeasance, and even the illustrious *New York Times* took three pages to try to do it.

Suffice to say that Najib's stepson, Riza Aziz, the offspring of the PM's second wife Rosmah, is the man apparently responsible for most of the woes brought about by this debacle – otherwise known as IMDB.

The initials stand for 1Malaysia Development Berhad, a sovereign wealth fund that has lost billions due to corruption and mismanagement, and is still weighed down by massive nonperforming loans.

The fund appears to be almost entirely controlled by Najib, Aziz and a flamboyant Penang conman called Jho Low – no relation to Jennifer Lopez, though he mixes with Paris Hilton and other Hollywood starlets.

Why and how? There is no clear answer, except to recall that Najib is under the sway of Rosmah, a shopaholic wrecking ball, who shrugs off ridicule and ignores how her actions thwart her husband's premiership.

In truth, the personal damage to Najib is piffling compared to the disastrous effect the huge IMDB losses are having on the already fragile Malaysian economy.

An opposition MP has called the fund fiasco “the mother of the mother of the mother of all scandals in the history of Malaysia”.

He may be right. Certainly, there are already worries that if and when IMDB collapses, the nation's financial system may take a hit that will dwarf the effect of the Asian

Financial Crisis in 1997.

And bear in mind that Malaysia's resource-dependent economy is already in trouble due to the depressed price of its key exports, petroleum oil and palm oil.

Last month, Najib announced US\$1.5 billion in spending cuts and said Malaysia's economic growth would fall from 6 percent to between 4.5pc and 5.5pc this year.

The economic woes have been compounded by diminishing political support at home.

In the last general election two years ago, Najib vowed to reverse the drop in votes that his UMNO-led coalition had witnessed under his predecessor, PM Abdullah Badawi.

It did not happen. His government ceded even more seats and lost four state assemblies and the overall popular vote to the opposition People's Alliance, led by Anwar Ibrahim.

Since that chastening experience, Najib has clung onto the UMNO leadership by appeasing his key support base, the nation's Malay-Muslim majority, and marginalising the minority Chinese and Indian communities.

This shocking move was his only option, or else he would have faced the same fate as Abdullah, who was elbowed out after his election failure by UMNO party men.

Concurrently, Najib has reversed his promise to dump the colonial-era Sedition Act, and instead applied it with increasing frequency against oppositionists, lawyers, journalists and academics.

Most recently, Anwar has been jailed for five years after a dubious sodomy conviction, while one of the

nation's popular cartoonists has been detained for drawing caricatures that lampoon the farcical Anwar trial.

Not only do these actions signal a premier running scared – as would be expected after the IMDB catastrophe and his election setback – but they are grotesquely hypocritical.

Tarring Anwar with sodomy conveniently distracts attention from the fact that Najib, a notorious philanderer in his early days like most UMNO leaders, may be complicit in the murder of a Mongolian model.

The demise of this woman, the lover of the PM's closest adviser and many Malaysians suspect also Najib's mistress, is under investigation due to a \$155 million kickback in an intertwined submarine deal negotiated when Najib was defence minister.

All of this led *Utusan* to issue its absurd editorial that – wait for it – blamed America for the country's woes. It even accused Washington, which has criticised Anwar's jailing, of copying the opposition leader's behaviour.

According to *Utusan*, “The US wants to ‘sodomise’ our legal and judicial system, even though the majority of Malaysians agree with the court's decision.”

Well, that is a moot point. Certainly the voting pattern suggests most Malaysians would happily accept Anwar as their next PM.

In any case, Najib's survival may depend more on UMNO elders like former PM Mahathir Mohamad, and former finance ministers Daim Zaidin and Razaleigh Hamzah.

Since they have all turned against him, though, the omens are not good.

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# Je suis Rohingya: The West's dilemma

Sympathy for the Muslims of Rakhine State should not automatically extend to the recognition of the Rohingya as an ethnic group

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THE controversy over the use of the term “Bengali” to describe Muslims in Rakhine State known as “Rohingya” seems set to continue following the second visit by UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee to Myanmar.

For many in the West, this controversy is an unfortunate distraction. For Myanmar and its neighbours though it goes to the very root of the crisis.

Some 95 percent of all Muslims resident in Rakhine are of Bengali origin, although this may well go back many generations and in some cases even centuries. They would now seem to be under pressure to deny their Bengali heritage and ancestry.

A single reference in a linguistic essay published in 1799 by a British visitor, Francis Buchanan, to the Burmese court of Ava is the only historical record extant that there were people who described themselves as "Natives of Arakan", or "Rooina".

He never used the term again. Nor was the word used by any of his contemporaries. It was likewise unknown throughout the period of the British administration of Rakhine – then called Arakan – from 1826 to 1948. Yet this single historical reference of uncertain relevance has today become one of the main pillars of the “Rohingya” narrative, all the proof needed of a Rohingya ethnicity supposedly going back 1000 years.

Rakhine was seriously depopulated during Burmese rule from 1785 to 1826. Contemporary estimates put the local population at the time of the British invasion at around 100,000. However, an American Baptist missionary, the Reverend GS Comstock, recorded that the population in 1942 was estimated at around 250,000, of whom about 167,000 were “Mugs” (Rakhine), 40,000 Burmese, 20,000 “Mussulmans”, 5000 new arrivals from Bengal, and sundry other ethnic groups.

This indicates an eight-to-one ratio of Buddhists (Rakhine and Burmese)

to Muslims. By the time of the first full census of 1872, the population of Arakan had doubled to 484,673. Buddhists (364,023) still exceeded Muslims (64,313) by a ratio of nearly 6 to 1. At the 1931 census there were still more Buddhists (721,432) than Muslims (384,475). But the ratio had fallen dramatically to less than 2 to 1 as a result of immigration from the Chittagong region of Bengal.

The Japanese invasion of Burma brought massive intercommunal violence, which saw the flight in 1942 of most Muslims in southern Arakan to the north, and of most Buddhists to the south. By the time of independence in 1948, Arakan was in disarray, with a cross-border jihadist movement in full swing.

It was against this background that the Muslim communities of Arakan understandably felt that they needed to redefine their status. The designations that the British had used were judged to be out of date and out of place. The pre-1785 Muslims began to call themselves "Rwanga," a word of uncertain etymology. The "Chittagonians" also felt that they no longer wished to be designated as such, and the non-Chittagonian "Bengalis" likewise, and both groups cloaked themselves in the "Rwanga" mantle. So Rwanda it was until the mid-1950s. But other possible designations emerged, and we can trace in Burmese periodicals a lively discussion among the Muslim scholarly and political elite about various alternatives.

As 1960 drew near, "Rohingya"

**Recognition of the Rohingya identity is bound to give moral and political support to a highly questionable and pretentious narrative.**



**A Muslim man leans against a shelter in an IDP camp in Sittwe.** Photo: Yu Yu

was used for the first time as a newly emerging ethnicity and political label to describe several Muslim communities, but dominated by the resourceful and hard-working Chittagonians. It is an ethnicity with whose origins many will have much sympathy, designed largely for self-preservation in an increasingly hostile environment. But in the process, the former quasi-indigenous Muslim communities have faded as the Chittagonians moved to centre stage.

Independent Myanmar has viewed this transformation of the Muslim community in Rakhine with increasing alarm. The 20,000 souls recorded by the Rev Comstock in 1842 have mushroomed as a result of immigration to 1 million or more. At least another 1 million "Rohingya" are reported to have sought asylum overseas, mainly in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. This presents an astonishing picture of a population of some 2-3 million Rohingya whose renewed congregation in Rakhine would present a totally unacceptable situation for the local non-Muslim population.

The Rohingya narrative, incorporating an apparent 100-fold natural increase in the Rohingya population since the 20,000 souls of 1842 and

allegedly unsupported by immigration, may well strike many as fanciful, if not preposterous.

It has, however, become politically correct not to challenge this narrative. Senior representatives in the UN and Western governments are being urged to proclaim the Rohingya identity. That is a political decision which only they can take. It is important though that they should be aware that their recognition of the Rohingya identity in Myanmar and overseas is bound to give moral and political support to a highly questionable and pretentious narrative.

"Je suis Rohingya" undoubtedly has its attractions. Membership of the Rohingya community is survivalist and embraced for political and cultural reasons outside Myanmar as an act of solidarity with an undeniably oppressed community.

I doubt that in most cases this has all that much to do with self-identification. It would indeed be an intrepid Rakhine Muslim spouse who, however dutiful, would tell her husband that she still feels more Bengali than Rohingya, especially if advice given by local religious and political leaders is that they ought now to embrace the Rohingya identity and consign their

Bengali origins to oblivion.

At the 1931 census, the largest Muslim community in Rakhine State were the Chittagonians. They are now in the vanguard of the Rohingya movement. Of the 186,327 enumerated in 1931, 156,833 declared that they were born in Myanmar. That is, more than 84 percent were already second-generation migrants and some third-generation or more. By 1948 most of them would have met the test for citizenship explained by President U Thein Sein to the UN high commissioner for refugees Antonio Guterres when they met on July 11, 2012: that the third generation of Bengalis who came to work with British encouragement in the agricultural sector prior to 1948 and decided to stay because it suited them were entitled to citizenship under the law.

That was no doubt why when Myanmar and Bangladeshi authorities discussed the repatriation of some 200,000 mostly rural Rakhine Muslims who had in 1978 fled to Bangladesh – where they were already popularly known as Rohingya – the task was relatively easy. According to the then-British ambassador, Charles Booth, who quoted Myanmar sources, some 65pc of those who had fled held National Registration Certificates (NRCs) issued under the 1948 Citizenship Act.

It is regrettable that after the 1982 Citizenship Act came into force, very few Muslims in Rakhine State – but not, it seems, those elsewhere in Myanmar – were able to exchange their NRCs for new identity cards. Although article 6 of the 1982 act guaranteed that anyone who was a citizen before the act would remain a citizen, they were instead obliged unwillingly to accept temporary “white cards”, which will soon be invalid.

We can only hope that the process of verification currently in train will make it possible for those who qualify to be welcomed back as Myanmar citizens. Claiming to be Rohingya, though, has not made their task any easier.

**Derek Tonkin is a former British ambassador to Thailand and Vietnam and currently an adviser to Bagan Capital Limited.**



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# Business

## Enough gas directed to local market – for now



AUNG SHIN

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THE government does not intend to increase the amount of natural gas allocated to the domestic market this year from the current supply of 300 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) despite increasing demand, according to an official of the Ministry of Energy.

"The domestic supply cannot be increased this year. It will be the same amount of 300 mmcf for all domestic use," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told *The Myanmar Times*.

The disclosure is likely to be seen as a setback for some sectors of business and industry which had lobbied for increases but at discounted prices, with current supply levels seen as holding back economic growth prospects.

Future electrification efforts will require increases in natural gas production or imports to fuel plants that are currently planned or under construction, according to industry experts.

"The Ministry of Electric Power and private firms' current supply of natural gas is fine for the moment. But gas supply is still a limitation for electrification plans," said U Aung Thu Tun, power systems director of Zeya & Associates. The firm is one of the larger industry players currently running a 50-megawatt gas-fired station in

Hlawga, Yangon Region.

"Although current supply is enough, future gas turbines coming online may require imports until 2019," he said.

Myanmar is currently producing 2 billion cubic feet per day (cf) of natural gas from offshore projects and 55 million cf (mmcf) from onshore fields. The bulk is allocated for export, with Thailand taking about 1.3 billion cf and China 465 mmcf. Domestic supply has stayed at 300 mmcf since 2013.

New offshore gas fields – Shwe and Zawtika – started exporting last year and are committed to increasing production this year.

A Myanma Oil and Gas Enter-

**'Although current supply is enough, future gas turbines coming online may require imports until 2019'**

**U Aung Thu Tun**  
Zeya & Associates

prise official said there is currently enough gas supply for domestic use, given the price firms are able to pay.

"The problem is that businesses in all sectors can't afford higher prices. That's why we take less gas from the offshore fields," he said.

The official said Myanmar has the right to obtain 225 mmcf from

Yadana and 100 mmcf from each of Shwe and Zawtika.

"We are only taking 180 to 190 mmcf from Yadana, 80 mmcf from Zawtika and only 25 mmcf from Shwe," he said. "It's much lower than we could obtain."

The official said Myanmar has actually been allocated too much gas from the Shwe Gas project, adding that under the contract it must pay for the unneeded supply it had agreed to take.

"We are negotiating this, as the country cannot afford the excess and the new gas-fired turbines that will need it are still being built," he said.

Earlier this month the Ministry of Energy released detailed figures of gas supply for domestic use. The announcement of the figures, from April to November 2014, was a rare disclosure of such data.

According to the ministry, some 78 percent of gas for the domestic market went to power stations, 15pc for industry and 7pc for CNG stations for transport.

Domestic demand for natural gas is constantly increasing and will rise further as the Ministry of Electric Power brings more gas-fired power stations on line.

Four privately run gas turbines in the Yangon area started operations in 2013 and there are power stations planned for the cities of Mawlamyine and Thaton in Mon State, Kyaukphyu in Rakhine State and Myingyan in Mandalay Region.

Giving a more detailed breakdown, an official said that 286 mmcf went to domestic use in December 2014, including 191 mmcf that went for electricity produc-



Gas flares at Yadana offshore site. The vast majority of domestic gas production is exported, though the ratio may change in the years ahead.

Photo: Staff

tion, 21 mmcf for CNG stations, 19 mmcf for state-owned fertilizer factories, 25 million for private industries, and 16 million for state-owned industries.

Domestic natural gas demand was pegged at 700 mmcf in 2013 according to ADB's *New Energy Architecture Report* released that same year.

## Yetagun review as output falls

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THE future of one of the country's four offshore gas projects will be reviewed this year as production rates have begun declining, according to officials.

Yetagun, operated by Malaysian state firm Petronas, has been producing for 15 years, though production rates have dropped to 360 million cubic feet per day (mmcf), below what has been promised to buyers.

Under a sales agreement with Thailand it is to be supplied with 400 Mmcf, a rate the buyer has the right to increase by 15 percent.

"So we have been pumping between 400 and 460 mmcf to Thailand," said an official from Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise. For the past 10 months, however, the amount of actual production has fallen to about 360 mmcf.

"We have tapped about 60 percent of Yetagun's potential," he said. "We have to survey the gas reserve in order to re-sign the sales agreement. This survey will probably happen in the middle of the year."

The gas field is thought to have 4.16 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The Yetagun field in the Mottama offshore area covers more than 24,000 square kilometres, taking in three shallow

water blocks – M-12, M-13 and M-14.

Discovery of a commercial viable reserve was first announced in 1992, with production beginning at the site – the country's second-largest – in 2000.

Malaysian firm Petronas Carigali is the operator and 40.91 percent owner of the block. Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise owns 20.45pc, while Thailand's PTTEP and Japan's Nippon Oil Exploration each own 19.32pc.

The project cost an estimated US\$700 million, with a stated lifetime lasting until 2030.

Yetagun currently has 14 wells in operation.

The Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise official said Thailand wants

more gas from other sites as Yetagun production drops.

"We are not responsible for this under the sales agreement," said the official. "And we can reduce production below 400 mmcf when certain targets are met, according to the agreement."

Thai newspaper *The Nation* has said the country may receive less gas from Myanmar as a result of the production decline.

It quoted PTT Upstream Petroleum and Gas Business chief operating officer Nuttachat Charuchinda as saying Yetagun operators are requesting a lowered daily contracted target due to the decline.

"Thailand may actually get less gas, but Zawtika [which came online last year] is producing more gas – around 350 mmcf at present," said the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise official.

Yetagun gas has been imported mainly to Thailand since its launch.

Myanmar produces a total of about 2 billion cubic feet per day, with most coming from its four large offshore projects and another 55 mmcf coming from onshore projects.

Of this 2 billion cubic feet, about 1.3 billion has been exported to Thailand and 465 million cubic feet to China, with much of the rest going to the domestic market.

MMCFD

360

Current output of natural gas from Yetagun, well below contracted minimum of 400 MMCFD

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Energy giant Total plans to ink offshore agreement this week

**BUSINESS 26**



Western countries mull action following Monywa mine report

**BUSINESS 27**

Exchange Rates (February 21 close)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1165	K1180
Malaysia Ringitt	K307	K308
Singapore Dollar	K757	K765
Thai Baht	K31	K32
US Dollar	K1032	K1036

# Central Bank slowing down foreign loans

Close scrutinising of debt financing draws business ire, though some say caution is necessary given the dangers of hot money and shady dealings



JEREMY MULLINS

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FOREIGN loans entering Myanmar are being held up for months as the Central Bank of Myanmar tightens its grip on incoming capital.

Businesses are facing long wait times and the possibility of loans being rejected because the Central Bank is scrutinising each loan, paying close attention to the interest rate, currency and the legitimacy of the investment.

The move to tighten oversight – which began about six months ago – is causing considerable difficulty for businesses operating in Myanmar, which desperately need capital to expand their operations. Yet some experts say the move is prudent given the relatively rudimentary stage of development of the financial system.

A number of would-be borrowers are also having the loans rejected for reasons such as too-high interest rates or moving the money before receiving approval, while those loans that are given the green light are being delayed for several months as the Central Bank deliberates.

Local banks often do not have enough capital to fund large, longer-term projects, and face a number of regulatory restrictions, forcing local businesses to turn to international lenders in many cases.

The process of approval for these loans has become unusually strict compared to other countries, said one senior official at a private bank.

Central Bank of Myanmar approval is particularly important to repatriate funds later. Yet local businesses are also able to make use of hundi, a traditional black-market money transfer system, for payments of up to millions of dollars. Hundi transfers usually bypass Central Bank oversight.

“If there’s too much bureaucracy, people will avoid you entirely,” said the banker, who requested anonymity. “Why play by the rules?”

The minimum wait time for approval is two weeks, with most loans taking two or three months to receive official approval, said the banker. He added it is difficult to know the exact criteria the Central Bank is applying to each loan.

“Those who play by the rules are being punished,” he said.

Local banks fill the role of the postman with foreign debt financing, attempting to receive approval for the loan from the Central Bank, such as from a foreign bank to a local firm.

While several businesspeople have voiced similar complaints, some experts said the Central Bank is justified in exercising caution with

foreign loans.

Much of the reason for the clampdown could be returning ill-gotten gains, but equally it is not clear borrowers are fully cognisant of the risks when borrowing from overseas, said Sean Turnell, a Myanmar-focused economist at Australia’s Macquarie University.

In particular, the risk of exchange rate changes can dramatically increase both the principal and interest payments on loans denominated in foreign currency, he said. This is occurring during a period of relatively high interest rates in Myanmar and historically low offshore rates, and some businesses are not adequately prepared when borrowing overseas. “The temptation is there, but I am not sure the realisation of risk is,” he said.

“Of course, the Central Bank of Myanmar should do all that it can to minimise approval delays, and to make its rulings consistent,” he said. “In all of this too, however, I am very aware of the very high workload of the CBM staff, and their lack of resources.”

**‘If there’s too much bureaucracy, people will avoid you entirely. Why play by the rules?’**

Senior banker

The Central Bank of Myanmar has taken into account businesses’ interest in foreign borrowing since 2012, but has been careful to consider the risks, said one of its senior officials.

“If there is hot money coming in, it will introduce volatility into the economy,” he said. “There should not be hot money, there should be a market-based interest rate, and companies shouldn’t have thin capitalisation.”

The official rejected local bank concerns that they were in the dark about obtaining approvals, claiming they had been made aware of the process. He added that companies lending from overseas to a local subsidiary face a different set of criteria than loans from outside institutions, as some businesses disguise investment as loans because they want to transfer profits without paying appropriate taxes.

“I hope in the future, there will be a more appropriate situation in the business environment,” he said.

While the nine foreign banks that received licences last year have



This lovely bunch of watermelons is due for higher prices. Photo: Sithu Lwin

## Melon market bounces back

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SEESAWING melon prices are on the up again, thanks to a combination of falling production and rising demand in advance of the Chinese New Year. Honeydew prices are expected to climb to 5.5 yuan (US\$0.88) per kilogram, up from a low of 1 yuan at the beginning of the year, say officials from the Myanmar Melon Growers’ Producers and Exporters Group.

U Naing Win, the group’s chair, told *The Myanmar Times*, “The price fell sharply at the beginning of the season. But it has now slightly bounced back. In the second week of February, watermelon price is between 1 yuan and 3.4 yuan per kilo

depending on variety and quality, while honeydew fetches between 1 yuan and 5.5 yuan per kilo.”

He said melon production in 2012-13 exceeded 290,000 tonnes, dramatically increasing to 450,000 tonnes in 2013-14. The yield increased another 50,000 to 100,000 tonnes this year as farmers expanded their plantation area to capitalise on higher prices.

“Last year farmers got pretty high prices – 6 yuan a kilo for watermelon, 15 yuan for honeydew – because plantations in China were destroyed by storms. Those prices were the highest in 100 years. But when farmers extended their plantation acreage the prices dropped to the lowest in 100 years,” said U Naing Win.


At the beginning of the season,

more than 300 trucks a day were ferrying melons to the border crossing point at Muse, plus another 100 trucks of honeydew, U Naing Win said. But later volume dropped to about half that. A spokesperson for Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association for Mandalay Region said local farmers had faced losses, requiring a better balance between supply and demand.

Apart from Chin and Kayah states, melons are grown in every part of the country. Sagaing, Mandalay and Bago regions are main growers of melon, according to Myanmar Melon Growers, Producers and Exporters Group. The growing season is September through May.

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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# Muse rice traders hoping New Years brings better luck



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MUSE-BASED rice traders are hopeful that the Year of the Sheep will improve their fortunes. Rice exports to China have plummeted to almost nothing from peaks of 2000 tonnes a day following a series of raids conducted by Chinese customs on allegedly illegal rice importers on the Chinese side of the border.

The Muse commodity exchange centre is closed for Chinese New Year from February 18 to 25, said Muse-based rice trader U Min Thein. "We hope trade will improve after the festival. We're optimistic."

The customs raids carried out between September and November were followed by a respite. But since the end of January, the raids have resumed with particular severity, traders say. One of the country's leading rice exporters, who asked not to be named, said, "This time, the customs went looking for imported Myanmar rice in the rice mills and warehouses



Exports prepare cargo at 105 Mile export zone near Muse. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

in Ruili. They arrested some Chinese traders who had imported rice from Myanmar. This is worse than before."

He added that the crackdown had blocked exports of rice from Ayeyarwady, Bago, Sagaing, Yangon and Mandalay regions. "Over a 10-day period, about 1 million rice bags were blocked in Muse. We have no idea

what will happen next," he said.

On the other hand, the Myanmar and Chinese governments have been working since the middle of last year to formalise the rice trade between them. The two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding last September, and the Myanmar Rice Federation has designated nine companies

that will register to export high-quality rice officially to China, perhaps as early as the end of April or early May.

The federation says it expects to export at least 1 million tonnes of rice to China officially in 2015.

In 2013-2014, Myanmar exported 800,000 tonnes of rice to China through Muse.

## French giant to sign energy contract

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FRENCH energy giant Total is to sign its production sharing contract with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise this week, according to officials.

Total's local subsidiary Total Exploration and Production Myanmar was awarded the deepwater block YWB in the 2013 offshore bidding round.

Negotiations over the production sharing contracts have taken time as government and company officials sought to iron out differences in the agreements, which will govern exploration and production operations in the future.

The latest contract is to be inked on February 25 in Nay Pyi Taw.

"This is going to be the fifth production sharing contract signing ceremony coming out of the first offshore bidding round," said an official from the Ministry of Energy. "It is positive that leading international oil companies such as Shell and Total have signed agreements."

The first such contracts were inked in December last year.

Total has been in Myanmar for more than 20 years, and is currently the operator of Yadana, the country's largest offshore gas field.

It has made another major investment in a local offshore project, taking a 40 percent stake in offshore block M-11 in 2012. The M-11 block is run by Thailand's PTTEP.

The Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise official said Total will invest US\$70 million over 8 years into exploration at the site, including an \$1 million signature bonus. These figures were not confirmed by Total.

"This is a new deepwater block for Myanmar offshore. No other company has been in YWB," he said.

The deepwater block is one of Myanmar's largest, covering more than 4300 square kilometres. It is located close to the western part of Yetagun gas field, which has been in commercial production since 2000.

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Dated: 23 February 2015

## Timber tender launched

MYANMAR Timber Enterprise has opened a tender for more than 3100 tonnes of hardwood logs, set for a February 20 to 23 sale, according to a statement.

The government banned exports of raw timber in 2014 in a bid to cut down on deforestation while aiding local saw mills with capturing more of the value chain.

Myanmar Timber Enterprise claims to have sold about 49,101 tonnes from April 1, 2014, to January 2015, sales which are comprised of timber that was legally cut by the state-owned firm as well as seizures from illegal traders, according to an official from its Export Marketing and Milling Department.

"After banning exports, the industry has become more modernised and techniques of wood process have been upgraded," the official said. "The wood left over from processing can be useful as well."

Myanmar Timber Enterprise currently holds open tenders generally twice a month.

- Su Phyto Win



# UK, Canada consider action on mine sale



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THE British government is examining allegations by Amnesty International that the British Virgin Islands was used to skirt international sanctions on the sale of a controversial copper mining project at Monywa.

Canadian company Ivanhoe Mines, which sold its stake in the mine in 2011, has denied knowledge of any wrongdoing.

Amnesty also accused Ivanhoe and the current Chinese operator of having “profited from, and in some cases colluded with the Myanmar authorities in serious human rights abuses and illegal activity around the Monywa copper mine complex”.

While Canadian authorities have not issued any formal response, Amnesty says it is in talks with both the

government and parliamentarians on how to proceed with an investigation.

The Monywa project is now run by the Chinese firm Wanbao – a subsidiary of arms manufacturer Norinco – with profits shared between the state, Wanbao and army-owned Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited. A planned US\$1 billion expansion has brought Wanbao into renewed conflict with local residents, who have refused to accept compensation for their land.

The Amnesty publication – *Open for Business? Corporate Crime and Abuses at Myanmar Copper Mine* – details large-scale forced evictions, environmental pollution and the use of “excessive force” by police against protestors. The mining project, which includes the Letpadaung mine and two sites developed in the 1990s, has been the subject of ongoing demonstrations. Police shot dead a 56-year-old woman in December 2014.

