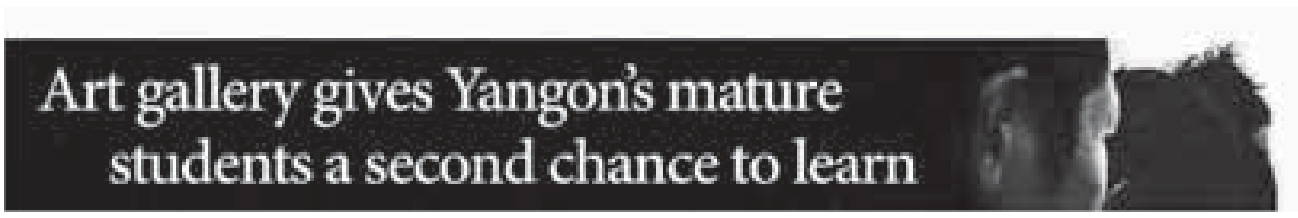

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NGO reps to meet MPs over draft law

CHERRY THEIN

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REPRESENTATIVES from local NGOs in upper and lower Myanmar will meet this week to prepare for discussions with MPs over the draft Association Law, which will govern how non-government groups register and operate.

Civil society groups are critical of the current draft, particularly the centralised registration process and punishments for individuals who violate provisions of the law. They argue it will discourage smaller groups from undertaking much-needed community activities and that the drafting process has been rushed and lacking in broad consultation.

The draft law prepared by the Pyithu Hluttaw Public Affairs Management Committee was published in state media on July 27 along with a note inviting public feedback before it is submitted to the parliament for discussion.

Under the current draft, all NGOs regardless of size will have to register with a central committee, which will also monitor their activities. Applications must be approved or denied within 90 days of submission and individuals who fail to abide by the law will face a fine of up to K500,000, a three-year prison term or both.

MORE ON NEWS 17

IN PICTURES

Photo: Boothee

Thousands packed the Myanmar Convention Centre from August 6 to 8 for a history-making event to mark the 25th anniversary of the 1988 uprising. While prominent activists such as 88 Generation leader Min Ko Naing and NLD boss Daw Aung San Suu Kyi led the speeches, it was the presence of a number of former and serving military officials, including U Aung Min and U Htay Oo, that that underscored how much Myanmar has changed over the past two years.

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Sex tape scandal rocks university

Students and teachers reject a report that the principal of a Thanlyin university was forced to resign for showing a sex video to parents and students with a projector.

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Peace centre warns on UNFC demands

A member of the Myanmar Peace Center has cautioned against making unrealistic demands, after an alliance of 11 ethnic groups said it would push for a complete rewrite of the 2008 constitution.

BUSINESS 22

Exporters cheer EU trade aid

Exporters have welcomed news that the European Union will spend 14 million euros (US$18.7 million) over the next four years to help them gain access to its 28-country single market, which is the world's largest.

THE PULSE 41

Bertnil Litner talks about 8888 as it really happened

Journalist Bertil Lintner discusses the recent publication inside Myanmar of his book *Outrage*, which was originally published in 1989 and details the events of the 1988 uprising.

Dispute looming over bills

The government and parliament are heading for another showdown after President U Thein Sein refused to sign the State/Region Hluttaw Law 2013. The government has issued a press release outlining the president's proposed changes to the bill, all of which were rejected by parliamentarians last month. NEWS 3

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

THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

Lost in translation
Chinese state media *Xinhua* has been left red-faced for the second time in a matter of weeks, after reporting Amazon billionaire Jeff Bezos had accidentally bought the *Washington Post* – the source of which was a satirical piece for *The New Yorker* magazine by comedian Andy Borowitz.

This came days after another gaffe, where the publication's website posted a gallery of 40 images ostensibly showing a woman being executed by lethal injection. It later emerged that the images came from a fetish website.

In November last year, the ruling Communist party mouthpiece published a story from US satire site The Onion which claimed that North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un had been voted "Sexiest Man Alive".

From petri dish to plate
In a 1936 address, Winston Churchill predicted that *in vitro* meat would one day be engineered for human consumption. In a world-first, the 'world's most expensive burger' (partially funded by Google co-founder Sergey Brin) was consumed by its creator and two food researchers in an event live-streamed over the web.

Researchers took stem cells from a cow and grew them into strips of muscle that they combined to make a burger. The burger was cooked by chef Richard McGeown and tasted by critics Hanni Ruetzler, a food researcher from the Future Food Studio and Josh Schonwald.

'Food scientist Hanni Reutzler said "There is quite some intense taste. It's close to meat. It's not that juicy. But the consistency is perfect."

Burger engineer Professor Post noted that the meat lacked the juicy flavour afforded by normal meat's fat content – something that can probably be replicated in order to create something identical to that from livestock.

GOP candidate uncovers Crayola's nefarious agenda
Children's stationary manufacturer Crayola has raised the ire of an anti-Islam Picken County Georgia GOP candidate in the US after it published colouring-in exercises on its website for those celebrating Ramadan.

The *pickensgop.org* blog posted a fairly unhinged and unfounded response to the Crayola site's printouts, which were entitled "Ready for Ramadan" and encouraged children to colour in a drawing of a prayer map, as well as Islamic patterns.

"Crayola should remind kids not to try and draw Muhammad lest their parents need to fend off Muslims and enter witness relocation – like the creator of Everyone Draw Muhammad Day – since the FBI nor anyone else will protect them", the post read, followed by the procedure for lodging a complaint.

The Crayola site has hundreds of colouring-in exercises available online in all manner of categories, including religious celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, Diwali, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa.

Secure email provider throws in the towel
The creator of an encrypted email service used by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden has pulled the plug on his company, despite paid subscriptions going up threefold in recent months. On Thursday last week 32-year-old Levison posted a cryptic message about his reasoning for doing so, making oblique reference to a government investigation that would force him to "become complicit in crimes against the American people".

"I'm taking a break from email," said Levison. "If you knew what I know about email, you might not use it either."

When Myanmar was Burma...

Archival material provided by Pansodan Gallery

General Aung San and Ne Win on the cover of political journal *Oh We* July 17, 1971.

Advertisement for British colonial Rowe & Co. Department store sale on January 29, 1938.

Emerald Nyein for NOW! Magazine. Photo by Pyay Han

Monks demonstrate on Mandalay's 38th Street on August 6. Photo: Phyo Wai Kyaw

Monks demonstrate over media, U Wirathu bombing

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HUNDREDS of monks in Mandalay staged an illegal demonstration last week, calling for "fairer" treatment in the international media and an end to terrorist acts.

Sayadaw U Tilawka from Mingun Monastery said the August 6 protest was organised in response to *Time* magazine's July 1 "Face of Buddhist Terror" cover and the detonating of a bomb near where U Wirathu was giving a sermon on July 21.

"We are not just protesting on behalf of Buddhism. We are against terrorism all around the world," U Tilawka said.

Carrying banners with photos of *Time* journalist Hannah Beech and messages such as, "The New York Time magazine must apologize to Theravada Buddhist monks in public," the monks walked from U Pesi Pagoda in Maha Aung Myay township to Mahamuni Pagoda. The march took about one hour and the monks then dispersed peacefully.

While the monks applied for permission to stage the rally, their application was rejected by local authorities on the grounds that the government had already expressed its unhappiness with the *Time* article and therefore the protest was not needed. About 500 monks went ahead and protested anyway.

"We asked permission but the authorities in Maha Aung Myay township did not allow it. However, we already decided to demonstrate and made arrangements for it so we marched [anyway]," U Tilawka said.

Before the protest began, Mandalay district administrator U Tin Zaw Moe explained to the monks why the application had been rejected. "We are just requesting [that you do not protest] but it is up to you whether you protest or not. I am afraid that it would create more problems if you do it without permission," U Tin Zaw Moe said.

Govt, MPs set for another showdown

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MPs have slammed the president for refusing to sign the Region/State Hluttaw Bill 2013 on the grounds that it is unconstitutional.

The government published a press release in state newspapers on August 8 outlining nine changes the president had proposed to the draft originally approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in February. However, MPs rejected all of the proposed changes.

In a message to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, the president asked him to take "necessary measures" as some sections were not "in accord with the constitution, the existing laws and main democratic practices" and therefore "cannot be signed by the president".

However, under the constitution, all bills approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw become law within seven days regardless of whether the president signs them. It appears likely the Region/State Hluttaw Bill 2013 will be sent to the Constitutional Tribunal for assessment.

MPs said the government's reaction showed it did not want to cooperate with MPs for the good of the country.

"This law was drafted particularly to improve joint efforts between MPs and governments on important issues. In reality, government officials do not dare to cooperate with MPs because the constitution states they should not participate in political activities," said Daw Nan Whar Nu, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Kunhein, in reference to section 9(e) of the bill.

"The president did not sign the points that were particularly intended to support the interests of the public and country through cooperation between MPs and the government. It means he is not willing to cooperate," she said.

Another point of contention is section 2(h), which designates region or state hluttaw committees as state-level organisations. A similar dispute over the status of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw committees led to the impeachment of the Constitutional Tribunal last year.

'It is concerning that the Constitutional Tribunal may have to decide on every law that is passed by the parliament.'

U Ye Tun
Pyithu Hluttaw representative

U Thein Nyunt, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Thingangyun, said the press release was "not unusual", as the government had issued a similar statement over its unhappiness with the Pyithu Hluttaw Law and Amyotha Hluttaw Law.

"I don't want to say anything about it because this is the president's right under the constitution. But under constitution section 106, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw can approve the bill without accepting the president's recommendations and the bill will still become law whether [or not] the president signs it," he said.

U Ye Tun, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Hsipaw, said he was certain the matter would end up before the Constitutional Tribunal.

"The constitution is not clear on some issues and it appears the president's advisory team gives him advice on matters where there is a lack of clarity," he said. "We have to wait to see how the Constitutional Tribunal will respond to the statement from the President's Office.

"It is concerning that the Constitutional Tribunal may have to decide on every law that is passed by the parliament."

But while there are clear divisions between the government and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, it appears the president is not going to block every contentious bill. On August 9, the government issued a similar statement expressing its objections to the Anti-Corruption Bill, which was passed by parliament last month after MPs rejected 10 of the president's 12 proposed amendments.

He warned that the bill did not properly define corruption and mostly targets bribery. "The bill needs to cover wide-ranging subjects as corruption includes abuse of power, bribery and deliberate negligence," he said.

As a result, the president warned the law may not meet the criteria for anti-corruption legislation set by the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which the government ratified in December 2012.

"Despite the above-mentioned circumstances," the president said in the statement. "I signed the bill approved by the majority of MPs with respect to the wish of the majority."

– *Translated by Zar Zar Soe*

ABSDF, govt hold more talks following ceasefire

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An ABSDF member (second right) shakes hands with Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Khin Ye at the Myanmar Peace Center on August 5. Photo: Boothee

THE All Burma Student's Democratic Front was scheduled to hold "union-level" peace talks over the weekend after signing a ceasefire agreement with government negotiators in Yangon earlier in the week.

The agreement was reached on August 5 at the Myanmar Peace Center, with another meeting planned for August 10.

"At first we discussed about 67 points but we have reached agreements by holding several talks," U Aung Min, head of the government's negotiating team, said at a press conference at the end of the talks on August 5.

"Now there are 12 points to be discussed further. We have reached an agreement to discuss these 12 points at union-level peace talks on August 10 at the same place."

On August 5 negotiators focused on peace and national reconciliation, regional development and the opening of liaison offices. They also agreed to hold further discussions on how to proceed with inclusive political dialogue.

As well as a ceasefire, the four-point agreement also commits the Tatmadaw and the ABSDF to avoid hostilities and allows ABSDF members to travel freely without weapons. The group will also open a liaison office in Myawaddy in Kayin State.

ABSDF chairman Comrade Than Khae said members of the front, which was formed in 1988 by students fleeing a brutal military crackdown, want peace.

"We really appreciate [the agreement] and we believe that it must be a positive step for getting genuine peace and national reconciliation," he said. "We have been struggling for democracy for 25 years. During those years, we have suffered many bitter experiences and lived in seriously difficult conditions.

"We understand that it is better to solve conflict by peaceful means rather than with arms. That's why we came here again to cooperate with other democratic forces, although we don't fully believe that genuine democracy is here now."

While the front has voiced a willingness to negotiate with all groups, including the government, to create genuine peace and national reconciliation, ABSDF forces have also assisted ethnic armed forces fighting the Tatmadaw, senior ABSDF officials said.

Comrade Than Khae stressed the importance of ensuring that all ABSDF members were aware of the agreement and abided by it.

"We must guarantee the agreements made with the government's peace team reach other ABSDF members in different parts of the country, including in borders areas ... because we came here to represent the ABSDF as one group," he said.

ABSDF leaders said they had not yet mapped out a future plan for the group, including whether the army would transform itself into a political party or civil society group.

"We have to decide the role of ABSDF after seeing results of the political dialogues that will include all ethnic groups," said vice chairman Comrade Myo Win. "We are ready to utilise our forces in any role that seeks to create genuine peace and national reconciliation."

U Aung Min said he believes the ABSDF will play a positive role in the peace process, national development and the transition to democracy. "A key point about the ABSDF is that its members have been living with ethnic armed forces for 25 years. They understand the ethnic groups and so we urge them to cooperate with us on the peace process as a negotiator," he said.

The August 5 talks were the fifth meeting between the ABSDF and the government's peace negotiation team.

Groups praise govt cooperation with Rakhine aid effort

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HUMANITARIAN groups say relief and recovery efforts in Rakhine State have proceeded faster than expected, thanks in part to the cooperation shown by state and national government officials.

The comments come as the United Nations says 140,000 people remain displaced and almost US$40 million in new funding is required to meet their needs to the end of the year.

Hans ten Feld, a spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Yangon, said the government had played an important role in helping his agency provide shelter to tens of thousands of displaced people ahead of the monsoon.

"One of the big recent challenges has been the necessity to ensure that 70,000 vulnerable IDPs were provided adequate shelter during the monsoon season. This has been largely achieved, not least with a substantial government response in this area," he said.

"I have been encouraged by statements by the government at different levels, from President Thein Sein down, that have recognised the need to help repair community relations; to address issues without any bias and in accordance with the law and with the public service code of conduct; and, in general, the willingness and intention to move forward in a positive and constructive manner to address and resolve the situation in Rakhine State."

This view was echoed by David Mathieson, a Yangon-based spokesperson for Human Rights Watch. While his organisation has been a vocal critic of government policies in Rakhine State, he described the relief effort as "successful" and praised the government's cooperation with aid groups.

"Under the circumstances, I don't think anyone has expected aid delivery to happen as fast as it has," Mr Mathieson said. "The fact that it's been successful is a testament to the expertise of UN officials and the cooperation of the local government."

Mr Mathieson said he believed both the Rakhine State and central governments were downplaying their important role in the delivery of aid to avoid accusations of bias from the Rakhine community, which regularly complains that aid groups favour Muslims over Rakhine people.

The UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said last week that as of mid-July about 140,000 people were still displaced due to two outbreaks of violence in the state in 2012.

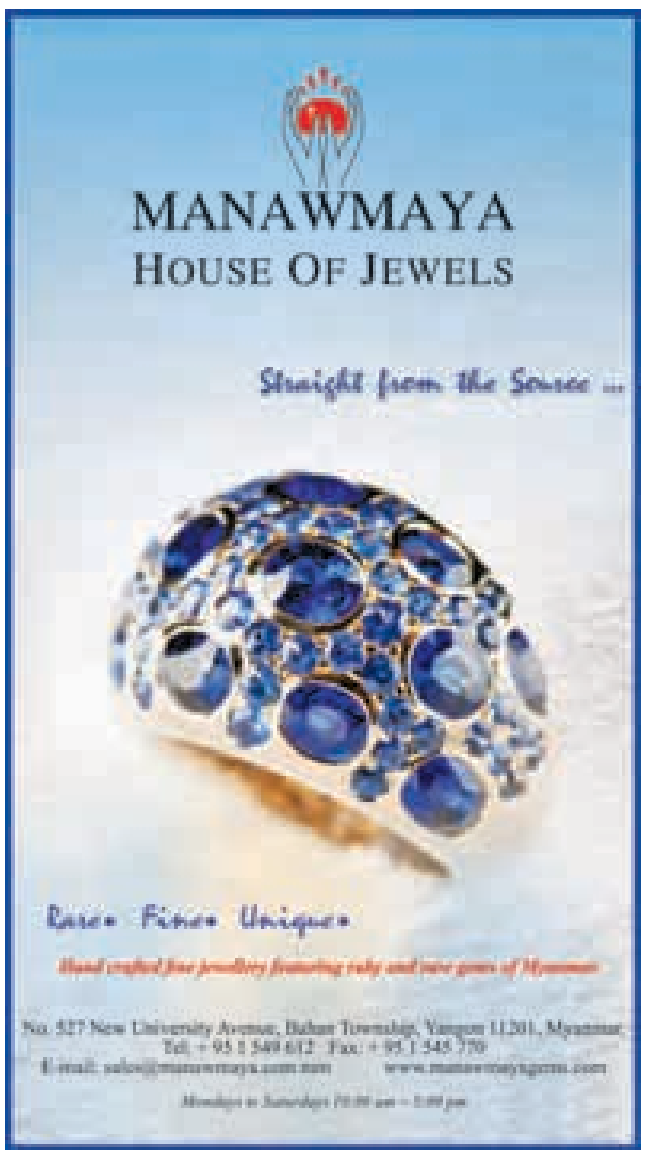
'Under the circumstances I don't think anyone expected aid delivery to happen as fast as it has.'

David Mathieson
Human Rights Watch

"In addition, as many as 36,000 other individuals in isolated and host communities in Minbya, Myebon, Pauktaw, Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw and Sittwe townships have also been adversely impacted," the report said.

With aboutr $70 million already committed to the relief effort in Rakhine State, OCHA estimates that UN agencies need another $39.3 million by the end of the year.

The report highlights food security as one of the most pressing issues in the region, and estimates that UN groups have less than half of the funding needed to properly address the issue.



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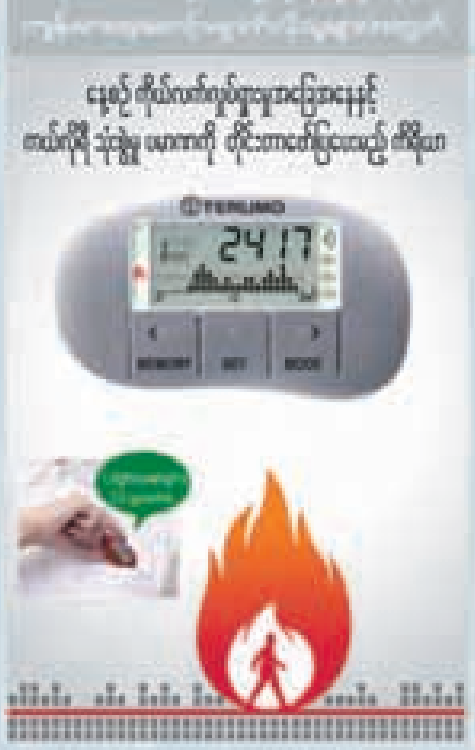

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Forgive, but do not forget

The photo exhibitions and videos brought the bloody crackdowns of 1988 back to life for many visitors – but 88 Generation leaders stressed the need for cooperation, not confrontation

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"DON'T stop. Keep going, keep going," the policeman said repeatedly to the taxi drivers as they try to stop outside the Myanmar Convention Center on Yangon's Mindhamma Road.

The policeman stood below an entrance bedecked with red and black flags with a peacock motif and the words, "8888 Silver Jubilee".

Many of the people streaming in through the entrance wore the black T-shirts made for the occasion, while others wore white T-shirts and traditional black longyi, known as *yaw paso*.

For many it was more about finding out what happened than remembering.

"I'm excited to attend the ceremony although I was not alive at the time," said Ma Wa Wai Thar, 21, from Thaketa township. "I felt sad and even cried when I was watching this video," she added, pointing to the large screen on which scenes of 1988 were being played.

Inside the convention center, more than 5000 people jostled to find seats in front of the stage, where a big red "8888" held centre stage.

Although 25 years have passed, red remains the colour of the uprising – a reminder of the blood spilled on the streets, in the prison cells and, most famously, on the "red bridge" leading to Inya Lake beside Pyay Road when people from all walks of life rose up against the government.

While the protests were extinguished, the quest for democracy was not.

"In the past 25 years, governments have changed and we've even had three national flags. But our flag, the peacock, has never changed. Let's all work together under this flag," 88 Generation leader Min Ko Naing told the crowd to rapturous applause.

"It has taken 25 years to reach this day. We have called for democracy for many years. Many people sacrificed their life; we gave our energy, sweat and tears within these years. Finally we can celebrate the silver ceremony," he said.

'There were bodies all over the road. Some died at the spot and others managed to run away when the police shot them.'

U Mya Kyaing
Former political prisoner

He said the 1988 uprising was a time when people "united and fought to end oppression and injustice under the military regime".

"We have to continue to move with the '88 spirit. If oppression and injustice happens again, there will be a revival of 1988."

The three-day event was notable for the diversity of people it attracted. This included not only those who were students in 1988 but also family members of students and people who died, members of political parties, former political prisoners, ethnic minority leaders, civil society representatives, members of parliament, a minister from the President's Office and, of course, democracy icon Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who delivered a speech on August 8.

The speakers of the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw sent letters to the ceremony, while Minister for the President's Office U Aung Min attended along with Union Solidarity and Development Party senior members U Htay Oo and U Thein Zaw.

Colonel San Aung from the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army said his group respected the 88 Generation for fighting for democracy for 25 years without resorting to violence.

"We have fought against the government with weapons for 60 years and it led to a lot of loss of life among our ethnic group. We don't want to fight anymore. We want to cooperate with all to get genuine federalism," he said.

88 Generation leader Ko Pyone Cho said organisers had hoped for a broad turnout.

"We invited all people – both those involved on that day and those not involved – because the 8-8-88 Revolution concerned all citizens," he said.

During the ceremony, participants observed a minute's silence for those who lost their lives. Among these was a teenage girl, Ma Win Maw Oo, who was shot by the military. A photo of her being carried by two students who tried in vain to save her life became famous around the world and was the focal point of a photo and art exhibition at last week's ceremony.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the 1988 uprising 25th anniversary event at the Myanmar Convention Cente

"We'll never forget the scene. It's a tragedy for our country," U Mya Kyaing, 75, said as he looked at the photo.

A former political prisoner, he was released from Thayarwady Prison in 2005 and lives in East Dagon township.

"At that time, we lived in North Okkalapa. There was a bridge near No 2 quarter. Government troops stood on the bridge and shot at those who demonstrated on North Okkalapa Road," he said slowly.

"There were bodies all over the road. Some died at that spot and others managed to run away when the police shot them. I helped the demonstrators as much as I could."

After attending last week's ceremony with some colleagues, U Mya Kyaing said he had decided to return to politics and cooperate with groups trying to get genuine peace and democracy. "I will help as much as I can."

Like U Mya Kyaing, some people were looking at the photos, some were visiting book shops and some were sitting at food courts and talking about their experiences in 1988.

One groups sang political songs, while others stood in front of a replica of a prison cell.

"We lived in it for many years by making what we needed," an ex-political prisoner sitting inside explained to visitors as he showed his handmade accessories.

Ma Ti Daung Nan, from Lashio in northern Shan State, came to Yangon for the ceremony. "I wanted to learn from this ceremony," she said. "Our ethnic group lives in very poor conditions and I want to do something to develop our life. After attending the ceremony I will share my experience and knowledge to other people at home."

88 Generation leaders said it was people like Ma Ti Daung Nan and U Mya Kyaing whom they hoped the event would inspire.

"We understand that we can't get democracy alone. We don't want to solve problems through violence. We will cooperate with all to find the best answer for the country peacefully," said Min Ko Naing.

There was also one final message from the 88 Generation: "We can forgive – but not forget."

Don't bear grudges: Daw Suu

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IT was the revolution that propelled Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to international stardom – but she said last week that she did not consider herself a part of the uprising.

"I admit honestly that I was not involved in 8-8-88 revolution," she said at the Myanmar Convention Center on August 8. "I also did not join the students who protested on the streets. But I believed that all should support the attainment of democracy. Because of this faith, I entered the political field in August.

The National League for Democracy leader gave her first public speech on August 26, 1988, on the western gateway to Shwedagon Pagoda. Since then she has dedicated herself to change through nonviolent methods, and it was a stance she reiterated last week.

"Some people think that we can achieve our aims through violence. That is sometimes true but it doesn't mean that the results we get in a short time are the right results," she said.

She suggested that those involved in the revolution should review their role and draw lessons from what has happened since.

"Everybody should review history in the right way. We know that if we take the wrong lessons from history we will create more problems for ourselves in future."

Although many people sacrificed their lives for democracy, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi urged all those who had suffered at the hands of military regimes to move forward in a positive ways to create a democratic country with respect for human rights.

"We don't hold grudges against anyone. We must share loving kindness to all and think about the right ways to move forward," she added.

She conceded that her efforts to achieve change through the hluttaw were yet to bear fruit, citing the three campaign promises she made before the 2012 by-elections: rule of law, peace and amendments to the constitution.

"If [someone] asks me if we have rule of law in our country, I would say not yet. If they ask is there peace, I would say not yet. And if they ask, have you finished amending the constitution, I say we have not even started yet."

…er in Yangon on August 8. Photo: Boothee

Debate over justice for 1988

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AS activists and members of the public came together last week to mark the 25th anniversary of the 1988 uprising, a number of human rights groups and individuals also raised the prospect of justice for the estimated 3000 people killed.

On August 6, Human Rights Watch issued a statement calling on President U Thein Sein to begin a formal investigation into the crackdown, which it described as "an unaddressed open wound that challenges the government's rhetoric of reform".

"The government should shed itself of 50 years of denial about military abuses by showing that it stands with the Burmese people and not with the killers of the past," said Brad Adams, the group's Asia director.

However, many politicians have distanced themselves from calls for a justice mechanism seemingly over concerns it could damage relations with serving and former members of the military.

At a BBC panel during the World Economic Forum in Nay Pyi Taw, moderator Nik Gowing repeatedly brought up the example of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation commission, asking parliamentarian and democracy icon Daw Aung San Suu Kyi if she favoured such a model.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) leader avoided responding either way.

The idea, however, seems to have gained momentum among MPs, who on July 31 even watched a movie about the South African commission in parliament.

In an interview with *The Myanmar Times* last week, NLD representative U Zaw Myint Maung voiced his support for such a commission, saying it could contribute to "peaceful change".

Some activists have also looked to Cambodia, where several members of the inner circle of dictator Pol Pot's regime have been put on trial in recent years.

On 27 July, the Cambodian branch of the advocacy group Documentation Center-Cambodia partnered with the Myanmar branch of Network for Human Rights Documentation for a workshop entitled "Human Rights Documentation as a Tool for Dealing with the Past and Moving on to the Future".

The meeting, held at Yangon's Royal Rose restaurant, "aimed to introduce the basic concept of a Truth Commission ... [and] how Burma could implement a Truth Commission like Cambodia's during this period of political transition".

However, David Mathieson, a Yangon-based spokesperson for Human Rights Watch, said Myanmar should not simply copy another country's example of transitional justice.

"The context [in Myanmar] is quite unique," he said. "You can't simply adopt the model from a different country."

Mr Mathieson said the South African commission's structure, where criminals of the Apartheid era were granted a reprieve if they admitted their crimes, could actually damage people's faith in the peace process. "There has to be clear justice and accountability," he said.

He said the process should start with a dialogue between "communities, the government and the military" to shed a clearer light on the events of 1988.

He pointed out that in addition to the well-known cases of police and army personnel firing on protesters, there were many lesser known instances of civilians attacking the homes and families of police and others they suspected of being informants. "The events were much more complicated than people think," he said.

Mr Mathieson said the commemoration events in Yangon last week made him hopeful that the process could begin now. "The three days of celebrations were very peaceful. There was no anti-government rhetoric. It was quite optimistic and uplifting ... It indicates that it's possible to openly discuss these issues."

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Snowden and Cambodia: A match made in heaven

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Edward Snowden speaks during an interview with *The Guardian*.
Photo: AFP/The Guardian

BOY, oh, boy, the world feels so warm and fuzzy. It's enough to make one jump for joy and start believing in Chevron's human energy.

The reason for the elation, of course, is that the world's bravest man (Sam Rainsy might disagree), namely Edward Snowden, has been given his freedom back.

Well, he's been granted a year's respite in Russia. You may say, 'Sure, and the first prize was two years in Venezuela,' but bottle the cynicism and instead applaud Moscow's courageous decision.

Snowden, for those who have been living underground for the past few months, is the young man who revealed that the United States has been spying on all of us.

Every email, every phone call, every log-in, every photo taken each time you use an ATM has been recorded and stored by the US National Security Agency (NSA).

As a result of exposing this clandestine "megadata" surveillance, Snowden has been labelled a traitor and threatened with a fate worse than the Spanish Inquisition.

Luckily, aided by like-minded citizens, he escaped to Moscow via Hong Kong, where he remained in the airport until August 1, when he was allowed into Russia.

What he revealed is shocking and sickening. It means none of us have any privacy whatsoever.

Should you do something that upsets Uncle Sam, it is but a matter of nanoseconds for all your phone calls, emails and other details to be pulled up and put through the NSA wringer.

Something incriminating will be found, perhaps those emails you wrote about Bun Rany, or the calls you made from the Pussy Bar, or the joints you shared outside the Cantina.

That material will be leaked and you will realise what it felt like for Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Anwar Ibrahim, Princess Diana and myriad others whose underwear drawers have been ransacked.

However, we are not here to recycle dirty linen, but to laud braveheart Snowden and focus on a scoop that, if my source is right, is almost as staggering as the material he leaked.

Edward Snowden is coming to Cambodia.

Well, that's the message. So please take a deep breath and remember you read it first in this illustrious organ.

"How and why is he coming?" you may ask.

Well, the how is easy. There is a daily nonstop Aeroflot-Russian Airlines flight from Moscow to Ho Chi Minh City for only US$450 one way.

From there, as Rainsy's pals across the border know, it's only $15 on the bus to Fugitive Central: the all-welcoming metropolis of Phnom Penh.

Russia has few more compliant vassals than Cambodia and Vietnam so forget passport and visa irritants - the man will be in like Flynn.

Before you know it, he'll be lighting a cigar in The Vault with fellow fugitives ranging from Russian property tycoons to exiled Thai Prime Ministers to alleged descendants of the Romanovs.

Why let him in? That's also easy to answer. Just review the West's snidey reaction, epitomised by the US, to Cambodia's recent peacefully conducted multiparty election.

Then recall some of the earlier guff from those who gave us torture at Guantanamo – you know, the chastisement about Hun Sen repatriating Uighurs and supporting Beijing over the South China Sea and so on.

If someone stiffs you relentlessly, it's nice when you can respond with a good poke in the vitals. That's what letting Snowden in will do.

Hopefully, he will then emulate his fellow leakmeister, Julian Assange, who plans to run for a senate seat in the coming Australian election.

If he wins, it will provide a nice incentive for Snowden, once Hun Sen has granted him honorary citizenship, to join the CPP and run here.

The prime minister, a wily man, could field the cleancut Snowden against the racially tainted Rainsy and then it would be au revoir, mon ami.

Robust debate needed on constitution

Strengthening the separation of powers will make Myanmar more stable and attractive to investors

ANDREW MCLEOD
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WHEN Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann visited Washington last June, he delighted his American audience with a keen interest in their constitutional system. Showing characteristic charm, he revealed an eagerness to learn more about how powers were divided among branches of government in the United States. The significance of that remark was lost on many commentators. But it represented the first sign of cross-party support to strengthen the separation of powers in Myanmar's constitution. Thura U Shwe Mann and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have now both made the separation of powers a crucial plank of their platform for constitutional reform.

The fresh prominence given to this principle raises two questions: What might a stronger separation of powers look like? And is such a tightening politically feasible?

The constitution adopted for Myanmar in 2008 embraces the separation of powers as one of its basic principles. Section 11 stipulates that the legislative power, the executive power and the judicial power are separated "to the extent possible, and exert reciprocal control, check and balance among themselves". According to standard constitutional doctrine, this would normally be understood as entrenching the notion that each of the three branches of government has a defined area of operation in which their actions are sovereign. The overriding objective of dividing powers in this way is to ensure that no branch of government is able to oppress or override the liberties of citizens.

But other provisions of the constitution sit uncomfortably with the usual conception of the separation of powers. Some powers that would ordinarily be vested in one branch currently reside in a different branch. For instance, section 212 grants the president power to promulgate ordinances when the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is in recess and section 218 authorises him to make "necessary rules" on matters to be performed by the Union Government. Both these powers resemble capacities normally vested in a parliamentary body. Another example is section 226, which empowers the government to mediate and decide disputes over administration among the regions, states and the union. This provision seems to give the executive the authority to deliver a definitive judgment on such disputes, which looks very much like a judicial power.

Entrenching a stronger form of the separation of powers will involve the bolstering of safeguards on judicial power.

Other constitutional provisions weaken the ability of each branch to check the power of the others. The president is responsible to the hluttaw (section 203), and the rulings of the Supreme Court and Constitutional Tribunal are final and conclusive (sections 295 and 324). But according to section 215 the president will not be answerable to any hluttaw or any court in the exercise of his powers and functions or even in the purported exercise of these. The proviso at the end of this section might suggest that the immunity operates only when actions are in accordance with the constitution but such an interpretation would make the section meaningless. If the constitution authorises an act, what is there to answer for?

Entrenching a stronger form of the separation of powers – if that is what Myanmar decides is in its best interests – will require amending these sections and others. It will involve the removal of some functions exercisable by the executive and the legislature and the bolstering of safeguards on judicial power.

At first blush, that seems to sink any chance of genuine reform. Global history has consistently shown that people and institutions rarely relinquish power willingly, no matter how well intentioned they may be.

But there are significant political and economic incentives for all three branches of government in Myanmar to agree to such changes. If the constitution establishes a clearer division of powers, the chance of contentious constitutional disputes will likely drop. For instance, a sharper separation of powers in the constitution might have avoided last year's complicated debate about the meaning of the term "union-level organisation". On this hypothetical, the arrangement of the legislature and its committees could have been viewed as a matter uniquely within the competence of the legislative branch and one inappropriate for another branch to adjudicate on unless the arrangement was clearly unconstitutional. By giving up some powers, the executive and the legislature will gain greater certainty and a degree of autonomy within the remaining scope of their authority. The judiciary, on the other hand, will be less likely to disrupt the expectations of the other branches when they do adjudicate on the breadth and depth of their powers.

This in itself will bring economic advantages. But businesses will also benefit directly from a more predictable constitutional structure. Knowing the scope and authority of each branch affords greater certainty in judging the likelihood of legal challenges to transactions. If, for example, the prerequisites for the executive to enter into a contract are clear – when must parliament vote to appropriate the funds for the contract? On what grounds can a court review the legality of the contract? – a private enterprise will be more willing to progress a transaction quickly and perform the contract efficiently.

Implementing such changes are likely to make Myanmar a more stable polity and a more attractive option for local and foreign investors. But whether a stronger separation of powers is desirable is ultimately a question for Myanmar, its people and its leaders. What is needed now is an informed and robust debate about the checks and balances required to progress Myanmar's transition to democracy. The balance Myanmar ultimately chooses will be unique and must suit its special social, cultural and economic considerations.

Andrew McLeod is a constitutional lawyer and deputy director of the Myanmar Constitutional Reform Project at the University of Sydney, Australia. In May, he led the Myanmar Constitutional Democracy Workshop held in Yangon.

Govt working to harmonise investment rules

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THE government plans to amend bylaws, orders and instructions that do not match provisions in the Foreign Investment Law, a government official told parliament last week.

In response to a question from an MP, Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Daw Khin San Yi said on August 5 that the government was already examining the legal framework for inconsistencies.

"I agree that some orders and instructions related to foreign investment should be amended," she said.

"We have been discussing bylaws, orders and instructions in detail with government ministries and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry since July 1 and have drafted amendments. These were submitted to the Myanmar Investment Commission in July and more changes were made. We will issue the final amendments after submitting them to cabinet for approval."

U Win Oo, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Yebyu in Tanintharyi Region, said he was particularly concerned about the allocation of land to foreign investors but there are inconsistencies throughout the ministries.

"The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation ... is allowing a large number of companies to invest in farming but the state hasn't yet settled farmland disputes so I am concerned that unnecessary problems will occur when more foreign investors come," he said.

