Blackout: Journal protests media oppression **Philippine Cinderellas overcome** poverty to seize the world stage **HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION 500** MYANMARTIMES DAILY EDITION **CONFUSION OVER BANK PUSHES CHARGES LAID OVER** FOR SUPPORT ON **POLICE SHOOTING GOVT PLANS FOR** WINE IMPORTS MORTGAGE PLAN IN FERGUSON **BUSINESS 10** ISINESS 8 Lanes closed as flyover nears completion North-south traffic on Pyay Road will be diverted around Myaynigone junction until March 31 to enable workers to finish construction of a flyover bridge above the congestion hotspot.

Cars head east and west along Bargayar Road at Myaynigone Junction yesterday, while the north-south lanes are closed for construction of a flyover. Photo: Zarni Phyo

KIO meet govt ahead of talks

Kachin Independence Organisation leaders held a second day of discussions in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, meeting President U Thein Sein and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing ahead of ceasefire negotiations in Yangon today. NEWS 3



Insurer to compensate all victims of Rakhine ferry sinking

SHWEGU THITSAR

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STATE-RUN Myanma Insurance will pay compensation for those killed or injured in last week's ferry accident in Rakhine State even if they didn't hold an official ticket.

Relatives of each of the deceased will receive K500,000, while those injured when Aung Tagun 3 went down late on March 13 near Myebon will receive K400,000, said Myanma Insurance managing director U Aye Min Thein said yesterday.

"We will pay whether they had a ticket or not. Some passengers bought tickets but some are unregistered," he said.

He said the compensation pavouts could be delayed while Myanma Insurance makes contact with the relatives of the deceased.

"We have only found the family members of half of the deceased, and there may be more bodies found. We will wait two years for the family members of the victims to make contact with us.'

However, the insurer will pay no compensation to state-run Inland Water Transport for the loss of the vessel because it was not insured, he said.

Myanma Insurance general manager U Maung Maung Lwin said none of IWT's 384 ferries are insured.

"The premium to insure a ferry is millions of kyat so [IWT] didn't insure them," he said.

The 19-year-old China-built ferry capsized near Myauk Kyain Island in Myebon township at about 8pm, while travelling from Taunggok to Sittwe

The Rakhine State government has formed an investigation team headed by minister U Ko Ko Naing to examine the accident.

The ferry was officially carrying 214 people when it went down. At least 34 bodies have already been recovered, but the final death toll is expected to be above 50.



A monk burned during a police crackdown in November 2012 speaks at a press conference in Yangon yesterday. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

Monks burned during Letpadaung protest to file suit against home affairs minister



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TWO Buddhist monks who were severely burned in 2012 protests against a Chinese-backed copper mine in Letpadaung have announced plans to sue the government, including Minister for Home Affairs Major General Ko Ko.

More than 100 monks sustained serious, disfiguring burns and required hospitalisation after police allegedly set off grenades containing white phosphorous. Nearly 60 monks are receiving long-term medical care and are permanently disabled as a result, the monks who are filing the suit said at press conference in Yangon vesterday.

The government has neither apologised for the incident nor provided any sort of medical or financial support,

said U Tikha Nyana, 66, who suffered burns to approximately 60 percent of his body.

Instead, it has pressured monasteries to deny assistance to the victims, he said.

"We charge the government to find the truth and justice. Although they have used violence against the monks they have not taken responsibility within the last two years," he said.

As monks cannot file lawsuits themselves, U Nay Thiha, a resident of Monvwa, filed the case against Maj Gen Ko Ko and national police chief Police Major Zaw Win on behalf of U Tikha Nyana and U Withoda. The monks also sent a letter to President U Thein Sein requesting the case be allowed to proceed in court.

The government has previously denied claims that phosphorous was used to disperse protesters at Letpadaung, insisting instead that only water cannon and tear gas were used.

But US-based rights group Justice Trust, which is assisting the monks' lawsuit, said the shell of one of the grenades was analysed at a laboratory in Bangkok and the results confirmed the presence of white phosphorous.

"International law prohibits the use [of phosphorous] against enemy soldiers even in times of war. Why did the government use it against their own peaceful monks and farmers?" said Roger Normand, the founder and executive director of Justice Trust.

The Letpadaung mine, which according to 2007 estimates contains the largest copper deposit in Southeast



Monks who require long-term medical care due to injuries sustained in a November 2012 police crackdown near the Letpadaung mine site

Asia, is in part backed by subsidiaries of Chinese weapons manufacturer Chinese North Industries Corp, better known as Norinco.

A 2014 report by Amnesty International found the company manufactures several varieties of legally dubious torture devices, as well as chemical weapons. The mine is also partly owned by army conglomerate Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd.

The mine has long been the subject of protests, particularly over environmental damage and land confiscations

In December, a 57-year-old woman was shot dead at the mine when police opened fire on protesters trying to stop the mine operator from fencing off disputed land.

The Lawyers Network, which is also helping the monks' lawsuit, said the owners of the mine must be brought to account.

"We will push this case all the way and if police don't accept it we will file to the Supreme Court," said lawyer U Aung Thane.

China, Myanmar investigate 'bombing'

Ethnic Kokang rebels reject government suggestions they orchestrated the March 13 incident, which left four people dead near Lincang



GUY DINMORE

A JOINT team of Chinese and Myanmar officials have started investigating the killing of five Chinese sugarcane workers in what Beijing says was an attack by a Myanmar warplane straying over the border with Yunnan province last week.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson told reporters in Beijing yesterday that work had begun, while noting what he called Myanmar's statement of regret over the March 13 incident near the Chinese border town of Lincang.

In a further sign that both sides

are trying to calm tensions over the incident, Myanmar released a statement on the evening of March 15 saying the government expressed its "deep sorrow for the death and injuries of Chinese nationals living in border areas".

The government said Myanmar's armed forces had been ordered to keep their operations against Kokang rebels "within the territory of Myanmar" and to respect China's territorial integrity.

However, the statement stopped short of accepting responsibility for the incident, saying a "thorough investigation" would be made into whether the Kokang rebel group had orchestrated the incident to harm bilateral relations and cause instability along the border.

U Tun Myat Lin, a spokesper-

son for the rebel Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), denied that its forces were responsible. "Our troops were not behind the scenes. I rule out the accusations. Manipulation of the two countries'

'We would like to

express our deep sorrow for the death

and injuries of **Chinese nationals.**

Myanmar government statement following the deaths of five workers across the China border

relations is not in our interests," he told The Myanmar Times.

The rebel spokesperson said military aircraft were seen near the border on the day the Chinese farm labourers were killed. Fighting was continuing yesterday, he added.

Tens of thousands of refugees, mostly ethnic Chinese, are reported to have fled across the border into China since fighting erupted in Kokang on February 9. China's spokesperson said the conflict had caused a serious impact on peace and stability in the border area and urged both sides to exercise restraint and take China's concerns seriously.

Fan Changlong, deputy head of China's Central Military Commission, called Senior General Min Aung Haing the day after the alleged bombing demanding that Myanmar

"seriously deal with this incident, punish those who caused the trouble, apologise and pay compensation to family members, and explain themselves to China".

The official Xinhua news agency reported that Mr Fan urged the commander-in-chief of the Tatmadaw to take firm action to rein in the armed forces and ensure no such incident occurred again. "Otherwise, China's military will take resolute and decisive measures to protect the lives, property and security of China's people," Mr Fan said.

Myanmar Online, a Chinese-language website that appears supportive of the Kokang rebels, reported that Chinese troop reinforcements arrived at the border yesterday while two helicopter gunships were seen over the town of Nansan.

Bus lines, cars diverted as work on Myaynigone flyover nears competion

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IN a final fortnight of pain before the Myaynigone overpass is completed at the end of this month, dozens of bus lines will have to be re-routed as heavy equipment is deployed to the crowded junction to finish the job.

From yesterday through to March 31, 38 bus lines have been diverted, according to the Yangon Region Supervisory Committee for Motor Vehicles - better known by its Myanmar-language acronym Ma Hta Tha

"Myaynigone junction, from Bargayar Road to Shin Sawpu Road, will be blocked with heavy concrete mixers and machinery. The bus routes will change as long as the road is closed," Ma Hta Tha chair U Hla Aung said yesterday.

The affected lines are mostly the north-south lines serving downtown. But Tarmwe-bound buses can still get through the Myaynigone junction.

The K17 billion, four-lane overpass is now 90 percent complete. according to Capital Development Company. Started in September

2014, it will be the fourth overpass to be completed in Yangon since a huge influx of private vehicles starting in 2011 brought congestion to the city streets.

Some diverted buses will use Bargayar, Baho and Pyidaungsu Yeik Thar roads before rejoining Pyay Road, and others will run from Hledan, Hanthawaddy, Myaynigone, Bargayar and Lower Kyeemyindaing roads to Phone Gyi Road.

Ma Hta Tha will announce more details of the diverted routes in due course, said U Hla Aung



IN PICTURES

Students wear black armbands to hluttaw

University Students' Union members wear black armbands during their meeting with parliamentarians to discuss proposed changes to the National Education Law yesterday. The students also observed a minute's silence in parliament for all students who have been mistreated in Myanmar over the years. - Pyae Thet Phyo

Kachin meet president and senior general

Kachin Independence Organisation delegation continues dialogue in capital ahead of Yangon talks

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A KACHIN Independence Organisation peace team met President U Thein Sein and Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing during a history-making visit to the capital Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The talks came as the government's Union Peace-making Work Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, which is negotiating on behalf of 16 armed groups, prepared to meet in Yangon today in an attempt to finalise the draft ceasefire.

President U Thein Sein met the KIO delegation led by La-Jar at his ranch in Nay Pyi Taw at 1pm to discuss the draft nationwide ceasefire accord. The president urged KIO members to work with the government to end the fighting in Kachin State, according to Myanmar Peace Center official U Hla Maung Shwe.

"We are brothers - we grew up together in the same country, Myanmar. We can create war and also we can make peace. Anyone killed on the battlefield - whoever they are is a loss for the country. So let's move toward democracy through peaceful means," President U Thein Sein said at the meeting, according to U Hla Maung Shwe.

At 3:30pm, the KIO delegation met Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the Bayintnaung Guesthouse. While no journalists were allowed to cover the meeting, Kachin Independence Army deputy commanderin-chief General Gun Maw said on March 15 after his meeting with Vice President Sai Mauk Kham that he expected to discuss the Kokang conflict and the Tatmadaw artillerv attack on a KIA academy in November that killed 23 people.

Until now, the KIO has - unlike most ethnic armed groups - shunned invitations to Nay Pyi Taw. The news

last week that a ground-breaking meeting with the government could take place was treated at first with great caution because the KIO had made no secret of its distrust for the government and the army.

The meeting gives additional impetus to the seventh round of formal talks between the UPWC and NCCT, which will begin at the Myanmar Peace Center in Yangon at 11am today. The two sides will discuss the final eight sections of the 103-section ceasefire agreement draft that are yet to be agreed upon.



President U Thein Sein and Kachin Independence Army deputy commander-in-chief General Gun Maw talk at the president's ranch in Nav Pyi Taw yesterday. Photo: Supplied/Min Zaw Oo

The meeting is expected to continue for six days. Both sides have said they expect it will result in a final agreement on the ceasefire. which was first proposed by the government in mid-2013.

An agreement on the ceasefire would pave the way for political dialogue.

The ceasefire states that dialogue nust begin with 90 days of the ceasefire being signed, while a framework for political dialogue must be agreed within 60 days.

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Press freedom: A long and winding road

EDITORIAL

MYANMAR'S media landscape has seen dramatic changes during the past four years. Draconian censorship rules for print media were abolished in 2012 and private dailies appeared in 2013. Two pieces of

legislation that directly concern the print media have passed parliament. Several independent journalism bodies sprang up for the first time in the past 50 or so years. Censorship of websites, particularly sources of

news, has disappeared. As a result, Myanmar has climbed from 174th to 145th in the Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, which assesses press freedom in more than 180 countries

each year. Many would agree this is quite an achievement.

The index reflects the degree of freedom that journalists enjoy and the efforts made by the authorities to respect this freedom. Reporters Without Borders works hard on its methodology and research to ensure the rankings give as accurate picture as possible of freedom on the ground.

Myanmar's improvement in recent years is perhaps best considered in light of rankings for other countries in the region on the 2014 index released last month. North Korea and China are way down, at $179^{\rm th}$ and 175th respectively. Within, Vietnam is the lowest, at 174th. Top of the list is Thailand, at 130th. Both Cambodia and Indonesia are also ahead of Myanmar, but we should be proud of the fact we are ahead of Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Laos and Brunei.

This does not mean that media freedom in Myanmar is perfect. Journalists here still face threats - of being obstructed, arrested or even imprisoned, as we saw earlier this month. Two journalists were detained while covering garment worker protests. while two more spent time in Tharyarwady Prison after being arrested at Letpadan during a crackdown on student demonstrators.

Broadcast media is still heavily controlled by the authorities, and a law that was supposed to liberalise the sector has been inexplicably held up in parliament. The government continues to prop up its loss-making daily newspapers, undermining the vibrant - and independent - publications produced by the private sector.

Other major challenges include the legal framework, media ownership, freedom of information and the capacity of journalists. These are not going away any time soon. All we can say for now is that while there has been improvement, there is still is a long way to go.

IN BRIEF

Down syndrome day to be marked for first time

A ceremony to mark World Down Syndrome Day in Myanmar for the first time will be held on March 21 at San Chaung Thar Stage in People's Park, Yangon, to raise awareness of the condition.

Artists and children suffering from Down syndrome will entertain at the ceremony, according to the Myanmar Down Syndrome Association.

'The aim is to get people to recognise the condition. Too many parents are ashamed that their children suffer from it," said Daw Myo Pa Pa, president of the association's working committee.

World Down Syndrome Day, which is being marked in Myanmar for the first time, is designed to help children live a healthier life, to get the special education they need and to help parents share their experiences.

Children with the syndrome live into their twenties. They have different features from other people," she said, adding that about 300 children had been invited to the ceremony, as well as senior officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare." – Myint Kay Thi

Corrupt judge gets 10 years' prison: Supreme Court

A judge in Homalin township, Sagaing Region, has been sentenced to 10 years' hard labour for corruption, parliament heard yesterday. Supreme Court Judge U Myint Aung disclosed that a number of corrupt judges had been punished.

"The Homalin township judge was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment with hard labour under section 56 of the Anti-Corruption Law," U Myint Aung told Pyithu Hluttaw. However, he gave no further details. An associate township judge from Yankin Township Court in Yangon Region had also been charged under the anti-corruption law, and judges in Tada-Oo, Kavan, Amarapura, Kani, Mawlamyine and Mingalardon townships had been dismissed on suspicion of corruption, he said. Judge U Myint Aung said two judges had been sacked, four suspended, one docked an annual increment and 19 judges issued with warnings for failing to follow rules of procedure. Daw Mi Myint Than, MP for Ye township in Mon State, said innocent people had been convicted by judges who had taken bribes. – Htoo Thant, translation by Thiri Min Htun



The front page of The Myanmar Post yesterday ran its cover blacked out to protest government oppression. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Journal blacks out front page amid boycott call

The Myanmar Post joins a Myanmar Journalist Network campaign to boycott government sources, three days after one of its reporters was released from jail



NEWSPAPERS protesting the beating of journalists by police attacking stureporters to flee, according to a journalist from The Myanmar Times who was present.

Two journalists were among the 127 detained on March 10. Ko Nyan Lin Tun from The Myanmar Post and Ko Phyo Aung Myint from Reporter Journal were released on March 13.

responded on his Facebook page saying the measure would have no effect on the government, which maintains its own media outlets, adding that the government could also use social and international media to air its views

U Than Htay, joint secretary of the MJN, told The Myanmar Times they disputed the information minister's response. "I found it very irresponsi-



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dents at Letpadan on March 10 are blacking out government news. Black spaces will appear on pages that would otherwise have carried stories from or about the Ministry of Information. President U Thein Sein and the Ministry of Home Affairs, they say. The first to join the campaign was The Myanmar Post, which appeared yesterday with black spaces on its front page. The network plans to meet more editors to encourage them to take part, it said.

The campaign comes after about 500 baton-wielding police attacked a group of about 100 students at Letpadan on March 10, beating and arresting them. Monks were also targeted, leaving about 10 of them bleeding from the head. The police then turned on the media covering the affray, cursing and shouting "Beat! Beat! Beat them all to death!" forcing the

'We will tell [the

International Press Institute] that journalists covering

a protest were

beaten and arrested.

U Than Htay

Myanmar Journalist Network

On March 13, the Myanmar Journalist Network decided to request newspapers not to carry news about the president and the two ministries, and to print black spaces instead.

Information Minister U Ye Htut

ble," he said.

The MJN says it will also boycott a conference on the media organised by the International Press Institute in Yangon from March 27 to 29 to draw attention to the government's oppression of the media.

The conference will focus on hate speech and will feature speakers from the United States, France, Sweden, Myanmar and other countries.

Instead, the network plans to write to the IPI explaining the reasons for their representatives' absence.

"We will tell them that journalists covering a protest were beaten and arrested, so that participants will understand how free the Myanmar media are," he said.

U Ye Htut, who will also be speaking at the IPI conference, responded that the boycott did not concern the government.

FEATURE

In Magwe, hope returns to dry zone

A program to produce, market and sell traditional handicrafts is empowering women and could soon be expanded to other regions

RACHNA SACHASINH

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SEWING machines whir, cutting machines slice ancient petrified wood and mallets mould rattan into pliable shapes. From the rear of a large, openair building, the shuttles of looms can be heard swishing back and forth. Amid the din, there are sounds of children playing at an on-site day care centre, and the chatter and laughter of more than 50 women mastering traditional Myanmar handicrafts.

Part of a network run by ActionAid, the vocational centre in Kanma, Pakkoku township, is helping poor communities in the "dry zone" – an area that stretches across central Myanmar where the UN World Food Programme estimates 40 percent of households live at or below the poverty line.

Irregular and scarce rainfall makes this one of the country's most food insecure areas. Agricultural income continues to decline due to climatic shifts, poor infrastructure and lack of credit, among other constraints. Men travel far in search of work, leaving many households headed by women who have limited education, and face social isolation and exclusion from broader economic activities.

The Socio Economic Development Network (SEDN), funded by the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust, focuses on the Magwe Region, working in 94 villages in Pakkoku and Myaing townships.

The network tackles the economic and social needs of the women and their families by helping them access basic services, such as health and education, and administrative processes like ID card registration.

A Craft Producer Network was established to link producer groups to markets and increase earnings potential by getting women, the government and private businesses working together.

"I never thought I would be sitting with [government] officials and companies and talking like equals," says Daw Zin Mar Aye, a seamstress from Middle Sabbae village in Pakkoku. "The program links us to government and businesses so that we don't have to recreate this once the program leaves."

Daw Zin Mar Aye had previously received vocational training with another international NGO. "We learned how to bake, but after the training, we had to buy our own materials and find a way to sell it. This program is different, because they teach you and they connect you to the buyers."

When Simone Herault, technical adviser for ActionAid, began planning the venture two years ago, she knew from experience in Cambodia and Ethiopia that a livelihood program must address social and economic

Source Louis Doors Table



Women deliver rattan products produced under a vocation training program in Magwe Region. Photo: Rachna Sachasinh

barriers to be effective. By involving government, private business and the women in all aspects, Ms Herault, along with a team of local Myanmar staff, laid the groundwork for networks that foster communication, collaboration and access.

The General Administration Department office in Nyaung Oo, which liaises with SEDN, supports this process because the network promotes access to available public services.

SEDN operates two vocational centres in Pakkoku township and two in

'I never thought I would be sitting with [government] officials and companies and talking like equals.'

Daw Zin Mar Aye Seamstress from Pakkoku

Myaing. More than 800 women have so far been trained in weaving, sewing or making rattan.

"We teach trainees basic skills and the importance of maintaining high quality standards, such as cleanliis sold, the entire profit is allocated to the respective producer group. Of this, 60 percent is paid directly to the women, and the rest into a collective savings account.