The report called on Canadian and British authorities to investigate whether Ivanhoe Mines, which has since rebranded as Turquoise Hill, and



A protestor lets her views be known outside the Chinese Embassy in Yangon. Photo: Staff

any linked legal entities breached Canadian and British economic sanctions in relation to operations at Monywa.

Canada had the strictest sanctions in the world at the time of the sale, with a total ban on investment in or trade with Myanmar.

The United Kingdom has been drawn into the controversy by Amnesty’s findings that Ivanhoe set up a trust in the British Virgin Islands to divest its Myanmar assets in order to take

advantage of contentious legal secrecy provisions there that have allowed details of the transfer to remain hidden from scrutiny.

Ivanhoe announced in 2007 it had placed its stake in the Monywa mine in an “independent third-party trust”, pending the sale of the asset. Ivanhoe received US\$103 million for its stake in August 2011 following the completion of the sale.

The divestiture of the Monywa mine

was demanded by Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto as part of a deal between the two companies to jointly develop a giant copper mine project in Mongolia, Oyu Tolgoi. Rio Tinto is now a major stakeholder in Turquoise Hill.

The British Virgin Islands, an offshore tax-haven, provides an opportunity for companies to operate without

MORE ON BUSINESS 28

## Industry port to double by 2017

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MYANMAR Industrial Port is to more than double its capacity and workforce by 2017 when it plans to be able to dock 10 container ships at a time, according to port chair U Ko Ko Htoo.

“We are extending our position on the Sule Terminal Port side by about 1800 metres (5900 feet), doubling its present size. This will accommodate up to 10 container ships. We can’t tell foreign shipping companies that want to do business here that we don’t have enough room for them,” he said.

10

Number of container ships to be handled simultaneously by the revamped port, from 4 at present.

The port can currently handle four ships and aims to add one more berth over the next four months.

Additional improvements will include faster loading and unloading systems and storage. The present 3800-strong workforce is to be doubled with the upgrades.

“There will be an increase in job opportunities [with the expanded facilities],” he said. “There will be an increase in exports, meaning jobs will increase at a faster rate as more ships come in and out.”

– Translation by Emoon

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U Kyi Win Associates  
for **ATLANTIC INDUSTRIES**  
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.  
Phone: 372416  
Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2015



An open pit mining site in Monywa.  
Photo: Staff

**Action considered on Monywa mines****CONTINUED FROM BUSINESS 26**

the disclosure requirements of most other jurisdictions. Campaigners for responsible business in Myanmar have pointed out that much of what appears as official figures for investment by British companies in Myanmar in fact comes from offshore traders based in the British Virgin Islands.

A spokesperson for the UK Foreign Office said it had “seen Amnesty International’s report and [we] are examining the findings in detail”.

She said she was unable to provide further information about who would be following up on the report or when an announcement might be made on what, if any, action would be taken by British authorities.

The Canadian government did not respond to questions from *The Myanmar Times* on whether it would undertake an investigation or what form it could take.

But an Amnesty spokesperson said the watchdog had met a range of Canadian government officials and parliamentarians, and had begun discussions about options on how to move forward with an investigation in Canada. “While there have not yet been any commitments, there is willingness to examine the information we have presented, consider the various possibilities, and ensure that the right government departments and law enforcement agencies are apprised,” the spokesperson said.

Amnesty International’s corporate

crimes researcher Meghan Abraham said it was important that the British government “stopped allowing its overseas territory to be used as a haven for secrecy”.

“The evidence we have uncovered shows how companies can shelter behind British Virgin Islands’ secrecy even for transactions which may breach the territory’s criminal law. This demands a full investigation by the UK government,” she said.

A spokesperson for Turquoise Hill did not respond to the allegations in detail but said the company’s management was “not aware of any facts or circumstances” that suggested a breach of sanctions or any other law at the time of the “apparent” sale of the Monywa assets.

“It remains our understanding that the measures proposed by Rio Tinto and put in place by Ivanhoe Mines on the disposal of the Myanmar asset were fully compliant with all applicable laws giving effect to sanctions,” he said.

An Amnesty International Myanmar spokesperson responded that Turquoise Hills’ statement “does not address the evidence that Amnesty International has uncovered about its so-called independent third party trust and possible breaches of economic sanctions. It needs to disclose information publicly and to the United Kingdom and Canadian authorities.”

Current mine operator Wanbao dismissed Amnesty’s report as “groundless”. “We strongly refute its

wild allegations and unsubstantiated claims. This report is not acceptable as it relies on hearsay and conjecture rather than on hard facts,” the company said in a statement, adding that it “vehemently den[ies] collusion with authorities to use force against protestors and villagers”.

Wanbao also asserted that the Amnesty report was based on what the mining company says was an outdated Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA).

“The ESIA was carried out by the internationally renowned and respected Australian consultancy, Knight Piesold. The ESIA has taken over two years to prepare and review, and it was based on community consultations and followed an exhaustive process.

“During the consultation process a number of environmental and technical issues were raised and these issues were able to be addressed and resolved,” it said.

It also said Amnesty had not properly consulted with the company before releasing its report.

However, an Amnesty spokesperson stood by the report.

“Wanbao keeps repeating the numbers of people who support the project without providing any proof to substantiate these claims,” he said.

“Amnesty International shared a draft of the report with the company, analysed all its public documents, gave it an opportunity to meet and to respond, and has included the company’s full response in our report.”

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Phone: 372416

Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2015**LIFT Financial Inclusion Programme: CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

The Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) is a multi-donor trust fund established to improve the lives of poor and vulnerable people in rural Myanmar.

Organizations are now invited to submit proposals for funding under the **LIFT Financial Inclusion Programme**. Successful applicants will implement projects under a grant agreement with UNOPS as the LIFT Fund Manager.

The Financial Inclusion Programme will support existing financial institutions in the central dry zone, the Ayeyarwaddy Delta, and new and existing institutions in the upland regions, to achieve sustainability, and increase their supply of a broad array of demand-driven financial services that serve diversified market segments, e.g.

- deposit services,
- lines-of-credit,
- leasing,
- term-finance,
- financing for seasonal crops (beans/pulses, oilseeds),
- debt consolidation loans and
- investments in agricultural cooperative businesses.

**Submissions will be accepted until****MARCH 23, 2015**

Read more on the LIFT website [www.lift-fund.org](http://www.lift-fund.org) for requirements

**Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund**



## Central Bank looks closely at foreign lending

CONTINUED FROM BUSINESS 25

not yet set up and the rules and regulations not yet finalised, it is likely similar restrictions will be applied to them, he added.

Experts say businesses are crying out for more capital.

Foreign dollars are important to generate the access to capital needed for economic development in Myanmar, said International Finance Corporation resident representative Vikram Kumar.

"The big guys have money," he said. "The small but strong entrepreneurs don't have the same access to capital."

Currently most local debt financing occurs with one-year loans on 13 percent interest rates, using immovable property as collateral. This base will need to be expanded to provide the financing entrepreneurs need.

Mr Kumar said there is not enough capital with domestic lenders to meet the needs of local business.

"Debt financing in Myanmar will be very international in nature," he said. "Capacity growth will not happen without foreign capital."

Mr Kumar said it is encouraging that foreign lenders are open to financing projects in Myanmar, at rates which appropriately reflect the level of risk in such projects. Strong capital inflows in the form of foreign direct investment are critical to help offset Myanmar's growing current account deficit the country is facing and will therefore help redress the country's balance of payments.

"By definition, FDI implies a greater commitment to a long-term interest in the investment project and an active interest in managing the project, both of which are currently needed in Myanmar," he said.

International debt financing will also need to play a key role until domestic banks come up to speed in terms of their ability to support long term financing, particularly for sectors like infrastructure and manufacturing.

"Today, domestic banks in Myanmar do not have sufficient experience in project finance risk-assessment and also do not have a liability structure that would allow them to engage in long-term lending," Mr Kumar said.

Businesses have begun to look at methods which improve their chances of having their foreign loans approved.

Legal and tax advisory firm VDB Loi held a seminar on financing transactions in January, looking at the practicalities of approval for foreign loans.

In a report it said the Central Bank requires documents showing the purpose of the money, the interest rate and all relevant agreements to approve a foreign loan.

"Presumably, a loan for a purpose which the CBM deems inappropriate or even illegal will not be approved," it said. "We also understand that the CBM is keen to watch out for onshore remittances which are disguised as off-shore transactions."

It added that the Myanmar Investment Commission needs to approve loans and security arrangements if the borrower has a permit under the Foreign Investment Law.

While on the surface this may seem more complicated, the Myanmar Investment Commission may play the role of facilitator, significantly helping to reduce red tape and improving communication where needed, the VDB Loi report said. It added that other ministries may also be asked for their view.

"Anything that is new, and that is just about everything when it comes to financing Myanmar right now, may very well ... take much longer than both borrowers and lenders expect," it said.

## Rural growth relies on access to markets

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MARKET access and poor infrastructure still confounds rural development, according to experts.

With up to 70 percent of the population dependant on income from agriculture to a large degree, it is important that people in rural areas are able to take advantage of opportunities. There are still significant barriers on the road to rural development.

City Mart managing director Daw Win Win Tint said it is often more convenient to order goods from overseas rather than from within the country.

"For example, ordering avocados of the same size and quality from Australia takes three days, while ordering from Shan State takes nearly one month," she said at a seminar earlier this month.

Local producers' attempts to reach the international marketplace are often stymied by poor market knowledge and a short-term outlook. "Cooperation, group

contact and trust among producers and retail businesspeople should be strongly built," she said. "Producers should not try to tackle the whole supply chain in the short-term."

It is important rural areas are not forgotten.

Investment in infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water supply, electricity and housing is important for the countryside's future, according to Shihab Uddin Ahamad, country manager for Action-Aid Myanmar.

After Cyclone Nargis hit the Ayeyarwaddy delta in 2008, several NGOs, civil organisations and private sector players began working in earnest to develop rural areas.

Yet the market must be the

core driver for rural development, and making market access easier is a crucial ingredient, he said at a separate seminar on rural development that took place earlier this month.

The government must support market-based initiatives for farm products, such as rubber and meat. Producers must move up the value-added scale by completing more of the processing within Myanmar rather than being shipped abroad, said U Zaw Min Win, vice chair of leading business group UMFCCI.

"Farm products must be grown, and they must also receive more added value," he said.

"The government has to support with materials, loans and also know-how.

He added that transportation in particular is of growing importance in efforts to increase people's living standards in the country's outlying regions and states.



Daw Win Win Tint.  
Photo: Thiri Lu

### Tough times for Thailand economy

Thailand's economic growth slowed sharply in 2014 to its weakest pace in three years, as political turmoil engulfing the kingdom compounded a fall in agricultural prices and waning exports.

Gross domestic product (GDP) expanded 0.7 percent last year, well down from the 2.9pc recorded in 2013, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) said in a statement on February 16.

The figure is the weakest since 0.1pc in 2011, when the country was battered by devastating floods.

Growth was widely expected to be dragged by months of political unrest that damaged tourist arrivals, slowed foreign investment and paralysed government spending before the army seized power in May vowing to restore peace and put zip back in the economy.

However, there were some good signs as fourth-quarter growth came in at 2.3pc on a year-on-year basis, according to the board.

Over the year, Thailand's key agricultural sectors - including rice and rubber - struggled with falling global prices.

- AFP

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## BEIJING

## Russia moves into Asian oil market

MIDDLE East oil producers already scrapping for share in Asia must now contend with more supply from Russia.

Russia, the world's second-biggest crude producer, boosted sales to China, Japan and South Korea by 25 percent last year, increasing its portion of shipments to 8.7pc, from 7.2pc in 2013, according to government data compiled by Bloomberg. Saudi Arabia accounted for 24pc, down from 26pc, while Qatar and Kuwait also ceded market share.

Gulf producers are now offering record discounts for Asian buyers amid a global crude glut. As European demand weakens and shale takes the US closer to energy self-sufficiency than at any time since the 1980s, suppliers are focusing on Asia, which the International Energy Agency forecasts will replace the Americas as the biggest consuming region this year. Rising sales to Asia are helping Russia's economy weather the conflict in Ukraine, sanctions and collapsing energy prices.

"Asian customers want to diversify supplies and Russia has the crude so it's a win-win situation," Victor Shum, a Singapore-based vice president at IHS Inc said on February 17. "The alternative for Russia is shipping crude to the west, to Europe, but Europe is not a region with growing demand. Asia is the place."

Russia sold about 51 million metric tonnes of crude to China, Japan and South Korea last year, from 41 million in 2013, the data shows. The countries, three of the region's four largest oil consumers, imported a total of 592 million tonnes. Comparable data for India, the fourth, is not available.

Saudi Arabia sold 142 million tonnes, down from 146 million. Qatar's shipments slid 7.4pc to about 30 million tonnes. Kuwait's sales remained at about 41 million tonnes, cutting its market share to 7pc from 7.2pc.

Asia will account for two-thirds of the growth in global oil demand this year, according to the Paris-based IEA. Daily consumption of 31.2 million barrels will take the region above the Americas at 31.1 million barrels. Europe's use is forecast to shrink to 14 million barrels.

While Saudi Arabia's hold on the Chinese market, the biggest after the US, slid to 16pc in 2014 from 19pc the year before, it's unlikely to lose its place as the top supplier, according to Amy Sun, a Guangzhou-based analyst at ICIS China. The nation boosted its market share in Japan, the world's third-biggest consumer, to 32pc from 30pc.

"Chinese refiners still love Saudi crude because supplies are stable and refining units are suitably configured," said Ms Sun. "If prices stay attractive, Saudi market dominance may well be intact over the next five years."

Asian refiners are limited in their options because plants are built to process only certain types of crude. Alternatives such as Venezuela's heavy, high-sulfur cargoes aren't viable for Japanese companies, according to Takayuki Nogami, a senior economist at Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corp. Russia's East Siberia-Pacific Ocean crude, or ESPO, is a similar quality to Murban oil from Abu Dhabi and favored by Japanese and South Korean refiners.

Deeper discounts also may help Middle East producers defend their sales in Asia. Iran set its Light crude at a record discount on February 10, based on a formula linked to Saudi prices. Qatar and Kuwait may become "more aggressive in offering generous discounts," Mr Nogami said by phone on January 28.

— Bloomberg

## OPINION

## Apple grapples with forced labour at Asian suppliers

HUMAN rights observers applauded when Apple announced its most ambitious effort yet to stamp out labour abuses among its Asian suppliers. Recruitment agencies in Asia are no longer allowed to charge fees to factory workers who make Apple products, and Apple vowed to scrutinise its supply chain to ensure that its new rule is enforced.

All of this revolves around a practice that tech and electronics companies gently call "bonded servitude". Others call it "forced labour". Still others, like the US State Department, call it for what, basically, it is: slavery.

Apple, like many of its counterparts – and many companies that make just about anything in Asia – has long relied on slave labour in Asia to make their products.

Workers in developing countries are usually forced to pay huge fees to recruiters to get jobs. Once workers take a job, the debt they incurred to pay recruiters essentially leaves them enslaved – as the State Department notes in its latest human trafficking report. Onerous recruitment fees are common wherever migrant workers are used. Factory managers often control workers by withholding their passports.

Dan Viederman, chief executive of the labour rights organization Verite, says that bonded labour is common in Malaysia, Taiwan and Singapore, where poor migrants from Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand and Bangladesh journey for temporary work. Because Apple quickly ramps up production of its new devices, factories in those countries must pull in hundreds of thousands of part-time workers to meet demand.

Apple's laudable effort is similar to

a pledge that Hewlett-Packard made last year to abolish recruitment fees, but Apple's move has a higher profile due to the company's huge global footprint (it sold the equivalent of 34,000 iPhones an hour last quarter alone). As one of the largest hardware manufacturers in the world, Apple's decisions resonate broadly.

Mr Viederman points out that all of the big electronics makers – including Apple's largest suppliers – have publicly committed to jointly addressing the miseries of forced labour.

But Mr Viederman says that slave labour practices continue to thrive, largely because local regulations in Asia aren't very strong or simply aren't enforced. He singled out Malaysia and Taiwan as countries that prohibit grievance processes or community organisations that could be deployed to help workers. He also notes that many auditors don't speak the same language as the workers they're trying to protect, so they don't always have clear pictures of what's actually happening on factory floors.

Apple's decision to more closely monitor its supply chain for abuses exemplifies the massive impact it potentially can have on workers across

**My guess is that if Apple does anything to reduce margins, investors will be unduly harsh.**

Asia. Apple forced suppliers to reimburse nearly US\$4 million in fees to over 4500 foreign contractors in 2014. Apple also made sure that over 30,000 workers have been reimbursed nearly \$21 million since it first started cracking down on bonded labour practices in 2008, according to the company's latest supplier responsibility report.

But Apple's recent crackdown on recruitment fees has also generated discussion and debate among Asian manufacturers and suppliers who remain eager to acquire the prestige of working with Apple.

The iPhone maker is well-known for driving hard bargains with suppliers like Flextronics, Qualcomm and Samsung for components like chips and cameras, keeping these suppliers' profit margins razor-thin. These component makers like the arrangement because they can make money on volume sales and their products and factories can become standard bearers for the larger industry. But they don't haul in huge profits by working with Apple. This reality forces Apple's suppliers to press their own subcontractors to source everything at the lowest cost possible, including what they're willing to pay for human labour.

Now Apple plans to force its suppliers to stop practices that have allowed slave-like conditions to flourish in Asia. That move will cut into suppliers' profit margins even further. But there is little evidence suggesting that Apple will be less aggressive about how it negotiates component pricing so its suppliers have the financial breathing room they might need to be more fair-minded about abusive labour practices.

"Apple has to have a conversation with its suppliers not only about how

to ensure that they'll adopt good labour practices, but that they can afford to do so," says Arvind Ganesan, the business and human rights director at Human Rights Watch.

Apple certainly has the money to think differently about how it motivates its suppliers. It currently captures about 93 percent of all of the profits generated in the smartphone industry. If the company wants better labour practices up and down its supply chain, will it have to renegotiate deals to give its new labour decrees real teeth? And if it does so, would investors punish the company for spending real money on a human rights push?

My guess is that if Apple does anything to reduce margins, investors will be unduly harsh. This, in turn, will keep Apple in an uneasy relationship with the companies that provide the parts and labour that make our phones and tablets.

To that end, Apple's biggest suppliers do have some leverage. The company makes so many devices and computers that it now has no choice but to use the largest suppliers in the business. For example, it relies heavily on Samsung even though the two companies are fierce rivals.

Because of this, Apple's power isn't unconstrained. It can't make enough iPhones and laptops to meet demand if it drops a player like Flextronics.

Apple is taking the first steps needed to address glaring labour abuses in Asia and for that it should be praised. If the company wants to press on for more substantive and long-lasting changes, it will have to decide how it will juggle the competing needs of Wall Street, its customers and its suppliers. — Bloomberg

## JAKARTA

## Jokowi's Indonesia squeezes out foreigners

AN English degree, a teaching certificate, five years of experience and an HIV test from your country of origin – that's all you need to get a job with a starting salary of US\$1200 a month in Indonesia.

With native-language English teachers needing to fulfill a laundry list of requirements to get a work permit, commercial schools are short of teachers.

"These are the most stringent conditions that are applied for English teachers in the world, hands down," said Nina Wexler, an American who owns two schools in the city of Solo. "Out of 100 applicants, maybe five qualify. And chances are they will end up taking higher-paid jobs in other countries."

The government is still raising new barriers, including a plan to require proficiency in Indonesian from foreigners seeking employment in the country. Red tape, corruption and complicated rules that are often contradictory continue to discourage foreign investment and run counter to President Joko Widodo's promises to simplify bureaucracy.

Mr Widodo, a former furniture exporter better known as Jokowi, is targeting economic growth of 7 percent within three years, driven by increased infrastructure spending and non-commodity exports, both of which will require foreign investment.

Southeast Asia's largest economy ranked 114<sup>th</sup> out of 189 in the World Bank's 2015 ease of doing business survey, nearly 100 places behind Malaysia and more than 30 below



Vietnam. Jokowi opened a "one-stop" shop for business permits last month. The centre brings together representatives from 22 ministries or government agencies to reduce the time it takes to obtain permits from as much as 165 days at the moment.

While some efforts will make it easier to do business, other ones won't help.

The government is pressing ahead with a plan to require foreigners to pass an Indonesian language test before getting a job. Such a law was needed because other countries require mostly low-skilled Indonesian migrant workers to learn local

languages before they depart, Manpower Minister Hanif Dhakiri told reporters in Jakarta on February 15.

"But foreigners can come here and all they can manage in Indonesian is 'good morning' and 'thank you' and then they work for years and take up strategic positions," said Mr Dhakiri, whose mother was a migrant worker in Saudi Arabia for six years when he was a child. "Well, that's not acceptable. It's not fair."

He said he expects the law will be implemented this year.

Countries typically place conditions on foreign workers seeking employment to protect jobs for their own

citizens. The challenge for businesses in Indonesia is that they struggle to find skilled workers, said John Kurtz, president of Indonesian operations of consulting company AT Kearney.

"What the government sometimes doesn't realize is that every employer would much rather have qualified Indonesians than hire expatriates," said Mr Kurtz. "For many many reasons, cost among them."

There are limitations on hiring foreign workers in industries ranging from banking to mining and aviation.

Commercial language schools, which employ foreign teachers to work alongside local instructors, are among the worst affected.

Indonesia is the only country in Asia that requires foreign English teachers to have an English-related degree and five years experience, according to data compiled by the country's Association of Foreign Language Institutes.

Yusuf Muhyiddin, an official overseeing private language schools at the education ministry in Jakarta, said critics of the legislation "may have a point", but also said the ministry has to follow the regulation. The ministry is open to discussing changes to the rule with language schools, he said.

English First, which operates globally and runs 66 schools across Indonesia, found only 215 instructors who were qualified out of 2205 prospective candidates in 2014, said Juli Simatupang, the company's director of corporate affairs. Of those only 26 joined the company, she said.

— Bloomberg





The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Myanmar is seeking for qualified applicants to fill the following position:

- 1) **Assistant Liaison Officer**  
(Re-advertisement) (NOA)  
(UNOPS Contract – LICA, Maungdaw)

Closing date: 03 March 2015

The detailed Terms of Reference for these positions are available on request from UNHCR offices in Yangon, Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Sittwe, Myitkyina, Bhamo, Mawlamyine, Hpa-An, Loikaw, Dawei and Taungoo.  
[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)



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# Property

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## Market slows but no bursting bubble

KO KO AUNG

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REAL estate experts are backing away from their bullish stances of a year ago, expecting a quieter market for 2015.

While prices for most Yangon real estate may hold steady or decline somewhat in the year ahead, industry insiders say they don't expect any property price bubble to burst completely.

Rising prices have already begun tapering, as government actions to hamper speculation and a slate of new projects attempting to woo investors combined in 2014 to chill the previously sunny market.

Many said expensive property created a barrier to doing business, with high prices said to dissuade some firms from setting up shop in Myanmar.

Mandaing real estate service managing director U Than Oo said he reckons the market will continue cooling over the coming months.

"Most investors are now only interested in projects that have nearly reached their potential," he said. "The government's term is nearly up, and real estate investors are watching the political climate because of the election."

US\$  
**69**

Price for a square metre of office space in Yangon at the end of 2014, according to Colliers Myanmar

"It's not only the local real estate market. Other sectors are slowing down. Real estate is only part of the economy," he added.

Local real estate prices shot up significantly starting around 2012, surging until rent in some parts of Yangon rivaled that of international cities such as Singapore.

Some areas of the market have increased more rapidly than others. The city's office space in particular has seen significantly higher prices, constrained by tight supply.

Colliers Myanmar noted that city-wide average office rental space, which cost US\$16 a square metre (10.7 square feet) in Yangon in 2011, has now quadrupled to about \$69 a square metre in 2014. Bangkok office space cost an average of 490 baht (US\$15) a square metre

in 2014, according to a January article in *The Bangkok Post*.

Colliers Myanmar added that rental prices are set to increase in the future, but at a more modest pace.

Occupancy rates for office space are also set to temporarily decline following the completion of sizeable new projects, though after investment sectors are further liberalised, an upward trajectory should continue in the medium to longer term, Colliers said in its fourth-quarter 2014 report on the Yangon office space market.

"We can assert the lack of international-standard office buildings this year will keep premium rental rates relatively stable," it said.

Prices increased on general optimism about the domestic economy, as international investors increasingly entered the market seeking real estate space.

While office space has seen some of the highest price increases, Yangon property increased across the board.

Initiatives have been introduced in an attempt to restrict the rise in land prices. The government in October 2013 changed how it applies taxes on property transactions partly in an effort to slow the market, later adjusting the system in October 2014.

Yangon Region authorities also unleashed a torrent of speculation in August 2014 when mayor U Hla Myint announced - and subsequently suspended - an \$8 billion city extension to the city's southwest. The move attracted a rush of speculators to the mostly rural townships, which eventually subsided.

With speculation subsiding not only in the Yangon new city area but also slowing across much of the city, experts say there are not yet signs of a rapid price decline.

Economist U Khin Maung Nyo said that local developers and contractors rely less on bank lending for their projects than in other countries, meaning any price declines ought to be slower.

There are also few mortgage holders in the market, meaning most property buyers are financing through savings or outside of the banks.

"There is no bubble, but prices will fall slightly," said Mandaing real estate service managing director U Than Oo.

The planned opening of the Yangon Stock Exchange may also take some steam out of real estate speculation, as investors have another outlet. Moe Lwin Real Estate Services managing director U Min Cho Oo said he does not expect significant competition for at least a couple of years from the exchange.



Construction is underway at the Galaxy Towers site. Photo: Naing Win Htun

## Yoma launches Galaxy Towers at Star City



NOE NOE  
AUNG

noeaeag@gmail.com

YOMA Strategic Holdings began sales of its Galaxy Towers, a total of six high-rise luxury condos that will rise to between 25 and 28 stories.

While only three of the six towers have initially been released, sales have been brisk, according to Elmar Busch, Yoma's managing director of real estate.

"In the initial 24 working hours, almost 20 per-

cent of the first release of units were reserved," he said.

For the first two days of sales, dozens of apartments were purchased with a 5pc cash deposit, he said.

Yoma is a Singapore-listed, Myanmar-focused company chaired by prominent entrepreneur Serge Pun.

Its Galaxy Towers will eventually include almost 1000 apartment units, with 278 apartments being initially released. Construction of the project has commenced, and Mr Busch said the project ought to be complete in 2017.

