



HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION

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PAGE 4

PHOTO: AFP

Judge agrees to re-test evidence in Koh Tao case

Migrant workers Ko Zaw Lin (left) and Ko Wai Phyo walk out of a police truck as they arrive for a hearing at a criminal court in Thailand's southern island of Koh Samui yesterday. The judge hearing the case agreed to a request from the defence for evidence allegedly linking the men to the killing of two British holidaymakers in September to be re-tested by the Ministry of Justice. The Myanmar men could face the death penalty if convicted.



NEWS 3

Ko Par Gyi's wife confronts Mon officials

Kyaikmayaw judge hearing case of death of journalist in October insists two summonses were sent to Ma Thandar asking her to testify in court over her husband's death.

EXCLUSIVE 5

Rakhine chief minister slams army over clashes

U Maung Maung Ohn says both the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army are "veering away from peace", adding that the arrest of civilians for links to armed group had created "great fear".



IN DEPTH 8

A storm away from ruin

Despite the hundreds of millions spent on aid projects in the delta since Cyclone Nargis, many remain just one natural disaster away from destitution - as some Wakema residents found following heavy winds earlier this month.

PROPERTY 12

Deal for historic sports field stirs controversy

Yangon's 100-acre Kyaikkasan sports ground slated for development by a Japanese-Myanmar consortium under a deal seemingly pushed through by the government without a tender.

Kokang focus for Wa summit

The conflict in northeastern Shan State is set to dominate a meeting of ethnic armed groups at the United Wa State Army headquarters, but some observers have warned the summit could complicate the peace process. NEWS 3

a good sofa is the soul of a home!

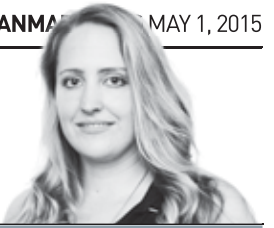
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Page 2

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THE INSIDER: Straya special

Happy May Day!

How about that weather?
This week's Page 2 special is brought to you from Sydney, Australia, where I have been sent by *The Myanmar Times* to report on the series of storms that have battered the harbour city ... as well as visit some relatives. Last week's storm (described breathlessly by the Murdoch propaganda machine as "once in a lifetime" weather event) raged for several days, and despite the bulk of the damage occurring in the rural areas (four elderly citizens killed, scores injured, 100,000+ left without electricity), it has by and large been referred to in the media as the "Sydney storm" of 2015. Arriving amidst the nationalist fervour of ANZAC day, where the nation honours its war dead by getting "sh*t-canned" and gambling,

everyone had a story of woe to impart. "My window broke and the cafe next door shut so I couldn't even get a latte," said one man, asking if his friends "saw [his] Instagram[s]".

The government has been accused of inaction in semi-rural areas, with residents forced to take their tales of crushed garages, ruined hatchbacks and clogged

45

The number of armed clashes during April, as reported by Myanmar Peace Monitor. This is slightly down from the 48 reported in March.

insurance hotlines to current affairs programs, while the genuinely hard-hit rural communities aren't getting much airtime.

Later on ANZAC day, a biblical hailstorm rocked the city's inner west, which put a significant dampener on the traditional raucous betting game of "two-up", but provided some light entertainment in the form of the closest thing to a snow fight the subtropical city has seen during autumn for quite some time.

The allegedly democratically-elected Abbott regime is officially of the view that climate change doesn't exist, and they recently paid a think tank to confirm this. In fact, the country's attitude toward the possibility that emissions and the fact we all live like a**holes with little regard as to the consequences this will have on the pale blue dot we inhabit is less progressive than the views of the Thein Sein administration - which is a fun fact to drop to the city's latte-swilling, small-dog-owning inhabitants. Further storms are expected later this week.

Yangon weather forecast:

Unrelenting rain until roughly October. High chance of eels on the streets, and a boom in domestic rat populations as they seek relief from the rising tides. Cultivate a trusting relationship with them. It's in your best interests. Apply disinfectant to any cuts or sores on the feet, and purchase a dehumidifier.

In brief:

News site Coconuts Yangon renders

Once was Burma...

Archival material courtesy of Pansodan Gallery

First floor, 286 Pansodan, upper block, Kyauktada township



Forward magazine May Day special, 1970.

Page 2 redundant, "ruining my goddamn life, I have nothing to write about any more," says a source who wishes to remain anonymous

Next week:

Australian immigration policy special. Page 2 meets refugees

from Myanmar who made it before the "stop the boats" policy was enacted. They dish the dirt on their motivations for making the move, which range from "fleeing persecution" to "just wanting to go over there and steal [Australian] jobs".

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KYAIKMAYAW, MON STATE

Murky investigation into journalist's death continues

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WITNESSES told a court hearing in Mon State's Kyaikmayaw yesterday that they recalled seeing journalist Ko Par Gyi on the streets of the small town before he was detained by the military. He would die in custody a week later, while allegedly trying to escape.

The testimony came at the third session in a hearing into his death, which began quietly on April 10. While the testimonies of three witnesses shed little light on the circumstances surrounding how Ko Par Gyi's died, yesterday's proceedings were significant for the fact that they were attended by his wife, Ma Thandar.

Since his disappearance, she has been fighting to resolve the murky circumstances surrounding her husband's killing. Only in recent days did she learn that the court had begun hearing the case. On arriving at court yesterday morning, she was told that the case had in fact been transferred to the court on March 30.

Encountering district prosecutor U Nyi Nyi Lwin outside the court waiting for the first of the witnesses to show up, Daw Thandar was told that there was no legal requirement to inform her.

Later, she was told that two letters had been sent informing her of the trial and asking her to testify. Although she requested copies of the letters, none were produced. "They are lying," a frustrated Ma Thandar said.

Her lawyer, U Robert San Aung, was unable to attend the trial due to a commitment in Bago Region's Tharyawady, where students arrested during the Letpadan crackdown on March 10 were appearing in court.

Ma Thandar sat on a chair just behind the prosecutor, closely following the proceedings. When the session ended in the afternoon, Daw Thandar was given an official letter asking her to testify at the next hearing, scheduled for May 11.

Only one of three witnesses who appeared yesterday gave evidence of significance. A motorbike driver who was the last one to speak with Ko Par Gyi before his arrest recounted his arrest.

Ko Par Gyi had just returned from a work trip and drank some fruit juice and water in a shop near the river bank in Kyaikmayaw. He then asked motorbike driver to take him to the bus station. When the driver passed a monastery, they were stopped and Ko Par Gyi was suddenly arrested. A few minutes later, the driver said, a military truck came to take Ko Par Gyi away. He was taken to the headquarters of Tatmadaw battalion 208 where, eventually, he would be fatally



Ma Thandar speaks outside Kyaikmayaw Township Court in Mon State yesterday. Photo: Naw Say Phaw Waa

shot by his capturers.

The monastery is located near a roundabout on a busy street in the centre of the small town. Yesterday morning, about the same time that Ko Par Gyi was arrested, about a dozen shops were open for business with scores of people on the street. Many more are likely to have seen the arrest, although it is unclear who will be called to testify.

No one involved in Ko Par Gyi's shooting has testified yet and it is not known how the last moments of his life unfolded. The military alleges that Ko Par Gyi was a member of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army and was shot while trying to escape, when he attempted to snatch a weapon from a soldier.

His death prompted widespread protests and international condemnation. President U Thein Sein responded by asking the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission to investigate. The commission's report, released in December, recommended the case be heard in a civilian court.

Frustrated at the government's inaction, Ma Thandar in February set

a 60-day deadline for proceedings to begin. She thought this deadline had come and gone.

The judge yesterday blamed the vagaries of the Myanmar postal system for her being unaware the hearing was taking place. She only learned it had begun after being informed by a local journalist.

The Mon National Party, which has its headquarters in Mawlamyine, was able to verify the information. The political party has helped Ma Thandar since her husband disappeared. "We help her because this is about human rights and media freedom, but it is very difficult as the case involves the government which holds all the power," said U Naing Soe Myint, the party's general secretary.

Offered the chance to testify during yesterday's hearing, Ma Thandar refused. She said she would only do so after receiving an official summons.

"I don't believe there is any rule of law here," she said. "I think they are just hearing this case because they are under pressure."

Kokang likely to dominate Wa summit

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The United Wa State Army, the most powerful of Myanmar's armed ethnic groups, today launches a week-long summit of selected factions to discuss the draft nationwide ceasefire agreement reached with the government on March 31.

Hosted in Pangkham, the Wa stronghold on the border of Shan State and China, the meeting will go ahead without the presence of any international observers or the government, raising questions over whether the talks with help or hinder the peace process. China's role in the summit is also unclear.

"We need to discuss the signing of the nationwide ceasefire accord in order to open the way quickly to political dialogue," U Aung Myint, a UWSA spokesperson, said yesterday, referring to political talks that are set to follow the signing of the ceasefire.

But the UWSA central committee has triggered controversy by deciding to allow only 12 ethnic groups to attend the Pangkham talks. Seven of the 16 groups in the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), which negotiated the draft ceasefire with the government, have been excluded.

The NCCT hopes to bring together all the relevant ethnic armed groups for a separate summit to finalise the nationwide ceasefire accord. It is expected to take place in La Khee Lar, the headquarters of the Karen National Union. No date has been set.

U Hla Maung Shwe, a senior official at the Myanmar Peace Centre, said the government had asked the NCCT to wrap up the process by the end of May so that there was enough time for political dialogue before parliamentary elections in November.

The UWSA did not attend the government-NCCT peace talks in Yangon and has had its own bilateral ceasefire agreement with the government for nearly 26 years.

Among those invited to Pangkham are three Wa allies that have been engaged in heavy fighting with the Tatmadaw in the Kokang border region since February 9. This has led to speculation that the Wa want to broaden the March 31 agreement to include its allies, against the wishes of the government and military.

The main force in Kokang, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), has had its

ceasefire offers rejected by the government which refuses to talk to the ethnic Chinese group. The MNDAA is backed by the Arakan Army and Ta'ang National Liberation Army.

U Sithu Aung Myint, a political commentator, said he expected the Pangkham meeting to focus on the Kokang conflict and push the government to recognise the MNDAA. But that would be hard for the Tatmadaw to accept and could end up delaying the signing of the ceasefire accord.

U Than Soe Naing, a political analyst, said China would keep a close eye on proceedings and might push for a positive outcome leading to a ceasefire signing.

"None of the ethnic armed groups can escape China's influence. China does not want intense conflicts on its border and Beijing's policy is to maintain strategic relations with Myanmar," he said.

Yun Sun, an analyst with the Stimson Center in Washington, said the Wa group was unlikely to have gone ahead with the summit without China's approval. "So why and how does that summit contribute to peace or does it in fact add more uncertainty to the peace process? That all remains to be seen," she said, noting that China's own power structure was not "monolithic".

'China does not want intense conflicts on its border?'

U Than Soe Naing
Political analyst

The UWSA spokesperson said no Chinese or other foreign observers had been invited to the talks. State-run Chinese news agency Xinhua is among the eight media outlets allowed to attend, and will be the only foreign media organisation present.

Myanmar's refusal to negotiate with the Kokang forces - reiterated this week by the president's spokesperson, U Ye Htut - has put it at odds with China, which has called for dialogue. Nearly three months of fighting has on occasion spilled across the border and driven tens of thousands of refugees into China.

A member of the government ceasefire negotiating team, who asked not to be named, said the Tatmadaw objective was to take complete control of the Kokang region before national elections in November.

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DNA evidence under review in Koh Tao murder case



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A THAI court yesterday ordered the re-examination of key evidence in a case where two Myanmar migrant workers are accused of the rape and murder of British backpackers.

At the defence team's request, the physical and DNA evidence will be sent to the Thai Ministry of Justice's Central Institute of Forensic Science for an analysis independent of the police investigation. British forensics experts are also expected to later assist the defence.

"We are delighted by the court's decision," said migration expert and adviser to the defence Andy Hall. "This increases the opportunity for a fair trial and for the real facts behind this horrific murder to come out."

Ko Zaw Lin and Ko Wai Phyo, 21, were arrested last September on Koh Tao for the violent murder of two British tourists, David Miller and Hannah Witheridge.

The defence argued that to prevent "a miscarriage of justice" they need an independent evaluation of critical forensic evidence supposedly linking the defendants to the bodies of the victims.



Defendants Zaw Lin and Wai Phyo appeared at the Koh Samui Court on April 30 for a pre-trial hearing. Photo: AFP and Supplied

The police force's handling of the case has already elicited accusations of unfairness and failure to

follow due process. British and Myanmar diplomatic missions to Thailand have both raised concerns and

become involved in the case.

Fears of a botched investigation arose after alleged confessions from the suspects were withdrawn amid allegations of torture, as well as the investigators' presumption soon after the killings that a Thai person could not have committed the crime.

U Htoo Chit, a spokesperson for an investigation team formed by the Myanmar embassy, swore to the suspects' innocence in February, stating that the "strongest case against them is for illegal working status".

Myanmar lawyers assigned to assist in the defence were not present at the pre-trial hearing yesterday when, in addition to the request for a re-examination of evidence, the defendants also made remarks.

Ko Zaw Lin and Ko Wai Phyo, who were brought to the Koh Samui court in prison attire and ankle shackles, expressed concern about the conditions of their pre-trial detention.

"So many people are crowded into one cell they have nowhere to sleep. The toilet for all of the people in the cell is right next to the sleeping area. The conditions are really deplorable and inhumane," said Mr Hall.

He added that their situation was "not likely to change" as issues with sanitation and overcrowding are endemic to Thai jails.

The court reportedly responded that the poor conditions reflect a "budgetary issue".

Hluttaw invites students for more talks

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STUDENT leaders are concerned that parliament is about to amend the controversial National Education Law without taking into full account the objections that have been raised. Yesterday the secretary of the bill committee told *The Myanmar Times* that MPs would meet once again with student representatives before further discussions take place in parliament.

The amendment bill was approved by the Amyotha Hluttaw, or upper house, after its bill committee met representatives of students, political parties, education experts and NGOs from March 5 to 18. However, members of the National Network for Education Reform (NNER) and some student representatives were not allowed to attend the discussion.

The bill has since been approved by the Pyithu Hluttaw, or lower house, with dozens of amendments, and will now be reconsidered by upper house MPs.

The NNER condemned the changes introduced into the bill, however, saying the text was reverting to law that had been in force during the former military regime. Student demands incorporated in an earlier version were struck out after a vote by MPs, they said.

"The bill is almost complete, without the students' demands and the four parties' agreement," said U Thein Lwin of the NNER, referring to an agreement reached in February on changes to the law, which was passed in September 2014.

Student representatives said yesterday that they had not yet received an invitation to new talks.



Two cars collide in Yangon, where traffic accidents have sky-rocketed in recent years. Photo: Staff

UN's 'Global Road Safety Week' aims to cut soaring accident rate

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YANGON, which has seen an explosion of traffic and accidents in just a few years, will hold the third UN Global Road Safety Week in People's Park and other venues with a walkathon and programs to educate and entertain from May 4-10.

"For the long term we need to educate children how to follow road and traffic rules and regulations because it is a little difficult to educate adults," said U Thit Lwin, an organiser of the events, detailing plans to put road safety on the school curriculum.

With public interest in exhibitions diminishing, new ways were needed to attract people's attention to the road safety issue, he added.

Eleven people die on average each

day in Myanmar in traffic accidents, according to official records which traffic police say are incomplete. That official rate is more than double the accident rate in Britain with a bigger population and far more vehicles on the roads.

A WHO expert has predicted that Myanmar could have the world's third worst traffic accident death rate by 2020.

"In my experience, only developed countries can control the number of accidents year-by-year. Less developed countries and developing countries are still trying to reduce the number of accidents. So we need to accelerate education," said U Thit Lwin.

On May 7, traffic police will hold traffic rules sessions for the public in Bahan, Sanchaung, Kamaryut, Mayangone and Tarmwe townships in cooperation with the Yangon council.

"Some people break regulations because they don't know the rules, and some break them when they already do know. So we are trying to educate the public every day," said Police Lieutenant Colonel Myo Aung Myint of the traffic police force.

Yangon residents complain, however, that there are not enough traffic police and that they cannot manage the traffic well, leading to an increase in accidents.

"As far as I know, having more or less traffic police is not directly related to accidents," said Pol Lt Col Myo Aung Myint.

"If people would follow the regulations then accidents would decrease. The number of people following discipline in Myanmar is very small. So we are educating the public as best we can."

Rakhine chief minister hits out at army over fighting



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MORE than 30 civilians, including an ethnic Rakhine politician, have been arrested in Rakhine State by the Tatmadaw for alleged links to the Arakan Army, the state's chief minister has told *The Myanmar Times*, as he criticised both sides for recent fighting.

In an exclusive interview yesterday, U Maung Maung Ohn said the Tatmadaw was continuing to make arrests under the colonial-era Unlawful Association Act, and that its actions had created "great fear" among the population.

"The Tatmadaw is not making peace and also the AA has continued fighting," he said. "Their actions appear to veer them from the peace process and as a result armed conflict is continuing in Myanmar."

The chief minister's criticism of the Tatmadaw's conduct in Rakhine State is surprising, as he only resigned from the military in June 2014 to take up the post. At the time of his retirement he held the rank of major general, and had served as deputy minister for border affairs.

Those charged under section 17(1) of the act, for contacting an illegal organisation, face up to two years' imprisonment.

A colonel in the Tatmadaw's Public Relations and Psychological Warfare section said yesterday that it was "impossible" that the Tatmadaw had detained civilians in Rakhine State but declined to comment further.

The conflict has also spilled over into the domestic political sphere, with the Tatmadaw on April 29 allegedly detaining U Zaw Win Maung, an executive committee member of the Rakhine National Party for Kyauktaw township. The Rakhine politician was arrested in Ywarthit village, the party said.

Secretary U Tun Aung Kyaw said

yesterday the army detained 18 civilians from Ywarthit village, including a party member, and five have since been released.

"The army is still holding our member. He hasn't been released yet. The army justified the arrest of these civilians by saying they suspected them of harming the region's security," said U Tun Aung Kyaw, a lower house representative for Ponnagayun.

The RNP released the statement on April 29 saying that innocent people had been arrested and tortured on suspicion of involvement with the AA. The party urged the government to ensure the legal rights of those detained are respected.

RNP official U Aye Thar Aung said the government should not be indifferent to the military's actions. "I don't understand why the government is ignoring this. They should be protecting civilians," he said.

Clashes between the Tatmadaw and the AA broke out in late March, with the heaviest fighting occurring on April 17 and 18. The most recent clashes occurred on April 23.

The Tatmadaw began detaining civilians over the past week. The arrests were confirmed by Police Major Khin Maung of Kyauktaw township police on April 26, but he declined to comment further yesterday.

"These arrests were made under a military operation so we can't speak about it," Pol Maj Khin Maung said yesterday.

Lieutenant Colonel Nyo Tun Aung, the deputy commander-in-chief of the AA, said they were being arrested because they were depicted in images on phones found on AA soldiers captured by the Tatmadaw.

The fighting has displaced more than 400 people, who have taken refuge in neighbouring villages, according to the regional government. Local aid groups say the number of displaced is at least 540.

"The state government is helping these people. Now, more than 300 people have returned to their homes and 100 people are still living in refugee camps. They are scared of more fighting," U Maung Maung Ohn said.

NLD duo arrested for filming stand-off

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TWO members of the National League for Democracy were arrested on April 29 as they filmed a confrontation between police and farmers in Mandalay's Myothar Industrial Park project.

Ko Kyaw Thu Myint of Aung Myay Thar San township and Ko Aung Ko Win of Mahar Aung Myay township in Mandalay were charged under penal code sections 143, 147 and 505(a) for unlawful assembly, rioting and incitement respectively.

"The farmers asked the NLD to record the scene," said U Myint

Aung, a member of a group formed by NLD that helps political prisoners and farmers.

The group was set up to help farmers whose land had been seized by conducting a study of farmland problems and reporting to the president, parliament and Ministry of Home Affairs.

MANDALAY



A Mandalay resident examines a sign for a candidate in the Mandalay City Development Committee election. Photo: Mg Zaw

Election interest dims further ahead of May 3 municipal vote

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EXCITEMENT levels in Mandalay's municipal election ratcheted a further step downward yesterday as the number of townships to be contested was reduced by 50 percent.

Yesterday a city official announced that the election would take place on May 3. "Every household that has voting rights can vote in their township," he said.

But therein lies the rub. In this city of 1.2 million, the one-voter-one-household rule means that in the six townships where the election was meant to be conducted, the number of potential voters was only about 200,000.

The number of actual voters is likely to be far lower due to strict eligibility requirements that will exclude tenants, unregistered households and illegal residents.

Not even the candidates are paying much attention, not least because if elected they will serve for only seven months, before fresh elections are held to coincide with those to be held for parliament in the November general election.

But election fever cooled even further with the news that the poll will now be contested in only four townships instead of the original six. Aung Myay Thar San township could not produce a single eligible candidate, while Maha Aung Myay township's sole candidate will be elected unopposed.

This narrows the field to 12 hopefuls, of whom four will be elected.

Daw Khin Lay Myint, the sole female candidate, who is contesting Chan Aye Thar San township, appealed last week for support.

"Vote for me, because I am a genuine civilian candidate," she urged the voter she met.

Heads of households registered to vote can do so in their township from 7am to 4pm.

The committee will include the mayor, the deputy mayor, six public elected members, four members appointed by the government, a secretary and an associate secretary. The elected committee members will elect the deputy mayor.

- Translation by Thiri Min Htun

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Government to release census data at end of May, says official

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DATA from last year's census will be published toward the end of May, an official told *The Myanmar Times* yesterday. U Myint Kyaing, director general of the Department of Population in the Ministry of Immigration and Population, said the release would be marked with a ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw, though no date had yet been fixed.

The census, the first in more than 30 years, was conducted in 2014 with international funding and support, but amid concerns about the identification of some ethnic groups. In Rakhine State, the government stopped hundreds of thousands of Muslims from taking part because they wanted to self-identify as Rohingya, an ethnic designation it does not recognise. The decision angered donors, as the government had promised it would allow all people in the country to



A Ministry of Immigration and Population official counts census forms in Nay Pyi Taw in May 2014. Photo: Zarni Phyo

self-identify freely.

U Myint Kyaing said the collation of material had been carried out in accordance with international norms on the basis of help from international advisory teams to ensure that the data were reliable and exact.

"The entire process has been thoroughly examined by international teams," he said.

The finalised data will be issued in the form of books, CDs and leaflets and will appear on government websites. "We expect to print tens of thousands of books," he said.

Summarised census data will also be printed in hundreds of thousands of leaflets for public distribution. "The leaflets will be useful at the ward and township level." - Translation by Zar Zar Soe

MILLION US\$

60

Estimated cost of conducting the 2014 census, according to the United Nations Population Fund

Fourteen new parties wait on UEC approval

Up to 87 parties could field candidates in this year's election if all are given approval to register by the Election Commission



LUN MIN MANG

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POLITICAL party registration for the November elections closed yesterday, with 73 parties confirmed registered and a further 14 awaiting the decision of the Union Election Commission, UEC official U Hla Maung Cho announced in Nay Pyi Taw.

The April 30 registration deadline was announced on March 11. No new applications to take part in the election will now be considered, he said.

"According to our data, there are 73 registered parties, and consideration of the applications of the remaining 14 parties is under way," he said.

Of the 73 registered parties, 53 will run nationwide in the general election, and 20 in only states or regions. A clear majority, 43 parties, are ethnic-based.

U Hla Maung Cho said some applications for registration had been

denied because the applicant parties did not qualify under the criteria set out in the political party registration law.

"According to Section 3(a) of the law, at least 15 people must initiate the registration of their party. If the number for any reason falls below 15, the UEC can deny the application," he said.

Section 4(a) of the law was amended last year so that now only citizens can establish a political party.

Even registered parties can be abolished if they do not comply with electoral rules and regulations. Section 12(a) says a party will be disbanded if it does not field candidates in at least three constituencies for Amyotha, Pyithu or state and regional hluataws.

"In 2010, five parties were abolished after they failed to put up enough candidates," he said, adding that two more were abolished after the 2012 by-election.

A party intending to run nationwide must collect 1000 members in 90 days, and a party running at the state or regional level needs at least 500 members.

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Activists defy union leaders, govt on May Day march

Police order organisers to alter route and reduce participants from 2000 to 500

NYAN LYNN AUNG



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LABOUR groups are making good on earlier threats to join with other protest movements by staging a mass May Day march today, despite requests from the government and a prominent union not to demonstrate.

Factory workers, farmers, land-grab protesters, student activists and monks will jointly picket through Yangon, starting in Bo Sein Hman field and ending at Kyaikkasan sports ground.

"We will make 10 demands during the march. These points affect all of us," said U Htay, a member of the Labour Affairs Action Network and a labour representative on the Arbitration Council, which works to resolve disputes between workers and employers.

Their list of requests for the government includes fixing the minimum wage at K5600 per day; releasing arrested labour, land and student activists; promoting labour rights; returning seized farmland; providing voter and democracy education; investigating recent police crackdowns on demonstrators; and reconvening negotiations on the National Education Law.

Asked why the groups decided

to unit for the march, U Htay said, "We are all oppressed people - not just the labourers but also the students and farmers."

The groups had initially planned for a larger and longer march that would have included 2000 demonstrators and proceeded from Mayangone to Hledan, passing through four townships.

However, the authorities rejected both the size and route of the march, ordering organisers to limit it to 500 people.

While the down-sized march has the blessing of the township authorities, organisers have ignored requests from both the Myanmar Trade Union Federation and the Ministry of Labour to postpone demonstrations until after minimum wage negotiations are finalised.

U Aung Lin, chair of the Myanmar Trade Union Federation, said now was not the time for demonstrations. He instead called for intensified negotiations between labourers, employers and government officials to end disputes over pay.

"We do not blame those groups that are marching," he said. "We each approach the labour rights issues in our own way."

The federation plans to hold its own May Day event in Mandalay. U Aung Lin said it expects 2000 people to attend the meeting, which will focus on the need for stronger legal protections for workers.

MANDALAY

Chinese paper tests the market

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IS Mandalay ready for another Chinese-language newspaper? Local Chinese-speakers and newspaper publishers experienced a mild flutter of interest just after the Thingyan holiday with the appearance of a Chinese-language paper that was distributed door-to-door. The paper, *World Daily*, apparently emanated from Thailand.

But the effort was not sustained for long, according to local observers, who are denying Facebook accounts of the rise of a new Chinese paper in Mandalay. U Setti, head of the Fuqing school and vice chair of the Myanmar-China Friendship Association, said the Thai-based publication was distributed out of Yangon.

"Even the longest-established [Chinese-language publications in Mandalay] are distributed out of Yangon. Facebook reports of a Chinese-language paper based in Mandalay are wrong," he said on April 29.

Well-established Chinese-language publications include the weekly paper *Golden Phoenix* and the monthly magazine *Mingalar*, which is also distributed in Yunnan, China. *Golden Phoenix*, which is distributed in Yangon, covers Myanmar business and includes articles translated into Chinese from local papers like *Voice* and *7Days*.