A Craft Producer Network Committee brings together women producers, the government and the private sector each month. Here, village producers sit face to face with representatives from the local district office and tourism sector managers to identify market opportunities.

The committee numbers more than 400 women producers and 60 government and private businesses at present. It is expected that the committee and women producers will take over operation of the social business in the fourth year of the program, a prospect that causes anxiety for the producers, who are just getting familiar with the process. Self-reliance and a functional social business are pillars of the project's long-term goals.

Another challenge is the number of women who participate in producer groups. At present, roughly half choose to participate. Working and collaborating in groups is new for many women, and there is hesitancy to commit.

"In the beginning, the women were very shy, and they did not trust us," says Ma May Thinzar Kyaw Soe, network program coordinator. "They would start training and stop, or they would finish training but work for themselves. When they started to see other women earning more income and getting weekly orders, then they came back. We don't force anyone. We are happy to have them come back and make them part of the network." For now, the women take their cues from Ms Herault, who designs home décor, clothing, accessories and textiles that bridge traditional Myanmar patterns and ethnic motifs with a modern sensibility. Cushion covers are crafted using hand-woven textiles with Shan or Kachin motifs. Chin designs are adapted into handbags and bedspreads. "You will not find a longyi here, because the focus is to create collections based on traditional Myanmar handicrafts that you won't find anywhere else," Ms Herault says.

made-in-Myanmar handicraft sector that produces high-quality goods for

tourists. U Ohn Thwin, general manager of Amazing Bagan Resort, said he supports the program because his guests appreciate buying handicrafts that benefit local communities.

Yukiko Sekihara, a manager of Bagan Thiripyitsaya Sanctuary Resort, said, "The products from MBoutik are great for our décor. We prefer working with them, because of the nice design, quality and punctual delivery."

ActionAid's network is showing early promise, generating a feeling of solidarity and hope among the women, who benefit from their connection to each other and to the wider economic system. As a result, SEDN is considering expansion to communities in Kayah, Kayin, Shan and Kachin states.

Daw Maw Maw Lwin from Kyittee in Myaing says she feels more confident and secure, echoing the sentiment of most women participants. "The government and business leaders give us space to talk and treat us with respect. The [program] staff also support us, so we can learn how to communicate the right way."

"We have more choice," adds Daw Mar Lar San, a rattan producer from Pakkoku. "I used to sell vegetables from my vegetable garden. It was not steady work, and I was always worried about money."

"If I need help, I can turn to the women in my group," says Daw Htay Kywe from Kyittee village. "I cannot tell you how proud and happy I feel to earn my own money."

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Products on display at Mboutik in Nyaung Oo. Photo: Rachna Sachasinh

ness, symmetry and craftsmanship," explains training coordinator Daw Lae Lae Htwe.

After vocational training, women learn book-keeping and are encouraged to organise into producer groups that allow them to work together to complete orders. For many, the producer groups are a secondary source of income. When a woman has to stop sewing or weaving to help in the field, care for young children or recuperate from illness, the rest of the group can keep working and earning.

In Nyaung Oo, SEDN operates a social business called MBoutik, where the textiles and handicrafts are sold. MBoutik is centrally located to access the tourist market in Bagan and villages in Pakkoku and Myaing. The women are paid an initial sum per product, which includes the cost of materials and labour. Once the item

Her collections have a clear market advantage. Years of isolation has left the country bereft of an authentic, Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademark or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

U Kyi Win Associates for **INTERBASIC HOLDING S.r.l.** P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon. Phone: 372416 Da

Dated: 17th March, 2015

Disaster training centre planned

MYANMAR will open a disaster management training centre in Hinthada, Ayeyarwady Region, in September, delegates at a world conference in Sendai, Japan, were told yesterday.

Minister for Social Welfare and Relief and Resettlement Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin was attending the World Disaster Risk Reduction conference to showcase Myanmar's achievements in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action approved 10 years ago.

Other achievements include the adoption of a disaster management law, the creation of national disaster preparedness committees countrywide, planning to establish an emergency operations centre and training young volunteers in disaster risk reduction.

The minister said previous natural disasters, which are not infrequent in Myanmar, had been overcome thanks to the collaboration of various entities under the Hyogo framework.

She also said Myanmar was committed to work with development partners in implementing a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to be adopted by the conference.

- Aye Sapay Phyu

88 Generation dismisses Malaysia migrants MOU



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THE 88 Generation has called on Malaysia to introduce legislation to protect Myanmar workers and dismissed a plan to sign of a bilateral memorandum of understanding as just for show.

During a meeting with President U Thein Sein on March 1, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak pledged to improve protection for migrant workers from Myanmar.

"Malaysia acknowledged the contribution of Myanmar labour force in Malaysia's economic development and agreed to expand and improve the cooperation," the Malaysian government said in a statement after the talks.

It will issue memorandum of understanding to formalise its intention to "safeguard the rights and interests of Myanmar workers in Malaysia", the statement said, without providing further details.

The Myanmar embassy in Malaysia confirmed that the memorandum would soon be signed by the two governments. The Malavsian embassy in Yangon said it could not comment as it had not received any information about the meeting between Mr Najib and U Thein Sein.

But Ma Thet Thet Aung, a member of the 88 Generation's migrant labour affairs group, said a law rather than an agreement was needed to protect migrants' rights in Malaysia.

"Malaysian officials always make these promises when they meet with their Myanmar counterparts, saying that they would improve protection for migrant workers," she said.

"But they still have not yet signed the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. If they want to improve protections for migrants, why didn't they sign it?

"The Myanmar government needs to push for the drawing of a new bilateral agreement on migrant workers."

Her comments come shortly after activists reported that the Malaysian government had arrested about 300 Myanmar migrant workers since the

Book

beginning of the year. The operation seems to have begun just as Malaysia took over from Myanmar as the chair of ASEAN they noted

The migrant workers are said to have been sent to camps for undocumented workers during January and February.

U San Win, a member of the Kepong Free Funeral Services Society based in Malaysia, told The Myanmar Times last week that the arrested workers had no work permit, but did have passports.

"Malaysia carried out special

'Malaysian officials always make these promises when they meet with their Myanmar counterparts.

Ma Thet Thet Aung 88 Generation migrant labour team

operations against Myanmar migrant workers after taking over the ASEAN chair," said U San Win, "The Myanmar government promised they would try their best to issue work permits two years ago, but nothing has happened."

The Myanmar government has issued identity certificates to its migrant workers in Malaysia, but only after long delays. "Our embassy there issues IDs, but only to citizens who already have an original Myanmar ID. Those without can't apply."

Ma Theit, who has been working in Malaysia for about 10 years, said it could take the Myanmar embassy up to a year to confirm an applicant's citizenship, and the worker could be arrested and jailed before the process was complete.

"Undocumented and unemployed migrant workers have been arrested recently," she said.

U Thein Win, director at the Labour Ministry, said discussions with the Malavsian government over the issue had vet to vield results. "Our minister will visit Malaysia at the end of this month" so that the matter could be resolved directly between the two governments, he said.



Foreigner robbed in Sagaing

A 50-year-old Englishman was robbed in Sagaing Hill on March 11, said Ko Moe Myint Oo, a bystander who came to his aid.

"I saw him in front of the police station trying to explain what had happened. The police couldn't understand, so I interpreted," he said.

A motorcyclist robbed tourist Gerald Kevin Boden near Ma Kite monastery at about 1pm while he was riding his bicycle. He reported the loss of a bag containing a wallet, passport, driving licence, credit card, US\$700, 10,000 baht, K15,000 and a mobile phone.

"The police are still trying to catch the thief," said Ko Moe Myint Oo. – Than Naing Soe

Men charged after young girl raped

Two men in their twenties have been arrested and charged with rape following a complaint from the father of a four-year-old girl in Hlaing Tharyar township

The alleged incident occurred on March 13, police said.

Thieves nick jewellery on bus

U Kyaw Zan Hla from Thingangyun township told police on March 14 that jewellery worth almost K6.3 million was missing from his bag. He said he had taken the jewellery to be polished at a shop on 28th Street. He then bought an additional K800,000 worth of diamond accessories at Bogyoke Market, and bought gold and emeralds at Shwebonthar Road. He packed them in his bag and took the 105 bus from Kone Zay Tan Gate. When he got home he found the zip of the bag open and the items were missing. Botahtaung Central Police Station is investigating.







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Train, container truck collide

Pazundaung railway station-master U San Maung reported to police on March 13 that a train collided with a container truck driven by Aung Ko Oo, 23, from Bago Region between Wardan and Ma Hlwa Kone. The accident caused K300,000 damage. Seikkan Police Station is investigating the incident. - Toe Wai Aung, translation by Emoon

Views



Shwe Pyi Thar labour leaders read a statement at Mahabandoola Park on March 8. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Time for govt to step up on labour disputes

Government policy failures have created this mess – and now it's time for officials to rise to the challenge and introduce the policies needed to resolve the conflicts



SITHU AUNG MYINT newsroom@mmtimes.com

A DEMONSTATION by workers was timed to coincide with student protests against the National Education Law recently. Several strikes broke out simultaneously at factories in the Shwe Pyi Thar Industrial Zone. Some resolved their disputes agreement with their employer. Some of these were brutally attacked by plain-clothed thugs, and 14 leaders were arrested.

According to the latest figures, nearly 20 workers were arrested for their role in the protests. On March 8, leaders of the Shwe Pyi Thar demonstration held a press conference at Mahabandoola Park in downtown Yangon, at which they called on the authorities to release the arrested workers, reveal who used the vigilantes to suppress the demonstrations and resolve the workers' demand for a wage increase.

Poor workplace conditions and low wages were behind the decision to strike, but in particular the latter. The government's mediation team by workers in Cambodia. But Myanmar has a higher cost of living than Cambodia. This is directly related to government fiscal management and policies. Myanmar people have struggled with high consumer prices because of the government's poor management and corruption, and the government should accept responsibility for this.

On the employers' side, they have their own problems as well. They have invested a lot in land rental. They also have to pay a lot for electricity and incur unnecessary expenditures due to government bureaucracy. This is also the result of poor management by the government.

But the wage disputes can be re-

From Htee Khee, a message of peace



newsroom@mmtimes.com

RECENTLY the Myanmar government's chief peace negotiator, Union minister U Aung Min, visited Htee Khee in Dawei district, Tanintharyi Region.

My colleagues and I travelled with him. The entourage also included a Karen National Union (KNU) delegation, led by the group's chair, General Mutu Say Poe. Relative peace and stability has returned to the area after three years of ceasefire, and it was time to assess the prospects for development initiatives.

Many years ago when still in the military, U Aung Min once walked from Dawei to the Htee Khee area. It took him five days.

Like the minister, General Mutu travelled by boat along Tanintharyi River for about five days to reach Htee Khee. His last visit to the area was said to be in the 70s.

The road trip to Htee Khee brought back some memories for me, too. I used to visit the area in the early 1990s, although my trips were less arduous as I made my way to Htee Khee from the Thai side.

Htee Khee is about 153 kilometres (95 miles) from Dawei. On the current unpaved road it takes about four hours.

Unlike the talk of war in the north of Myanmar, every discussion at various stopovers along the road to Htee Kee was about building roads, villages, schools, hospitals, trade, development and cooperation.

Located near the Thai border with Myanmar, it was – and still is – under the control of the KNU's Brigade 4. I last visited in about 1993. The Htee Khee area then hosted an All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) camp called "Minthamee". The overwhelming feeling in the camp was that being in the resistance was serious business and so the message could not be a joke. Or perhaps camp leaders thought residents needed a boost to their morale, so they intentionally did not question the message.

The news energised the men more than the women. For three days, the camp was awash with speculation and anticipation. Obviously, Connie was the talk of the camp.

In preparation for the arrival of this national celebrity, the male students had their hair cut. They shaved moustaches and trimmed beards. They washed their best clothes and carefully put them under their pillow in order to press them while they slept.

Around 2pm on the afternoon of her supposed arrival, everyone in the camp went to the riverside. Connie was to come by boat. I went with them and watched the spectacle. At about 4pm three small long-tailed boats arrived. Connie indeed was there on the boat but – much to everyone's great disappointment – it was not the pop singer Connie. No offence to the new recruit, but she was small, dark and unattractive. I was in agreement with their disappointment. Male students cursed their comrades at the frontline and went about their business.

Soon after the incident, I left the camp. I do not know what hand fate dealt Connie.

During my recent visit to Htee Khee, all those memories flooded back. It must have been the same for others with me, including U Aung Min and General Mutu Say Poe.

But there was more to the trip than simply memories. The Htee Khee area has long been synonymous with war – not just for decades, but for centuries. Alaungphaya, the Myanmar king, invaded Thailand and ransacked its capital Ayuthaya in 1765. The victorious king sent his army via Htee Khee.

In 1941, General Aung San and his legendary Thirty Comrades used the Htee Khee route to return to Myanmar. With the help of the Japanese they drove the British out. The Kayin set up a base here to fight successive Myanmar governments after independence in 1948. Later, in 1988, the students joined the Kayin here to fight the military regime.

However, peace has returned to Htee Khee since the KNU's ceasefire with the government in early 2012. It is here to stay – for the first time in centuries. Unlike the talk of war in the north of Myanmar, every discussion at various stopovers along the road to Htee Khee was about building roads, villages, schools, hospitals, trade, development and cooperation.

The KNU leaders talked about turning the "bloody battlefields into

through compromise and negotiation, while some workers faced a violent crackdown by the authorities.

This is a good time to ask why labour disputes are difficult to reconcile in Myanmar, and how they could be dealt with better.

More than 5500 workers from Costec, Ford Glory, E-Land Myanmar and Red Stone garment factories and Tai Yi shoe factory in Shwe Pyi Thar Industrial Zone protested simultaneously. According to a government statement, workers from four of the factories reached a compromise with employers and most have now returned to work. However, hundreds have also lost their jobs.

This includes more than 600 workers from E-Land Myanmar who still have not reached an helped bring workers and employers together to discuss a wage increase, but some couldn't reach agreement. Workers complained that their minimum wage could hardly cover their living costs, while employers said that if they agreed to the demands they would lose money.

The workers' demands are simple. They said their monthly income ranges from just K80,000 to K130,000 a month, and this is not enough to cope with rising living costs. Workers from E-Land Myanmar demanded a K1000-a-day pay increase.

It is obvious there will never be a resolution if just workers and employers are negotiating.

The daily wage of a Myanmar worker – the equivalent of US\$2.50-3 – is about the same as that earned solved if the government steps up to the plate. The first thing to do is to set a minimum wage. The government hasn't done this yet – indeed, it seems reluctant to, because it fears that if is too low it will prompt more protests, and if it too high foreign investment might dry up. Another problem is that living costs vary significantly from place to place. This makes it hard for the government to set a national minimum wage like Thailand.

Regardless, these disputes can be settled neither through negotiation between employers and workers only, nor through violence against protest leaders. Only if the government carries out its duties properly can this crisis be resolved. Based on its track record, however, that prospect seems unlikely.

- Translation by Zar Zar Soe

I had fond memories of Htee Khee and the Minthamee camp.

An ABSDF leader once beat his competitors and won the heart of the camp's most beautiful woman – only to lose an election for camp leader to his competitors shortly after. It was a delicate balancing act between love and politics.

At the same camp, I witnessed a cruel practical joke played on camp residents by their comrades fighting at the front line. It happened during one of my visits. It went like this.

The message from the frontline came, short and concise. It read, "Connie has joined the resistance. She will be brought to the base in three days."

The news that they would soon be joined by a famous female pop singer spread faster than wildfire in the small camp. It jolted residents from their boring daily routine. bloodless political dialogue". They emphasised the waste of war and "overcoming the mountain of more than 60 years of armed conflict through reconciliation". They pleaded for understanding and sympathy for their long-suffering people.

The Kayin have incessantly talked of peace. Especially in Htee Khee area, they are slowly turning an area long associated with deadly conflicts and misery into one of peace.

The river that carried Connie two decades ago to Minthamee camp near Htee Khee has disappeared, replaced only by a small pond. But peace is here to stay. This – together with our memories – is what we brought back from Htee Khee.

Aung Nang Oo is associate director of the Peace Dialogue Program at the Myanmar Peace Center.

Business

Franchising forecasted for the future of local businesses

SU PHYO WIN

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KNOWLEDGE of franchising is still at the earliest stages, hindering development of what could be a high-growth part of the economy, according to local and international experts.

The country's first franchise association was started last week, aiming to promote the concept as an internationally-tested method to building business.

"When I ask local businesspeople to consider franchises, they say they don't want to," said presidential economic adviser U Aung Tun Thet at a seminar yesterday. "They should understand that simply opening branch offices is not enough for economic development."

Small and medium enterprises count for 97 percent of the total number of companies. With franchises, those small business owners could gain support and ideas from larger companies while still running their own firms.

U Aung Tun Thet said the main hurdle is not a lack of specific laws or associations, but rather simply a lack of knowledge of how franchises operate.

Other ASEAN nations have had considerable success in this area.

Indonesia has 486 franchise brands and 39,000 outlets; Malaysia has 666 brands and 5066 outlets; Philippines has 1500 brands and 140,000 outlets; and Singapore has 500 brands and 3000 outlets, according to a survey by the Phlippines Franchise Association.

Its emeritus chair Samie Lim said franchising can be a powerful tool for economic development that creates thousands of enterprises and millions of jobs.

"Before we changed [to franchising], there were only 45 internationalstandard franchise brands in Philippines. Now it has reached 1500 brands, of which 65pc are local - but it took 15

years to reach this stage," said Mr Lim. Saward Mitaree, president of the Thailand Franchise and Licence Association, said in Thailand there are systematic attempts to transform small business owners into

franchisees. 'Myanmar can just start franchise businesses. If they understand how franchises will help business, they will change over," he said.

'Franchising is like marriage. Before you get a franchise, you must study.'

Daw Kay Khine Kyaw Nyunt Franchisee

Myanmar has no franchise law at present, but neither does Thailand.

"We are pushing the [Thai] government to approve a franchise law," he said. "But we already have so much legal protection, such as trade laws and so on."

Myanmar last week launched its first Franchise and Chainstore Association from current franchises in the country, aiming to serve as a thirdparty association, partly to join together international franchisors with local businesspeople.

Founding member Daw Kay Khine Kyaw Nyunt said it will not be compulsory to join the association, though it will benefit members.

There are currently about 50 main franchise brands in the country.

"Franchising is like marriage. Before

image and the reputation of the brand you will be franchising," she said.

Mvanmar CP Livestock is one of the largest domestic franchisers. It has taken a detailed approach to adding locations, according to U Zaw Ko Ko, assistant department manager of its food business.

"We first look at the location, which has to be in a crowded area with targeted customers. The second part is capital. The franchisee also needs experience, past income, ethics and an educated background," he said. U Zaw Ko Ko added franchisees can generate profits of 10 to 15pc.

Others who have taken the plunge say there has historically been relatively little support for franchise owners.

Nan Nan Company has become the local franchisee of Potato Break. opening its first Myanmar branch last June, with more to follow in the coming fiscal year, said its manager Jeremy Kyaw

There are concrete steps that can be taken to support development of franchises. Mr Lim said Myanmar's franchise association should be recognised by the government and be free from unnecessary restrictions.

"I know what the government can and can't do. I think that for businesses like SMEs, the government should set up some infrastructure to support them, but should not pass laws to inhibit them, as laws sometimes restrict growth?

Philippines had essentially selfregulated the industry in the absence of law, according to Philippines Franchising Association director of legal, governance and ethical standards Leo Dominguez.

"I think Myanmar will not have a real understanding at first," he said. "As your country is just opening, its economy and businesses are young. When franchising, companies that offer themselves to franchisees is saying that we have been around for



Liquor droug

Many retailers are keeping imported alcohol off



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THE foreign liquor drought has continued for weeks since a late February move by some retailers to pull booze off the shelves, after promises of legalised imports did not materialise.

Officials from the Myanmar Retailers Association head office in Yangon said they remain hopeful the government will pursue an explicit policy on alcohol imports that will be in line with a market economy.

Foreign alcohol imports are currently banned, though distributors had been using loopholes in the law to bring in alcohol. Authorities cracked down on this practice in late 2013, claiming to be planning ways to legalise the exports in the future.