The towers are part of the Star City project in Thanlyin township in the east of Yangon, about 15 minutes from Thilawa Special Economic Zone.



A boy takes a photo of a mock-up of the towers. Photo: Naing Win Htun

Mr Busch said about 700 visitors came to tour the project on its opening day.

He highlighted the installation of gas pipes direct to each apartment as an added benefit, though the feature is still subject to government and building authority approval.

"Every household will have the possibility of just turning on the gas, without having all of the heavy bottles," he said.

The total value of the structure is about US\$250 million.

Units are priced depending on the level they are on, with lower-down apartments cheaper than units on high floors.

Over half of the total units are two bedrooms, though there are also one-, three- and four-bedroom units.

The smallest one-bedroom units are 728 square feet and the largest four-bedroom units are 2200 square feet, according to Gabriel Cheng, group director of sales.

Prices are between \$135,000 and about \$500,000 per unit, with installment payments allowed up to 20 months.

The project will also include access to facilities such as a clubhouse, recreation complex, on-site retailers and restaurants. A nearby international school is also slated to be opened in 2016.



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**“The big guys have money ... The small but strong entrepreneurs don’t have the same access to capital.”**

- Vikram Kumar, IFC

**Former Thai PM Yingluck indicted on rice scheme**

**WORLD 38**

**HOUSE OF THE WEEK**

# Marvellous homes come at top dollar



There are marvellous homes in the city. Whether you find yourself planted in one, usually, is a matter of price.

This week’s house has a large, green compound, with plenty of room to rest while still living an active life. Parking lot currently dominates, and that may be fine if you’ve a personal fleet of vehicles that rivals Yoma’s. If you’d like a little more greenery, though, it’s an excellent place to add gardens.

Located in Mindama housing project, it is a two-storey home that is convenient for a large family. It boasts four master bedrooms, two living rooms, a dining room, kitchen and no fewer than five bathrooms.

The compound is huge, at 8800 square feet. There’s an overhang garage to boot.

All the amenities you would expect for top dollar are there, including nearly all the furnishings you will need.

Indoor decorations are modern, and it is a fine place to show off to your friends.

Mayangone township is some distance from downtown, but it’s growing in popularity, particularly among businesses. Rent is a little high, but you can attempt negotiations with the owner and bring that down to size.

- Tin Yadanar Tun

**Location :** Mindama Housing, Mayangone township  
**Price :** K10 million a month (rent)  
**Contact :** Estate Myanmar Enterprise Ltd.  
**Phone :** 09-43118787  
09-43031699



# Dagon 2 changes mulled



MYAT NYEIN AYE

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THE Myanmar Engineering Society has twice inspected the Dagon City 2 project, one of the five large projects that were temporarily suspended near Shwedagon Pagoda last month.

The society, an independent body of experts, is operating at the request Myanmar Investment Commission, looking at the effect the five projects will have on Shwedagon as well as other nearby sites following public concern about their impact on the landmarks.

Owners of at least two of the five projects say they have already received required approval from the

Myanmar Investment Commission, and the current process is a re-examination.

The Myanmar Investment Commission has not yet officially directed any change to Dagon City 2, said U Thoun Htike Min, chair of Thu Kha Yadanar company. “That’s why we currently haven’t completed any changes.”

Thu Kha Yadanar is the sole owner of Dagon City 2 and a minority partner in the nearby but separate Dagon City 1 project, which is also affected by the pause.

U Thoun Htike Min said it is likely some changes to Dagon City 2 will be requested, particularly in the structures closest to Alan Pya Pagoda. If Myanmar Investment Commission directs some changes to the plan, the company will follow the instructions, he said.

“There will probably be changes but we will follow their directions,”

he said. “The Dagon City 2 block may be moved back from Alan Pya Pagoda or the number of floors may be reduced.”

Government officials are awaiting the final report.

Myanmar Investment Commission director U Thant Zin Kyaing said the five projects are still being inspected, so there is no detailed outcome to announce yet.

There may be some changes coming, however.

“Inspection of these projects should be finished this month. After that, there will be an outcome and that outcome will be announced,” he said.

U Thant Zin Kyaing added the projects had already received Myanmar Investment Commission approval, but could not comment on the status of Yangon City Development Committee approval for the five project sites.



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– Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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# MYTHIC set to compete



CATHERINE TRAUTWEIN

newroom@mmtimes.com

A NEW cable company has promised to establish the market price for international connectivity in Myanmar by laying its own cable, according to its founder and CEO U Myo Myint Ohn.

Campana Group, based in Singapore with a Yangon subsidiary, will deliver international connectivity, a reliable submarine network and massive capacity at an economical price, U Myo Myint Ohn said. The firm's MYTHIC cable project joins others currently in the works and aims to disrupt the effective monopoly state-owned incumbent Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) enjoys in doling out international capacity.

The telco, as part of a consortium, currently runs the SEA-ME-WE 3 cable, which connects Myanmar to 33 other countries around the world. Soon, MPT will operate SEA-ME-WE 5, which will link up with 17 other countries.

U Myo Myint Ohn said MPT has held the key to international capacity and sold it to internet service providers at an "exorbitant" price.

"Even to this day, their prices are considered ridiculous," he continued. "We're bringing in another international gateway ... whereby we're going to provide economical, reliable capacity at a wholesale level to all the carriers including MPT, and that will in turn allow these guys to offer cheap mobile broadband services to the consumer."

However, MPT said building cable in a consortium can reduce each member's expense, and that each party's expertise on home markets smoothes construction, operation and maintenance, resulting in high quality telco services at competitive prices.

Campana takes on MPT's past, present and future as its cable snakes into the space occupied by legacy cable SEA-ME-WE 3 and its impending successor, SEA-ME-WE 5. The MPT cable, slated to start service by the second half of next year, will have more capacity than its predecessor and will help Myanmar connect to the internet if cuts occur on SEA-ME-WE 3, according to MPT.

MYTHIC – an acronym for Myanmar-Malaysia-Thailand Internet Connectivity – will differentiate on pricing and reliability, according to U Myo Myint Ohn.

Cable cuts seem to be part of life in Myanmar. U Myo Myint Ohn said cable spanning land in Myanmar where feelings toward the government are less than fuzzy can get cut. "That happens a lot behind the Thai-Myanmar borders connecting at Myawaddy," U Myo Myint Ohn said. "It goes to the KNU land – if they're not happy with the government ... they just decide to cut it there and then."

SEA-ME-WE 3 has also experienced outages. MPT said fault frequency varies by location, and pins most cuts in shallow waters on fishing activities – but also that there have been few faults observed in the past off of Myanmar.

In December, Campana submitted its application for a Network Facilities Service (Individual) licence, which U

Myo Myint Ohn said provides blanket approval. Construction – which will cost between US\$60 million and US\$80 million – will start in April and the cable will go live in August of 2016, he said.

The company plans for MYTHIC to run from Myanmar to Malaysia and Thailand, from which points it can connect to the rest of the world, according to U Myo Myint Ohn.

"We've got investors and strategic partners ... We're going to be selling capacity to Telenor, Ooredoo, YTP and all the other hundreds of local ISPs that are now coming onboard," U Myo Myint Ohn said. "We'll be selling to the bigger Myanmar market and we're going to open up that competition."

"Effectively, when we give prices, we are establishing the market cost for international connectivity."

Meanwhile, another Myanmar player has been working to set up international links to the worldwide web: Telenor.

Telenor head of communications, Hanne Knudsen, said the firm finalised its fibre to Thailand – which links straight to Telenor's Thai subsidiary, DTAC – earlier this month, but is currently beta testing the connection. The company targets operating the cable at "full capacity" by February's end.

"[We] want to share, swap or lease fibre with all operators in the market as it means lower cost, faster rollout and added protection when there are fibre cuts on a particular line," she said, adding it is unclear whether Telenor will lease its own capacity as the fibre is still undergoing testing.

Like Campana, Telenor will help diversify Myanmar's connections to the internet with its cable.

"I see the fibre market in the same as when the mobile market was opened up to competition," she said. "Competition is good – it ultimately benefits the consumer as the choice is wider and the prices come down."



# Myanmar language, culture gets game users

AUNG KYAW NYUNT

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A LOCAL Myanmar game has racked up tens of thousands of users, proving the use of local language and cultural tie-ins can trump foreign competition.

Total Gameplay Studio's Pawthoot Android app, named for lovable rascal and Myanmar cartoon cultural icon Thamaing Pawthoot, has gained 40,000 users. An iOS version is in development.

"We are expanding this game in the Myanmar market, and we will expand this game in the world," said U Myint Kyaw Thu, Total Gameplay Studio chief technology officer.

The app revolves around Thamaing Pawthoot, a thief of Taung Pu Lu township in love with the governor's daughter. His mission: to steal the "Book of Aung Zay Yatu Ahi Ahi" from the governor's enemy.

The character is the brainchild of cartoonist Maung Wana, and gets its voice in the Pawthoot app from Myanmar singer Ko Hlwan Paing. "We created this game to preserve the essence of Maung Wana's Thamaing Pawthoot," said U Myint Kyaw Thu.

Total Gameplay has a history of making games based on Myanmar culture. The firm has launched apps around chinlone, the Myanmar traditional cane-ball game, and one trishaw driver's Thingyan.

Now, the fact that Pawthoot runs in Myanmar language and has links to tradition has won users over.

Mobile user Ko Soe Win Maung compares the game to Temple Run, but likes Pawthoot because it operates with local language.

Another mobile user, Ko Kyaw Kyaw Oo, said Pawthoot beats the American app. "Temple Run is interesting to Myanmar mobile gamers, but Pawthoot is more interesting because it's a traditional game and I play it in Myanmar language," he said.

Up next: Total Gameplay apps for the Myanmar hero Bayinnaung and gangster Lanmadaw Pho Toke.

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# World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

WASHINGTON

## World must ‘wage a new war against a new enemy’: Kerry

MINISTERS from over 60 nations gathered last week to draw up an action plan to fight violent extremism, as top US diplomat John Kerry urged the world to “wage a new war against a new enemy”.

On the third and final day of a White House summit called by President Barack Obama after a series of brutal jihadist attacks around the world, delegates were to hammer out ways to combat the threat posed by radical extremist groups.

“We have to come together and ask : What’s our strategy?”, Mr Kerry said, as he opened the summit at the State Department in the wake of shocking beheadings and murders by the Islamic State group (IS) in Iraq and Syria.

The first session would seek to answer why so many young people were flocking to join groups such as al-Qaeda and IS, he said, “because you cannot defeat what you don’t understand”.

Even if it was easy to recognise how people can become marginalised and disaffected in their own communities, “it’s a huge leap between personal disquiet and committing murder, mayhem,” Mr Kerry said.

Observers say some 20,000 foreign fighters have left their homelands to join extremist groups in the past few years, with an estimated 4000 of those from western Europe.

The “emergence of a new generation of transnational terrorist groups ... is a grave threat to international peace and security”, warned UN chief Ban Ki-moon.

“These extremists are pursuing a deliberate strategy of ‘shock and awful’ - beheadings, burnings, and snuff films designed to polarise and provoke,” he told the gathering.

As a first step of an action plan, Mr Ban said he would convene in the coming months a meeting of global faith leaders “to send a powerful message of tolerance and solidarity”.

“Extremists have a strategy for hate. We need a comprehensive strategy for harmony, meaningful integration and peace,” Mr Ban said.

The summit has been in the pipeline for months, but took on greater impetus last week after several attacks, including on a cultural centre and on a synagogue in Copenhagen which left two people dead.

Among those attending is Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris, where attacks by Islamist gunmen last month on the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical weekly magazine and a kosher supermarket left 17 people dead.

The day’s talks sought to elaborate ways to stop violent ideologies from taking root in vulnerable communities across the world - from the growth of Boko Haram in Nigeria to the Islamic extremists in the Middle East and Asia.

While US officials have said the aim was to draft an action plan, it was unclear what concrete results would emerge from the three-day meeting.

And Mr Kerry acknowledged most of the work to try to stop the extremists would be done “without fanfare” quietly in classrooms, community halls and on street corners.

“Military force alone won’t achieve victory. In the long term, this war will be won only by deploying a broader, far more creative arsenal,” Mr Kerry warned on February 19 in a op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*.

“Eliminating the terrorists of today with force will not guarantee protection from the terrorists of tomorrow. We have to transform the environments that give birth to these movements,” he argued.

Part of the work needed was “to identify the zones of greatest vulnerability, the places that could descend into the chaos that breeds terrorism - or that could turn the corner and be the hotbed of growth or innovation,” Mr Kerry added. - *AFP*



DONETSK

## Russia backs ceasefire

RUSSIA pledged renewed support for a tattered ceasefire in eastern Ukraine on February 19 despite violations which included the storming of a key town by pro-Russian rebels.

As the leaders condemned the fighting and urged both sides to observe the truce, there was strident opposition from the separatists and Moscow to a plea from Ukraine for international peacekeepers to enforce the ceasefire.

Washington said pro-Russian rebels had broken the ceasefire more than 250 times since it came into force on February 15.

The Ukrainian army, meanwhile, said 90 troops had been captured and 82 were still missing after the rebels seized the strategic town of Debaltseve.

The seizure of the town, a transport hub sandwiched between the rebel strongholds of Donetsk and Lugansk, sent government troops into retreat.

The insurgents claimed to have captured as many as 300 government soldiers.

One of the rebel leaders, Alexander Zakharchenko, said that 3000 to 3500 troops died in the assault, although such casualty counts on both sides are often greatly exaggerated for propaganda effect.

“Let Kiev take their dead,” he said. Kiev’s defeat in Debaltseve, which has had many Ukrainians

questioning the competence of their military leaders, prompted Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to appeal for international peacekeepers to be deployed in the east.

Mr Poroshenko again raised the proposal in a four-way telephone conversation on February 19 with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Russian President Vladimir Putin, his office said.

He found little apparent support, however, with none of the others mentioning it in statements from their offices, and Moscow denying it was mentioned at all.

Instead, the four called for the implementation of the full package of measures agreed in Minsk, including a full ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons and the release of prisoners,

according to the French presidency.

They also called for observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to be able to carry out their task of monitoring the ceasefire.

The OSCE, which rebels have blocked from entering Debaltseve, said there were “no exceptions” to the ceasefire’s application in the conflict zone - explicitly rejecting the separatists’ argument that Debaltseve should be excluded.

Journalists have also been prevented from getting into the war-ravaged town.

An AFP reporter about 4 kilometres (over 2 miles) from Debaltseve on February 19 saw rebels firing Grad rockets for 15 minutes, making the earth tremble.

“There’s still fighting, there has been shelling, it’s risky,” a rebel commander appointed as the new mayor of the town, Alexander Apendikov, said as his convoy stopped on the road.

The commander, nicknamed “The Greek” for his ethnic origins, said the insurgents were going building to building in Debaltseve looking for remaining Ukrainian soldiers refusing to surrender.

“They are hiding, some of them in the woods. We don’t know what they’re going to do,” he said.

The EU and US have called the rebel assault of Debaltseve a “clear

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**‘We call on all parties, including Russia, to abide by [the ceasefire] plan.’**

**Eric Schultz**  
White House deputy press secretary





'Charlie's Angels' fight sex crime in India

WORLD 40

Mummified monk keeps Mongolia traditions alive

WORLD 42



Laos war relics appear on US catwalks

WORLD 45



IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

A man tells a performer to keep dancing a lion dance at the entrance of a temple during the celebrations to mark the first day of the Lunar New Year in Hong Kong on February 19. Fortune tellers said that the Year of the Sheep should be calmer in general than the previous Year of the Horse, which was characterised by catastrophic international air accidents, brutal terror attacks, global political upheaval, a resurgent Ebola virus and war.

YEPPOON, AUSTRALIA

Australia suffers double cyclone woes

TWO powerful cyclones roared ashore in Australia on February 20 leaving a trail of destruction with buildings severely damaged, trees uprooted and power lines downed, cutting electricity to thousands of people.

Tropical Cyclone Marcia, a category five tempest, slammed into the Queensland coast mid morning on February 20, its landfall coming just hours after another major storm, Cyclone Lam, hit further north.

The category four Lam caused extensive damage to remote Aboriginal communities near Elcho Island, some 500 kilometres (310 miles) east of Northern Territory capital Darwin, including Milingimbi, Ramingining and Gapuwiyak.

"Initial indications are that there has been substantial damage, initial reports are the airstrip is still intact but covered with debris," regional police commander Bruce Porter said of the Elcho Island community, which was without power and water.

"There are downed power lines.

There are a number of trees down and many roads are impassable and we do have a number of buildings and houses that have been severely damaged."

Further south, howling winds and torrential rain had residents hunkering down to wait out the terrifying conditions whipped up by Marcia with authorities warning of a "calamity".

The storm landed near Shoalwater Bay, north of Yeppoon, a town of 16,000 people some 670 kilometres (415 miles) north of Brisbane. It was later downgraded to a category four.

The impact of Marcia was on February 20 being felt over a wide area with residents as far away as Brisbane sandbagging their homes and clearing yards of objects that could be whipped away by the wind.

Massive seas, a deluge of rain and gusts of up to 295 kilometres (182 miles) per hour were being experienced along the central Queensland coast with a storm surge predicted to raise sea levels 3 metres (10 feet) higher than normal. - AFP

Australia cyclones



AFP

as violence continues



Pro-Russian separatists take positions near the eastern Ukrainian city of Ugleorsk on February 19. Photo: AFP

to the crisis," said committee chair Christopher Tugendhat.

In Donetsk, intense artillery fire continued throughout the day, according to a journalist on the ground.

A UN convoy carrying humanitarian aid reached the town on February, the first to arrive in the rebel stronghold.

The West has accused Russia of sending troops, tanks and weapons to support the separatists with the aim of keeping Ukraine, an ex-Soviet republic, too destabilised to move closer toward the EU and NATO. Moscow denies the allegation.

US Secretary of State John Kerry told his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on February 18 "to stop Russian and separatist attacks on Ukrainian positions in Debaltsevo and other violations of the ceasefire".

President Barack Obama has also been mulling sending arms to Ukraine if the situation worsens.

But Russia has a mighty military that could trump any armed escalation in Ukraine, and is an important gas supplier to several EU countries. It has already retaliated against sanctions by banning European food imports.

Britain's Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said on February 19 his country remained opposed to arming Ukraine, but noted the question was "one for individual national governments". - AFP

violation" of the truce aimed at quelling Ukraine's 10-month-old conflict, which has killed more than 5600 people.

"This violence has continued despite Russian and separatist commitments to a ceasefire agreement," White House deputy press secretary Eric Schultz said on February 19. "We call on all parties, including Russia, to abide by that plan."

As Western powers pledged support for the ceasefire agreement, a

scathing report from a British parliamentary committee said Britain and the EU were "guilty of sleepwalking into this crisis".

The EU Committee of the House of Lords said the EU's relationship with Moscow had long assumed an "optimistic premise" that Russia was on the path to greater democracy.

"The lack of robust analytical capacity, in both the UK and the EU, effectively led to a catastrophic misreading of the mood in the run-up



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Dated: 23 February 2015

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Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2015**BANGKOK**

Thai prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra is photographed in Bangkok on September 29, 2014 . Photo: AFP

# Yingluck is indicted

FORMER Thai premier Yingluck Shinawatra was formally indicted over a bungled rice subsidy scheme last week in the latest legal move against her divisive family that could see her jailed for up to a decade.

Thailand's junta-stacked government is also considering launching a civil suit against the nation's first female prime minister, to seek US\$18 billion in compensation for damages caused by the scheme which her government introduced.

The indictment comes after Ms Yingluck, sister of fugitive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, was retroactively impeached last month by an assembly appointed by the junta which seized power from her elected government last May.

"Today we have indicted former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra ... for dereliction of duty" in relation to the costly rice scheme, said Chutichai Sakhakorn, director-general of the special litigation department at the Office of the Attorney General, on February 19.

The Supreme Court will decide whether or not to accept the case on March 19.

The ousted premier has been banned from leaving the country since authorities announced she would face criminal charges over the populist scheme on the same day she was impeached, a move carrying an automatic five-year ban

from politics.

Ms Yingluck did not attend the indictment at Bangkok's Supreme Court but her lawyer Norawit Larlaeng said she had no plans to travel overseas after rumours she might seek to flee.

"She will enter the justice process," he told reporters ahead of the formal charges being laid out.

The former premier has defended the rice scheme as a necessary subsidy to help poor farmers who historically receive a disproportionately small slice of government cash.

But while popular among the Shinawatras' vote base in Thailand's rural heartlands in the north and northeast it was economically disastrous, leading to massive stockpiles of the grain.

On February 18 Finance Minister Sommai Phasee said his ministry had

**'The finance ministry oversees damages to the state and is ready to take action.'**

**Sommai Phasee**  
Thai finance minister

received a letter from the national graft agency asking it to pursue a civil suit against Ms Yingluck to recover losses of US\$18 billion as a result of the scheme.

"The finance ministry oversees damages to the state and is ready to take action," he said.

The subsidy, which paid farmers in the rural Shinawatra heartland twice the market rate for their crop, cost billions of dollars and inspired protests that felled Ms Yingluck's government and led to a military takeover on May 22.

Experts say the impeachment and criminal charges are the latest attempt by the country's royalist elite, and its army backers, to end the political influence of the Shinawatras, whose parties have won every election since 2001.

The clan draws the loyalty of urban working-class voters and farmers from the north and northeast, who applaud the family for recognising their changing social and economic aspirations.

Since seizing power, Thailand's military have banned political gatherings, censored the media, arrested and detained opponents and ramped up prosecution under the country's controversial lese majeste laws.

The junta says it will hold fresh elections in early 2016 once reforms to tackle corruption and curb the power of political parties are codified in a new constitution. - AFP

**KUALA LUMPUR**

# PM rubbishes police officer's corruption assassination claims

MALAYSIA'S prime minister on February 19 dismissed as "rubbish" a former police commando's claim that he was ordered by "important people" to kill a woman linked to highly sensitive corruption allegations.

"It's total rubbish. Total rubbish," Prime Minister Najib Razak said to reporters in a rare comment on the affair, according to news website Malaysian Insider.

Police officer Sirul Azhar Umar, who fled abroad to avoid being hanged and is now in Australian custody, is a key figure in a scandal entwined with Malaysia's 2002 purchase of submarines from France.

That deal has long been clouded by accusations of huge kickbacks to Malaysian officials and the murder of Altantuya Shaariibuu, a Mongolian woman who purportedly acted as a translator in the negotiations. Suspicions have swirled for years that Ms Altantuya was murdered to keep her quiet about shenanigans in the deal.

In a phone interview published on

February 18 on Malaysian news website Malaysiakini, Mr Sirul said he and another officer carried out the killing under orders from "important people", while declining to elaborate.

Mr Najib has previously denied wrongdoing in the deal and sworn on the Koran that he did not know Ms Altantuya. The scandal is one of Malaysia's most sensitive topics.

It centres on allegations that French submarine maker DCNS paid "commissions" of more than 114 million euros (US\$142 million) for two Scorpene submarines, which Malaysia's opposition alleges were kickbacks. The deal is being investigated by French authorities.

Ms Altantuya was the lover of Abdul Razak Baginda, a close associate of Mr Najib, who had been tasked with executing the deal. Mr Najib was defence minister at the time.

Ms Altantuya, 28, was shot dead and her body blown up with military-grade plastic explosives outside Kuala Lumpur.

A private investigator working for

Mr Abdul Razak gave a sworn 2008 statement claiming Mr Najib, now 61, had earlier been romantically entangled with Ms Altantuya and was involved in efforts to manipulate the murder probe.

Mr Sirul and his convicted accomplice Azilah Hadri were members of an elite unit that guards top Malaysian ministers. They were convicted of the killing in 2009 and sentenced to death, a verdict upheld by Malaysia's highest court last month. Mr Sirul had managed to flee abroad ahead of last month's final ruling.

But Malaysia's courts never sought to establish why two police commandos would act on their own in killing the woman, fuelling suspicions of a cover-up.

Mr Sirul told Malaysiakini he was a "scapegoat" and was considering revealing all he knows to the media.

He is now stuck in limbo in custody in Australia, where national law forbids sending people back to face execution.

- AFP





ဝန်ဆောင်မှု အသစ်

# ဆွေသမ္မာ



ချစ်ခင်ရင်းနှီးသူများနှင့် နီးနီးကပ်ကပ်ရှိနေနိုင်ဖို့  
ပိုမိုသက်သာသော ဈေးနှုန်းများ  
ကောင်းမွန်သော ဆက်သွယ်ရေးကွန်ရက်နှင့် ဝန်ဆောင်မှုများ

 ဝမ်နစ်လျှင် ၁၅ ကျပ်ဖြင့်  
ခေါ်ဆိုနိုင်ပါပြီ

 ပိုမိုမြန်ဆန်သော  
အင်တာနက်ပြန်နှုန်း  
ဆက်သွယ်ရေးအားလုံး  
1 MB လျှင် ၁၅ ကျပ်

 SMS ၁ စောင် ၁၅ ကျပ်



 ဈေးနှုန်းသက်သာသော  
ဝန်ဆောင်မှုအသစ်  
ဝမ်နစ်လျှင် ၂၅ ကျပ်ဖြင့် နှစ်သက်ရာ MPT  
မိုဘိုင်းနံပါတ် (၃) ခုကို ခေါ်ဆိုသည့်အပြင်  
50 MB အခမဲ့သုံးစွဲခွင့်

ဘယ်ညီအစ်ကိုမျှ မသိရအောင် ကွန်ရက်ပြစ်တဲ့ MPT ရဲ့ ဝန်ဆောင်မှုအသစ်များကို ယခုရယူလိုက်ပါ။

“SWE” ဟုရိုက်၍ 1332 သို့အခမဲ့ SMS ပေးပို့ပြီး ဝန်ဆောင်မှုရယူပါ။  
သုံးစွဲပြီးမှ ကျသင့်ငွေပေးချေသော သုံးစွဲသူများအနေဖြင့် “POSTSWE” ဟုရိုက်၍  
1332 သို့အခမဲ့ SMS ပေးပို့ပြီး ဝန်ဆောင်မှုရယူပါ။

- Swe Thahar ဝန်ဆောင်မှုကို အခမဲ့ရယူနိုင်ပါသည်။
- GSM နှင့် WCDMA အသုံးပြုသူများအတွက် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။
- \* နှစ်သက်ရာ MPT နံပါတ် (၃) ခုကို ဝမ်နစ်လျှင် ၂၅ ကျပ်နှုန်းဖြင့် ခေါ်ဆိုနိုင်သည့် ဝန်ဆောင်မှုကို ရယူနိုင်ပါသည်။ ပထမဆုံးနံပါတ်ကို စတင်စာရင်းသွင်းသည့်နေ့မှစ၍ ရက်ပေါင်း (၃၀) အတွင်း အသုံးပြုရန် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ၂၀၁၅ ခုနှစ် မတ်လ (၃၁) ရက်မတိုင်မီ စာရင်းပေးသွင်းခြင်းများအတွက်သာ အကျိုးဝင်ပါသည်။





NEW DELHI

# India's Charlie's Angels take on Delhi's mean streets

AS dawn breaks over the Indian capital, a group of policewomen are already hard at work practising their punches, on a mission to rid the city's streets of sexual predators.

