

INSIDE BUSINESS
Deputy minister makes case for stock exchange

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DAILY EDITION

ISSUE 1 | MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2015



Garment worker Ma Aye Aye Phyo reads a statement to the media at Mahabandoola Park in downtown Yangon yesterday evening. Photo: Zarni Phyo

EDITORIAL

Our vision for peace

USE the word reconciliation and a single person will often spring to mind: Nelson R Mandela, who served as president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. A political prisoner for 27 years, until 1990, he dismantled the legacy of apartheid by tackling institutionalised racism, poverty and inequality, and fostering racial reconciliation. While he passed away in 2013, his legacy and achievements live on.

Still, reconciliation means different things to different people. Others might think of the changes in 1990s in Eastern Europe. For some, the word simply means the opposite of retaliation. For others, it might be a way to avert a revolution. Here in Myanmar, there are similarly diverse perspectives among political leaders and the public.

But it is clear that there is a groundswell of support for reconciliation in Myanmar. All understand it is essential so we can leave behind decades of conflict and propel forward the transition to democracy and freedom, building the society of the future that we deserve.

At the same time, we must recognise the challenges in achieving this goal. Those who have occupied the corridors of power or benefitted handsomely from previous regimes might worry that reconciliation will also bring retaliation. Those who have been oppressed and suffered might be intent on seeking revenge.

There are, we believe, core notions that should accompany the reconciliation process, including understanding, sympathy and mutual trust. If we, the people of Myanmar – regardless of our racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds – firmly believe that reconciliation is not just about building relations between former opponents, but also building a democratic nation where justice, equality and liberty prevail, we are on the right track.

The media also has its role to play in promoting understanding of the issues surrounding reconciliation. Each Monday over the next four weeks – starting from this first edition of *The Myanmar Times* daily – we will examine reconciliation in Myanmar in all its complexity.

Workers threaten to join students, farmers

Government's heavy-handed response to unrest, including the use of civilian paramilitary, could prompt disgruntled groups of workers, students and farmers to unite. **NEWS 3**

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Page 2

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



THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

Well, folks – here it is: the long-awaited daily edition of *The Myanmar Times*. The product of so many people's blood, sweat and tears*. Our White Whale.

Readers of *Page 2* (both of them) have asked what's in store. Currently, the plan is to do this twice a week.

Producing a page on a weekly basis was already a bit like childbirth, so please, if you have any stories you think deserve chasing up, any pictures – just anything at all, really – please feel free to send 'em my way. Email's up top. *We don't use ink.

Human trafficking not sexy to donors

The upcoming International Press Institute World Congress in Myanmar "On the Path to a Free Media" scheduled for March 27 – 29 looks set to be that little bit less interesting, with IPI having rescinded the offer for Phuketwan journalist Chutima Sidasathian to speak on human trafficking due to an apparent lack of donor interest, opting instead to cancel the panel altogether.

"Unfortunately, due to the fact that we could not find any sponsors for the human trafficking panel, we had to take it off the program for the IPI World Congress in Myanmar," read an email from IPI Membership and Global Relations Manager Christiane Klint published on Phuketwan last week. IPI also failed to find funding to cover Ms Sidasathian's travel expenses to attend the event as a participant, but "there were concerns [about whether or not] she would be able to travel, due to the pending case against her".

The legal pickle to which Ms Klint refers is the defamation suit Ms Sidasathian and her fellow Phuketwan staffer Alan Morison are facing, having been sued by the Thai Navy over publishing an excerpt from a story by Reuters (that went on to net Reuters a Pulitzer), it does make a bit of a mockery of the whole "On the Path to a Free Media" thing – particularly when one considers the rather gobsmacking conference attendance fees. To wit, IPI members will be expected to fork out US\$1056, while non-members will have to pony up \$1366.

The Blair Watch Project

Former British PM Tony Blair was spotted in the thriving metropolis of Nay Pyi Taw last week by Reuters journalist Andrew RC Marshall (not to

be confused with Andrew McGregor Marshall), who tweeted that one of Blair's dinner companions said he was in town for "private meetings". Which makes some sense, because while I'm told the Safari Park is world class and that the aeroplane bar is something to behold, Nay Pyi Taw is not quite there yet in terms of staking its claim as a renowned holiday destination. This isn't Blair's first visit to Myanmar. He was spotted enjoying a casual meal with Bill Clinton at Monsoon on November 14, in late 2013.

What Andrew RC Marshall may not have realised is that he missed his chance to perform a citizen's arrest on Blair for Crimes Against Peace, for which there is a significant online bounty. Arrestblair.org says attempts to arrest Mr Blair "will, at this stage, be largely symbolic, but they will have great political resonance".

The website recommends approaching Mr Blair in a calm fashion (which makes him sound like an alpaca), gently placing a hand on his shoulder or elbow before loudly pronouncing the following: "Mr Blair, this is a citizens' arrest for a crime against peace, namely your decision to launch an unprovoked war against Iraq. I am inviting you to accompany me to a police station to answer the charge." While performing a citizen's arrest on Blair would have precisely zero impact in the greater scheme of things, the bounty currently sits at £7,413.80. It's worth a shot.

POUNDS

7413

Bounty for anyone who successfully carries out a citizen's arrest on Mr Blair

In brief

Winner at inaugural trophy-making championship describes his victory as 'hollow', saddened by the realisation he'll never know the joy of receiving a trophy he hasn't made himself that he doesn't see as inferior

Youthful street art experiment with moss graffiti takes a sinister turn when someone mishears original idea

People speculating about internet slowdowns may be falsely romanticising normal network speeds, study finds

EU Delegation upbeat despite criticisms over police training program: "At least everyone seems to have forgotten that we rent from Asia World"

Next week

"The funny thing is, most of the expats who bang on about *Burmese Days* – they don't get that they're the modern-day equivalent of exactly what I was railing against" George Orwell tells *The Myanmar Times* in an exclusive séance

Censor struggles to make proper assessment of new local death metal band album, "can't quite make out the lyrics"

Startup fairtrade jade co-op "badly overestimated" market demand for ethically sourced minerals

Hluttaw thrown briefly into disarray after dyslexic MP gets confused between martial and marital law again

'We condemn the men with red armbands who crudely attacked students in front of Yangon city hall. We knew that they committed violence for money. If you want money, I have K8000. Take it.'

A student to Eleven, at March 6 rally

Vacancy

Aggressive, hopped-up young men required for shadowy paramilitary outfit. Exciting, varied work – no two days will be the same. Appealing daily rate for ongoing casual work. Some uniform provided. Own motorcycle a plus, but transport will be provided if work site is in Yangon proper. Must have no qualms about hitting women. No training will be provided at this stage, but experience is preferred.

Email CV and references to HR.certainparallelforges@hotmail.com

Once was Burma...

Archival material courtesy of Pansodan Gallery

First floor, 286 Pansodan, upper block, Kyauktada township



Mahabandoola graces old soap advertisement poster, date unknown



IN PICTURES

Page 2 was on the scene at Chaung Tha on March 2 to witness what one might assume was a classic case of someone drinking too much whiskey, parking their car on the beach, passing out, then waking up to discover the tide had come in. (We've all done it.) This, it turns out, was not the case. *The Irrawaddy* reported that three Taiwanese men and a Myanmar driver were cruising down the beach when they became bogged down in the sand. As the tide came in, they had no choice but to abandon ship. The four men will face charges.



Duty. Photo: via Facebook

Workers issue threat to govt over arrests

Strikers float plan to link up with students, farmers and monks after crackdown

KYAW
PHONE
KYAW



k.phonekyaw@gmail.com

FACTORY workers on strike for a wage increase yesterday threatened to unite with other protest movements in Yangon if the government does not explain why plainclothes "thugs" attacked the mostly female picketers last week.

The workers have warned that unless the government explains its role in breaking up the demonstrations and releases arrested workers and activists, they will join forces with student protesters, land grab demonstrators and monks.

On March 4, vigilantes decked in red armbands emblazoned with the word "duty" helped riot police break up a labour protest in Yangon's Shwe Pyi Thar Industrial Zone. They had planned to march on downtown Yangon but instead 14 workers and an activist were arrested in the crackdown, workers said at a press conference yesterday evening at Mahabandoola Park.

"Most of us are women, so we might be arrested easily, but the government made the arrests violently,

beating us. It shows the aggressive desire of the government," the workers said in a statement read out at yesterday's conference.

The newly detained factory picketers joined two labour union leaders and an activist who were arrested mid-February during violent clashes with police. Blamed for allegedly instigating the protests, the union leaders and activists are facing charges under section 505(b) of the Penal Code which permits imprisonment for committing an offence that can disrupt the state or public tranquility. The arrested workers are being charged with rioting under section 147.

Just under 4000 garment and shoe factory workers employed by

'We cannot solve the issue for everyone ... Most of them have accepted our negotiations.'

U Zaw Aye Maung
Regional government minister

five different Chinese and South Korean companies launched the strike in January. While demands varied between factories, all called for a K60,000-a-month (US\$60) minimum wage, which the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers' Association called unaffordable.

Many of the workers were lured back to work by a K300-a-day pay boost, in part because they could no longer afford to go strike, having already lost more than a month's wages.

Several hundred labourers from Costec and Ford Glory garment factories refused to return to the assembly lines yesterday, but they shied away from any demonstrations after the latest round of violence.

Regional minister U Zaw Aye Maung, who has led efforts to negotiate with the workers, declined to comment about the recent arrests. He was dismissive of those workers who remain on strike.

"We cannot solve the issue for everyone," he said. "Perhaps some continue to disagree, but most of them have accepted our negotiations."

U Zaw Aye Maung said that he did not have any information about the armband-toting thugs involved in last week's clashes.



IN PICTURES

PHOTO: ZARNI PHYO

A woman writes a message on a chalkboard at the closing event for the Yangon Women's Festival yesterday. Held at the Institut Francais, the event also marked International Women's Day.

Local publication for call for proposals

Support to Civil Society Organisations in Myanmar
EuropeAid/136-680/DD/ACT/MM



The European Union Delegation to Myanmar is seeking proposals for projects aiming at strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations for enhancing their participation in Myanmar's public policies and programmes as a pre-condition for a more equitable, open and democratic society, with financial assistance from the thematic programme Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities. The full Guidelines for Applicants are available for consultation during the office opening hours at the reception desk: Monday - Friday 09:00 - 17:00 at the European Union Delegation to Myanmar, Hledan Centre - Corner of Pyay Road and Hledan Road - 6th Floor, Kamayut Township, Yangon, and on the following internet site:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?ADSSChck=1425288416031&do=publi.welcome&ORDERBYAD=Desc&AOFr=136680&ORDERBY=upd&NBPUBLILIST=15&SEARCHTYPE=RS&userlanguage=en>

and http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/myanmar/grants_tenders/grants/index_en.htm.

The deadline for submission of Concept Notes is 22 April 2015 at 16:30 (Myanmar local time).

An information session on this call for proposals will be held on 19 March 2015 in Yangon. Interested organisations must contact the Operations Section of the EU Delegation (Email: DELEGATION-MYANMAR-OPERATIONS@eeas.europa.eu, Tel: +95 (0) 1 230 56 50) before 12 March 2015 to register.

MYANMARTIMES

Chief Executive Officer

Tony Child
tonychild.mcm@gmail.com

Editorial Director

U Thiha Saw
editorial.director.mcm@gmail.com

Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Tin Moe Aung
tinmoeaung.mcm@gmail.com

EDITORIAL

Editor MTE - Thomas Kean
tdkean@gmail.com

Editor MTM - Sann Oo
sannoo@gmail.com

Chief of Staff - Zaw Win Than
zawwinthan@gmail.com

Editor Special Publications - Myo Lwin
myolwin286@gmail.com

Editor-at-Large - Douglas Long
dlong125@gmail.com

News Editor MTE

Guy Dinmore
guydinmore@gmail.com

Business Editor MTE - Jeremy Mullins
jeremymullins7@gmail.com

World Editor MTE - Fiona MacGregor
fionamacgregor@hotmail.co.uk

The Pulse Editor MTE - Charlotte Rose
charlottelola.rose@gmail.com

Sport Editor MTE - Matt Roebuck
mattroebuck@gmail.com

Special Publications Editor MTE - Wade Guyitt
wadeguyitt@gmail.com

Regional Affairs Correspondent - Roger Mitton
rogermitton@gmail.com

Chief Sub Editor MTM

Aye Sapay Phyu

Business & Property Editor MTM

Tin Moe Aung

tinmoeaung.mcm@gmail.com

Timeout Editor MTM

Moh Moh Thaw

mohthaw@gmail.com

MCM BUREAUS

Mandalay Bureau Chief - Stuart Alan Becker

stuart.becker@gmail.com

News Editors (Mandalay)

Khin Su Wai, Phyo Wai Kyaw

Nay Pyi Taw Bureau Chief - Hsu Hlaing Htun

hsuhlainghtun.mcm@gmail.com

DIGITAL/ONLINE

Online Editors - Kayleigh Long, Thet Hlaing

kayleighlong@gmail.com, thet202@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHICS

Director - Kaung Htet

Photographers -

Aung Htay Hlaing, Thiri, Zarni Phyo

PRODUCTION

zarnicp@gmail.com

Art Director - Tin Zaw Htway

Production Manager - Zarni

MCM PRINTING

Printing Director - Han Tun

Factory Administrator - Aung Kyaw Oo (3)

Factory Foreman - Tin Win

SALES & MARKETING

ads.myanmartimes@gmail.com

Deputy National Sales Directors -

Chan Tha Oo, Nay Myo Oo,

Nandar Khine, Nyi Nyi Tun

Classifieds Manager - Khin Mon Mon Yi

classified.mcm@gmail.com

ADMIN, FINANCE & SYSTEMS

Chief Financial Officer - Mon Mon Tha Saing

monmonthasaing@gmail.com

Deputy HR Director - Khine Su Yin

khinesu1988@gmail.com

Director of IT/Systems - Kyaw Zay Yar Lin

kyawzayyarlin@gmail.com

Publisher - U Thiha, Permit No: 01021

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

Yangon - subscribe.mt@gmail.com

Mandalay - mdydistribution.mcm@gmail.com

Nay Pyi Taw - nptdistribution.mcm@gmail.com

ADVERTISING & SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES

Telephone: (01) 253 642, 392 928

Facsimile: (01) 254 158

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Myanmar Consolidated Media Ltd.
www.mmtimes.com

Head Office: 379/383 Bo Aung Kyaw Street,
Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar.
Telephone: (01) 253 642, 253 651, 392808
Facsimile: (01) 254 158, 392 928

Mandalay Bureau: No. 20, 71st Street,
Between 28th street and 29th Street,
Chan Aye Thar San Township.
Tel: (02) 24450, 24460, 65391. Fax: (02) 74585.
Email: mdybranch@mmtimes.com.mm

Nay Pyi Taw Bureau: No (15/496) Yaza Htarni
Road, Paung Laung (2)Q, Pyinmana.
Tel: (067) 25982, 25983, 25309, 21426
Email: capitalbureau@mmtimes.com.mm



Activists protest outside the European Union office in Hledan on March 7. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Unknown group breaks up protest in Hmawbi

At least three protests have been disrupted by groups of plainclothes men



MRATT
KYAW THU

mrattkthu@gmail.com

PLAINCLOTHES men reportedly harassed student protesters and broke up an education reform demonstration in the rural outskirts of Yangon yesterday, one of several such incidents to occur over the past week.

About 20 activists gathered yesterday in Hmawbi township in outer Yangon Region to demand police stop using violence against student protesters and end a blockade preventing a core protest column in Letpadan from marching toward Yangon.

Just after 10am, a group of 10 men in plainclothes pulled up to the Hmawbi township demonstration in a van. The men blocked the students and activists from continuing. Shoving ensued before residents intervened to stop the confrontation, after which protesters took off into a nearby market, according to activist Ko Aww Shan Kha, who took part in the demonstration.

"They were not holding batons or

wearing uniforms," he said. "But they surrounded the students and activists and tried to break them up. Then the demonstration stopped. No one was injured."

He said the men did not have the red "duty" armbands worn by plainclothes men who have broken up protests in Yangon.

Pictures posted on social media after student protests on March 5 near Sule Pagoda and March 6 in Letpadan showed groups of armband-clad vigilantes attempting to disperse demonstrators before baton-wielding police moved in. During crackdowns outside City Hall on March 5 that led to the arrest of about 10 protesters, including at least five students, men who have not been identified but were described by activists as "thuggish-looking" were seen allegedly choking activists.

Plainclothed, pro-government thugs known as Swan Ah Shin were used by the previous military regime to suppress pro-democracy demonstrations, most notoriously during the September 2007 protests. On March 6, the director of the President's Office posted on Facebook an image of section 128 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which permits a male civilian force to be ral-

lied in response to unlawful assembly. The article was enacted during British colonial rule in 1898.

On March 7, activists took aim at the European Union for providing crowd control training to the police, protesting outside the EU office in the Hledan area of Kamaryut township.

Activists shouted, "EU! You're responsible for the violent actions of Myanmar police," in front of the office.

Tensions between the student protesters and the authorities have been mounting since a March 2 deadline for the demonstrators to disperse and give up plans of marching to Yangon was ignored.

Students have been protesting for months against the National Education Law approved by parliament last September. Students allege that the new laws would cripple the freedom of universities already struggling after decades of military rule.

Amendments agreed upon during tense talks between the government and students in February would address most of the students' demands. However, student leaders have accused the government and parliament of deliberately stalling on the introduction of the proposed changes.

Chief minister defends protest response

LUN MIN MANG

lunminlm@gmail.com

YANGON Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe defended the use of paramilitary groups to break up a pro-student demonstration in front of City Hall last week during a meeting with 88 Generation activists, who have described the thuggish tactics as a "black mark" on the government.

U Tun Myint Aung, an 88 Generation member who attended the meeting, told *The Myanmar Times* that Chief Minister U Myint Swe had justified the use of civilians to break up the demonstration at Sule Pagoda on March 5.

"As government officials normally say, he said the crackdown was done according to the law," U Tun Myint Aung said.

Eleven activists were arrested following the demonstration. The men who broke up the protest were without uniforms but wore a red banner around their arms with the word "duty".

Under section 128 of the colonial-era Code of Criminal Procedure, police can enlist civilians to disperse and arrest demonstrators who refuse to comply with an order to disperse.

Other government officials, including President's Office director U Zaw Htay, have also referred to this section to justify the violent response.

Representatives of 88 Generation expressed their displeasure at the government's crowd disruption tactics.

"We said cracking down on the protests with violence was a black mark on the government and the country, particularly when they claim it to be democratic," U Tun Myint Aung said.

The meeting between members of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society and U Myint Swe was held at the invitation of the regional government. Talks also focused on garment workers' protests for higher pay, U Tun Myint Aung said.

The 88 Generation delegation was led by U Ko Ko Gyi.

Air strikes fail to dislodge Kokang troops

LUN MIN MANG

lunminlm@gmail.com

GUY DINMORE

guydinmore@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT forces using air strikes have retaken territory in the Kokang area close to the border with China, although ethnic Chinese rebels said yesterday they were still inside Myanmar territory.

Maps of the fighting published in official media claim that over the past week the Tatmadaw has regained control of some border posts northeast and southeast of the main town of Laukkai where the latest conflict erupted on February 9, prompting tens of thousands of ethnic Chinese civilians to flee into China.

Government forces captured a hill known as Point 1753, close to the border, after six waves of air strikes on March 7, the military newspaper *Myawady* reported. Four soldiers

were killed and 11 wounded in the offensive, taking the death toll on the government side to 66 over the past month, according to an unofficial tally of fatalities released by the Tatmadaw.

A Tatmadaw lieutenant colonel, who asked not to be named, said yesterday that the situation in Laukkai was "stable".

A spokesperson for the Myanmar National Democracy Alliance Army said Kokang rebel forces in northern Shan State could not enter China.

"We are still in Myanmar territory. We cannot go into China. The border cannot be passed," U Htun Myat Lin told *The Myanmar Times*.

China has repeatedly assured Myanmar that it is not assisting the ethnic Chinese rebels as Beijing seeks to prevent a localised conflict derailing its broader economic and strategic interests. But Myanmar has rejected China's calls for a dialogue and ceasefire with the rebel MNDAA, which is

backed by at least two other ethnic armed groups.

The MNDAA spokesperson said the numbers of its fighters were growing as new members joined. The government has accused the rebels of forcibly conscripting locals and employing Chinese mercenaries.

Radio Free Asia reported last week that China had closed some border crossing points and had forced some thousands of refugees back into Myanmar.

More than 60,000 refugees had arrived in the Chinese border town of Lincang over the past month, the communist party chief of Yunnan province was quoted as saying on March 7 by the official Xinhua news agency. Li Jiheng said China had provided assistance to the refugees and that "strict border management measures" had been implemented at the crossing with Lincang, although he added that the border was not closed.

Meanwhile, the Myanmar Press Council (Interim) yesterday raised its concerns with the military over reporting restrictions imposed under martial law in Kokang. General Aung Ye Win of the defence ministry's psychological warfare department told press council members invited to the Yangon office of the *Myawady* that he would report their concerns to a higher level.

The meeting was called after the Press Council wrote to the commander-in-chief of the military on March 3 seeking clarification over martial law provisions for the media and restrictions on reporting. The government imposed martial law in the Kokang area on February 17.

The latest martial law decree clarifies that a court martial will make judgments in accordance with existing laws, meaning that journalists would be prosecuted under the existing media law. - *Additional reporting by Ye Mon and Wa Lone*

Expelled members of NLD issued new ID cards

NAW SAY PHAW WAA
nawsayphawwaa@gmail.com

THANKS to a fast-track immigration project, 33 National League for Democracy members expelled from the party last October because of questions about their citizenship have now received ID cards confirming their status. The cards were presented at a March 3 ceremony at the administration office in Mawlamyine's Thiri Myine ward.

The members were expelled, along with about 140 others, after the Union Election Commission instructed political parties last October to remove associate citizens and temporary ID-card holders from the party in accordance with amendments to the Political Parties Registration Law enacted the previous month.

While the changes mostly affected Muslims in Rakhine State, who hold the majority of the temporary IDs, known as white cards, in circulation, in some cases those without any identification were removed from party lists.

The NLD used the Immigration and National Registration Department's Moe Pwint project, under which people who can produce the necessary documentation can be issued with replacement cards with little delay, to secure new Citizenship Scrutiny Cards for eligible party members.

33

NLD members who received Citizenship Scrutiny Cards at a March 3 ceremony

U Win Ye Htut, deputy head of Mon State's Immigration and National Registration Department, said the 33 NLD members were able to produce documents proving their citizenship, but applications from the other members expelled from the party would require more time to process because they were "mixed-blood".

"We have mixed-Indian, mixed-Chinese and mixed-Bengalis here. The Moe Pwint project works only for national races. Scrutinising citizenship for mixed-blood people is not easy to do in a ward administration office because it takes more time to scrutinise their documents systematically," he said.

NLD member Daw Lay Lay Nwe, who lost her identity card six months ago, told *The Myanmar Times* that officials processed her application in 10 days, and did not charge her any fee.

"I applied for my card through the Moe Pwint project at the ward administration office. I produced my household member list, a copy of my parents' ID cards, my photo and blood-type," she said.

More than 800,000 households comprising 4.5 million people have received new cards under the Moe Pwint Special Project, including more than 8000 households, or 200,000 people, in Mon State, said U Win Ye Htut.