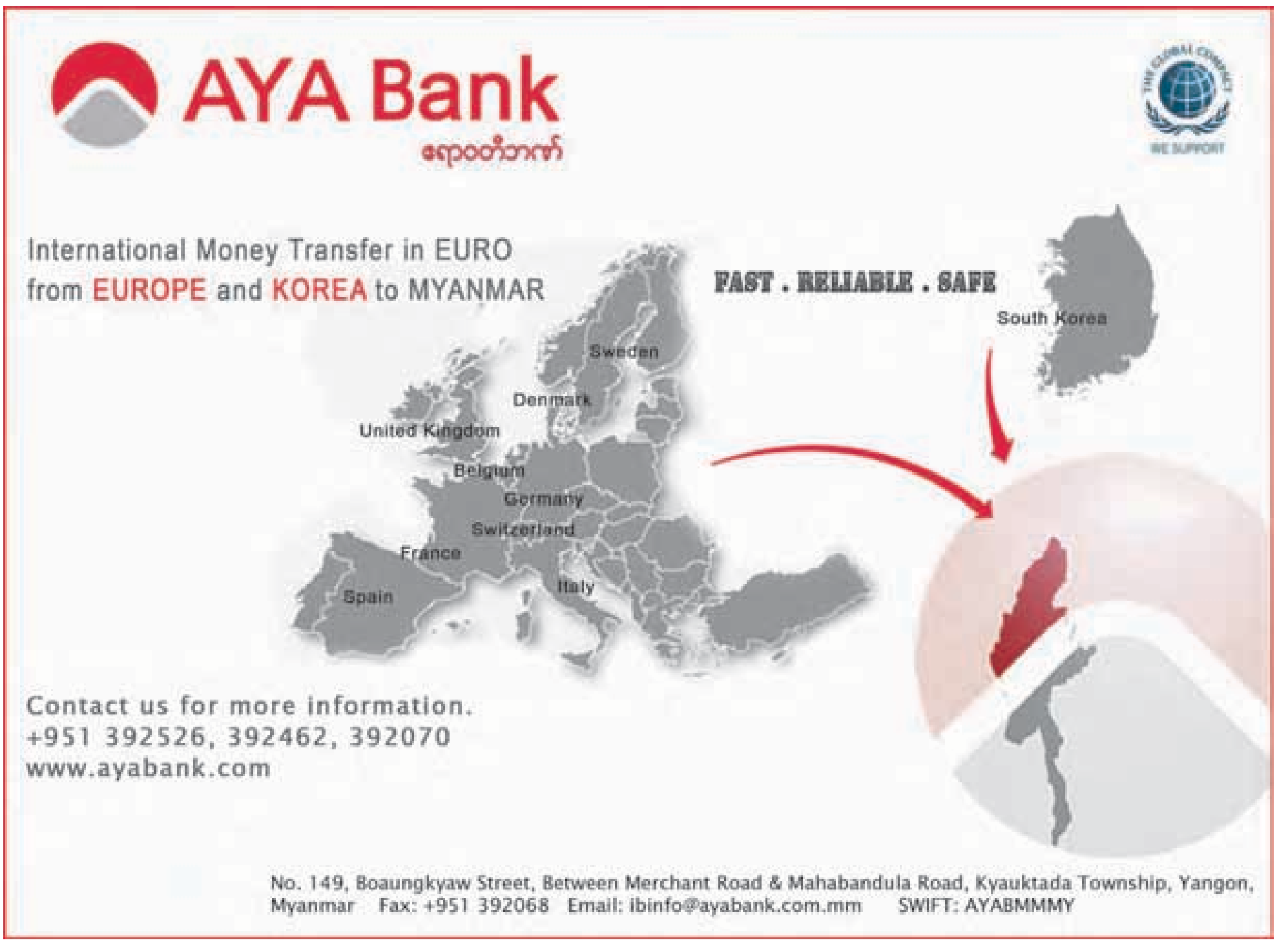
"Meanwhile, I heard that the state plans to give hundreds of thousands of acres to foreign investors. I heard that it plans to grant 600,000 acres for a joint venture with China. It's also expected to grant a South Korean company more than 100,000 in Tanintharyi Region. At the same time, it is very difficult for local firms to get a licence for even 5000 acres. The government should comply properly with the law.

"But there are some mistakes in other ministries' orders and instructions. For example, electricity trade is included in the list of restricted business but electricity can be sold to foreign countries in some areas where there is a surplus of electricity and in other areas may have to be bought from a foreign country when supply isn't sufficient.

"The investment rules also do not allow a company to do print and broadcast media together but the ... Ministry of Information allows companies to run a daily newspaper, FM station, satellite TV network, and make movies and TV shows." – *Translated by Thiri Min Htun*

IN PICTURES

Police test a driver for alcohol in Mandalay as part of a campaign to crack down on drink driving. Traffic police are conducting the campaign throughout August with the Mandalay Region Traffic Rule Enforcement Supervisory Committee in a bid to reduce the number of road accidents. Officials will conduct the breathalyser tests four days a month, with drunk drivers facing a K10,000 fine, a three-month jail term or both. *Photo: Aung Ye Thwin*



FEATURE

Sex workers struggle in Mandalay

Despite the first hints of a campaign to change outdated prostitution laws, sex work in Mandalay remains a dangerous business

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"COME and enjoy a cup of green tea."

It sounds like a friendly invitation and naïve strangers who wander the Ayeyarwady River bank on Mandalay's western fringe could easily be taken in by it.

They will quickly find, however, that this is not an innocent invitation but rather the line of choice for the city's street prostitutes, many of whom ply their trade along the river.

Prostitutes, or sex workers, are found in every city and Mandalay is no different. Some history books record that during the reign of King Mindon, who founded the city in the 1850s, Mandalay had a separate administrative quarter for prostitutes. Today, however, they operate much less openly and are spread out across the city. Every day is filled with danger, from violent pimps and customers to sexually transmitted infections.

"Sometimes prostitutes are forced to have sex with a group of people, even though they just do a deal with one person," said Angel Lay, who works for a Mandalay-based international NGO that implements projects targeting sex workers. "They are also regularly threatened with violence or even attacked, and sometimes clients cheat them."

Unsurprisingly, it is poverty that drives women to take these risks. Angel Lay said that there are four main types – those who work in massage parlours, KTV lounges, stage shows or on the streets – and they earn from K5000 to K15,000 a day. Sometimes, however, after paying off pimps or handlers they are left with barely K500.

"It's not easy to make money. Some barely make enough to buy food and so they have to keep 'farming their paddy plots'," Angel Lay said, using the slang term for selling their bodies.

"Some prostitutes who are not particularly attractive work under a procurer. Even though they know they are being exploited, they think working with them is safer."

Ma Sandi, 27, began working as a prostitute three years ago, shortly after she started working at a KTV lounge.

"At first I worked to entertain guests but I have changed because of the money and I think environment also pushed me towards it," she said. "I am not happy but it is hard to break free from this life. I am single though so it is not as hard for me as those women who have husbands. Once they start working [as a prostitute] their husbands are completely indifferent to them."

Sex workers walk in front of a group of men at a KTV in Mandalay. Photo: Supplied

Angel Lay said alcohol and methamphetamine use and abuse is also common.

"I once looked at a prostitute and her client with the permission of her pimp to see if they were using a condom or not," he said. "They were but I was upset when I saw the prostitute's face. Her eyes were dead and lifeless."

He said most women who have many clients use condoms as regularly as possible but those who have just a few regulars are less likely. Prostitutes also sometimes consider condoms dangerous because if they are arrested police use them as evidence. Prostitutes also have little opportunity to force clients to wear a condom if they do not want to, Angel Lay said.

Prostitution remains illegal but some want to be given licences to work legally, as they believe this will make it safer for them.

"I think having licences could help to avoid [dangerous] situations ... It could also help to improve their health by, for example, requiring them to get regular tests," Angel Lay said.

"Sometimes we do tests and find that prostitutes have a sexually transmitted infection but when we tell them they don't believe us."

The possibility of legalising prostitution was recently raised by National League for Democracy MP Daw Sandar Min in the Pyithu Hluttaw. She asked whether the government had any plans to amend the Suppression of Prostitution Act, which was enacted in 1949. Myanmar Police Force chief Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun, who is also the deputy minister for home affairs, said there was no need to change the law, saying it was necessary to serve as a deterrent. He said that prostitutes could find other jobs but became sex workers because they could make more money.

'I am not happy but it is hard to break free from this life.'

Ma Sandi
Sex worker

He said the authorities had prosecuted 1956 prostitution cases in 2011, 3226 cases in 2012 and 640 cases so far this year, the *Irrawaddy* reported.

Daw Sandar Min said she had expected her proposal to be rejected but said the law was also unfair because only the prostitute, and not the client, can be prosecuted, unless the prostitute is underage.

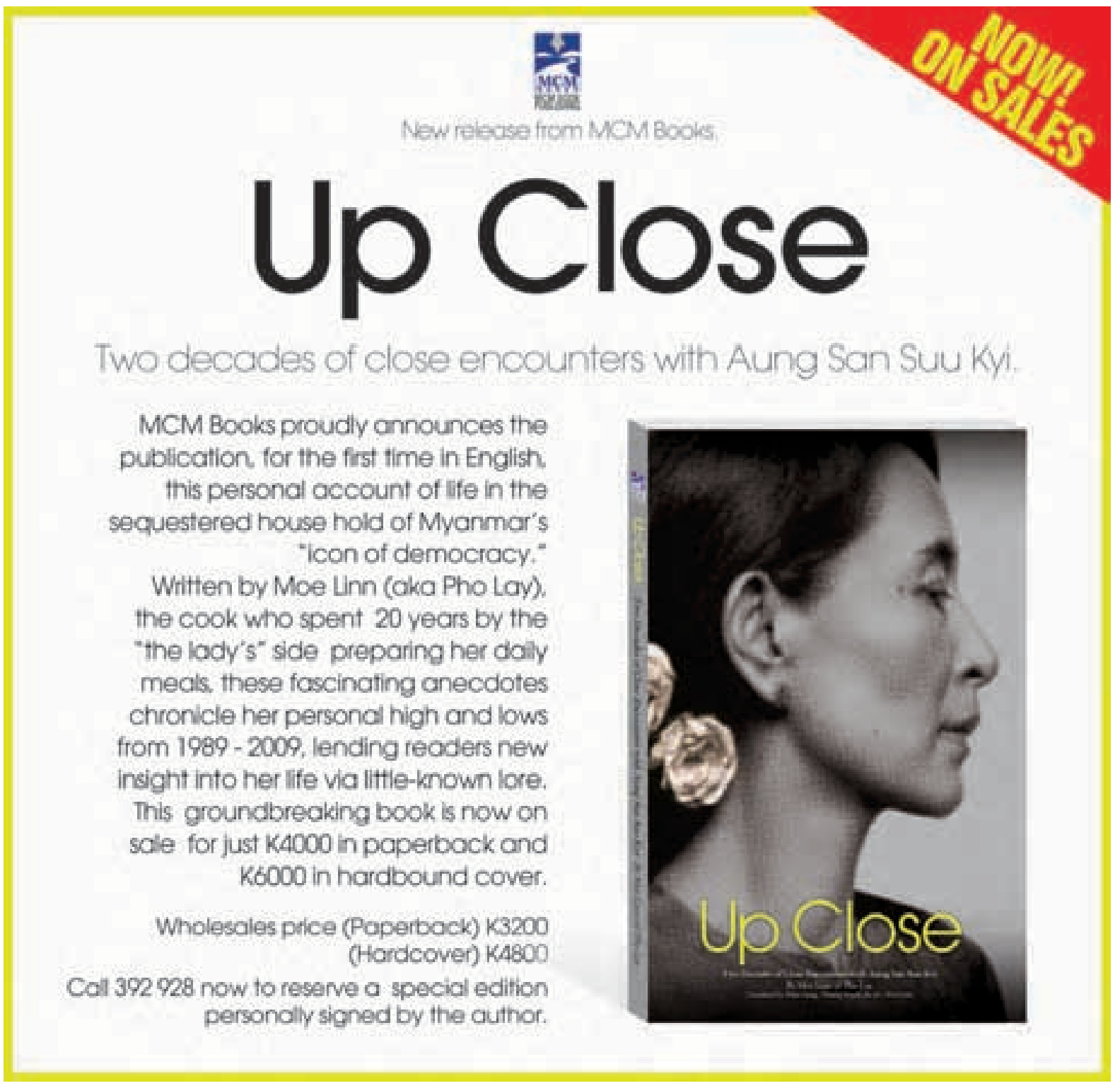
"The authorities who deal with the issue of prostitution know this law is out of date," she said. "[Lawmakers] may understand that they will have to amend this law one day, even though they did not want to do so today."

Her NLD counterpart from Mingalar Taung Nyunt township, Daw Phyu Phyu Thin, said that creating job opportunities was the best way to improve the lives of prostitutes in the long term.

"Prostitutes were not that common before but now they are more common because there are fewer job opportunities ... Most of them feel helpless," said Daw Phyu Phyu Thin, who for more than a decade has run an HIV clinic in Yangon. "The law does not help them – it makes their situation worse. There were some changes in the country [under the new government] but no changes for prostitutes. I am not satisfied about it at all."

She said that improving the lives of prostitutes was an important element of improving women's rights in Myanmar.

"The problem will continue until we can talk openly about the issue. We should all cooperate on the [prostitution] issue in the interests of women's rights and health."



Activist to appear in court this week over IDP clash

U Kyaw Hla Aung was detained on July 15 for alleged involvement in clashes between immigration officials and Muslims in Rakhine State

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LAWYER and activist U Kyaw Hla Aung is due to appear in a Rakhine State court this week, in what will be his second hearing since being arrested on July 15.

U Kyaw Hla Aung, who identifies as Rohingya, is accused of inciting a protest in a camp for internally displaced people (IDPs) earlier this year. His supporters, both inside and outside Myanmar, say the charges are false and a pretence to silence the prominent Sittwe-based activist.

"He's a human rights defender peacefully trying to help his community," said Jim Lougren of the Frontline Defenders organisation, which works to protect activists in oppressed nations and communities. "It's effectively a case of arbitrary detention ... We would argue that this case is without merit."

Since being arrested U Kyaw Hla Aung has not had access to a lawyer or been able to contact his family. He has been charged with rioting armed with a deadly weapon, encouraging persons to take part in an unlawful assembly and voluntarily causing grievous hurt to deter a public servant from his duty. He first appeared in court on July 31 in a closed session.

The charges against him stem from an incident on April 26 when a group of Rohingya youth in the Boduba IDP camp refused to fill out a census form that identified them as "Bengali". The situation escalated until the youths attacked several immigration police.

U Kyaw Hla Aung is accused of making phone calls instructing the youths to attack officials but his family says the only calls he made to Bodupa were to try and calm the angry mob.

U Win Myaing, a spokesperson for the Rakhine government, said he was not familiar with the details of U Kyaw Hla Aung's case, but added that police would not target activists for their beliefs alone. "I don't think that happens," he said.

The timing of U Kyaw Hla Aung's arrest is especially significant as it came on the same day that President U Thein Sein announced during his visit to Europe that the government would release all political prisoners by the end of the year. The President's Office did not respond to requests for comment.

'He's a human rights defender ... we would argue that this case is without merit.'

Jim Lougren
Frontline Defenders

"[This trial] ties into the larger issue of the environment in which human rights defenders can carry out their work," Mr Lougren said. "In many countries there is a gap between rhetoric and the truth on the ground. The credibility of [U Thein Sein's] commitment depends on how the system actually works."

While he has no access to legal representation, Frontline Defenders has people in Rakhine State assisting U Kyaw Hla Aung and his family during the trial. Mr Lougren said the group is also lobbying leaders in Europe on U Kyaw Hla Aung's behalf.

This is far from U Kyaw Hla Aung's first brush with the justice system. Before becoming a lawyer he was a clerk at the Sittwe High Court. His children say he was first arrested in 1986 after he wrote an appeal on behalf of local farmers whose land had been confiscated.

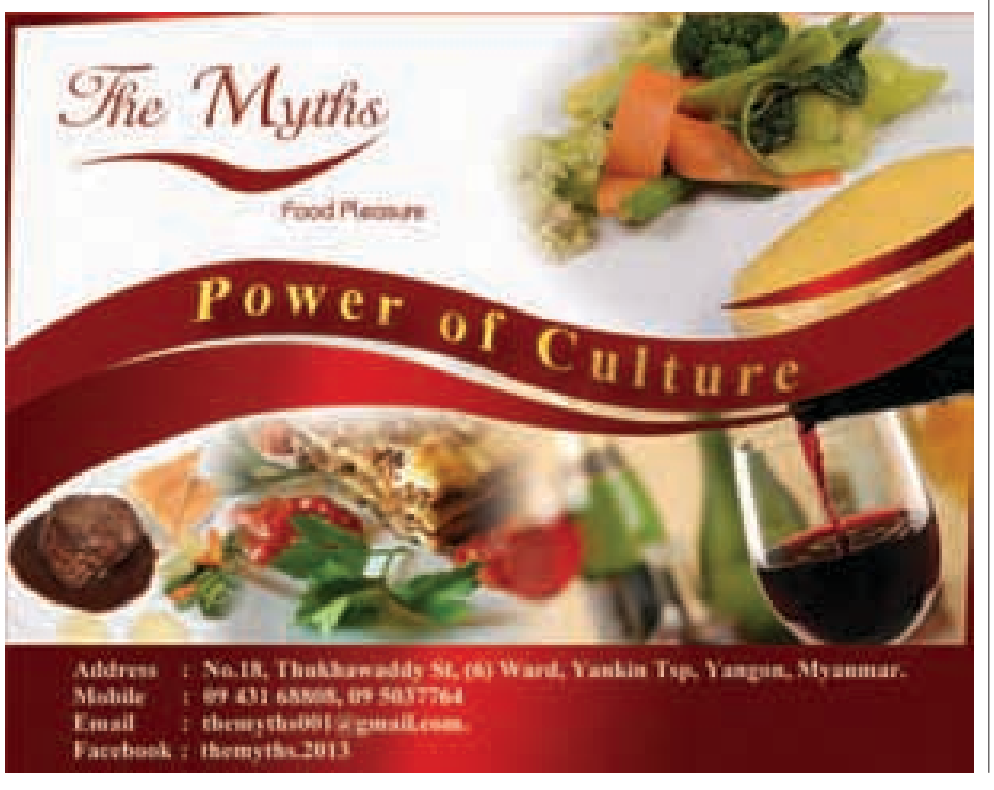
After being released in 1988, he assisted Rohingya political parties that were preparing for the upcoming election. In what sources describe as a "large crackdown" on Rohingya activists in 1990, U Kyaw Hla Aung was again arrested and spent the next 10 years in prison. "At that time we had difficult lives," said his eldest son, who is 35 and works as a human rights activist in Bangkok.

In June 2012, a Rakhine news website, Freedom News Group, posted a story on June 10 alleging that two boxes of firearms had been seen being delivered to U Kyaw Hla Aung's home in Sittwe. He and his colleagues were detained by the police, who also said they had a letter linking U Kyaw Hla Aung to al-Qaeda.

The next day, U Kyaw Hla Aung's home was burned down while he waited in prison. His family – his wife, son and three daughters – are staying in a rented home near an IDP camp in Sittwe. They declined to be interviewed for this article, citing safety concerns.

When asked if he wished his father would stop his activism, his eldest son said, "No ... we have to work. It is our duty. We have to protect innocent people, that is what I believe.

"[My father] works for many people. When he was in Sittwe prison [from 1990 until 2000] he helped write appeal letters for other inmates. Both Muslims and Rakhine."



Dredging equipment bought by the Department of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems at a dock in Yangon. Photo: Shwegu Thitsar

Department buys dredging vessels from Chinese firm

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THE Department of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems has received 19 watercraft from a Chinese company that it will use to dredge Myanmar's rivers.

The department received 14 vessels on July 20 and the remaining five arrived in early August, said director general U Tun Lwin Oo.

They were bought from China National Aero-Technology Import & Export Corporation (CATIC) for US$24 million under a December 2009 memorandum of understanding. The company began building the watercraft – including five cutter suction dredgers, two backhoe dredgers, four split hopper barges, a tug boat, a landing craft and six aid vessels – in December 2011 and finished them in June.

U Tun Lwin Oo said there many sections of Myanmar's river network that urgently need to be dredged. The department expects the new equipment will allow it to maintain the entire system.

First, however, the equipment will be tested and staff will be trained with assistance from Chinese engineers, said department director U Thaung Lwin.

"We will mostly conduct river training exercises in [Yangon]. We will then conduct our first dredging works in Mandalay and Magwe regions and then Monywa township [in Sagaing Region] and Pyay township [in Bago Region]," he said.

"We will take one-and-a-half months to check these watercraft. If there are weaknesses we will mend them with the help of the Chinese engineers ... Then we will start [dredging] works. We can't do it at the moment because the water level is too high." – *Translated by Thiri Min Htun*

THAI

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Workers head to Malaysia despite ban

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THE line of eager jobseekers standing in the daily monsoon rain stretches for nearly a block outside the Malaysian embassy in Yangon. They are testament to the fact that, despite recent violence between Myanmar workers in Malaysia and a subsequent ban on sending workers there, the number hoping to be allowed to work in the Muslim nation has not diminished.

About 3000 Myanmar nationals apply each month for Malaysian work visas and the embassy says there has been no noticeable decline.

Clashes between Buddhists and Muslims from Myanmar occurred between May 30 to June 4 and were mostly confined to areas around Kuala Lumpur. The most recent reports put the number killed at six but details are scarce and the Malaysian authorities are still investigating.

The violence prompted Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Zin Yaw and Deputy Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Daw Win Maw Tun to visit Malaysia on June 11. Two days later the Ministry of Labour announced it would stop granting migrant labour cards that enable Myanmar nationals to seek employment in Malaysia.

Despite the stoppage there has been no slump in applications, the Malaysian embassy said. It is likely, however, that those applying for work visas obtained the required documentation from the Ministry of Labour prior to the ban being put in place, and the number could drop in coming months when the backlog has cleared.

Ministry of Labour officials insist that the measure is a temporary one but say no end date for the measure has been decided.

"As the situation settles down, we will send workers again. We are worried about [Myanmar workers] as they could face an uneasy situation there," said Daw Moh Moh Thwin, an officer from the Yangon Region Labour Department.

However, there appears to be no solid evidence that the violence in Malaysia is linked to clashes between Myanmar's Buddhist majority and the minority Rohingya Muslim group in Rakhine State.

Charles Hector, a lawyer and human rights activist in Malaysia, said the religious violence in Myanmar and migrant workers clashes in Malaysia were "not connected".

Zafar Ahmad bin Abdul Ghani, president of the Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organisation Malaysia, agreed and said that Rohingya in Malaysia were "not involved in these attacks".

The concerns over the violence appear to have mostly emanated from Myanmar. For many of the 300,000 legal Myanmar workers in Malaysia, this presented the difficult choice of whether to leave their relatively high-paying jobs and return home to their concerned relatives.

"My mum was so worried so I had to come back," said Ko Myo Aung, 43. He had worked in Malaysia for 16 years and was running his own metal shop when his elderly mother urged him to return home in early July. "I was ok there. The situation was calm. I tried to explain that to her but it didn't work."

He blamed sensationalised media reports, including from Myanmar's state-run outlets, for causing the uproar at home. Since returning he has struggled to find a job and was disappointed with the salary offered at a recent fair organised by the Department of Labour for those who have come back from Malaysia.

"I'm glad that my daughter graduated from high school last year. Otherwise, I don't know how I would handle it," he said after receiving an offer of K6000 a day from a local construction firm – not enough to make the K300,000 to K400,000 a month he estimated he would need to cover his expenses and live comfortably.

Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

Ko Thant Zaw Oo (left), who recently returned from Malaysia, sits for a job interview at a labour office in Yangon last month.

Thirty-one-year-old Ko Thant Zaw Oo was also disappointed by Myanmar's low wages after spending three years working on construction sites in Malaysia, where he earned about K450,000 a month.

"I was preparing to go back [to Malaysia] then this happened and my family won't let me go back," he said.

He said he was treated well while working in Malaysia, and was paid overtime, given medical leave and allowed to take public holidays off.

For undocumented workers, however, the reality of life in Malaysia can be strikingly different. Lured by false promises of high-paying jobs and comfortable accommodation, many find themselves working long hours in dangerous conditions with few avenues for gaining better conditions or pay.

Despite Malaysian efforts to better manage the undocumented workers, including a 2011 amnesty program, they "basically have no rights", Mr Hector said.

The Malaysian embassy estimates that there are 100,000 illegal Myanmar workers in Malaysia.

Pranom Somwong, a representative of the Worker Hub for Change and Network of Action for Migrants in Malaysia, said workers' efforts to push for the authorities to ensure better conditions are often stifled by employers or agents.

"When migrants do attempt to claim their rights they are threatened, harassed, become victims of violence, summarily 'shipped back' to their home country by employers or their agents, many times with no real or effective protection or intervention by the state authorities to prevent this injustice," she said.

Until the recent violence, Myanmar nationals also lacked any support from their own embassy.

"The Burmese embassy [in Malaysia] has always been a problem," Mr Hector said. "They are not keen to help."

But the recent violence has spurred nationalist pride among not just government officials but also some of the country's leading businessmen. U Zaw Zaw, the managing director of Max Myanmar, U Tay Za, chairman of Htoo Group, and officials from KBZ Bank and Myanmar Airways International have all rushed to help undocumented workers who have been injured or detained return to Myanmar.

About 2500 have returned so far, the Ministry of Labour said. Their arrivals at Yangon airport in corporate-branded shirts have been splashed across media outlets, including Eleven Media Group, which last week said it had helped pay for the return of over 120 workers.

Mr Hector said that he felt this increased private sector role would be welcomed by the Malaysian government, which has long been pressing Myanmar to take more responsibility for its undocumented workers.

"The [Malaysian] government doesn't want to keep people locked up," Mr Hector said. "It is expensive."

Myanmar, Thailand to mark 'special moment'

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MORE people-to-people exchanges are needed to grow relations between Myanmar and Thailand, the Thai ambassador has told *The Myanmar Times* as the two countries prepare to celebrate 65 years of formal diplomatic ties this week.

Thai ambassador to Myanmar Pisanu Suvanajata said the two countries had shown they could work together constructively, pointing to the growing cooperation over the border which was once a perennial point of contention.

"We have cooperation on the both sides of the border areas. People cross the border and exchange visits. Nowadays the relations and strong bond of friendship has been further strengthened," Mr Pisanu told *The Myanmar Times*.

*T*he next step is to build trust and understanding through greater personal ties between citizens of the two countries, he said.

"The priority that we focus on is to promote people-to-people relations and understanding ... It is the vital and crucial step – relations can't be improved unless people-to-people relations are good."

On economic ties, Mr Pisanu said Thailand also sees Myanmar as an important trade partner and the gateway between ASEAN and South Asia.

Thailand is a major backer of the proposed special economic zone and port at Dawei. While the project has struggled to move forward, Mr Pisanu said that it had the potential to become an important logistic hub of ASEAN in the future.

"It would be an historic project for both countries," he said.

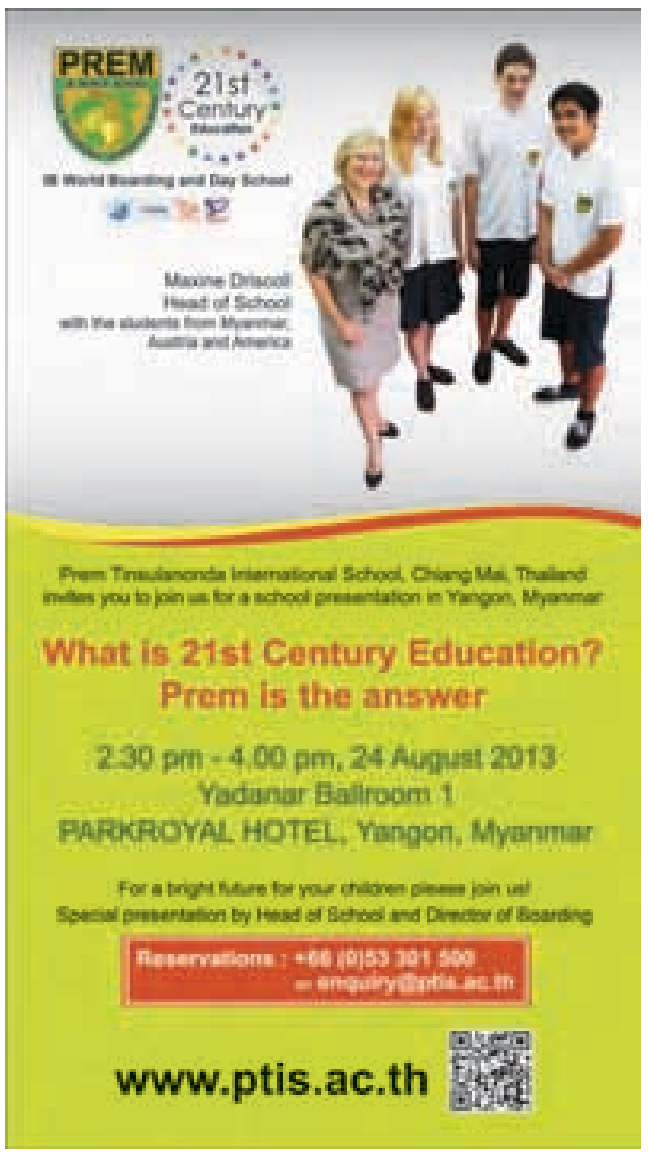
"Now the two governments are joining hands and we share common lines to realise the project ... However, it is not an easy task – [it is a] huge project."

He said Thai companies were also actively exploring other economic opportunities, and many of the country's largest firms, including energy company PTT, CP Group and Siam Cement Group, are already here.

"We also have so many new businesses coming from Thailand to invest in Myanmar, such as consumer products, manufacturing products, agricultural products and some leading businesses. These are the development taking place nowadays," he said.

Myanmar and Thailand will mark the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties on August 14 in Bangkok. Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin is expected to attend the event.

"We were among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Myanmar after Myanmar got independence," Mr Pisanu said. "This is a very special moment between our two countries."



A car negotiates floodwaters in Kayin State on August 2. Photo: Aung Paing Soe

UN warns of flooding impact on agriculture

THE United Nations has warned of the need for livelihood support for those displaced by recent flooding in eastern Myanmar, which has been described as the worst in decades.

More than 7300 people were still displaced by flooding as of August 7, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said in a flash update on August 8, citing Relief and Resettlement Department figures. At the peak of the flooding more than 38,000 people had been forced to leave their homes, while at least three people were killed.

But the UN said the danger was not over, as the flooding has inflicted heavy damage on eastern Myanmar's agriculture sector.

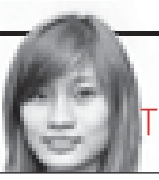
"Although most people in relocation sites in Kayin have returned home, many homes, food stocks and paddy fields have been destroyed and damaged by the effects from the storm. Livelihood support, such as seeds and agricultural inputs, will be required to support the most affected people to recover fully," UNOCHA said.

"Preliminary analysis indicates that some affected rural people will require food assistance until the harvest season [in] November-December," it said.

In a statement released on August 2, the government said that 30,907 acres of paddy fields had been damaged in Kayin State. – *Thomas Kean*

Sex tape resignation rumour rocks university

Myanmar journal sparks controversy by reporting principal of Thanlyin university forced to resign for showing student sex video to parents and students



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STUDENTS and teachers from the Government Technological University in Yangon's Thanlyin township say a report that the college's principal was fired for inappropriate behaviour are incorrect.

News journal *Myanmar Than Taw Sint* reported last month that the principal, Kathy Lwin, had been ordered to resign after allegedly forcing students and some parents to watch a video of two students having sex in an empty classroom at the college.

The video had been uploaded online and the journal reported that the principal played the video to the students' parents and classmates to shame them.

A lecturer at the university, Daw Theingi Ait, dismissed the report as "a rumour" and said the principal had not been forced to resign. However, the lecturer confirmed that two students had quit after the video appeared on the internet.

"The students responsible for that incident quit after it came to light," the lecturer said. "I don't know why people said our principal showed [the video] with a projector. There's no way she could do this."

Students from the university also said at a press conference that the report was untrue. They are demanding an apology from the journal, arguing it has caused them severe embarrassment.

'We feel upset … This has made people think badly about all students.'

Fourth-year student
Thanlyin Technological University

"We feel upset because now people are looking at us strangely whenever they see our uniform even though what the journal reported is incorrect," said a student in the fourth year of an architecture course.

"This has made people think badly about all engineering students."

Mg Kyaw Zin Htet, a second year mechanical engineering student, said the students had not been pressured by the university to hold the press conference.

"No officials were involved in this media briefing. We are just doing it as students of Thanlyin Technological University," he said, adding that they were still waiting for a response from the journal to their demand for an apology.

But an editor from the journal said it would not apologise and it had a recording of an interview to back up its version of events.

"Our report is the truth and we have the recording of an official from the Yangon Region government," the editor said.

Yangon Region Minister for Forestry and Energy U Kyaw Soe said the government had not told the journal the principal had resigned.

He added that it could not comment on issues related to Thanlyin Technology University because it is administered by the Ministry of Science and Technology in Nay Pyi Taw.

"We didn't say anything concerning the principal of the university to *Myanmar Than Taw Sint*," he said.

An official in the office of the Minister of Science and Technology said it was unaware of the reports and could not comment.

FEATURE

Organic advocates battle slow growth

Organic farming makes up just a fraction of the agriculture sector but a handful of firms are rejecting chemical fertilisers and pesticides

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A CARTOON recently appeared in *Kyemon*, a government-owned daily newspaper, about the effect of prolonged consumption of vegetables treated with excessive pesticides. This cartoon depicted two women debating what makes us healthier: eating vegetables or, as one argued, not eating them, because of the dangers posed by the chemicals with which they are treated.

News of food safety incidents, including those related to agricultural products, appears weekly in newspapers and online. This should not be surprising. With many chemical fertilisers and pesticides imported illegally, and instructions often only in foreign languages, growers regularly use high quantities of potentially dangerous chemicals. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, which has a responsibility to regulate these products, has shown itself to be unwilling or unable to enforce the existing laws. The dangers of incorrect use of chemical pesticides are serious, and not only for consumers: For farmers, using chemical products safely can be the difference between life and death.

"Food safety incidents can be seen in stories from all over the country," said Daw Than Than Sein, a consultant for the Myanmar Organic Agricultural Group (MOAG). "It is likely we will see more cases in the future."

In an effort to avert future cases, however, the group is working to encourage farmers away from pesticide use.

"The agriculture sector doesn't have good practices in place for the usage of pesticides. For the purposes of food safety, MOAG is carrying out a program to issue legal certification to organic growers and promote organic farms to avoid these problems."

The industry faces a number of challenges, however. Farmers pursuing organic cultivation have expressed concern that large-scale farms using chemical and synthetic fertilisers could contaminate their organic fields. Farmers raised this issue at a workshop on the organic vegetable industry held in August 2012 in Yangon and also warned that the numbers of illegal agricultural pesticides, black-market fertilisers and falsely labelled "organic" fertilisers are rising.

But the main problem is the lack of demand. While yields from organically cultivated yields are about half of what a regular field can produce, MOAG-certified organic products are normally sold as conventional products because there is no real organic market. For farmers, this means there is little economic incentive to switch.

In Yangon, however, supermarket chain City Mart sells organic vegetables – such as carrots, radishes, and mustard – as well as fruit, mushrooms and rice.

20

The number of certified organic farms in Myanmar at the end of 2012

"Interest from customers is still limited for organic products and mainly comes from the expatriate community," said U Soe Moe Thu, a City Mart director. "We see the market potential of organic products being limited for the near future. Supply for organics is mainly from local suppliers, and is still inconsistent and low in volume. Once the supply situation improves, sales should pick up. There is a growing number of suppliers wanting to supply organic foods."

U Soe Moe Thu said certification programs such as the MOAG's give consumers – and retailers – confidence that the product on offer is genuinely organic.

"The main issue we faced in the past was the lack of a certification body for organic products," he said. "We were unwilling to put the product on the shelf just on the basis of the distributor's or supplier's claims that their products were organic."

Even when products are certified, he said, it takes a leap of faith for customers to buy organic.

"Demand has to pick up first for organic products to be successful. Organic products, by nature, are more expensive and often less presentable. The success of organic products therefore depends mainly on customers who have their mind set on buying organic. This group of customers will remain very small for the time being."

Daw Than Than Sein conceded that organic produce "is still struggling to get a place" in the market. But she also pointed to MOAG data that showed the number of certified organic farming operations increased more than three-fold last year, albeit from an extremely low base.

In 2011, six organic farms, covering 59.89 hectares, were jointly certified by the MOAG and Organic Agricultural Certification Thailand (ACT). Two fertiliser companies were also had organic products approved by the MOAG. By the end of 2012 there were 20 organic farms in Myanmar.

Industry experts said there could also be anywhere from 2000 to 5000 acres of organic farming in Myanmar taking place without MOAG certification. Even still, organic agriculture is tiny relative to neighbouring countries like Thailand or Indonesia, where organic acreage is measured in six figures.

One group that is working outside the MOAG certification scheme is the Consumer Protection Association (CPA). Chairman U Ba Oak Khaing said his group, which has about 500 members, plans to grow organic mushrooms and paddy.

It has opted not to apply for MOAG certification because, U Ba Oak Khaing said, the association feels its organic experts are more than qualified, and some were formerly members of the MOAG.

The association, which was formed in August 2012, plans to open its own organic sales centre for products grown on its 40 acres of land as a means of developing the organic market.

U Ye Win Thein, the vice chairman of BioSupreme, is optimistic that demand for organic products will take off in future. His company distributes Bio Organic Fertilizer – produced with Australian bio-composting technology within the guidelines of the AS 4454:2003 – to farmers by using cash on delivery, contract farming and installment payment methods. The company's main markets are Ayeyarwady Region and Mon State.

He said the lack of understanding about the potential side effects of chemical pesticides was holding the organic industry back.

Photo: Christopher Davy

"The process of certifying organic producers should be systematic," he said, "and workshops on organic farming [techniques] are clearly needed."

For everyone along the production chain, however, organic farming has the potential to bring high dividends. U Sein Wing Hlaing, the chairman of the Myanmar Paddy Producers Association, said he realised this while on a study tour in Taiwan.

"They have organic farms of 500 acres, even up to 1000 acres, in Taiwan," he said. "Buyers from Japan pay US$2000 a tonne. The products are certified by organisations from both Taiwan and Japan."

But similar setups here would require significant changes to Myanmar's irrigation systems, he said.

"If you want to plant organic paddy, in most cases you would need to change the irrigation system. For example, if Mg Hla uses chemicals and he uses the same water source as Mg Mya, then Mg Mya is going to have trouble cultivating organically," he said.

Despite these challenges, some are still finding ways to make organic agriculture work.

Daw Theint Theint, a rice producer and trader who started selling Thabarwa brand rice in 2000, has found an increase in demand for organic foods from consumers. She applied to the MOAG for organic certification in 2009 and received it in 2012. The rice is grown on her own fields in Ayeyarwady Region's Labutta township and sold at City Mart and Ocean supermarkets.

"This year I've expanded to 1000 acres," she said. "I'm lucky that my land is alluvial soil because it means I don't need to rely on irrigation and I can guarantee my product is organic."

Organic garlic on sale at Shan Maw Myae on Yangon's 49th Street.
Photo: Zarni Phyo

Group spreads new farming techniques in Magwe Region

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A NETWORK of affiliated environmental groups has been introducing the benefits of organic farming techniques to 30 farmers from five villages in Magwe Region since last month, the project's coordinator said.