Ma Chaw Su Hlaing, founder of CSK Chinese language school, said there was a limited market for Chinese-language reading material in Mandalay. "As far as I know, there are two types who read them: language students and their teachers, and those people who can't read Myanmar-language papers."

A spokesperson for *Golden Phoenix*, Ma Cho Thet, said the weekly was distributed in Chinese schools, adding, "It's for people studying Chinese for career purposes, University of Foreign Languages students and local Chinese. Other readers include investors from Taiwan, China, Singapore and Malaysia."

Ma Cho Thet said *Golden Phoenix* was the only Chinese-language



A woman in Mandalay holds copies of three Chinese-language publications, including *World Daily* (bottom). Photo: Khin Su Wai

newspaper published in Myanmar. Others that surfaced occasionally came from Thailand or Singapore, she said.

Despite the interest from students and foreign investors, some observers question how big the market for a new Chinese publication would be.

"Mandalay only has about 20,000

to 30,000 Chinese [speakers]. The idea that Mandalay is full of Chinese people is wrong. You see a lot downtown, but the Chinese population in Mandalay is relatively small, and not many can even read Chinese," said U Kyaw Sein, chair of the Mandalay-Yunnan Association, which promotes social activities and Chinese Buddhism.

Government to bring back fishermen from Indonesia

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PLANS are going ahead for the repatriation of hundreds of Myanmar fishermen after their rescue from slavers. About 280 fishermen are now undergoing verification of their citizenship on the Indonesian island of Tual.

Yesterday the head of the anti-human trafficking unit, Police Brigadier General U Win Naing Tun, confirmed that the Myanmar government would fly the fishermen home.

"We plan to bring back the Myanmar fishermen with government

support," he said.

Myanmar government officials have been meeting with officials of the International Organization for Migration to discuss details concerning repatriation, after doubts had been expressed as to whether there was sufficient funding in place.

"We will establish their citizenship on the basis of the authority of the Myanmar ambassador in Jakarta rather than sending back reports to the immigration department. That will be faster and better for the fishermen," said U Win Naing Tun.

He added that they were discuss-

ing with the Indonesian authorities the transfer of another 196 fishermen from Benjina Island to Tual, which is considered a safer location.

The citizenship verification process will be complicated by the fact that many of the fishermen have no documentation, and some members of ethnic minorities do not speak the Myanmar language well.

U Sein Oo, a director general in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said it would not be possible to bring back all the fishermen at the same time, but priority would be given to those whose citizenship was confirmed first.

According to data collected by a Myanmar government delegation on Tual, 277 fishermen out of 300 on

196

Fishermen that Myanmar authorities are trying to have transferred from Benjina to Tual

the island were presumed to be Myanmar citizens, and the delegation is interviewing more fishermen on Benjina Island. The delegation has also discovered 24 in Jakarta who were apparently victims of human trafficking, as well as 22 more who were detained on Ambon Island for illegal fishing.

The group on Tual also includes fishermen from Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. They were reportedly forced by abusive captors to crew mainly Thai fishing boats. The Myanmar delegation will continue to conduct search and rescue missions.

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WAKEMA, AYEYARWADY REGION



A resident of Lay Eain Dan village in Wakema township clears thatch and bamboo from his damaged home on April 26. Photo: Wa Lone

One storm away from ruin

A recent storm in the delta highlights how grinding poverty leaves families unable to cope when disaster strikes

WA LONE

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IN the seven years since Cyclone Nargis devastated the Ayeyarwady Delta, killing hundreds of thousands of people overnight, scores of international NGOs have carried out dozens of disaster-relief programs in areas thought to be at risk. But in many places, people still live just one storm away from ruin.

The fierce winds that struck Wakema township, Ayeyarwady Region, on April 11 were barely reported outside the hot, flat, remote villages that they levelled.

Most of the villagers here subsist on fishing in the ponds and tributaries, and on paddy cultivation. In the rainy season, floodwaters lap at their doors, but in summer the ground all around is cracked with the heat, and the paddy stubble is all burned, leaving the houses high and dry on their spindly bamboo stilts.

The April 11 cyclone killed no one, but destroyed nearly 80 of those houses. Residents say storms afflict them every year, but nothing has been done in the way of protection against natural disasters.

Mother-of-three Daw Cho Mar Htwe swings the hammock on which her 18-month-old son is trying to sleep. He has been sick for three days with diarrhoea, and she is worried. In addition to the boy's eight-year-old sister and five-year-old brother, Daw Cho Mar Htwe also has to look after her 70-year-old mother.

"We are earning a bare living, from hand to mouth," she said.

The family lives in Lay Eain Dan, a village of some 50 households about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Wakema. The storm stripped the thatch from the house, which has



Daw Cho Mar Htwe (second right) sits in her damaged home in Lay Eain Dan village with her children and 70-year-old mother on April 26. Photo: Wa Lone

no windows and no door, and is lit, currently, by the sunlight that pours through what is left of the roof.

U Mya Maung, 60, a farmer in Lay Eain Dan village, said his house had been completely wrecked by the storm.

He said his family had passed that terrible night without shelter from the wind and rain, huddling together on an embankment.

"We're still living under canvas because I can't afford to rebuild," he said.

U Aung Aung, the village administrator, said on April 26 that he had reported the damage to the township authorities. "So far I've had no response," he said.

Aleh Seh village, 8km away, lost 39 houses in the storm. Unlike at Lay Ein Den, residents said the government has provided assistance. Village administrator U Maung Tu said the township authorities had

provided five bags of rice, K5000 and other emergency assistance to each family, and the Myanmar Red Cross had given them kitchen sets.

'We're still living under canvas because I can't afford to rebuild.'

U Mya Maung

Lay Eain Dan village resident

He attributed this to his "good relationship" with the authorities, which stemmed from the long time he had held the post.

But the assistance from the authorities to Aleh Seh fails to hide

the fact that the government has invested almost nothing in providing services to these villages.

Barely 100 miles (164 kilometres) from car-choked Yangon, the only access most villages have to Wakema is agricultural embankments. These human-made waterways are muddy and green with algae, but also the villages' only source of drinking water.

Clogged with flotsam, the stink fills the air.

"The government auctions off the creeks [to fishing companies] but doesn't clean out the drain," complained U Maung Tu.

Villagers say they have complained to their local parliamentarians - two from the Union Solidarity and Development Party and one from the National League for Democracy - but received no response.

They have now given up hope on receiving help from them. "They only came here to get votes at election time. They never bother to help us in the hard times," said one resident.

During the past week, the Yangon volunteer youth group Network came to hear of the destruction of Wakema. Forty different groups have pooled their resources and are coordinating the provision of emergency assistance. They are also urging more support from local donors.

"The villagers need so much help, but our funding is limited," organiser Tin Maung Myint said.

Dr Zar Ni Win, who runs a mobile medical team attached to Network, said the villagers needed health education as well as medical assistance. "Some of them have never seen a doctor before," he said.

After the cyclone came the strong sunshine, and soon more rains will come.

Daw Cho Mar Htwe tries to keep her sense of humour. "Unfortunately, my house was not completely destroyed, otherwise I would have received some aid," she said. She keeps rocking her youngest, trying to keep him out of the sun.

IN BRIEF

Dry zone water, sanitation get a boost from projects

About 45,000 people living in the country's dry midsection will benefit from an internationally funded program to improve hygiene and access to clean water. The improvements, costing some US\$1.3 million in total, will be carried out in three regions and two states over the next three years.

Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) will be implementing the Community-Based Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program, which is funded by the Korean Red Cross, Samsung and the Cartier Charitable Foundation.

Large parts of Mandalay, Magwe and Sagaing regions and Kachin and Kayin states suffer perennial water shortages because of low rainfall, inadequate water sources and poor infrastructure, and the problem is exacerbated by bad toilet facilities that assist the spread of diseases, including diarrhoea.

Dr Naing Naing, deputy director of the MRCS health department, said MRCS would develop wells and lakes, dig refuse pits, provide materials to build fly-proof latrines and give training on healthy living.

The Korean Red Cross and Samsung will provide 600 million won (\$561,695) to cover 23 villages in six townships of Mandalay, Magwe and Sagaing regions to implement improvements for 26,425 people through 2016.

Improvements covering 27 villages in eight townships with a population of 19,489 people will be carried out in those three regions, and in Kachin and Kayin states, in 2015-2017, said MRCS, with funding of 750,000 Swiss francs (\$784,027) from the Cartier Charitable Foundation. - Myint Kay Thi

Illegal timber seized in Mandalay

Forestry department investigators said yesterday they had seized nearly 180 tonnes of illegal timber, along with sawmill equipment, in Thazi township, Mandalay Region, between April 23 and 25.

The investigators seized 61.5 tonnes of hardwood on April 23, 76 tonnes on April 24 and 36 tonnes on April 25, along with 14 sawmill engines, 25 circular saws and related equipment, two dynamos, two wood cutters, two tongue-and-groove plank machines, a chainsaw and a motor vehicle, and made six arrests.

"High demand and high prices from overseas encourage this trade. We will make arrests whenever we receive information. We are also aware of illegal logging in Katha township, Sagaing Region," said U Pyae Sone Myo, the director of the investigation department. - Pyae Thet Phy, translation by Emoon

Yangon private schools wait on registration approvals

Private education is booming in Myanmar. Since the Private School Registration Law was passed in December, 2012, nearly 160 private educational establishments have sprung up across the country. In Yangon, education officials have received more than 100 applications to open private schools in academic year 2015-2016, one said yesterday.

A spokesperson for the Department of No 3 Basic Education (Yangon Region) said the list of approved establishments would be released before the academic year begins in June.

"We are now reviewing the applicants before granting the permits," he said.

Teachers seeking employment in the private schools must also be registered, and 855 applicants are waiting to be interviewed on May 5.

U Maung Sein, who has applied to run a private school in Yangon, told *The Myanmar Times* yesterday that the long processing time made it hard to attract students.

"It would be better if we were told earlier about the success of our application so we could publicise the fact and open enrolment," he said. "We can't do that until we get the permit." - May Thinzar Naing, translation by Thiri Min Htun

Views

Can Myanmar afford to burn coal?

ON April 28, *The Myanmar Times* reported that the Myanmar government has so far signed 12 provisional contracts for coal-powered electricity-generating stations. There have also been numerous oil and gas research and exploration contracts signed in the past year.

For most people in Myanmar, who have no electricity supply or an unreliable supply, this might seem like good news. But can Myanmar, which ranks second as the country most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, afford to go down the path of fossil-fuel power generation? And will most ordinary people benefit from this kind of power generation?

The fact that the government is seeking to increase electricity generation is a welcome policy shift. While neighbouring countries enjoy electricity provided by Myanmar's natural resources, people in Myanmar still sit in the dark at night. The previous government was more interested in earning dollars for military spending and luxury lifestyles than in providing electricity to homes and developing Myanmar's economy.

The new military-backed government has a slightly different agenda. They do want to use some of Myanmar's natural resources to generate power for domestic use. However, their motivations for doing so might not be completely altruistic and could be leading them to make rushed decisions that will have long-term negative impacts, both environmentally and financially.

One motivation is that they see developing Myanmar's economy as a matter of restoring national pride. They don't want to be the poor man of ASEAN any longer. Many people in Myanmar share this view, but they want to see the economy grow through good-quality jobs, not as a source of cheap labour for export factories. Another motivation is political, hoping that the Myanmar people will accept a perceived Chinese-style compromise of economic growth subduing demands for democracy and human rights.

President U Thein Sein highlighted both of these motivations in his inaugural speech to parliament in March 2011. "Regarding the economic might, we have to try for economic growth. If our country is not economically strong, it will face underestimation and unfair treatment from other countries. National economy is associated with political affairs. If the nation enjoys economic growth, the people will become affluent, and they will not be under



Photo: Shutterstock.com



MARK FARMANER

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influence of internal and external elements," he said at the time. Electricity generation is key to economic growth. With Myanmar in dire need of power and rich in fossil-fuel resources, it might make sense on face value to develop these resources. However, in its rush to generate electricity, it is ignoring key problems.

Coal is one of the dirtiest fuels in the world. There is no such thing as clean coal. Coal releases not only carbon into the atmosphere - a cause of climate change - but many other pollutants as well. Then there is the damage caused by mining and transport. In Myanmar there are also concerns about how people near big mining and development projects are treated.

No individual weather event can be directly linked to climate change, but science does tell us that climate change will cause more extreme weather events, to which Myanmar is especially vulnerable. The more fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas that Myanmar uses to generate electricity, the more carbon is released, contrib-

uting to climate change. This means a greater likelihood of extreme weather events, such as Cyclone Nargis and Cyclone Giri.

It is not only climate change that raises questions about the wisdom of the government's current approach to power generation. Coal is a fuel of the past. The government is investing in coal at a time when many countries around the world are moving away from it and toward renewables. Foreign companies building and running these power stations will likely tie the people of Myanmar into decades-long contracts for power generation that could end up costing more than clean alternatives. Power stations also require large and expensive infrastructure for the transport of electricity. Economically, it will never be viable to transport centrally generated power to remote and rural areas of the countries, leaving more than half the population unlikely to benefit.

Choosing fossil-fuel-burning power stations to generate electricity today is equivalent to the government choosing phone landlines over mobiles. Mobile-phone technology is starting to enable people to have phones in areas where landlines were never an option. The same must now happen with electricity. For people in more remote areas, their only hope of having electricity

is to leapfrog fossil fuels and cables in the same way mobile technology is leapfrogging landlines. Solar, wind and other renewables are the future, not coal.

The fault of this flawed power policy does not solely lie with the government. Behind the scenes foreign companies have been advis-

ing and lobbying them on the new national strategy for energy generation. Energy giants don't make their money from solar power. It isn't hard to join the dots.

.....
Mark Farmaner is director at Burma Campaign UK.

Don't forget the white elephants

WHITE elephants - the literal kind - have been proud possessions of rulers in South and Southeast Asian nations since the days of city-states, fiefdoms, kings and emperors.

The myth lives on. Many Myanmar people still regard white elephants as a symbol of power and influence. Times have changed, however, and one should take a look at the myth from a different perspective. Elephants, be they white, grey or pink, are creatures with which we cohabit this corner of the world. Their existence - and possible extinction - is an important symbol of the state of our planet.

Environmental issues, however, have been noticeably absent from

debate around this year's election. Each political party has a long list of other topics that they are pushing, from constitutional amendments to the voting system, ethnic conflict to resource sharing. There are also land confiscations, labour rights and education to consider.

The official campaign period for the election does not start until the Union Election Commission gives a green light. However, it's neither too early nor too late for political parties to begin putting environmental issues near the top of their policy priorities.

Parties should not overlook recent developments at the Letpadaung

copper mine, logging and deforestation in many areas of the country, and the future of the gigantic Myit-sone dam in Kachin State. The president has halted the dam only for his term in office, so its fate is unclear beyond the election.

All of these issues are political, but also have deep environmental implications.

Elephants of all shapes and sizes - including the white kind that are so valued - should serve as a reminder to politicians and candidates in this year's general election that the public cares about the environment. They are waiting for political parties to listen to them.

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Business

Google search now finds phones

AUNG THU RA

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Android users can now turn to Google search to find misplaced phones in Myanmar.

The American search giant revealed via a blog post that its new phone-finding service has been rolled out to Myanmar earlier this month.

Android users that Google search "Find my phone" from computers can track down a mobile that has been misplaced, so long as the phone has been enabled for cellular data and location services and runs the most recent version of Google's app.

The service allows users to lock and wipe lost phones, as well as to make them ring. Phones found online will show up pinpointed on Google Maps.

One Myanmar mobile developer called the service useful, but said he doubted it would help local people.

"I think most Myanmar people won't run cellular data on their phone, so this service can't manage your lost phone," said Yangon developer U Aung Thu Ya.

"We also need to open GPS if you want to know the phone's location."

Google launched its local Myanmar search engine in 2013, and has since become an increasing presence in the country.

Google Translate for Myanmar language debuted last December, followed by Myanmar language Gmail in February.

Mobile and internet penetration rates have rapidly increased following the launch of two foreign telcos in the second half of last year.



A sampling of chili peppers for sale in a Yangon market. Photo: Staff

Chili peppers for South Korea

HTOO THANT

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THE Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has announced a plan to export up to 500 tonnes of chili peppers to South Korea as a test.

Most of the peppers will be grown in the Nay Pyi Taw area as part of efforts to enlarge agricultural exports, according to minister U Myint Hlaing.

"South Korea has said they want to buy chili peppers from Myanmar. First, we will export a quantity as a

test, but we will export more if the first shipment shows promise," said ministry information officer U Win Hlaing Oo.

Although the agricultural sector has received significant government support, it has proven challenging developing quality crops to meet international standards.

There are currently two chili plantations in Ottra Thiri township of Nay Pyi Taw - one 50 acres and the other 20 acres.

U Win Hlaing Oo said the peppers are expected to be harvested in

'South Korea has said they want to buy chili peppers from Myanmar.'

U Win Hlaing Oo
Ministry of Agriculture

June, though the price per tonne is presently unknown.

Farmers say the crop has enjoyed success due to strong local demand. U Khin Maung Lwin, a Pinyin township chili farmer, said prices are usually strong early in the rainy season, though can be affected by heavy rains.

Chili peppers grown in Nay Pyi Taw are common sights in Yangon and Mandalay markets.

The peppers were selling for K3500 per viss (1.6 kilogrammes or 3.6 pounds) in the capital earlier this month.

- Translation by Zar Zar soe

Yangon's Vietnamese development lands Melia hotel



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SPANISH hotel chain Melia Hotels International signed a deal yesterday that will place a five-star Melia brand hotel at a prominent Vietnamese-owned development.

The Melia Hotel Yangon will be part of the mixed-use Hoang Anh Gia Lai (HAGL) Myanmar Centre next to the Sedona Hotel near Inya Lake.

HAGL Group chief executive Vo Thuong Son said the hotel itself will be owned by the Vietnamese firm, but managed by Melia Hotels International.

"We believe that with wide knowledge and experience in hotel and tourism service management worldwide, Melia will be able to help our hotel operate efficiently and bring high values to customers," he said yesterday.

HAGL is one of Vietnam's largest companies. Founded in 1993, it has recently focused on agriculture and property development, with a number of regional businesses.

HAGL Group began work on its US\$440 million Yangon project in June 2013, after signing a long-term build-operate-transfer agreement with the Ministry of Tourism in 2012. The first phase will include a 27-storey commercial centre, two office towers and a 23-storey hotel, with work to be finished this year.

The second phase will be largely completed in 2016, including four residential blocks with 1800 apartments and an office tower.

Earlier this year, Rowsley, a Singaporean firm, signed an agreement to purchase a 50 percent stake in the HAGL Myanmar Centre for \$275 million. In early April, Rowsley walked away from the deal, claiming an agreement could not be reached over the details of the investment structure.

Work is continuing on the development, with tenants slated to move in within months.



Work continues at the HAGL Myanmar Centre yesterday. Photo: Aung Myin Ye Zaw

Cao Duy Thinh, managing director of HAGL Group Myanmar, said the entire phase 1, including the 429-room Melia Yangon Hotel, will open in September, though the two office towers could open sooner.

Work on the second phase will

start in May or June, with "the whole project fully completed by 2017," he told *The Myanmar Times*.

Minister of Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung said tourism has become one of the main sectors driving the country's economy.

"Melia Yangon is joining with existing international hotels chains like Kempinski, Hilton, Accor, Wyndham, Pan Pacific, [by operating] in Myanmar," he said. "As our tourism sector progresses on track, Melia will support the shortages of hotel rooms for the rising number of tourist arrivals to the country."

Melia was founded in 1956 in Spain, operating more than 370 hotels around the world.

Its senior vice president for Asia Pacific Region Bernardo Cabot said Melia Yangon will become the first "urban leisure" hotel in Myanmar.

"We arrive in Myanmar aware that this country has the potential to become one of the most admired and competitive tourist destinations worldwide," he said.

"The Melia brand is our most international brand and it suited perfectly the HAGL project in Yangon, where it will offer a perfect blend of business and leisure offering. An extraordinary project with an extraordinary brand which will further increase the prestige of Yangon as a destination."

Controversial project planned near historic Rangoon Turf Club

PROPERTY 12



Apple makes it to the top but may find it tough to stay there

BUSINESS 14

Exchange Rates (April 30 close)

Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1175	K1210
Malaysia Ringitt	K305	K320
Singapore Dollar	K805	K833
Thai Baht	K33	K35
US Dollar	K1086	K1095

Commodity trading takes to the internet



CATHERINE TRAUTWEIN SU PHYO WIN

TRADING in beans, pulses and paddy could move from warehouses to the web as soon as this month, as the Myanmar International Commodity Exchange (MICEx) prepares to launch its online platform.

The exchange will allow for online spot and futures trading, clearing and settling in a range of commodities, eventually expanding from agricultural products to other items such as gold.

"The exchange is all set to go live in a short time. We have all the required systems, operations and risk management in place," said MICEx project manager Kedar Silohi.

Farmers will be able to check prices

through ticker boards installed in villages and via an SMS system. Prices will also be referenced on the exchange website and through a smartphone application - which will also allow farmers to input sell quotes.

The exchange is to be launched in the next month or two, in conjunction with Indian conglomerate Pearl Group. Selling is to be free for farmers, though buyers will pay a fee on purchases.

The MICEx backers are also working in other parts of the agricultural products logistics chain in Myanmar, having begun warehouse receipt financing with Yoma and United Amara Banks.

Warehouse receipt financing allows farmers to physically place their harvested crops in the company's warehouses for use as collateral for short-term loans. Farmers are able to use the loans to pay for immediate expenses, instead of selling their crops at the year's lowest prices. They are also able to hold out for higher prices later

in the year - though some farmers say that storage fees and pressing needs for capital could keep them from waiting around.

Mr Silohi said at harvest time, commodity prices are low, and at peak times the price is high, but currently "the farmer is not taking advantage of that."

After dropping off commodities at a MICEx warehouse, a farmer can decide when he would like to sell his goods. A company representative takes over trading for the farmer, who leaves the warehouse with a receipt and a quality certificate so long as his products are up to par. Afterwards, the farmer can retrieve payment from the banks.

A fee is charged for storing crops. While there are possible advantages for farmers, some have reservations about the program.

"Farmers don't know the price changes," said U Mg Pyone, a farmer from Zalon township in Ayeyarwaddy Region. "We need money for input and to settle debts ... I think it will be com-

licated in the future, instead of leading to profit for farmers."

MICEx chair U Sein Win Hlaing said there is a big difference between his business and those that are out to cheat farmers. "It is not like the function similar to big companies giving loans to farmers, taking back the seeds at low prices," he said. "We are helping the farmers."

But some have shown they will take convincing of the benefits of warehouse receipt financing.

"I think that farmers won't profit

from the system, though it won't harm them," said Freedom of Farmers League president U Thein Aung.

As soon as paddy gets harvested, half to three-quarters of the crop must be sold to satisfy costs of planting and get ready for the next season, according to U Thein Aung.

"How can we wait for prices to increase while paying warehouse maintenance fees?" he asked.

The firm has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Indian warehousing company Sohan Lal Commodity Management for the warehouse receipt financing. It currently has four warehouses in Yangon.

It also claims a permit from the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development for the right to research the country's commodities market, conduct a feasibility study on setting up commodity exchange centres in Myanmar, work to start these centres on behalf of Pearl Group and then run them.

'The exchange is all set to go live in a short time.'

Kedar Silohi

Commodity exchange manager

Yetagun review by October

AUNG SHIN
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A REVIEW into declining natural gas production from the Yetagun field ought to be complete by October, according to an official from Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise.

The field, operated by Malaysian state firm Petronas, experienced a significant drop in gas production last year. Operators are now looking to scale back its production targets.

"Currently the field is producing up to 360 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) for export to Thailand. Production had reached a plateau at 450 MMCFD before the decline," said the official, who requested anonymity as he is not permitted to speak to the media.

Petronas Carigali, which holds nearly 41 percent, and its partners Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, with 20.45pc, and PTTEP of Thailand and Nippon Oil Exploration with 19.32pc each will negotiate new terms with the buyers, notably Thai authorities.

"The size of the possible gas reserve has been disclosed to the buyer," he said. "Maximum production at Yetagun could drop to 200 MMCFD after the October deal - but it still needs to be agreed to by PTT."

Yetagun is the second-oldest of Myanmar's four offshore gas production sites. First discovered in 1992, it began operating in 2000.

Located in the Moattma offshore area, previous estimates have pegged gas reserves at 4.16 trillion cubic feet on the site, which spans shallow water blocks M-12, M-13 and M-14.

PTT chief operating officer Nuttachat Charuchinda said in February that Yetagun has been producing less than agreed on, according to Thai newspaper *The Nation*. He said the existing contracted amount is 400 MMCFD, but over the past year, supply had been about 250 MMCFD.

Myanmar currently produces about 2 billion cubic feet per day, with most coming from offshore projects.

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Business complex for Yangon's historic sporting grounds stirs up controversy



NOE NOE
AUNG

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KYAIAKKASAN sports ground covers a vast expanse of prime real estate in the heart of Yangon that has entertained and thrilled for decades, while also concealing a darker past as a temporary detention centre used during crackdowns by the former military regime.

Now the historic site, once home of the colonial-era Rangoon Turf Club racecourse, is said to be slated for development as a commercial complex by a consortium of Japanese and Myanmar companies. Controversy surrounds the project, with questions being asked over how the contract was awarded and for what purposes.

In a city of frenetically expanding construction sites and diminishing open areas, Kyaikkasan is treasured by residents, despite its rundown, socialist-era feel.

The sprawling grounds, covering over 100 acres, are currently used by the Institute of Sports and Physical Education under the sports ministry. The horses are long gone but the institute is involved in training and coaching more than 30 sports and activities, including archery, badminton, basketball, billiards, athletics and cycling. Last month it hosted the 11th annual Traditional Kite Design and Dueling Competition.

"In the early morning, there are many people who come here for their daily exercises, especially jogging," said a member of staff who asked not to be named.

"The Institute of Sports and Physical Education is teaching courses here, especially for high school students. There is almost every kind of sports training here," he added. He said he had no idea about the controversy



Children flew kites of their own last weekend during the 11th annual Traditional Kite Competition at Kyaikkasan sporting grounds in Tarmwe township, the potential site of a large future development. Photo: Eli Meixler

over its future.

In late January, *New Light of Myanmar*, a state newspaper, described a meeting between U Win Tun, minister for environment and forestry, and a Japanese businessman representing Kyaikkasan Land Development Pte. They were said to have discussed upgrading the sports institute and developing a commercial complex.

The newspaper reported that Kyaikkasan Land Development had been

registered in Singapore for the project in cooperation with Raysum, a Japanese property management company; Ikeya Corporation, a Japanese business consultancy in Myanmar; and Mariana Investment, a local company.

Kyaikkasan Land Development could not be reached for comment. U Sein Lwin, the company's deputy chair, is also head of the Timber Merchants Association which declined to provide his contact details. Ikeya declined to comment. Mariana Investment could not be reached for comment.

The ministry of information said on its website that Kyaikkasan Land Development would invest in upgrading the Institute of Sports and Physical Education and build a "central business district". It said that Azusa Sekkei, a Japanese firm of architects, would design the complex to be built by Mitsubishi. AEON Mall, a Japanese mall developer, would build shopping centers and supermarkets, while it expected further investments by leading Japanese companies in the business district.