"We don't need to go to different departments, just to the ward office," said NLD member U Tin Naing Tun, who lost his ID card 30 years ago.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun



The 15 defendants arrive at Yangon's Northern District Court on March 5.
Photo: Naing Wynn Htoon

Fifteen receive death sentence

TOE WAI AUNG
linnhtet.lt@gmail.com

FIFTEEN men have been sentenced to death for murdering a man in a brawl in a liquor shop in North Okkalapa township in 2011. The sentence was handed down at a tense hearing in Yangon's Northern District Court on March 5, at which supporters of the defendants threatened journalists.

Despite being second on the court list, the accused did not arrive at court until 4pm. The sentencing was shifted to a larger courtroom due to the large crowd, which included about 80 police providing security and two relatives of victim U Kyaw Min, 32.

"I came here to see the court sentence those who brutally killed my son. I have asked police to ensure my security," said the mother of the victim, who asked not to be named.

When the accused arrived with police, they and their supporters threatened journalists and photographers, warning them not to take photos. Police asked journalists not to enter the court for the verdict due to safety reasons.

One journalist who attended court described the supporters of the defendants as "hooligans".

"The victim's family didn't even get a chance to go into the court because there were a lot of people from the side of the accused. The trial has been regularly delayed because some people were cursing during the court hearings," said Ko Moe Gyoe, a reporter from *The Voice Daily*.

Twenty-three people were arrested and charged with premeditated murder following the death of U Kyaw Min on November 17, 2011. They were accused of entering the liquor shop wearing masks and stabbing U Kyaw Min.

In August 2012, the case was transferred from Eastern District Court at the request of the police, who cited the difficulty ensuring security. Eight people were discharged, leaving 15 defendants.

They now have one month to appeal the sentence to the Yangon Region High Court. They can then appeal to the Union Supreme Court and then finally to the president for clemency.

While Myanmar has not abolished the death penalty, it has not been carried out since 1988. In a May 2011 amnesty, President U Thein Sein commuted the sentences of all death row inmates to life imprisonment.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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Lawyers try again to file suit over hotel project

YE MON

yeemontun2013@gmail.com

ATTEMPTS by a lawyers' organisation to block the conversion of a historic Yangon colonial-era building into a five-star hotel continued yesterday as Myanmar Lawyers' Network submitted a petition to sue the chief minister of Yangon Region government, Myanmar Investment Commission and two private companies.

Advocate U Soe Tint Yi told *The Myanmar Times* that his organisation was preparing case files for a submission to the high court this month or next month.

The network first filed with the court in November 2013 and then again in November 2014, but the court rejected the plea without giving a reason.

"The court should have told me what the reason for rejecting the case was. We will hold a press conference before the third submission," said U Soe Tint Yi.

Advocates U Than Tin, U Kye Myint and U Ohn Maung lodged complaints against Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, former head of the Myanmar Investment Commission U Zeyar Aung and two private Myanmar-owned companies, Flying Tiger Engineering and Prime Residence, over the proposed hotel.

Flying Tiger won a tender in 2012 to turn the Small Claims Court on Strand Road into a five-star hotel. The company has agreed with the government on the payment of US\$14.4 million for a 70-year lease and 7 percent of the income as annual rent.

The plan is controversial because of the historic importance of the court building, which is one of a number of colonial buildings in Yangon that have suffered varying degrees of neglect.

Flying Tiger said it has submitted a conservation management plan to the non-profit Yangon Heritage Trust for review. Managing director U Thung Htike Min said yesterday that Flying Tiger had commissioned a Hong Kong-based company, Purcell, to draft a conservation management plan, and that renovation was 80 percent complete.

"We are working with the government and MIC, and have no reason to be alarmed at this legal action," he said.

Flying Tiger expects to open the 200-room hotel next year.

'Extinct' songbird rediscovered in Yangon

AYE SAPAY PHYU

ayephyu2006@gmail.com

CONSERVATIONISTS have rediscovered a small songbird in Myanmar that for decades was presumed to be extinct.

Jerdon's babbler (*Chrysomma alirostre*) was last spotted in July 1941, Wildlife Conservation Society said in a March 6 statement.

Birders rediscovered the babbler in May 2014 while surveying remaining patches of grassland along the Ayeyarwady River and its tributaries. At an abandoned agricultural station in Udo, Yangon Region, the scientists heard what they thought could be the babbler's distinctive call. A team from the conservation society and the National University of Singapore coaxed one of the babblers out from the reeds by playing a recording of the bird's call, according to an announcement of the finding in the latest issue of *Birding Asia*.

Over the next 48 hours, the team found more Jerdon's babblers at several locations in the immediate vicinity and managed to obtain blood samples and high-quality photographs.

The small brown bird, about the size of a house sparrow, was initially



The Jerdon's babbler was rediscovered in rural Yangon Region in May 2014 – more than 70 years after it was last spotted. Photo: Supplied/WCS

described in 1862 by British naturalist TC Jerdon, who made the discovery in grassy plains near Thayetmyo in Magwe Region.

At the beginning of the 20th

century, the species was common in the vast natural grassland that once covered the Ayeyarwady and Sit-taung river floodplains. Since then, agriculture development has erased

most of the grasslands.

"The degradation of these vast grasslands had led many to consider this subspecies of Jerdon's babbler extinct," said Colin Poole, director of WCS's Regional Conservation Hub in Singapore. "This discovery not only proves that the species still exists in Myanmar but that the habitat can still be found as well. Future work is needed to identify remaining pockets of natural grassland and develop systems for local communities to conserve and benefit from them."

The Jerdon's babbler in Myanmar is currently considered one of three subspecies from the Indus, Bhramaputra and Ayeyarwady river basins in South Asia. But since the rediscovery, scientists are analysing the Myanmar babblers' blood samples to determine whether the bird should be reclassified as a distinct species.

"Our sound recordings indicate that there may be pronounced bio-acoustic differences between the Myanmar subspecies and those further west," said assistant professor Frank Rheindt of NUS.

Myanmar is already home to 1114 known bird species, more than any other country in mainland Southeast Asia.

Ministry orders name change for new prisoners committee

Members left confused by government decision to rename committee after its disbanded predecessor



YE MON

yeemontun2013@gmail.com

THE government has changed the name of a political prisoner-related committee that activists have described as a sham.

The 27-member Prisoners of Conscience Affairs Committee was formed by the President's Office on January 5 to free people jailed for their opinions or political activity.

It replaced the Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee, which was disbanded after bringing about the release of 354 prisoners.

But committee member U Sit Myaing, the vice chair of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, said the Ministry of Home Affairs has now written to the committee instructing it to again use the

name Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee.

U Sit Myaing said the letter had not given any reason for the change.

"The letter mentioned only to change the name," he said. "The list of members of the committee has not changed."

U Zaw Htay, a director in the President's Office, said yesterday he was unaware of the name change and had heard nothing about the

'I think if they changed the name, the purpose [of the committee] will also have changed.'

U Ye Aung

Former Political Prisoners Society

committee's activities since it was formed.

Former political prisoners who sit on the committee said they were concerned at the lack of transparency over the name change and the body's role.

Member U Ye Aung from the Former Political Prisoners Society said he was considering quitting the committee.

"I'm very disappointed at the government," he said. "I really want to know why they changed the name. I think if they changed the name, the purpose will also have changed."

"The head of the committee should call a meeting as soon as possible and the government should release all remaining political prisoners."

Another member, Sai Nyunt Lwin from the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, said he thought the committee was just to appease the international community, and the government had no intention of

releasing political prisoners.

"Political prisoners will be free when the government releases them. The government is ignoring the political prisoners issue. The head of the committee has not even called a meeting yet," he said.

The committee is chaired by Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun, a deputy minister for home affairs. Two members of the Remaining Political Prisoner Scrutiny Committee who regularly criticised the government's handling of the political prisoner issue, U Bo Kyi of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners and U Nyo Tun of the Former Political Prisoners Society, were not reselected.

The government insists it freed all political prisoners by the end of 2013 and any who remain behind bars are imprisoned for criminal offences. However, according to the AAPP there were 159 political prisoners incarcerated at the end of January, with another 213 activists on trial for political actions.



Vacancy Notice (VN No. 2015/002)

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Govt seeks approval for \$40m loan to equip police

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein has asked parliament to approve a 246 million yuan (US\$39.27 million) loan from China's Exim Bank to pay for vehicles and water craft for the Myanmar Police Force.

The president sent a formal message to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann on March 5 outlining the terms of the loan, which will be repayable over 20 years at an interest rate of 4.5 percent, with a five-year deferment period. Myanmar will also have to pay fees and charges totalling 0.8pc.

The president said the loan would help the police force ensure national security, rule of law and stability.

MPs are expected to discuss the request this week. Yangon Region Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Phone

Myint Aung said the message did not state whether the loan was in cash or kind. Officials from the ministries of home affairs or finance are likely to clarify questions from MPs, he said.

Under the 2008 constitution, the government must get parliamentary approval for international loans.

Late last month MPs approved a \$300 million loan from Exim Bank to the Ministry of Cooperatives to support poverty alleviation and rural development programs. However, the Exim loan was only approved after lengthy debate in parliament, with MPs questioning why the interest rate was higher than for other loans extended to Myanmar by international partners. – *Htoo Thant, translation by Thiri Min Htun*

Views

Gender equality: the fight continues

Myanmar has made progress toward closing the gap between men and women, but much work still needs to be done

TWENTY years ago, gender equality advocates worldwide were euphoric. In 1995, 189 countries endorsed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which held out the promise for gender equality and women's rights. Myanmar was among those countries.

Myanmar also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its 2008 constitution guarantees gender equality and women's rights, and Myanmar's National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-22 is well aligned with the Beijing Platform for Action.

Myanmar has made impressive gains on gender and equality. The overall labour force participation rates for women have increased. Women's non-agricultural wage employment has grown, reaching 44.7 percent in 2010, with little difference between urban and rural areas. Women's participation in government and public administration as a proportion of staff and in middle management positions has increased slowly since 2004-5. Women have benefited from skills training and small loans from the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, business loans from the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association, and microfinance, microcredit and savings groups. In 2010, there were more than 5100 self-reliance groups, each with about 10-15 women.

Greater access to health services, social protection, poverty alleviation and rural development are now national priorities, with laws and schemes in place to ensure this. Far-reaching measures include maternity and paternity benefits, and medical care for children up to one year of age under the Social Security Law 2013; the maternal voucher scheme; cash transfers to mothers with three or more children; scholarships, stipends, awards and school food programs; and relief food assistance programs and services for survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence.

A law to prevent and punish violence against women is almost ready.



An elderly resident of Pauk township, Magwe Region, smokes a cigar in her home. Photo: Yu Yu

This is pivotal for gender equality and women's empowerment. Added to this, investments in sexual and reproductive health services have increased. Of course, these services will only support reproductive health and rights, and women's empowerment if they are provided on a voluntary basis, are of appropriate quality and widely accessible.

Progress notwithstanding, women bear the primary and in many cases the sole responsibility for unpaid care work, in addition to their paid jobs. The non-recognition of women's unpaid care work as work, in Myanmar and elsewhere, and the poor status assigned to it, leads not only to inequalities in resource allocations within the household, but also underpins existing inequalities in public paid employment. These include gendered occupational segmentation

JANET JACKSON
JEAN D'CUNHA
newsroom@mmtimes.com

in women-oriented sectors, such as teaching, that reinforces women's traditional nurturing role and women's greater concentration in the informal sector.

Gender wage gaps continue to prevail. In government jobs, women are rarely more senior than mid-management positions – the director, deputy director and assistant director levels. Women's representation in the legislature is the lowest in ASEAN.

This inequality between women and men across all facets of their lives is too often manifested in gender-based violence. The threat of violence against women in families and communities constrains women's full enjoyment of their rights. It also

hinders poverty reduction efforts and has inter-generational consequences. Addressing the causes and impacts is an imperative for gender inequality, women's empowerment, and national development, peace and security.

Eliminating discrimination and accelerating the achievement of gender equality is a human rights

Gender wage gaps continue to prevail. In government jobs, women are rarely more senior than mid-management.

obligation for all. It is also a precondition for ensuring that women contribute to and benefit equitably from economic growth. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has found that restricting job opportunities for women costs the Asia-Pacific region up to US\$46 billion a year, with 45pc of women outside the labour market.

In recent years, the corporate world has been emphasising principles of inclusiveness and diversity as important to growth and development. When women are excluded from management positions, managers are, on average, less skilled, which reduces the pace of innovation and technology adoption.

When women earn an income, they reinvest 90pc of it on their families, while men invest only 30-40pc. Data from countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Mexico, South Africa and the United Kingdom shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, changes expenditure patterns on food, health and education that benefit children.

Cash transfer programs in Brazil and Mexico show higher retention rates in school, improved health and girls in particular securing better employment than their mothers. In India, a woman's higher earned income increases her children's years of schooling.

These are lessons that Myanmar needs to learn from as it strives to transition from least-developed country status to a middle-income country.

This International Women's Day gives us all another opportunity to reaffirm the importance of ending discrimination against women, and recognise that inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, geographic location and income are indefensible.

Janet Jackson is the representative of the UNFPA, and Jean D'Cunha is senior gender adviser to the resident coordinator in Myanmar.

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The Myanmar Times is proud to present a special four-page section focusing on reform and reconciliation. The extra weekly feature will appear each Monday in March.

ON March 30, 2011, the first elected civilian representatives to take office in Myanmar in half a century swore an oath to, among other duties, “strive for further flourishing [of] the eternal principles of justice, liberty and equality”. Their words signalled that, from then on, discussion and debate would pave the way for change and growth. Since then, an unprecedented era

of development has arrived in the country, of the kind few in 2011 – or 2007, or 1988, or 1962 – could have imagined. It would not be an understatement to call the transition period a second Independence for Myanmar. Over the past four years, the joy of freedom has brought impatience for more; at the same time, new challenges have arisen over where to go from here. Some hurdles have been handled well;

others not so well. Held back by endemic poverty, ongoing conflicts and numerous other limitations, Myanmar democracy remains, at best, a work in progress. But it is progressing. That’s why, coinciding with the daily launch of the only privately run English-language newspaper, *The Myanmar Times* would like to state for the record its view that the transition process – now begun – must remain

irrevocable and irreversible. Whether in peace talks, government, business, NGOs, or the arts – and even in the religious, civic or domestic spheres – we all, as a parliament of peers, must hold ourselves to the same oath, working for “justice, liberty and equality” for all. Anything less is simply unacceptable in the new Myanmar.

– Staff



Vacant seats, vacant hopes?

LUN MIN MANG
lunmin.lm@gmail.com

VOTERS in parts of the country without representation in parliament remain to be convinced of the virtues of democracy, a study has found. There are 20 seats in the national and regional parliaments that have never been filled, leaving their constituencies without representation. Mostly these are in areas of conflict between the government and ethnic armed groups. One practical result of the lack of an MP is that constituents miss out on the distribution of development funds.

Last month, the Health Information System Working Group (HISWG) released a report called *The Long Road to Recovery*, which highlights the need for basic healthcare in eastern Myanmar, mainly in Shan, Kayah, Mon and Kayah states. It compared the situation there to some of the world’s worst conflict-ridden regions.

Since the 2012 by-election, eight constituencies in Pyithu Hluttaw and 12 in state and regional parliaments have remained unrepresented.

Alongside their legislative functions, hluttaws participate in development programs in the regions and states, in particular by allocating the K100 million earmarked for the development of each township in a program launched last year.

Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Hla Swe said a township’s development can depend on the effectiveness of its representation. “Some constituencies or townships, even if they have representatives, they may not be working toward their development,” he said. “A working township administrative authority is better than a non-working representative.”

MP U Hla Swe added, “A working representative and a township administrative body will help more developed areas at both

the Union and the local levels.”

A by-election scheduled for the end of last year to elect representatives for the vacant constituencies was cancelled by the Union Election Commission (UEC).

One of the empty seats, Hpakant, has long been affected by armed conflict despite, or perhaps because of, the presence of gems and jade. Local resident Ko Ah Yaw said the area was developing economically, with the installation of basic infrastructure like hospitals and schools. “But we feel our town should be more developed and more secure,” he said. “We have never had electricity. What difference would having a representative in hluttaw make?”

The Long Road to Recovery said the national infant mortality rate was among the worst in the region, at about 41 deaths per 1000 live births. In eastern Myanmar, however, the rate was more than double, at 94.2 per 1000 live births

– a figure common to disaster-struck or conflict-ridden nations, the report said.

Local residents seem more concerned with the day-to-day struggle to make a living than the niceties of the election campaign. “Public interest in politics is very low. Some people said they have never seen their representative. Electoral education is important,” said U Thant Sin of the New Myanmar Foundation.

The government elected in 2011 comprises a parliament, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, composed of an upper and lower house, the Amyotha Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw. In the Amyotha Hluttaw, also known as House of Nationalities, 168 of the 224 seats are slated for directly elected representatives, while the remaining 56 (25pc) are occupied by army representatives. In the Pyithu Hluttaw, or House of Representatives, 330 of the 440 seats (75pc) are allocated to elected representatives and the remaining 110 seats are filled by officers selected by the army Commander-in-Chief.

The 168 seats in Amyotha Hluttaw that are filled by election comprise 12 seats for each of the seven states and the seven regions. Pyithu Hluttaw members represent Myanmar’s 330 townships.

However, a number of constituencies remain unrepresented. In areas affected by prolonged conflict, or in which an MP have died, or areas in which elected MPs have been raised to ministerial positions, no MPs sit. A 2014 by-election to fill such slots was cancelled by the Union Election Commission, but not by invoking a clause which allows cancellation by natural disaster or conflict – as done in 2010 and 2012 – but due to official UEC claims that filling the 35 seats then vacant at the Union and state/region level would cost over K2 billion, with “no telling whether the spending would benefit the country”.

In his monthly radio address to the nation on March 1, President U Thein Sein, called a recent pledge for national reconciliation “our government’s proof of the seriousness of our commitment that conflicts must be solved through dialogue and coordination”.

“UNION Day is the day on which national leader Bogyoke Aung San, political leaders and ethnic group leaders signed a historic agreement for the emergence of a Union in which all national races, all cultures, live equally in the world. We celebrate that day as Union Day and have been holding ceremonies every year in different forms.

“This 68th anniversary of Union Day is more significant than other years and full of meaning. The reason is that leaders of the government, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the Myanmar Election Commission, political parties, Tatmadaw representatives and ethnic armed groups, and some other leaders were able to sign a pledge for national reconciliation.

“Some leaders of national races had advised me of the need to have firm promises from the national races in order not to undermine peace, to lessen anxieties regarding the peace process and not to reduce people’s hopes due to the deep and fine nature of the local peace process. I have seriously considered the leaders’ ideas and tried to get the signatures of pledges. This signing means the pledge of all the leaders involved in the peace process, that the important steps such as coordination on the final nationwide ceasefire agreement, the drawing of political dialogue frameworks and the starting of political dialogue as soon as possible in 2015 will be carried out with transparency, responsibility and accountability.

“We need to accept that Myanmar’s present peace process is not at a complete and sufficient stage. I myself have signed with the good will that the opportunities and certainties that came out of challenges and difficulties need to be firmly implemented. Another reason for signing is a reiteration or a confirmation for the continued survival of the peace process, trust building and the success of the process. In other words, it is our government’s proof of the seriousness of our commitment that conflicts must be solved through dialogue and coordination. The meeting between the Union-level Peace Implementation Working Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team to be held in March is under way.

“National days and ceremonies of the national races were held in February. The ability to recommence their national days decently with their traditional characters should be viewed as a political development.”

– Translation by Myo Lwin



MPs file out after a session of parliament. Over 30 constituencies currently lack representatives at the Union or state/region level, due to death, ministerial promotion or ongoing conflict, with some areas yet to be represented at all since the parliamentary age began in 2011. Photo: Staff



U Zaw Naing
Taxi driver, Tarmwe township

OKAY, I am not going to talk about the changes in government or the ruling system. I will just tell you what changes I have seen around me. I see that now everyone has a mobile phone, even a trishaw driver. In the past, you could say that anyone who has a phone is rich, because as you know phones were, back then, really expensive. Another thing I see is that cars have proliferated exponentially in a few years, which is partly responsible for the traffic congestions we are experiencing today.

Other than these changes, nothing has had more impact on my life. On one hand, I now have a phone which has made life so much easier. But on the other hand, the multitudinous cars on the roads have given me nothing but frustration and a thought that I should stop being a taxi driver. I have been driving a taxi for almost a decade. Frankly speaking, it is now very hard to earn as much money as you could years ago.

The unexpected change? Well, when I was young, until about age 20 or 35, there was no such thing as religious conflicts in this country. There might be some minor frictions but there weren’t any violent killings. My opinion is that as long as a person is living in this country, he is a Myanmar, no matter whether he is a Buddhist or a Muslim.



U Thein Lwin
Tea shop owner, Thingangyun township

I DO not feel any significant difference. There was a change in ruler but not among the ruled. That’s my opinion. I agree that this government has brought changes like making mobile phones accessible to the general population, but this is something very trivial compared to the many problems our country is having today. There are still many people who are trapped in the mesh of poverty. Civil wars are going on and no one is sure if there is really going to be a ceasefire agreement.

To talk about the impact the transition has had on me, there is hardly any. I live here. I work here. I don’t go out much. But I now have a phone which I find very useful.

Our country had always been insular. Now it is opening up. Obama has paid a historic visit and the Norwegian king gave a speech here. Who would have expected these things?

– Nay Zaw Aung Win



Coming home

Min Zaw Oo used to fight with arms. Now he talks for peace

SANDAR LWIN

sdsandarlwin@gmail.com

DURING 20 years of exile, he campaigned for economic sanctions against his own government. He scaled the academic heights of America, and talked to Sri Lanka's terrorist Tamil Tigers about the possibility of bombing his own country to save it for democracy. From the Myanmar-Thai border to the cloisters of Georgetown University to wartime Afghanistan, he travelled the world.

Then, in 2012, he came home. Now director of ceasefire negotiation and implementation at the Myanmar Peace Center, U Min Zaw Oo works closely with his former enemies in the Tatmadaw. Sitting across a desk, not a battlefield, he spends his days trying to stamp out the remaining embers of Myanmar's long-burning conflicts.

When 1988's bloody clashes between soldiers and students roused his strong sense of justice, he, a just-matriculated student, became an opponent of the military regime, though admittedly without understanding of the workings of any political system.

To save him from himself – and the possible consequences of his work with the All Burma Federation of Student Unions – his parents sent him to Singapore to study computer science after matriculation.

But like his grandfather before him, Min Zaw Oo had wanted to apply to the Defence Services Academy. While the 1988 fallout made that unappealing, the call to arms nonetheless proved too strong to resist.

After a year in Singapore, he joined the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (Southern Wing). He then took up arms against the Tatmadaw along the Thai-Myanmar border, where he spent four years. When asked what pushed a large number of students underground concurrently, without a central guiding leadership to order them to do so, he answered it was not political sentiment but the inspiration of history.

"One of the strongest influences on many of us students at that time was General Aung San and his Thirty Comrades. They secretly went to Japan, underwent military training, returned to their country and won independence. Their example inspired our imagination – about going underground and

training, returning under arms, and toppling the dictators," he said.

The decision made him and his own comrades shut off their sentimentality, he said.

"We never discussed our parents. Not because we didn't miss them, but because we feared a weakening of will if we started to think in that direction. Nor did we think of our future, our personal ambitions. It was a spontaneous agreement among us."

In 1997, as the Tatmadaw pressed hard against the ABSDF camps, applications for a scholarship awarded by the United States Information Services to Myanmar rebel youth were making the rounds. There were now two options to pursue, and the former was starting to seem hopeless.



