INSIDE THE PULSE

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Costumed actors mark the 503rd anniversary of the founding of Taungoo in Bago Region on November 17.

IN PICTURES

PHOTO: THIRI

Taungoo celebrates founding of Kaytumadi dynasty

The town of Taungoo – located 220 kilometres (138 miles) north of Yangon in Bago Region – held parades on November 17 to commemorate the founding of the Taungoo (Kaytumadi) dynasty on the full moon of Tazaungmone in 1510. Under the dynasty's first three kings – Min Gyi Nyo, Tabinshwehti and Bayintnaung – central Myanmar was reunified for the first time since the fall of Bagan in 1287.

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NEWS 4

KIA general heads to Thailand

Leaders of armed ethnic groups are meeting in Chiang Mai this week to discuss the latest draft of a ceasefire agreement with the government.

FEATURE 12

Slipping and sliding on the road to Mindat

An intrepid journalist finds that even after the official end of monsoon, heavy rain can make for treacherous travel through the hills of Chin State.

BUSINESS 22-23

Govt to update alcohol import rules

As the crackdown on foreign wine and spirits continues, the government is working on implementing a more open and competitive import policy.

PROPERTY 28

Expat enclave takes root in Dagon township

Yaw Min Gyi Road north of downtown Yangon is treasured for the sense of community shared by the locals and foreigners living there.

Rohingya remain in limbo

The UN last week urged Myanmar to give citizenship status to stateless Rohingya Muslims, but U Ye Htut, spokesperson for U Thein Sein, said the country would not be pressured into changing its stance on the sensitive issue. NEWS 3

Page 2

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THE INSIDER: The local lowdown & best of the web

BARKING MAD

Veteran German journalist Wulf Beleites is preparing to launch a niche magazine he says will prove print is not dead, as well as cater to an underrepresented group in society: dog haters.

"There are enough dog opponents, dog enemies and dog haters who would be pleased if there were a magazine for them" the aspiring publisher of *Kot & Köter*, which roughly translates as "Poop & Pooches", told *Der Spiegel*.

While it's unclear whether the German market will prove to hold sufficient demand from a dog-hating demographic, Beleites might find an untapped niche in Myanmar. Following an October report by *The Irrawaddy* on allegations of a nefarious dog-elimination campaign being carried out by the Yangon City Development Committee to beautify downtown in preparation for the equally Orwellian-sounding "SEA Games", residents of the Dagon area have reported a spate of dog deaths by what would appear to be poisoning as recently as last week.

YANKEES PIONEER JOHNNY, 2.0

The humble Johnny could be in line for a makeover, with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation last week announcing the winners of its condom design competition.

The foundation received some 812 applications, all aiming to meet the design brief of a "next generation condom that significantly preserves or enhances pleasure", in such a way that might make them more appealing to men and curb the spread of STIs – as well as reduce rates of unwanted pregnancies.

Some of the designs were intended to make application more straightforward, using pull-tabs. Others sought to create a rubber that would mould to its owner's shape and retain it – which presumably means this particular model would be reusable and lends new meaning to the statement "I have *a* condom".

The "ultrasensitive reconstituted collagen condom", as described to *The New York Times* by medical company rep Mark McGlothlin, would "feel like skin and be made from collagen fibers from cows' Achilles tendons or possibly fish skin".

"They're unbelievably strong," said Mr McGlothlin, who currently gets beef tendon from a Vietnamese grocery. "I could yank all day and not break this thing."

WATCH YOUR STEP

A four-year-old Korean boy disappeared in Phuket last week, as he walked down a dark street with his parents. He was found unharmed, having fallen two metres down through a hole into the island's underground network of sewerage drains. Local news outlet *Phuketwan* described the incident with a concluding statement that could just as easily apply to Yangon residents:

"Proper footpaths are rare on Phuket and all people who have to walk around the island share the fear of suddenly standing on a loose concrete cover and falling into a drain."

So, dear reader: Exercise caution, and always look down when you walk lest you fall into a sewer.

SEA GAMES HOLD PROMISE FOR FANS

There was exciting news for sports fans as well as fans of, well, *fans*, last week:

"We will provide 24-hour electricity all over the country during the SEA Games," Maung Maung Latt, vice-chairman of the Yangon City Power Supplying Board told *Eleven* media.

When Myanmar was Burma...

Archival material provided by Pansodan Gallery

Poster for 80s album "Selected songs" by renowned musicians Hlone Moe and Cho Pyone

Nant Chit Nadi Zaw for *NOW!* magazine.
Photo: Jason (SENSE Photography)

Style Statement NOW!

Police in Yangon uncover plot to bomb 'religious buildings'

LOCAL police said on November 20 they had arrested three people suspected of planning bomb attacks on mosques, as the country grapples with religious tensions after waves of anti-Muslim violence.

The suspects are all Buddhist men from Rakhine State, where two bouts of unrest last year left scores dead and some 140,000 displaced, mainly Rohingya Muslims.

"They were planning to plant bombs at mosques, after attending training on the border in Kayin State," a police official in Yangon told AFP on condition of anonymity.

'They were planning to plant bombs at mosques, after attending training on the border in Kayin State.'

Yangon police official

He said authorities were continuing to investigate the "ongoing case".

Myanmar remains tense after eruptions of religious conflict that have killed around 250 people and cast a shadow over much-praised political reforms.

A report in the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* on November 20 said an initial raid on a guesthouse in the Yangon area found one 34-year-old suspect "red-handed making bombs with gunpowder and related materials" on November 13.

It said further investigations led police to arrest two more suspects, aged 31 and 28, on November 16.

The *New Light* said one of the men had received training on the border and had received "two ready-to-use" mines and a pack of gunpowder.

It said the intended target was "religious buildings" and police were still hunting further suspects.

Myanmar was rattled by a series of explosions in October that the United States denounced as "acts of terror", including one at the luxury Traders Hotel in Yangon that injured an American woman.

No group claimed responsibility, but authorities said suspects arrested at the time were linked to ethnic Kayin rebels.

There were two rounds of unrest in Rakhine in June and October 2012, with fighting largely between local Buddhists and the Rohingya minority. Clashes were later reported in other areas.

The arrival of a delegation from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation earlier this month for a tour of the country, including Rakhine State, sparked protests led by Buddhist monks.

Humanitarian workers have faced threats and harassment for trying to help in Muslim camps.

Radical monks have been accused of fuelling the violence with anti-Muslim rhetoric, while witnesses to violence in central Myanmar in March said some attackers were dressed in clerical robes.

Myanmar views its population of some 800,000 Rohingya as illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh and denies them citizenship.

Thousands of Rohingya have since fled Myanmar, with many paying smugglers for passage on rickety and overcrowded boats to Malaysia or further south. Hundreds are believed to have perished at sea so far this year. – *AFP*

Rakhine on edge after two girls found dead

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TWO shocking murders of young girls in Rakhine State have led to increased security forces being deployed in Kyauktaw and Pauktaw, an official said last week, in efforts to keep the already volatile region from exploding into further violence.

The deployment comes after two young girls, Rakhine Buddhists aged five and six, were found murdered on November 17 and 18 in separate incidents. One victim reportedly appeared to have been raped.

Local residents are worried the incidents will spark a further round of violence between Rakhine Buddhist and Muslim communities.

"The state government posted more security forces in both areas to keep conditions stable," said U Win Myaing, secretary of the Rakhine State government's Information and Records Committee.

Ma Zalattwa, age five, from Soe Mae Kyi village in Pauktaw township went missing on November 17 after celebrating the full moon night of Tazaungdine with her friends, according to Narinjara News. She was killed later that evening and her body recovered the next day.

Ma Mi Mi Nge, age six, from Kyar Nyo Byint village in Kyauktaw township went missing on the night of November 18 while playing with friends, relatives say.

"We found her body in a farmland near a village at 2pm. She was already dead. All assumed that she was murdered after being raped by some people," relative U Myint Maung told *The Myanmar Times* by phone on November 21.

Family members don't yet know exactly how Ma Mi Mi Nge died, U Myint Maung said, though he added that policemen from Apauk Wa station had been questioning villagers as part of their investigation.

Narinjara News reports that, as of November 22, police had arrested at least 12 people in connection with the two murders.

"Police arrested some people, both Muslim and Rakhine," said U Win Myaing. "We don't want to comment about these cases. Police are still investigating. We will publish all information that we have after the investigation process is over."

The chair of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) for Kyauktaw township, U Maung Maung, also confirmed that more security forces had arrived in Kyauktaw.

"Local residents are worried. They are afraid of facing renewed sectarian violence again in Rakhine."

UN and US pressure Myanmar on Rohingya

BILL O'TOOLE **EI EI TOE LWIN**

A woman washes pots in front of her shelter in Mizigwazon IDP camp in Sittwe township, Rakhine State, on May 17. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

THE United Nations General Assembly Committee on Human Rights and members of the United States House of Representatives last week joined the growing chorus of international groups decrying ongoing human right abuses across Myanmar, especially in Rakhine State.

A UN resolution on Myanmar was one of several handed down by the committee, which also passed resolutions on Iran, Syria and North Korea. The resolution was passed unanimously by the 193-nation committee, meaning the general assembly will pass it at their meeting later this year.

The General Assembly statement welcomed President U Thein Sein's recent reforms, including the release of 69 political prisoners earlier this month, but said more work is still needed.

It said the committee is concerned about "remaining human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detentions of political activists and human rights defenders, forced displacement, land confiscations, rape and other forms of sexual violence and torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as violations of international humanitarian law".

The resolution also urged the Myanmar government to give stateless Rohingya Muslims full access to citizenship and to end Buddhist violence against them.

In Washington, meanwhile, US lawmakers introduced a similar resolution, calling for the United States to pressure Nay Pyi Taw to end the ongoing isolation and persecution of the stateless Rohingya people.

In a statement published on November 19, the UK-based Physicians for Human Rights applauded the US resolution: "For far too long, the international community has ignored the long-standing persecution of the Rohingya. ... As discrimination turns into more and more acts of violence and abuse, this vulnerable community urgently needs the United States to press the Burmese government to stem the tide of hatred and violence."

Bertrand Vainvel, the UN's interim humanitarian coordinator for Myanmar, said that although the language is harsh, the UN human rights committee's statement did not mark a new direction for their operations in country. Rather, they see calling for pressure on the government as consistent with their ongoing mission.

'The Rohingya do not exist under Myanmar's law.'

U Nyan Win
National League for Democracy

Mr Vainvel said such pressure was especially important to apply at the moment, as the humanitarian situation in Rakhine and Kachin states is increasingly dire.

"The space for humanitarian access and development opportunities is shrinking ... This declaration is something that captures the situation as it is now. We need to use all the tools we can to come to a solution."

In response to the UN resolution's call to give stateless Rohingya Muslims full access to citizenship, U Ye Htut, spokesperson for U Thein Sein, reaffirmed the government would not grant citizenship to anyone who did not meet the country's legal criteria.

U Ye Htut said "Bengalis" living in Rakhine State will get citizenship if they meet the criteria of the 1982 Citizenship Act but added those who do not meet the criteria "can't get citizenship, despite pressure put on us by international organisations".

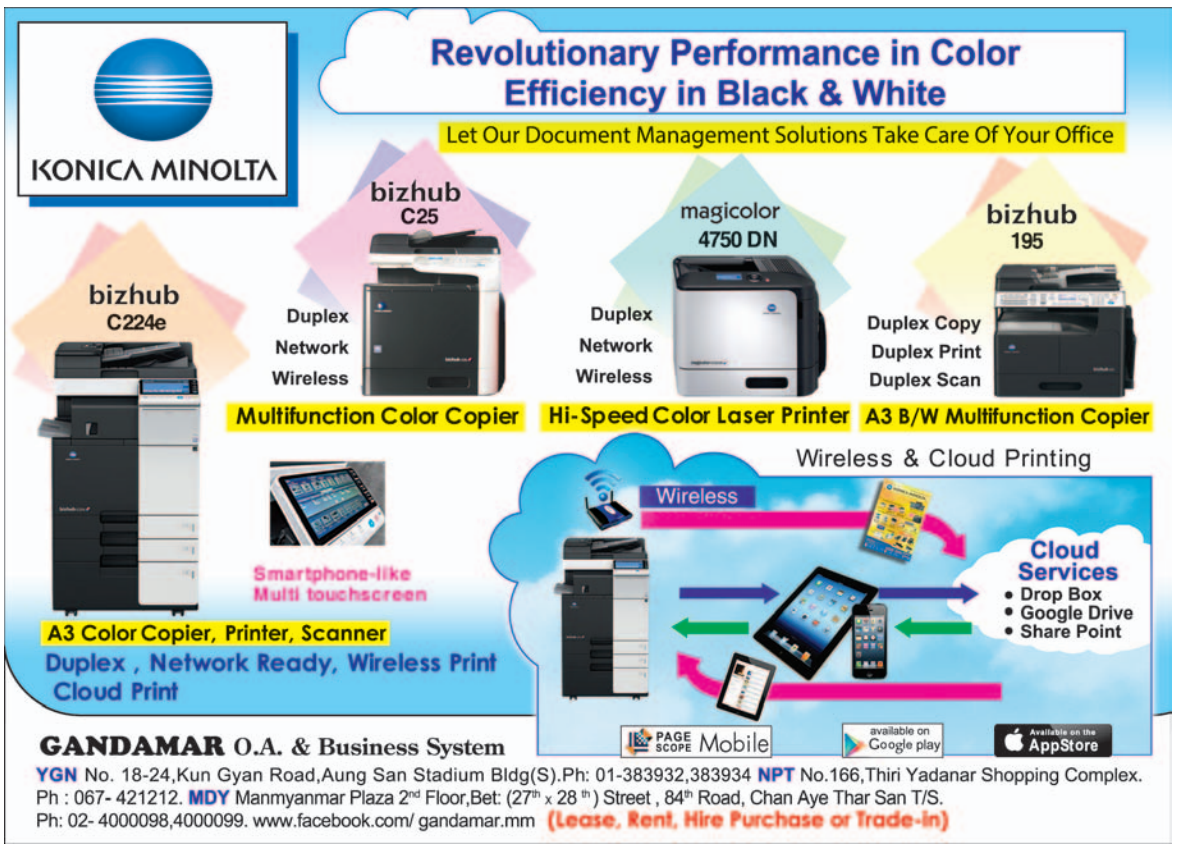
That law stipulates that minorities must prove they lived in Myanmar prior to 1823 to obtain nationality – effectively denying the Rohingya the right to citizenship.

Rejection of the Rohingya extends outside Rakhine and even includes key figures in Myanmar's democratic movement.

"The Rohingya do not exist under Myanmar's law," said U Nyan Win, a spokesman for the National League for Democracy, adding he was in "agreement" with the presidential spokesman on the point.

U Ye Htut, rejecting the term "Rohingya", said the United Nations should highlight the refusal of "Bengalis" to cooperate with local authorities over the implementation of a population assessment by the Ministry of Immigration and Population.

Immigration officers visited a camp near Thatkepyin village, about 10 kilometres (6 miles) from Sittwe, on April 26 and attempted to record the ethnicity of camp residents as Bengali. However, camp residents refused, saying they would only sign as Rohingya, and allegedly threw rocks at the officials. – *With AFP*



Ethnic groups meet in Thailand

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Deputy commander-in-chief General Gun Maw of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) speaks to the media in Yangon on November 18. Photo: AFP

THE issue of sovereignty for ethnic minorities is one of the main priorities that must be addressed in future peace talks with the government, the deputy commander-in-chief of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) said during a visit to Yangon last week.

"The issue of sovereignty must inevitably be discussed in talks, even though we are in a dilemma about how to tackle the peace process," General Gun Maw said at a press conference at the Business Alliance Hotel in Yangon on November 18.

"There is a different point of view between us and the government on this issue, which is exactly why we need to focus on it."

Union Minister U Aung Min, head of the government's peace negotiation team, had told reporters at the conclusion of peace talks in Myitkyina on November 4 that they will discuss all points brought up by ethnic armed groups except the issues of sovereignty and secession from the union.

The next round of talks are scheduled to be held in Hpa-an, Kayin State, in mid-December.

Gen Gun Maw said many ethnic armed groups were established around 1948, and since that time they have called for autonomy and the establishment of a federalist political system that would give more power to ethnic states.

"Federal doesn't mean secession. We have never asked for secession, so it's unfair for the government to push us to sign an agreement not to secede," he said.

Gen Gun Maw arrived in Yangon on November 17, his first visit to the former capital. The purpose of his trip was to get a passport to go to Chiang Mai, Thailand, for a meeting of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) on November 25.

The 13-member NCCT was founded at the Laiza Conference – held in Kachin State from October 29 to November 1 – to lead discussions with the government's peace negotiation group.

The members represent various ethnic armed groups throughout Myanmar, with Gen Gun Maw serving as the team's deputy chairman.

The team is meeting in Chang Mai to discuss the draft of the nationwide ceasefire agreement that ethnic groups presented to government during talks in Myitkyina on November 3 to 4, as well as the draft introduced by the government side at the same time.

The NCCT will then present a revised draft at next month's Hpa-an meeting.

While Gen Gun Maw was waiting for his passport, he met with U Aung Min, members of Yangon's Kachin community, the 88 Generation Student Group and US ambassador to Myanmar Derek Mitchell.

During the press conference on November 18, Gen Gun Maw talked about the peace process, recent fighting between the Tatmadaw and the KIA in Mansi township in southern Kachin State, and the controversial Myitsone hydropower project.

"Fighting is still going on because we have not achieved a concrete agreement during the peace process. Therefore, we are trying to forge a concrete nationwide ceasefire agreement even as both sides continue fighting each other," he said.

On the Myitsone dam project, which was suspended by President U Thein Sein in September 2011, Gen Gun Maw said the KIA is keeping a close eye on all foreign investment projects that might be implemented in Kachin State.

"We remain concerned about the Myitsone hydropower project," he said. "We have already sent messages to the governments of Myanmar and China stating that we don't agree with the project."

Kachin activists call for end to clashes

SEVERAL Kachin campaign groups called on November 18 for an immediate end to clashes between Myanmar troops and ethnic rebels that have trapped hundreds of people, including schoolchildren, with limited food and shelter in a remote area of the state.

Skirmishes have affected at least 2300 people in the Bhamo-Mansi area, among them many who had already been displaced by previous fighting, the non-government groups said in a statement distributed by the UN in Yangon on November 18.

The groups expressed particular concern for some 700 pupils after their boarding school was surrounded on November 16 by Myanmar troops.

"These students and their teachers ... were surrounded and blockaded inside the school compound but an appeal by the Catholic Church led to their release" later that evening, the statement said.

"The latest battle has also affected internally displaced persons [IDPs] located around the area ... These IDPs have been displaced by earlier skirmishes," it said, calling for an "immediate cessation of hostilities" to allow humanitarian access.

'These students and their teachers ... were surrounded and blockaded inside the school.'

Statement from Kachin groups

A spokesman for the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Yangon on November 19 said they released the statement by mistake, but the agency "echoes the concern the NGOs put forth".

Fighting in Kachin State erupted in June 2011 when a 17-year ceasefire crumbled. It has displaced some 100,000 people.

The Kachin conflict – along with religious unrest elsewhere in the country – has overshadowed widely praised political changes as Myanmar emerges from decades of military rule.

President U Thein Sein's reformist government has reached tentative peace deals with most major ethnic rebel groups in the country, which has been racked by civil wars since independence from Britain in 1948.

Despite talks, peace in Kachin State has so far remained elusive, thwarting government efforts to cement a nationwide ceasefire that would burnish its reform credentials.

Speaking in Yangon, the Kachin Independence Army's second-in-command confirmed the clashes around the school in Nam Lim Pa village near the Chinese border.

General Gum Maw said Myanmar troops entered the area with a relief convoy and "fighting broke out".

But he said the clashes would not derail the tentative peace process, with talks between the government and an umbrella organisation representing several ethnic groups due in December.

On November 18 the United States embassy announced a new US$25 million relief package for victims of violence across the country, including in Kachin State where it will provide food, healthcare and shelter to the displaced. – *AFP*

Palaung youth publish journal

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A PALAUNG ethnic youth group has released its first independent news journal, which it says addresses the needs of the Palaung people.

"We have launched an in-depth, independent, accurate and unbiased journal," the group announced in a press statement on November 17.

Called *The Margalar,* the journal was founded by the Ta'ang Youth Association (Myanmar) in northern Shan State, long the scene of armed conflict and narcotics.

The statement said the paper is funded by People in Need, a non-government organisation from the Czech Republic that does work in Myanmar.

The monthly news journal will cover the Palaung region "to promote, serve and protect the dignity and interests of Palaung's people", the group said.

The Ta'ang Youth Association was founded in September 2012 and is based in Lashio, northern Shan State. The group said it focuses on the emergency needs of the Palaung people such as helping refugees and disseminating information on elections, education and land law.

"We believe information dissemination is the fuel of democracy," the group said.

Local community capacity at centre of new UNICEF agenda

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A SHIFT in focus from national to sub-national capacity-building will be the direction of the remaining 2.5 years of the UNICEF-Myanmar five-year cooperation agreement, the United Nations Children's Fund's regional director for East Asia and the Pacific said.

Speaking exclusively to *The Myanmar Times*, Daniel Toole said UNICEF's mid-term review had drawn both positive feedback and criticisms from the government.

"Coordination needs to be strengthened across the UN. That was one of the government's criticisms," Mr Toole said. "Their plea I think was 'please coordinate', as they really can't manage every UN agency acting separately. So we will be working very hard to pull together [sector] partners."

"One of the results of the review is that we will be looking at both the national and sub-national level," he said.

As part of that pivot, the agency will be strengthening its office in Kachin State, he said. The regional director visited Myitkyina during his tour of the country in November, where he said he was impressed with the health facilities and schools he visited.

"One of the things UNICEF has pushed for the last couple of years is an increased attention to teaching children in their mother tongue. The school I visited on the outskirts of Myitkyina had almost 400 [internally displaced children] there," Mr Toole said.

"They were using both teachers from the displaced themselves, teaching in the mother tongue."

He noted that while there was integration at the school level, there were separate classrooms for internally displaced children.

"The systems are working, but they all need strengthening," he said, noting that his tour access was limited to select government-controlled areas.

Mr Toole said UNICEF had raised the need for increased access to all of the government-controlled areas as well as assistance in accessing non-government controlled areas.

"Kachin is an area where we don't even know the vaccination status of children on the border areas," he said, adding that Myanmar was the last piece of the puzzle for achieving a polio-free Southeast Asia.

"We have a huge respect for the fact that the government has signed these peace agreements. At the same time … visible change, government schools functioning, health services being delivered, midwives who know what to do and have the equipment they need … that's what convinces people that peace is actually different."

Kids participate in UN Universal Children's Day at the National Races Villages in Thaketa Township, Yangon, on November 20. Photo: Ko Taik

As part of this mentality, UNICEF has been pushing for Myanmar to ensure that its enormous natural resource capital is channelled into its biggest earnings potential – human capital.

"Those natural resources are time-bound … Human capacity is a renewable resource."

"What we realised as UNICEF and what the international community realises is that we have to be able to help the government get the right legislation in place. We need to be working at a national policy level," Mr Toole said. "At the same time, we have to be working with sub-national communities because the capacities at that level are still rather weak.

"As international [actors], we have to strengthen the capacity at the local level because that is what will make the difference."

Landmine victims tell of disrupted dreams

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BROKEN lives, shattered hopes, ruptured families, lost limbs – these are the costs inflicted on innocent villagers by the plague of landmines.

In interviews with *The Myanmar Times,* some of the victims recalled the day they made violent contact with the hidden menace beneath the earth and related the toll it has taken.

"Suddenly, I felt as if the earth had swallowed me up. Everything went black, but I felt no pain. Then, when I tried to stand up, I found my right leg was gone," said Ma Theint Theint Moe.

In 2003 she became the first woman in her town to fall victim to the mines planted in Bago Region's Kyaukkyi township, close to the border with Kayin State.

A labourer for a local timber company, she had ventured into the forest with her friends when disaster struck.

"While I was in hospital I formed a hatred for the people who make landmines. I was afraid to see my friends. I kept going over in my mind what had happened to me," she said.

Over the past 10 years the hatred and anger have eased. But it took a long time before she dared leave her house again.

"It changed my life. I became angry for no reason when people talked to me or even looked at me. I felt my brothers and sisters didn't want to help me because I'd become a burden to them," said Ma Theint Theint Moe.

Her ambitions destroyed, she did her best to help her family by doing household chores.

"I'd dreamed of setting up a small shop to sell food in front of my house, or a tailoring shop. I would learn how to sew clothes for my customers. But when the blow fell, all my dreams were ruined," she said.

After five years, she was given a prosthetic leg and began to cook and do the washing. Sometimes she could walk outside the house.

"Last year I started to learn tailoring, and now I'm trying to sew clothes. Though it is very difficult for me to recover my dream, I've decided to make it happen one day," Ma Theint Theint Moe said.

She cannot forget the depression and loss of confidence.

"Though people helped me sometimes, I thought they were just looking down on me. I was worried and afraid whenever I heard that people were going into the forest," she said.

Ko Myo Min Tun, 26, said he also felt abandoned and helpless after he lost his leg to a mine on May 1, 2010, near his home in Kanyutkwin village in Bago Region's Pyu township.

"When I became disabled, I hated everyone, even myself. But eventually I came to understand that I would never get back my leg, and I felt sadness instead of hate," he said.

A victim of the war between the government and the Karen National Union, he says he received no support from either side.

"When I lost my leg, I also lost status in my family. I'm not the head of the household any more. I just help my wife, who does the cooking and brings in the income," he said.

If there is no able-bodied man available, local farmers sometimes employ him, he said.

"They know I can't work like a normal person but sometimes, if there's nobody else, they will pay me K2000 for a day's work. But I'm still afraid to go into the woods," he said. To this day, he has never returned to the scene of his accident.

"We are villagers, not soldiers, but we are suffering from this conflict. Each side supports its soldiers, but both sides ignore us," said Ko Myo Min Tun.

Ko Min Min Aung, 34, met his landmine on March 30, 2007.

"Even if we got any support, it wouldn't compensate for the loss of my leg," he said. "Neither the government nor the KNU provided a map of the mines they had laid. They just told us there were many mines in the forest nearby. But we are just poor villagers. We have to work in the forest for our livelihood."

He supports his two daughters by helping to build the road between Kyaungpyar village and the town of Mone for daily wages.

But he added, "My self-confidence is gone. So are my plans for my family's future. How can I send my daughters to school now?

"I can never get back the spirit I had. I can't describe what I feel now."

Now is the time, he says, to demine the area. "We villagers need support, but more than that, we want peace without landmines. It's true I'm still alive, but how much does a leg cost? The loss has changed my life and cost me all my dreams."

Ko Thura was 14, an avid footballer who played for his school and hoped for a future with a professional team. One day in 2010, he ignored his parents' instructions and sneaked out to fish in a local stream. The stream was mined.

"I was thrown into the air. I thought one of my friends had stepped on a mine. But when I tried to stand up and run I couldn't. My body was covered with blood. When I looked down, I saw my right leg smashed into splinters and I fainted," he said.

His family could only afford to keep him in hospital for a month, after which he went home. It was his friends who helped him recover, he said.

"I was crazy about football and I used to play a lot. A year after the mine, my friends helped me to play football again. It was very difficult to face people, but once I was on the pitch I forgot about everything but the game," Ko Thura said.

"I don't want to hate anyone anymore. I just want to recover."

Ma Theint Theint Moe talks about the landmine that took her leg in Kyaukkyi township, Bago Region. Photo: Nyein Ei Ei Htwe

'While I was in hospital I formed a hatred for the people who make landmines. I was afraid to see my friends. I kept going over in my mind what had happened to me.'

Ma Theint Theint Moe
Landmine victim

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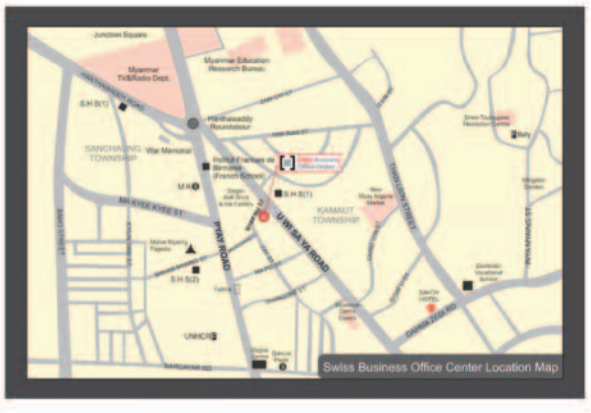

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Govt to privatise 30 domestic airports in 2014

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NEARLY half of the country's airports are being put up for sale, the Ministry of Transportation announced last week, with tenders to open in January for private ownership of 30 domestic airports.

"We are targeting this coming April, 2014, to transfer to private-sector use," the director general of the Department of Civil Aviation, U Tin Naing Htun, told a press conference November 20.

The announcement follows a call for tenders to renovate Yangon and Mandalay airports, and to build a new international airport at Hanthawady. It marks the first time domestic airports have been opened to private investors.

"In the past, we have never allowed the private sector to operate" in domestic airports, U Tin Naing Htun said, adding that the move would help offset the cost of running the airports and would free up funds that could be better spent elsewhere.

"At present, we are using about US$12 billion a year for maintenance of airports in the whole country. In the future we hope to reduce that cost and and we can use the funds in another undeveloped sectors," he said.

Of the country's 69 airports, 32 are open to both local and foreign travellers, including the major international gateways of Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw. Bagan/Nyaung-U, Heho and Dawei airports also offer customs, immigration and full medical services.

"Dawei, Mawlamyine, Rakhine [Sittwe], Heho and Nyaung-U airports are very popular airports where private companies are willing to operate," U Tin Naing Htun said.

The government will open a tender starting January 1, 2014, he said, and while foreign investors are permitted, the process will favour local businesses provided all parties operate according to related investment law.

All bidders should be willing to take responsibility for the full operations of the entire airport and also be able to show a clear business plan, U Tin Naing Htun added.

"I would like to suggest that the private companies should consider carefully how they will invest and also should estimate how much [profit] they can get, because the airport development business will cost a lot."

From January to September of this year, 2.6 million travellers passed through the domestic airports being opened for tender, according to Department of Civil Aviation figures, with 2.7 million expected in 2015.

IN PICTURES

PHOTO: KAUNG HTET

Shia Muslims gather in downtown Yangon on November 15 to mark Ashura, a festival commemorating the death in the 7th century of Hussein ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.

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Views

Engaging the private sector in the fight against malaria

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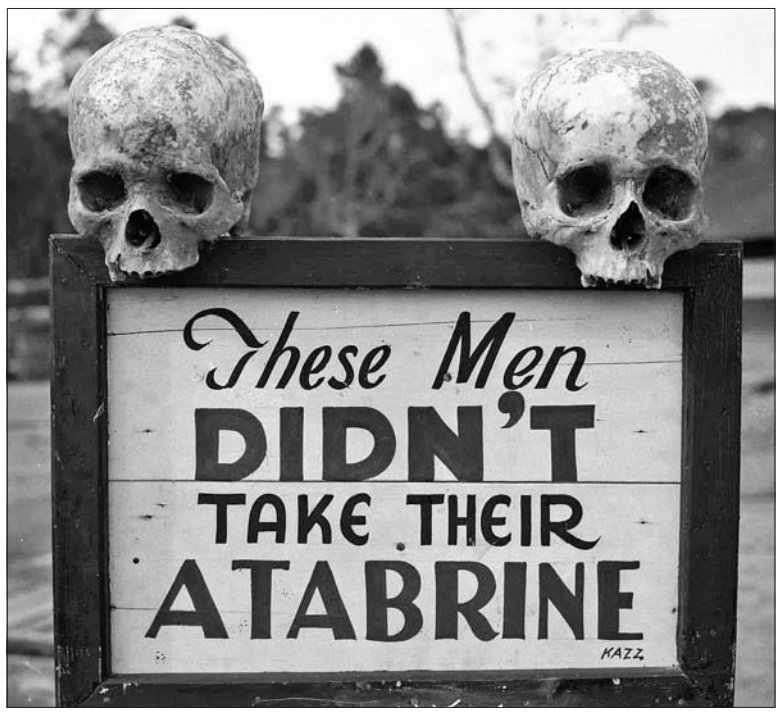

A macabre sign advertises Atabrine brand anti-malaria medicine at the 363rd Station Hospital in Guinea during World War II. Photo: Otis Historical Archives

THE past decade has seen unprecedented progress against many of the world's leading global health challenges, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Thanks to bold commitment by political and business leaders, we have seen increased investment in global health and steady progress toward ambitious goals like the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

With malaria control, for example, there has been notable improvement since the start of the new millennium, particularly due to greater involvement of a wide variety of partners and increased external funding for endemic countries. With increased coordination of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partners and under the technical leadership of the World Health Organisation (WHO), global malaria deaths have declined by more than 25 percent since 2000.

With serious financial and technical challenges threatening progress in these last 1000 days before the 2015 deadline of the MDGs, one thing is certain: All sectors of society must be involved in the fight against malaria if our gains are to be sustained and scaled up in hard-to-reach communities. This will require a multisector, country-led approach, with actors from various sectors working together to maximise the impact of our limited resources.

Nowhere is this truer than in the evolving democracy of Myanmar, which accounts for one of the highest burdens of malaria in the Asia-Pacific, with half the population at risk of infection and nearly 17,000 malaria-related deaths occurring each year.

On November 25 and 26 Myanmar is holding its first malaria forum focused on greater private sector engagement. Under the organisation of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in association with the Myanmar Health and Development Consortium and the Myanmar Business Coalition on AIDS, and with support from the Ministry of Health, the two-day meeting aims to involve corporate leaders in efforts to contain drug-resistant malaria by developing an accreditation scheme that would incentivise employers to act in support of the Myanmar Artemisinin Resistance Containment strategy.

Rapid economic growth and increasing foreign direct investment in the country have attracted large local and foreign labour forces that, on one hand, threaten to perpetuate the spread of disease through migrant employees, while also offering a unique channel through which to reach vulnerable groups and advance key public health strategies. By investing in malaria, the corporate sector stands to protect the communities in which they operate and play a critical role in the success of containment efforts.

17,000

Malaria-related deaths in Myanmar each year

While malaria-endemic governments have demonstrated high levels of commitment and subsequent success against malaria and other health issues, most governments lack the resources needed to comprehensively and fully tackle malaria. With bigger budgets, wider reach and often greater efficiency, the private sector has and will continue to play a crucial – and welcome – role as we move forward.

For many in the private sector, investments in corporate social responsibility have yielded big results. Beyond moral obligation, most investments in health areas began as a way to protect the workforce and, ultimately, the bottom line. But with a minimally higher investment, many employers have benefited from the power of broader community investment, creating not only healthy employees but also healthy, more robust markets while advancing progress against the global health and development agenda at the local level.

In Papua New Guinea, for example, the country's largest oil and gas producer, Oil Search Limited, has become a leading partner in the nation's malaria control efforts. In the mid-1990s, Oil Search began working with local health staff and company management to develop a comprehensive malaria control program intended to protect its workforce. Since its 1997 inception, the program has helped achieve an impressive 23pc decrease in malaria prevalence in communities covered by the program. Recent numbers indicate a 50pc decrease in the number of people testing positive for malaria in all health facilities in the project area between 2010 and 2011.

Oil Search's growing national focus has helped the country secure ongoing funding for malaria from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and in February 2012 the newly established Oil Search Health Foundation was chosen to assume the role of Principal Recipient of the country's Global Fund grant for malaria.

And there are several examples of responsible corporate investment right here in Myanmar. For example, an investment in malaria by the Moattama Gas Transportation Company (MGTC), in cooperation with the Myanmar health authorities, has helped to develop a socioeconomic program aimed at reducing the main causes of mortality in the region through immunisation programs, free medical care for villagers, promotion of best health practices and improved hygiene. Increased funding by MGTC has resulted in increased capacity and better health systems that have resulted in decreased malaria and infant mortality rates.

The leading palm oil and rubber producer in Myanmar, Yuzana Company Ltd, is also helping make strides against malaria through its partnership with the US Agency for International Development's Control and Prevention of Malaria Project (CAP-Malaria). With more than 50,000 mobile and migrant workers on Yuzana's plantations, CAP-Malaria is strengthening the quality of the company's clinics by providing access to diagnostics and treatment, as well as on-the-job training and a mobile malaria clinic to reach workers in remote areas. Through checkpoints, the project also monitors malaria in migrant populations departing the Yuzana region and returning home.