The plans have not yet materialised, however, and last month a number of prominent retailers stripped the alcohol from their shelves. Government officials have said the main concern is the prevalence of fakes on the market, though Myanmar Retailers Association officials say it is not fakes or rising taxes on alcohol that caused them to empty the shelves.

U Nay Myo Than Tin, an official at Myanmar Retailers Associations with responsibilities in Mandalay Region, said the decision by some liquor shops to stop selling alcohol was made individually, not across the association's entire membership.

Stores which took alcohol off the shelves are facing customer complaints that they cannot meet demand.

'Our trouble is that we haven't received any updated information from government ministries or a new explicit policy yet," he said. "We have only seen a short piece of news in state media last week, so we can't tell what we will do."

The Global New Light of Myanmar reported last week that wine imports will be allowed soon, with an announcement coming in March to register local



Prominent retailers have pulled alcohol off

steps to importing, we must buy from suppliers - it is difficult to import ourselves," he said.

Hotels frequently buy alcohol from duty-free shops for their customers who prefer foreign brands. U Tin Win said he hopes obstacles to imports are removed in the future.

Complicating efforts to create a liquor policy are the large number of government departments involved in setting it up.

'If we officially allow and collect data from imports ... it will be much



companies.

Citing Daw Tin San Yi, director of the Ministry of Commerce's Directorate of Trade, the report said that local companies with proper permits and a contract with foreign partners will be entitled to apply for wine import licences at the Directorate of Trade. The report added licences will be valid for one year, with imports restricted to sea and air routes and alcohol content of from 7 to 20 percent.

U Tin Win, managing director of Central Hotel and joint secretary general of the Myanmar Hotelier Association, said hotels can also suffer liquor shortages even though they can currently obtain import licences.

"As we have few customers for our liquor and there are many

easier to control fakes.'

U Win Myint Ministry of Commerce

Ministry of Commerce director U Win Myint said it is not just his ministry but other departments concerned with internal revenue, customs and logistics that are involved in the trade. He added the Ministry of Commerce has announced plans since last November to begin wine imports, but customs and internal revenue restrictions remain.

"The probable issue is the government has shown imports the

Opinions divided on Telenor's police booth sponsorship BUSINESS 10



IMF head heaps praise on India's reforming economy BUSINESS 11

Exchange Rates (March 16 close)				
Currency	Buying	Selling		
Euro	K1089	K1107		
Malaysia Ringitt	K307	K308		
Singapore Dollar	K762	K768		
Thai Baht	K31	K32		
US Dollar	K1065	K1069		

ht before wine plan

the shelves, as government promises a revamped wine import policy



the shelves, while many hotels are relying on imports from duty-free firms. Photo: Staff

green light, but some problems remain in the private sector," he said. "Besides, different departments are not cooperating with its procedures on the issue."

The government is particularly concerned on the problem of fake alcohol, though data on the subject is scare and it is therefore difficult to control.

"If we officially allow and collect data from imports, as well as supply and consumption, it will be much easier to control fakes," he said.

Compounding the private sector's difficulties is the increasing number of tourists visiting the country, many of whom are keen on consuming foreign tipple.

U Nay Lin, managing director of Sein Lan Kabar Company and vice chair of the Myanmar Restaurant Association, said hotels face more trouble when they have more foreign customers. "We are careful to only accept goods from suppliers that have valid import licences and tax-paid seals," he said.

Myanmar Industries Association chair U Zaw Min Win said in his association's opinion it would like to see imports legalised as soon as possible, but the government is currently discuss the problem to ensure they are managing every potential part of the issue.



Preparing the financial system for digital attacks

CATHERINE TRAUTWEIN

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AS money moves online and onto mobile phones, security could stand between banking customers and hacks and attacks – but some say the industry isn't quite ready for security showdowns.

Financial players worldwide put up all kinds of barriers to keep attacks at bay. But in Myanmar, some of these walls can be flimsy. Education around security risks remains low and infrastructure for preventing them lacking – all this in a market rapidly moving onto the internet.

Tim Scheffmann, CEO of mobile banking software provider Frontier Technology Partners, has had a long career in banking and said he was currently experiencing déjà vu in Myanmar. "Everything is repeating itself right now, but it's faster and on a higher level," he continued.

Security has not always kept pace with the speed of the development in the banking sector, according to Mr Scheffmann.

"The last 40 to 50 years, no one has had to think about that," he said. "There was no crime and there was no one hacking or with hacking capabilities here.

"Now that has changed."

Adam Hunt of Yangon entrepreneurship school Opportunities NOW used to be a "white hat" hacker – someone that works to expose security issues for hire, or for other benevolent reasons. On the other side of the coin, "black hat" hackers do a similar job, but with more malicious intentions.

Mr Hunt, speaking at downtown innovation lab Phandeeyar on March 12, called security a holistic mindset, and listed different aspects that make up the whole: physical, procedural, technical and social components.

Physical security seems the most traditional, and can involve practices like locking doors and windows. But even elementary security measures might be absent in Myanmar.

Mr Scheffmann erected an iron cage around Frontier Technology Partners' servers and installed CCTV cameras when he first arrived, he said. On the procedural side, the company has also made sure employees know what to do and who to tell in case of fire, and also how to wield pepper spray – the last taught using a balloon with a menacing expression.

Technical security involves the network, hardware, firewall, servers and work stations, Mr Hunt said.

d work stations, Mr Hunt said. "[Banks] need to Frontier Technology Partners de- those areas of securi

can't with "homemade" programs, Mr Scheffmann said. "They just do not have the capacity."

The social side to security can deal with more complex threats – ones in disguise. Mr Hunt describes his history as a white hat hacker and strategies to obtain sensitive information, including using false business cards and back stories.

"We're using people, we're using their lack of education or the goodness of their hearts to gain access," Mr Hunt said.

To him, the primary threat to users' data is education. "Millions of people in Myanmar are beginning to use computers and cell phones and the internet for the first time, and they don't know what the risks are," he said.

Unfortunately, what they don't know can hurt them. Mr Scheffmann shakes his head when asked about a bank's response to customers' tribulations in the case of hacks. "You can call the help desk," he said.

Mr Scheffmann said that at the regulatory level around mobile money and mobile banking, the Central Bank of Myanmar did not demand specific security standards be met. The financial institution, charged with oversight of the banking industry, has taken a cautious approach around policy.

"We are dealing with a regulator who is very, very conservative," Mr Scheffmann said. While it tends not to risk anything, it actually opens doors to other potential risks.

Mr Scheffmann said the maxim "slow and steady wins the race" prevails in the Myanmar market.

He mentions a story a friend told him about elephants worried about their footing on unstable ground. "When elephants tread onto muddy waters, they become totally insecure ... so they break a branch, put it on the muddy ground and then step on the branch," he said. "If the elephant driver is pushing them too hard to move forward, the elephant will grab the driver, put it in the mud and step on the driver.

"That happens every other month here in Myanmar."

Mr Hunt said banks must begin migrating online to keep competitive, but that by doing so they implement publicly accessible systems that could get attacked.

Moving toward a secure future in Myanmar will require people work on the strength of even the weakest links in the security chain.

"[Banks] need to go through all of those areas of security – technical sys-

Wine will be the first foreign alcohol that can be imported under the government's plan. Photo: Staf

pends on German powerhouse SAP for its software, which protects data with measures like encryption and safeguards information that other Myanmar vendors and solutions tems and training and physical and all that," Mr Hunt said. "Because if all the areas work except one ... then that's where you're going to get hit. All the rest doesn't matter."

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CHDB pushes for funding for plans to finance mortgages for homeowners



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HOME ownership may be a common dream, but financing purchases of admittedly expensive homes continues to be an obstacle.

The Construction and Housing Development Bank was set up in 2013 under the Ministry of Construction's supervision to providing the loans that could allow more people to afford homes, but so far its success has been limited.

Managing director U Win Zaw said it needs more funding to expand its loan portfolio and more time to assist customers with paying back its loans.

"If we do get long term funds, we will be able to lend money to customers for the long-term," he said. "But now we need money."

The bank's current funding comes with a four-year term, meaning it is limited to four-year loans. U Win Zaw said with longer funding, 10 or two-year mortgages would become possible.

"We established this bank a year ago, but we don't have any longterm funding," he said.

It hopes to tap international institutions for more funding. This will require building trust and showing the Construction and Housing Development Bank can overcome problems.

Its current maximum interest rate is 12 percent plus a 1pc interest charge for a four-year mortgage. Given the bank is lending to immovable property, it has been issuing some loans for four years, longer than most other banks, which have a one-year limit. Although Yangon property prices have shown recent signs of settling, most commentators agree real estate is selling well beyond the price range of the average would-be buyer. While the bank can't move the property market by itself, it can offer interest rates and terms that are more convenient to let more buyers enter.

The bank, however, is still at early days of development. It currently only lends for big government projects and large, low-risk associations like the Mandalay City Development Committee.

It has accepted applications from about 200 potential borrowers, but is still scrutinising the individuals before making any decision.

U Win Zaw said he admitted that this falls short of what people are expecting from the bank.

"The bank should support actual loans for people who need loans," said company director Ko Myint Kyaw Thura. "It doesn't make sense for us to lend to people who already own homes."

He said he pushed for more government policies for first-time home buyers, as it makes a measureable impact on peoples' lives.

Interest rates are still expensive at the bank, with a four-year term being difficult for borrowers.

"These days a starter house may



turned down because they cannot show ownership on title deeds



cost K20 million [US\$19,400]. To repay that over four years requires payments of about K400,000 a month without including interest," he said. "Most people are not earning this amount of money."

Like all domestic banks, Construction and Housing Development Bank must provide a minimum 8pc interest rate to depositors, though some of its products offer higher returns.

Potential home owners say they are frustrated with the difficulty in securing financing.

Retired officer U Hla Soe Tint is building a house in the 15th ward of Yangon's Shwe Pauk Kan township. He said he would like to borrow to help build the home, but has been stymied so far by lending limits and the four-year term. "Some people might pretend to build a house and then use this money to start a business, but this is a risky strategy. If the business fails, the house will be seized," he said. U Hla Soe Tint added the bank would not accept him as a borrower anyway due to an inability to show regular income.

Most applicants to Construction and Housing Development Bank have been rejected for not being able to show the appropriate documents, particularly land title.

U Win Zaw said in some cases, the title documents may show an owner who is 10 times removed from the current, actual owner of the property.

Many buyers do not re-register land in their name after making a

purchase in an effort to get around property taxes, which are charged on a percentage of a property's sales value.

Yet the buyer is also closing him or herself off to most mortgages, as banks want documents specifying the correct owner's name when taking collateral.

"There are a lot of cases like this," said U Win Zaw. "And we can't lend them money. We can only lend when the name on the paper is the name of the person who wants to borrow."

About 70pc of all applicants are turned down for this reason, he added.

Construction and Housing Development Bank deputy managing director Daw Myint Myint Mu said there are many people requesting loans, but it is difficult to accept applications.

Others are turned down because they are not able to explain how they plan on paying back the money.

The bank has received some financing, such as US\$10 million from Japan's Sawada Holding Company, which was earmarked for mortgages in a particular housing project.

Currently the bank has about K100 billion in total capital, of which about 90pc is lent out, according to its deputy managing director U Than Aung.

Rapidly expanding property prices, particularly in Yangon, has put home ownership beyond the reach of most in Myanmar's largest city. For most, the problem is one of access to finance.

Although a start has been made with Construction and Housing Development Bank, there is plenty more to do before it becomes a truly effective lender to help home owners.



Telenor traffic booths draw mixed reaction

AYE NYEIN WIN

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TELENOR'S sponsorship of traffic police huts are drawing mixed reactions from drivers.

The Norwegian telco has inked an agreement to spruce up traffic huts in Yangon and Mandalay, outfitting the booths with a Telenor logo and an LED screen displaying a set of traffic rules in Myanmar language. The traffic booths stand out on the city's roads, and the move has generated opinions both for and against.

"Even if the messages can be difficult to read for drivers, their passengers can read them easily and learn the traffic rules," said taxi driver U Moe Thee. "Taxi drivers and passengers must follow rules – there's no extra lives, and body parts can't be replaced easily."

U Moe Thee said it is a good mix of advertising for the company and

One of Telenor's renovated traffic police booths on Bogyoke Aung San Street. The move to spruce up the booths has drawn mixed reaction from commuters. Photo: Naing Win Htun

Telenor Myanmar CEO Petter Furberg said it has not paid any money to the authorities.

"The only cost Telenor has is painting and fixing the booths, as some were in a pretty bad state," he told *The Myanmar Times* last month.

'People could assume that Telenor has authority or support from the government - I think that's an ugly feature.'

U Maung Taxi driver for the benefit of road users.

Other drivers opposed the booths, saying it brings advertising too close to state functions.

"Education drivers and road users is a good idea – but I'm so ashamed of my government," said taxi driver U Maung. "Actually, the government should be doing this on its own, but it has no funds for this ... Telenor is not under the government and is only a private company, and the Ministry of Home Affairs should be responsible."

"People could assume that Telenor has authority or support from the government – I think it's an ugly feature," he said.

Traffic police captain U Win Lwin said the traffic police do not own the huts, pointing reporters to Region authorities, who declined to comment on the booths.

SINGAPORE Chance from Macau's gambling stumble

AT the oceanfront Ramada Plaza hotel on South Korea's Jeju island, about a hundred Chinese gamblers huddle around felt-topped tables, wagering as much as 5 million won (US\$4500) at baccarat. Shouts in Mandarin - "Beautiful!" - ring out as bettors with winning hands slam their cards down.

Asian casino operators from South Korea to Australia are pulling in China's gamblers as the country's corruption crackdown scares many away from Macau, the world's biggest gambling hub. They are capitalising on a downturn in the city's gaming industry, which last month suffered its worst drop ever.

Operators such as Paradise Co in South Korea are hiring Mandarin-speaking staff and offering VIP treatment including free flights, limousines and hotel stays to big spenders. Echo Entertainment Group Ltd of Sydney and NagaCorp Ltd in Cambodia cater to the junket operators who organise trips for Chinese gamblers with perks such as higher commissions, lower taxes and private jets.

"Premium mass players can be recognised as VIP players and treated better than in Macau," said Lee Hyuk-Byung, vice chair of Paradise, in an interview in Seoul. "And we have other attractions in Korea such as culture, fashion, food."

Macau casino revenue fell last year for the first time and may decline another 8 percent this year, according to analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. By contrast, South Korea and the Philippines will grow 16pc and 33pc respectively this year, gaining from the spillover of Chinese gamblers, Deutsche Bank analyst Karen Tang wrote in a note.

Li Gang, director of China's Macau Liaison Office, this month reiterated President Xi Jinping call for the city to diversify from casinos. Gambling in Macau, the only place in China where casinos are legal, had declined as the anti-graft crackdown meant officials did not dare to visit, and also due to stricter rules and the country's economic slowdown, he said during a session at the National People's Congress held in Beijing.

Macau's process to diversify its economy will take between 20 to 30 years to complete, and the government should strengthen its efforts to achieve this, Mr Li added.

'The anti-corruption measures are discouraging some people from travelling to Macau, and as a result we are seeing a slight shift in travel from Macau to other destinations," said Aaron Fischer, a Hong Kongbased analyst at CLSA Ltd.

"Vietnam and Philippines will likely benefit as they are the closest. Korea will pick up people in the northern parts of China.'

Gamblers who bet at least \$50,000 at Paradise's casinos qualify for freebies usually available only to VIP players, Mr Lee said. In Macau, the minimum needed to get similar perks from junket operators is about \$500,000, according to CLSA data.

The company also draws Chinese gamblers to the celebrity-obsessed country by touting its pop culture and offering recommendations of top Korean plastic surgeons, Mr Lee said



Gamblers are abandoning Macau casinos for other regional hotspots. Photos: AFP

Operators have more risqué offerings too. A gambler who exchanges 300,000 yuan (\$48,000) worth of chips can receive free flights to Jeju, tours with a Mandarin-speaking guide, and the companionship of a "third-tier" Korean actress or model, according to an e-mailed brochure from Shanghai-based tour operator CNS. A CNS travel agent, who would only give her name as "Xiao Qi", confirmed the services when contacted by phone.

It's illegal for foreign companies to advertise casino operations in China and Paradise avoids public solicitations, Mr Lee said. Its staff reaches out to high-stakes gamblers recommended by existing customers and makes frequent trips to major Chinese cities including Beijing and Shanghai, he added.

Companies are able to sidestep China's ban on casino marketing by advertising non-gaming aspects such as a concert or entertainment show held on its venue, said Grant Govertsen, an analyst at Union Gaming Group in Macau.

"Junket operators own restaurants, night clubs. They sponsor golf tournaments and other getaways," he said. "There is plenty of he said last month in Manila.

stuff a junket could advertise in a mass-market sort of format."

Still, foreign operators' efforts to attract China's gamblers have caught the notice of local authorities, which announced last month a crackdown on representative offices that "attract and recruit Chinese citizens" to casinos.

Manila's members-only Signature Club in Melco Crown Entertainment's City of Dreams casino has entrance signs in both English and Chinese, while Mandarinspeaking staff direct guests to cashiers, shops and restaurants. The neighbouring Solaire Resort and Casino owned by Bloomberry Resorts has suckling pig and Peking duck on the menu, catering to Chinese palates.

"There are a lot of excuses to go the Philippines; we always promote the Philippines not on the casino but the whole package," Cristino Naguiat, chair at gaming regular Philippine Amusement & Gaming, said in an interview.

"Even with the crackdown in China, we still had higher volume in terms of gross gaming revenue and in terms of junket and VIPs."

South Korea is preparing to welcome more Chinese gamblers after tourist arrivals from the country rose last year to 6.1 million, with new casinos planned including at Incheon Airport.

On Jeju island, junket operators have set up shop to offer gambling chips on loan, a service common in Macau that helps bettors sidestep China's limits on taking currency out of the country.

Competition between the island's eight foreigner-only casinos has led to a flourishing of more than 100 unlicensed junket operators and their agents on the island, said Seo Won-Seok, a hotel and tourism management professor at Kyunghee University in Seoul.

As Chinese gamblers become more important, there's a need to better regulate the growth of the junket operators that bring them, he said.

"Our casino industry may be too dependent on the Chinese market and that means there is always risk from China's government policy," Mr Seo said. "I think that's the downside - too many Chinese in Korea."

- Bloomberg



NEW DELHI IMF head Lagarde praises progress in Modi's India

INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde hailed India as the bright spot of the global



that is one of the world's biggest oil growth."

A fall in global crude prices has clearances, will help revive the in- right-wing Narendra Modi replaced

also been a major boon to a country vestment cycle and achieve faster the centre-left Congress party in government.

economy yesterday ahead of talks in New Delhi with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

While Ms Lagarde urged Mr Modi to do more to open up the economy, she said India had the "opportunity to become one of the world's most dynamic economies" with growth running at above 7 percent.

"Among the emerging markets, and compared to advanced economies, India is the bright spot," the former French finance minister told The Times of India newspaper.

Since Mr Modi came to power last May, inflation has fallen to around 5pc while revised gross domestic product (GDP) data has put growth for the current financial year at 7.4pc, meaning Asia's thirdlargest economy is now outpacing China.

Christine Lagarde. Photo: AFP

importers.

Ms Lagarde welcomed the government's first full budget last month for striking "a good growthequity balance" and praised Mr Modi's drive to make India a major manufacturing hub and an easier place to do business.

But she also outlined a series of areas where the government needed to make progress to encourage investment.

"The economy should be opened more fully to the world, and there's a good case for removing domestic constraints on growth, especially in energy, mining and power," she said.

"Further reforms of India's complex labour laws to encourage young job-seekers and boost female labour participation, as well as easing of land acquisition and other

'The economy should be opened more fully to the world, and there's a good case for removing domestic constraints on growth..."

Christine Lagarde IMF

visit to India, her first since the

As well as her talks with top officials, she is also due to deliver a keynote speech in New Delhi before travelling to the financial capital Mumbai for meetings to be held today.