Local media reported a month ago, quoting a member of Yangon regional parliament, that no tender was held for the Kyaikkasan development ground and that the proposal was sent

directly by the companies to President U Thein Sein.

The plans have stirred up a broad debate among the public, but relevant officials deny knowledge of it.

U Zaw Htay, director of the president's office, said on April 22 that he did not know about the project, although the Yangon regional parliament had said it was a state project.

"This is the first time I've ever heard about that project. You should ask the relevant ministry," he told *The Myanmar Times*.

A sports ministry official said the ministry had no involvement in the project. "The project is a government project. We are not working on it... We are not working on business matters. The ministry is working only to improve sport for the country," he said.

Daw Nyo Nyo Thin, an opposition lawmaker in the Yangon regional parliament, proposed cancelling the project in early April, but it rejected her proposal.

"According to the law, projects to be done in Yangon region should be sent to huttaw beforehand. Before sending it to the president, the companies should let the regional parliament know. Technically, discussing the project in the regional parliament,

investigating the tender committee, confirming and making the decision by regional parliament are usual procedures," she said.

Daw Nyo Nyo Thin presented letters of objection by urban planning experts, civil societies, and some government departments.

U Harry Phone Thant, a senior advisor of Myanmar Tourism Federation, says the ground is about 150 years old. The Rangoon Turf Club moved there in 1926.

"It is a historical ground because of its background," he said, noting that Union Day, Peasants Day and May Day rallies were held there during the socialist era under Ne Win.

The now crumbling art deco members stand was used by delegates from far and wide to deliver speeches extolling the virtues of socialism. It also served as a stage for entertainers, such as the popular zat pwe troupes Shwe-man Thabin and Sein Aung Min.

"The grounds were transformed into a fair ground. All government departments had their own show-stands. The smaller private entrepreneurs had theirs. It was a big occasion for everybody, especially the black marketeers who would buy up the items on sale and sell back at a profit," he added.



The grounds are some of Yangon's largest open spaces. Photo: Eli Meixler

NEW YORK

Big Apple developers seeking out Chinese partners

NEW York city developers including Vornado Realty Trust and Related Cos. are seeking Chinese partners for new projects, according to top executives at the companies.

"We do have aspirations to do some things which would involve Chinese capital and Chinese investors," Steven Roth, chair and chief executive officer of Vornado, said at a forum hosted by the China General Chamber of Commerce at Bloomberg LP's New York headquarters.

"It's likely that Vornado would do something important with Chinese investors over the next year or two."

Chinese institutions are becoming a formidable force in New York City real estate as they seek to invest stockpiles of cash. Beijing-based Anbang Insurance Group Co. bought the landmark Waldorf Astoria hotel in February for US\$1.95 billion, the largest deal ever for a US hotel. Also that month, the firm agreed to purchase the office portion of 717 Fifth Ave., a 26-storey office tower in midtown Manhattan, according to people with knowledge of the transaction.

Chinese companies are interested in developing projects as well as in providing cash, according to Jeff

Blau, CEO of Related, the developer of Manhattan's Time Warner Center and Hudson Yards.

"Many of the Chinese companies don't perceive themselves just as capital investors," Mr Blau said at the event. "The conversations are much more about an active partnership."

Related's Hudson Yards, a \$20 billion undertaking that aims to transform an industrial area at the city's western edge into a business center and residential enclave, will need capital from around the globe, he said. With more than 17 million square feet (1.6 million square meters) planned,

the project is the largest private real estate development in US history, according to the company.

In addition to making deals with Chinese institutions, New York developers are increasingly turning to Chinese individuals who invest in US projects through the federal government's EB-5 program as a path to legal residency. At Hudson Yards, cash raised through the EB-5 program was critical in financing a platform that will sit over a 13-acre (5.3-hectare) train yard. Related has raised \$800 million in funds through the program, Mr Blau said.

Extell Development Co. used \$75

million in EB-5 funds for its International Gem Tower office building on West 47th Street, Extell President Gary Barnett said at the forum. It's getting more expensive to raise cash through the program as competition between developers increases, said Barnett. His company built the One57 condominium tower, which set off a high-end residential construction boom in Midtown.

As US commercial-property values surge to records, led by gains in large cities such as New York and San Francisco, some segments of the Manhattan market may be getting overheated, the executives said. — *Bloomberg*



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TOKYO

Sony posts billion dollar loss



Customers check Japanese electronics giant Sony's headphones at an electronics shop in Tokyo. Photo: AFP

SONY said it booked a US\$1.1 billion loss for its latest fiscal year, but the struggling electronics giant expects a profit in the next 12 months as it embarks on an overhaul.

The latest loss comes as the once world-leading firm continues with a painful restructuring that has included layoffs and asset sales, as it races to rescue its battered balance sheet.

Boss Kazuo Hirai, a company veteran tapped to turn the firm around, has said he would keep splitting the business into self-operating units in

a bid to return to profitability.

Yesterday, Sony said its net loss for the year to March was 126 billion yen (\$1.1 billion), a slight improvement on the 128.4 billion yen loss a year ago, as it absorbs big restructuring costs.

It was also much lower than the 170 billion yen forecast by the company in February, which was itself a reduction from its earlier 230 billion yen estimated shortfall.

On Thursday, the electronics-entertainment conglomerate posted an operating profit of 68.5 billion yen,

more than double the previous year, on sales of 8.21 trillion yen, a 5.8 percent increase.

Strong sales of the PlayStation 4 games console and electronic devices, including image sensors used in cameras, helped drive revenue, while a weaker yen - which lifts the value of repatriated overseas income - also boosted results, it said.

Sony said a long-suffering television unit was showing signs of improvement.

"This improvement was primarily due to cost reductions and an im-

provement in product mix reflecting a shift to high value-added models," it said in a statement.

- 'Recovery path' -

Critics have called on Sony to dump televisions altogether but Hirai flatly refused, saying they were an integral part of the company.

Sony has struggled in the consumer electronics business that built its global brand, including losing billions of dollars in televisions over the past decade as it faced fierce competition from lower-cost rivals in South Korea and Taiwan. - AFP

TOKYO

Different paths for Japanese airlines

JAPANESE carrier ANA said yesterday its annual net profit more than doubled on robust international business, but rival Japan Airlines saw its bottom line worsen as the weak yen undercut lower fuel prices.

ANA Holdings, the parent company of All Nippon Airways, said the soaring profit came after logging record revenue as an expansion at a downtown Tokyo airport allowed it to run more overseas routes.

It recorded a net profit of 39.2 billion yen (US\$330 million), up 107.8 percent from the previous year.

But Japan Airlines (JAL) said its fiscal-year net profit sank 10.3pc to 149.0 billion yen.

For the fiscal year to March 2016, ANA expects net profit to grow 32pc to 52 billion yen while JAL is bracing for a 3.4pc drop to 144 billion yen.

"JAL's profit decline for the fiscal year to March was partially due to a weak yen, which boosted fuel costs," said Katsuhiko Suzuki, analyst at Mizuho Securities.

A sharp drop in oil prices is good news for airlines, which often count fuel as their single-biggest expense.

But the Japanese yen weakened sharply from September and aviation fuel prices dropped dramatically only from October, JAL said.

For ANA, Mr Suzuki said its expansion at Haneda Airport offset the negative impact of the weak yen.

For the current fiscal year, the two firms are expected to benefit from the sharp decline in oil prices, he said.

OPINION

Apple is discovering it is lonely at the top

KATIE BENNER

BY every measure that counts, Apple had an extraordinary quarter. It is currently the best performing technology bellwether, and tech is arguably the hottest place for investors to be right now. Apple's revenue and growth trounce those of other hardware makers like Dell and Hewlett-Packard. And it's wildly profitable, all while growing at breakneck speed.

The planet's most admired gadget maker is the rare company that can outperform its competitors by such wide margins. Three months ago it reported the most profitable quarter ever achieved by a publicly traded company. Its market capitalisation has soared past US\$700 billion, which makes Apple the most highly valued company in the world. Not bad for a nearly 40-year-old tech company that started out selling home PC kits.

It all reminds me of the spring of 2008.

Back then, Goldman Sachs stood at the pinnacle of the financial services industry, a business that was an important driver of US and global economic growth. Goldman had posted record revenue of \$46 billion in 2007, earning \$11.4 billion along the way, according to Bloomberg data.

An epic financial crisis soon ensued, of course, and Goldman's revenue, stock price and reputation all slumped. Goldman remains a vibrant Wall Street player and its fortunes have rebounded in recent years, but it has yet to fully revisit the heights it once occupied several years ago.

When companies achieve the kind of dominance Goldman once enjoyed, they can seem invincible. But they're actually quite vulnerable because they not only have to perform well, but also at a level that's almost impossible to sustain for long periods of time.

In a Fortune feature from 2008, ominously titled "The Man Who Must Keep Goldman Growing," the firm's chief executive, Lloyd Blankfein, was hyper-aware of the challenges ahead. He fretted over the odds of a business like his hitting the shoals - 9 percent if you performed poorly, 3pc if you were really good, and (presciently) 100pc



A man waits in line for the release of the Apple Watch to customers at the Maxfield in LA last week. Apple boasts a string of tech hits, but some question how long it can last. Photo: AFP

if a crisis hit and all hell broke loose. As Fortune put it, Mr Blankfein at the time didn't want to be "the Goldman chief who falls off the tightrope."

Apple CEO Tim Cook doesn't seem like a Blankfein-type worrier. In fact, he came across as cool and confident during the company's earnings call this week. But the question remains of how he'll continue to fuel growth at his juggernaut, which has grown in size, earnings and position that is light-years beyond anything that Goldman ever achieved.

This week Apple said that its quarterly net income soared 33pc to \$13.6 billion - much more than Goldman has earned in any year except for 2007 and 2009. Revenue in the quarter rose 27pc to \$58 billion. Apple upped its capital-return program and increased its dividend by 11pc. If iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus demand continues apace, Apple could report its highest annual profit since 2012.

Angelo Zino, an equity analyst at S&P Capital IQ, thinks that Apple has done remarkably well - but he still has a "hold" rating on the stock. Mr Zino agrees that as companies climb higher it gets harder for them to continue to beat, or even meet, expectations. He says that at some point Apple's topline

growth will decelerate. It will get harder for Apple do better than it did the year before, especially as it racks up record quarter after record quarter.

I can't say with any certainty when things will slow down for Apple. But there are pivotal areas to watch as it figures out how to manage the risks that come with being at the top of the heap.

China could emerge as the company's most important relationship to watch. Apple said that last quarter's iPhone sales in China were greater than in the US for the first time. IDC analyst Crawford Del Prete said during an appearance on Bloomberg West that going forward it will be hard to envision a time when China isn't the company's biggest customer.

All well and good, but this also could make Apple vulnerable to vicissitudes in China's economy and to a government that wants security concessions from tech companies that do business within its borders. While Apple is known for being a staunch advocate of consumer privacy, it also has a massive supply chain operation that relies on Chinese labour - creating a recipe for a complicated relationship.

White-hot iPhone sales have tabled the question of Apple's product

diversity for now, but that doesn't mean the question is moot. Mr Zino points out that global smart phone sales growth industrywide is slowing down from north of 25pc last year to somewhere in the low teens this year.

It also looks unlikely that the iPad will ever be a big product for Apple. The device currently accounts for about 9 percent of Apple's revenue, and the company reported in the quarter that iPad sales are falling. Even when larger-screen models are introduced, which should happen later this year, Apple may not see sustained sales growth for the tablets.

For now, Apple Watch's fortunes are still tied to iPhone proliferation. An Apple car is still a dream. It's still unclear if Apple can do something compelling in television. During the recent earnings call, Mr Cook mentioned his company's work with HBO and said that he wants Apple to take part in the "major, major changes in media" that are under way. Apple is also working on music streaming as it ingests and transforms Beats.

Apple sits atop an enviable stockpile of cash and has been shrewd about how it manages its finances. It has been borrowing billions of dollars - at rock-bottom rates - to buy back stock and issue dividends, a strategy it will continue to use. From August 2012 through March 2015, the company returned more than \$112 billion to shareholders, including \$80 billion in buybacks.

Mr Zino sees ongoing annual dividend increases at Apple of between 8pc and 10pc, as well as \$140 billion in share repurchases, through 2017. What happens after that? If the pace of buybacks and dividends changes, will the activist investors come out to agitate?

Apple may never endure a crisis of Goldman-like proportions, one in which a global financial calamity threatens to decimate the company's business lines. Yet Apple is also clearly, admirably and perilously occupying a summit with which Goldman is familiar. And it's not easy to stay on top.

Katie Benner is a tech columnist with Bloomberg View

PERCENT

107.8

Increase of ANA holding's net profit last year, compared to year earlier.

10.3

Decline of ANA rival Japan Airlines' net profit during the same period.

In the past year, ANA's revenue rose 9.1pc to a record 1.71 trillion yen, boosting operating profit by 38.7pc to 91.5 billion yen.

The robust earnings were "driven by further expansion of the group's international route network, tight cost control and the continued gradual recovery of the Japanese economy," the company said in a statement.

Domestic passenger revenue edged up 1.2pc to 683.3 billion yen while international passenger income rose a faster 18.5pc to 468.3 billion yen, ANA said.

JAL's overall revenue in the year increased 2.7pc to 1.34 trillion yen and operating profit climbed 7.7pc to 179.7 billion yen.

ANA has been in a spat with JAL over the allocation of landing slots at Haneda, after the one-time flag carrier emerged from one of Japan's biggest-ever bankruptcies following a government rescue.

ANA expects to grow bigger after throwing a lifeline to bankrupt domestic rival SkyMark Airlines by taking a nearly 20pc stake. - AFP

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World

WORLD EDITOR: Fiona MacGregor

BALTIMORE

Protests in US over police 'injustices'

THOUSANDS demonstrated in US East Coast cities on April 29 demanding equal treatment for all by police, after a young African American died of injuries sustained in custody in Baltimore.

The biggest show of people power was in Baltimore itself - epicentre of the latest racially tinged unrest to convulse the United States - where several thousand mostly young demonstrators paralysed city blocks in a major rally through downtown to City Hall.

The streets of Baltimore seemed calm on the second night of a city-wide curfew.

Thousands more protested in New York, the capital Washington and Boston in solidarity, as simmering anger over alleged police brutality against blacks and discrimination again bubbled to the surface.

The protests were overwhelmingly peaceful and good-natured, although New York police said they had arrested more than 60 demonstrators. Emotions were running high, and scuffles broke out.

What appears to be a growing movement for change was focused on Baltimore, where a rally that started at the main train station included black and white demonstrators, some of them linking arms and chanting: "No justice, no peace! No racists, no peace!"

Many in the march were high school or college students.

"We're protesting the ongoing injustices that police have perpetrated on black men particularly. Police are trigger-happy and we need to stop that," said Jonathan Brown, 19, a student at Johns Hopkins University.

Some in the huge crowd held placards, one reading, "Killer cops deserve cell blocks."

The 2000 National Guard personnel who have flooded Baltimore this week kept a low profile and only small knots of demonstrators remained on the streets when a curfew swept into effect for a second night from 10pm to 5am.

Of the more than 200 people arrested in the April 27 riots, police were forced to let half of them go on April 29, the *Baltimore Sun* reported.

Amid the chaos of the unrest, it is hard now to determine which officer arrested what suspect. And a specially extended deadline for holding people without charge was expiring, so people had to be let go, Captain Eric Kowalczyk said, according to the *Sun*.

The calm in Baltimore for the second night running was a far cry from the violence and looting that flared there following the funeral of 25-year-old Freddie Gray on April 27.

The circumstances surrounding Gray's death are unclear, but six officers have been suspended with pay.

'We're protesting the ongoing injustices that police have perpetrated on black men particularly.'

Jonathan Brown
Student

The results of an investigation into his death are to be handed over today to prosecutors, but not made public right away, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake said.

She said many in the community had been under the mistaken belief the report would also be made public today, stoking fears of another outbreak of violence.

Adding to the confusion, *The Washington Post*, citing a police document, said a prisoner sharing a police transport van with Gray told investigators that he could hear Gray "banging against the walls" of the vehicle and believed that he "was intentionally trying to injure himself".

The prisoner, who is in jail, was separated from Gray by a metal partition and could not see him, the report said. Gray died seven days after his arrest with 80 percent of his spine severed at the neck, lawyers for his family say, portraying him as just the latest young African American to die at the hands of the police.

In August, a white policeman shot dead a black teenager in the St Louis suburb of Ferguson, triggering demonstrations in major US cities from Los Angeles to New York that were repeated when a grand jury declined to indict the officer.

Maryland State Governor Larry Hogan said he had been "very encouraged" by the prior 24 hours and said a semblance of normality was returning to Baltimore, a gritty city of 620,000 less than an hour's drive from Washington. But he cautioned: "We are not out of the woods yet."

In New York City, protesters gathered at Union Square in Lower Manhattan for a rally dubbed on a Facebook page, "NYC Rise up and Shut it down with Baltimore."

The large march initially met no resistance from police, but that swiftly changed as officers - who deployed in significant numbers - moved in and made arrests.

Police said more than 60 people were arrested.

In Washington there was a festive atmosphere as a well-organised march that peaked at about 1000 ended at the White House, where protesters chanted and held signs reading, "Stop racist police terror."

Among the many startling images to emerge from Baltimore was that of an infuriated mother hitting her teenage son repeatedly for joining the demonstrations on April 27 and dragging him away.

"I just lost it," said Toya Graham, a single mother of six, whose actions have been widely praised.

"I was shocked, I was angry, because you never want to see your child out there doing that," she added, speaking to CBS News. - *AFP*



Nepalese women carry their children as they walk in a rain shower in Kathmandu on April 30. Photo: AFP

KATHMANDU

NGOs scramble to deliver relief in Nepal

BY CATHERINE TRAUTWEIN

IN the wake of a massive earthquake that sent Nepal reeling on April 25, the country is now attempting to heal the thousands injured and keep others - especially those displaced by the disaster - hydrated and hygienic.

The 7.8-magnitude quake has killed at least 5000 people and injured more than 10,000, overwhelming the country's medical facilities. The government of Nepal has an urgent need for support on fronts including water, sanitation, hygiene and health, according to an April 29 situation report from the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator in Nepal.

Meanwhile, those displaced by the quake face issues with potable water and fears of the spread of infectious disease.

Speaking from Kathmandu, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) media officer Matt Graydon said that although an earthquake had been long anticipated in Nepal, nothing could have prepared people for the day it actually happened.

He called health the IOM's priority response, "something we can

deliver through doctors on the ground immediately".

Yasmin Rabiyan, the communications manager for medical NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Myanmar, said in an email that hospitals in Kathmandu visited by MSF were generally "overstretched" because they had been forced to cope with a surge of patients injured after the earthquake as well as regular patients with chronic illnesses and others.

The French organisation also evaluated the situation at Gorkha District Hospital - whose in-patient department was devastated by the earthquake - and deployed a rapid surgical intervention kit to the district and a surgical team to address issues in the vicinity.

One hospital near the Kathmandu airport appeared visibly strained on April 28. An impromptu "emergency room" had been set up across the street with a tarp overhead and military personnel present.

Inside, what had been the hospital's emergency room was transformed into an intensive care unit. Patients lay on mattresses on the floor as well as in traditional hos-

pital beds.

Trekking company owner Phuri Kitar Sherpa, visiting an injured relative who had sustained a head wound, said the man required a three-hour surgery - an operation that was complicated by rolling aftershocks. Mr Phuri Kitar Sherpa gave the doctors permission to leave mid-operation should a tremor strike.

"They have their own families," he said.

Mr Phuri Kitar Sherpa set up a makeshift camp down the road from his company's office after the earthquake. Inhabitants include a three-month-old baby and an elderly woman who recently underwent open-heart surgery.

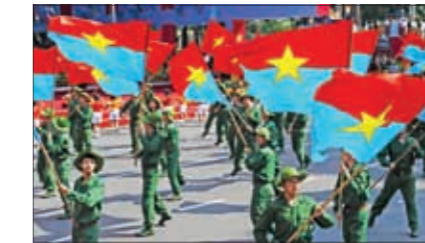
He said healthy food options are currently limited, and voiced concerns about hygiene.

MSF - also called Doctors without Borders - which evaluated an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Kathmandu and another outside the capital, found that people in such temporary settlements had imperative needs in areas such as clean drinking water and sufficient sanitation facilities, Ms Rabiyan said.

"This is where we will probably

France investigates alleged child sex abuse by its soldiers in Africa

WORLD 19



Vietnam PM attacks 'barbaric US crimes' on war anniversary

WORLD 18

JAKARTA

Is political pressure spurring Indonesia's execution drive?

INDONESIA'S president invoked a national drugs crisis to justify this week's execution of seven foreign traffickers, but analysts say it was more about a weakened leader acting under intense political pressure.

The execution by firing squad of two Australians, a Brazilian, four Nigerians, as well as one Indonesian, on April 29 sparked an international furor, with Australia recalling its ambassador and UN chief Ban Ki-moon expressing deep regret.

However it was long expected after President Joko Widodo, who took office in October, insisted that there would be no clemency for drug traffickers, shocking rights activists who had hoped the leader - viewed as a reformer - would take a softer line on capital punishment.

He has backed up his claim that Indonesia is facing an emergency with figures from the national anti-narcotics agency, which says that dozens of people are dying each day due to drugs and 4.5 million users are in need of rehabilitation.

While Mr Widodo points to such figures, many analysts believe he was more motivated by a desire to present himself as a tough leader and stave off pressure from nationalist lawmakers and the influential head of his own political party after a series of political missteps.

"He understands that Indonesians want a firm leader. He wants to show that he is a firm president," said Yohanes Sulaiman, a political expert from the Indonesian Defence University.

He added that during last year's presidential election campaign, Mr

Widodo, a former furniture exporter, was often viewed as weak compared to his opponent, controversial ex-general Prabowo Subianto.

Damien Kingsbury, an Indonesia expert at Australia's Deakin University, said that once Mr Widodo promised to take a tough stance on drugs, changing course under pressure from Australia, which has been vocal in its opposition to the executions, would have been "political suicide".

"Widodo - under domestic pressure from his party boss to stick to his own policy platform, and facing pressure bordering on hostility from the legislature with which he has to work - could not back down," he wrote in a commentary for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Experts have also questioned the data that Mr Widodo has relied on to back up the claim of a drugs crisis.

In an analysis for Australian news website The Conversation, Claudia Stoicescu, a graduate student at Oxford University, noted that Mr Widodo's figures came from a study conducted by a university working for the anti-drugs agency, which she said used "questionable methods and vague measures".

Of the 4.5 million people cited as drug users in need of rehabilitation, around 1.6 million were recreational users who had tried drugs fewer than five times in their lives, she wrote.

Despite the concerns, there seems little chance of Indonesia changing course any time soon, with the attorney-general declaring after the executions the country was fighting a "war" on drugs. - *AFP*



A demonstrator is arrested during a protest at Union Square in New York City on April 29. Photo: AFP



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HO CHI MINH CITY



Soldiers dressed as Vietnam War-era Vietcong soldiers march during a parade marking the 40th anniversary of the fall of Saigon in Ho Chi Minh City on April 30. Photo: AFP

Vietnam marks 40 years since the fall of Saigon

VIETNAM'S premier yesterday hit out at the "barbarous crimes" of its wartime American foe as the nation marked four decades since the fall of Saigon, an event that delivered a Communist victory and a painful blow to US military prestige.

The central streets of southern Ho Chi Minh City – formerly Saigon – were filled with a forest of hammer and sickle flags of the Communist Party as regiments of goose-stepping soldiers filed past the country's top leaders.

In front of Independence Palace – whose gates northern tanks clattered through in one of the iconic moments of the 1975 victory – Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung struck out at the US attempt to contain the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia through war in Vietnam.

"They committed countless barbarous crimes, caused immeasurable losses and pain to our people and country," he said in an address.

The war killed millions of Vietnamese – both civilians and com-

batants from the divided North and South – and left hundreds of thousands more wounded.

The physical effects of conflict still linger, including through deformities that Vietnam says are caused by the dioxin Agent Orange, sprayed by the US Air Force to pare back the thick jungle used as cover by the northern guerilla forces.

Some 58,000 US servicemen also died in a war that remains seared into the consciousness of the American public, most often as a tragic waste of young lives and a symbol of the over-extension of power.

It was the first Cold War conflict to be extensively covered by the Western press – and the first to be lost by a modern superpower that thought itself unbeatable.

The Communist victory was one of "ardent patriotism", Dung said, hailing the reunification of Vietnam, which was cleaved apart in 1954 into the Communist North and the US-backed South.

Veterans at the parade spoke of their pride at having fought the Americans. "An event like this is necessary to help young people understand the glorious history of our country," said Nguyen Van Hung, 72, wearing his old army uniform.

But divisions remain: Up to 1 million "boat people" fled the South in the aftermath of the conflict and now form a vocal diaspora, staunchly opposed to Vietnam's authoritarian state. Domestically, the Communist Party is also facing rising public discontent over high-level corrup-

tion, growing inequality and its continued efforts to smother criticism.

Ties between the wartime enemies have warmed in recent years, with Washington drawing closer to Hanoi in the face of growing Chinese assertiveness in the region.

With public discontent rising, the authoritarian state relies heavily on its past military victories to legitimise its rule, observers say.

People used to see the war "as one for national liberation and unification", said Tuong Vu, an associate professor of political science at the University of Oregon.

"These days most Vietnamese perhaps believe that the war was a tragic event during which Vietnamese killed other Vietnamese ... The Communist Party is no longer seen as patriotic or invincible," he said.

But local media, which is entirely state-run, has published fawning stories ahead of the anniversary, heavy on wartime heroism.

That official narrative still chimes with many among the older generation, but increasingly the public is indifferent or even hostile to such shows of official patriotism.

"Let the past go. It's been 40 years," wrote businessman Tran Minh Chien on his Facebook page.

Some residents in Ho Chi Minh City were also left unimpressed by the show of pomp.

"I don't care about this parade – it's bad for business," said Nguyen Thi Dieu, 25, a vendor who sells cold water and snacks in the city centre. – AFP

1945-1975: Vietnam's path to independence

When North Vietnam's tanks smashed through the gates of Saigon's presidential palace 40 years ago, it heralded the end of nearly two decades of war, a humiliating defeat for the US and reunification with the South. Here is a timeline of events in the lead-up to the Vietnam War and the taking of Saigon by Northern forces.

1945

September 2: Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh declares the country's independence from France. Paraphrasing the US Declaration of Independence, he states, "All men are born equal."

1954

May 7: Vietnamese forces overrun a French base at Dien Bien Phu after a 55-day battle that costs the lives of some 3000 French troops and 8000 Viet Minh.
July 21: The Geneva Accords divide Vietnam at the 17th parallel, with Communists in control of the North and a US-backed government in the South. Elections are supposed to be held but never materialise.

Late 1950s

Insurgency rages in the South. Viet Cong guerrillas are backed by the North, while the South is increasingly bolstered by US military advisors.

1964

August 2: North Vietnamese patrol boats fire at the US destroyer Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin, and a second disputed attack is reported two days later.