The project, which is being run by the Green Network Sustainable Environment Group, will help cut costs and preserve farmland for future growing seasons, coordinator U Thaung Shwe said.

"We help [farmers] to use a sustainable agricultural method that mixes traditional and modern techniques. We'll seek to cut fertiliser use and at the same time boost the quality of the crops and the soil," he said.

While current methods of cultivating an acre of peanuts cost more than K200,000, with a sesame crop costing K150,000 an acre, farmers can save K30,000 to K40,000 by switching to the new method, he said.

He also called the techniques "good for the long term" because they halve fertiliser use.

"The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation permits [farmers] to use a bag of fertiliser for an acre of land," U Thaung Shwe said. "We let them use half of it in the first year of the plan, then the other half next year. This way we will reduce the use of fertiliser."

Instead of relying on chemical-based products, farmers participating in the program are learning how to make their own fertiliser from humus, as well as non-chemical insect sprays.

While the project has drawn interest from farmers, U Thaung Shwe said weaning them off chemicals will be a challenge.

"Farmers are interested in [organic farming] but the challenge is to change their habits. We need to take time to change their habit of using fertiliser as an easier way to farm."

U Nyo Maung, who lives in Htone Paung Taw Myauk village, was among the participants in the training.

While he is interested in organic farming and learned techniques from the training to improve drought resistance, he said he's not ready to give up chemicals entirely.

"The yield decreased 30 percent when I use organic farming methods only so I now use both methods. I use insecticide when my crops are infected," he said.

The environmental group is considering a further program centred around fruit tree orchards, U Thaung Shwe said, but he added that its success would depend on whether farmers and the government support the program. He also said further planning would be needed to solve the question of how farmers could earn income while waiting for their orchards to bear fruit.

The Green Network Sustainable Environment Group was established in late 2011 when more than 53 organisations signed on to become members.

– Translated by Thiri Min Htun

Jakarta bombing retaliation for religious clashes

A BOMB that exploded at a Buddhist temple in the Indonesian capital Jakarta bore the words "we are responding to the screams of the Rohingya", the place of worship said last week.

It appeared to be the latest outburst of anger in Muslim-majority Indonesia at the plight of Rohingya Muslims.

The low-intensity bomb, containing pieces of iron and ball bearings, went off late on August 4 inside the Ekayana Buddhist temple as hundreds of worshippers prayed, lightly injuring one person who received cuts to an arm and leg.

A second bomb was also set but only emitted smoke and failed to go off, according to police. The attack caused only minimal damage.

Temple official Ponijan Liaw said on August 5 that CCTV footage showed a man wearing a white shirt entering the temple and placing two green packages with the bombs inside next to two doors before leaving.

The blast happened shortly afterward, he said.

One package bore the words "we are responding to the screams of the Rohingya", Mr Liaw said, adding the footage had been handed over to police.

National police spokesman Ronny Sompie said authorities were still investigating the motive behind the attack and could not comment on who might be responsible.

Religious Affairs Minister Suryadharma Ali said the bombing "was a provocation aimed at pitting Muslims against Buddhists.

"I'm sure Muslims and Buddhists will not be affected. Relations between Muslims and Buddhists are good and as far as I know, there's never been a conflict between Muslims and Buddhists in Indonesia," he said.

Security Minister Djoko Suyanto condemned the perpetrators for ruining "the peace of Ramadan", the Muslim holy month which came to an end last week with the Eid al-Fitr holiday.

"The security forces have been ordered to immediately hunt down and arrest the perpetrators," he added.

Police in May foiled a plot to bomb the Myanmar embassy in Jakarta by Islamic hardliners as anger grew over conflict between Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar. – *AFP*

IN PICTURES

A crane lifts a Mitsubishi Pajero from the railway lines below Sule Pagoda Road on August 4. The 25-year-old female driver lost control of the vehicle while heading north towards Aung San Stadium and skidded off the right side of the bridge. The driver and her father, who was in the passenger seat, both sustained minor injuries in the crash. *Photo: Ko Taik*

Farmer loses land to govt, again

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AN AMARAPURA township resident who lost some of his land more than a decade ago for the Yadanarbon Bridge project says officials have confiscated the rest of his fields to raise money for the construction of a high school.

U Moe Moe, a farmer from Moe Kaung village in Shwe Kyet Yat village tract, said he had submitted a complaint to administrative and parliamentary bodies, as well as the Mandalay Region government and the International Labour Organization over the confiscation.

"The village-tract administrator, members of a school development committee and property brokers came on April 13, 2013, and [confiscated the land] ... saying they were doing it to raise money for the school," he said.

"I have submitted a complaint against the village-tract administrator because I found out there were no instructions whatsoever from the Ministry of Education to do this."

The loss of 2 acres represents a double blow for U Moe Moe, who already lost 1 acre for the construction of the Yadanarbon Bridge, which spans the Ayeyarwady River, in 2002-03.

"I had three acres of farmland ... and some was taken for the bridge but I still had about two acres in another part of the village," U Moe Moe said. "But now they've taken that land too." – *Translated by Win Thaw Tar*

The pagoda-topped Taungkalat, a volcanic plug that sits beside Mt Popa, is one of Myanmar's most popular tourist destinations. Photo: Aung Ye Thwin

Enviro groups to plant 10,000 trees at Mt Popa

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THE Mount Popa Lovers environmental group and other civil society organisations are working together to plant 10,000 saplings to help green Mt Popa.

MPL spokesperson Ko Toe said deforestation was a major problem in the area because of tea plantations, illegal logging and locals cutting down trees for domestic use.

"We started planting trees at the end of June. Residents and government departments ... are also taking part and we have already planted 6000 trees," he said.

"The number of trees here is decreasing due to a tea plantation project that saw nearly 400 acres of trees cut down for the project. We are planting these new trees to make up for the loss of those."

Mount Popa Monitoring group member Ko Aung Hein said the number could swell to 14,000, after the Department of Forestry contributed another 2500 trees and some locals gave young trees for the reforestation efforts.

"We will mostly grow these young trees in the areas where trees were completely cut down or burnt by forest fire," he said.

He said that while some government officials, including those at Mount Popa National Park and the local Department of Forestry, have made efforts to protect the area's forest, they had been thwarted by a lack of cooperation from other government departmetns and locals.

"There is a lack of collaboration," Ko Aung Hein said. "The department has conducted information sessions on forest protection but locals don't understand it well. But they cooperate with us for reforestation programs, and the government is as well."

– Translated by Thiri Min Htun

Monks submit millions of signatures for draft marriage law to hluttaw

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A LEADING monk says almost 3 million signatures of support for a draft marriage law have been collected and submitted to parliament.

Ashin Sanda Thiri, a spokesperson for the team of Buddhist monks that drafted the law, told *The Myanmar Times* that he expects parliamentarians will consider the draft, which would restrict who Buddhist women can marry.

Critics, however, argue that the draft law will exacerbate already strained relations between religious groups in Myanmar and violates the human rights of Buddhist women.

Ashin Sanda Thiri said the signatures were collected by teams organised throughout the country.

"We are collecting more signatures from our members and partners throughout the country. We hope to get more," he said. "We also hope the hluttaw listens to the people's voices and considers the people's needs pragmatically."

One Buddhist monk from Shwebo township in Sagaing Region told *The Myanmar Times* it had been easy to collect signatures of support for the draft law after a meeting of about 1500 leading monks in Yangon on July 27.

However, he conceded that many who signed the petition did not understand the law properly.

"People in villages do not understand the draft – some are illiterate – so it was hard to collect signatures before the conference," he said. "We tried to explain to them what the purpose was and we were careful to not encourage racism or hate speech."

He said those collecting signatures distributed copies of the draft law and then returned one or two weeks later to collect the signatures and verify that those who had signed the petition were over 18.

Ashin Sanda Thiri said the law aims to prevent forced religious conversion, restrict marriage between Buddhist women and men of other faiths, express support for monogamous marriage and control population growth.

'We hope the hluttaw listens to the people's voices and considers the people's needs pragmatically.'

Ashin Sanda Thiri
Senior monk

"All points should be informative and clear to prevent misunderstanding and disagreement. We are always ready to explain the purpose of the text," he said.

While critics have taken aim at the section that bans Buddhist women from marrying men of other faiths, Ashin Sanda Thiri said it was not dissimilar from similar restrictions practised by Christians, Hindus and Muslims.

"We will not stop a Buddhist woman from marrying a man from another religion because it is her right. Our concern is to support freedom of worship. It should be her own decision whether she converts to a new religion or not," he said.

The draft law also allows women to waive their right to force their husband to convert. Those found guilty of breaching its provisions face up to 10 years in jail – a punishment that would apply only to men.

Ashin Sanda Thiri said the draft law in circulation is not the final version. More consultations are planned, including a series of workshops this month.

"We have to conduct more discussions ... [and get] suggestions from legal experts and public feedback."

But he rejected the criticism that monks should not interfere in the lives of laypeople.

"Buddha laid down many dos and don'ts for laypeople," he said. "While it is right that the clergy should not draft the law we can make suggestions based on the problems that we see laypeople are facing. We just suggest to parliaments to do something about this issue."

However, in an address to the nation on August 1, President U Thein Sein invoked a speech by General Aung San to call for a separation of religion and politics.

"Mixing religion with politics would go against the true teachings of various faiths," the president said in his monthly radio address.

"[Aung San] cautioned us that we must always condemn and prevent hate speech veiled with religious overtones. In the practice of freedom of religion, we must draw a demarcation line between politics and religion."

MPRL

MPRL E&P Pte Ltd.

Corporate Social Responsibility Operations Support & Control Officer
(Deadline for applications: 23 August 2013)

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Or through e-mail to: hrdept@mprlnet.com.mm by 23 August 2013.
Only short-listed applications will be acknowledged.
Direct applications only please, no agency candidates will be considered.

Myanmar Health Sector Coordinating Committee
Call for Sub-Recipient Proposal Concept Note
for Myanmar New Funding Model
Tuberculosis Grant

The Myanmar Health Sector Coordinating Committee (M-HSCC) has successfully secured funding from the Global Fund under the New Funding Model for HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria grants for the period of 2013 to 2016.

In support of the newly signed TB grant, the M-HSCC is seeking organizations to implement services and activities as follows:

Package: Accelerated case finding
- Advocacy, communication and social mobilization (ACSM) interventions; engaging all care providers and communities; TB screening among higher risk groups and active case finding in remote areas.
- Priority will be given to the high TB burden regions such as Yangon and Mandalay.

The members of the review panel will review and rate applicants based on a set of criteria. These criteria and other documents can be viewed on the M-HSCC website: www.myanmarhscc.org

The Secretariat of the TSG-TB can be contacted for more information: Dr Erwin Cooreman,
Email: cooremane@searo.who.int,
Tel: 01-241932-33, 01- 250583-4 Ext. 4234

Submission deadline and location
One hard copy of the Concept Note will need to be submitted in the specified format. Applicants who do not fulfill the stated eligibility criteria will be disqualified.

The Concept Note must be received in a sealed envelope by 4pm on 16 August 2013 at:

Proposal Collection Desk
M-HSCC Secretariat Office
c/o UNAIDS
12th Floor, Traders Hotel, 233 Sule Pagoda Road,
Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Peace centre warns against 'extreme' constitution demands

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U Khun Okkar (right), joint general secretary of the United Nationalities Federal Council, with chief government negotiator U Aung Min at a press conference on March 23. Photo: Boothee

A MYANMAR Peace Center official has cautioned armed ethnic groups "not to be too radical", after a coalition of 11 groups announced it would push for a full rewrite of the constitution.

The United Nationalities Federal Council announced on August 1, following a four-day meeting in Chiang Mai, that its members would draft their own constitution rather than accept the 2008 constitution that underpins Myanmar's political system.

Some question whether the move is realistic and have expressed concern that it could slow down talks.

While refusing to comment specifically on the UNFC statement, U Min Zaw Oo from the peace centre said that both sides need to find middle ground to move negotiations forward.

"We help the peace talks to be taken and we are not in a position to [make statements on] political views or policies," he said. "But if one group is too extreme, it will be hard to move discussions forward."

But UNFC officials say the decision was necessary because the 2008 constitution does not guarantee federalism. They are demanding a "genuine" federal system, as well as a federal army to replace the Tatmadaw.

"It will be too hard to change [the constitution] from within the hluttaw," UNFC joint general secretary U Khun Okkar told *The Myanmar Times* on August 9. "The 2008 constitution has many features that are undemocratic."

The UNFC and United Nationalities Alliance, which comprises political parties that contested the 1990 election, will jointly form a committee to oversee the process. "Democratic forces" and civil society organisations will also be invited to participate, said U Khun Okkar, who will be in charge of the committee.

He dismissed concerns that the UNFC's decision could damage the peace process, saying the issue would be discussed when the group meets government negotiators at the end of this month in Chiang Mai.

Not all are opposed to the decision to reject the 2008 constitution. U Sai Nyunt Lwin, general secretary of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, also said he has concerns that the process of amending the constitution through parliament will be "too slow". Rewriting it will save time and money, he suggested, as amending many sections of the current constitution will require not only the support of at least 75 percent of MPs but also a costly national referendum.

But Harn Yawnghwe, a director of the Euro-Burma Office, which has supported dialogue between armed ethnic groups, said they should take a more pragmatic approach. "Everybody wants a federal union, but if you look at it realistically this government has a mandate only until 2015," he told Democratic Voice of Burma last month. "There is no way you can get agreement on a complete federal union before 2015, but there are steps you can begin to take in that direction."

In a briefing paper on the UNFC position, the Euro-Burma Office said the UNFC had "rejected the government's offer for talks without seriously offering any practical alternative other than a return to war. It is a dangerous game."

CONTINUED FROM NEWS 1

NGO reps to meet MPs over draft law

Daw Nwe Zin Win, chairperson of the National NGO Network, told *The Myanmar Times* that NGOs agreed that a registration law is needed but want the legislation to support and encourage civil society development.

"It is not acceptable to punish or fine NGOs which are using their own funds for humanitarian projects when they are not able to register," she said.

"Most NGOs are working to fulfil the needs of their communities. Do they have to stop their work if they can't afford the registration fee, even though there are many needs to be met? We feel the current version of the draft law is impossible to follow."

To strengthen their negotiating position, NGOs held workshops in Yangon and Mandalay on July 31 to discuss the draft and formed a 15-member working committee to suggest amendments.

About 100 NGO representatives met in Yangon on August 9, while an equivalent meeting was held in Mandalay. On August 13, delegates from lower Myanmar, including Yangon and Ayeyarwady regions and Mon and Rakhine states, will meet to collate feedback on the draft. An event will be held the same day in Mandalay with delegates from upper Myanmar, including Kachin and Shan states.

About 40 NGO representatives will discuss the recommendations with 60 MPs at a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on August 15.

"We will collect voices from all CSOs in the country as well as we possibly can," Daw Nwe Zin Win said. "We will explain our proposed amendments to our colleagues – both CSOs and members of parliament – so we can get a good result. Sometimes the media did not reflect our real thoughts on the law. We are not protesting against it. We will participate in the legal process."

An official from a Yangon-based civil society group said that while an association law is needed some sections of the current draft could hinder their activities.

"The government wants NGOs to follow the law. But both the government and NGOs should be responsible and accountable by law," he said.

An official from an NGO in Ayeyarwady Region said the provisions in the current draft contradicted statements made by President U Thein Sein.

"The president met all NGOs to encourage their work and invited them to collaborate and cooperate together for national development," said U Than Htike Aung of Pyokhin Thit, which is based in Maubin township.

"The law should be reasonable and easy to follow ... [but] we can't register under this law. We raise funds from our friends and conduct activities like free funerals, and feeding and educating street kids. If the law restricts our activities we will just stop them," he said, adding that 13 other civil society groups in Maubin had also objected to the draft.

The current law for registering organisations dates to 1988. Only a fraction of Myanmar's civil society groups are registered, as the process is long and expensive and groups say their activities are restricted once they register.

The law has also been applied unevenly, with groups close to the government able to register much faster than those perceived as being oppositional. In some cases, NGOs have waited years for a response to a registration application.

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Dated: 12 August 2013

ADB moves forward on e-governance project

SHWE YEE SAW MYINT

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THE Asian Development Bank is expected to invite shortlisted consulting firms to submit applications for a US$1.5 million e-governance master plan project this week.

The initiative will involve creating a master plan for e-governance in Myanmar and reviewing information technology capacity in the country's academic institutions.

The deadline for applications was August 8 and this week the shortlisted companies will be asked to submit proposals within 20 days.

Official government approval for the initiative is yet to be received but ADB spokesperson Karen Palmer said companies are being invited to apply now so work on the project can begin in September, by which time the project should be approved.

"While waiting for the government's approval of the technical assistance we are advertising the consulting firm selection for two of the three [project] outputs," Ms Palmer said. "Negotiations and selection of firms is likely to happen in September-October."

The development of e-governance will support the government's efforts to revive and upgrade sectors of the economy so they can better compete on the global stage, the project description said.

"One of the key issues facing the government as it seeks to introduce ICT systems to help strengthen performance of public services is the lack of a coherent and systematic approach to the design, evaluation and adoption of such systems," it said.

The ADB said this means there is a danger that e-governance will develop on an "ad-hoc basis", particularly given many donors are offering support for ICT development to government ministries.

Presidential adviser Aung Tun Thet said that while the government had introduced an e-government system into ministries last year it has not yet "reached the level we want".

This inter-ministerial task force to streamline the bureaucracy is headed by a minister in the President's Office and includes deputy ministers from a range of ministries. Its initial focus is on economic-related sectors, including trade, investment, electricity and communications.

"The Myanmar Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is leading the e-government project and we hope to develop it further in the future," he said.

He added that government working practices are changing to involve fewer people and rely more heavily on technology. Budget support is being made available to assist that process, he added.

IT specialist U Zaw Naing, managing director of Mandalay Technology, said earlier efforts at e-government had failed to make much progress because of a lack of ICT infrastructure, poor implementation and the mindset of government officials.

He said the "good news" is that the infrastructure issue is being addressed and that continuity in government had improved.

"We should not be pushing things on and off, and doing things as and when the boss commands it. We need steady enforcement, steady improvement and continuous [implementation]," U Zaw Naing said.

"Our experience has been that when a government leader or a minister or a prime minister changes, the projects he had developed are put aside … [and] the momentum is lost."

He said changing the mindset of government employees was difficult but necessary because e-governance is about improving service delivery.

"They should be serving the public … instead of being a burden to the public."

A man signs a petition in Mandalay against a print media law being debated in parliament. Photo: Hlaing Kyaw Soe

Petition launched over print media bill

HLAING KYAW SOE

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THE Mandalay branch of the Myanmar Journalist Network is collecting signatures until August 12 for a petition calling on MPs to scrap a print media law being considered by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The journalists said they launched the campaign on August 6 because they are concerned that the current version of the law does not ensure press freedom.

The Printing and Publishing Enterprise Bill was passed by the Pyithu Hluttaw on July 4 and will soon be debated in the Amyotha Hluttaw.

The Interim Press Council has accused the Ministry of Information of ignoring its concerns about the draft and described it as a backward step for the media industry.

The press council has drafted its own print media law and the petition calls on the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to throw out the ministry's version and instead consider the draft written by the council.

More than 1100 signatures had been collected as of August 8.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe

Reporter fights lawsuit

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A SENIOR reporter from *The Myanmar Times* appeared in court for the first time on August 9 over charges that his coverage of a recent Mandalay Region dispute "damaged the dignity" of electricity department officials.

Si Thu Lwin wrote a series of articles for *The Myanmar Times* earlier this year covering an ongoing conflict in Madaya township over the installation of power lines, which residents argued should bypass the town, rather than be run down the main street, for environmental and safety reasons. The dispute was resolved in favour of the residents through a lucky draw, but the Mandalay Region electricity department vowed to press ahead with its original plan.

The controversy was first reported in the paper's Myanmar-language edition on May 24. On May 29, Madaya township electricity engineer U Nyan Htun submitted a complaint alleging Si Thu Lwin's article contained "some words that damaged the dignity of the electricity department and its staff".

Police interviewed Si Thu Lwin in late July and he later received an official summons from a township judge to appear in the Madaya township court. He was also invited to submit a letter to the court refuting the charges.

If found guilty of libel, Si Thu Lwin faces two years in prison, a cash fine or both. He has been granted bail and will appear in court again on August 22.

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Tatmadaw frees 68 child soldiers

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THE Tatmadaw released 68 child soldiers on August 7, the largest of four such discharges since a joint action plan to end underage recruitment was agreed in June 2012, the United Nations Children's Fund said last week.

176

The number of child soldiers released since June 2012

UN Resident Coordinator for Myanmar Ashok Nigam said it was another "positive step" toward achieving the government's commitment to end the use of child soldiers. It comes one month after the Tatmadaw released 42 child soldiers on the first anniversary of the signing of the joint action plan agreement.

"I have always said the military is not a place for a child to grow up. We are very happy for the children and young people being discharged today," Mr Nigam said in a statement. "We congratulate them and wish them and their families well as they reunite."

The group included both children and young people who were recruited as minors. They were discharged at a ceremony that was attended by senior officials from the Tatmadaw, as well as officials from the ministries of defence, social welfare and immigration.

The UN Resident Coordinator and representatives from UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Save the Children and World Vision also attended the ceremony.

The Tatmadaw has released 176 child soldiers since signing the agreement.

"We welcome today's release and further encourage the Myanmar government and the Tatmadaw to continue accelerating identification and registration so that all children are discharged as a matter of urgency," UNICEF Myanmar's Deputy Representative in Yangon, Shalini Bahuguna, said.

"The time has come for the mass release of all children from the Myanmar armed forces," Ms Bahuguna said.

Myanmar EITI application on track for December

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MYANMAR is expected to begin the formal process of joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative by the end of this year, several sources said earlier this month.

The initiative requires companies working in the oil, gas and mineral sectors to declare any payments to the government, while the government also has to declare its revenue from extractive industries.

Edith Bowles, a senior official from the Sustainable Energy, Gas, Oil and Mining (SEGOM) unit at the World Bank, said Myanmar is on track to start the application process in December.

"There are 39 counties implementing EITI while a further 16 countries have applied to be EITI members," Ms Bowles said. "We expect Myanmar will start the EITI membership application process in December.

"Those who are applying for EITI membership will submit their first report and annual report within 18 months," she said.

There are four requirements that countries must meet before they can apply for EITI candidature.

A Yadana gas project station at Kanbauk in Tanintharyi Region. Photo: Staff

Myanmar has already completed three of these – making a definitive statement of intent to implement EITI; appointing a senior official to lead implementation; and pledging to work with civil society and the private sector on implementation – but still needs to establish a multi-stakeholder group that includes government officials as well as civil society and private sector representatives.

The group is expected to be formed at the end of October and government and private sector representatives have already been selected, officials say.

The final stage of preparation for an application is for the group to develop a costed workplan that is "aligned with the reporting and validation deadlines established by the EITI board", according to the initiative's website.

Ms Bowles said Myanmar would receive support for its application from the EITI's multi-donor trust fund, which is managed by the World Bank.

Through a technical advisory group based at the Myanmar Development Resource Institute (MDRI), the World Bank will help establish and administer the multi-stakeholder group, she said. It will also provide assistance to amend laws that do not support the initiative's reporting requirements, she said.

The central committee was established by the president on December 14, 2012, and is chaired by Minister for the President's Office U Soe Thein. Minister for Finance U Win Shein is secretary, while other members include Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun and Minister for Mines U Myint Aung. Working and coordination committees have also been formed.

Deputy Minister for Finance U Maung Maung Thein, the chairman of the working committee, said on August 2 that the government is committed to joining the initiative and expects to start the process by the end of the year.

U Maung Maung Thein said joining the initiative would bring "benefits for future generations" as it will help alleviate corruption in the sector and support democratic development and good governance.

"If we become an EITI member, corruption in resource based industries will be wiped out automatically. The other benefit we will get from it is more foreign investment," he said.

"Money received from sale of natural resources is the property of all citizens. We have to be aware that resources won't last forever and need to use them wisely," he said, before asking all stakeholders to "lend us a hand and give good advice".

The meeting was also attended by Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry officials, environmental experts and civil society representatives, including Daw Daewi Thant Zin from the Myanmar Green Network, U Ye Myat Soe from the Myanmar Geologists Association and U Min Aung Ye Htut Tin from the Mon Social Development Network.

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe

Call for applications for journalism training

With the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) International Programme for the Development of Communication, Myanmar Consolidated Media, publisher of *The Myanmar Times*, is seeking applications for capacity-building programs for print media journalists in Myanmar.

A four-week training program will be conducted for journalists with minimal or no experience. Trainees will have the opportunity to undertake an internship at *The Myanmar Times* upon concluding the course.

The program will be conducted in September 2013 by expatriate and Myanmar journalism instructors outside office hours. English skills and a university degree are preferred but not essential. Successful applicants will need to provide a release form from their employer for the duration of the course. Applications should include an up-to-date CV and cover letter explaining why the applicant wants to undertake the training. Applications close on Friday, August 16.

For further information or to submit an application please email:
administration@myanmartimes.com.mm

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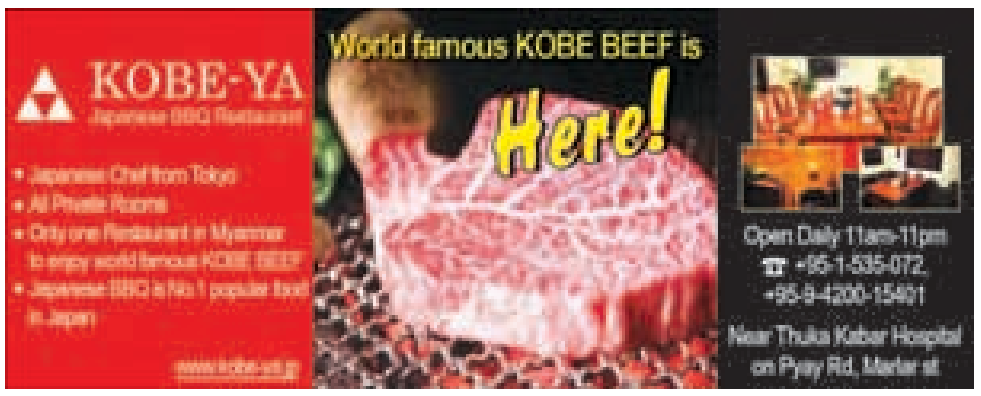

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No recall for Dumex products: distributor

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THE local distributor for baby formula brand Dumex says it does not plan to recall its products from the market and maintains they are safe for consumers, despite Chinese authorities issuing a recall for more than 726 tonnes of Dumex milk powder products last week.

The products subject to the recall were made using potentially contaminated whey protein concentrate produced by New Zealand company Fonterra, the world's fourth-largest producer of dairy products. The company announced on August 3 that tests of its products had shown the presence of bacteria associated with *Clostridium botulinum*, which can cause the potentially fatal condition botulism.

Dumex distributor MO ASIA issued a statement on August 6 saying none of its products were affected by the recall.

A spokesperson from the company guaranteed that the bacteria was not present in its products but refused to answer many questions at a press conference last week.

"We are 100 percent sure that our products are safe. The batch numbers of products we are importing here are different from the batch which the Fonterra company said could be dangerous," the company's nutrition manager, Dr Hnin Hnin Yu, said at the press conference.

"Our company imported [its products] from Dumex in Malaysia, which produced them with raw materials from Fonterra," she said.

However, the company declined to provide the batch numbers for the products that it is distributing.

Fonterra said that three batches of whey protein concentrate used in infant formula and sports drinks were contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum* and issued an immediate recall. Botulism is a rare and serious illness that causes paralysis of muscles.

Manufacturers in Australia, China, Malaysia, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Vietnam were affected by the recall. In addition to Shanghai-based Dumex Baby Food, a subsidiary of French food firm Danone, Hangzhou Wahaha and Coca-Cola's Chinese subsidiary were also supplied with potentially tainted Fonterra products.

Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported that Dumex had produced 726.552 tonnes of its own brand milk powder products with potentially tainted materials, 420.188 tonnes of which had already been sold into China's domestic market.

Myanmar's Food and Drug Administration is yet to make a statement and declined to comment when contacted by *The Myanmar Times* last week.

But parents who use Dumex products expressed concern about the lack of clarity from the company and regulators.

"We're worried. We have to rely on these milk products for our babies' nutritional needs. Nobody knows whether they are safe or not," Daw Kay Thi from South Okkalapa township, who has a one-year-old child.

International pressure grows for changes to 2008 constitution

Focus remains on amendments that would allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to become president after 2015 election

TIM MCLAUGHLIN
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SECTIONS of the international community are increasing their calls for Myanmar to undertake drastic constitutional reforms prior to the nation's 2015 elections.

Politicians and ministers from the United States, Australia and Britain are urging MPs to revise the constitution on the grounds that it does not reflect the will of the people.

John Bercow, the speaker of Britain's House of Commons, said during a speech at Yangon University on August 1 that there was an "urgent need" for constitutional change "if the reform process is to be genuinely inclusive and legitimate".

Mr Bercow, who also met U Thein Sein in London during the president's recent visit to Britain, said a particular focus should be amending "clauses relating to the eligibility of candidates for the presidency and the system of governance for the ethnic states".

"Of course the Burmese parliament will elect who it chooses as its next president. However, any constitutional change which did not allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to be a candidate would be regarded in my country, and surely across the international community, as a joke in very poor taste," said Mr Bercow, who spent a week in Myanmar.

His call echoed that made by US Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, who on the same day publicly announced his own views on the need for constitutional change.

"At the heart of Burma's existing problems is the need for constitutional reform. The current flawed constitution is not up to the task of supporting the country's democratic ambitions," Mr McConnell said.

"Simply put, if Burma is to take the next big step toward economic and political reform and toward fully normalising its relations with the United States, it needs to revise its constitution."

While Mr McConnell stopped short of naming Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, he said that a clause in the constitution that bans anyone with a relative who is a citizen of a foreign country from being eligible for the presidency should be changed.

The statement is a reference to section 59(f), which specifically targets the National League for Democracy leader, whose late husband Michael Aris was a British citizen, as are her two sons Kim and Alex.

Mr McConnell also outlined two additional areas where he believes change is necessary: bringing the military under civilian control and judicial independence from the executive.

'The US ... should not only spotlight the issue of who can be president.'

U Ye Tun
Pyithu Hluttaw representative, Hsipaw

Janelle Saffin, a member of the Australian parliament with a longtime interest in Myanmar, has expressed similar views over the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The extent of this separation remains murky as section 11(a) states that it is pursued only "to the extent possible".

Calls for constitutional changes began to gain momentum domestically in March when senior Union Solidarity and Development Party members U Aye Myint and U Thein Zaw submitted a proposal to form a committee to review the constitution.

In late July a committee comprising 109 members was established. All 18 parties represented in the hluttaw have at least one member on the committee. The USDP has 52 members, while the Tatmadaw has 25 and the NLD seven.

But U Ye Tun, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Hsipaw in Shan State, cautioned against foreign countries being too fixated on amending the eligibility criteria for the presidency.

"I've heard the US has said that if the parliament does not amend the constitution, especially the requirements for the presidency, it may harm relations between the two countries. But I think the US should apply pressure for all undemocratic laws to be changed. It should not only spotlight the issue of who can be president," he said.

He said that MPs should not let international pressure affect how they vote. "The parliament doesn't need to pay attention to this pressure. As a parliamentarian, I will just vote independently and do what I think is right." – *Additional reporting by Soe Than Lynn*

Business

Fish firms aim for EU

New intiatives will smooth access to world's top market

MYAT NYEIN AYE

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FISH exporters say they welcome initiatives by the European Union to improve their ability to take advantage of duty-free access to the market, but say most fish and fish-product exporters lack the knowledge and capacity to meet the stringent requirements of European importers.

U Myo Nyunt, whose company General Food Technology and Industry exported to Europe before Myanmar's labour violations cost it its duty-free access more than a decade ago, said he welcomes any attempt by the European Union to help exporters benefit from its generalised scheme of preferences, which provides least developed countries like Myanmar with duty- and quota-free access to its market.

However, he said that most domestic fish and fish-product exporters lack the technology to provide products suitable for the European market.

Daw Toe Nandar Tin, treasurer of the Myanmar Fishery Products Processors and Exporters Association, said anything that helps association members increase exports is "good news" because they are struggling with rising costs and declining sales.

The EU will spend a total of €14 million (US$ 18.2 million, K18.6 billion) over the next four years to help Myanmar exporters increase their ability to access the 28-state single market, officials at the European delegation to Myanmar told *The Myanmar Times* on August 8. The funds comprise a €1 million technical assistance program that is already underway and two new programs whose budgets are set to be approved, said Alistair MacDonald, chargè d'affaires at the delegation. The first is a €10 million four-year trade development program and the second a €3 program to help set up a European Chamber of Commerce here, he added.

Alberto Menghini, a program officer with the delegation, said training is underway for government officials on how to prove products exported from Myanmar were produced here to ensure that other countries do not attempt to pass their exports off as Myanmar exports in order to gain tariff exemption. He also said health officials here are working closely with their counterparts in Europe to ensure systems are in place to test food products for safety.

Myanmar's GSP status was restored last month, but it is retroactive for one year, meaning that exports to the European Union from June 2012 are tax-free and duties paid can be refunded.

Members of the Myanmar Fishery Products Processors and Exporters Association, however, say that there is little understanding about how the GSP works. U Htin Aye, managing director of fish exporter Shwe Ya Mone, said some exporters are also having difficultly establishing links with EU importers because it has been almost a decade since they traded with Europe.

Those who exported to Europe without GSP benefits lowered their prices to compensate for this, he said. Since the reinstatement of GSP, however, importers have not paid higher prices, he added.

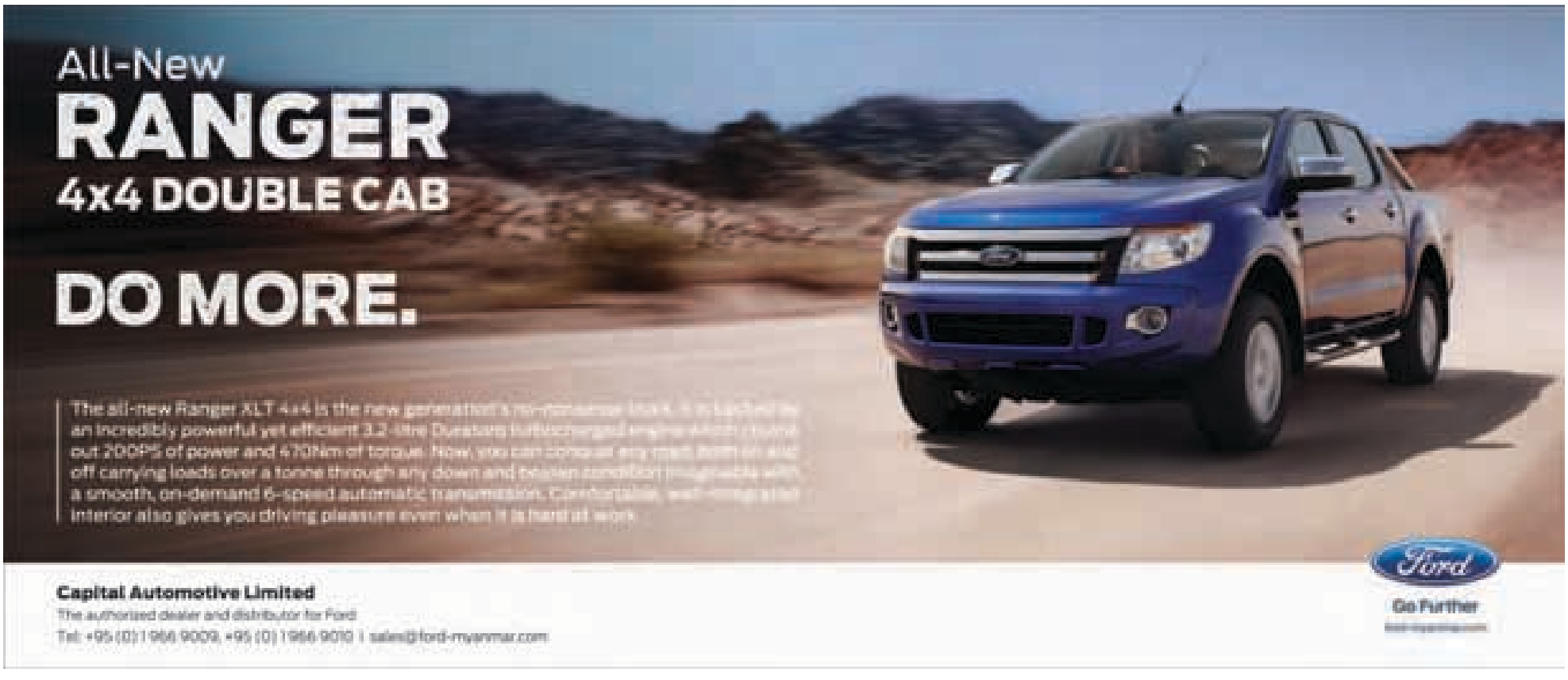
Despite the uncertainty among Myanmar exporters, companies from the region have stated a strong interest in investing in Myanmar's fisheries sector since GSP benefits were restored, said U Han Htun, a Myanmar Fisheries Federation executive committee member.

Workers at a Yangon fish market pack fish in plastic crates. Exports to Europe require food-safety certification. Photo: Staff

"Thai companies have joined the Myanmar Shrimp Association (MSA) because they want to invest in farms," he said.

"If they can make a deal they will build a lot of new farms to grow freshwater and saltwater prawn. They will be export the prawn to the EU under GSP terms," he said.

Before the Myanmar was readmitted to the EU's GSP list, a total of 13 domestic companies had obtained EU quality control certificates allowing them to ship products to the bloc. Since June, another company has obtained the relevant certificate and four others are working with the Department of Fisheries to try and earn certificates, a department spokesperson said.