There are countless examples of successful public-private partnerships in global health, but what we know is that the private sector is a powerful partner capable of working independently or in partnership with national governments to strengthen capacity and expand access to lifesaving interventions, resulting in true, lasting progress toward universal development goals across the board.

The fast-paced progress against malaria has enjoyed unprecedented momentum due largely to a surge in political support and funding increases that have allowed greater access to effective and affordable interventions that have, in turn, helped decrease the global burden of disease.

Yet malaria continues to devastate communities and drain economies around the world. The WHO estimates that malaria infects 219 million people around the globe each year, killing approximately 660,000. Roughly 85pc of these deaths are children under the age of five.

Behind Africa, the Asia-Pacific region carries the second-highest burden of malaria globally, with 20 malaria-endemic countries accounting for approximately 30 million cases and 42,000 deaths each year.

Now, more than ever, we must identify opportunities to work together across all sectors. This will require us to ask ourselves how we might engage the private sector in a more meaningful manner. In the Asia-Pacific region specifically, as borders become more open and regional cooperation and investment opportunities become more viable, we have an opportunity to work in partnership in a coordinated, multisectoral method to ensure development projects are linked to broader health impact.

I encourage business leaders joining the discussions in Yangon this week to consider not only their bottom dollar but also the impact they might have on the communities in which they operate. When companies enter public-private partnerships and invest in malaria – through the Global Fund, for example – they help create healthy communities and thriving markets that can change the course of history for generations.

We must learn from companies like Oil Search and the Yuzana Company: When we engage companies in true public-private partnerships, we have an opportunity to leverage their unique skillsets, unrivalled efficiency and deep networks that will help us to truly expand access to lifesaving interventions in more cost-effective ways so we can save more lives. These exemplary partnerships have shown us the high return that relatively low investments in malaria can have.

In January 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced that malaria would be a priority under his second mandate. He also emphasised the importance of partnerships to help advance progress against UN priorities. As we work to answer the secretary-general's call and expand the fragile gains made in the fight against malaria, particularly in a region ripe with new economic opportunities, let us do so with a truly multisectoral approach. No one group or government can overcome this killer, but if we work together in innovative and meaningful ways, I believe we can.

Behind Africa, the Asia-Pacific carries the second-highest burden of malaria globally, with 20 malaria-endemic countries accounting for approximately 30 million cases and 42,000 deaths each year.

Hervé Verhoosel is head of external relations at the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership, the global framework for coordinated action against malaria that was founded in 1998 by UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and the World Bank.

Views

NSA knows when you've been naughty

Spying by the National Security Agency has been widely condemned around the globe, but the data that has been collected could provide answers to troubling questions about the behaviour of some world leaders

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THE United States taps the telephones and monitors the emails of everyone in this region.

No one is immune: not you, not me, not Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen or opposition leader Sam Rainsy.

We know it because of the revelations by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, now in exile in Moscow.

As *The New York Times* noted this month, "The NSA has operated on the principle that any eavesdropping that can be done on a foreign target of any conceivable interest, now or in the future, should be done."

It called the NSA "an electronic omnivore of staggering capabilities, hacking its way around the world to strip governments and other targets of their secrets".

In this way, Washington monitors communications not only from dodgy regimes like Myanmar and Vietnam, but also from treaty allies like the Philippines and Thailand.

In Phnom Penh, the NSA's Special Collection Service operates out of locked rooms in the massive US Embassy at Wat Phnom, where it snags all Cambodian messages and those from Laos and Vietnam.

Perhaps it's not unexpected nor anything to fret about.

As Peter Galbraith, a former US ambassador, wrote in *The Guardian*, "How serious is the invasion of privacy? The NSA can vacuum up huge quantities of data, but that does not mean it is useful."

He added, "Most of us lead lives that are of no interest to any intelligence agency and, even for people of interest, most conversations and email are of no intelligence value."

Well, maybe, but let us pause a moment and appreciate that while what Galbraith said has some validity, it is also undeniable that many people do lead lives of great interest.

Recently, the *Bangkok Post* pondered the probability that Washington listens to Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's phone conversations.

After eavesdropping on Hun Sen and his ministers and election officials, as well as on Sam Rainsy and his men, the US will know for sure whether the July election result was fixed.

It concluded that US President Barack Obama could well "have received details of confidential conversations before his trip to Thailand last year".

Big deal, you may say; but think again and forget the boring political policy talk and consider more portentous personal issues.

For instance, after eavesdropping on Hun Sen and his ministers and election officials, as well as on Sam Rainsy and his men, the US will know for sure whether the July election result was fixed.

It will also know whether Foreign Minister Hor Namhong really did show a draft of the final ASEAN Ministerial Meeting communiqué to the Chinese for approval last July.

Likewise, the US spy agency will be aware of just how involved the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak was with the beautiful Mongolian model Altantuya Shaaribuu, who was subsequently murdered.

In fact, they will hold the answer to many rumours, such as whether the alleged flirtation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with the young MP-elect David Hla Myint did cause the revered party strategist Kyi Maung to quit.

And they will know for sure if the 2010 assassination of the renegade Thai General Seh Daeng, who backed anti-government Red Shirt protests, was the work of army snipers based in Dusit Thani Hotel.

Such information is invaluable to a foreign power. It is the ultimate deterrent and the ultimate enforcer: Do what I say or be prepared for unsavoury revelations.

An example of how it works is now unfolding in the Philippines where the NSA has long had the dope on every political figure, including the veteran leader of the Senate, Juan Ponce Enrile.

Right now, Washington is keen to station troops once again in the country; but while President Benigno Aquino backs the idea, Enrile does not.

Suddenly, there are revelations that Enrile has stolen public funds, and he is charged with plunder. Where did the information come from? And will the charges be dropped if he stops objecting to US troops coming back?

It's a potent reminder to all leaders that someone is watching, and if they do something naughty, it may be revealed. And that's no bad thing.

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Lost kingdom: The forgotten royal family

KELLY MACNAMARA
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IN a modest Yangon apartment, the granddaughter of Myanmar's last king lives poor and unrecognised by her neighbours – a far cry from the power and riches of her ancestor.

Daw Hteik Su Phaya Gyi said the childhood days when her family had a bevy of servants and retained some of its royal status were now a distant memory.

The British colonial regime dethroned her grandfather King Thibaw in 1885 and later the military junta, which ruled the country for decades, kept the family out of the public eye.

"They didn't want us to be somebody," said the silver-haired princess, swathed in a shimmering purple shawl worn especially for the rare interview.

"I have lived as an ordinary person for 60 years," she said.

"Of course I repent a little over the glorious times that we had when we were young," she said, displaying a lively wit undimmed by her 90 years.

The demolition of the monarchy, at the end of the third and final war that brought the nation firmly under the colonial yoke, smashed centuries of royal rule in the country then called Burma.

King Thibaw and his wife, Queen Supayalat, were swiftly and unceremoniously removed from Myanmar and deposited in the small Indian seaside town of Ratnagiri.

King Thibaw died in India aged 56 in 1916, shortly after suffering a heart attack, and the family eventually fractured.

Some settled in India while others made their lives in Myanmar, which remained part of the British Empire until 1948 and came under military rule in 1962.

A cloak of silence was thrown over the monarchy by successive Myanmar regimes that viewed it as a potential rival, while army leaders sought to evoke much earlier warrior royals.

"Most of Myanmar has forgotten about the king," said deputy culture minister and royal historian U Than Swe, who has spearheaded a campaign to return King Thibaw's body to Myanmar.

A visit by President U Thein Sein to King Thibaw's tomb in Ratnagiri during an official trip to India last December reignited interest in Myanmar's monarchy.

But U Than Swe said the government has more immediate priorities.

Daw Hteik Su Phaya Gyi shows her photo during an interview at her residence in Yangon on March 18. Photo: AFP

Queen Suphayalat's own tomb in Yangon is barely marked. When the family tried to place a simple sign there to inform visitors of the pedigree of the occupant, the government immediately removed it.

From demi-god to prisoner

Thibaw was born into a courtly lifestyle steeped in incredible luxury and his fall was bewilderingly sudden.

The royals lived a lavish and isolated existence within the walls of their gilded teak palace in Mandalay. They could only be approached by people crawling on their knees.

"This man was a demigod in Burma.

MORE ON NEWS 11

CONTINUED FROM NEWS 10

He was worshipped by his people," said Sudha Shah, author of *The King in Exile: The Fall of the Royal Family of Burma*.

"Suddenly he was controlled like a puppet on a string by the British."

The British wanted King Thibaw off the throne to appease business and Christian missionary interests in the country, Ms Shah said.

They opted for complete destruction of the monarchy, partly due to fierce resistance to their incursion which saw the country flooded with British forces.

There were also doubts over finding a pliant royal heir that the British could rule through – King Thibaw and his queen notoriously executed dozens of potential rivals for the throne.

Restitution of the royal line was vaguely considered as Myanmar entered independence.

But one episode when the military tried to enlist the royal family to help it counter communist insurgents ended the generals' enthusiasm for the monarchy, Ms Shah said.

Local people thronged to catch a glimpse of the family and women knelt and spread their hair on the ground for the family to walk on.

"So taken aback were the generals by the depth of public sentiment demonstrated for the royal family, that they no longer involved the family in any further campaigns," Ms Shah said.

The family had a brief period of public activity when the princess and her siblings set up the "Miss Burma" beauty contest – she was in charge of catwalk training. The eldest brother, Taw Phaya Gyi, became involved in the Olympics before he was assassinated by insurgents in 1948.

Daw Hteik Su Phaya Gyi and her younger brother Taw Phaya, the 89-year-old potential heir of the Konbaung dynasty, are the only surviving grandchildren.

Living with snakes and leeches

The royals, refusing the small allowance offered after the British left, were forced to make their own way in the world.

The princess used the English she learned as a child studying in a Catholic school in the Mon State city of Mawlamyine to land positions at the Australian and US embassies before settling as a teacher – a job she still does today.

But a family quarrel in the late 1990s saw her lose her inherited home and end up living "in a hut".

"During the rain the water was up to here," she said, indicating knee-deep flooding. "The snakes come into the house. And leeches."

'Of course I repent a little over the glorious times that we had when we were young.'

Daw Hteik Su Phaya Gyi
Granddaughter of King Thibaw

She now lives with her daughter, who works at a burial association, and said none of her six children, 20 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren showed an interest in reviving the royal line.

She is "grateful" that U Thein Sein took the time to visit Ratnagiri but believes her grandfather should not be moved.

Several members of the family scraped together the money to travel to India in the early 1990s – her only visit to her grandparents' home in exile.

She recounted her own mother's stories of the queen standing on a balcony overlooking the Arabian Sea and weeping for her homeland.

"When I went there I looked up at that little veranda and the sun was setting. So I said, 'Oh, my grandmother must have felt the same,' and I had tears in my eyes." – *AFP*

Monk accuses OIC of coveting Myanmar's natural resources

SI THU LWIN

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Buddhist monks protest against the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Mandalay on November 19. Photo: Si Thu Lwin

ABOUT 400 Buddhist monks staged a protest against the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Mandalay on November 19, three days after the Saudi-based delegation departed Myanmar.

The OIC visited the country from November 14 to 16, holding meetings in Nay Pyi Taw and touring areas of Rakhine State to discuss the government's response to anti-Muslim violence that has left nearly 250 people dead and more than 140,000 homeless since mid-2012.

The monks started their demonstration at U Pwar Pagoda at the southern end of Maha Myat Muni Pagoda at 1pm, walking along Sagaing-Mandalay Road. They turned onto 42nd Street and then 81st Street before ending the protest back at U Pwar Pagoda.

While walking, the monks chanted, "No OIC and no Bengalis". They were referring to the Rohingya Muslims living in Rakhine State, whom the protesters said should not be granted Myanmar citizenship.

Taw U Kar Wi Ya, one of the monks leading the march, also said the OIC should not be allowed to open an office in Myanmar.

However, he invited the group to "take the Bengalis from Rakhine State back to their Islamic countries of origin".

Taw U Kar Wi Ya also accused the OIC of wanting to steal Myanmar's "natural resources" and incite the Rohingya community, and called on President U Thein Sein to "broadcast his objection" against the organisation.

– *Translation by Zar Zar Soe*

FEATURE

Through torrents and mud to Mindat

An essential part of travel is enjoying the journey, but that can be tough when you don't know if you'll ever reach your destination

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The author's bus gets help from a construction crew on the muddy road to Mindat. Photo: Salai Kyaw Moe

"AHH ... They're going to get into trouble!"

"Why couldn't they have waited for a while longer?"

The alarmed shouts from the passengers on our small bus drowned out the roar of the rushing stream that blocked our path.

The anxious faces couldn't stop the raindrops from falling or stem the tide of the turbulent stream, whose rising waters were rushing down from high in the Chin Hills.

But the panic was infectious and quickly spread throughout our bus.

The source of our dismay was the sight of the truck in front of us trying to ford the stream. Buses and trucks travelling in either direction had stopped to wait for the water to subside, but one impatient driver had decided to try his luck in the torrent.

The force of the current seemed to be pushing the truck downstream as it struggled to cross, and another, even louder, shriek of dismay went up when two of the passengers fell from the truck and into the water.

Several local villagers quickly leaped to the rescue and helped the passengers reach safety, while others along the shore shouted to encourage the driver until he made it across the stream.

"It's great luck!" someone on our bus said as we breathed a collective sigh of relief.

I was travelling with four other journalists, and our destination was Mindat in Chin State, which we normally would have reached from our starting point in Pakokku via Kan Ma, Yay Pyar, Pauk and Kyauk Htu.

But our driver, Ko July Aung, had heard that mountain torrents, swollen by late October rains, were blocking the way, so he decided to try the southern route through Nyaung Oo, Chauk, Seik Phyu and Saw. The route added about 80 kilometres (50 miles) to the trip and doubled the ticket price, but it seemed the only way.

As it turned out, the alternate road wasn't much better. The near-disaster with the truck occurred at Takhon Stream near Kyun Chaung village, which we had reached at around 2pm on the same day we had left Pakokku.

We were stuck there for about seven hours, which was inconvenient for us but a boon for the owners of a small snack shop near the stream where all the waiting bus and truck passengers congregated.

The owner said the rain had been heavy since the full moon of Thadingyut the previous week.

"There have been many buses that have had to wait until the water level dropped. When the rain stops high up in the mountains, there is less water down here," he said.

It was well after dark by the time we passed Takhon Stream, but it wasn't long before we faced another water crossing. The driver told us to stay on the bus, but one-third of the way across, our tyres sank into the sandy streambed.

My friends and I jumped out of the bus. The water was cold and knee-deep, and it was hard to stand in the swift current. But we helped push anyway, and we finally made it across with help from a big truck that pulled us from the other side.

Among the passengers on our bus were some teachers who work in Mindat but who return to their hometown of Pakokku on holidays to visit family. For them, dealing with floods on the way back to Mindat after Thadingyut holiday has become an annual rite of passage.

Daw Nandar Win, who has been teaching in Mindat for three years, said her worst experience occurred two years ago when there was flooding in Pakokku and the bus driver decided to go by way of Kyauk Htu, the route we had skipped this year.

"Ye Pyar Stream was filled with swift water, so we had to cross using boats. A few teachers died when their boat sank and they were swept away by the current," she said.

"I thought the way we're going this year would be more flexible, but I think it would be better if we turned back. When we get a phone connection, we'll call the headmaster of our school about taking a few days of leave."

The next obstacle was even more formidable: the wide Ka Zon Ma Stream. There were already four highway buses waiting to cross when we arrived.

Driver Ko July Aung informed us that we would have to spend the rest of the night there because it was not safe to cross at the moment.

"The other buses have been waiting here for two days, but they don't want to turn around because of the bad conditions behind us," he said.

It was well after dark by the time we passed Takhon Stream, but it wasn't long before we faced another water crossing. The driver told us to stay on the bus, but one-third of the way across, our tyres sank into the sandy streambed.

Bus passengers cross a stream on foot. Photo: Salai Kyaw Moe

Of course we couldn't blame our driver for this. All we could do was sigh and prepare to change out of our wet clothes.

Our moods lightened a bit when Ko July Aung told us we could cook noodles in a nearby house.

We followed him through light rain to the house. Ko July Aung used his loud voice to wake the owners, who answered the door with lit candles in their hands. A baby started crying inside the house, and when we entered we could see that the dirt floor had turned muddy from all the rain.

The house owners gave us a pot with water so we could boil our instant noodles, which we ate quickly.

Ko July Aung and some other drivers, meanwhile, had sat down on a bamboo pallet to wait for their water to boil. Their combined weight was too much, and with a crack the bamboo furniture broke, spilling them into the mud with one or two painful scrapes on top of the embarrassment.

The house owners told us not to worry about the broken pallet. We thanked them for their hospitality and rushed back to our bus.

We passed the rest of the night talking and sleeping in our seats. In the morning, Ko July Aung was able to drive across Ka Zon Ma Stream with help from some villagers, who pushed and pulled the bus through the mud.

We passengers, meanwhile, walked across, and when we reached Ka Zon Ma village on the other side we headed straight for the nearest shop for breakfast since we didn't have any other food.

The shop owner told us that Ka Zon Ma Stream is famous for its speedy current during rainy season, but in summer it's nothing more than a dry bed of sand.

"When we see clouds in the high mountains, we know we should stop thinking about crossing the stream because the current can sweep away vehicles, people and even bridges," he said.

We boarded our bus, and Ko July Aung still managed to smile despite the many hours of difficulty we had faced.

But the challenges weren't over. After four more hours of driving we entered Yaw township, where the road had been blocked by a landslide. But construction workers with cranes had built an alternate route around the blockage, about 10 metres (30 feet) below the original road.

Once again we jumped out and walked through mud and across streams, and even helped push our poor bus. At other times we had help from the construction crews.

The other passengers thought it was strange that my travel companions and I were using our cameras to record every difficulty we faced, but by the end of the trip they were used to us and we were all friends.

One of the most amazing aspects of this trip is the fact that our driver Ko July Aung, who kept his spirits high throughout the ordeal, has only been driving a bus for one year.

"We face a lot of difficulties along this route, especially in rainy season, but I live in Mindat and just want to drive this way because I want to help improve the local transportation," he said, adding, "Chin State has the worst roads in Myanmar, which makes business hard and means big highway buses can't run on a daily basis."

We finally stopped for lunch around 5pm, and then started the final leg of the trip. As we drove higher and higher into the mountains, we prayed for help from the heavens.

It was after dark when we saw the sign reading "Welcome to Mindat Township, Chin State" in the headlights of our bus. The air was cold, and our hearts felt refreshed.

After all the problems we had faced, we felt lucky to reach Mindat, which lies at an altitude of 1418 metres (4680 feet) above sea level. We were welcomed by a cold wind, and we were happy to finally get off the bus and enjoy an early sleep.

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Residents call for action on wastewater in Amarapura township

Waste from dumps, sewers and even a crematorium are endangering the health of villagers, but local authorities say they are working to fix the problems

KYAY MONE WIN

kyaymonewin@gmail.com

RESIDENTS of villages near South Lake and North Lake in Mandalay Region's Amarapura township say they are facing health problems due to air and water pollution.

Sewage pipes from an industrial zone in Pyigyitagun township are oozing liquid waste; a crematorium at Taung Inn Myauk Inn cemetery is emitting chemicals; and trash is being buried beneath the earth at a nearby household rubbish dump. For area residents – particularly those in Inngone and Min villages, located between the two lakes – the odours are hard to ignore, said Ko Win Naing, head of Min village's administration office.

He said the factories have been discarding their wastewater near the villages for the past 12 years.

"Factory wastewater is piped across [from the industrial zone] ... and then pumped into a ditch near our village," he said. "The household rubbish dump has been here for four years but the crematorium has only starting running recently.

"We haven't had a chance to breathe some decent air for ages because of the bad smells these three sites cause."

He said people in nearby villages also smell the odours but Min village, which is home to about 800 people, is the worst affected.

'Villagers are suffering physically, mentally and emotionally. They don't know what to do and they do not want to live there.'

Ko Maung Maung Oo
Sein Yaung Soe environmental network

"We can't stand it any longer," Ko Win Naing said. "In summer, the worst smells are too bad to breathe. Locals, both young and old, have suffered from respiratory illnesses, such as asthma, as well as skin conditions."

One Min village farmer said locals have faced financial problems due to wastewater flooding and destroying paddy fields.

"My fields were flooded by the Ayeyarwady and Dotehtawady rivers this year," said U Aung Myat, 70, a native of the village. "Wastewater mixed with river water inundated my 6 acres of paddy, which were destroyed. Every year our fields are flooded and destroyed but the damage is getting worse."

Min village residents, including an influential local monk, have tried to seek help from township authorities but no action has so far been taken, said U Aung Hla, a villager in his 70s.

"Villagers have suffered these health issues for more than 10 years because they are scared to go to hospitals, clinics and the court," he said.

U Aung Myat, a native of Min village in Mandalay Region, says he suffers from skin dise wastewater. Photo: Kyay Mone Win

"They are afraid that their village will be moved if they complain.

"Now they are daring to speak up about the problems because the government is getting more transparent. When we heard about the wastewater disposal plan 10 years ago, we asked an official if it would be good for the village. He replied that the wastewater would only be released once it had been cleaned.

"But the water that exits that pipe is hot and smells awful – I think there might be some nasty chemicals inside it," he said.

Ko Maung Maung Oo, a spokes-

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
YANGON

JOB VACANCIES

The Australian Embassy in Yangon is a medium sized diplomatic agency representing the Australian Government in Myanmar. It is staffed by employees of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the Australian Trade Commission and the Department of Defence. The Australian Embassy is seeking applications for the following positions.

DEFENCE OFFICE MANAGER
SALARY RANGE: US$3200 TO US$3800 PER MONTH

The Defence Office Manager provides administrative and financial support to the Defence Attaché (DA)

Qualifications and Experience

The successful applicant will have the following qualifications and attributes:

- Be an Australian citizen or citizen of another country who has an existing government security clearance that is recognised by DFAT or is eligible to obtain one.
- Proven experience and a demonstrated ability in administration, finances and budgets.
- Excellent communication and liaison skills.
- Have a high level of initiative and be able to work independently.
- Good knowledge of modern office procedures, practices, methods and equipment including use of standard computer software programs such as Microsoft Word and Excel.

DEFENCE DRIVER
SALARY RANGE: US$475 TO US$575 PER MONTH

The Defence Driver facilitates the transportation of staff of the Defence Section Yangon as well as visiting Australian Defence officials.

Qualifications and Experience

The appointee should have the following qualifications and experience:

- Must be in possession of a current Myanmar driving licence.
- Be able to drive in a safe and responsible manner.
- Maintain the Defence vehicle in a clean and tidy state.
- Maintain the vehicle running sheets.
- Have very good English language skills including reading and writing.
- Conduct errands and minor administrative tasks.
- Must be punctual, reliable and courteous.
- Be prepared to undertake errands.

In addition the appointee must be willing to:

- Work over-time and undertake weekend work in support of the Defence Attaché.
- Conduct regional travel including overnight trips.

The application form, selection criteria and duty statement can be obtained from the Australian Embassy, 88 Strand Road, or downloaded from the Embassy website at: http://www.myanmar.embassy.gov.au

Applications should be lodged at the Embassy or emailed to **austembassy.yangon@dfat.gov.au** together with a one page summary addressing the selection criteria and a copy of your CV with one recent passport sized photo. The closing date for applications is 4:00 pm Thursday 5 December 2013.

Note:
1. The Australian Embassy does not discriminate in regards to race, ethnicity, gender and age.
2. Only those candidates whose qualifications and experience are of further interest will be contacted for an interview.

ase on his feet after walking through

person for the Sein Yaung Soe environmental network, which is conducting environmental impact surveys in towns near the Ayeyarwady River, said living conditions in Min village are noticeably worse than nearby areas.

"When we started our survey, Min village wasn't even included," said Ko Maung Maung Oo. "Later, we found that it has suffered a lot and decided we needed to do more observation. We visited seven or eight times – and the smell was terrible, even on sunny days.

"A South Korean expert who accompanied our group said that Min villagers could even die if there were a mountain behind it to trap the fumes in. He said Min village is also affected because it is downwind of the lakes," he said.

"We have found that the soil is contaminated, as well as the water and air. Villagers are suffering physically, mentally and emotionally. They don't know what to do and they do not want to live there."

Ko Win Naing said residents want the authorities to start addressing the pollution issue, even if it cannot be resolved immediately.

"We understand that it is difficult to stop the pollution right away or relocate the village," he said. "But perhaps the crematorium's chimney could be raised to stop the smoke blowing directly onto Min village. And the wastewater could be better cleaned before it's dumped.

"We have heard that the authorities have already asked for tenders for a sewage plant. If there is a plan to clean wastewater like that, we'd like them to implement it as fast as possible."

U Thein Tun Oo, an MP from Amarapura, said he is lobbying the government through the Pyithu Hluttaw to resolve the pollution problems in Min village and surrounding areas.

"I asked questions about the disposal of wastewater from Pyigyitagon industrial zone into Amarapura township during the seventh hluttaw session and I have personally visited Min village and met the residents," he said. "I can see the problems they face and I want to urge the authorities to build a wastewater treatment plant as quickly as possible because this could lead to severe long-term health problems for these villagers."

He said the pollution is the result of poor enforcement of laws concerning waste management, not the absence of legislation.

"We will also negotiate with Mandalay City Development Committee [MCDC] to fix the problems caused by the rubbish dump and crematorium."

U Tint Lwin, head of MCDC's Water and Sanitation Department, said steps were already being taken to deal with the problems.

"The Hydrotek company has been awarded the tender to build a wastewater treatment plant in the area. They are now waiting for permission from the Myanmar Investment Committee," he said.

"We expect construction of the plant to start at the beginning of 2014, and it will take about 30 months to complete. After that, I'm sure the problems that the villagers are facing will be solved."

U Nay Win Myint, head of MCDC's Cleaning Department, said the crematorium at Taung Inn Myauk Inn is being "upgraded" so ash will not fall onto nearby villages.

"But we can't do anything about the smell from the crematorium. We are ready to take action to correct any other problems faced by the villagers apart from the smell." – *Translation by Thiri Min Htun*

Taung Inn Myauk Inn rubbish dump near Min village. Photo: Kyay Mone Win

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Emergency services ready for SEA Games

YAMON PHU THIT
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MYANMAR is ready to provide emergency medical services to athletes and visitors for the Southeast Asian games next month, a Ministry of Health spokesperson says.

Emergency medical services (EMS) – a combination service of emergency ambulance and urgent medical care – will be enhanced in strategic locations during the SEA games, said Dr Zaw Wai Soe of the orthopedics and traumatology department at Yangon General Hospital.

The services will be based in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Ngwe Saung, which are all hosting SEA Games events.

"There are many athletes, tourists and spectators who will visit the sports events. Therefore, we aim to provide immediate response to those who have emergency situations," he said.

The ministry has equipped 86 ambulances and trained 1500 doctors, nurses and volunteers in EMS services in anticipation of the event. The system is being tested this month to ensure it operates smoothly before the games begin on December 11. Full-time service will begin on December 1.

The ministry has also set up a hotline number for "pre-hospital care services", which can be accessed by dialing 192.

This number, however, is only available for the SEA Games and is mainly for those participating in the games or attending events.

The government received technical support from Australia, Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand to bring the country's emergency services up to standard in time for the games.

"The SEA Games will be a practice run for emergency medicine in Myanmar," Dr Zaw Wai Soe said. "The ministry has plans to provide the services nationwide [after the games]."

EMS providers will focus on key locations where major sport events will be held and along highways leading to the sporting events. This includes the Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay highway and the Yangon-Pathein highway, along which athletes and spectators will travel.

Ambulance stations will be available every 65 kilometres (40 miles) along the main highways, Dr Zaw Wai Soe said.

EMS services will also be provided at events and hotels at which athletes, guests and spectators will stay.

Motorcyclists complain of abuse by Mdy police

SI THU LWIN
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FOR two young Mandalay men, an encounter with the police ended up in the hospital emergency room. Now the parents of one of the men have threatened to sue the police.

The incident began at the corner of 26th and 80th streets in Mandalay at 11pm on November 17, the full moon day of Tazaungdine.

"When our motorcycle stopped at the corner of 80th Street, two policemen posted there told us to move on, and spoke abusively to us," said Ko Myo Min Tun, 26.

After words were exchanged, "another policeman arrived and beat us and then they took us to the police station in Aung Myay Thar San township," he said. "At the station they beat us."

He said he and his companion, Ko Phyo Wai, 27, were taken to the emergency room of Mandalay Hospital with head and eye injuries.

Now the two men have been charged with "voluntarily causing grievous hurt to deter a public servant from his duty".

Daw Moe Sandar, mother of Ko Pyo Wai, said, "I've not been allowed to see them in person or to see their medical records. I've just seen them via the television screen. If they are guilty, they will have to accept the penalty. But if the police beat them, we will sue," she said.

The parents of the two said they were allowed to see their sons in the cells at Aung Myay Thar San court by paying a visitor fee of K500 each.

Police Captain Aunt Myint, of No 5 Police Station, said, "They beat policemen with a stick, leaving them with injuries. We allowed their parents to see them. We will arrange for medical treatment by special physicians if they require intensive care."

– Translation by Zar Zar Soe

Photo: Si Thu Lwin

Relatives show blood-spattered clothes worn by a young man on the night he and a friend were taken to a police station and allegedly beaten.

Student contest teaches Gettysburg Address

EI THAE THAE NAING
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AN event celebrating the 150th anniversary of US President Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address was held by the United States embassy at the Practicing High School in Kamayut township on November 19.

Ten students from the school participated in a Gettysburg Address competition, in which they recited the speech.

Afterward, the US ambassador to Myanmar, Derek Mitchell, delivered a short talk and answered questions from the student body. It was the ambassador's first visit to a public school in Myanmar.

Mr Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, was instrumental in bringing about an end to the American Civil War.

His Gettysburg Address, delivered on November 19, 1863, is one of the best-known speeches in US history.

"In this address, the president talked about peace, rebirth and renewal for the country. Now Myanmar is working toward attaining peace on both sides, so it is good to remind young people about this speech," said Mr Mitchell.

Andrew Leathy, public diplomacy officer at the embassy, said every student in the United States is taught about the Gettysburg Address.

"Ambassador Mitchell wants to share this important part of our culture about how our country became united after the Civil War," he said.

"With young people in Myanmar coming together through democracy, I think this is a good opportunity to share this lesson about democracy in our own country."

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Ks. ~~1,500~~ 1,400

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Ks. ~~1,800~~ 1,650

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Ks. ~~1,480~~ 1,350

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Ks. ~~2,600~~ 2,350

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Ks. ~~780~~ 700

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Ks. ~~3,050~~ 2,750

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100% Juice
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2Ltr
each/Ks. ~~4,300~~ 3,850

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Ks. ~~1,650~~ 1,480

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Ks. ~~1,780~~ 1,600

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Ks. ~~3,050~~ 2,750

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Ks. ~~380~~ 340

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Ks. ~~4,320~~ 3,880

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47th STREET ☎ 01-200026, 298746 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	MYAY NI GHONE ☎ 01-510697 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	JUNCTION MAW TIN ☎ 01-218159 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	marketplace by City Mart
JUNCTION 8 ☎ 01-650778 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	ZAWANA ☎ 01-564532 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	THAMINE ☎ 01-654566 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	GOLDEN VALLEY ☎ 01-523840~43 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)
FMI CITY ☎ 01-682323 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	SHWE MYA YAR ☎ 01-294063 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	JUNCTION SQUARE ☎ 01-527053 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	PARKSON FMI ☎ 01-246899,243031 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)

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Hair Color
-Colorsilk/ Top Speed
Whitening Body Lotion 500ml
New Complexion Milk Bath
700ml

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HERBALLINES
Shampoo
-Aloevera & White Tea
-Olive Oil & Green Tea
-Honey & Avocado
-Ginseng & Egg Protein
1000ml

each/Ks. ~~2,950~~ **2,650**

O-SHIN
Dishwashing Liquid
4ltr

Ks. ~~3,000~~ **2,700**

BSC ESSENCE
Detergent Liquid
-Color/ Lingerie
1Ltr

each/Ks. ~~2,850~~ **2,600**

BSC ESSENCE
Detergent Liquid
Machine Wash
Impress/ Floral/ Blossom
2Ltr

each/Ks. ~~5,500~~ **4,950**

ELAN
Enzyme+ Detergent Powder
350g/ 700g/ 2.5kg/ 4.5kg

Price range from, Ks.450 to Ks.5,850

OKI
Detergent Cream
-Pink/ Green/ Super White
1Kg

Price range from, Ks.1,250 to Ks.1,350

MAYA
Wet Pop Tissue
80's

Ks. ~~2,750~~ **2,450**

CUIFENG
Bathroom Tissue
3 Ply Full 10 Rolls

Ks. ~~3,200~~ **2,880**

DAILY
Fresh Airfreshener Gel
-Sweet Orange
-Bubble Blue
-Pink Floral
-Fresh Green
-Purple Lavender
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Naphthalene Ball
6's 130g

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MIDEA
Rice Cooker
MTR-18E

Ks. ~~20,500~~ **16,000**

PHILIPS
Citrus Juicer
HR-2737

Ks. ~~18,000~~ **17,000**

MD
Table Fan
12"
FT30-8NS

Ks. ~~20,500~~ **18,500**

K-LITE
Rechargeable Fan with AC & DC
KN-2391

Ks. ~~33,000~~ **31,000**

FARFALLA
Induction Cooker
FEC-H33

Ks. ~~34,900~~ **32,500**

PHILIPS
Electric Kettle
HD-9303

Ks. ~~34,500~~ **32,800**

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-Bowl
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-Dinner Plate

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Dinner Plate 26.5cm
-Black Bowl 24cm

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Ks.5,700 to Ks.8,950

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-Dinner Plate
-Soup Plate
-Dessert Plate

10% Off
Price range from,
Ks.4,850 to Ks.5,700

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-Service Plate
-Dessert Plate
-Soup Plate
-Salad Bowl

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47th STREET ☎ 01-200026, 298746 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	MYAY NI GHONE ☎ 01-510697 (9:00AM to 10:00PM)	JUNCTION MAW TIN ☎ 01-218159 (9:00AM to 9:00PM)	marketplace by City Mart
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Customs Hill finds place on must-see list

Long overlooked by tourists, a collection of Buddha carvings near Pyay has enjoyed a huge increase in visitors in the past year

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RARELY visited by tourists in the past, Customs Hill south of Pyay is now becoming popular with foreign travellers and looks set to become a major fixture on Myanmar's tourist trail, an official from the Union of Myanmar Travel Association told *The Myanmar Times* earlier this month.

Customs Hill (Akauk Taung) is an area along the Ayeyarwaddy River where, during the 19th century, dozens of Buddha images were carved into the cliff walls overlooking the waterway.

According to local lore, the carvings were made by tax collectors as they waited to levy tariffs from passing boats (thus the name Customs Hill).

But U Kyaw Min Hlaing, an executive member of UMTA, has a different explanation.

"In the past, many boatmen were engaged in trade between lower and upper Myanmar. Their boats were powered by the wind, and they sometimes stopped at Customs Hill to wait for the wind to pick up. While they waited, they carved Buddha images into the stone walls," he said.

The carvings are still there for everyone to see and are "very attractive to both tourists and locals", he said.

The cliffs at Customs Hill are topped by a pagoda and monastery complex, and U Kyaw Min Hlaing said the UMTA has surveyed the area to prepare for the influx of tourists that is now occurring.

"When new places become popular with tourists, we need to prepare differently for foreign and local visitors," he said. "Locals can spend the night at the monastery, but foreigners are not allowed to stay there, so for tours we arrange a budget hotel in Pyay."

Customs Hill is reached via a two-hour drive from Pyay, followed by a 45-minute boat ride from Htone Bo village. From the boat, travellers can "take scenic photos along the river", U Kyaw Min Hlaing said.

He said that expanding tourism to previously unpopular destinations can help local businesses and is also attractive for tourists who want to get off the beaten track.

'When new places become popular with tourists, we need to prepare differently for foreign and local visitors.'

U Kyaw Min Hlaing
Union of Myanmar Travel Association

Buddha images are carved into cliffs above the Ayeyarwaddy River at Akauk Taung (Customs Hill) near Pyay in Bago Region. Photo: Douglas Long

U Than Htay from Than Htay and Brothers pilgrimage tour company said that interest in travelling to Customs Hill has exploded in the past year, and his company is making plans to increase the number of tours to the area.

"The Buddha images on stone cliffs at Customs Hill are very attractive, and once you reach it you can also see a waterfall and cave, so now we're conducting surveys to make betters plan for visiting there," said U Than Htay.

U Hla Aye, managing director of Shan Yoma travel company, said he has arranged visits to Customs Hill at the request of his customers.