Dressed in white karate kimonos, the constables knee and kick their imaginary attackers with aggression, honing their skills in preparation for their debut assignment to protect women and the vulnerable.

Following a string of high-profile attacks that has seen New Delhi branded the rape capital of India, police chiefs decided to form an all-women squad specially trained in martial arts.

"We won't tolerate any bad behaviour," leader Bharti Wadhwa said after an intense two-hour session with her 40-strong team, dubbed Charlie's Angels by their trainers after the 1970s US television show.

"It can start from a simple cat call which then leads to stalking and then rape. We will nip such antics in the bud," said Ms Wadhwa.

After months of such sessions, the women are almost ready. Wearing plain clothes instead of uniforms to blend in, they are set to be deployed in coming months at busy bus and metro stations, outside colleges and other areas where women are thought vulnerable.

Trainer Vishal Jaiswal, a blackbelt in Japanese Shotokan-style karate, is all praise for his proteges.

"In fact, I feel a great sense of responsibility while training these cops.

I feel like a warrior on a mission," he said.

"And my mission is to make them like Charlie's Angels, fearless and fearless," he said with a smile.

Delhi, a sprawling city of some 16 million, came under the spotlight just over two years ago when thousands took to the streets, enraged about violence suffered by women.

The tipping point was the horrific fatal gang-rape of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in the capital. The attack and the subsequent protests shook the country and led to a wave of policing and legal reforms.

Since then however, attacks on women in Delhi have showed few signs of slowing. Last month women's safety again made headlines when an Uber taxi driver was charged with raping a woman passenger as she returned home from dinner in the city.

Some 2069 rapes were registered

**'I am glad to know that now women cops will be around to protect us from lecherous men.'**

**Sakshi Sharma**  
Student



Indian policewomen practise kicks during a self-defence class in New Delhi on January 29. Photo: AFP

with police in Delhi in 2014 against 1571 the previous year, an increase of 31.6 percent. Experts say women are coming forward in increasing numbers, instead of suffering in silence, despite the stigma attached to sex crimes in deeply patriarchal India.

Police have adopted a range of controversial initiatives to try to throw off the "rape capital" tag, including holding self-defence classes for Delhi's female residents.

The all-women karate unit has been championed by Delhi police chief Bhim Sain Bassi. Known as "Charlie Papa" on police radio, he has stressed women's safety as a priority since taking the top job in 2013.

"After some more training, the karate unit will be deployed in plain clothes near metro stations and outside schools and colleges, spots which

are most vulnerable," police deputy commissioner Varsha Sharma said.

"Young girls and women must feel assured that these guardian angels are there to take care of them at all times."

Women rights activists laud the initiative but are sceptical of what a unit numbering just 40 can really achieve in a city teeming with millions.

"They must extend this training to enrol more policewomen," Mriganka Dadwal, executive director of non-profit group SLAP (Street-level Awareness Programme), said.

"The message should go out loud and clear to sex offenders that they are constantly being watched wherever they may be."

In test runs, the karate unit has fanned out across the city to patrol public buses and talk to passengers about their safety fears.

Women commuters hailed the constables as "much needed" when AFP tagged along on one of their recent runs.

"I use the bus to go to college and often men stare or give you dirty looks," said Sakshi Sharma, 19, as she browsed through a pink police booklet offering tips on how to stay safe in the city.

"I used to feel helpless but I am glad to know that now women cops will be around to protect us from lecherous men. It's a great start by the police."

Sitting alongside her, Chhaya Aggarwal, a 25-year-old software professional, was more enthusiastic.

"Now our fathers and brothers need not worry about us when we are out, thanks to this women's army out on the streets." – AFP

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**BANGKOK**

## Thailand bans foreign surrogacy

A LAW banning foreign couples from using Thai women as surrogates was passed last week after a series of high-profile scandals tainting the image of the unregulated industry in the country.

The legislation was unanimously approved by Thailand's junta-picked parliament on February 19 in a bill spurred by the case of an Australian couple accused of abandoning a baby with Down's syndrome while taking his healthy twin sister borne by a Thai surrogate.

"Thailand and its women's uterus will no longer be a hub" for surrogacy, said National Legislative Assembly member Wallop Tungkananurak.

Under the new law, likely to be enforced by June, only Thai couples or those where at least one partner comes from Thailand will be eligible to use surrogates in the kingdom.

They will have to prove that they are unable to bear children and have no relatives to act as surrogates on their behalf.

Anyone found breaching the law could face up to 10 years in jail, said Mr Wallop. Commercial surrogacy is officially banned by the Medical Council of Thailand and authorities moved to close several IVF clinics in the weeks after the scandal over the Australian couple last August. – AFP



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ခေတ်မှီသော အမြင်အဆင် များဖြင့် အောက်ပါအတိုင်း  
ဖွဲ့စည်းပေးထား ပါသည်။

- မီးအပူခံ အလျှင်မြန် ဖိန်းတံခါး အသံလုံ မှန် နှင့် အလျှင်မြန် ပြတင်းပေါက်
- ကြမ်းခင်း ပါကေး (သို့) အရည်သွေးမြှင့် ကြွေပြား
- နိုင်ငံတကာအဆင့်ပို Kitchen Counter Top ၊ ဂက်စ် မီးဖို ၊ ညော်စုပ်စက်
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- အခန်းတိုင်းအတွက် လေအေးပေးစက် (Air Con) များ
- အဆင့်မြင့် ရေပေးပေးမှုစနစ် နှင့် လုံလောက်သောကာပေါက်ကန်  
စီစဉ်ပေးထားခြင်း

သင့်တင့်တုံ့ဖျေးနှုန်းနှင့် ခေတ်မှီထည်ဝါမျှတပေါင်းစု ဖွဲ့စည်းထားသော THE CENTURY တွင် သင် နှင့် သင့်မိသားစု  
ဘဝတစ်သက်သာ အမှတ်ရစရာများကိုဖန်တီးအရယူလိုက်ပါ

- ရန်ကုန်မြို့၏ အချက်အချာကျသော (၆)လမ်းသွား လမ်းမကြီးတစ်ခုဖြစ်သည့် ရန်ကုန်-အင်းစိန် လမ်းကြီး  
ပေါ်တွင်တည်ရှိခြင်း ၊
- ၁ ခု ကေဂျီ ဘိုးဘွားပိုင်မြေပေါ်တွင် ခေတ်မှီ ထည်ဝါ၍ နိုင်ငံခြားပညာရှင်များမှ ဒီဇိုင်းပြုလုပ်ထားသော  
၂၄ထပ် နှင့် Basement ၂ ထပ် ပါ Twin Tower အဆောက်အဦး ဒီဇိုင်း ၊
- မိသားစုများနှင့် အပန်းဖြေနိုင်ရန် 4th Floor တွင် လူကြီး နှင့် ကလေးရေကူးကန် ၊ ကော်ဖီခရိုင် ၊  
အားကစားခန်းမ ၊ ယောဂခန်းမ၊ ချွေးထုတ်ခန်း ၊ ပန်းညှပ်နှင့် ကလေးကစားကွင်း ၊ ခန်းမကျယ် ၊ B.B.Q  
ပြုလုပ်ရန်နေရာ

အရစ်ကျ ငွေပေးချေမှုစနစ်

- ၁) ပထမအကြိမ် - ကြိုတင် စာရင်းသွင်းသည့်နေ့တွင် - ကျပ် ၅,၀၀၀,၀၀၀
- ၂) ဒုတိယအကြိမ် - ၁၀ % အား ၄၅ ရက်အတွင်း ၂ ကြိမ်ခွဲ၍ ပေးသွင်းနိုင်ပါသည်။  
- ကြိုတင်ငွေ သိန်း ၅,၀၀၀,၀၀၀ အား ပြန်လည်နှုတ်ပေးမည်။
- ၃) ကျန် ၈၀ % အား လစဉ် (၁၀.၉ %) နှုန်းဖြင့် ၄၂ လအရစ်ကျပေးချေရပါမည်။
- ၄) နောက်ဆုံးကျန်ရှိသော ၁၀% အား အခန်းသော့ လက်ဝယ်ရောက်ရှိသည့်နေ့တွင်ပေးချေရပါမည် ။



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ULAN BATOR

# Mongolia's mummified monks live on

FOR more than a century he sat in a meditative pose in remote western Mongolia before being thrust into the spotlight by an unscrupulous thief.

The discovery of the near-perfectly preserved mummy of a Buddhist monk born almost 200 years ago may have baffled many but it is also shining a light on how the religion venerates relics of holy figures.

The corpse, still sitting in the lotus position, was recovered in the Central Asian country's capital of Ulan Bator after being stolen from its provincial resting place by a man who aimed to sell it, Mongolian media reported last month.

The remains are believed to those of a monk named Sanjjab who lived from 1822 to 1905, according to G Purevbat, a noted Mongolian Buddhist artist and lama - spiritual teacher - involved in the investigation into the identity of the recovered mummy, as well as its long-term preservation.

Mr Purevbat said that the deceased monk had been a disciple of the Geser Lama, a revered figure in Mongolian Buddhism who lived from 1811-1894.

**'We believe they are alive, therefore we believe they are living gods.'**

**G Purevbat**  
Lama

"He is preserved so well, so beautifully," Mr Purevbat said in an interview at the Ulzii Badruulagch Monastery, located in snowy mountains in Tov province about a 90-minute drive from Ulan Bator. Mr Purevbat is head of the monastery.

"Once they finish the cleaning it will look like [the] real features," he said, adding that dust and earth had accumulated on the mummy's body and that it was now being carefully prepared for reinterment.

Mummified holy figures are a vital spiritual force for Mongolian Buddhists, with some believers maintaining that senior lamas whose bodies have been preserved are not really dead.

"We believe they are alive, therefore we believe they are living gods," Mr Purevbat said.

Photos published shortly after the body's discovery show a bony, dusty-looking figure sitting with legs crossed, one palm slightly upturned with its head and upper body bent forward.

Requests by AFP to see the mummy, now in the hands of forensics officials in Ulan Bator, were rebuffed.

Jonathan Mair, an authority on Buddhism at the University of Manchester in Britain, said that the preservation of bodily relics in the faith goes all the way back to the Buddha himself.

"In Tibetan Buddhism [as practised in Mongolia] intentional preservation of bodies of important religious teachers is commonplace," he said in an e-mail.

"The body is placed in the lotus position, as in this case, before being

packed in salt or other preservatives for a period of years" and eventually being exhumed and put in a stupa, or shrine, he said.

The exact circumstances of the monk Sanjjab's mummification were not immediately clear and may come to light after the ongoing investigation is complete. Mr Mair, however, cited the country's weather conditions as a possible factor.

"Mongolia is a very dry climate and it is possible that this contributed to the preservation of the body in this case," he said.

"There have also been cases of attempted - and sometimes successful - self-mummification, in which the body is prepared through an arduous process involving starvation and culminating in a meditation-unto-death," Mr Mair added.

"This is well documented in Chinese, and especially in Japanese, Buddhism, and it has been suggested that it has also been practised by Tibetan Buddhists."

Buddhists in Mongolia were subject to intense persecution during much of the 20th century when the country was a communist satellite of the Soviet Union.

In 1990 the country threw off Soviet control in the aftermath of the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and swiftly transformed itself into a vibrant democracy.

The Ninth Bogd Jebtsundamba, the Tibetan-born spiritual leader of Mongolia's Buddhists who had been forced to spend most of his life living outside the



Buddhist monk G Purevbat, founder of the Aglag Meditation Temple, walks in front of stone carving "Ingot Rock" at the Ulzi Badruulagch Monastery some 60 kilometres (37 miles) west of Ulan Bator, Mongolia, on February 13. Photo: AFP

country in India, died in 2012 and has been subject to mummification at Ulan Bator's Gandan monastery.

The original sites of Sanjjab and the Geser Lama's remains are two small separate stupas on Sodnomdarjaa Mountain in the country's west central Arkhangai province.

Sanjjab's body will eventually be returned to its original resting place,

although officials plan a more secure structure to avoid a repeat theft, Mr Purevbat said. He added that while the monk Sanjjab's mummy was looted, the remains of the Geser Lama were not taken because "his energy protects him".

"Just a simple man on the street can't reach him because he's very powerful," Mr Purevbat said. "No one can reach him." - AFP

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UN

## UN postpones Sri Lanka war crimes probe

THE United Nations decided last week to postpone an eagerly awaited report on a war crimes probe into Sri Lanka's brutal separatist war to give the country's new government a chance to cooperate with investigators.

The UN Human Rights Council accepted a recommendation from rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein to delay the presentation of the report by six months, his office said in a statement.

"This has been a difficult decision," Mr Zeid said. He guaranteed that the report, which had been scheduled to be presented to the council next month, would be published by September.

He said there were strong arguments for deferring the report, pointing to "the changing context in Sri Lanka, and the possibility that important new information may emerge which will strengthen the report".

Mr Zeid's comments came after the surprise victory in January's presidential election of Maithripala Sirisena, whose new government has been welcomed as the possible start of a new era for the Indian Ocean island.

The previous government of long-time strongman Mahinda Rajapakse had flatly refused to cooperate with the UN-mandated investigation into allegations that government forces killed up to 40,000 Tamil civilians while defeating the separatists in 2009.

The UN estimates at least 100,000 people were killed in the conflict between 1972 and 2009. Mr Zeid said three UN rights experts had agreed that "a one-off temporary deferral [of the re-

port] would be the best option to allow space for the new government to show its willingness to cooperate on human rights issues".

The UN rights chief said he had already received commitments from the new government of Sri Lanka "indicating it is prepared to cooperate with my office on a whole range of important human rights issues, which the previous government had absolutely refused to do," adding he wanted to ensure such commitments "translate into reality".

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera urged the UN last week to delay the report, stressing that the new government was in the process of setting up an internal domestic probe into the war crimes allegations.

"Once the (UN) report is finalised, we are hoping they can refer it to our domestic mechanism for action," he said during a trip to Washington, denying that the government was merely trying to buy time.

"Unlike the previous government we are not in a state of denial, saying that such violations have not happened. We believe such violations have happened," Mr Samaraweera said, adding that the government was "ready to ensure that those who have violated human rights in Sri Lanka will be brought to justice."

Mr Zeid acknowledged that many victims of rights violations might see the delay as a sign the report would be shelved or diluted, but gave his "personal, absolute and unshakeable commitment that the report will be published by September". - AFP

TOKYO

## Newspaper sued over 'comfort girls' reports

MORE than 2000 people are suing the liberal *Asahi* newspaper to demand that it place international advertisements apologising for its coverage of wartime sex slavery, saying it has stained Japan's reputation, local media said on February 19.

The move is the latest salvo in the battle over Japan's history, which pits an increasingly aggressive revisionist right wing against an ever-more-cowed mainstream that accepts the country's guilt over its World War II atrocities.

The group of plaintiffs, including Japanese nationals living in the United States, filed the class action in the Tokyo District Court on February 18, according to Japanese newspapers, including the *Asahi*.

They argued that the *Asahi's* historical reports on the so-called "comfort women" system were instrumental in forging global opinion that the Japanese state and its military were involved in organising a formalised system of sex slavery.

They also claim that the paper's reports contributed to the drive to build statues of former "comfort women" in California and other US locations, which they say led to their mental distress.

The suit demands the *Asahi* pay 3 million yen (US\$253,000) in compensation and place advertisements

in major US and European newspapers apologising for the coverage.

Last month, some 8700 people, including conservative lawmakers and professors, filed a similar lawsuit with the district court against the *Asahi*.

Despite a dearth of official records, mainstream historians say up to 200,000 women, many from Korea but also from China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan, served Japanese soldiers in military brothels called "comfort stations".

Most agree that these women were not willing participants and that the Imperial Japanese Army and wartime government were involved in their enslavement, tacitly or explicitly.

Right-wingers, however, say the women were common prostitutes

engaged in a commercial exchange, and are fighting a vigorous battle to alter the narrative.

The *Asahi* has become the focus of their ire because it published a series of articles in the 1980s based on the now-discredited testimony of a Japanese man who said he had rounded up Korean women to work in military brothels.

After years of pressure, the paper retracted the articles, and apologised. The company's president also resigned.

Conservatives leapt on the *Asahi's* climbdown, and nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe - who wants a more sympathetic telling of Japan's history - took the move as proof of a smear.

Mainstream Japanese opinion holds that the state was culpable for the system, and rejects the revisionist drive. Supporters of the position say the *Asahi* articles were not the only basis for their belief.

Last month, South Korean President Park Geun-Hye urged Tokyo to apologise properly to the "comfort women", saying, "If Japan fails to resolve the issue on time ... it will not only strain bilateral relations but also put a heavy historical burden on Japan."

The *Asahi* said it would respond "in a proper manner" when it receives court documents. - AFP

Thousand

200

Women reported to have been used in Japanese brothels during WWII

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Irrawaddy Green Towers, one of the leaders in construction of cell phone towers in Myanmar, has sponsored a one-year subscription of *Myanmar Times* in both English and Burmese to 54 schools in Mandalay and Upper Myanmar, including orphanages, monastic schools and government schools as part of IGT's corporate social responsibility program.

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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NEW YORK/BAN NAPHIA



A Lao artisan fills moulds with aluminium recycled from Vietnam War bombs and other objects at her workshop outside her house in Ban Naphia, in the northern Laotian province of Xiangkhouang on February 10. Photo: AFP

Fashioning war shrapnel

FORTY years after the end of the Vietnam war, US bombs dropped along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos have become expensive jewellery worn by American fashionistas.

Delicate bracelets encrusted with diamonds, bronze pendants, necklaces and drop earrings – all made from ordnance left over from America’s deadliest war – are on display on the sidelines of New York Fashion Week.

Crafted by artisans in Laos, who smelted shrapnel in straw-roofed workshops, they are distributed by Brooklyn startup Article 22 and now sold in nearly 40 countries.

Inscriptions such as “love is the bomb” and “dropped + made in Laos” are engraved into the metal, a play on modern slang in which “bomb” means “cool,” not just a lethal weapon of war.

“We want the jewellery to be conversational pieces,” said Elizabeth Suda, cofounder of Article 22, which is named after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“When you see someone wearing a bomb, you’re gonna ask: What’s it all about? Why? In a very literal way, it tells a story,” she said.

Article 22 calls its jewellery line “Peacebomb” and in a sign of their growing stature, items have been selected to appear in a stall operated by trendy fashion-forward boutique The Curve on the sidelines of Fashion Week.

The jewellery designers, whose work has been endorsed by American actresses Zoe Kravitz and Olivia Wilde, pride themselves on being ethical.

Since being set up in 2010, Article 22 says it has paid to demine 700,000 square miles (65,000 square metres) of land in Laos, the most bombed country per capita on the planet.

Profits from the simplest bracelet clears 32 square feet, while their most expensive piece, a \$1250 necklace, clears up to 840 square feet.

“The problem of unexploded bombs could harm the health and opportunities of Lao people for generations to come, if not for efforts like Article 22,” said Channapha Khamvongsa from the Legacies of War advocacy group.

Many of the tens of millions of bombs dropped from 1964 to 1973 never exploded, leaving behind about 80 million tennis-sized bomblets that have killed thousands of villagers and children.

500 for four times the local price. And thus her initiative, Buy Back the Bombs, was born.

Over the intervening years, they have refined and diversified their designs into a full collection of bangles, necklaces and pendants.

Jewels made from Ban Naphia bombs now sell in 39 different countries through 150 different retailers.

“People really like those a lot because they are unique pieces that they can’t find anywhere and it allows them to become storytellers also,” said Ms Suda’s business partner, former banker Camille Hautefort.

Nevena Borissova, founder of The Curve chain of high-fashion boutiques in New York and other US cities, was happy to showcase their work. She praised the “amazing” jewellery.

“They make money, they employ and support the local communities. I was like: We’re behind it,” she said.

Sass Brown, acting associate dean of the Fashion Institute of Technology’s School of Art and Design in New York, said Article 22 is part of a trend for similar projects.

Falling Whistles sells whistles fashioned after those used by child soldiers to raise money for war victims in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Emi and Eve sells jewellery and metal clutch bags out of recycled bomb casings and bullet shells from Cambodia, and Fonderie 47 makes watches and jewelry from Ak-47s from Africa.

Brown said the best fashion is subversive.

“I think the best fashion makes people think and does challenge people. That’s the role of art, in its purest form,” she said. – AFP

‘We want the jewellery to be conversational pieces.’

Elizabeth Suda  
Article 22 cofounder

In the highlands of Xieng Khuang province, artisans in the village of Ban Naphia smelted ordnance fragments into a thick, shiny liquid that they first fashioned into spoons.

“They were able to take something so negative and turn it into something that was positive and useful and that could generate income,” said Ms Suda.

“It was really a way of them reclaiming their land and their place in the world.”

Discovering their work, she came up with the idea of making bracelets for export, promising to buy the first

JAKARTA

Bali Nine executions postponed

THE execution of two Australian drug smugglers on death row in Indonesia has been delayed by up to one month, the vice president’s office said on February 20.

Husain Abdullah, the spokesperson for Vice President Jusuf Kalla, said the execution of Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, the ringleaders of the so-called Bali Nine heroin trafficking group, “will be delayed for between three weeks to a month from now due to technical reasons”, without elaborating further.

Indonesian authorities had already confirmed that Mr Chan, 31, and Mr Sukumaran, 33, would be among the next group of prisoners on death row to be executed, despite repeated appeals from Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott for their lives to be spared.

The two Australians were due to be transferred this week from Bali to a high-security prison on Nusakambangan island ahead of execution, but that was delayed after appeals from Canberra that the men be granted more time with their families.

Indonesian authorities also cited logistical difficulties involving capacity at Nusakambangan – the notorious island prison where five inmates were executed last month – as a reason for the delay.

Tony Spontana, a spokesperson for the attorney-general’s office which oversees the executions, neither confirmed nor denied the statement from the vice president’s office but insisted the prisoners would eventually face the firing squad.

“What needs to be underscored is the execution will still be conducted,” Mr Spontana said.

Indonesia’s pledge to proceed with the execution of the Australians, just two of seven foreigners on death row whose appeals for presidential clemency have been rejected, has strained ties between Jakarta and Canberra, a relationship only just recovering from a damaging rift in 2014 over spying revelations and people-smuggling.

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# When children become **tourist attractions**

*With "orphanage tourism" on the rise in Myanmar, child protection experts are warning volunteers and visitors to stay away, saying their presence is harmful to children*



**T**HE trishaw driver stopped outside a small, ramshackle building. From inside, we could hear a child crying. “Go in,” he said, pointing to the door.

I looked at him, confused. I had taken the tour of Dala, on the southern bank of the Yangon river, several times, and this had never been one of the usual stops. “Orphanage,” he said. “Go in.”

We declined his offer to go inside, but according to local tour guide Ko San Win, the orphanage has become a popular stop on the itineraries of tourists visiting the island.

“We get all kinds of requests from our clients. Some tourists ask us if they can visit children at an orphanage, so we take them there when we go to Dala,” he said.

This isn’t the only orphanage in Myanmar welcoming tourists through its doors. Orphanage visits from tourists and volunteers, known commonly as “orphanage tourism”, is on the rise in the country, according to UNICEF.

Orphanage tourism is already prevalent across Southeast Asia, particularly in Cambodia and the north of Thailand, where a number of orphanages charge up to US\$400 a week for volunteers to spend time with orphans. According to child protection expert Tessa Boudrie, in these countries orphanages have become a tourist destination in their own right.

“Somehow it’s a normal thing to have on your itinerary. So you go to the spa, you go to Angkor Wat and you top it off with a visit to an orphanage,” she said.

“Orphanage tourism creates more orphanages ... By building orphanages and keeping the conditions quite basic, keeping the children in not the best conditions, you’re more likely to pull at people’s heartstrings and you’re more likely to get more donations,” he said.

In May last year, UNICEF hosted a visit to Cambodia by Myanmar’s deputy minister of social welfare, relief and resettlement, U Phone Swe, who met with representatives of civil society working to combat the country’s worrying orphanage boom. Following the visit, the government committed to a moratorium to prevent the establishment of new orphanages in Myanmar. It’s an important step, says Gray, though it does not help the thousands of children already living in orphanages.

A UNICEF study of registered orphanages in Myanmar found that 73pc of children in institutional care had one or both parents still alive, dispelling the myth that orphanages are for children without parents. Yet there has been an increase in children living in orphanages, with 17,322 children living in 217 registered facilities in 2010, compared to 14,410 children in 177 facilities in 2006.

UNICEF says extreme poverty is behind most of these cases. Parents send their children to orphanages believing they will have better access to food, shelter and an education. But there is overwhelming evidence to show the detrimental impacts of residential care on the physical and emotional well-being of children. Institutional care has been replaced with foster

said. “Can you imagine, in the town where you come from, a bus full of Korean tourists comes and goes into your child’s primary school, cuddles all the children, gives them soft toys and then leaves? It’s mind-blowing.”

But not everyone agrees. A British volunteer who supports several orphanages in Yangon said warnings against volunteering in orphanages are “outrageous”.

“These kids have been through so much that I can’t even imagine, and giving them opportunities is my way of showing them that people care. The children at the orphanages I visit are very well loved and cared for and far happier than some children who live with their families,” said the volunteer, who asked not to be named.

“If I stopped going to the orphanages, the kids will have lost yet another family member. Foreigners give aid that often Myanmar can’t offer and surely any help is good,” she said.

But child protection experts say voluntourism contributes to the separation of families by giving legitimacy to institutions which should not exist in the first place. If orphanages did not receive support from volunteers and donors, they say, orphanages would not exist and children would be cared for by their communities or extended family – where they are better off.