President of JICA upbeat on Myanmar

BUSINESS 25

Price of retail space keeps climbing

PROPERTY 32

Exchange Rates (August 9 close)

Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1285	K1295
Malay Ringitt	K295	K300
SG Dollar	K765	K770
Thai Baht	K31	K31.5
US Dollar	K972	K974

Questions mount over federation's finances

SU PHYO WIN
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QUESTIONS about the last financial report of the country's largest business federation went unanswered at a meeting at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry last week, according to a businessman who raised them.

U Khin Hlaing, chairman of Zawtika International, said the nine members of the federation's central executive committee he met with for more than three hours were unable to answer his questions about the report, including questions about funding to build an office in the capital.

U Tin Maung Sint, a member of the central executive of the Myanmar Rice Federation and a leader of those who say they want to reform the federation, said the financial report approved at the federation's annual general meeting on July 13 could spark a leadership shakeup.

"They are sitting on a time bomb and they don't know when it will explode," he said, referring to the federation's leadership, which he accuses of using it as a "family business". This includes the federation's president U Win Aung who is on the US government's list of people American companies and individuals are banned from doing business with. U Win Aung, who is on the blacklist for alleged ties to the former military government, declined repeated requests for comment.

The meeting between U Khin Hlaing and the central executive committee members was videotaped and an audio tape was also made. The subsequent two-hour press conference was also taped by staff of U Khin Hlaing's company.

Copies of an audio tape are circulating among members of the federation, sources say. U Khin Hlaing, however, said he has not shared his audio or video tapes in which he asks central executive committee members about funds allocated to build the federation's office in Nay Pyi Taw.

Although the controversial financial report lacks detail, it does provide a figure for the amount of money allocated to build the office in the capital: more than K1.8 billion.

Members of the reformist group say this expenditure as well as others related to property transactions in Yangon are dubious, and they are gathering more information about them, information they say could result in a legal case against leaders of the federation.

'They are sitting on a time bomb and they don't know when it will explode.'

U Tin Maung Sint
'Reformist' Leader

U Khin Hlaing addresses a press conference following a meeting at the UMFCCI last week. Photo: Lim Ko Taik

Last Tuesday's lengthy meeting between U Khin Hlaing and federation members was prompted by a July 17 letter from the Commerce Ministry instructing U Win Aung and members of the central executive committee to answer U Khin Hlaing's questions about the financial report.

A second letter from the ministry, dated July 28, instructs them to answer questions from the reformist group.

U Myint Soe, a member of the federation's central executive committee, said another meeting will be held with U Khin Hlaing to discuss his concerns.

"We will gather opinions and try to cooperate with U Khin Hlaing not later than August 20," he said following last Tuesday's meeting.

U Aung Zaw Oo, a member of the federation's executive committee, downplayed the dispute, saying the only federation members protesting against it were those who had failed to win positions in its first democratic election.

"The only complaints are from the losers," U Aung Zaw Oo said.

U Tin Maung Sint, who did not stand for election, said that the dispute began over an election he and others believed was rigged but has expanded into one that that will decide how business is conducted in Myanmar. – *Additional reporting by Vincent MacIsaac*

Offshore block 'viable'

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COMMERCIAL production at offshore block M3 is slated to begin as early as 2018, according to a high-ranking official at the Ministry of Energy.

Thai energy firm PTTEP has been exploring the block since 2011, with tests indicating it is commercially viable, said the official who requested anonymity because he is not authorised to speak to the media.

"PTTEP is presently conducting detailed exploration," he said, adding the engineering, procurement, commissioning, installation and construction phase would take four to five years to complete. "Commercial production at the M3 field will begin at 2018 at the earliest."

PTTEP is the sole operator of the block, but Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise will take a 20-25 percent stake of the field when commercial production goes ahead.

PTTEP has invested in six projects in the Moattma offshore region, four of which are at the appraisal stage. PTTEP did not respond to requests for comment. Gas from block M3 will be for domestic use.

Some 12 firms are working on offshore blocks, with three projects in production. Yadana and Yetagun in Moattma are producing natural gas for export to Thailand, and Shwe gas offshore from Rakhine State began exporting to China at the end of last month.

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Tel: (951) 654086
Dated: 12th August, 2013

Flooding has minimal impact on rice price

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THE worst monsoon flooding in more than 20 years has had only a slight impact on the price of rice because the floodwaters did not hit the country's main rice-growing areas, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation.

U Aung Zaw Oo, a joint secretary at the federation, said the wholesale price of 25 percent broken rice had risen K500 per 49 kilogram sack to K15,500 but would likely fall the same amount next month.

He said the price rose this month after rice mills in flood-hit areas, primarily in Mon and Kayin states, were unable to supply markets in cities because roads became impassable. He added, however, that there would be no supply shortage because the government had a large buffer stock and traders also had large supplies.

U Aung Zaw Oo also said the government may allocate more money to buy rice from farmers this season through its rice buffer stock committee but said it was too early to provide a figure.

Farmers in several regions and states whose crops were destroyed said this would not help them. Their most pressing need is their inability to pay down debts, they said.

Aid workers said Kayin State was the hardest hit. One international relief agency, which asked not to be named, said almost 90 percent of the state's rice crop was destroyed. Floodwaters destroyed rice on 39,010 acres of the state's total 44,000 acres of rice fields, the agency said. It said that 6733 families, comprising 34,284 people in total, lost their rice crop in that state alone.

Reliable nationwide data was unavailable late last week, but reports from villages in Yangon and Ayeyarwady regions suggest the disaster could take affected farmers at least one year to recover from.

U Hlaing Win, who farms 17 acres near Malitt village in Yangon Region's Hlegu township, said farmers in his village lost 300 acres of paddy. "The paddy was destroyed. We have start all over again," he said.

6733

Number of farming families in Kayin State whose monsoon rice crop was destroyed by floodwaters

Farmers in the village still have debts from last year and cannot obtain new loans to buy fertiliser and seed, he added.

"It costs more than K50,000 to plant one acre. Interest rates on our debts are rising, but our crop was destroyed," U Hlaing Win said. "For the last three years floods have damaged or destroyed crops. We need better drainage systems," he added.

U Tin Htay Aung, who farms 150 acres in Ayeyarwady Region's Pyapon township, said floodwaters had destroyed two-thirds of his crop. More than 900 acres of rice near his village, Kyat Pha Mhwe Zaung, were ruined, he added. Residents of Ingapu village in Ayeyarwady Region say more than 3000 acres of rice were lost in the first floods to hit the area in five years.

Meanwhile, three energy firms announced donations to flood victims in Taninthayi Region. France-based Total, Malaysia-based Petronas and Thai-based PTTEP donated food and potable water to flood-affected families in the region where 157 homes in Kalaungain township were swept away by floodwaters on July 31.

BRIEFS

Yangon

Insurer plans share sale next month

Kanbawza Group of Company's insurance arm, IKBZ, will become a public company in late September by selling shares to the public, a senior official said last week.

U Nyo Myint, IKBZ's managing director, said the company is still determining how many shares will be sold and at what price.

"I'm not sure how many shares will be sold because our company has only been operating for a little more than a month," he said. "The process involves many steps but we'll inform the public what we are doing in stages. We have always intended to make IKBZ a public company," he said.

He added that many globally recognised insurance companies are public entities. "We also plan to turn our company into a public company after it has been operating for three months. We need to take at least three months to ensure that our operations are running smoothly. We've already hired a team of accountants comprising some experienced hands from home and abroad and we'll discuss the matter with them.

"After we make IKBZ company into a public company and we make the business a success, we may also make Kanbawza a public company later," U Nyo Myint said.

He added that IKBZ has also started offering automotive insurance.

"What is most important to us is convincing customers that we're trustworthy. And to do that we need to make compensation payments as quickly as possible. We have already paid out our first automotive insurance claim," he added.

– Shwegu Thitsar, translated by Win Thaw Tar

Shan State

Tea imports threaten Shan farmers

Tea farmers in Namhsan in northern Shan State are struggling to compete with illegal imports of dried tea from China, the Palaung Tea Planting Association says.

"These illegal dried teas have a good smell and the price is also fairly low. So we can't compete at all," association member U Aye Kyaw said during a recent meeting on development in the Palaung Self-administered Zone.

He said imported coffee mix is also harming the market for tea.

The result has been hard on the local economy. Many young Palaung are heading overseas for jobs and the number of dried tea factories – once more than 130 – is falling steadily.

"In Namhsan, there are only about 30 dried tea factories left," U Aye Kyaw said. "With sales declining, tea farmers are gradually losing their market, pushing young people to China and Thailand in search of work."

He added that tea enterprises can only be saved if the government offers low-interest loans and promotes new cultivation and production techniques.

– Hlaing Kyaw Soe, translated by Zar Zar Soe

The Fine Print

Legal & tax insight

Still too early for private equity firms

ALESSIO POLASTRI
alessio@pwplegal.com

ALTHOUGH private equity firms are often criticised for taking too short a view of a company's prospects, they have the capacity to be of enormous assistance to domestic companies needing capital to expand their business and, eventually, apply for a public listing.

With local banks still reluctant to lend money to businesses and foreign banks unwilling or unable to fund projects, business people in Myanmar are becoming concerned about locating the capital required to start or sustain their businesses in the medium to long term.

The very first barrier foreign investors meet is the impossibility of acquiring shares in companies that are 100 percent owned by locals. Although this restriction is not clearly stated in the laws of Myanmar, it is the standard practice adopted by authorities. As a result, the whole transaction would lack an essential element, namely the security of the equity (or better, non-equity) investor.

The investor will have no control over the company and will not receive dividends because he or she did not receive shares for the investment.

There are some solutions that circumvent this restriction and allow potential investors to feel more comfortable. One that has been successfully implemented several times in Myanmar is to incorporate a company in the form of a joint venture between the existing local company and the potential investor. The joint venture would be funded by a capital injection (most likely from the foreign side) while assets – such as a long-term lease, trademarks, equipment and factory – will most likely come from the local partner. This new company would be positioned to carry on the business initially owned by the local company and to eventually expand its activities with fresh cash.

Such a scenario can be successfully implemented only if the assets can be transferred from the local company to the newly formed company. However, not all the assets can be freely transferred. For example, licences granted by authorities require their consent before they can be transferred and consent is not always easy to obtain.

A second solution is for the foreign investor to enter into a joint operating agreement (or production-sharing contract) through an unincorporated joint venture. This corporate structure is used in some industries globally, not only in Myanmar. This solution would not allow the transfer of shares – the foreign investor does not become a shareholder of the local company – but, by contractual arrangements, the foreign investor will be entitled to a share of the profits, while the company will be governed and managed by committees to which the foreign investor has the right to appoint members.

One downside of such an arrangement – and the reason foreign investors are not keen to adopt it – is related to the repatriation of profits. In order to be protected by Notification 40/2011 on the repatriation of profits and provisions in the Foreign Investment Law, foreigners need to invest under the umbrella of the Myanmar Investment Commission. There are, however, other restrictions preventing private equity firms from entering Myanmar.

The issues above are only some of those that prevent foreigners from confidently investing in Myanmar. The hope is that new laws and the reform of the Myanmar Companies Act will partially, if not entirely, solve these issues.

Alessio Polastri is a consultant at Polastri Wint & Partners Legal & Tax Advisors.

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To apply, send a one page CV to kshitij.arora@atcapital.co.in

Japan-Myanmar Centre opens in Yangon

AUNG SHIN

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THE Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is deepening its assistance to Myanmar by launching new programs to alleviate poverty, develop human resources and enhance ties between domestic and Japanese firms, the president of the agency said following the opening of the Japan-Myanmar Centre last week.

JICA's Akihiko Tanaka also said that creating a proper investment environment in Myanmar is key to attracting Japanese businesses.

"Japanese companies are watching very carefully now," he said. "When Myanmar can offer the right environment, they will come," he added.

Myanmar's rapid exit from two decades of international isolation has caught the eye of foreign investors but is not in itself sufficient to attract investment.

Mr Tanaka said Japanese investors are seeking the "right infrastructure and institutions" before they invest.

The new centre, which opened on August 9, is one component of the new infrastructure Myanmar needs to encourage investment.

It has been formed by a partnership between JICA and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Mr Tanada said JICA chose the federation as its partner because it is the largest business network in Myanmar. The centre will focus on human resources development. Japanese experts will provide technical training to Myanmar business people on a range of practical skills.

Akihiko Tanaka

JICA is launching two other projects in Myanmar. It will facilitate the development of engineering departments at two Myanmar universities by linking them with Japanese universities that will help update curriculum.

The agency is also funding sign-language training for hearing impaired people.

Mr Tanaka said he had engaged in high-level talks with the government about JICA's ongoing work in Myanmar.

"I have met with the president, many ministers and the parliamentary speaker in Nay Pyi Taw. We talked about areas of cooperation and possibilities of future cooperation. I reported to the president about many of the new projects JICA is implementing. We discussed the most important areas for poverty reduction, particularly in the agriculture sector, to improve people's livelihood," the JICA president said.

JICA's work in Myanmar is focused on three areas: improving livelihoods to reduce poverty, capacity development, and development of infrastructure and institutions.

It has been a key player in the development of Myanmar, funding projects to improve infrastructure of transport networks, electricity and water supply.

The Japanese government is also driving the development of Thilawa special economic zone near Yangon and considering participating in Dawei Special Economic Zone in the southern part of the country.

Still, Japanese investment remains lower than that of other countries, such as China and Thailand.

JICA officials say this will change as more infrastructure is built and that Japanese investment will flow into manufacturing rather than resource extraction.

They say that this will generate long-term jobs and sustain Myanmar's economic development.

Airport bid winners

THE transport ministry announced the winning bids for three airport projects in state media on August 10.

Pioneer Aerodrome Services, a Myanmar company, won the tender to renovate Yangon International Airport, while Singapore-based Yongnam-CAPE-JGC was selected as the back up.

Japan-based Mitsubishi Corporation was selected to renovate Mandalay International Airport, with France-based VINCI Airports selected as the back-up company.

South Korea's Incheon Airport consortium was selected to build Hanthawaddy International Airport, while Yongnam-CAPE-JGC was selected as the back up operator. Hanthawaddy is expected to become the country's main airport. All three projects are scheduled to begin early next year. – *Aung Shin*

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Issue Date : 04 August 2013
Closing Date : 19 August 2013 (5:00pm)
Duration of Appointment : 1 Year (possible extensions)

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Applications should be addressed to UNFPA Representative.
Attention: International Operations Manager
RoomA07, UNFPA, No.6, Natmauk Road, Yangon.
Email : myanmar.office@unfpa.org
For further details, please see the vacancy announcement posted at UN billboard. No.6, Natmauk Road, Yangon and also at UNFPA website (http://myanmar.unfpa.org)
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Issue Date : 12 August 2013
Closing Date : 26 August 2013 (5:00pm)
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ANALYSIS

Risk-free incentives for SMEs

In the second part of his analysis of laws promoting small and medium-sized enterprises, economist Andrea Smurra discusses incentives that generate economic activity without putting the government's finances at risk

ANDREA SMURRA

andrea.smurra@theigc.org

MYANMAR'S new Small and Medium Enterprise Law could provide a boost for a sector that has been at the forefront of innovation globally. Similar laws have been implemented elsewhere, with the most effective ones focused on increasing services and reducing red tape. Credit guarantees and tax incentives, however, have been less effective as well as riskier.

A virtually risk-free set of incentives focuses on training and providing services to SMEs. Many countries provide them with free or subsidised knowledge and information. Examples include accountancy training, seminars on tax structure and regulations, as well as programs aimed at reducing the information barriers that exist regarding the acquisition of licences and entering new domestic and foreign markets.

It is also common for governments to set up institutions devoted to the promotion of SMEs through marketing initiatives, sector-specific services and awards. An astonishing example is the Singaporean SPRING agency which, just over the first two quarters of 2012, financed more than 1600 capability development projects, generating added value of more than US$2 billion. In Taiwan, every year the Ministry of Economic Affairs selects the most innovative SMEs and awards them with a whole set of business development services, from marketing to R&D subsidies.

The second group of incentives is aimed at reducing and simplifying the bureaucratic burden on SMEs. Dedicated SME offices are often put in place within the civil service. Additionally, SMEs are allowed to employ simplified accounting systems, matched with simplified tax requirements (which do not necessarily entail lower or zero tax rates).

In many countries SMEs receive preferential treatment from the state and the law. For example, contracts for the supply of goods and services to the US government often include quotas requiring a certain amount to be purchased from SMEs. It is also common for SMEs to be subjected to relaxed health and environmental regulations, given the large upfront payments compliance with these regulations frequently requires. Finally, it is often the case that labour regulations are relaxed for SMEs, whose economic nature might require more agile hiring and firing procedures.

The government cannot afford to have large sections of the business community not paying any tax.

These types of incentives, if correctly designed and adapted to the economic landscape of Myanmar, will allow policymakers to level the playing field and restore a thriving competitive environment for all enterprises. However, there are also serious risks connected with some commonly used incentives.

The first relates to credit. In a country such as Myanmar, where capital is so scarce, policy-makers might decide to provide subsidised credit to SMEs to boost the sector. The government could facilitate access to credit by taking on some of the risk connected with SMEs' entrepreneurial activity. If this policy is adopted it will be easier for firms to borrow and invest, but the country's finances will be dangerously exposed if a credit-guarantee scheme is not designed prudently. In particular, eligible companies need to be efficiently screened on the basis of their potential to avoid excessive risk-taking.

The second, and probably most dangerous, risk is related to tax incentives. The government has often resorted to tax holidays and exemptions to encourage and stimulate investment. A clear and recent example is the new FDI Law. While it can be an effective means to increase investment in the short term, this policy reduces the number of taxpayers. Government revenue from taxation is already considerably lower in Myanmar than in most neighboring countries (4 percent of GDP against 10pc in Bangladesh and Cambodia, 14pc in Laos and 17pc in Thailand).

The government cannot afford to have large sections of the business community not paying tax if it intends to provide the services and public investments necessary for successful development. Hence, the executive should be extremely wary of offering further tax incentives in future legislation.

The third and final risk is connected with identifying the enterprises that will enjoy the benefits granted by the law. Whatever incentive scheme the government puts into place, a great number of entrepreneurs will show interest. Some of these will be genuine SMEs that need incentives to overcome disadvantages they face relative to large firms and to achieve their full potential.

However, there will also be entrepreneurs that, through corporate restructuring and ownership pyramids, will disguise big enterprise to be eligible for the benefits provided by the SME Law. Identifying and prosecuting "fake SMEs" will be one of the biggest challenges ahead. The government will have to develop a screening mechanism to deal with those trying to exploit the law and devote resources to it. A well-designed SME Law is crucial to ensuring that fake SMEs are easy to identify.

Careful consideration must be given to all the specific policies that will be part of the SME Law to ensure that Myanmar derives the maximum possible benefit from it.

Andrea Smurra is an economist at the International Growth Centre (London School of Economics) and a visiting fellow at the Myanmar Development Research Institute.

US renews ban on Myanmar gems

US-BASED Human Rights Watch is warning that Myanmar may face a struggle in its effort to gain access to Washington's generalised system of preferences, which grants trade privileges to developing nations, following the renewal of the ban on the import of gems from Myanmar to the United States.

"It's unclear what action the US government will take on the GSP, but it's clear that Myanmar still has a long way to go to meet the labour rights conditionality contained in the GSP law," Phil Robertson, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division, told *The Myanmar Times*. He was referring to labour standards that must be met in order to gain access to the program. "The armed forces still use forced labour and child soldiers, labour leaders face intimidation and abuse when they try to form unions and collectively bargain, and the level of implementation of the labour law is weak and subject to corruption," Mr Robertson added. "Any objective assessment would find that Myanmar has not met the requirements to have its GSP status restored."

His comments follow an executive order issued on August 7 by President Barack Obama to maintain a ban on the import of rubies and jade.

"The administration is maintaining restrictions on specific activities and actors that contribute to human rights abuses or undermine Burma's democratic reform process," deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes said, using Myanmar's former name. Mr Obama "is taking this step to advance our policy of promoting responsible economic engagement and encouraging reform that directly benefits the Burmese people," Mr Rhodes said.

90%

Amount of the world's rubies produced in Myanmar

Mr Obama in November suspended a ban on imports from Myanmar except gems. The sanctions formally lapsed last month after Mitch McConnell, the top Republican in the Senate, said it would be counterproductive to renew sanctions legislation. Mr Rhodes said that Obama "fully supported" the end of the broader ban.

But US lawmakers pressed to keep the decade-old ban on imports of gems, which often come from Kachin State and other conflict-torn areas.

Human rights advocates say that the lucrative trade has helped fuel the violence, with ethnic minorities seeing little of the profit from gems in their regions despite working under harsh conditions.

Mr Robertson said, "It's important that the US government has continued the ban on imports of jade and rubies from Burma because the procurement and production of gems is the epitome of rights-abusing, crony capitalism."

"I'm certain the Myanmar government and its gems exporters are quite unhappy, but hopefully this action will serve as a clear indication that they need to clean up their acts and ensure abuses in controlling areas with gems, and producing the jade and rubies, are ended," he added.

Myanmar produces some 90 percent of the world's rubies. A US law passed in 2008, which cracked down on Myanmar-origin gems exported via third countries, estimated that US$100 million in Myanmar's precious stones were coming into the United States annually at the time.

But the renewed US ban will not deprive Myanmar of other customers. The European Union in April ended all sanctions on Myanmar except weapons sales.

Neighbours China and Thailand have been major buyers of Myanmar's gems. A US official told Congress in 2011 that, despite Western bans, Myanmar was exporting more rubies and jade due to high demand in China.

– AFP, The Myanmar Times

UNOPS

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Myanmar is inviting qualified candidates to apply for the following positions:

Sr.	Title and level	Duty Station	Position	Deadline
1.	Myanmar - English - Myanmar Translator (LICA 6) (Re-advertised)	Home based	National	14-August-2013
2.	Planning and Budget Officer (LICA 6)	Yangon	National	15-August-2013
3.	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (NOC)	Yangon	National	19-August-2013

For details please visit UNOPS website https://gprs.unops.org and click on the post you are interested in applying for. All applications must be made through UNOPS E-recruitment system.

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Natural light

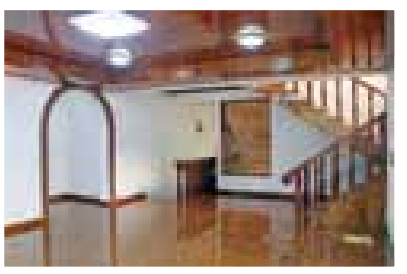
This week's house is a well-maintained two-storey rental home, perfect for families who aren't looking to purchase during the housing boom. It boasts plenty of windows to let in the breeze and natural light, and since it's located in quiet Bahan township you won't hesitate to throw back the curtains. The white and light-blue colour scheme and the well-decorated compound – measuring 10,890 square feet – also offer plenty of breathing room.

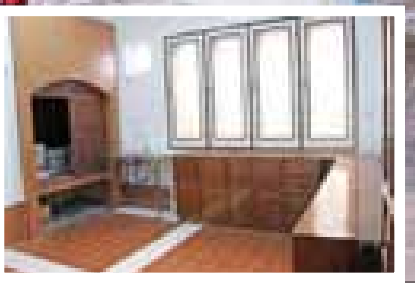
Entering through the wide living room, you'll be greeted with a kitchen and dining room partitioned with simple white walls and parquet flooring that extends upstairs as well. Four double bedrooms give family members their own space, while the wide upstairs balcony gives everyone a place to gather together and relax in the evening. Above the two-car garage is a room, with separate bathroom, for workers or gardeners.

The house comes equipped with nine air conditioners and two landlines, but does not come fully furnished, so you'll need to weigh the costs of buying furniture when setting your budget. The rental price of US$8000 is a bit higher than those of other properties in the area, but it is negotiable. If you're looking for a dose of fresh air, you may find the premium worth it.

– Ei Thae Thae Naing

Location	:	Nat Maut Yeik Thar Lane, Bahan township
Rental price	:	$8000 for rent (negotiable)
Contact	:	Estate Myanmar Co. Ltd
Phone	:	01 512029





Photos: Zarni Phyo

Million-dollar home sales jump in US

REAL estate has returned as a favourite topic of conversation at the pair of Starbucks coffee shops in Granite Bay, a Sacramento, California, suburb where the median income is double that of the rest of the state.

"When the real estate market was booming, people sat in Starbucks and talked about how much they paid for a house," said Craig Moe, who in June bought a US$1.2 million property discounted 25 percent from its sale six years ago. "Now, they talk about how little they paid and what a bargain they got."

Home sales priced at more than $1 million are gaining at triple the pace of the broader market, according to real estate research firm DataQuick. Wealthy purchasers, helped by gains in equities, are diving into real estate a year after a recovery began in the housing market when less well-heeled buyers rushed to take advantage of record-low interest rates, said Susan Wachter, a professor of real estate and finance at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

"The real estate recovery has been built on purchases by middle-class families, even though they haven't been the ones to flourish during the recovery," she said. "Now the economy is getting a vote of confidence from wealthy homebuyers."

Sales of homes priced at more than $1 million jumped an average 37pc in 2013's first half from a year earlier to the highest level since 2007, according to DataQuick. Transactions priced at less than $1 million rose 11pc in the same period to the highest since 2009, data from the National Association of Realtors shows.

37%

Rise in sales of homes worth more than US$1 million in the first half of this year, according to DataQuick

The $1-million-and-up end of the market usually lags the cycles of the broader market because those purchases "tend to be discretionary spending" that can wait until economic conditions are right, Ms Wachter said. "These usually are people who can weather any storm."

The rebounding housing market meanwhile is helping the economic recovery with economists predicting the US economy will expand by 2.3pc this quarter from 1.7pc in the prior three months and grow every period through at least 2014's third quarter, according to the median estimate in a Bloomberg survey.

Home purchases fuel consumer spending that accounts for about 70pc of the economy, and at the high end spending on decorating, furniture and appliances is much greater per home. Properties priced for more than $1 million accounted for about 2.4pc of all home sales in June, up from 1.3pc in early 2012 when the rest of the market began recovering, according to the National Association of Realtors.

"Wealthy families are gaining confidence in the economy and they're seeing stability in their investments," said Nikki Michelini, director at wealth management firm Aspiriant.

"The rich are feeling better about their prospects and starting to rediscover real estate as a place to park money," agreed real-estate analyst Mark LePage. – *Bloomberg*

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IN PICTURES

A man walks past a mural painted on the "5 Pointz" building on August 9 in the Long Island City neighbourhood of New York City. The site is a series of properties that graffiti artists use as an outdoor art exhibit space and is considered the Mecca of the graffiti world. It has been used as a space for graffiti artists since the early 1990s, though in 2011, Jerry Wolkoff, the owner of the property, announced he planned to demolish the building to build high-rise residential buildings. The 5 Pointz graffiti community has since been in a battle to keep the space as is; they are currently petitioning the government to have it considered a protected cultural landmark. *Photo: AFP*

Putting a price-tag on retail shops

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THE rising price of rent for Yangon's street-level shops is being driven by an influx of potential tenants, with some locations demanding six-fold increases from two years ago, store owners say.

They said that rapidly rising rental costs are eating into their profits, but constant demand for prime locations is expected to keep commercial rents high.

Shops in Yangon townships such as Kamaryut, Tarmwe and Insein are commanding as much as K3 million per month for 1500 square feet, from K500,000 for high-end locations two years ago, according to Phoenix Real Estate Agency owner Ko Htun Htun.

"Yangon Region has a booming commercial rental market, especially this year because a lot of businesses want to open shops and showrooms downtown and other main places," he said.

Much of the growth in demand stems from opening industries such as cell phone shops, which face bright prospects, he said.

Retailers say high rents are eating into profit margins of some and dissuading others from setting up shop in the first place.

"The rental fees and property costs are often larger than the size businesspeople can invest," said a spokesman for the Myanmar Retailers Association.

Ko Htun Htun said many store owners were stuck with renting, as purchase prices had climbed far out of reach for more retailers.

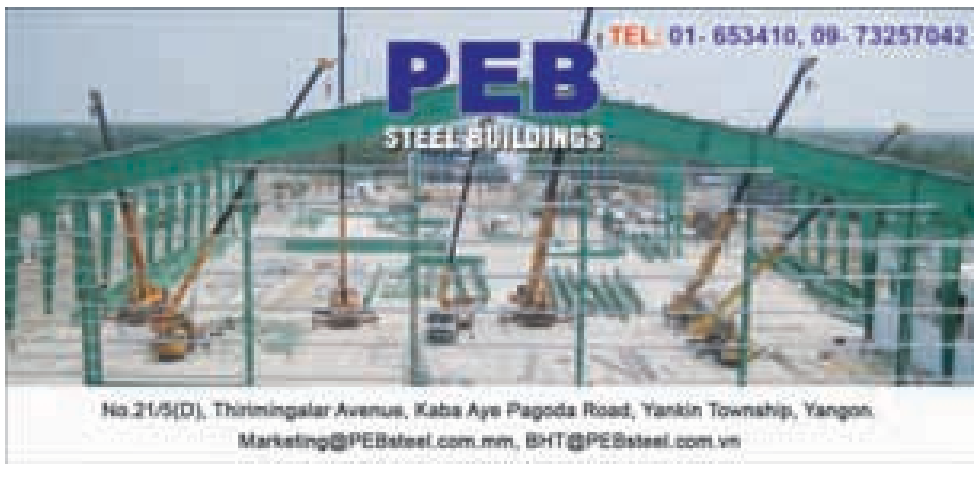
"A shop owner wanting to buy land or a house in good location would have to pay up to K3-K4 billion. So renting is generally better than buying," he said.

U Min Ko opened a phone service shop on 33 Street in Kyauktada township, paying 450,000 per month for 1250 square feet. With a year-long contract, he says his shop is often in the red during slow months.

Store owners in Yangon's outskirts also claim to see large recent increases in rent.

Ko Zaw Nge, owner of a guitar shop in Thauwana township, said his monthly rent increased by 20 percent to K120,000 over the last three months.

"This is a very high fee for me," he said. "If the price continues to increase in the future, I'm worried about the long-term viability of the shop. I don't sell my products every day."



New 'era' for interior design

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THE newly formed Association of Myanmar Interior Designers hosted its first seminar last week to foster cooperation and improvement within the industry and introduce itself to the public.

The seminar was held on August 4 at the Myanmar Engineering Society in Hlaing township, Yangon.

U Saw Phyu Thein, a patron of the association, said part of the purpose of the seminar was to introduce the association – which was formed in January and has 40 members – to the public, as well as to provide a venue for sharing information between companies and generations.

"This time is a new era for the interior design industry," U Saw Phyu Thein said, referring to the construction boom.

"We'll hold more seminars like this in the future to meet the needs of the interior design industry."

He said the association aims to follow the examples of established professional associations such as the Association of Myanmar Architects and the Myanmar Engineering Society in the way it functions.

GENEVA

Post-Higgs, CERN readies for next cosmic quest

A YEAR ago, the world's largest particle collider made one of the greatest discoveries in the history of science, identifying what is believed to be the Higgs Boson – the long-sought maker of mass.

Today, its computer screens are dark, the control desks unstaffed and the giant, supercooled tunnel empty of the crashing proton beams whose snapshots of the Big Bang helped flush out the elusive particle.

But the silence is an illusion.

Behind the scenes, work is pushing ahead to give the vast machine a mighty upgrade, enabling it to advance the frontiers of knowledge even further.

The 27-kilometre (17-mile) circular lab, straddling the French-Swiss border 100 metres (325 feet) underground, went offline in February for an 18-month overhaul.

And when experiments resume in 2015, scientists at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) will use its enhanced power to probe dark matter, dark energy and supersymmetry – ideas considered as wild as the Higgs Boson itself was, half a century ago.

As engineers focus on the technical mission, physicists are sifting through the mountains of data that the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) has churned out since 2010, for there could be more nuggets to find.

"The things that are easy to spot have already been exploited, and now we're taking another look," said Tiziano Camporesi of CERN, noting wryly that dealing with the unknown was, well, unknowable.

"We always say that astronomers have an easier task, because they can actually see what they're looking for!"

The LHC's particle collisions transform energy into mass, the goal being to find fundamental particles in the sub-atomic debris that help us to understand the universe.

CERN's work can bemuse neophytes, but the researchers find ways to make it simple.

"Everybody knows what an electron is, especially if they put their finger in an electric socket," joked Pierluigi Campana, whose team has just provided the most exhaustive confirmation to date of the Standard Model, the chief theoretical framework of particle physics conceived in the 1970s.

For the experts, the new findings are almost as thrilling as tracking the Higgs Boson – nicknamed the God Particle.

"Every time we pass a significant amount of data collected, someone will find an excuse to open a bottle of champagne," said physicist Joel Goldstein, glancing at a lab corner piled with empties.

"We're going to run out of space eventually!" *–AFP*

IN PICTURES

This image shows the newly discovered exoplanet GJ 504b. Although it is about the size of Jupiter, it is four times more massive. Its surface temperature is an uncomfortably warm 232 degrees Celcius. And as planets go, this one is just a toddler–about 160 million years old. *–AFP*

ASHGABAT

Isolated Turkmenistan bows to Internet age

WHEN Turkmen mother Selbi Dzhafarova wanted to buy a toy car for her son's birthday, he burst into tears. "He asked us to buy him a computer instead," she said.

Her son Arslan's wish was hardly different from the wishes of young boys all over the world except that the nine-year-old lives in the hermit ex-Soviet state of Turkmenistan where internet access for most private users was banned until just a few years ago.

"We had to do it," Dzhafarova told AFP while shopping at a market in the capital Ashgabat. Needing a computer "is already an everyday reality and not a child's whim", she said.

Turkmenistan, an energy-rich Central Asian nation bordering Afghanistan and Iran, was for two decades ruled by dictator Saparmurat Niyazov, best remembered for his bizarre personality cult complete with gold statues, his own philosophy book and deep suspicion of cyberspace.

Under Niyazov, who claimed that Western novelties were "foreign to the mentality of our people", only a handful of outlets like Western companies, several colleges and hotels were connected to the internet.

After his death in 2007, the country has taken cautious steps to dismantle his legacy. The first two internet cafes opened in Ashgabat two days after the inauguration of the new president, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov.

Soon more cyber-cafes opened, each adorned with a portrait of the new leader, while schools and universities started receiving computers.

On September 1, children starting primary school across the country are set to receive over 190,000 Lenovo netbook computers from the education ministry on the president's orders.

Children enjoy computers in a computer centre in Ashgabat. Photo: AFP

"Our experience of conducting classes with the use of digital assistants has shown a significant increase of our young citizens' interest in studies," Berdymukhamedov said in televised remarks.

But for all its purported readiness to embrace the digital age, the government is not planning to loosen its tight grip over the internet any time soon.

Access is regulated by state firm TurkmenTelekom, which became a monopoly in 2000 when several independent providers lost their licences and the few internet cafes in existence shut up shop.

Getting online is a pricey affair: The company charges nearly US $7,000 per month for unlimited Internet at a zippy 2048 kilobytes per second.

By comparison, GDP per capita in Turkmenistan is estimated by the US Central Intelligence Agency's latest World Factbook to be $8900.

At the country's several dozen cyber cafes, visitors are required to show their passports to use the internet. An hour-long session costs 6 manats ($2.1).

Wi-fi is only available at the few expensive hotels that usually cater to foreigners.

Reporters without Borders' annual list of the "Enemies of the Internet" regularly features the country along with Iran, Syria and North Korea.*–AFP*

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Dated: 12 August 2013

World

WORLD EDITOR: **Douglas Long** | **dlong125**@gmail.com

WASHINGTON

Israeli-Palestinian talks planned for Aug 14

PALESTINIAN and Israeli negotiators will resume talks on ending their longstanding conflict on August 14 in Jerusalem, the US State Department said on August 8.

The talks restarted last month in Washington under US mediation, and both sides agreed to try to resolve their differences within nine months.

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters that US mediator Martin Indyk would attend the next round of talks, which will be followed by a meeting in Jericho.

She added that US Secretary of State John Kerry, who hosted July's resumption of the talks, "does not expect to make any announcement in the aftermath of this round of talks".

After three years of stalemate in the peace process and six decades of hot and cold conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, last month's meeting was hailed as a breakthrough.

Israeli negotiator Tzipi Livni and her Palestinian counterpart Saeb Erakat held two days of face-to-face dialogue in the US capital and promised to quickly resume talks in their divided region.

The rivals and their US mentor hope to reach an agreement on recognising two states living side-by-side in peace, across a border roughly based on that of 1967, but many thorny issues remain.

The final status of the city of Jerusalem and Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory are expected to be sticking points, along with Palestinian demands that refugees be allowed to return to land now in Israel.

Ms Psaki said the United States had expressed its concern to Israel after reports that it was to authorise the building of 1000 new homes for Jewish settlers on Palestinian land.

Settlement-building infuriates Palestinians, and the peace process has been derailed in the past by disputes over new housing.

"Our position on settlements has not changed. We do not accept the legitimacy of continued settlement activity and oppose any efforts to legitimise settlement outposts," Ms Psaki said.

"The secretary has made clear that he believes both of the negotiating teams are at the table in good faith and are committed to working together to make progress. We are speaking to the government of Israel and making our concerns known."

Ms Psaki also announced that Mr Kerry and US National Security Adviser Susan Rice were to meet leaders of the Jewish American and Arab American communities at the White House to discuss their contribution to the peace process. – *AFP*

HARARE

Thousands turned away at Zimbabwe polls

NEARLY 305,000 Zimbabwean voters were turned away and 206,000 received assistance from election officials during this month's disputed vote, organisers said on August 8.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) said nearly 3.5 million people cast their ballots in the July 31 polls, which extended President Robert Mugabe's 33-year rule.

The commission's statistics show the largest number of voters – 64,483 – were turned away in the capital Harare.

Urban areas have long been a stronghold of Mugabe's rival Morgan Tsvangirai, who claimed the vote was rigged.

Zimbabweans celebrate Robert Mugabe's election victory by holding a fake funeral for opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai in Mbari on August 4. Photo: AFP

Regular voters were reportedly turned away because their names were missing from the voters' roll, they were registered in another ward or they did not have adequate identification. But independent poll monitors have reported widespread manipulation of the roll and said the real number of disenfranchised voters could be much higher.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) said more than 750,000 urban voters were missing from the electoral list, in what they described as "a systematic effort to disenfranchise an estimated million voters".