- AFP

Correction

The March 12 article "South Africa makes its pitch" misidentified the title of Deon Seals. He is political and trade counsellor at the South African embassy in Bangkok, not the ambassador.

The Myanmar Times regrets the error.

Ms Lagarde is paying a two-day

SYDNEY

GE divests its finance arm Down Under

GENERAL Electric has sold its consumer lending arm in Australia and New Zealand to an investment consortium including Germany's Deutsche Bank and US investment firm KKR for US\$6.3 billion, the company said.

The deal, which is subject to regulatory approval, is one of the biggest in the Asia-Pacific region so far this year, according to the Wall Street Journal, and is the latest step in the American conglomerate's efforts to scale back its financial division, GE Capital.

GE Capital's Australia and New Zealand units were sold for A\$8.2 billion (US\$6.3 billion) to the consortium made up of Deutsche Bank, KKR and Varde Partners, the American company said in a statement late March 15.

The lending arm offers personal loans, credit cards and other financial services with more than 3 million total customers. GE said in the statement. All of the products and services will be retained under the new ownership.

The Fairfield, Connecticut-based GE in January reported a robust jump in profits for the fourth quarter of 2014 as it shifts its focus back to its core industrial roots.

GE, which is considered a bellweather of global industrial activity, said in January that profits for the preceding three-month period rose 61 percent year-on-year.

It has sought to sell off various financial assets in recent months in addition to its Australia and New Zealand operations.

Last month, the Hungarian government said it would pay \$700 million to buy Budapest Bank from GE, while the firm sold GE Money Bank to Spain's Santander in November.

It has also spun off the retail finance business of the GE Capital division. -AFP

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ATHENS Tsipras denies Greece faces cash shortage

and pensions this month.

THE Greek state is not facing a cash shortage, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras insisted as his government braced for another week of pressing debt repayments.

'There is absolutely no problem with liquidity," Mr Tsipras told reporters after a meeting with Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis.

The finance minister had earlier told Alpha TV, "There is no problem in securing funds for salaries and pensions."

The denials came as Greece prepared to issue 1.0 billion euros (US\$1.1 billion) in three-month treasury bills tomorrow to meet debt repayments.

The government this week must repay over 900 million euros to the International Monetary Fund and redeem 1.6 billion euros in threemonth treasury bills, To Vima weekly reported on March 15.

Greece has drawn no loans from its 240 billion euro EU-IMF rescue package because the new government is still locked in talks with its international creditors on a revised reform plan.

With a 6.0-billion debt bill in March overall on Athens' books. Germany's Frankfurter Allgemeine

attends parliament on March 13. Photo: AFP

European parliament president Martin Schulz also told the daily: Tsipras urgently needs money."

The German politician, who met Mr Tsipras last week, said Athens had to convince eurozone nations and the European Central Bank of its determination to carry out reforms.

To cover the shortage, the radical government this week submitted a law that directs the cash reserves on pension funds into state debt purchases.

Financial daily *Naftemboriki* on March 14 reported that pension funds have 2.5 billion euros deposited at the Bank of Greece, and another 1.9 billion in private banks.

Analysts have described the move as "scraping the barrel".

In addition to holding back promised funds, the European Central Bank has limited the power of Greek banks to assist the state by buying its short-term treasury bills.

Greece's harshest critic German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble this week warned that a disorderly "Grexident" - playing on the terms "Grexit" and an accident - that could push Athens out of the euro could not be excluded.

"To the extent that Greece is solely responsible and decides what is to happen, and we don't know exactly what Greek leaders are doing, we can't exclude it," Mr Schaeuble told Austrian broadcaster ORF. – AFP

STOCKHOLM PRC becomes third-largest international arms exporter

CHINA has eased ahead of Germany and France to become the world's number three arms exporter after the United States and Russia, a Stockholm-based think tank said yesterday.

The volume of the multi-billiondollar world arms trade rose 16 percent during the period 2010 to 2014 over the previous five years, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute added in its annual report.

The figures show that "the United States has taken a firm lead" with 31pc of global exports of conventional weapons, SIPRI said, adding that Russia is second with 27pc.

The next three arms exporters are far behind with about 5pc each, and China is only slightly ahead of fourth-ranked Germany and fifthranked France.

Three Asian countries accounted for more than two-thirds of Chinese exports, with Pakistan buying 41pc of the total, followed by Bangladesh and Myanmar. Beijing also had 18

World arms trade

SIPRI* report released Monday Transfers 2010 - 2014

World's largest importers and where they import from





Zeitung on March 15 warned that

Greek civil servants should brace

themselves for downsized salaries

in respect of :- "Electric coffee-making machines (coffee percolators) for domestic and professional use, electric machines for preparing coffee, infusions and other hot beverages; milk heating and frothing machines for use in making coffee" – Int'l Class: 30 "Services for providing food and drink; temporary accommodation" - Int'l Class: 43

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U Kyi Win Associates for Luigi Lavazza S.p.A. P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon. Phone: 372416 Dated: 17th March, 2015

client nations in Africa during the period.

'The United States has taken a firm lead.'

sales were 143pc the figure from the previous five years. Ukraine and Russia also saw surges in exports, while German and French exports declined. Russia's top client was India - the world's leading arms importer - with

Source: *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

Among the top suppliers, China's

Pakistan

Australia

The data reflects the volume of arms deliveries, not the financial value of the deals, SIPRI notes.

Among importers, India was far ahead of second- and third-placed Saudi Arabia and China, purchasing some 15pc of the total volume



Spain

Ukraine

Sweden

AFP

Israel

African arms imports shot up 45pc in the period, SIPRI found. "Algeria was the largest arms importer in Africa, followed by Morocco, whose arms imports increased 11-fold," it said.

While the arms trade has been on the rise for the past decade, the volume remains about one-third below its post-war peak reached in the early 1980s. - AFP

Peace Research Institute report

70pc of its purchases coming from

diverse clientele. South Korea, its top

client, accounted for only 9pc of total

The United States had the most

Russia.

US business.



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World

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PHNOM PENH

Cambodia dismisses HRW labour report

CALLING a recently released report by Human Rights Watch about systematic Labour Law violations and corruption in Cambodia's garment sector "groundless", the Ministry of Labour said in a statement that its monitoring of the industry is transparent and competent.

The ministry's statement calls into question HRW's professionalism, and says the ministry's work with the International Labour Organization's Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) proves its sincerity in holding factories accountable.

"What is mentioned in the report of the [HRW] is unacceptable because it violates the ministry's professionalism," the statement reads.

"The ILO factory programs are excellent in Cambodia, and have been administered professionally and effectively."

After reading the government's reaction to the report, Aruna Kashyap, HRW's senior researcher for the organisation's Women's Rights Division, said the government seems disingenuous in its commitment to ethical practices in the garment sector.

Even some data provided by the Labour Ministry appears to demonstrate a lack of sincere efforts, she said.

The March 13 statement reports that the ministry inspectors audited 7191 factories in 2014. A December letter to HRW signed by Labour Minister Ith Sam Heng reports that they inspected 1,686 factories in the first 11 months of 2014, doiing out fines to 25.

For both figures to be accurate,

the ministry would have to have inspected more than 5000 factories in the month of December alone.

"If they have to come up with the number of 7151... they're doing about 200 inspections per day, which would seriously compromise the quality of inspections," Ms Kashyap said.

Further, the ministry has not disclosed how much it fined factories, whether factories paid the fines or what labour laws were violated.

Labour Ministry spokesperson Heng Sour declined to comment beyond referring reporters to the ministry's statement.

Instead of engaging with the data presented in HRW's 140-page report, the government chose to attack the organisation, said Phil Robertson, HRW's Asia deputy director.

"It's obviously a purely defensive reaction by the Ministry of Labour," Robertson said.

"They're not rebutting our facts, they're attacking us; [they] don't have any substantive defence."

Moeun Tola, head of the labour department at the Community Legal Education Center, said the response was expected. Government officials routinely refuse to accept constructive criticism, he added.

The ministry also said nothing about former labour inspectors who reported to HRW that they had personally received payoffs, Ms Kashyap said.

"Living in denial is not going to improve the conditions in the factories," she said.

– Phnom Penh Post

BEIJING

Black and white case: man sues over panda bite

A CHINESE man who sued local government officials over an attack by a wild panda has won more than US\$80,000 in compensation, his lawyer said yesterday.

The animals are renowned for their lovable appearance but despite their placid, bamboo-chewing image they are members of the bear family and have a fearsome bite.

The animal wandered into Liziba village, in the northwestern province of Gansu, where local officials try-

medical bills, he said, adding that he may need further operations.

The giant panda's natural habitat mostly lies in mountainous southwestern China. They have a notoriously low reproductive rate and are under pressure from factors such as habitat loss.

The number of wild giant pandas rose nearly 17 percent over the decade to 2013 to reach 1864, state media cited an official survey data as saying this month, with a government agency crediting conservation measures for the increase.



IN PICTURES

Homes are left damaged in the wake of Cyclone Pam, in Vanuatu's

PORT VILA

Aid groups struggle in st

AID agencies said yesterday conditions in cyclone-ravaged Vanuatu were among the most challenging they have ever faced with fears of disease rife, as the Pacific nation's shocked president said climate change was partly to blame for the devastation.

Relief flights continued arriving in the battered capital Port Vila after Severe Tropical Cyclone Pam tore through on the night of March 13 packing wind gusts of up to 320 kilometres (200 miles) an hour.

But workers on the ground said there was no way to distribute desperately needed supplies across the archipelago's 80 islands, warning it would take days to reach remote villages flattened by the monster storm. said the front part of her house had collapsed.

"I fought tears seeing that devastation," she told the Australian Associated Press news agency, adding that disease was now her main concern.

"With all the rain and rubbish around, there's going to be malaria and dengue, as well as diarrhoea and vomiting with water contamination. People here are reliant on their gardens for food. But all that's gone."

Save the Children's Vanuatu director Tom Skirrow told AFP the logistical challenges were even worse than for Super Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the Philippines in Vila, where relief workers said up to 90 percent of homes have been damaged, stands at six with more than 30 injured, although aid workers believe this is likely a fraction of the fatalities caused by the storm.

Mr Skirrow said flights over remote islands in the archipelago, which spans more than 12,000 square kilometres (4,700 square miles), had confirmed widespread destruction elsewhere in the impoverished nation of 270,000.

Ms Balpe said initial reports from two volunteers in the northern Torres and Banks islands were not as devastating, but no contact had been established with other areas and it appeared the southern island of Tanna had suffered widespread damage.

ing to capture it chased it onto Guan Quanzhi's land, the *Lanzhou Even*ing News reported.

"I saw a panda jump out in front of me, its body completely covered in mud," he told the newspaper.

The creature bit him in the leg and only released its grip when another villager covered its head with a coat, the report said, and the incident in March last year left Mr Guan with injuries requiring seven hours of surgery.

Mr Guan's son sued local forestry officials and the nearby Baishuijiang National Nature Reserve, which is home to more than 100 wild pandas.

Following "negotiations", officials agreed to pay compensation of 520,000 yuan (\$83,000), his lawyer Wang Chaohui told AFP.

Mr Guan is "satisfied with the amount", which will cover his

Pandas are a major generator of tourist revenue in several parts of China and for Beijing, which capitalises on the global fascination with the animals by renting them to foreign zoos.

They have been known to attack humans, including in 2008 when a panda mauled a 20-year-old man who climbed into its enclosure at a zoo in southern China.

The nature conservation organisation WWF says on its website; "As cuddly as they may look, a panda can protect itself as well as most other bears," using its heavy weight, strong jaw muscles and large molar teeth. It cautions; "Although used mainly for crushing bamboo, a panda bite can be very nasty." Oxfam country director in Port Vila Colin Collett van Rooyen said a lack of enough clean water, temporary toilets, water purification tablets and hygiene kits needed to be addressed rapidly.

"Friday night was the first emergency with the arrival of Cyclone Pam. Disease will be the second emergency without clean water, sanitation and hygiene provision," he said.

"There are more than 100,000 people likely homeless, every school destroyed, full evacuation centres, damage to health facilities and the morgue."

Charlotte Gillan, an Australian paramedic who lives in the village of Tango on the outskirts of Port Vila,

November 2013, leaving more than 7350 people dead or missing and ravaging an area as big as Portugal.

"I was present for the Haiyan response and I would 100 percent tell you that this is a much more difficult logistical problem," he said.

"The numbers are smaller but the percentage of the population that's been affected is much bigger."

Aurelia Balpe, head of the Pacific office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, agreed that the task facing aid agencies was likely unprecedented in the region.

"I think for the Pacific, it's probably going to be the biggest disaster we've ever implemented. I don't think there has ever been destruction on this scale in one place," she told AFP.

The official death toll in Port

"He was very traumatised," she said of a local Red Cross volunteer who was contacted on Tanna.

"He sounded like he was in shock and we couldn't get very much information from him, just that there was devastation."

Pacific nations regard themselves as at the frontline of climate change, given many are low-lying islands dangerously exposed to rising sea levels, and Vanuatu President Baldwin Lonsdale said changing weather patterns were partly to blame for the destruction.

"Climate change is contributing to the disaster in Vanuatu," the emotional leader said ahead of his departure from Japan, where he was attending a UN disaster meeting, to

- AFP

China's damning human rights report card

WORLD 18



capital Port Vila, on March 16.

orm-hit Vanuatu

Sydney en-route to his homeland. "This year we have had more

(rain) than other years and for the last couple of weeks, the heavy rain has exceeded what has happened in the past."

Asked by AFP how his people were reacting to the disaster, he replied: "They are coping but it will take some time before they can recover and start a normal life again. "It's quite shocking for them, for

all of us in Vanuatu, because this cyclone we were not expecting (to be) so strong," he added.

Communications were still down across most of the islands, although the airport in Port Vila re-opened to commercial flights on Monday.

Military planes from Australia, New Zealand and France were arriving loaded full of food, shelter, medicine and generators, along with disaster relief teams.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said the cyclone, which was the maximum category five when it hit, had affected countries across the South Pacific, including the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Tuvalu.

World leaders, including Australia, Britain, New Zealand and the European Union have pledged relief. – *AFP*



Vigilante justice on the streets of Lahore

WORLD 19

Thai government seeks extradition of lese majeste suspect from the US

THE Thai government plans to seek the extradition of a lese majeste suspect who lives in the United States as he also faces an arrest warrant for his alleged involvement in the grenade attack at the Criminal Court.

Manoon Chaichana, aka Anek Sanfran, has become the fifth suspect for whom the Military Court approved arrest warrants on March 14 for their roles in the RDG-5 grenade attack at the Criminal Court compound on Ratchadaphisek Road on March 7.

The four other suspects are Norapat Lueapol, or "Bas"; Supaporn Mitarak, or "Dear"; Wassana Busdee, and Jessadapong Wattanapornchaisiri.

National police chief Pol Gen Somyot Pumpunmuang said yesterday police will work with state agencies to seek the extradition of Mr Manoon from the US.

Mr Manoon, who fled a previous lese majeste charge, gave financial support for the grenade attack, said Pol Maj Gen Chayapol Chatchaidech, Metropolitan Police Bureau's Division 6 commander.

Mr Manoon allegedly transferred money to Ms Wassana who delivered the money to Ms Supaporn for hiring the attackers, Pol Maj Gen Chayapol said. He said the suspects worked under the Thai Alliance for Human Rights group which aims to raise public panic.

Police have charged them with terrorism, forming a gang for illegal activities, attempted murder, staging a bomb attack, illegal possession of a weapon and illegal possession of a military armament.

Pol Gen Somyot said the group is among 14 suspects facing arrest warrants for the court attack. Of them, 12 have been arrested. Only Mr Manoon and Weerasak Towangjorn, aka Yai Pattaya, who allegedly provided the grenade to the attackers, are still at large.

Other detained suspects include Yutthana Yenpinyo, the suspect accused of throwing the grenade into the court compound; Mahahin Khunthong, who allegedly drove the motorcycle for the attack; Nattapat Onming, Mr Mahahin's wife; Thachapan Pokkhrong, Mr Yutthana's wife; Charnwit Jariyanukul; Wichai Yoosuk and Sansern Sriounruen. They are all accused of collusion in the attack.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwon admitted the process of extraditing those who fled criminal cases would take time.

However, the government would seek the cooperation of the country where the suspect lives.

Mr Manoon, meanwhile, strongly denied the claim, saying that he doesn't know the group of suspects.

"This is very vague information. I don't know them and have never contacted them," Mr Manoon told the Isra News Centre.

He said the accusation is part of a plot to link the grenade attack to those who live in exile in foreign countries to create hatred against them. This is because those living abroad are the only people who can fight for justice in Thailand.

Mr Manoon has lived in San Francisco for several years. He faces lese majeste charges for allegedly insulting the monarchy in video clips since 2010.

He was among several people summoned by the National Council for Peace and Order after the May 22 coup but he ignored it, saying that he is not a Thai citizen any more.

Meanwhile, soldiers from the 11th Infantry Regiment, King's Guard, have handed over four suspects they had detained under martial law to police for questioning. – *Bangkok Post*

Royal slander crackdown goes online

THAILAND'S Technology Crime Suppression Division (TCSD) has this year ordered the closure of more than 500 URLs (uniform resource locators) containing content deemed to violate the lese majeste law.

However, a huge portion of them remain open due to the police's lack of authority in gaining access to them when the servers are located overseas.

Pol Maj Prakrom Varunprabha, a police inspector with TCSD's Sub Division 1, who is on a special assignment to curb lese majeste acts on the internet, said the TCSD issued orders to shut down 510 URLs between January 5 and March 10 for violating the lese majeste law.

URL is the generic term for all types of names and addresses that refer to objects on the World Wide Web.

Of this number, 184 URLs were the HTTP type while the others were the HTTPS type. But not all have been shut down in practice. and YouTube were used widely to gain political benefits. That was why they didn't want to do anything with [lese majeste movements on these online media]. Instead, those governments pretended they wanted to ensure freedom of expression," he said.

Aside from lese majeste acts, crimes including fraud, defamation, and other internet-based criminal acts were more rampant at that time, said Pol Maj Prakrom.

The highest number of lese majeste acts were found on Facebook, followed by video-sharing sites – such as You-Tube.com and Dailymotion.com – free blogs (such as Blogspot.com and Wordpress.com), file sharing sites – such as 4Shared.com, Mediafire.com – and free webboards – such as Pantip.com – he said.

In tracking lese majeste offenders who use internet servers registered in Thailand, police first have to check for their IP addresses by working together where the servers are found, he said.

"Obtaining IP addresses of users using foreign servers is difficult because internet users' privacy protection is now seen as an important issue," he said.

It is not easy to probe whether the suspects really are the real culprits, so police will usually seek witnesses and evidence from where the suspects committed the crime.

Given these problems, the best way to deal with online lese majeste acts is to use a special device to screen or search for keywords of suspected content uploaded onto the internet.

This type of device has been used overseas. In the US, for instance, the device is used to screen for possible acts that may endanger international security or lead to internet fraud.

The use of this technology should never be regarded as a form of violating individual rights or freedom, given the fact it is also used widely in



Adrian Banga surveys his house, flattened by Cyclone Pam, in Vanuatu's capital Port Vila on March 16. Photo: AFP

Twenty-two HTTP-type URLs and 285 HTTPS-type URLs still cannot be closed down.

After being shut, some HTTP-type URLs have also been re-opened.

Police first have to seek permission from the court and translate the court's permission document into English before submitting it to the concerned websites.

The URLs were used for the same purpose of defaming the monarchy, the heir to the throne and the regent, which is against Section 112 of the Criminal Code, said Pol Maj Prakrom.

Some of the most common forms of lese majeste materials found on the internet are defamatory messages, doctored pictures, and fake audio clips designed to mislead and confuse the public, he said.

"Previously, when governments were led by political parties, Facebook

with the owners of the websites or the internet providers.

After that police will seek permission to search locations where they think the suspects may be or where there might be clues leading to their arrest.

But the process becomes more complicated when it comes to servers that are registered overseas as it's more difficult to seek co-operation from the parties concerned, said Pol Maj Prakrom.