“Children shouldn’t be in an orphanage in the first place,” said Boudrie. “Most of these children are not orphans – they are just poor. So how about we all put our efforts into community-based

*Can you imagine, in the town where you come from, a bus full of Korean tourists goes into your child’s school, cuddles all the children, gives them soft toys and then leaves? It’s mind-blowing*

And as the number of visitors to Myanmar increases, the phenomenon is spreading here too, with a number of websites offering tourists the opportunity to “give back” and “experience a slice of real life and real people” by teaching English or just “dropping by and saying hello to the adorable children”.

But while visitors may think it is a good way to make a positive contribution to the country, UNICEF says well-meaning “voluntourists” who give time or money to orphanages are doing more harm than good by inadvertently fuelling demand for orphans across Southeast Asia.

“What we have seen in other locations is that people see orphanages as an opportunity to make money. Tourists will go to an orphanage and feel shocked or saddened by what they see, and want to donate money. And when you’ve got large number of tourists donating money it suddenly becomes a good business enterprise for the orphanage director,” said James Gray, child protection specialist at UNICEF.

It is not difficult to see why orphanages may want to attract foreign visitors: Local tour guide Thint Lwyn said that when he takes tourists to visit orphanages “they usually donate about US\$100”.

“You see orphanages opening up where the tourists are,” Gray said. “In a five-year period Cambodia had a 75 percent increase in tourists, and at the same time a 75pc increase in the number of new orphanages opening.” He acknowledges that tourists make donations “with the best of intentions”, but says that they could actually be part of the problem rather than the solution.

care programs or community-based support in many countries worldwide. Orphanages, UNICEF says, should be the last resort.

“Evidence shows that institutions are extremely dangerous for children,” said Gray. “It doesn’t matter how poor a family is, a poor family is still infinitely better for a child’s well-being than an institution.”

But the risks facing children in orphanages don’t end there. Child protection experts are also concerned that ill-intentioned foreigners may be visiting orphanages in order to have direct contact with children.

“People may think it is ok to visit orphanages because they’re not going to harm a child. But if an orphanage is allowing you in then they’re going to be allowing everyone else to come in. There’s no background checks, no documentation,” Gray said. “An unregulated children’s home that is welcoming anyone in: that is the ideal setting for a pedophile or someone who wants to harm children.”

In other Southeast Asian countries there have been a number of cases involving sexual abuse by directors of private orphanages. According to Boudrie, there is already evidence that pedophiles are coming to Myanmar to exploit vulnerable children. She says tourists and volunteers should not be allowed to visit orphanages, regardless of their intentions, as they are putting children at risk who are already vulnerable.

“In the West we long ago steered away from the idea of putting children in institutions, but even if we did have institutions like that, you would never be allowed to visit,” she

family support programs instead of orphanages. That is usually a much shorter period of intervention, cheaper and far more effective.”

Currently, evidence that orphanage tourism is taking off in Myanmar is only anecdotal. But UNICEF says it wants to raise awareness of the issue to prevent it from escalating as it has in neighbouring countries.

In May 2014, UNICEF and the Myanmar Department of Social Welfare held a National Forum on the Prevention of Family Separation in Myanmar. The forum brought together 150 participants from civil society, embassies, government, the private sector and medical professionals to raise awareness that many children are being unnecessarily separated from their families and that growing up in residential care puts children at increased risk of exploitation and abuse.

UNICEF is also engaging with the travel and tourism industry in Myanmar to raise awareness of the impact of orphanage tourism, including delivering a series of awareness-raising workshops for tour guides and travel operators.

“Tour guides are the guys on the ground with the tourists so it’s important they have an understanding of this topic. If they get a request to take a tourist to an orphanage they can try to encourage them to think twice about it,” said Gray.

“Children are not tourist attractions ... As long as the government and tourism industry are helping to ensure tourists get that message, we’re already a step ahead of other countries 10 years ago.”



Children stay at an orphanage in Kayin State. Photos: Zarni Phyto



## HONG KONG

# Year of the Sheep won't be baaa-d, fortune tellers say

AARON TAM

**T**HE Year of the Horse brought catastrophic international air accidents, brutal terror attacks, global political upheaval, a resurgent Ebola virus and war – and, in Hong Kong, large-scale civil unrest.

But fortune tellers in the southern Chinese city are heralding a more docile Year of the Sheep – though volatility is still in the air, with warnings of more woes for the global property markets, and an “explosion of bacteria” leading to new and resurgent diseases.

The lunar calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, and through Chinese folklore ascribes 12 animals – one for each year in the rotating cycle.

The sheep, in the eighth position, is “comparatively tame, meaning that if there is any challenge everyone can come together to solve it”, Hong Kong based feng shui expert Cheng Chi-tai said.

“But because of the animal’s character, it is not strong enough to suppress the instability from last year,” Cheng said, adding that there is no difference between the sheep and the goat in the Chinese translation.

Chinese fortune-telling, including feng shui, is based on ancient philosophy and the belief that events are dictated by balancing the five elements that make up the universe: metal, wood, water, fire and earth.

Feng shui – literally meaning “wind-water” – is influential in many parts of Asia, where people adjust their lives, homes and offices based on its rules to maximise their luck and wealth.

“This year will definitely be calmer in terms of disasters or accidents,” feng shui expert Thierry Chow said. The 27-year-old is a second-generation master who studied the practice under her father, renowned expert Chow Hon-ming.

“The reason last year was so explosive was because the fire element was quite dominant,” Chow said.

In its annual tongue-in-cheek “feng shui index” CLSA, one of Asia’s leading brokerages, predicted there would be a slight



A boy stands on a model of a ram near a temple during Lunar New Year celebrations in Hong Kong on February 19. Fortune tellers in Hong Kong said that the Year of the Sheep should be calmer than the previous Year of the Horse. Photo: AFP/Philippe Lopez

improvement in the economy due to the sheep’s docile nature.

“Prayers and invocations to wealth, engagements and transactions, openings and agreements are smiled upon by the gentle sheep,” it said.

But Chow also warned the animal was strongly connected to the earth element, which can represent sickness, meaning that this year could see a resurgence of existing diseases and the genesis of new ones.

The previous Year of the Sheep – 2003 – saw the SARS epidemic that infected 8096 worldwide and killed 744 people.

“Depending on what other elements are partnering with earth, it usually sparks an outbreak,” she said, adding that the combination of wood and earth elements were a particularly potent mix.

“There is going to be a big explosion of bacteria,” Chow added.

Property markets around the world could also see a tough year ahead with a possibility of a downturn, both Chow and Cheng predicted. The sector is represented by the earth element but the impact of the wood element may cause problems.

But there are also positive sides to the wood element, Chow said, suggesting it could also spark a renewed interest in Earth-friendly

trends – such as a rise in people becoming vegetarian, or adopting a greater interest in farming and sustainability.

An individual’s fortune for the lunar year ahead is calculated by using the exact time and date of his birth and examining the relationship with each of the elements.

For example, Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence, who was born in the Year of the Horse, will continue to have a successful year with lots of work and opportunities, Chow said.

But the star, who hit the headlines last year after hackers posted nude pictures of her online, may continue to struggle in her personal life. Chow said, “If she’s in a relationship there will be lots of conflicts and it will be very unstable.”

Alibaba’s Jack Ma, one of Asia’s richest men, will not be greatly affected by regulatory troubles despite authorities recently accusing his company of allowing “illegal” actions on its multi-billion-dollar online shopping platform.

“He’s not going to have a rocky year. It will be quite stable overall,” Chow said, adding that Ma’s wealth will go up in 2015 due to his birth sign. “He will be travelling, be occupied and busy in a positive way.” – *AFP*



The new Pin Lal film studio cost US\$5 million to build. Photo: Supplied

## First studio set to transform Myanmar’s film industry

CHIT SU

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MYANMAR’S filmmakers have long had to make do without a film studio, shooting films on location or even in their own homes.

That is set to change with the soon to be completed construction of the new Pin Lal film studio, located in North Okklapa, which is set to fill what many see as a gaping hole in Myanmar’s film industry.

The studio is owned by the Pin Lal film production company and spans a total area of 7500 square feet (700 square metres). Film director and owner of Pin Lal Productions, Na Gyi, said the studio – constructed by civil engineer Khin Maung Aye – had taken two years to build at a total cost of US\$5million.

“I want to upgrade the Myanmar film industry,” said Na Gyi. “When we make films, the camera should

be eight to 10 feet away from our subject in some scenes, but that can be impossible when we shoot films in people’s homes or on location. It’s a real problem for filmmakers.”

Some music videos are already being made at the new studio, although it has not officially opened due to ongoing construction. The studio features a multifunctional room, a greenscreen room for special effects, a setting room and a stage.

“I am currently creating a sound studio as well, but it is not finished yet. All the walls are hollow inside and completely mobile. The studio is also soundproof, so a number of movies can be shot at the same time,” Na Gyi said.

The studio will be used by other production companies as well as Pin Lal Productions. The studio is available for hire with prices starting from around US\$300 for one room.

## Mister Myanmar misses out on top prize

NANDAR AUNG

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MISTER Myanmar, Aung Chan Mya, scooped 15<sup>th</sup> place at last week’s Mister International 2014-15 competition – held in Korea from February 6 to 15 – where he competed against 50 pageant hopefuls from around the world.

Despite losing out on the top prizes, the 6-foot-1 inch-tall model said he was happy with the result.

“I learned a lot from this competition. All the contestants supported each others like brothers or friends – I think this competition is great for building relationships between countries,” said the 20-year-old. “I didn’t get first prize or anything but I am happy with the final result. It has been such a great experience.”

In the national costume competition, Aung Chan Mya wore a costume modeled on King Konbaung’s royal regalia, but it was Mister China who collected the top prize.

This is the first time Myanmar has sent a contestant to the Mister International pageant, which is now in its ninth year. Misters from around the world compete in different categories watched over by a panel of judges, including body fitness, talent, swim suit and evening suit rounds, as well as the national costume competition.

The winner of Mister International 2014-15 was Neil Perez from the Philippines. Second place was awarded to Mister Lebanon and the runnerup prizes were picked up by the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia. Mister Korea won the Most Stylish Award, Japan scooped the Photogenic Award and the Mister Congeniality Award went to Colombia.

Aung Chan Mya returned to Yangon on February 16, and said he will continue with his modelling career as well as seeking to help others through charity work.



Mister Myanmar Aung Chan Mya wore a costume modeled on King Konbaung’s royal regalia in the national costume round. Photo: Supplied



People light candles and incense at a temple for the Lunar New Year, in the Chinatown area of Bangkok on February 19. Photo: AFP/Nicolas Asfour



Book Review

# The Burden of Being Burmese

Poems by Ko Ko Thet  
2015

JOE WOODS

**K**O Ko Thett is a widely known and important poet in both the Burmese world of poetry and literature and the anglophone one. He co-edited and translated the seminal *Bones will Crow* anthology with James Byrne in 2012, which was largely responsible for introducing contemporary Burmese poetry to the English-speaking world, and he's a prolific translator of poetry and literature.

His own publishing history has been erratic and understandably fractured. While attending the Rangoon Institute of Technology – the place he credits with his becoming both poeticised and politicised – he published two uncensored chapbooks in samizdat. Leaving Burma in 1997 following a four-month detention for his role in the December 1996 student uprising in Rangoon, he has since lived in Finland and Austria and now resides in Louvain, Belgium, where he's both a student and translator.

*The Burden of Being Burmese* is a rare case of a poetry book that's been genuinely long awaited. Ko Ko Thett has been publishing poetry for almost 20 years now in many prestigious outlets, and the cover carries an

endorsement from, among others, the great experimentalist John Ashberry who describes the book as being “brilliantly off-kilter” and a “probably reliable guide to a virtually unknown kingdom.” This can only be interpreted as high praise from the high priest of American poetry and, in turn, a nod to Ko Ko Thett's own modernist techniques; titles in lower case, list poems, inversions, ellipsis and an avoidance of the lyric voice but at the same time thoroughly engaging. The book is a kaleidoscopic journey through the mostly urban and rural landscapes that make up modern Burma – a road movie in which he observes with passionate indignation, eschewing sentimentality and invariably casting a cold eye. Take the opening stanza of chaos clock, a poem about Yangon:

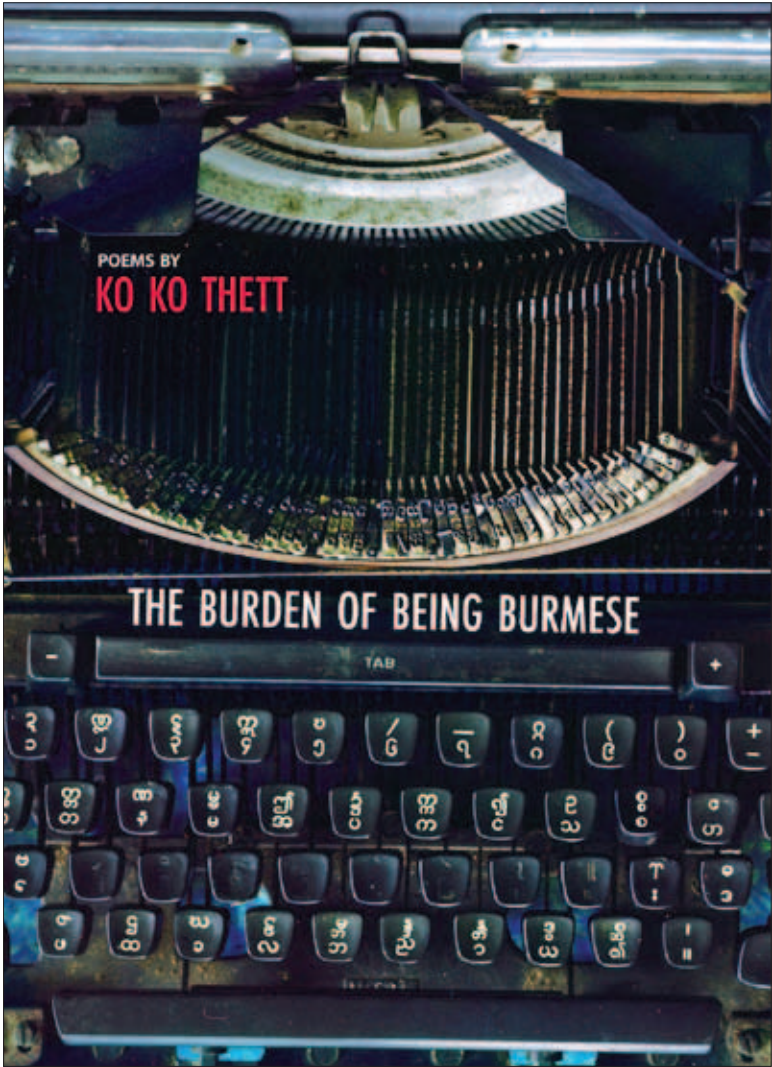
“the city's streets are ideal  
for both trishaws and sports utility vehicles  
motorcycles have been banned  
but you can still tear around town in a helmet”

Here the city is under surveillance by a poet who registers that “massage parlours are new age churches” and asks “where in the world can you enjoy a free funeral?” It is the city known to us but somehow refreshed when scrutinised in forensic detail. The poem closes with the line “since when did the strife end” – a neat play on the “end of strife” English rendering of Rangoon.

The book is peppered with Burmese phrases, some already absorbed into English and many not (a glossary is provided) but the ease and fluency with which Ko Ko Thett flits between the two is indicative of his own process of writing: the poems originate in Burmese but are written down in English. He's particularly well suited to making an impact on the international scene, but deservedly so as Ko Ko Thett is a poet of great depth and range, capable of the anti-lyrical “*padauks* in the bud anticipate the *thingyan* rain” to the “soldier-sock stench” of the durian fruit as he traverses Myanmar. There is humour too and poems like “monosodium glutamate” suggest great performance pieces. Performance is clearly not new to Ko Ko Thett, who appears at the end of the book as a serious young boy in a black and white photo, dramatically reciting at a state poetry competition in Pyay. A portrait of the artist as a young propagandist perhaps? His apprenticeship has been long in the making but finally bearing great promise.

The Burden of Being Burmese will be launched at this year's Irrawaddy Literature Festival which will be held from March 28 to 30 in Mandalay.

US\$15



Better than oompa loompas: Candy Land's master confectioners make candy to order. Photo: Thiri Lu

## Sweet dreams are made of this

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A SHOT of espresso can get you jazzed. But if you'd rather be swirled, kneaded or sprinkled with rainbow-hued hundreds-and-thousands, the place for you is Candy Land. Not only can these high-quality treats sweeten your day, you also get to see the artistry that goes into constructing them.

The artistes at work in Candy Land stimulate the eye as well as the palate. And for the adventurous, you even get the chance to make your sweet treats yourself, perhaps under the supervision of a master confectioner taking a break from the serious business of lollipops.

Inside the small shop, which is located on the ground floor of the Taw Win Centre, exquisite miniature confections can be glimpsed tucked away in bottles and packages. Yangon's very own Willy Wonka,

production manager and candy maker extraordinaire Ko Khaing Soe Thet, gets jiggy with the sugar coagulate on the steel board which is always kept heated. Beside him, three subordinate but skilled sweetistas busy themselves with shaping and packaging.

All the while, as it happens, they are on camera. A customer, requiring lollipops for her son, is sufficiently intrigued by the display to record it on her phone. This happens a lot. Women and children in particular are keen to observe the procedure, before scoffing the results.

Ko Khaing Soe Thet and two of his close friends opened their first candy emporium at People's Square and Park last July.

"We faced lots of difficulties when we first opened," he said "People didn't want to pay too much just for candy. Then we started to explain to customers how we produce these handmade products."

Word spread among the city's sweet-tooths, and people started to notice, to come – and to come back – in sufficient numbers as to allow the launch of a second shop, this one at the Taw Win Centre, in January. But this time, Ko Khaing Soe Thet made no effort to conceal the art that goes into his creations. Quite the contrary, it is on display. This idea clearly works.

As for ingredients, we have glucose, sugar, water, and food colourings and flavourings imported from France.

"Lots of people like sweet things but they don't know what's in them," he said, "We use good-quality ingredients both from local and overseas sources. We even got a letter of recommendation from the Myanmar Food and Drug Administration."

Candy Land takes orders, and will make up your sweet desire in various flavours, tints and sizes.

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Living Well in Myanmar

# Eat right to help the vessels in your brain

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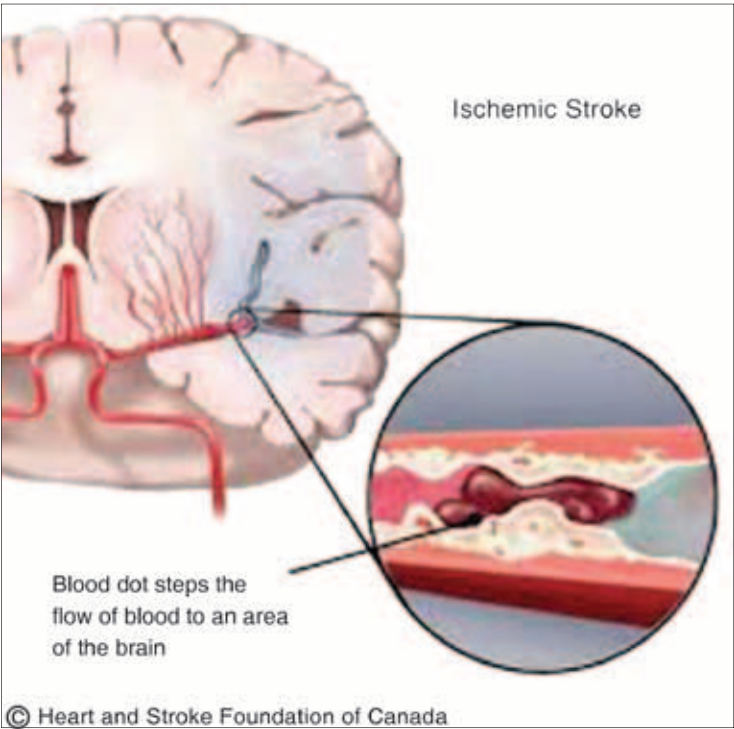
**T**RYING to get patients to eat better is a fundamental part of being a primary care doctor in Yangon. I've written several times about the Mediterranean diet, and am obliged to do so again both because of its health benefits and because it seems to apply so well to the food that is available in Myanmar.

Research has shown that people who follow a Mediterranean diet are at lower risk of heart disease, cognitive decline and premature death. And now, according to new research, it may also lower the risk of stroke.

A large study that is following 104,000 teachers in California divided them up into five categories based on how well they follow a dietary pattern that includes high amounts of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and olive oil. Compared to the group that eats these items infrequently, those who were frequent consumers had fewer strokes. The results remained valid even if the two groups were identical in other ways, such as total calories consumed, body weight, exercise habits and smoking.

Last month in *Living Well* I wrote about women's heart health. I explained that heart attacks are the number-one killer of women globally and that a woman's chances of having heart disease are greatly reduced by leading a healthy lifestyle. Readers may remember that the article identified stroke as the second leading cause of death in women. So the medical data increasingly supports the notion that eating well can protect you from the top two threats to your longevity.

A stroke is caused by a blood vessel in the head suddenly becoming clogged and thereby denying blood and oxygen to part of the brain. When that happens for more than a few minutes, the brain begins to suffocate and die. Much of preventative medicine is trying



to understand how to keep vessels healthy so that they don't become blocked. Healthy food intake, such as that promoted by the Mediterranean diet, is a key part of protecting the well-being of vessels both in the brain and elsewhere.

While different studies tend to define the Mediterranean dietary pattern in slightly different ways, it typically has these characteristics:

- high consumption of fruit; vegetables, whole grain bread and other cereals, potatoes, beans, nuts and seeds;
- olive oil is an important monounsaturated fat source;
- dairy products, fish and poultry are consumed in low to moderate amounts, and little red meat is eaten;
- eggs are consumed zero to four times a week;
- wine is consumed in low to moderate amounts.

Can people in Myanmar follow a Mediterranean diet? It seems quite accessible to those with enough of an economic cushion to have control over the family unit's food purchases. Stacks of vegetables, fish, beans or fruit are plentiful at morning and night street markets. Nuts are easy

to find and can be cheap. Burmese cuisine features salads heavy in tomato, eggplant, corn, green beans and pennywort. Beans and soya are easily available in South Asian dishes and can be found in Shan noodle dishes. Of course, olive oil and wine are expensive, so may be less accessible to most residents.

While eating right to avoid stroke and other diseases is certainly possible – and obviously beneficial – the challenge, as with many other healthy lifestyle choices, is getting people to actually do what we know works. Research aimed at understanding which interventions can change behaviour is difficult to do and has been generally underfunded. Nevertheless, continuing to advocate for a healthy diet is a fundamental and high-yield part of good doctoring.

.....  
**Christoph Gelsdorf is an American Board of Family Medicine physician who sees patients in Yangon and California (www.gelsdorfMD.com). He is a member of the General Practitioner Society of the Myanmar Medical Association. Reader thoughts and questions are welcomed.**



## IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP/Prakash Methema

A Nepalese Hindu Sadhu (holy man) smokes marijuana from a clay pipe as a holy offering for Lord Shiva, the Hindu god of creation and destruction, during the Maha Shivaratri festival in Kathmandu on February 17. Hindus mark the Maha Shivratri festival by offering prayers and fasting.

## The Global Gossip

### LOS ANGELES 'Fifty Shades of Grey' sets box-office record

Steamy bondage romp *Fifty Shades of Grey* dominated the North American box office on its opening weekend, whipping the competition to secure top spot – and the biggest February opening ever – industry figures showed last week.

The erotic tale of billionaire Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) and his sadomasochistic relationship with college graduate Anastasia Steele (Dakota Johnson) pulled in US\$93 million – more than 40 percent of the top dozen movies' sales – according to box office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

Add to that earnings of \$173 million outside the US, which takes its international sales to over a quarter of a billion dollars.

The movie, which opened last week in Europe before its weekend US debut, scored the record haul despite some decidedly mixed reviews.

"While creatively better endowed than its print counterpart, '50 Shades of Grey' is a less than satisfying experience on the screen," said the Rotten Tomatoes movie ranking website, which gave it a lackluster 26 percent approval rating.



Photo: AFP/Mark Ralston



**Actress Charlize Theron poses on the red carpet at the world premiere of *The Gunman* in central London on February 16.** Photo: AFP/Leon Neal



**Actress January Jones attends the Costume Designers Guild Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on February 17 in Beverly Hills, California.** Photo: AFP/Frederick M. Brown

### TOKYO Love, sex and koi carp

Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami is offering tips on love and lust, counselling sex with a fish and advising one fan who wants to date a younger woman to read Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*.

The writer, known for his sometimes surreal literary diversions, has been taking queries from readers on a specially established website, offering advice on subjects ranging from the racy to the frankly odd.

In one recent post on "Murakami-san no tokoro" ("Mr. Murakami's place") the author of *Norwegian Wood* told a 22-year-old woman who claimed never to have fallen in love that the feeling is akin to "a cat slipping into a whirling washing machine".

"This is something you would never see unless you've actually done it," Murakami writes. "If you feel you wouldn't want to, or it would be a hassle, then please do not go near a washing machine."

After one candid query from a married man who complains that his wife refuses to perform certain acts in the bedroom, Murakami suggests he suck it up and find alternatives.

"People ... like her will not change easily," he writes. "You may have to give up. Or you could keep a big koi carp and train it ... Of course I am joking."

The 66-year-old – frequently mentioned as a possible Nobel Literature laureate – has garnered a large and fairly obsessive fan base around the world, who devour his works in dozens of languages.

### NEW YORK Lady Gaga announces engagement

Pop diva Lady Gaga announced to the world on February 16 that she is getting married – to an actor she met making a video, in which she wore her mother's wedding dress.

The 28-year-old superstar, who has become as known for her extravagant outfits as for her music, revealed the engagement by showing a simple, heart-shaped ring that fiancé Taylor Kinney gave her.

"He gave me his heart on Valentine's Day, and I said YES!" Gaga said in a caption to the picture she shared with her 5.5 million followers on Instagram.

Gaga met Kinney in 2011 when filming the video for "You & I" in the open fields of Nebraska. Despite the romantic title, the video was full of disturbing imagery including simulated torture of Gaga.

In a foreshadowing of the relationship to come, Gaga revealed that she wore her mother's wedding dress for the video. It also showed Gaga – clad as a mermaid – having sex with Kinney.