Photo: Thiri Lu

"We thought we could win through guerrilla tactics. But you need materiel, supplies. What do you do if three enemy columns are advancing on you, and you have barely 100 bullets?"

Military reality forced him to revise his approach. As it happened, that was when he was offered a scholarship by the United States Information Services. Within months U Min Zaw Oo was at America's George Mason University, studying for a bachelor degree, then a master's in conflict resolution.

While a world away from home, he never forgot where he came from – or why he had left. He kept his ABSDF uniform hung behind the door of his room and, working odd jobs, sent money back to those fighting on the border.

The experience expanded his thinking about the conflict, however, until it was no longer "us against them". He started seeing his once-faceless opponents as individuals.

"Studying conflict resolution encouraged me to try to understand the other side, not just my own. What is their motivation? What are their worries? I began to think more broadly," said Min Zaw Oo.

After graduating with his master's, he returned to the Myanmar-Thai border. But then came a dark incident which set back hopes for many who wished to see national-level negotiations between the military government and the opposition led by NLD's Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

While briefly free from house arrest and touring the country, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her followers were blockaded by an angry mob for several hours at Tabayin, Sagaing Region, also known as Depayin. At least 70 people were killed when

the mob attacked, and popular sentiment afterward said it had been a government-backed threat which could easily have escalated into assassination.

U Min Zaw Oo said the incident forced him to re-evaluate the military's capacity for peaceful change – and his own.

"We met with a guy from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, from Sri Lanka. He asked us, 'How many child suicide bombers have you trained?' We said, 'None.' He asked, 'How many millions of dollars can you raise?' We were satisfied with about US\$20,000 a month. They were raising \$400 million a year.

"What he taught us was that to do armed revolution or terrorism effectively needs resources. Morale alone is not enough."

After Depayin, other veterans of the struggle, including exiled activists, paused to take stock of the country's democratisation and

opposition movement as a whole. The same year, on August 30, General Khin Nyunt released the "Roadmap to Discipline-flourishing Democracy", popularly known as the seven-step roadmap.

"We found that our opposition movement was weak in strategic leadership. We saw that our approach would not lead to a democratic transition," said U Min Zaw Oo. "We decided to seek a strategy to reach the destinations sketched out in the government's road map."

That meant going back into the country and working from within.

In 2006, while in America, U Min Zaw Oo was contacted by activists – including U Ne Win Maung, the late chair of the NGO Egress; and U Tin Maung Than – looking to reach out to students in exile. And he continued to study. "I took another master's in security studies at Georgetown University simultaneously with a PhD in conflict resolution at George Mason. I wanted to understand the military's point of view on national security," he said.

At first, some of his old comrades accused him of betrayal for wanting to return, causing an estrangement. But U Min Zaw Oo said there was no choice.

"Their way had not produced results. We were looking at how to produce results in line with our principles," he said.

While studying, he made his living by writing analyses of some Asian and African countries, including Myanmar, for the American military. His studies complete, in 2010 he moved to Afghanistan to earn money to fund his return home.

"My work in Afghanistan was to research and analyse the sentiments and needs of the Afghan people. After about two years, I joined a USAID project to research elections."

He also met with Union Minister U Aung Min on the Thai-Myanmar border in 2011 and demanded to continue his work on political reform and freedom of speech.

"We found out that there are those who can understand returnees like us – determined reformers in the government," he said.

He returned in October 2012. The president granted a mandate to the Myanmar Peace Centre on October 26, and U Aung Min asked U Min

MORE ON PAGE 11



When an NLD rally in Pyay marking the centenary of Bogyoke Aung San's birth on March 1 included staged recreations of military abuses carried out against protesters in 1988, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi told the crowd it was neither the time nor the place.

"THERE were some entertainment programs I liked and some I didn't like. I liked the first part in which they sang in honour of my father. This is appropriate for the birthday of my father. However, I need to say clearly and boldly that I don't like the second part of the program. Even though people clapped their hands and gave applause, we must not do things we should not do. The mishaps of the past which could create discord among ourselves should not be revealed at a time when we are doing national reconciliation. This we must understand.

"We do not see the Tatmadaw as enemies. We will reject not only the Tatmadaw but any organisation which will do illegal things and things that are harmful to the country. We can't tolerate this in any way. But we cannot continue on our future path with these prejudices again. Now is the time we are reconciling with the Tatmadaw.

"This country has not gained democracy fully. It is because Tatmadaw has been given special powers in the Constitution. We will try to change this law within the legal framework. Why we are trying to change it within the legal framework is because we don't want the country to be harmful. We don't want the people to be harmful as my father had always said.

"I will say another thing as leader of the National League for Democracy. This is not a time in which we have the right to campaign for the election. So, the latter program which had election campaigning is a matter we should not do. I would like to apologise. The Election Commission will fix [the time] we have the right to campaign for the election. We can campaign for votes from a date if the Election Commission fixes a date. We want to win in the election. But we want to win the right way. We don't want to win in whatever way.

"Because of what I have said, those who had exerted efforts in the entertainment program will feel a little bit sorry. But we must face the mistake. It is necessary to be able to avoid repeating mistakes. – Translation by Myo Lwin

Place of no return

Why one former soldier left – and what needs to happen before he will come back



KHIN SU WAI

jasminekhin@gmail.com

THOUGH the government of President U Thein Sein has invited back exiles who left the country during the former military regime, not all have accepted the offer. One who has stayed away is a former Tatmadaw sergeant, U Myint Wai. Now deputy director of the Bangkok-based Thai Allied Committee with Desegregated Burma Foundation, he also runs the Dear Burma Sunday School for Myanmar migrant workers.

How did you come to be in Bangkok and why did you start the Dear Burma school?

I fled Myanmar after the regime killed the students and protesters in 1988. I

finished my BA in Economics through distance learning. When I was still with the Tatmadaw, I used to teach the soldiers' children, and so after I fled I became a teacher, working with a Sunday school on the border. I joined my present organisation because they were looking for someone who could deal with both Myanmar and Thai people, and who had no political background. I got to Bangkok in 1992. The Dear Burma Sunday School opened in 2003 after a long struggle.

How did you come to be working with Myanmar migrant workers?

Our foundation developed projects with the aim of making contact both with ordinary Myanmar citizens and with political groups. At that time, Myanmar migrant workers started to flood into Thailand. I remember a terrible accident involving a bus that caught fire, leaving passengers with serious burns. I found that many Myanmar people wanted to

get involved with politics, working with the grassroots.

What is your opinion on the Bengali/Rohingya issue?

A case occurred in Thailand involving a group of 78 Bengalis calling themselves Rohingya and asking for refugee status. We tried to intervene on their behalf, but the Thai government would not allow us to. They put them in prison, and unfortunately, three of them died. Then 28 of them produced their passports and told the Thai government they were from Bangladesh. We repatriated them. The Myanmar government should handle this issue decisively. Different governments have different ways of dealing with this problem, whether it's Australia, Thailand or Myanmar.

What's your view of the 2015 election?

It's good to see that all voters have

the chance to make their views known and vote for the candidate of their choice. This will look good to the international community even if there is fraud and if electoral standards are lower than they should be. The civil society organisations will have to be active and alert. I believe the Myanmar people are ready for reform, despite issues like the student protests and the fighting at Laukkai.

Myanmar has changed so much since you left. Would you ever return?

Definitely. I would never go to a third country, even though sponsors have offered me the chance. But I've made my decision. I come from a military background, and going to a third country would create problems for me. If there was an amnesty, I would return home for sure. But first they would have to abolish the military tribunals dealing with rebels and deserters.



Solving conflict in the 21st century

Min Ba Htoo explains how history has brought forth a new model of conflict resolution

IT is difficult to forgive. It is even more difficult to reconcile. But both are essential for the livelihood and peacefulness of everyone, abroad and in Myanmar. Forgiveness can give much-needed help that allows people to continue leading a happy life and leave behind anger, hatred and mental trauma caused by past marginalisation. The trauma will grow bigger if we pretend it does not exist. It is a sociological dream to expect it to disappear gradually by itself.

In his book *No future without forgiveness*, Bishop Desmond Tutu urges South Africans to have the ability to forgive. And if we look back to the beginning of civilisation, we will find that people have forgiven a lot. If there was no forgiveness, there would not be a single person roaming this earth. Today we are witnessing the development of collective forgiveness under the leadership of Truth Commissions, not only in South Africa but also in countries like Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Honduras, Rwanda and Uruguay. How were people in these countries able to forgive?

One explanation attributes this development to changes in international systems. Cross-border military hostilities have decreased, following the end of cold wars, while communal conflicts are on the rise instead. In some countries, these communal conflicts are especially cruel, and the casualties high. Religious and ethnic minorities are normally the ones who suffer more hardship and discrimination.

In response, leaders of some developed countries have made statements of apology or forgiveness for injustices committed in the past, either to calm rising political incitements or because their own ethical beliefs drove them to do so. Consider US President Reagan's apology and compensation payments for the temporary restraints on Japanese Americans during the Second World War; Israeli Prime Minister Barak's apology to non-European migrants who suffered injustices under previous government; and compensation programs for local indigenous minorities in Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

In January 2015, marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Japan's minister for foreign affairs gave a speech in New Delhi, India. The speech stated that Japan had deeply pondered its actions during the Second World War, and that its past action drove them to increase aid and support for Asian development in response.

Some say we are now entering a new age of ethical enlightenment. Others say the righteousness ideology of the Cold War era is failing; or that Western powers and the United Nations are thinking more about the value of the ethics than before. Whatever it is, in the past pretending, hiding and deception were thought of as strategic skills. But no more – today, apologising and forgiving are necessary in response to political incitements. Political leaders need to conduct themselves in step with this new age.

Until recently, conflict solving has been simply considered a method to stop competitions between societies. If the conflict could be stopped, competitors would not wish to do more than settle the arguments. In other words, they would not want to go further and actually pursue forgiveness and reconciliation. Conflict-solving concepts developed only within a limited framework.

In the 1990s, however, with new forms of conflict approaching, conflicts that were not always win-lose situations, the potential emerged for cooperative results in which each society could obtain better results. The early years of the 21st century have shown this to be so. Conflict solving reduces unreasonable ambitions and establishes new scenarios.

As we seek to solve sensitive conflicts in Myanmar, including armed conflicts and ethnic conflicts, whether we go forward with the 20th-century definition or the 21st-century definition depends on the people in this nation, including those in positions of authority.

– Translation by Myo Lwin and Kyawt Dar Li Lynn



Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

What is reconciliation?

In this exclusively translated extract from his book *Pyan-Le-Yin-Gyar-Sait-Ye Hnit Myanmar Naing Ngan Ye Atnay Amyin* (Reconciliation and political views), Min Ba Htoo – a former Union minister writing under a pen name – tackles diversity via democracy

THOUGH it is true that diversity leads to conflict, we shouldn't remove or shun diversity to avoid conflict. Democracy does not allow this. Instead, it teaches us to expose, recognise and handle diversity – this is how conflict management proceeds. Arguments, disputes, disagreements, negotiations and collaborations all feature in the process. Those who have different opinions and opposite views must be allowed to coexist to avoid further breakouts of violence.

Two main factors must be followed in adopting a democratic way forward. There must be a fair way to solve, by peaceful means, the problems which have separated our society. Moreover, there must be a relationship that can work properly among stakeholders in the peace-making process. Such good relationships can bring about reconciliation.

When opposing groups in a post-conflict society seek to reach a settlement, they have to agree to replace a new government system. Generally, the new government system is usually in line with the criteria of democracy. Past enemies have to collaborate in facing challenges under the new

government system they have agreed to adopt. The biggest problem they face in doing so is relationships being worsened, and grudges, distrust, disrespect and hatred suffered from past violence erupting again.

It is important to be able to handle pessimistic relationships properly in that period. It shouldn't be expected that old enemies will love each other. It is necessary, though, to have the appearance of mutual trust, which is the bedrock of collaboration and interdependence.

How can it appear? It is necessary to review aggressively the past and bad relationships caused by it, and it is also necessary to accept the real situation today. Reconciliation is not pretending not to remember the past, or avoiding it. It means accepting the hurt and trying to heal it. Those who admit their offence need to dare to admit it. Meanwhile, those who need to forgive others need to dare to forgive them. Trust can't be built by doing superficial give-and-take.

There is one important fact for trust building. It needs to be built by all people concerned, not only among the minority of politicians

and those who are directly settling problems. Good relationships concern not only politicians, leaders and representatives but also society.

The whole society needs to step toward a collaborative relationship based on mutual respect, away from the hostile relationships that happened in past violence or wars. If not, even the world's best democratic government system, with the highest-quality democratic standards, can't survive in this country. In seeking to develop a democratic culture, the main key is to have an honest democratic system of relationships.

Democratic reforms can succeed only when reconciliation can be made in all political, military, economy and social sectors. Democracy and reconciliation are interdependent. Both must be carried out in the interests of all people. They shouldn't be for the interest of any party, group or a person. If not, the reconciliation process, which is immense – equal to the number of individuals in the entire population – cannot be completed. Reconciliation comprises searching for truth and justice, forgiving and healing mental hurt. It is a process blanketing the whole social fabric

of a society.

No old enemies can be forced to love each other, to forgive each offence and to forget their past. But they are all urged to coexist, to collaborate and to share with each other for the sake of society. Reconciliation is building a new relationship to be adopted in synchronisation with the political process. It is not easy to do and it can't be completed instantly. An effective reconciliation process must give a guarantee not to resume violence. Each side needs to know other side's requirements, fears and eagernesses. Increasing mutual respect and collaborative practices is the best protection against backsliding.

What is reconciliation, then? We can call it a process of stepping toward the future of a society which was discriminated against in the past. The process must be long-term. We can't set a timeframe or formula; the case is profound and vast. All people in society must change stance, willingness, feelings and beliefs. That's why reconciliation involves not just those who give trouble and suffer trouble, but the whole society.

– Translation by Thiri Min Htun



Ma Htaike Htaike Aung
Program director, Myanmar ICT for Development Organisation (MIDO)

AFTER 2011, when the new government came in, everything was changing. The government was signing every kind of memorandum of understanding, MOU, and making many commitments, so there were some positive changes regarding our ICT sector. Of course the most significant change is the liberalisation of the markets. We were hoping that with new technologies and communications available, people would be given much more space to amplify their works.

Apart from infrastructure changes, the liberalisation of the telecoms market, we've found policies related specifically to technology and the internet haven't changed much at all – I think because people are not really concerned about what effect it could have on them, and because there are a lot of urgent issues [around] peace and civic rights.

There was once the amending of the Electronic Transactions Law that has been infamous for putting political activists behind bars. But they just amended some

of the charges, not the bigger scope of why people should be put behind bars.

So regarding that sector, parliament maybe doesn't have much capacity, or maybe they don't have enough resources to do it. But in the terms of this policy, we don't see any big, significant changes.

Some people said the government is actually creating fake spaces for people to speak up and practise democracy. On the other side, we think we could use these opportunities and try to find space – for example, this internet and this ICT space – and then make of it the best use possible.

Unlike before, civil society groups and human rights groups are now allowed to work more openly. Previously, for some meetings and workshops we had to maybe go to Bangkok or Chiang Mai, or do it by a very underground method. But now it's happening online. Protests and people can come out. These events are allowed. But then, the actions and then the follow-up are

not really taken by the government.

You know, the other side, the anti-side, the people who are kind of inciting violence in the country, are actually using that space already, to influence and speak out. But then on the other side, the civil society side, they are kind of lacking skills to actually take advantage of it. So I think that's also very really important, that civil society should try to step into that space and really make good use of it. Good people are needed to step in more and believe in that space and use it to amplify their works too.

Many people say the space is there, the government is allowing it, but then whenever something concerns the government's pockets – like money – there comes the violence. There come the past, you know, like the ghosts of Christmas past. So we don't know whether we can actually practise real democracy with that given space.

– Catherine Trautwein



The party line

The Myanmar Times speaks to political parties about the issues they face

National League for Democracy

Established: 1988
Hluttaw seats: 6 (Amyotha), 38 (Pyithu)
U Win Myint, secretary

RESPONSIBLE persons need to have true wish to bring about reconciliation, said U Win Myint, secretary of the National League for Democracy and member of the Rule of Law and Stability Committee. In an exclusive interview with *The Myanmar Times*, he said practical measures, not just talks, are necessary to form what he called a "democracy culture".

"To bring about internal peace, it is necessary to be fair and have equal rights. Moreover, goodwill must be commensurate with the real situation. National reconciliation can be achieved only when do they implement peace process practically with real wishes," U Win Myint said.

'There must be a democracy culture in the national reconciliation process.'

"One side can't say only they are fair and just. It can be achieved when authorities actually create a situation that people can accept and comply with."

He said that since the party formed in 1988, it has set three policies: general compatibility without grudges; national reconciliation; and adoption of political reform peacefully and smoothly.

He added that rather than only

via a good relationship between the government and ethnic armed groups, national reconciliation can appear only when people from all social strata are on good terms.

"Internal peace depends on rule of law. It requires equal rights. Peace will appear if all people behave in accord with *lawka pala taja* [deterrent principles of shame and fear]," he said.

"Seeking solutions from a meeting among officials and state leaders is really necessary to settle conflicts," he said, mentioning party leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's push for four-party talks.

"If all responsible officials cooperate, national reconciliation will be implemented."

U Win Myint said that although it is the time of peace process, the government faces a number of other problems: tensions, armed groups, labour turmoil and national education issues. He said such issue can be exacerbated by manipulators seeking to foment discord in the state.

"If government is in unity, the public must follow with them. There must be a democracy culture in the national reconciliation process. If true democracy can displayed in front of the public, they must follow too. And also there is a need to coordinate and discuss between government and opposition groups," said U Win Myint.

He defined "democracy culture" as all issues being tackled by coordination and discussion rather than by violence.

- Hsu Hlaing Htun, translation by Thiri Min Tun and Mya Kay Khine

National Democratic Force

Formed: 2010
Hluttaw seats: 4 (Amyotha), 8 (Pyithu)
U Khin Maung Swe, party chair

"NATIONAL reconciliation is a very important matter. Myanmar has never reached the stage of being a peaceful nation once, though it has been independent for so many years. Without national reconciliation, it will be difficult to carry out future nation-building and national development tasks.

Ceasefire things were done in 1994. But it became void when local development was not implemented in reality and trust was lost. So, it is important to build political trust if we are to have national reconciliation.

When building trust, national reconciliation will be reached if all stakeholders firmly stand with one single view; that is, to build for the interest of the nation and its people. Is local peace to be attained just between the government and that armed group? Is it to be attained with all the people? Why peace could not be attained before is because of lack of political trust and then an inability to reach national reconciliation.

How could we go there? Fulfilling the political needs that have been included in the civil war process is the main thing. Fighting has occurred only after going underground, going into the jungle, and it was due to the inability to solve things politically. So, it is necessary to adopt bold political guarantees and solutions to solve things politically in order to stop the fighting. If the

promises are attained that these issues will be solved between the government and armed groups for the interest of the country and the people, then we can say we get political trust.

We need to pass through political dialogues in order to get this political trust. Ceasefire agreements must be signed. Local developments must be implemented practically. Distribution and use of resources must be carried out as much as possible. And then the administrative power of the regions and states need to be relaxed to a certain extent and these powers need to be shared [to lower levels]. Political guarantees

'Fighting ... was due to the inability to solve things politically.'

that we are going toward the federal democratic nation must be given. The other side needs to give promises that they will not separate from the Union.

If the National Democratic Front becomes the winning party in the 2015 general election and can form a government, we will do peace first. We will do peace and unity and regional development

first in the states and regions. Since we want to go toward democracy, equal rights, the right to create our own destiny, use of resources to be shared by percentage will be applied. For example, three shares - one share for central government; one share for states and regions; and one share for the regions where developments have been late. If so, it will be beneficial for long-term interest.

There will be more job opportunities if factories with foreign investments will emerge in states and regions if there is a resource-sharing mechanism in the states and regions. There will be taxes. There will be resource-sharing. If there is equal administrative power under a federal system according to the Union of Myanmar, people's social sufferings will be reduced. Then the middle class will be bigger and the rich-poor gap will be narrowed. Only then we can expect democracy. Until then it is not possible to give liberal democracy in which people are getting the highest individual rights. Only after fulfilling such social issues like healthcare, education, job opportunities and elimination of poverty can we turn toward democracy. Only after going three or four decades, there is a possibility of getting to a better situation - a liberal democracy system that other Western countries have been practising.

- Mya Kay Khine, translation by Myo Lwin

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Zaw Oo to aid the government's peacebuilding team.

U Min Zaw Oo saw that without peace, democratisation could not succeed, and that peace required a national reconciliation movement. He felt the government-led peace initiative could be steered to becoming a focal movement for national reconciliation - including with opposition parties.

He first served as a shuttle negotiator between the government and armed groups to bring them to the dialogue table. He now analyses all parties' sentiments for the organisations involved, providing technical support to the stakeholders designing the peace process.

The criticisms and bitter taunts of "collaborator" have not ceased, but U Min Zaw Oo is undeterred.

"We have progressed along the path of democratic reform, and reform activities have accelerated and gathered strength. As long as I can continue along that path, my conscience is clear."

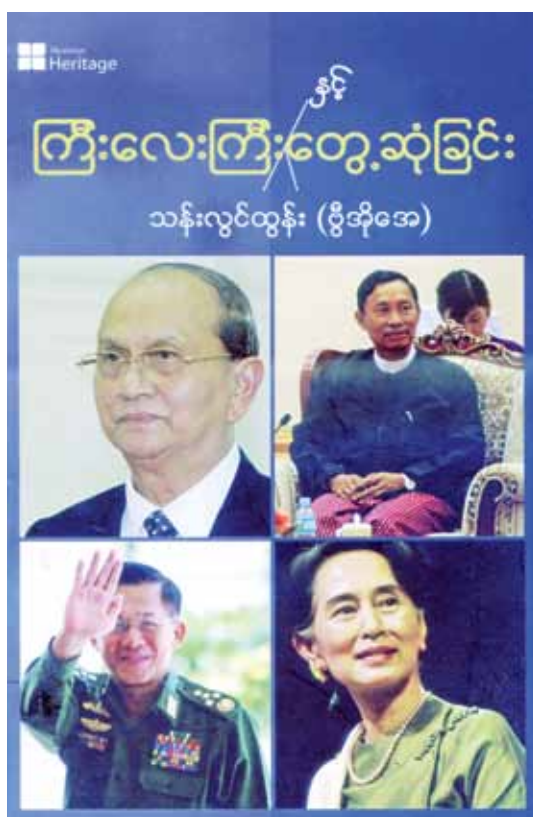
Asked how others at the bargaining table see things, he said they are still fighting - not for more power but for the people, and for relevancy in a changed world.

"According to the 2008 constitution, the government comprises the executive branch, parliament and military. The former generals now in government can't return to the military. Their future depends on what they do in the newly developed political arena. The transition to democracy has become a matter of political survival for them."

Book Review

Kyee-Lay-Kyee Hnit Twai Sone Chin (Meeting with the big four)

Interviews by U Than Lwin Tun
Myanmar Heritage Publishing House
December 2014



THOSE interested in current politics - and able to read Myanmar - will want to look at this compilation of interviews with president U Thein Sein; Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann; Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing; and chair of the National League for Democracy Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The interviews were conducted separately on November 20-23 in Nay Pyi Taw by the VOA's U Than Lwin Tun. The questions and answers are all direct transcriptions, so you get the complete discussion and unedited thoughts.

This 81-page book gives lots of food for thought on how the four most influential people in the country see the situation of Myanmar and its 51 million people. For example, here are their takes on constitution amendment - one of many hot-button issues of this 2015 election year.