"Tourists who visit Myanmar for the first time go to the usual places" such as Yangon, Mandalay and Bagan, but those returning for a second time ask for suggestions for different places to visit.

"We send them to destinations like Mawlamyine, Hpa-an, Golden Rock Pagoda and Customs Hill," he said.

Despite its increased popularity, however, Customs Hill still presents challenges for visitors, he said.

"Customs Hill is a bit difficult because tourists can't reach Pyay by air, so only those willing to travel overland can visit."

Myanmar tops list of deaths from disaster

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DEATH and destruction rates from natural disasters in Myanmar are among the highest in the world, a new report says. A study of extreme weather and its effects over the past 20 years, the *Global Climate Risk Index 2014,* was released by German Watch, an academic and research organisation, on November 12.

The release said that Myanmar, Honduras and Haiti lost most in economic terms and in fatalities because of storms, floods and heat waves from 1993 to 2012. The index showed that eight of the top 10 affected countries were in low-income and low-middle-income country groups.

According to the report, there have been 38 extreme weather events in Myanmar, including 2008's Cyclone Nargis, in the past 20 years. The annual average death toll of the country from those events amounted to 7136, or nearly 14 deaths per 10,000. The figures showed that Myanmar had the highest number of deaths from extreme weather events among the 10 most affected countries.

The country's total annual average loss was recorded as the equivalent of US$617.79 million.

A German Watch press release stated that the *Climate Risk Index* ranked countries according to the relative and absolute number of human victims, and relative and absolute economic damage. The most recent available data from 2012, as well as for the period 1993-2012, were taken into account in the preparation of the index.

The index said poorer developing countries were hit much harder, particularly in relative terms, emphasising their particular vulnerability to climate risks, despite the fact that absolute monetary damage was much higher in richer countries. Loss of life and personal hardship were also much more widespread, especially in the low-income countries.

It said a substantial outcome of the 2013 Climate Change Conference in Warsaw, Poland, would be a commitment to climate funding toward 2020 in general, and specific funding pledges to the Least Developed Country Fund and the Adaptation Fund.

The paper said many developing countries were already preparing for climate-related disasters but called on the industrialised countries to help further advance disaster preparedness and resilience in poor countries.

Myanmar submitted its National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA) for Climate Change report to the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change in May.

Myanmar's Minister of Transport, U Nyan Tun Aung, said Myanmar should take immediate steps for sustainable development that would help poor communities.

U Aung Kyaw, assistant director of the Department of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, said that disaster and development are clearly linked.

"Unsustainable development brings risk. For example, more carbon dioxide in the air leads to climate change and more disasters, which hinder development," he said.

"But learning lessons from previous disasters and practising good management will promote development and reduce losses from future disasters. Disaster-risk reduction activities by the government and agencies after Nargis reflect that concept."

Business

Telecoms still waiting on licences

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PROLONGED discussions over an operator's licence between the government and Norwegian-based telecoms operator Telenor and Qatar's Ooredoo will result in the highly anticipated networks not becoming operational until at least mid-2014, officials said.

Ooredoo and Telenor are working on roughly the same timeline, saying it would take six and eight months respectively to develop an infrastructure and launch services once it obtains an operator's licence from the government.

But that is something it appears will not happen until the end of the year, officials from both operators told *The Myanmar Times*.

"Telenor Myanmar is in discussions with the government, and we expect to secure our operating licence by the end of 2013," Matchima Chanswangpuwana, head of communications at Telenor Myanmar, said by email.

"We will begin our telecom infrastructure roll-out right after we are awarded the licence," she said.

Telenor had it planned to start up operations in Myanmar in mid-2014, although the delay in the licensing process now means services will not launch until at least August 2014.

Experts said the process of passing the Telecommunications Law and the issuance of the operator's licence has taken longer than expected, though Telenor refused to comment on specifics.

"What we can say is that the government had run an open and efficient bidding process and we look forward to bringing the many benefits of mobile communications services to the people of Myanmar," she said.

CONTINUED ON BUSINESS 26

Govt to finalise alcohol i

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A customer lifts a bottle of wine off the shelf of a shop in downtown Yangon. Photo: Boothee

WHILE the government's investigation into illegal alcohol import continues to see thousands of bottles of alcohol seized, hefty fines to importers and a possible shortage of alcoholic drinks in Myanmar, plans are afoot to allow proper import before the end of the fiscal year.

For years, there has been a limited ban in place on imported items such as preserved foods and alcohol meant to protect local producers, but some of those blacklisted items, including wine, have quietly been allowed into the market in past years. Some traders, meanwhile, simply channeled such goods through the black market.

But now, an investigative committee formed within the Ministry of Commerce to tackle illicit alcohol imports last year has resulted in the confiscation of thousands of bottles of wine and spirits, said U Win Myint, director of the Ministry of Commerce's Directorate of Trade.

"Currently, we are able to seize any alcohol in any case where we are getting information," he said.

"There are uncountable numbers of illegal traders and alcohol sales in the local market and shops," he said.

'There are uncountable numbers of illegal traders and alcohol sales in the local market and shops.'

U Win Myint
Director of the Ministry of Commerce's Directorate of Trade

Though established last year, U Win Myint claims the ministry taskforce remained largely inactive until September, when they discovered and confiscated 500 cases of illegal alcohol from local traders.

He said it was only then that the issue was brought up to parliament and a country-wide crackdown was approved.

"[We] suggested to the lower house of parliament that action be taken against illegal traders who refuse to levy tax, and the president backed the proposal," he said.

According to an official on the Illegal Trade Prevention and Supervision Control Committee, officials on September 18 seized nearly 89,000 bottles of whisky, wine and beer from Greenline Myanmar Group (GMG), a local distributor based in Yangon's Dawbon township.

On October 8, over 2500 cases of various alcohols were seized from the warehouse of an individual importer in Bayintnaung bus compound, while at the same time 45,552 cans of beer were taken from a warehouse in Shwe Pyi Thar industrial zone 2.

In the most public bust to date, the ministry taskforce on October 28 confiscated 30,000 bottles of various wines and about 2400 cans of beer from Yangon-based Quarto Products, one of the largest distributors in the country, claiming the distributor illegally imported US$620,000 worth of wine using an unauthorised licence.

But it did not stop there. In the

Shrimp farmers in Rakhine still reeling from Cyclone Giri three years on

BUSINESS 25

Yaw Min Gyi area growing in line with foreign tastes

PROPERTY 28

Exchange Rates (November 22 close)

Currency	Buying	Selling
Euro	K1300	K1310
Malaysia Ringitt	K302	K307
Singapore Dollar	K782	K787
Thai Baht	K31	K31.50
US Dollar	K982	K985

mport rules

most recent case last week, 2160 bottles of whisky and rum were taken from a bus at Aung Mingalar bus station in North Okkalapa township.

"The cases for GMG and Quarto are using hotel licences. We don't allow any alcohol products to be sold by outside entities apart from certain hotels and duty-free shops," U Win Myint said, adding that GMG and Quarto were importing from overseas suppliers, while alcohol was being smuggled through the Myawaddy border in the other cases.

He said that while the investigation was ongoing, persecution would be limited to illicit traders, but not the shops and restaurants where illegal products are being sold.

Confiscated goods are then auctioned into the local market with tax labels attached.

In the meantime, the government is working on a resolution to implement a more open and competitive import policy regarding alcohol.

"It might be passed around December and at the latest in March," U Win Myint said.

"We have plans to open [the alcohol trade], but we have to discuss it with international organisations and other departments," he said. "That's why we cannot decide immediately."

U Naung Naung Han, general secretary of the Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA) and a member of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), said that the legislation for legal imports should be passed sooner rather than later in order to fill the current supply gap for alcohol in the market.

"There is a shortage of valuable wines and other alcohol. If something does not change, it will get worse when demand is going to grow during the SEA Games," said U Naung Naung Han said.

According to the Internal Revenue Department, tax on legally imported alcohol is high at about 50 percent or higher depending on the type, while customs and transportation fees also have to be applied.

"The smuggled products are much cheaper than legally imported products, but we don't know about their quality," U Naung Haung Han said.

U Ye Min, manager of Sedona Hotel's food and beverages department, said that larger hotels will likely not feel the pinch from the recent busts as they have ample stocks in reserve.

"We have another five or six suppliers, not just Quarto and GMG, or we can buy them urgently at the supermarket if we need to."

World Bank, ADB say raising electricity price is the only way

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WITH power supply costing the government K185 billion (about US$190 million) a year, international finance institutions said last week that the government would likely need to raise electricity costs in order to maintain growth in line with the country's development.

The statements from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) come one week after the government shelved a price hike announced at the end of October following a public backlash, while the Ministry of Power has promised parliament to review the proposed increases.

But the electricity supply will not be improved and shortages will likely worsen without new funding, the World Bank said in a statement on November 15, adding that the government should enact measures to protect poor and vulnerable customers in well-designed tariff reform.

"Myanmar's economy is growing and the need for electricity is increasing. The costs of producing and supplying additional electricity to existing and new producers will increase, while industrial and commercial businesses will be able to pay higher electricity tariffs," said the statement.

"Without new funding, the electricity supply will not improve and the shortages which affect Myanmar's towns and cities presently will get worse," it continues.

The country will need a total of 2370 megawatts of electricity in the next hot season between April and July, while current production is just 1655MW, Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe told state media on November 13.

"The ministry is trying to increase supply by 202MW from hydropower plants that are still under construction and 259.1MW from gas-fired power plants. It is not enough to supply the coming season. We are going to develop a new gas-fired power plant with 100MW capacity in time," he said.

Amid growing production costs and higher demand, the Ministry of Electric Power announced in October that starting this month it would raise electricity rates, but have since reneged on the initiative following public outcry that led to widespread protests.

According to the terms of the announcement, households would experience a 43 percent price hike, from K35 to K50 per unit, for every unit used over 100 kilowatt hours, while commercial users would pay 50pc more, or K150, for each unit consumed above 5000 units.

Megawatts

2370

Myanmar's expected electricity demand for the next hot season between April and July

But with the plan under review and the hike now pushed back until the next financial year, the government remains out of pocket, while power consumption is expected to increase another 15pc this year.

"In order to ensure the financial viability of the power sector, which is needed to expand electricity access to more people in the country, either tariff rates need to be increased or even greater government subsidies, paid for by taxpayers, will be required," Jong-Inn Kim, lead energy specialist at the ADB's energy division, told *The Myanmar Times*.

"One possible solution is a phased approach, which maintains low lifeline tariffs for poor households and small businesses. Under this approach, households and small businesses with low electricity usage rates still pay lower subsidised rates, while tariffs for major electricity users slowly increase over time," he said.

He added that once the transition is completed, the higher tariffs for major users will cover the lifeline tariffs for poorer users, while higher tariffs for major users will also help attract more private investments in Myanmar's power sector.

Where the government estimates losses of K185 billion per annum on electricity, total subsidies amount to K500-600 billion for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 fiscal years – equivalent to over 1.1pc of Myanmar's GDP, according to the ADB.

Four gas-fired power plants in the Yangon area are now ready for production, but the Power Purchase Agreement with the Ministry of Electric Power is still under discussion.

Private companies, meanwhile, have invested a total of US$270 million in the plants and are expecting to sell electricity at K210 per unit, said U Zeya Thura Mon, CEO of Myanmar Central Power Company.

"The government price increase is quite relevant. It is designed not to be a burden for vulnerable users. If the government cannot increase prices, the country must pay higher subsidies. Without private investment, power supplies will be insufficient because the ministry doesn't have the money. Subsidisation is closer to socialism than to the market economy," he said.

According to the ministry, only 224 towns out of 396 have access to electricity, and more than 40,000 of 60,000 villages go without power, leaving 70pc of the country's population lacking access to electricity.

IN BRIEF

New Visa travel card now being offered by Myanma Apex

Myanma Apex Bank (MAB) is now offering a multicurrency prepaid Visa travel card for citizens to use abroad, the bank's managing director U Win Min Kine announced at the press conference November 19.

Up to US$5000 can be put on the card, U Win Min Kine said, and the money can be withdrawn at any of 2 million ATMs around the world.

The card allows payments or withdrawals in euros, US dollars and Singapore dollars, and can also be topped up with local currencies.

Hiro Taylor, Visa's head of business development for Myanmar, said the credit card giant is currently working with MAB and plans to expand the service to seven more banks soon.

Because the cards can be used on any website that offers Visa online payment options, Myanmar card-holders can now enjoy the same services as international card-holders, Mr Taylor said. – *Aye Thidar Kyaw*

DBS Bank opens a representative office in Yangon

DBS bank opened a representative office in Yangon on November 15. The bank will provide services to Singapore companies investing in Myanmar, and local companies looking to invest overseas, said its Yangon representative Mr Chan Weng Meng.

Its services include credit facilities, trade finance, cash management and treasury advice.

"We can open only a representative office. If we get a permit to open as a bank, we could help companies in the finance sector," said DBS executive Sim Lim.

DBS has been present in Myanmar since 1993.

"DBS's pedigree places us in a unique position to help business leverage growth and investment opportunities in Myanmar and across Asia," said Mr Lim.

DBS is Southeast Asia's largest bank with over 250 branches across 16 markets. – *Tin Yadanar Htun*

Garment exports soar following European Union trade pact

Problems still remain as labour is underdeveloped, while electricity is in short supply

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GARMENT exports have surged since the European Union admitted Myanmar into its generalised system of preferences last April, opening up European markets.

According to U Aung Myint, director of SMC garment manufacturing and member of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers' Association, Myanmar exported US$400 million worth of garments from May through July, on pace to surpass the $700 million it exported through all of the last financial year.

He said that the sudden rise in exports has also been fuelled by problems with the garment sector in competiting regional countries.

"Bangladesh, the leading country for garment manufacturing with more than $20 billion worth of exports, is now facing social compliance problems. In China, wages are rising. That's what helped attract buyers to Myanmar," he said.

But the boost has also brought drawbacks.

"Skilled labour and electricity are both in short supply. More and more garment industries are ready to come in, but transportation and documentation problems still hinder the sector in competing with countries like Cambodia," said U Aung Myint.

MILLION

$400

Myanmar's garment exports from May through July

Nevertheless, local factories are overbooked with orders as firms from countries like the US are waiting on more friendly trade agreements before deciding to do business in Myanmar, said U Moe Pwint, director of Hallmark Manufacturing.

"We don't have a minimum-wage law. The influx of orders has led factories to stop accepting new orders and they're struggling to finish their current orders on time," he said.

"We have a full order-book and the potential for profit is good," U Moe Pwint added.

Investors uncertain of Rakhine SEZ

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COMPANIES from South Korea, Taiwan, China and India visited Kyut Phyu special economic zone (SEZ) projects in the last month, though they seem uncertain about whether to invest, a Rakhine government official said.

Rakhine State's national planning and economic development minister, U Maung San Shwe, said companies were researching the possibility of investing in the region and observed the state of construction and electricity in the area.

Without investors, however, the SEZ zone won't develop. "We need funds, human resources and real estate to operate SEZ projects," U Maung San Shwe said, adding current levels were "inadequate".

The government called for international tenders to develop the SEZ in southern Kyut Phyu on September 8, saying the 1000-acre site would operate with an initial investment of US$277 million in 2014.

Many investors, however, have been put off by ongoing conflict between Buddhists and Muslims in Rakhine State. U Maung San Shwe said the regional government will help those who want to invest directly in the SEZ and industry zones projects in southern Kyut Phyu.

"[The government] will protect completely their [investors'] security and won't allow further conflict," the minister said.

U Maung San Shwe also added that the regional government has been planning to form a committee at the regional or national level for reducing conflict, preventing illegal migration and boosting regional development.

U Aung Mra Kyaw, an MP in Rakhine's regional parliament, said the issue of how to power SEZ projects has been proposed to parliament and plans are in place to extend supplies with master power lines from Kyut Phyu and Tha Htay Zay before 2015, with tower lines already being built. Some projects will also be powered by natural gas.

He added that both officials and investors need to think about a "master plan" to get the SEZ operational and prevent future conflict in the area.

Insurance firms try to solidify before entry of foreign players

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RECENTLY opened insurance firms are scrambling to get a foothold in the market ahead of a promise by the government to allow foreign-owned firms to operate in Myanmar by 2015.

Twelve privately run local firms were allowed to open an insurance business starting in June, breaking a 61-year-long monopoly over the market by state-run Myanma Insurance.

Now, with global insurers such as MetLife, Prudential, Manulife Financial and AIA Group waiting in the wings – having recently won bids to open representative offices – local firms with less than six months of experience are trying to win over customers in the hopes of making a lasting impression on the market.

BILLION

4.6

Capital deposit required by the government to establish an insurance company in Myanmar

"We are trying our best and need to be patient because we have to reach out and explain the value of our business to people in order to get their attention. But we also need feedback, which has been hard to get so far," said U Soe Win Thant, general manager of Global World Insurance.

While understanding the market and educating potential customers about the benefits of insurance are among the top priorities for local firms, U Soe Win Thant said that they would also need to draw from the experience of foreign experts, who can give them advice on how to succeed in a frontier market.

He also said the upstart local providers need to band together, even as they compete with one another.

"We also need an association to happen as soon as possible, as well as to keep working the market before they [foreign firms] come," he said.

Each company was required to deposit K46 billion in capital to Myanma Economic Bank in order to establish an operation. Of the 12 private firms that were given approval in April to open branches two months later, 11 have since opened their doors.

U Soe Win Thant said that his firm has earned K30 million in life, fire and motor insurance premiums since opening in July.

U Pe Myint, managing director at Co-operative Bank, which operates Citizen Business Insurance, also expressed caution for the infant insurance market in the face of global competition, but said without a date in place to open the market it would be too difficult to anticipate the outcome.

"It is too early to think about because domestic companies have not really made any progress yet," he said. "I would think that the government would not open the market immediately before our local businesses have time to grow."

"I don't think the insurance sector will be open to foreign insurance firms just yet," said Aung Thura, CEO at local consulting firm Thura Swiss Ltd. "It's not the same as the banking sector which is more advanced and better protected. It wouldn't make sense. Local companies put in a lot of capital and would have no chance against global insurers at this stage."

Though it is too early to know when the market would open to foreign firms, some local insurance companies say they could be enticed to enter into partnerships.

"We would like to cooperate in a joint venture if a company was to extend the opportunity," said U Yan Pai, managing director of Capital Life Insurance. "It would allow us to widen the market [with new products], but the laws need to be amended first."

Indeed, in order for foreign insurers to do business in Myanmar, the 1993 Insurance Law would need to be amended in line with the passing in November last year of the Foreign Investment Law, U Sein Min, general manager of Myanma Insurance, told *The Myanmar Times* last month.

A view of the IKBZ Insurance office in downtown Yangon. Photo: Thiri Lu

U Sein Min. Photo: Philip Heijmans

"Hopefully it would be come out in early 2014, when our market would be wider and more open," he said, adding that although the Insurance Business Law governs business conducted by insurance investors, nothing in Myanmar law currently allows for either joint ventures or wholly owned foreign entities in the insurance sector.

"Foreign companies and agents are approaching our market, but this is a transaction period. The private companies don't know the insurance business thoroughly. They're just taking it on for a year or more before the outsiders come."

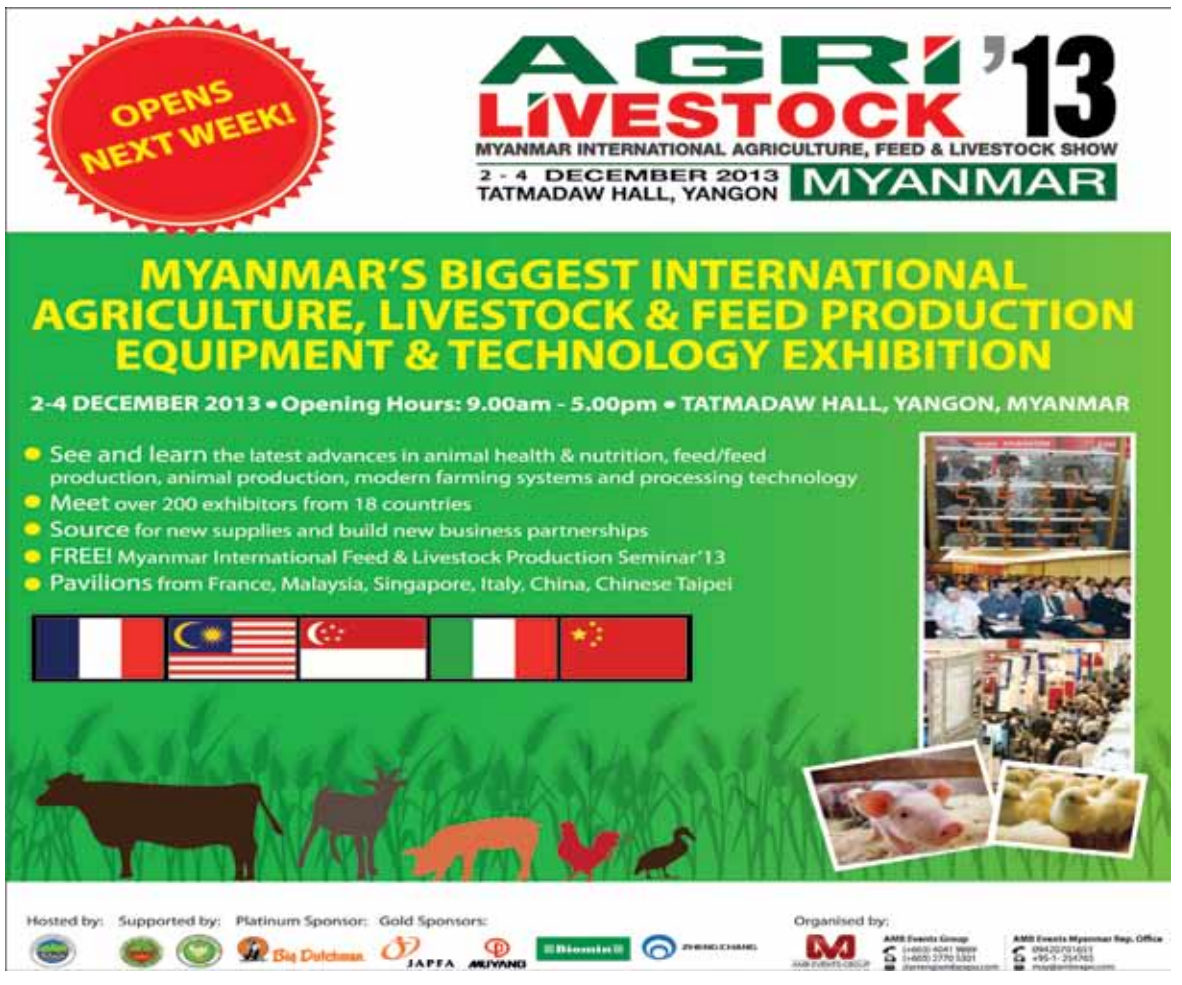
In the 2012-13 fiscal year, Myanma Insurance posted earnings of about US$47 million, up from $25 million in 2011-2012, U Sein Min said. Of its total portfolio, property insurance represents nearly 45pc, while marine and motor insurance comprise make up 32pc and 18pc respectively.

Total claim ratio, meanwhile, was less than 15pc in the last fiscal year.

"The domestic insurance is very young and not mature," U Sein Min said. "We could not compete in capital [with foreign firms]. I think that's the main reason Myanma Insurance will not allow foreign investors to operate just yet."

U Lwin Oo, assistant manager of Myanma Insurance's Marine and Aviation Insurance Department, said they are gearing up for the formation of an insurance broker association, currently slated for 2014. Once all 12 private companies are operating, they will all participate in the association, U Lwin Oo said.

"Officials are currently preparing policy, rules and regulations according to member consensus," he said, adding the next step is to register for an association licence with the Ministry of Home Affairs.



Japanese business association opens branch in Yangon

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THE Japan-based Asia Leaders Association (ALA) has opened a Yangon branch, according to a business forum held by the association at Sedona Hotel on November 17.

The ALA has already opened branches in 12 cities in nine Asian countries. The organisation assists small- and medium-sized companies, helping them cooperate on various common issues in order to encourage growth and expansion in Japan, Asia and the global economy.

As well as announcing the new branch, Chair Hideo Sawada said the ALA has talked to the Myanmar Investment Commission about doing business in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and other areas, though he added that lack of infrastructure in some areas remain a barrier.

Myanmar doesn't yet offer necessary infrastructure such as the electricity and rules and regulation that allow smooth financial transitions, Mr Sawada said.

"However, this is essential for us. We have to transfer money and levy taxes through the banks," he said.

"We have high quality services and much capital. That means we are ready to invest here and to bring benefits after these two main things are made perfect soon," he added.

Mr Sawada said the ALA would help bring new businesses to Myanmar from various industries, including manufacturing, services, hotels and tourism and media.

"Some members have planned to move their factories to Myanmar from other countries in the region like China," he said.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), Japan has invested nearly US$300 million in Myanmar, much of which has gone into the garment sector.

EIB to grant loan to SMEs

Delegation signs additional letters of intent for further investment in the future

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THE European Investment Bank (EIB) will lend €30-€100 million (US$40-$134 million) a year to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Myanmar through local banks, said a joint statement from the EU-Myanmar Task Force last week.

The EIB and the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) signed an initial agreement on finance cooperation in Nay Pyi Taw on November 15.

CBM vice president U Set Aung said, "We are going to sign the framework agreement next February. Probably selected local banks will then receive loans from the EIB."

The detailed procedures for lending to SMEs in terms of interest rates and repayment schedules will be discussed in the framework agreement, and the EIB will provide technical assistance for the development of the finance sector, he said.

The European Investment Bank will focus on infrastructure projects, including transport and energy, on environmental projects and loans to selected local banks, said the statement.

600

Participants in the EU-Myanmar Task Force meetings last week in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw

During their meeting, both sides agreed on the importance of reducing administrative burdens, improving access to finance, protecting property rights, developing skills and training capacities, ensuring corporate social responsibility, stabilising electricity supply and supporting the development of SMEs, officials said.

Michel Kempeneers, Asia Pacific director of Wallonia Foreign Trade and Investment Agency, who participated in the two-day business forum, told *The Myanmar Times,* "EU businesses are very interested in this forum and in investing in Myanmar. I believe there will be enough room for us. We are looking at many sectors to invest, but SMEs are likely to be the first."

The task force statement also underlined the importance of ensuring the highest standards in measures aimed at countering money laundering and terrorist financing.

The two partners are going to work together to address the issues in the recent Financial Action Task Force report.

EU and Myanmar authorities also signed letters of intent for further investments in the SMEs, tourism and mining sectors and exchanged letters on cooperation for development.

A total of 600 people participated in the task force meetings, including more than 100 European investors and business people, on November 14 and 15 in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw.

Rakhine shrimp farmers reeling from cyclone three years on

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A Rakhine villager sits in a traditional longboat filled with fishing nets in Sittwe District, Rakhine State. Photo: Myat Nyein Aye

THREE years since it struck, the effects of Cyclone Giri are still devastating Rakhine State villages. The October 2010 storm laid waste to Myebon township, including the villages of Kyee Gaung Taung and Taung Gyi Yinn.

"We lost all our shrimp and paddy farms because of Giri. After the storm we had nothing left – it was all under water. Our business has suffered ever since," said one villager in Kyee Gaung Taung village in Myebon township.

U Ba Thein, who works 70 acres of shrimp farms, said, "Our farms and pools were destroyed by the storm. We can't rebuild the banks around the pools, which flood every rainy season.

"We started the shrimp business just before the storm. Now we do eight months of shrimp breeding and four months of paddy farming a year," he said.

Before Giri, shrimp farmers could earn high prices from the shrimp, enough to build high protective banks around their pools. But since then, they have had to borrow money from the shrimp trading centre, which buys their product.

"We have to sell all our shrimp to the centre, but they don't give us a good price," said Daw Oo Sein Nu, owner of 20 acres of shrimp pools in Kyee Gaung Taung.

The price for shrimp of up to 4 inches (10 centimetres) long is K30,000 a viss (one viss equals 1.6 kilograms or 3.6 pounds) in the open market but the villagers receive only K23,000, they said.

Paddy farmers face a similar problem, said U Kyaw Aung, the owner of 8 acres of paddy.

"Our paddy lands are located beside the river, so we have to build banks. When the tide is up, it floods our fields. Sometimes we lose everything," he said.

Since Giri struck, shrimp production has fallen 60 percent for lack of capital, say villagers in Taung Gyi Yinn.

"We used to catch 60 viss of shrimp in 80 acres twice a month. Now we can catch only about 20 viss," said U Hla Htun, who owns 80 acres of shrimp pools. Farmers have received no government or NGO support, he added.

Gov gives Rakhine 38pc budget bump

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THE Rakhine State parliament has ramped up its proposed budget for the 2013-14 financial year by 38 percent, it announced at a meeting on November 19.

The new total of K109 billion (about US$112 million) represents a hike of K30 billion over the initially proposed budget of K79 billion, which was discussed on November 9. It also represents a 60pc increase on last year's budget of K68 billion – itself a K4 billion increase on that year's original proposal of K64 billion.

This year's budget will be shared between the 25 ministries of Rakhine State, but does not cover health or education. It factors in an estimated K37 billion to be collected in tax – substantially less than the total required.

'[Ngapali Beach] hasn't drawn any exact project plans yet.'

U Maung San Shwe
National planning minister for Rakhine State

"It's possible the deficit in the budget will be K70 billion, if you compare the collection and expenditure amounts," said U Aung Mra Kyaw, an MP of Rakhine parliament.

An official from the Rakhine State administration, who declined to be named, said that the budget was expanded in order to create job opportunities, reduce poverty and build additional infrastructure in the region.

He also said that K5 billion of the extra K30 billion will go toward developing Napali Beach into an international-standard holiday spot.

"It hasn't drawn any exact project plans yet," said U Maung San Shwe, Rakhine State minister of national planning and economic development. "First of all, the main thing is stability in the region."

He added that the government will form a committee and put out a call for tenders to construct needed infrastructure and turn the beach – often considered Myanmar's most beautiful – into a world-class destination.

Ngapali Beach is 7 kilometres (4 miles) from Thandwe. Its long unspoiled stretches of sand are a popular attraction for tourists.

Ngapali Beach is one of several destinations in Rakhine State the government is hoping to develop in order to attract foreign visitors. Photo: Wiki Commons

CONTINUED FROM BUSINESS 22

Ross Cormack, chief executive officer at Ooredoo Myanmar, also would not comment specifically on the licence negotiations with the government saying, "[W]e think the development of Myanmar's telecommunications industry and the establishment of a stable legislative environment is critical to the long-term success of the telecoms sector in Myanmar.

"We expect an announcement to be made before the end of the year," he said regarding the issuance of an operator's licence.

Ooredoo has said that it would spend US$15 billion over the 15-year duration of its licence.

Telenor and Ooredoo were selected as the two winners from 92 competitors to receive a mobile licence during a bidding process in June, though the number of competitive players may increase as Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) is in partnership talks with several international telecoms firms, including France Telecom.

U Kyaw Soe, a spokesperson from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), told *The Myanmar Times* that any rules or bylaws in addition to the Telecommunications Law, including those that warrant the issuance of an operator's licence, would be finalised within 90 days following the November 8 passage of the law in parliament.

BILLION

$15

Ooredoo's planned investment on telecom operations over the 15-year duration of its licence

"The operator licence would be after the process of finalising detailed regulations," he said, adding that the government is currently seeking outside comment on those rules, which deal with licensing, access and interconnection, spectrum, numbering, and competition, on the MCIT website.

Regardless of the slow pace of progress in the telecoms market, experts said it would have little impact on impressions of investors currently looking at Myanmar.

"In this case, I believe the impact doesn't exist because we have no market and no law – just a monopoly – so everything has to start from scratch," said Alessio Polastri, managing partner at legal advisory firm Polastri Wint & Partners. "Once those laws and rules are in place, investors will more easily get a licence and start their businesses." – *Additional reporting by Aung Shin.*

IN BRIEF

San Jose

Apple awarded $290m in Samsung patent case

A US federal jury last week ordered Samsung to pay US$290 million in damages to Apple in a partial retrial of a blockbuster patent case involving the two smartphone giants.

The award revises the $450 million in damages originally granted in the landmark suit, but thrown out by a judge. It is in addition to nearly $600 million in patent infringement damages upheld from the trial last year.

Apple calculated the combined total of the damages awards in the case at slightly less than $930 million.

"For Apple, this case has always been about more than patents and money," the iPhone, iPad, iPod and Macintosh computer maker said. – *AFP*

JOB WATCH

PATH
A catalyst for global health

PATH is an international nonprofit organization that transforms global health through innovation. Having just recently opened an office in Myanmar, PATH currently seeks qualified candidates looking for an opportunity to make a positive impact on the health of people in Myanmar. The following available position, Country Manager, will be based in our Yangon office.

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HELSINKI

Nokia approves mobile phone sale to Microsoft

NOKIA shareholders voted overwhelmingly last week in favour of selling the company's mobile business to US software giant Microsoft in an attempt to reinvent the once-proud Finnish telecoms titan.

According to Nokia – which will now become a telecom equipment and services company – the deal was almost unanimously approved with 99.52 percent support from shareholders at an extraordinary meeting in Helsinki.

The "yes" vote was expected. Analysts judge the deal as positive for the ailing Finnish firm.

"It was expected that the decision of selling the mobile phone division would arouse strong emotions," Nokia board chairman and interim chief executive Risto Siilasmaa said during the meeting.

"We are certain that if we had continued with the old strategy, we would have most likely put Nokia, its shareholders and its employees in serious difficulties."

Nokia's share price has doubled since the plan was announced in early September with Microsoft agreeing to pay 5.44 billion euros (US$7.35 billion) for the loss-making company's mobile phone division.

"It's an excellent deal. It's hard to imagine a better price for a division experiencing structural losses," Pierre Ferragu, an analyst at the brokers Sanford Bernstein, told AFP.

The sale of the assets, which include the Lumia smartphone trademark and technology, must take place in early 2014.

Once the world leader in mobile phones, Nokia lost its top place to South Korea's Samsung in 2012.

Although still number two in the overall mobile phone market with a 13.8pc market share in the third quarter of the year – ahead of US giant Apple (6.7pc) – Nokia is still far behind Samsung (25.7pc) and ranks eighth in the fast-growing smartphone market, according to technology consultancy Gartner.

Microsoft executive communications manager Ryan Asdourian demonstrates a 6-inch Nokia "phablet" running Windows software during a meeting last week in Washington. Photo: AFP

The deal spells the end of the once iconic Nokia branded mobile handsets, which have experienced a spectacular fall in sales since the arrival of Apple's touchscreen iPhone in 2007.

"For Nokia shareholders it's a good price because this business is loss-making and Nokia was too small to relaunch," said Eric Beaudet, an analyst at Natixis bank.

"Nokia has good products but that's not enough. Their problem is their fixed costs are too high, which means they need 10 percent of the world smartphone market to be profitable. At the moment they have less than half that."

Tuesday was also an opportunity for shareholders to discuss the string of failures that brought the Finnish group to its knees.

IN BRIEF

New York

Bloomberg to downsize news staff, scales back on arts coverage

The Bloomberg news agency said last week it was cutting staff as it scales back its arts and culture coverage, saying it was seeking to position itself for "significant growth".

The cuts are expected to affect fewer than 40 positions out of more than 2000 staff, according to a source familiar with the matter.

Bloomberg also confirmed that Hong Kong-based reporter Mike Forsythe had "left the company", but denied it killed an article he had written because it could have been embarrassing to Chinese leaders.

Geneva

German giant Commerzbank to expand Swiss operations

German giant Commerzbank said last week that it was launching a massive expansion of its operations in Switzerland with the aim of tapping business sector clients.

The move came just months after the bank said 5000 jobs would be axed as it tots up the toll from the financial and sovereign debt crises.

It also comes amid intense international pressure on Swiss banks over the country's banking secrecy rule that critics claim is helping to shield tax evaders.

In a statement, Germany's number two bank said that next year it would open six regional offices in the Swiss cities of Basel, Bern, Lausanne, Lucerne, Sankt Gallen and Zurich.

– *AFP*

SYDNEY

Spat between Qantas and Virgin turns ugly

VIRGIN Australia chief John Borghetti last week lashed out at "offensive" allegations made by Qantas in an escalating row over foreign ownership, with reports that lawyers had been called in.

It follows Qantas chief Alan Joyce this week blasting what he called a "virtual takeover" of Virgin Australia by foreign airlines, claiming they were working to destabilise the national carrier.