A special technique is needed to obtain the IP address used by the suspect before the legal process can actually begin, he said.

However, Pol Maj Prakrom declined to elaborate on what the technique is. And unlike tracking domestic servers, tracing servers overseas also requires a process of seeking co-operation from authorities in those countries countries like the US, Britain, France, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore, he said.

"Not only does this device help curb lese majeste law violations here, but it also helps suppress other types of online crimes such as sales of weapons and drugs and prostitution," he said.

Not all suspects have been prosecuted as police tend to base their decisions mainly on the motive of the crime. Some may be warned to stop if they are found to have forwarded lese majeste materials online out of simply wanting notoriety in cyberspace.

Otherwise, lese majeste offenders can face between three and 15 years in jail, plus a maximum additional prison sentence of five years or a maximum fine of 100,000 baht (US\$3035) for violating the computer crime law. – *Bangkok Post*

FERGUSON

Charges laid in police shooting

POLICE have charged a young African-American man in connection with the shooting in Ferguson last week that wounded two police officers and rekindled tension in the racially troubled Missouri city.

Jeffrey Williams, 20, is charged with first-degree assault, armed criminal action and shooting a firearm from a motor vehicle causing injury, St Louis County prosecutor Robert McCulloch told reporters, after an intense four-day manhunt.

"It's possible at this point that he was firing shots at someone other than the police, but struck the police officers," Mr McCulloch said, adding that Williams had acknowledged firing gunshots and that the investigation was ongoing.

Ferguson has been in the global spotlight since a white policeman fatally shot unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in August, igniting sometimes violent protests in major American cities and prompting an impassioned debate about policing and race relations.

Wednesday night's gunfire erupted just hours after Ferguson's police chief resigned in response to a Justice Department report that alleged systemic racial bias in the city's overwhelmingly white police force, in a suburb of 21,000 that is two-thirds black.

Mr McCulloch said Mr Williams had participated in some of the demon-

strations demanding justice that have roiled Ferguson almost nightly since Mr Brown's killing – a claim disputed by protest organisers.

After news filtered through of MR Williams' arrest, about 100 people gathered outside the police station in support of police and Mayor James Knowles, who is under growing pressure to resign.

Facing them were a handful of African-American protesters, some of whom shouted abuse in the faces of the predominantly white and middle-aged pro-police group. Some protesters tore up an American flag in the middle of the street.

"Police officers are human beings and most police officers are doing a very good job," said white Ferguson resident Blake Ashby, who sported a yellow "Ferguson Proud" T-shirt but acknowledged a need for institutional reforms.

In Washington, Attorney General Eric Holder welcomed news of Williams' arrest, saying it sent "a clear message that acts of violence against our law enforcement personnel will never be tolerated".

Protest organisers – including a pastor who knows the Williams family – strongly disputed the assertion that the suspect had taken part in anti-police demonstrations, saying they did not recognise him.

"I've never seen his face [at the pro-



A demonstrator rips an American flag during a protest outside the Ferguson police station on March 15. Photo: AFP

tests]," said Bishop Derrick Robinson, who visited Mr Williams in his cell in the St Louis County jail on March 15.

Robinson told AFP that Mr Williams told him he had shot at a demonstrator who had attempted to rob him, but that he could not identify who that perpetrator was.

The pastor added that Mr Williams showed him bruises on his body, which the detainee claimed had been the result of police beating him when he was taken into custody on March 14.

The two officers shot last week were among a detail of several dozen police from around St Louis County who had been sent to Ferguson as reinforcements.

One, from the affluent white suburb of Webster Groves, was hit in the face, the other, a member of the St.

Louis County force, in the shoulder. Both were treated in the hospital then released.

According to McCulloch, Mr Williams – being held on \$300,000 cash bail – "has acknowledged his participation in firing the shots," stressing however that "he is innocent until proven guilty".

He also said a .40-caliber handgun that matched the shells found at the scene of the shooting had been found during a raid of Williams' residence in the Ferguson area.

Missouri has some of the most relaxed gun laws in the United States. No permit is needed to buy or own a handgun in the Midwestern state and open-carry is permitted.

It was unclear how the arrest would impact Ferguson, where Mr McCull-

och has been criticised after a St Louis County grand jury for which he was responsible did not indict Darren Wilson, the officer who killed Brown.

In the damning report earlier this month, the Justice Department said Ferguson's police department and municipal court targeted African Americans in an attempt to collect fines and court fees to fill up city coffers.

Besides police chief Thomas Jackson, the city's manager, municipal judge and two police officers have resigned, and a clerk was fired for writing racist emails.

Mayor Knowles is under growing pressure to resign as well, but in interviews with US news media he has said he intends to stay in office to implement reforms and restore community harmony. – *AFP*

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SAO PAULO Over 1 million turn out for Brazil protest

ABOUT 1.5 million protesters hit the streets across Brazil on March 15 in a major show of anger against leftist President Dilma Rousseff, who faces crises from a faltering economy to a massive corruption scandal at state oil giant Petrobras.

Many called for the impeachment of Ms Rousseff, less than six months after she was narrowly returned to power in the most bitterly fought presidential race since the end of a military dictatorship in 1985.

The biggest demonstration took place in Sao Paulo, where a million people rallied - according to police estimates - many in the distinctive yellow and green of Brazil's national football team. The city - South America's biggest, and Brazil's business and industrial hub - is a stronghold of opposition to Ms Rousseff.

Peaceful demonstrations also took place in 83 cities and towns around the country, including major protests in the capital Brasilia and in Rio de Janeiro.

The numbers matched the vast rallies that roiled Brazil in June 2013, when protesters angry at the cost of hosting the 2014 World Cup demanded an end to corruption and more spending on transportation, health and education.

"We are thousands and thousands of people who demand the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff," Rubens Nunes, 26, told AFP in Sao Paulo, where the massive crowd stretched along four kilometers (2.5 miles) of Avenida Paulista, a major thoroughfare.

The protests are significantly larger than those convened on March 13 in support of Ms Rousseff and Petrobras by unions and social movements related to her ruling Workers' Party (PT).

In the capital Brasilia alone, between 45,000 and 50,000 people marched on the 15th towards the Congress, according to police estimates.

The government was keen to appear to be listening and toward the end of the day Justice Minister Jose Eduardo Cardozo and Miguel Rossetto, presidential chief of staff, gave a press conference saying immediate steps would be taken to fight graft and impunity.

The demonstrations against the government are legitimate. What is not legitimate is the coup, violence and unfounded 'impeachment' that is damaging democracy," said Mr Rossetto.

In Rio de Janeiro, people waved Brazilian flags along the coastal Copacabana avenue behind a truck blaring slogans against Ms Rousseff.

"Get out Dilma; get out PT!" people chanted. A few protesters among the 15,000 packed there even called for military intervention to end the PT's 12 years in power.

Rita Souza, a 50-year-old television producer, carried a banner reading; Military intervention now."

"I'm not asking for a coup, but a constitutional intervention to call new fair elections," Souza told AFP. "They can all go to Cuba!"

Construction contractor Alessandro Braga, 37, attended the rally in Brasilia with his wife and son.

"I support the departure of Dilma,"



Demonstrators protest against the government of president Dilma Rousseff in Rio de Janeiro on March 15. Photo: AFP

he said. "The biggest corruption scandals occurred during her administration and she said nothing."

The marches were supported by the opposition Social Democracy Party, whose president Aecio Neves - who lost the election runoff to Ms Rousseff said in video on Facebook that "the road is just beginning.'

"We will not disperse," he said.

Dozens of political figures, including close allies of Ms Rousseff, and former Petrobras executives are under investigation over a kickback and money laundering scheme that saw an estimated \$3.8 billion creamed off inflated contracts over a decade.

No one has been convicted yet, but some of the alleged wrongdoing took place while Ms Rousseff was chairman of the Petrobras board.

Twenty-two deputies, 13 senators and two governors have been implicated in the bribe-taking allegations. Ms Rousseff is not being investigated.

In addition to the corruption scandal at Petrobras, Ms Rousseff is also facing rising inflation and a Brazilian economy that is on the brink of recession. - AFP



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China's damning human rights report card

CHINESE authorities detained nearly 1000 human rights defenders in 2014, an advocacy group said yesterday, accusing President Xi Jinping's government of setting China's "worst record of human rights violations since the mid-1990s".

The figure nears the number detained in the previous two years combined, the overseas-based advocacy group Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) said in its annual report.

"Since Xi came to power, authorities have pursued a relentless and ruthless assault on fundamental liberties to tighten the stranglehold on the rapidly shrinking space of civil society, targeting human rights defenders, the messengers of human rights," the group wrote.

"In greater numbers than at any time since the mid-1990s, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Massacre, activists, lawyers, journalists, and liberal intellectuals were locked up, put under house arrest, blocked from speaking out, or



The number of activists and rights defenders deprived of their freedom in 2014, acccording to HRW



The ICC tower shrouded in fog in Hong Kong yesterday. The foggy weather in the Southern Chinese city is caused by a humid maritime airstream affecting the south China coastal areas. Photo: AFP

essentially forced into exile abroad," it said.

The group recorded 955 cases of activists and others it describes as rights defenders having been deprived of their freedom in 2014. The total for the previous two years was 1160. The report comes shortly after five women's rights campaigners were detained in Beijing for planning pro-

tests against sexual harassment on International Women's Day. Amnesty International decried the detentions as "chilling", and the European Union has demanded their

ve release.

Since taking office as Communist chief in 2012, Xi has overseen a campaign against government critics with hundreds detained or jailed.

China maintains that it safeguards its citizens' legal rights, including freedom of assembly, expression, re-

ligion and the press.

Yet, according to the CHRD report, "the second year under Xi Jinping's rule was even more draconian than the first".

More than 200 activists, lawyers, journalists and others were detained surrounding the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown in June and Hong Kong's pro-democracy Occupy Central campaign in the autumn.

In addition, more human rights lawyers were likely to have been detained or prosecuted in 2014 "than in any year since the early 2000s, when such lawyers first came onto the scene", CHRD said.

"Those who demanded to exercise their fundamental rights or challenge the increasingly repressive system faced government retaliation, including the use of torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, intimidation and other forms of mistreatment," the group wrote.

It described Xi as having "spearheaded an ideological shift that harkens back to the Maoist era".

In January, the New York-based group Human Rights Watch said in its annual report that the ruling Communist Party has "unleashed an extraordinary assault on basic human rights and their defenders with a ferocity unseen in recent years".

It added that recent developments in China are "an alarming sign given that the current leadership will likely remain in power through 2023".

- AFP

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Netanyahu woos the hard right

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a last-ditch effort on March 15 to garner support at a mass rightwing rally in Tel Aviv where he pledged he would never make territorial concessions.

Mr Netanyahu's speech, which addressed security concerns and praised Jewish tradition, came hours after he attempted to draw centrist votes to his Likud party, flagging in opinion polls behind the Zionist Union coalition.

"As long as Likud is in power, we won't divide Jerusalem," he said to cheers. Palestinians want Israeli-controlled east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

"There will be no concessions or withdrawals. There is a real danger the left will take power," he said.

Mr Netanyahu also promised participants he would include the ultranationalist Jewish Home in his coalition if he forms the government, in an attempt to draw votes away from that party to Likud.

Jewish Home leader Naftali Bennett, who spoke after Mr Netanyahu, has been trying to attract Likud voters, stressing that this would not jeopardise Mr Netanyahu's chances of forming a coalition. you could have for this hazardous region," the 30-year-Likud member told AFP.

Mr Netanyahu has run a campaign focused squarely on security issues, arguing that only he is capable of protecting Israel from an Iranian nuclear threat and warning that security will be at risk in case of victory for his rivals, the centre-left Zionist Union.

But on the street, voters appeared more concerned by the increasingly unmanageable cost of living and the Jewish state's housing crisis.

'There will be no concessions or withdrawals. There is a real danger the left will take power.'

Benjamin Netanyahu Israeli Prime Minister

"spin", saying Mr Netanyahu had not made good on similar promises in the past.

In a poll published in the top-selling Yediot Aharonot on Friday, the Zionist Union was in the lead to take 26 of the Knesset's 120 seats, followed by 22 for Likud.

Under Israel's complex electoral system, the task of forming a new government does not automatically fall to the party with the largest number of votes.

The winner – and next premier – will be the one who can succeed in cobbling together a coalition commanding a parliamentary majority.

A last-minute poll predicted the rightwing and religious bloc would win 56 seats with the same number going to centre-left and Arab parties.

And with Kulanu seen taking eight, Kahlon's decision on who to back is likely to be crucial.

Isaac Herzog, who heads the Zionist Union with former peace negotiator and centrist HaTnuah leader Tzipi Livni, ridiculed Mr Netanyahu's latest offer.

"When Bibi goes down in the polls, he ups the lies," he wrote on Facebook. He also addressed the issue of Jerusalem on Sunday, visiting the Western Wall in the Old City, the holiest site at which Jews are allowed to pray.

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U Kyi Win Associates for **GOUSSON-CONSULTADORIA E MARKETING S.r.l.** P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon. Phone: 372416 Dated: 17th March, 2015 At the rally, he also emphasised the importance of Jewish tradition in the upcoming government.

Israel goes to the polls on today for its second general election in as many years, with pundits unanimous that the vote will be a referendum on six consecutive years of Mr Netanyahu as premier.

Organisers anticipated at least 30,000 people at the Tel Aviv rally, while officials estimated at least 15,000 attended.

One demonstrator who stood out was Sheikh Salem Hezair, a Bedouin from the southern town Rahat, who came wearing his keffiyeh headscarf.

"Nobody can replace him," he said of Mr Netanyahu. "He's the best leader With the last opinion polls showing a consistent erosion in support for his rightwing Likud, Mr Netanyahu also took the opportunity to launch a lastditch charm offensive to lure the support of centre-right Kulanu.

Ahead of the rally, he gave interviews to Israel's two main radio stations and said he would be willing to hand the powerful finance portfolio to Kulanu leader Moshe Kahlon.

"I cannot form a government without him. However many seats his party wins, he will get the post of finance minister," Mr Netanyahu told army radio.

A popular former Likud minister, Kahlon – whose party is forecast to win between eight and 10 seats – is expected to play the role of kingmaker after Tuesday's vote.

But Kahlon dismissed the offer as

"I will know to safeguard Jerusalem and its residents in actions, not just words, more than any other leader," Mr Herzog said.

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, meanwhile, visited the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the southern West Bank city Hebron in a one-man rally aimed at winning last-minute votes.

"The real national camp is here today, not anywhere else," said Mr Lieberman, who wants to become defence minister in Israel's next government.

Lieberman's Yisrael Beitenu party, members of which are being investigated by police after graft allegations, was expected to drop from its current 13 seats to between four and six. – *AFP*

LAHORE

Vigilante mob justice over **Taliban** blast

FOURTEEN people were killed and more than 70 injured when two Taliban suicide bombers attacked churches in Pakistan's Lahore on March 15, sparking mob violence in which two other suspected militants died.

The bombings occurred during prayers at two churches located around half a kilometre apart in the city's Youhanabad neighbourhood. which is home to more than 100,000 Christians, officials said.

Up to 4000 then took to the streets of the eastern city, many armed with clubs, smashing vehicles and attacking a city bus station in a rare show of anger by the beleaguered minority.

Doctor Mohammad Saeed Sohbin. medical superintendent of the General Hospital, told AFP; "We have received 14 dead bodies and 70 injured," adding that the figure did not include the suspected militants who were lynched or the bombers.

Zahid Pervez, the top health official in Lahore, confirmed the death toll and told reporters that 78 people were wounded in both attacks, which left blood and shoes scattered across the blast sites.

The March 15 attack is the worst in over a year against Pakistan's Christians, who make up a tiny proportion of the mainly Muslim country.

Eyewitness Jacob David said people jumped out of a church window to save their lives.

"These were huge blasts, one after another. Everyone started running here and there. Some people jumped outside after breaking the window," the 55-year-old told AFP.

Police spokesperson Nabila Ghazanfar said two policemen guarding the churches were among those killed in the attacks, while two people were beaten to death by protesters who took to the streets after the blasts.

"Policemen on duty at both the entrances tried to stop them but the bombers blew themselves up," she

"The angry mob protesting after the blast beat to death two people whom they suspected of being associates of the attackers."

An AFP photographer saw the bodies of the two suspected militants on fire after the beatings. It was not clear whether they were still alive at the time.

The Pakistani Taliban's Jamaat-ul-Ahrar faction described the blasts as suicide attacks and vowed to continue their campaign for the enforcement of Sharia Islamic law, in a statement emailed to the media.

Christians, who make up around 2 percent of Pakistan's population of 180 million, have been targeted by attacks and riots in recent years, often over allegations of profanity regarding the Koran or the Prophet Mohammed.

The March 15 attacks were the worst on the community since a devastating double suicide-bombing in the northwestern city of Peshawar in September 2013 killed 82 people.

Pakistani Christians block a street during a protest in Karachi on March 15, following suicide bomb attacks on churches in Lahore. Photo: AFF That came months after more than 3000 Muslim protesters torched some

100 houses as they rampaged through Joseph Colony, another Christian neighbourhood of Lahore, following blasphemy allegations against a Christian man

Pope Francis has condemned the attacks and accused the world of "seeking to hide" the persecution of Christians.

"It's with pain, much pain, that I was told of the terrorist attacks against two Christian churches in Lahore in Pakistan, which have caused numerous deaths and injuries," the pope said after his weekly prayer in Rome.

The thousands of Christian protesters who clashed with police on March 15 attacked their cars with stones and sticks, as women wept and beat their heads and chests.

The protesters, some wearing

crosses round their necks, later turned against the city's bus rapid transit system - a signature project of the ruling PML-N party of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Mr Sharif in a statement condemned the church bombings and "directed provincial governments to ensure the security of [the] public and their properties".

Zaeem Qadri, a spokesperson for the provincial government, said efforts were being made to stop the rioting but "emotions are very high because their churches have been attacked"

Christians also took to the streets in other cities, including Pakistan's largest Karachi, where around 200 protesters blocked a main road and burnt tyres. There were also demonstrations in Peshawar, Multan and Quetta.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini urged action on the attacks and groups "preaching hate", saying the bloc stood with Pakistan in its anti-terrorism fight and with religious minorities.

"Freedom of religion or belief is a central tenet of democratic societies," she said in a statement.

The attack was the first by the Taliban since three of their major factions announced late last week that they had reunited.

Pakistan's military has stepped up its fight against militants since Taliban gunmen massacred more than 150 people, mostly children, at a Peshawar school in December.

A moratorium on executions in terror cases was lifted and military courts set up. Later, the death penalty was reinstated for all capital cases. - AFP

TIKRIT Calls for backup in Tikrit assault

IRAQI forces need support from coalition air strikes in Tikrit, where die-hard jihadists are defending their last redoubt with trenches, sandbags and roadside bombs, a top officer said on March 15.

Two weeks into Baghdad's biggest operation yet against the Islamic State (IS) group, Iraqi forces have a complete stranglehold on Tikrit but have yet to launch a final assault.

Staff Lieutenant General Abdulwahab al-Saadi said he had asked the defence ministry to request coalition involvement, but "no air support" from foreign allies had yet been provided in Tikrit.

That assertion is supported by daily statements from the coalition that have not mentioned strikes in the area. Asked if US-led coalition air strikes would help, Lt Gen Saadi said; "Of

One police officer gave an estimate of 10,000 IEDs (improvised explosive devices) in Tikrit.

We are reinforcing our offensive capacities in the areas we have cleared and reinforcing our control on the entrances to the city," an army major general said on March 15.

"IS is putting up sandbags and digging trenches," he said.

Lt Gen Saadi said that while there were enough personnel trained in explosives disposal, there is a shortage of the equipment to carry out the task.

Karim al-Nuri, a spokesman for the volunteer Popular Mobilisation units. said on the March 13 he expected Tikrit to be liberated within 72 hours.

But the army was less upbeat, with officers saying it could be days or even up to two weeks before the city is retaken.

posed to IS, have in recent months been working their way north.