August 7: Congress passes the Southeast Asia Resolution, commonly known as the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving US president Lyndon B Johnson power to escalate US military operations in Southeast Asia.

1965

April 7: The US offers North Vietnam aid in exchange for peace, but is rebuffed. Johnson then raises US troop levels in South Vietnam to more than 60,000. By the end of 1966 US forces in the country number 385,000.

1968

January 30: Viet Cong units across South Vietnam launch the Tet Offensive. It is a tactical disaster, almost wiping out the guerrilla group's ability to fight, but it also deals a fatal blow to support for the war in the US.

March 16: US Army soldiers massacre hundreds of villagers in My Lai. The crime comes to light a year later, shocking the American public. Only one officer is convicted of 22 murders and sentenced to life in prison. He is placed under house arrest and released in 1974.

1971

October: US forces stop spraying Agent Orange, a defoliant that contains the toxic chemical Dioxin. Vietnamese officials say that up to 3 million people were exposed to the substance, causing birth defects in at least 150,000 children.

1972

December 13: Peace talks in Paris between the North Vietnamese and US representatives break down. President Richard Nixon orders a 12-day bombing campaign, Operation Linebacker II, that targets Hanoi and Haiphong.

1973

January 27: The Paris Peace Accord is signed. US forces withdraw from South Vietnam by the end of March, having lost around 58,000 lives.

1975

April 30: The North Vietnamese seize Saigon a day after the US frantically evacuates more than 1000 of its citizens and almost 7000 Vietnamese. Many more allies are left behind. The war is over.

1976

July 2: North and South Vietnam are officially reunited, and Saigon is renamed Ho Chi Minh City.



French troops endure Vietnamese shelling at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

'The Communist Party is no longer seen as patriotic or invincible.'

Tuong Vu
University of Oregon

WASHINGTON

Abe offers 'eternal condolences' for Americans killed in WWII

SHINZO Abe became the first Japanese prime minister to address a joint meeting of the US Congress on April 29, offering heartfelt testimony on the need for deeper ties while facing controversy over his views of World War II.

Speaking in English, Mr Abe stressed the tight bonds between two nations that were forged from the embers of brutal battles like Pearl Harbor and Iwo Jima, and offered a solemn personal apology for Japan's actions.

"On behalf of Japan and the Japanese people, I offer with profound respect my eternal condolences to the souls of all American people that were lost during World War II," he said to rousing applause from US lawmakers.

Shortly before arriving on Capitol Hill, Mr Abe symbolically laid a flower wreath at a monument to that conflict, which claimed the lives of an estimated 400,000 Americans.

"The battles engraved at the memorial crossed my mind, and I reflected upon the lost dreams and lost futures of those young Americans.

"History is harsh. What is done cannot be undone. With deep repentance in my heart, I stood there in silent prayers for some time," Mr Abe said.

But it was Japan's actions in Asia during that war that threatened to overshadow his historic address.

In Congress, Mr Abe was faced with the presence of 87-year-old Lee Yong-Soo, one of the estimated 200,000

Asian women who were forced into sexual slavery by occupying Japanese troops.

She was invited by Democrat lawmaker Mike Honda, who is one of many that accuse Mr Abe of downplaying any official role by the country or its military.

Abe expressed his "deep remorse" over Japan's actions toward neighbouring Asian nations, but stopped short of a full apology demanded by many.

"Post war, we started out on our path bearing in mind feelings of deep remorse over the war," he told the joint meeting. "Our actions brought suffering to the peoples in Asian countries. We must not avert our eyes from that." That angered some in Congress,

including Mr Honda, who said it was "shocking and shameful" that Mr Abe "continues to evade his government's responsibility for the systematic atrocity that was perpetrated the Japanese Imperial Army".

Democrat Congresswoman Judy Chu said she was "incredibly disappointed" that Mr Abe did not directly address the issue of comfort women.

"Without responsibility and remorse, it is impossible to move forward."

Republicans were less scathing, with Senator John McCain lauding a "historic recognition of two peoples reconciled with their shared history".

These same lawmakers must grant President Barack Obama authority to

ink a vast trans-Pacific trade deal that includes Japan, the United States and 10 other countries.

Mr Abe threw his weight behind that pact, which faces opposition on the left of the political spectrum.

"We cannot overlook sweat shops or burdens on the environment," Mr Abe said, framing the deal as more than just an economic tool.

"[It] goes far beyond just economic benefits. It is also about our security. Long-term, its strategic value is awesome. We should never forget that," he said.

"We can spread our shared values around the world and have them take root: the rule of law, democracy and freedom." – AFP

ADEN



Members of the Popular Resistance Committees, loyal to fugitive President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi, raise their weapons in the southern city of Taz during ongoing clashes with Huthi rebels on April 29. Photo: AFP

Saudi-led warplanes pound Yemen

A SAUDI-LED coalition pressed on with airstrikes yesterday against Shiite rebels in south Yemen where fierce clashes raged between the insurgents and southern pro-government fighters, sources said.

Warplanes hit Huthi rebel positions in the main southern city of Aden, in the districts of Khor Makkar and Dar Saad, helping pro-government forces to retake positions, sources among the southern fighters said.

Eight people were killed in overnight clashes in Aden, including five pro-government fighters and

three civilians, according to the city's health chief Al-Khader Laswar.

He said 44 others were wounded. Details of losses on the rebel side were not available.

Shiite Huthi fighters backed by troops loyal to former strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh had made advances in Aden, which is now defended by local militia dubbed "popular resistance" units that have sided with forces loyal to embattled President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi.

Saudi Arabia assembled a multi-

country coalition in March that launched attacks on the rebels following a request by Hadi, who has since fled Aden to Riyadh.

Although the coalition said it had halted its air campaign on April 21, strikes have continued to pound rebel positions throughout Yemen.

Overnight raids targeted Huthis in the southern provinces of Lahj and Abyan, southern fighters said.

The United Nations says more than 1000 people have been killed in fighting in Yemen since late March. — AFP

PARIS

'Charlie Hebdo' cartoonist says he will no longer draw Mohammed

CARTOONIST Luz, who drew *Charlie Hebdo's* front cover picture of Mohammed following the massacre of the satirical weekly's editorial team by jihadists in January, has told a French magazine he will no longer draw the prophet.

"I will no longer draw the figure of Mohammed. It no longer interests me," he told *Les Inrockuptibles* magazine in an interview published on April 29. "I'm not going to spend my life drawing [cartoons of Mohammed]."

Luz's cover image in January

portrayed Mohammed with a sign saying "Je Suis Charlie" under the words "All is forgiven".

The issue came out a week after the attack by jihadists on the magazine's office left 12 dead. It had a print run of 8 million — a record for the French press.

"The terrorists did not win," Luz told *Les Inrockuptibles*.

"They will have won if the whole of France continues to be scared," he added, accusing the far-right National Front of trying to stir up fear in the wake of the attacks. — AFP



Photo: AFP

PARIS

France probes child sex abuse allegations

FRANCE is investigating allegations that its peacekeepers sexually abused children in the Central African Republic after a leaked UN report said victims as young as eight were raped in exchange for food and money.

The French government "was made aware at the end of July 2014 by the UN's high commission for human rights of accusations by children that they had been sexually abused by French soldiers", the Defence Ministry said in a statement on April 29.

An investigation was opened shortly after by Paris prosecutors, it said.

The Defence Ministry vowed to take measures to ensure that "the truth be found" and said "the strongest penalties" would be imposed on those found responsible.

The abuse was alleged by around 10 children, the ministry said, and reportedly took place at a centre for displaced people near the airport of the capital Bangui between December 2013 and June 2014.

UN spokesperson Farhan Haq confirmed that UN rights investigators had conducted a probe last year following "serious allegations" of child abuse and sexual exploitation by French troops, and had suspended a staff member for leaking the report in July.

The report was given to Britain's *The Guardian* newspaper by the US-based advocacy group AIDS-Free World, which is calling for a commission of enquiry to be set up on sexual misconduct by peacekeepers.

Paula Donovan, co-director of the organisation, said the report detailed interviews with six children, aged eight to 15, who approached the French soldiers to ask for food.

"The children were saying that they were hungry and they thought that they could get some food from the soldiers. The answer was, 'If you do this, then I will give you food,'" Ms Donovan said.

The UN employee accused of the leak, Swedish national Anders Kompass, is based in Geneva and turned the report over to French authorities because his bosses had failed to take action, *The Guardian* reported.

He has been suspended and faces dismissal for breaching protocol, the paper said.

But UN officials said Mr Kompass passed on the confidential document before it was presented to senior officials in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, suggesting that senior UN officials were not even aware of the report's findings when it was leaked.

"This constitutes a serious breach of protocol, which, as is well known to all OHCHR officials, requires redaction of any information that could endanger victims, witnesses and investigators," said Mr Haq.

The Swedish foreign ministry said it was aware of Mr Kompass's suspension, which it described as "worrying".

"The UN must have zero tolerance of sexual abuse of children and must push to investigate any such suspicions," said its chief legal counsel Anders Ronquist.

900,000

People displaced in the Central African Republic since December 2013.

The French government said prosecutors had "immediately" opened a case into the abuse after receiving the news last year, and that police investigators had travelled to the Central African Republic on August 1 to look into the case.

France sent troops to the impoverished, landlocked nation in December 2013 as the country became engulfed in violence following a coup in March that toppled longtime leader Francois Bozize. The United Nations deployed its own MINUSCA mission in September.

Since December 2013, violence has displaced nearly 900,000 people in the Central African Republic, including more than 460,000 who have become refugees — a full 10 percent of the population.

About half of the country's people live in severe poverty and need humanitarian aid, while 1.5 million are considered food insecure, according to the UN. — AFP



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**IN PICTURES**

The Baltimore Orioles faced the Chicago White Sox in an empty stadium on April 29 after riots prompted officials to take what is believed to be the unprecedented step of ordering the game played behind closed doors. "We believe that these decisions are in the best interests of fan safety and the deployment of city resources," said MLB commissioner Rob Manfred.

Photo: AFP

JUDO

Laos visit Myanmar the gentle way

KYAW ZIN HLAING

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JUDOKAS from Laos completed a joint training camp with their Myanmar equivalents at the Laeway judo camp, Nay Pyi Taw on April 29.

Laos sent three judo players and a their Japanese coach to join the Myanmar's 32 strong provisional squad for 10 days of training in advance of the 28th Southeast Asian Games that will hold it's Judo contest between June 6 and 8 at Singapore's EXPO Hall.

"The Laos team made the suggestion of this joint training camp and we accepted hoping it would provide an experience of fighting unknown combatants," Myanmar Judo Federation's general secretary Aung Naing Swe told *The Myanmar Times*.

In preparation for the SEA Games the Myanmar team have also travelled overseas to Japan, where they joined Japanese judoka for training.

"In February we visited Japan for three weeks and last year we sent a team to compete at the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon. We did not medal in Korea but we brought back experience of fighting against continental-level opponents and we will take this experience into the SEA Games," added Aung Naing Swe.

The 2015 SEA Games will hold contests in six weight divisions for



A Myanmar judoka grapples with his Vietnamese opponent at the 2013 SEA Games. Photo: Staff

both the male and female competitions and the Judo squad hopes to match their 2013 efforts when they heard the national anthem played for them on four occasions. In that competition on home soil, Myanmar judokas also secured four silver and three bronze.

"We'll enter 10 events this year but competition will be tougher this year. I have heard our opponents are strong in their preparation for Singapore and

I believe Thailand and Vietnam will provide the toughest opposition," said Aung Naing Swe.

Judo, which translates as "gentle way" first became featured in full Olympic competition at the 1964 Games and has been part of the SEA Games since Bangkok 1967. Judo is a combat sport where opponents aim to throw or pin an opponent to the ground or force a submission through a lock or choke hold.

CONTINUED FROM SPORT 24

From the bounce, the Thai side showed their long kicking ability. Myanmar had packed their defensive line but had to watch as the ball was kicked for five goals and two behinds in the first quarter and a large number of those points were kicked from with the square near the centre of the pitch.

The narrowness of the pitch also refused the smaller side the opportunity to find rest bite by using the width of the pitch or to use their greater speed and maneuverability. With the game played in close quarters, the Thai Tigers quickly narrowed the visitors options and insisted on the game being played with maximum engagement.

Nevertheless, the Cocks con-

tinued to fight for each other and twice found the goal posts courtesy of Romanin and the American Brendan Kelly.

"As a veteran myself, it was a huge honour to play in front of a former POW, said Kelly, after the game. "Seeing the hardship of life in 'Hell-fire Pass' was staggering and helped inspire me to give my all on the pitch."

ASIAN FOOTBALL

Don't hold your breath for Asian World Cup win

ASIAN football's new technical director refused to put a time-frame on the region's first World Cup win on April 29, but said strong domestic leagues were the first step to success.

Asked when an Asian team will realistically be able to win football's biggest prize, former Scotland boss Andy Roxburgh laughed and said, "Good question!"

But Roxburgh, tasked with raising standards in the region, said he had been deeply impressed by Japan's repeatedly stated aim of winning the World Cup by 2050.

"The Japanese are actually focused and say, 'We are going to win that World Cup ... it might not be tomorrow or the next day, but our aim is to win it,'" Roxburgh told journalists.

"And so they're focused on doing just that. Therefore if more countries

in Asia have that focus, and that attitude, then who knows. But I wouldn't like to make a prediction."

Roxburgh joined the Asian Football Confederation last month, after a long stint with European body UEFA, with a remit to boost coaching standards and grassroots soccer.

South Korea reached the 2002 World Cup semis on home soil but last year's edition in Brazil turned out poorly for Asian teams, who failed to register a single win.

Hopes will rise ahead of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, where Asian sides will seek to make the most of regional advantage against the powerhouses of Europe and South America.

Roxburgh, appointed on an "initial" two-year deal, said it was important to "design the way forward" for Asian success through development, coaching and competitions.

But Roxburgh, speaking ahead of yesterday's AFC congress in Bahrain, said it was vital for league standards to improve, to allow players to thrive without having to move to Europe.

"I would like to see leagues in Asia really boom, that would be the big thing," he said. "In India and China, if they really start to boom then there might not be such a desire to go to Europe."

He added: "There is talent in Asia, but talent is never enough. How many people have you seen, whether it's a coach or a player, they're very talented. And yet they don't quite make it to the top level."

"You need commitment, you need desire. And if you don't have that commitment and desire and confidence ... then that talent will never mature to what you hoped it might become." - AFP



IN PICTURES

Myanmar's women's football team trained in an alleyway next to the Ramana Hotel Saigon yesterday, as they prepared for their opening game of the Asean Football Federation Women's Championship scheduled for May 2 in Ho Chi Minh City against hosts Vietnam.

Photo: MFF/ Facebook

Blatter re-election set for Asian boost

FIFA chief Sepp Blatter was expected to take a big step toward a fifth term in office when he watched Asia's football boss, a key ally, seal re-election unopposed on yesterday.

Just four weeks before FIFA's presidential vote, Blatter attempted to shore up crucial Asian support when he addressed the Asian Football Confederation congress in Bahrain.

It is likely to be a triumphant trip for the 79-year-old, after AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ibrahim al Khalifa, a vocal supporter, was handed a fresh, four-year term.

Kuwaiti powerbroker Sheikh Ahmad al Fahad Al Sabah, another Blatter ally, won one of three seats on FIFA's executive committee up for grabs.

Meanwhile Blatter's presidential rival Prince Ali bin al Hussein lost his post as a FIFA vice president, which is being absorbed into the Asian leader's job title.

Blatter has already been assured of African support for the May 29 FIFA poll, and with Asia's 46 votes he would be all but at the finish line.

His rivals - Jordan's Prince Ali, Dutchman Michael van Praag and former galactico Luis Figo - face a last-minute scramble for support ahead of the ballot in Zurich.

Shaikh Salman tightened what is becoming an iron grip on Asian football when his first full term was rubber-stamped by the congress in his home country of Bahrain.

He swept to power in 2013

promising a clean slate after his predecessor Mohamed bin Hammam was banned from football mid-term over alleged bribery and financial wrongdoing.

The past could still haunt the AFC, however, after general secretary Alex Soosay faced accusations related to the former regime under disgraced Qatari bin Hammam.

According to a video interview seen by a Malaysian newspaper, an AFC employee said Soosay asked him to tamper with or destroy documents during an investigation.

No comment was immediately available from Soosay, although the report said he had dismissed the video as a smear attempt.

The AFC ditched tradition by holding the congress in Shaikh Salman's stronghold of Manama rather than the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, where the body is based.

It also done away with its usual executive committee meeting the day before the congress, meaning proceedings will focus squarely on voting.

Five AFC vice presidents were decided, plus 11 executive committee members. Australia's Moya Dodd and Afghan Zohra Mehri are among five mandatory female exco appointments.

But the bigger picture is Asia's support for Blatter, which looks set to help keep him at the head of world football despite a series of controversies, notably over Qatar's hosting of the 2022 World Cup. - AFP

All or nothing in Ayeyawady's next AFC match-up

MATT ROEBUCK
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AYEYAWADY United will face either Johor Darul Ta'zim of Malaysia or Kitchee of Hong Kong in the AFC Cup Round of 16 on May 27.

Before that the team will travel to Persib Bandung of Indonesia for a tie to determine which of them faces a home draw against the second-place team in Group F. The Myanmar side - two points back - will need a win to top Group H.

At the start of this year's second-tier continental championship, Ayeyawady manager, Marjan Sekulovski told the press that his aim was to finish runner-up to Persib, who he believed would dominate the group.

However after a 1-1 draw with the Indonesians in Yangon on March 11, the Delta Boys - including leading goal scorer of the competition Riste Naumov - can travel to the Group H leaders on the attack with nothing to lose but a valuable advantage to win.

In last year's Round of 16, only one side playing away from home made their way to the quarter finals. That was when Al-Hidd of Bahrain beat Lebanon's Safa.

Myanmar's Yangon United particularly struggled on their long 2014 journey to Indonesia's Persipura Jayapura, based on the island of Papua. After a long journey and only a short time to acclimatise, the team was two down in 10 minutes and although they managed to draw level, they eventually

succumbed 9-2.

Persib went on to become beaten semi-finalists, a title that Kitchee - the 2013-14 Hong Kong First Division League Champions - also hold from the 2014 competition.

Johor Darul Ta'zim, the 2014 Malaysia Super League champions are based in the Malaysian Singapore border town of Johor Darul. The 2014 domestic championship was the first piece of major silverware the club has collected.

Should Ayeyawady win their Round of 16 tie, they will reach the quarter-final. That will be a two-legged affair played on August 25/26 and September 15/16. At that stage of the competition teams from East Asia can also be drawn against their West Asian rivals.

AFC Cup East Asia									
Group E									
Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	Persipura Jayapura (Q)	5	4	1	0	14	3	+11	13
2	Bengaluru FC (Q)	5	4	0	1	7	5	+2	12
3	Maziya (E)	5	1	1	3	5	6	-1	4
4	Warriors (E)	5	0	0	5	1	13	-12	0
Group F									
Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	Johor Darul Ta'zim (Q)	5	4	0	1	8	3	+5	12
2	Kitchee (Q)	5	3	1	1	8	4	+4	10
3	East Bengal (E)	5	1	1	3	6	8	-2	4
4	Balestier Khalsa (E)	5	1	0	4	3	10	-7	3
Group G									
Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	South China (Q)	5	5	0	0	16	3	+13	15
2	Pahang	5	2	1	2	11	10	+1	7
3	Global	5	1	1	3	5	12	-7	4
4	Yadanarbon (E)	5	1	0	4	10	17	-7	3
Group H									
Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	Persib Bandung (Q)	5	3	2	0	7	2	+5	11
2	Ayeyawady United (Q)	5	2	3	0	10	6	+4	9
3	New Radiant (E)	5	1	1	3	3	9	-6	4
4	Lao Toyota FC (E)	5	0	2	3	6	9	-3	2

(E) Eliminated; (Q) Qualified to the phase indicated.

Bremen scrap Indonesia tour plans

BUNDESLIGA side Werder Bremen announced April 28 they have shelved plans to tour Indonesia next month because of an on-going row between the Indonesian FA (PSSI) and the country's government.

A disagreement over the new Indonesian Super League season has put the competition in jeopardy with football's governing-body FIFA threatening sanctions if the government keeps interfering.

Bremen, who are challenging for a Europa League place for next season, had planned friendlies in the Southeast Asian country at the end of May, but say the situation is now

too complicated.

"We were very advanced in our planning, but under these conditions there are too many questions which have been raised and there are too many question marks," said Werder's chief executive officer Klaus Filbry.

"Internationally, we want to show ourselves at our best, but it won't be possible this time."

"So in this respect, we have changed our plans at short notice."

Bremen say they are now planning three friendlies at the end of May with exact dates and opponents set to be announced. - AFP

Sport

AFC Cup nears knockouts



SPORT 23

AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL

Mates in arms



The wreath placed at the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. Photo: Matt Roebuck

MATT ROEBUCK
matt.d.roebuck@gmail.com

MATESHIP and remembrance were the words that summed up the Myanmar Fighting Cocks recent ANZAC Cup tour to challenge the Thailand Tigers.

It was those words that Australian senator Michaelia Cash had used at the memorial service held on April 25 at the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, where thousands lie, victims of the construction of the Thai-Burma Railway.

And those words resonated for all in attendance after a 141-13 defeat for the Fighting Cocks at the hands of an experienced Thai side.

Despite the result, the side's refusal to give up and the way they improved throughout the game stood out to all those watching. Spectators included Neil MacPherson, of the 2nd/2nd Pioneers, a survivor of the "Death Railway", who had worked on both sides of the border and attended the match as guest of honour.

"I must make a point," said MacPherson, who before presenting the Thai team with their trophy, had some words for their vanquished foes.

"You fought well and courageously and although the score was against you, you come away with a good reputation."

Tigers coach Patrick Fitzgerald made a similar point, touching once again upon the theme of the day.

"The Cocks played with a lot of spirit," said Fitzgerald. "With your backs against the wall, that's when the ANZAC character comes through."

"You were here as mates and that's what shone through in the end."

"It was a genuine privilege to be involved in commemorating the 100th Anniversary," said Fighting Cock Andrew Romanin. "For once, the game and the result really were secondary to why we were there. The fact we were there at all is what should be remembered. We have the ANZACs to thank for that," added the Australian.

Both sides rose early to visit "Hell-fire Pass", a former cutting of the Thai-Burma railway and site of a dawn service that is arguably the most important ANZAC day memorial site of the Second World War.

"When an Aussie Rules team was established in Myanmar last year, the Thai team thought it would be an appropriate gesture to invite them as their opposition for the ANZAC Day game on the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings," said Julian Clark, a veteran of several ANZAC Day games

in Thailand and a founding member of the Myanmar club.

After "Hell-fire Pass", the teams travelled to Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, where club president Henry Cox laid a wreath on behalf of the Myanmar side.

The Myanmar team went into the game on a high, undefeated and topping the AFL Asia standings for 2015 after victories over the Laos Elephants and Cambodian Eagles. But this tie they knew would be a tougher proposition.

The Cocks were without their "Man of the Tournament" and "Man of the Final" from the Vientiane Cup; Wade Carruthers and Conor Smith respectively, two tall players who fulfill important roles for the Fighting Cocks in the centre of the pitch.

Myanmar also missed a number of other experienced "talls" and so travelled with a squad of inexperienced players, short in stature and including a number of debutants.

With the Tigers fielding a large squad both in stature and number. On the sidelines stood eleven substitutes ready to interchange on the short and narrow pitch played into the advantage of the home team.



MORE ON SPORT 22

Club president Henry Cox presents former POW Neil MacPherson with a commemorative ANZAC day Fighting Cocks guernsey. Photo: MFC/Aurelia Rusek

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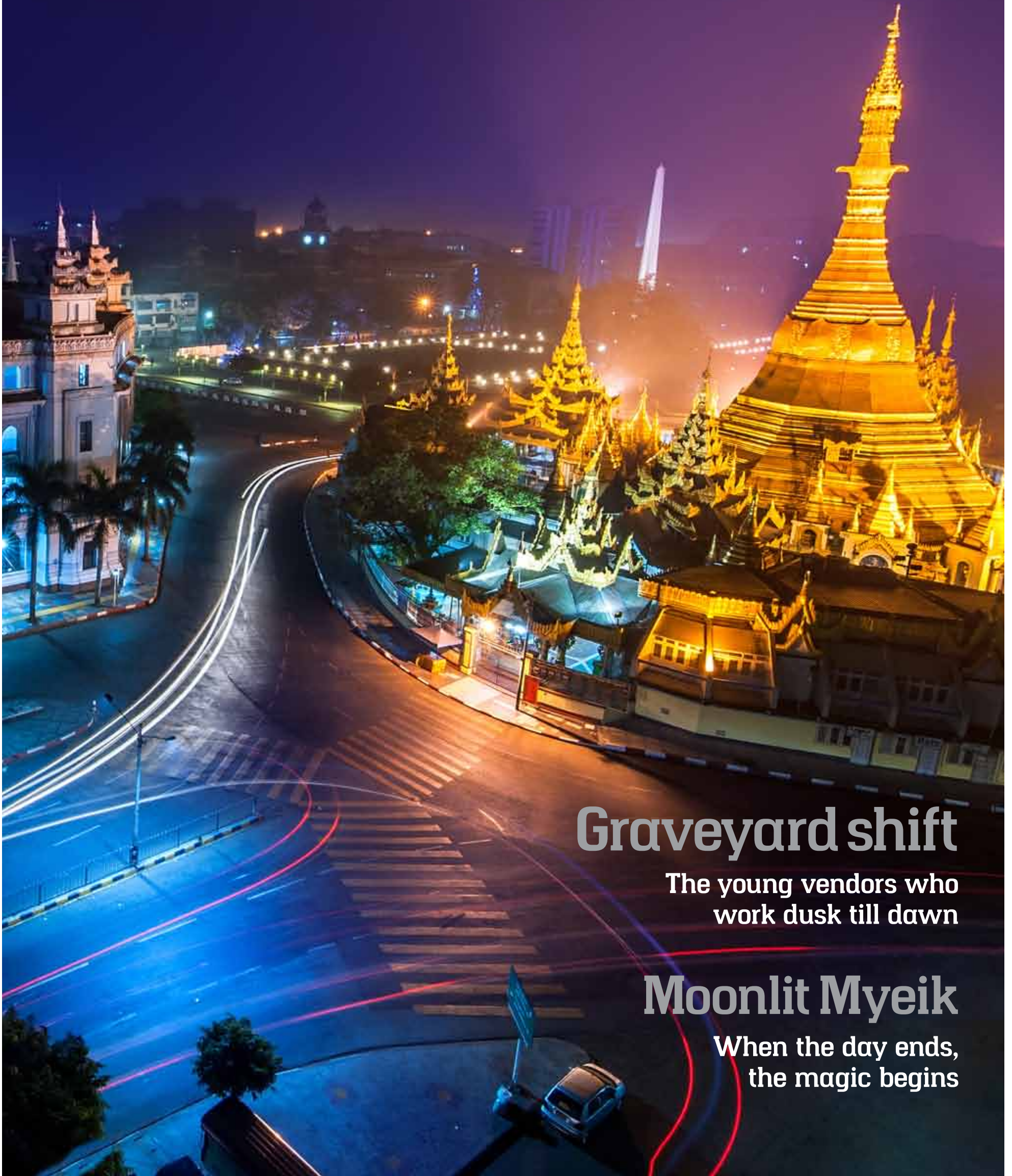
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EEKEND

THE MYANMAR TIMES ISSUE 07 | MAY 1-7, 2015



Graveyard shift

The young vendors who work dusk till dawn

Moonlit Myeik

When the day ends, the magic begins



Sumo wrestlers from Onoe stable hold up crying babies during a "Baby-cry Sumo" event at the Yukigaya Hachiman shrine in Tokyo, Japan, on April 29. Some 100 babies below one year of age took part in the annual baby crying contest. Japanese parents believe that sumo wrestlers can help make babies cry out a wish to grow up with good health. **Photo: AFP/Toshifumi Kitamura**



Whether private, public, monastic; primary, high school, university; foreign languages, minority languages; pre-school, summer school, boarding school; cheap, expensive; teachers, tutors; sciences, arts; tablets or pencils,

the most important thing you can learn is how to learn

Education



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Members of Japan's avant-garde dance group Dairakudakan perform at a festival in Tokyo on April 26. A total of 44 performers and groups participated in the two-day annual street performance festival at Tokyo's Koenji shipping district.
Photo: AFP/Toshifumi Kitamura

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WHAT'S ON

Your weekly guide to events in Yangon

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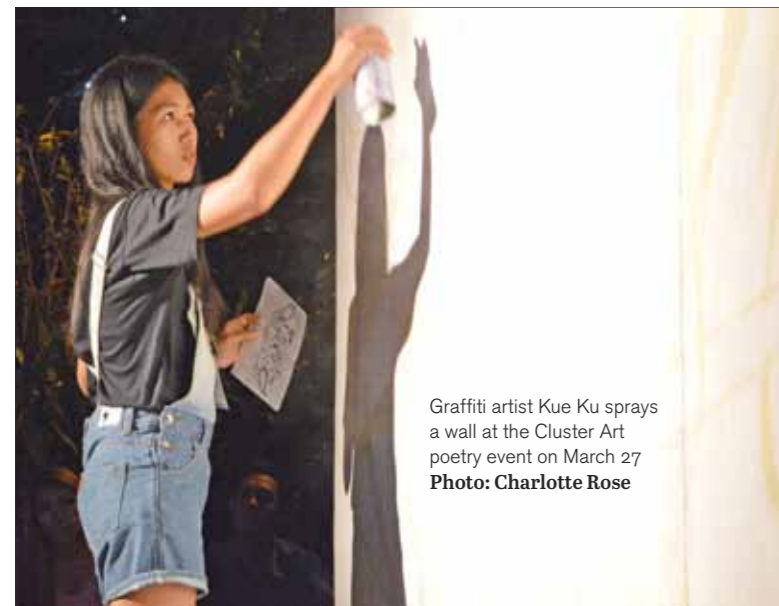
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Graffiti artists spray on despite ban



Graffiti artist Kue Ku sprays a wall at the Cluster Art poetry event on March 27
Photo: Charlotte Rose



Despite a government ban on graffiti and street art, graffiti artists have not been discouraged. Photo: Staff

BY ZON PANN PWINT

THEY have no fear of the law, or the police, or of public opinion. The self-confessed vandals, who scrawl their names in paint in public places, fear only dogs.