On November 19, Qantas launched an online campaign against a capital raising by Virgin that could leave 72 percent of the carrier in the hands of Singapore Airlines, Air New Zealand and Abu Dhabi-based Etihad.

Mr Joyce, who was in Canberra Wednesday to lobby politicians, said it would result in an "unfair playing field".

He claimed the foreign backing allowed Virgin to run at a loss by setting uncompetitively low prices to win customers from Qantas, an allegation Mr Borghetti denied.

"To say that Virgin Australia is driven by a strategy of uncompetitively low prices and irrational behaviour is offensive and absurd," he told the company's annual general meeting in Brisbane.

"The airline is run rationally with good management and a view to creating a long-term sustainable and profitable business."

He added, "We have embraced change and competition and adapted our business to it."

Mr Borghetti is so furious that he is seeking legal advice on whether there are grounds to sue Mr Joyce for defamation, Fairfax Media reported, although the airline could not immediately confirm this.

Singapore Airlines, Air New Zealand and Etihad already own 63 percent of Qantas' main domestic rival.

Mr Joyce wrote to Prime Minister Tony Abbott and all state governments this week demanding they "fully examine the motives behind the virtual takeover of Virgin Australia by foreign airlines, and to prevent destabilising of the domestic aviation industry, local tourism and jobs".

Qantas said the situation was compounded by the disadvantage it experienced from the restrictions imposed by the Qantas Sale Act when it was privatised in 1995, which limits foreign ownership in the national carrier to 49pc. – *AFP*

72%

Amount of Qantas that would be in the hands of a consortium through Virgin's capital raising campaign

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Property

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Thai firm scales back on port

THE Thai industrial giant behind the controversial deep-sea Dawei Port agreed last week to dramatically scale back its role in the project, leaving it short of investors.

The Dawei mega-project was trailed as a way to encourage foreign investment in Myanmar as it emerges from decades of military rule, and give Thailand a gateway to the Indian Ocean and Western markets.

But it has faced funding difficulties and resistance from local villagers amid accusations of land-grabbing.

Operator Italian-Thai Development (ITD) said it had agreed with Myanmar's government to end its role as sole developer.

"With the new framework agreement, ITD will no longer take the sole concession," said a company spokesperon Pravee Komolkanchana.

The Dawei project aims to build a deep-sea port and a 100-square-mile (250-square-kilometre) industrial estate in southern Myanmar.

The plans include a steel mill, a fertiliser plant, a coal-fired power station and an oil refinery as well as the port.

Thailand's Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra led a business delegation to Dawei last year to drum up more support for the 10-year, US$8 billion project.

BILLION

$8

Estimated capital required to build the Dawei Port

Mr Pravee said ITD has invested more than $30 million so far and completed an estimated 15-20 percent of the project.

"We are now stopping main construction work," he said, adding his firm will continue with some maintenance contracts.

Mr Pravee added that the agreement "will give opportunities for other private companies to invest".

"It will be more secure and keep the project going," he said, adding Myanmar may seek funding from international lenders or other foreign companies.

– AFP

IN BRIEF

Washington

US homes sales drop for second straight month

US existing-home sales fell for a second consecutive month in October as tight inventory continued to push up prices sharply, damping demand, the National Association of Realtors said Wednesday.

Sales of previously owned homes fell 3.2 percent to an annual rate of 5.12 million in October from 5.29 million in September, the NAR said.

The October sales were much lower than the 5.20 million pace estimated by analysts.

– AFP

Yaw Min Gyi area growing in line with foreign tastes

BRIDGET DI CERTO

bridget.dicerto@gmail.com

A woman walks past a string of recently opened Western shops in Yaw Min Gyi. Photo: Aung Htay Hlaing

A STROLL down Yaw Min Gyi Street in Dagon township is a time lapse in action that doubles as a succinct progress report showcasing the invincible health of Yangon's booming property development.

Crumbling red-brick villas, with cavernous bay-windows eyeing the hungry jungle vines that do a better job holding the structure together than the decades-old mortar, give way to shiny new condo developments careening ever upward.

Street barbeque stalls with well-worn and precariously cracked plastic stools are fading into smart cafes that serve pizza and burgers and boast hipster-chic lighting installations.

As the international eye of investment turns to Myanmar, the influxes of expats here are finding a home in this area on and around Yangon's Yaw Min Gyi Street.

Nestled north of gridlocked downtown and behind the iconic Parkroyal Hotel, Yaw Min Gyi is blossoming with creature comforts for the expat renter.

Al-fresco bakeries, Western cafes, boutique fashion retailers and even Yangon's first "Fro-Yo" dot the pretty streets of the Yaw Min Gyi area, all of which offer a magnetic "feels like home" appeal that caters to the wave of new foreign faces.

"Most changes started in 1990," said Tony Lin, owner of the iconic Sun Cafe that has been on the street since 1947.

Auntie Boke reminisces over an old photo of what Yaw Min Gyi used to look like. Photo: Bridget Di Certo

"The cafe used to be in a house at the end of the street with a wedding reception and we moved into this new building because we thought it would attract more customers," he said of the Sun Cafe's current location inside one of the first condo apartment blocks built in the area.

The 45-year-old businessman said he had watched in the last few years as his clientele morphed from local working men into a boisterous range of Western and Japanese expats.

Auntie Boke, a real estate agent based in Yaw Min Gyi, has also seen her clientele change dramatically over the past decade.

At that time her family had a flat inside one of the colonial, two-storey apartment blocks that shouldered the then-languid downtown avenues.

"This is a special community where my family has been living since 1966," the entrepreneur real estate agent said inside her offices on Yaw Min Gyi, which was formerly known as York Road under British rule.

Without the modern conveniences of Wi-Fi or mobiles, the property market in each neighbourhood by default fell into the hands of the most knowledgeable family or individual in the thicket. For the jovial Auntie Boke this was a natural playground for a woman whose family also ran the neighbourhood's phone shop.

Changes have come in all shapes and sizes and all ends of the spectrum, from welcome to problematic.

"I don't ever want to leave this place," the raven-haired, motherly figure said. "This [neighbourhood] has a great location, not far from downtown, good electricity and a good community feel – many neighbours are friends."

Auntie Boke's adoptive business protégé, American David Ney, agreed that one of the aspects of Yaw Min Gyi is the enduring sense of community shared among the expats and locals that populate its modernising streets.

In addition to western shops, one can also find spas, gyms and an international selection of dining options, all of which opened in recent years.

"All the well laid-out cafes and shops in this area are relatively new," Mr Ney said. "There's been the addition of an international burger shop in six months, and there are two pizza places on this road.

"There's also a very large Japanese population here. Because of that there are Japanese-language-only restaurants. Apparently walking into a place like that is exactly like walking into a small Tokyo sake bar."

With the international influences comes the suffocation of traditional street stalls and vendors. Street stalls that were almost a permanent fixture on the streets are being swept away in favour of large construction and increased traffic.

"It's changing – I wish there was some way to compensate for both [old and new]," Mr Ney lamented.

The first changes came when the wealthy Chinese Mandalay and Shan populations came to Yangon in the nineties, said Gallery 65 curator and owner U Min Lwin. The recent stream of Western and Japanese expats has brought a new wave of changes to the area, helping fuel demand for galleries like U Min Lwin's, as well as open mike nights and other performance exhibitions held in stately residences in the area.

Gallery 65 is the bottom half of one of the last colonial landed homes in the area. U Min Lwin's parents still live on the upper floor of the swelling, dark teak residence.

"It used to be [filled with] houses like this – with yards and where everyone knew each other," U Min Lwin said.

Three other stately homes in similar style to his parents' were built on the road in the early 20th century, but two were razed during World War II while the third was developed into apartment blocks, U Min Lwin said.

"The atmosphere has changed here."

'The cafe used to be in a house at the end of the street with a wedding reception and we moved into this new building because we thought it would attract more customers.'

Tony Lin
Owner of Sun Cafe

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

'[Yaw Min Gyi] has a great location, not far from downtown, good electricity and a good community feel – many neighbours are friends.' — Auntie Boke

French Nigeria hostage recounts escape

WORLD 32

The Fine Print

Legal & tax insight

Registering collectively owned land in Myanmar

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INVESTORS and builders here and abroad are hoping to see the condominium bill publicised on November 10 come into law soon. Along with the Myanmar Foreign Investment Law, the Myanmar Condominium Law provides valuable first-hand information for investors, most of whom have been waiting for the law to pass before developing real estate here. At the same time, the bill raises many important issues and presents some challenges in its current draft state.

The bill covers the towns and areas within the boundaries of the development committees of Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay, and specified towns and regions. According to the draft, foreigners will be eligible to own up to 40 percent of the apartments in a condominium, so long as they are six storeys up or higher. Condominiums will also be able to serve as collateral when taking out loans from the bank.

All collectively owned land is to be registered, and the Ministry of Construction will issue rules and require notification on the minimum numbers of storeys, apartment rooms and the planned materials to be used by the collective owners.

Section 7 of the draft explains the process. The project has to conform to government provisions for urban planning, and areas less than one acre require special ministry approval. According to this provision, the developer can build on registered, collectively owned land only.

Confusion arises, however, with the issue of changing the title. The land is to be changed from privately owned to collectively owned before construction begins. The transferer is the legal owner of the land, but who is the transferee? In fact, the apartments' owners are; but since the developer cannot know who the future owners of the apartments will be at this stage, more clarity is needed about how to transfer the land title and register land as collectively owned.

The difference between a condominium and an apartment is a purely legal one, as it's impossible to know a condo from an apartment simply by looking at it or visiting the building. What defines a condominium is the form of ownership.

Legally, a condominium means an apartment, house, office building, or other multiple unit complex, units of which are individually owned with each owner receiving a deed of the unit purchased. Ownership includes the right to sell or mortgage that unit as well as share in joint ownership of any common passageways or facilities.

All in all, we welcome this draft condominium law. It's a key ingredient in the drive to a more modernised, developed state. It will help bring more convenient living to the people and will support the development of the business sector and increase foreign investment in real estate.

Wint Thandar Oo is Partner of Polastri Wint & Partners and U Tin Sein is senior associate.

Overview of Mandalay downtown at the back of 78th street. Photo: Phyo Wai Kyaw

New property tax could chill market in Mandalay

PHYO WAI KYAW
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A SCHEME to set standard real estate prices in Mandalay could cast a chill over the property, market experts said, after the region's revenue department implemented a 37 percent tax on property transactions earlir this year.

The plan came into force on November 15, and is applied to land on a per-acre fixed price according to its location.

Some estate brokers said the new standard prices are higher than actual prices in some areas.

"I've never of anyone offering K7 billion for one acre on the Yangon-Mandalay Road," said U Kyaw Win of the Mann Myay Yazar estate agency.

"If there's a gap between the fixed price and the actual price, dealers could find it hard to pay the tax. We heard that when Yangon introduced this scheme they consulted the Myanmar Real Estate Services Association, but this didn't happen in Mandalay," he said.

U Doe Phone, of Golden Brothers Real Estate Agency, said standard prices, coupled with the high tax demand, could cool the market down.

The highest standard price is K12 billion per acre, in areas between 26th and 35th streets, and 73rd and 84th streets.

U Khin Maung Than, chair of the Myanmar Real Estate Services Association (MRESA), said last month that people would be prepared to pay "reasonable" taxes.

"The government will have to explain to the public why they should pay tax," he said, adding that some people misunderstood the issue.

"Sellers can set whatever price they like, but they then would need to pay tax on the basis of the fixed standard prices," said U Khin Maung Than on November 19.

The government imposed a 37pc tax rate on land transactions in August 2012 in the hope of reducing high property prices.

IN BRIEF

Paris

Eiffel Tower staircase to go under hammer in Paris

A piece of Parisian history will go under the hammer this week with the sale of a 15-step section of the Eiffel Tower's original spiral staircase.

The iron steps, which once connected the tower's second and third levels, will be auctioned as part of a sale of Art Deco furniture by auction house Artcurial in the French capital.

Expected to fetch between US$27,000 and $40,000, they stand around 12 feet (3.5 metres) high and weigh 1650 pounds (750 kilogram).

The original steps were removed in 1983 to comply with new health and safety regulations.

Colombo

Sri Lanka slaps tax on foreigners, raises defence budget

Sri Lanka slapped a new property tax on foreigners and increased telephone charges in a new budget last week that also included another rise in defence spending four years after the civil war ended.

President Mahinda Rajapakse, who is also the finance and defence minister, told parliament he was raising telecom tax from 20 to 25 percent to rake in more revenue from the rapidly growing industry.

Mr Rajapakse introduced a 15pc tax on land leased to foreign nationals, slapped a 2pc tax on banks and raised duties on the import and export of several commodities.

The estimated revenue from the new measures for 2014 was not immediately clear. – *AFP*

IN PICTURES

Towers of the cable railway under construction overlook El Alto, Bolivia last week. The cable railway, being built by Swiss company Doppelmayr, that will link the cities of La Paz and El Alto will be the world biggest urban network of the kind, with a length of 34,000 feet (10,337 meters). *Photo: AFP*

ISTANBUL

High-speed railway in Turkey slated for Feb

Turkey is aiming to finally open a high-speed railway between Istanbul and Ankara in February after several delays, a transport ministry official said last week.

The US$4 billion railway is the latest in a number of ambitious and often controversial urban development projects by the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"The line is expected to open in February but it might be delayed," the official told AFP, without elaborating.

The government had announced that the high-speed link between Turkey's capital and its biggest city would be inaugurated in late October or early November, but it was delayed for safety reasons, according to the official.

Transport Minister Binali Yildirim had said last week that development projects worth a total of 86 billion Turkish lira ($42 billion) would be completed in six years.

The Istanbul-Ankara line is part of a wider project to construct high-speed railways in 15 cities, Mr Yildirim told reporters at a budget meeting.

"The testing for the line has begun," he said.

The railway will slash travel time between the two cities to three hours, with trains travelling at up to 155 miles (250 kilometres) an hour.

Currently, the journey takes about eight hours by train or six hours by bus and at least five by car.

The line will also be connected to the Istanbul sea tunnel under the Bosphorus that opened in October to mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of modern Turkey.

Mr Erdogan's government is frequently criticised for its major construction plans that include a third airport in Istanbul and a third bridge across the Bosphorus.

Critics say the government has pioneered grandiose projects to fulfil election promises ahead of the local polls in March next year.

Opposition to the mega projects led to mass anti-government protests across the country in June. – *AFP*

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Mr. TAKASHI SHIRAI - General Manager of Nippon Steel and Sumikin Engineering Co., Ltd. Mr. SHIRAI is a world authority in this field and has to his credit the design of Taipei tower, the 2nd tallest building in the world and his exclusive speech is **"Design of high rise buildings in Myanmar".**

29th Nov, 2013
► Venue : Summit Parkview Hotel (Innwa Hall - II)
50, Ahlone Road, Dagon Township, Yangon.
► Date : Friday, 29 November 2013
► Time : 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM

Email: bht@pebsteel.com, Tel:(+95) 01 653 410, 09 73 257 042
sta@pebsteel.com, Tel: (+95) 942 11 02126

SAO PAULO

Brazil to privatise airports

AIRPORTS in Rio and Belo Horizonte, two host cities of the 2014 World Cup, are to be privatised at an auction to be held in the country this week, Brazilian civil aviation authorities said.

Press reports said five consortia, each with at least one foreign partner, are to take part in the November 15 auction at the Sao Paulo stock exchange.

A spokesman for the National Civil Aviation Agency would only say that names of the bidders are to be officially released at the end of last week.

Officials said a minimum bid of 4.8 billion reals (US$2.1 billion) is required for a 25-year concession for Rio's Galeao airport, the country's second busiest.

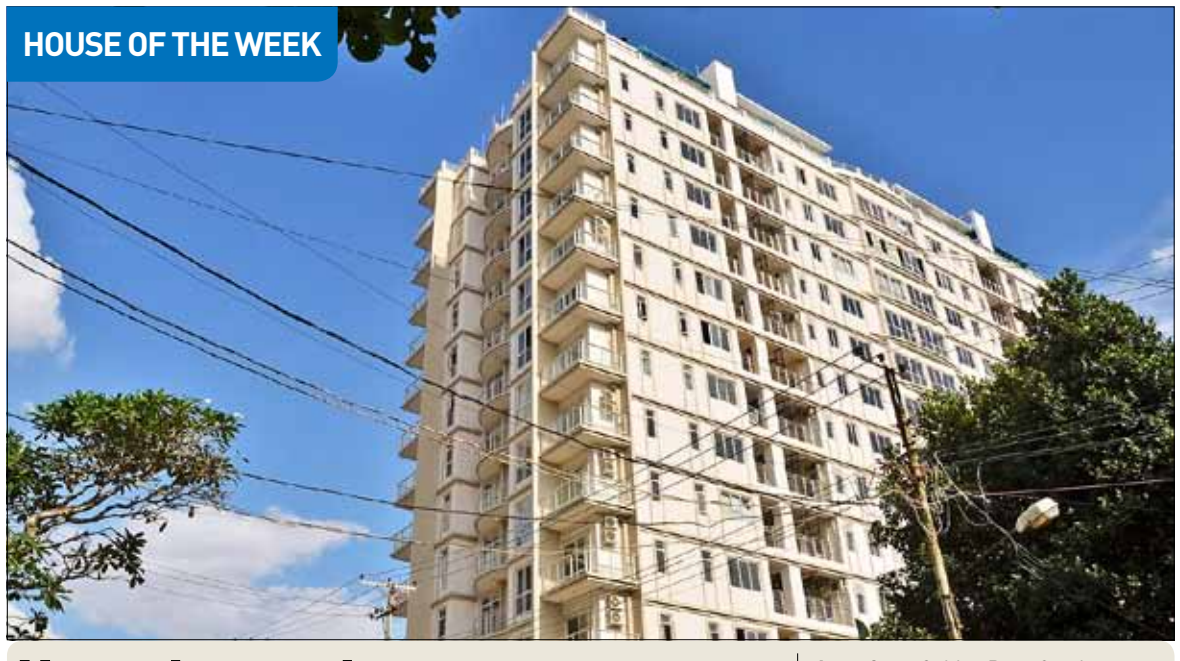
A minimum offer of 1.09 billion reals ($490 million) is necessary for a 30-year concession for Belo Horizonte's Confins airport.

The contracts are set to be signed next March.

Last year, 20-year concessions valued at a total of $14 billion were granted to manage three airports – two in Sao Paulo and one in Brasilia – breaking the monopoly of Infraero, the federal agency that runs more than 70 airports.

Brazil, a continent-sized country of more than 200 million, is upgrading its ageing and congested airports in preparation for handling tens of thousands of tourists expected for next year's World Cup and the 2016 Rio summer Olympics. – *AFP*

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



Up and up and up

This week's home is in Ahlone township, convenient for downtown, and commands a fine view of Shwedagon Pagoda. The Golden Rose condominium apartment is now open for rent or sale. The unfurnished 2514-square-foot apartment with parquet floor offers two double rooms and two single rooms, plus a storeroom and kitchen. A dining area and a prayer room are not partitioned off. Ample windows afford sunlight and natural breeze. This apartment comes with four air conditioners.

– *Ei The The Naing*

Location : Golden Rose Condominium, Hnin Si Gone Street, Ahlone township
Price : K729 million (for sale), US$4500 (for rent)
Contact : (Mya) Pann Tha Khin Real Estate Service
Phone : 01 229648, 09 43127288, 09 73097581

PARIS

3D printing 'will change the world': researchers

FROM replacement kidneys to guns, cars, prosthetics and works of art, 3D printing is predicted to transform our lives in the coming decades as dramatically as the internet did before it.

"I have no doubt it is going to change the world," researcher James Craddock told AFP at the two-day 3D Printshow in Paris last week.

A member of the 3D Printing Research Group (3DPRG) at the UK's Nottingham University, Mr. Craddock nevertheless predicted that use of 3D printing would be limited.

"You wouldn't want to make a cup from a 3D printer because it would probably fall apart, leak or poison you, but you would use it for high-value, beautiful items or replacement parts," he said.

"The real revolutionary factor is industrial use," he added.

Here is a selection of the potential future uses of 3D printing:

Californian engineering company Solid Concepts said earlier this month it had produced a metal replica of a classic 1911 shotgun.

US entrepreneur and inventor Brook Drumm, however, warned that the process of printing a gun would be slow, expensive and potentially dangerous.

Mr. Drumm set up his firm Printrbot to produce printers costing from US$400 that print plastic items.

Metal printers can cost around $250,000 and "the particulates are so fine that your skin could absorb them through the pores. The materials are not safe," he said.

The gun itself – unless made out of metal – would also be unreliable.

"There's a lot of moving parts in a gun and they need to be precise," he said, adding that he tried to print a plastic gun but gave up because it took so long.

"Time-wise, if I was going to print a plastic gun and you were going to go and buy a metal one, even if it took you two weeks to get approval I probably still wouldn't have it working first," he said.

Fancy a replica of a Viking helmet or one of the Louvre's most famous sculptures on the mantelpiece?

American Cosmo Wenman has used thousands of photographs taken in some of the world's biggest museums to produce exact plastic copies.

> **'I have no doubt it is going to change the world.'**
>
> **James Craddock**
> 3D printing researcher

Works he has produced include the ancient Greek statue Venus de Milo which is in the Louvre.

"If you look at the small print at museums in terms of taking photographs, they say that you cannot put them to commercial use," he said.

"But from a practical point of view that is not enforceable and for antiquities there is no intellectual property issue," he said.

Canadian Jim Kor's 3D Urbee car is made out of plastic and stainless steel.

The futuristic-looking three-wheeler is electric but uses petrol at higher speeds.

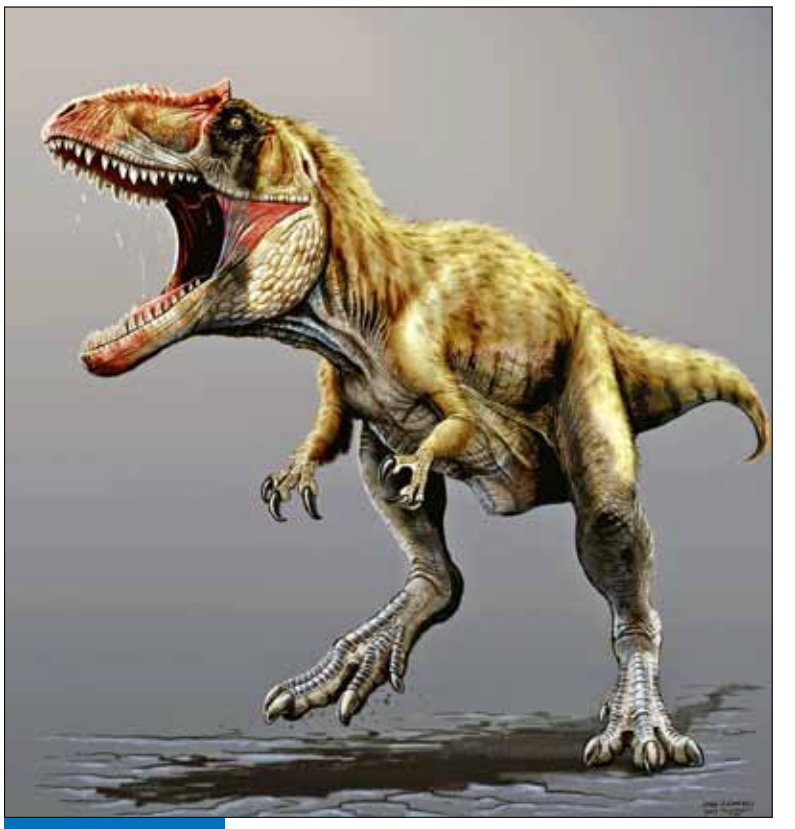
Production designer Mr. Kor says if a car company mass produced the vehicle it would be possible to keep the price down to around US$16,000.

"We want it to be the Volkswagen Beetle for the next century, low-cost and long-lasting too," he said.

"It should last 30-plus years. Our goal is that it should be 100-percent recyclable."

Jewellery can made to ensure that each piece is slightly different, known as "mass customisation".

3D printing can also make the production process of a wide variety of industries far less expensive and time consuming. – *AFP*



IN PICTURES

This artist's rendering shows an adult *Siats meekerorum*. A newly discovered species of carnivorous dinosaur – one of the three largest ever discovered in North America – lived alongside and competed with small-bodied tyrannosaurs 98 million years ago. The apex predator of its time, it kept tyrannosaurs from assuming top predator roles for millions of years. *Photo: AFP*

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MYANMAR INFRASTRUCTURE '13

World

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LONDON

Two on bail in British thirty-year slavery case

BRITISH police have released two suspects on bail after they were arrested in connection with the case of three traumatised women who allegedly spent 30 years as slaves, Scotland Yard said on November 22.

A 69-year-old Malaysian woman, a 57-year-old Irish woman and a 30-year-old Briton who had apparently spent her entire life in servitude were rescued last month, police said.

Police arrested a man and a woman, both aged 67 and described as non-British nationals, at the house in south London on November 21 but the unnamed pair were later freed after questioning.

"Two people arrested on Thursday, 21 November, in connection with an investigation into slavery and domestic servitude have been bailed until a date in January pending further enquiries," a police statement said.

Police had earlier described it as one of the worst cases of its kind they had seen.

"These women are highly traumatised, having been held in servitude for at least 30 years with no real exposure to the outside world, and trying to find out exactly what has happened over three decades will understandably take some time," Detective Inspector Kevin Hyland, who leads Scotland Yard's Human Trafficking Unit said.

Police said there was no evidence to suggest that the case involved sexual abuse.

Detectives said they did not know where the youngest woman was born, adding that the relationship between the three women was "part of an ongoing investigation and we are not willing to speculate".

"However, we believe that the 30-year-old woman had been in servitude all her life," a Scotland Yard statement said.

The women, who are now in an unspecified location, were rescued after the Irish woman "found the courage" to call the Freedom Charity on October 18 after it was featured in a television programme about domestic slavery, police said.

The charity usually deals with forced marriage and honour-based abuse but is also used to working with women who feel trapped in difficult situations.

The Irish woman said she and two others had been held against their will in a house in London for 30 years.

The charity raised the alarm with police and with the help of secret telephone calls the 30-year-old British woman and the Irish woman agreed to meet with charity workers and police on October 25.

Police identified the address where they had been held, in the south London borough of Lambeth. – *AFP*

IN PICTURES

A man uses an umbrella to shelter from the wind as he tries to light Philippines, on November 21. More than 4000 people were killed an some of the strongest winds ever recorded by a storm, made landfall.

WARSAW

Climate talks falter as green groups walk out

EXASPERATED environmental groups walked out of faltering UN climate talks in Warsaw on November 21 as rich and poor nations bickered about who must do what to curb planet warming.

Negotiators were at loggerheads on the penultimate day of talks over divvying up responsibility for cutting greenhouse gas emissions and scaling up aid to poor states vulnerable to climate change effects.

In a dramatic flourish, six environment and development groups walked out, saying the annual round of talks had delivered little more than hot air since opening on November 11.

"The Warsaw climate conference, which should have been an important step in the just transition to a sustainable future, is on track to deliver virtually nothing," said a statement announcing the groups' decision to "voluntarily withdraw".

The signatories are Greenpeace, WWF, Oxfam, ActionAid, the International Trade Union Confederation and Friends of the Earth.

They claimed more than 800 UN-accredited observers were part of the mass protest.

The groups pointed the finger at Poland for its "endorsement" of a global coal summit held in the same city and at the same time as the climate talks. They also singled out Japan for slashing its carbon emissions goal, and Australia for its decision to scrap a carbon tax on high emitters.

"Governments here have delivered a slap in the face to those suffering as a result of dangerous climate change," said Greenpeace executive director Kumi Naidoo.

Non-governmental organisations attend the talks as observers and advisors. Decision-making is reserved for UN member states.

On November 20, UN chief Ban Ki-moon had urged nations to "much bolder" action to stave off an existential peril for the earth.

Gathering more than 190 nations, the talks are meant to pave the way to a pact by the end of 2015 to limit warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial levels by taming carbon gases emitted by burning coal, oil and gas.

On current emissions trends, scientists warn the Earth could face warming of 4 C or higher – a recipe for catastrophic storms, droughts, floods and a land-gobbling sea-level rise.

Delegates said there have been few advances in crafting a roadmap for arriving at a historic climate deal in Paris, now only two years away.

"There are still things that are very important to us where we do not see enough progress, for instance a clear timeline, and key elements of the 2015 agreement," European climate commissioner Connie Hedegaard said after another round of all-night talks.

"We are not moving forward in our discussions."

Developing countries want wealthy nations to shoulder a bigger share of emissions cuts to make up for a long history of fossil-fuel combustion. – *AFP*

PARIS

French Nigeria hostage recounts daring escape

THE French hostage held for 11 months by an Islamist group in Nigeria told French television on November 21 he made his audacious run for freedom after his captor left a key in the door by mistake.

Francis Collomp, speaking on the TF1 channel, described how on the night of November 16 one of his captors entered the dungeon where he was kept to perform the ablutions required for Islamic prayer, but left the keys in the door.

"While he was in the bathroom, very quietly I opened the closed door. I had all my things ready to leave and then I locked it [behind me]," the 63-year-old engineer said.

"I ran into an alley towards the main road, then on the road I started walking quickly so that no one would notice me," he said.

After trekking for 4 to 5 kilometres, Mr Collomp found a motorcycle taxi, which took him to a police station in Zaria, a nearby town.

The Frenchman was abducted at gunpoint in Katsina state last December, and was held for nine months in the city of Kano before he was brought to Zaria, around 160 kilometres away by road, two months ago.

French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault (right) walks next to French former hostage Francis Collomp upon his arrival at the military airport of Villacoublay outside Paris, on November 18. Photo: AFP

Mr Collomp said he was "in the loop" about negotiations for his release, and was spurred to action after failing to be freed in early summer and with the unlucky fate of others in his position on his mind.

"I should have been freed in June but that didn't happen. Then they told me that things had hit a dead end. I also knew the story of the journalists that were killed, and that had an effect on me," he said, referring to the two French radio correspondents kidnapped and murdered by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali on November 2.

Mr Collomp prepared his escape for months, he said, walking up to 15 kilometres a day in circles in his cell to stay fit, anticipating a long walk awaiting him outside. He lost 38 kilograms in total, admitting he had been "on the heavy side" beforehand.

French President Francois Hollande compared Mr Collomp's escape to "an adventure story" on the day of his return to France, saying he was proud of his compatriot and his "exceptional courage".

A Roman Catholic priest, 42-year-old Georges Vandenbeusch, was kidnapped in northern Cameroon and reportedly taken by Islamist militants to Nigeria in mid-November.

France now has seven hostages officially being held abroad, including the priest, four journalists in Syria and two people taken in Mali. – *AFP*

Taiwan makes biggest heroin bust in 20 years

WORLD 34

Chinese cyber spying may justify sanctions:US

WORLD 37

Indonesia's illegal dentists back in business

WORLD 35

a fire amid the rubble of destroyed homes in Tacloban, d up to 4.4 million displaced when typhoon Haiyan packing *Photo: AFP*

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia's 'Lizard King' back in business

A NOTORIOUS Malaysian wildlife trafficker dubbed the "Lizard King" for his smuggling of endangered reptiles is back in business despite a 2010 conviction for illegally trafficking endangered species, according to an investigative report by Al Jazeera.

Anson Wong was arrested in August 2010 at Kuala Lumpur's international airport while attempting to smuggle 95 endangered boa constrictors to Indonesia.

He was sentenced to five years in jail but a Malaysian appeals court sparked an outcry when it freed him in 2012.

Malaysian authorities had said in the wake of Wong's arrest that his licences for legitimate wildlife trading were revoked.

But the Al Jazeera report, whose reporter Steve Chao went undercover to talk with wildlife dealers and associates of Mr Wong's, said Mr Wong and his wife Cheah Bing Shee were believed to be trading albino pythons and other wildlife from their base in the northern Malaysian state of Penang.

Trade in the pythons requires a permit, said the report by the Qatar-based network aired late November 21.

It said documents also revealed shell companies used by Mr Wong to hide his activities.

Illegal trade in wildlife is thought to be worth at least $19 billion a year worldwide, according to conservation groups.

In Penang, Mr Chao confronted Mr Wong, who declined to comment.

Several of mr Wong's former associates also claimed that corrupt customs officials in Malaysia, Indonesia and Madagascar were helping to facilitate Mr Wong's activities, the report said.

Malaysian wildlife trafficker Anson Wong (centre) being escorted by the police at the sessions court in Sepang, outside Kuala Lumpur in 2010. Photo: AFP

In a press release, Al Jazeera said Mr Chao and his team worked with anti-trafficking groups to track Wong's Malaysian-based operation.

Kadir Hashim, enforcement director of Malaysia's wildlife department, confirmed Mr Wong's permits remained revoked.

"The department is investigating both," Mr Wong and Ms Cheah, he said in an e-mail response to an AFP inquiry, without elaborating further.

Mr Wong is described by wildlife groups as one of the world's most active smugglers of wild animals.

He was sentenced to 71 months in jail in the United States in 2001 after pleading guilty to trafficking in endangered reptiles.

Despite efforts by Southeast Asian authorities to crack down on animal smuggling, the practice persists and poses a threat to a number of threatened species, conservationists say.

Shenaaz Khan, an official with wildlife-trade monitoring network Traffic, said the group was "not at all" surprised by Al Jazeera's report. – *AFP*

TOKYO

New Japan islet created in volcano eruption

A DRAMATIC volcanic eruption in the Pacific Ocean has created a tiny new islet in Japan's territorial waters, officials said November 21, the first time in decades the nation has seen the phenomenon.

The navy spotted smoke about 1000 kilometres (600 miles) south of Tokyo on November 20 and Japan's coastguard later verified the birth of the islet around the Ogasawara island chain.

Video footage showed plumes of smoke and ash billowing from the 200-metre island, and Japan's coastguard said it was warning vessels to use caution in the area until the eruption cools off.

"Smoke is still rising from the volcanic island, and we issued a navigation warning to say that this island has emerged with ash falling in the area," said a spokesman for the maritime agency.

He added that the islet may not last long due to erosion, but if enough volcanic lava surfaces and solidifies it could mark a new entry on the map.

Similar eruptions in the early 1970s and mid-80s created tiny islets in Japan's territory that have since been partially or completely eaten up by the ocean.

Japan's top government spokesperson joked that he hoped the outcrop would mark an expansion of Tokyo's maritime territory – a reference to diplomatic rows with China and South Korea over ownership of other islands far from the tiny islet.

"If this becomes a solid island, our country's territorial waters will expand," chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga said in response to questions about the new addition. – *AFP*

White smoke rises from a newly created islet from a volcano near the Ogasawara island chain in Japanese waters. Photo: AFP

THE HAGUE

Watchdog wants companies to destroy most of Syria's chemical weapons

THE world's chemical watchdog solicited private companies on November 21 to help with the destruction of around two-thirds of Syria's vast stock of chemical weapons, as options dwindle ahead of a tight deadline to complete the task.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) published a note on its website saying it wanted to identify companies for disposing of chemicals and other materials "associated with the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons".

It requested companies "interested in participating in a potential tendering process" to approach the OPCW.

The world is in agreement about destroying Syria's chemical weapons as part of a US-Russia deal aimed at heading off strikes on the Damascus regime after deadly chemical attacks in August.

But despite consensus on destroying the chemicals outside war-wracked Syria, no country has volunteered to have them destroyed on its soil.

Syria is cooperating with the disarmament and has already said it had 1290 tonnes of chemical weapons and precursors, or ingredients, as well as over 1000 unfilled chemical munitions, such as shells, rockets or mortars.

Some chemical weapons are destroyed through a process known as hydrolysis, in which agents, like detergents, are used to neutralise chemicals such as mustard gas and sulphur, resulting in liquid waste.

Nerve gases such as sarin are often better destroyed through incineration.

The OPCW request said 798 tonnes of chemicals needed to be disposed of, as well as 7.7 million litres of effluent.

A rebel fighter burns a Syrian flag found in a building that belonged to Syrian government forces in the northern city of Aleppo on November 21. Photo: AFP

"These are chemical products that can be destroyed in a secure way by the industrial sector [including] some of the most toxic chemicals that have not yet been mixed," OPCW spokesperson Christian Chartier told AFP.

"This is about two-thirds of Syria's chemical weapons," he said.

"Businesses will be chosen as with any tender, according to criteria including the proposed timeframe, competence, price, etc," Mr Chartier said.

The OPCW's appeal would nevertheless require a country to accept the chemicals to be received on its soil, a solution that has so far proved elusive.

Any company that might receive the chemicals would need to complete their destruction by the same mid-2014 deadline.