In October, they retook Jurf al-Sakhr, one of the southernmost areas to have been captured by IS, and have since also reclaimed the eastern province of Diyala.

Iranian support was crucial in both operations.

Kurdish peshmerga forces have also been pushing the jihadists back from northern parts of the country, with US-led coalition support.

The last remaining IS stronghold east of the Tigris river is Hawijah, a town northeast of Tikrit, where fleeing jihadists are believed to have gathered and on which Kurdish forces are advancing.

Tikrit is seen by commanders as a key stepping stone on the way to reconquering IS's northern hub of

TEHRAN Son of former Iranian President gets 15 years

THE son of Iran's former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has been sentenced to 15 years in jail after being convicted of security offences and financial crimes, state media said on March 15.

Mehdi Hashemi was accused of involvement in massive protests that followed Iran's disputed presidential election in 2009, and after being threatened with arrest he left for Britain.

The now 45-year-old was detained and questioned after returning to Tehran in September 2012, and although he was bailed after nearly three months in custody he was later rearrested.

His conviction relates to national

Ahmadinejad.

Mr Rafsanjani's son is not the first member of the family to be convicted in recent years.

In September 2012, the former president's daughter Faezeh Hashemi, who also supported the Green Movement, was convicted of spreading propaganda against the regime. She was sentenced to six months in jail.

The name of Mehdi Hashemi, most commonly described as a businessman in recent years, was quoted in cases around a decade ago involving Norway's Statoil and the French oil giant Total, which were alleged to have paid bribes to secure easier access to Iran's hydrocarbons market. Mr Hashemi was a senior official in the



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course ... The Americans have advanced equipment, they have AWACS (surveillance) aircraft."

"They are able to locate the targets exactly" and carry out accurate strikes, he told AFP in an interview at Tikrit University on the northern edge of the city.

"With the advanced technology of the aircraft and weapons they have, of course [strikes] by them are necessarv." Saadi said.

Saadi said that support from the Iraqi air force had been "limited".

Fighters from the Imam Ali Brigades, a Shiite militia involved in the Tikrit operation, complained to AFP that a Sukhoi jet had even targeted pro-government forces by mistake.

Since IS fighters took the city in June 2014, they have planted bombs underneath every road, according to residents who fled Tikrit.

Lt Gen Saadi said he thought the reason there had been no coalition air strikes in support of the Tikrit operation was political, not military.

Shiite Iran has been Baghdad's main foreign partner in the operation and Tehran's top commander in charge of external operations, Qassem Soleimani, has been on the front lines in several battles against IS.

Officials in Washington have expressed unease at the level of Iranian involvement in the overwhelmingly Sunni city which was executed dictator Saddam Hussein's home town.

Coalition air strikes have supported several other operations to reclaim iihadist-held territory in Iraq, including some in which Iran-backed Shiite militias were involved.

Iraqi security forces, backed by Shiite volunteers and militias, and in some cases Sunni tribespeople opMosul, Iraq's second city.

The outcome of the battle seems in little doubt, but there is more at stake for the government than just territorial gain.

The vast operation is seen as a test of Baghdad's ability to instil discipline in the array of forces involved in the anti-IS war.

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced by the offensive. Tikrit once had an estimated population of 200.000 but it is unclear how many civilians remain there.

Local volunteer fighters and police will hold Tikrit after it is retaken, while the army will defend the city from outside, said Lt Gen Saadi.

But for now, the advance is "slow and steady".

"We are preserving our units so they do not take unnecessary losses," he said. - AFP

security matters as well as fraud and embezzlement, judiciary spokesperson Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejeie was quoted as saying on its official website and in state media.

Mr Hashemi has 20 days to appeal his punishment, additional terms of which include an undisclosed fine and ban from holding public office, the reports said. One of his lawyers told the ISNA news agency that an appeal would indeed be lodged.

The 15-year sentence, if confirmed by a secondary court, would be one of the heaviest ever handed down to a family member of such a high-ranking official.

Hashemi supported the so-called Green Movement led by the defeated reformist candidates Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi after the presidential election which was officially won by Mahmoud

oil sector at the time.

Rafsanjani, who was president from 1989 to 1997 and is now considered a moderate, is close to the reformist camp in Iranian politics

In 2009, he became the bane of conservatives who have publicly echoed the doubts of some Iranians on the fairness of the election and criticised the repression and deadly crackdown by the regime that followed.

The protests remain a touch paper issue in domestic politics, with critics of the indefinite house arrests saying Mousavi, his wife and Karroubi should face a trial where they can defend themselves.

Mr Rafsanjani, 80, has steadily fallen out of favour at the very top level of Iranian political office in recent years. -AFP

ON

THE MYANMAR TIMES MARCH 17, 2015



TOUR FINGERS

Philippine poverty to



S a child she waded in muddy Philippine rice paddies. Now teenager Janicel Lubina struts down runways for the country's top designers and is hoping to be crowned among the world's most beautiful women.

Lubina is a star recruit in one of Manila's beauty pageant boot camps, where shy, lanky teenage girls from remote farming provinces are transformed into poised Barbie dolls who can preach about world peace in six-inch heels.

Beauty pageants are hugely popular with women in the Philippines, with many taking part in the hope it will lead to down until they perfect it.

"We'll take in a girl, she will be in pain because of the duck walk, but the end result is she'll be a head-turner," he said.

Towering at 1.83 metres (six feet) tall in heels, raven-haired Lubina hopes to represent the country in the Miss Universe pageant, which has a huge following in the Philippines.

But Lubina's camera-ready smile fades when she talks about her struggles back home in Palawan province, where she worked as a maid like her mother, while her father was recovering from a mild stroke.

"One time, I mopped floors for an entire day and my boss

Local pageant fans are also among the world's most devoted. In 2010, a YouTube clip of four friends going berserk while watching Miss Universe got close to 4 million views, prompting

fast-food chain KFC to put them in one of their TV commercials. For 1985 Miss Philippines Joyce Burton-Titular, pageants are huge in the country because of Filipinos love to ogle and criticise glamorous women

"It's a cultural thing that starts with the admiration of beauty We also enjoy being mean critics, whether a girl wins or loses," Burton-Titular said.

Burton-Titular said pageants could also present an

luxury living, success in high fashion and movie stardom.

"My mother was a maid. I can't be a maid forever and get stuck in the province," 19-year-old Lubina said before she auditioned for this year's Binibining Pilipinas (Miss Philippines) contest.

Lubina mastered what is dubbed the "duck walk" at the Kagandahang Flores (Beauty of the Flower) training camp in Manila, where students are taught to perfect their beauty queen strut by swinging their hips from side to side like ducks.

Camp director and 'duck-walk' inventor Rodin Gilbert Flores approaches training with the precision of a scientist. He is a licensed chemical engineer who worked for a major glass company before shifting to entertainment.

"It's is all about muscle memory. It's calculated down to the movement of the hands," he said.

"The girl should also show her personality. She can't be like a mannequin with no expression on her face."

Flores ruthlessly watches as his students, wearing two-piece bikinis and high heels, 'duck-walk' from one end of a dark covered basketball court to the other.

Sweat drips down their cheeks but they are not allowed to sit

made me do it all over again because she didn't like my work," she said.

Lubina was discovered by a local make-up artist while she was out on an errand, walking on a dirt road. The beautician was amazed by her towering frame, she said.

She won 3000 pesos (US\$68) in her first pageant three years ago and has never looked back - for her the money has flowed in to the extent that she can support her family and pay for stroke treatment for her father.

Among her most memorable purchases was their family's first ever television set, which she gave to her parents as a gift after she placed second in a contest in 2013.

"It wasn't even a flat-screen TV, but it meant so much because my parents used to watch TV in our neighbour's house... Now they can watch me on TV anytime," she said.

Flores trained the Philippines' last two big global pageant winners - Miss International 2013 Bea Rose Santiago, and Miss Earth 2014 Jamie Herrell.

In total, the country's beauties have won the Miss International competition five times: twice each at Miss Universe and Miss Earth, and once at Miss World.

opportunity to escape from poverty.

"Pageants these days are a great equaliser because you can come from the poorest of the poor and still win. In our country, pageants are empowering," she said.

Burton-Titular said winning the national pageant 30 years ago gave her the confidence to try a career in acting, and as a newsreader.

For Herrell, beating 84 other beautiful women for the Miss Earth title last year has led to guest spots in television dance shows

Unlike Lubina, Herrell comes from a well-off family that owns a dance studio in Cebu city, a commercial centre in the central region. She said she spends her pageant winnings on clothes.

But Herrell takes her Miss Earth duties seriously, planting as many trees as she can in her home province of Cebu and other deforested areas to raise awareness about environmental issues.

"Pageants are relevant. Women can use them as channels for their advocacy," she said.

'You help the community, and be beautiful at the same time. And that's the tough part." - AFP







22 the pulse

Linking the world with world with words

ZON PANN PWINT zonpann08@gmail.com

RANSLATIONS of foreign novels and short stories are on the decline and local authors' finest works are relatively unknown to readers abroad. The chair of the Pen Myanmar Writers' Association says there is certainly a lack of great translators who accurately convey the subtle nuances of meaning without marring the style.

PEN Myanmar will host a five-day

translation workshop to build literary links with the world. Entitled *Link the Wor(l)ds*, it will take place from May 27 to 31 at Taw Win Garden hotel on Pyay Road.

One of the seminar's highlights will be the selection of 10 Myanmar-to-English and 10 English-to-Myanmar translators. The two groups will translate local and foreign authors respectively, though the stories have not yet been selected. The authors will work with the candidates. With the help of Penguin

Publishing, the British Council, Select



Photo: Thiri Lu



The Three Musketeers is one of the classic books on sale at Green Book Store. Photo: Aung Tun Win

Centre, Writers' Centre Norwich and *Ngar Doe* Publishing House, PEN will nurture the selected candidates' hopes of becoming professional translators. Entry is open to anyone applying to PEN's office at 31 Upper Pazundaung Street, Pazundaung township, third floor. The deadline is April 20.

Until the late 1990s, fiction, best-sellers, classics and prizewinning books by famous authors such as Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov and AJ Cronin were translated into Myanmar. However, in recent years relatively few international works have been translated.

The days of great translations by writers like Shwe U Daung (1889-1973), who translated such novels as *Great Expectations, The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and Mya Than Tint (1929-1998), who translated War and Peace, would appear to be over. The Nobel-Myanmar literary festival hosted in January fired readers with an interest in translated books by featuring about 50 foreign Nobel Prize-winning authors.

On the other hand, famous local authors are not known abroad because of the dearth of translators. Very few books are translated into English such as *Smile as they Bow*.

"Literary translation is very different from the translation of other types of text. It is important not only to convey the meaning of the words but also nuances of language," Kevin Mackenzie, director of the British Council, told a press conference on March 12 at Taw Win Garden hotel.

Suzanne Jonson, author of *A Lady Cyclist's Guide to Kashgar;* American translator Alfred Birnbaum; Singapore writer, poet and playwright Alfian Sa'at; and local writer Moe Thet Han will attend the workshop. PEN Myanmar chair Ma Thida

(Sanchaung) said, "It is not an easy task. The translator must be aware of other cultures. There are overtones, style and subtleties, and every nuance of each word must be caught.

"The skill can be attained through training. It takes more than looking up words in a dictionary. Myanmar authors are not familiar figures outside the country, and foreign authors are strange to local readers," she said.

Ma Thida said, "We aim to benefit selected translators. Penguin and *Ngar Doe* could publish their work."

Veteran translator and writer Maung Moe Thu, who translated Robert Bloch's *Psycho* and Eric Van Lustbader's *The Bourne Betrayal*, said, "When I was a student, Penguin books were available for K2.50. There was a wide variety of W Somerset Maugham. I had a chance to explore his books and was inspired to translate," he said.



Blooming Marvellous

"Florals? Groundbreaking." Miranda Priestley's famous retort from *The Devil Wears Prada* was dismissed in style yesterday at the opening of Tokyo Fashion Week, where Thai designer Pim Sukhahuta's edgy blooms ruled the runway. From ditsy prints to 3D floral embellishments, next season looks set to be garden-themed. Photos: AFP/Yoshikazu Tsuno









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K7 282	Daily	6:00	8:10	W9 201	Daily
W9 201	Daily	7:00	8:25	7Y 132	Daily
YH 835	1,7	7:00	8:40	K7 267	Daily
YH 831	4,6	7:00	8:40	YH 830	5
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Flight K7 282 YJ 891 YH 909 YH 917 YJ 141 YJ 881 YJ 881 YJ 801 K7 242 7Y 131 K7 264 7Y 241 YH 731 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 YANGO Flight YH 829 YH 835	Days Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 6 Daily Daily <td>Dep 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:10 6:20 6:30 6:45 7:00 7:15 8:20 14:30 14:30 15:30 15:30 TKYIN Dep 7:00 7:00</td> <td>Arr 7:20 8:25 7:45 8:05 8:05 8:20 8:20 8:35 9:40 16:40 17:10 17:25 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35</td> <td>Flight YJ 891 YH 918 YJ 141 / W9 7141 YJ 881 YJ 910 YH 835 K7 242 7Y 131 7Y 121 K7 283 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 HH 732 Flight YH 832 YH 836</td> <td>Days Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 Daily 6 Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Baily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Alford 1,2,3,4,5,6 INA TO Days 4,6 1,7</td>	Dep 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:10 6:20 6:30 6:45 7:00 7:15 8:20 14:30 14:30 15:30 15:30 TKYIN Dep 7:00 7:00	Arr 7:20 8:25 7:45 8:05 8:05 8:20 8:20 8:35 9:40 16:40 17:10 17:25 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35	Flight YJ 891 YH 918 YJ 141 / W9 7141 YJ 881 YJ 910 YH 835 K7 242 7Y 131 7Y 121 K7 283 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 HH 732 Flight YH 832 YH 836	Days Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 Daily 6 Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Baily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Alford 1,2,3,4,5,6 INA TO Days 4,6 1,7
Flight K7 282 YJ 891 YH 909 YH 917 YJ 141 YJ 881 YJ 881 YJ 801 K7 242 7Y 131 K7 264 7Y 241 YH 731 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 W9 212 YANGO Flight YH 829	Days Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1,2,4,5 6 Daily	Dep 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:10 6:20 6:30 6:45 7:00 7:15 8:20 14:30 14:30 15:30 15:30 TS30 TKYIN Dep 7:00	Arr 7:20 8:25 7:45 8:05 8:05 8:20 8:20 8:35 9:40 16:40 17:10 17:25 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35	Flight YJ 891 YH 918 YJ 141 / W9 7141 YJ 881 YJ 910 YH 835 K7 242 7Y 131 7Y 121 K7 283 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 W9 129 YH 732 Flight YH 832 YH 836 YH 827	Days Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 Daily 6 Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1,3,6 1,2,3,4,5,6 INA TO Days 4,6
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Flight K7 282 YJ 891 YH 909 YH 917 YJ 141 YJ 881 YJ 881 YJ 801 K7 242 7Y 131 K7 264 7Y 241 YH 731 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 YANGO Flight YH 829 YH 835 YH 831 YH 826 YJ 201 YJ 233	Days Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 6 Daily Daily 1 Daily Daily 1,2,3,4,5,7 1,3,6 4 1 N TO MYI Days 5 1,7 4,6 3 1,2,3,4 6	Dep 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:10 6:20 6:30 6:45 7:00 7:15 8:20 14:30 14:30 15:30 15:30 7:00 11:00	Arr 7:20 8:25 7:45 8:05 8:00 8:20 8:20 8:35 9:40 16:40 17:10 17:25 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05	Flight YJ 891 YH 918 YJ 141 /W9 7141 YJ 881 YJ 910 YH 835 K7 242 7Y 131 7Y 121 K7 283 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 YH 732 K7 836 YH 832 YH 836 YH 832 YH 830 YH 830 YJ 830 YJ 152 /W9 7152	Days Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 Daily 6 Daily
Flight K7 282 YJ 891 YH 909 YH 917 YJ 141 YJ 881 YJ 881 YJ 801 K7 242 7Y 131 K7 242 YY 131 K7 264 7Y 241 YH 731 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 YANGO Flight YH 829 YH 835 YH 831 YH 826 YJ 201 YJ 233 W9 251	Days Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 6 Daily Daily 1 Daily Daily 1,2,3,4,5,7 1,3,6 4 1 N TO MYI Days 5 1,7 4,6 3 1,2,3,4 6 2,5	Dep 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:10 6:20 6:30 6:45 7:00 7:15 8:20 14:30 14:30 15:30 15:30 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 11:00 11:30	Arr 7:20 8:25 7:45 8:20 8:05 8:20 8:20 8:35 9:40 16:40 17:10 17:25 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05	Flight YJ 891 YH 918 YJ 141 / W9 7141 YJ 881 YJ 910 YH 835 K7 242 7Y 131 7Y 121 K7 283 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 K7 830 YH 832 YH 832 YH 836 YH 832 YH 830 YH 830 YJ 152 / W9 7152 K7 623	Days Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 Daily 6 Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1,3,6 1,2,3,4,5,6 INA TO Days 4,6 1,7 3 5 1,2,3,4 1 1,3,5,7
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Flight K7 282 YJ 891 YH 909 YH 917 YJ 141 YJ 881 YJ 881 YJ 801 K7 242 7Y 131 7Y 121 K7 264 7Y 241 YH 731 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 W9 211 W9 129 YANGO Flight YH 829 YH 835 YH 831 YH 826 YJ 201 YJ 233 W9 251	Days Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 6 Daily Daily 1 Daily Daily 1,2,3,4,5,7 1,3,6 4 1 N TO MYI Days 5 1,7 4,6 3 1,2,3,4 6 2,5	Dep 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:00 6:10 6:20 6:30 6:45 7:00 7:15 8:20 14:30 14:30 15:30 15:30 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 7:00 11:00 11:30	Arr 7:20 8:25 7:45 8:20 8:05 8:20 8:20 8:35 9:40 16:40 17:10 17:25 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 17:35 17:40 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05 10:05	Flight YJ 891 YH 918 YJ 141 / W9 7141 YJ 881 YJ 910 YH 835 K7 242 7Y 131 7Y 121 K7 283 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 K7 265 7Y 242 W9 129 YH 732 K7 830 YH 832 YH 832 YH 836 YH 832 YH 830 YH 830 YJ 152 / W9 7152 K7 623	Days Daily Daily 1 7 1,2,4,5 Daily 6 Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily 1,3,6 1,2,3,4,5,6 INA TO Days 4,6 1,7 3 5 1,2,3,4 1,3,5,7

	GON TO H	EHQ	
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 141/W9 7141	1	6:20	8:35
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
YJ 201	1	7:00	9:10
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
VANC	ON TO M		
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 325	1,5	6:45	8:15
77 531	1,5	7:00	8:38
K7 319	2,4,6	7:00	9:05
Y5 325	2	15:30	17:00
YANG	on to si	TTWE	
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 309	1,3,6	11:30	12:55
K7 422	Daily	13:00	14:55
VANCO	N TO THA		
	_	-	_
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
		6.00	0.50
YJ 141/W9 7141	1	6:20 7:00	9:50
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242	1 Daily	7:00	10:35
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6	7:00 10:30	10:35 13:10
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6	7:00 10:30 11:30	10:35 13:10 13:50
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 ON TO D/	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D/ Days	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 ON TO D Days 2,4,6	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D/ Days	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 ON TO D Days 2,4,6	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG K7 319 7Y 531	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO DA Days 2,4,6 1,5 ON TO LA	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 7:00	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D/ Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 7:00 8.SHIO Dep	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 7:00 8 SHIO Dep 10:45	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751 YH 729 7Y 741	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00 11:30	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00 12:45 13:00 13:18
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751 YH 729	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751 YH 729 7Y 741 K7 828	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5 1,3,5	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 SHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:30 11:30 12:30	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00 12:45 13:00 13:18
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751 YH 729 7Y 741 K7 828	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5 1,3,5 CON TO P	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00 11:30 12:30 UTAO	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00 12:45 13:00 13:18 14:50
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751 YJ 751 YH 729 7Y 741 K7 828 K7 828	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5 1,3,5 CON TO PI Days	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00 11:30 12:30 UTAO Dep	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00 12:45 13:00 13:18 14:50
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YH 729 7Y 741 K7 828 YH 729 7Y 741 K7 828	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5 1,3,5 CON TO PI Days 6,4	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00 11:30 12:30 VTAO Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00 12:45 13:00 13:18 14:50
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight YJ 751 YH 729 7Y 751 YH 729 7Y 741 K7 828 Flight YH 826	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5 1,3,5 CON TO PU Days 6,4 3	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00 11:30 12:30 VTAO Dep 7:00	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00 12:45 13:00 13:18 14:50 Arr 13:18 14:50
YJ 141/W9 7141 K7 242 YH 505 W9 309 7Y 122 K7 422 Y5 421 YANG Flight K7 319 7Y 531 YANG Flight YJ 751 YJ 751 YH 729 7Y 741 K7 828 Flight YH 831	1 Daily 1,2,3,4,5,6 1,3,6 Daily Daily 1,3,4,6 CON TO D Days 2,4,6 1,5 CON TO LA Days 5 3,7 2,4,6 1,5 1,3,5 CON TO PI Days 6,4	7:00 10:30 11:30 12:15 13:00 15:45 AWEI Dep 7:00 7:00 XSHIO Dep 10:45 10:30 11:00 11:30 12:30 VTAO Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:00 7:00 Dep 7:00 7:	10:35 13:10 13:50 13:05 13:35 16:40 Arr 8:10 7:48 8:10 7:48 Arr 13:00 12:45 13:00 12:45 13:00 13:18 14:50