Graffiti first came to public notice when the street artist Arker Kyaw painted a mural of US President Barack Obama on the wall near his house in Shwegonedine in November 2012 to mark the president's visit to Myanmar.

Since then, it has acquired a kind of raffish vogue.

In 2013, Yangon municipal authorities announced a ban on graffiti and street art. The ban had no evident effect.

"The ban didn't affect us. We enjoy drawing illegally at night and I've never heard of anyone being punished since the ban was announced," said Kue Ku, 18, one of the few women who scrawl graffiti. Kue Ku says drawing is her hobby. She enjoys painting on canvas and on walls. "But I am afraid of dogs. When we walk around searching for somewhere to paint, we often come across them and have to run away," she said.

Since her parents discourage her from going out late at night, she often finds it more convenient to vandalise public property during the day.

She and her friends keep cans of spray paint inside their car, and drive around looking for places to deface, sometimes as far as Bago. Kue Ku sprays her name in stylised writing - known as "tagging" - on walls along the way.

"I love tagging the walls, especially the walls of railway

stations. I love seeing my name on the walls when I drive past," she said.

She knows graffiti is vandalism against public property, and that many people dislike it. "I avoid painting on the walls of schools, hospitals and religious buildings. It's my self-imposed duty," she said righteously, adding that some people pay her to decorate the walls of their home.

Graffiti artist Thu Myat said the authorities, security guards and the public are already familiar with his work. "They don't bother us any more. If we get caught painting at night, they just stand and gaze at

the graffiti and leave without saying anything. It means they understand graffiti doesn't relate to politics and we are doing nothing wrong," said Thu Myat.

The police used to make graffiti violators sign a pledge vowing never again to paint on the walls of public property. "In the past, the image of graffiti artists was bad. The authorities thought we were doing something wrong at night. Some artists even spent a few days at the police station," Thu Myat said. But today, he said, graffiti is commercially successful, and its "artists" are paid for their work. The dogs disapprove of this trend. ■



Street artists Arker Kyaw first brought graffiti into the spotlight with his 2012 mural of US president Barack Obama. Photo: Staff



East meets West in new exhibition

BY CHIT SU

A COLLABORATION between two old friends, long separated in time and space, will help Yangon orphans. The two artists, both graduates of the Yangon State School of Fine Art, class of 1980, have come together to present the exhibition *Beauties of East and West* from May 7 to 10 at Gallery 65, at 65 Yaw Min Gyi Road (behind the Parkroyal Hotel), Dagon township, Yangon.

More than 40 of their most recent paintings will be on display. Ye Min, who was a graphic designer in the fashion industry in New York for 15 years, is contributing Western landscapes, native American subjects, abstracts and nudes, while

Than Soe is presenting paintings on Buddhist culture, Myanmar customs, and ethnic scenes.

"When we met up again we decided to show our artwork together, so we organised this exhibition," said Than Soe, who is based in Yangon.

Ye Min, a cancer survivor, wanted the proceeds from the exhibition to benefit local orphans.

"Most of the pictures are very recent, in fact I'm still drawing some of them," said Than Soe, adding, "We will donate to orphanages in Thanlyin and Okkalapa."

Visitors to the exhibition will receive free postcards featuring the exhibits, which are mostly in oil and acrylic.

Beauties of East and West is open from 10am to 6pm daily. ■

Early-morning dance parties take off in US



Dancing before breakfast: Early morning raves have become increasingly popular in the US. Photo: AFP/Robyn Beck

PARTYING before breakfast? It's not everyone's cup of tea. But it is the concept behind "Daybreakers", early-morning raves becoming increasingly popular in the United States.

At 6:30am one recent morning, some 250 young - and old - dance enthusiasts gathered in downtown Los Angeles to strut their stuff before many people have even got out of bed.

Andre Herd, the producer behind the event, said it combines the fun of night-time partying without the morning-after downsides.

"It flips the switch on what everyone knows and used to love in my opinion, which is: you go, you get drunk, you maybe meet somebody, you hook up, you have fun with your friends, you go home, you're hungover the next day," he said.

"Here you get to go dance, you can meet somebody, there is an amazing energy in the room. Because everyone comes here buys a ticket and comes with the intention of dancing, everyone dances."

The parties are held about once a month, with tickets costing US\$25 and invitations sent out by email about a week in advance.

But unlike a regular rave, there is no alcohol or drugs: The strongest stimulant available is coffee, with fruit juices the drink of choice at the bar.

There is, of course, a DJ to keep the rhythms coming.

Lenore, whose friends are all married and who no longer goes out to clubs at night, said Daybreakers were ideal.

Originally launched in New York, breakfast parties are now organised regularly in several US cities - but also in London and Tel Aviv.

In Los Angeles, the gathering breaks up around 9:00am - when many head off for work or play, a smile on their faces.

"I'll take my computer down to the beach and answer some emails, pick my daughter up from school at noon, teach a garden lesson for her class from noon to one," said Tawnya Calvillo, after her vigorous party workout.

"After that, we'll probably eat ice cream and go for a bike ride." ■

-AFP

Myanmar resonates with world-class experimental music

BY TOM BARTON

IT could have been a scene in a Brooklyn warehouse: attendees lining the un-rendered walls, their transfixed silence punctuated with discerning nods at the compellingly unfamiliar sounds. But it's not Brooklyn, Berlin or Brunswick - it's a dusky Yangon rooftop and this is Myanmar's experimental music scene.

The fifth in a series of performances hosted by experimental art initiative 7000 Padauk, *Noise Above Yangon* invited

listeners on a journey of truly world-class local and international improvised experimental sound art.

The success of 7000 Padauk's first experimental music event, which featured at a temporary "pop-up" Yangon art space opened in 2012, triggered the blossoming of a vibrant experimental music scene in Yangon.

"It was really organic, the way it started," said Nathalie Johnston, event organiser and co-founder of 7000 Padauk.

"After that, musicians from all over the world began to connect with us on Facebook asking if they could perform. I had no idea there were so

many experimental musicians in the world!" she said.

On the balmy rooftop of Pansodan Scene, the first of the evening's several 15-minute musical vignettes was kicked-off by Vietnamese artist Tri Minh - heralded as the "first truly electronic artist in Vietnam" by electronic music authority Resident Advisor. Tri Minh's set deftly eased the crowd into the tone of the evening with heaving, stuttering waves of rolling sub bass, filtered sounds and spattering glitches.

At the end of the first performance, Serbian sound artist Rastko urged the growing crowd to leave the safety of the perimeter and sit down amongst the musicians at the centre of the cement rooftop, to hear the sound "as it is meant to be experienced".

Indeed, a 5-channel PA system with independent speaker sends - cutting-edge by anyone's standards - allowed the sound artists to truly envelope the audience in a 360-degree audio sphere.

Up next, Myanmar duo Burmelange, featuring artists Darko C and Ko Jui, conjured up a droning, pulsating violin and electric guitar improvisation - their unorthodox use of instruments evoking post-punk recontextualist Oren Ambarchi.

Myanmar's DJ Kavas outshined his "DJ" moniker, clearly demonstrating his vision as a digital composer. His entire set featured a single iconic breakbeat drum sample obscured by sonic manipulation involving delays and time stretching. This exercise in minimalism - making so much out of incredibly limited source material - was



A live set by (left to right) Rastko (Serbia), Phu Pham (Vietnam) and Slyne (Myanmar). Photo: Charlotte Rose

masterfully constructed. As the sun set on downtown Yangon, a collaboration between Rastko (Serbia), Slyne (Myanmar) and Phu Pham (Vietnam) spun a freely improvised microcosm of sound evoking John Cage's *Chance*

Music. Kalimba, gong and cymbals resonated alongside analogue synth tones, laptop sequencing, and live performance on a Madrona Labs Soundplane - a MIDI controller reminiscent of the Ondes Martinet made famous by Radiohead's *Kid A*.

The performance was interspersed with Rastko's guttural screeches - outbursts illuminating the immediacy of the performance.

Here, more than ever, the audience was made aware of one of the central tenets of experimental

music: Despite starkly unfamiliar forms and sounds, our innate urge for pattern recognition inevitably helps us devise a structural narrative to accept.

In a land where the notion of "acceptance" is not only a theological pillar of the national religion but is imperative as a tool for coping with living conditions, the link with experimental noise music was clear. Listeners met with a barrage of sonic information were challenged to "stop trying to understand it" (as one attendee remarked) and instead experience the sound with open ears and minds.

"People hear the term 'experimental music' and think they won't 'get' it," said Johnston. "But when they see the musicians in the zone, coming alive, making music and reading each other, everyone always enjoys it."

If at first glance the flourishing of an experimental music scene in Myanmar seems unusual, we only need to reflect on the art form's origins for insight. As Western society's bitter disillusionment with the status quo swiftly followed the utter destruction wreaked by the First World War, experimental musicians sought to free themselves of the artistic and social conventions that had so clearly failed to serve the progress of humanity. Now it's Myanmar's turn to choose its direction, and as always, art and social change walk hand in hand.

"It's a very small scene - this is the scene," said Rastko, co-organiser of the event, gesturing around the rooftop. "But we are trying." ■



Fabulous fritters

BY EVE O'SULLIVAN

IT'S a good thing I have an unusual fearlessness when it comes to hot oil, as this week's fritters use it by the bucketload, providing perfect snacking material for a weekend of warm weather.

Prawn fritters

Serves 4

200g plain flour, sifted
 ¼ tsp baking powder
 1¼ tsp salt
 ½ tsp ground white pepper
 1 tsp ground turmeric
 350-375ml water
 150g cooked crayfish tails or prawns, roughly chopped
 2 tbsp fresh chives, chopped
 ¼ small red onion, very finely sliced
 4 whole spring onions, chopped (green and white parts)
 100g tinned sweetcorn, drained, or a handful of beansprouts
 1 litre vegetable oil, for deep frying

For the sauce

4 tbsp chilli sauce
 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
 1 tbsp light soy sauce
 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
 1 tsp palm or light brown sugar
 ¼ tsp mustard powder

First, make the dipping sauce by combining all the ingredients, then set aside.

Mix the flour with the baking powder, salt, pepper and turmeric. Slowly stir in the water so that the batter is smooth and thick. (Add more water if very stiff.) Set aside.

if you have a cooking thermometer). Spoon heaped tablespoons of the batter carefully into the hot oil. Deep-fry until golden brown (about 3-4 minutes). Drain on paper towels and serve warm with the dipping sauce.

Spiced cabbage fritters

Cabbage is really cheap, but it has a bad reputation. Here's a really thrifty and tasty recipe that's speedy and filling.
 Serves 2-4

1 small sweet potato ¼ red onion, thinly sliced
 1 garlic clove, chopped
 Vegetable oil, for frying
 ¼ medium savoy cabbage, shredded
 1 tsp turmeric
 ¼ tsp cumin
 ¼ tsp paprika
 A dash of soy sauce
 Salt and black pepper, to taste
 2 tbsp gram flour

Prick the sweet potato with a fork then cook in the microwave on high for 2-3 minutes, until softened, then set aside to cool.

On a medium heat, fry the garlic and onion in a little oil. When they begin to soften, add the chopped cabbage and fry for about 10 minutes, until just cooked. Add all the spices, then after a minute, add the soy and seasoning.

Scoop the flesh from the sweet potato, mash then add to the pan and combine with the veg. Remove from the heat and allow to cool a little.

In a bowl, add the 2 tbsp chickpea (gram) flour and a little water to make a mix slightly thicker than



Tip the seafood, chives and vegetables into the batter and mix well to ensure that everything is well-distributed.

Heat the oil in a deep-sided saucepan or wok until hot enough to brown a cube of bread in about 20 seconds (about 170C-180C/340-350F

pancake batter. Add the cabbage mixture to this batter and stir well, making sure it's all combined.

Divide into roughly 6-8 fritters, then heat some oil in a clean frying pan and cook until browned and crispy on each side. Serve with a salad and some minted yoghurt. **W**

RESTAURANT REVIEW



7th Joint Bar and Grill

BY CHARLOTTE ROSE

LAST week, an article on Global Post declared, "Bushwick is over: Time to move to Yangon." Apparently, Yangon's emerging bar and restaurant scene is an early sign of the "hipster revolution" about to sweep the city. Clearly, in his haste to broadcast the city's hip new "foodie culture" to the world, the writer of said article didn't find time to visit 7th Joint Bar and Grill.

Whilst I certainly don't claim to be an arbiter of hip - I've never owned a gramophone and only drink from jam jars when I've run

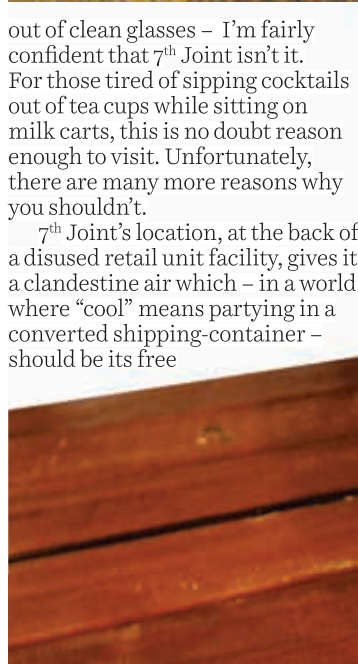
ticket into the hipster club. But this place is not so much "fashionably uncool" as it just uncool. Claiming to be "the only reggae bar in Myanmar", 7th Joint "strives to deliver a unique reggae experience with an atmosphere that will take you back to the Caribbean". Now, I've never been to the Caribbean, but I'm almost certain that it doesn't look like this. Unless, of course, it's painted in red, green and yellow stripes and covered entirely in pictures of Bob Marley.

While Bob smiled down at us from the wall, my guest and I turned our attention to the menu. I ordered the "signature" jerk chicken (K6500) from the range of Jamaican favourites on offer, which was served with traditional rice and beans and an unbuttered, unsalted, unimaginative corn on the cob. The dish looked bland, and tasted even blander, though it was undoubtedly the better choice next to my guest's Jamaican chicken curry, the taste of which was akin to a kitchen sponge that has been left in dishwater overnight. Even the potato wedges (K2500) we ordered as a side were undercooked and unseasoned - does the Caribbean not have salt?

Admittedly, 7th Joint probably isn't the kind of place you go to enjoy a good meal. It's more of a bar than it is a grill - a place to sip cocktails whilst listening to reggae and reminiscing about the time you smoked a joint on the beach with that girl with the belly-button piercing. And in the drinks department, 7th Joint deserves some credit. Not because they taste great (they don't) but because they've taken the K800 mojito formula popular with 19th Street revellers - cheap rum, heaps of sugar syrup - and ingeniously repackaged it as a K4500 mojito.

out of clean glasses - I'm fairly confident that 7th Joint isn't it. For those tired of sipping cocktails out of tea cups while sitting on milk carts, this is no doubt reason enough to visit. Unfortunately, there are many more reasons why you shouldn't.

7th Joint's location, at the back of a disused retail unit facility, gives it a clandestine air which - in a world where "cool" means partying in a converted shipping-container - should be its free



Among the range of other cocktails on offer, the Sex on the Beach was only mildly better - though I did enjoy the less-than-subtle quip on the menu: "I know you have tried it. If not, you do wanna try it. If you know what I mean." (Yes. We know what you mean.)

None of this, however, seemed to matter to the crowds that packed out the two-tier bar. Perhaps because friendly service and a charming owner - who spent the night handing out free shots - create a welcoming atmosphere that makes 7th Joint feel like more of a house party than a bar. The buzzing, anything-goes vibe and live music give this place the potential to become a popular late-night watering hole. While they didn't actually play any reggae, the band was jaunty, and after a bit of a dance I even started to enjoy the place. Who knows, perhaps there's a need for a Bob Marley-themed bar among the wave of "gastro" and "bespoke" openings that has swept the city of late.

Hipster is over: It's time to move to the Caribbean. **W**

7th Joint Bar and Grill

G-A10 Shwe Asia Building, corner of 47th Street and Mahabandula Road, Botahtaung Township

Restaurant Rating:     

Food **3**
 Beverage **4**
 Service **7**
 Value **5**
 X factor **5**

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Late-night eats

IN most cities around the world, finding a post-drink meal or midnight snack is a simple walk in the dark: You just head to your nearest kebab-shop or 24-hour burger joint. Yangon, however, can hardly be described as a “24-hour” city, so where do night owls go to satisfy their late-night hunger pangs? These popular spots are open around the clock, so you can fill up even after the last round of whisky shots have been downed. – *Charlotte Rose*

365



A popular late night spot, 365 is something of an institution among locals and visitors alike. Serving a range of Western options, including burgers and sandwiches (K3600-4800), pastas and imported steaks (K19,500-33,000), as well as a range of noodle and rice dishes, 365 is open 24 hours a day, making it the perfect place to fill up after a late-night flight or a few too many at one of the area’s surrounding bars. They also have an extensive cocktail list if you fancy a few more, or if it’s a wake-up call you’re after they serve surprisingly good coffee.

Of course, you can dine here at any time of day, but there’s a reason locals consider 365 a late-night venue: It isn’t exactly what you’d call fine dining. The “Western” dishes are probably worth giving a miss if you’re actually from

the West, though the noodles and stir-fried dishes are a pretty safe bet – the fried beef with chilli (K3800) was my favourite. Expect a heavy dose of MSG (most of the dishes are oozing with the stuff) although, as grease and salt are the main food groups craved by the squiffy, this is unlikely to be a problem if you’re here after a night on the town.

Fairy lights and comfy sofas mean 365 manages to maintain a family-friendly vibe even in the early hours. Service is brusque, but then so would I be if I was serving Pina Coladas at 3am.

5 Thamada Hotel, Alan Pya Pagoda Road, Dagon	
Food	6
Beverage	8
Late-night X-factor	9

New Burger (New Khum Wei)

It’s Tarmwe location might be a bit out of the way for some but, if you’re faced with a 4am food emergency, New Burger is worth jumping a taxi for.

Don’t be fooled by the name – it is not just burgers on the menu. There’s a range of fried rice (K2500-4000) and noodle



dishes (K3000-4000) on offer, and if you’re passing by during the day it’s worth giving the hot-pot a try. Having said that, the cheeseburger (K2500)

is a good choice – while not exactly a gourmet cow, it’s at least served in a real burger bun (a rare find in this parallel universe in which “bread” is actually cake) and the fries aren’t bad either. Surprisingly, they also serve the best lime juice (K1800) I’ve tasted in the city, as well as a long list of other fresh juices and coffee.

A favourite with locals, New Burger is busy around the clock and there’s a laid-back, PG-rated vibe about the place which makes it a good choice for a late-night food mission. Even the security guard outside checked I was ok as I left at 1am.

U Chit Maung Road (next to Green Leaf Hotel), Tarmwe	
Food	6
Beverage	6
Late-night X-factor	9

Toba Restaurant and Café



Toba is another of the few places in Yangon open to hungry revellers 24 hours a day, though if you find yourself eating here, you’ve definitely had a few too many. There’s a range of Indonesian favourites on offer, including Nasi goreng, Mie goreng and Gado-gado, and apparently the chefs are Indonesian, though you wouldn’t know it. MSG and oil are the favourite ingredients here – the Nasi goreng I ordered was passable, but my guest didn’t touch his fried noodles. Having said that, you’re probably not going to be so picky at 4am.

The interior has a back-street diner feel to it which

can make the atmosphere feel a little sketchy late at night. But it was busy during my visit and the service is friendly enough. If you’re headed here after ingesting large volumes of Mandalay Rum the fried food will probably appeal, but if cardiac arrest doesn’t do it for you you’d be better off staggering the few metres around the corner to 365 and eating there instead. **W**

15 Nawaday Street, Dagon	
Food	4
Beverage	6
Late night X-factor	5

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Chain gang

What comes to mind when you think of Friday-night after-dark activities? Bet it's not riding bicycles

BY WADE GUYITT

BICYCLES are inexpensive, repairable, long-lasting, congestion-reducing, environment-protecting and health-promoting, not to mention fun. Yangon, of course, finds them deeply suspicious.

Beside the passive discouragement presented by uneven roads packed with belligerent drivers, Yangon's potential cyclist is dissuaded by the fact that, since 2003, several arterial roads, as well as an unhealthy chunk of the downtown, have been officially off-limits to bicycles. That's a shame: For all the millions spent to widen streets or put up flyovers, no one seems to realise it might be sensible to get people moving about on machines that occupy less than 1 square metre, rather than the 7.6 taken up by an average mid-sized car.

You do see bikes in smaller back alleys, and occasionally flouting the (apparently unenforced) diktat on bigger roads. But except for the brave souls on rusty beaters who depend on their wheels to get around, not to mention the odd lycra-ed die-hard seeking a speedier, more invigorating commute, Yangon is mostly a dead zone for riding, particularly compared to other major Asian cities.

Fortunately, a few cyclists are trying to take back the streets. And like all good vigilantes, they're doing their best work at night.

Not that there's anything expressly anti-authoritarian about the Friday-night group bike rides that happen each week in Yangon. They're just a way for friends and strangers, experienced or beginner, to come together and go for a healthy spin around town. But gathering en masse with other riders under cover of darkness does lend a conspiratorial air – though that's forgotten as soon as one experiences the joy of riding

worry-free through streets that may prove intimidating during daytime traffic.

The ride is put on by long-resident Australian Jeff Parry, co-proprietor (with his Myanmar wife) of Bike World Explores Myanmar, a bicycle shop on Kan Street off Pyay Road at 6.5 Mile, and also, one block north, a BB&B, or bed, breakfast and bicycle.

Bike World – motto: "Get on your bike" – runs guided tour packages all over Myanmar. Best for the casual rider are their weekly regular Sunday-morning rides, in which participants are car-ferried north of Yangon for beautiful, between-village riding, with stops at sites of local interest and, if you're lucky, the chance for a quick swim to cool off. Bring your sunscreen – and a bit of cash for a mohinga breakfast and a post-ride lunch and drink – and leave the rest to Parry and his crew. Give Bike World a heads-up and you can even rent a bike and helmet from them.

Of course, country lanes in daytime are one thing; low visibility and speeding cars at night are quite another. "Is it safe to ride around the streets at night?" asked one BB&B patron visiting from Bangkok, as we gathered in the courtyard of the guesthouse and got fitted out with appropriately sized rental bikes, all brand-name imports from abroad.

"Safer than in the daytime," I replied, playing the role of the informed local, "because there are fewer cars on the road." But for all my outward confidence, I was glad to see the organisers assiduously checking tyre-pressure and affixing lights to the fronts and backs of our bikes.

Rolling out the gate into the small lanes just outside was the first time I'd been on a bicycle in about a year. I found it an adjustment at first to get used to navigating the bad back-road pavement in low visibility, not to mention a few befuddled passersby. But our first stop was only a few

minutes away: the Bike World shop, where a few dozen experienced local riders were waiting for us beginners.

The Friday Night Ride has been averaging around 50 participants lately; that night saw 37, but Parry said they'd had a few record-setting nights of 64. The vast majority of participants are local Myanmar riders who know the route and could ride circles around the newcomers, yet still take care to keep the group together and are quick to approach if anyone seems a bit nervous about the state of their equipment. The more the merrier, seems to be the general opinion. The ride is free for anyone with their own bike, so the only financial benefit for Bike World comes from the tourist contingent and other bike-renters like me. But attracting more people means more cycling happening in Yangon generally, and for those who love their rides, a chance to remind the city that a bicycle is more than just two-thirds of a trishaw is a reward in itself.