The document said that the deadline for destruction of resulting effluent would be December 31, 2014, or six months after the UN Security Council-backed deadline for Syria to completely destroy its arsenal.

Destruction by companies would be monitored by the OPCW.

Companies have until November 29, to express their interest, the OPCW said.

With the number of potential hosts dwindling, the OPCW said the chemicals could even be destroyed at sea on floating incinerators.

– *AFP*

TAIPEI

Taiwan makes biggest heroin bust in 20 years

TAIWAN police said on November 17 they had cracked a major drug ring, confiscating 229 kilograms (504 pounds) of heroin in their biggest seizure of the drug for 20 years.

The 600 heroin bricks were discovered in 12 amplifier boxes in a container airlifted from Vietnam, the Criminal Investigation Bureau said.

Police said they had arrested eight people and were pursuing other suspects.

Bureau commissioner Lin Te-hua put the "wholesale" value of the haul at around NT$900 million (US$30.5 million), but said its street value in Taiwan could be 10 times more.

Authorities in October seized 220 pounds of heroin smuggled in a cargo container in the southern city of Kaohsiung.

Last year they seized 176 pounds of heroin in a fishing boat, and arrested seven people involved in smuggling it from Cambodia.

Under Taiwan's anti-drug laws, manufacturing, transporting and dealing in heroin is punishable by death. – *AFP*

Six hundred heroin bricks discovered in 12 amplifier boxes in a container are displayed at the Criminal Investigation Bureau in Taipei. Photo: AFP

BANGKOK

Thai ruling party escapes punishment

THAILAND'S ruling party on November 20 escaped the threat of dissolution in a key court verdict that slammed a bill it had proposed as "unconstitutional", as political rivals rallied in Bangkok.

The Constitutional Court verdict was welcomed by both sides of Thailand's fractured political landscape, with both pro- and anti-government figures claiming victory.

"The judges dismissed the petition to dissolve the political parties," Constitutional Court judge Jaroon Intaracha said, reading the ruling.

But he criticised the process of pushing through a proposal to amend the constitution – drawn up under the military junta that deposed divisive former premier Thaksin Shinawatra – to make the Thai senate a fully elected body.

The court said the amendment "aimed to obtain power in an undemocratic way", adding that some MPs had been found to have voted on behalf of others, a practice it said was "illegal".

It added the ruling party's amendment bid was "unconstitutional".

Judicial rulings have played an important role in politically turbulent Thailand.

Two pro-Thaksin premiers were forced from office in 2008 by such rulings, making way for the opposition Democrat Party, which is backed by the military and Bangkok's elite, to take power in a parliamentary vote.

Anti-government protesters blow whistles as they gather in front of the Constitutional Court in Bangkok on November 20. Photo: AFP

The pro-government Red Shirt rally group, which has gathered over 20,000 people in the capital ahead of the verdict, welcomed the court decision not to dissolve the ruling Puea Thai party.

But the group slammed the court's ruling against the amendment.

"If we cannot amend one article, how about the whole constitution," said prominent Red Shirt leader Jatuporn Prompan.

A lawyer for the opposition Democrat Party said the ruling should trigger the resignation of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, Mr Thaksin's sister.

"The amendment, which was not based on rule of law, but to benefit of specific people, cannot go through," said Virat Karlayasiri. – *AFP*

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KOLKATA

$1m in gold stashed in aircraft toilet

CLEANERS working on a commercial plane in eastern India have found 24 gold bars worth more than US$1 million stuffed into a toilet compartment, officials said Wednesday.

India, which rivals China as the world's biggest gold consumer, has witnessed a spike in smuggling after import duties were hiked three times this year to try to dampen demand for the precious metal.

The plane belonging to Jet Airways was being cleaned at Kolkata airport on Tuesday after a trip from the eastern city of Patna. It had previously been flying on international routes.

"The cleaning staff of the airport were going though their routine duties and found two bags in the toilets of the plane," director of the airport BP Mishra told AFP.

The 1-kilogram gold bars "have not been claimed by anyone. No arrest has been made as yet".

Senior customs official RS Meena estimated the value of the haul at about 70 million rupees, or $1.1 million. – *AFP*

A man poses with a gold bullion bar. Photo: Wikicommons

JAKARTA

Illegal dentist business bites back after ban

FOR more than 30 years, Indonesian dentist Edi Herman has been fixing the teeth of Jakartans in the rusty chair of his tiny shop, advertising his services with a huge poster of sparkling pearly whites on blood-red gums.

He is one of thousands of low-cost, unlicensed dentists, whose small stores with their lurid signs can be found nestled in grimy alleys and wedged between red-tiled houses across the capital.

But, after years of horror stories about people suffering terrible damage at the hands of unscrupulous practitioners with neither clean tools nor training, the government moved to ban them from all dental work in 2011.

The unlicensed dentists are fighting back, however.

They have managed to get the ban overturned after challenging it in the constitutional court – and are now demanding the right to practise.

"We demand to be granted a licence so we can operate legally. We will never give up our fight," said Dwi Waris Supriyono, chairman of the Informal Dentists' Association.

For Mr Herman, 56, a ban would have destroyed his livelihood and stopped him from practising a trade passed down to him and his brothers by their father.

"The government wants to put us out of business," said Mr Herman, dressed in a faded T-shirt and sarong, as he puffed on a clove cigarette waiting for his next patient at his central Jakarta shop.

"But I've been doing this since 1980, and I don't want to lose my job."

Wanting to protect their livelihoods, the informal dentists – who can be found all across Indonesia – argue that they are the only realistic option for many in a country where millions live in abject poverty.

Herman charges 50,000 rupiah (around US$4.50) for a simple scaling job, and 1,500,000 rupiah (around $140) to fit a brace – four to five times lower than prices at professional, licensed dentists.

It is also much easier to find an informal dentist. The health ministry estimates there are 75,000 of them in Indonesia, compared to 35,000 licensed practitioners.

The government insists that numerous tales of dental disaster at the hands of unlicensed practitioners vindicates its drive to impose a ban.

One case is that of cleaner Fitri Hayati, whose attempts to get her teeth straightened at two illegal dentists in Jakarta were far from successful.

A woman cleans an informal dentist shop in Jakarta. Photo: AFP

The 24-year-old was fitted with braces but one tooth has been pushed down so it now looks longer than the others, and she said she suffers from "unbearable pain".

"I can't eat or sleep as my whole mouth is in pain since I started wearing these braces," she told AFP.

Senior health ministry official Untung Suseno Sutarjo accused unlicensed dentists of "putting our people at risk for their own gain.

"These practitioners have no qualifications. They use tools which have not been cleaned or sterilised properly."

Informal dentists, known as "Tukang Gigi" in Indonesian – which translates as "Tooth Workers" – have been plying their trade for generations.

In the late 1980s, authorities sought to crack down on them by ordering that they limit their work to making only dentures.

But the new law was largely ignored and they continued to perform many other procedures regardless.

So in 2011 the government sought to ban them from doing all dental work, a move the informal dentists countered by seeking a judicial review of the new legislation.

Earlier this year the constitutional court sided with them and declared the law against the constitution, which states that every Indonesian has the right to work.

Mr Supriyono, of the Informal Dentists' Association, argues that despite a lack of formal training, unlicensed practitioners often have years of experience and skills passed down from generation to generation.

"Informal dentists have been around a lot longer than the professionals," he said. "Earlier generations learned their skills from the Chinese in the 1800s," he said, referring to Chinese dentists who travelled to Indonesia in the company of merchants.

The first dentist school, where licensed practitioners are trained, only opened in 1928, he added.

The association now wants unlicensed dentists to be given the right to officially perform procedures such as fitting crowns or putting in fillings, things many are already doing anyway.

And there is a hope that at least some of them may achieve this. In its ruling, the constitutional court ordered the health ministry to grant informal dentists a licence if they successfully pass a training course.

But ministry official Mr Sutarjo predicted only a small number in the unlicensed sector would be able to take the course.

"Some are illiterate and many have not even graduated from high school," he said.

He added that only those who meet certain educational criteria would be allowed to attend courses and that the selection process "would eventually make them disappear".

He said that a plan to ensure all Indonesians have access to healthcare, which will start being rolled out next year, would help cover the cost of professional dentists for those on low incomes.

– AFP

BEIJING

China commemorates the Korean assassin Japan brands a 'criminal'

CHINA and South Korea are to cooperate on a memorial to a Korean national hero who assassinated a Japanese official a century ago, provoking a diplomatic row on November 19.

Relationships between all three neighbours are heavily coloured by history, while both Beijing and Seoul are embroiled in separate territorial rows with Tokyo over disputed islands.

The latest flashpoint between them is Ahn Jung-Geun, who shot and killed Hirobumi Ito, then Japan's top official in Korea, at the railway station in Harbin in northeast China in 1909.

Mr Ahn, a Korean nationalist, killed Mr Ito in response to Japan's colonial designs over the Korean peninsula where its influence had been growing.

He was hanged the following year, when Korea also became a formal Japanese colony, heralding a brutal occupation which lasted until the end of World War II in 1945.

Japan already held territory in mainland China at the time and went on to invade Manchuria in the 1930s before occupying most of eastern China during the war.

South Korean President Park Geun-Hye met China's top foreign policy official Yang Jiechi on November 18. Both said work was progressing on a monument in Harbin to Mr Ahn, according to a statement by the presidential Blue House in Seoul.

"Ahn Jung-Geun is a very famous anti-Japanese fighter in history," Beijing's foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei said at a regular briefing Tuesday. "He is respected by the Chinese people as well."

"China will in accordance with relevant regulations on memorial facilities involving foreigners make a study to push forward relevant work."

Mr Ito, Japan's first prime minister, was one of the most significant figures in the country's modern politics and Tokyo vehemently opposes the monument.

"We have been telling the South Korean government that Ahn Jung-Geun was a criminal," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, the government's top spokesman, told reporters on November 19.

"I'm afraid this is not good for relations between Japan and South Korea." – *AFP*

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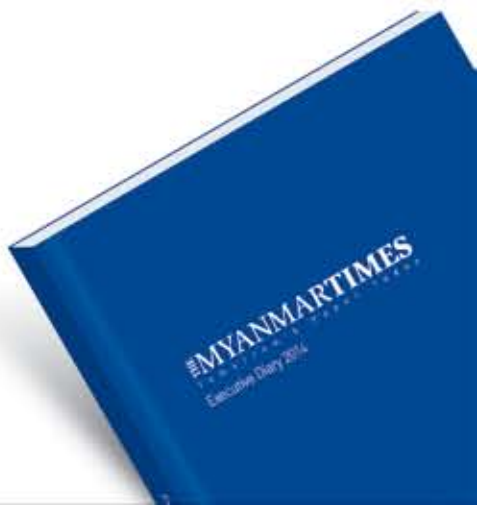

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JAKARTA

Indonesia downgrades its Australia relations

THE Indonesian president on November 20 suspended cooperation with Australia over the sensitive issue of people smuggling, denouncing Canberra's "Cold War" behaviour following allegations its spies tapped his phone.

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono announced that cooperation with Indonesia's southern neighbour in a number of areas would be temporarily halted, including military exercises and intelligence exchanges.

But the most important for the Australians will be the key area of people smuggling, as Canberra seeks to stem a flow of thousands of asylum seekers arriving by boat from Indonesia.

Mr Yudhoyono said that "coordinated military cooperation" between Jakarta and Canberra, which includes joint work on people smuggling, would be halted "until everything is clear".

"For me personally, and for Indonesia, the wiretapping by Australia ... is difficult to comprehend," an angry Mr Yudhoyono told reporters.

"This is not the Cold War era."

Cooperation with Australia on exchanging intelligence and sharing information would also be suspended as well as joint military exercises, the president said.

He was speaking after a meeting at the presidential palace in Jakarta with Indonesia's ambassador to Australia who was recalled earlier this week over the scandal.

It was the latest angry outburst from Indonesia over reports, based on documents leaked by US intelligence fugitive Edward Snowden, that Australian spies tried to tap the phones of the president, his wife and ministers.

On November 19, Mr Yudhoyono publicly lambasted Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on Twitter for what he said was a lack of remorse over the allegations, first reported in Australian media.

Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa earlier said Indonesia would downgrade ties with Australia, telling reporters, "Like taps, we are closing off areas of cooperation one by one."

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (right) walks next to Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott during his visit in Jakarta. Photo: AFP

Asylum seekers are a flashpoint issue in Australia, and stopping the influx of thousands of would-be refugees who board boats in Indonesia is a priority of Mr Abbott's new government.

He partly won power in September with a series of hardline policies to stem the flow of asylum boats, including turning vessels back to Indonesia when it is safe to do so.

Mr Yudhoyono's decision to suspend cooperation in several areas came after Mr Abbott again refused to apologise on November 20 over the scandal.

"I do understand how personally hurtful these allegations have been, these reports have been, for him and his family," he told parliament.

"I do note there have been allegations and even admissions in the past on this subject. People didn't overreact then and I certainly don't propose to overreact now."

Mr Abbott appeared to be referring to an admission by Jakarta's former intelligence chief to similar spying operations by Indonesia in the past, reported in the Australian media on November 20.

The Australian and the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* both cited comments from a 2004 television interview with Indonesia's retiring intelligence chief Abdullah Mahmud Hendropriyono, in which he said all governments tapped each other's communications.

He admitted that Jakarta had eavesdropped on the phone calls of Australian politicians, had tapped Australian civil and military communications, and even bugged the Australian embassy in Jakarta during the East Timor crisis in 1999. At the time, no apology was sought by then Australian prime minister John Howard.

The leaked documents, reported by the ABC and the *Guardian* newspaper, showed that Australia's electronic intelligence agency tracked Mr Yudhoyono's activity on his mobile phone for 15 days in August 2009, when Labor's Kevin Rudd was prime minister.

At least one phone call was reportedly intercepted.

The list of tracking targets also included Mr Yudhoyono's wife Ani, Vice President Boediono – who was in Australia last week – former Vice President Jusuf Kalla, the foreign affairs spokesman, the security minister and the information minister, the reports said. – *AFP*

WASHINGTON

Chinese cyber spying may justify sanctions

A US panel on November 20 raised the spectre of sanctions against China, warning Congress that Beijing has not curbed its rampant spying on American interests, a major national security concern.

The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission in its annual report also flagged China's massive increase in military spending as a worry, citing its naval expansion as a threat to America's role in Asia.

The report accused China of "directing and executing a large-scale cyber espionage campaign" penetrating the US government and private industry.

"There is an urgent need for Washington to take action to prompt Beijing to change its approach to cyberspace and deter future Chinese cyber theft," said the commission, set up by Congress to make policy recommendations.

The report listed proposals aimed at "changing the cost-benefit calculus" for China including banning the import of the manufacturing giant's goods that are determined to include technologies stolen from the United States.

Other possibilities include restricting access to American banks for companies deemed to have used stolen technologies or banning travel to the United States for people involved in hacking.

The commission called for a combination of steps, saying China would likely "make only temporary or minor changes" in response to solo measures.

The report comes after months of disclosures from former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden that America engaged in sweeping espionage worldwide, including the monitoring of online correspondence and tapping the communications of leaders of both friendly and rival countries.

China has used Mr Snowden's revelations to accuse US President Barack Obama of double standards, saying Beijing is also a victim of cyber espionage.

The commission's report said the United States and China have maintained dialogue on cybersecurity but quoted observers as estimating that Mr Snowden's disclosures have set back US efforts "by at least six months".

"Frankly, yes, it has hurt the US ability to express concern. There's no question of that," Dennis Shea, the vice chairman of the commission, told reporters.

"I personally believe there is a distinction between what the United States does for security purposes and the wholesale economic espionage that's going on directed against the United States," he said.

In a report released in February, the security firm Mandiant said China was devoting thousands of people to, and has made a major investment in, a military-linked unit that has pilfered intellectual property and government secrets.

The commission said the Chinese unit decreased activity for about one month after the Mandiant report, but the reduction may have been because the US government shared information with internet service providers.

US National Security Adviser Susan Rice, in a speech Wednesday at Georgetown University, said cyberespionage also hurt China "because American businesses are increasingly concerned about the costs of doing business" there.

"If meaningful action is not taken now, this behaviour will undermine the economic relationship that benefits both our nations," she said.

The wide-ranging report warned that China, which has steadily ramped up its military budget as its economy soared to become the world's second-largest, may soon challenge US forces' dominant role in Asia.

People's Liberation Army "modernization is altering the security balance in the Asia-Pacific, challenging decades of US military preeminence in the region", it said.

The report added that China is "rapidly expanding and diversifying its ability to strike US bases, ships and aircraft" throughout the region, it said. – *AFP*

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that **Robert Bosch GMBH** a company organized under the laws of Germany and having its principal office at 70442 Stuttgart, Germany is the owner and sole proprietor of the following trademark:-

(Reg: Nos. IV/193/1967 & IV/11140/2013)

in respect of:- "Merchandise of all types relating to the fields of electrical engineering, electronics, optics and precision mechanics, machinery, applicants and jigs and fixtures for industry and household"

Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademarks or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

U Kyi Win Associates
For **Robert Bosch GMBH**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416 Dated: 25th November, 2013

TRADE MARK CAUTION

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(Reg: Nos. IV/5007/2001 & IV/8288/2013)

AURORA

(Reg: Nos. IV/5009/2001 & IV/8289/2013)

KING STAR

(Reg: Nos. IV/5008/2001 & IV/8290/2013)

The above three trademarks are in respect of:-
"Passengers cars, tires, tubes, flaps, wheels for tires" Class: 12

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **Hankook Tire World Wide Co., Ltd.**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416 Dated: 25th November, 2013

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(Reg: No. IV/11129/2013)

in respect of: - "Carbonated beverages; beer; beer-flavored soft drinks; non alcoholic beer; non-alcoholic fruits extracts; ginger ale; non-alcoholic fruit juice beverages; whey beverages; fruit juices; waters (beverages); tomato juice (beverages); sherbets (beverages); non-alcoholic beverages; cocktails, non-alcoholic; non-alcoholic fruit nectars; aerated water; cola drinks; isotonic beverages; fruit based beverages containing lactic acid; vegetable beverages; preparations for making beverages; syrups for beverages"

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **Kirin Holdings Singapore Pte. Ltd**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416 Dated: 25th November, 2013

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AGARWOOD

(Reg: No. IV/10096/2012)

in respect of: "Business management of hotels and resorts/motels and other temporary accommodation including serviced apartments and apartment hotels; public relations services in relation to temporary accommodation, including hotels and motels, serviced apartments and apartment hotels; marketing of temporary accommodation including hotels and motels, serviced apartments and apartment hotels including the advertising of the aforementioned services via the Internet and other global computer networks." - Class: 35

"Property and leasing services including apartment house management, renting of apartments and flats, rental of serviced apartments; management of rented accommodation; management of serviced apartments, providing long-term housing accommodation." - Class:36

"Temporary accommodation services, accommodation (rental of temporary), catering (food and drink), rental of meeting rooms, restaurants, cafés, reservations of temporary accommodation; providing temporary housing accommodation; providing serviced apartments; hotel services." Class: 43

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U Kyi Win Associates
for **Millennium & Copthorne International Limited**
P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.
Phone: 372416 Dated: 25th November, 2013

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Manchester City Football Club Limited, a company incorporated in United Kingdom, of Etihad Stadium. Etihad Campus, Manchester, M11 3FF, United Kingdom, is the Owner of the following Trade Mark:-

M.C.F.C. Superbia In Proelio

Reg. No. 12011/2013

in respect of "**Class 25:** Clothing, footwear, headgear; sports clothing; leisurewear; football shirts; football shorts; football socks; replica kits; replica shirts; replica shorts; replica socks; training clothing; tracksuits; training pants; waterproof clothing; sweatshirts; sweatpants; jackets; coats; fleeces (clothing); shirts; t-shirts; polo shirts; vests; singlets; blouses; knitwear; jerseys; jumpers; pullovers; sweaters; hooded tops; cardigans; waistcoats; suits; trousers; jeans; pants; shorts; leggings; skirts; ties; cravats; underwear; boxer shorts; briefs; thongs; lingerie; nightwear; pyjamas; night shirts; dressing gowns; bathrobes; beach clothes; swimwear; swim suits; bathing trunks; bathing caps; socks; gloves; mittens; scarves; ear muffs; wristbands; belts; braces; aprons (clothing); clothes linings; shoes; boots; sandals; slippers; sports shoes; training shoes; football boots and shoes; studs for football boots; hats; caps; visors; headbands; articles of clothing, footwear and headgear for babies and children; bodysuits; romper suits; sleep suits; bibs; baby boots".

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **Manchester City Football Club Limited**
P. O. Box 60, Yangon
E-mail: makhinkyi.law@mptmail.net.mm
Dated: 25 November 2013

ST PETERSBURG

Russia releases first Greenpeace activist

RUSSIAN authorities released a Brazilian Greenpeace activist from prison in St Petersburg on November 20 after she was granted bail, the first of 20 arrested campaigners set to leave jail.

Ana Paula Maciel, a deckhand on Greenpeace's *Arctic Sunrise* ship, walked out of jail following two months in detention after she and 18 crewmates were granted bail, the group said.

"Ana Paula Maciel has left prison! She is free! The first of the Arctic 30," Greenpeace said on Twitter as hearings continued into the 30 activists charged with hooliganism over their protest against oil prospecting.

Greenpeace posted a photo of Ms Maciel smiling broadly outside the prison and holding a piece of paper with the handwritten message "Save the Arctic".

Ms Maciel was granted bail on November 19, prompting Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff to write on Twitter, "I am delighted with the news."

But her legal status remains unclear. "Ana Paula's passport has not yet been given back, so she definitely cannot leave right now," said Greenpeace spokesperson Aaron Gray-Block.

Russia often requires people suspected of or charged with a crime to sign a document barring them from leaving the city. The decision to grant bail to prisoners including the US captain of Greenpeace's campaign ship has raised cautious hopes for the activists in a case that has caused global concern.

But they still face grave charges that could see them jailed for up to seven years for hooliganism.

Russia had held the 30 crew members since September after activists scaled an oil rig in the Barents Sea owned by energy giant Gazprom to protest against oil prospecting.

Twelve activists had already been granted bail on November 18 and 19 but were awaiting release pending the transfer of the bond funds from Greenpeace. The crew members' detention caused an international outcry, with stars including Madonna and Paul McCartney and politicians such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel calling for their release.

Greenpeace International activist, one of the "Arctic 30," Kieron Bryan from the UK, stands behind bars during a hearing at the Primorskiy Court. Photo: AFP

The last of the activists to be granted bail was Marco Weber of Switzerland, one of the people who attempted to scale the Gazprom platform and was briefly held on a Russian patrol ship.

Earlier courts in St Petersburg – who were considering whether to extend their detention by another three months – granted bail to the veteran US captain Peter Willcox, Danish crew member Anne Mier Roer Jensen, Dutch citizens Faiza Oulahsen and Mannes Ubels, as well as Britain's Alexandra Harris, Kieron Bryan and Anthony Perett.

Mr Willcox is one of Greenpeace's most experienced activists who was also the captain of its Rainbow Warrior ship blown up by the French foreign intelligence service in 1985.

Ms Oulahsen appeared in court with the slogan "Save the Arctic" written on her palm and hugged a friend through the bars of her cage.

In a video released by Greenpeace from the courtroom, she said, "I'm going to enjoy the fact that I can walk more than just three yards in the cell and some fresh air."

Those granted bail remain under arrest until the funds are transferred. Greenpeace has said it will supply the bail payments of two million rubles (US$60,750) for each activist.

Greenpeace International on November 20 said it had already posted bail for nine of the Arctic 30, but does not expect them to be released before the weekend and cautioned their future status was unclear.

"It is still not clear whether their movements will then be restricted. None of them have passports after they were confiscated," Greenpeace said.

Of the activists to have so far appeared before the court, only one has been ordered to stay in detention pending trial.

A court on November 18 ordered Australian activist Colin Russell, 59, who acted as the ship's radio operator, to remain in pre-trial detention until February 24, a day after the end of the Sochi Winter Olympic Games.

Greenpeace has said it was "baffled" as to why he was being treated more harshly than the others. – *AFP*

PARIS

Three IKEA France execs charged in personal data spying scandal

THREE executives at IKEA France, including the CEO, were charged on November 19 in connection with allegations the company illegally used police files to spy on staff and customers, a judicial source said.

IKEA France's CEO Stefan Vanoverbeke, CFO Dariusz Rychert and the company's former CEO Jean-Louis Baillot were charged with "complicity to collect personal data" and "complicity to violate professional secrecy", the source said.

All three were formally held for questioning by police in Versailles, near Paris, on November 18.

The charges follow police seizures at IKEA France's headquarters in the Paris suburbs earlier this month.

A spokeswoman for IKEA France said the firm was aware of the latest developments. "The company will continue to assist the establishment of the truth," she said.

On November 19 IKEA France was itself charged as a legal entity and ordered to pay a deposit of 500,000 euros (US$670,000) to secure possible compensation for the civil parties in the case, according to the same source.

French prosecutors launched a criminal probe in April 2012 following allegations that IKEA France paid for illegal access to secret police files to gain information about employees and clients.

Keen to repair its reputation, IKEA France subsequently fired four employees, launched an internal inquiry and established a code of conduct to avoid a repeat of the scandal.

Several people have been charged in connection with the case, including IKEA France's former risk management head Jean-Francois Paris.

Four civilian police employees have also been charged and are suspected of having been paid by IKEA France in exchange for confidential police files.

Jean-Louis Baillot, then CEO of IKEA France, during a presentation to the press of the 18th IKEA store to open in France. Photo: AFP

Media reports have said sources were paid about 80 euros ($110) in each case to hand over files from the police STIC file system, which tracks millions of names and personal information about criminals, victims and even witnesses.

Reports alleged IKEA France requested information on its own employees, including union members, the owners of certain car registrations and names associated with a list of mobile phone numbers.

In one case the company allegedly asked for personal information on a customer who was suing it for 4000 euros.

The judicial probe in Versailles was opened after a complaint was filed by labour unions. – *AFP*

GENEVA

Bangladeshi garment worker Amir Hamza shows his injuries from rubber bullets fired November 18 by riot police, as he recuperates in a hospital in Savar. Photo: AFP

Bangladesh garment deal should be global

ALMOST 140 Bangladeshi garment factories were shut on November 19 as thousands of workers protesting at a new minimum wage clashed with police outside Dhaka, killing at least two people.

Protests over poor wages and working conditions have gathered momentum since the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory complex in April on the outskirts of Dhaka that killed 1135 people near the Bangladeshi capital Dkaha.

Police said violence erupted at Ashulia, home to Bangladesh's biggest garment plants which make clothing for top Western retailers such as Walmart, in the industrial district of Gazipur north of Dhaka.

Witnesses said two workers died after police opened fire on labourers as they exited the GMS Composite Knitting Industry in Gazipur.

"First, factory authorities beat one of our colleagues and then as we were coming out of the factory in protest, police opened fire. Two workers died and several were injured," a factory worker said.

"The factory authorities dragged several of the injured workers inside the plant.

"We don't know what happened to them," said the worker, who requested anonymity for safety reasons.

A spokesperson for Enam Medical College where one of the bodies were kept said the male worker had a bullet wound in his neck.

Police confirmed the toll but denied they fired live rounds at the workers.

"We suspect they died during a stampede when they were coming out of the factory," said sub-inspector Saiful Islam, adding police only used non-lethal weapons.

The trigger for the new protests was worker unhappiness at the new minimum wage the government has announced for the country's four-million garment workers.

Meanwhile, a top UN official said on November 18 that measures by top Western retailers to improve safety in Bangladesh's garment factories after a disaster that claimed more than 1000 lives should be adopted worldwide, .

"It's clear we shouldn't make a double standard," said Gilbert Houngbo, deputy director general of the International Labour Organization.

"In Bangladesh, yes, but we have to make sure that the other countries, in the region and also in other regions, have it," the former prime minister of Togo told reporters.

The garment sector was spurred into action by April's collapse of the Rana Plaza factory complex one of the world's worst ever industrial disasters.

The tragedy, coming in the wake of a factory fire in November 2012 that killed 117 people, led to pledges from big-name Western retailers and the Bangladeshi government to improve conditions.

Planned measures include more frequent fire and construction safety inspections as well as expanded union rights.

Critics who have long pointed to risky conditions in the factories of the developing world note that it took more than 1000 deaths in a single tragedy to jolt the sector into action.

"Unfortunately this is always what makes the whole international community, and national communities, move," Mr Houngbo said as he launched an ILO report on the Bangladeshi economy.

"My only hope is that, at least, for Bangladesh, there will be no repeat," he added.

Bangladesh's US$22 billion garment industry is the world's second largest after China's and exports 80 percent of its output to Europe and North America, giving their retailers huge clout in its economy.

The sector is a top employer, but its 4 million workers, most of whom are women, are paid as little as $38 a month.

In the face of growing labour unrest following April's disaster, Bangladesh has opted to hike the sector's minimum wage by 76 percent to $68 beginning in December – only the fourth pay increase since 1985.

Unions complain however that skilled employees have been deprived, and further note that some bosses are cutting food and transport allowances to offset the wage hikes.

Even the new wage level will leave Bangladeshi garment workers behind their counterparts in other major exporting nations such as Cambodia (where the figure is $80), Sri Lanka ($73) and Vietnam ($78).

The wage issue has become sharply political in Bangladesh, with pro-government unions accepting $68 and left-leaning labour groups demanding $100.

It has also fed into broader strife.

Bangladesh has been reeling from a spate of violence since late October after the opposition launched protests to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign and make way for elections in January.

Mr Houngbo said he feared politics could distort efforts to improve labour standards.

"I really hope to be wrong," he said. "But after the election, depending on how it goes, and if the international and media attention is a bit off, if this is off-radar, what will be the impact? This is really the danger." – *AFP*

MEXICO CITY

Inmates control most Mexican prisons

VIOLENCE has increased in Mexico's prisons and the majority are controlled by inmates, the country's National Human Rights Commission said on November 19.

The commission found in an annual report that 65 of Mexico's 101 most populated prisons were under the control of convicts in 2012, a 4.3 percent increase from 2011.

The commission said the number of riots, fights, escapes and homicides increased last year, with 73 acts of violence that left 154 inmates dead and 103 wounded. Another 261 inmates escaped.

In 49 prisons, inmates have "privileged areas" that house banned substances and objects as well as prostitution. At least 52 prisons are overpopulated.

Mexico's ombudsman Raul Plascencia Villanueva said the prison system was in "critical condition" and needs to ensure human rights are guaranteed in penitentiaries.

The penitentiaries visited by the commission represent 80 percent of the prison population of 239,089 inmates. Mexico's prisons have room for 194,000 inmates.

In more recent examples of problems in Mexican jailhouses, seven inmates escaped from a prison in the northern state of Tamaulipas last week, days after six convicts were killed in the same penitentiary.

In one of the biggest prison breaks, 132 inmates snuck out of their facility in Piedras Negras, a city near the US border in the northern state of Coahuila. – *AFP*

TRADE MARK CAUTION

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Triumph

Reg. No. 9750/2013

in respect of "**Class 25:** Clothing, footwear, headgear".

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L
for **Triumph Intertrade AG**
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Dated: 25 November 2013

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myKyat

Reg. No. 4/11921 /2013 (31October 2013)

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U Than Maung, *Advocate*
For **Frontier Technology Partners Co., Ltd.,**
C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,** #15th Fl**,** Sakura Tower, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Dated 25 November2013 utm@kcyangon.com

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DOMINO'S PIZZA

Reg. Nos. 2866/1992, 4/694/2000,4/4093/2009& 4/4094/2009

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"Restaurant, catering and retail store services specializing in pizza pies for consumption on or off the premises". (International Class 42)

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Tin Ohnmar Tun & The Law Chambers
Ph: 0973150632
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(For.Domnern Somgiat & Boonma)
(Attorneys at Law, Thailand)
Dated: 25th November, 2013

COMAYAGUELA

Amid militarized war on gangs, Hondurians vote

ARMED soldiers receive orders in their battle against gangs in Honduras as children play during recess at a school that will serve as a polling station in the November 24 presidential election.

Some 100 military police officers arrived three weeks ago at the Jose Angel Ulloa School in Comayaguela, sister city of the capital Tegucigalpa, turning it into a barracks from which they fan out to patrol neighborhoods dominated by the Mara 18 gang.

The gang is locked in a brutal war with their rivals, the Mara Salvatrucha, which has left Honduras with the world's highest homicide rate, at 85.5 murders per 100,000 inhabitants.

The runaway violence and the country's role as a key transit point for US-bound cocaine from South America are major issues in the presidential campaign.

"Many of the threats the gangsters made to terrify or extort came from here," Captain Carlos Martinez, who heads the contingent stationed at the school, told AFP. "This is why we're here."

Major Santos Nolasco, the military police's spokesman, said drug traffickers and the "maras" or gangs, are heavily armed with AK-47 and AR-15 assault rifles as well as grenade launchers.

"This is a war against organised crime, which has powerful weapons and an organisation," Mr Nolasco said in a courtyard where children were jumping, staring at visitors or eating ice cream.

The ruling National Party (PN) candidate, Juan Orlando Hernandez, promises to keep the troops in the streets but leftist rival Xiomara Castro wants to replace them with "community police".

In the last opinion poll allowed by law last month, Cid-Gallup found that 28 percent of voters supported Mr Hernandez compared to 27pc for Ms Castro.

Human rights groups have criticised the militarisation of society and warn that soldiers, who ran death squads and made leftist opponents vanish in the 1980s, are not suited for the job.

Mr Martinez countered that troops received human rights training to support civilian police, which is overwhelmed and infiltrated by the gangs.

While people want the soldiers here, some call them "Robocops", he said.

"The situation is difficult. Bodies often appear. [The gangs] have invaded the entire territory," said Sandra Vasquez, who watched her eight-year-old son after dropping him off at school.

"Now we feel protected because [the school] is surrounded by soldiers," she said.

Near the school, Aquilina Reyes, 48, recalled her son's murder as she washed clothes in a laundromat because there is no running water on the hillside where she lives.

"The violence is dreadful," she said as she scrubbed a discoloured blouse with soap. "It's good that they sent the soldiers out into the street."

"They killed my son eight months ago. They made him get off a bus, took him and left him in pieces. I have other sons and I don't want the same thing to happen to them," she said.

The gangs force shop owners, taxi and bus drivers, and entire families to pay a "war tax", or extortion payments, under the threat of death.

"There is a lot of corruption. They remember the poor during the elections. After the process ends, we will be abandoned again," said Jaime Perez, 37, who lives in a house on the hills.

Nearby, a 47-year-old woman who runs a grocery store said she closes early to avoid the bullets that sometimes come flying in the neighborhood.

"The marginalised neighborhoods are the ones that suffer most from the violence. For us, it's every man for himself," said Margarita, who only gave her first name.

The children have become witnesses to the violence. Twenty days ago, some saw a young man killed near the school, said teacher Luz Cardenas.

"They talk about the time a grocery store was robbed, when [the gangs] enter homes to grab their enemies or whoever didn't pay the extortion money. They are familiarising themselves with violence," Ms Cardenas said.

"We teach the children that security is important and that weapons are to defend ourselves against enemies who could harm us, not for self-destruction. God first, armed forces second," she said.

At the school, six-year-old Samuel said the soldiers who joined their classes are here "to take care of us because there is danger in schools."

"The thieves come and kidnap us," he said as his friends drew a Christmas bell as soldiers armed with assault rifles walked by. – *AFP*

A child eats a sausage collected from the garbage at the municipal rubbish dump 20 kilometres north of Tegucigalpa, on November 21. Photo: AFP

CAIVANO

Toxic mafia dumps sow panic, anger in Italy

ANGER is boiling over near Naples after revelations about toxic mafia dumps blamed for rising cancer rates that have prompted accusations the state is ignoring a vast public health crisis.

Thousands have taken to the streets amid growing evidence that a far wider swathe of territory than originally thought was used by the local Camorra crime syndicate to burn or secretly bury millions of tonnes of waste for years.

The smoke-choked area north of the city has been dubbed the "Triangle of Death" and it is a grim sight – a short trip but a world away from the postcard images of the Bay of Naples and its famous cuisine.

Hidden out of sight down dirt tracks in the countryside, vast mounds of illegal and hazardous garbage, from broken sheets of asbestos to car tires and containers of industrial-strength glue, lie rotting next to farmed fields.

Periodically set alight, they billow black fumes towards neighbouring towns, but locals say the real killer lies in aquifers feeding tomato, cabbage and broccoli crops which are poisoned with chloroform, arsenic and heavy metals.

Environmental groups say the toxic garbage could affect 1.5 million people living in the southern Naples and Caserta provinces.