HEHO TO YANGON					
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr		
YJ 141 / W9 7141	1	8:50	10:55		
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		
MYEI	k to yan	IGON			
Flight	Days	Dep	Arr		

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			
YJ 141/W9 7141	1	10:05	10:55			
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			
	1		Arr 16:30			
Flight	Days	Dep				
Flight YJ 752	Days 5	Dep 13:15	16:30			
Flight YJ 752 K7 829	Days 5 1,3	Dep 13:15 15:05	16:30 15:55			

ANGON	
Dep	Arr
11:00	14:45
11:00	14:45
11:00	14:45
15:45	19:40
	Dep 11:00 11:00 11:00

Domestic Airlines

Air Bagan (W9)

Tel: 513322, 513422, 504888. Fax: 515102

Air KBZ (K7)

Tel: 372977~80, 533030~39 (airport), 373766 (hotline). Fax: 372983

Asian Wings (YJ)

Tel: 515261~264, 512140, 512473, 512640 Fax: 532333, 516654

Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5) Tel: 09400446999, 09400447999 Fax: 8604051

Mann Yadanarpon Airlines (7Y) Tel: 656969 Fax: 656998, 651020

Yangon Airways (YH) Tel: 383100, 383107, 700264 Fax: 652 533

Airline Codes

7Y = Mann Yadanarpon Airlines

K7 = Air KBZ

W9 = Air Bagan

Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

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YH = Yangon Airways
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YJ = Asian Wings

Subject to change without notice

Day

- 1 = Monday
- 2 = Tuesday
- 3 = Wednesday
- 4 = Thursday
- 6 = Saturday

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INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

BANGKOK TO YANGON Days

Daily

Daily

Daily

Daily

Daily Daily

Daily

Daily

Daily

Daily

ON MUEANG TO YANGON

Dep

8:00

8:45

21:30

11:55

13:05

13:40

17:00

18:05

19:20

20:15

Arr

8:45

9:40

22:20

12:40

13:50

14:30

17:50

18:50

20:05

21:30

	IGON TO BA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
PG 706	Daily	6:05	8:20	TG 303
8M 335 TG 304	Daily	8:40	10:25 11:45	PG 701 Y5 238
PG 702	Daily Daily	9:50 10:30	12:25	8M 336
TG 302	Daily	14:50	16:45	TG 301
PG 708	Daily	15:20	17:15	PG 707
8M 331	Daily	16:30	18:15	PG 703
PG 704	Daily	18:35	20:30	TG 305
Y5 237	Daily	19:00	20:50	8M 332
TG 306	Daily	19:50	21:45	PG 705
YANG	ON TO DON	MUFANG		DI
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
DD 4231	Daily	8:00	9:45	DD 4230
FD 252	Daily	8:30	10:20	FD 251
FD 256	Daily	12:50	14:40	FD 255
FD 254	Daily	17:35	19:25	FD 253
FD 258	Daily	21:30	23:15	FD 257
DD 4239	Daily	21:00	22:55	DD 4238
YAN	GON TO SIN	GAPORE		5
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25	TR 2822
Y5 2233	Daily	9:45	14:15	Y5 2234
TR 2823	Daily	9:45	2:35 15:10	SQ 998
SQ 997 3K 582	Daily Daily	10:25 11:45	16:20	3K 581 MI 533
MI 533	2,4,6	13:35	20:50	8M 232
8M 233	5,6,7	14:40	19:05	MI 518
MI 519	Daily	16:40	21:15	3K 583
3K 584	2,3,5	19:30	00:05+1	8M 234
VANG	N TO KUALA		2	KU
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
8M 501	1,2,3,5,6	7:30	11:30	AK 504
AK 505	Daily	8:30	12:45	MH 740
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30	8M 502
MH 743	Daily	16:00	20:15	MH 742
AK 503	Daily	19:05	23:20	AK 502
V۵	NGON TO BE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
CA 906	3,5,7	23:50	0550+1	CA 905
γανισ	ON TO GUA			G
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
8M 711	2,4,7	8:40	13:15	CZ 3055
CZ 3056	3,6	11:35	15:55	CZ 3055
CZ 3056	1,5	17:40	22:10	8M 712
YA	ANGON TO T	AIPEI		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
CI 7916	Daily	10:50	16:10	CI 7915
VAN	IGON TO KU	NMING		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
CA 416	Daily	12:30	15:55	MU 2011
MU 2012	3	12:40	18:50	CA 415
MU 2032	1,2,4,5,6,7	14:50	18:15	MU 2031
YA	ANGON TO H	ANOI		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:25	VN 957
YANGO	N TO HO CHI	MINH CIT	ΓY	HO
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:05	VN 943
Y	<mark>ANGON TO E</mark>	OHA		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
QR 919	1,4,6	7:55	11:40	QR 918
YA	ANGON TO S	EOUL		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
0Z 770	4,7	0:50	8:50	KE 471
KE 472	Daily	23:55	07:45+1	0Z 769
YAN	GON TO HON	IG KONG		H
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
KA 251	Daily	1:10	5:25	KA 252
	,			KA 250
Y/	ANGON TO T	ΟΚΥΟ		
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	Flights
NH 914	Daily	22:10	06:45+1	NH 913
	NGON TO D		Arr	Eliabta
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr 12:00	Flights
BG 061 BG 061	2	11:45 19:45	13:00 21:00	BG 060 BG 060
			21.00	BG 000
	NGON TO INC			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr 14:45	Flights
PG 724 W9 607	1,3,5,6 4,7	12:50 14:30	14:45 16:20	PG 723 W9 608
	T,/	00.55	07.45.1	014 7701

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S	Days	Dep	Arr	—
30	Daily	6:30	7:15	Ai
1	Daily	7:15	8:00	Te
5	Daily	11:35	12:20	10
3	Daily	16:20	17:05	_
7	Daily	20:15	20:55	B
38		19:25	20:35	Te
00	Daily	19.20	20.15	—
SING	APORE TO Y	ANGON		В
S	Days	Dep	Arr	
22	Days	7:20	8:45	Te
34	Daily	7:20	8:50	
	,			C
8	Daily	7:55	9:20	Te
1	Daily	9:10	10:40	
3	2,4,6	11:30	12:45	_
32	Daily	13:25	14:50	D
8	Daily	14:20	15:45	Te
3	2,3,5	17:20	18:50	
34	5,6,7	20:10	21:35	G
	LUMPUR TO	VANCON		
				Te
S	Days	Dep	Arr	Fa
4	Daily	6:55	8:00	
10	Daily	10:05	11:15	M
)2	1,2,3,5,6	12:30	13:30	Te
12	Daily	13:55	15:05	Fa
2	Daily	17:20	18:25	Га
BE	IJING TO YAI	NGON		M
S	Days	Dep	Arr	Te
5	3,5,7	19:30	22:50	
<u></u>				N
	IGZHOU TO N			
	Days	Dep	Arr	Te
55	3,6	8:35	10:35	
55	1,5	14:40	16:40	Q
2	2,4,7	14:15	15:50	Te
T /		001		
I.	AIPEI TO YAN			
S	Days	Dep	Arr	Si
5	Daily	7:00	9:50	Te
		NOON		—
	IMING TO YA			T
S	Days	Dep	Arr	
	2			Te
11	3	8:25	11:50	
5	Daily	11:10	11:30	
				Ti
5 31	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7	11:10 13:30	11:30	Ti
5 31 H/	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN	11:10 13:30 IGON	11:30 14:00	
5 31 H/ s	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep	11:30 14:00 Arr	Ti Te
5 31 H/	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN	11:10 13:30 IGON	11:30 14:00	Ti Te Vi
5 31 H/ s 7	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10	Ti Te
5 31 H/ s 7 CHII	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TO	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 O YANGO	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10	Ti Te Vi
5 31 8 7 7 D CHI I 8	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TI Days	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 O YANGO Dep	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr	Ti Te Vi
5 31 H/ s 7 CHII	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TO	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 O YANGO	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10	Ti Te Vi
5 31 8 7 7 D CHI I 8 3	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TO Days 2,4,7	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 O YANGO Dep 11:45	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr	Ti Te Vi
5 31 8 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TH Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN	11:10 13:30 Dep 16:40 O YANGO Dep 11:45 GON	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25	Ti Te Vi
5 31 s 7 D CHI I s 3 D D s	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TI Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN Days	11:10 13:30 Dep 16:40 O YANGO Dep 11:45 GON Dep	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25 Arr	Ti Te Vi Te
5 31 8 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TH Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN	11:10 13:30 Dep 16:40 O YANGO Dep 11:45 GON	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25	Ti Te Vi
5 31 8 7 7 0 CHI I 8 3 0 0 5 8	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TO Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN Days 3,5,7	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 O YANGOI Dep 11:45 GON Dep 19:45	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25 Arr	Τi Te Vi Te 3κ
5 31 8 7 7 0 CHI I 8 3 0 CHI I 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TO Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN Days 3,5,7 EOUL TO YAN	11:10 13:30 Dep 16:40 DyANGO Dep 11:45 GON Dep 19:45 GON	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25 Arr 0459+1	Ti Te Vi Te
5 31 s 7 D CHI I s 3 D s 8 S 8 8 S 8	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TI Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN Days 3,5,7 EOUL TO YAN Days	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 DYANGOI Dep 11:45 GON Dep 19:45 IGON Dep	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25 Arr 0459+1 Arr	Ti Te Vi Te 3K 8N
5 31 8 7 7 0 CHI I 8 3 0 CHI I 8 3 0 CHI I 8 3 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 1	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TI Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN Days 3,5,7 COUL TO YAN Days Daily	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 D YANGO Dep 11:45 GON Dep 19:45 IGON Dep 18:30	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25 Arr 0459+1 Arr 22:30	Τi Te Vi Te 3κ
5 31 s 7 D CHI I s 3 D s 8 S 8 8 S 8	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TI Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN Days 3,5,7 EOUL TO YAN Days	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 DYANGOI Dep 11:45 GON Dep 19:45 IGON Dep	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25 Arr 0459+1 Arr	Ti Te Vi Te 3k 8N Ak
5 31 8 7 D CHI I 8 3 D CHI I 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 1 9	Daily 1,2,4,5,6,7 ANOI TO YAN Days 1,3,5,6,7 MINH CITY TI Days 2,4,7 OHA TO YAN Days 3,5,7 COUL TO YAN Days Daily	11:10 13:30 IGON Dep 16:40 DYANGOI Dep 11:45 GON Dep 19:45 IGON Dep 18:30 19:30	11:30 14:00 Arr 18:10 N Arr 13:25 Arr 0459+1 Arr 22:30	Ti Te Vi Te 3K 8N

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 252	2,4,6	22:20	00:15+1
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:50	23:45
ТО	KYO TO YAN	IGON	
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:45	17:15
DH	IAKA TO YAN	IGON	
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
BG 060	2	8:30	10:45
BG 060	5	16:30	18:45
INC	HEON TO YA	NGON	
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
CHIAI	NG MAI TO Y	ANGON	

International Airlines

Air Asia (FD) Tel: 09254049991~3

Air Bagan Ltd.(W9) Tel: 513322, 513422, 504888. Fax: 515102

Air China (CA) Tel: 666112, 655882

ir India el: 253597~98, 254758. Fax 248175

angkok Airways (PG) el: 255122, 255265. Fax: 255119

iman Bangladesh Airlines (BG) el: 371867~68. Fax: 371869

ondor (DE) el: 370836~39 (ext: 303)

ragonair (KA) l: 255320, 255321. Fax: 255329

olden Myanmar Airlines (Y5) l: 09400446999, 09400447999 ax: 8604051

lalaysia Airlines (MH) el: 387648, 241007 (ext: 120, 121, 122) ax: 241124

lyanmar Airways International (8M) l: 255260. Fax: 255305

lok Airline (DD) el: 255050, 255021. Fax: 255051

atar Airways (QR) el: 379845, 379843, 379831. Fax: 379730

ingapore Airlines (SQ) / Silk Air (MI) l: 255287~9. Fax: 255290

hai Airways (TG) el: 255491~6. Fax: 255223

iger Airline (TR) l: 371383, 370836~39 (ext: 303)

ietnam Airlines (VN) l: 255066, 255088, 255068. Fax: 255086

Airline Codes

3K = Jet Star	
3M = Myanmar Airways International	
AK = Air Asia	
3G = 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	



Photo: Supplied

Green Hill Valley elephant camp: An experience you will never forget

EI EI THU 91.eieithu@gmail.com

F Green Hill Valley sounds like a perfect name for a retirement community, it is - though in this case, the retirees are elephants. The family of Daw Tin Win Maw opened the home in 2011 near Kalaw, Shan State, originally setting aside 50 acres (20 hectares) for retired timber elephants, who had spent their lives lugging logs around.

Starting with two elderly elephants, they leased five more from Myanma Timber Enterprise, and conceived the idea of a new form of tourism, she said.

We saw this as responsible tourism, as well as a way of providing for the veterinary care of elephants. We don't focus on entertainment, like fancy riding, demonstrations or circus acts," she said. "We also carry out re-plantation to improve their environment, so tourists can join in by planting a local tree during their stay.

"Re-plantation is a way for tourists to improve their knowledge of what sustains the environment, and it has a positive effect. We can't stop villagers cutting down trees, but when they see the tourists are replanting them, they might cut fewer of them. That's how we're regenerating the secondary forest," she said.

Green Hill Valley elephant care camp works with Myanma Timber Enterprise in conserving more than 100 acres of natural forest. Tourists from North America and Europe come in package tours.

At this camp, tourists learn a little more about the nature of elephants, their care, feeding, training and daily lives, she said.

"We accept only about 35 tourists a day to ensure that the elephants have enough time to rest, and to help sustain their environment. All our elephants are free to return to the forest after activities end at 4pm," said Daw Tin Win Maw.

About 45 minutes' drive from Kalaw, the camp is best vsited between October and February. But it is open the whole year, except for the period of the water festival.

Green Hill Valley founder U Htun Htun Wynn said, "The retired elephants may not find life in the forest so easy and safe because they were domesticated during their service. Now they no longer have to work. Our camp is 100 percent private, and our main income is from tourism."

U Htun Htun Wynn, who has 18 years' experience as a tourist guide, set up the camp with Daw Tin Win Maw and their uncle, veterinarian Dr Ba Kyaw Than, an expert in elephant veterinary care for more than 36 vears.

"Asian elephants are an endangered species now, so we need to conserve them whether they are wild or domesticated," said Daw Tin Win Maw.

Green Hill Valley elephant care camp can be visited from 9am to 4pm at a cost of US\$90 per person, including international-standard lunch and all additional charges. Visitors can also feed the elephants.

Hights	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

Daily

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI

8M 7702

23:55 07:45+1

YANGON TO GAYA			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 601	1,3,5,6	10:30	11:50

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 710	Daily	14:15	16:40

MANDALAY TO SINGAPORE			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 533	2,4,6	15:45	20:50
Y5 2233	1,2,4,5,6	7:50	14:15

MANDALAY TO DON MUEANG			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 245	Daily	12:50	15:15

MANDALAY TO KUNMING			
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	13:50	16:40

NAY PYI TAW TO BANGKOK				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
PG 722	1,2,3,4,5	19:45	22:4	

r	Flights	Days	Dep	An
5	Y5 252	2,4,6	9:25	10:15
50	7Y 306	1,5	13:45	14:35
20	W9 608	4,7	17:20	18:10

GAYA TO YANGON					
Flights Days Dep Arr					
8M 602	1,3,5,6	12:50	16:00		
BANGKOK TO MANDALAY					
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr		
PG 709	Daily	12.05	13.25		

SINGAPORE TO MANDALAY				
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr	
Y5 2234	Daily	7:20	16:30	
MI 533	2,4,6	11:30	14:50	

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY					
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr		
FD 244	Daily	10:55	12:20		

KUNMING TO MANDALAY						
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr			
MU 2029	Daily	12:55	12:50			
BANGKOK TO NAY PYI TAW						
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr			
PG 721	1,2,3,4,5	17:15 19:15				

NH = All Nippon Airways

- PG = Bangkok Airways
- QR = Qatar Airways
- SQ = Singapore Airways TG = Thai Airways TR = Tiger Airline VN = Vietnam Airline

Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

Subject to change without notice

Day		4	-	Thursday
1 =	Monday	5	=	Friday
2 =	Tuesday	6	=	Saturday
3 =	Wednesday	7	=	Sunday



At Green Hill Valley, tourists can learn about elephants and their care. Photo: Supplied

CYCLING



KY'S Richie Porte assert-ed March 15 he feels in the form of his life following his second Paris-Nice title in three years.

The 30-year Australian, who trailed leader Tony Gallopin by 36 seconds going into the final day's time trial, hopes this win can boost his confidence ahead of the Giro d'Italia.

"I relish this win even more than two years ago," the Tasmanian-born cvclist said. "In between times I had a bad season [in 2014]."

"I wasn't sure I could win this Paris-Nice. I had lost time on Saturday [March 14]," Porte explained.

Moviestar's Colombian rider Nairo

Quintana won the snow-bound fifth

stage of the Tirreno-Adriatico on

d'Italia winner and 2013 Tour de

France runner-up, finished the 197km

stage between Esanatoglia and Terminillo 41 seconds ahead of the chas-

ing peloton to take the race leader's

blue jersey from overnight pace-set-

ter Wouter Poels of the Netherlands.

The Colombian, last year's Giro

"There was too much tyre pressure, it was not ideal. It was like riding on ice. But I was confident. I know the climb very well, I've done it many times during training and sometimes even faster than today."

Porte, who finished the early season classic stage race 30 seconds clear of Polish world road-race champion Michal Kwiatkowski, hopes to bank on this performance heading to Italy in May when he will lead Team Sky.

And the Paris-Nice triumph will undoubtedly shore up his Giro d'Italia team leadership stakes.

"I am 30 now, my hair is getting grey. I am happy to be part of such a

Quintana takes Tirreno-Adriatico lead in blizzard

Crossing in second was Bauke

Mollema, who came in ahead of

a group including race favourites

Joaquin Rodriguez, Rigoberto Uran

on the final climb of the day, among

those left trailing in his wake the man

who won last year's Tour de France,

ings by 39sec from Mollema with

Quintana leads the overall stand-

Quintana made a decisive move

and Alberto Contador.

Vincenzo Nibali.

strong team," he explained. "My confidence is boosted. I feel I am in the best shape of my life. I will head to the Volta a Catalunya and the Giro with a team that is improving every day. And then, we'll have the Tour de France with Chris [Froome].'

Porte's personnal best on the Giro is seventh in 2010 when he topped the young rider classification and wore the leader's pink jersey for three days.