"A total of 99.97 percent of rural voters were registered while only 67.94pc of urban voters were registered," said ZESN chairman Solomon Zwana.

Rights groups say police forced some people they believed to be opposition supporters to feign illiteracy and seek the assistance of polling officials, with their votes going to Mr Mugabe.

Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate in Africa.

The country's former finance minister Simba Makoni, who defected from Mugabe's ZANU-PF in 2008, joined those voices rejecting the outcome.

"We reject the results announced by ZEC as not free, not fair, not credible and not legitimate," said Mr Makoni. "These results do not reflect the expression of the free will of the people of Zimbabwe."

Mr Makoni, the leader of the Mavambo Kusile Dawn party, had backed Mr Tsvangirai in the elections. He complained about the lack of availability of the voters' roll in time for the polls and the high number of ballot papers that were printed above the registered voters.

"Hundreds of thousands of potential voters failed to register and were therefore denied their right to vote. This point has a significant bearing on the outcome of the election," he said. – *AFP*

BRIEFS

Sao Paulo

Brazil to launch website on dictatorship abuses

A website with material from dissident trials proving abuses by Brazil's 1964-1985 military dictatorship went online last week.

The documents are drawn from 710 trials conducted by the Higher Military Tribunal and are complemented by pictures, videos and other material, the federal prosecutor's office said in a statement.

The digital initiative, which went online on August 9, is based on the original "Brazil Never Again" project launched in the early 1980s by the Sao Paulo archdiocese and the World Council of Churches.

Also included in that project are documents collected in Switzerland and the United States, which have been digitised and repatriated since 2011.

Brazil officially recognises 400 dead and missing during the military dictatorship, compared with 30,000 in neighbouring Argentina and 3200 in Chile.

Moscow

Hackers plant false Gorbachev death rumour

The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was forced to deny rumours of his death after hackers planted a false report on the Twitter accounts of a state news agency.

"I'm alive and well," Mr Gorbachev told *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper, using a blanked-out Russian expletive to describe his ill-wishers who he said were "hoping in vain".

His indignant response came after two Twitter accounts of the RIA Novosti state news agency posted news of the death of the ex-president, who signed off on a bloodless breakup of the USSR in 1991.

The message, published in a screenshot on the website of Kommersant daily, was hardly convincing. It said that "Mikhail Gorbachev has died in the Shoko cafe in Yekaterinburg".

It added that Mr Gorbachev died as he was talking to a maverick politician, Yevgeny Roizman, who is standing for mayor of the Siberian city, suggesting a political motive for the message.

Johannesburg

Winnie Mandela releases journal on prison life

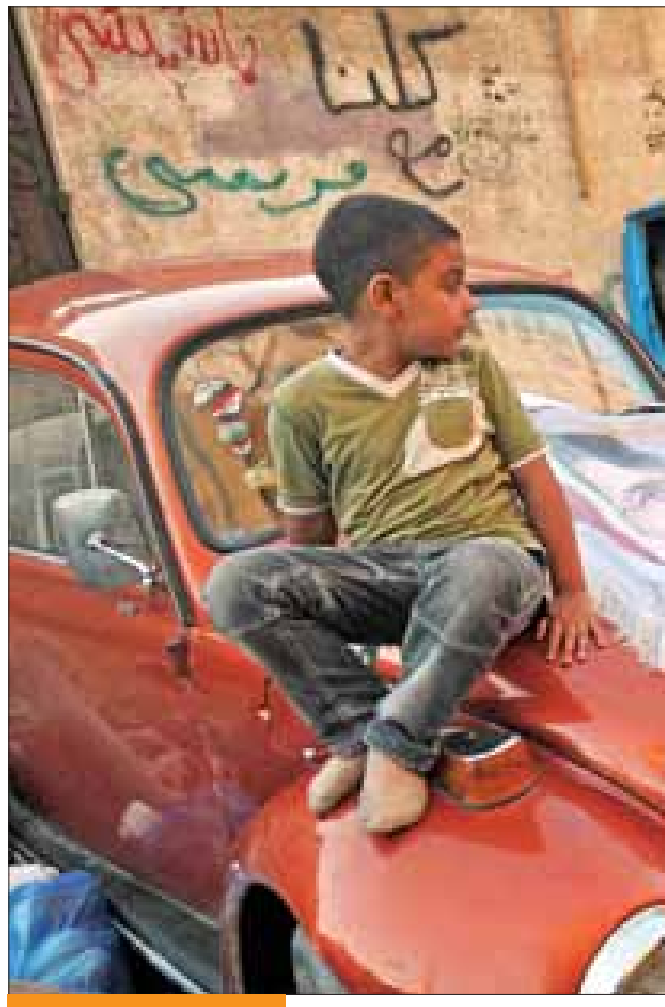
Nelson Mandela's ex-wife Winnie on August 8 released a book about her detention by the apartheid regime, a time she described as the darkest part of her life.

The book *491 Days: Prisoner number 1323/69* is based on a journal Winnie Madikizela-Mandela kept in prison during her detention.

In the book, Ms Madikizela-Mandela shares some of her journal entries as well as letters between her husband and herself. The book details her harrowing isolated confinement for more than a year after security police detained her at her Soweto home on May 12, 1969.

An anti-apartheid activist in her own right, she was held at Pretoria Central Prison with a group of other fighters under the notorious Terrorism Act.

Her then-husband Nelson Mandela had already been in prison almost seven years by then. – *AFP*



IN PICTURES

A child sits on a car decora
fringes of a protest in the
new efforts last week to fi
army's ouster of Islamist p

WASHINGTON

Resurgent al-
to be reckone

MATHIEU RABECHAULT

A RESURGENCE of bombings in Iraq. A new generation of jihadists flocking to the chaotic crucible of the Syrian conflict. Terror alerts in Yemen that prompted embassies to be shuttered.

US President Barack Obama may be correct in asserting that al-Qaeda's leadership has been "hammered", but recent events have proved the terror network remains a deadly threat, analysts say.

Addressing an audience of US Marines at a base in California on August 7, Mr Obama stated that "the core of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan is on the way to defeat".

However, the US leader was careful to emphasise that "threats to our nation" remained, just days after the United States closed some 20 diplomatic outposts in the Middle East and Africa after intelligence suggesting a terrorist attack was imminent.

Mr Obama's administration has scored a string of victories over al-Qaeda, locating and killing Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011 and sharply increasing the use of drones in targeted strikes against the network's leaders.

Despite these successes, former CIA analyst Bruce Riedel wrote in a recent opinion piece that "the recent global terror alert illustrates that, 15 years after its first attacks on America, al-Qaeda is thriving".

"The pandemonium in Syria, Libya and Egypt are like a hothouse for al-Qaeda, which is thriving just as it has in Somalia and Afghanistan," Mr Riedel said.

Seth Jones, an analyst with the Rand Corporation, noted that al-Qaeda and its affiliates had adapted to the changing global conditions in the past decade.

"The State Department threat warnings are a reminder of the resiliency of al-Qaeda," Mr Jones said. "Over the past decade, there has been a net expansion in the number and geographic scope of al-Qaeda affiliates and allies, indicating that al-Qaeda and its brand are far from defeated."

While the core leadership of the group has been weakened "tactically", the overall network "absolutely has not", said Aaron Zelin of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

In Yemen, the recent uncovering of an ambitious plot

Rowhani says Iran ready for 'serious' nuclear talks

WORLD 32

Taliban calls Afghan elections 'waste of time'

WORLD 33

Japan marks atomic bombing anniversary

WORLD 37

ated with a poster of Egypt's deposed president Mohamed Morsi, on the Mediterranean city of Alexandria on August 6. Foreign envoys mounted nd a way out of the crippling political crisis sparked by the Egyptian resident Morsi. *Photo: AFP*

-Qaeda still a force ed with: analysts

to seize control of two cities, as well as an oil export terminal, showed that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remained highly active.

The fact that the group had not struck in the United States since Christmas 2009 "did not mean they had stopped trying", Mr Zelin added.

AQAP's leader, Nasser al-Wuhayshi, is believed to have been promoted to second-in-command of the global organisation behind Ayman al-Zawahiri.

In Iraq, where al-Qaeda has merged with a Syrian affiliate to form the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, attacks have spiked.

"Al-Qaeda is in a phase of reconquest [in Iraq]," one Western diplomat said.

The mass breakout of more than 500 detainees – including many al-Qaeda militants – from two Iraqi jails in July was likely to have a "huge" impact in the coming months, Mr Zelin said.

The United Nations, meanwhile, warned in a recent report that al-Qaeda was thriving in the battlegrounds of the Syrian conflict.

"The continuing civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic has seen the emergence of a strong al-Qaeda presence drawing from al-Qaeda in Iraq, attracting hundreds of recruits from outside the Syrian Arab Republic," the UN reported.

'The State Department threat warnings are a reminder of the resiliency of al-Qaeda.'

Seth Jones
Rand Corporation

According to Syrian NGOs, 485 foreign fighters were killed during the month of Ramadan.

Even if many of the groups battling Syrian forces are not al-Qaeda affiliates, CIA number two Michael Morell raised the prospect of the group gaining access to the regime's weapons arsenal.

Syrian weapons "are going to be up for grabs and up for sale" if the country collapses, Mr Morell warned in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*. A failed state in Syria could also end up becoming a safe haven for al-Qaeda in the way Afghanistan once was, he added.

Last week's revelation that al-Zawahiri had conducted a conference call with more than 20 top operatives across the militant group's network also suggested that al-Qaeda was rebuilding its capability to plan globally, despite the widely held view that al-Qaeda's leadership only communicated by courier.

Brookings Institution analyst Riedel, meanwhile, said the troubled aftermath of the Arab Spring in the Middle East – initially seen as a body blow to al-Qaeda – was in danger of becoming a recruitment tool.

"The ill-starred Arab Awakening is fueling more anger and frustration in the Islamic world, converting more people to jihad," he said.

"After 15 years, there is no end in sight to al-Qaeda. And the new generation – AQ 3.0 – may be with us for years to come."

– AFP

MOSCOW

Obama's Putin snub marks new low in US-Russia ties

STUART WILLIAMS

US President Barack Obama's cancellation of a summit with Vladimir Putin represents a new low in US-Russia relations, which have been eroded not only by the row over US leaker Edward Snowden but also a litany of other headaches.

Scrapping a summit is a move unprecedented in US-Russia ties since the Cold War and is bound to be taken as a personal slight against Mr Putin by the Kremlin, which is a stickler for protocol and has already said it is "disappointed".

Mr Obama is still travelling to Saint Petersburg for the September 5 and 6 G20 summit hosted by Russia but will not, as previously planned, go to Moscow beforehand for a bilateral meeting with Mr Putin.

"There is every sign that Washington and Moscow are moving to a serious chill in relations," said Lilia Shevtsova, a political analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Centre. "There are too many questions on which Russia and the United States cannot achieve even the slightest rapprochement."

The United States scrapped the summit one week after Russia granted asylum to former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, whom Washington wants to put on trial for leaking details of vast US surveillance programs.

But the Snowden issue is not an isolated row and just the latest addition to an ever growing list of disputes that have clouded US-Russia relations ever since Mr Putin returned to the Kremlin in May 2012 for a historic third term.

'There are too many questions on which Russia and the United States cannot achieve even the slightest rapprochement.'

Lilia Shevtsova
Carnegie Moscow Centre

"The Snowden issue is just a pretext for cancelling the visit," the *Kommersant* daily quoted a Kremlin source as saying. "The Americans are moving away from serious negotiations and their refusal will unavoidably have political consequences."

Within the past year, Russia has banned US families from adopting Russian children, forced NGOs financed from abroad to register as "foreign agents" and rushed through legislation outlawing "homosexual propaganda" for minors.

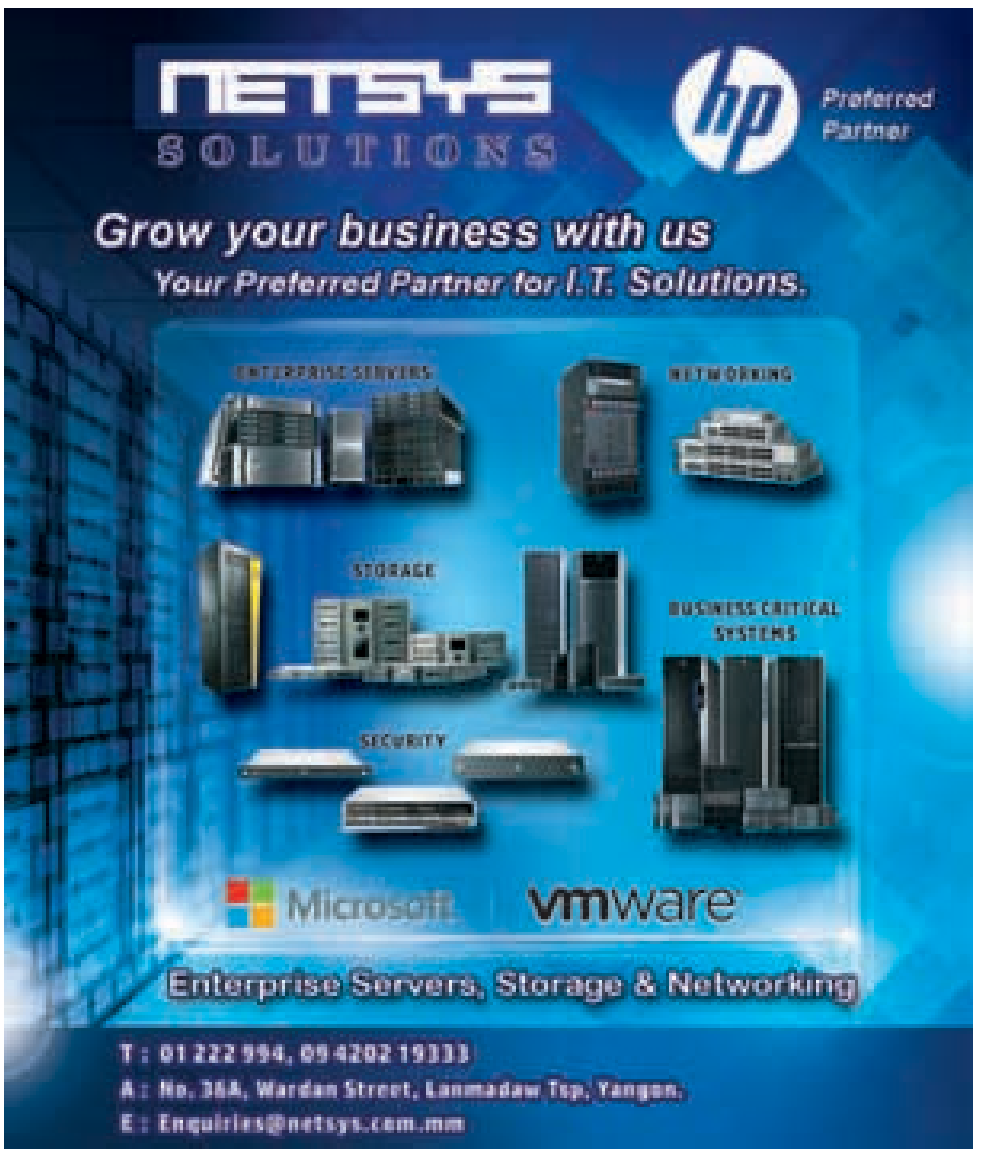
Meanwhile, the two sides are at loggerheads over the conflict in Syria, with Moscow refusing to halt its cooperation with President Bashar al-Assad. A joint US-Russia plan for Geneva peace talks has so far come to nothing.

"All these questions have complicated US-Russia relations to such an extent that Putin and Obama have nothing to talk about in a bilateral meeting," said Ms Shevtsova.

The United States is particularly riled to have received no response from Russia to proposals from Mr Obama for new nuclear arms cuts, something he had envisaged as part of his historic legacy.

The United States is currently not even requesting a bilateral meeting with Mr Putin on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Saint Petersburg, according to people familiar with the situation.

The last summit cancellation between Moscow and Washington appears to date back to May 1960 when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev stormed out of a Paris meeting with US President Dwight D Eisenhower in a row over a US spy plane shot down by Moscow. – *AFP*



TEHRAN

Iran's Rowhani urges 'serious' nuclear talks

FARHAD POULADI

IRANIAN President Hassan Rowhani on August 6 said that his country was ready for "serious" talks on its nuclear program without delay and that US calls for tougher sanctions showed a lack of understanding.

Addressing his first news conference since taking office on August 3, Mr Rowhani said he would not surrender Iran's rights but that he wanted to allay Western concerns.

"As the president of the Islamic republic, I am announcing that there is the political will to solve this issue and also take into consideration the concerns of the other sides," he said.

"We are the people of interaction and talks, with seriousness and without wasting time, if the other sides are ready."

Mr Rowhani headed Iran's nuclear negotiating team under reformist president Mohammad Khatami in the early 2000s, and Western leaders have expressed hope his election could herald a more constructive approach in the protracted talks.

The hardline policies of his firebrand predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, prompted crippling EU and US sanctions against Iran's oil and banking sectors that he has vowed to seek to relax.

Mr Rowhani said there could be no surrender of the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy that Iran claims under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"Iran's peaceful nuclear program is a national issue ... We will not give up the rights of the Iranian people," he said.

"We will preserve our rights based on the international regulations."

'We care about the US response in deeds, not in words.'

Hassan Rowhani
Iranian president

He also stressed that Iran would not give up uranium enrichment – the sensitive nuclear activity at the heart of Western concerns, which Iran suspended when Mr Rowhani was chief negotiator a decade ago.

"In Iran, nobody has said we will give up uranium enrichment, no one and at no time," he said.

And he reiterated his insistence that Iran would not negotiate under the threat of economic sanctions or military action.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said there were still steps Iran needed to take "to meet their international obligations and find a peaceful solution to this issue".

"The ball is in their court," she said. "If there's a credible proposal and actions that are taken, again the United States will be a willing partner. But we're not quite there yet."

Mr Rowhani had earlier hit out at what he termed "contradictory messages" from Washington.

The White House has said that it would be a "willing partner" in genuine talks, but the US Senate has urged tougher sanctions.

"Recent declarations from the White House show that some US officials do not have a correct and realistic assessment of the situation here and the message that the Iranian people gave in the election," Mr Rowhani said.

"They are still sending contradictory messages. We care about the US response in deeds, not in words."

On August 4, the White House said Iran would find the United States a willing partner if Mr Rowhani is prepared to engage substantively and seriously on its nuclear program.

In a message congratulating Rowhani on his inauguration, the White House said it "presents an opportunity for Iran to act quickly to resolve the international community's deep concerns over Iran's nuclear program".

Western governments suspect Iran's nuclear program is cover for a drive for a weapons capability, an ambition Tehran strongly denies.

Mr Rowhani took particular issue with a letter signed by 76 US Senators – just over three-quarters of the total – calling for tougher US sanctions, even as he promised more constructive engagement.

He charged that the letter was the work of a "foreign country" and its supporters in the United States, a clear allusion to Iran's arch-foe Israel.

Russia, too, strongly criticised the US senators' sanctions call, saying it was in the world's interests to respond positively to Mr Rowhani's talks offer.

"I think these ideas contradict the fundamental interests of the international community," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said of the letter. "These are dangerous games and we hope reason will prevail."

But Israel – which has the Middle East's sole, if undeclared, nuclear arsenal – called for "increased pressure" on the Iranian regime, saying that it was the only language that it understood.

"The only thing that has worked in the last two decades is pressure. And the only thing that will work now is increased pressure," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a delegation of 36 visiting US Congressmen. – *AFP*

Iranian President Hasan Rowhani holds a news conference in Tehran on August 6.

BRASILIA

Reporter has files given by Snowden

BRAZIL-BASED American reporter Glenn Greenwald said on August 6 that he had received more than 15,000 secret US government documents from intelligence leaker Edward Snowden.

Mr Greenwald, who revealed details of Washington's vast electronic surveillance program in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper, gave no details of the content of the files as he testified before the Brazilian Senate's foreign relations committee.

"I did not do an exact count, but he gave me 15,000 [to] 20,000 documents. Very, very complete and very long," Mr Greenwald said, responding to questions from lawmakers.

"The stories we have published are a small portion. There will certainly be more revelations on the espionage activities of the US government and allied governments ... on how they have penetrated the communications systems of Brazil and Latin America," he said.

He added that he could not give more details about the documents because an investigation of Mr Snowden is under way in the United States.

"The pretext [given by Washington] for the spying is only one thing: terrorism and the need to protect the [American] people. But the reality is that there are many documents which have nothing to do with terrorism or national security, but have to do with competition with other countries, in the business, industrial and economic fields," Mr Greenwald said.

In an interview with AFP last month, Mr Greenwald explained that Mr Snowden personally handed him the documents in Hong Kong, where the former NSA contractor temporarily took refuge, after fleeing the United States. – *AFP*

KABUL

Taliban dismiss Afghan elections

BEN SHEPPARD

TALIBAN leader Mullah Omar on August 6 dismissed elections due in Afghanistan next year as a "waste of time" but insisted the militants had no desire to grab power after NATO troops leave.

Afghanistan is scheduled to go to the polls on April 5 to elect a successor to the Western-backed President Hamid Karzai, who has ruled since the US-led invasion overthrew the Taliban in 2001.

The United States and other foreign donors say the poll is crucial for the country's future after the vast majority of NATO-led troops withdraw by the end of 2014.

Omar issued a lengthy statement on the internet ahead of Eid celebrations that began in Afghanistan on August 8 marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

The reclusive one-eyed supremo offered glimmers of hope for peace after 12 years of war, saying the Taliban – who sheltered Al-Qaeda during their 1996-2001 regime – did not seek a return to absolute power.

"As to the deceiving drama under the name of elections 2014, our pious people will not tire themselves out, nor will they participate in it," Omar said. "Participation in such elections is only a waste of time, nothing more."

In previous elections, the Taliban called on Afghans to boycott voting, sent fighters to block roads to polling stations, and targeted candidates and activists.

Omar's statement struck a conciliatory tone on some issues. "[The Taliban] does not think of monopolising power. Rather we believe in reaching understanding with the Afghans regarding an Afghan-inclusive government based on Islamic principles," he said.

The remark signalled a willingness to consider power sharing.

Omar also said the Taliban would not "allow anyone to harm others from our soil" – a vow in line with US demands that the country does not return to being a safe haven for global militancy.

74%

Proportion of civilian casualties in Afghanistan caused by insurgents, according to a recent UN report

Omar, who presided over the Taliban government, signalled a partial change to their extreme interpretation of sharia law. "Our young generations should arm themselves with religious and modern educations because modern education is a fundamental need of every society," he said.

Writer and analyst Ahmad Saeedi said the "softer" messages suggested the Taliban could take a more strategic approach to gaining maximum influence after 2014.

"The Taliban know that the world has changed, and that they cannot reach power with violence alone, and they want to give hope to their supporters," he said.

Nearly 70,000 US troops and 30,000 soldiers from other countries are still deployed in Afghanistan, fighting the Taliban and training the national army and police to take on the insurgents.

All foreign combat troops will leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014, with many Afghans fearing they face a new era of turmoil after decades of war since the Soviet occupation in 1979.

Attempts to start peace talks with the Taliban collapsed in June when a new office in Qatar for the insurgents enraged President Hamid Karzai, because it was styled as an embassy for a government in exile.

Omar said the office proved the Taliban were "showing honesty and commitment to resolve problems of its oppressed people ... but the invaders and their allies are creating obstacles".

Violence has continued to rage across much of Afghanistan as NATO troops begin their pullout and Afghan troops increasingly move to the frontlines.

"The current jihad in Afghanistan is continuing with great success," Omar said, adding a call for unity among Taliban factions and an appeal for fighters to avoid civilian casualties.

A recent UN report found that 74 percent of civilian casualties were caused by insurgents. – *AFP*

WASHINGTON

Records for sea ice loss, greenhouse gas in 2012

KERRY SHERIDAN

THE world lost record amounts of Arctic sea ice in 2012 and spewed out all-time high levels of greenhouse gases by burning fossil fuels, international climate scientists said on August 6.

Last year was among the top 10 on record for global land and surface temperature since modern data collection began, said the *State of the Climate* report issued annually by researchers in Britain and the United States.

"The findings are striking," said Kathryn Sullivan, acting administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"Our planet as a whole is becoming a warmer place."

The peer-reviewed report did not go into the causes for the trends but experts said it should serve as a guide for policymakers as they prepare for the effects of rising seas and warming weather on communities and infrastructure.

Furthermore, it points to a new normal in which record-setting events are typical, particularly in the Arctic, where surface temperature rise is fast outpacing the rest of the world.

"It's hard to read the report and not be led to the conclusion that the task of reducing carbon emissions is now more urgent than ever," said Michael Mann, a leading US climatologist at Pennsylvania State University who was not involved in the research.

'It's hard to read the report and not be led to the conclusion that the task of reducing carbon emissions is now more urgent than ever.'

Michael Mann
US Climatologist

Globally, according to four independent analyses cited by the study, "2012 ranked as the eighth or ninth warmest year since records began in the mid-to-late 1800s."

"The year was 0.14-0.17 degrees Celsius above the 1981-2010 average, depending on the dataset considered," said the report, which was published in the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*.

When it comes to Arctic sea ice, a new record low was observed in September and another all-time low for snow cover was recorded in the Northern Hemisphere, it said.

"Surface temperatures in the Arctic are increasing at a rate about two times faster than the rest of the world," said Jackie Richter-Menge, a research civil engineer with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

"In the Arctic, the records or near records being reported from year to year are no longer anomalies or exceptions. Really, they have become the rule for us, or the norm that we see in the Arctic and we expect to see for the foreseeable future."

The melt is contributing to rising sea level. Average global sea level reached a record high in 2012, 3.5 centimetres (1.4 inches) above the 1993 to 2010 average.

"Most recently, over the past seven years or so, it appears that the ice melt is contributing more than twice as much to the global sea level rise compared with warming waters," said Jessica Blunden, climatologist at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center.

Meanwhile, permafrost temperatures reached record highs in northern Alaska, and 97 percent of the Greenland ice sheet showed some form of melt, four times greater than the average melt for this time of year.

The amount of carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels also hit new highs, after a slight decline in recent years that followed the global financial crisis.

"In spring 2012, for the first time, the atmospheric [carbon dioxide] concentration exceeded 400 parts per million at seven of the 13 Arctic observation sites," said the report.

Global average carbon dioxide reached 392.6ppm, a 2.1ppm increase from 2011, it said. – *AFP*

UNITED NATIONS

Argentina pushes claim on Falklands at UN

ARGENTINA'S President Cristina Kirchner renewed her country's demand for talks on the sovereignty of the British-ruled Falkland Islands at the UN Security Council on August 6.

"This is not a fanciful stance. We simply want the United Nations resolution to be enforced and for our two countries to sit down and discuss this," she said.

Argentina is the new rotating chair of the Security Council, and Ms Kirchner admitted it was controversial to raise the Falklands during a debate ostensibly about the UN's ties with regional bodies.

Britain is a permanent council member and its ambassador, Mark Lyall Grant, was in the chamber to hear Ms Kirchner's speech.

Ms Kirchner recalled that the UN General Assembly passed a resolution in 1964 urging Britain and Argentina to hold negotiations over sovereignty of the islands, which Britain has ruled since 1833.

Speaking the day after UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon notified her that Britain had again refused to discuss the sovereignty issue, Ms Kirchner questioned Britain's commitment to upholding UN resolutions.

"One can have discordant opinions about something that has not been resolved by the United Nations, but when this body that covers us all, that we are all signatories of, whose resolutions we have all committed to respect, issues a resolution through its General Assembly, this body's maximum organ, it is not a matter of discordant opinions," she said.

"We are before a UN resolution. Are we ready to fulfill what we're obligated to do or not?"

The British ambassador's response was firm.

"The views of the people of the Falkland Islands cannot be dismissed. There can be no discussion on the sovereignty of the islands unless and until the islanders so wish," Mr Lyall Grant told the council.

"They made their views unequivocally clear in the referendum in March when they voted overwhelmingly to remain a UK overseas territory."

Argentina, which was then ruled by a military junta under General Leopoldo Galtieri, invaded and occupied the islands in April 1982.

This prompted Britain to send a task force of 100 ships to recapture them in a war in which 649 Argentine and 244 British troops died.

In March, Falkland Islanders voted 99.8 percent to remain a British territory, but Argentina rejected the vote as meaningless and Ms Kirchner has repeatedly staked its claim. – *AFP*

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LACTASOY
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Original
1000ml
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-Sangre De
Toro Red
2011 75cl
~~Ks. 8,200~~ 7,400

San Valentin
Garnacha
2011 75cl
~~Ks. 8,600~~ 7,650

AUNG SAN | 47TH STREET | JUNCTION 8 | FMI CITY
YANKIN CENTRE | MYAY NI GHONE | ZAWANA | SHWE MYA YAR
CHINATOWN POINT | JUNCTION MAW TIN | THAMINE | JUNCTION SQUARE
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BUTTERFLY
Portable Gas Cooker
No.268

~~13,700~~
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MIDEA
Rice Cooker
1.8L
CFXB-408

~~16,800~~
14,500

FARFALLA
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1.2ltr
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~~16,200~~
15,000

PHILIPS
Steam Iron
GC-1490

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MIDEA
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CI21-SY21B

~~46,000~~
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MIDEA
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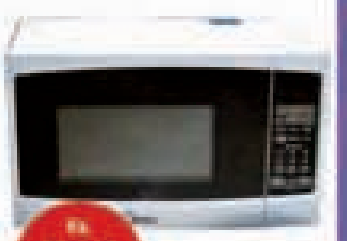
EG-720CN9



~~77,600~~
73,000

BABY WEAR

PAMPERS
Baby Diapper Dry
-(28's (XXL)
-(32's (L)
-(54's (M)
-(58's (S)

Price range from.
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Baby Powder
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1,300

SAN REMO
-Spaghetti Bolognese
&
-Spaghetti
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Buy Pasta 2pkts (or)
Pasta 1pkt + Pasta sauce 1 bot.
Get a free Pasta Keeper.

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Pasta Spaghetti Noodle
500g

each/Ks.
~~1,600~~
1,350

RISCOSSA
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500g

Ks.
~~1000~~
900

-Whole Peeled Tomato
400g

Ks.
~~950~~
850

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-Seafood
-Sesame Oil
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SAMYANG
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-Hot Mushroom/ Japanese Udon/
Kimchi Ramen/ Seafood/
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each/Ks.
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YUM YUM
Instant Noodle
Tom Yum Kung/ Creamy
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-Tom Yam (Red)
50g

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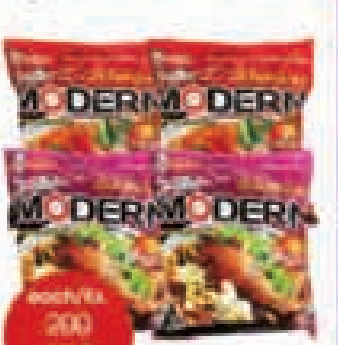
MODERN
Instant Noodle
-Duck
-Tom Yum Kung
60g



each/Ks.
~~200~~
180

MAMA
Instant Noodle
Tom Yum
-Shrimp (Local)/
Shrimp/ Migoreng Seafood
-Coconut Milk/ Chicken Soup/
Shrimp Creamy (Local)/
Spicy & Spicy

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YUM YUM
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any flavour (1) bundle, Get 10% off.

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MAMEE
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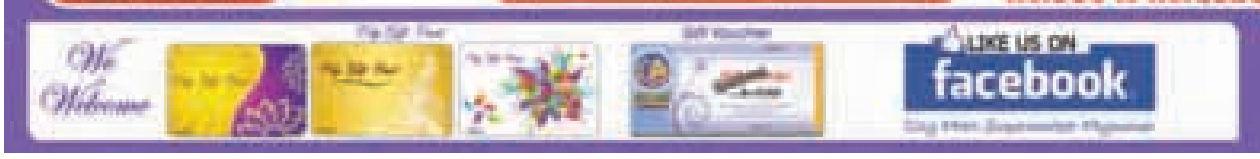
-Migoreng Vegetable
-Tom Yum Shrimp
-Prawn
-Hot & Spicy
55g/ 5 x 55g

Buy any 5pkts (or) 1bundle,
Get a free Lucky Draw.



WE ACCEPT TELEPHONE ORDER

WASHINGTON

Greatest doomsday speeches never made

Some of the most dramatic political speeches ever written were for events that never came to pass, writes **Joshua E Keating**

THE British National Archives recently released the script for a hypothetical 1983 speech that would have been delivered by Queen Elizabeth II in the event of a global nuclear war. The speech, written as if broadcast at midday on Friday, March 4, 1983, was drawn up as part of a war-gaming exercise conducted at a time of high tensions following Ronald Reagan's "evil empire" speech and NATO's "Able Archer" exercise.

In the speech, the queen refers to her childhood during World War II and to the famous 1939 speech by her father, King George VI, announcing the outbreak of war with Germany:

Queen Elizabeth II. Photo: NASA

Now this madness of war is once more spreading through the world and our brave country must again prepare itself to survive against great odds.

I have never forgotten the sorrow and the pride I felt as my sister and I huddled around the nursery wireless set listening to my father's inspiring words on that fateful day in 1939. Not for a single moment did I imagine that this solemn and awful duty would one day fall to me.

We all know that the dangers facing us today are greater by far than at any time in our long history. The enemy is not the soldier with his rifle, nor even the airman prowling the skies above our cities and towns, but the deadly power of abused technology.

But whatever terrors lie in wait for us, all the qualities that have helped to keep our freedom intact twice already during this sad century will once more be our strength.

Queen Elizabeth would also have referred to her "beloved son Andrew", who was at that time serving in the Navy.

Neither this speech, nor any like it, was ever given. But it joins the ranks of famous doomsday speeches and dramatic statements on war and peace that were prepared but – thankfully for all of us – never delivered.

Photo: White House

John F Kennedy.

JFK: The US-Soviet war begins

Last year, the John F Kennedy Presidential Library released the speech that had been prepared in the event that the United States launched airstrikes against Cuba during the high-stakes missile crisis of October 1962.

"My fellow Americans, with a heavy heart, and in necessary fulfillment of my oath of office, I have ordered – and the United States Air Force has now carried out – military operations with conventional weapons only, to remove a major nuclear weapons build-up from the soil of Cuba," Mr Kennedy begins.

He continues:

The United States of America need not and cannot tolerate defiance, deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. Nuclear weapons are so destructive, and ballistic missiles are so swift, that a sudden shift in the nature of their threat can be deeply dangerous – especially when the trigger appears to be in the hands of a violent and unstable revolutionary leader. […]

If the 1930s taught us any lesson at all, it was that aggressive conduct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, will ultimately lead to war. This nation is opposed to war – but it is true to its word.

According to some accounts, Mr Kennedy's regular speechwriter Ted Sorensen, who was staunchly opposed to airstrikes, refused to write the speech, so it was drafted by National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy.

While Mr Kennedy appeals to US citizens to remain calm and calls for talks with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to discuss the situation, it's quite possible that this speech, if delivered, would have marked the beginning of a nuclear war.

Richard Nixon. Photo: White House

Nixon: Death on the moon

In July 1969, legendary speechwriter William Safire drafted a speech – considered by some to be among his best – for President Richard Nixon to deliver in the event the Apollo 11 astronauts were unable to return to Earth:

Fate has ordained that the men who went to the moon to explore in peace will stay on the moon to rest in peace.

These brave men, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, know that there is no hope for their recovery. But they also know that there is hope for mankind in their sacrifice.

These two men are laying down their lives in mankind's most noble goal: the search for truth and understanding.

They will be mourned by their families and friends; they will be mourned by their nation; they will be mourned by the people of the world; they will be mourned by a Mother Earth that dared send two of her sons into the unknown.

What makes the speech particularly macabre reading today is the use of present tense. Mr Nixon says the men "are laying down their lives", and a supplementary note attached to the remarks specifies that before speaking the president should telephone the "widows-to-be".

Mr Aldrin and Mr Armstrong would have been trapped on the moon listening to their own eulogy.

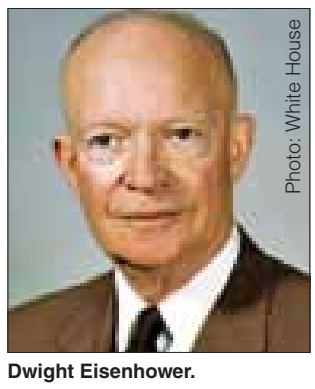


Photo: White House

Dwight Eisenhower.

Eisenhower: The failure of D-Day

The day before the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, General Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, wrote down a statement to be delivered if the Germans were able to repel the attack. It read:

Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.

Eisenhower carried the handwritten note in his wallet throughout the operation, but fortunately never had to deliver it.

Rice: The missile threat

On September 11, 2001, then-National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice was due to deliver a speech at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) on "the threats and problems of today and the day after, not the world of yesterday".

The speech was never delivered – Ms Rice spent much of the day in a bunker with other members of the Bush administration national security team – but it pointedly focused on missile defence, rather than prevention of non-state terrorism, as a priority:

Photo: US State Department

Condoleezza Rice.

We need to worry about the suitcase bomb, the car bomb and the vial of sarin released in the subway. [But] why put deadbolt locks on your doors and stock up on cans of mace and then decide to leave your windows open?

The full text of the speech was never released by the Bush administration, but according to *The Washington Post*, Ms Rice intended to note disapprovingly that "the United States had spent US$11 billion on counterterrorism, about twice as much as it spent on missile defence, during the previous year".

Ms Rice made good on her promise to SAIS by delivering a speech on September 11, 2002, focusing almost entirely on the threat of international terrorism.

Truman: What the 'Russkies' understand

On June 12, 1948, US President Harry Truman, then deeply unpopular and looking ahead to a gruelling reelection fight, gave a national radio address from the University of California, Berkeley, in which he placed the blame for rising Cold War tensions solely with the Russians.