Kinney popped the question to Gaga, an Italian American whose real name is Stefani Germanotta, over a Valentine's Day dinner at the New York restaurant Joanne Trattoria which is owned by her parents.



**Lady Gaga and Taylor Kinney pose on the red carpet during the 37th annual Kennedy Center Honors in Washington, DC on December 7.** Photo: AFP/Kris Connor





Artist Min Thurein speaks at a press conference at the British Ambassador’s Residence in Yangon on February 20 to announce the My Yangon, My Home Festival to be held throughout the city from March 1 to 22. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

# Art moves out of the galleries, onto the streets

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ARTISTS, cartoonists, sculptors and photographers are gearing up for a citywide Yangon Art and Heritage Festival to be held from March 1 to 22 in streets, 100-year-old buildings, public transport and art galleries across the downtown area.

The festival’s theme is “My Yangon, My Home”. It is organised and supported by the British Embassy in Yangon and realised by artist Htein Lin, Spanish artists Jose Abad Lorente and Diana Valarezo.

“Most art exhibitions are held in galleries. With the aim of benefiting the community at large, the cartoon shows, installations and display of sculptures will be in public spaces like the streets and on buses,” said Htein Lin.

As the opening event, a musical concert will take place in front of the City Hall. Local performance artists are honing their performances under the theme of “My Home” for the closing day.

On March 1, political and satirical cartoons will be displayed along Pansodan Street by five cartoonists including Soe Thaw Tar, Shwe Min Thar, Mg Mg Aung, Win Aung and Thiha (Sa Khan Thit), whose work illustrates their emergence and development as cartoonists.

For photography buffs, a gathering of youthful picture-takers, Yangon Street Photographer from Myanmar Deitta, shot scenes from Yangon life

and vie with each other in presenting them. The winner will be exhibited at Myanmar Deitta. Also the organisers arranged a poster competition by challenging amateur painters from the National University of Arts and Culture to show the rest of us how it’s done. The finalists received awards and had the opportunity to show their artworks in public spaces.

But there’s more. Look out for an installation show by artist Aung Myat Htay near the British Council that invites passers-by to participate, all at the same time.

The young artist Min Thurein has created a sculpture finished with iron. Started from March 1 to 7, the sculpture will be displayed on the bus line that runs from North Dagon to downtown six times a day. Passengers on the bus can touch the sculpture. Indeed, given the crowded state of Yangon buses, they will probably have to.

“The whole project can be seen as the first community art in Myanmar,” Htein Lin said. “We celebrate most of the art shows within the public area and give artists the chance to reach out to the ordinary person.”

He and the other organisers have been arranging this big project for the past two months, but he still faces difficulties in securing permission from Yangon City Development Committee and other authorities.

“We’re trying to send a message to the public of Yangon that this is what public art looks like, and this is what community is supposed to do. We hope city-dwellers at every level will enjoy the artworks our artists have created,” said 48-year-old Htein Lin.

# Iranian photographer brings images of hope to Deitta Gallery

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FATEMEH Behboudi grew up surrounded by suffering. Born in Tehran during the 1980-88 war between Iran and Iraq, in which more than 200,000 Iranian soldiers lost their lives, she attended the funerals of soldiers whose bodies were discovered years after the war, witnessing families and mothers overcome by grief and sadness. But with the bodies of more than 10,000 Iranians still missing, she also saw mothers living in perpetual hope that the bodies of their children would be found.

Behboudi’s award-winning photography series *Mothers of Patience* tells the story of the mothers of missing Iranian martyrs, narrating how they have spent their years in pain, expectation, love, and with the never-ending hope of finding their sons. The collection, which is the first to be exhibited at the new Deitta Gallery, opened in

Yangon on February 16 to a jam-packed crowd.

Behboudi – who recently won a World Press Photo award for the work – flew in last week to attend the festival. At last week’s opening, she told the crowd she was “so happy that her work could be shown in Yangon”.

Her work, which is being displayed as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Yangon Photo Festival, drew an overwhelmingly positive reaction from exhibition-goers.

“It’s amazing how she has managed to capture such incredible grief so elegantly,” commented one of the guests.

The exhibition was accompanied by a projection of *Iranian Fathers and Daughters* by Nafise Motlaq – a series of photographs depicting women from all walks of life with their fathers.

“Photography is an important medium to express feelings, to discover what is going on around around the world, and to tell

stories which matter,” said Motlaq, who accompanied Behboudi to Yangon. “I hope this festival inspires young Burmese people idea to get into photography. We need to tell the stories of our countries and nobody can do it better than local photographers,” she said.

Motlaq’s striking photographs are accompanied by telling captions. One read, “People think I don’t have freedom because my father is a cleric but it’s not true. He gave me permission to visit the national book fair with my friends when I was 15.”

Matt Grace, director of the Deitta Gallery, said after the event: “I was great to see so many people come in and react so positively to both the work that we showed and the space itself”

*Mothers of Patience* will run until the end of February at the Deitta Gallery on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of 49, 44<sup>th</sup> Street (lower block), Yangon.



A guest inspects a photograph at the opening of Fatemeh Behboudi’s *Mothers of Patience* at the Deitta Gallery on February 16. Photo: Zarni Phyo

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# What's on

## ART

**Until Feb 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](http://www.yangonphoto.com)

**Until Feb 25** "Panoramic Dream." First solo show of Win Lwin Aung featuring a collection of acrylic paintings. River Ayeyarwaddy Gallery, 134, 35<sup>th</sup> street (middle block), Kyauktada 9am-5pm

**Until Feb 28** "Mothers of Patience." Photography by award-winning Iranian photographer Fatemeh Behboudi as part of the Yangon Photo Festival (see page 51). The Deitta Gallery, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 49, 44<sup>th</sup> Street (lower block). Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm

## 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 *Rock Angel*. Directed by Puttipong Pormsaka Na-Sakonnakorn. Thai drama. *The Taking of Tiger Mountain*. Directed by Tsui Hark. Hong Kong-Chinese 3D epic. *I Fine Thank You Love You*. Directed by Mez Tharatorn. Thai comedy drama.

**Mingalar Cinema 2**, at Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone *Rock Angel*.

**Shae Shaung Cinema**, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada *Kingsman: The Secret Service*. Directed by Matthew Vaughn. Spy action comedy. *Unbroken*. Directed by Angelina Jolie. American biographical war drama.

**Junction Square Cineplex**, Kamaryut *Jupiter Ascending*. Directed by Lana and

## FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 1

Got an event?  
List it in What's On!  
[whatsonmt@gmail.com](mailto:whatsonmt@gmail.com)

Andy Wachowski. Space opera.

**Junction Mawtin**, Lanmadaw *Jupiter Ascending*.

**Mingalar San Pya Cineplex**, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw *Kingsman: The Secret Service* *Rock Angel*.

## MUSIC

**Feb 23** Monday Blues. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan, 9:30-11:30pm

**Feb 23** Children's Choir of Paris national concert. Institute of France, 340 Pyay Road, Sanchaung, 6pm, free entrance

**Feb 25** Jazz music and dinner. Rendez-Vous restaurant and bar, Institut Francais, Pyay Road Sanchaung 7:30-9:30pm

## MISC

**Feb 23** Trivia night. Free beer pitcher for round winners and winning team gets a K30,000 bar tab. 50<sup>th</sup> Bar, 50<sup>th</sup> Street (lower block) 8pm

**Feb 24** Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada, 7pm- late

**Feb 24** Capoeira class (Brazilian martial arts). Free entrance. Institut Francais, 340 Pyay Road, Sanchaung. Tuesday 6-8pm and Sunday 5-7pm

**Feb 24** Tango dance night. Hola dance club, 94 Bogalay Zay Street, Botahtaung. Entry K5000. 8-9:30pm

**Feb 25** Mojito Night, The Lab, 70A Shwegonedaing Road, Bahan, 5:30-10pm

**Feb 28** Creative weekend - creative art workshops for kids (ages 7-12). Agora Café, 84 Kanbe Road (opposite Yankin children's hospital), Yankin 1-2pm

## WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 1, 2015

**AQUARIUS** | Jan 20 - Feb 18



Friends are made by many good deeds, but lost by a single rash blunder. Good advice is never cheap, but cheap advice is never good. You should meet both good and not-so-good experiences head on and react in a stable, consistent manner whether you are rewarded or penalised. Be wary of showing your emotions this week.

**PISCES** | Feb 19 - March 20



A little scar spoils the overall beauty. Know that one who indulges in excessive libidinous pursuits will soon become unhealthy. Learn to discern an advantage even when hedged about with disadvantages. A friend's frown is worth more than a fool's smile. Never permit doubts to arise about your good name, which is more valuable than riches. Eschew defilement and profanity.

**ARIES** | Mar 21 - Apr 19



Bear in mind the wisdom of Albert Einstein, who allegedly said that only two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity. What seems nasty, painful and evil can become a source of beauty, joy and strength if confronted with an open mind. You should change your beliefs so as to build a stronger platform for right actions. Anger supplies the energy to make changes downward, but you must be in control of yourself at all times.

**TAURUS** | Apr 20 - May 20



Time allows all things to happen at once, but to unfold differently. You already know that reaching agreement with others is an excellent method for improving social relationships. Now remember that you can alter your life by adjusting your attitude. The advantages of self-nurturing are unquestioned, but your self-indulgence should be limited judiciously. Remember that every heart to love must come.

**GEMINI** | May 21 - June 20



Learning to take charge of yourself will involve a whole new thinking process. Keep in mind the effect of spiritual wheel-clamping as a check on the negative emotions in your life. Set up your own rules of conduct for yourself and approach the unexpected with a smile. Be calm when dealing with problems and be sure to confirm your promise. Others may be relying on you even more than you rely on yourself.

**CANCER** | June 21 - July 22



Demand self-discipline, quality behaviour, personal responsibility and mature responses, first of yourself. Maximise your propensity for right action and the mastery of external events. Develop your introverted skills of concentration, depth and introspection. The examination of both objective and subjective viewpoints should offer a clearer perceptive. Your heart should be motivated and stimulated.

**LEO** | July 23 - Aug 22



Offer more substantive information and less small talk. Know that intuitive perception is insight gained without conscious reasoning, but is no less true for all that. Try to develop the characteristics born of that insight that can make you more imaginative, theoretical, future-oriented and creative. Integrate your world view into the big picture so that its meaning can change your life for the better.

**VIRGO** | Aug 23 - Sept 22



It is an iron rule that all paths that lead to happiness pass through pain. You should not have to choose between money and prestige, but strive to see the hidden meaning in all your actions. The most humdrum workaday task could harbour profound meaning. Any satisfaction that may be derived from life's small victories must be balanced in a wider cosmos. Emotional health is essential in life.

**LIBRA** | Sept 23 - Oct 22



Learn how to tap the inner potential of your mind. Know that life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood. If you need a motto, keep in mind that vision without action is daydreaming, but action without vision is mere Brownian motion. Your boldness has a certain power to sway emotions in others, but be wary of trying to impose your ideas. Save string.

**SCORPIO** | Oct 23 - Nov 21



Stay alert for signs and omens, for your path this week takes you through a thicket of risk. But take courage from the knowledge that though the path is narrow, it is also straight, and slightly downhill. Hazards may arise at any moment, even arising from your own best efforts, and golden fortune ever lies between the devil and the deep blue sea. Break free from emotional games.

**SAGITTARIUS** | Nov 22 - Dec 21



Challenges will require you to overcome irrational fears and demand the strenuous deployment of your innate abilities. Think deeply before making a move to a different climate and consider the reason for the move. Foster the practice of mental assimilation above rote memorisation - only fools confuse the two. Know that a good listener may be more popular than a glib talker.

**CAPRICORN** | Dec 22 - Jan 19



No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking. It is clear that without successful entrepreneurship you will not enjoy good fortune. Avoid doom and gloom predictions, while being sceptical of those who promise jam today. You should know when to say "enough", even as a feast is set before you. Labour to develop your management skills and observation experience.

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# Butter me up



food

**PHYO ARBIDANS**  
phyo.arbidans@gmail.com

AS I grew up during the Socialist era, my family were not very familiar with imported dairy products. In Myanmar the only dairy products we really eat are milk and yoghurt. When I was a child we had locally made butter which was hard and sticky, but when the country opened up, margarine became more popular.

I was never a fan of butter until I moved to Sydney. In Myanmar, toast with butter is what you give someone when they are sick: no curry, no spicy food, no rice – just buttered toast and a boiled egg. For a long time I couldn’t get my head around eating butter as an everyday food.

The dairy products in Australia were very different to those I had been used to as a child, and I came to like them – which was lucky, since my GP told me I had to eat more dairy products to boost my calcium intake.

But eating butter all the time can get boring, so this week I’m sharing some of my favourite seasoned butter recipes. Seasoned butters are easy to make and can be used to add flavour to a wide variety of foods. And if you do get sick, they’re sure to liven up your toast!



### SWEET CHILLI BUTTER

- 100g unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce (not the runny kind)

Soften the butter in a bowl. Add the sweet chilli sauce to the softened butter and mash together to combine.

Lay out a sheet of cling film 8-9 inches in length. Transfer the butter mixture onto the cling film and shape into a log. Next, fold each side of the cling film over the butter and roll the butter up. Fold in the ends. The butter



parcel should look like a spring roll.

Freeze the roll of butter for at least 30 minutes. Remove the butter from the fridge 5 minutes before serving to soften.

Great served with grilled vegetables, grilled prawns and seafood.

### GARLIC AND BASIL BUTTER

- 2 cloves garlic
- 60g unsalted butter
- ¼ cup basil leaves (loosely packed)

Soften the butter. Chop the garlic and basil finely. Next, add the butter, garlic and basil to a bowl and mix well.

Wrap the butter in cling film, following the procedure above. Freeze the butter for at least 30 minutes. Remove the butter from the fridge 5 minutes before serving to soften.

Toast a baguette and brush the butter onto the warm bread. Great served with pasta or soup.

### CHILLI, CORIANDER AND LIME BUTTER

- 1 teaspoon chilli flakes
- 1/4 cup coriander leaves
- zest of 1 lime
- 60g unsalted butter

Soften the butter and transfer into a handheld food processor along with the other ingredients. Mix well. If you do not have a food processor, chop the coriander leaves finely and mix together with the other ingredients in a bowl.

Wrap the butter in cling film, following the procedure above. Freeze the butter for at least 30 minutes. Remove the butter from the fridge 5 minutes before serving to soften.

Great served with grilled seafood or meat.

### SWEET CORN WITH SMOKY SPICED BUTTER

- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 40g salted butter

Soften the butter. Add the smoked paprika to the softened butter and mix well to combine.

Wrap the butter in cling film, following the procedure above. Freeze the butter for at least 30 minutes. Remove the butter from the fridge 5 minutes before serving to soften.

Brush the butter on grilled or steamed sweet corn and add salt to taste.

### MUSTARD AND FENNEL BUTTER

- 2 tablespoons black or brown mustard seeds
- 2 tablespoons fennel seeds
- 100g salted butter

Soften the butter. Add the spices to the softened butter and mix well to combine.

Wrap the butter in cling film, following the procedure above. Freeze the butter for at least 30 minutes. Remove the butter from the fridge 5 minutes before serving to soften.

Great served with grilled or roasted vegetables or meat.



Photos: Phyo

## Restaurant Review

**CHARLOTTE ROSE**  
charlottelola.rose@gmail.com

AS A British expat, I often find myself trying to convince other expats that I’m not a binge-drinking, colonising, *Doctor Who*-loving tea fanatic who enjoys chit-chatting about the weather.

But there is one thing I can’t argue with: We Brits do love a good curry. Until recently, however, living in Yangon has meant being unable to observe my weekly day of worship, otherwise known as “chicken tikka masala Monday” (“mohinga Monday” just isn’t quite the same).

Thank Vishnu, then, for the wave of Indian restaurants that has swept through the city of late. The Taj is the third newly opened Indian restaurant we’ve reviewed in the last month and – for anyone thinking of opening a fourth – it’s going to be a tough act to follow.

The Taj is everything you could want from an Indian fine-dining restaurant. The modern interior has avoided the sterile atmosphere that is all too common in Indian restaurants and strikes a perfect balance between cosy and contemporary. The restaurant was packed three

times over during our visit – adding to the lively atmosphere without giving us the looming feeling that we were about to be ousted from our (unreserved) table.

Some diners (admittedly, probably British ones) may be disappointed to find that The Taj does not serve alcoholic beverages. They do however, offer a selection of excellent fresh juices (K2000) to wash down your curry with. Besides, sobriety will cease to be a concern when the excellent food arrives. There are two menus to choose from: a fine-dining menu and an “express menu” for people who want their curry in a hurry. Both contain a plethora of curry options, all with clear descriptions.

My guest and I selected pakoras (K3500) and chicken tikka (K5000) from the fine-dining menu to start, followed by mutton Dahiwalla (K5500), prawn green masala (K6500) and aloo gobi (K3500). All of the dishes were delicious: The pakoras were fluffy and crisp, the chicken tikka juicy and flavourful and the curries rich, fragrant and easy on the oil – a rare find in this city. Most importantly, every dish was oozing with freshness. The nan breads deserve a special mention. Unlike the



Photo: Charlotte Rose

floppy, oil-soaked, oven glove-looking things found in most curry houses, these crisp breads were a joy. The kheema naan (K1500) was the best I have tasted anywhere, and I’ve eaten a lot of them.

We followed up our meal with warm, melt-in-the-mouth *gulab jamuns* (K2500) and surprisingly

good coffee (K3000).

The Taj scores a final goal with the service – the staff are attentive and friendly and, despite the fine-dining options being freshly prepared, our meals arrived long before starvation had a chance to set in.

Despite facing stiff competition from the sudden influx of quality

## The Taj

Aung San Stadium (North Stand), Upper Pansodan Road, Mingalar Taung Nyunt.

Restaurant Rating  
★★★★★

Food	8
Beverage	7
Service	9
Value	9
X-factor	8

Indian restaurants to Yangon, The Taj has raised the bar when it comes to fresh, expertly cooked Indian dishes. Until the very moment you step outside onto the garbage-strewn street, you’ll forget that you’re even in Yangon.

That’s worth missing Doctor Who for, I’d say.





Nafise Motlaq, Fatemeh Behboudi and Matt Grace



Thet Htoo and Min Zaya



Yu Yu and Phyo



Ma Gi Gi and family

## Iranian exhibition opens at Dietta Gallery

Crowds flocked to Yangon's new Dietta Gallery on February 16 for the opening of Iranian photographer Fatemeh Behboudi's award-winning series *Mothers of Patience*. The exhibition, part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Yangon Photo Festival, drew an overwhelmingly positive reaction from exhibition-goers, and Behboudi said she was delighted that her work could be displayed in Yangon.



Ko Khant Linn Thar and Rio



Ma May Phyu Phyu

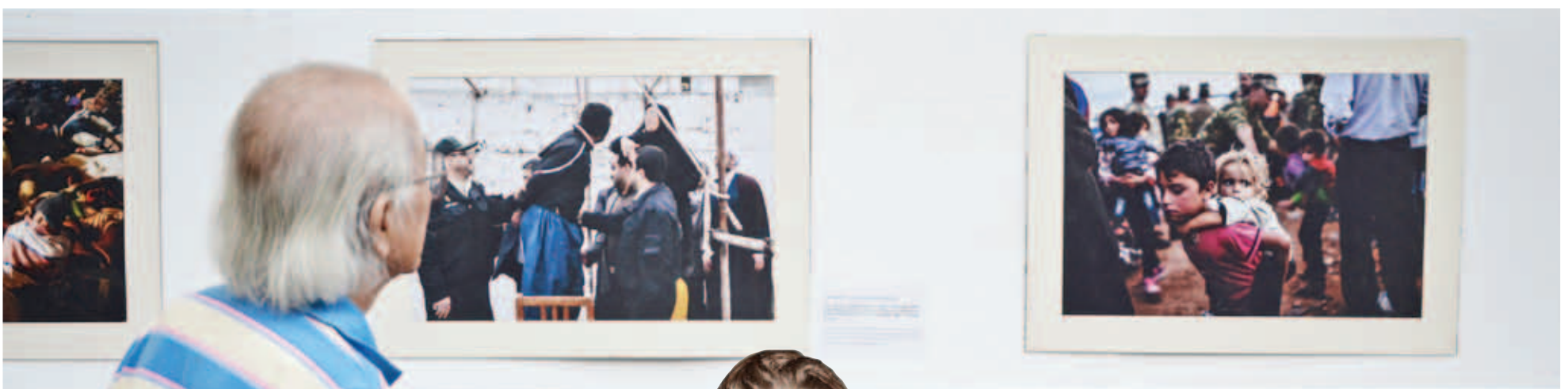


## Coffee lovers rejoice

Guests celebrated the opening of the Mr Chef coffee shop at Dagon Center 2 in Yangon on February 12.



Ko Zaw Zaw Htay, U Kyaw Zaw Linn, Daw Mon Mon Cho Aye and Winny



## Photo festival opens with circus show

Performers wowed guests with dazzling circus acts at the opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> Yangon Photo Festival in the gardens of the Institut Francais on February 13. Following weeks of workshops, children from Myanmar presented their stories through dance, photography and juggling performances.







Chinese new year get racey

Guests gathered for an evening of food, drinks and entertainment at the Jaguar ALIVE Chinese New Year Celebration on February 14 at Capital Automotive Ltd on Insein Road, which included a showing of the new international Jaguar video, featuring actor Nicholas Hoult of X-Men fame, as well as performances by signer Nay Nay, Eaik Ti Yahtar Temple dance group and Jade Dragon dance group.



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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	2,3	6:00	7:40	
YH 917	1,2,3,4,5	6:10	8:30	
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	6:00	8:05	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	8:10	
YJ 811	3	7:00	8:25	
W9 201	Daily	7:00	8:25	
YH 835	1	7:00	8:40	
YH 829	5	7:00	8:40	
YH 831	4,6	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	
YJ 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 826	3	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 737	5	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	1,2,3,4,5	14:30	16:40	
YH 731	6	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	
YJ 909	5	6:00	7:35	
YH 909	2,3	6:00	8:25	
YH 917	1,2,3,4,5	6:10	7:45	
YH 881	7	6:30	7:50	
YH 909	1,4	6:30	8:05	
YH 633	3	6:30	8:05	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5	6:45	8:05	
YJ 801	6	7:00	8:20	
K7 242	Daily	7:00	8:20	
YH 917	6	7:00	8:35	
YH 909	6	7:00	8:35	
7Y 131	Daily	7:15	8:35	
7Y 121	1	8:20	9:40	
Y5 649	Daily	10:30	11:50	
YJ 211	5	11:00	15:30	
YJ 201	1,3	11:00	16:00	
K7 264	Daily	14:30	16:40	
7Y 241	Daily	14:30	17:10	
YH 731	1,2,3,4,5	14:30	17:25	
YH 731	6	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	7:00	10:05	
YH 829	5	7:00	10:05	
YH 831	4,6	7:00	10:05	
YJ 201	1	11:00	12:25	
YH 826	3	11:00	14:05	
YJ 201	2,3,4	11:00	13:50	

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	2,3	7:40	9:45	
Y5 233	Daily	7:50	9:00	
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	8:20	10:15	
YJ 811	3	8:40	10:05	
K7 283	Daily	8:25	11:30	
YH 918	1,2,3,4,5	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	
YH 830	5	11:30	12:40	
YJ 762	4	13:10	17:00	
YH 836	1	13:20	14:45	
YH 832	4,6	13:20	14:45	
YJ 212	7	15:00	16:25	
YJ 212	5	15:00	17:05	
YJ 752	5	15:05	16:30	
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 732	1,2,3,4,5	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	6	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 738	5	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	
YH 827	3	17:50	19:15	
W9 252	2,5	18:15	19:40	

NYAUNG U TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	Daily	7:35	10:15	
YH 910	5	7:35	10:45	
YH 918	1	7:45	10:45	
YH 910	1,4	8:05	10:10	
YH 634	3	8:05	10:10	
YJ 881	7	8:05	10:10	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5	8:20	10:25	
YH 910	2,3	8:25	9:45	
YH 918	6	8:35	10:45	
YH 910	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	
7Y 242	Daily	17:25	18:45	
W9 129	1,3,6	17:50	19:10	
YH 732	1,2,3,4,5	17:25	18:45	
YH 732	6	17:55	19:15	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 830	5	10:05	12:40	
YH 836	1	11:55	14:45	
YH 832	4,6	11:55	14:45	
YJ 202	2,4	14:05	16:55	
YJ 202	1,3	14:05	17:35	
K7 623	1,3,5,7	16:10	19:05	

YJ 233	6	11:00	16:05
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

YANGON TO HEHO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	6:00	8:50	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	9:00	
YH 909	5	6:00	8:30	
YH 917	1,2,3,4,5	6:10	9:35	
YH 909	1	6:30	9:00	
YH 633	5	6:30	9:00	
YJ 881	7	6:30	8:45	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5	6:45	9:00	
YH 917	6	7:00	9:30	
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	1,2,3,4,6	10:30	11:55	
YJ 751	3,7	10:30	11:40	
YJ 751	5	10:45	11:55	
YJ 761	1,2,4	11:00	12:10	
YJ 751	5	11:00	12:10	
YJ 233	6	11:00	12:10	
YH911	2	11:00	16:15	
YH 727	1	11:15	12:40	
YH 737	5	11:15	12:40	
YH 505	5	11:30	12:55	
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	1,2,3,4,5	14:30	15:55	
YH 731	6	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	1,2,3,4,6	10:30	13:10	
YH 505	5	11:30	14:10	
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	3	10:30	12:45	
YJ 751	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	7:00	11:00	
YH 831	4,6	7:00	11:00	
YH 826	3	11:00	15:00	
W9 251	2,5	11:30	15:25	