Traffic was light when we turned south from 6.5 Mile down Pyay Road. Leaving the cramped sidestreets behind, our large number meant we could move in a carefully spaced swarm, and for those who love their rides, a chance to remind the city that a bicycle is more than just two-thirds of a trishaw is a reward in itself. Traffic was light when we turned south from 6.5 Mile down Pyay Road. Leaving the cramped sidestreets behind, our large number meant we could move in a carefully spaced swarm, and for those who love their rides, a chance to remind the city that a bicycle is more than just two-thirds of a trishaw is a reward in itself. Traffic was light when we turned south from 6.5 Mile down Pyay Road. Leaving the cramped sidestreets behind, our large number meant we could move in a carefully spaced swarm, and for those who love their rides, a chance to remind the city that a bicycle is more than just two-thirds of a trishaw is a reward in itself.

We soon stopped for a break at



People's Park opposite Shwedagon Pagoda, the first of three or four opportunities for a headcount and to make sure everyone was okay. From there we came downtown and looped around Sule Pagoda – the roundabout itself, normally life-threatening for pedestrians in rush hour, was entirely empty when we reached it – then headed north above Bogyoke. Coming up to Aung San Stadium, where a few lone cars waited at a red light to our right and our lane gave us nothing but open pavement ahead, was when the pleasure of night-time riding kicked in. Wide, smooth road let us put on some speed and enjoy the experience of city cycling in ways that would have been impossible earlier in the day.

Another highlight came as we curved around Kandawgyi Lake, lights reflecting on the water as we zipped along. This was also when I found an unexpected benefit of helmet-wearing: It protects you when you ride too close to the kerb and get whipped by overgrown tree leaves.

One benefit of riding is that speed is nature's air conditioner: The sweat only catches up when stopping for a break, which is good motivation to keep on riding. But all too soon we pulled up outside a tea shop where the group usually breaks for refreshment. As it appeared to be closed that night, most headed home while the rental contingent and a few regulars retired to a restaurant on Sayar San Road for some well-deserved rehydration.

It was well past midnight when at last we began the short jaunt back to our starting point at the BB&B. Our only companions were open intersections and empty roads – the

streets themselves seeming to beckon us onward, instead of just standing in between us and our destination as they do during daytime.

Earlier in the evening, when a cluster of us were stopped at an intersection, waiting for a light to change, a pedestrian rubbernecked our rides as he crossed the street. Seemingly surprised at the sight of so many bicycles gathered in one spot, he said, somewhat disconsolately, and to all and no one in particular, "I want to ride a bicycle but I don't have one."

To him – and to all those who feel hemmed in by Yangon's car-centric streets, and crave a taste of a healthier, cheaper, more self-directed approach to navigating the city – I have only one response: "Rent one – from Bike World." And pencil your first ride in for a Friday night. **W**

Bike World Explores Myanmar runs Friday-night rides starting from their guesthouse at 10F Khabaung Road, 6.5 Mile, off Pyay Road (01-527636). Arrive at 9pm, leaving plenty of time for a 9:30 departure, particularly if you intend to rent a bicycle (K15,000). While the rides aren't competitive, and while the streets are notably calmer in the evening, you'll want to be comfortable enough on a bicycle that you can be out in light traffic without worry. For more information see the BWEM website at www.myanmarpanorama.com, which contains a handy map showing exactly how to get to the guesthouse, complete with instructions in both English and Myanmar.

Can't sleep? How to beat insomnia

BY BIM ADEWUNMI

I DON'T remember having trouble sleeping – until my late teens. There was no grand trauma, no "aha" moment to pinpoint when my sleep was disrupted. I just sort of drifted into insomnia. I have tried to remedy it over the years, using pills (soft herbal brands and the hard big pharma types), sprays (top picks: lavender and frankincense), a variety of "calming" sounds (including whale, panpipes and white noise) and, of course, the gold-level option of "wishing really hard".

Sleep, as I learned via A-level psychology, is a chance to relax and literally do nothing (except allow my subconscious to sort through the day's events). Yet I was switched on: I either wake up during the night or fail to fall asleep in the first place (during the day, of course, I drift off on trains, buses and in cars). I average about 4.5 hours a night, which is not ideal for a rich human life. I've got used to not sleeping; in movie-learned therapy-speak, I think that means I've hit rock bottom, which makes it the perfect time to see Dr Guy Meadows, the clinical director of The Sleep School.

Dr Guy (that's how he introduces himself) is a chirpy sort and I like him immediately. He explains that insomnia is essentially learned



behaviour: If you don't sleep, your body gets used to not sleeping. "Sleep is natural," he says, before engaging me in a tug-of-war with my scarf. He yanks at it; in reply, I tug back. "Exactly," he says, delighted by my human predictability.

Rather than classic cognitive behavioural therapy, Dr Guy uses acceptance and commitment therapy, which, according to his guide *The Sleep Book*, "recognises that it is our struggle or reaction to pain and suffering that actually makes them

worse". The key is to not aggressively "chase" sleep but rather to "let go of the rope".

I am reassured by the sleep "hypnogram" Dr Guy draws me, which shows the patterns of normal sleep and the exact ways in which my sleep is utterly borked – you're supposed to wake up over the course of a night, but also to drop straight back. We talk about sleep regulation, including "sleep and wake drives" that work in tandem with the circadian body clock to regulate

sleepiness and wakefulness, and why naps are only a short-term fix. We talk about orange light (sleep-inducing) and blue light (wake-inducing, the type smartphone screens emit). He concludes I am an "owl" and this, plus modern humans' generally overstimulated eyes and minds, may have exacerbated my sleeplessness.

I implement Dr Guy's advice straight away. I start "darkening down" two hours before bed and shut off my phone half an hour before. He also asks me to set a reasonable bedtime, which I put at 12.30am, with a plan to get out of bed no later than 7.30am. We even do a bit of mindfulness, which I've been encouraged to do by myself on my work commute – three minutes, three times a day. I do "welcoming and diffusing exercises" in which I repeat my anxious bedtime thoughts to the tune of "Happy Birthday", and prefix them with "I am having the thought that ..."

Does it work? It's too soon to say for sure. The new bedtime routine is my biggest breakthrough. I feel like a baby, but it helps to have an actual bedtime. The diffusing exercises are also potent, creating a necessary distance between myself and my thoughts. I'm not 100% there yet, but this is a long-term process, and for the first time in ages I am optimistic about licking this insomnia. Sweet dreams. **W** *– Washington Post*

Dr Guy's sleep advice for insomniacs

When we encounter sleeplessness, we fight against it. We try to do things to make ourselves go to sleep – have a hot bath, drink a warm milk, count sheep. All the advice out there about dealing with insomnia is about "doing" something to help.

The paradox is that sleeping requires us to do absolutely nothing. If you ask a normal sleeper how they do it, they will tell you they do nothing. But if you ask an insomniac, they will give you a list as long as their arm. My theory is that it is doing all these things to help us get to sleep that is part of the problem.

What can we do to improve the situation? Well, let go. Letting go is about acceptance and a willingness to be awake in bed. It's about accepting everything that goes along with insomnia – the worry, anxiety. I teach my patients to use mindfulness to observe all these feelings, and let them be.

When people are finally OK with being awake, they don't get in the way of sleep.

In fashion first, Google shows what's hot and not

TULLE skirts are in. Jogger pants are hot. But high-waisted shorts? You don't want to go there.

In its first fashion trends report, Google analysed billions of searches dating back to 2009 to provide a detailed analysis of what's hot and what's not.

For example, queries for tulle skirts jumped 34 percent between January 2014 and 2015, according to the report.

"Who says you need to be a ballerina to wear a tulle skirt?" said a blog post released April 26 on the report by Google brand strategist Yarden Horwitz and fashion data scientist Olivier Zimmer.

"Originating on the West Coast, the tulle skirt trend is making its way across the world, according to Google searches. Consumers are seeking this skirt in all colors of the rainbow (and even in rainbow), but the most popular colors are the classics: black and white."

Google, by crunching the

numbers on fashion searches and correlating them with location, offers insights into how the trends have been moving.

For example, the midi skirt – "not quite a maxi skirt, and definitely not a mini skirt" – made a comeback in the British market in 2013.

The skirt "has seen 9 times growth in searches over the past three years", the blog said.

Jogger pants are among the hotter fashion trends, for just about everyone.

"We're seeing top searches for jogger pants for men, women, boys, girls, and even toddlers, indicating mass appeal for this apparel item," the blog said.

People seemed interested in all kinds of jogger pants, Google found, but the most-searched item was for those decorated with emojis.

Overall searches for jogger pants rose 165pc in the year to 2014, Google said, while the jump in searches for emoji pants was

an astonishing 58,000pc.

High-waisted shorts were on the downswing, off 42pc in Google searches through 2014, the report found.

Other items showing a "sustained decline" included vintage clothing, string bikinis and peplum-embellished dresses.

In denim, searches were up for biker jeans, "boyfriend jeans", ripped jeans and bell-bottom jeans, but lower for high-waisted jeans and "raw denim".

Some of the trends are linked to seasons: Google said the rising seasonal trends for the spring include white lace dresses, high-waisted bikinis, rompers, shift dresses and white jumpsuits.

Seasonal declines were noted for skinny jeans, custom T-shirts and corset dresses.

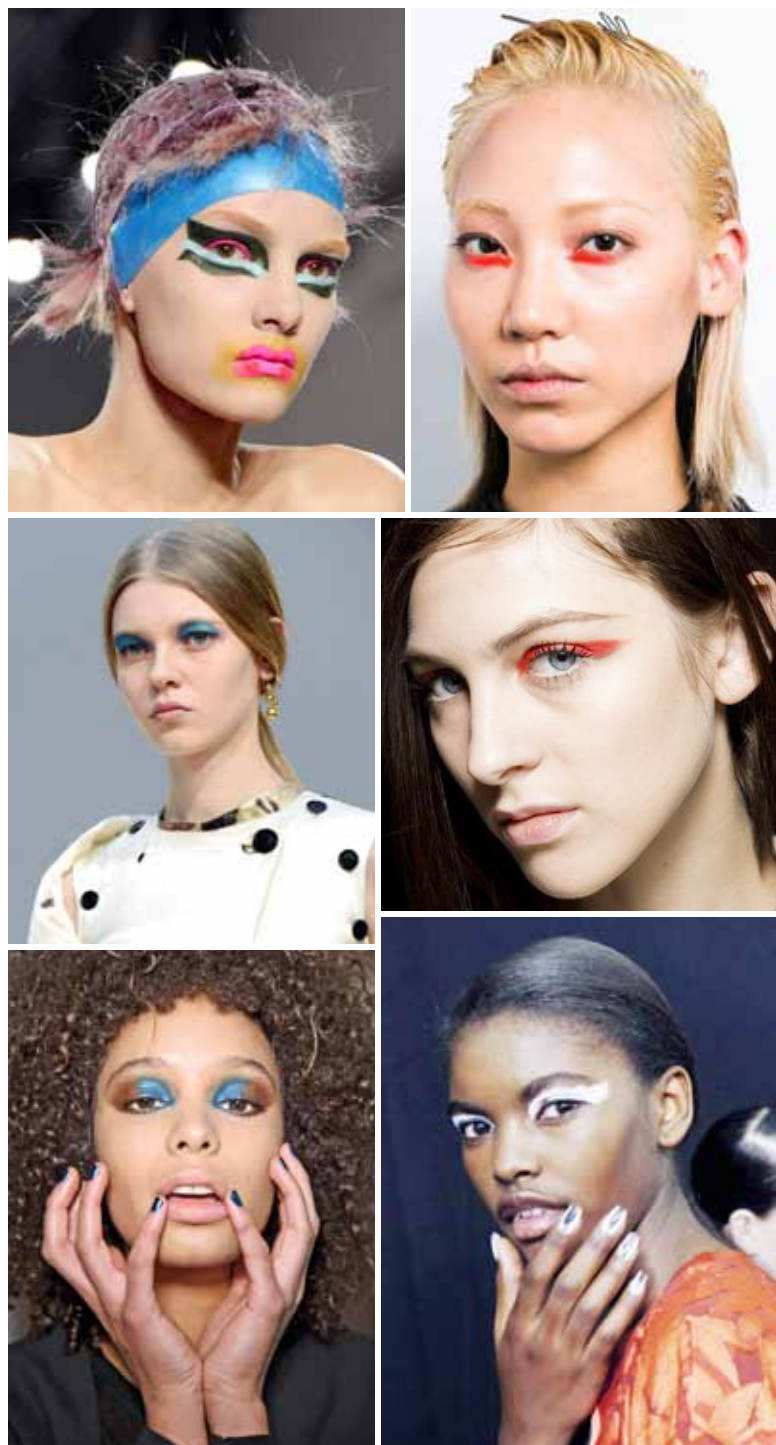
The "falling stars", or onetime fads that are losing steam, include "normcore" or unisex fashion, 90s jeans, zoo jeans and the scarf vest, Google said. **W**

– AFP



A model wears a tulle skirt at the Behnaz Sarafpour Fall Fashion Show in New York. Photo: AFP/Doug Kanter

Show your true colours



Conventional beauty wisdom may have it that summer makeup is about embracing the "barely there" look, but this year the big catwalk trends were anything but subtle, with bold eyeshadows featuring on runways everywhere from London to Milan. This approach is all about going OTT: Use a bold, block colour all over your lids (it's time to ditch the shimmery pastels), or if you're feeling brave try a sweep of colour underneath the eyes as seen at the Peter Som Spring/Summer 2015 show. – Charlotte Rose Photos: AFP

NEW ZEALAND OFFERS FULLY-FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS TO MYANMAR NATIONALS

The New Zealand Aid Programme wishes to offer up to thirty New Zealand - ASEAN Scholars Awards (NZ-AS) to Myanmar candidates for full-time postgraduate study at one of nine eligible New Zealand institutions.

The Programme's scholarships support Postgraduate Certificates (6 months), Postgraduate Diplomas (1 year) Master's degrees (1-2 years) and PhDs (3-4 years) of a variety of study subjects related to the following sectors: Agriculture Development spanning agri-business management, agricultural systems and management, production and harvesting, food science, biotechnology, and rural development; Disaster Risk Management focusing on emergency management, hazard assessment and management, climate change adaption, natural resource management; Private Sector Development covering management, economics, commerce, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) development, accounting, business finance, marketing, supply chain management, tourism; Renewable energy; English Language Teaching and Public Sector Management involving law, justice, public administration and politics.

Successful candidates will receive full scholarships for the 2016 academic year, including: full tuition fees, travel costs, an establishment and living allowance, medical and travel insurance, pastoral and academic support.

Applications are open to candidates who meet the following criteria:

- Be a Myanmar citizen under 39 years of age.
- Must have lived in Myanmar for at least the last 2 years.
- Have at least 2 years of relevant work experience (part time or fulltime, paid or voluntary).
- Not be serving military personnel.
- Be able to satisfy Immigration requirements for international student entry to New Zealand (i.e. medical checks, police clearances/character checks, etc.)
- Be academically and linguistically able to obtain an Offer of Place for the proposed programme of study from the tertiary institute where you will undertake your scholarship.
- Have a minimum IELTS (Academic) result of 6.5 overall, with no band less than 6.0 and results to be no older than 24 months at time of application
- Not have been previously terminated from a New Zealand Government Scholarship
- Seek a qualification that will contribute to the sustainable development of Myanmar.
- Be able to commence your study programme in 2016
- Commit to return to Myanmar for a minimum of 2 years at the end of your scholarship.

For more information, visit <http://www.nzembassy.com/thailand> or contact

Sirikarn.thammawijit@mfat.govt.nz or call +66 2 254 2530 ext. 29. Application deadline is 31 July 2015.

How to get your kids off to sleep, minus the stress

BY TIM LOTT

A SURVEY I received recently suggests that parents find bedtime to be the most stressful part of the day. The raw evidence behind most commercially commissioned surveys – this one was from a blinds company – are often weak, and this is no exception. Yet the results chimed with my own experience quite strongly.

Mealtimes and waking-up times are no picnic either, along with the times in between, but bedtime does present its own special set of problems, mainly because getting a child to sleep is fundamentally out of our control, and parents hate feeling helpless. Which is a shame, because that is fundamentally the condition of parents, as it is of children.

I am aware of a number of strategies one can follow to ensure

a smooth passage into the arms of Morpheus – though not all of these are particularly realistic. One is to make sure the bedroom is used primarily for sleep rather than for play or work activities – so that the brain recognises the bed as a place of slumber rather than activity – but this strikes me as being largely unenforceable. What are you going to do, lock up the toys? Unless you can afford a dedicated playroom, it's just not going to happen.

Another idea is to make sure the room is dark, particularly in summer when the daylight can persist long enough to make the child believe they are being tricked into going to bed too early. Thus it is probably worth investing in good blackout curtains or blinds (hence the blinds company's sponsorship of the survey). But the tykes still know it's light outside, and thus balk at nodding off – not an unreasonable attitude, in evolutionary terms.

To get them into a routine, at regular set times, is another good strategy. But the real problem is that most children don't want to go to sleep when you tell them to – and short of dosing them up with Calpol (believe me, when they were younger I wasn't beyond giving it a try), there's precious little you can do about it. Going in and shouting "Go to sleep!" is not necessarily the most effective solution. I should know, I've tried enough times.

The bedtime problem doesn't only occur for children. I have slumber issues with my wife, mainly because she likes to watch TV/muck about on her computer/read, whereas I like to go to sleep, which in my primitive and increasingly post-sexual mind is what a bed is for. We did enter into an agreement that the TV should be switched off at a certain time, but that lasted about as long as a truce between Russia and Ukraine.



Shouting 'Go to sleep!' is not the most effective solution. I should know, I've tried enough times

So what is the solution to bedtime stress? As in so many problems, I find the answer is to give up. Our youngest, who is eight, once received nightly imprecations to switch off the light and get with the sandman, but to no avail. Now we leave her with a book and let her get on with it. Sometimes she will

still be at it hours later when we go to bed ourselves, but it doesn't seem to make any difference to her mood when she wakes up in the morning – it's terrible whatever we do.

The matter of my wife and myself is not so easily solved. I find regular arguments help – one should never underestimate the possibility of simply grinding someone down with moans. However, my wife is probably even more stubborn than I am, so this rarely works.

I've come to a solution – of sorts. Nowadays, I find myself snoring and getting up in the night to take a whizz, both of which annoy her consummately. So although this is a battle I am never going to win, at least I get my revenge. Sometimes, in a family, that's as much as you can hope for. **W**

– The Guardian

Chinese museum seeks to restore respect for forgotten family elders

WHAT makes a good son or daughter? At China's first museum dedicated to the topic of "filial piety", the answer seems to be: almost superhuman levels of devotion and sacrifice.

Respect for family elders has been a cornerstone of Chinese culture for millennia, but many believe it is being eroded by the country's rapid economic growth.

The Modern Filial Piety Culture Museum, which cost more than US\$1 million, is part of government-backed efforts to "pass on the value" – as a banner over the entrance exhorts.

In a grey brick courtyard building inspired by traditional Chinese architecture, slick panels and exhibits in gleaming glass cases tell of more than a dozen modern-day filial role models.

One is policeman Wang Chunlai, who provided his bedridden parents with years of medical care, giving them injections and blood transfusions.

"This man is a classic example of filial piety," said museum volunteer Zeng Yan, in front of the Wangs' tattered beds and discoloured bedpans, donated after their demise.

Others include an eight-year-old girl who provided constant care for her paralysed mother, and a schoolteacher who took his Alzheimer's-afflicted mother everywhere he went.

Among the artefacts are a blue and yellow cart – something between a fairytale carriage and a wheelbarrow – in which two sons pulled their mother to more than 600 towns and cities across China to fulfil her dying wish to travel.

They wore out 12 pairs of shoes in the process, several of them on display beside the carriage in the museum in the southwestern province of Sichuan.

"I think that people often don't consider their parents' dreams. That's the meaning of the exhibit," Zeng added.

Filial piety was the core value of China's ancient sage Confucius, and outlandish tales have been used for centuries to spur



People visit the Modern Filial Piety Culture Museum in Qionglai, China, on February 2. Photo: AFP

readers to greater heights of parental devotion.

One of the country's most renowned literary works is the *Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety*, written during the Yuan dynasty 600 years ago.

It includes a woman who breastfeeds her toothless step-mother, a son who tastes his father's excrement to test for illness, and another man who sits naked at his parents' bedside to prevent them being bitten by mosquitoes.

But China's three decades of rapid economic growth have put families under unprecedented strains, with hundreds of millions leaving their parents behind as they migrate to find work.

Suicide rates among elderly people in some rural areas have increased five-fold over the last two decades, state-run media

have reported, with family neglect seen as a major cause.

Projections show that 350 million Chinese – one in four of the population – will be aged 60 or older by 2030, almost twice as many as now.

At the same time, "one-child policy" family planning rules mean the burden of care will usually fall on a single offspring.

A 2012 law requiring adult children to visit their aged parents "often", or risk repercussions, has been seen as unenforceable.

Instead, Beijing has fallen back on celebrating examples of the virtue, with local bureaucrats holding competitions to find "filial children".

State-run media have run pictures of hundreds of schoolchildren kow-towing before their parents to show their obedience

– although social media commentators said such ceremonies discouraged independent thinking among children.

The museum, on a riverbank in the Sichuan backwater of Guyi, opened four months ago and local authorities provided at least a quarter of its 8 million yuan (\$1.3 million) construction costs, its businessman founder Liao Lin said.

An introductory panel features equal-sized portraits of Confucius and President Xi Jinping, with a quote from the current Communist chief urging officials to read the *Standards for Being a Good Pupil and Child*, a collection of Confucian sayings which emphasise filial piety.

But the official drive has been criticised as a way for the state to shirk its duty to provide elderly care.

China's civil affairs minister said last year that there were just 25 care beds for every 1000 senior citizens, while health insurance rarely covers the costs of major procedures.

"Many Chinese families, facing smaller family size and family separation, are anxiously searching for new ways of fulfilling filial piety," said Hong Zhang, a researcher at Colby College in the US.

"If the government is promoting the filial tradition, people can be cynical and see it as the government's effort to find an excuse of not doing its job."

Museum founder Liao, a tea and liquor magnate, admitted that heroic acts of filial piety alone were not enough. "China's social security system is still lacking," he said.

Liao – whose own daughter is at boarding school and hopes to study abroad – said he "thought a lot" about his parents, and "did my best to serve them", but would not give details.

"People will see these perfect examples, and be inspired to do even better," he said of his exhibits.

"They may feel guilty that they don't care enough for their parents, and return home to wash their parents' feet. That's the kind of result we are hoping for." **W** – AFP

Apply these rules and you'll see your home in a whole new light

BY STEPHANIE CAVANAUGH

It's amazing what good lighting can do. Besides making you look more attractive, it can be energising, relaxing or simply illuminating – accentuating a room's best features, minimising the unsavory and making your home a more enjoyable living and entertaining space.

With the plethora of lighting gadgets and gizmos available everywhere, just about any effect is possible, and can be done with minimal expense.

Judith Capen, an architect at Architrave Architects in Washington, said there are plenty of inexpensive sources of light that are plenty effective.

Fluorescent fixtures, which can be harsh, are great when used indirectly. "Put them on top of cabinets where you don't see the fixture," she said.

This is not just a kitchen trick. Consider fluorescents on top of an armoire, or a tall bookcase, anywhere the source is unseen. Puck lights – little round battery-powered LED disks that require no wiring – are also handy for inside cabinets, under shelves and in dark corners. "It's not about an expensive fixture, but what you can do with it to shape a space," Capen said.

It is possible to have it all – an ambiance that invites pleasure, relaxation, stimulation and charm – and even disguise a few of a home's flaws by redirecting the eye to something more pleasing.

"What you want to do is layer the light," said San Francisco lighting designer Randall Whitehead. "People try to do everything with one fixture, but you want different types of light to successfully illuminate a room. The best rooms use various sources of illumination to create a subtle design."

The language of light is pretty straightforward. Whitehead, who is also a columnist and author of seven books on residential lighting, said there are four lighting terms everyone should know:

- 1. Task lighting** can brightly illuminate your desk, your closet, your kitchen counter, or your bathroom mirror so you don't slice your throat shaving.
- 2. Decorative lighting** includes chandeliers, hanging fixtures in the foyer, and table lamps. "Architectural jewellery," he calls these. "They are the supermodels of light; they just need to look pretty."
- 3. Accent or directed lighting** highlights objects in a room. "Museums traditionally use a directed light on each piece of art and statuary," he said. "It's spotty, but dramatic." However, when overused in a residential setting, "accent lighting can imply that what you own is more important than the people in the room."
- 4.** That's where **ambient lighting** comes in. We might call it the umami of illumination that bounces light around, blending all of the effects together and making the eye do a happy dance. This type of indirect illumination is the least understood and implemented but potentially the most bewitching element in any lighting scheme. "Add it and you become the star of your own home – as important as the objects in the space," Whitehead said.

Ambient light is indirect, and the light source is either invisible or insignificant. Examples are cove lighting at the top of a wall, or matte-black metal torchiers that simply throw light into a space, or uplights that sit on the floor behind large plants and create shadow patterns across a ceiling.

Just be cautious with the light you select. LEDs are becoming more attractive in design and quality

of illumination, "but a lot of what's out there is too cool a light, a color not neat on skin tones. People look ghostly," he said. "Look for warmer bulbs, particularly those called 'dimmed incandescent.'"

To put it all together, "start with the people and then add art and architecture," said Whitehead. The living room of an apartment Whitehead designed in San Francisco's Potrero Hill demonstrates the interplay.

"The first thing you see is the beautiful, subtle leaf pattern projected on the ceiling," he said. Shooting light upward from an LED fixture fitted with a dramatic stencil pattern makes the space feel larger, and a rather bland, low ceiling seem more interesting.

An unearthly lantern that resembles a stainless-steel pod dangles at one side of the room. This is the architectural jewellery – "it's not really providing illumination, just an illusion," Whitehead said.

Recessed lights highlight the coffee table, the fireplace and artwork. "Recessed fixtures should not be directed over seating, it's harsh – an uncomfortable light to be under," he said.

Fading into the far left corner of the room is a black shaded lamp "that throws light up for ambiance and down for reading on the sofa. It functions like a torchier," providing light without calling attention to itself.

The lights mounted outside and above the sliding glass doors to the terrace visually expand the space so the room feels as large as it does during the day. Without them, he said, "you create a black-mirror effect; you can't see out and are closing off the room."

The result is a room shaped by layers of light,



'Lighting is an easy, cheap and simple way of updating the look of virtually any room'

Ryall Smith, real estate agent

easily adjusting to the needs of the homeowners, whether they are chilling in front of the fire or entertaining a roomful of guests.

Too often, however, our homes look their best only when they're put on the market for sale.

"Lighting is an easy, cheap and simple way of updating the look of virtually any room in your house," said real estate agent Ryall Smith of Coldwell Banker in Washington, who shared a few quick and inexpensive tricks he uses when staging homes.