"The refusal of the Soviet Union to work with its wartime allies for world recovery and world peace is the most bitter disappointment of our time," Mr Truman said, concluding,

'If the 1930s taught us any lesson at all, it was that aggressive conduct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, will ultimately lead to war. This nation is opposed to war – but it is true to its word.'

John F Kennedy
US president

"The only expansion we are interested in is the expansion of human freedom."

It was a blunt speech, but it was downright genteel compared to the original draft Mr Truman had written, published years later along with his private papers.

Discussing his disappointments with the Russian government following the 1945 Potsdam conference between the allied leaders, Mr Truman would have said, "I had the kindliest feelings for Russia and the Russian people and I liked Stalin. But I found after a patient year that Russian agreements are made to be broken."

Harry Truman. Photo: White House

Mr Truman says he had come to realise that the United States had demobilised its armed forces too quickly after the war because "mamma and papa and every Congressman wanted every boy discharged at once after Japan folded up".

He argues for the United States to maintain universal military training, concluding, "Our friends the Russkies understand only one language – how many divisions have you – actual or potential."

Probably a good thing he made some revisions.

– Foreign Policy

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Dated: 12 August 2013

Japanese children in Hiroshima carry lanterns on August 6 in remembrance of victims of the 1945 bombing of the city. Photo: AFP

HIROSHIMA

Japan marks anniversary of atomic bombing by US

TORU YAMANAKA

TENS of thousands of people gathered at a peace memorial park in Hiroshima on August 6 to mark the 68th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the city, as anti-atomic sentiment runs high in Japan.

The annual ceremony came as radioactive water leaks at the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant have stoked renewed fears about the plant's precarious state, and underscored broader worries about atomic power following Japan's 2011 nuclear crisis.

In Hiroshima, ageing survivors, relatives, government officials and foreign delegates observed a moment of silence at 8:15am, the time of the detonation that turned the western Japanese city into a nuclear inferno.

"We offer heartfelt consolation to the souls of the atomic bomb victims by pledging to do everything in our power to eliminate the absolute evil of nuclear weapons and achieve a peaceful world," Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui told the ceremony.

An American B-29 bomber named *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, in one of the final chapters of World War II. It killed an estimated 140,000 people by December that year. Three days later, the port city of Nagasaki was also bombed, killing an estimated 70,000 people.

The Allied powers have long argued that the twin attacks brought a quick end to the war by speeding up Japan's surrender, preventing millions more casualties from a land invasion planned for later in the year.

Also on August 6, Japanese officials unveiled Tokyo's biggest naval ship since World War II, as the government moves to beef up Japan's self-defence forces, jangling nerves in neighbouring China and South Korea.

Tokyo said the timing of an annual peace ceremony and the helicopter carrier unveiling was coincidental.

140,000

Estimated number of people killed in the bombing of Hiroshima by December 1945

Among the attendees in Hiroshima last year was Clifton Truman Daniel, grandson of former US president Harry Truman, who authorised the bombings. He was the first Truman relative to attend the annual anniversary in Japan.

Many atomic bomb survivors, known as *hibakusha*, oppose military and civil use of nuclear power, pointing to the tens of thousands who were killed instantly in the Hiroshima blast and the many more who later died from radiation sickness and cancers linked to the attack.

Anti-nuclear sentiment flared in Japan after an earthquake-sparked tsunami left some 19,000 dead or missing and knocked out cooling systems at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant two years ago.

Meltdowns at the crippled site spread radiation over a large area and forced thousands to leave their homes in the worst atomic disaster in a generation.

Concerns about Fukushima have remained high since the accident. In recent weeks, the plant's operator Tokyo Electric Power admitted for the first time that radioactive water had leaked into the ocean as it struggles to contain the toxic buildup.

"Eastern Japan is still suffering the aftermath of the great earthquake and the nuclear accident," Hiroshima's mayor said.

"The people of Hiroshima know well the ordeal of recovery. We urge the national government to rapidly develop and implement a responsible energy policy that places top priority on peoples' safety and livelihood."

The administration of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was among the attendees at the memorial event, has advocated restarting Japan's nuclear reactors if their safety can be assured, a plan opposed by many in the disaster-struck nation.

Mr Abe's conservative Liberal Democratic Party has also said it wants to upgrade Japan's self-defence forces into a full-fledged military, which would mean overhauling a pacifist constitution imposed on the country by the US and its allies after WWII. – *AFP*

BEIJING

Trafficked Chinese baby reunited with parents

A BABY boy allegedly sold by the doctor who delivered him in China has been reunited with his parents, state media reported on August 6, in a case highlighting the problem of child trafficking.

Zhang Suxia, the doctor responsible for the birth in northwestern China's Shaanxi Province, allegedly persuaded the parents to give up their child last month after informing them he had serious congenital diseases, the *China Daily* newspaper reported.

Mr Zhang and two other suspects were detained, the report said, and police discovered the baby at the house of a farmer in the central province of Henan, where three more suspects were held.

The baby was reunited with his mother Dong Shanshan and father Lai Guofeng on August 5 in Fuping, Shaanxi, the report said.

"Dong held him tightly as family members wept before the parents knelt to thank police for recovering the infant," the *China Daily* said.

Citing a police official in Henan, the paper reported that a farmer with three daughters bought the baby boy from the alleged traffickers for 60,000 yuan (US$9800).

Seven other families in Shaanxi have told police their newborns were taken away after Mr Zhang told them their infants were sick and they would face heavy financial burdens as a result, it added.

Trafficking of children is a serious problem in China, blamed in part on the "one-child" policy that has put a premium on baby boys, with girls sometimes sold off, abandoned or put up for adoption.

Under the policy, aimed at controlling China's vast population of more than 1.3 billion, people who live in urban areas are generally allowed one child, while rural families can have two if the first is a girl. – *AFP*

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Phone: 372416 Dated: 12th August, 2013

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **S & B FOODS INC.**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416 Dated: 12th August, 2013

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"Anti-rust greases; Canada balsam; colorants; copal; dammar resin; developers and toners used for xerographic machines; dyestuffs; ink cartridges for computers, printers and word processors; ink cartridges for inkjet printers; ink cartridges for xerographic machines; mastic (natural resin); mimeographic inks; mordants; nonferrous metal foils and powders for painting, decoration, printing or art production; paints and varnishes; pigments; pine oil extracted from pine roots; precious metal foils and powders for painting, decoration, printing or art production; printing compositions; printing ink; rosin; sandarac; shellac; toner and developer for use in photocopying machines, optical scanners, computer printers, inkjet printers, laser printers, optical printers, microfilm reader-printers; paints and toners for image forming apparatus; toner cartridges for xerographic machines; wallpaper removing preparations; wood preservatives. parts and components of all of the aforesaid goods in this class" - Class:2

"Apparatus for making proof used in graphic arts; apparatus for mixing chemicals; apparatus for preparing printing plates or preparing graphic arts film; machines and machine tools; printing machines; printing plates; parts and components of all of aforesaid goods in this class" - Class:7

"Accessories for cameras, namely exchangeable lenses, camera lenses, electronic flashes; air tanks; anti-theft warnings apparatus; apparatus and instruments for duplication of exposed photographic films; apparatus for mixing of chemicals for use in a photographic darkroom; apparatus for recording, transmission or reproduction of sound or image; audio and video disks; audio and video tapes; audio mixers and audio speakers, control systems, namely, computer consoles and supporting software for the control and integration of text, audio, graphics, still images and moving pictures in planetariums; automatic document feeders, cassettes and sorters, all of fittings of copying machines; automatic machines for processing exposed graphic arts film, paper and plates; automatic machines for processing exposed photographic films and paper; automatic machines for processing exposed-medical X-ray films; billing machines; apparatus to check stamping mail; binoculars; calculating scales; calculators; camera cases and accessories, namely, bags and straps; camera lenses; cameras and fitting thereof and accessories thereto; cameras for identification photography; cameras for special photography; cameras to record images viewed on CRT display; cash registers; cinematographic apparatus and instruments; cinematographic films; coin counting and sorting machines; coin-operated gates for car parks or parking lots; computer hardware; computer input devices; computer memories; computer output devices; computer peripheral devices; computer printers; computer programs(recorded); computer software(recorded); computers; copying apparatus and machines (photographic, electrostatic, thermic); copying machines; data processing apparatus; data processing equipment and computers; densitometers; digital cameras; disposable camera; drawing or drafting machines; electric calculators; electric or magnetic measuring machines and instruments; electric, photographic, cinematographic, optical, measuring, checking apparatus and instruments; electrical communication apparatus and instruments; electrical distribution or control machines and instruments; electrodes; electrolysers; electronic cameras; electronic data processing machines for use by photographic finishing laboratory; electronic machines and instruments and their parts and fittings; electronic printers as components of computers; electronic viewers ; facsimile machines; fiber optic cables; electric wires and cables; films(exposed); filters (photography); flash-bulbs (photography) and stroboscope units; flatness testers; floppy disks; identity cards; industrial meters used in photography, namely exposure meters, TV color balance analyzers, illuminance meters, luminance meters, colorimeters, spectroradiometers, thermometers, chlorophyll meters, spectrophotometers, glossmeters, UV radiometers, CRT focus meters, color display measuring instruments, non-contact three-dimensional digitizers; inkjet printers; interfaces for computer; laser printers; luminous or mechanical road signs; 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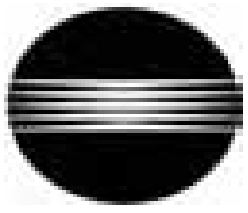
planetariums; pre-recorded video discs and tapes; printers for use with computers; processed glass; punch card machines; records; resistance wires; roentgen cameras; rotary converters; scanners; screens (photography); screens used for graphic arts; slide film mounts; slide films and transparencies; spectacles; supporting computer software for use in conjunction with photocopying machines, scanners, optical scanners, computer printers, inkjet printers, laser printers, printers, optical printers, digital cameras and facsimile machines, namely, driver software and network utility software; printers; time recorders; time stamping machines; transparencies (photography); tripods for cameras; vending machines; video cameras; video disc players; video game apparatus for personal use; video printers used for making print of video picture; video tape recorders; video tape recording and/or reproducing apparatus, namely video cameras, video recorder, copier and player, video decks, video tuners; word-processors; parts and components of all the aforesaid goods in this class" - Class:9

"Apparatus and instruments for medical analysis and diagnosis and peripheral devices thereto; intensifying screens for X-ray films (used for medical X-ray photograph); jaundice meter; medical apparatus and instruments; medical X-ray photograph duplicators; orthopedic articles; oximeter; prosthetic or filling materials; roentgen apparatus for medical purposes; surgical catguts; surgical, medical, dental and veterinary apparatus and instruments; suture materials; testing apparatus for medical purposes; un-exposed medical X-ray film cassettes; un-exposed medical X-ray films; X-ray diagnostic apparatus; parts and components of all of aforesaid goods in this class" - Class:10

"Addressing machines; adhesives for stationery or household purposes; albums; automatic stamp applying machines; blueprinting machines; copying apparatus (office requisites); drawing instruments and drawing materials; electric staplers; envelope sealing machines for offices; hectograph duplicating machines; ink; inking ribbons and typewriter ribbons; inking ribbons for computer printers; letterpress duplicating machines; marking templates; mimeographs; paper for inkjet printers; paper shredders; paper; printed matter; photographs; papers for copying machines, printers and facsimile machines; photograph stands; plain paper for xeographic machine; postal frankers; postcards; printing types; rotary duplicators, printers' reglets; stationery; thermally sensitive paper; typewriters; parts and components of all the aforesaid goods in this class" - Class:16

"Annealing; bookbinding; digital image processing; photograph enlargement; photograph printing; photographic film development; photogravure; processing of cinematographic films; processing, developing and/or printing of photographic films and photographic papers; recycling of waste and trash; rental and leasing of chemical machines and apparatus; rental and leasing of food processing and beverage processing machines and apparatus; rental and leasing of lumbering machines and instruments; rental and leasing of wood and plywood working machines and apparatus; rental and leasing of bookbinding machines; rental and leasing of textile machines and apparatus; rental and leasing of tobacco processing machines; rental and leasing of pulping machines; rental and leasing of paper making machines; rental and leasing of paper processing machines. rental and leasing of metalworking machines and tools; rental and leasing of photo-developing, printing, enlarging or finishing apparatus; treatment of materials" - Class: 40



(Reg: Nos. IV/5673/2003 & IV/4366/2013)

In respect of:- "Class: 2-7-16 and 40" same as trademark "KONICA MINOLTA"

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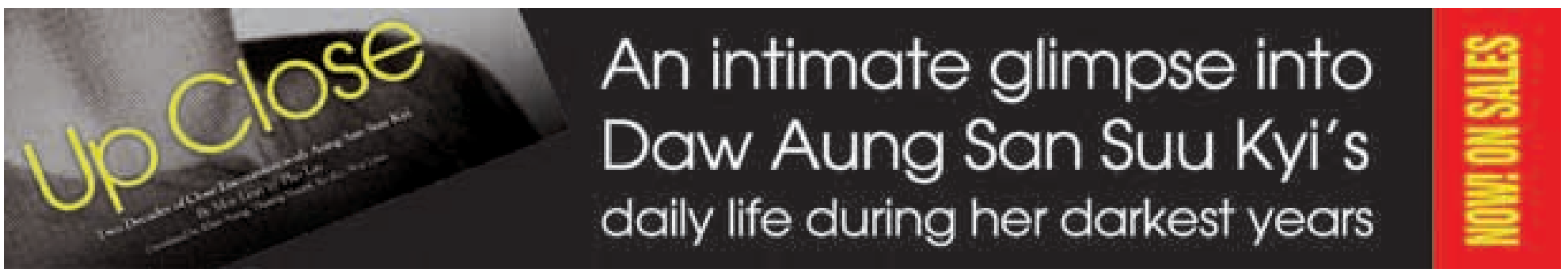
U Kyi Win Associates
for **Konica Minolta Inc.**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416 Dated: 12th August, 2013



BEIJING

China's naval ambitions making waves in Pacific

SEBASTIEN BLANC

China's first aircraft carrier docks in Dalian, China, on September 24, 2012. Photo: AFP

CHINA'S communist rulers are rocking the boat in the Pacific as they extend their naval strength and reach while Japan and the Philippines bolster their own fleets, increasing the risk of a maritime conflict, analysts say.

Five warships completed China's first circumnavigation of Japan earlier this month in a clear show of force. Other vessels regularly patrol various territories contested by Tokyo and other neighbours – prompting Japan to summon Beijing's ambassador for a protest on August 8.

At the same time, China's first aircraft carrier is already in service, and top naval commanders have promised it will have more.

"What we are seeing is that China's Communist Party leadership is now trying to leverage its new military capabilities to achieve political-strategic goals," said Rick Fisher, an expert on Asian military affairs with the US-based International Assessment and Strategy Center.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has in recent weeks reaffirmed his country's aim of establishing itself as a maritime power.

At the same time, Washington – which maintains military bases around the region and has strong ties with South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines – intends to "pivot" its attention toward Asia.

Beijing insists that it has no interest in "hegemony" and its intentions are peaceful, but analysts say the threat of conflict is rising.

China's circumnavigation of Japan saw its vessels pass through the Soya Strait between Japan and Russia – on their way to joint exercises in Russia's Peter the Great Bay – and the Miyako Strait near Okinawa.

The journey did not constitute an overt threat, but in the current context the symbolism was unmistakable.

The state-run *China Daily* said Beijing's forces had "fragmented" what it called the "first island chain", the land masses stretching from the northern tip of Japan to the Philippines that divide the Chinese mainland from the Pacific.

"By sending patrols through these sensitive maritime choke points, China shows its neighbours that it will defend its interests beyond the China Seas, that it seeks to build a true ocean-going navy," said Jonathan Holslag of the Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies.

Mr Fisher added that for China, "Being acknowledged as a 'superpower' that can deploy large-scale force to Africa and Latin America would also be a very significant 'victory'."

China's actions and ambitions are prompting its neighbours to take their own defensive measures.

Last week Manila took delivery of a Hamilton-class cutter from the US – days after announcing a purchase from France – while Tokyo unveiled its biggest warship since World War II, a helicopter carrier that can be adapted to carry vertical-takeoff jets.

The development raises the prospect of a potential Asian arms race. "To respond to Japan's light carrier … China can only develop its own real aircraft carriers," China's state-run *Global Times* said on August 7.

Beijing's first such vessel, the refitted Soviet-era *Liaoning*, went into service last autumn, and Song Xue, deputy chief of staff of the navy, said in April that "China will have more than one aircraft carrier".

Its first domestically built carrier may already be under construction at a shipyard near Shanghai, security consultancy IHS Jane's reported last week, based on analyses of satellite photos.

The images appear to show a section of the deck that might serve as the track for an aircraft-launching catapult – a feature specialists say would let it carry a wider variety of larger planes.

"We know that China has been working on this, but putting it so fast on a carrier is a major step," said Mr Holslag.

Other suggestions are that the images may only be of a practice section intended to help the yard secure a contract to build such a vessel.

'By sending patrols through these sensitive maritime choke points, China shows its neighbours that it will defend its interests beyond the China Seas.'

Jonathan Holslag
Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies

Beijing took effective control of the disputed Scarborough shoal just 200 kilometres (120 miles) from the Philippines last year, humiliating Manila, and keeps up nearly daily pressure in the South China Sea, which it claims almost in its entirety.

Chinese media have released in recent days photos of tourist ships landing on the Xisha Islands, the Chinese name for the Paracels, whose sovereignty is challenged by Vietnam. Taiwan also claims them.

At the same time, Beijing's vessels frequently patrol near the disputed East China Sea islands known as Senkaku in Tokyo, which controls them, and in China as Diaoyu.

"For now the party is content to wage a virtual war of coast guard versus coast guard with Japan," Mr Fisher said. "We can consider this a 'shoving match', no punches yet. But the contest is real and China will push harder and harder against Japan's ships."

Once Beijing has built up its capabilities, he said, "China will be tempted to engineer an 'incident' to justify a small war at sea that it thinks it can 'win'."

"You can be sure that Xi Jinping understands how a very well timed brief, contained and decisively won war can be very good for China," Mr Fisher added. – *AFP*

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan PM seeks to ease India tensions

PAKISTANI Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried on August 8 to ease tensions with India by urging both sides to work swiftly to shore up a 10-year ceasefire threatened by recent attacks.

He made the remarks shortly after the Indian government for the first time directly accused Pakistan's army of involvement in an ambush that killed five Indian soldiers on August 5 in Kashmir.

The picturesque Himalayan territory is divided between India and Pakistan by the UN-monitored Line of Control but is claimed in full by both countries.

India's Defence Minister AK Antony said specialist Pakistani troops had been involved in the attack and hinted at stronger military action.

But Mr Sharif, who was elected in May and who backs rapprochement with India, said he was looking forward to meeting his Indian counterpart on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September.

In remarks made at the Pakistani foreign ministry and released by his office, Mr Sharif expressed his sadness over the loss of life and said it was "imperative" for India and Pakistan to take "effective steps to ensure and restore" the truce.

He said existing military channels could be more "optimally utilised" to prevent the situation from escalating further.

Amid uproar in India over New Delhi's handling of the attack, Mr Sharif said leaders on both sides needed to engage "constructively with a view to building trust and confidence".

He also stressed that he was looking forward to meeting Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh next month in New York to discuss steps to further build trust and consolidate ties.

Indian analysts have said the August 5 attack complicates efforts to arrange such a meeting.

Pakistani military officials on August 8 accused Indian troops of opening fire and seriously wounding a male civilian along the heavily militarised Line of Control.

They said Indian troops opened fire at around 8:30am in the Tatta Pani sector, seriously wounding one civilian who was evacuated to a military hospital.

Pakistan denied any part in the incident, but India has lodged an official protest with Islamabad over what is one of the worst losses of life for Indian troops since the 2003 truce. – *AFP*

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P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416 Dated: 12th August, 2013

GET YOUR FINGERS ON IT

the pulse

Dance revival: Yangon swings into action

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AS he speaks, Gisbert Igaya looks down at his hands, toying with the napkin in front of him.

"I really love dancing," he says quietly. "It feels natural."

His understatement is considerable. The 24-year-old dance teacher is originally from Bulacon on Luzon Island in the Philippines. Now based in Yangon, he's one of the better-known dance teachers around town.

"I started with ballroom dancing when I was 13 but my favourite styles are cha cha, rumba and samba."

Igaya says as a young boy he found dancing awkward at first. But he was encouraged to take part in competitions by his school teacher. Once he started winning prizes, a love for dancing took hold.

Now, dancing is a passion – but it's also a savvy business decision, he says, at least in Yangon.

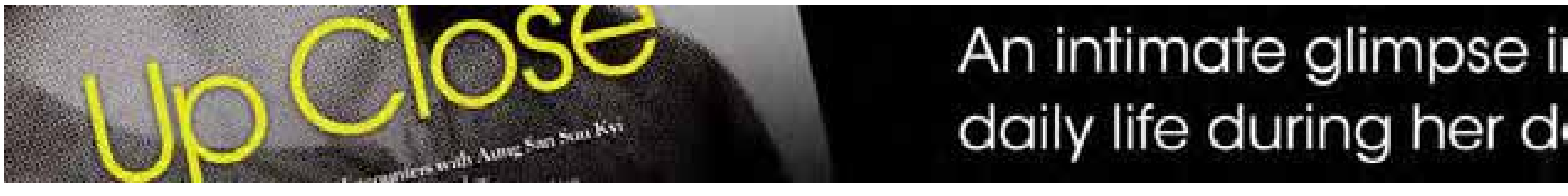
"There's a gap in the market here and I can be more successful than in the Philippines in terms of business opportunities."

Latin dancing hasn't exactly been popular in Myanmar but with an influx of expatriates coming into the country, there has been a shift toward such sexier, slightly more risqué forms of dance.

"Myanmar is a lot more conservative than the Philippines," Igaya says. "Ballroom is still the most popular style, but I think television programs like *Dancing with the Stars* are helping to show that dancing is fun and can be great for fitness. It isn't about being

"... Dancing is fun and can be great for fitness. It isn't about being inappropriate."

Gisbert Igaya
Dancer



Gisbert Igaya and Moe Thett Oo mid-pose during a dance routine.
Photo: Phil McKinney

inappropriate."

Ma Soe Thuza agrees. As the mother of Igaya's dance partner, she wants to encourage the talent that she sees in her 20-year-old daughter, May Thett Oo.

"I also dance ballroom and I taught May how to dance when she was younger," Soe Thuza says.

"There is nothing wrong with encouraging your children to be the best they can be."

Ma Soe Thuza makes sure to attends all of May Thett Oo's performances, acting both as mother and manager.

May Thet Oo started Latin dancing when she finished high school and continued to dance throughout university. Having recently completed an English degree at the Yangon University of Foreign Languages, she's now ready to embark on her own career as a dance teacher.

"I learn a lot from watching Gisbert teach," May Thet Oo says. "I've taught children before and I think adults will be more difficult, but it's so much fun."

She is a slight young woman who, like her dance partner, is soft-spoken and shy. It's hard to believe that either May Thet Oo or Igaya are exhibitionists of any sort who would be willing to allow – or even encourage – others to watch them moving their bodies.

Hard to believe, that is, until they start talking about dancing.

May Thet Oo's eyes brighten up as she explains what it feels like to perform in front of a crowd.

"It's really exhilarating. I feel really free."

Gisbert Igaya and May Thet Oo perform salsa dancing every second Tuesday of the month at 50th Bar on 50th Street, Yangon, starting from about 8pm. They provide free lessons to anyone wanting to take part.

Outrage:

1988, as it really happened

BY NAN TIN HTWE

JOURNALIST Bertil Lintner discusses the recent publication inside Myanmar of his book *Outrage*, which details the events of 1988 and was first published in 1989.

How do you feel about *Outrage* being translated into Myanmar after more than 20 years?

It was actually translated into Burmese and published outside Myanmar in 1990. But this new, second edition – with better layout and many more pictures and other illustrations – was published in Yangon, which is encouraging.

Who do you expect will read it?

People who were there in August and September 1988 as well as young people who want to know what happened during those tumultuous years.

Is there any particular group of readers you hope *Outrage* can inspire?

It depends what you mean by "inspire". I hope the book will inspire people to become writers and record their own history. But first and foremost, the book is meant to honour all those brave young and old men and women who took to the streets in 1988 to fight for freedom. Many were killed, even more ended up in jail or became refugees in other countries. What they sacrificed and did for their country should not be forgotten.

What were the main challenges that you faced while writing it?

The challenges any author would face when writing a book: to sort face facts from fiction, first-hand accounts from hearsay and so on … People were eager to talk and tell me about their experiences, and it's thanks to them that I was able to write the book.

Despite this, you're confident that it reflects what actually happened?

Of course it's true – just ask anyone who was there in 1988-89. And compare what I wrote, which was based on first-hand accounts provided by people who took part in the movement of 1988, with the crude and ludicrous propaganda which the government published about those events: The "Red Book" (*Burma Communist Party's Conspiracy to Take Over State Power*, published by the government in 1989) claimed it was a communist conspiracy and another, [the] "Green Book" (*The Conspiracy of Treasonous Minions within the Myanmar Naing-ngan and Traitorous Cohorts Abroad*, also published by the government in 1989) that is was a rightist conspiracy. Both the red and green books are full of lies and bizarre propaganda. My book, *Outrage*, tells it as it really happened.

Why did you choose the title *Outrage*?

It has a double meaning in English: The people were outraged, very angry with the then-Burma Socialist Program Party government and wanted change; and what happened, the killings, the massacres, the imprisonment of innocent people, was an outrage as well.

Most agree Myanmar has entered a new era but do you think it's possible we could face a 1988-type situation again?

[It is] too early to say. If the military decides to re-assert power, [then] yes, then it could happen again.

nto Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's
arkest years

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Shiver me timbers! Yangon police make pirated goods walk off the plank

Police target supermarkets in fight against bootlegged foreign movies and music

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GOVERNMENT attempts to combat media piracy is nothing new in Myanmar, but until recently the focus was on small-time sellers such as street vendors and shops. That's changing this month, police say, now that enforcers are getting around to checking supermarkets as well.

"We have been confiscating pirated goods for a long time now," Kyauktada township police chief U Myo Myint Kyaing told *The Myanmar Times*. "It's been a slow and methodical process. We are not just targeting supermarkets. This is the law that we enforcing."

After police recently made their first seizure of pirated goods from supermarkets across the Yangon area early this month, word spread quickly among the major chains that foreign titles could no longer be safely displayed.

"We heard the news that the police are seizing pirated foreign music and movies from supermarkets," said a saleswoman from Yangon's Ruby Mart. "So our manager ordered us to remove them. We started pulling foreign CDs, VCDs and DVDs from the shelves on August 2."

She said the retail chain has temporarily pulled stock before when police were seizing uncensored foreign movies, but now that music is being targeted as well, stores will face a loss in revenue.

"Foreign music and movies are the bestselling products for us. [Bootlegged material represents] over half of the total amount of income from music and movies, as those are cheap and the public can enjoy new songs and movies at cheap prices."

On August 2, the Myanmar Music Association distanced itself from the move, stating it is not involved in the seizure of pirated discs imported from other countries.

"When police confiscate pirated foreign CDs, VCDs and DVDs, people may think it's because of either the Myanmar Music Association or the Myanmar Motion Picture Organization," said U Thar Soe, secretary of the MMA's Copyright Maintenance Committee.

"Those cases [of pirated foreign media] have nothing to do with us. It is only to do with the law of the Ministry of Information."

While he added that obeying the law "is the duty of every citizen in the country." U Thar Soe added that while committee members themselves are not looking to confiscate foreign media, they are happy to pay for them just like most everyone else.

"We are not interested in confiscating foreign pirated imports. We are even buying and watching those movies.

"In other countries, they only protect their local products. They are not really concerned about imported contraband goods. We are now only acting to protect our local CDs, VCDs and DVDs."

But you can't trawl for tuna without netting a few dolphins, and according to U Thar Soe the haul of illegal foreign goods often includes bootleg Myanmar media as well.

"When they catch pirated [foreign] CDs many local pirated [discs] are seized as well, as most of the sellers of pirated goods are selling both foreign and Myanmar movies."

The eyes have it: Striking '88 painting brings high price at auction

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The prized painting by U Win Pe was auctioned to art collector, Ko Htet Aung for the fetching price of K2,800,000. Photo: Thirilu

BIDS on a painting auctioned last week to mark the 25th anniversary of the August 8, 1988, uprising started at K8888 – but like the protests themselves, they didn't stop there.

Artist U Win Pe's '88 Democratic Revolution' – offered by the artist in tribute to the silver jubilee of a cornerstone date in the country's modern era – eventually fetched K2,800,000, with half the proceeds going to support the memorial events held in Yangon last week.

The winning bid came from avid art collector Ko Htet Aung, who said he was just 10 years old and attending fifth standard when the uprising occurred.

"We [children] were happy as schools were closed for months," Ko Htet Aung said as he reflected on what it was like to witness such a controversial period through a child's eyes. "But my mother didn't let us go out, though we saw many people on the road.

"When we grew up and read about the students' revolution, I came to learn about that terrible situation all too well."

Ko Htet Aung said the power of the painting compelled him to top the other bids.

"I saw many eyes in the painting at the center of the number eights," he said. "I felt it was very significant and forced me to be the winner of the auction."

He also admitted he thought the final price would go even higher.

"I was late for the auction," he added, "and was worried because I didn't want to lose the chance to own this painting. But now that I've been given the chance to own the painting and donate to the fund for the 8888 event, I'm very glad. I'll keep the painting forever."

Ko Tun Win Nyein, a member of the magazine's editorial team, thanked U Win Pe, who now lives in the United States, for allowing his painting to be used for the cover and for donating half its sale price in support of the events.

"In the third week of June, artist U Win Pe arrived in Yangon," Ko Tun Win Nyein said. "We met him to discuss making a painting for the anniversary. When he went back to America he sent us the painting in good time before the magazine's publication."

Another editorial member said the magazine faced many challenges, but ultimately the common desire to properly acknowledge the important date helped pull things together in time.

"There were many different ideas, sites and opinions [about how] to publish this magazine," Ko Zaw Thet Htwe said. "But finally, the same thing – wanting to give the magazine to the public before the anniversary – made us succeed."

The auction was held at Royal Rose Hall at Shwe Gone Dine Junction, Bahan township, Yangon, on August 4, with proceeds supporting the 8888 Silver Jubilee event held August 6-8 at the Myanmar Convention Centre, Min Dhama Road, Mayangone township.

If you missed the auction and don't know Ko Htet Aung well enough to drop by, it can also be seen on the cover of *Four Eights* magazine commemorating the silver jubilee, which launched August 8.

CORRECTION

Last week's article *Flower Power* incorrectly attributed this photo of Ko Ye Lwin to AFP. In fact, the photographer was the *Myanmar Times*' very own photographer, Ko Taik.

Yangon music school expands scholarship program

LWIN MAR HTUN
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A RECENT announcement from the Gitameik Music School could be music to some young Yangonite's ears: For the first time, its director says, the school is offering scholarships to students from within the city as well as those outside.

"Students from regions outside Yangon can get full-time scholarships," said U Moe Naing. "That includes a place to stay, food and free music classes. Another one is a part-time scholarship. That's for the students from Yangon. They can attend music classes without charge."

Both scholarships are tailored toward those with good musical skill who can't afford to attend classes otherwise, he said. Applicants will need to pass an audition in front of their prospective teachers in order to be accepted.

Eight students currently attend the school part-time, with some studying voice and others studying musical instruments.

Switzerland.

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Ambassador of the United States Derek J. Mitchell and Mr Johannes Gerhard zur Feld, Representative of USAID

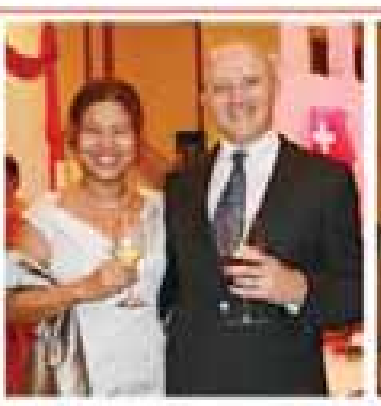
U Myint Lwin, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Chua Hian Kong Robert

U Ko Ko Gyi, IH Governor, and Mr Bruce Shepherd , CEM of New Zealand

Mrs Christine Schraner Burgener, spouse of Christoph Burgener, Ambassador of Switzerland in Myanmar and Mrs Corinne Hoechen Pignolet, Counselor of the Embassy of Switzerland

Mr Sukhdeep Singh, GM of Inya Lake Hotel

Ambassador Christoph Burgener, U Zaw Zaw, director of Max Myanmar and the Ambassador of Kingdom of Thailand, H.E. Pisanu Sarmsujan



Daw Amy Nyunt, CEO of Netmount Solutions, and Dr. Olivier Cottin, SOS International

Mr Thomas Fehr and Daw Yi Khin Phyu Htun

Mrs Christine Schraner Burgener, spouse of Christoph Burgener, Ambassador of Switzerland in Myanmar and Mr Aung Thura, director of Thura Swiss Ltd, Maker of Cuisinaire

Dr. Aung Win, Managing Director of Maple Trading Ltd., with Daw Win Yi Khine, Director of Maple Trading Ltd., and Daw Hnin Wai of the Myanmar Women Entrepreneur's Association

Ambassador of Indonesia, Mr. Sihardiantoa Soemawinata with spouse

U Nyan Soe, Daw Win Mo Thun, Daw Tin Nwe Htun, U Myint Soe, His Excellency U Thaw Kyaw, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Bonnie Nyunt of Voice of America and Dr. Aung Win, Managing Director of Maple Trading Ltd.

Daw Mily Ow, Director of real Fitness and Mrs Hazen Chan, spouse of the Ambassador of Singapore

Mr Michal Wachsler and Mr Piotr Brunner of the Swiss Embassy serving the Raclette station

Daw Nwe Htwe Thu Nwe, Daw Zaidi Hlaka and Daw Aye Thinzar Aung

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Turning over a new leaf:

Art gallery gives Yangon's mature students a second chance to learn

ZON PANN PWINT

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U Myo Min Tun, the founder of the Last Leaf Gallery and the Greenthumb learning centre, teaches a class on August 09. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

THE artwork on display at Yangon's Last Leaf Gallery may be traditional, but the venue is also being used for something which – for some of its visitors – is anything but: education.

Gallery owner U Myo Min Tun is also the founder of Greenthumb, an English-language school operating out of the gallery that provides basic education to underprivileged students, mostly young adults from urban areas around Yangon whose lives haven't offered them many other opportunities for schooling.

"Most of the students are full-time workers who don't earn much," U Myo Min Tun said. "And the majority are working jobs which don't easily allow advancement or personal development.

"They work at KTV [karaoke television], massage parlours and beer stations. Their problem is that they can't spend much time learning. As they come from the outer areas of the city, they spend a lot of time commuting. More often than not they go straight to work after class, and when they arrive home, they are too tired to study," he added.

The precarious schedule, coupled with the demands of supporting families, means most students can only attend irregularly. But in spite of the odds, the program has succeeded in encouraging people to join.

"I started with a single student two years ago," U Myo Min Tun said. "Now the centre has more than a hundred students."

U Myo Min Tun's reasons for starting Greenthumb stem from his time support teaching at a middle school in Naboei village, north of Myingyan in Mandalay Region in 1989.

"The middle school had more than 400 students and only eight teachers taught there on my holidays while I was at university," he said.

'The centre provides lessons in not only English language but also knowledge of society. I have learned a great deal about social issues'

Ma Aye Myat Mon
Former student at Greenthumb

"One of my students from middle school in Naboei was very clever and she passed the matriculation exam with three distinctions and was eligible to attend medical school. But her parents were very poor and couldn't afford to pay for her to continue studying.

"She has continued living in the village and sold betel nut and got married with a poor man.

That pushed me to found a school that gives free education to underprivileged students whose parents can't support them," he said.

Ma Aye Myat Mon used to be among those students taking classes at Greenthumb.

She now works at a marketing agency and no longer has a chance to keep up with the courses. But she recently dropped by to bring a friend, to whom she had recommended the program.

She said the lessons encompassed far more than the official curriculum of English grammar, phonetics, pronunciation, reading and writing.

"The centre provides lessons in not only English language but also knowledge of society," she said. "I have learned a great deal about social issues."

She attended three days a week for three months before her new job prevented her from continuing, she said, and the opportunity left her with no regrets.

"I was happy to attend and it didn't cost anything for me to study here."

A gallery may seem like an unusual venue for a school. But for U Myo Min Tun, art and education have always been closely linked. When he first opened his gallery and set about to give it a name, he was immediately reminded of a memorable classroom experience from his youth.

When he was young, he said, "I didn't even know there were female artists." He believed only men could be artists. But all that changed one day, he said, and it's a lesson he's never forgotten.

"When I was in the ninth grade, the students had to learn O Henry's short story 'The Last Leaf". That's how I got introduced to the fact that artists can be females."

"The Last Leaf", published in 1907, is a tale of two female artists living together in New York City's Greenwich Village, one of whom encounters the "cold, unseen stranger" pneumonia and has given up all hope, believing that she will die when the last leaf falls from the tree outside her window. It is a tale of poverty, companionship, redemption and – above all – the power of art to change the way we see the world.

To this day, O Henry is famous for his twist endings, in which a sudden realisation causes old scenes to be recast in new light – sometimes, as in the case of "The Last Leaf", literally. The technique set the template for generations of short-story writers coming afterward – and also inadvertently inspired a new way of thinking about art spaces.

"I never forgot 'The Last Leaf", the story or its title," he said.

Given the unexpected way its space is being used, then, the Last Leaf Gallery seems to have proven itself an exceptionally well-named. Greenthumb – the name references the saying that those who are good gardeners have "a green thumb" – provides new hope and a nurturing environment for those who might otherwise believe their student days are long behind them.

While O Henry's story was set in Greenwich Village, long known as New York City's bohemian refuge for artists, Yangon's equivalent is Pansodan Street, where the Last Leaf Gallery is located. As well as Greenthumb and the Last Leaf Gallery, Pansodan is home to a number of book vendors and galleries, including some famous art spaces run by U Myo Min Tun's brother, U Aung Soe Min, which are named after the street itself.