Porte has started this season superbly with wins in the Australian time trial championship as well as stages in the Volta ao Algarve and the Tour Down Under. - AFP

Uran at 48sec and France's Thibault

stage in March 14, folded on the day's

last climb to slip back to 10th in the

was a 210km ride from Rieti to Porto

Saint'Elpidio on March 16 with the

race concluding with the March 17

10km time trial in San Benedetto del

overall standings at 1min 13sec.

Poels, successful in the fourth

The sixth and penultimate stage

Pinot in fourth.

Tronto. - AFP



Sky's Richie Porte in action in the Paris-Nice final-stage time-trial. Photo: AFP

FOOTBALL

March 15.

Rooney's fight club

MANCHESTER United star Wayne Rooney has found himself embroiled in a bizarre incident after footage emerged of him being knocked out by former teammate Phil Bardsley in an impromptu boxing match in his kitchen.

Rooney was sent sprawling in his home after Bardsley caught him with a left jab as they indulged in a friendly sparring bout.

The 29-year-old England skipper is seen falling to the floor and appears to hit his head with a thud as he lands heavily on the ground.

He was left apparently out cold, arms splayed to the side and his head partially under a dining room chair. As he lay unconscious, shocked friends rushed over before filming came to an end.

The footage could see Rooney find

himself in hot water both with his club and with England manager Roy Hodgson and others in the Football Associa-

tion's hierarchy. The tussle could have left Rooney with serious injuries and is unlikely to have impressed his boss at Manchester United, Louis van Gaal.

Rooney, capped 101 times by his country, and Bardsley, 29, were teammates at United between 2003 and 2008, before Bardsley left Old Trafford for Sunderland and then Stoke City.

The Sun newspaper, which obtained the video, said the incident happened on February 22, when it claimed Rooney's wife Coleen was away on holiday with their two sons.

Rooney's spokesperson declined to make any comment. - AFP

Rugby Four can win Six Nations Coach Philippe Saint-Andre refused

IN BRIEF

to be drawn on France's chances of snatching the Six Nations title after a 29-0 win over Italy on March 15 boosted lagging confidence ahead of next week's finale against England.

France face England at Twickenham this weekend looking to cause an upset, and hoping results elsewhere go their way, as they bid for a first title since 2010.

However France's rivals -England, Ireland and Wales - would beg to differ after a game that will likely go down as one of the worst in recent Six Nations history

France travelled to the Italian capital looking to reclaim the Giuseppe Garibaldi Trophy having lost to the Azzurri on their two previous visits to Rome.

Yoann Maestri, in the 45th minute following a great attacking move by full back Scott Spedding, and Mathieu Bastareaud, at the death, ran in the only tries of the game as France ran out deserved winners.

It was far from beautiful rugby at a cold and rain-hit Stadio Olimpico, but the result left France third in the table, two points adrift of leaders England (6), Ireland (4) and Wales (4) ahead of next week's decisive fixtures.

France's defence, which has conceded only two tries in four games, remains their strong point. But on this performance, England's lively backs will fancy rewriting those statistics.

Golf

Speith secures second tour title Jordan Spieth sank a dramatic 28foot birdie putt on the third playoff hole on March 15 to win the US\$5.9 million Valspar Championship and capture his second career US PGA Tour title.

The 21-year-old American rolled a tension-packed putt over a ridge and into the cup at the par-3 17th on Innisbrook resort's Copperhead

Ski Jumping Freund a soar winner

Severin Freund won his fourth straight World Cup event, and ninth of the season, as the German world champion claimed victory on Oslo's famous Holmenkollen hill on March 15 to cap a perfect weekend.

Just 24 hours after jumping to his eighth win, Freund produced jumps of 132m and 128m for a total of 258.9pts to relegate Japan's Noriaki Kasai to second spot on 254.9.

In the overall rankings, Freund is 94pts ahead of Prevc with two events remaining and a maximum of 200 points on offer (100 for victory).

Freund, 27, has finished on the podium 15 times this season and is in reach of the record number of victories, which is 11, set by compatriot Martin Schmitt during the 1999-2000 campaign.

Athletics

Fast footwork for Suzuki

Yusuke Suzuki smashed the week-old 20-kilometre race walk world record by 26 seconds on Sunday at the Asian Race Walking Championships in his home town of Nomi, central Japan.

Suzuki, set a new record time





n & Service Cent

No.(A-3), Aungsan Stadium (North East Wing), Upper Pansodan Street, Yangon. Room No. (4006/B), 3rd Floor, Taw Win Centre, Yangon. No.(13/A), Kabaraye Pagoda Road (Corner of Gandamar Street), Mayangone Township, Yangon. No.(4),73rt St , Between 30th & 31th Street, Chan Aye Thar San Township, Mandalay, Level (2), Capital Hyper Mark, Yazathingaha Street , Qutarathiri Township, Naypyitaw. Room No.(8), Yay Aye Queen Quarter, East Myo Path Street , Taung Gyi.

course to defeat compatriots Patrick Reed and Sean O'Hair and take the \$1.062 million top prize.

"I guess it was just my day," Spieth said.

Spieth, who shared second at last year's Masters, jumped to a career-best sixth in the new world rankings out on March 16 and will be among the favorites at next month's Masters, where top-ranked Rory McIlroy will try to complete a career Grand Slam by winning the green jacket for a third consecutive major triumph.

It was the third victory in five months for Spieth even though his only other US PGA victory came in a playoff at the 2013 John Deere Classic. Spieth took the Australian Open crown in November and the Hero World Challenge hosted by Tiger Woods last December.

of 1hr 16mins 36secs, obliterating the record of 1hr 17 mins 02secs set by France's Yohann Diniz in the national championships in Arles, southern France, on March 8.

Suzuki, who managed only 36th at the 2012 London Olympics, took the Asian title for the third time.

Basketball March Madness

The bracket for the National Collegiate Athletic Association men's basketball tournament was drawn on March 15.

The NCAA tournament, nicknamed "March Madness" for the passion it evokes every year among American sports fans, features the University of Kentucky as an unbeaten top seed trying to become the first unbeaten national champion since Indiana in 1976. – AFP

Cricket World Cup

Centuries set ton of records in World Cup



HE opening round of the World Cup witnessed 35 centuries compared to just six in the entire 1975 tournament, seemingly proving nd for all that one-day cricket is

once and for all that one-day cricket is a batsman's game.

Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara heads the list of century makers, smashing four consecutive hundreds to become the first batsman in all oneday internationals to score four in a row.

The 37-year-old left-hander is in the form of his life, scoring 105 not out against Bangladesh, 117 not out versus England, 104 against Australia and 124 in the game with Scotland.

Surprisingly it was non-Test side Afghanistan who got the better of him, dismissing the veteran for seven while Sangakkara managed just 39 in the first game against New Zealand.

"It's one of the rarest things you can see, him playing four [hundreds] in a row. I'm lucky to be here to watch all four innings," said Sri Lanka chair of selectors Sanath Jayasuriya yesterday.

Sangakkara's teammate Tillakaratne Dilshan, India's Shikhar Dhawan, Zimbabwe's Brendan Taylor and Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Mahmudullah have all notched two hundreds in the current tournament which kicks off its quarter-finals from tomorrow.

Of the 35 hundreds in the 42 matches in the group stage, Sri Lanka had eight while South Africa had five, India saw four, and the West Indies and Australia three each.

Batsmen from Bangladesh had two, both by Mahmudullah and so did eliminated England, Ireland and Zimbabwe both by Taylor.

New Zealand, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates and Scotland all one century each.

England's Dennis Amiss was the first batsman to score a World Cup hundred in the inaugural event held in England in 1975.

There were just six centuries in

that first tournament.

But bowlers dominated the second edition of the World Cup – also held in England – when only two hundreds were scored, both by eventual winners the West Indies.

Gordon Greenidge hit a century against India in the group phase before master blaster Viv Richards sealed the title for the West Indies with 138 not out in the final against England at Lord's.

The 1983 event – also held in England – saw eight hundreds while the next edition, in 1987 in the sub-continent, had 11.

The number went down to eight in 1992 when Australia and New Zealand co-hosted the event for the first time.

In 2003 in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya, 21 hundreds were scored while four years later in the Caribbean, the figure dropped slightly to 20.

The 2011 World Cup saw 24 hundreds in all on the flat pitches of India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. – *AFP*



Irish captain William Porterfield celebrates a ton while Pakistan's Umar Akmal looks on in despair. Photo: AFP

Five first-round lessons

Left-arm forward

Some 23 years after Wasim Akram lit up the last World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, this tournament has seen a clutch of leftarm fast bowlers following in the Pakistan great's footsteps, with batsmen exposed to an angle of delivery many of them don't face that often.

Australia's Mitchell Starc has so far taken 16 wickets at just 8.50 apiece, with New Zealand's Trent Boult not far behind with 15 at just a shade more than 15 each.

Meanwhile Pakistan fielded a trio of left-arm quicks – Mohammad Irfan, Rahat Ali and Wahab Riaz – in their tournament-changing win over South Africa.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2015

Quarter finals

March 18, Wednesday

Attack to win

Cricket tactics are a little bit like flared trousers – everything comes back at least once. Amidst all the blazing hitting, what this World Cup has shown is that captains prepared to back their bowlers with attacking fields – Australia's Michael Clarke and New Zealand's Brendon McCullum being two examples – have the greatest chance of success.

India peak at right time

India had a wretched tour of Australia in the lead-up to the defence of their title but, as they showed in winning the 2011 World Cup on home soil and the 2013 Champions Trophy in England, MS Dhoni's men – and the captain himself – have an admirable ability to raise their game when there's a major prize at stake.

Garden of Eden no graveyard for

Before the tournament started, there

were fears the short straight bound-

bowlers

Asian quartet defy Down-under convention

CO-HOSTS Australia and New Zealand may be the teams to beat, but the striking feature of this World Cup is Asia's four Test nations defying conventional wisdom to make the quarter-finals.

The belief that Asian cricketers struggle on the hard, bouncy wickets Down Under was thrown out of the window as India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh moved ahead from the group stages.

Three more wins will see a team crowned the 2015 champions – just like Pakistan did when the World Cup was last held in Australia and New Zealand in 1992 – and another victory for Asia cannot be ruled out.

"There is no reason why an Asian he side can't win this time," legendary se Pakistani fast bowler Wasim Akram, st who was part of the 1992 winning Ca team, told AFP.

nament who knocked England out in the league.

Bangladesh went through almost the entire last year without a win in Test or one-day cricket, but the tactical acumen of their Sri Lankan coach Chandika Hathurusinghe and fast bowling adviser Heath Streak has paid dividends.

Two consecutive centuries by Mohammad Mahmudullah and incisive fast bowling by Rubel Hossain and young Taskin Ahmed led the turnaround for the Tigers, and skipper Mashrafe Mortaza promises more from his side.

"We are hungry for success and I am confident we can reach new heights," said Mortaza, whose team sent India crashing from the first stage of the 2007 World Cup in the prolific Kumar Sangakkara in their ranks.

The 37-year-old left-hander, playing one-day cricket for the last time, has already hammered an unprecedented four consecutive centuries and tops the batting charts with 496 runs.

With the 38-year-old Tillakaratne Dilshan having made 395 runs with two hundreds, it promises to be an enthralling contest between Sri Lanka's in-form batsmen and the Proteas' attack led by Dale Steyn.

Coach Marvan Atapattu is confident that Sri Lanka, the 1996 champions who lost in the finals in both the last two editions, are equipped to deal with the pressures of a knock-out game.

"Over the last few years in big

South Africa v Sri Lanka Venue: Sydney Cricket Ground, Sydney (AUS)

March 19, Thursday

India v Bangladesh Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne (AUS)

March 20, Friday

Australia V Pakistan Adelaide Oval, Adelaide (AUS)

March 21, Saturday

New Zealand v West Indies Wellington Regional Stadium, Wellington (NZL)

Source: ICC Cricket World Cup 2015



aries at Eden Park would lead to a riot of run-scoring at the Auckland ground.

Yet the venue has staged some low-scoring thrillers, including New Zealand's one-wicket win over Australia in the match of the tournament so far, with the Aussies all out for 151 after Boult took five for 27, only for Starc to hit back with six for 28.

Associates on the rise

It is a measure of how things have changed that Ireland's victory over the West Indies was no longer regarded as a shock.

Meanwhile Afghanistan, UAE and Scotland all had their moments too, adding to the vibrancy of a tournament that otherwise would just be a slightly expanded version of the Champions Trophy. – AFP "They have played well and deserve to go through. In a knock-out situation, past form will really not count. Everything depends on how you play on that day."

Defending champions India bounced back from a dismal tour of Australia prior to the World Cup to record six straight wins in the league, which surprised many, but not team director Ravi Shastri.

"I'm not one bit surprised," the former all-rounder told the Wisden India website. "What we are looking forward to now is to carry on the good work. Not think too far ahead, but keep the momentum going."

India's quarter-final opponents at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground on March 19 will be Bangladesh, the surprise team of the tour-

Caribbean.

Mortaza said his biggest challenge was to check the growing excitement in the team over making the knock-out rounds for the first time and the prospect of playing before some 90,000 spectators at the MCG.

"Everyone is excited about the game but as a professional unit we must focus on the task ahead," he said. "It's a chance to show the world that we are among the top teams."

The India-Bangladesh match means that at least one Asian team will be guaranteed a place in the semi-finals, but Sri Lanka and Pakistan will also be strong contenders for the last four.

Sri Lanka, who take on the powerful but inconsistent South Africa in tomorrow's first quarter-final at the Sydney Cricket Ground, have the tournament matches, I've seen people raise their game and raise the whole team," he said.

"These guys can do it again. When it comes to pulling together and working towards a common goal, we're among the best."

Pakistan, described by South African coach Russell Domingo as "predictably unpredictable", lived up to that reputation by bouncing back from two defeats to win four in a row.

And as they prepare to tackle mighty Australia at the Adelaide Oval on March 20, skipper Misbahul Haq was convinced his team can win the tournament and repeat the feat of their 1992 predecessors.

"Of course we can win the World Cup," Misbah said after knocking Ireland out of the race. "We have the momentum." – *AFP*

SPORT 27



What we've learned so far at Cricket's World Cup



World Cup migrants must be protected: Blatter

IFA president Sepp Blatter said March 15 that more must be done to protect migrant workers building Qatar's World Cup stadiums even though the Gulf state's emir had

given a "personal commitment" to their welfare.

Blatter and Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani held 90 minutes of talks at the Al Bahr palace ahead of a FIFA executive committee meeting on March 19 and 20 to decide the final dates for the 2022 World Cup. The tournament will be the first to be held in November-December because of Qatar's scalding summer temperatures.

"It was important for me to have an opportunity to get the latest information directly from the highest political authority, ahead of the executive committee next week," said Blatter.

"As various human rights groups have recently noted, progress has been made already, especially with regard to the standards introduced by the Supreme Committee relating to 2022 construction sites, but more must be done in Qatar to ensure uniformly fair working conditions for all."

Blatter added this would only be possible through the "collective effort of all stakeholders".

This included concstruction companies, said Blatter, who added that the World Cup could act as a catalyst for social change in the tiny Gulf kingdom.



FIFA president Sepp Blatter called for the Football World Cup to be a catalyst for social change. Photo: AFP

"It is encouraging to hear the emir's personal commitment to workers' welfare and to get a sense of the improvements planned for all workers in Qatar," said the FIFA leader who returned to Zurich after the meeting.

Blatter did not visit any construction sites. FIFA said that was the responsibility of secretary-general Jerome Valcke, who was in Doha last month, and at the time visited some of the sites.

Human rights groups have backed

Qatari reforms in recent weeks, especially the proposed move to electronic payments, which should ensure many staff are paid on time.

However, there is concern that reforms are not moving fast enough. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have called on Qatar to speed up efforts to reform the controversial "kafala" sponsorship system, which enables employers to prevent foreign workers from leaving the country or changing jobs and has been likened to modern-day slavery.

They have also cited the confiscation of passports by employers, workers not being issued an exit visa so they can leave Qatar if they wish, and migrant labourers having to pay recruitment fees.

Earlier this month, Qatar said it would more than double the number of migrant labourers in the country to 2.5 million by 2020.

Sheikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman bin Nasser al-Thani, a senior member of the royal family and chair of the Daruna conglomerate, told a business conference in Doha that the number of workers would reach "2.5 million within three to five years".

It is estimated that there are anywhere between 700,000 and 1 million migrant workers in the tiny Gulf kingdom, out of a total population of 2.3 million.

FIFA said the emir and Blatter also discussed the probable moving of the World Cup to the end of 2022.

A FIFA meeting in Doha in February recommended switching the World Cup from its traditional dates of June and July to November and December because of Qatar's climate. – AFP

FORMULA ONE

Even Arnie can't mask F1's troubled season start

IT says something about the state of Formula One when the highlight of the year's first race is the "Running Man" handing out the prizes.

After several withdrawals and a processional one-two win for Mercedes, Hollywood star Arnold Schwarzenegger's surprise appearance at the podium ceremony provided a rare moment of cheer.

But even Schwarzenegger's dazzling smile, and banter with winner Lewis Hamilton, couldn't mask the problems facing F1 at the start of the new season. about the complex hybrid engine technology which is giving many teams a headache.

New outfit Manor didn't make it out of the garage, and Red Bull's Daniil Kvyat and Kevin Magnussen of McLaren dropped out with mechanical problems on the way to the start.

Max Verstappen, who became the sport's youngest driver aged 17 years and 166 days, also had a bitter sweet day when the Renault power unit in his Toro Rosso failed on the 34th lap.



hind the scenes often exceeds the spectacle on the track.

And like Schwarzenegger's Terminator, it keeps coming back – starting with Malaysia in two weeks' time.

The debacle, for an outfit which dominated F1 between 2010 and 2013, prompted a dark warning from Marko as he spoke to German-language media.

"We are unhappy with the way Formula One is regulated and run," Marko

With only 15 cars making it to the grid for the opening race, the fewest since 1963, questions are being asked

'There is this wall in Jerusalem that you can stand in front of and complain. Maybe the guys should go there.'

> **Toto Wolff** Mercedes F1 executive director

Engine-supplier Honda's struggles on their reunion with McLaren were underlined when Jenson Button was delighted just to finish the race, even in last place.

Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo echoed the assessment of many when he called the race, which Hamilton led from start to finish, "boring".

"For sure it's not great for the people," said Ferrari's Sebastien Vettel, commenting on the sparse field.

"[Formula One] is a difficult challenge. It is complicated – maybe it got a bit too complicated."

Red Bull, dominant from 2010-2013, said they may even consider pulling out of the sport. Team principal Christian Horner called for new rules to rein in Mercedes.

"I fear the interest will wane," Horner

Arnold Schwarzenegger (right) entertains the crowd interviewing Mercedes F1 Team's German driver Nico Rosberg (left) after the Australian Grand Prix. Photo: AFP

told reporters.

"I didn't see much of Mercedes on the television and I can only imagine that it isn't interesting watching a procession so the producer was looking for other battles going on in the race – except there weren't that many cars to look at.

"The highlight for me was Arnie Schwarzenegger on the podium."

Vettel was accused of switching off fans in droves during his march to four

world titles with Red Bull, and another lop-sided season will not help Formula One's appeal.

And when told about the complaints, the response from Mercedes boss Toto Wolff was blunt.

"There is this wall in Jerusalem that you can stand in front of and complain. Maybe the guys should go there," he said.

The problems look stark, but crisis is nothing new to a sport where drama be-

said. "Therefore we will also be thinking about an exit scenario if the cost-benefit analysis no longer adds up."

He added that Red Bull, owned by Austrian energy-drink billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz, would evaluate their position later in the year.

Despite Red Bull's years on top, Horner said it wasn't "healthy" to have one team dominant and he called for F1 to rein in Mercedes and their superior engine.

"On this evidence, we are set for a two-horse race at every grand prix. Is it healthy to have a situation like this?" Horner told reporters.

"The FIA, within the rules, have an equalisation mechanism and that needs to be looked at."

He said Red Bull had to weather several rules-changes during its time at the top, including bans on double-diffusers and flexible bodywork. – *AFP*