President U Thein Sein says discussing the country's affairs with only four parties - as requested by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi - will not be comprehensive enough,

and that hluttaw is the most responsible organisation for amending the 2008 constitution.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann says amendments to the constitution will be ratified in the newly elected hluttaw which will be formed in early 2016 following November's general election, as changes to section 59(f) are being discussed in the hluttaw, paving the way to a potential Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presidential nod - but not until after this election.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said the Tatmadaw stands on the side of no constitution amendments, and that despite the 5 million who signed a petition, which was circulated by the NLD and 88 Generation, to amend the constitution, the wishes of the majority need to be considered also.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said she will try to coordinate efforts despite difficulties amending section 436. She says we need courage if changes are to be done swiftly.

In all, the book is an accessible, first-person insight into current politics.

- Myo Lwin

Business

Yangon Stock Exchange

Interest welcomed as consultant role draws most applications



KO KO
AUNG

pmkokoang@gmail.com

CONSULTANCY licences were the hot draw among the four licence classes for service providers on the Yangon Stock Exchange, according to deputy finance minister Dr Maung Maung Thein.

A total of 57 applications were received by deadline on March 6 for underwriters, brokers, dealers and consulting companies, he said in a speech on March 7.

Over 180 companies had purchased applications, though 57 were eventually turned in. Of those, 30 were for consulting companies, 20 were for underwriters, 5 for brokers and 2 for dealers.

'Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore stock exchanges keep asking about our condition.'

Maung Maung Thein
Deputy finance minister

Consulting companies are also required to contribute the smallest amount of capital - K30 million (US\$29,000) - if they are successful. Underwriters are required to have much larger capital of K15 billion, while dealers will need to have K10 billion and brokers must have K7 billion.

Many of the guidelines governing

the activities open to these four types of service providers are still being developed by officials.

U Maung Maung Thein, who is also chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar, said he was pleased to see 57 companies apply, adding interest in Myanmar's stock exchange is picking up among Myanmar people.

"Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore stock exchanges keep asking about our condition," he said. "They are also very interested in the exchange."

The Yangon Stock Exchange is scheduled to launch in October this year. It is 51 percent owned by state-run Myanma Economic Bank, 30.25pc by Daiwa Institute of Research and 18.75pc by Japan Exchange Group.

February 27 had been the initial deadline for submission of applications, though it was pushed back one week to March 6. The winners are expected to be announced in mid-April.

Local firms, and joint ventures with a majority-local component, were allowed to submit bids.

There are over 200 public companies in Myanmar, though only a handful are thought to be capable of meeting the as-yet-unfinished listing requirements.

So far, FMI, Asia Green Development Bank and MAPCO have all declared their intention to list, though some are thought to be more prepared than others.

Daiwa Securities Company managing director Tsutomu Matsuno said because it is still early days for the stock exchange, the listed companies must be carefully chosen.

"They must not be too risky. Buyers must take a cautious first step in choosing listed companies if they want to buy shares," he said in a speech on March 7.

The Securities and Exchange Law was passed in July 2013, and related by-laws and follow-up regulations are still being developed.

Taking stock of future market potential

THE Yangon Stock Exchange is slated to open later this year, but there is much to do until then. Applications for service providers were due on March 6, one step in many that needs to be completed before the exchange can launch. *The Myanmar Times'* Jeremy Mullins met with Dr Maung Maung Thein, deputy finance minister and chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar, on March 7 to discuss the road ahead for the YSX.

In the first place, why start a stock exchange? Isn't it a little early for Myanmar to have an exchange?

That is a question often asked to me by so many critics. Actually it's late. We have started late. All our neighbouring countries have their own stock exchange.

You might know the facts that there are 198 countries in the world. Out of 198 countries, only nine countries do not have stock exchanges. Out of the nine countries only three are traditional countries, they have a long history. The other six countries, are just island states, very small, very tiny.

So out of nine, three have a long tradition. Out of three, Myanmar is one of the countries. North Korea is another. Another is Brunei. Brunei is now trying to start a stock exchange. So why do you raise this question that we are very early to start a stock exchange? Our country has been an independent country for 67 years. Up until now we don't have stock exchange. So I think the question whether it is too early for a stock exchange is ridiculous.

What about examples like Cambodia and Laos, where the stock exchange opened and nobody really showed up?

It depends on the country's economic conditions. So Cambodia has a stock exchange, Laos has a stock exchange, but the size of the stock exchanges and the size of the economies are very small compared to Myanmar.

Myanmar's economy has great potential. This is not said by me. This is said by a McKinsey report. That is why we believe we are not going to be like Cambodia or Laos, because economically speaking they are not comparable to us, they are small. We have great potential.

According to the McKinsey report, our economy will be four times greater in 2020. That means they made research in 2010. At that time our GDP was in the region of US\$40 billion or so. But 10 years later our GDP will be more than \$200 billion. It is not said by me, it is said by a McKinsey report.

Nobody questions that the economy has lots of potential, but people are worried there are not enough companies to list.

That is a very wrong statement. Because we have now in a very short time over 200 public companies. Not all of them are qualified enough to be listed, but out of 200 we now have qualified companies in the region of 10. That is [the] failsafe. Because you know very well some of our public companies have been selling their shares for so many years.

For example First Private Bank has sold their shares for 20 years. They are doing very well. Same with FMI and other public companies.

And if we describe the criteria for public companies, all of our public companies will make themselves meet that criteria. In this way they will become qualified companies.



U Maung Maung Thein.
Photo: Shwegu Thitsar

The stock exchange is opening in about six months. Is that enough time?

The stock exchange is not a one-year or two-years business. Look at New York Stock Exchange. It is now over 200 years old. We can start with five companies, 10 companies, no problem, this is just the beginning. Later on, there will be more qualified companies and the stock market will be more developed.

Can you talk about the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar? Who heads the SECM, who sits on it and how is it composed?

The SECM is chaired by me, and we have six members, composed of various experienced staff, and the most important thing is we have technical assistance from Japan's Ministry of Finance.

Is it the SECM that will be evaluating the underwriter, broker, dealer, consultant bids? Can you elaborate? How many bids were received?

We have called for applications for four kinds of licences. They are all service providers. The first is underwriter licence. The second is dealer. The third is dealer. The fourth is advisory licence.

The last day for the application was [March 6]. So far we have received 57 applications. Out of 57, we received 20 applications for underwriter, two for dealers, five for brokers and 30 for advisory. That's a very good number to start with.

Do you know how many will eventually receive licences?

We cannot say for sure. We have to scrutinise their applications. Those who are well qualified will be chosen.

Can you talk about foreigners and what role they can play? Can foreigners buy stocks or be

an underwriter on the YSX?

We allow joint ventures in service provider licences - underwriters, brokers, dealers and advisory.

Why not allow foreigners [fully] into the exchange?

It's very clear. If we allow 100pc foreigners, there will be no place for our locals. That is why we just allow joint ventures to work together with foreigners and to learn. When our people get enough knowledge we will allow foreigners.

From the opposite point of view, [for listing companies] don't foreigners really have the expertise and the capital that could really help the exchange especially in the early years?

For listing companies we have a strategy. First we will allow only local companies to be listed. Later on if our company law has been changed we will allow [foreign-local] joint ventures. And later on third stage will be state-owned economic enterprises. We will corporatise them and list them in the stock exchange.

This is a few years away. Currently we could not allow [foreign-local] joint venture companies to be listed because our company law does not allow it so we are trying to rewrite the company law.

The timing seems a little strange. Why do it [open the exchange] at the end of 2015, the same time as the election?

We want to [get something started], that is why. If possible I was appointed as deputy minister in the year 2012. I wanted to start it in the year 2012, but that is not possible, it takes time. At least four years to start the stock exchange. That is why 2015 we targeted as the year to start the stock exchange, because the stock exchange cannot be started overnight. It took four years.

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Mon State poultry farmers move to counter bird flu

BUSINESS 14



Chinese property buyers in Portugal get raw deal in visa contest

BUSINESS 16

Exchange Rates (March 8 close)		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1138	K1156
Malaysia Ringitt	K307	K308
Singapore Dollar	K755	K765
Thai Baht	K31	K32
US Dollar	K1045	K1049

Budget deficit concerns grow

SU PHYO WIN



suphyo1990@gmail.com

CONCERN is growing over a jump in the 2015-16 budget deficit, as lower gas exports and higher expenditures, including a civil servant wage hike, have combined to increase the forecast deficit to above a 5 percent-of-GDP target.

Speaking at an ActionAid-organised seminar held at business association UMFCI on March 6, some experts said the rate by which expenditures are outpacing revenue is dangerous.

“Although Pyidaungsu Hluttaw patron U Khin Aung Myint announced during a parliamentary session that the budget deficit should not rise about 5pc of GDP, now it is over,” said U Zaw Pe Win, a panellist at the seminar and principal of the Human Development Institute.

The 2013-14 budget deficit was about 4pc of GDP, without considering any supplementary budget, though U Zaw Pe Win said it could hit above 5pc this year.

“I think it is most likely this deficit will not be fixed,” he said. U Zaw Pe Win added the budget should be carefully managed and any deficit spending should be properly used.

There is less room for large national expenditures compared due to weak tax collection efforts.

U Phyo Min Thein, a member of the Pyithu Hluttaw's Banks and Monetary Development Affairs Committee, said tax revenue equals only about 8.11pc of GDP, compared with above 10pc for every other ASEAN member country.

“It shows the system of checks and balances is too weak,” he said. “Tax payments should be scrutinised, and there should be opposition party officials serving on the Public Accounts Committee

rather than just the ruling party, so they can point what is missing.”

“At present, although there are more than 400 pages of audit objections, no one is taking action,” he said. U Phyo Min Thein added the deficit could be 5.22pc this year.

Another member of the panel discussion said that the government's handling of the budget indicates its approach to governing in general. Many of the assembled experts called for more transparency in the budgeting process.

U Zaw Pe Win said the 2014-15 fiscal year budget deficit was officially announced as K2.7 trillion, later raised by another K1 trillion. Of this extra spending, 32pc went to defence, 7pc to health and 2pc to education.

Budget plans have stayed the same after four years of the civilian government, with budget deficits becoming a kind of tradition, he said.

“Why always the deficit? Is it a tradition?” he said.

“The highest tax rates are only 25pc, but some taxpayers are making billions in profits.”

U Zaw Pe Win added that there had been past attempts to increase top tax rates to 98pc for the highest earners.

An IMF statement released following a February staff visit to the country noted that the prioritising spending and increasing tax revenues is imperative to containing the deficit within authorities' 5pc target.

In particular, care needs to be taken on public sector wages, it said.

“The large proposed increase in public sector wage bill could crowd out the much needed increases in health, education and infrastructure that are essential for increasing Myanmar's growth potential. To mitigate this risk, the government will need to increase its efforts to broaden the tax base, improve tax compliance and minimise exemptions,” it said. “Wage increases in the public sector should be in line with revenue and productivity growth.”



A man takes a snap of the view from the GEMS Garden Condominium project. Photo: Thiri Lu

First two GEMS towers finished

NOE NOE AUNG
noenoeag@gmail.com

TWO of the structures are now completed at GEMS Garden Condominium, according to company officials.

The development, started in 2013 by Capital Development Limited, a subsidiary of the Capital Diamond Star Group conglomerate, is now waiting on its Building Completion Certificate from Yangon City Development Committee before residents can move in.

Capital Development managing

director U Tin Maung Win said the last two towers currently being built are due to be finished by the end of 2015.

The firm has announced it is allowing customers to pay in different installment sizes for units in the second set of towers.

U Tin Maung Win said there is increasing amounts of construction and development on property outside of Yangon's downtown areas.

“Yangon's population is getting larger, particularly in the north around 9 Mile,” he said.

“I believe our project will be a

significant one.”

The four 21-storey towers include a total of 584 apartments.

The towers are the first phase of the Capital City project, which is envisioned to eventually include a large shopping mall, high-quality residences and office towers on 12 acres of land.

U Tin Maung Win said the fact that the first two towers are 100pc complete indicates the firm is one that can be trusted.

Capital Diamond Star Group is one of the country's largest firms, helmed by U Ko Ko Gyi.

Yangon jetties open with more in the works

SHWEGU THITSAR
khaingsabainyein@gmail.com

THREE new jetties have been completed in Yangon harbour so far in 2015, along a slew of more projects planned.

The three, built by Myanma Industrial Port, Myat Myitta Mon and Annawa, were finished, while 10 more are under construction, said Myanma Port Authority chief engineer U Mya Than.

The other 10 are being built by army-owned Myanma Economic Corporation, Myanma Port Authority, and private companies including Asia World, Shwe Nar Wha, Shwe Taung Max Myanmar.

Myanma Port Authority alone is working on 5 jetties facilitated by a 30-year low-interest loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency, said U Mya Than.

He added the interest rate is 0.01 percent.

A number of other jetties are also being built on plots at Thilawa Port, southeast of Yangon. A total of 20 companies are participating in the build, he said.

3

Number of new jetties that have opened this year in Yangon, with about 10 more being worked on

Thilawa is closer to the Andaman Sea along the Yangon River and so better-able to land large international container ships and oil tankers.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

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Mon State to prevent bird flu outbreak



Mon State farmers are trying to prevent the spread of bird flu. Photo: Staff

NAW SAY PHAW WAA
newsroom@mmmtimes.com

POULTRY farmers in Mon State were called to an urgent meeting on March 6 to discuss measures to prevent the spread of the deadly H5N1 bird flu to the state. The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department called the distributors in after an avian flu outbreak in Monywa, Sagaing Region, led to the death of hundreds of thousands of diseased birds.

About 15 people, representing the four big poultry distributors in Mawlamyine, attended the meeting. Each owner has more than 10,000 chickens.

Dr Chit Thein, Mawlamyine township chief officer, said after the meeting, "The best way to prevent infection is get all the distributors from

this area together and provide guidelines to prevent further infection in Mon State." Outbreaks of H5N1 also occurred in 2006 and 2011.

He said the authorities had advised poultry dealers to go to the markets with municipal experts to inspect the birds on sale, and to apply pesticide on their farms.

U Hla Than, owner of the U Noe Din family farm, told *The Myanmar Times* that some chickens had died in his area, but only because of high temperatures. "The flu is not here yet, so we are trying to prevent infection by requiring that chickens bought from outside Mon State be accompanied by a letter guaranteeing its good health. And we also isolate the runs of any culled chickens for 20 days for cleansing," he said.

Farm owner Arkar Min confirmed

that any chickens bought out-of-state would have to be guaranteed healthy by the local Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department. "That is the only way we can prevent infection from unhealthy chickens being imported to Mawlamyine," he said.

The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development has confirmed the deaths of chickens and quail in Monywa because of bird flu. As of March 1, about 250,000 birds had been destroyed there.

The chief officer of Mawlamyine Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Dr Ni Ni Maw, told the meeting that everyone shared a responsibility to prevent infection because the flu was dangerous not only to birds, but also to humans, who had not yet been infected in an H5N1 outbreak in Myanmar.

MPPE pledges crackdown on weak petrol stations

AUNG SHIN
koshumgtha@gmail.com

MYANMA Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPE) will take serious actions against private petrol stations with sub-standard quality, according to its managing director U Thant Zin.

Six mobile testing laboratories were imported last year. While they have been put to limited use already, so far petrol stations failing tests have only received warnings, he said.

"We are checking privately owned petrol stations with the mobile labs, but it has been limited because of a number of reasons. Some private stations are taking the opportunity to continue their usual way of doing business," he said.

U Thant Zin said he pledged to crack down on poor quality or devious stations.

"We will terminate licences for distributors and importers, temporarily or permanently, if we find poor quality at stations and storage facilities," he said.

MPPE will both conduct random checks with the mobile lab and send fuel samples to the Ministry of Energy's stationary laboratory, and also expand searches to both fuel stations and privately owned wholesale storage facilities.

However, MPPE officials said it is not yet able to provide detailed information, such as the number of times it tested fuel this year or the previous year.

MPPE Yangon Region official U

Tin Naing Soe said the rate of inspections has increased this year compared to last, even though in neither year has MPPE taken action.

The mobile labs can check every type of fuel commonly sold at stations, including premium and diesel - but can only visit three or four stations a day.

Taxi driver U Maung said MPPE should regularly check stations. He added taxi drivers normally do not complain about stations they suspect of not conducting business properly, instead simply avoiding them.

1462

Number of petrol stations in the country, according to Ministry of Energy

"I am currently facing the problem of poor quality petrol," he said.

Private import of petrol products was first allowed in 2010, the same year that nearly all state-owned petrol stations were privatised.

As of last count, there were 1462 privately owned petrol stations in the country, including 115 in Yangon alone.

There are also 6 private storage facilities and 15 vessels permitted to import petroleum products, according to figures from the Ministry of Energy released last month.

IN BRIEF

Telenor tries temporary towers

Telenor used temporary mobile towers for a March 1 to 4 festival in Magwe Region in a first for the company.

The towers set up at Shwe Set Taw pagoda provided coverage for the festival in area where its permanent towers have not yet been set up.

"We want to serve as many people, as best as we can, wherever they are in Myanmar," said Telenor Myanmar CEO Petter Furberg.

It plans to deploy the temporary towers a second time in Bago Region later this month.

Subscribers said that while they appreciated the effort, it should be expanded to cover more unserved areas.

U Min Min Soe, a Telenor user, was forced to switch to MPT when visiting Kyaiktiyo Pagoda on Peasant's Day.

"Telenor Myanmar should provide service with temporary towers before permanent towers are built in rural areas," he said. - *Aung Kyaw Nyunt*

Two international exhibitions are coming at convention centre

Myanmar Convention Centre will host two exhibitions from March 12 to 14, the second FoodBev exhibition and Myanmar HoReCa (hotel, restaurant and catering) 2015.

The exhibitions will include about 100 brands from countries including Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Germany and Myanmar. Products will be displayed for a number of goods, including food and beverage.

"The exhibition will be very beneficial for visitors," said Myanmar Food Processors and Exports Association president U Zaw Min Win. "It will include shows, competitions and demonstrations for everybody interested in food, so I hope it will be a success."

- *Ei Ei Thu*

TANINTHARYI REGION

Tougher to impress with CSR



AUNG SHIN

koshumgtha@gmail.com

IT is becoming more difficult to organise Corporate Social Responsibility projects, according to officials from French energy giant Total.

The firm has been operating in the country for over 20 years, notably the offshore Yadana gas field, which is largest in the country.

Companies like Total are keen on the positive brand perceptions built by CSR activities, while Myanmar has promoted CSR spending because of the benefits it brings to local communities.

Total has chosen to work particularly in the Kanbawk area of Tanintharyi Region, the landing point for its offshore gas that is being exported to Thailand.

"In the past, the challenges in Kanbawk were infrastructure and security issues," said Daw Swe Swe Win, head of Total E&P Myanmar's CSR Department.

"Now the infrastructure has been developed as we've done a lot of construction in the area. Today the challenge is organising people - young people are impatient and quick to complain rather than waiting for long-term benefits from the project."

In Kanbawk, Total has focused on CSR in several areas including education, health, construction, agriculture, microfinance and renewable energy. The company has 60 permanent CSR



Young people take in the launch of Total's 58th school. Photo: Aung Shin

staff for its Yadana CSR programs, with spending of US\$17 million from 2010 to October 2014 in CSR spending, according to a statement from the Ministry of Energy.

While the efforts have doubtlessly raised living standards in the Kanbawk area, success breeds its own challenges.

Daw Swe Swe Win said there is also sometimes an expectation that Total will provide a solution if people complain enough.

It can also be challenging to differentiate companies in the public mind.

For instance, negative perceptions from the conflict near Letpadaung copper mines, far to the north in Magwe Region, have affected other resource extraction companies.

The Myanmar Times visited a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new school in Mayanchaung village, Yayphyu township with Total last week. The school cost K33.4 million (\$32,000) and joins 57 others it has already built. It also runs initiatives such as a local microcredit project called Yadana Subuu.

Total spends \$1.5 million each year

for CSR projects both in the Kanbawk area and nationwide.

Total's Kanbawk program leader Marie-Alix du Laz said local companies complete all the construction work and the program is managed by a community-based committee.

It is also ramping up its business in the longer term. It has purchased a 44 percent stake in offshore block M-11, which belongs with PTTEP, as well as signing its production sharing contract with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise for deepwater block YWB.

BRIEFS

China budget deficit balloons

China's budget deficit this year will be higher than previously declared as the government boosts fiscal spending in a bid to bolster economic growth, the finance minister said on March 6.

Premier Li Keqiang said on March 5 in his "work report" to the National People's Congress (NPC), the country's Communist-controlled parliament, that the deficit would amount to 2.3 percent of gross domestic product, up from 2.1pc in 2014.

But Lou Jiwei said on March 6 that a further 200 billion yuan (US\$31.9 billion) of planned spending was excluded from the original calculation for technical reasons, and incorporating it brought the deficit to around 2.7pc of GDP. That ratio is higher than that of the US, though the actual US deficit is far larger, as its economy remains around double the size of China's.

Apple supplier plans Japan factory

Apple supplier Japan Display said on March 6 it would spend US\$1.4 billion on a new smartphone and tablet screen factory, in a move that may be a response to growing demand from the US iPhone maker.

The plant, which is expected to produce 25,000 sheets of liquid crystal displays (LCD) a month, will be constructed in the central Japanese city of Hakusan at a cost of 170 billion yen (US\$1.4 billion), the company said.

The plant, which would boost Japan Display's screen production by about 20 percent, is expected to start operating next year, it said in a statement.

American trade deficit shrinks

The US trade deficit fell to US\$41.8 billion in January from December as imports declined more than exports, the Commerce Department said on March 6.

The trade gap narrowed from a revised December reading of \$45.6 billion, previously estimated at \$46.6 billion. The January number was slightly less than analysts expected.

Imports of goods and services fell 3.9 percent to \$231.2 billion, mainly due to a fall in imported goods led by industrial supplies and consumer goods. Petroleum imports fell as oil prices drop and the US pumps out high levels of crude, boosted by shale-oil and hydraulic fracturing production.

EU launches stimulus

In what may be its best and last chance to stimulate growth and ward off deflation across the eurozone, the European Central Bank will today launch its long-awaited 1.1 trillion euro (US\$1.2 trillion) quantitative easing program.

The kickoff was announced on March 5 by ECB President Mario Draghi, who confirmed the eurozone central bank will begin its program of buying around 60 billion euros of public and private bonds each month starting March 9 – a policy it will apply at least until September 2016.

The move comes as traditional efforts to boost sluggish economic activity in the 19-nation eurozone have been exhausted through rate cuts that have brought borrowing costs to nearly zero. – AFP

Cheap pharma arrives in US

Americans are poised to gain access to cheaper therapies for serious ailments from cancer to arthritis with the March 6 approval of the first biosimilar in the US, Novartis' version of Amgen's Neupogen.

For years, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies have manufactured and sold expensive, complex medicines that have no less-expensive alternatives – unlike cheap generic copies of pills that become available when their patents run out.

Thanks to a 2010 law, that's now changing. On March 6, the Food and Drug Administration cleared the first imitation of a bioengineered drug, which Novartis will call Zarxio, according to a statement from the agency.

– Bloomberg

MUMBAI

Zoning change for more houses

MUMBAI is seeking to amend its 24-year-old building rules that allowed slums to mushroom and kept housing beyond the reach of most of its 19 million residents.

The island-city, which has little land available for development, is proposing changes to its Floor Space Index regulations that may permit developers to tear down old structures and build taller towers. This may be good news for companies including Oberoi Realty, Sunteck Realty, Peninsula Land and Godrej Properties, according to Edelweiss Financial Services.