"My brother and I want Pansodan Street to be an art street," U Myo Min Tun said. "I know nothing about art, but I can feel and appreciate it."

That appreciation extends from art to artists: Part of the motivation behind opening the gallery was helping out a friend whose paintings weren't drawing the attention they deserved.

"My friend opened a gallery in Pazundaung township over two years," says U Myo Min Tun. "The gallery was housed in a secluded place which couldn't be found very easily, so I opened my gallery on Pansodan Road and have let him exhibit his collection here as well."

Though he claims to be a businessman, not an artist, his sympathy for their often-precarious livelihood shows that O Henry's story left a deeper mark in him than many realise.

"I know very well how artists struggle," he says, "So I pay the artists more for their paintings than what they are asking. It is how I contribute to their cause."

It's a shame to learn – although perhaps not surprising – that U Myo Min Tun is struggling to keep things afloat at the school. He is quickly running out of funding and may need to sell other assets to keep things going. His story seems destined to reflect the twists and turns that stem from that story that (so long ago) influenced him.

The paintings hung at No 268 Pansodan are a mix of oil, watercolour and acrylic, and are mostly realist and impressionist in style. They also include traditional gemstone and embroidery works.

But for the students hard at work and concentrating on their studies at Greenthumb, the most striking visions at the gallery may not be what's hanging on the walls but something they alone can see – the thought of a better future.

'I started with a single student two years ago. Now the centre has more than a hundred students'

U Myo Min Tun
Founder of Greenthumb learning centre

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EVERYWHERE WITH YOU

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

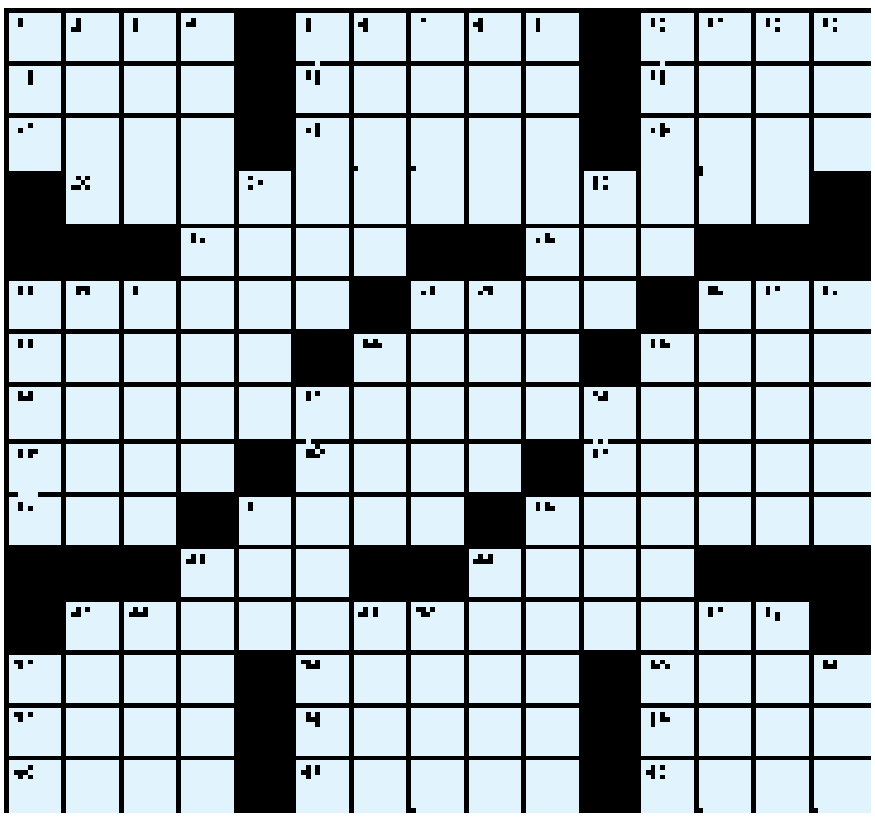
BLOCK HEAD? *By Aaron Zarrie*

ACROSS

1 Ruin James Bond's martini?
5 Towers for storing grain
10 "Looky here!" sound
14 It's opened in saunas
15 Proficient
16 Burn-soothing plant
17 "Yesterday!" in memos
18 Defibrillator operator's call
19 Motown music
20 Person you can trust
23 Wedding cake feature
24 Snoop
25 In the direction of
28 Gift-wrapping accessory
30 Woolf's "___ Dalloway"
33 Hacienda material
34 Unconvincing, as an excuse
35 Shoe-filler
36 Statistician's presentation
39 Vein
40 Sign of things to come
41 Surname of some famous twins
42 No one has two of them?
43 Fruit-cocktail ingredient
44 Maurice Ravel composition
45 Piece of turf
46 War god
47 There's no end to it
53 Weight allowance
54 Put on paper
55 Gives a boost to
57 "Author unknown" byline
58 Accuser
59 Lincoln Logs competitor
60 Chromosome part
61 Takes to the hills?
62 Garden with a snake

DOWN

1 Relaxing vacation destination
2 Throw around
3 What some veterans recall
4 Time-honored
5 Worthy of worship
6 Dynamo's antithesis
7 Wine barrel sediment
8 Common aquarium fish
9 Sharpened, as an old-fashioned razor
10 ___-faced (sallow)
11 Astringent fruit
12 Lip-puckering
13 ___ Aviv, Israel
21 Buenos ___
22 Underground treasure
25 Billiards necessity
26 "___ Melancholy" (Keats)
27 Rolling tracts of open country
28 Get gradually smaller
29 Congregational concurrence
30 Key developer of communications
31 Generic pooch name
32 Transcript source
34 Monk in high places
35 Not miniature
37 Some rural festivities
38 Whisperer of sweet nothings
43 Dish eaten with the fingers
44 Thorny bushes (var.)
45 Ruckus
46 Played a role
47 Rooftop rooster
48 Press
49 Long Russian chain
50 Uncertain number
51 Stretched the truth, so to speak
52 Periphery
53 Price indicator
56 Chip off the old block



SUDOKU PACIFIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

7		3		1	2			8
	8			6		3		1
	9		3				6	2
				8	6	1	5	
	5	4		3		2	8	
	2	8	5	9				
8	4				3		1	
2		9		5			3	
3			8	7		4		5

8/12

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

DILBERT

BY SCOTT ADAMS

PEANUTS

BY CHARLES SCHULZ

CALVIN AND HOBBES

BY BILL WATTERSON

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.

LET'S EAT OUT — **Solution: 8 letters**

A	P	P	L	E	V	I	S	N	E	P	X	E	H	B
N	A	P	K	I	N	S	E	R	V	E	D	Y	A	A
L	B	S	T	N	A	R	U	A	T	S	E	R	M	N
U	U	S	P	L	F	O	R	K	S	N	B	E	B	A
S	I	N	A	I	F	O	O	D	O	E	S	D	U	N
N	U	D	C	I	H	O	N	M	C	P	P	R	R	A
O	S	P	S	H	C	C	E	U	I	A	A	O	G	I
I	A	H	P	S	E	H	E	T	R	S	E	F	E	R
T	N	S	O	E	D	S	I	T	N	T	H	A	R	E
N	D	U	O	I	R	E	I	C	S	R	C	S	S	T
E	W	N	N	P	M	E	A	L	K	Y	O	T	T	E
V	I	E	S	I	S	L	L	O	R	E	E	C	U	F
N	C	M	T	R	E	A	T	S	W	A	N	T	N	A
O	H	O	T	D	O	G	S	S	K	Y	D	N	A	C
C	A	K	E	S	N	U	B	S	R	E	N	N	I	D

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8/12

Apple, Banana, Barbecues, Buns, Cafeteria, Cakes, Candy, Cheap, Chicken, Chips, Conventions, Cook, Corn, Dine, Dinners, Expensive, Fast, Fish, Food, Forks, Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Lunches, Meal, Menus, Money, Napkins, Nuts, Order, Parties, Pastry, Pies, Restaurants, Rolls, Salads, Sandwich, Served, Spoons, Steaks, Supper, Time, Tips, Treats, Want

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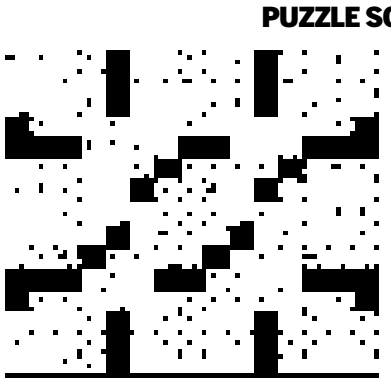
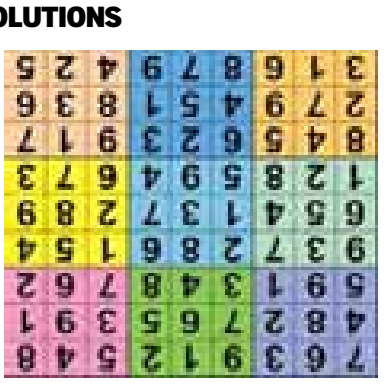
PUZZLE SOLUTIONS





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Garlic on your breath? Not a problem when (ca)noodling for two

PHYO'S COOKING ADVENTURE

phyocooking@gmail.com

WHEN I lived in Sydney, I so often had cravings for garlic noodles (*si chet khauk swe*) that I ended up making up my own recipes for this fusion-style Chinese-Myanmar noodle salad just to satisfy my desires. Both of this week's recipes call for garlic oil, so you'll want to make that first – and really, why not make a few more portions while you're at it? You can keep leftover garlic oil in an airtight jar in the fridge, and you'll never go wrong having extra *si chet* on hand in Myanmar.

Chinese chicken and garlic noodles. Photo: Phyo

Although the two recipes below call for meat, they can be made into great vegetarian meals by substituting sliced fried tofu or bean curd instead of chicken. On a busy day you can even use instant noodles. Even my Australian husband has been known to mix up a batch of his own when the appetite strikes him. If only I could tempt him to share ...

GARLIC OIL

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 cloves garlic, crushed

PREPARATION
Heat oil carefully in a small pan and sauté the garlic until it turns golden yellow, taking care not to let it burn. When it's done, scoop the fried garlic out and set aside, then turn off heat and let oil cool. Then mix the fried garlic back in.

FIVE-SPICE NOODLE SALAD WITH POACHED SPICED CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 2)
For the chicken
160 grams boneless chicken breast (1 large piece)
2 star anise
2 cloves

For the noodles
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon salt
2 packs dried noodles (egg or rice)
2 teaspoons garlic oil (*si chet*)
2 teaspoons Kikkoman soy sauce
1 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon five-spice powder or Chinese masala
Sliced spring onions to garnish

PREPARATION
Wash the chicken breast and drain well. Arrange chicken in a pot with the star anise and cloves. Add water until just covering the chicken, bring to a boil, then turn down heat and let simmer for 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Remove chicken from pot, discarding spices. Allow to cool, shred with a fork and set aside.

Meanwhile, boil water in a large pot. Add vegetable oil and salt to keep noodle strands from sticking to one another. Cook noodles according to packet instructions. When finished, drain well and divide noodles into two bowls.

Divide garlic oil, soy sauce, white pepper and five-spice powder between the two noodle bowls and mix well. Garnish both with sliced spring onions and shredded chicken on top. You can also add an extra splash (½ teaspoon) of soy sauce if you are using meat in the dish and prefer a saltier taste.

Serve with condiments such as Shan-style garlic pickles (*kyet thon phyu chin*) or pickled vegetables (*thee sone tha nut*).

Five spiced noodle salad with poached chicken Photo: Phyo

CHINESE CHICKEN AND GARLIC NOODLES

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 2)
For the chicken
160 grams boneless chicken breast (1 large piece)
2 teaspoons salt
2/3 teaspoon turmeric powder

For the gravy
1 tablespoon roasted chickpea (gram flour) powder
1½ cups cold water
½ onion, diced
½ teaspoon vegetable oil
½ teaspoon salt

For the noodles
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon salt
2 packs dried noodles
2 teaspoons garlic oil
5 teaspoons Kikkoman soy sauce
2 teaspoons Indian masala (I use Kalarlay brand)
100 grams cabbage, thinly shredded
1 onion, sliced

On the side:
fish sauce
chopped oriander
slices of lime
chilli flakes

PREPARATION
Wash the chicken and drain well. Marinate it with salt and turmeric powder for 30 minutes. Then put the chicken into a pot and add just enough water to cover it. Boil water then turn down heat and let simmer, turning once, for 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Remove chicken from pot, drain and let cool, then cut into slices.

Meanwhile, pour the chickpea powder into the cold water and mix well to remove lumps. Pour oil into saucepan and warm over medium heat. Sauté the diced onions for about 3 minutes, then slowly pour the chickpea mixture into the pan. Allow the mixture to boil, then turn down heat down and let simmer for 10 minutes. The consistency of the gravy should be thick but not sticky. If it's growing too thick, add a bit more water.

Meanwhile, boil water in a large pot. Add vegetable oil and salt to keep noodle strands from sticking to one another. Cook noodles according to packet instructions. When finished, drain well and divide noodles into two bowls.

Divide garlic oil (*si chet*), soy sauce, masala, cabbage, onions and gravy between each bowl. Mix well and garnish with slices of chicken. Wedges of limes, coriander, fish sauce and chili flakes should be served on the side as condiments.

TIPS
After slicing onions, soak them in cold water then drain them and pat them dry. This helps the flavour to be less intense.

You can find fresh egg noodles or wheat-free soba noodles at most produce markets.

QUOTE
"God comes to the hungry in the form of food."
Mahatma Gandhi, non-violent civil disobedience practitioner and vegetarian

NEXT WEEK
Mediterranean and Moroccan inspired garbanzo beans

Yunan BBQ proves meat plus fire equals a good time, any time

MY past experiences of eating barbeque in Yangon have mostly aligned with late nights with friends and plenty of Myanmar beer on flow. It felt a bit strange, then, to head out for some barbeque in the light of day simply because I was hungry.

Yunan BBQ, at the corner of Kanyethethar Street and Kabar Aye Pagoda Road, has long been established as a Yangon institution, providing diners with plenty of choices of BBQ kebabs as well as à la carte options from the menu. There is also a second location, located on Sayarsan Road in Bahan. While just as popular, I've been told it's usually less crowded, so head there instead if you don't want to be yelling at your companions throughout your meal.

Yunan BBQ (1)

No 48 (A), corner of Kanyethethar Street and Kabar Aye Pagoda Road, Mayangone township. Ph: 01 664496, 665398

Food :	8
Drink :	7
Service :	8
Atmosphere :	7
X-factor :	7
Value for money :	9

Total Score: 7.6/10

On my recent lunchtime visit I was in the company of a couple of friends who have darkened Yunan BBQ's door even more often than I have. I deferred to their superior menu knowledge, and soon enough – the service is quick – the table was covered with deep-fried chilli cuttlefish with salt and pepper, a selection of barbequed meats-on-a-stick, grilled baby corn and rice.

The cuttlefish (K3000) [**CORRECT? You had a question mark after it...**] was coated in Japanese PankoPanko [**my internet's down, but what the heck is this?**] breadcrumbs and came out a light golden colour.

A wide selection of barbeque fare at the Yunan BBQ restaurant. Photo: Manny Maung

It was the first time in Myanmar that I'd eaten something deep-fried which didn't leave behind a telltale layer of grease on the serving plate after it was gone.

The barbequed meats were tasty fare, though I did pass on the liver (to the appreciative friend on my left). What really caught my eye – though unfortunately only after I was already stuffed – was the grilled pork being cooked in a giant vat over a bed of hot coals. Eyeballing it from our table I could see a juicy layer of blistering crackling and clear juices running down the hot meat. It's the closest thing I've seen to Western-style roast pork here and in retrospect I'm really disappointed I didn't just order it and hoe in.

I'll guess I'll just have to call them up and ask when their next daily batch is going to be ready. I'll be the one waiting – as patiently as I can – outside the door.

Wine Review

RED WINE

Chateau Mayne Pargade, Bordeaux, 2010

Dark red, akin to something out of True Blood, this wine has strong liquorice and cassis notes that balance surprisingly well with an oak and vanilla finish.

Score 8/10

K15,000

WHITE WINE

St Martin Dry, French White Wine, 2005

This is an extremely fruity wine, tasting more like alcoholic grape juice than a sophisticated blend of dry white. Golden in colour, it would be better used for a wine punch than drunken as is.

Score 6/10

K10,000

Ye Myat

Dell Pacific Rim new products launch

Ma Celly

Ko Chit Ko Ko and Ma Thapyay Aung

Ma Ei san and Ko Lin Aye Mg

Nissan 3S Centre opening

Responsible persons

The Sein Gay Har family's donation ceremony

U Aye Zaw Myint and Daw Te Te Lay

U Aung Min and Dr Htet Ko Ko

U Ba Aung and U Maung Maung Win's family

Two Hearts wedding dress launch

A Lin Young

Tin Moe Lwin, attendee and Shwe Thamee

Padamyar FM mobile service launch

Two Hearts' models

Ramco Cement launch

Ko Sein Win and Ko Myint Aung

Ko Aung Htet, Ma Sandar Win, Ko Nay Myo and Dr Pyone Pyone Han

NYEIN
EI EI HTWE

nyeineieihtwe23@gmail.com

WHAT a relief the week is nearly over. As much as Socialite loves socialising, she's quite ready to kick her feet up and recharge. As usual, it was action-packed for this celebrity journo. She attended the Nissan 3S Centre opening ceremony on Pyay Road as well as Dell's Pacific Rim product launch at Junction Square on July 31. She was also seen at the Elite launch, the Samsung S3 Tablet launch and the 9th Singapore Property Sale event. More to come next week with a stint of ten-pin bowling! But for now, it's shut-eye time.

Elite Highway bus launch

Ma Myat Myo Pwint

Sweden's Oriflame cosmetics launch

Fredrik Widell

Nima Khoei

Ma Khine Zar Min Tun

9th Singapore Property sale

Ma Thazin

Pansy Yin

Ma Thazin Aung

Daw Ohanmar Tin Maung

Samsung Galaxy S3 Tab media launch

Responsible persons

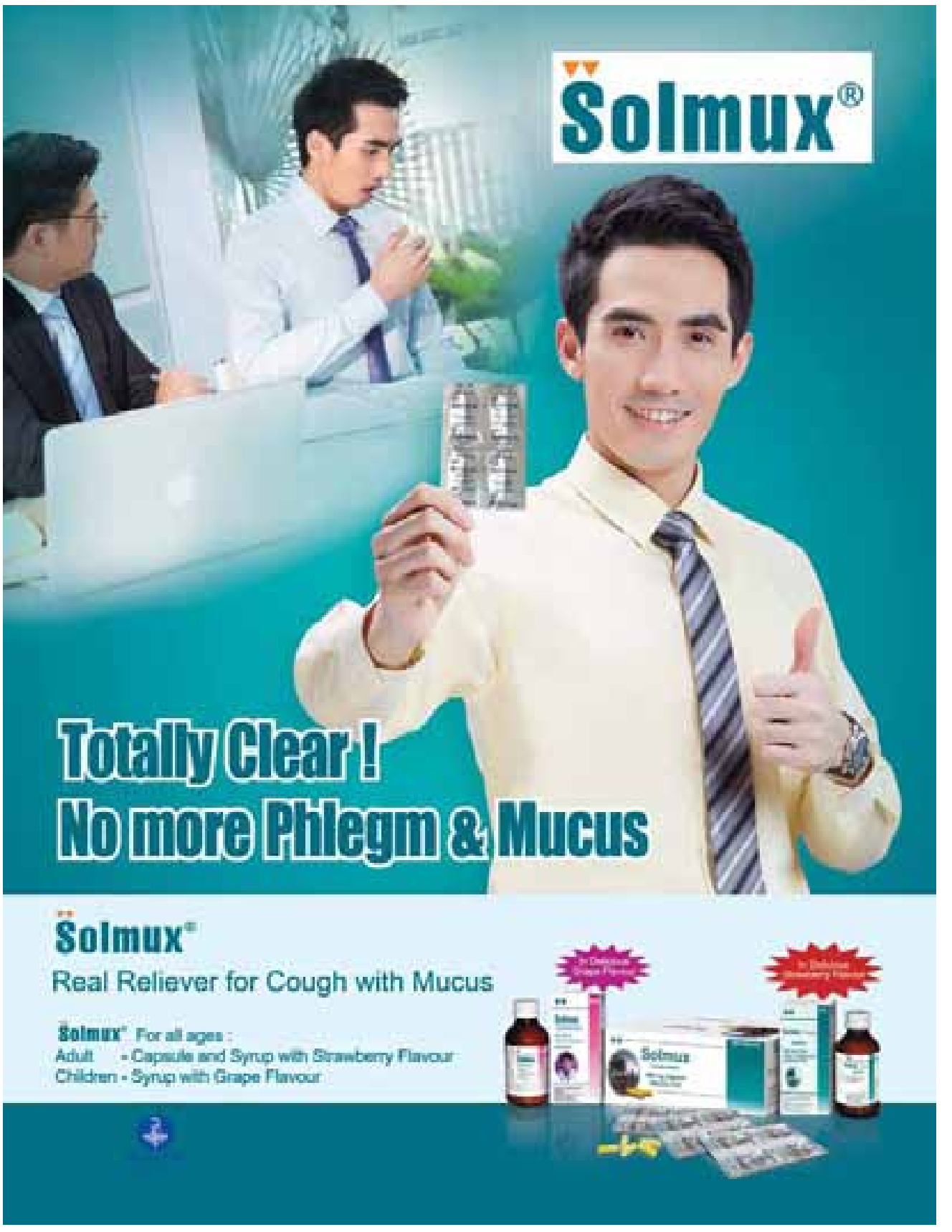
Ko Phyo announcing lucky draw winners

Models

Raricha cosmetics launch

Htay Min Tun

Dr Hnin Hnin Yu



DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 401	1	7:00	7:55
FMI A1	1,2,3,4,5	7:30	8:30
FMI A1	6	8:00	9:00
FMI B1	1,2,3,4,5	11:30	12:30
FMI A1	7	15:30	16:30
FMI C1	1,2,3,4,5	16:30	17:30

NAY PYI TAW TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
FMI A2	1,2,3,4,5	8:50	9:50
FMI A2	6	10:00	11:00
FMI B2	1,2,3,4,5	13:00	14:00
FMI A2	7	17:00	18:00
FMI C2	1,2,3,4,5	18:00	19:00

YANGON TO MANDALAY

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 211	7	6:00	7:25
W9 512	3	6:00	8:05
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,6	6:10	8:15
YJ 891	5	6:30	7:55
YH 917	6	6:10	8:25
YH 917	1,2,3,4,5,7	6:10	8:40
Y5 234	Daily	6:15	7:30
6T 401/K7222	2,3,4,5,6,7	6:30	8:35
K7 222	Daily	6:30	8:40
YJ 201	4	6:00	7:55
K7 626	1,5	6:45	8:10
K7 226	2,4	6:45	8:10
YJ 201	3	7:00	8:25
YJ 901	1	7:00	8:25
YJ 143/W97143	1,2,3	7:00	9:05
W9 251	Daily	7:00	9:05
6T 401	1	7:00	9:40
YJ 761	6	7:00	8:55
W9 201	1,2,3	7:45	9:10
8M 6603	2,4,7	9:00	10:10
YJ 751/W9 7751	5	10:00	11:55
YJ 761	1	10:30	12:25
W9 251	2	10:30	11:55
K7 624	Daily	10:30	11:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	7	10:30	12:25
YJ 201	1	11:00	12:25
YJ 761	2,4	11:00	12:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	3	11:00	12:55
YJ 601	6	11:00	12:25
YH 737	3,7	11:15	13:25
YH 727	1,5	11:15	13:25
YH 729	2,4,6	11:15	14:15
YJ 211	5	11:30	12:55
YH 731	1	14:30	16:10
YH 731	2,3,4,5,6	14:30	16:40
W9 129	1,2,3	14:45	16:40
YJ 781	2	14:30	15:55
K7 224	Daily	14:30	16:35
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	14:30	16:35

MANDALAY TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
Y5 233	Daily	8:10	9:25
YJ 892	2,3,4,6,7	8:30	10:25
YJ 892	5	8:10	11:00
YH 918	1,2,3,4,5,7	8:40	10:45
YH 918	6	8:25	11:15
YJ 143/W97143	1,2,3	9:20	10:45
6T 402/K7 223	2,3,4,5,6,7	8:55	10:55
K7 223	Daily	8:55	11:00
YJ 892	1	8:30	9:55
YJ 902	1	8:40	10:35
W9 201	4,5,6,7	9:10	11:05
W9 144	Daily	9:20	10:45
W9 201	1,2,3	9:25	11:20
Y5 132	3,5,6,7	9:30	10:30
6T 402	1	10:00	12:00
YJ 202	3	10:05	12:55
K7 227	2,4	10:35	12:00
K7 627	1,5	10:55	12:20
YJ 202	4	11:00	12:25
YJ 762	6	12:35	14:00
K7 845	2,4,7	12:50	16:00
YJ 202	1	15:30	17:25
W9 120	1,3	15:45	17:10
YJ 602	6	15:40	17:05
YJ 762	1	16:05	17:30
YJ 782	2	16:10	18:15
YH 732	1	16:10	18:15
YJ 212	5	16:30	18:35
YJ 762	2,4	16:35	18:00
YH 732	2,3,4,5,6	16:40	18:45
W9 129	4,5,6,7	16:40	18:45
YH 728	1,5	16:45	18:10
6T 502/K7 225	Daily	16:50	19:00
K7 225	Daily	16:50	19:00
W9 129	1,2,3	16:55	19:00
K7 625	Daily	17:10	18:35
8M 6604	2,4,7	17:20	18:30
YJ 725/W9 7752	7	17:20	18:45
YJ 212	7	17:20	18:45
YH 738	3,7	17:25	18:50
W9 511	2	17:30	19:35
W9 252	2	17:35	19:00
YJ 725/W9 7752	3	17:50	19:15
YH 730	2,4,6	18:00	19:25

YANGON TO NYAUNG U

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 833	7	6:10	7:45
YH 917	Daily	6:10	7:45
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,6 ,7	6:10	7:30
YJ 891	5	6:30	8:40
6T 401/K7 222	2,3,4,5,6,7	6:30	7:50
K7 222	Daily	6:30	7:50
YJ 143/ W9 7143	1,2,3	7:00	8:20
6T 401	1	7:00	8:55
YJ 781	2	14:30	16:40
W9 129	1,2,3	14:45	17:25
W9 129	4,5,6,7	14:30	17:10
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	14:30	17:20
YH 731	1	14:30	16:55
YH 731	2,3,4,5,6	14:30	17:25
K7 224	Daily	14:30	17:25

NYAUNG U TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 834	7	7:45	9:05
YJ 891	7	7:45	9:50
YH 917	1,2,3,4,5,7	7:45	10:45
YJ 891	2,3,4,6	7:45	10:25
YJ 143/W9 7143	1,2,3	8:35	10:45
YJ 143/W9 7143	4,5,6,7	8:05	10:45
K7 222	Daily	8:05	11:00
6T 401	2,3,4,5,6,7	8:05	10:55
YJ 891	5	8:55	11:00
YJ 891	1	7:45	9:55
6T 401	1	9:10	12:00
YH 917	6	9:10	11:15
YH 732	1	16:55	18:15
YH 732	2,3,4,5,6	17:25	18:45
6T 502/K7 225	Daily	17:40	19:00
W9 129	1,2,3	17:40	19:00
W9 129	Daily	17:25	18:45
K7 225	Daily	17:45	19:00

YANGON TO MYITKYINA

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 201	4	6:00	9:20
YJ 211	7	6:00	8:50
YJ 211	5	11:30	14:20
YJ 201	3	7:00	9:50
K7 844	2,4,7	7:30	11:05
W9 251	2	10:30	13:25
K7 624	Daily	10:30	13:25
YJ 201	1	11:00	13:50

MYITKYINA TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 202	4	9:35	12:25
YJ 211	7	9:05	12:25
YJ 211	5	14:35	18:35
YJ 202	3	10:05	12:55
K7 625	Daily	15:40	18:35
W9 252	2	16:05	19:00
YJ 202	1	16:30	17:25

YANGON TO HEHO

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 891	7	6:10	8:25
YH 917	1,2,3,4,5,7	6:10	9:35
YH 917	6	6:10	10:05
YJ 891	2,3,4,6	6:10	9:00
YJ 891	5	6:30	9:35
6T 401/K7222	2,3,4,5,6,7	6:30	9:30
K7 222	Daily	6:30	9:30
6T 401	1	7:00	10:35
YJ 761	6	7:00	8:10
YJ 901	1	7:00	9:10
W9 201	4,5,6,7	7:30	9:40
K7 828	1,3,5	7:30	8:45
W9 201	1,2,3	7:45	9:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	5	10:00	11:10
YJ 761	1	10:30	11:40
YJ 751/W9 7751	7	10:30	11:40
W9 119	1,3,	10:30	11:40
YJ 761	2,4	11:00	12:10
YJ 751/W9 7751	3	11:00	12:10
YH 727	1,5	11:15	12:40
YH 737	3,7	11:15	12:40
K7 826	2,6	11:45	13:00
W9 129	1,2,3	14:45	15:55
W9 129	4,5,6,7	14:30	15:40
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	14:30	15:40
K7 224	Daily	14:30	15:45
YH 731	2,3,4,5,6	14:30	15:55

HEHO TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 892	7	8:40	9:50
YJ 892	2,3,4,6	9:15	10:25
YJ 902	1	9:25	10:35
YH 918	1,2,3,4,5,7	9:35	10:45
YJ 892	5	9:50	11:00
YH 918	6	10:05	11:15
6T 402/K7223	2,3,4,5,6,7	9:45	10:55
K7 223	Daily	9:45	11:00
W9 201	4,5,6,7	9:55	11:05
W9 201	1,2,3	10:10	11:20
6T 402	1	10:50	12:00
YJ 762	6	11:50	14:00
K7 829	1,3,5	13:50	15:05
W9 120	1,3	15:00	17:10
YJ 762	1	15:20	17:30
YJ 762	2,4	15:50	18:00
YJ 762	6	11:50	14:00
W9 129	1,2,3	16:10	19:00
YJ 752/W9 7752	5	16:55	18:05
W9 129	4,5,6,7	15:55	18:45
YH 731	2,3,4,5,6	15:55	18:45
YH 728	1,5	16:00	18:10
6T 501/K7 224	Daily	16:00	19:00
K7 224	Daily	16:00	19:00
YJ 602	6	16:25	17:35
YH 738	3,7	16:40	18:50
K7 827	2,6	17:25	18:40

YANGON TO SIT T WE

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 605	5	11:15	13:15
6T 611	3,7	11:30	12:55
K7 426	Daily	12:30	13:50
6T 607	1	12:30	13:55
6T 611	2,4,6	14:30	15:55

SIT T WE TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 612	3,7	13:15	14:40
6T 606	5	13:35	15:00
K7 427	Daily	14:05	15:25
6T 608	1	14:15	16:15
6T 612	2,4,6	16:15	17:40

YANGON TO MYEIK

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
K7 319	Daily	7:00	9:05
YJ 301	2	7:00	9:10
YH 633	1,3,4,5,7	7:00	9:15
6T 707	2	7:30	9:30
6T 707	6	11:15	13:15
YJ 301	4,7	12:45	14:55

MYEIK TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 634	1,3,4,5,7	11:25	13:25
YJ 302	2	11:25	13:35
K7 320	Daily	11:30	13:35
6T 708	2	11:55	13:55
6T 708	6	15:40	17:40
YJ 302	4,7	15:10	18:45

YANGON TO THANDWE

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 605	5	11:15	12:10
6T 607	1	12:30	15:05

THANDWE TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 605	5	12:25	15:00
6T 608	1	15:20	16:15

Domestic Airlines

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

Air KBZ (K7)
Tel: 372977~80, 533030~39 (Airport), Fax: 372983

Air Mandalay (6T)
Tel : (Head Office) 501520, 525488, Fax: 525937. Airport: 533222~3, 09-73152853. Fax: 533223.

Asian Wings (YJ)
Tel: 951 516654, 532253, 09-731-35991~3.Fax: 951 532333

Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5)
Tel: 95 9 400446999, 95 9 400447999, Fax: 95 9 73256067

Yangon Airways(YH)
Tel: (+95-1) 383 100, 383 107, 700 264, Fax: 652 533.

FMI Air Charter - Sales & Reservations
Tel: (95-1) 240363, 240373 / (+95-9) 421146545

Domestic

6T = Air Mandalay
W9 = Air Bagan
YJ = Asian Wings
K7 = AIR KBZ
YH = Yangon Airways
UB = FMI UB Charter
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

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INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO BANGKOK

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 706	Daily	7:15	9:30
8M 335	Daily	9:00	10:45
TG 304	Daily	9:50	11:45
PG 702	Daily	10:30	12:25
TG 302	Daily	14:55	16:50
PG 708	Daily	15:20	17:15
8M 331	1,5,6	16:30	18:15
PG 704	Daily	18:20	20:15
Y5 237	Daily	18:05	19:50
TG 306	Daily	19:45	21:40

YANGON TO DON MUENG

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2752	Daily	8:30	10:20
FD 2754	Daily	17:50	19:35

YANGON TO SINGAPORE

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 509	1,6	0:25	5:00
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25
Y5 233	Daily	10:10	14:40
SQ 997	Daily	10:25	14:45
8M 6232	Daily	11:30	16:05
3K 586	Daily	11:30	16:05
MI 517	Daily	16:40	21:15

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 501	1,3,6	7:50	11:50
AK 1427	Daily	8:30	12:50
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30
MH 743	Daily	15:45	20:00

YANGON TO BEIJING

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 906	2,3,4,6,7	14:15	21:55

YANGON TO GAUNGZHOU

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 711	4,7	8:40	13:15
CZ 3056	3,6	11:20	15:50
CZ 3056	1,5	17:40	22:15

YANGON TO TAIPEI

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7916	1,2,3,5,6	10:50	16:15

YANGON TO KUNMING

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2012	1,3	12:20	18:35
MU 2032	2,4,5,6,7	14:40	18:00
CA 906	2,3,4,6,7	14:15	17:35

YANGON TO CHIANG MAI

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 9607	4,7	14:20	16:10

YANGON TO HANOI

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 956	1,3,5,6,7	19:10	21:30

YANGON TO HO CHI MINH CITY

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 942	2,4,7	14:25	17:10

YANGON TO DOHA

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 619	1,4,5	8:15	11:15

YANGON TO PHNOM PENH

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 403	3	16:50	19:15

YANGON TO SEOUL

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
0Z 770	3,4,6,7	0:35	9:10
KE 472	Daily	23:35	08:05+1

YANGON TO HONG KONG

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	1,2,4,6	1:10	6:00

YANGON TO TOKYO

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	1,3,6	21:30	06:40+1

YANGON TO KOLKATA

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AI 228	1,5	14:05	15:05

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 782	2,3,5,7	9:30	11:55

MANDALAY TO DON MUENG

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2761	Daily	12:45	15:00

MANDALAY TO KUNMING

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2030	Daily	14:40	17:20

BANGKOK TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 336	Daily	6:15	7:00
TG 303	Daily	7:55	8:50
PG 701	Daily	8:50	9:40
TG 301	Daily	13:00	13:45
PG 707	Daily	13:40	14:30
PG 703	Daily	16:45	17:35
TG 305	Daily	17:50	18:45
8M 332	Daily	19:15	20:00
PG 705	Daily	20:15	21:30
Y5 238	Daily	21:10	21:55

DON MUENG TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2751	Daily	7:15	8:00
FD 2753	Daily	16:35	17:20

SINGAPORE TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
SQ 998	Daily	7:55	9:20
3K 585	Daily	9:10	10:40
8M 6231	Daily	9:10	10:40
VN 943	2,4,7	11:40	13:25
8M 232	Daily	13:25	14:50
MI 518	Daily	14:20	15:45
Y5 234	Daily	15:35	17:05
MI 520	5,7	22:10	23:35

BEIJING TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	12:40	13:15

KAULA LUMPUR TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AK 1426	Daily	6:55	8:00
MH 740	Daily	10:05	11:15
8M 502	1,3,6	12:50	13:50
MH742	Daily	13:30	14:40

GUANGZHOU TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CZ 3055	3,6	8:40	10:30
CZ 3055	1,5	14:45	16:35
8M 712	4,7	14:15	15:50

TAIPEI TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CI 7915	1,2,3,5,6	7:00	9:55

KUNMING TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2011	1,3	8:20	11:30
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	12:40	13:15
MU 2031	2,4,5,6,7	13:30	13:55

CHIANG MAI TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 9608	4,7	17:20	18:10

HANOI TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 957	1,3,5,6,7	16:35	18:10

HO CHI MINH CITY TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
VN 943	2,4,7	11:40	13:25

BANGKOK TO MANDALAY

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 781	2,3,5,7	7:25	8:50

DOHA TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 618	3,4,7	21:05	07:00+1

PHNOM PENH TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 404	3	20:15	21:40

SEOUL TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	Daily	18:40	22:30
0Z 769	2,3,5,6	19:50	23:25

TOKYO TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	1,3,6	10:30	15:30

HONG KONG TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:45	23:30

KOLKATA TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AI 227	1,5	10:35	13:20

DON MUEANG TO MANDALAY

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
FD 2760	Daily	10:50	12:15

KUNMING TO MANDALAY

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MU 2029	Daily	13:55	13:50

International Airlines

Air Asia (FD)
Tel: 251 885, 251 886.

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

Air China (CA)
Tel : 666112, 655882.

Air India
Tel : 253597~98, 254758. Fax: 248175

Bangkok Airways (PG)
Tel: 255122, 255 265, Fax: 255119

Condor (DE)
Tel: + 95 1 -370836 up to 39 (ext : 810)

Dragonair (KA)
Tel: 95-1-255320, 255321, Fax : 255329

Golden Myanmar Airlines (Y5)
Tel: 95 9 400446999, 95 9 400447999, Fax: 95 9 73256067

Malaysia Airlines (MH)
Tel : 387648, 241007 ext : 120, 121, 122 Fax : 241124

Myanmar Airways International(8M)
Tel : 255260, Fax: 255305

Silk Air(MI)
Tel: 255 287~9, Fax: 255 290

Thai Airways (TG)
Tel : 255491~6, Fax : 255223

Vietnam Airlines (VN)
Fax : 255086. Tel 255066/ 255088/ 255068.