YJ 234	6	16:20	19:10
YH 827	3	16:25	19:15
W9 252	2,5	16:45	19:40

HEHO TO YANGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 910	5	8:30	10:45
YH 910	1,4	9:00	10:10
YJ 881	7	9:00	10:10
YH 634	3	9:00	10:10
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	9:05	10:15
K7 283	Daily	9:15	11:30
YJ 881	1,2,4,5	9:15	10:25
W9 201	Daily	9:25	10:35
K7 243	Daily	9:30	11:45
YH 918	6	9:30	10:40
YH 918	1,2,3,4,5	9:35	10:45
7Y 132	Daily	10:20	11:30
7Y 121	Daily	10:50	14:10
K7 267	Daily	11:10	12:25
YH 506	1,2,3,4,6	11:55	14:00
YH 506	5	12:55	15:00
YJ 752	5	14:20	16:30
YJ 762	4	15:00	17:00
YJ 762	1,2	15:50	18:00
7Y 241	Daily	15:55	18:45
YH 732	1,2,3,4,5	15:55	18:45
K7 829	1,3,5	16:10	17:25
YH 728	1	16:00	18:10
YH 912	2	16:15	17:25
YH 732	6	16:25	19:15
YJ 602	6	16:25	17:35
K7 264	Daily	16:30	18:15
YH 738	5	16:40	18:50
YJ 752	3,7	16:45	17:55
W9 129	1,3,6	16:55	19:10



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

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

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
SO 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

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

YANGON TO BEIJING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 906	3,5,7	23:50	0550+1

YANGON TO GUANGZHOU			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 711	2,4,7	8:40	13:15
CZ 3056	3,6	11:35	15:55
CZ 3056	1,5	17:40	22:10

YANGON TO TAIPEI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7916	Daily	10:50	16:10

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

YANGON TO HANOI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:25

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:05

YANGON TO DOHA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 919	1,4,6	7:55	11:40

YANGON TO SEOUL			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:50	8:50
KE 472	Daily	23:55	07:45+1

YANGON TO HONG KONG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	Daily	1:10	05:25

YANGON TO TOKYO			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	Daily	22:10	06:45+1

YANGON TO DHAKA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 061	2	11:45	13:00
BG 061	5	19:45	21:00

YANGON TO INCHEON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 724	1,3,5,6	12:50	14:45
8M 7702	Daily	23:55	07:45+1

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 251	2,4,6	6:15	8:05
7Y 305	1,5	11:00	12:50
W9 607	4,7	14:30	16:20

YANGON TO GAYA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 601	1,3,5,6	10:30	11:50

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 710	Daily	14:15	16:40

MANDALAY TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 533	2,4,6	15:45	20:50
Y5 2233	1,2,4,5,6	7:50	14:15

MANDALAY TO DON MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 245	Daily	12:50	15:15

MANDALAY TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	13:50	16:40

NAY PYI TAW TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 722	1,2,3,4,5	19:45	22:45

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 303	Daily	8:00	8:45
PG 701	Daily	8:45	9:40
Y5 238	Daily	21:30	22:20
8M 336	Daily	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

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

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

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

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 905	3,5,7	19:30	22:50

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CZ 3055	3,6	8:35	10:35
CZ 3055	1,5	14:40	16:40
8M 712	2,4,7	14:15	15:50

TAIPEI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7915	Daily	7:00	9:50

KUNMING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2011	3	8:25	11:50
CA 415	Daily	11:10	11:30
MU 2031	1,2,4,5,6,7	13:30	14:00

HANOI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:40	18:10

HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 943	2,4,7	11:45	13:25

DOHA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 918	3,5,7	19:45	0459+1

SEOUL TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	Daily	18:30	22:30
OZ 769	3,6	19:30	23:40

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

TOKYO TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:45	17:15

DHAKA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 060	2	8:30	10:45
BG 060	5	16:30	18:45

INCHEON TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 723	1,3,5,6	11:00	11:55
8M 7701	Daily	18:30	22:30

CHIANG MAI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 252	2,4,6	9:25	10:15
7Y 306	1,5	13:45	14:35
W9 608	4,7	17:20	18:10

GAYA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 602	1,3,5,6	12:50	16:00

BANGKOK TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 709	Daily	12:05	13:25

SINGAPORE TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 2234	Daily	7:20	16:30
MI 533	2,4,6	11:30	14:50

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 244	Daily	10:55	12:20

KUNMING TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2029	Daily	12:55	12:50

BANGKOK TO NAY PYI TAW			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:15	19:15

International Airlines	
Air Asia (FD) Tel: 09254049991-3	
Air Bagan Ltd.(W9) Tel: 513322, 513422, 504888. Fax: 515102	
Air China (CA) Tel: 666112, 655882	
Air India Tel: 253597-98, 254758. Fax 248175	
Bangkok Airways (PG) Tel: 255122, 255265. Fax: 255119	
Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BG) Tel: 371867-68. Fax: 371869	
Condor (DE) Tel: 370836-39 [ext: 303]	
Dragonair (KA) Tel: 255320, 255321. Fax: 255329	
Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5) Tel: 09400446999, 09400447999 Fax: 8604051	
Malaysia Airlines (MH) Tel: 387648, 241007 [ext: 120, 121, 122] Fax: 241124	
Myanmar Airways International (8M) Tel: 255260. Fax: 255305	
Nok Airline (DD) Tel: 255050, 255021. Fax: 255051	
Qatar Airways (QR) Tel: 379845, 379843, 379831. Fax: 379730	
Singapore Airlines (SQ) / Silk Air (MI) Tel: 255287-9. Fax: 255290	
Thai Airways (TG) Tel: 255491-6. Fax: 255223	
Tiger Airline (TR) Tel: 371383, 370836-39 [ext: 303]	
Vietnam Airlines (VN) Tel: 255066, 255088, 255068. Fax: 255086	

Airline Codes	
3K = Jet Star	
8M = Myanmar Airways International	
AK = Air Asia	
BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines	
CA = Air China	
CI = China Airlines	
CZ = China Southern	
DD = Nok Airline	
FD = Air Asia	
KA = Dragonair	
KE = Korea Airlines	
MH = Malaysia Airlines	
MI = Silk Air	
MU = China Eastern Airlines	
NH = All Nippon Airways	
PG = Bangkok Airways	
QR = Qatar Airways	
SQ = Singapore Airways	
TG = Thai Airways	
TR = Tiger Airline	
VN = Vietnam Airline	
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines	
Subject to change without notice	

Day	4 = Thursday
1 = Monday	5 = Friday
2 = Tuesday	6 = Saturday
3 = Wednesday	7 = Sunday

NAZARETH



Almost all the literature indicates that the Nazareth of biblical times was a hamlet; now it’s a sprawling, commercial city of some 60,000. Photo: The Washington Post/Ildris Ahmed

The modern translation of Jesus’ home town

JENNIFER MOSES



Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

A LITTLE OFF By Bernie Adams

ACROSS

- 1 Hardly outgoing
- 6 Small glen
- 10 Run-down neighborhood
- 14 Where some sports events are held
- 15 Matinee hero
- 16 "\_\_\_ on down the road"
- 17 What happy people leave without?
- 20 Many-headed monster slain by Hercules
- 21 Nullifies
- 22 High-protein legume
- 24 Period of calm
- 26 Slightly tapered
- 27 Four-pedal bike
- 29 Yemeni seaport
- 31 Singer Stewart
- 32 Opera feature
- 33 Sudden pain
- 35 Common morning meal
- 40 China buy
- 41 Kind of agreement
- 43 "\_\_\_ Just Not That Into You"
- 46 Knuckle knocks
- 47 Like Dolly Parton
- 49 Guru getaway
- 51 Wingtip-to-wingtip dimension
- 53 Driving range prop
- 54 Troop member
- 55 Put in an office
- 57 Like a well-searched room
- 63 Tempting location?
- 64 The "U" of CPU
- 65 Brants and ganders
- 66 Prone to prying
- 67 Norway's capital
- 68 German industrial city

DOWN

- 1 Bill in a bar
- 2 Nest egg, for short
- 3 Garage worker
- 4 Like octopus secretions

5 Lollygag

6 Like popular videos

7 Determine the sum of

8 Bump's place

9 90-degree letter

10 Man of La Mancha

11 More doilylike

12 Comfortable with

13 Made a goof (with "up")

18 Jack-in-the-pulpit family

19 Exact retribution

22 Mom, pop and school org.

23 All \_\_\_ (paying attention)

25 Like much of the Old West

26 Do a tavern job

28 Bull's-eye hitter

30 Eating regimen

33 1/2 fl. oz.

34 Yes-men feed them

36 Poke holes in a lawn

37 Word of respect

38 Spelunking

39 Word with "time" and "place"

42 Caustic soapmaking compound

43 Expedite

44 Portuguese dollar, once

45 Ocean liners?

47 "Ha'i" spot on Broadway?

48 Jumpy

50 Needing more flour, as dough

52 Tangy sauce

56 Not the best grades

58 Trio minus one

59 Ending for "sit"

60 Shutout score, on the soccer field

61 "\_\_\_ as directed"

62 Speeds on bikes?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

14 15 16

17 18 19

20 21

22 23 24 25 26

27 28 29 30 31

32 33 34

35 36 37 38 39

40 41 42

43 44 45 46 47 48

49 50 51 52 53

54 55 56

57 58 59 60 61 62

63 64 65

66 67 68

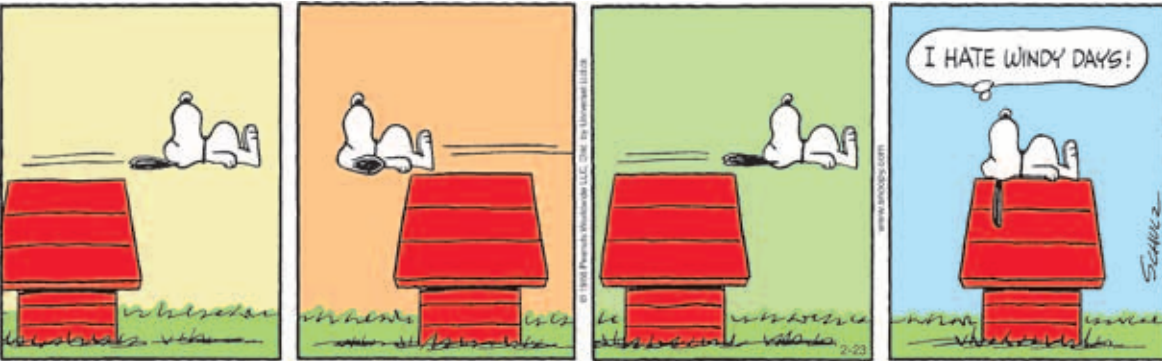
DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



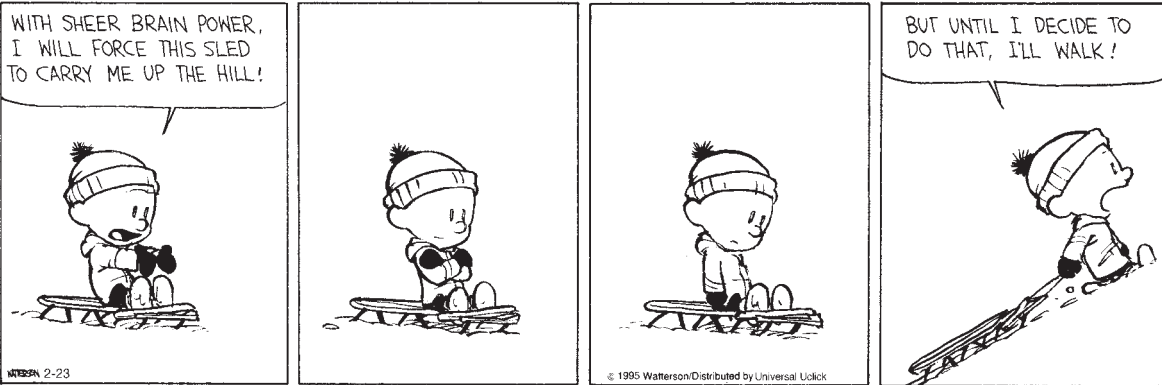
PEANUTS

BY CHARLES SCHULZ



CALVIN AND HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON



SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

3					8			
		5	2	4	1		3	
9				3		1		
		2		9		7		6
			1	6	2			
8		6		7		2		
		8		2				3
	1		4	8	3	9		
			6					7

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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.

TALKING NUMBERS

Solution: 5 letters

B	C	L	S	E	D	O	C	L	A	T	O	T	O	L
O	U	M	A	S	S	O	A	P	S	C	Y	N	N	A
N	Y	D	U	E	S	I	P	E	I	R	T	O	E	M
D	G	R	G	T	R	L	R	T	T	S	I	I	G	I
S	O	A	O	E	I	E	E	E	G	T	D	T	A	C
C	L	E	S	E	T	M	M	N	A	I	U	I	T	E
I	O	N	D	N	H	O	I	C	N	G	A	D	I	D
T	P	I	I	T	N	T	I	V	E	I	S	D	V	I
A	O	L	I	O	N	L	E	O	N	D	U	A	E	V
M	T	R	G	U	P	S	M	A	N	N	M	E	S	I
E	A	I	O	I	T	E	T	U	T	H	S	Q	E	S
H	R	C	T	M	T	U	F	E	R	U	P	U	C	I
T	C	L	E	R	R	E	G	E	T	N	I	A	I	O
A	U	N	Y	A	N	A	L	Y	S	I	S	L	R	N
M	T	E	L	E	P	H	O	N	E	M	I	R	P	G

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Accounting, Addition, Analysis, Applied, Arithmetic, Audit, Bonds, Budget, Codes, Cost, Decimal, Digits, Division, Equal, Funds, Geometry, Graph, Integer, Interest, Investment, Linear, Mass, Mathematics, Multiplication, Natural, Negative, Prices, Prime, Pure, Real, Serial, Sums, Telephone, Theory, Topology, Total, Trigonometry

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PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

N	E	S	E	O	L	S	O	S	O	N	S	O	N	S
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T	U	I	D	E	I	N	E	N	R	N	T	U	N	T
E	T	O	C	L	E	C	L	E	C	L	E	C	L	E
E	T	E	N	A	V	A	M	H	A	S	A	H	A	S
Y	M	O	S	O	P	A	V	S	S	H	A	S	H	A
L	R	A	L	E	T	E	A	T	E	A	T	E	A	T
S	G	E	D	E	B	M	A	C	S	S	S	S	S	S
S	G	E	N	W	T	C	I	A	R	I	A	R	I	A
D	O	R	N	E	A	E	M	D	N	A	T	E	T	E
E	T	E	I	O	L	U	L	A	V	P	E	C	T	E
S	N	C	E	G	L	D	R	K	W	B	A	V	A	S
E	A	S	E	L	O	D	O	V	N	E	A	V	A	S
S	U	L	E	A	V	A	D	I	M	E	T	I	A	S

7	8	5	6	1	9	3	4	2
5	8	6	3	4	8	7	4	5
2	9	6	3	4	8	7	4	5
3	4	1	3	5	2	7	4	1
1	6	2	7	4	2	3	9	5
8	5	3	2	9	1	6	7	4
9	5	7	4	6	5	2	8	3
5	1	2	5	9	3	7	4	8
6	3	8	4	1	2	5	9	7
4	7	9	8	5	6	1	2	3



# QUICK GUIDE

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## The Essentials

<b>EMBASSIES</b> <b>Australia</b> 88, Strand Road, Yangon. Tel : 251810, 251797, 251798. <b>Bangladesh</b> 11-B, Than Lwin Road, Yangon. Tel: 515275, 526144, email: bdootygn@mptmail.net.mm <b>Brazil</b> 56, Pyay Road, 6 <sup>th</sup> mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 507225, 507251. email: Administ.yangon@tamaraty.gov.br. <b>Brunei</b> 17, Kanbawza Avenue, Golden Velly (1), Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 566985, 503978. email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm <b>Cambodia</b> 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 549609, 540964. email: RECYANGON @mptmail.net.mm <b>Canada</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Centerpoint Towers, 65 Sule Pagoda Road, Yangon, Tel : 01-384805 , Fax :01 384806, Email : yngon@international.gc.ca <b>China</b> 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 221280, 221281. <b>Denmark</b> , No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 01 – 9669520 – 17. <b>Egypt</b> 81, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 222886, 222887, Egyptembassy86@gmail.com <b>France</b> 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 212178, 212520, email: ambaf rance. rangoun@diplomatie.fr <b>Germany</b> 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 548951, 548952, email: info@rangun. diplo.de <b>India</b> 545-547, Merchant St, Yangon. Tel: 391219, 388412, email:indiaembassy @mptmail.net.mm <b>Indonesia</b> 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Rd, Yangon. Tel: 254465, 254469, email: kukygn @indonesia.com. mm <b>Israel</b> 15, Khabauing Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il <b>Italy</b> 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. Tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang. mail@esteri.it <b>Japan</b> 100, Natmauk Rd, Yangon. Tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643 <b>Kuwait</b> 62-B, Shwe Taung Kyar St, Bahan Tsp. Tel : 01-230-9542, 230-9543. Fax : 01-230-5836. <b>Laos</b> A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 222482, Fax: 227446, email: Laoembcab@mptmail. net.mm <b>Malaysia</b> 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 220248, 220249, email: mwkyangon@mptmail.net.mm <b>Nepal</b> 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. Tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb @mptmail.net.mm <b>Norway</b> , No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp,Yangon. Tel: 01 – 9669520 – 17 Fax – 01- 9669516 <b>New Zealand</b> No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2306046-9 Fax : 01-2305805 <b>Netherlands</b> No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2305805 <b>North Korea</b> 77C, Shin Saw Pu Rd, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 512642, 510205 <b>Pakistan</b> A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange) <b>Philippines</b> 7, Gandamar St, Yankin Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 558149-151, Email: p.e. yangon@gmail.com <b>Saudi Arabia</b> No.6/S, Inya Yeiktha St, 10 <sup>th</sup> Qtr, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon, Tel: (951) 652-344, 652-344, Fax: (951) 657-983 <b>Russia</b> 38, Sagawa Rd, Yangon. Tel: 241955, 254161, <b>Serbia</b> No. 114-A, Inya Rd, P.O.Box No. 943, Yangon. Tel: 515282, 515283, email: serbemb @ yangon.net.mm <b>Singapore</b> 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 559001, email: singemb_ygn@_sgmfa.gov.sg <b>South Korea</b> 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr <b>Sri Lanka</b> 34 Taw Win Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222812, <b>Switzerland</b> No 11, Kabaung Lane, 5 ½ mile, Pyay Rd, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 534754, 507089. <b>Thailand</b> 94 Pyay Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 226721, 226728, 226824 <b>Turkey</b> 19AB, Kan Yeik Thar St, Mayangone Tsp,Yangon. Tel : 662992, Fax : 661365 <b>United Kingdom</b> 80 Strand Rd, Yangon. Tel: 370867, 380322, 371852, 371853, 256438, <b>United States of America</b> 110, University Avenue, Kamayut Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 536509, 535756, Fax: 650306 <b>Vietnam</b> Bldg-72, Thanlwin Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 511305 <b>UNITED NATIONS ILO Liaison</b> 1-A, Kanbae (Thitsar Rd), Yankin Tsp, Tel : 01-566538, 566539 <b>IOM</b> 318 (A) Ahlone Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon.Tel – 01-210588, 09 73236679, 0973236680, Email- iomyangon@iom.int <b>UNAIDS</b> 137/1, Thaw Wun Rd, Kamayut Tsp. Tel : 534498, 504832 <b>UNDCP</b> 11-A, Malikha St, Mayangone tsp. Tel: 666903, 664539. <b>UNDP</b> 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739. <b>UNFPA</b> 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029. <b>UNHCR</b> 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. Tel: 524022, 524024. <b>UNIAP</b> Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. Tel: 254852, 254853. <b>UNIC</b> 6, Natmauk St., Bahan, tel: 52910~19 <b>UNICEF</b> 14~15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, Kyauktada. Tel: 375527~32, unicef.yangon@unicef. org. <b>UNODC</b> 11-A, Malikha Rd., Ward 7, Mayangone. tel: 01-9666903, 9660556, 9660538, 9660398. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org <b>UNOPS</b> 120/0, Pyi Thu Lane, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp. Tel: 951-657281~7. Fax: 657279. <b>UNRC</b> 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE Tel: 542911~19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator), <b>WFP</b> 5 Kan Baw Za St, Shwe Taung Kyar, (Golden Valley), Bahan Tsp. Tel : 2305971~6 <b>WHO</b> No. 2, Pyay Rd, 7 Mile, Mayangone Tsp, Tel : 650405-6, 650416, 654386-90. <b>ASEAN</b> Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Tsp. Tel: 225258. <b>FAO</b> Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673.	
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**Excel River View Hotel**

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**Excel Palace Hotel**

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**Hotel Grand United (Chinatown)**  
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**(21<sup>st</sup> Downtown)**  
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**(Ahlone Branch)**  
35, Min Ye Kyaw Swar Rd, Ahlone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: (95-1) 218061-64; Email: grandunited. head@gmail.com, www. hotelgrandunited.com



**HOTEL YANKIN**

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**Windsor Hotel** No.31, Shin Saw Pu Street, Sanchaung. Yangon, Myanmar. Ph: 95-1-511216-8, www. hotelwindsoryangon.com

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**HOTEL MAX**  
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<b>HOSPITALS</b> Central Women's Hospital ☎tel: 221013, 222811. Children Hospital ☎tel: 221421, 222807 Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital ☎tel: 543888. Naypyitaw Hospital (emergency) ☎tel: 420096. Worker's Hospital ☎tel: 554444, 554455, 554811.
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**Sakura Residence**  
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- # 87/2, Crn of 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> St, 77<sup>th</sup> St, Chan Aye Thar Zan Tsp, Mandalay. Tel: (02) 24880

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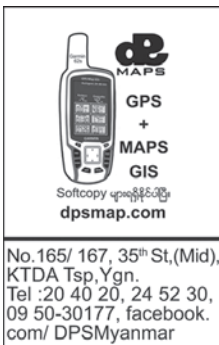
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**OFFICE SPACE** Downtown, Modern office space at an affordable price. 1,356 sqft, so would be large enough for staff and to facilitate a meeting room and a kitchen. Located on the 11th floor it has 24 hours security and a back-up generator. Price- \$3,500. Ph : 09-314-91678.

**BAHAN** Condo: Conveniently located in Pearl condo, a 20 minute drive from downtown or from the airport. There are many shops and restaurants in the building and the property can be used for both commercial and residential purposes. It has 2 master bedrooms, one single bedroom with one common bath and has 1,550 SF of living space with a great view. Price- \$2,600. Ph: 09-314-91678

**BAHAN** Affordable Single family home: off Sayasan Rd, in residential area, it is completely remodeled recently in western style. 3MBR, 2SR, 4 bathrooms total with A/C in every room. It has a nice lawn with space large enough for 7-8 car parking. Home size is about 3500 sqft, land size is about 7,000 sqft Price- \$3,500. Ph : 09 2543 82482.

**BAHAN**, Near Chatrium hotel, Po Sein Rd, 2 RC house, 3 Rooms with toilet, 3 AC, Cable phone, wide car prking, US\$ 2150 per month. Ph: 09-794440510, 09-312-87827.

**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 New Bld. 1600sqft, 1MBR, 2SR, f.f, 25 Lakhs. (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, 15 Lakhs, 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 centre, 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: 09-5000-2313

**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, 2MBR, 2SR, new building, semi furniture USD 5000. Ba Ho St, 6500 sqft, 2 stories, 8MBR, USD 10000. No need agent, Ph: 09-2570-3331

**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: edwinbriels@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

**MYANIGONE**, Newly decorated apartment, good lighting & ventilation <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ventilation\_%28architecture%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.

**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

#### Housing for Sale

**HMAWBI**, Land 50' x 60', lin Sat Thew Daw, Not far from Yagon Prome Rd, 165 Lakhs only, Ph: 09-4236-60602.

**PWIN OOLWIN**, 55' x 60'. Near Thein Inn Pagoda, 125 Lakhs, Contact Ko Pyae, 09-4921-4688.

**BAGANLAND** 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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No.22, 1st Fl, Thida Road, Tamwe Tsp, Ygn. Ph. 09 260258485, ppcmyanmar@gmail.com

#### VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Limousine Drivers

- Full Time
- 6 days week
- starting from Ks 350,000 / Per month.
- Must speak English or other Foreign Language.
- Minimum 3 yrs driving experience.

**Contact No: 09-4317-9011, 09-4201-65678, 09-519-7354**



Employment

Ingo Position

**THE UNITED Nations** World Food Programme, is seeking (1)**Program me Officer**/Head of Sub Office NO-B, Kachin State (Re-advertise) please visit to http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals. Please email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org COB 27 February 2015.

**THE UNITED Nations** World Food Programme, is seeking (1) **Programme Assistant** GS-5, Hakha. For more information, please visit to http://www.themimu.info/jobs-for-myanmar-nationals. Please email the applications with UN P-11 to wfpmyanmar.vacancy@wfp.org COB 24 February 2015

Ingo Position

(1) **ENGINEER** (Consultant for Renovation Health Facilities Assessment) 2 Posts (Mindat/Matupi-chinstate)Deadline: until candidate identified. Please send application letter, CV and related documents to Myanmar RedCross Society(Head Office)Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org

**MYANMAR** Red Cross Society is seeking(1) **Branch WASH Officer** 3 posts in Mogok, Sagaing, Matupi: University Degree in Civil Engineering, Geology, Hydrology, or related fields. 2 years experience in Watsan related activities. Effective computer knowledge & English language skills. Knowledge of Auto CAD (2D). (2)**Programme Assistant** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: University Degree & related financial background preferable. 2 years experience. Effective computer knowledge & English language skills. (3)**Finance Officer** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: CPA or B.Com/ B Accounting (or) equivalent accounting degree. Computer skill in MS Excel & accounting software is an asset. Effective English language skills. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to: Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrshrrecruitment@gmail.com, Closing date: 3.3.2015

(1)**BRANCH WASH Officer** 3 Posts Mogok, Sagaing, Matupi-chin state) Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org.

**TERRE** des hommes Italia is seeking **Junior Agronomist** (Based in Magway & Mandalay Region) :University in Agriculture, 3 years experience in INGOs, Fluent in English, Good computer skills, (2)**Asst: Logistician/Warehouse keeper** (Based in Yenanchaung & Natmauk) (3)**Work supervisor** (Based in Yenanchaung & Natmauk) : for 2 & 3: Bachelor degree, Command of English, Command of Microsoft office. Please submit application with complete information about current job & expected salary incl CV, photo references by email or by postal service

to 48, Shwe Hinn Thar St, Hlaing. Email ht.tdhit.mya@gmail.com. Closing date : 26.2.15

**INT'L Rescue Committee** - Myanmar is seeking (1) **Agricultural Support Officer** 1 post in Sittwe, Rakhine State: Bachelor's degree in agriculture. Diploma with 2 years' experience. knowledge of Rakhine language. (2)**Community Mobilisation Manager** 1 post in Myebon, Rakhine State: Degree in social sciences with 3 years experience. Operational knowledge of Microsoft Office. Fluency in English, (4)**Project Officer - WATSA/ Hygiene** 1 post in Myebon/ Minbya, Rakhine State: Bachelor's degree. 2 years experience. (4) **Field Operations Coordinator** : Masters Degree in Business Administration, 4 years experience. (6) **Reproductive Health Project Manager:** Medical degree with public health background/ Master of public health or post graduate diploma in public health is an asset. 5 years experience. For all posts : Fluent in English. Computer skills in Microsoft Office. Please submit a Cover letter & CV to the HR Department by email at: WaiMar.Naing@rescue.org Closing date : 24 February 2015.