The plan for the world's second-most densely populated megacity after Dhaka is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Housing for All' program, which seeks to build 20 million homes across India by 2022 to help eliminate urban slums and squalor. In theory, the move should increase the supply of apartments, cut property prices and help India's financial capital emulate wealthy peers including New York and Shanghai.

"This is the only way to solve the perennial housing shortage in this city, where most are living in pigeon-hole-size apartments," said Vyomesh Shah, managing director of Hubtown, a Mumbai-based developer.



Rooftop diners against a backdrop of Mumbai. Photo: Bloomberg

The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai has proposed to increase the Floor Space Index, or FSI, to range between 2 and 8, compared with an earlier cap of 1.33. The FSI determines the maximum floor area allowed in a building relative to the land on which it is erected.

When the index was first introduced in Mumbai in 1964, it was set at 4.5, meaning a building on a 1 acre (0.4 hectare) plot of land, a little smaller than a football field, liv-

ing space totaling 196,000 square feet could be built. Policy makers lowered that number in 1991 to 1.33 times, a move contrary to what most cities with limited land have tended to do – raise the permitted FSI to accommodate growth, as in Manhattan, Singapore, Hong Kong and some Chinese cities. The proposed change will allow for variable building heights depending on location, consumption patterns and logistics.

Historically, FSI has been used as a tool to limit congestion in Mumbai, said Aashiesh Agarwaal, an analyst at Edelweiss Securities. Under the new plan, it is designed primarily to be a tool to manage physical development by laying out uniform rules, where locations with good public transport connectivity will get a higher FSI, he said.

"They seek to address key lacunae impacting Mumbai's real estate sector," Mr Agarwaal said. "They are a step in the right direction and positive for developers with strong governance, brand and execution capabilities."

Allowing taller towers on smaller land parcels may lead to a break down of the already creaky infrastructure in the island city, said Gulam Zia, Mumbai-based executive director at Knight Frank LLP.

"The city has grown haphazardly like wild grass and now if you let it expand vertically without putting necessary infrastructure in place, it won't serve anybody," he said.

The Mumbai metropolitan region needs US\$60 billion of investment in public transportation over the next 20 years and the current plan falls short of needs, according to estimates by McKinsey & Co.

– Bloomberg

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LISBON

Chinese buyers in Portugal get burned

BILLBOARDS in Chinese at Lisbon's international airport peddling luxury properties leave little doubt about who is buying real estate in Portugal.

While the ads offer a chance at securing a so-called golden visa to live in Portugal in exchange for property investments of at least 500,000 euros (US\$559,000), they leave out the golden rule of such purchases: Never rush into a deal.

The haste with which some Chinese buyers have acquired their piece of Portugal has left them feeling cheated once they realise they might have struck better deals. Some may even have been victims of middlemen who charge commissions of as much as a quarter of the value of the transaction.

"Many Chinese land in Portugal for the first time, don't speak the language and buy a home in a matter of days," said Y Ping Chow, head of the Chinese League in Portugal, a Lisbon-based group that promotes the Chinese community. "Some of these investors got burned."

Portugal cannot afford to leave a sour taste in the mouth of Chinese investors. The golden visa program, which began in late 2012 while the country, like much of Europe, was in the throes of the financial crisis, has raked in more than 1 billion euros in much-needed investment, mainly from Chinese property buyers, according to the country's foreign ministry.

The Chinese accounted for more than 80 percent of the 1526 resident permits issued under the program last year, according to the ministry. Home prices in Portugal rose 1.2pc in 2014 after seven straight years of declines, Confidencial Imobiliario, a company that collects property-market data, said in an email.

To ensure foreign investors continue buying property in the country through the golden visa program, the govern-



Chinese buyers have flocked to Portugal, where large investments can result in EU citizenship. Photo: Bloomberg

ment announced plans on February 23 to tighten controls over the issuance of resident permits, including a closer monitoring of real estate prices. That came after a probe into allegations of corruption, influence peddling and money laundering linked to the golden visas led to 11 detentions.

"The aim is to improve this program," Vice Premier Paulo Portas said at a press conference in Lisbon. "There are 13 other EU countries with similar investor programs and it doesn't seem wise to give up this program to the benefit of others."

Keeping the program going will mean convincing potential property buyers that they won't meet the fate of Hua Guiping.

Ms Hua, 47, flew from Shanghai to Lisbon in 2013. Less than a week after

her arrival, she agreed to buy a home for 500,000 euros before moving to Portugal with her husband and daughter.

Bracketed by an interpreter on one side and a real estate agent on the other, Ms Hua visited dozens of homes in two days before agreeing to buy a house at The Arrabida Resort and Golf Academy, about 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of Lisbon.

"While none of the houses that I visited pleased me, the seller insisted the price was very low and that in two years it would rise to 1 million euros," Ms Hua said in an emailed statement. "I agreed to buy the house and returned to China feeling happy because I thought I had made an excellent deal."

A few months later, while browsing the internet, Ms Hua learned that some of the homes in the same resort were on

sale online for less than half the price she had paid.

"I saw that houses in the same area were valued at 210,000 euros to 250,000 euros while my home was sold for more than twice that value," said Hua. "I'm truly upset by all this."

Several online real estate listings show prices for similar three-bedroom properties in the same resort ranging from 220,000 euros to 515,000 euros.

Pelicano-Investimento Imobiliario, the company that owned the house Ms Hua agreed to buy, denies that it sold the property at above-market prices.

Some properties are being sold at lower prices because they have been repossessed by banks or belong to individuals looking to repay debts, Pelicano said in a statement on February 10.

Sergio Martins, director-general

of the Portuguese-Chinese Business Chamber of Commerce, is aware of complaints by some Chinese of overpaying for properties in Portugal.

"This happens because some unusual mediators tend to be involved in these transactions - emigration agencies and more than one real estate agency in Portugal and China, plus lawyers and other consultancy services," Mr Martins said in an interview on February 10. "Commissions can sometimes rise to as much as 25pc of the real estate transaction."

Unlike Ms Hua, Rex Shen spent months researching home prices in Portugal before using up most of the money he saved working as a casino manager in Macau to buy two apartments almost 7000 miles (11,000 kilometres) away in the centre of Lisbon. He cut out middlemen and paid almost no commissions.

Mr Shen now works as a real estate agent in the Portuguese capital selling properties to his fellow countrymen.

"A smart Chinese investor should do the necessary research before coming to Portugal," said Mr Shen. "It's a free market and some real estate agents in Portugal are indeed selling properties at very high prices."

Demand from Chinese property buyers remains strong as China continues to allow a freer movement of funds in and out of the country.

The Chinese came "at a difficult time for Portugal, when many didn't believe that the country could face and overcome the crisis," said Antonio Costa, the mayor of Lisbon and leader of Portugal's Socialist Party. They made a "big contribution to Portugal's ability to be in the situation it's in today, very different from where we were four years ago".

Foreigners accounted for 90pc of the 730 million euros invested in Portuguese real estate last year, almost three times more than in 2013. - Bloomberg



IN PICTURES

Cambodian commuters travel across the Mekong River with their motorbikes on a ferry. The Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh has seen plenty of large-scale construction work in recent years. Photo: AFP

BEIJING

PRC pushes its trade pacts

CHINA hopes to finish negotiations on upgrading a free trade zone with ASEAN member states and another trade pact involving the ASEAN and five other economies in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a government work report delivered by Premier Li Keqiang last week.

China has sought strengthened trade relations with ASEAN members, as well as with India, Japan, South Korea and Australia in recent years.

China opened its first free trade area with ASEAN in January 2010 and is now working on an upgrade to boost trade. The world's second largest economy aims to wrap up talks for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which aims to integrate trade relations ASEAN already has with China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand, respectively.

Trade with the 10 ASEAN economies accounts for 11.16 percent of China's total trade, reaching US\$480.4 billion last year. The talks to crank up the free trade agreements, now in the second round, focus on more measures to open markets and facilitate trade.

Rising labour costs are undercutting China's edge in low-end manufacturing and enhanced trade pacts with regional partners will expand new markets for China as it struggles to move manufacturing up in the global industrial chain, said Zha Daojiong, a professor at Peking University. - Xinhua



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UNOCHA MYANMAR VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT (UNOCHA/YGN/2015/010)

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is seeking the applications from dynamic and highly motivated Myanmar nationals for the following vacancy. Detailed terms of reference/ requirements for vacancy can be requested at the UNOCHA Office. The position below is Fixed Term Appointment for 1 year with possibility of extension.

1 Humanitarian Affairs Specialist (NOC, 1 position)
Duty station: Yangon

Requirements

- A completed advanced university degree (Masters) in Social Sciences, Social Work, International relations, Political Science or related field is a must.
- Minimum five (5) years of relevant work experience, in the field of Humanitarian Affairs/International development.
- Proven record of Liaison with the Government both at National and Sub-national Level.
- Relevant experience in working with an UN agency or other humanitarian agency is desirable.
- Experience in the area of emergency preparedness, crisis/emergency relief management, humanitarian/development environment, field coordination is an asset.
- Excellent oral and written command of English and Myanmar language is required.
- Excellent liaison, interpersonal and general communications skills;
- Ability to work with minimum supervision in a multi-cultural environment.
- Coordination and Information Management skills
- Training and or capacity building skills
- Presentation skills
- Excellent command of MS Office suite applications (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint)

Candidates should clearly indicate the Vacancy Number and Post Title in their applications, and should submit them together with complete duly filled **UN-P11 form**, bio-data stating personal details, academic qualification and work experience, copies of educational credentials, and a recent passport sized photograph. Applications should be addressed to:

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Room (211), No (5), Kanbawza Street, Shwe Taung Kyar (2) Ward,
Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar (In front of Pearl Condo)
Closing Date: Monday, 20 March, 2015 (COB)
Email: wakh@un.org

Only short-listed candidates will be notified. Interviews will be competency based.



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The deadline for submission of applications is on **12 March 2015**.



LOCALS ONLY POSITION

Pact, a U.S based INGO with operations throughout Myanmar, is currently seeking an experienced and dedicated candidate for the position below.

Position Title: Communications Manager

Position Summary: The Communications Manager is responsible for providing leadership in the communications department, including supervising communications officer(s), managing the implementation of Pact's communication strategy, overseeing publicity and media relations, and the production of key publications and materials.

Requirements:

- Degree-level qualification or equivalent, Master's degree preferable
- **Minimum 5 years' experience** working in the development/humanitarian field (preferably in communications section) or in media industry
- Excellent verbal and written proficiency in English and Myanmar language
- Demonstrable experience in working with a wide range of media, preparing press releases, editing and producing publications, and managing social media platforms
- Computer literate in both Microsoft and Apple operating systems, with strong technical skills including experience with video editing, photography, and production of layouts and graphics in Adobe InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator

NB: This position is for Myanmar nationals only.

Detailed job description including requirements for the position is available at the Pact office or www.themimu.info/jobs/index.php. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Interested and qualified candidates can send their application letter, CV, one passport-sized photo and references to:

HR Officer, Pact #608 Penthouse, Bo Son Pat Condominium, Pabedan

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United Nations Nations Unies

BUREAU DE LA COORDINATION
DES AFFAIRES HUMANITAIRES

OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION
OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

UNOCHA MYANMAR VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT (UNOCHA/YGN/2015/009)

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is seeking the applications from dynamic and highly motivated Myanmar nationals for the following vacancy. Detailed terms of reference/ requirements for vacancy can be requested at the UNOCHA Office. The position below is Fixed Term Appointment for 1 year with possibility of extension.

1 Humanitarian Coordination Specialist (NOC, 1 position)
Duty station: Bhamo, Kachin State

Requirements

- A completed advanced university degree (Masters) in a relevant field is a must.
- Minimum Five (5) years of relevant work experience in a senior position, in the field of Humanitarian Affairs/ International development.
- Relevant experience in working with an UN agency or other humanitarian agency is desirable.
- Experience in the area of emergency preparedness, crisis/emergency relief management, humanitarian/development environment, field coordination is an asset.
- Understanding of key concepts and principles of UN civil-military coordination
- Experience in interagency humanitarian cross line missions
- Experience in field office management; admin and financial management
- Formal experience and or training / TOT in civil military coordination an asset
- Excellent oral and written command of English and Myanmar language is required.
- Knowledge of other local languages an asset
- Excellent liaison, interpersonal and general communications skills;
- Ability to work with minimum supervision in a multi-cultural environment.
- Ability to lead, influence and support junior staff
- Coordination and Information Management skills
- Training and or capacity building skills
- Presentation skills
- Excellent command of MS Office suite applications (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint)

Candidates should clearly indicate the Vacancy Number and Post Title in their applications, and should submit them together with complete duly filled **UN-P11 form**, bio-data stating personal details, academic qualification and work experience, copies of educational credentials, and a recent passport sized photograph. Applications should be addressed to:

Admin and HR Unit, UNOCHA Myanmar
Room (211), No (5), Kanbawza Street, Shwe Taung Kyar (2) Ward,
Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar (In front of Pearl Condo)
Closing Date: Monday, 20 March, 2015 (COB)
Email: wakh@un.org

Only short-listed candidates will be notified. Interviews will be competency based.

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BUREAU DE LA COORDINATION
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1 Humanitarian Affairs Specialist (Strategic Planning) (NOC, 1 position)
Duty station: Yangon

Requirements

- Master's Degree or equivalent in Social Sciences, International Relations, Political Sciences or related field.
- Minimum Five (5) years of relevant work experience in the field of humanitarian affairs/ International development.
- Proven experience in the area of strategic planning, drafting, particularly in analytical writing, reports writing and written communication.
- Relevant experience in working with an UN agency or other humanitarian agency is desirable.
- Excellent oral and written command of English and Myanmar language is required.
- Knowledge of other local languages an asset
- Excellent liaison, interpersonal and communications skills;
- Demonstrated research and report writing/drafting skills;
- Ability to develop clear goals, make recommendations and execute assignments in a timely way;
- Able to provide training and/or support capacity building;
- High level of political and organizational awareness;
- Ability to work with minimum supervision in a multi-cultural environment;
- Excellent command of MS Office suite applications (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint)

Candidates should clearly indicate the Vacancy Number and Post Title in their applications, and should submit them together with complete duly filled **UN-P11 form**, bio-data stating personal details, academic qualification and work experience, copies of educational credentials, and a recent passport sized photograph. Applications should be addressed to:

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World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

NEW DEHLI

Ethnic tensions high after rape lynching

POLICE in India charged 18 people yesterday after a mob of thousands last week stormed a prison and lynched a man accused of rape in the country's northeast.

Tensions remained high as officers arrested the men for rioting in Nagaland state, but it was unclear if they were directly involved in killing Syed Farid Khan, whose body was then strung up to a clock tower on March 5.

Mr Khan, 35, whom the mob and earlier the Nagland government described as being an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh, had been accused of raping a 19-year-old tribal woman multiple times.

"So far we have arrested 18 people for rioting and unlawful assembly," the Inspector General of Police, Wabang Jamir, said.

"We are now verifying if besides being part of the mob they were also directly involved in the lynching," Mr Jamir said adding images that had appeared on social media would be used to help identify those involved in the attack.

Several thousand people overpowered security at the Dimapur Central Prison searching for Khan on March 5.

Bengali-speaking Mr Khan was stripped and paraded on the streets outside, while men armed with sticks beat him to death, according to local media.

Another man was shot dead by police after the mob refused to hand over his body, while 60 people were injured in the clashes, which saw attacks on properties belonging to Bengali-speaking residents.

Hundreds of riot police have been patrolling the streets of Dimapur district since the incident, while Mr Jamir said a curfew remained in place along with mobile phone and internet restrictions.

Tensions have been rising in Dimapur since Mr Khan was arrested on February 24 for the alleged rape.

The lynching comes as India is in the midst of a raging controversy over a government order to ban the broadcast of a documentary about the December 2012 fatal gang-rape of a young student in New Delhi.

India has seen an outpouring of anger over frightening levels of violence against women since the 2012 attack,

which sparked shock both within India and around the world.

But the lynching is also linked to ethnic tensions within Nagaland, whose indigenous groups have for years accused growing numbers migrants from Bangladesh of illegally settling on their land and eating into resources.

Mr Khan's brother, who lives in neighbouring Assam state, on March 7 accused police of falsely implicating his brother in the rape to try to root out non-tribals from Nagaland.

Nagaland's indigenous tribal groups, especially the largest Naga tribe, have for years accused the growing population of Bengali-speaking Muslims from nearby Assam state and Bangladesh of illegally settling on their land and usurping resources. Nagas have previously campaigned to evict Bengali-speaking immigrants from their territory, who they claim entice local girls into marriage for getting tribal status.

Mr Khan's brother, Jamaluddin, an Indian army sergeant, accused Nagaland's government of "deliberately dubbing him as a Bangladeshi ... to justify the killing."

"The girl's medical report didn't confirm rape but still my brother was jailed and then handed over to the mob who lynched him just because he was a Bengali-speaking person," he said.

He said his brother had been living in Dimapur for 10 years, where he married a local girl and had a daughter.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said Khan had given her 5000 rupees (US\$80) after the attack in return for her silence.

"It was only after the incident, he gave me the money to keep silent, so I took the money and gave it to the police station," the woman told the NDTV network.

Police inspector general Mr Jamir said the women's initial medical report "confirmed rape and other ... injuries on her body".

Rights group Amnesty International also condemned the killing as a "serious lapse in the criminal justice system".

"The Nagaland government must ensure that every person who was part of the mob is brought to justice," said Shemeer Babu, Amnesty India's programs director. — AFP



KUALA LUMPUR

A year on and MH370 my

MALAYSIA'S prime minister said his nation remains committed to the so far fruitless hunt for flight MH370 exactly one year after it went missing, and is hopeful the plane will be found.

Najib Razak's comments yesterday came as Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott said the search in the southern Indian Ocean, which is being led by his country, could be widened if the current probe is unsuccessful.

"Together with our international partners, we have followed the little evidence that exists. Malaysia remains committed to the search, and hopeful that MH370 will be found," Mr Najib said in a statement to mark the anniversary of the plane's disappearance on March 8 last year.

The year-long hunt in the deep ocean at least 1600 kilometres (1000 miles) off Australia's west coast where the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 is believed to have crashed has so far yielded no sign of the plane.

Mr Najib's speech came as an interim report released yesterday on a major investigation into the missing flight found no red flags relating to the crew or mechanical issues and shed no new light on the cause of the disappearance.

It remains unclear whether it will contain any new information on what might have caused the aircraft to disappear after veering from its Kuala Lumpur-Beijing route with 239 passengers and crew aboard.

"No words can describe the pain the families of those on board are going through," Mr Najib said, calling the plane's disappearance "without precedent".

"The lack of answers and

definitive proof - such as aircraft wreckage - has made this more difficult to bear."

Malaysia Airlines chief executive Ahmad Jauhari Yahya told relatives of the crew on the flight that the carrier's management shares their ongoing grief.

"We remain hopeful that the search will help us find the answers that we all seek," Mr Ahmad Jauhari told staff at a remembrance ceremony in Kuala Lumpur.

"Until then, as a family, we will continue to support to each other."

Investigators still lack any trace of the jet, including the "black box" data recorders considered most likely to yield clues.

More than 40 percent of a designated 60,000-square-kilometre (23,000-square-mile) zone

believed to be the most likely location of the crash site has been scanned for wreckage using sophisticated sonar, but nothing related to MH370 has been found.

The priority search is due to conclude in May, but Mr Abbott said yesterday it could be extended further "as long as there are reasonable leads" as the next of kin needed answers.

"If we don't succeed in this search, there is another search that we intend to make," the Australian leader said in Sydney.

"We've got 60,000 square kilometres that is the subject of this search. If that's unsuccessful, there's another 60,000 square kilometres that we intend to search and, as I said, we are reasonably confident of finding the plane."



A family member of a Chinese passenger from the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 shows a poster as she leaves after a prayer session at the Yonghegong Lama temple in Beijing on March 8. Photo: AFP

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Dated: 9 March 2015

Boko Haram vows allegiance to IS

WORLD 21



Arrests in Russia over Nemtsov killing

WORLD 23

IN PICTURES

PHOTO: AFP

A heavily tattooed Buddhist devotee sits among the crowd during an annual tattoo festival, at Wat Bang Phra temple in Nakhon Chaisi west of Bangkok on March 7. Thousands of Buddhist devotees gathered at the temple for the festival celebrating traditional Sak Yant tattoos, which wearers believe will bring them good luck and protection from harm.

stery continues

Mr Abbott did not give further details about where the proposed new probe would take place.

Malaysia's Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai told AFP in an interview on Saturday that the hunt for MH370 would be sent "back to the drawing board" if the current search zone comes up empty.

He said that meant satellite and other data used to determine the suspected crash region would have to be re-examined, but he would not specify what could happen next.

Many next of kin were deeply critical of Malaysia's initial response to the crisis, saying that opportunities to intercept or track the plane were lost.

The independent investigative team was set up in the weeks after the plane's disappearance under International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) requirements.

Its report is considered only an "interim" one due to the lack of hard evidence.

The lengthy document, released yesterday, reported no findings that would cast suspicion on crew members, nor found evidence of mechanical issues that may have struck the flight.

The international team of investigators probed the captain and co-pilot's personal, psychological, and financial profiles, and also looked into the backgrounds of the 10 cabin crew.

"There were no behavioural signs of social isolation, change in habits or interest, self-neglect, drug or alcohol abuse of the Captain, First Officer and the Cabin Crew," the report said.

It said that civilian radar had tracked the plane for a short time

after it diverted on March 8 of last year, apparently contradicting earlier Malaysian statements that only its military radar had monitored the plane.

But analysts said the report mostly restated what was already known.

"There is nothing much to go on with the new report," said Gerry Soejataman, a Jakarta-based aviation consultant. "This is because there is little to analyse."

'We remain hopefully that the search will help us find the answers that we seek.'

Ahman Jauhari Yahya
Malaysia Airlines chief executive

The report was focused on air-safety issues related to MH370 and the investigators did not probe the 227 passengers or the possibility of a hijack.

The report stressed that the investigation was ongoing and that "new information that may become available may alter this information."

"The investigation team expects that further factual information will be available from the wreckage and flight recorders if the aircraft is found," it said. - AFP

MORE ON PAGE 20

SEOUL

N Korea denies US envoy attack

NORTH Korea hit out yesterday at accusations that it may be behind a shocking knife attack on the US envoy to the South, branding the claims a "vicious" smear campaign by Seoul.

Kim Ki-Jong slashed Mark Lippert with a paring knife on March 5 in an assault that left the US envoy needing 80 stitches to a deep gash on his face.

Mr Kim, 55, was immediately arrested and charged with attempted murder, and police are investigating whether he has any links to the communist North.

He has reportedly told police that he had acted alone and denied any links to the North, calling the suggestion "outrageous".

The profile painted of him - based

on past brushes with the law and his blog postings - is that of a lone assailant with strong nationalist views who saw the US as one of the main obstacles to the reunification of the divided Korean peninsula.

But Mr Kim has also visited the North seven times since 1999, and once tried to erect a memorial in Seoul to the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il after his death in 2011.

Mr Kim told police he had stabbed Mr Lippert in protest at massive US-South joint army exercises currently underway. The annual exercises are routinely slammed by the North as a practice for invasion.

Shortly after the attack, the North hailed Mr Kim's act as "just

punishment" and a valid "expression of resistance" to the US-South military drills.

But yesterday the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea (CPRK) bristled at suggestions that it might have been behind the assault, calling it an attempt to defame its leadership.