"People are terrified. Cancers are sharply up, along with allergies, foetus deformities and infertility," Doctor Luigi Costanzo, who treats some 1600 people in the town of Frattamaggiore, said.

Toxic waste has been buried in the area for decades, ever since the Camorra decided to branch out into the lucrative waste disposal business in the 1980s.

Instead of paying exorbitant sums to have it disposed of legally, companies paid mobsters a fraction of the cost to dump it in fields, wells and lakes.

"There were those who suspected what was going on, but farmers who tried to go to the police were threatened," said Pasquale Crispino, a farmer who has grown potatoes in the area for years.

The latest revelations about the extent of the problem came last month when parliament made public a 1997 confession by top mafia turncoat Carmine Schiavone which described in detail how and where the rubbish was disposed of.

People hold pictures of Italian politicians they consider responsible of environmental pollution during a demonstration called "Full River" in downtown Naples on November 16. Photo: AFP

Mr Schiavone's words carry weight because he is the brother of a notorious local crime boss, Francesco Schiavone, the jailed leader of the powerful Casalesi clan who is better known by his underworld moniker "Sandokan".

"It became a real business which brought money in but the residents risked dying of cancer within 20 years. I don't think they can be saved," he was quoted saying then – a claim that has fueled outrage over government inaction.

Tens of thousands of locals took to the streets of Naples this month chanting "No to Camorra!" and slamming the government for failing to act.

More protests are planned as the extent of the problem comes into focus.

"This is a humanitarian crisis. There is not one home here that does not have someone sick with a tumour," said local priest Maurizio Patriciello.

"We see black smoke at every hour of the day and night. It steals our breath and sentences us to death. Those supposed to defend us have failed," he said.

According to environmentalist group Legambiente, 10 million tonnes of industrial waste from across Italy and farther afield was buried in the area between 1991 and 2013, dumped mainly at night by over 400,000 lorries.

"Only politicians' widespread inertia, 'oversights' by controllers, a dense network of collusion and a mafia code of silence could have resulted in the 'invisibility' of such a column of lorries," it said in a report last week.

The number of tumours in women in the area has risen by 40 percent and those in men by 47pc, according to the Pascale national tumour institute, and local cemeteries have sections for the growing number of child victims.

"As mothers we are paying the highest price. No-one has yet seen fit to tell us, 'We have killed your children. We accept responsibility and will intervene to save those living,'" said Tina Zaccaria, whose daughter Dalia died aged 13.

Ms Zaccaria is one of several mothers pictured holding photographs of their dead children on thousands of postcards sent to Pope Francis – who this week telephoned a local nun, Sister Teresa, to express his concern and support.

"Someone must pay, until then this will remain a no-man's land," Ms Zaccaria said. – *AFP*

SEOUL

NK threatens 'sea of fire' for S Korea

NORTH Korea on November 22 marked the anniversary of its shelling of a South Korean border island with a threat to turn South Korea's presidential office into a "sea of fire".

The threat came as the South's army, navy, air force and marine corps launched an intensive military drill on and around Yeonpyeong Island in memory of the incident in which four people were killed in November 2010.

"Three years ago the baptism of retaliatory fire was limited to Yeonpyeong, but next time the presidential Blue House and all headquarters of the puppet regime will be targeted," the North's Korean People's Army said in a statement.

"If the South recklessly provokes us again, the sea of fire at Yeonpyeong will turn into a sea of fire at the Blue House," it said.

"Park Geun-Hye and her clique must find a painful lesson in the shameful defeat inflicted upon the South," it said, citing the South's president by her name without any title.

Three years ago on November 22, North Korea bombarded the island of Yeonpyeong after warning the South against conducting a live gunfire drill in what the North claims as its territorial waters.

The attack killed two South Korean marines and two civilians in one of the most serious border incidents since the 1950-1953 Korean War.

Most islanders fled to the mainland after the attacks but have since returned home.

In the intervening three years, the island has built new fortifications, increased the number of troops three-fold and deployed new weapons including missiles, anti-battery radars and helicopters.

A South Korean soldier patrols on the South-controlled island of Yeonpyeong near the disputed waters of the Yellow Sea at dawn on November 21. Photo: AFP

The maritime boundary – the scene of bloody clashes in 1999, 2002 and 2009 – is not recognised by Pyongyang, which argues it was unilaterally drawn by the US-led United Nations forces after the Korean war.

North Korea's military threatened to attack the island at the time of the shelling anniversary last year, saying its only regret was not sending Yeonpyeong "to the bottom of the sea" and adding it would not miss the opportunity if "warmongers" provoked it again. – *AFP*

THE G·E·M·S

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the pulse

Photo: Greg Holland

Explosive atmosphere at Taunggyi balloon festival

Photo: Greg Holland

WA LONE

walone14@gmail.com

THERE is a chill in the air, and the moon is shining high in the sky over the hills of Shan State. Hot air balloons, some made of paper and filled with fireworks, are soaring into the night sky, just before dawn, one by one. The town of Taunggyi is shrouded in a thick, morning blanket of fog.

"We are very excited," says a young man wearing a green shirt, traditional Shan pants and a colourful turban.

A dozen of his friends are preparing to launch balloons, while another group of young people are dancing to traditional music. Thousands of people are waiting in the middle of a field, their eyes following a searchlight that is shining around the festival grounds.

This is the Tazaungdaing Balloon Festival – an annual event in the southern Shan State city of Taunggyi leading up to the full moon day of the lunar month Tazaungmone on the Myanmar calendar.

This year's festival was held from November 10 to 18.

Decorated balloons are sent into sky during the Tazaungdaing Festival to pay homage to the Sulamani Pagoda, which was built in heaven by the king of the celestials. Thousands of people from across Shan State and Myanmar, as well as international visitors and tourists, come to Taunggyi to see the festival. The hotels are fully booked and the restaurants are buzzing.

The paper balloons released into the sky are 4.5 to 7.3 metres (15 to 24 feet) tall. A flame heats the air in the balloon, and it quickly ascends filled with various types of fireworks that continuously light as the balloons ascend.

Two young man carrying flaming torches stoke fire into the balloon. Soon, it's soaring rapidly into the air, and bright sparks light the sky. The crowd cheers with joy, shouting and clapping at the spectacle.

Photo: Greg Holland

Shan State is famous for its stunning scenery and the variety of people that populate its valleys and plains. During the Tazaungdaing Balloon Festival, Lisu, Taung Yoe, Shan, Pa-O, Palaung, Eng, Danu and other ethnic groups converge on Taunggyi, and the women of these tribes show off their traditional dress and dance at special ceremonies.

Hot air balloon competitions are held throughout each day and into the night. Rockets filled with fireworks are randomly fired. The daytime balloons are in the form of pagodas or represent animals such as elephants, dragons or even ducks, while the night balloons take the shape of rugby balls and elongated paper balls with multicoloured lanterns hanging around the sides.

Most visitors to the festival are local and come either on the full moon day or just before. In addition to the releasing of balloons, locals take part in robe-weaving competitions, after which the completed garments are donated to local pagodas.

U Soe Aung from the Danu Literature, Culture and Regional Development Association said the festival is supported, in part, by the many people who live in the area.

"We have asked our nationalities to lend support by donating money, and they give as much as they can to be involved in the competition," he said.

This year's balloon competition was less crowded and less competitive than previous years, which organisers blamed, in part, on the upcoming Southeast Asian Games, which will be held countrywide starting on December 11.

Sponsors and others who would normally make the trip were not involved in this year's festival, said U Tin Oo, joint secretary of the Balloon Festival Committee.

"This year only one company took part because others have given their attention to the SEA Games," he said.

"Last year, there were about 10 companies. Although there were fewer contestants this year than last, residents kept the customs of the festival strong and the overall event was still crowded, as usual."

u Kyi's daily life during her darkest years | NOW ON SALE! A new release from MCM Books by Moe Linn (aka Pho Lay)

Living well in Myanmar

Should My Family and I Get the Rabies Vaccine?

CHRISTOPH GELSDORF, MD

livingwellmyanmar@gmail.com

Stray dogs at a rescue shelter outside of Yangon. Photo: Kaung Htet

RECENTLY a friend of mine was walking in Lashio when he noticed a sudden tugging on his leg. He looked down to find a dog attached to his extremity, inflicting a bite that went through his trousers and pierced his skin. Of course he immediately began worrying about rabies, and since he hadn't been vaccinated, started calling doctors to find out what to do. Apparently the advice ranged from "do nothing," to "go to Yangon for some shots," to "go to Bangkok because the medicine we have here is not enough." He wound up flying to Thailand because the immunoglobulin injection that is the safest course of action for a dog bite (along with five doses of vaccine) was not immediately available in Lashio.

Contrast that story to a 5-year-old patient I had last week who was bitten by a street dog in front of his house. He came into clinic with a fairly nasty set of wounds in his lower leg that we were able to wash out and dress. Luckily his parents had planned ahead and he had been vaccinated against rabies. All he needed was a dose of vaccine that day and then another three days later, and that medicine is typically available in Yangon.

Despite some recent controversial efforts to reduce the street dog population in preparation for the SEA Games, their numbers are likely to remain strong across the country. Exploring the city or country will involve exposure to street dogs for the foreseeable future. And the dogs do bite. In fact the doorman at my friend's office claims a certain dog residing nearby has bitten over 40 people.

Myanmar is classified by the World Health Organization as a "high rabies endemic country." The Myanmar Ministry of Health has made what I assume is a very rough estimate of 600,000 dog bites leading to 1000 cases of rabies annually. That would make us by far the highest risk country in SE Asia.

The trouble with rabies is that the disease itself is always fatal – there is no cure. Therefore we go to great lengths to prevent its onset. This means recommending vaccination for anyone at risk, which is anyone living in Myanmar. It also means giving injections to everyone with a dog bite even though the majority of dogs aren't infected with rabies.

Getting vaccinated against rabies is straightforward and requires 3 shots into the upper arm over the course of a month. The side effects are mild: typically none, sometimes a soreness or redness at the injection site, and very occasionally a short fever or headache.

It is difficult to know whether a street dog has rabies or not, so we avoid death by taking medicine immediately after the bite. If the unfortunate recipient of the bite is lucky enough to have received the vaccine, she needs only two dose of medicine over three days. If unvaccinated she needs five-plua doses over the course of a month, as well as an immediate injection of a second medicine called immunoglobulin directly into the wound. Not only is the immunoglobulin expensive (US$150 to US$1000 depending on type), its availability in Yangon is sporadic, so may necessitate a trip to Singapore or Bangkok.

Children are considered to be higher risk of rabies because they have a greater chance of being bitten by dogs. The global estimate is that 40% of dog bites happen in kids between 5-15 years old. Presumably this is because as children explore the outside world they might chase or scare dogs in an attempt to play. Rabies vaccination for children is on the same schedule as adults.

At the moment in my Yangon clinic a full course of vaccinecosts around $50, plus the medical consultation (the vaccine costs between $0-$50 in Europe depending on the country and $200 in USA/ Canada). Rabies vaccine should be available at most international clinics and private hospitals. Unfortunately this price point puts proper rabies prevention out of reach for the majority of the country. The WHO has a protocol for a smaller dose of the same medicine to be injected under the skin rather than into a muscle, which can reduce the cost substantially. Therefore anyone interested in rabies vaccination should discuss medication access with his or her local General Practitioner.

If you have difficulty getting to a clinic quickly, the key thing to do at home is aggressively wash out the bite. The goal is to mechanically clean rabies virus out of the wound. You should do this vigorously with water or soap and water. Sterile water that you shoot through a syringe is best, which is how we do it in clinic. If possible, follow-up the irrigation with application of ethanol or iodine.In rural areas I've made a small hole in the top of a water bottle so that when squeezed it shoots a high powered fast stream of water directly into a wound.

Making the decision to vaccinate against rabies ultimately depends on the individual's appetite for risk and comfort level with the steps that would be necessary after a dogbite. Because of the higher risk for kids, I recommend thinking three times before deciding not to vaccinate your children. And it's always best to further consult with your doctor.

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Aung San returns to Kyat notes

The announcement of a new look for the country's banknotes brings celebration, and also prompts some to reflect on other, less successful currency changes in the past

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Old Kyat notes featuring General Aung San. Photo: Boothee

IN recent decades, people in Myanmar have faced an uphill struggle when it came to seeing portraits of national heroes on currency notes issued by the Central Bank.

Since the 1990s, banknotes of various denominations have featured images of a lion or an elephant on the front and a national landmark on the other side. Other than the K500 note, which bears the likeness of 19th-century commander-in-chief of the armed forces Maha Bandula, the notes have lacked historical figures.

This is soon to change, however, after an MP suggested to Pyithu Hluttaw on November 13 that currency notes should carry a picture of national hero Bogyoke Aung San.

In response, the vice president of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Daw Khin Saw Oo, announced that they were working on a series of redesigned currency notes decorated with "the country's prominent leaders, buildings, landscapes and emblems", a statement popularly understood to include Bogyoke Aung San, the country's most famous historical leader.

No date of circulation has yet been announced.

"This issue was debated in the hluttaw once by different representative months ago but it was rejected," U Thein Nyunt, the Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Thingangyun township constituency, told *The Myanmar Times* on November 14. U Thein Nyunt, who made the suggestion that led to Daw Khin Saw Oo's announcement, said that his constituents have been asking for notes which better reflected their heroes and heritage.

"When I won a seat in parliament, I spoke to people in my constituency about what they would like to demand. Many of them called for a picture of General Aung San to be printed on currency notes, and for a siren to wail on Martyr'sDay, July 19, when General Aung San and other ministers were assassinated," he said.

"It is a kind of promise that the vice president of the Central Bank of Myanmar responded that pictures of national heroes, historic landmarks and monuments will be the faces of our new currency notes," he said."That is really fulfilling for us."

U Thein Nyunt added that many neighbouring countries honour their heroes this way. "For instance, the various denominations of the Indian rupee feature Mohandas Gandhi."

Several past sets of banknotes issued by Myanmar's treasurydepartment have portrayed images of BogyokeAung San, the national independence hero who was assassinated with other members of his cabinet in 1947, six months prior to the country's emergence from British rule. His picture featured on the K25 note released in 1972, the K5 and K10 notes of 1973, the K100 notes of 1976 and the K50 notes released in 1979.

He's not the only modern historical figure to be featured on bills in the past. The K45 note released in 1987 portrayed Thakhin Pho Hla Gyi, an oil field worker who led a protest against low wages during the British colonial era. The K75 note, printed in 1985 and terminated in 1987, depicted a picture of Saya San, a farmer who staged a peasant protest over the low price of rice for the benefit of other farmers.

One by one, though, most of these bills have been removed from circulation. In 1985, the government announced that the K50 and K100 notes would no longer be considered legal tender. The K25 notes were made illegal in 1987. Today, the K10 is the only note of legal value with a picture of General Aung San on it, but inflation has meant that the K10 is virtually never seen or used and has become a collector's item instead, one of many such old bills seen most often in street stalls being hawked to tourists as souvenirs.

Such old bills may seem a quaint bit of historical novelty to visitors, but for those who remember them being removed from use, they're also reminders of turbulent times in the country's economy that lead to widespread upheaval.

Writer-turned-doctor Daw Khin Pan Hnin was working at a hospital in Lashio, Shan State, in 1987, when the K15, K25, K35 and K75 notes were made illegal.

"At first, the government announced that it was a rumour that it would discontinue the use of these notes. Later it came true," Daw Khin Pan Hnin said.

"They might have done it for some good reason but it affected [us]. At that time, I was staying at hotel run as a cooperative. I couldn't pay for my stay at the hotel and found it difficult to return home too." she added.

As compensation, she remembers, she and her medical colleagues in national service were allowed double their usual salary for one month. But the change is said to have rendered 75 percent of the country's money worthless; the resulting economic fallout contributed directly to the mass uprisings the following year.

This more recent Central Bank announcement, on the other hand, is long overdue, said Daw Khin Pan Hnin.

"It should have been done a long time ago," she said."Every woman, man and child loves Bogyoke Aung San. His courage and dedication to the achievement of independence is an example to us all."

What portrait would look best? There's no official word yet, but Daw Khin Pan Hnin has some suggestions for those in charge of the designs.

"The picture of him wearing a long coat and a cap, taken in London when he signed the Aung San-Attlee Agreement,and the portrait of him wearing the traditional turban and jacket that appeared on the K90 notes look graceful," DawKhin Pan Hnin said, but was careful to add that not just any portrait would do.

"I don't like the picture of him with a bare head that was featured on the K1 notes once," DawKhin Pan Hnin said."They should discuss what picture is respectful to be featured on notes before they are issued."

Writer U Nyi Min Nyo agrees that the image on a banknote is important. He remembers a conversation he had once in Tachileik, Shan State, where he was giving a literary talk.

"When I arrived in Tachileik, I found out they use [Thai] baht instead of kyat. I met a Thai woman and she said the baht notes are more graceful than the kyat notes because the various denominations of the Thai baht feature her king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, while our kyatnotes portray figures of animals only."

He added that Thailand is not the only example of a country using its currency to celebrate the achievements of its citizens.

"Most countries have their national heroes and well-known personalities such as scientists and authors on their currency notes. Thoughthese people have died, they are still living on in the currency notes of that country, making people remember them forever."

"Figures of animals on currency notes are terrible," U Nyi Min Nyo added. "Currency notes should feature only those the people respect, such General Aung San, U Thant and Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing, who have shown unswerving support for the country and its people."

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Several women hold candles while observing a moment of silence in People's Park in Yangon. Photo: Zarni Phyo

Transgender Memorial Day host by Myanmar LGBT

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A CANDLELIGHT commemoration ceremony was held last week in Yangon's People's Park for transgendered victims of hate crimes. Gay and lesbian participants observed a two-minute silence at the event, which was also celebrated in 10 other townships throughout the country.

The Memorial for Transgenders on November 20 was intended to raise general awareness of the gay, lesbian and transgender (LGBT) community, said Ko Tin Ko Ko, coordinator of the Kings N Queens LGBT Group.

"We hold this Memorial Day to let them know the [history]," said Ko Tin Ko Ko.

Similar events were held simultaneously in Myitkyina, Monywa, Shwebo, Kyaukpadaung, Pyay, Mandalay, Kalaw, Lashio and Kawthaung, said Ko Hla Myat Tun, program officer of the organisation Colour Rainbow.

"Some township authorities didn't allow the event because of their doubts about us. So we contacted groups of LGBT from those townships and explained what they should do," said Ko Hla Myat Tun, adding that last year the event took place in only five townships, and in Yangon had to be held in a hotel room.

"We were glad to be able to hold the commemoration in public this year. Many people were able to see us and join us," he said.

Suu Choe, a lesbian who attended the event, said she had faced the problems of being a transgender since she was young.

"I liked to dress and live like a tomboy since I was young, but my family and schoolmates didn't like it. I've experienced much discrimination, including from teachers, though some friends accepted me. The worst was that my family discriminated against me. I just wanted to be accepted," said Suu Choe.

Make-up artist Nyan Nyan, who attended the event, said he makes a point never to miss LGBT community events.

"I always attended events for gays. There is less discrimination now. We can find work easily and most of us can make a living. I appreciate the development of these organisations."

ABBA comes to Yangon! Well, not exactly…

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ALTHOUGH they are not ABBA, Myanmar fans longing to hear original songs from the world-famous Swedish pop music group will get the next best thing this month when a well-known Swedish ABBA cover band performs at People's Park (Pyithu Yin Pyin) in Yangon.

The ABBA tribute band, known as Arrival, will bring all the ABBA fan favourites to Myanmar on November 30, starting at 7:30pm. ABBA's most popular songs include *Mamma Mia*, *Fernando*, *Money, Money*, *Super Trouper*, *Chiquitita* and *I Have a Dream*.

Tickets range in price from K60,000 (US$62) to 25,000 ($26) for seated seats and K10,000 ($10) for standing.

U Kyaw Htin Latt, chief operation officer for the event's sponsor, See Zar Entertainment, said Arrival is the most popular, and authentic, ABBA tribute band currently touring.

"They sing ABBA original songs and have exclusive rights to ABBA songs. The band has toured about 50 countries since 1995 when they were founded," he said. Arrival's band members even style themselves after the original ABBA members and mimic the fashion of the time when ABBA was famous.

"When they are performing on stage, it is hard to believe that they are a different music group," U Kyaw Htin Latt said.

The original pop music group ABBA broke up in 1982. U Pee Paw, of another sponsor, Pee Paw Entertainment, said bringing the original members to Myanmar is "impossible."

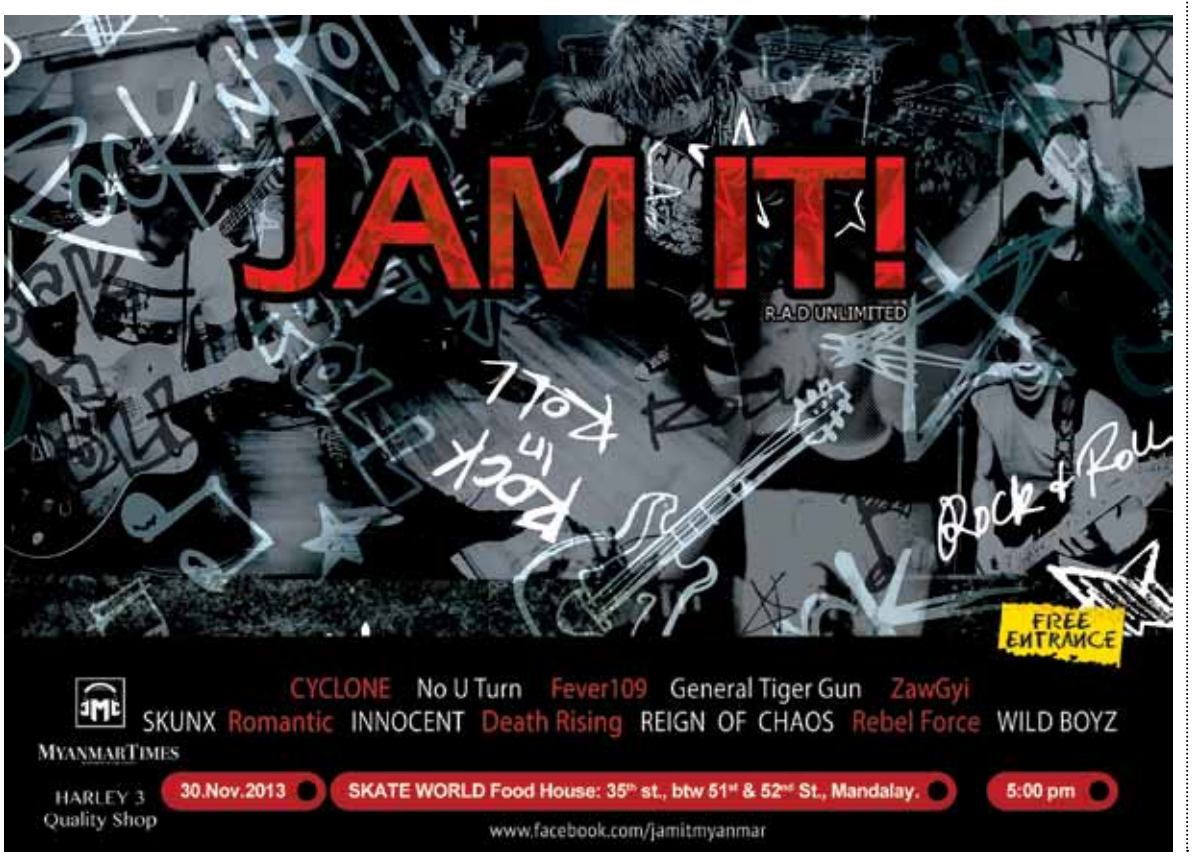
'it is hard to believe they are a different music group'

U Kyaw Htin Latt
Spokesperson for See Zar entertainment

"The singers and players are getting old," he said. "When Arrival from Sweden sings the original songs of ABBA, you will feel as if you are listening to the songs sung by ABBA … I hope their incredible costumes and voices will make the concert fabulous," he added.

Tickets are available at Yangon Life Pte Ltd. Those interested can call 09420110634/095050965.

Members of Arrival, dressed in the style of ABBA. Photo: Supplied



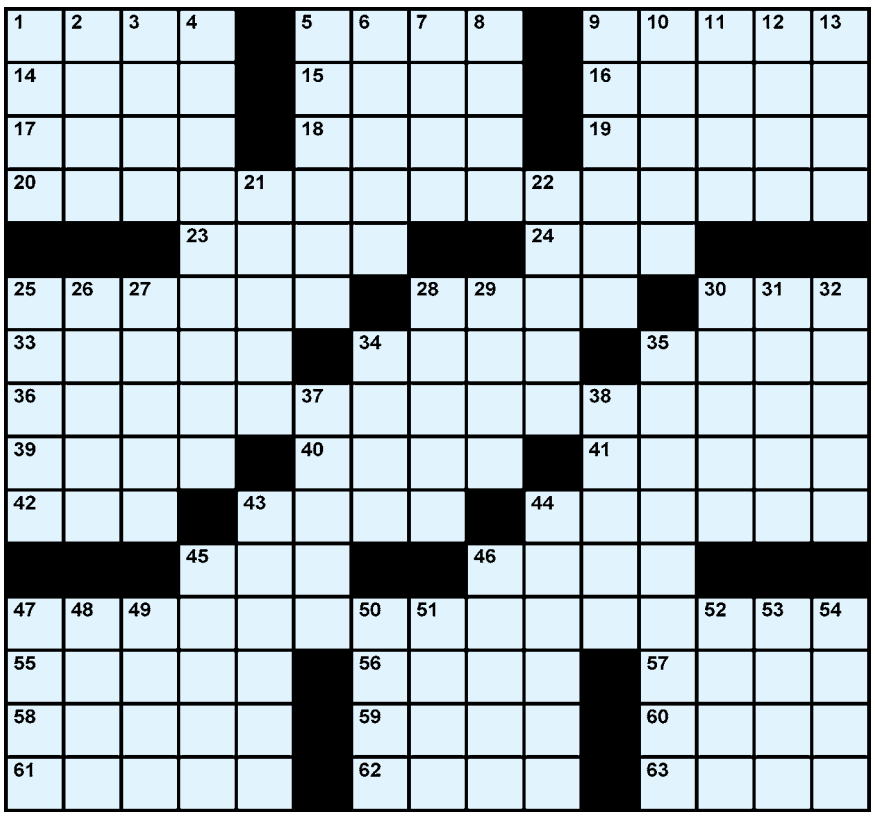
Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

UMP SAYS WHAT? *By Mary Jersey*

ACROSS
1 Clothing for the Masses
5 Whispered call
9 Largest of the deer family
14 Italian coin no more
15 Perlman of "Canadian Bacon"
16 Plenty sore
17 Clapping animal
18 Certain British noble
19 Twangy, as a voice
20 Overseas, e.g.
23 Granola ingredients
24 Actress Tilly
25 Like an immodest bathing suit
28 Utter loudly
30 One in the family, informally
33 Its capital is Oranjestad
34 In short order
35 "Arf!" equivalent
36 Manage despite not having
39 Garbage can emanation
40 Cabbage kin
41 Dishwasher cycle
42 Message from the Titanic
43 Wise guy
44 Shiny cotton fabric
45 Short snooze
46 Rectangle or triangle part
47 Like something in an unfamiliar place
55 Compose
56 Summit
57 Lackawanna's lake
58 White heron
59 Water fall?
60 Hathaway of Hollywood
61 Dilapidated
62 Beginning for "while"
63 They play ball together

DOWN
1 To say nothing of
2 In ___ of (replacing)
3 Obnoxious young'un
4 Old West staple
5 Like the woman in a Roy Orbison classic
6 Former Iranian rulers
7 Damaged by drought
8 Soft mineral
9 Steps out of France?
10 Long-armed beast
11 Brewer's kiln
12 Regulus, for one
13 Slippery and slithery
21 Bad for you and then some
22 Certain Arab
25 Palms yielding starch
26 System of principles
27 They may be garaged
28 Goblin or bugbear
29 Rob on screen
30 Trailblazing Daniel
31 Shake awake
32 Many times
34 Hitch or glitch
35 Chicken breast, e.g.
37 Giraffe cousin
38 Swap
43 It's supposed to come first
44 Making no sound
45 Famous
46 Final Four matches
47 Has bills
48 Primal impulse
49 Inexpensive swing, perhaps
50 Weight allowance
51 Bit of "Frankenstein" makeup
52 Eagle by the shore
53 Pinta's companion
54 Abound



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Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

					9	5	3	4
3		5					2	
9		1		3	2			
	5					9		8
		7		8		2		
6		8					7	
			9	2		8		6
	2					7		3
5	3	6	7					

11/28

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

DILBERT

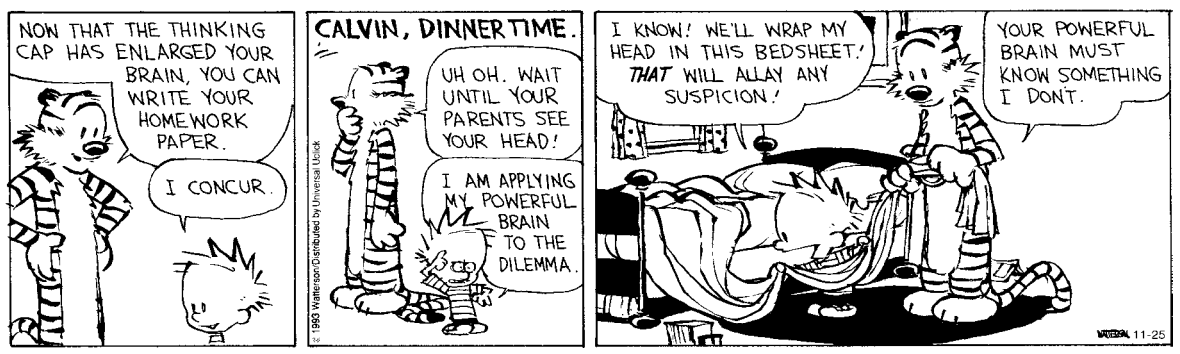
BY SCOTT ADAMS

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.

THINGS THAT INTERTWINE — **Solution: 9 letters**

S K C O S S E H C N A R B D I
T Y R E D I O R B M E N A E S
S R R D E T S I W T R E S S N
I I E E F R A C S U R P K S R
W S R E W O L F T H I R E O E
T G V O S O G N T H O N T R T
A O R T T N E A S W R E S C T
L H E H I M N N T S E C R S A
T E I D P G O E L B H A S S P
L N D I L I N A L E T L E I R
G E U E T W I Z Z L E R S R E
B Q G A S T R I C T G E O C T
E U L S I D I A R B O T R O Z
T E K N A L B N C K T N E V E
R N I O J L I N K S P I R A L

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Agree, Baskets, Bedding, Belt, Blanket, Braid, Branches, Clothing, Crisscrossed, Embroidery, Equipment, Even, Flowers, Gastric, Henequen, Initials, Interlace, Join, Knit, Legs, Links, Love, Networks, Patterns, Pretzel, Relationships, Roses, Scarf, Socks, Spiral, Tangle, Thread, Throw, Together, Trees, Turn, Twisted, Twists, Twizzlers, Wires

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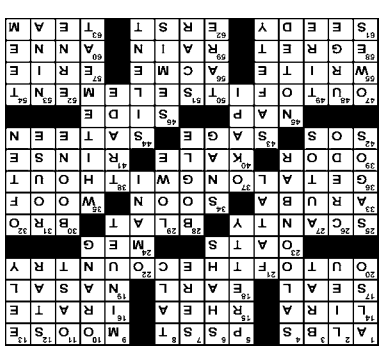

2	9	4	8	1	7	6	3	5
8	1	7	6	5	4	9	2	3
6	5	8	3	2	9	4	7	1
5	7	3	4	9	2	1	8	6
1	6	2	5	8	3	7	9	4
4	8	9	1	7	6	3	5	2
7	8	6	2	3	5	1	4	9
9	2	1	7	4	8	5	6	3
3	4	5	9	6	1	2	8	7

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PHYO'S COOKING ADVENTURE

Egg yourself onward with these two noodle dishes

WE'RE serving up egg noodles this week. Our first recipe, a simple fried noodle in oyster sauce, is good for a light meal, si chet-style. Because it's not spicy, kids enjoy it at breakfast or for an after-school snack, and it's easy to serve it up to them warm at a moment's notice.

The second recipe, Singaporean-style stir-fried noodles with coconut and curry powder, turns up the heat a little bit, as Singaporean fusion dishes tend to do. But the curry powder is still mild and, while aromatic, doesn't smell as strongly as masala or other curry spices. If you make extra portions of this vegetarian dish you can toss the leftovers in the fridge for a day or two and enjoy it again later in the week.

Ginger chicken noodles. Photo: Phyo

GINGER CHICKEN NOODLES IN OYSTER SAUCE
(SERVES 6)

2 cloves garlic
6-8 small bok choy
8-10 baby corn
1 chicken breast (boneless, skinless)
1 piece ginger (about 5cm by 3cm)
1/4 cup Kikkoman soy sauce
500 grams egg noodles
1/4 cup oyster sauce
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons ground pepper

Peel the ginger and slice thinly (julienne). Cut chicken very thinly and marinate with ginger, soy sauce and garlic.

Meanwhile, cut the bottom of the bok choy and separate the leaves individually, washing and drying them. Halve the baby corn, washing and drying them as well.

Prepare the noodles according to packet instructions.

Mix the oyster sauce with two tablespoons of cold water and set aside.

Add vegetable oil to wok and heat on medium heat. When the oil is hot enough, transfer chicken into wok, reserving the marinate liquid. Fry chicken for 2-3 minutes or until cooked through. Transfer chicken to plate, sprinkle ground black pepper on top and set aside.

Add remaining oil into wok and fry baby corn for 2 minutes, then add the bok choy leaves, the marinade liquid and the oyster sauce mixture. After 2 minutes, add the noodles. Mix well so that the noodles are coated in sauce. Bring the chicken back to the wok and mix in well, then remove from wok.

Serve with spicy chilli sauce or homemade green chilli sauce.

SINGAPOREAN-STYLE FRIED NOODLES
(SERVES 6)

500 grams egg noodles
1/2 cup dried black fungus
2 bean curd or hard tofu
1/3 cup light soy sauce
1/3 cup Chinese rice wine
2 tablespoons sugar
1 cup coconut milk
1 1/2 cups chicken stock
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup frozen peas
4 cloves garlic
2 teaspoons grated ginger
6 shallots (diagonally sliced)
2 1/2 cups curry powder
3 small red chillis (halved, de-seeded and diced)
Salt to taste
Coriander to garnish

Singapore-style noodles. Photo: Phyo

Prepare noodles according to packet instructions.

Soak the black fungus in hot water, then clean them well once they are soft. Cut into thick ribbons. Cut bean curd into 2cm cubes and drain well.

In a big bowl, mix light soy sauce, rice wine, sugar, coconut milk and chicken stock.

Add oil to wok and heat on medium heat. When the oil is hot fry bean curds. When they start changing to a golden colour, add frozen peas, garlic, ginger, shallots, curry powder, black fungus and chillies. Fry for another 30 seconds. Add noodles to mixture in wok and mix well, then pour the coconut mixture over the noddles. Fry for 5-6 minutes, until the noodles have absorbed most of the liquid.

Add salt to taste. Serve with garnishes of coriander and wedges of lime.

TIPS

Pork can be substituted for chicken in the first recipe. The second recipe can also be made with seafood.

Adding a tablespoon of vegetable oil into the boiling water before preparing the noodles will make the noodles smooth and silky and keep them from sticking to each other.

SHOPPING LIST

I have used fresh egg noodles from the supermarket. McCormick curry powder is available at large supermarkets.

QUOTE

"A fit, healthy body – that is the best fashion statement."
–Jess C Scott, author

A slice of France at the Alamanda Inn

A WINDY drive down the back streets of Yangon's fashionable Golden Valley will bring you to a hidden retreat.

A row of used bikes greet you in the driveway that takes you to the restaurant of the Alamanda Inn. High ceilings with fans, open walls and green foliage help create a relaxed tropical atmosphere.

Unfortunately I made the mistake of sitting on the outer area where there wasn't any air from the ceiling fans to blow the mosquitos away. Although there were coils placed under the dining table, the pesky little critters managed to chomp away at my ankles throughout the night.

I would recommend sitting somewhere in the middle of the room where there is some air flow if visiting at night.

Providing a boutique bed and breakfast service, the Alamanda Inn's restaurant also caters for external guests looking for a tasty, yet hearty meal.

The food is French influenced, with Moroccan flavours infused throughout the menu -- and the tajines come highly recommended.