(1)**MEDICAL DOCTOR** (Sittwe) 1 Post (2) **Restoring Family Links Officer** (Nay Pyi Taw / Yangon) 1 Post. (3)**Township Branch Project Officer** - 1 post (4)**Development & Liaison Officer** - 1 post. Please send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society (Head Office) Yazatingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org

(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, Nay Pyi Taw. Ormrshrrecruitment@gmail.com, myanmarredcrosssociety.org

Local Positions

**WE ARE** seeking **Limousine drivers**, full time, 6 days week, starting from K 350,000,

Must speak English or other foreign language, Minimum 3 year driving experience. Contact : 09-4201-65678, 09-519-7354, 09-4317-9011.

**AUNG CHAN THA** Trading Co., Ltd. is seeking (1)**Sales Executive** - M 5 Posts: Any graduate, BE or B Tech (Mechanical) is preferable. 3 years experience. Age 25~30. (2)**Sales Executive** - M 5 Posts (Industrial Dept) : Any graduate: Preferable BE or B Tech (Mechanical). Age 25~30. (3)**Sales Engineer** - M 10 Posts (Sales Dept) : Any graduate: Preferable A.G.T.I or B Tech). Age 20~25. (4)**Engineer Trainee** - M 15 Posts (Sales & Industrial Dept) : BE, B Tech or AGTI (Fresh Graduate), Age 20~25. (5)**Senior Engineer** - M 10 Posts (Service & Industrial Dept) : Any graduate, Preferable BE or B Tech (Mechanical). Age 25~35. (6)**PSSR** - M 10 Posts (Spare part & Industrial Dept) : Any graduate, Preferable BE or B Tech (Mechanical). Age 25~30. (8) **Mechanic Helper / Tool Room - Store** - M 5 Posts : 1 year experience Age 25~30. (9)**Office Driver** - M 5 Posts : 5 years experience. Kha - valid driving license. Age 30~40. Please email covering letter, CV, 2 passport photo & photocopies of the graduation certificates, national registration card, labor registration card, police clearance, household census list to Aung Chan Tha Trading Co., Ltd :HR Manager, 54, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Near Nawaday Intersection, Mayangone, Yangon. Email: hr.aungchantha@gmail.com within 2 weeks.

**TRAVEL** companies is looking for **Senior travel assistant cum authorized tourist guide**, with three foreign languages, may please contact to 09-301-99028.

**SMEC** Myanmar is seeking (1)**Senior-Government liasion & stakeholder Specialist** : 15 years of experience in leading. Conducting in leading, conducting & organising stakeholder consultation. (2) **Environmental impact Assessment Specialist** : 10 years experience in environmental & social impact assessment & related

fields. (3)**Hydrology, Sediment & Water Qaulity Specialist** : tertiary qualifications in environmental sciences or water resources engineering knowledge & experience in environmental & social impact assessments. For all posts : Based in Yangon but frequent travel to shan state. Please email applications & any enquiries to myanmar@smec.com by Febuary. Ph : 01-8603578.

**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, CountryManager, Email: resal@myanmartravel.com, Ph: 09-430-74201.

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 . Plesse submit to Myanmar Food Co., Ltd., ph: 09-730-99383, mfft.hr@gmail.com

**MYANMAR LIFESTYLE** Co.ltd, is seeking (1).

Thaketa. Email- wai.strategypartner@gmail.com Ph: 09-4211-66892

**INT'L** Managed 4 Star Hotel is seeking (1)**EAM** Assisting Hotel GM in overall operations, Strong Sales background, with Int'l hotels experience (2)**Sales Managers:** Responsible for overall Hotel, Banquet & Membership sales. Managed Team of Sales Executives. 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, 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: 09-731-05353, 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 Ang Kyaw St, Middle Block, Kyauktada, Tel: 09-420 731246.

**A RESTAURANT** is looking for a **general manager**. 300,000 - 450,000 ks/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.orgtel: 09-979-786 575.

**ENGLISH** speaking & writing staff for English magazine. cnucontents@hanmail.net ph: 09-4500-65916

**GYMBOREE PLAY** & Music is seeking **Marketing** : atleast 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 smilar field. No.135/5, Mawya waddy Lane, 8.5 Mile, Mayangone, Yangon. Ph: 01-667061, 09-796-307128, 09-730-90465. Email: bulgogibrothers.myanmar@gmail.com



SMEC Myanmar is seeking the following short teams (6-8 months) positions to support it project team with respect to environmental and social impact asses sment procedures for a proposed large infrastructure project.

- Senior-Government liasion and stakeholder Specialist**  
The applicant must have more than 15 years of experience in leading. Conducting in leading, conducting and organising stakeholder consultation. Position is based in Yangon but frequent travel to shan state.
- Environmental impact Assessment Specialist**  
The applicant must have more than 10 years of 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 Qaulity Specialist**  
The applicant should have tertiary qualifications in environmental sciences or water resources engineering knowledge and experience in environmental and social impact assessments. Position is based in Yangon but frequent tavel to shan state.

Please email applications and any enquiries to [myanmar@smec.com](mailto:myanmar@smec.com) by 28<sup>th</sup> Febuary. Ph : 01-8603578.



Australia Awards

Scholarships Information Session

The Australian Embassy invites all interested Myanmar citizens to attend an information session in Yangon on the Australia Awards Scholarship program. Full details about the application process will be explained and answers given to all your questions.

**Venue:** Innwa 1 Room, Summit Parkview Hotel, Ahlone Road.  
**Date:** Saturday 28 Feb 2015  
**Time:** 9:30am – 11:30am & 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Note both sessions are the same and registration is not necessary.

Email: [australiaawards.myanmar@dfat.gov.au](mailto:australiaawards.myanmar@dfat.gov.au)  
Phone: 01 25 18 10 (Ext 116 or 233)





## BASEBALL

## Rodriguez issues apology for doping, mistakes

DISGRACED Major League Baseball slugger Alex Rodriguez released a handwritten apology note on February 17 to fans, his New York Yankees teammates and the league for his doping and other mistakes.

Rodriguez, who missed the entire 2014 season while serving the longest doping ban in major league history, met with the Yankees earlier this month and apologised to the organisation, including its long-time owners, the Steinbrenner family.

A week later, and just nine days before he and the Yankees were set to gather in Florida to begin preseason training for the 2015 campaign, Rodriguez said he was sorry he took performance-enhancing substances and also apologised for his often-combative actions in fighting the process that led to his suspension.

"I take full responsibility for the mistakes that led to my suspension for the 2014 season," Rodriguez said. "I regret that my actions made the situation worse than it needed to be. To Major League Baseball, the Yankees, the Steinbrenner family, the Players Association and you, the fans, I can only say I'm sorry."

Addressing the broken trust "A-Rod" had with supporters, the 39-year-old third baseman who closed his letter "sincerely, Alex" admitted he knew many baseball fans will still doubt him.

"I accept the fact that many of you will not believe my apology or anything that I say at this point. I understand why and that's on me," Rodriguez said.

The apology came only hours after a federal judge in Florida issued a four-year prison sentence to Anthony Bosch, who supplied Rodriguez and more than a dozen other major league players with banned substances, including human growth hormones, steroids and testosterone before the Biogenesis scandal was uncovered in 2013.

Rodriguez, a three-time American League Most Valuable Player, was

originally given a 211-game ban but it was later reduced to 162 games – the entire 2014 campaign.

"I served the longest suspension in the history of the league for PED use," Rodriguez said. "The Commissioner has said the matter is over. The Players Association has said the same. The Yankees have said the next step is to play baseball. I'm ready to put this chapter behind me and play some ball."

What he was not ready to do, however, was face questions from reporters. He rejected an offer from the team to use Yankee Stadium as a backdrop to a news conference where he might issue an apology, but his statement only ensured that the questions would linger over this week's start of preseason training camp not only for Rodriguez but also for his teammates.

"It was gracious of the Yankees to offer me the use of Yankee Stadium for this apology, but I decided that next time I am in Yankee Stadium, I should be in pinstripes doing my job," said Rodriguez.

In 2009, Rodriguez admitted in a preseason news conference at training camp that he took steroids while playing for the Texas Rangers from 2001 to 2003.

The doping revelations have tainted Rodriguez's chase of Major League Baseball's career home-run records. His 654 career homers rank fifth on the all-time list – six shy of Willie Mays in fourth, 60 behind Babe Ruth in third and 108 off the record 762 set by Barry Bonds, whose links to banned substances have tainted his achievement in the eyes of many fans.

The Yankees owe Rodriguez US\$61 million through the 2017 season but are expected to fight against having to pay out bonus money in the contract for his rising up the all-time homer list.

"When I go to spring training, I will do everything I can to be the best player and teammate possible, earn a spot on the Yankees and help us win," Rodriguez said. – *AFP*

## GOLF

## Love to return as US Ryder Cup captain

DAVIS Love, who captained the US Ryder Cup team that lost a 2012 heart-breaker at Medinah, will return to guide the Americans against Europe in 2016, Golf Channel reported on February 16.

The report on the network's website said the PGA of America will announce Love as the choice to captain the US team next year at Hazeltine on February 24 at its Florida headquarters.

Love, 50, was selected after several meetings by an 11-man Ryder Cup task force charged with improving US results in the wake of a divisive 16½ to 11½ US loss to Europe last year at Gleneagles with Tom Watson guiding the Americans.

Americans have lost eight of the past 10 Ryder Cups, including the past three in a row and six of the past seven meetings with Europe's top players.

The task force met for four hours two weeks ago in San Diego, but it was unclear how much influence players or the PGA of America had in the decision.

In 2012, Love's US squad led 10-6 entering Sunday singles matches only to have Europe match the best last-day rally in Cup history to keep the trophy 14½ to 13½.

Repeating captains has been rare

for the US side. Watson, who was captain at a 1993 US win at Gleneagles that is the most recent for the Americans on European soil, had been the first repeat US Ryder Cup captain since Jack Nicklaus in 1983 and 1987.

Love would become only the eighth man to captain the US Ryder Cup squad more than once, a list that includes Watson, Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Jack Burke, San Snead, Ben Hogan and Walter Hagen. Of those, only Burke lost his debut but received a second chance.

Among others thought to be contenders for the job were Fred Couples, a close friend of Love who has a 3-0 record as US captain in the Presidents Cup against a non-European global squad, and Paul Azinger, who was captain for the most recent US triumph in 2008 at Valhalla.

The Golf Channel report said Steve Stricker and Tom Lehman, both members of the US Ryder Cup task force, are likely to be involved in the 2016 matches as well, possibly as assistant captains.

Love has won 20 PGA titles, his lone major among them coming at the 1997 PGA Championship. His most recent victory came at the 2008 Children's Miracle Network Classic. – *AFP*



## IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

A curious mule watches cyclists pass during the first stage of the 2015 Tour of Oman, contested along a 161km (100-mile) route between Bayt Al Naman Castle and al-Wutayyah on February 17. Italian Andrea Guardini won the first stage to claim the leader's red jersey.

## CYCLING

## Armstrong must pay \$10m after court loss

DISGRACED cyclist Lance Armstrong, who was stripped of seven Tour de France titles for doping, must pay US\$10 million after losing an arbitration dispute with SCA Promotions.

The Texas firm announced on February 16 in a statement that the arbitration panel punished Armstrong for "an unparalleled pageant of international perjury, fraud and conspiracy".

The award, which SCA said was believed to be the largest sanction assessed against an individual in American judicial history, was made public when SCA filed a motion with a Dallas court to have the arbitration ruling confirmed into a judgment against Armstrong.

**'It is hard to describe how much harm Lance Armstrong's web of lies caused SCA.'**

**Bob Hamman**  
SCA Promotions president

"We are very pleased with this result," SCA Promotions president Bob Hamman said. "It is hard to describe how much harm Lance Armstrong's web of lies caused SCA but this is a good first start toward repairing that damage."

Armstrong, 43, received \$4.5 million in bonus payments from SCA for winning the Tour de France from 2001 to 2003 under SCA's deal with the US Postal Service team owners.

But SCA refused to pay Armstrong a \$5 million bonus for his 2004 triumph. Armstrong went to



Lance Armstrong attends a press conference in Los Angeles, California, on February 28, 2011. Photo: AFP

court and settled the case for \$7.5 million in 2006 after swearing he had won the race without taking performance-enhancing drugs.

Armstrong's confession of doping in 2013 prompted SCA to reopen the matter and the arbitration panel conducted a new hearing. SCA had sought \$12 million from Armstrong, including legal fees.

"This record breaking award was justified given Armstrong's outrageous conduct," SCA attorney Jeff Tillotson said, adding, "The panel of arbitrators determined that Armstrong continued to lie to the panel throughout the final hearing even while admitting to prior falsehoods and other wrongful conduct."

Arbitrators ruled Armstrong

"used perjury and other wrongful conduct to secure millions of dollars of benefits" from SCA, saying the fallen cycling star committed "perjury on every issue" in the case and finding Armstrong "intimidated and pressured other witnesses to lie" and "used a false personal and emotional appeal to perpetuate" his lies.

Armstrong admitted in the hearing he did not tell the truth about his earlier doping but arbitrators wrote that he "expressed no remorse".

SCA has a lawsuit in Dallas state district court pursuing additional claims against Armstrong, who is also fighting a federal lawsuit over fraud claims that could cost him \$100 million. – *AFP*





A woman with blonde hair, wearing a light-colored dress, is holding a large, structured red handbag with a top handle. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light color.

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**RUGBY**

New Zealand rugby captain Richie McCaw speaks to the media in Sydney on August 15, 2014. Photo: AFP

# All Blacks skipper McCaw 'likely' to quit

**A**LL Blacks skipper Richie McCaw on February 19 dropped the strongest hint yet he will retire after this year's World Cup in England and bring his glittering career to an end.

The 34-year-old captain of New Zealand, the reigning world champions, admitted he was considering hanging up his boots but was not yet ready to make a definitive announcement, preferring to focus on the ongoing Super 15 season with the Canterbury Crusaders.

"Honestly, I haven't made any final decision but probably the likelihood is I'm not going to be playing next year," flanker McCaw said at a Crusaders training session, in comments published on New Zealand Rugby's official website.

"But I don't want to be getting carried away now talking about those sorts of things when I am focusing about playing," added McCaw, one of rugby union's all-time great loose forwards.

"I want to really enjoy this year but, as I say, that's the likelihood and I don't want to make any big announcements because I don't think that would be right going into a season."

McCaw currently has 137 Test caps and is set to become rugby's most-capped international later this year, overtaking Ireland's Brian O'Driscoll (141) and Australia's George Gregan (139).

However, the openside flanker is renowned as the ultimate team man, and helping the All Blacks become the first side to win back-to-back World Cups would rank higher for him than any individual accolade.

McCaw could earn mega-dollars with a French or Japanese club if he decided to retire from international rugby and continue playing at a lesser level.

But unlike many All Blacks, including the France-bound Dan Carter, he has never shown any interest in playing outside New Zealand and he insisted that money was not a driving force.

"Everyone is motivated a bit differently and I've always said that is not the number-one motivation," he said.

"Obviously, it is nice to play and get well-looked-after because of that, but I've always said that if I was enjoying it and wanted to carry on playing then I would play here. If I'm not enjoying it and decide I've got to go off and just play to earn some cash, I think that would be pretty tough."

McCaw made his New Zealand debut against Ireland in 2001 and took over as skipper in 2006, becoming the first player to captain an international side for 100 Tests late last year.

He has been named world player of the year a record three times and, on home soil, led the All Blacks to their first World Cup title for 24 years in 2011, playing the entire tournament with a painful foot injury. - *AFP*

**RUGBY**

# Reds star charged with supplying cocaine

SUPER Rugby was reeling last week after a man widely identified as Queensland Reds star Karmichael Hunt was charged with supplying cocaine.

The charges follow an operation by Queensland's Crime and Corruption Commission, which resulted in the arrest of four people on February 19.

One of them was New Zealand-born Hunt, who used to play rugby league for the Brisbane Broncos, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and other media reported.

He was charged with four counts of supplying the drug, it said.

"During an investigation focused on a cocaine trafficking syndicate operating

in southeast Queensland, these four individuals were identified contacting the syndicate and arranging for the supply of cocaine," the commission alleged.

Investigators claim that the three men and one woman arranged for the supply of cocaine for personal use or to supply to friends and colleagues between June and December 2014.

Hunt, 28, was on February 19 named at fullback for the Reds in their match against the Western Force in Brisbane on Saturday night.

The team postponed their pre-match captain's press conference on February 20 as reports of their vice-captain's arrest spread.

**ATHLETICS**

# Pistorius advert gets complaints

AN advertisement making light of the trial of South African athlete Oscar Pistorius received by far the most complaints ever in Britain, the advertising watchdog said on February 20.

The advert for Irish betting company Paddy Power appeared during Pistorius' trial for murder last year and read "money back if he walks" - a pun on the prospect of his release and the fact he is a double amputee.

The sprinter, 28, was jailed for five years by a Pretoria court in October after being convicted of culpable homicide for the killing of his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp.

Pistorius said he shot Steenkamp through a locked toilet door in the early hours of Valentine's Day in 2013, believing she was an intruder.

The advertisement appeared in a British newspaper during the trial in March, promoting Paddy Power's betting offers on whether Pistorius would be found guilty or not.

The advert said the company would refund all those who bet Pistorius would be convicted, were he to be found not guilty.

The advert received 5525 complaints, by far the highest number of objections ever received for an advertisement in Britain according to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

Those who complained accused Paddy Power of making light of a woman's death and of disability.

The watchdog banned the advert on the grounds it "brought advertising into disrepute".

Paddy Power had argued that while irreverent, the advert was not intended to cause offence.

Two other advertisements received more complaints than ever before in 2014, something the ASA said reflected the public's increased use of social media to coordinate complaints.

One was an advert for website Booking.com that was cleared of appearing to use the word "booking" as a substitute for a swearword. It received 1768 complaints.

The other was an email from newspaper the Sun that offered certain subscribers the chance to win a date with a topless model - it received 1711 objections.

The ASA banned it and found the offer of a date as a reward was "de-meaning to women and objectified those offered as prizes".

ASA chief executive Guy Parker said it was inevitable that some ads would split opinion.

"2014 was the year social media came into its own in making it easier than ever to lodge complaints en masse," he said. - *AFP*



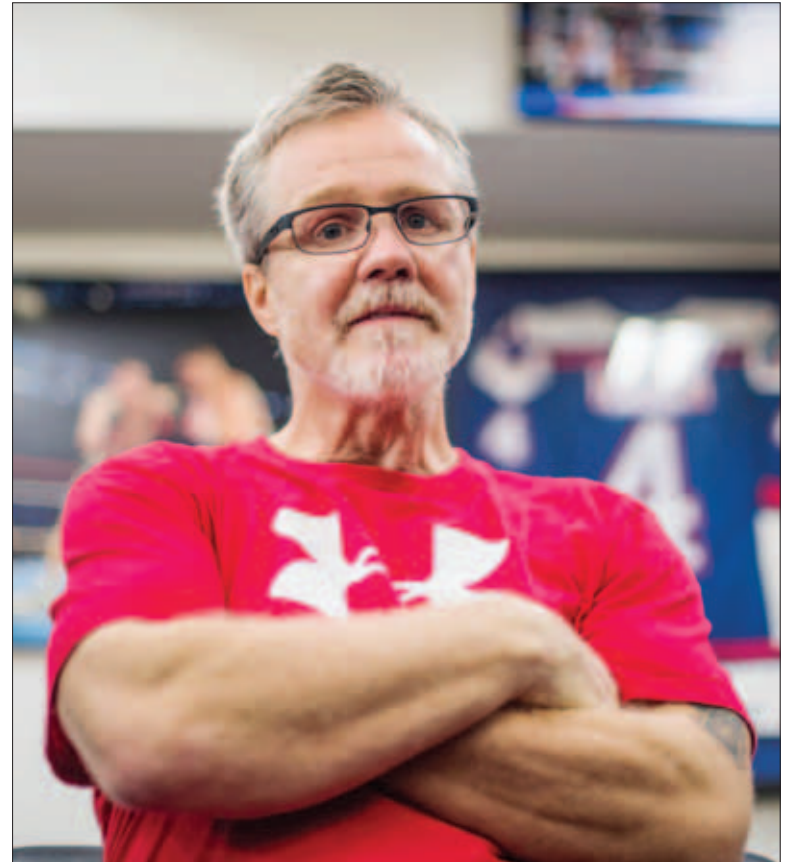
# Time running out on Pacquiao, Mayweather

Fight fans around the world have clamoured for years for a showdown

Opponents Manny Pacquiao has knocked out during his career

Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum last month ignited buzz over the fight when he said negotiations had been

Those pay-per-view revenues have added another wrinkle to the negotiations, since the fighters are under contract to rival US telecasters, Showtime and HBO.



"I don't think he really cares about the fans," Roach said of Mayweather. "I think he just wants to do enough to win. Manny's not like that. That's why Manny's been knocked out a few times. That could happen again, but I'd rather see a fighter get knocked out trying to win than just trying to go the distance." — *AFP*

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# Sport

## Decision time is nigh for Mayweather-Pacquiao bout

SPORT 67



### FOOTBALL

## FIFA hopeful Figo moots 48-team World Cup

**L**UIS Figo revealed proposals for a 48-team World Cup and a US\$3.5 billion windfall for national associations as he launched his FIFA presidential campaign on February 19.

Unveiling his manifesto at Wembley Stadium in London, the 42-year-old former Portugal winger said the expansion of the World Cup from its current 32-team format would be "weighted toward non-European teams".

"With that option, we will increase substantially the tournament's financial income, which could be invested again in grassroots football, and allow other confederations outside Europe to have more places in the World Cup," he said.

One of his proposals for the World Cup is to split it into two 24-team tournaments played simultaneously on two different continents, followed by a final knockout stage in one country.

**'The decisions I made throughout my career demonstrate I can stand on my own two feet.'**

**Luis Figo**  
FIFA presidential candidate

He said the expanded format, which could be a 40-team or 48-team World Cup, would only add three or four days to the duration of the tournament.

Another of his proposals is the distribution of half of FIFA's \$2.5 billion revenues and \$1 billion of

FIFA's \$1.5 billion cash reserves to its 209 member associations, principally for spending on grassroots football.

The former Barcelona and Real Madrid superstar also called for the restoration of the "old" interpretation of the offside rule, "where a player is judged offside whether directly involved in the play or not".

Other suggestions include a debate about the use of extra technology and the testing of sin-bins for incidents of "unsporting behaviour to referees".

Figo is standing against incumbent Sepp Blatter, Dutch football chief Michael van Praag and FIFA vice-president for Asia Prince Ali bin Al Hussein in the FIFA presidential election on May 29.

Like van Praag and Ali, Figo has called for the world governing body to become more transparent following a series of corruption scandals under long-serving president Blatter. "Mr Blatter, I respect him as I respect all the other candidates," Figo said.

"He's been leading the organisation for many years and has made many positive achievements for football, but I think sometimes a point is reached when change is needed."

Figo played down suggestions that the three challengers to 78-year-old Blatter, who is standing for a fifth term, could eventually pool their resources by rallying behind one candidate.

"I don't know if with one we'd be more strong or not," he said.

"My plan is to run to the end, to see the most people as possible regarding the presidents of associations and try to convince them with my ideas, my manifesto, and see what is good for the governance and democracy of FIFA."

He also confirmed that he would fund his campaign himself and added, "The decisions I made throughout



Former Portuguese football player and FIFA presidential candidate Luis Figo presents his manifesto "For Football" at the start of his presidential campaign at Wembley Stadium in London on February 19. Photo: AFP

my career demonstrate I can stand on my own two feet."

Figo's campaign has received the backing of high-profile figures including his countryman and Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho, former England captain David Beckham and Brazilian World Cup winner Roberto Carlos.

Hailing from Lisbon, Figo played for Sporting Lisbon, Barcelona, Real and Inter Milan during a glittering career.

A skilful, two-footed wide player, he captained Portugal at the 2006 World Cup and won a total of 127 caps, making him his country's most-capped player.

As well as working as an ambassador at Inter, he has served on European governing body UEFA's Football Committee since 2011. - AFP

### IN PICTURES

Photo: AFP

Zimbabwe batsman Craig Irvine cuts a delivery away from United Arab Emirates (UAE) bowling during their Pool B 2015 Cricket World Cup match in Nelson on February 19.



## Myanmar U-20s defeat Fiji in first friendly

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THE Myanmar U-20 football team defeated Fiji 1-0 at Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay on February 17, with striker Than Paing scoring the match's lone goal in the 27<sup>th</sup> minute.

The game was the first of two friendly matches against Fiji as they prepare for the U-20 World Cup 2015, which will be held in New Zealand starting May 20.

The second meet between the teams was scheduled to be held at Yangon's Thuwunna Stadium on February 21.

"Myanmar and Fiji will both be competing to the U-20 World Cup for the first time, so all their opponents will be concentrating on these two teams," Fiji U-20 coach Frank Farina said at a press conference before the first game.

"We believe our team will gain much experience from these friendly matches. Afterward, we will continue joint training to Malaysia and the United States."

Fiji qualified for the FIFA U-20 World Cup after winning the Oceania Football Confederation U-20 Men's Championship last May. The country has been placed in Group F alongside Germany, Uzbekistan and Honduras for the World Cup.

Myanmar U-20 coach Gerd Friedrich said the friendly matches mark Myanmar's first meetings with Fiji.

"I don't know much about the Fiji team, but these friendly matches are very important for both teams. We will try our best in these matches," he said.

He added that he was satisfied with Myanmar's placement in Group A for the World Cup, along with New Zealand, the United States and Ukraine.

"We played against the Ukraine youth team in a friendly match in Turkey during a joint training trip, and we have also played against many European teams," he said. "This experience will help support in the World Cup group matches."

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