"Even the police and conservative media of South Korea joined the [South's] regime in attempting to link the case with the [North]," it said in a statement carried in English by the state-run KCNA early yesterday.

"Such moves are prompted by a vicious intention to save itself from the present awkward position ... and intensify an anti-DPRK smear campaign worldwide," the CPRK said, using the North's official title.

Last week police raided Mr Kim's house in search for evidence of his potential links to Pyongyang and found several books published in the North, a senior Seoul detective on the case said yesterday.

"We are investigating if there were any mastermind behind the attack," Kim Doo-Yeon told reporters, adding police were probing whether Mr Kim had violated the anti-communist national security laws.

The notorious laws ban unauthorised contact with the North or activities deemed to be praising Pyongyang, which technically remain at war with Seoul after the 1950-53 Korean War ended with a ceasefire instead of a peace treaty.

Offenders are subject to up to seven years of imprisonment. - AFP



US Ambassador to South Korea, Mark Lippert (right), shakes hands with Moon Jae-In South Korea's opposition leader of the New Politics Alliance for Democracy party, at a hospital in Seoul. Photo: AFP



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KUALA LUMPUR



Indian sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik creates a sand sculpture of the missing Malaysian airliner MH370 on Puri beach in eastern Odisha state, India on March 7. Photo: AFP

MH370: Some questions answered

A YEAR on, there remains no evidence to indicate what caused Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 to vanish or where it ended up, despite the most expensive search operation in history.

Here are answers to some key questions still swirling around MH370.

What is the status of the search?

Vessels scanning the sea floor for wreckage using sophisticated sonar have covered about 40 percent of a "priority search area" in the remote southern Indian Ocean spanning 60,000 square kilometres (23,000 square miles).

Nothing has been found yet apart from several shipping containers in the Australian-led operation, which is due to be completed in May. Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott said on the one-year anniversary of the disappearance that the search could be extended to another 60,000 square kilometre zone if nothing turns up by then, but offered no further details.

The stormy southern hemisphere winter is expected to begin affecting any future operations within months.

What happens if wreckage is spotted?

An immensely challenging recovery phase would begin in pitch-black depths of up to 4000 metres (13,100 feet) below the surface, potentially hampered by volcano clusters, undersea mountains, ridges and valleys.

Search coordinators, however, can draw on lessons learnt during the quest for the data recorders from the 2009 crash of Air France Flight 447 in the Atlantic Ocean.

Its black boxes were located after a difficult two-year search using submersible drones and other means. A remotely operated vehicle was eventually sent down to pluck

them from the seabed nearly 4000 metres below.

Are they looking in the right place?

That remains unclear, although search coordinators insist they are.

The crash zone was determined through analysis of signals from MH370 that were detected by a satellite, which indicated the plane's last known location as being along one of two arcs: one stretching north into Central Asia, one south into the Indian Ocean.

The northern corridor has been discounted in the belief the plane would have been spotted and most experts concur that, while the satellite data analysis is imprecise, the Indian Ocean is the best bet.

But the failure to find anything has sustained nagging doubts - particularly among the families of passengers - about whether the search is on the right track.

SQUARE KILOMETRES

60,000

Extent of current search zone

What are the main theories today on what happened?

Speculation remains focused primarily on a possible mechanical or structural failure, a hijacking or terror plot, or rogue pilot action, but still nothing has emerged to substantiate any of these scenarios.

The lack of solid information has sustained a cottage industry of conspiracy theories, with books,

documentaries and a thriving on-line debate positing a range of possibilities.

These include suggestions that the plane was commandeered to be used as a "flying bomb" headed for US military installations on the Diego Garcia atoll, and was shot down by the Americans. The United States has dismissed this.

A few months after MH370 vanished, former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad was among those subscribing to online speculation that the CIA took remote control of the US-made plane after it was commandeered by terrorists.

He added that it was possible "the plane is somewhere, maybe without [Malaysia Airlines] markings".

Writing in *New York* magazine last month, US aviation expert Jeff Wise sparked an online debate by suggesting MH370 was commandeered to a Russian facility in Kazakhstan, possibly an effort by President Vladimir Putin to intimidate the West during the Ukraine crisis, or to gain access to a certain passenger or item in the hold.

"There's no way to know. That's the thing about MH370 theory-making: It's hard to come up with a plausible motive for an act that has no apparent beneficiaries," he wrote.

Do we know everything the authorities know?

Malaysia's government and the airline have continually insisted they are hiding nothing.

But angry next of kin have railed at contradictory early statements by authorities and the carrier, and accused them of being slow to share facts or of divulging only partial information.

Tim Clark, the chief executive of Gulf airline Emirates, said in media

interviews last year he also doubted there had been full disclosure.

"I do not believe that the information held by some is on the table," he was quoted as saying.

An independent team of investigators tasked with probing the mystery released an interim report on its findings yesterday on the one-year anniversary in Kuala Lumpur, with authorities stressing its "interim" status due to the lack of hard evidence of what happened to the plane.

How rare are cases like this?

According to the Netherlands-based Aviation Safety Network, which tracks air incidents, there has been only one other recorded instance in which a plane carrying more than 100 people has disappeared without a trace.

That was in 1962, when a turbo-prop operated by US-based Flying Tiger Line and chartered by the US military disappeared en route from Guam to the Philippines with 107 people aboard. Its fate remains unknown.

What will be MH370's aviation legacy?

Unless MH370's black box or other telling wreckage is recovered, the aviation industry will be unable to determine what went wrong and consider implementing appropriate safeguards.

But MH370 has also spurred efforts to reduce the chance of planes disappearing.

A global aviation summit in Montreal last month backed plans to require real-time tracking of any airliner in distress starting in 2016.

Australia has also said it was conducting trials, with Malaysia and Indonesia, of a system that increases the frequency with which planes are tracked over remote oceans.

- AFP

BEIJING

Families in China remember victims

RELATIVES of passengers on board the missing flight MH370 gathered in Beijing under a heavy police presence yesterday to mark one year since the plane disappeared.

About two-thirds of those on board the Malaysia Airlines flight were Chinese, but relatives say they have faced harassment from authorities in their own country as they seek answers on the world's biggest aviation mystery.

China's ruling Communist Party commonly clamps down in organised gatherings or collective expressions of anger as it seeks to enforce stability.

Chinese relatives had planned to commemorate the disappearance of the Boeing 777 at a number of sites in Beijing, including the Malaysian embassy, the airport and the Lama Temple, a popular Tibetan Buddhist place of worship and tourist site.

But dozens of uniformed security sealed the street around the diplomatic mission, while relatives said they had opted to avoid the airport as police were out in force.

About 30 visited the Lama Temple, with around 10 entering the site in groups of two or three to pay their personal respects, as if attempting to keep a low profile.

The remainder waited outside the temple in a group, wearing T-shirts saying "Pray for MH370", and waving placards to photographers reading "Keep searching for MH370".

'Today will be a tough day for the next of kin of passengers Our hearts are with you.'

Wang Yi

Chinese foreign minister

But most media had been moved on from the area by police, with one officer saying that it was a regulation enforced by the temple.

"The ones wearing the clothes with the words 'Pray for MH370' would find it hard to get in [to the temple]," relatives' leader Steven Wang said.

"We were originally planning to go the embassy or the airport, but I heard they are tons of police officers in the two places, especially the embassy.

"The police have enforced martial law in the area surrounding it," added Mr Wang, whose mother was on the plane.

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi told a press conference on the sidelines of the National People's Congress, China's Communist-controlled parliament, that the search effort for MH370 would continue.

"Today will be a tough day for the next of kin of passengers on board the flight. Our hearts are with you," he said, telling the relatives Beijing would "help safeguard your legitimate and lawful requests and interests".

After waiting for about 90 minutes outside the temple, the relatives walked away to a nearby restaurant, under the close watch of police.

- AFP

MAIDUGURI

Boko Haram pledges allegiance to IS

BOKO Haram has vowed to support the Islamic State group in an audio message published online, after three bombs wreaked havoc in northeast Nigeria, killing 58 and wounding scores.

"We announce our allegiance to the Caliph of the Muslims, Ibrahim ibn Awad ibn Ibrahim al-Husseini al-Qurashi," Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau said on March 7, referring to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Mr Shekau said the pledge was made because of religious duty to Islam and because it would "enrage the enemy of Allah".

The eight-minute speech, in which Mr Shekau was not shown, was published on a Twitter account used by Boko Haram and subtitled in English, French and Arabic.

Mr Shekau has previously mentioned Mr al-Baghdadi in video

messages yet stopped short of pledging formal allegiance.

But there have been increasing signs that the Nigerian militants, whose six-year insurgency has claimed more than 13,000 lives and left 1.5 million people homeless, has been seeking a closer tie-up.

Not only did Mr Shekau announce last year that the captured town of Gwoza in Borno state was part of a caliphate but in recent weeks Boko Haram videos have increasingly resembled IS group propaganda.

Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan, who has persistently blamed the violence on outside forces, last month claimed the country had intelligence on Boko Haram links to IS. Sunni jihadist specialist Aaron Zelin, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute of Near East Policy, said it was difficult

to assess the immediate effect of Mr Shekau's statement.

"Definitely it will put an even bigger target on their back," he said in an email.

He added, "It's relevant because it highlights the resonance of the idea of the caliphate."

"For years there have been rumours of connections with AQIM [Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb] or Al-Shebab but there was never anything definitive ... and now [Boko Haram] decides to do this overtly."

Max Abrahms, from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, said the pledge of allegiance "made sense", as both groups were currently "in a position of relative organisational weakness".

IS, on the back foot in Iraq, has been looking to broaden its reach beyond

the Middle East, particularly in places where there are power vacuums and existing militant groups, such as Libya.

Boko Haram has apparently been pummelled out of captured territory by the Nigerian army and its regional allies and has returned to its previous campaign of urban guerrilla warfare.

Militant fighters were last week reportedly amassing in Gwoza - which is generally considered to be the group's headquarters - possibly in preparation for a military offensive.

Nigeria's military on March 7 announced another success against Boko Haram, ousting them from Buni Yadi and Buni Gari in Yobe state after previously claiming the recapture of Marte in Borno state.

Mr Abrahms, a specialist in extremist groups, said that with IS and Boko Haram both "uninhibited" in terms of

violence, they were "a natural ally".

But the apparently more formal link could attract more global attention to the insurgency.

"I think Shekau now has to be careful here as traditionally the international community has regarded the conflict as a civil war within Nigeria, perhaps an extended regional war in west Africa," he added.

With Boko Haram squeezed out of captured territory, security analysts have predicted a rise in bomb attacks in towns and cities, including to disrupt elections in three weeks' time.

Borno's police commissioner Clement Adoda gave a toll of 58 dead "for the three locations" targeted on March 7 in Maiduguri as well as 139 wounded.

"Normalcy has been restored," he added, declining to give further details. - AFP

BAMAKO

Mali jihadist killers target foreigners

FIVE people including two Europeans and a Malian policeman died in an assault claimed by an Islamist group on a Bamako nightclub on March 7, the first attack targeting Westerners in a city braced for jihadist violence since 2012.

At least one masked gunman entered the club popular with foreigners in the Malian capital around 1am and sprayed the venue with gunfire and threw grenades, witnesses said.

A spokesperson for Al-Murabitoun, a jihadist group run by a leading Algerian militant, claimed responsibility in an audio recording carried by Mauritanian news agency Al-Akbar.

"We claim responsibility for the latest operation in Bamako carried out by brave combatants from Al-Murabitoun to avenge our prophet against the unbelieving West which has insulted and mocked him," the recording said.

Mali's government described the massacre as a "terrorist" attack by "those who have no other goal than to push away the prospect of peace" - apparently referring to jihadists who operate across the desert north.

"They reportedly shouted 'death to whites' on entering the restaurant ... It sounds like an attack against the presence of Europeans," a diplomatic source said. - AFP



Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (centre) arrives at La Terrasse bar and restaurant in Bamako on March 7. Photo: AFP



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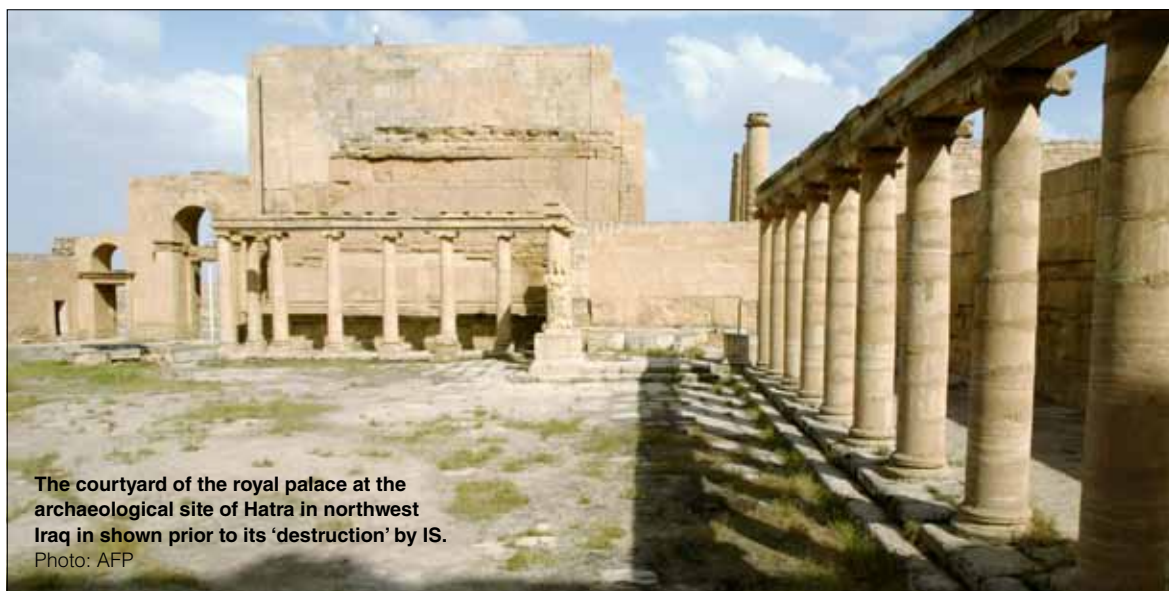
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BAGHDAD

The courtyard of the royal palace at the archaeological site of Hatra in northwest Iraq in shown prior to its 'destruction' by IS.
Photo: AFP

Ancient fort destroyed by IS

THE United Nations' cultural body has condemned the "destruction" by the Islamic State jihadist group of Hatra, a stunning Roman period ancient fortress city in the Iraqi desert.

The destruction of the UNESCO World Heritage Site was reported two days after the Iraqi antiquities minister

said that IS bulldozed the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud, and a week after the jihadists released a tape of them smashing artefacts in the Mosul museum.

"The destruction of Hatra marks a turning point in the appalling strategy of cultural cleansing under way in

Iraq," UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova said on March 7.

Hatra is an extremely well-preserved city with a unique mix of eastern and western architecture, located in a desert area about 60 miles (100 kilometres) southwest of the northern jihadist hub of Mosul. - AFP

PARIS**Kerry seeks to reassure France on Iran**

TOP US diplomat John Kerry has sought to smooth differences with France over nuclear talks with Iran, agreeing with the French that there were still gaps to overcome in the "critical weeks" ahead.

The US secretary of state said on March 7 it was up to Iran to prove its peaceful intentions to the world if it wants a deal on its nuclear program ahead of the looming March 31 deadline.

He was speaking to reporters after a 20-minute meeting with French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius in Paris where they tried to iron out their differing views on the deal.

France has privately expressed concerns that the final agreement will not include enough iron-clad guarantees to stop Iran acquiring a nuclear bomb.

"We want an agreement that's solid," Mr Kerry said.

"We want an agreement that will guarantee that we are holding any kind of program that continues in Iran accountable to the highest standards so that we know in fact that it is a peaceful program."

Mr Fabius emphasised that any deal to remove sanctions could not be thrashed out only between Iran and the US.

"These are multilateral negotiations and we are making sure our position is known," he said.

Mr Fabius acknowledged that progress had been made in the months of talks since an interim deal reached on November 2013, but stressed "differences still remain" which had to be "overcome" and "there is still work to do".

In a show of unity, Mr Kerry said he had "the same assessment" as Mr Fabius.

"We have made progress, but there remain gaps, divergences as he [Mr Fabius] said, and we need to close those gaps," Mr Kerry insisted.

Having flown in from London on the last stop of a week-long trip, Mr Kerry also briefed German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and British counterpart Philip Hammond on the latest round of talks with Iran, which took place over three days in Switzerland earlier last week.

Mr Steinmeier kept up the show of unity, and said they were conscious of other countries' concerns, particularly Israel.

"That's why we will only sign this accord if Iran is permanently and verifiably excluded from having access to a nuclear bomb," he told reporters.

Mr Hammond said after that the meeting was "a useful opportunity to coordinate our political positions".

Although a nuclear deal would "be great for both sides and, in our view, for the region as a whole ... the outcome is still uncertain. Iran is going to have to move further in order to reach a deal which works for us all," Mr Hammond said.

Mr Fabius had expressed his concerns over the deal on March 6, saying "as regards the numbers, controls and the length of the agreement, the situation is still not sufficient".

Key issues in the talks which began in late 2013 include the level of uranium enrichment that Iran should be allowed, the degree of international oversight of its programme and how long an accord should last.

"It is frankly up to Iran that wants this program ... that asserts that they have a peaceful program, to show the world that it is indeed exactly what they say," said Mr Kerry.

Iran has long denied seeking to arm itself with an atomic bomb, insisting its nuclear program is for energy production and other civilian purposes. - AFP

HAVANA**FARC agrees key deal on demining**

COLOMBIA'S government and Marxist FARC rebels have announced a deal on demining in a stride forward on a key issue to negotiate peace after decades of conflict.

Army and FARC leaders met on March 7 for the first time in what one diplomat called "unprecedented" talks.

"The government and the FARC have agreed to ask [Norwegian People's Aid] to lead and coordinate a cleanup and decontamination operation: for mines in rural areas as part of the armed conflict," a statement from the parties said, read out by Cuban diplomat Rodolfo Benitez.

Lead government negotiator Humberto de la Calle, a former vice president, stressed that "our goal is to put an end to the conflict ... so the demining proposal is a first step, but a giant one toward peace".

"Starting today, the government and the FARC will be working together on the cleanup and clearing of some rural areas."

President Juan Manuel Santos, in Monteria, Colombia, called it "extremely important".

He added, "It is a much needed sign that in fact we are on the way to ending a conflict that has bled us dry for over 50 years."

The Colombian conflict has killed 220,000 people and uprooted more than 5 million since the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) was launched in 1964. The peace talks, which began in November 2012, have produced partial accords on several issues, but have yet to yield a final deal.

Mr Benitez said the sides agreed to the demining arrangement "as part of the de-escalation, and as a confidence-building measure ... as well as to create better safety conditions for rural people".

FARC lead negotiator Ivan Marquez said the deal "begins the cleanup and demining of our fields".

The FARC declared an indefinite, unilateral ceasefire on December 20, but Mr Santos has rejected a bilateral ceasefire without a definitive peace deal. - AFP

MOSCOW

Men held over Nemtsov killing

TWO men suspected of killing opposition activist Boris Nemtsov, who was gunned down near the Kremlin in a brazen assassination that shocked the country, were arrested on March 7, Russian authorities have said.

The arrests come a week after the longtime critic of President Vladimir Putin was shot four times in the back as he strolled with his girlfriend along a bridge in the heart of the capital. The killing happened in full view of the presidency and tourist sites such as Red Square.

"Two men suspected of committing this crime were arrested today [March 7]. They are Anzor Gubashev and Zaur Dadayev, and the head of state has been informed," the head of the FSB federal security service Alexander Bortnikov told state television.

He said the two men were from the North Caucasus region, where Russia has fought two devastating wars against Chechen rebels and where security forces, often accused of committing human rights abuse, continue to clash with Islamist insurgents.

A spokesperson for the powerful Investigative Committee, Vladimir Markin, told Interfax news agency that the men were suspected of having been "involved in the organisation and execution of Nemtsov".

However he added investigations were ongoing to find others "involved to varying degrees in the crime".

The latest killing of a high-profile government critic under Mr Putin's rule prompted an outpouring of international condemnation and

stunned opposition activists, who blame the Kremlin for using state media to whip up hysteria against so-called "traitors".

The 55-year-old, an anti-corruption crusader who served as Boris Yeltsin's first deputy prime minister in the 1990s and until Mr Putin's rise was seen as a potential president, died two days before he was to lead a major anti-government rally.

The protest march - called to denounce Russia's policies in the Ukraine war - instead became a memorial for Mr Nemtsov, with tens of thousands swarming the streets of Moscow in the largest opposition gathering since a wave of anti-Kremlin protests in 2011-12.

Mr Putin, whose rule has seen the steady suppression of independent media and opposition parties, promised an all-out effort to catch those responsible for an act which he called a "provocation".

Russian news agencies reported that the men were being held in the high-security Lefortovo prison in Moscow, and would appear in court by today to determine whether they should remain in custody.

Mr Nemtsov's Ukrainian girlfriend Ganna Duritska, the sole witness to the murder, returned to Kiev after the killing. Her lawyer Vadim Prokhorov told Kommersant radio he was unsure whether she would be summoned back to Moscow after the arrests but was "ready to cooperate" with investigators.

Theories have proliferated since



Funeral assistants load the coffin of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov into a car after a memorial service at the Andrei Sakharov rights centre in Moscow on March 3. Photo:AFP

the killing over why Mr Nemtsov was targeted.

Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny - who was released from a two-week stint in jail on February 6 for organising the initial anti-government rally - accused "the country's political leadership" of ordering a hit on Mr Nemtsov.

Friends said Mr Nemtsov had been working on a report containing what he described as proof of Russian military involvement in the bloody uprising by pro-Moscow militias in eastern Ukraine.

Meanwhile investigators suggested the killers wanted to destabilise Russia, which is facing its worst

standoff with the West since the Cold War over Ukraine. Mr Putin's allies also hinted at a Western plot.

But they were also probing the possibility he was assassinated for criticising Russia's role in the Ukraine conflict or his condemnation of January's killings at the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical weekly in Paris by Islamist gunmen.

The former head of the FSB - the successor to the Soviet-era KGB - and now lawmaker Nikolay Kovalev earlier told the RIA Novosti agency that initial information showed the two arrested were merely paid hitmen.

- AFP

SELMA

Obama: 'Our march is not over'

US President Barack Obama rallied a new generation of Americans to the spirit of the civil rights struggle on February 7, warning their march for freedom "is not yet finished".

In a forceful speech in Selma, Alabama on the 50th anniversary of the brutal repression of a peaceful protest there, America's first black president denounced new attempts to restrict voting rights. And he paid stirring tribute to the sacrifice of a generation of activists who marched so that black Americans could enjoy civil rights and opened the road that eventually led him to the White House.

"We gather here to celebrate them," he declared, standing on the spot where Alabama state troopers launched an assault on the marchers in scenes that shocked America.

"We gather here to honour the courage of ordinary Americans willing to endure billy clubs and the chastening rod, tear gas and the trampling hoof, men and women who despite the gush of blood and splintered bone would ... keep marching toward justice."