I chose a fish tajine (K10,000) with a side serve of couscous for an additional K2000 (the couscous ended up served inside the tajine with the fish rather than as a separate side dish but if you don't ask for it, you won't get it). The couscous was light and fluffy and the tajine was a generous portion of fleshy white fish, vegetables, preserved lemon and green olives. The overall effect was a perfect balance of sour and sweet with moist vegetable juices that were soaked up by the couscous.

My dining partner went for something even heartier -- the steak, hunter-style, served with vegetables (K8500) and a portion of fries (K2000) to accompany the main. Large chunks of steak, perfectly cooked to a medium rare were served in a tomato-based cacciatore-style sauce. Again, the meat was a generous serve and when the fries were placed next to the main dish, the portions seemed challenging to finish.

Hunter-style steak with a side of vegetables. Photo: Staff

We had also ordered a starter, the tartine au bleu to share (K3000), but that actually arrived after our main dishes were served. The strong blue cheese was melted on a thick crust of toasted white bread, with a juicy slice of tomato to highlight the contrast in flavours. Perhaps because it was served after our mains, I found the dish a little bland, but at least the pungent blue cheese had a good, strong bite to it.

The Alamanda Inn also stocks a cellar with some reasonably priced varieties of Bordeaux. Our meals were paired with the Chateau Bel-Air, priced at K23,000. Light in body and tasting like a classical old world wine, the Chateau Bel-Air made the perfect match for all three choices. It helped bring out the complex flavours of the blue cheese but didn't take away from the more delicate flavours of the fish, or the stronger flavours of the red meat.

I had a great dining experience and will be back to try more, especially because of the well-priced and decently portioned food.

Alamanda Inn

60b Shwe Taung Kyar Road (Golden Valley Road), Ph 01 534513

Food:	8
Drink:	8
Atmosphere:	8
X-factor:	8
Service:	7
Value for money:	9

Total Score: 8/10

Wine Review

RED WINE

Stone Cross Merlot-Pinotage 2009, South Africa

A dry merlot that never quite lives up to the promise of "freshness and fruit" advertised on the label. Nevertheless, smooth texture and pleasingly tart aftertaste makes this inexpensive bottle more than worth the price.

Score 7/10

K8,000

WHITE WINE

Banrock Station Moscato 2011, Australia

A "fruit wine" that brings honour to the term. Melony tones, citrus aromas, and just the right amount of spritz make this a refreshing, even zesty bottle of white wine.

Score 9/10

K7,700

LG product seminar

U Wai Lwin and Min Park

Jonghan Park

New Burger restaurant launche

Ken, Yang, Lin and Andrew Lin

Ko Zeyar Lin, Htet Phone Naing, Nine Nine and wife, Ms Lin, Ko Naing Min Thu, Ko Kyi Zaw Htet, Khay Set Thwin, Ko Aung Lay, Ma Nanda Htun and Ma Kyi Thar Hnin Su

Jazz and Myanmar Orchestra event

Member of Jazz Bliss

Member

Member

FUJI detergent lucky draw

Daw Aye Aye Than and Ma May Hnin Soe

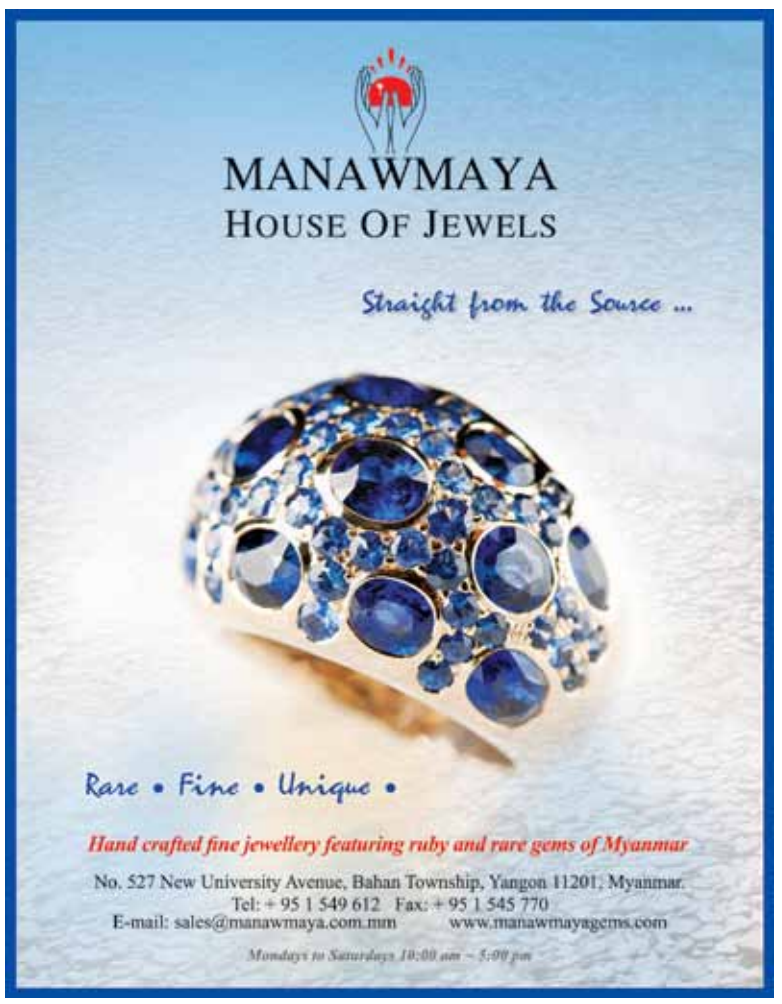
Kyaw Thu Lin, Phyu Phyu Win, Hnin Ei Khine, Zaw Moe Tun, Chaw Su Htwe, Khin Myo Thet and Ko Yin Kyi

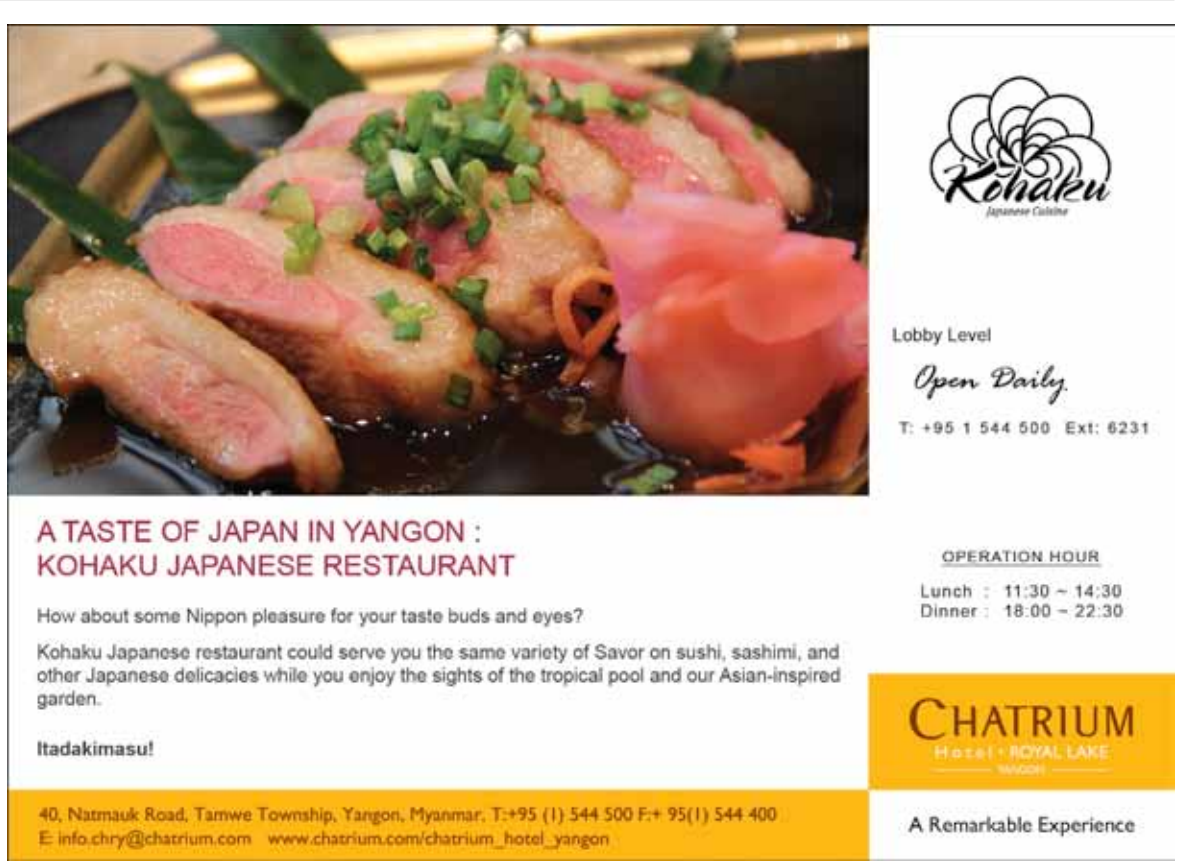
Royal Green River Cruise launch

Ma Thandar Kyaw and Ma Su Su Wai Hlaing

Michael and Ko Kyaw Zin Oo

U Khin Mg Aye and Daw Nu Nu Yi





NYEIN
EI EI HTWE

nyeineieihtwe23@gmail.com

A RELATIVELY quiet week for the socialite. On November 12, she attended the LG product seminar at Park Royal Hotel. On November 15, she was out again to attend the New Burger restaurant launch at Kyee Myint Dine Township. From there, socialite motored across town to the Fuji detergent lucky draw and YVES Rousher cosmetic launching at Junction Square. On the following day, socialite got some much needed rest and relaxation at Sedona hotel, which was hosting the Loretta soft drink launch.

Taung goo's 503th anniversary

Ye Aung, Moh Moh Myint Aung and authorities

Authorities

RV King Whale River Cruise launch

Attendees

Khin Lay and Khin Cherry Aye

U Aung Myo Min Din and U Thet Lwin Toe

Hnin Htut Swe

YVES Rocher cosmetics launch

Nyi Nyi Aung, Esther, Hieu, Brigitte and Peter

Ma Phyu Phyu Tin

May Thuzar and Thet Thet Tun

DOMESTIC FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO NAY PYI TAW

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
FMI A1	1,2,3,4,5	7:30	8:30
Y5 777	1,2,3,4,6	7:45	8:25
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
Y5 778	1,2,3,4,6	17:30	18:10
FMI C2	1,2,3,4,5	18:00	19:00

YANGON TO MANDALAY

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	2,5,7	6:00	7:40
YJ 901	2,4,5,6	6:00	7:25
YJ 901	1	6:00	8:05
YH 917	1,3,4,6	6:00	8:20
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	6:10	8:15
Y5 234	Daily	6:15	7:30
YH 909	1,3	6:15	7:55
6T 401	Daily	6:20	8:25
YH 909	4	6:30	8:10
K7 222	Daily	6:30	8:40
K7 626	1,5	6:45	8:10
K7 226	2,4	6:45	8:10
YJ 001	3	7:30	8:25
YJ 001	1,2,4,5	7:30	9:20
W9 201	Daily	7:30	8:55
8M 6603	2,4,7	9:00	10:10
K7 624	Daily	10:30	11:55
YJ 211	5	10:30	11:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	3	10:30	12:25
YJ 601	6	10:30	12:35
YH 729	6	11:00	12:40
YJ 761	1,2,4,6	11:00	12:55
YJ 201	1,2,3,4	11:00	12:25
YJ 751/W9 7751	5	11:00	12:55
YH 737	7	11:00	13:10
YH 729	4	11:00	14:00
YH 727	1	11:13	13:40
W9 251	2,5	11:15	12:40
6T 807	7	11:30	12:55
YH 729	2	11:30	14:30
YH 737	5	11:30	13:40
6T 807	1	12:00	13:25
YH 737	3	13:30	15:40
K7 224	Daily	14:30	16:35
W9 129	Daily	15:00	16:55
YH 731	1,3,4,7	15:00	17:10
6T 501	Daily	15:30	17:30
YH 731	2	15:30	17:40
W9 211	Daily	15:30	16:55

MANDALAY TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 910	1	6:15	7:55
YH 910	4	6:30	8:10
YJ 901	4,6	7:40	9:45
YJ 901	2	7:40	10:30
YH 910	3	7:55	10:00
Y5 233	Daily	8:10	9:25
YH 918	1,3,4,6	8:20	10:15
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	8:30	10:25
6T 402	Daily	8:45	10:45
YJ 902	1,2,3,4	8:20	10:25
K7 223	Daily	8:55	11:00
W9 201	Daily	9:10	11:05
YH 918	2,5,7	9:10	11:05
W9 144	Daily	9:20	10:45
YJ 002	3	9:25	10:20
YJ 001	1,2,4,5	9:50	10:45
Y5 132	3,5,6,7	9:30	10:30
K7 227	2,4	10:35	12:00
K7 627	1,5	10:55	12:20
K7 845	2,4,7	12:50	16:00
YJ 762	4,5	13:10	16:00
YH 728	1	13:10	16:55
6T 808	7	13:15	15:15
6T 808	1	13:45	15:45
YH 730	4	14:00	17:45
YH 730	2	14:30	19:15
YJ 202	3	15:30	16:55
YJ 202	4	15:30	17:25
YJ 202	1,2	15:30	17:35
YJ 212	5	15:30	17:35
YH 738	3	15:40	19:20
YJ 602	6	15:50	17:55
YH 738	5	16:55	19:00
YH 738	7	17:10	18:35
YH 730	6	17:45	19:10
YJ 762	1,2	16:35	18:00
W9 120	1,3,6	16:30	17:55
K7 225	Daily	16:50	19:00
W9 129	Daily	17:10	18:35
W9 211	Daily	17:10	19:15
YH 732	1,3,4,7	17:10	19:15
K7 625	Daily	17:10	18:35
8M 6604	2,4,7	17:20	18:30
YJ 752/W9 7752	3	17:00	18:25
YH 732	2	17:40	19:45
6T 502	Daily	17:50	19:55
YJ 752/W9 7752	5	17:50	19:15

YANGON TO NYAUNG U

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	1,3,4,6	6:00	7:35
YJ 901	1	6:00	7:20
YJ 901	2,4,5,6	6:00	8:10
YH 917	2,5,7	6:00	8:25
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	6:10	7:30
W9 141	Daily	6:15	7:35
YH 909	2,5,6,7	6:15	7:50
YH 909	1,3	6:15	8:40
6T 401	Daily	6:20	7:40
6T 351	1,2,3,4,6,7	6:30	7:50
K7 222	Daily	6:30	7:50
YJ 901	3	6:30	8:20
YH 909	4	6:30	8:55
YJ 601	6	10:30	11:50
W9 143	Daily	7:15	8:35
K7 224	Daily	14:30	17:25
YH 731	1	15:00	17:55
W9 211	Daily	15:30	17:40
YH 731	3,4,7	15:00	17:55
6T 501	Daily	15:30	18:20
YH 731	2	15:30	18:40

NYAUNG U TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	1,3,4,6	7:35	10:15
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	7:45	10:25
W9 141	Daily	7:50	10:40
YH 910	6,7	7:50	9:35
6T 401	Daily	7:55	10:45
K7 222	Daily	8:05	11:00
YJ 901	4,5,6	8:25	9:45
YH 917	2,5,7	8:25	11:05
YJ 901	2	8:25	10:30
YJ 901	3	8:35	9:55
YH 910	3	8:40	10:00
YH 910	1	8:40	10:45
W9 144	Daily	8:50	10:10
YH 910	4	8:55	10:15
YJ 902	1	9:05	10:25
YH 910	2,5,7	9:40	11:00
6T 351	5	10:50	13:55
YJ 202	1,2	16:15	17:35
YJ 212	5	16:15	17:35
YJ 602	6	16:35	17:55
YH 738	5	17:40	19:00
K7 225	Daily	17:45	19:00
W9 211	Daily	17:55	19:15
YH 732	1,3,4,6	17:55	19:15
6T 502	Daily	18:35	19:55
YH 732	2	18:40	19:45

YANGON TO MYITKYINA

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
K7 844	2,4,7	7:30	11:05
K7 624	Daily	10:30	13:25
YJ 211	5	10:30	13:20
YJ 201	1,2,3,4	11:00	13:50
W9 251	2,5	11:15	14:10

MYITKYINA TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YJ 212	5	13:35	17:35
YJ 202	2	14:05	16:55
YJ 202	4	14:05	17:25
YJ 202	1,2	14:05	17:35
K7 625	Daily	15:40	18:35
W9 252	2,5	16:05	19:00

YANGON TO HEHO

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
YH 917	1,3,4,6	6:00	9:05
YH 917	2,5,7	6:00	9:55
YJ 901	2	6:00	9:05
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	6:10	9:00
W9 141	Daily	6:15	8:20
YH 909	2,5,6,7	6:15	8:45
YH 909	1	6:15	9:35
6T 401	Daily	6:20	9:20
K7 222	Daily	6:30	9:30
6T 351	1,2,3,4,6,7	6:30	8:45
W9 201	Daily	7:30	9:40
K7 828	1,3,5	7:30	8:45
YH 513	3	10:30	11:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	3	10:30	11:40
YH 505	4,6,7	10:30	11:55
YJ 751/W9 7751	5,6	11:00	12:10
YJ 761	1,2,6	11:00	12:10
YH 737	7	11:00	12:25
6T 807	7	11:30	13:50
YH 737	5	11:30	12:55
W9 203	Daily	11:00	12:10
W9 119	1,3,6	11:15	12:25
W9 129	Daily	15:00	16:10
K7 826	2,6	11:45	13:00
6T 807	1	12:00	14:20
K7 224	Daily	14:30	15:45
YH 731	1,3,4,7	15:00	16:25
YH 921	6	15:00	16:25
6T 501	Daily	15:30	16:40
YH 731	2	15:30	16:55
YH 921	5	15:30	16:55

HEHO TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 141	Daily	8:35	10:40
YH 910	6	8:45	9:35
YH 910	2,5,7	8:45	11:00
6T 352	Daily	9:00	11:10
YH 918	1,3,4,6	9:05	10:15
YJ 891	1,2,3,4,5,6	9:15	10:25
6T 402	Daily	9:35	10:45
YH 910	1	9:35	10:45
K7 223	Daily	9:45	11:00
W9 201	Daily	9:55	11:05
YH 918	2	9:55	11:05
YH 514	3	11:55	13:05
YH 506	3,4,6,7	11:55	14:00
W9 204	Daily	12:25	13:35
YH 512	1	12:25	14:30
YH 506	2	12:55	15:00
YJ 761	4	12:25	16:00
K7 829	1,3,5	13:50	15:05
6T 808	7	14:05	15:15
6T 808	1	14:35	15:45
YH 728	1	15:45	16:55
YH 738	5	16:10	19:00
YH 738	7	16:25	18:35
YH 922	6	16:25	17:35
YH 922	5	16:55	18:05
W9 120	1,3,6	15:45	17:55
YJ 762	1,2,6	15:50	18:00
K7 224	Daily	16:00	19:00
YJ 752/W9 7752	5	16:15	18:25
W9 129	Daily	16:25	18:35
YH 731	1,3,4,7	16:25	19:15
YH 730	4	16:35	17:45
6T 501	Daily	16:55	19:55
YH 731	2	16:55	19:45
YH 730	2	17:05	19:15
K7 827	2,6	17:25	18:40
YH 738	3	18:10	19:20

YANGON TO SITTWE

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 605	Daily	11:15	13:15
6T 611	4,6	14:30	15:55
W9 309	1,3,5,6,7	11:30	12:55
K7 426	Daily	12:30	13:50

SITTWE TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
6T 606	Daily	13:35	15:00
K7 427	Daily	14:05	15:25
6T 612	4,6	16:15	17:40

YANGON TO MYEIK

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
K7 319	Daily	7:00	9:05

MYEIK TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
K7 320	Daily	11:30	13:35

YANGON TO THANDWE

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 141	Daily	6:15	9:35
6T 351	1,2,3,4,6,7	6:30	10:00
YH 505	3,4,6,7	10:30	13:10
6T 605	Daily	11:15	12:10
YH 511	1	11:00	13:40
W9307	2,4	11:30	13:50
W9 309	1,3,5,6,7	11:30	13:50
YH 511	5	11:30	14:05
YH 505	2	11:30	14:10

THANDWE TO YANGON

Flight	Days	Dep	Arr
W9 141	Daily	9:50	10:40
6T 632	1,2,3,4,6,7	10:15	11:10
6T 605	Dailys	12:25	15:00
6T 632	5	13:00	13:55
YH 506	3,4,6,7	13:10	14:00
YH 512	1	13:40	14:30
W9 307	2,4	14:05	14:55
W9 309	1,3,5,6,7	14:05	14:55
YH 512	5	14:05	14:55
YH 506	2	14:10	15:00

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: 01 860 4051

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
- FMI = FMI AIR Charter
- Y5 = Golden Myanmar Airlines

Subject to change without notice

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

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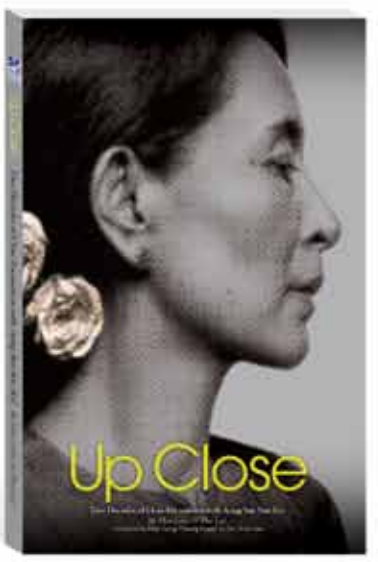


INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT SCHEDULES

YANGON TO BANGKOK

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
PG 706	Daily	7:15	9:30
8M 335	Daily	8:20	10:05
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	Daily	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
DD 4231	1,3,5,7	8:00	9:45
FD 2752	Daily	8:30	10:20
FD 2756	Daily	12:15	14:05
FD 2754	Daily	17:50	19:35

YANGON TO SINGAPORE

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
MI 509/SQ 5019	1,2,6,7	0:25	5:00
8M 231	Daily	8:00	12:25
Y5 233	Daily	10:10	14:40
SQ 997/MI 5871	Daily	10:25	14:45
8M 6232	Daily	11:30	16:05
3K 586	Daily	11:40	16:20
MI 517/SQ 5017	Daily	16:40	21:15
TR 2827	1,6,7	15:10	19:35
TR 2827	2,3,4,5	17:10	21:35

YANGON TO KUALA LUMPUR

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 501	1,2,3,5,6	7:50	11:50
AK 1427	Daily	8:30	12:50
MH 741	Daily	12:15	16:30
MH 743	Daily	16:00	20:15

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	2,4,7	8:40	13:15
CZ 3056	3,6	11:35	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	Daily	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	7:30	11:15

YANGON TO PHNOM PENH

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 403	1,3,6	8:35	12:30

YANGON TO SEOUL

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
OZ 770	4,7	0:50	8:50
KE 472	Daily	23:35	08:05+1

YANGON TO HONG KONG

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 251	1,2,4,6	01:10	05:35

YANGON TO TOKYO

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 914	Daily	21:45	06:45+1

YANGON TO KOLKATA

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
AI 228	1,5	14:05	15:05

MANDALAY TO BANGKOK

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
TG 2982	1,2,4,6	9:30	11:45
TG 2984	3,5,7	19:35	21:45
PG 710	Daily	14:15	16:40

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	11:30	0:15
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
DD 4230	1,3,5,7	6:30	7:15
FD 2751	Daily	7:15	8:00
FD 2755	Daily	11:10	11:45
FD 2753	Daily	16:35	17:20

SINGAPORE TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
SQ 998/MI 5872	Daily	7:55	9:20
3K 585	Daily	9:10	10:40
8M 6231	Daily	9:10	10:40
8M 232	Daily	13:25	14:50
TR 2826	1,6,7	13:10	14:30
MI 518/MI 5018	Daily	14:20	15:45
TR 2826	2,3,4,5	15:00	16:30
Y5 234	Daily	15:35	17:05
MI 520/SQ 5020	1,5,6,7	22:10	23:35

BEIJING TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
CA 905	2,3,4,6,7	8:05	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	1,2,3,5,6	14:00	15:00
MH742	Daily	13:50	15:00

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	2,4,7	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	13:00	13:15
MU 2031	Daily	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 2981	1,2,4,6	7:25	8:50
TG 2983	3,5,7	17:30	18:45
PG 709	Daily	12:05	13:25

DOHA TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
QR 618	Daily	21:15	06:00+1

PHNOM PENH TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
8M 404	1,3,6	13:30	14:55

SEOUL TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KE 471	Daily	18:40	22:30
OZ 769	3,6	19:30	23:40

TOKYO TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
NH 913	Daily	11:45	17:15

HONG KONG TO YANGON

Flights	Days	Dep	Arr
KA 250	1,3,5,7	21:50	23:45

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: 01 860 4051

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

Subject to change without notice

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

INDIA

Serenity and alt-rock found in Northern India

MICHAEL SNYDER

WHEN the music ended, the valley fell silent.

In the last weeks of September, the monsoon rains had largely receded, but elephantine clouds continued to pour over the hillsides, drifting close overhead and dropping dramatic shadows across the golden paddies carpeting the valley floor. Cupped like so much still water in the upraised hands of the Himalayas, the Ziro Valley had returned, once again, to its customary quiet.

'This is beyond what we thought we'd come to India for'

Lee Renaldo
Co-founder of Sonic Youth

Over the previous three days, the second Ziro Festival of Music — one of the newest additions to India's rapidly expanding festival circuit — had brought some 1,200 people to the valley. They'd traveled from across the neighboring Seven Sister states of the remote northeast, and from India's big cities, to Arunachal Pradesh, the sparsely populated hill state that bursts from the plains and tea plantations of Assam and rises toward the Tibetan plateau.

Like all the artists and journalists who attended the festival, I arrived by road from Guwahati, the nearest major city with an airport. The drive — I would describe it as harrowing, but that seems like an exaggeration, albeit a mild one — took 18 hours, beginning along the flat banks of the Brahmaputra River and continuing, in its final 60 miles, along pock-marked switchbacks that hugged the contours of the hillsides as they rose through subtropical jungle toward the gentle alpine hills that enclose Ziro.

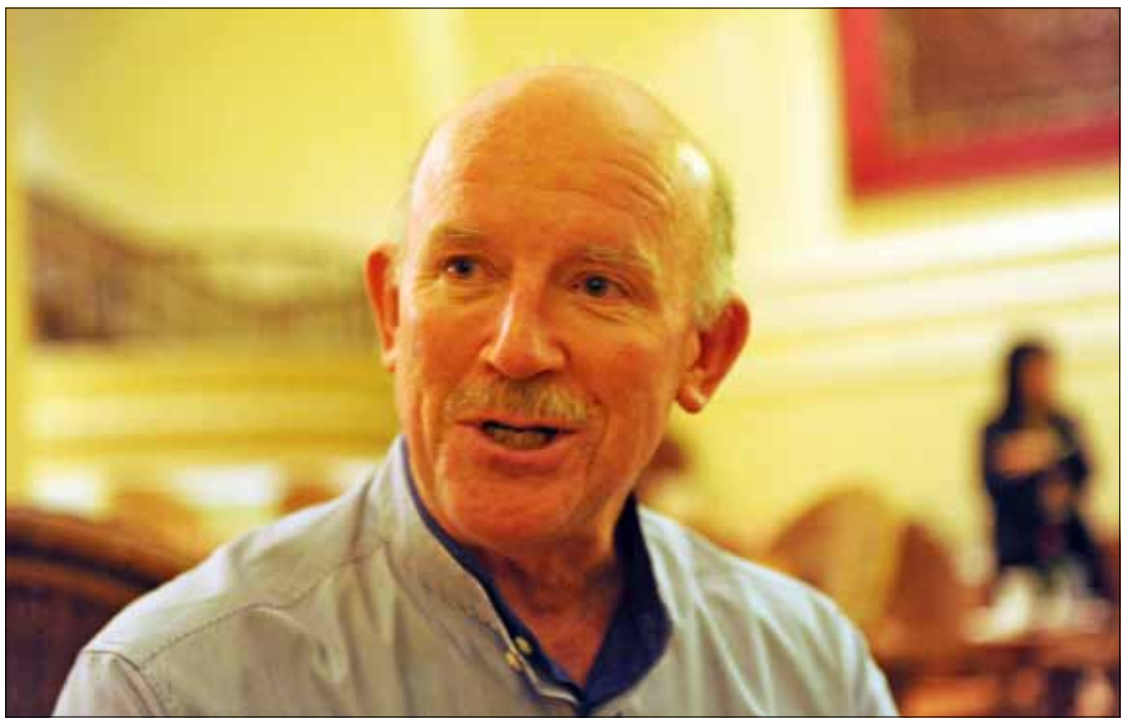
The lack of infrastructure, and the travel permits required to enter the state because of its disputed northern border with China, make getting to Arunachal complex, which has kept the state well off the grid. In its small way, the festival has begun to put Ziro on the map, but like most of Arunachal and the northeast, this remains tribal territory: amazingly diverse, virtually unexplored and beautiful beyond all reason.

Ziro, for instance, is home to the Apatani tribe, one of 26 major tribes (there are more than 100 sub-tribes) that make up Arunachal's minuscule population. With just 1.4 million people spread over 32,000 square miles of jungle-covered hills, alpine valleys and snow-capped mountains, Arunachal has the lowest population density of any state in India. Yet follow the single road that heads north out of Ziro, first climbing through pine forest before dropping suddenly into a deeper valley lush with bananas and primeval fern trees, and you enter an entirely different tribal zone, with different styles of housing, different festivals, a different language.

After the Ziro festival, Lee Ranaldo and Steve Shelley — two former members of Sonic Youth who played the last show — held a news conference. "This is beyond what we thought we'd come to India for," Ranaldo said of Ziro. And it's true: Most travelers associate India with drama — with chaos, riotous colors and the constant possibility of transcendence and disaster. Ziro bestows a calm that feels like absolution.

– The Washington Post

The Ziro Valley pre-festival. Photo: Washington Post



Bill Hardy talks wine in the lobby of Traders Hotel. Photo: Phil Heijmans

Breaking down barriers – a wine pioneer in Myanmar.

BRIDGET DI CERTO
bridget@myanmartimes.com.mm

BILL Hardy means business.

Big, boozy business.

But for the man from a tiny town called Tintara in the sunburnt outback of Australia, his savvy business eye and stellar vintner pedigree is veiled by his down-to-earth attitude and eagerness to communicate.

"He carries his own bags everywhere," one of the entourage for Mr Hardy's first visit to Myanmar whispers shortly before the man of the hour arrives for our interview.

The pétillant-eyed Mr Hardy is the fifth generation of Australia's famed Hardy's Wines, a global wine icon that was established with a few crops of grapes and a helluva a lot of hope by Thomas Hardy in 1853.

The "can-do" attitude is clearly an inherited phenomenon, for the 63-year-old Hardy's Wines brand ambassador bounds into the seemingly appropriately-named Peacock Lounge at Traders Hotel with a spritely step that belies his dizzying promotion trail itinerary for the last two months that has taken him everywhere from Russia to Malaysia.

"Everywhere I have been, everyone is talking about Myanmar, saying it's all happening in Myanmar," Mr Hardy says.

In the rapidly modernising Myanmar, Hardy's has been a climbing favourite since it began being imported about 10 years ago.

"Most people have only taken an interest here in the last couple of years," Mr Hardy says. "We have been in the market much, much longer than most people and this is a market we wanted to give some support to, accelerate the growth."

As far back as the 1930s, Hardy's has been exporting its barrelled treasure to Asia.

"In our history there is a lovely passage written about when the Second World War came along, the European markets closed down. It is recorded that the 'Malay and other Southeast Asian markets' kept us afloat for a couple of years until they too closed down because of the war," Mr Hardy says.

For this visit, the focus is education – improving wine literacy.

"I try to put wine in perspective as a beverage: what its role is in life and where it came from."

Australian wines have found a vigorous following in both maturing and entry-level Asian wine markets.

"I think it's more about style than [geographical] proximity or anything like that," Mr Hardy says reflectively. "It's the style and value you get with Australian wines.

"We have certainly found our style of wine being a little more fruitful than European wines, a little bit softer and rounder, more easily approachable."

To celebrate his first visit Myanmar Mr Hardy hosted a wine-pairing dinner, showcasing four wines, a Sparkling Brut and a Muscato.

"Wine is a beverage to be drunk with food. It's not a beverage to stand around with a few mates with nothing to eat," Mr Hardy stresses piquantly, no doubt startling many a wine-drinker (including the writer) around the table.

Speaking of the Myanmar cuisine he sampled during his brief sojourn in Yangon, the Aussie connoisseur noted the weightiness of the fare compared to the country's Southeast Asian neighbours.

"With Myanmar [string] bean dishes and the halloumi-like Myanmar cheese I would pair a Sauvignon Blanc or Riesling Gewurztraminer, which is aromatic, has a lightness of body, good acidity and a bit of sweetness to it," Mr Hardy said of his suggested pairing for some of Myanmar's more common dishes.

With butter fish curry, he suggested a stronger, aromatic oaked Chardonnay or a light red like a Rosé or Pinot Noir.

"With the beef or lamb curry, the Aussie Shiraz is one of the few red wines of the world that will cople with reasonably strong flavours, as it has richness and depth and a peppery spiciness. It doesn't have a sugar sweetness, but has fruit sweetness, rich fruit," he says with such finesse the wine can almost be tasted by his captive audience.

"One of the words I find myself using with wine is that it is an aspirational product, a product that, as people's living standards life and they gain a bit of wealth, becomes a sign of a slight more cultural lifestyle.

"Whether you start with the wine you buy at the supermarket or something higher up the scale, it's not really important. It's just about discovering the product."

Introducing Asian markets where sugary soft drinks or beer are the most commonly consumed beverages can be a delicate dance, Mr Hardy explains.

"You need a wine with lovely aromas that's soft, not too acid, that has a fullness and roundness about it and a little bit of sweetness because of the drinks they are coming from," he says.

For a white, the Riesling Gewurztraminer provides a pleasant gateway for the first-time wine-drinker, while a Merlot is a soft red with limited acid and tannin coupled with abundant fruit sweetness that would provide another entry-level option, Mr Hardy says.

The Riesling Gewurztraminer is Hardy's most successful wine product in Asian markets. The labels' brand ambassador attributes this to aromatic and sweet characteristics of the agreeable wine.

"The actual word 'gewurz' in German means spicy and when you mix it with Riesling ... it's better with light curries like coconut or Malaysian style curries. There is sweetness, softness, roundness and pretty intense flavours you need to cope with spicy foods," Mr Hardy says of the Rielsing Gewurztraminer breed.

After debunking the myth about drinking wine without eating, Mr Hardy took sides in the other Great Asian Wine Debate: Should red wine be chilled or served at Bikram Yoga-worthy "room" temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius or even higher?

"For wine of any colour to age correctly, it should be firstly kept at a stable temperature rather than a certain temperature. It is more important that the temperature is stable than necessarily really cold. If it is stable at 16 or 18 or 20 degrees Celsius, I would be happy with any of those.

"If temperature varies, that's not a good thing, because what ends up happening is the wine expanding and contracting ever so slightly with the change in temperature. It makes the cork move ever so slightly. You will get additional air entering the bottle because the cork is not absolutely fixed there," he says, adding this accelerates the chemical reactions for aging. "Once you start getting above 20 degrees Celsius wines will start ageing considerably faster."

At the conclusion of the whirlwind interview, marking one of the penultimate duties of his whirlwind visit to Myanmar, Bill Hardy was confident he would be back soon.

"In Myanmar a lot of people are still drinking house pours, the higher end is yet to take off, but with the influx of hotels and tourism this is bound to change," he says with a genuine thrill, before rushing to his next engagement.

WEEKLY PREDICTIONS

NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 1, 2013

AQUARIUS | Jan 20 - Feb 18

Focus on your heartfelt objectives to revive imaginative powers and never deplete your energy when you are worried or negatively engaged. Don't get seduced by possible developments. Determine your needs and values but do not make your decisions based on what you don't want or fear. Put as much distance as possible between yourself and disruptive conditions. Locate your love interest.

PISCES | Feb 19 - March 20

Your fortunate growth will reveal hidden problems and conditions to create a new role and high responsibility. Be grateful for a new word of ideas, ideals, challenges and possibilities moving in your direction. Also be thankful for new experiences, and your next steps will reveal themselves as a valuable cycle for growth to identify your genuine interests or current needs. Appraise your own level of development including your emotional focus.