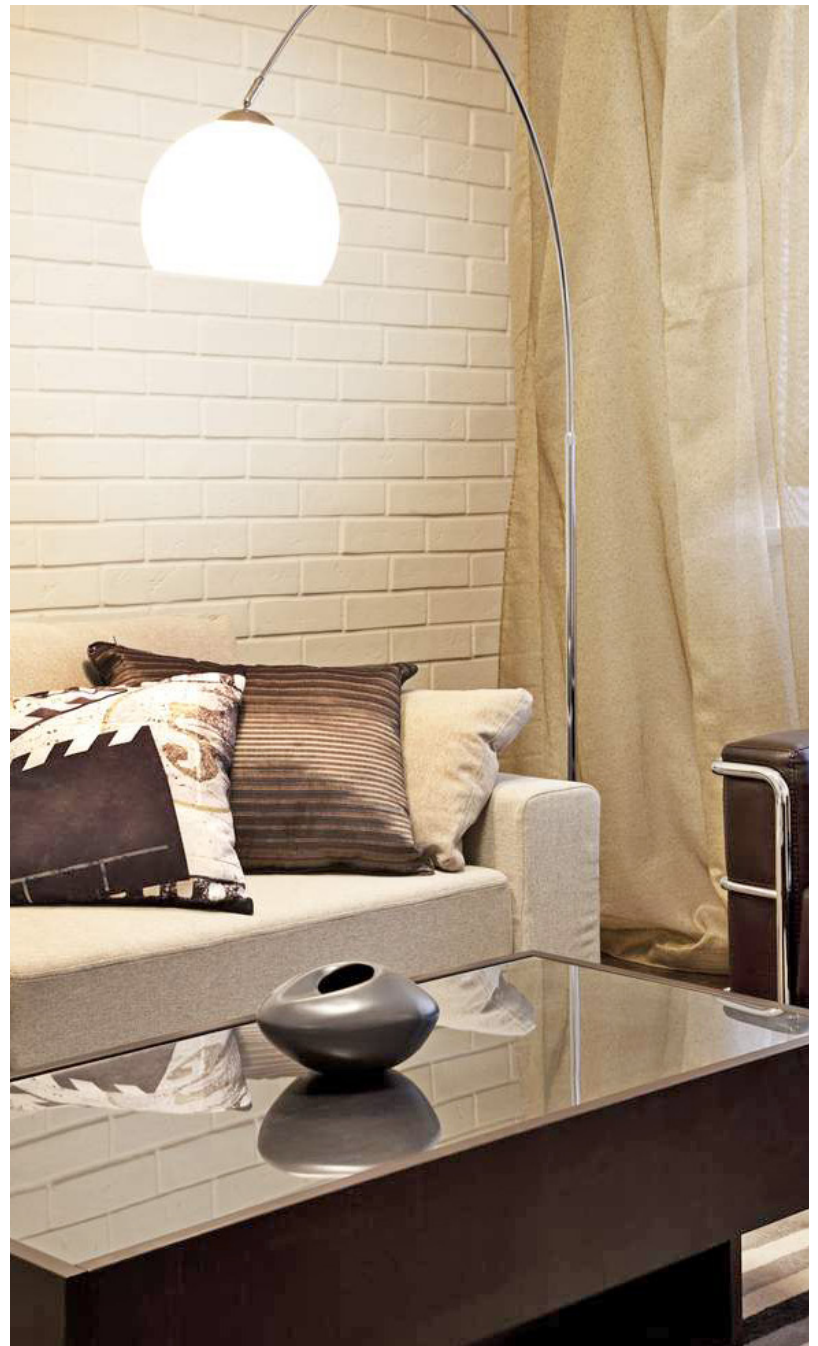
"Dark corners suck the energy out of a room," said Smith. "Take a look at your living room and dining room and put in uplights."

Little lamps can make for big transformations. "Most kitchens, for example, have only overhead lighting," he said. "Buy two small lamps and put them in corners, or maybe one in the dark triangle behind the sink, or on a stretch of granite counter. You won't need the overheads, and it creates a homey, warm feeling."

Like moths, humans gravitate toward the brightest light. If you don't want your guests to congregate in the kitchen during a party, turn on those little lamps and turn off the overhead.

"We put lamps in rooms where you wouldn't think of putting in lighting," said Smith. "Plug in an attractive lamp in the bathroom and it becomes part of the living space." ❖

– Washington Post



Crystal chandeliers are what designer Randall Whitehead calls "architectural jewellery." Photo: Washington Post/Theodores.com



Night crawlers

Su Su Lwin sells flowers to drivers at night. Photos: Zarni Phyo

BY NYEIN EI EI HTWE

THE girls ply their trade amid the sickly scent of jasmine mingled with the blue tang of exhaust gas and the miasma of burned rubber and petrol that rises from the baked asphalt beneath their bare feet. Their faces are lit by the angry glare of stoplights and the flickering neon of the roadside shops and the amber flashes of traffic indicators, and reflected in the mirrored curves of car windows that will not open for them. Sometimes they get shouted at. More often they are ignored. Now and again they make a sale, and must try to smile. They are on duty at the busy intersection, in the shadow of the great overpass, from dusk until midnight. Their combined age is 14.

Su Su Lwin, eight, and her six-year-old sister Cho Cho Lwin are working the Hledan junction, a little slice of Yangon that wants to be Sukhumvit.

"My mother gets the jasmine from Hledan market and we string it when we get back from school. We have a bath and walk up the junction to sell the flowers," Su Su Lwin said when the green light temporarily interrupts her sales activities.

Now that the schools are closed, Su Su Lwin and her sister sell flowers in the daytime as well.

"We sell jasmine at night and star flowers in the morning," she said, breaking off to return to work as the traffic ground to a halt.

A driver cursed her.

Su Su Lwin smiled through her fear and moved to the next vehicle. The two sisters sell till midnight, but can get off by 11pm if they sell all their jasmine.

"Drivers love us because I don't nag them to buy flowers, but just stand beside their window," she said.

SUV drivers can be rough. The worst are the taxi drivers.

"But all kinds of drivers buy flowers in the rain. When it rains they don't shout at us," said Su Su Lwin with a smile.

The girls live in the compound of Yangon University, so they can walk to work. Su Su Lwin entered upon her trade two

years ago, apprenticed to her elder brother, Kyaw Moe.

"Now he's working in a factory, so I take my sister," she said.

Su Su Lwin will enter third standard next month and her sister will be in second standard in the same school. Their friends and their teachers know how they spend their nights. "Some friends say it's a pity we're poor and have to work nights because then I can't watch the TV series they watch," she said. All the children's shows are finished by the time she gets home from work.

But she has a favourite TV star, Phwe Phwe, and her dream is that his car will stop at her junction so she can sell him some fragrant blossoms. "I would give them to him for free, but my mother would scold me," she said.

Their mother gives each sister K300 a day pocket money from their proceeds.

Su Su Lwin wants to be a doctor and works hard at her lessons. Another would-be medic is Thiha Zaw who, for the moment, sells balloons at Inya Kanbaung.

The eleven-year-old is proud of advancing to the fourth standard, a rare feat this year because of changes to the system.

"My eldest brother bought fried noodles for me the day the results came out," he reminisced.

His father was always ill and his mother didn't work, but his two elder brothers worked as a mason and a water-pipe cleaner.

Thiha Zaw commutes to Inya Kanbaung with the help of the chief sellers in his township, North Okkalapa, and sells the battery-lit balloons and arrows, for which he is paid K1000 a night, which he hands over to his mother, who gives him back K300. He bleeds the air from unsold balloons so they can be sold the next night.

"My mother puts the money toward my school expenses. But when school starts I won't be able to work because classes begin at 7am," he said.

By the time he gets in from work, the family is asleep, so he eats at the home of the sales force organiser.

Thiha Zaw doesn't really mind spending his nights selling

balloons, but he misses the chance to play with his friends.

"I love it here on Inya Lake, seeing all the people playing and walking. When boys my age buy my balloons I want to be their friend," he said. But they just want the balloons.

Nyein Nyein Aye sells snacks along Pyay Road by Inya Lake. She misses her friends too.

The 13-year-old, her round face daubed with thanakha, lives in Hlaing Tharyar township. Her plastic basket is filled with fried potatoes, preserved fruit, fried sunflowers seeds, chewing gum, purified water and cigarettes.

She left school after passing sixth standard, before her family moved to Hlaing Tharyar township from faraway Ayeyarwady Region two years ago.

"Since I moved to Yangon, I haven't seen my beloved friend Phoo Ngong Chit. I miss her a lot," she said, adding that Yangon people are not friendly.

Street sales hold no terrors for her, since she used to sell fish, caught by her father, alongside her mother. When her father couldn't work as much as before, she and her mother took to selling foodstuffs to pay for her younger brother's schooling.

"My father drank alcohol every day and it made him sick. I don't blame him. Now all our family sells snacks together here," she said.

At midnight, when the crowd around the lake starts to clear, she and her family walk to the bus stop for Hlaing



"Some friends say it's a pity we're poor and have to work nights because then I can't watch the TV series they watch"

Tharyar township. Then it's a motorbike taxi as far as their home.

Now that the rains have started, Nyein Nyein Aye said she wants to work in a pipe factory instead of in the street. "Sometimes we don't make a sale the whole night because the rain keeps people away from the lake," she said.

Yangon City Development Committee won't issue permits to sell in public places where the public might be bothered, which is why Nyein Nyein Aye and the other sellers have to wait until dark. She said many people get annoyed by the sales pitches and think the children are just out for pocket money, but in fact they earnestly want to make the sale.

"My mother always says not to ask people for money, so I don't. I just call out my wares," said Nyein Nyein Aye.

Hein Myint Soe, from Kyeemyindaing township, finds he doesn't miss his family now that he works and lives in a restaurant in Hlaing township. He is paid K30,000 a month, but can't get home because he works from 9am to 11pm.

At 14, Hein Myint Soe is already an experienced waiter, while his elder sister worked as a house-maid. His parents are a mason and a vegetable seller in the township, but all family members have to work except for the youngest brother, who has just passed the first standard exam.

"I don't mind living here because I get meals. Since I'm the youngest, all the other workers love me and take care of me," he said.

He keeps all his pay, unless his mother comes to take it.

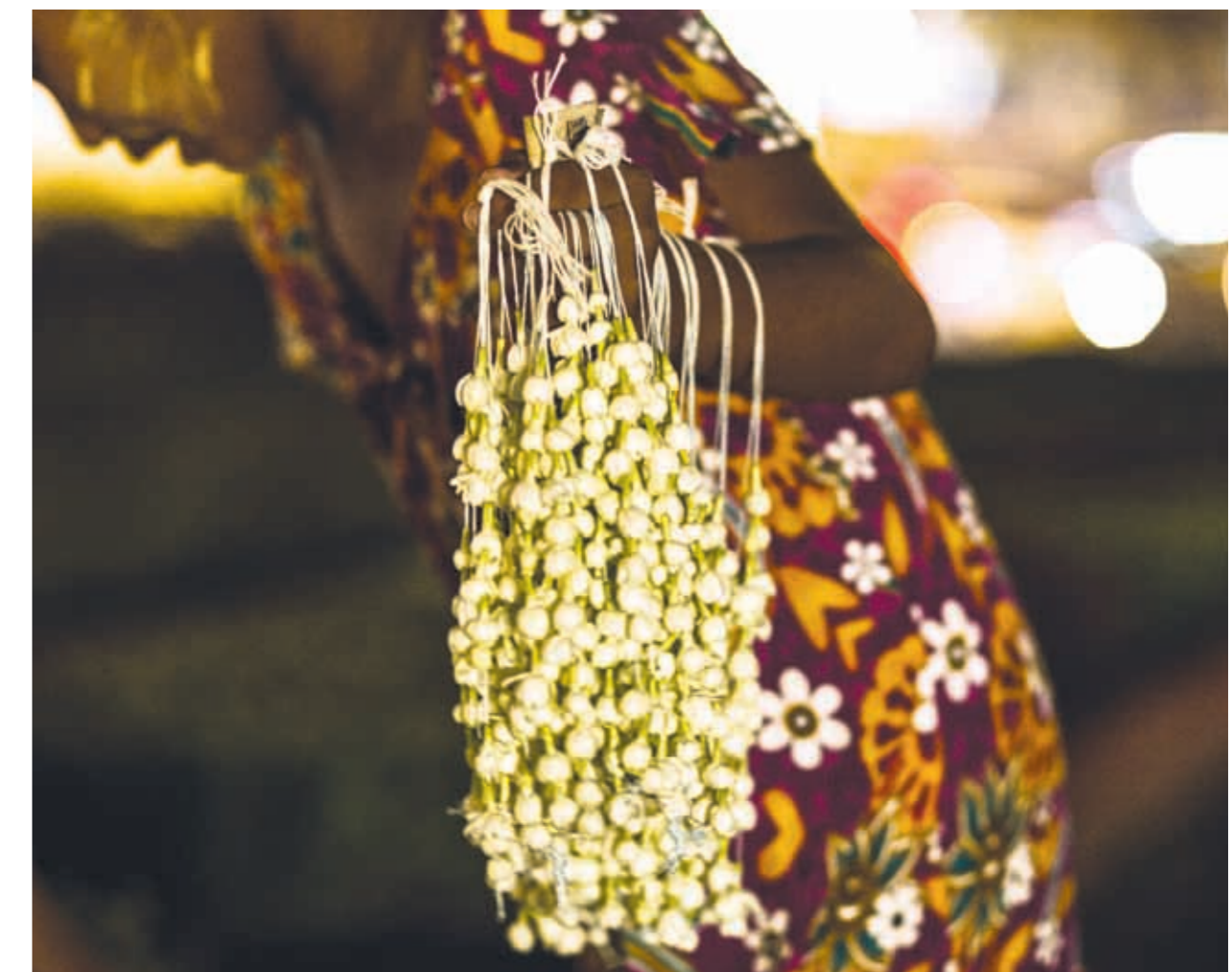
He has been working since he failed fourth standard and his parents asked him about his career intentions. "I didn't want to stay at school because I didn't really understand the lessons," he said.

His ambition is to become a cook in a restaurant, and he spends time between orders in the kitchen, watching the chef.

Having made good friends with the other waiters, he doesn't miss his old friends from the township so much, though he misses his younger brother before he goes to sleep.

He added, "But we play football at midnight. It's the only time we get to play." ■

While other children are tucked up in bed asleep, many, like eight-year-old Su Su Lwin, are working to support their families



After-hours in Myeik Archipelago



Photos: Douglas Long

BY DOUGLAS LONG

HUMANITY is engaged in an ongoing war against darkness – not in the metaphorical good-versus-evil sense, in which pure-hearted Hobbits drop magic rings into volcanoes to banish the forces of shadow, but in the literal sense of wiring the world with power lines, flipping the switch and pretending the sun never sets on civilisation.

This mania for poking artificial illumination into all corners of the planet has, since the discovery of electricity in the late 19th century, become one of the enduring hallmarks of human progress.

To a certain extent this is all well and good – it would be callous and absurd to begrudge anyone the right to enjoy the benefits of electricity – but I am also not afraid to admit that there are times when I find myself sympathising with the darkness, in all its mystery and ambiguity.

At such times I feel an overwhelming urge to turn my back to the light and retreat to those ever-shrinking zones where the power lines have not yet reached, and where the stars and planets have not yet been smothered by the electric glow of the city.

Living in Myanmar has provided some good opportunities to escape The Glow and become one with the night – often without the need to even leave my apartment, and usually at times that were unexpected and unwanted.

The best moments, however, have occurred during trips outside the city: spending the night in off-the-grid monasteries while trekking in Shan State; starting a daylong push for the 3091-metre summit of Natmataung in Chin State at 3:30am under an intensely twinkling, unpolluted sky; and venturing out for a nocturnal amble around Mrauk Oo, where fireflies vied with the stars as the main source of illumination.

But trumping all these was my experience in Myeik Archipelago in Myanmar's southern Tanintharyi Region.

My previous trips, however active, had all involved sleeping indoors, but in the southern islands my wife and I effectively lived outside over the course of the six-day trip: eating, drinking, relaxing and sleeping on the open-air upper deck of the live-aboard boat that took us from Myeik to Kawthoung.

With no walls around us, and only a sun-shading tarp over our heads, there was no impediment to watching every sunrise and sunset from beginning to end, nor was there any distraction from experiencing the night-time hours in all their quiet glory.

We knew from the start that our journey would be different from anything we had done before. On the first day our boat *Ayer Princess* left Myeik jetty at 5pm, just in time to watch the sun go down as we wove our way through the islands lying just off the coast.

We were the only two guests on the boat (along with five crewmembers), and despite the presence of three double-occupancy cabins below deck, we opted to settle in on the top deck, which was equipped with rattan chairs, a table, a reasonably comfortable bed, and a cooler full of water, soft drinks and beer.

We poured some drinks and basked in the smell and taste of the salty air, the feel of the wind, and the sight of the blue water and incandescent clouds. As day disappeared, the stars took their place in the indigo sky, a transition we witnessed as the crew brought us a feast of fresh food for dinner: chicken with cashew nuts, fried watercress and mushrooms, sweet and sour fish, and prawn tempura.

Our boat stopped for the night around 9:30pm, and our generator and lights stayed on for another 30 minutes as we prepared for sleep. Only when the electricity was switched off did the atmosphere take on an even more magical quality: light breeze, swaying boat, sparkling stars. A line of squid boats floated on the distant horizon, their banks of lights not enough to ruin our view of the sky.

I woke several times that first night. The fact that I was not accustomed to sleeping on a boat probably contributed to the sense of unease I felt whenever I drifted toward wakefulness, but each time I opened my eyes the disquiet was replaced by silent, appreciative awe.

The first time I woke, I noticed the wind had died down but the stars still decorated the sky in glittering abundance. Strangely, hypnotically, the water seemed to shimmer with an eerie green luminescence, as if while we slept our boat had drifted across some invisible divide between worlds and into an alien ocean.

Waking later, I found that the wind had returned and a sickle moon had risen, sending the dimmest stars into retreat and casting a silver streak across the water. Later still, during the darkest hours before dawn, we were approached by another boat, whose crew used our vessel to anchor their fishing net, returning at daybreak to retrieve their catch.

And so it went throughout the journey, the days spent exploring islands, coves and coral reefs by foot, kayak and flipper, and the evenings descending like an enchanted curtain over the Andaman Sea and the islands of the archipelago. Each night brought new surprises.

On our last night in the archipelago we anchored in a small bay between two low islands with names straight out of a *Scooby-Doo* episode: Myauk Pyu (White Monkey) and Thay Yae (Ghost). There was no village in sight, but three or four small fishing boats floated nearby. We were sheltered from the wind by the twin islands, and the atmosphere was calm and quiet.

My wife and I watched the sun go down as we ate our usual multi-course meal with fresh seafood, washed down with



Strangely, hypnotically, the water seemed to shimmer with an eerie green luminescence, as if while we slept our boat had drifted across some invisible divide between worlds and into an alien ocean

red wine and beer. As had been typical throughout the trip – during which we had been waking before dawn and spending many hours each day swimming, snorkelling and kayaking – we were asleep by 10:30pm.

On this night I slept through until 4:30am, at which time my wife and I both woke up. We didn't try to go back to sleep. Instead we lay on our bed watching the stars in the western sky, where Ursa Major and Ursa Minor were clearly visible. We saw a few blinking satellites crossing the heavens, as well as a handful of falling meteors – I counted four, my wife seven.

We also glimpsed some peculiar sights, including what looked like another shooting star, except that as it streaked across the sky it followed a horizontal, rather than a downward, trajectory until it flared out. We both considered it too strange to add to our meteor count.

Odder still was a star-like light that we watched for many minutes as it moved quickly and erratically – up, down, sideways, diagonally – its bizarre dance confined to a small area of the sky. My wife and I both saw it and we were both baffled.

I tend to think it actually *was* a star, its apparent movement an optical illusion caused by the movement of our boat on the waves, coupled with the lack of a fixed visual reference on the ground. (The moon was new, and the night was so dark we couldn't see the outlines of the nearby islands.)

My wife, on the other hand, calmly explained it away as an unidentified flying object whose pilot was clearly whacked out on space-yaba.

Eventually the lights in the sky, and their accompanying mysteries, faded with the inevitable rising of the sun over the trees of White Monkey Island. **W**



Coastal Tanintharyi Region is dazzling during the daytime, but only after sundown are the mysterious splendours of the sea and sky truly revealed.



Photo: Thandar Khine



Banana Beach, Phuket, Thailand

Phuket has a reputation for being one of Thailand's rowdier enclaves, but even though most of the popular beaches are busy and well-developed for tourists, there are still some peaceful hideaways. Banana Beach is one of these. Just a couple of hundred metres long and with crystal clear water, the beach can't be seen from the road, with only a wooden sign and local knowledge to suggest its existence. Not far from the attractive Naithon Beach, Banana Beach can be found off the road running from Andaman White Beach and Trisara Resorts, and is catered by a small restaurant selling seafood beneath the palm trees.

Vault Beach, Cornwall, UK

Around 9 miles from St Austell, which has plenty of its own beautiful bays and beaches that can be reached by the coastal footpath, you'll find Vault Beach. A 20-minute cliff-top walk from Gorran Haven, near Dodman Point, the wild beach consists of a long strip of clean white shingle. Often completely empty, it's unsurprising that one end (the southern end) is a popular, albeit unofficial, nudist spot. The nearest accommodation is Treveague Farm, offering cottages as well as a campsite for visitors. Nearby you'll also find the plush Lower Barns B&B, with boutique rooms and a hot tub.

Praia do Rosa, Brazil

The beaches north of Rio are the most visited along Brazil's coastline. Further south however, in Santa Catarina, the Praia do Rosa is peaceful and wild without being completely remote; The town of Rosa may be small but it has a growing surfing community and is known for its excellent seafood and easygoing hippy vibe, while the state capital Florianópolis is just an hour's drive away. There's a good range of accommodation in Rosa, mainly cosy pousadas, such as the lively surf bar and inn Pico da Tribo. The beach itself is 3km of soft sand lined with tropical foliage, with gentle surf that's perfect for beginners; long-running surf school Captain Dave's should have you up on your board before long.

Playa del Silencio, Costa Verde, Spain

A dramatic crescent of rugged cliffs arches into the ocean to create this stunning bay in northern Spain. The pebble beach, at the heart of the Costa Verde, is close to the quaint port of Cudillero, and an hour's drive from the cathedral town Oviedo. It is off-the-beaten-track: To reach the beach you'll have to take a bit of a walk down steep cliff steps. But once there you'll be captivated by the rock formations and sound of the waves. There's a range of hotels and homesteads in the village, and just outside Cudillero, the Casona de la Paca hotel offers a charming, old-fashioned place to stay in a rustic red mansion house.

Memory Cove, Lincoln national park, Australia

Lincoln national park is well worth exploring for an adventure in some of the country's most scenic wilderness. Memory Cove has three beaches close to each other, in a wilderness protection area within the national park itself. Each day just 15 vehicles are permitted access and with only five designated camp sites – and a maximum of three-night stays – you won't be battling for space on the white sand. Among the wildlife you may spot are sea eagles, dolphins and whales, and a hike up Stamford Hill will be rewarded with panoramic views along the coastline.

Shelly Beach, Kenton-on-Sea, South Africa

Port Elizabeth is a busy tourist destination with well-known Blue Flag beaches but around an hour-and-a-half's drive along the coast you can find some lesser-spotted hangouts, such as Shelly Beach. At low tide, this small cove near the town of Kenton, on South Africa's Eastern Cape, is a peaceful and secluded place to be. An amphitheatre of rock frames the beach and creates a sheltered swimming spot. The town itself lies between the Bushman's and Kariega Rivers, along which there are daily cruises, and there are homely B&Bs to stay in, such as River Roost, five minutes from the beaches and overlooking the river. Just inland are game reserves and off the coast you can spot dolphins, southern white whales and great white sharks.

St Lucie Inlet, Florida, US

The beach at St Lucie Inlet Preserve state park can only be accessed by boat. The barrier island on the Florida coastline is a wild environment inhabited during the summer by loggerhead, leatherback, and green turtles and there's 2.7km of white sand to enjoy at your leisure. Less than two hours' drive from Miami, it couldn't be further from the rollerblading, bars and bikinis of the city's own stretch of sand. The best way to reach this beach is on a kayak trail, which leads you through miles of tidal creek – well worth exploring in its own right. St Lucie Inlet closes at sunset but you can camp nearby at the Jonathan Dickinson state park, which has campsites and cabins, as well as its own set of bike, hiking and kayak trails.

Torre Lapillo Bay, Porto Cesareo, Puglia, Italy

In Salento, southern Puglia, the Porto Cesareo area enjoys a coast of white sand and shimmering turquoise waters. Known as the Maldives of Italy, there are lots of beautiful beaches to choose from but Torre Lapillo Bay is a particularly eye-catching spot where you'll also find the 16th-century Tower of St Thomas. The town of Porto Cesareo, which runs alongside a lagoon, makes a good holiday base with its wide range of hotels, but there are good offerings on Airbnb along the coast, with cool beachside houses.

Redi, Maharashtra, India

Plenty of people search out Goa's secret beaches; what many don't realise is that arguably the best one is just over the border, in Maharashtra. Redi, aka Paradise Beach, has a great deal of natural beauty: a small lagoon, a sandy peninsula, a ruined fort. What's more, aside from a few coconut and water vendors, it's pretty much deserted. For these reasons, those in the know have been packing a picnic and a few beers and crossing the Tiracol river for some time.

Winnifred Beach, Portland, Jamaica

The rest of the world may not have heard of Winnifred, but it's famous in Jamaica for the simple and quite depressing reason that it's one of the few remaining free public beaches on the island. The majority charge or are for the exclusive use of resorts. Hotel developers have had their eye on Winnifred for years, too, but a five-year legal battle ended in success for the local community last November, when a court ruled that public access to the beach should remain. The sand is soft and white and the calm turquoise water perfect for swimming as it's protected by a coral reef. Watch the local lads catch angelfish with their bare hands. Go on the weekend and see Jamaica at play: reggae pumping out, the sweet, smoky aroma of jerk chicken in the air, beach shacks selling cold beer, families hanging out, and football matches you might be able to join in.