After the original Selma march and others like it, then-President Lyndon Johnson passed the Voting Rights Act that sought to prevent racist officials from excluding African Americans from the ballot. That law, Mr Obama said, is again under threat from state governments seeking to tighten voter registration rules in a bid to restrict the size of the franchise. - AFP

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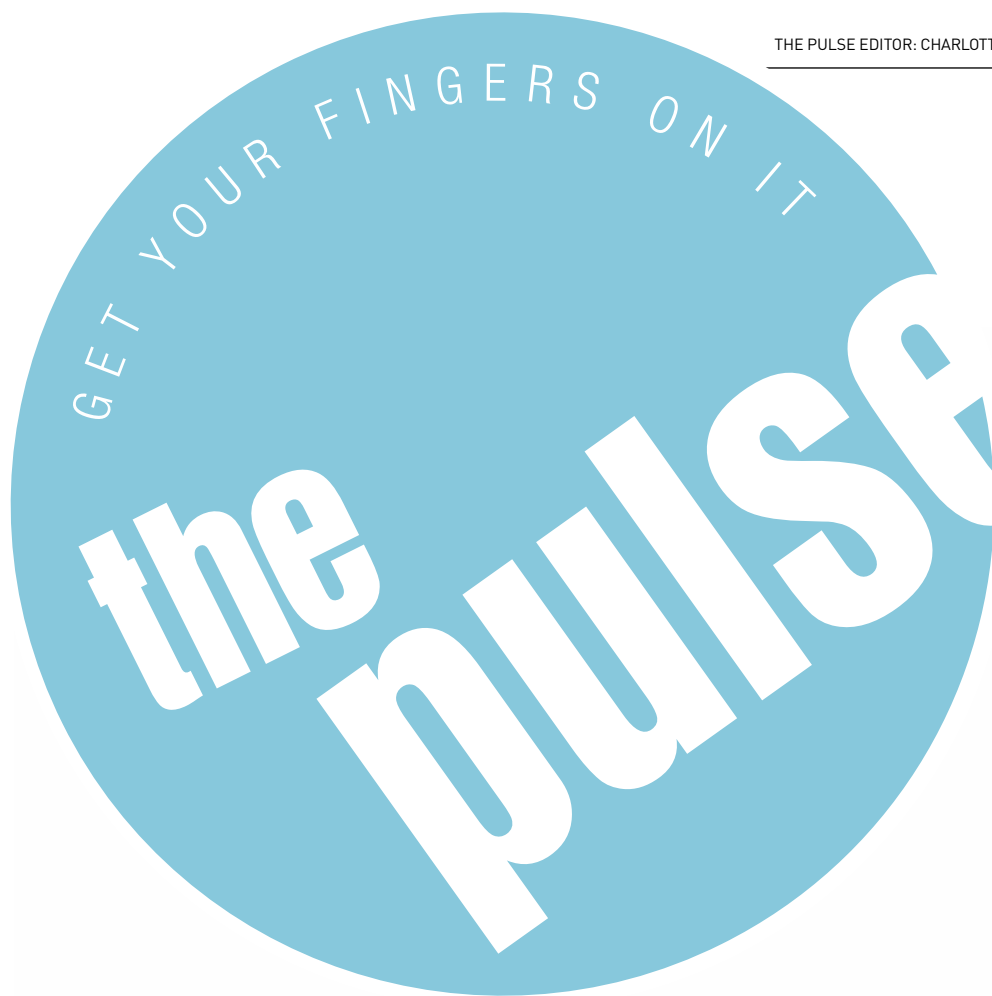

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Sketching out

ZON PANN PWINT

AFTER a gap of 20 years, artist Soe Win Nyein has returned to drawing – and has found in Yangon a rich source of inspiration. About 100 of his sketches – showing the jetties on Botahtaung and Pansodan, colonial-era architecture, street sellers, tea shops, book stalls, buses and old churches – are now on display in a show entitled *Sketches of SWN* at the Yangon Gallery, at People’s Park, Ahlone Road.

“Yangon is always aesthetically pleasing to an artist’s eye. Its nature, people, customs and buildings have provided inspiration for many of my sketches,” said Soe Win Nyein.

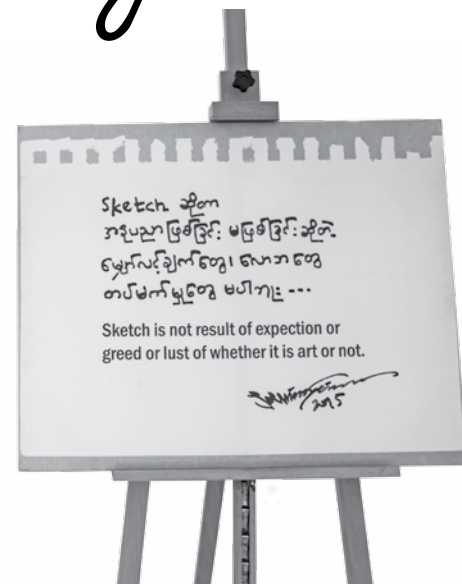
He has always had a passion for painting. But he spent 20 years making a name for himself as a graphic designer because painting did not pay enough. In 2013, his friends, fellow artist Zaw Mong and cartoonist Aw Pi Kye, encouraged him to return to the drawing board. He began a series of Yangon sketches in 2013.

“Sometimes I travel to Mandalay, Dawei, Rakhine or Myitkyina and sketch the delightful rural scenes there. I never draw from photographs. I draw the things that catch my attention,” he said.

He intended to publish a catalogue of his Yangon work, and posted sketches on his Facebook page. The exhibition coordinator at the Yangon Gallery saw them, and encouraged him to consider a solo exhibition.

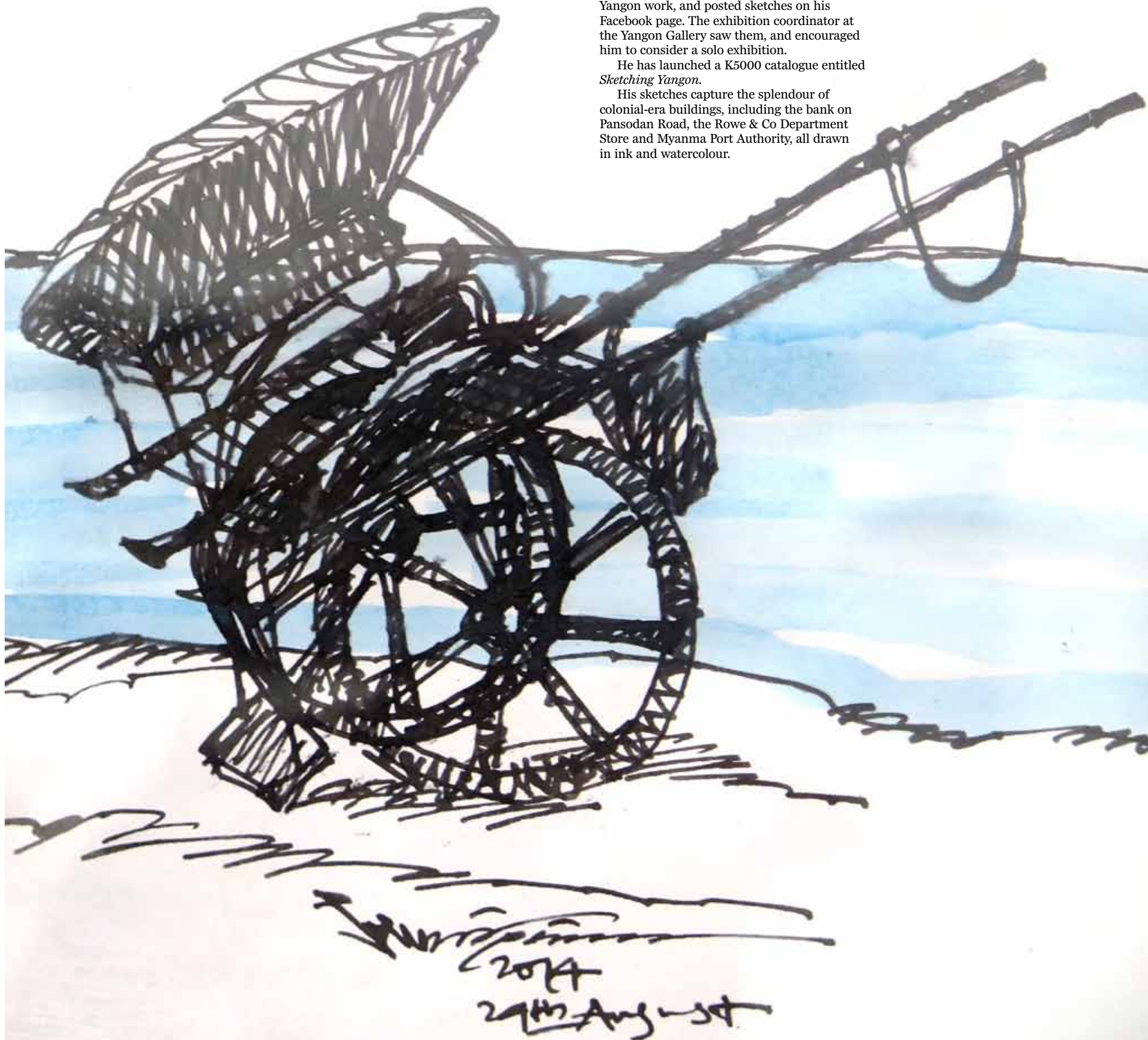
He has launched a K5000 catalogue entitled *Sketching Yangon*.

His sketches capture the splendour of colonial-era buildings, including the bank on Pansodan Road, the Rowe & Co Department Store and Myanma Port Authority, all drawn in ink and watercolour.



Last year, an accident prevented Soe Win Nyein from travelling. “I will spend my time painting, and develop my sketches into 4-by-6-foot paintings,” he said.

At the opening, 13 of his paintings were sold for \$150 each. “Sketches of SWN” will be on display at Yangon Gallery through March 11.



Wiki activists help to write Cambodian women's history

BENNETT MURRAY

WIKIPEDIA'S Khmer language coverage is patchy at best, and almost non-existent when it comes to profiling the country's most important women. This weekend, online activists are joining forces to flood the site with new entries.

Browsing the Khmer-language version of Wikipedia, knowledge seekers can find entries for many prominent Cambodians. Prime Minister Hun Sen, opposition leader Sam Rainsy and architect Vann Molyvann all feature. Even the late National Police Commissioner Hok Lundy has an extensive biography. But almost all the entries are for men.

While Mu Sochua, arguably Cambodia's most influential female opposition lawmaker, has a 713-word article on English Wikipedia, she doesn't have an entry at all on the Khmer site. Nor does Bun Rany, wife of Prime Minister Hun Sen, nor Somaly Mam, the disgraced celebrity human rights activist. The late 1960s and 1970s singer Ros Sereysothea is one of only a handful of female profiles on the site.

"I think women's voices are

underrepresented - there are many issues that are strongly concerned with women, and they lack the opportunity to raise their voice," said Oum Vannarith, public relations director at Zaman University and prolific Wikipedia editor.

Vannarith said he had no specific data on the number of women on the site's Khmer edition, but it was much less than the 55 entries on English Wikipedia's Khmer women category page.

To mark International Women's Day, Vannarith is planning to host a gathering of Wikipedia editors at the 5D Lab Cambodia community centre to add new entries about Cambodian women to the Khmer language version of the site. About 10 Cambodians in other parts of the world are also expected to chip in at the same time.

"We will ask participants who they get inspiration from, who they admire, and then we will identify key people ... and then we will teach them how to research and add to Khmer Wikipedia," he said.

According to Vannarith, Khmer Wikipedia had 4655 articles as of March 5. This places it ahead of Kashubian, a Slavic language spoken in parts of Poland, and behind



Cambodia's First Lady Bun Rany doesn't feature on Khmer Wikipedia. Photo: Phnom Penh Post/Hong Menea

Sardinian in rankings.

While the approach of the 5000-article-in-Khmer mark is a significant milestone for Wikipedia since the local language pages launched in 2013, Vannarith said that the lack of female editors was among his biggest concerns as an editor.

However, he added that the gender imbalance was not unique to Khmer Wikipedia.

"The general issue is the common issue of the Wikipedia movement, even in well developed countries - not many participants are women," said Vannarith.

According to Wikipedia's own article on the site's gender bias, between 84 and 91 percent of Wikipedia editors are male which leads to "systematic bias". In an interview with the BBC last August, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales admitted that the site had "completely failed" to fix the imbalance.

Web media consultant and blogger, Kounila Keo, who will address the March 8 workshop via Skype, said the efforts were part of an international campaign to enlist female editors.

Kounila said via Skype from Singapore that she though female participation in the Wikipedia community was as important as male participation, adding that she was personally behind much of the editing of Cambodian women on English Wikipedia.

"If you're a female Wikipedia editor, you tend to think more about entries about women," she said.

"There have been complaints that some male Wikipedia editors are not sensible enough when they write articles about women."

- Phnom Penh Post

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Guests celebrate media 'milestone'

The Myanmar Times celebrated the launch of its new English-language daily newspaper at Sule Shangri-La on March 5. Chair of Myanmar Consolidated Media U Thein Tun and MCM staff were joined by 200 guests, including senior government officials, business luminaries, foreign diplomats, representatives of the media industry and other special invitees, to mark the auspicious occasion.



Miss Farmer hopefuls sow their stuff



A Miss Farmer 2012 contestant demonstrates traditional farming methods. Photo: Staff

NANDAR AUNG
nandaraung.mcm@gmail.com

SHE will be in no danger of tumbling over her own high heels on the catwalk. And her views on world peace may be on the down-to-earth side. But Miss Farmer 2015, when she is chosen, will be a very capable representative of the people who produce the nation's food and run its huge agricultural sector.

She will look, indeed, like a farmer and, most particularly, a paddy farmer.

The competition, now in its third year, is being organised by the Myanmar Paddy Producers' Association and the Myanmar Agro-Tech Expo 2015, which will run from March 27 to 29 at the Myanmar Convention Centre, Mindhamma Street, Mayangone township.

The musical accompaniment to the

competition will feature songs about farming, including the benefits of mechanisation over traditional methods.

The organisers want to showcase the life of women on the farm, and honour them for the contribution they make.



"We're used to seeing the Miss Universe type of competition for beautiful women. But we think it's time to put the spotlight on the life of farm

women, to show how hard they work to help their families," said U Soe Win, joint secretary of the Myanmar Paddy Producers' Association and secretary for the Miss Farmer Contest 2015. "All states and regions will be represented among the competitors."

The competition is open to fit, healthy, single Myanmar women between 18 and 25 years old, over 5 feet 3 inches (1.6 metres) tall, and weighing at least 110 pounds (50 kilograms). They can register with the Myanmar Paddy Producers' Association at the 5th floor, UMFCCI Office Tower, Min Ye Kyaw Swar Street, Lanmadaw township, until March 16.

The final will be held at the MCC hall on March 29. The first prize is K5 million, with a golden crown. The second prize is K3 million, and the third prize K2 million. All three winners get the chance to take an overseas trip.

Last year, Ma Kyi Win from Shan State won the first prize.

A pageant hopeful walks the catwalk at the Miss Farmer 2014 contest. Photo: Supplied

What's on

TODAY

"Sketches of SWN" by artist Soe Win Nyein (until March 11). The Yangon Gallery, People's Park, Ahlone Road, Dagon Township 10-6pm (see page 24)
Trivia night. Free beer pitcher for round winners and winning team gets a K30,000 bar tab. 50th Bar, 50th Street (lower block) 8pm

TOMORROW

Tuesday Snippets: Gallery conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, 289 Pansodan Street, Kyauktada 7pm- late
Zumba dance party. Hola dance club, 94 Bogalay Zay Street, Botahtaung 9pm

Got an event? | List it in What's On! | whatsonmt@gmail.com

New TV show brings Japan to Myanmar's living rooms

NANDAR AUNG
nandaraung.mcm@gmail.com

IF you've ever dreamed of eating sushi on the top of a Tokyo skyscraper, riding the world's highest roller-coaster, climbing Mount Fuji or bathing in Japan's famous hot springs, a new series on free channel 5 Plus will tell you everything you need to know before you book those flights.

Mingalarba Japan, the first travel program to be shown on Myanmar television, will guide viewers around 13 cities in Japan, offering tips on what to see and where to go. Featured cities include Tokyo, Yokohama, Kamakura, Kimitsu and Kamogawa, with each episode exploring a different location.

"I have lived in Japan for a long time. I like the Japanese traditions and food, and I love their way of seeing the world," said U Jaw Maran, who presents the show alongside model Thandar Hlaing.

"It's been pretty tiring filming the show: We started filming in each city at 6am and didn't finish until midnight. But it was worth it and I'm glad that we can take viewers to Japan with us on our journey through the country," he said.

U Jaw Maran - chair of events company Living Sound Entertainment, which organised the popular 2NE1 concert in Myanmar last year - created the program in collaboration with Japanese entertainment company Kantou Eizou Seisakusha Renmei. Producers have been filming the



Presenter Jaw Maran (left), producer Hiroshi Chikasada (centre) and model Thandar Hlaing. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

series since November.

"The Japanese culture is unique and unlike anywhere else in the world. I think that is why people are interested in visiting. I am happy to have the chance to show how beautiful my country is through this program," said Japanese producer Hiroshi Chikasada.

Mingalarba Japan will be on channel 5 Plus every Tuesday and Saturday at 6pm. Shows will be repeated on Wednesday and Sunday at 2am and 12pm.



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12 - 14 March 2015

Myanmar Convention Centre (MCC) | Yangon

12-13 March (9.00 - 17.00 hrs.) | 14 March (9.00 - 16.00 hrs.)

DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO MANDALAY				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 775	Daily	6:00	7:10	
YH 909	Daily	6:00	7:40	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	8:30	
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	8:05	
YJ 811	3	6:30	7:55	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	8:10	
W9 201	Daily	7:00	8:25	
YH 835	1,7	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	
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	3,5,7	11:15	13:25	
YH 727	1	11:15	13:25	
W9 251	2,5	11:30	12:55	
7Y 941	1,3,4,6	11:45	13:10	
7Y 841	2,5	11:45	13:10	
7Y 943	7	11:45	13:10	
K7 822	4,7	12:30	16:55	
K7 622	1,3,5,7	13:00	14:25	
K7 226	2,4,6	13:30	14:55	
7Y 241	Daily	14:30	16:25	
YH 731	Daily	14:30	16:40	
Y5 234	Daily	15:20	16:30	
W9 211	4	15:30	16:55	

YANGON TO NYAUNG U				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	7:20	
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	7:20	
YH 909	Daily	6:00	8:25	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	7:45	
YJ 881	7	6:30	7:50	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5	6:45	8:05	
YJ 801	6	7:00	8:20	
K7 242	Daily	7:00	8:20	
7Y 131	Daily	7:15	8:35	
7Y 121	1	8:20	9:40	
K7 264	Daily	14:30	16:40	
7Y 241	Daily	14:30	17:10	
YH 731	1,2,3,4,5,7	14:30	17:25	
W9 129	1,3,6	15:30	17:35	
W9 211	4	15:30	17:40	

YANGON TO MYITKYINA				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 829	5	7:00	9:40	
YH 835	1,7	7:00	10:05	
YH 831	4,6	7:00	10:05	
YH 826	3	7:00	10:05	
YJ 201	1,2,3,4	11:00	13:50	
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	

MANDALAY TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 910	Daily	7:40	9:45	
Y5 233	Daily	7:50	9:00	
YJ 811	3	8:10	10:05	
YJ 891	Daily	8:20	10:15	
K7 283	Daily	8:25	11:30	
YH 918	Daily	8:30	10:45	
W9 201	Daily	8:40	10:35	
7Y 132	Daily	9:35	11:30	
K7 267	Daily	10:20	12:25	
YH 830	5	11:05	14:55	
YH 836	1,7	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	1,2,3,4	15:30	16:55	
YJ 762	4	15:50	17:00	
YJ 602	6	16:25	17:35	
YJ 762	1,2	16:35	18:00	
YH 732	6	16:40	18:05	
7Y 242	Daily	16:40	18:45	
YH 732	1,2,3,4,5,7	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	
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	3,5,7	17:25	18:50	
K7 623	1,3,5,7	17:40	19:05	
YH 730	2,4,6	17:45	19:10	
YJ 234	6	17:45	19:10	
W9 252	2,5	18:15	19:40	

NYAUNG U TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	Daily	7:35	10:15	
YH 918	Daily	7:45	10:45	
YJ 881	7	8:05	10:10	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5	8:20	10:25	
YH 910	Daily	8:25	9:45	
YH 835	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	
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	1,2,3,4,5,6	17:25	18:45	

MYITKYINA TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 832	4,6	11:55	14:45	
YH 836	1,7	11:55	14:45	
YH 827	3	11:55	14:45	
YH 830	5	12:30	14:55	
YJ 202	1,2,3,4	14:05	16:55	
K7 623	1,3,5,7	16:10	19:05	
YJ 234	6	16:20	19:10	
W9 252	2,5	16:45	19:40	

YANGON TO HEHO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 891	Daily	6:00	8:50	
K7 282	Daily	6:00	9:00	
YH 917	Daily	6:10	9:35	
YJ 811	3	6:30	8:40	
YJ 881	7	6:30	8:45	
YJ 881	1,2,4,5	6:45	9:00	
K7 242	Daily	7:00	9:15	
7Y 131	Daily	7:15	10:05	
K7 266	Daily	8:00	9:15	
7Y 121	Daily	8:20	10:35	
Y5 649	Daily	10:30	12:45	
YH 505	1,2,3,4,5,6	10:30	11:55	
YJ 751	3,7	10:30	11:40	
YJ 751	5	10:45	11:55	
YJ 761	1,2,4	11:00	12:10	
YJ 233	6	11:00	12:10	
YH 727	1	11:15	12:40	
YH 737	3,5,7	11:15	12:40	
7Y 941	1,2,4,6	11:45	13:55	
K7 828	1,3,5	12:30	13:45	
K7 822	2,4,7	12:30	13:45	
K7 264	Daily	14:30	15:45	
7Y 241	Daily	14:30	15:40	
YH 731	Daily	14:30	15:55	
W9 129	1,3,6	15:30	16:40	

YANGON TO MYEIK				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 325	1,5	6:45	8:15	
7Y 531	1,5	7:00	8:38	
K7 319	2,4,6	7:00	9:05	
Y5 325	2	15:30	17:00	

YANGON TO SITTWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 309	1,3,6	11:30	12:55	
K7 422	Daily	13:00	14:55	

YANGON TO THANDWE				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 242	Daily	7:00	10:35	
YH 505	1,2,3,4,5,6	10:30	13:10	
W9 309	1,3,6	11:30	13:50	
7Y 122	Daily	12:15	13:05	
K7 422	Daily	13:00	13:35	
Y5 421	1,3,4,6	15:45	16:40	

YANGON TO DAWEI				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 319	2,4,6	7:00	8:10	
7Y 531	1,5	7:00	7:48	

YANGON TO LASHIO				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 751	5	10:45	13:00	
YJ 751	3,7	10:30	12:45	
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 831	6,4	7:00	11:00	
YH 826	3	7:00	11:00	
YH 835	7,1	7:00	11:00	
W9 251	2,5	11:30	15:25	

HEHO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 811	3	8:55	10:05	
YJ 881	7	9:00	10:10	
YJ 891	Daily	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	Daily	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	1,2,3,4,5,6	11:55	14:00	
YJ 752	5	14:20	16:30	
YJ 762	4	15:50	17:00	
YJ 762	1,2	15:50	18:00	
7Y 241	Daily	15:55	18:45	
YH 732	1,2,3,4,5,6	15:55	18:45	
K7 829	1,3,5	16:10	17:25	
YH 728	1	16:00	18:10	
YJ 602	6	16:25	17:35	
K7 264	Daily	16:30	18:15	
YH 738	3,5,7	16:40	18:50	
YJ 752	3,7	16:45	17:55	
W9 129	1,3,6	16:55	19:10	