Qatar Airways (Temporary Office)
Tel: 01-250388, (ext: 8142, 8210)

International

FD & AK = Air Asia
TG = Thai Airways
8M = Myanmar Airways International
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines
PG = Bangkok Airways
MI = Silk Air
VN = Vietnam Airline
MH = Malaysia Airlines
CZ = China Southern
CI = China Airlines
CA = Air China
KA = Dragonair
Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines
IC = Indian Airlines Limited
W9 = Air Bagan
3K = Jet Star
AI = Air India
QR = Qatar Airways
KE = Korea Airlines
NH = All Nippon Airways
SQ = Singapore Airways
DE = Condor Airlines
MU=China Eastern Airlines
BR = Eva Airlines
DE = Condor
AI = Air India

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JAPAN

Tsuetate Onsen: no ordinary hot spring

YOSHIHIRO NAGAI

THERE is an old folktale that visitors to a hot spring resort here come leaning on canes and walk home forgetting they ever had them.

That is exactly how the Tsuetate Onsen hot spring got its name – *tsue* means "cane", while *tate* means "standing."

Tsuetate Onsen is located in a mountain town with a population of about 300. It is a common sight to see steam rising from the hot spring, and there are even public areas where you can steam vegetables and other foods using hot spring vapours.

"There's no particular charm to this hot spring, but recently, tourists have been enjoying various kinds of *purin* [custard pudding]," said Sawako Takasaki, the proprietor of the inn where I stayed.

For some reason, I couldn't imagine a hot spring associated with *purin*.

"You can see places where you can use hot spring steam. Locals steam vegetables and eggs there every day. For that reason, when we were discussing what we should make to attract tourists, we naturally came up with *purin*," Takasaki explained.

Using the steam and thick, locally produced Jersey cattle milk, a group of *okami* – women who run local inns – were quickly able to create 20 kinds of *purin*.

Curious, I visited another inn after seeing a signboard advertising its "Tsuetate purin".

"I want to try the *purin* on the signboard," I said.

"Coming right up," the okami replied. "We also offer a single-day course in which you can bathe in a hot spring and eat an original purin."

Each inn takes pride in its original purin, saying theirs is the best in the resort town.

Visiting a number of inns in the area, I gobbled up a variety of purin in rapid succession – bittersweet *purin, hojicha* (roasted green tea) *purin* and even a fried *purin*.

While out on my "*purin* tour", I came across a group on a Michikusa Annai tour of back alleys that locals call "Sedoya".

The tour guide, Takahisa Kawatsu, 47, is part of an eight-member volunteer group called Team Sedoya.

"It's not interesting to only walk through the main streets in a hot spring resort town. The past and present are mixed together in the back alleys," Kawatsu said.

Just by stepping off the main street and into the back alleys, the scenery totally changes. Small streets spread out like a maze in every direction, with some so narrow that only one person can pass through at a time.

In the back alleys, there is a rarely used recreation hall, as well as various *izakaya* pubs that show they took down the curtains at the front gates and closed down.

Ahead of the stairs, you can see the Yakushido Hall, in which a statue of Yakushi Nyorai (the Buddha of healing) is enshrined, as well as a hot spring that is only used by locals.

I could also see many carp-shaped wooden plaques swaying in the breeze over the Momijibashi Bridge at the exits of the Sedoya back alleys. Tourists had written down their wishes on the backs of the plaques.

"Time stands still as if we're still in the Showa Era [1926-1989]. But strangely, there isn't a sense of loneliness or bleakness. Instead, tourists can feel nostalgic about the good memories of that time," Kawatsu said.

Some back alleys are sometimes used as outdoor galleries for old photos, and landscape paintings of the hot spring hang on bare cement walls. A café capturing the atmosphere of the time, which seems to act as a hideaway, is also open for business.

The increasing number of tourists to the back alleys has led to the revitalisation of the Sedoya area.

After grabbing dinner at the inn, I rode a free shuttle bus to a firefly viewing site. The bus driver asked that the destination be kept secret to preserve the environment of the area.

At the viewing area, countless fireflies surrounded us under the starry sky. If it weren't for the blinking lights of the fireflies, I wouldn't have been able to distinguish them from the stars overhead.

"How did you feel about Tsuetate?" asked a person involved in the local tourist industry whom I became friendly with while on the tour.

"Compared with Tokyo, time flows slowly," I answered.

"That's right. Time always seems to stretch until I can leave work at 5:30pm," he said.

Although that wasn't what I meant, I enjoyed eating *purin*, wandering the Sedoya back alleys and watching fireflies. And after taking a bath at the inn, I'll be able to walk tomorrow "without a cane".

For more information, call the Tsuetate Onsen Tourist Association at (0967) 48-0206 or the Tsuetate tourist inns cooperative at (0967) 48-0506.

– The Yomiuri Shimbun

Vapour rises from the Tsuetate Onsen hot spring on a tranquil afternoon. Photo: *The Yomiuri Shimbun*

‘The Act of Killing’: Reliving past terrors

Former Indonesian death squad leaders prepare to recreate murders in the unnerving documentary *The Act of Killing*. Photo: Drafthouse Films

ANNE HORNADAY

TO describe *The Act of Killing* as a riveting documentary about Indonesian death squads that terrorised that country’s citizens in the 1960s might be factually accurate. But it doesn’t get nearly to the heart of it. This audacious, horrifying, boldly experimental plunge into the mind-et of murderers and the culture of impunity breaks so many rules of documentary decorum that it virtually creates its own genre: investigative improv, perhaps. Or, better yet, Brechtian nonfiction.

Whatever you call it, *The Act of Killing* is a must-see. Using blunt stagecraft, probing psychological insight, elegant interrogation of narrative truth and characters steeped in a particularly terrifying brand of self-mythologising, director Joshua Oppenheimer has succeeded in turning *The Act of Killing* into both a sharply confrontational vehicle for bearing witness and a craftily layered meditation on the cinematic medium itself.

The Act of Killing focuses on the years 1965 and 1966, when a young man named Anwar Congo became a legendary death-squad leader in North Sumatra, murdering communists, ethnic Chinese and intellectuals following the military coup that brought longtime authoritarian leader Suharto to power. It’s estimated that one million people died during those purges, which were carried out with the help of a paramilitary organisation called the Pancasila Youth, an organisation that thrives even 15 years after Suharto’s resignation.

Despite its historical context, *The Act of Killing* contains none of the expected stock footage or newsreels of atrocities and trials. Rather, Oppenheimer catches up with Congo, his cronies and Pancasila Youth leaders in the present day, as they proudly recall their actions 50 years ago. What becomes unnervingly clear as Oppenheimer films these men swaggering through city streets, shaking down shopkeepers and bullying citizens who nervously laugh along with them, is that not only have they not been prosecuted for their crimes, but they’re also lionised for them. Congo is so proud of his past deeds that he eagerly shows Oppenheimer how he preferred to dispatch his victims, strangling them with a taut piece of wire so they would bleed less.

It’s a risky proposition to ask such morally challenged protagonists to reenact their crimes as pulp entertainment.

As *The Act of Killing* progresses, Congo and his fellow criminals explain that they learned most of their postures and methods from Hollywood crime movies, for which they were scalping tickets when they were enlisted to become freelance domestic terrorists in the 1960s. Citing Marlon Brando and Al Pacino as role models, they call themselves “gangsters” throughout the film, reminding anyone who will listen that the word for “gangster” in Indonesian has its roots in the term for “free man” in Dutch. In time, Congo and his colleagues are donning garish costumes and bloody makeup to reenact the torture and murders they committed, staged like cheap film noir knockoffs with chillingly bad dialogue.

It’s a risky proposition to ask such morally challenged protagonists to reenact their crimes as pulp entertainment. And in one anguishing scene of a scene, a survivor confronts his stepfather’s killers with raw, tearful emotion, eliciting shockingly dispassionate responses. Thankfully, Oppenheimer — who has made earlier documentaries focused on human rights issues — has the brains and taste to make those sequences revealing rather than exploitative. It’s telling that his executive producers on the project are Errol Morris and Werner Herzog, both masters of allowing their subjects’ self-deception to propel alternately sobering and gobsmacking stories.

The Act of Killing records such perversity, such venal cruelty and vile narcissism, that it’s often difficult not to shudder and turn away. And those moments of revulsion are just as likely to occur during a staid round of golf or in the gilded halls of government as in the film’s more lurid set pieces. With its subtle connections of screen violence and real-life violence, “free men” and free markets, and the ongoing cultural legacy of colonialism, *The Act of Killing* is a brilliant, powerful reckoning with the wages of history, mendacity and denial.

Killing is always an act, as the film suggests — physical, theatrical and ethical. And its own fascinatingly ambiguous final sequence leads viewers to question when repentance can be one, too.

— *The Washington Post*

Doctor Who?: A new face takes up the iconic role

SCOTTISH actor Peter Capaldi, best known as the abusive spin doctor in satire ‘The Thick of It’, was on Sunday named as the new eponymous star of cult British series ‘Doctor Who’.

The British broadcaster BBC unveiled the 55-year-old Glaswegian as the 12th Time Lord during a live program on Sunday evening.

“Being asked to play the Doctor is an amazing privilege. Like the Doctor himself I find myself in a state of utter terror and delight. I can’t wait to get started,” said Capaldi, who will replace outgoing Doctor, Matt Smith.

“It’s so wonderful not to keep this secret any longer, but it’s been so fantastic,” he added.

Executive producer and lead writer Steven Moffat said an “incendiary combination” had been forged.

“One of the most talented actors of his generation is about to play the best part on television,” he added.

Capaldi hit the big screen in 2009, playing the Machiavellian Malcolm Tucker in political comedy *In The Loop*, where he starred alongside the late James Gandolfini of ‘The Sopranos notoriety.’

The science fiction adventures of the Time Lord – a time travelling, humanoid alien who traverses the universe in a Tardis spacecraft – have maintained a loyal following since they were first aired in 1963.

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

AUGUST 12 - 18, 2013

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18

Learn to program yourself to keep effective control over situations rather than simply hoping for success and drifting from one thing to another. So stop relying on short-term bursts of energy and start creating a permanent lifestyle in which you can change and improve the flow of your life.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20

Inspire confidence and trust by being a reliable friend. You might even choose some opportunities to start listening to your parents’ advice but it will take a serious amount of self-reflection to do this. Find someone to love – it’s a great time for your heart to swell big-time.

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19

When you don’t take the courage to journey into the water of your fear, you will find nothing but suffering. You will soon find yourself in radically different personal circumstances than at present, and you will also become more speculative and risk-taking than usual. Be careful what you say and don’t interfere in the personal affairs of others’.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20

Don’t be discouraged by romantic set-backs: it’s really your ego that is wounded. That other person seems to have just one magic trick – where they disappear. And that’s it. Allow yourself to be self-indulgent this week and resilient to change if someone tries to force you to change direction. We don’t want to be a yes-man/woman, do we?

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20

Maintain your willingness to hold yourself accountable for whatever results from your plans. Your work will bring you into contact with media that will serve your purpose and provide you with ample opportunities to do what you do best. You’ve got so much to do but so little time.

CANCER | Jun 21 - Jul 22

Many people have the wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy cause. Know that the biggest lie you tell yourself is the area of in-action that is, “I’ll do it later.” Putting things off is known as procrastination, and the burden of yesterday’s incompletion is a heavy load to carry.

LEO | Jul 23 - Aug 22

Mental tranquility needs the power of unadulterated fearlessness and spiritual courage. Your way of thinking will change accordingly with your experiences, but your conceptual framework will remain as solid as ever. Remember it is only the weak who cannot forgive, so cut others some slack – there also going through a few of their own life challenges.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sep 22

Your daily duty is to glean as much information as possible from the people around you. Then you will have to process it to work out which direction you will have to take. You are going to have an eye for romance this week and beautiful things will happen in love. It should be an interesting week.

LIBRA | Sep 23 - Oct 22

Life is filled with opportunities to express love, but don’t forget to follow up your words with action. Focus your energy on activities that will bring you in closer contact with nature. Previous romantic partners will contact you and something may once again spark as you now come together to share the experiences you have had separately.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21

Over time, you’ll find yourself changing your perspective on something that you didn’t think you could change your mind on. Use today to start changing your lifestyle so that you can easily lay the groundwork for the future. Listen to others, think about what they say and compare their message to your own knowledge.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21

Orient yourself toward optimism and possibility. Compare incentives and disincentives to a decision that you need to make – and make it without fear or favour. You find this week most powerful in communicating with a lover and feel that even if you share separate ideas on a problem, you are closer to that person.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19

Sometimes stepping back from a situation brings you great clarity. Sometimes it confuses you more. You may be searching for an ideal situation in love, but you have forgotten that love is hard work. Try not to be so hard on others. You might regret it down the track.

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UNDP 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739.

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DAI, a global development consulting firm headquartered in Washington, DC, seeks to fill multiple positions to support an anticipated rule of law program in Myanmar
The purpose of the program is to promote and protect the rule of law and civil liberties in Myanmar. The contract will address key capacity and structural gaps that limit the effectiveness of selected justice system actors and inhibit inclusive participation in rule of law reform initiatives. The central objectives of the program are to promote more effective, accountable and accessible justice sector institutions; and to increase legal literacy, access to justice and participation of marginalized populations in target regions/states.
Long-and short-term positions under the program will be based throughout Myanmar, and will be filled by experts in the following technical ares :

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Candidates with credentials in the technical areas mentioned above are strongly encouraged to apply. DAI is also seeking candidates with strong experience in program administration and financial management, accounting and procurement for administrative positions.

Fluency in English is required.

Interested and qualified candidate should send their **resume in English** by e-mail to : **amanda_brondy@dai.com** with "Myanmar Rule of Law" in the subject line.

Application deadline: August 20, 2013. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

More information about DAI can be found on the DAI website (www.dai.com).

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Charltons Legal Consulting Limited practice covers a wide range of corporate transactions including corporate finance, restructurings, capital markets, securities, funds and M&A. We offer interesting work and excellent career prospects. Charltons Legal Consulting Limited is currently recruiting for the following positions:
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Qualifications and Experience required:
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To apply in strict confidence please send a full CV (clearly identifying the post for which you are applying) to Head of Management, Charltons Legal Consulting Limited, 116-A, Inya Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon. Email: myanmar@charltonslaw.com. Recent graduates are also encouraged to apply.
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Employment

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DEUTSCHE Welthungerhilfe is seeking **Program Coordination Officer** in Yangon : University degree in a relevant disciplines e.g. Social sciences, Management, Development Studies etc. 5 years practical experience with NGO/ UN. Excellent in both oral & written English & Myanmar (mother tongue speaker). Knowledge of other national languages spoken in Myanmar is an asset. Pls submit an application letter detailing why they are interested in the position and an updated CV including education qualifications, contact number & contact details of at least 2 professional references to: Regina.Feindt@welthungerhilfe.de, moemoe.lwin@welthungerhilfe.de

MYANMAR RED Cross Society is seeking (1) **Resources Mobilization Officer** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: Bachelor's degree. Over 2 years experience in Marketing. Effective English language skill. Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. (2)**Program Officer** (Community Based Health First Aid) 2 posts in MRCS-Nay Pyi Taw and frequently travel to program areas: University graduate. Effective computer knowledge. Effective English language skill. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, Nay Pyi Taw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

FRENCH RED CROSS is seeking **Senior Head of Delegation Assistant** 1 post : Myanmar Citizen. Master degree or equivalent in a subject relevant to the position applied for. Excellent spoken and written skills in Myanmar and English, including the ability to write quality reports and give clear presentation. French is an asset. Computer literacy in both Myanmar and English. Applications (including and references) should be submitted to French Red Cross Office : At the intention of Finance/ Administration/ HR Manager - 42, 1st Flr, Strand Rd, Botahtaung, Yangon. Tel: 09-731-59942, Email: fin.mgr.myanmar.frc@gmail.com, Cc:hod.myanmar.frc@gmail.com, hr.officer.myanmar.frc@gmail.com Closing date : 19th August 2013

WORLD VISION Myanmar is seeking **Protection Officer** (End-Tracking in Person) in National Office, Yangon Region. The applicant should have: University Bachelor Degree in any discipline. 2 ~ 3 years experience in handling human anti-trafficking project is preferable. Pls submit your resume (clearly identify the post you apply) by post to HR Department, World Vision Myanmar or in person to application drop-box at No 18, Shin Saw Pu Rd; Ahlone, Sanchaung PO or send to myajobapps@wvi.org Closing date : August 12, 2013.

NORWEGIAN Refugee Council is seeking **Logistics Assistant** - Fleet (Hpa-An) 1 post in Hpa-An, Kayin State: Degree or Diploma in related field and/ or related training course. Prior work experience in logistics & procurement. Computer literate. Pls submit CV, including application letter & contact detail of 2 referees (No Other Supporting Documents Are Required For This Stage), clearly indicating which position they are interested to admin-hr@myanmar.nrc.no with cc to ssc@myanmar.nrc.no or mail to: HR Officer, NRC : 68, Than Lwin Rd (Corner of Aung Daw Mu St), Bahan, Yangon Closing date : 15th August 2013.

MEDECINS Sans Frontieres-Holland (AZG) is seeking(1) **Medical Program Manager** 1 post in Rakhine State: Medical degree. 2 years experience with MSF. Experience in related field. Good computer skills. (2)**Malaria Mobile Field Monitor** 1 post in Sittwe: 10th Standard passed. Knowledge of malaria diagnosis & treatment. 1 year relevant experience preferably with MSF in health education, microscopy, dispensing or field site monitoring, or PHC. Pls send application letter, CV, passport photo, copies of education qualifications & references to: HR Coordinator, MSF-Holland/ AZG (Yangon Coordination), 62A, Bawdiyeiktha-Thanlwin Rd, Bahan, Yangon, Or through rakhine-esd-recruiting@oca.msf.org. Closing date : 13th August 2013.

Overseas

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MAKEITHAPPEN Int'l Company Limited is the First Authorized Reseller from Apple Inc and the Master Franchise of Thai Chokdee Dimsum. Recruiting Now!, Marketing & Sales: **Marketing & Sales Manager, Marketing & Sales Executive**. Service: **Restaurant Manager**, **Waiters**. Others: **Store Manager, Operation & Administratioin Manager, Technical Coordinators, Office Admin.** Qualifications Required: Over 18 years. Degree holders preferable. Willing to learn & energetic. hospitalities experience preferable. Service Oriented : 330, Alone Rd, Shop (6,7) Yangon Int'l Hotel, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 09-850-1361, 09-730-48638. Email: myanmar.makeithappen@gmail.com

AMARA GROUP Co., Ltd is looking for (1) **Front Office Manager** 1 Post (Ngapali). (2) **Guest Relation Officer** 1 Post (Ngapali). (3) **Sous Chef** 1 Post (Ngapali). (4) **Demi Cher** 1 Post (Ngapali). (5)**Chief Account** 1 Post (Ngapali). (6) **Accountant** 1 Post (Ngapali). (7) **Executive Housekeeper** 1 Post (Ngapali). (8) **Restaurant Manager** 1 Post (Ngapali). (9) **Hotel Manager** 1 Post (Kalaw). (10)**Demi Chef** 1 Post (Kalaw). (11)**Sous Chef** 1 Post (Kalaw). (12) **Sous Chef** 1 Post (Mandalay). Demi Chef 1 Post (Mandalay). (13)**Sales Manager** 1 Post (Yangon). Be part of a dynamic team & contribute to the hotels success with your expertise and experience. We look forward receiving your CV in English. Contact: amaragroup.mmw@gmail.com, moemoe@amaragroup-myanmar.com, Ph: 663347, 652191, No.6, Tayza Rd, Kyan Khin Su Quarter, Mingalardon, www.amaraoceanresort.com,

LUCKY BIRD Group of Companies- Yangon looking for (1)**General Manager** 1 Post. (2) **Business Development Manage**r 1 Post. (3) **Office Secretary** 1 Post. (4)**Sales & Marketing Manager** 1 Post. (5)**Electronic Engineer** 5 Posts. (6) **Computer Service Technicians** 7 Post. (7)**Sales & Marketing Executive**. (8)**Network Engineer** 3 Posts. (9) **Mobile Engineer** 2 Posts. Requirements: 2 years experience in related fields. Fluent in English oral and written. University degree Holder. Capacity to work independently, efficiency and and flexibility. Pls apply CV with photo, Educational Documents, Labour Card Copy, NRC Copy to: 355, Thein Byu Rd, Mingalartaungnyunt, Yangon, Tel: 248167, 379875, email: luckybird. Yangon Closing date : 15th August, 2013.

CENTER for Vocational Training (CVT) is seeking (1)**Senior Teacher for Cabinet Maker Profession** 1 Post: Profound theoretical and practical knowledge in the Furniture Making field. (Hand tools/ Power tools/ Industrial Machines). Age above 30. 5 years experience & 2 years teaching experience. (2)**Teacher for Commercial Assistant Professional** - 1 Post: Bachelor Degree from University of Economic or relevance knowledge. Age above 30. Experience in administrative work. 5 years experience & 2 years teaching experience. (3)**Teacher for Electrician Profession** - 1 Post : B.E (E.P), CVT graduate, with 5 years experience & 3 years teaching experience. Age above 30. For all posts : Computer literate. Good command in English. Submit an application letter with CV, recent passport photo & Copy of relevance documents to the reception counter or by email within 3 weeks. Contact: 3rd Flr, MRCS Bldg 42, Strand Rd, Botahtaung, Yangon. Ph: 383676, 09-731-66206. Email: cvt.2001.2009@gmail.com, hrcvtmyanmar@gmail.com

REQD. URGENTLY in Limited Foreign Company (1).2(Two) highly skilled & experiences **Drivers** for Lexus/Land Cruiser/ Pajero for Full Time basis. Salary no Bar for right candidates & will be as per skills, experiences & Market Standards. (2)**Senior Accounts & Admin Executive** (Female Candidate Preferred) with 1-5 years experiences in Accounts & Admin Deptt. & hands on Knowledge of MS Word, MS Excel, Tally Software with fluent in English & Liasoning works. Salary is no bar for the right candidate & will be as per skills, experiences & Market Standards. Pls send resume with latest passport photo to : jyoti.b227@gmail.com, jyoti.b227@rediffmail.com, zmtcool@gmail.com. You can also call in +95-2025, 09-731-64230, +95-1-371374.

MYA&MINN (MYANMAR) Industrial Trading Co., Ltd is seeking (1) **Admin & Account Assistant** (Basic Salary) - M/F 1 Post : Basic IT skill, Familiar with MS Office, Any graduate, Diploma/ certificate, LCCI Level 2, Prefer with working experiences (2)**Sales & Marketing** (Basic Salary + Sales Commission) - M/F - 3 Posts: Any graduate, Diploma/ Certificate, Prefer with related working experiences & basic IT skill. Pls send CV, Photocopies of proven documents, 2 passport recent photos, National Identification Card to : 1035, #03-01, Thu Min Galar Rd, (6) Quarter, South Oakalar Pa, Yangon (OR) email: myanminn.myanmar@gmail.com, latest by 22nd August 2013 (OR) 22nd ~ 24th August 2013 (10:00 ~ 16:00 Hrs) walk-in interview. Ph: 09-517-1264, 09-4210-90421

EXECUTIVE Assistant To provide professional support to the company CEO through : Effective communication prioriti zation & organization, Liaise between company depart ment/ offices, managers, Manage meetings & appointments, travel schedules, invitations, meeting minutes, Arrange travel (flights, hotel bookings, visas, etc.), Develop & maintain categorized filing & document systems, Maintain high level of discretion & confidentiality. Qualifications: University degree, Age 26 ~ 40, Fluent in Myanmar & English (ability to translate highly desirable), Excellent interpersonal skills & ability to liaise effectively with high level and foreign clients, government officials, Experience in similar position preferred, Attractive salary based on experience & qualification. Pls submit CV and a cover letter to thandaster@gmail.com within two weeks.

WOH HUP Int'l Pte Ltd, a Building Construction Company is seeking for Yangon Office: (1) **Account Executive -** Degree in Accountancy 2 to 4 years experience handling full set of account, Able to do MYOB will be an advantage, Good learning attitude & take initiatives Basic Microsoft Office knowledge. Good in English. (2)**Logistic Executive** - Diploma / Degree in Logistics, 2 to 5 years relevant experience, Good knowledge on custom clearance & freight forwarding, Good in English. (3)**Quantity Surveyor -** Degree in Surveying, 3 years relevant experience, Good in English (4) **Purchasing Executive** - Diploma / Degree in Purchasing or relevant, 2 to 5 years working in purchasing, Preferable familiar with construction material, Good in English. Pls submit resume with cover letter in English, stating current and expected salary (in Kyat) to - 483, Suite (8B), Aye Yeik Thar 2nd St, Aye Yeik Thar Condo, Bahan, Yangon, (OR) Email: thundarmm@wh-intl.com.

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Candidates must submit their application (by personal, by post or by email) with one photo to Journeys Travel until **27-8-2013**.

Address : 53, Mayangone Pagoda Lane, Mayangone Township, (Near Mayangone Labour Office). Ph : 656259, 656307.
Email : Admin@journeysmyanmar.com.

CHICAGO

Baseball's drug problem hits new high

A-Roid case highlights game's doping battle

A 211-game ban didn't keep star player Alex Rodriguez from taking the field on August 5, but did signal that US baseball may be slowly coming to grips with its doping problem.

That Rodriguez took the field for his injury-delayed season debut just hours after Major League Baseball announced he would be banned through the end of the 2014 season marks the latest in a series of scandals to hit the sport.

But the August 5 events may have offered some encouraging signs, including 12 players accepting 50-game suspensions without appealing.

That followed Milwaukee star Ryan Braun's similar acceptance of a 65-game ban after he was linked to the Biogenesis anti-ageing clinic, which has been fingered as a source of performance enhancing drugs like testosterone and human growth hormone.

"Despite the challenges this situation has created during a great season on the field, we pursued this matter because it was not only the right thing to do, but the only thing to do," MLB Commissioner Bud Selig said of the investigation into the clinic.

He also praised the efforts of the players' union, which has often been at odds with the league over anti-doping procedures.

Yankees manager Joe Girardi, who was only too happy to welcome Rodriguez back to his punch-less lineup for as long as he could, said the fact that the MLB and players union officials have cooperated in the course of the Biogenesis case was progress.

"People have asked me, is this a good day or a bad day in baseball," Girardi said. "I think it's both. It's another black eye for us that we're trying to clean this game up.

"But I think it's really good, the combination of union and Major League Baseball working together."

Major League Baseball Players Association executive director Michael Weiner said the union agreed that the 12 50-game suspensions handed down were "consistent with the punishments set forth in the Joint Drug Agreement."

But the union will help Rodriguez pursue his appeal, saying Selig didn't act appropriately – apparently in imposing such a lengthy ban when the game's anti-doping rules call for a 50-game suspension for a first offence and 100 games for a second.

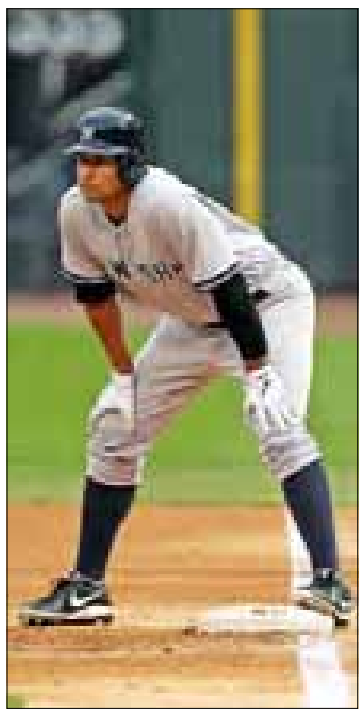
Selig said Rodriguez's ban also included punishment for obstructing the investigation into Biogenesis.

But if Rodriguez proves another big fish that gets away when he takes his case to an arbitrator, it will be an even darker day for baseball.

Less than a month ago, the Baseball Hall of Fame completed a 2013 induction ceremony that featured just three posthumous honorees.

All of the modern-era candidates, many with links to the doping scandals of the past 15 years, had been snubbed by the selection panel.

They include two players whose names have become synonymous with baseball's "steroid era", all-time home run king Barry Bonds and star pitcher Roger Clemens.



Alex Rodriguez #13 of the New York Yankees stands at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago on August 5. Photo: AFP

Mark McGwire, who battled doping allegations as he became the first player to hit 70 homers in a season while with the St Louis Cardinals in 1998, admitted in 2010 that he had used steroids for almost a decade.

Now the hitting coach for the Los Angeles Dodgers, McGwire said on August 5 he thought players were more resolved now to rid their sport of doping.

"It really doesn't matter what I think. I think it matters what the players think," McGwire said.

"And what I hear every day in the clubhouse, they're just happy it's coming to an end. They're happy that Major League Baseball is taking care of it." – *AFP*

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Games that Alex Rodriguez has been banned for doping allegations

TOKYO

Japan's marathon man keeps his day job

Yuki Kawuchi spends his week days as a clerk, and his weekends as a world class runner

HE has no coach, no sponsor and works five days a week as a school clerk, but that won't stop Japanese marathon runner Yuki Kawauchi from racing with the best at the world athletics championships, which started on August 10 in Moscow.

Dubbed the "strongest citizen runner in history", Kawauchi squeezes races into his weekends, travelling at home and overseas before returning to work every Monday.

In doing so the 26-year-old has become a cult hero in marathon-mad Japan. "I want to show that you can compete at the world level even if you have a job like I do," he told a recent gathering of reporters.

Kawauchi's unusual success story has helped fuel the nation's ever-intensifying enthusiasm for running, which saw a spike in 2011 after the earthquake and tsunami disaster prompted many to improve their fitness in preparation for emergencies.

"I will run straight and steady, aiming for a spot in the top six," Kawauchi said of competing in the world men's marathon in Moscow on August 17.

Japanese men have been without a world-class marathon medal since Tsuyoshi Ogata brought home bronze from the 2005 world athletics championships. Japanese women have done much better, winning the 2000 and 2004 Olympic golds through Naoko Takahashi and Mizuki Noguchi while bagging five non-gold world medals since 2001.

Despite having little time to spare between his full-time administrative job at a school in Saitama, north of Tokyo, Kawauchi has run in 22 long-distance events so far this year, which is a lot compared to most elite runners.

These include six full marathons, 10 half-marathons and a 50-kilometre (31 mile), "ultramarathon" in June, in which he collapsed with heat stroke.

Having finished 18th in his world championship debut in 2011, he failed to qualify for last year's London Olympics. But in March he set a personal best of 2:08:14 at the Seoul Marathon where he finished fourth.

Kawauchi, who reportedly spends a quarter of his salary on racing, has won 10 marathons since his first in 2009, completing the last nine of those victories in a year.

"He is a model for us, even if not everybody can handle so many races as he does," said former national team runner Yuko Manabe, 34, as she coached two dozen office workers and housewives running around Tokyo's popular Imperial Palace route on a Friday evening.

A 5-kilometre (3-mile) ring road outside the palace's stone walls and mossy moats in the centre of Tokyo, it has become a pilgrimage for runners who swarm there by the thousands even in the sweltering summer.

"Citizen runners have finally seen in Kawauchi, who leads the life of a salaryman, the first person to represent them at the world championships," said Jiro Hashimoto, who has published the popular monthly magazine *Runners* since 1976.

"He is enormously popular at every race he runs," he told AFP.

Five men and three women, including 2004 women's Olympic champion Noguchi, make up Japan's marathon squad for Moscow. All but Kawauchi belong to corporate teams -- semi-professional athletes hired by companies as ordinary workers but allowed to focus on training and competing to promote brand awareness.

Kawauchi was selected thanks to his victory at the Beppu, Oita Marathon in February, in which he outpaced Kentaro Nakamoto who was sixth in the London Olympics and who will also run in Moscow.

"In domestic races, I strongly feel that I must not be beaten by corporate teams," he said, adding however that rivalries are put aside when representing Japan.

"We help each other in the national team."

Last month he sent a strong signal of intent by winning Australia's Gold Coast Marathon, tying the course record in the process.

Awarded the top prize of 15,000 Australian dollars (US$13,350), he missed out on a bonus of A$5,000 that would have been his had he broken the record instead of equalling it.

"It is more than what I earn every month," Kawauchi said. – *AFP*

NAY PYI TAW

Nay Pyi Taw FC will pay for stadium damages

SU HLAING TUN
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THE Ministry of Sport says Nay Pyi Taw FC will have to pay for damage inflicted on Myanmar's showcase stadium by what an official described as "low-class" fans.

The team is owned by U Phyo Ko Ko Tint Hsan, the son of Minister for Sport U Tint Hsan.

About 150 seats were destroyed on August 4 when fans of Nay Pyi Taw FC and Yangon United FC clashed after a brawl on the field brought the match to a halt shortly before half-time. Spectators also invaded the pitch, damaging steel railings and advertising boards.

Ministry of Sport director U Htay Aung said the riot was because of "low-grade players and their low-class fans". He also blamed the media for not encouraging fans to behave properly and described the security as "feeble".

He said that home team Nay Pyi Taw FC "will take responsibility" for covering the cost of repairs.

"The players would not be violent if the management controlled them properly. And the spectators went on a rampage because they don't have any knowledge about sportsmanship," he said.

"But the problems were caused by a small group of low-class spectators, who made up only 5 percent of the total crowd."

U Htay Aung said the ministry will increase security at future sporting events.

"Everyone has a responsibility to avoid unnecessary problems like this in the future."

But football fan Ko Aung said the incident did not bode well for the SEA Games, which will pit Myanmar's athletes against the region's best.

"It seems like there could be big trouble at the SEA Games," he said. "The officials can't even handle the players so how are they going to control the crowd?"

– *Translated by Zar Zar Soe*

IN PICTURES

Down the stretch: Team Luna Rossa Challenge (L) races against Team Artemis Racing in the Louis Vuitton Cup semi–final on August 6 in San Francisco, California. *Photo: AFP*

A Superb Platform for Myanmar Enterprises to Explore the Chinese Market

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CAEXPO

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CAEXPO

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Sport

Unlikely marathon runner inspires Japan

SPORT 58

Ugly clash as fans trash stadium

Violent tackle leads to abandonment of final match of the season in the Capital

A spectator is removed from the pitch (L). Fans toss seats onto the field on August 6 at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw. Photo: Yangon United

KYAW ZIN HLAING
kyawzinhlaing91@gmail.com

THE Myanmar Football Federation has said that fans and players involved in August 4 clashes that disrupted the Myanmar National League's (MNL) final match of the season will face harsh penalties for their actions.

The match, between second placed Nay Pyi Taw FC and MNL champs Yangon United, took place at Nay Pyi Taw's Wunna Theikdi Stadium but was stopped after just 37 minutes of play as unruly fans stormed the pitch and players began fighting.

Around 10,000 Nay Pyi Taw FC fans and 1,400 Yangon United supporters gathered in the newly opened at Wunna Theikdi Stadium on match day. It was the first MNL match to be hosted at the 30,000 seat stadium, which was constructed as the centerepiece of new facilities for December's Southeast Asian Games.

But the festive atmosphere took an ugly turn early on. As singers performed in a pre-match show supporters of both clubs began tossing water bottles, cans and charged into each other's sections, which were divided by a fence.

When Yangon's Dan Htan was violently tackled 32 minutes into the match referee Hla Min awarded a penalty to Yangon United. Angered by the decision, a Nay Pyi Taw FC fan rushed the field in an attempt to attack the official.

The fan was stopped by Nay Pyi Taw FC players who escorted him off the field, and play resumed.

Yangon United striker Cesar netted the match's only goal on the ensuing penalty kick.

But tensions off the pitch flared again just 5 minutes later when Yangon United's Yan Aung Kyaw was kicked in face by Nay Pyi Taw defender Khine Htoo. The incident sent fans streaming out of the stands and onto the field as the referees tried helplessly to control the situation.

Spectators who remained in their seats showered the field with bottles and trash. They then began ripping seats from the stands and throwing them onto the field.

> **'The chaos was due to drunk spectators… Being drunk, they couldn't understand what was wrong or what was right.'**
>
> **U Zaw Zaw**
> MFF President

With security guards unable to quell the violence, the match was officially called off at the 37th minute. The MNL awards ceremony, scheduled to take place after the match finished, was also cancelled.

However, under Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) regulations, Yangon United was awarded a 1–0 victory.

After the incident, MFF President U Zaw Zaw admonished fans for drinking heavily before and during the match.

"The chaos was due to drunk spectators…Being drunk, they couldn't understand what was wrong or what was right," he said.

"We are arranging to run a conduct education program for spectators so they will be more polite when cheering."

MORE ON SPORT 58

– Translated by Zar Zar Soe

BRIEFS

Sydney

Jockey dies after fall in Australia

Australia's horse-racing community was reeling on August 6 after jockey Simone Montgomerie died after falling during a race at the Darwin Cup meeting.

The 26-year-old, a young mother, was thrown from her mount Riahgrand during race six on Monday as she came down the home straight, and was trampled by other horses. The remaining races were cancelled in order for a full investigation to be carried out. – *AFP*

Bangkok

Thailand pledges US$2 million to support SEA Games

Sport Authority of Thailand will provide around US$2 million to help Myanmar organise the 2013 Southeast Asian Games, it was announced on August 6.

The money will finance Thai coaches to travel to Myanmar to help with training. Myanmar will also send athletes from six separate sports to Thailand for 30-day training sessions. – *Tim McLaughlin*

London

Gymnastics great Tweddle retires

Beth Tweddle, Britain's most successful gymnast, on August 6 announced her retirement from competitive sport with immediate effect.

The 28-year-old from Cheshire in northwest England made the news public a year to the day since she won an Olympic bronze medal on the uneven bars at the London Games.

The South African-born Tweddle bows out as a three-time world champion, six-time European champion and seven-time national champion. – *AFP*