– *The Guardian*

10 of the best beaches... that you've probably never heard of

From Australia to the UK, Spain to Thailand and beyond, these beaches with their gorgeous waters and picture-perfect shorelines will have you dreaming of holiday escapes

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

OUT THERE By Marsha Handley

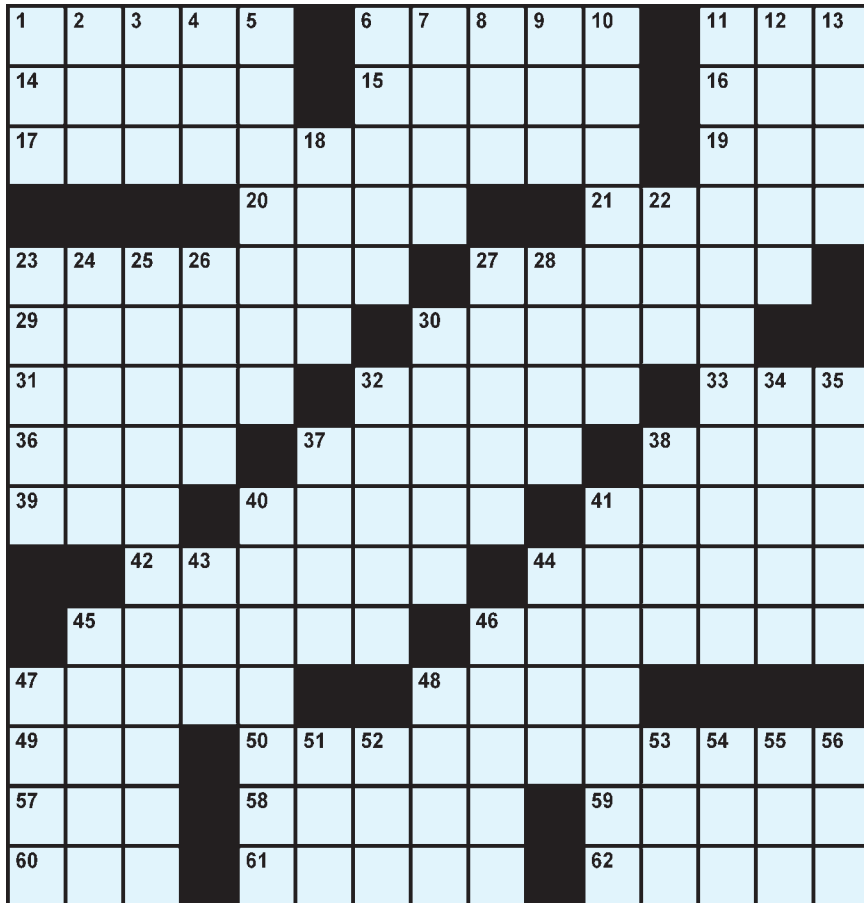
ACROSS

- 1 Construction girder
- 6 All thumbs
- 11 It offers resistance
- 14 Artemis, to the Romans
- 15 Ark contents
- 16 JFK overseer
- 17 Ghost story, e.g.
- 19 J. Edgar Hoover's org.
- 20 Luce's periodical
- 21 Fanatical
- 23 Some metalware items
- 27 Tiny village
- 29 "Mourning Becomes Electra" playwright
- 30 Record promotion scandal
- 31 Mean moods
- 32 Actor's memorization
- 33 Atlanta-based station
- 36 Continental currency
- 37 Hunts for
- 38 Falling flakes
- 39 Rescued from (with "of")
- 40 Blackens on a barbecue
- 41 Cry of accomplishment
- 42 Sags
- 44 Go from site to site?
- 45 Timber problem
- 46 Intense, as eyes
- 47 Kennel club classification
- 48 Freshman, probably
- 49 Senatorial affirmative
- 50 Scraps
- 57 Type of cap
- 58 Twofold
- 59 Practice piece for one instrument
- 60 Begley and Harris
- 61 Separated
- 62 Virgil put him through hell

- 3 Common ringbearer
- 4 Collector's suffix
- 5 Fireplace frames
- 6 Agenda entries
- 7 Fridge posting
- 8 History class subject
- 9 Amigo
- 10 Lunchbox item
- 11 Cause of some chuckles
- 12 Something to kick
- 13 Domestic
- 18 Young lady

- 22 "Is that ___?"
- 23 Brain teaser
- 24 Cause of many yawns
- 25 Products of exotic foods before bedtime
- 26 One of the Jackson brothers
- 27 Actor Tom
- 28 "The ___ have it"
- 30 Mooring sites
- 32 Bounded
- 34 Like Erik the Red
- 35 Bird call
- 37 "Beat it!"
- 38 Boutique
- 40 City in Spain or Argentina

- 41 Showed a general tendency
- 43 Bread type
- 44 "___ waiting long?"
- 45 Great fear
- 46 Delivered a hand
- 47 Modern information unit
- 48 Bygone autocrat
- 51 Appetizer selection
- 52 "CSI" proof
- 53 In-flight info, for short
- 54 One with a mother
- 55 Dangerous '50s crop spray
- 56 Take in



DOWN

- 1 Bar requirements
- 2 It may be boring

DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS



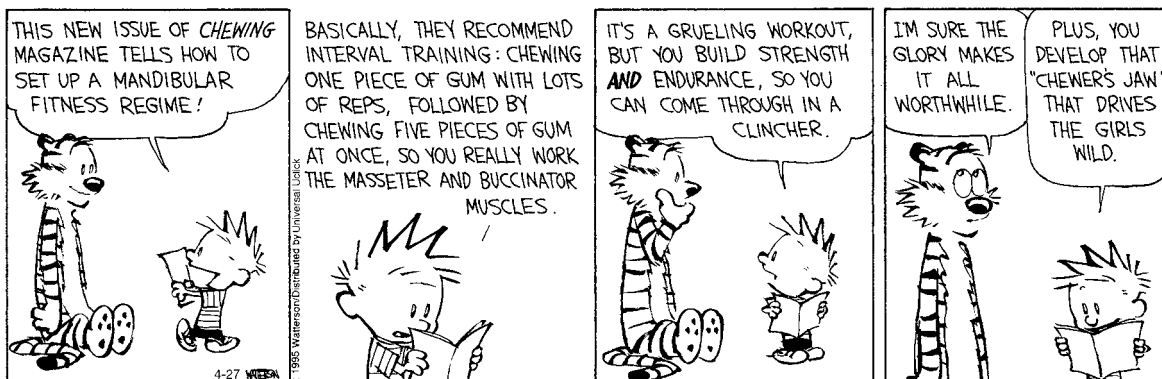
PEANUTS

BY CHARLES SCHULZ



CALVIN AND HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON



SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.



4/30

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Solution: 5 letters



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4/27

Adjust, Agenda, Analysis, Arrange, Business, Calculate, Calendar, Checklist, Correcting, Cycle, Deadlines, Designate, Effort, Errands, File, Goals, Growth, Mission, Monitor, Organize, Performance, Plan, Process, Productivity, Project, Refer, Regulate, Resources, Routine, Scheduling, Solve, Target, Task, Technique, Urgency

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

APRIL 10 - 16, 2015

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18



You know how they taught you not to judge a book by its cover? Wrong. It's exactly what you should do. Don't let your reactions this week come from past experiences. Let old habits die and look at life with reborn eyes. Never assume another's thoughts, unless you are, in fact, a mind-reader. If so, please ignore that last thought. For both our sakes.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20



This week you need to focus on the here-and-now. Hey! Goldfish! Back to your horoscope, please. Mindfulness improves mental health, relationships and career success. But you'll also be able to hear your heart more clearly. And, if the heart wants ice-cream and champagne at 10am on a Tuesday morning, who are we to judge?

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19



The trouble with control is that as soon as we try to exert it we can lose our grip on a situation. Paging: irony. Sometimes, the best course of action is none at all. This week, try not to jump to conclusions. In times of need, all we can do is what we decide is right. Or, we can sit back, fail and feel bad for a little while, then likely forget all about it.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20



Giving others credit is twofold: Altruism is proven to boost wellbeing, while you can always blame someone else if things go downhill. But seriously, share some of the spoils and you also get to share some of the burden. This week your love life looks to achieve a state of understanding. Money will also flow. Coincidence?

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20



"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel." So advised Polonius to a young Laertes. Unless Shakespeare was going for a 16th-century *Fifty Shades of Grey*, he was advising us to bind tightly to our oldest friends. They are our source of happiness, understanding and opportunity.

CANCER | June 21 - July 22



Family may be a source of discomfort this week (as though this week should be any different). Visualise Christmas dinner and endure creepy Uncle Oscar's antics by focusing on the holiday ahead. Rip the Band-Aid off in financial matters lest you yourself be ripped off. Deal with problems sooner, rather than later this week. You may also be lucky in love.

AUNG MYIN KYAW

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Tel: 09-731-35632, Email: williamaste@gmail.com

LEO | July 23 - Aug 22



You only get out what you put in. No more viscerally is this illustrated than by our little friend Ecoli. This week continue to dream large but don't forget to act. "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans," said John Lennon. Ironically, that was right before he was assassinated - presumably with no such plans. The sentiment was there.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sept 22



This week give others the benefit of the doubt. Remember, "silent" and "listen" share the same letters. Then again, so too do "desperation" and "a rope ends it" - so perhaps it's best to take that anagram with a grain of salt. At the end of the day, you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Though unless your name is Renfield, you probably don't want flies in your honey. Be careful around chairs this week.

LIBRA | Sept 23 - Oct 22



Time heals all wounds. Well, it doesn't really heal them - the breaks sort of set funny and you learn to limp along in a different way. This week, consider casting off those crutches and you may just find you can travel new paths without them. Speaking of crutches, this week is also looking favourable in the love department.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21



"The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing, Jon Snow". So said Socrates. Or was it Ygritte? Anyway, the point is that you need to learn to accept what you don't know. This is the only way you can truly continue to learn. Conversely, there is the Homer Simpson approach: Don't put new information in lest the old stuff falls out. At your age perhaps heed the latter.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21



Your goals are the targets, your habits the arrows. It's just a shame they don't let you bring your longbow to work, huh? Take care this week to stay focused on your goals. Do so and you may be rewarded with a wonderful event: a gift, an adventure, or a statue named in your honour. This week you may have to endure a problematic wheel.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19



Have you heard that saying "A good workman never blames his tools"? Try this week, as hard as you can, not to blame the tools you work with. It will be challenging. Make sure you seek advice to help you through the coming days. You may have to pay a price, but it will be worth it in the long run. Financial matters this week will require courage.

CHRONICLES OF BEI KA STREET

A Study in Saffron

CHAPTER 6

EDITED BY KO NAN DOI

BUT U Sha Lok was not destined to spend very long nursing his chagrin at being thrown off the scent. Just then the bell rang, and moments later we were joined by U Lek Trey of the official police, who radiated an even more powerful aura of smugness than he had the day before in the charnel house on Ba Thoun Street.

"I just dropped by to tell you, U Sha Lok, that you need waste no more of your prodigious brainpower on our little mystery. For I have found our man, who is even now behind bars at Bo Street police station," he declared.

"The devil you have," cried U Sha Lok, his face for a moment showing consternation. But only for a moment. "Pray tell me, Lek Trey, the identity of your prisoner?"

"Why, sir, the thing was easy enough once our plodding Yangon Metropolitan Police got onto the job. We may lack your dash and your sparkle, U Sha Lok, but you may rely on us for solid achievement. The guilty party is a notorious gambler known for rigging bets on English Premier League football matches. His name is Man U Win. He lives, as I suspected, in Parami Road. We picked him up the moment we learned he had been seen in the vicinity of Anawrahta Street late last night. We've been after this customer for a very long time, as he is a suspect in at least three murders. I have no doubt yesterday's business will make a fourth."

U Sha Lok had by now completely recovered his habitual *sang-froid*. "My congratulations on a job well done, my dear fellow. But has your man confessed?"

"Not yet. Indeed, he denies all knowledge of the affair, though he was forced to admit going to Anawrahta Street late last night, and will not say why. No doubt he feels the noose closing around his neck."

At that moment there came a loud knock on the street door below.

"U Lek Trey, I pray you wait a moment before returning to the scene of your triumph and extracting a confession from your suspect. You may find it interesting to meet our visitor, who is even now ascending the stairs," said U Sha Lok. As he spoke, he took a pair of handcuffs from a drawer and concealed them in the top of his longyi. "Wa Zone, at my word, be ready to strike!"

"Sir, the cabman you ordered," called Daw Hat Sun from the landing. I opened the door to reveal a burly fellow in workman's clothing, a grimy cap upon his head, pulled down firmly over his eyes and over his grey-streaked hair.

U Sha Lok turned his back on the fellow, who entered the room with a slow and reluctant tread. "Kindly bear me a hand with these valises if you please, my good man," he said, half turning his head. With an air of disgruntlement, the man slouched forward.

Then, quicker than thought, U Sha Lok spun round and snapped the cuffs to his wrist. "Wa Zone, Lek Trey! Seize him!" he cried, clinging tight to the ruffian's free arm. For all the force the three of us could bring to bear, the cabman fought like a fury to be free. With hideous oaths he struggled in our grip until I hit him over the head a few times with a copy of my *Handbook of Ethical Conduct for International Medical Professionals*, and U Lek Trey applied his own handcuffs to the man's ankles. We were all of us quite breathless by the time we had subdued him.

Astride the middle of the room, U Sha Lok pointed an imperious finger. "I present to you Daniel Maung, also known as Kyaw Maung, the murderer of Jasper B Monk, of Oakland, California, USA!" he cried. "Come, admit it man, our case against you is complete!"

"Twas never murder," said the man, who had recovered his breath and seemed resigned to his capture. All traces of violence and defiance had now been erased from his manner, and there was about him a kind of serenity. He spoke quietly, even with a tinge of ironic humour, though not devoid of bitterness, with a slight Mandalay burr. "If ever a man deserved to die, it was the demon Jasper Monk. His death was no murder, but heaven's revenge. My part in his death was an act of virtue - even of genius, you might almost say."

U Sha Lok cast a meaningful glance at U Lek Trey. "You admit, then, writing the word 'parami' on the wall beside your victim?"

"Aye, so I did. And I will tell the world why, too, and dare any man to say he would have done different, if he had suffered the same fate as I," said the man stoutly. "I gave him a choice he never gave to my darling, whom he destroyed!"

"That's as may be," said U Lek Trey sternly. "Yet for all that you'll be charged with murder and answer at Yangon assizes. And then to a higher power than that, I should say!"

The man shrugged. "I don't fear your earthly judges. Where were they when I wanted justice? I took it for myself, for none other ever offered it."

"U Sha Lok," I said, rather diffident before this display of defiance which, I confess, I found rather stirring. My friend looked at me questioningly.

"You said he was bald," I reminded him.

With a flick of the wrist, U Sha Lok whisked the man's cap from his head, taking with it the grey wig beneath, revealing a scalp as hairless as a billiard ball.

The man looked at him with an air of mocking disdain. "Oh, you're a clever man and no mistake, U Sha Lok. But I daresay in all your investigations you've never heard a stranger tale than I can tell."

"I would hear it gladly," said U Sha Lok. "If U Lek Trey has no objection to our whiling away an hour or so before he carts you off to Bo Street Station?"

Next week: An astonishing tale

WEEKEND

Advertise hotline:
392676, 253642





Playing dress-up

Cosplay - the practice of dressing up as a character from a movie, book, or video game - is big all over the world, especially in Asia, and it's no different here in Myanmar where fans got dressed up for the country's 5th annual Cosplay Festival on April 26 at MICT Park.

All that jazz

Guests enjoyed jazz music performed by the Bamboo trio, featuring *The Myanmar Times'* deputy Pulse editor Tom Barton on vocals, at Gekko on April 24. Missed it? The band performs every Friday - check our What's On? guide on page 26 for details.



Pascaline, Jerome and Eric



Aaron, Ko Soe Soe and Pan Thang



Ma Ei Hnin Pwint Khine, Ko Soe Moe Hlaing and Ko Than Htoo



Ma Chaw Su Khaing, Khin San Soe and Ma Ei Hnin Pwint Khine



Caroline Cheah, Ma Khine Zar Min Htoo and Ma Ohn Mar Aye

Noise above Yangon

Guests gathered on the rooftop of Pansodan Scene on April 26 for an evening of experimental sound and improvisation. Read more about the event on page 5.



Anton and Medea



Laura and Lucia



Pan Thang and Pich



EEKEND

Advertise hotline: 392676, 253642

What's on



EVENTS

FRIDAY 1

MUSIC

Bamboo trio featuring vocalist Tom Barton. Gekko Restaurant, 535 Merchant Road 7pm

Acoustic music show. Off the Beaten Track Café, Kandawgyi park (near children's playground), Mingalar Taung Nyunt 7-9:30pm

Nightly live music. Kokine Bar & Restaurant (next to Kokine swimming club) 6-11pm

Live music by The Four Band. Thiripyitsaya Sky Bistro, 20th floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada 7-10pm

NIGHTLIFE

The Yangon Vibe. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 10pm

MISC

Knowledge Exchange: "Why I started my social business". Meet 6 savvy entrepreneurs and their award-winning social start-ups. Phandeeayar, 11th floor, Mac Tower Building, 561 Merchant Road 7-8:30pm

SATURDAY 2

ART

ISM High School Art Exhibition. The International School of Myanmar High School presents the eighth annual student art exhibition created by 160 high-school students. New Treasure Art Gallery, 84A Thanlwin Street, Golden Hill Avenue, Golden Hill Valley, Bahan 10am-6pm

NIGHTLIFE

Drunk Love Saturday. Club Rizzoli, Chatrium Hotel, 40 Natmauk Road, Tarmwe 7-9pm

Australian Club Diggers' Dance 2015. Featuring fabulous food, drink and

dancing the night away to fantastic live music. Tickets US\$70, available at the Australian Clinic, Golden Hill Towers. The Australian Embassy Club, 18 Golden Valley Road, Bahan 7:30pm

MUSIC

Live Music. Kokine Bar & Restaurant (near Kokine Swimming Pool) 6-11pm

Live Jazz. Sky Bistro Bar and Restaurant, 20th floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada 7-10pm

MISC

Yangon Hash House Harriers Saturday run. A mixed, family-style Hash. Runs usually take about an hour and start from Yangon University, K4000, University Avenue, Kamaryut 2:45-8pm

SUNDAY 3

ART

ISM High School Art Exhibition. The International School of Myanmar High School presents the eighth annual student art exhibition created by 160 high-school students. New Treasure Art Gallery, 84A Thanlwin Street, Golden Hill Avenue, Golden Hill Valley, Bahan 10am-6pm

MISC

Burmese Language Club. Pansodan Gallery, Pansodan Street 4pm

MONDAY 4

ART

ISM High School Art Exhibition. The International School of Myanmar High School presents the eighth annual student art exhibition created by 160 high-school students. New Treasure Art Gallery, 84A Thanlwin Street, Golden Hill Avenue, Golden Hill Valley, Bahan 10am-6pm

MUSIC

Monday Blues Special Edition. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 9:30pm



The Bamboo trio, featuring vocalist Tom Barton, perform at Gekko every Monday evening. Photo: Naing Wynn Htoon

"Piano" - live music by Bonny.

Thiripyitsaya Sky Bistro, 20th floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada 7pm

Live music by The Experience Band.

Thiripyitsaya Sky Bistro, 20th floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada 7-10pm

MUSIC

Folk on Fire with L'N'R band. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 9:30pm

MISC

Trivia Night. Free beer pitcher for round winners and winning team gets a K30,000 bar tab. 50th Street Bar, 50th Street (lower block) 8pm

MISC

Tuesday Snippets. Gallery Conversation and drinks. Pansodan Gallery, Pansodan Street 7-10 pm

Wine deal. All wine bottles sold at half price. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 7-9:30pm

TUESDAY 5

ART

ISM High School Art Exhibition. The International School of Myanmar High School presents the eighth annual student art exhibition created by 160 high-school students. New Treasure Art Gallery, 84A Thanlwin Street, Golden Hill Avenue, Golden Hill Valley, Bahan 10am-6pm

MUSIC

WEDNESDAY 6

ART

ISM High School Art Exhibition. The International School of Myanmar High School presents the eighth annual student art exhibition created by 160 high-school students. New Treasure Art Gallery, 84A Thanlwin Street, Golden Hill Avenue, Golden Hill Valley, Bahan 10am-6pm

NIGHTLIFE

Mojito Night. The Lab, 70A Shwegone-daing Road, Bahan 5:30-10pm

Girls' night out. Mojo Bar, 135 Inya Road, Bahan 8pm

MUSIC

Jazz music and dinner. Rendez-Vous restaurant and bar, Institut Francias, 340 Pyay Road 7:30-9:30pm

THURSDAY 7

ART

"Beauties of East and West" art exhibition. Featuring over 40 paintings of Buddhist culture, Myanmar customs, ethnic nationalities of Myanmar, Western landscapes, Native American subjects, abstracts and nude art by artists Ye Min (New York) and Than Soe. Gallery 65, 65 Yaw Min Gyi Road (behind Parkroyal Hotel), Dagon 10am-6pm [see page 5]

ISM High School Art Exhibition. The International School of Myanmar High School presents the eighth annual student art exhibition created by 160 high-school students. New Treasure Art Gallery, 84A Thanlwin Street, Golden Hill Avenue, Golden Hill Valley, Bahan 10am-6pm

FILM

Start times at **Mingalar (1,2), Top Royal, Shae Saung (1,2) and Nay Pyi Taw** cinemas are 10am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm

Start times at **Junction Square and Junction Maw Tin** are 9:30am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm and 6:30pm daily and 9:30am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm on Friday and Saturday

Start times at **Mingalar san Pya** are 10am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm and 9:30pm

Nay Pyi Taw Cinema, near Sule Pagoda

Make Me Shudder 3. Directed by Poj Apirut. Thai horror film.

The Spongebob Movie. Directed by Paul Tibbitt. American animated adventure comedy.

Outcast. Directed by Nick Powell. 3D American-Chinese-Canadian action.

Mingalar Cinema 2, Dagon Center 2, Myaynigone

Fast & Furious 7. Directed by James Wan. Blockbuster American action.

Shae Saung Cinema, Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada

Fast & Furious 7. Directed by James Wan. Blockbuster American action.

Outcast. Directed by Nick Powell. 3D American-Chinese-Canadian action.

Junction Square Cineplex, Kamaryut

The Lazarus Effect. Directed by David Gelb. American science-fiction horror.

From Vegas To Macau 2. Directed by Wong Jing. 3D Hong Kong-Chinese comedy-action.

Junction Mawtin, Lanmadaw

The Lazarus Effect. Directed by David Gelb. American science-fiction horror.

Mingalar San Pya Cineplex, Phone Gyi Street and Anawrahta, Lanmadaw

Make Me Shudder 3. Directed by Poj Apirut. Thai horror film.

Fast & Furious 7. Directed by James Wan. Blockbuster American action.



A painting by artist Ye Min from the "Beauties of East and West" exhibition at Gallery 65, opening on May 7. Photo: Supplied



WHAT'S ON PICK OF THE WEEK

Masters of Myanmar art show their work in Malaysia

BY DOUGLAS LONG

DURING his 40-year career as a painter, Tin Win has attended numerous opening ceremonies at fine arts galleries in Myanmar and abroad – but he had never experienced anything quite like the formal affair at The Edge Galerie in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on April 21.

Among the notable guests at the event, which marked the opening of the “Masters of Myanmar Art” group exhibition, were eminent Malaysian artists and art collectors, as well as Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Azlan Shah and his consort, Raja Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim.

“The opening ceremony was excellent,” said Tin Win, known for his photorealistic paintings of Myanmar’s ethnic minorities set against abstract backgrounds. “I had a very good experience meeting important people who were interested in our Myanmar artwork.”

The exhibition, which continues through May 22, encompasses 45 paintings by 11 of Myanmar’s most talented visual artists, seven of whom made the trip to Malaysia for the opening: Tin Win, Pann Kyi, Khin Zaw Latt, Zay Yar Aye, Khin Maung Zaw, Soe Soe (Laputta) and Mon Thet.

Also participating in the show but unable to make the journey were Tin Htay Aung, Moe Nyo, Aung Thin Oo and Zaw Min.

The works include oils, acrylics and watercolours, and range from realistic village scenes to semi-abstract pagoda images.

In a speech at the opening ceremony, Sultan Nazrin noted that as Myanmar has opened up to the outside world, “its art has emerged from the shadows, and today gallery owners from across the world are already scouting for talent.”

He said artists stand to benefit from such increased regional and international exposure to their work.

“These developments in the art scene are positive because, as in all great civilisations, a greater appreciation of art and culture contributes to a country’s aspiration to be a developed and civilised society. It gives a nation soul and depth,” he said.

“Art has always been an effective mode of political and social expression, and history has shown that many artists have paid a heavy price for daring to stand up to injustice.”

This “heavy price” is all too familiar to Myanmar artists who, before 2010, spent decades struggling under a government in which paranoid military ideologues with no fine arts knowledge dictated what was permitted to be shown in art galleries.

During their trip to Kuala Lumpur from April 20 to 24, the Myanmar painters visited several private art collections as well as the National Art Gallery, the Islamic Arts Museum and the Bank Negara Malaysia Museum and Art Gallery.

The tour provided insight into Malaysia’s art scene and highlighted the degree to which Myanmar’s arts had been asphyxiated – both



Raja Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim (left), Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Azlan Shah (centre) and Myanmar artist Khin Zaw Latt attend the opening of the “Masters of Myanmar Art” exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on April 21. **Photos: Douglas Long**



Myanmar artists (left to right) Pann Kyi, Khin Maung Zaw, Khin Zaw Latt, Soe Soe (Laputta), Tin Win, Mon Thet and Zay Yar Aye await the arrival of Sultan Nazrin at The Edge Galerie.



Zay Yar Aye poses with one of his paintings at The Edge Galerie.

creatively and financially – by more than 50 years of draconian military control.

And although some steps toward political liberalisation have been made and censorship has been

scaled back in recent years, the dark, not-so-distant days of junta rule have left a legacy of huge challenges for Myanmar artists. Among these is a business environment virtually bereft of local art collectors.

Tin Win, who was on his first visit to Malaysia, said that in Kuala Lumpur he met businesspeople “who collect artwork that is beautiful for hanging on the wall and that is also a good investment”.

“In Myanmar, businessmen don’t know about collecting artwork,” he said. “They invest in land or jewellery. Maybe with a little education, one day there will be more art collectors in Myanmar.”

During a radio interview on BFM 89.9 in Kuala Lumpur on April 23, Khin Zaw Latt expanded on this idea.

“It’s the same in every country: To live on art is very difficult. But especially in Myanmar, local people don’t buy art,” he said.

“I think it still needs to take time to develop Myanmar art ... We still need to have the infrastructure like museums and private collections,” he said. “If you come to Myanmar, most of the galleries are run by the artists. No businesspeople are interested to do art galleries.”

On the creative side, Zay Yar Aye, who has benefited from years of art education in Myanmar and Japan, said the Malaysia trip provided him with “practical experiences, ideas and energy” for future art projects.

“Malaysia’s art scene is very different from our country. In Myanmar, artists prefer to continue doing what they are already doing. In Malaysia they are more free. For example, you see artists who start out with a traditional style and gradually change to an abstract style,” he said.

Khin Zaw Latt, speaking to *The Myanmar Times*, agreed.

“Most Myanmar painters are still working on very traditional subjects like monasteries, temples and landscapes. In Malaysia they are more contemporary and free,” he said.

“I’ve seen many abstract artists [in Malaysia], but in Myanmar we have only a few such artists. Some artists in Malaysia, even though they are making abstract art, are doing well because collectors also appreciate these works.”

Overall, Khin Zaw Latt described the Malaysia trip as “a very good experience”.

“It’s a big exhibition for us because it’s a big group – 11 Burmese artists, including senior artists and younger artists,” he said.

“It was also a very grand opening. I’ve done many exhibitions inside and outside Myanmar, but I have never done this kind of formal grand opening. It was interesting, and also good to meet the local artists.”

The show was organised by ECM Libra Financial Group Bhd chair Datuk Seri Kalimullah Hassan and The Edge Media Group executive chair Datuk Tong Kooi Ong, with the aim of offering Malaysian collectors the opportunity to buy paintings by accomplished artists from Myanmar. Proceeds from the sales will be donated to charities in Myanmar. **W**

“Masters of Myanmar Art” runs until May 22 at The Edge Galerie, G5-G6 Mont’Kiara Meridin 19, Jalan Duta Kiara, Mont’Kiara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. For more information, email info@theedgegalerie.com, visit www.theedgegalerie.com or call +60-3-7721-8188. Opening hours are Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 7pm.

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