MYEIK TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 326	1,5	8:35	10:05	
7Y 532	1,5	10:45	12:18	
K7 320	2,4,6	11:30	13:35	
Y5 326	2	17:15	18:45	

SITTWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
W9 309	1,3,6	13:10	14:55	
K7 423	Daily	15:10	16:30	

THANDWE TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 243	Daily	10:50	11:45	
YH 506	1,2,3,4,5,6	13:10	14:00	
7Y 122	Daily	13:20	14:10	
W9 309	1,3,6	14:05	14:55	
K7 422	Daily	14:10	16:30	
Y5 422	1,3,4,6	16:55	17:50	

DAWEI TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
K7 320	2,4,6	12:25	13:35	
7Y 532	1,5	11:30	12:18	

LASHIO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YJ 752	5	13:15	16:30	
K7 829	1,3	15:05	15:55	
K7 829	5	15:05	17:25	
YJ 752	3,7	15:40	17:55	
7Y 742	1,5	16:00	17:48	
YH 730	2,4,6	16:45	19:10	

PUTAO TO YANGON				
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr	
YH 836	1,7	11:00	14:45	
YH 832	4,6	11:00	14:45	
YH 827	3	11:00	14:45	
W9 252	2,5	15:45	19:40	

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	Daily	18:35	20:30
Y5 237	Daily	19:00	20:50
TG 306	Daily	19:50	21:45

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 303	Daily	8:00	8:45
PG 701	Daily	8:45	9:40
Y5 238	Daily	21:30	22:20
8M 336	Daily	11:55	12:40
TG 301	Daily	13:05	13:50
PG 707	Daily	13:40	14:30
PG 703	Daily	17:00	17:50
TG 305	Daily	18:05	18:50
8M 332	Daily	19:20	20:05
PG 705	Daily	20:15	21:30

YANGON TO DON MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4231	Daily	8:00	9:45
FD 252	Daily	8:30	10:20
FD 256	Daily	12:50	14:40
FD 254	Daily	17:35	19:25
FD 258	Daily	21:30	23:15
DD 4239	Daily	21:00	22:55

DON MUEANG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
DD 4230	Daily	6:30	7:15
FD 251	Daily	7:15	8:00
FD 255	Daily	11:35	12:20
FD 253	Daily	16:20	17:05
FD 257	Daily	20:15	20:55
DD 4238	Daily	19:25	20:15

YANGON TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25
Y5 2233	Daily	9:45	14:15
TR 2823	Daily	9:45	2:35
SQ 997	Daily	10:25	15:10
3K 582	Daily	11:45	16:20
MI 533	2,4,6	13:35	20:50
8M 233	5,6,7	14:40	19:05
MI 519	Daily	16:40	21:15
3K 584	2,3,5	19:30	00:05+1

SINGAPORE TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TR 2822	Daily	7:20	8:45
Y5 2234	Daily	7:20	8:50
SQ 998	Daily	7:55	9:20
3K 581	Daily	9:10	10:40
MI 532	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	18:50
8M 234	5,6,7	20:10	21:35

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 501	1,2,3,5,6	7:30	11:30
AK 505	Daily	8:30	12:45
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30
MH 743	Daily	16:00	20:15
AK 503	Daily	19:05	23:20

KUALA LUMPUR TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AK 504	Daily	6:55	8:00
MH 740	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 502	1,2,3,5,6	12:30	13:30
MH 742	Daily	13:55	15:05
AK 502	Daily	17:20	18:25

YANGON TO BEIJING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 906	3,5,7	23:50	05:50+1

BEIJING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 905	3,5,7	19:30	22:50

YANGON TO GUANGZHOU			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 711	2,4,7	8:40	13:15
CZ 3056	3,6	11:35	15:55
CZ 3056	1,5	17:40	22:10

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CZ 3055	3,6	8:35	10:35
CZ 3055	1,5	14:40	16:40
8M 712	2,4,7	14:15	15:50

YANGON TO TAIPEI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7916	Daily	10:50	16:10

TAIPEI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7915	Daily	7:00	9:50

YANGON TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 416	Daily	12:30	15:55
MU 2012	3	12:40	18:50
MU 2032	1,2,4,5,6,7	14:50	18:15

KUNMING TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2011	3	8:25	11:50
CA 415	Daily	11:10	11:30
MU 2031	1,2,4,5,6,7	13:30	14:00

YANGON TO HANOI			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:25

HANOI TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:40	18:10

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:05

HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 943	2,4,7	11:45	13:25

YANGON TO DOHA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 919	1,4,6	7:55	11:40

DOHA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 918	3,5,7	19:45	04:59+1

YANGON TO SEOUL			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:50	8:50
KE 472	Daily	23:55	07:45+1

SEOUL TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	Daily	18:30	22:30
OZ 769	3,6	19:30	23:40

YANGON TO HONG KONG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	Daily	1:10	5:25

HONG KONG TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 252	2,4,6	22:20	00:15+1
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:50	23:45

YANGON TO TOKYO			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	Daily	22:10	06:45+1

TOKYO TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:45	17:15

YANGON TO DHAKA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 061	2	11:45	13:00
BG 061	5	19:45	21:00

DHAKA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 060	2	8:30	10:45
BG 060	5	16:30	18:45

YANGON TO INCHEON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 724	1,3,5,6	12:50	14:45
W9 607	4,7	14:30	16:20
8M 7702	Daily	23:55	07:45+1

INCHEON TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 723	1,3,5,6	11:00	11:55
W9 608	4,7	17:20	18:10
8M 7701	Daily	18:30	22:30

YANGON TO 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

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

YANGON TO GAYA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 601	1,3,5,6	10:30	11:50

GAYA TO YANGON			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 602	1,3,5,6	12:50	16:00

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 710	Daily	14:15	16:40

BANGKOK TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 709	Daily	12:05	13:25

MANDALAY TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 533	2,4,6	15:45	20:50
Y5 2233	1,2,4,5,6	7:50	14:15

SINGAPORE TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 2234	Daily	7:20	16:30
MI 533	2,4,6	11:30	14:50

MANDALAY TO DON MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 245	Daily	12:50	15:15

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 244	Daily	10:55	12:20

MANDALAY TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	13:50	16:40

KUNMING TO MANDALAY			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2029	Daily	12:55	12:50

NAY PYI TAW TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 722	1,2,3,4,5	19:45	22:45

BANGKOK TO NAY PYI TAW			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:15	19:15

International Airlines

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

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Sino Tech Corporation, a Company incorporated in China, of 501 Newton Road, Z.J. Hi-Tech Park, Shanghai 201203, The Republic of China, is the Owner of the following Trade Mark:-



Reg. No. 5615/2008

in respect of "Int'l Class 10: Medical devices, namely coronary stents".

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

Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **Sino Tech Corporation**
P. O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 9 March 2015

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Hunter Douglas Industries Switzerland GmbH, a Company incorporated in Switzerland, of Adligenswilerstrasse 37, CH- 6006 Luzern, Switzerland, is the Owner of the following Trade Marks:-

3FORM

Reg. No. 9699/2011

CHROMA

Reg. No. 9700/2011

in respect of "Int'l classes 17 & 19: Semi-manufactured products made of synthetic material, synthetic sheets, synthetic panels. Non-metallic building materials; non-metallic sheets and panels for wall cladding, façade cladding, floors, ceilings, partition walls, worktops and furniture".

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

Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **Hunter Douglas Industries Switzerland GmbH**
P. O. Box 60, Yangon.
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 9 March 2015

TRADE MARK CAUTION

CORTINA NV, of Meersbloem-Melden 42, B-9700 Oudenaarde, Belgium, is the Owner of the following Trade Marks:-

OXYPAS

Reg. No. 20572/2014

in respect of "Class 09: Safety wear; protective wear; safety work clothing; protective work clothing; safety footwear; protective footwear; protective eyewear; goggles; protective masks; safety masks; safety headgear; protective headgear; protective hand wear; safety hand wear. Class 25: Work shoes; shoes for nurses and doctors; uniforms for nurses and doctors; insoles for shoes and boots; clothing; footwear; headgear".

SPROX

Reg. No. 20573/2014

in respect of "Class 25: Footwear".

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

Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **CORTINA NV**
P. O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 9 March 2015



Myanmar's Conor Smith contests a ball-up with the Laos Ruckman. Photo: Matt Roebuck

Fighting Cocks foil Laos 'Phants

MATT ROEBUCK

THE Myanmar Fighting Cocks, the local representative to Australian Rules Football's 'AFL Asia' competitions, returned from Laos last week carrying in tow the side's first silverware: the Vientiane Cup.

On February 28, the Teik Kyat met the Laos Elephants at the Lao Tobacco Sports Field, where they played three games and won three against a mixture of Laos nationals and Australian expats.

In their first matchup, the Myanmar side; only constituted in 2014 and predominantly formed of Australian expats; played a seven-a-side game against the Laos Nationals.

"To play against a side consisting of Laotian players was a real honour," said the Fighting Cocks' president Henry Cox after the competition. "To be able to field an equivalent side is an undoubted ambition of the Myanmar club, but for now, we are still an emerging side."

The first game saw the Myanmar side run out comfortable victors in a 66-18 game but the contest was not without challenge for the side, particularly from Handa, whose efforts through the competition saw him named "Local player of the tournament".

"If he'd been playing since he was young, he'd have made the big leagues by now," said Steve Chapman, president of the Laos Elephants, who were formed in 2007.

Next up for the Cocks was a nine-a-side game against the Laos Felang, a team of Australian nationals. Though this game was tighter, the Fighting Cocks drew to a two-goal lead in the first half and fought hard to maintain the margin in the second, running out 54-34 victors and guaranteeing their place in the final.

The Laos National and Felang sides then met in an encounter that went the way of the experienced Aus-

tralian side before the two teams combined in an attempt to defend the 2015 trophy from leaving home soil.

Conor Smith, an American making his Test Match debut for the Myanmar side, dominated his Laos counterparts and won man of the match for the final, inspiring his side to lift the Vientiane Cup with a 65-32 win over the combined Laos Elephant side.

Myanmar's next test will be a home game on March 21, when they host the Cambodian Eagles at the Star City Sports Oval before travelling to Chonaburri on April 25 for the ANZAC Cup, an annual game hosted by Thailand to commemorate those who died in during the construction of the Thai-Burma "Death Railway".

"It will be especially poignant for this to be first time that this game is played between Myanmar and Thai representative teams, on the 100th year anniversary of ANZAC day and the Gallipoli landings," said Cox.

GOLF

Park sets sights on top spot after Singapore tournament

NERVELESS Park In-Bee sealed a wire-to-wire victory at the HSBC Women's Champions on March 9 in a clear statement of her intent to win back the number one ranking from Lydia Ko.

On a day of iced towels and umbrellas, the South Korean stayed cool in the Singapore heat for two-under-par 70 and a two-stroke win over Ko as she finished the week bogey-free.

Park's scores of 66, 69, 68 and 70 and aggregate of 15-under 273 were too much for Ko, 17, golf's youngest ever number one who was unable to erase her two-shot overnight deficit.

"That's a big accomplishment for me," said Park of her accomplishment of leading the \$1.4 million tournament from start to finish.

"I think I've done that probably once before only, and to have a pressure every day since Thursday, I think it's something that I should be

really proud of."

New Zealand's Ko, playing with her left thumb strapped, missed short par putts on eight, 12 and 13 but finished with a curling, 12-foot birdie on 18 in front of a packed gallery.

World number three Stacy Lewis put her ball into a tree on 12 and then found water at the last before finishing on 72, four shots back in third at par-72 Sentosa Golf Club.

"She played great all week," Ko said of Park. "No bogeys around here and on a course where you can hit a good shot and you can get bad luck."

"She made no bogeys, that's pretty phenomenal."

Starting the day two strokes adrift, Ko birdied four and five to draw level with Park, whom she demoted to world number two when she seized the top ranking last month.

But Ko's bogey at eight signalled a mid-round stumble with three

dropped shots, before she recovered with a birdie on 15 and another at the last after escaping from two bunnies.

Lewis had a helter-skelter final day when she scrambled brilliantly on eight and then saw her second shot on the par-five 12th nestle in the branches of a palm tree.

The American somehow escaped with par and birdied 13 as she threatened to beat Ko into second spot -- before dunking her approach into the greenside lake on the par-five 18th.

Meanwhile Park's progress was serene and she needed only birdies on seven and 11 before being doused with champagne as she toasted her 13th LPGA win and first of the year.

"I'll probably play a lot more with Lydia, a lot more often," Park said. "I just can't believe that I'm playing with somebody who can't even drink."

- AFP

FOOTBALL

Foreign women may find a seat at Iranian football

FOREIGN women may be allowed to attend football matches in Iran, a top official said March 7, but a ban on female nationals watching live games seems set to remain.

The comments came a day after FIFA chief Sepp Blatter called the exclusion of women from stadiums an "intolerable situation" that he raised when he met Iran's President Hassan Rouhani in 2013.

Blatter, in FIFA's weekly magazine, appealed to Iranian authorities to "open the nation's football stadiums to women".

"A collective stadium ban still applies to women in Iran, despite

the existence of a thriving women's football organisation. This cannot continue," he wrote.

Access to football stadiums has been forbidden for women since the Islamic revolution in 1979, on the official basis that the ruling protects them from obscene behaviour among male fans.

The ban, however, has been deemed a major obstacle to Iran's ambitions of hosting the 2019 Asian Nations Cup.

Without giving a timeframe, Ali Kafashian, president of Iran's Football Federation, told Isna news agency that the Asian Football Confederation has "requested certain facilities that we

have agreed to supply".

"We have problems regarding the presence of women in stadiums, but in relation to foreigners, we are looking at how to solve the problems," he said.

Such a step would appear to follow Iran's Volleyball Federation, which in January said it would break with custom and allow foreign women to attend male matches when it hosts a major tournament this summer.

That decision came months after the sport's governing body, the FIVB, said it would not allow the Islamic republic to host international events while its gender policies remained in place. - AFP

IN BRIEF

Milan

Berlusconi to sell AC shares

AC Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi has signed a preliminary agreement to sell 30 percent of the club to Bee Taechaubol following a meeting between the former Italian prime minister and the Thai businessman, according to *La Gazzetta dello Sport* on March 8.

It reported the deal would see Taechaubol acquire the share in the club at the end of May for 250 million euros. If Berlusconi goes back on the

decision he would be liable to pay a penalty amounting to 10 pc of the price of the 250 million euro stake. - AFP

Macau

China must wait for boxing champ

Double Olympic champion Zou Shiming's failure to win the IBF flyweight world title on March 7 does not mean China's dream of having a professional world champion is over, says veteran promoter Bob Arum.

The Top Rank chief turned his

attention to the next in line for a shot at glory - Hong Kong's "Wonder Kid" Rex Tso.

Tso, 27, fighting on the Amnat Ruenroeng-Zou undercard, prevailed on points in a brutal 10-round super flyweight eliminator against Michael Enriquez of the Philippines.

Tso will challenge Kohei Kono, Japan's WBA super flyweight champion, on July 18, and become the first ever boxer from Hong Kong to fight for a world title.



IN PICTURES

Australia's Glenn Maxwell celebrates scoring the second-fastest hundred in the 40-year history of the World Cup. Maxwell reached his first international one-day ton in just 51 balls, leading Australia to victory over Sri Lanka at the Sydney Cricket Ground on March 7.

Photo: AFP

The Myanmar Times presents: Great Speakers

Harvard graduate, veteran of MIT's Artificial Intelligence lab and president of the Free Software Foundation, **Dr Richard Stallman**, developer of the GNU/Linux free operating system, will speak to educators, students, computer professionals and anyone interested in protection from internet surveillance about the importance of software and internet freedom.



Richard Stallman (left), shown here with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange holding up a picture of Edward Snowden

FREE AS IN FREEDOM

6-8pm, Tuesday, April 2, Phandeeyar, the Myanmar Innovation Lab
11th floor, MAC Tower, 561 Merchant Road, Yangon

The event is free of charge and attendees are requested to anonymously donate to the Free Software Foundation in any amount they can afford. Some materials will be available for sale to benefit the Free Software Foundation, and this is a rare opportunity for those in Myanmar to access the tremendous computing resources the foundation makes available. This event is seeking sponsor organisations to help cover the cost of Dr Stallman's visit. A special fundraising dinner will be held the following evening. For more information please contact Stuart Alan Becker at *The Myanmar Times*, by email at stuart.becker@gmail.com or by telephone on 09-975027347.

Sport

Myanmar's Aussie Rules side claim first silverware in Laos

SPORT 30



FOOTBALL

Yangon United dominant as league takes a break

MNL-1 enters recess for four months with Yangon undefeated

MATT ROEBUCK
KYAW ZIN HLAING

kyawzinhlaing.mcm@gmail.com

BRAZILLIAN Cézár scored a hat-trick to deliver Yangon a 5-2 win over Zeyar Shwe Myay at the Yangon United Sports Center on March 8 and secure his side an unbeaten record in the Myanmar National League 1, as the season breaks for a series of international fixtures and tournaments.

Cézár consistently provided the Zayer Shwe Myay defence with troubles and put Yangon into the lead in the 23rd minute. The visitors were not without response and found themselves level through a 35th minute penalty struck by Brazilian striker Silver Rodrigo.

Yangon's skipper regained the lead for his side in the 38th minute before two more goals from Cézár in the 43rd and 68th minutes either side of another finished by Brazilian playmaker Emerson in the 59th minute but the game out of reach. A 74th minute strike for Rodrigo gave Zeyar Shwe Myay a consolation goal.

"Cezar and Emerson stood out in this game. I believe we can be champions this season," said Yangon coach Miodrag Ješić, after the game.

"The MNL still has many games ahead of us but I believe the team's talent and teamwork can see us through," he added.

Yangon stand top of the table after week nine with 27 points. Yangon's consistency continues on from last season, when after losing the distraction of continental football in the AFC Cup, they played undefeated for the second half of the season and finished runners-up.

Yangon's already strong forward line of playmaker Emerson,

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	Yangon United	9	9	0	0	30	8	+22	27
2	Ayeyawady United	8	7	1	0	20	6	+14	22
3	Magway	9	5	3	1	19	11	+8	18
4	Yadanarbon FC	8	5	1	2	12	7	+5	16
5	Kanbawza FC	9	4	3	2	11	8	+3	15
6	Chin United	8	3	2	3	10	9	+1	11
7	Nay Pyi Taw	9	2	2	4	7	12	-5	8
8	Rakhine United	9	2	1	6	9	20	-11	7
9	Hantharwady United	9	0	6	3	7	10	-3	6
10	Zeyar Shwe Myay	8	1	2	4	7	18	-11	5
11	Manaw Myay	9	1	2	6	7	20	-13	5
12	Zwegapin United	9	1	1	7	6	16	-10	4

compatriot and MNL top-scorer for the last two seasons Cezar, and Myanmar international striker and poster boy Kyaw Ko Ko has been further strengthened with the return of Kyi Lin, the Myanmar international forward tipped for great things.

The team's goal line has also been further solidified with the introduction of another Brazilian, Luiz Fernando between the posts. In the opening nine games Yangon have scored 30 and conceded just eight.

"This presents no pressure for me," said Ješić. "Before the second half of the season, we will prepare our team to be champions."

Ayeyarwady United's busy close season in the transfer market would appear to have paid off, as last season's MFF Cup winners lead the chasing pack on 22 points.

Ayeyarwady will spend the break continuing to benefit from competitive football as they contest Group G of the AFC Cup, continuing with Indonesia's Persib Bandung at Thuwunna

Stadium on March 11.

Also contesting the AFC Cup over the break will be Mandalay's Yadanarbon FC. Last year's league winners parted ways with two of their international forwards – Australian James Meyer and Liberian Boakay Eddie Foday – after their defeat at the hands of Chin United.

Sitting further down the table, the three-time champions will be disappointed with their form so far but whether replacement foreign players will arrive at Bahtoo stadium or the club will cut their losses for the year remains to be seen.

KBZ will be hoping that former Irish international and Premier League forward Caleb Folan will benefit from time to rest from the injury he picked up early season and return for the second half of the season fully fit.

The table is split between Yangon and the chasing pack and the remaining six teams that could find themselves in a battle to avoid the two relegation spots.

Manaw Myay and Zwegapin FC have struggled to find results and currently sit in the dreaded drop zone, with 2013 league runners-up Nay Pyi Taw FC, a side who played in last year's AFC Cup and qualified for the knockout stages, languishing surprisingly near the bottom. The capital's representatives have struggled to compete this year after unloading a number of players to Ayeyarwady in the off-season.

The MNL-1 will now take a break until June 27, so that Myanmar's national sides can focus on Olympic and World Cup qualification, plus the U20 World Cup and South East Asian Games.

TENNIS

South Korea, NZ win ties in Davis Cup

SOUTH Korea beat Thailand 3-2 in their first round Davis Cup Asia-Oceania tie, with a victory in the reverse singles yesterday enough to spoil the hosts' hopes of a final day comeback.

The visitors came in with a slim 2-1 lead after two days of competition, with the Thais hoping to overturn the deficit.

But Chung Hyeon snatched away Thailand's chances, breezing by Danai Udomchoke 6-4, 6-1, 6-1 in the early game on March 8, giving the visitors an unassailable 3-1 lead and registering his second singles win of the tie.

Warit Sombutmark later reduced the margin with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Lim Yong-Kyu.

Warit's straight sets loss to Chung Hyeon on March 6 was the second singles defeat for Thailand on an opening day which left them with it all to do.

On March 7 brothers Sanchai and Sonchat Ratiwatana kept the tie alive with gruelling five set win in the doubles match over Korea's Nam Ji-Sung and Song Min-Kyu.

But the tie slipped away as Danai Udomchoke lost his match yesterday morning.

In Auckland, meanwhile, New Zealand outlasted China after a marathon start to finish 4-1 winners in their Davis Cup Group I Asia-Oceania first round tie yesterday.

The deciding third singles was taken out by New Zealand's Rubin Statham over China's Zhe Li 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 in the only straight sets match in the tie.

The opening singles on March 6 were both five-setters with Wu Di winning for China and Michael Venus registering a win for New Zealand.

In the doubles on March 7 Marcus Daniell and Artem Sitak came from two sets down to beat Li and Zhang Ze for New Zealand to take a 2-1 lead going into the final day.

Statham, who lost to Wu on the first day, received a boost before the reverse singles when Zhang Ze pulled out injured after playing 10 sets in the first singles and doubles.

Despite being lower ranked than Li, Statham managed a service break in each set to win the match in two hours.

"It's the first round one, group one win we've had for a long time," Statham said.

"It's great that we're through to the second round and one step closer to the World Group."

In the dead rubber, Venus beat Wang Chuchan 3-6, 7-6, 6-4.

New Zealand next play India in July for a place in the World Group qualifying round.

In results from the Davis Cup World Group, world number one Novak Djokovic powered Serbia into the Davis Cup quarter-finals on March 7.

There were early celebrations in Kraljevo after Djokovic came in as a last-minute doubles replacement for Viktor Troicki and alongside Nenad Zimonjic convincingly beat Marin Draganja and Franko Skugor 6-3, 6-4, 6-1.

The Serbian pair needed less than two hours to advance, despite a scare in the second set when Djokovic was treated for a blister on his right hand.

Serbia will next face either Brazil or Argentina. – AFP



Yangon's fans cheer on the side at KBZ FC's Taunggyi stadium. Photo: Yangon United/Facebook

MYANMAR TIMES

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DAILY EDITION

ISSUE 1 | MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2015

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