ARIES | Mar 21 - Apr 19

Develop your assertiveness skill and be willing to talk about sensitive issues without being afraid. Live in the present. Avoid "fueling stress fires" by bemoaning the past or spinning your wheels about the future. Projecting an appropriate degree of self-confidence is needed to get positive social reactions or responds. Be more willing to take personal criticism without showing resentment or anger.

TAURUS | Apr 20 - May 20

Improve vitality can translate into widened opportunities. Whatever your occupation, you will capture other's appreciation when displaying your talents. Magic happens when you fully attend to your task or to your partner's needs, as selflessness can be one hallmark of professionalism. Consider not being self-conscious with effective presentation. Revive mental power with your authenticity.

GEMINI | May 21 - June 20

Millions feel unthreaded by lurking and dark unknowns because of false beliefs and discontent. Explore some conservative ground rules to make your spiritual resolutions. Look at your condition in life and boldly create something to be easily adaptable. The cosmos will back you up. Avoid conflicts and confrontations. There will be a very happy romantic meeting and online love also seems interesting.

CANCER | Jun 21 - Jul 22

To think clearly about something you have to distance yourself from it and to feel something you must get close to it. Always, try to maintain some kind of social connection and communication even in the most extreme circumstances. An important financial message is that you need to be less moody, more stable and fixed. You are sure to attain great wealth in a family-type of business.

LEO | Jul 23 - Aug 22

Rule and be aware of benevolent grace in the best interests of others to attract attention in any social gathering. Life without joy is no life at all. Without power, even good things cannot come to pass through different social interference. Never forget to add value to your mentors and close colleagues. Make sure to pay attention to communication and information which could prove disturbing to something in your life.

VIRGO | Aug 23 - Sep 22

Your symbol of purity and innocence is to maintain life according to your mental and analytical powers. Manage your inclination towards natural humility, which can become self-denial and self-abasement. When you turn negative, you are apt to turn your devastating criticism onto yourself, thereby sowing the seeds of self-destruction. You should find a broad-minded person with depth and vision to get along in a relationship.

LIBRA | Sep 23 - Oct 22

Without a fair and harmonious relationship there is no beauty, whether it be in love, art or social and political affairs. Perhaps, family responsibilities will take prominence with you and family expenses will be greater than you'd imagined. What a bittersweet experience it will be in love affairs. What you are about to do is great and should be considered carefully. Make yourself free of stress.

SCORPIO | Oct 23 - Nov 21

Perpetual transformation is not something to be feared. Understanding the true meaning of life is the golden key to knowing how to live up your present and future social positions and credits. Love is one of the Nature's most potent transformations. Believe in the value of love and its power which can change you and make you high in emotions. What your revenge needs is good mental balance.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your generosity and optimistic attitude should be maintained. Believe in yourself as having an inborn consciousness of wealth to reform social and mental standards. Never carry the burdens of want and limitation, but show your grace and humanity. Make your vision of paradise on Earth a reality in order to enhance your organizational power. Make yourself easy and free to enjoy life and love.

CAPRICORN | Dec 22 - Jan 19

Take into account the negative side of things and you may imagine the worst possible scenario in every undertaking. Your own greedy and egocentric sense could create a repulsive and troublesome life unless you become adaptable and compatible with others, especially family members. Escape from your own defilements.

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The Essentials

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Australia 88, Strand Road, Yangon. Tel : 251810, 251797, 251798.

Bangladesh 11-B, Than Lwin Road, Yangon. Tel: 515275, 526144, email: bdootygn@mptmail.net.mm

Brazil 56, Pyay Road, 6th mile, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 507225, 507251. email: Administ. yangon@itamaraty.gov.br.

Brunei 17, Kanbawza Avenue, Golden Velly (1), Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 566985, 503978. email: bruneiemb@bruneiemb.com.mm

Cambodia 25 (3B/4B), New University Avenue Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 549609, 540964. email: RECYANGON @mptmail.net.mm

China 1, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 221280, 221281.

Danmark, No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 01 – 9669520 - 17.

Egypt 81, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 222886, 222887, Egyptembassy86@gmail.com

France 102, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 212178, 212520, email: ambaf rance. rangoun@ diplomatie.fr

Germany 9, Bogyoke Aung San Museum Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 548951, 548952, email: info@rangun.diplo.de

India 545-547, Merchant St, Yangon. Tel: 391219, 388412, email: indiaembassy @mptmail.net.mm

Indonesia 100, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Rd, Yangon. Tel: 254465, 254469, 229750, fax: 254468, email: kukygn @indonesia.com.mm

Israel 15, Khabaung Street, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 515115, fax: 515116, email: info@yangon.mfa.gov.il

Italy 3, Inya Myaing Road, Golden Valley, Yangon. Tel: 527100, 527101, fax: 514565, email: ambyang.mail@ esteri.it

Japan 100, Natmauk Rd, Yangon. Tel: 549644-8, 540399, 540400, 540411, 545988, fax: 549643

Embassy of the **State of Kuwait** Chatrium Hotel, Rm: 416, 418, 420, 422, 40 Natmauk Rd, Tarmwe Tsp, Tel: 544500.

North Korea 77C, Shin Saw Pu Rd, Sanchaung Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 512642, 510205

South Korea 97 University Avenue, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 527142-4, 515190, fax: 513286, email: myanmar@mofat.go.kr

Lao A-1, Diplomatic Quarters, Tawwin Road, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 222482, fax: 227446, email: Laoembcab@mptmail. net.mm

Malaysia 82, Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road, Yangon. Tel: 220248, 220249, email: mwkyangon@mptmail.net.mm

Nepal 16, Natmauk Yeiktha, Yangon. Tel: 545880, 557168, fax: 549803, email: nepemb @mptmail.net.mm

Norway, No.7, Pyi Thu St, Pyay Rd, 7 Miles, Mayangone Tsp,Yangon. Tel: 01 – 9669520 - 17 Fax – 01- 9669516

New Zealand No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2305805

Netherlands Diplomatic Mission No. 43/C, Inya Myaing Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel : 01-2305805

Pakistan A-4, diplomatic Quarters, Pyay Rd, Yangon. Tel: 222881 (Chancery Exchange)

Philippines 50, Sayasan Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 558149-151,Email: p.e. yangon@gmail.com

Russian 38, Sagawa Rd, Yangon. Tel: 241955, 254161,

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia No.287/289, U Wisara Rd, Sanchaung. Tel : 01-536153, 516952.

Serbia No. 114-A, Inya Rd, P.O.Box No. 943, Yangon. Tel: 515282, 515283, email: serbemb @ yangon.net.mm

Singapore 238, Dhamazedi Road, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 559001, email: singemb_ ygn@_ sgmfa. gov.sg

Sri Lanka 34 Taw Win Road, Yangon. Tel: 222812,

The Embassy of Switzerland No 11, Kabaung Lane, 5 ½ mile, Pyay Rd, Hlaing Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 534754, 512873, 507089. Fax: 534754, Ext: 110

Thailand 94 Pyay Rd, Dagon Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 226721, 226728, 226824

Turkish Embassy 19AB, Kan Yeik Thar St, Mayangone Tsp,Yangon. Tel : 662992, Fax : 661365

United Kingdom 80 Strand Rd, Yangon. Tel: 370867, 380322, 371852, 371853, 256438,

United States of America 110, University Avenue, Kamayut Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 536509, 535756, Fax: 650306

Vietnam Bldg-72, Thanlwin Rd, Bahan Tsp, Yangon. Tel: 511305

UNITED NATIONS

ILO Liaison 1-A, Kanbae (Thitsar Rd), Yankin Tsp, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel : 01-566538, 566539

IOM 12th Flr, Traders Hotel, 223, Tel: 252560 ext. 5002

UNAIDS 137/1, Thaw Wun Rd, Kamayut Tsp. Tel : 534498, 504832

UNDCP 11-A, Malikha St, Mayangone tsp. Tel: 666903, 664539.

UNDP 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tel: 542910-19. fax: 292739.

UNFPA 6, Natmauk Rd, Bahan tsp. tel: 546029.

UNHCR 287, Pyay Rd, Sanchaung tsp. Tel: 524022, 524024.

UNIAP Rm: 1202, 12 Fl, Traders Hotel. Tel: 254852, 254853.

UNIC 6, Natmauk St., Bahan, tel: 52910~19

UNICEF 14~15 Flr, Traders Hotel. P.O. Box 1435, Kyauktada. Tel: 375527~32, Email: unicef.yangon@unicef.org, www.unicef.org/myanmar.

UNODC 11-A, Malikha Rd., Ward 7, Mayangone. tel: 01-9666903, 9660556, 9660538, 9660398. email: fo.myanmar@unodc.org

UNOPS Inya Lake Hotel, 3rd floor, 37, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd, Mayangone Tsp. Tel: 951-657281~7. Fax: 657279.

UNRC 6, Natmauk Rd, P.O. Box 650, TMWE Tel: 542911~19, 292637 (Resident Coordinator),

WFP 3rd-flr, Inya Lake Hotel, 37, Kabar Aye Pagoda Rd. Tel: 657011~6 (6-lines) Ext: 2000.

WHO No. 2, Pyay Rd, 7 Mile, Mayangone Tsp, Tel : 650405-6, 650416, 654386-90.

ASEAN Coordinating Of. for the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force, 79, Taw Win st, Dagon Tsp. Tel: 225258.

FAO Myanma Agriculture Service Insein Rd, Insein. tel: 641672, 641673. fax: 641561.

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Immigration ☎tel: 286434.
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs ☎tel: 067-412009, 067-412344.
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Naypyitaw Hospital (emergency) ☎tel: 420096.
Worker's Hospital ☎tel: 554444, 554455, 554811.
Yangon Children Hospital ☎tel: 222807, 222808, 222809.
Yangon General Hospital (East) ☎tel: 292835, 292836, 292837.
Yangon General Hospital (New) ☎tel: 384493, 384494, 384495, 379109.
Yangon General Hospital (West) ☎tel: 222860, 222861, 220416.
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Ingo Positions

NORWEGIAN Refugee Council is seeking(1) **Admin/ HR Assistant** in Yangon : Prioritizing & multi tasking skills. Knowledge of Microsoft Office's software package. University graduate, preferably business administration or HR management or other relevant educational background combined with relevant professional experience. Fluency in English. (2) **Logistics Officer** in Yangon: Solid experience of working with windows-based computer software, and modern control systems. Fluency in English. Pls submit CV, including application letter and contact detail of two referees (No other supporting documents are required for this stage), clearly indicating which position they are interested. Email : admin-hr@myanmar.nrc.no or mail to: HR Officer, NRC, 68, Than Lwin Rd (Corner with Aung Daw Mu St), Bahan, Yangon. Closing date for (1) 1st December, for (2) :30 November 2013.

WORLD VISION Int'l - Myanmar is seeking(1) **Zonal Agriculture Specialist** (Hilly Zone): Bachelor Degree in Agricultural Science is essential & Master Degree desirable. 3 years experience in the field of Agriculture. (2)**Livestock Specialist** (Economic & Agriculture Development Depart ment): Bachelor Degree in veterinary science is essential & Master Degree desirable. 3 years experience in the field of Livestock. For all posts : Good knowledge in Microsoft Office. Must provide a clean criminal background. Pls submit resume (clearly identify the post you apply) by post to HR Department, World Vision Int'l - 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 :December 6, 2013.

MEDECINS Sans Frontieres - Switzerland (MSF-CH) is seeking (1)**Human Resources & Administrative Assistant** in Yangon Office. Education: Certificate or diploma in business, hotel or HR Management or similar education. Experience in a similar position of at least 2 years in a private company or in NGO. Fluent in English & Myanmar. (2)**Medical Doctor** - 1 post in Sittwe, Myauk Oo, KyaukTaw - Rakhine State: Recognized medical doctor diploma/ degree with valid SAMA. Previous working experience with humanitarian organization & interested in public health in remote population are assest. 1 year clinical experience essential. Fluent in English & Myanmar. Pls submit your application (motivation letter, updated CV and copy of professional diplomas) to HR Manager, Medecins Sans Frontieres - Switzerland (MSF-CH) 101, Dhamazedi Rd, Kamaryut, Yangon, Email: msfch-rangoon-web@geneva.msf.org.

ACTION Aid is seeking **Program Officer** in Hpa-an, Kayin State: 2 to 3 years experience in community develop ment program, support ing partner/ fellows & volunteers. Excellent written & spoken Myanmar skills, plus ability to speak & understand Kayin Sagaw, Pwo and Ploan. Basic English is preferred, but not required. Basic computer skills - Word, Excel, Outlook. Pls send an application letter along with a current C.V, to #No(1), Win Ga Bar Avenue, Shwe Gone Daing, Bahan, Yangon or email Aamyanmar.job@actionaid.org or a copy to job.actionaid509@gmail.com No require ment of photo or copy of certificates. Closing date: 29th of November 2013.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking (1) **Field Coordinator** (CBHD focus on MNCH) 1 post in Mindat, Chin State: University graduate (in public health or management or related fields). 3 years experience in programme manage ment with experience in planning, monitoring & reporting & in budget control. 3 year's experience in supervision, manage ment of staff & volunteers within the NS or any other related NGO. (2) **Manager** 1 post in Hpa-An, Kayin State: Relevant university degree in related field. 5 years experience in senior management. For all posts : Effective computer knowledge. Red cross volunteers are preferable. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office, Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

WORLD VISION Int'l - Myanmar is seeking (1) **Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Facili tator** in Pyapon - Ayeyarwaddy Region: University degree. Competent in use of Microsoft Office. 2 years of progressive experience in project programming & monitoring. Good command of Myanmar & English & report writing skill is desirable. Must provide a clean criminal background. (2)**Zonal Child Protection Specialist** in Mawlamyine - Mon State: University degree with extensive experience in the field of Child Protection & Participation. 3 years experience in child protection. Good knowledge & understanding of Child Protection, Child Right, Child Convention & Child Law. Good knowledge in Microsoft Office. Good command in English & report writing. Must provide a clean criminal background. Pls submit resume (clearly identify the post you apply) by post to HR Department, World Vision Int'l - 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: November 28, 2013.

SOLIDARITES Int'l is seeking **Deputy Logistics Coordinator** 1 post in Yangon: 4 years of professional experience in Logistics field with INGO/ NGO. University degree or Diploma (preferably in Logistics Or related proven experience in similar area.). Knowledge of IT management & MS office. Demonstrated team management & planning abilities. Fluent in English & Myanmar. Pls submit application (CV, cover letter, references) to : Application for Deputy Logistics Coordinator/ Yangon, - Solidarites Int'l office : 44-A, Tharyarwaddy Lane, Bahan, Yangon or per email: recruitment@solidarites-myanmar.org, Closing date: 30 November, 2013.

MYANMAR Red Cross Society is seeking (1) **PMER Coordinator** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: Bachelor's degree. Effective English language skill & computer knowledge. (2) **SHG Development Officer** 1 post in Nay Pyi Taw: Any graduate. Effective computer knowledge. Knowledge of English in speaking and writing is an advantage. Red Cross Volunteers are preferable. Pls send application letter, CV & related documents to Myanmar Red Cross Society Head Office. Yazathingaha Rd, Dekkhinathiri, NayPyiTaw. Or mrcshrrecruitment@gmail.com

BUSINESS Develop ment Manager (Salary in USD) M/F 5 posts - Age 27 ~ 35. Graduate with MBA. 3 years experience in any related field Hotel & Restaurant (or) Trading (or) Construction (or) Fishery. Must have strategic thinking for future business development and strong organizational and planning skill. Must be an independent leader with minimal supervision and good in communication skill and negotiation skill. Good written and verbal communication skill in English. Contact: No.(004/A), Bldg (A), Yuzana St, Highway Complex, Kamaryut, Yangon. Ph: 505273.

HelpAge Myanmar is seeking **Finance Officer** -3 post in Yangon with frequent travel to project areas : CPA/ACCA, 5 years experience in similar position with international agencies/UN, Experience in producing budgets, financial monitoring and donor reports, Solid experience in developing internal finance control systems, Experience in building staff capacity in accounting, controls, budgeting and project finance management. Experience in working as part of multi-disciplinary teams, Advance computer skills particularly in Excel, Good command of English and Myanmar, Willingness to travel in the project areas. Pls send a Cover letter & CV to the HR Unit : 25,A/1 New University Avenue Rd, Kokine, Bahan, Yangon OR by email to hr.helpagemyanmar@gmail.com Closing date : 25 November 2013.

PEACE WINDS Japan (PWJ), a Japanese NGO, has an immediate opening for (1) **Finance/ Administrative Officer** post to assist our WASH project in Hpa-an, Kayin State. Ideal candidate will have University degree, must have at least 2 years of related experience in NGO, strong English speaking and writing skills, good computer skills, ability to multitask. Karen language skills advantage. Qualified & interested applicants pls send CV & a cover letter to recruit.pwj.myanmar@gmail.com Closing date: November 25.

Local Positions

HORIZON Int'l School is looking for (Shukhinnthar Campus) (1).**Office secretar**y - F 1 post : Age under 30, Bachelor's Degree in any field or Diploma in the relevant field, Sufficient work experience in the related field, Good command of English, Computer literate, Customer care skills, (2).**Assistant Teacher** - F 2 posts : Age 20 to 35, University graduate, Proficient in English, Comfortable working with young learners, Able to devote oneself to teaching, Friendly, enthusiastic & patient. (3).**Receptionist** - F 1 post : Age under 30, Bachelor's Degree in any field or Diploma in the relevant field, Sufficient work experience in the related field, Good command of English, Able to handle phone communication, BENEFITS: Attractive Salary, Lunch is also provided , An opportunity to work for an institution where students have lots of outstanding int'l achievements, Enhancement training. Pls bring CV along with a copy of your credentials to: 235, Shukintha rMyoPatt Rd, Taketa, Yangon.Ph: 450396, 450397, Closing date : December 15th, 2013.

RECEPTIONIST cum Administrative Assistant 1 Post : Yangon : Diploma / Degree holder, Prefer 1 ~ 2 years experience in Admin / Reception field, Good English communication skills with strong team spirit, Good computer knowledge. If you would like to refer any suitable person, kindly send the CV including contact telephone number, education qualifications to my email: Moethawdar@dfdl.com, Yamin.Khine@dfdl.com Closing date: 30 November 2013.

YANGON Oil and Gas Services Co., Ltd is seeking **Material Controller** - M 2 Post in Sagaing Division: Bachelor Degree with additional certificate course in logistics & warehouse management. 3 years relevant experience in stock controlling and inventory checking in oil and gas firms. Good skills in MS office suite and internet, email. Good in both oral and written in English. Pls send full CV, detailing skills, knowledge & experience with recent color passport photograph to yogsmyanmar@gmail.com by email or submit hard copy to room 1406, 14th Flr, Sakura Tower not later than 30th November 2013 (or) until suitable candidate is defined.

BAGAN CAPITAL, an investment and advisory firm, is seeking an **Office Manager** (Yangon head office). Duties: Supervise office staff, manage accounts, maintain office records and supplies, perform general clerical tasks, deal with inquiries, organize office operations, systems and procedures. MUST BE: Fluent in English and Myanmar (native), able to type in Myanmar, able to travel locally within Yangon state, have excellent interpersonal skills, be experienced with software such as Excel & Word, have basic accounting & math skills, able to multitask, be detail-oriented, have excellent time management skill. Must provide own accommodation. Must have no criminal record. Email CV to: recruitment@bcfmyanmar.com

ORION BUSINESS Group is seeking **Education Consultant** - 4 Posts : 1 to 2 years experience in educational consulting field, Welcome to apply fresh graduate MBA or DMA , Excellent in English, Support Marketing director to run effective marketing strategy for education service, Can consult & communicate well with any level of customers (2)**Marketing Executive** - 6 Posts : Diploma or certificate in marketing, Excellent in English, Experience in marketing field prefer, Fresh graduate who has a great enthusiasm in marketing can also welcome to apply, Good communication & negotiation skills, Flexible and can work as a team. Pls submit application with CV, recent passport photo & copy of all relevant documents to 512/B, Waizayantar Rd, 4 Ward, South Okkalapa. Ph:09- 731-13092, 09- 317-43835. hr1@orionbusinessgroup.com within two weeks. (1). **English - Japanese Translator** - (JLPT Level 1 and English language skill) Salary 10 Lakh and above http://goo.gl/JfkQxU (2). **Japanese - Burmese Translator** (JLPT Level 1), Salary 5.5 Lakh http://goo.gl/4YP3ar (3) **Company Introduction**. Consulting company. Off day is generally Sat, Sun and public holidays. Fill application form at, http://goo.gl/ZS2epe or Send Resume to DJ Myanmar Ltd : 4th flr, Left Room, Bldg 13/B, Shankone St, Myaynigone, Yangon, info@dreamjobmyanmar.com by post.

JETRO's "SECRETARY" lady "**Secretary**", a graduate at least, age 20~25 years., having the following qualities are welcome to apply: "Have good health", "Pleasant personality", "Fluent in English", "Computer skills", "Japanese language skill" (an advantage), Experience and interest in office logistical & secretarial works", "High spirit in teamwork to support the office", "Confidence & adaptability in challenging works", "Necessary overtime works". Pls submit CV, recommendations, copies of relevant certificates & N.R.C, & a recent photo to [Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO Ygn), Sedona Hotel Business Suites#04-02, No. 1, Kaba Aye Pagoda Rd., Yankin, Yangon, Tel: 544051~3] Closing date : December 2nd 2013,

URGENT NEED : Accountants, General Clerks, Marketing & Sales Persons - M/F- US$ 1,000 /Month, Free Accomodation, Food, Transport Yearly Bonus, Local Allowances, Festival Allowances. To work in Nigeria, Lagos. 25 Myanmar are working there No agent fees, Air Ticket Free, During Vacation with pay CPA or ACCA or M.Ba or B.Com or D.Ma or LCCI, Good for English speaking, Computer skill & MYOB Ph:01-573881, 09-5148138

KEEN KNOWLEDGE Co,ltd. is seeking (1) **Japanese Translator / Interpreter** - F 2 posts (2)**Japanese Language Instructor** - F 1 post : Must be BA (Japanese) or N1, N2 passed, 2 years experiences in related fields, Good interpersonal & negotiation skills, Willing to learn and self motivation. Pls summit updated CV including contact details not later than November 30,2013. (Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interview.) Kkservices2 @ gmail.com, kinkkoo@gmail.com, cathrinekyawwin@gmail.com 01-860-3235, 09-1564707,

"**AUDIER & PARTNERS**, a Vietnam-based international law firm with offices in Vietnam, Mongolia and Myanmar is looking to hire **business lawyers** for its Yangon Office. Profile: Myanmar nationals holding advanced law degrees, minimum 1-year work experience in law firms/government entities, full English proficiency (reading, writing, speaking), computer software proficiency. Pls submit CV to grangerat@audierpartners.com"

(1) **EXECUTIVE Secretary** - F 1 Post : Age above 25. Relevant training or qualification & degree holder. 3 years experience. Knowledge & experience of relevant software application. Proficiency in English. Willing to travel. Height is over 5'2". (2) **Executive Driver** - M 1 Post : Age above 28. Ten standard & above. 3 years experience & valid driving license. Can drive Hi-way. More convenience for the people who live in Bahan, Mayangone, Tarmwe, Myaenigone Tsp. Pls send application with 1 Photo, CV, Copy of certificates & all necessary documents to 60, Pyay Rd, 61/2 Miles, Hlaing, Yangon. Ph: 655750, 655751, Closing Date : 30.11.2013.

INTER GROUP of companies : an int'l management consulting company is looking for (1).**Junior Consultant** 1 Post : Diploma or Degree in Business Management and/ or Finance, Good communication, presentation & inter personal skills, Comfor table with engaging clients, Ability to work both independently and as part of a team, Prior knowledge on trade matters, logistics and shipping documents required. Pls submit detailed CV in person or by email, stating your current & expected salary, date of availability, reason for leaving and a recent passport photo to 7(D), 1st Flr, Pyay Rd, 6 miles, Hlaing, Yangon, Ph: 09-731-0 5353, 09-731-05340, Email: hr-ygn@icononline.net Pls state the Job Title that you are applied for in the subject of your email.

SAVOY HOTEL, Yangon is urgently looking for (1) **Sous Chef** - minimum 3 ~ 5 years experience in the same position (2) **Driver** - minimum 3 years experience (3) **Bell Man** - minimum 2 years experience and good English skill (4) **Storekeeper** - minimum 2-3 years experience (5) **Security** - minimum 2 years experience. Application letter by email to savoy.hra@gmail.com or 129, Dhammazedi Rd, Yangon. Tel: (95-1) 526298, 526289. Please mention the desire position on the application letter.

ARYU THUKHA Specialist Hospital, Lashio is seeking suitable person for the following positions. (1). **Nurses** 3 posts (2). **Laboratory technician** 2 posts (3). **Radiographer** 2 posts. Requirements :Dip. In Nursing, B.Med.Tech. (Lab technology), . B.Med.Tech. (Medical imaging). Interested candidates can enquire at 09-502-6602

MYANMAR Survey Research (MSR) is looking for (1) **International Consul tant** in Yangon: at least 3 year working in a research space - ideally social & public policy research; superb data analytical and report writing skills; excellent communication skills & ability to build rapport with people for a range of backgrounds. (2) **Chief Accountant** - M/F 1 post: CPA or ACCA or other relevant qualification, 5 years experience in accounting & auditing, good English communication skills, computer literate. (3) **Research Executive** - M/F 2 posts : design and manage a research project; analyse & interpret data. Have good English writing skills. Please submit CV with recent photo and relevant documents to #55, Maha Bandoola Garden St, Yangon. Email: msr@myanmar.com.mm within three weeks.

WORLD TRADE Associate Trading Company Ltd is seeking **Sales and Marketing** - M 4 Posts : Degree or Diploma holder in related field. Good personality, polite, neat and tidy. Pls contact : 40/42, 136 St, Tarmwe, Yangon. Ph: 01 200151 , 01 200288 , 09-510-9966

AYEYARWADDY Group Co., Ltd is seeking **Operator -** F 15 posts : Any graduated / any diploma/ Ten standard passed. Excellent in spoken & written English. Age 20 to 25. (2)**Chief Account & Finance Controller** - F 3 posts: B.Com or M.Com & CPA or ACCA Part II or III passed. 6 years & above experience. Good in English. Able to prepare the final account & able present management team requirements. Able to prepare budget forecast for future projects. Excellent in Microsoft office. Pls submit CV with recent photo, copies of relevant qualifications, labor registration, copy of NRC Closing date : 28-11-2013. winwin.ati@gmail.com

AF-MERCADOS EMI-Recruitment. AF-Mercados Energy Markets Int'l S.A., a premier energy sector consultancy firm based in Madrid, Spain is seeking qualified Myanmar-nationals in energy related engineering & economic fields for ongoing & future projects in Myanmar. Over 5 years relevant experience in at least one of these fields related to the energy sector (power, natural gas/oil, renewables/ efficiency): legal, regulatory & institutional study, planning, statistic and economic analysis, engineering (generation, transmission, distribut ion). Advanced degree in law, economics, public administration, financial and/or business management, engineering, or other related fields. Excellent proficiency in English Myanmar. Pls send CV & cover letter by email to CV@mercadosemi.es, by 30.11.2013, & include contact phone numbers. AF Mercados EMI is a dynamic, multinational organization. www.mercadosemi.com

Vacancy Annoucement

Maybank Yangon Representative Office is looking for a driver aged above 25 years old. Completed at least 10th Standard with minimum 3 years working experience as a driver and with valid driving licence. Good command in English is preferred. Willing to work on weekends. Please submit CV with latest color photo with relevant qualifications to Maybank 7th Floor, Centre Point Towers, No. 65, Corner of Sule Pagoda Rd & Merchant St, Yangon. **Closing Date : Dec 2, 2013.**

PARIS

France celebrates World Cup spot

French players celebrate at the end of the FIFA World Cup 2014 qualifying football match against Ukraine at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris, on November 19. Photo: AFP

FREE porn and a glamorous TV weather presenter stripping on air!

As one wag put it, how else would France celebrate reaching the World Cup?

Record unemployment, tax hikes and a stagnant economy – they were all forgotten briefly on Wednesday as the country united in celebration of its football team's gutsy comeback against Ukraine to clinch a place at next year's finals in Brazil.

Trailing 2-0 from the first leg, "Les Bleus" became the first side to overturn a two-goal deficit in a qualifying play-off.

It was a performance and a result that was celebrated as much in La Goutte d'Or – the Little Africa of Paris – that produced man-of-the-match Mamadou Sakho, as in the National Assembly, where a debate on pension reform was briefly suspended to allow deputies to release their inner footballer and punch the air in delight.

"*Impossible n'est pas Français*" (Impossible is not French) read a banner in the national stadium. That was to become one of the themes of the night as a wave of euphoria swept over social media and the nation buzzed from the badly needed shot to its collective self-esteem.

Jubilation was tinged with trepidation for Doria Tillier, who had rashly promised to present the November 20 forecast on Canal Plus in the nude if the side managed to pull off a turnaround few pundits believed possible.

When Karim Benzema, a son of La Banlieue (literally "the suburbs" but the sense is closer to "the ghetto" in English), knocked in France's second goal to level the tie on aggregate, Tillier tweeted, "Shit! 2-0 to France, I'm beginning to get stressed."

When the time came for the fateful broadcast, former model Tillier at first seemed to have found a way out – presenting the weather not "*a poil*" (nude in French), but in Poil, a small village in central France.

But she did in the end strip down, running naked across a local field with the camera shooting from a distance.

Free porn if France wins

It was an expensive night for Marc Dorcel, a hardcore France fan in more ways than one.

One of the world's biggest producers of pornographic films, Dorcel offered free access to his online videos in the event of a French triumph. Within a minute of the final whistle his server was overwhelmed by fans eager to take him up on the promise.

President François Hollande will be hoping for a similar boost to his ratings in the aftermath of a win he witnessed in person.

Currently the most unpopular French leader of modern times, Hollande said he hoped Les Bleus' success would deliver a boost to the nation's morale.

"There are times to be angry or worried but today we have won and we have to savour it," Hollande said.

"At times like these, victories are especially sweet. They said the team would never get there, that it couldn't get there. But it did and it is an example to all of us: You have to go for it. You have to believe."

France's media was united in concluding that Les Bleus had taken a huge step towards redeeming themselves in the eyes of a public which had turned against them in the aftermath of their disastrous appearance at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, where vicious in-fighting in the squad culminated in a player strike and a first round exit.

"Rio, Bravo," headlined *Liberation*, which reported that a solid Ukraine had been demolished by "an unleashed French side in a boiling Stade de France".

Broadsheet *Le Figaro* offered a slightly grudging verdict that: "This time [French coach Didier] Deschamps got everything right."

But *L'Equipe*, the sports daily which has regularly savaged the players in recent years, acknowledged that they had come up with the goods when it mattered most. "Respect", read its front-page headline.

France's biggest TV station, TF1, had particular reason to celebrate. A match audience of 13.5 million viewers was the biggest for a qualifier in 20 years and the company's shares surged 8 percent on November 20 as investors breathed a sigh of relief over its acquisition of broadcasting rights for the finals.

Not everyone celebrating

The far-right National Front, whose founder Jean-Marie Le Pen has repeatedly questioned the commitment of France's black or Arab players, put its own spin on the triumph for a squad which – like the 1998 World Cup winning team – reflects the multicultural nature of modern France.

"It is not the racialist concept of a black, white, Arab France that saved the team yesterday evening," the National Front said in a statement. "This victory ... is neither an exploit, nor an end it itself. It is only a start towards the team's redemption and no one has forgotten the South African fiasco."

– *AFP*

WWF

WWF isoffering the best and brightest future conservation leaders from Myanmar the opportunity to pursue graduate-level study (Master's and PhD's) and short-term training in conservation anywhere in the world.

Fellowships:
Priority will be given to candidates working on **integrated spatial planning and management; species such as Asian elephants and Irrawaddy dolphins; reducing wildlife crime; sustainable forestry; integrated river basin management; protected area management, and green economy principles.** EFN supports up to two years of studies for a maximum of $30,000 per year.

Eligibility Criteria

- You must be a citizen and legal permanent resident of Myanmar.
- You must have at least two years of work experience in conservation (paid or unpaid) and a demonstrated commitment to working in Myanmar.
- Your research should be focused on one of the topics listed above.
- You must be enrolled in, admitted to, or have applied to a master's or PhD program.
- You must plan to begin your studies no later than January 2015.
- You must commit to working for at least two years in your home country after the completion of your degree.

Applicants can access the online application at: www.worldwildlife.org/efn. And may email questions to efn@wwfus.org.

Application deadline for fellowships: **February 28, 2014.** Applications submitted after this date will not be considered. Professional development grants are open all year around.

SEOUL

'Toughest ever' doping tests planned for Sochi: IOC

THE upcoming Winter Games in the Russian city of Sochi will see the "toughest-ever" anti-doping tests, International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said on November 21, despite scepticism over the host country's testing capability.

Bach, elected head of the IOC in September, said the number of pre-competition tests at Sochi next year would increase 57 percent compared to the previous Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

"We can clearly say that both as regards to quantity as well as quality this will be the toughest anti-doping program we have ever had in the Olympic Games," Bach told journalists during a visit to South Korea.

"The tests will be even more target-oriented ... There will be more tests pre-competition ... where most of the anti-doping violations are happening," he said.

Bach arrived on November 20 to inspect preparations for the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

"So the anti-doping test program for Sochi will be the toughest ever applied in Olympic Winter Games," he said.

Bach told the World Conference on Doping in Sport in Johannesburg a fortnight ago that athletes would undergo 1269 pre-competition tests – more than 400 more than were done at the Vancouver games.

'The anti-doping test program for Sochi will be the toughest ever applied in Olympic Winter Games.'

Thomas Bach
International Olympic Committe president

However the global anti-doping agency this month provisionally suspended the accreditation of Moscow's sports drug-testing laboratory because of questions over the quality of its procedures.

Russia's sports minister on November 18 promised necessary measures would be taken at the lab, which has until December 1 to improve the reliability of its results.

Global leaders passed a new world anti-doping code at the conference in Johannesburg, under which offenders could face up to four-year bans from competitive sport.

The code governs competitive sports ranging from athletics to football to cycling, and has been backed by powerful sporting bodies like the International Olympic Committee, world football's governing body FIFA and governments.

The revised World Anti-Doping Code follows a two year-long re-evaluation, during which the discovery of extensive doping by champion cyclist Lance Armstrong highlighted the challenges of ensuring clean competition.

Bach hailed South Korea's preparations for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

"We're satisfied with progress made by the organising committee. This progress makes us very, very confident about the success of the Winter Games in 2018," he said.

The eastern resort town of Pyeongchang won its Olympics bid in 2011 after two failed attempts, and will become the first Asian country to host the Winter Olympics after Japan. – *AFP*

MADRID

Bale enjoying Madrid life after slow start

GARETH Bale has said he is relishing life at Real Madrid now that he is clear of the niggling injuries that blighted his start to life in the Spanish capital.

Bale, who cost Real a reported 91 million euros (US$123 million) back in September, spent nearly a month on the sidelines due to a thigh problem.

However, he has made a blistering return to form in the past month with three goals and five assists in his last four games.

"It has been great ever since I have been here. Everyone has made me feel very welcome," he said at a sponsor's event on November 21.

"I felt very comfortable straight away, but obviously after an injury and a bit of a slow start I am now enjoying everything on the pitch now and I am just looking forward to the rest of the season."

The triumvirate of Bale, Karim Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo have combined for 16 goals and 11 assists in Madrid's last four outings.

Whilst Carlo Ancelotti's men have been struck by a series of injuries to key players, including World Player of the Year Lionel Messi, who won't play again this year.

Gareth Bale (centre, in red) of Wales shoots on goal during the international friendly football match between Wales and Finland at Cardiff City Stadium in Cardiff on November 16. Photo: AFP

And with Real's place in the last 16 of the Champions League all but secured, Bale is hoping they can eat into Barca's six-point gap over their title rivals in the coming weeks.

"I think it is important first and foremost that we qualify mathematically [in the Champions League] and we make sure to get through that. But even with the Champions League, we're always 100 percent focused on the league as well. No matter what competition it is we'll be going out to win every single game."

Madrid suffered a serious injury of their own over the international break, however, with the news that Sami Khedira looks set to miss the rest of the season with a cruciate ligament injury.

Ancelotti has admitted that Khedira's absence could force him to switch from the 4-3-3 system he had struck upon since Bale's return.

And whilst he admitted the absence of his midfield partner is a big blow, Xabi Alonso is sure the German will bounce back.

"With the news about Khedira we were left in a state of shock," the Spanish international said.

"We were waiting for a few hours because we didn't know the exact extent of the injury that he had. Then the worst was confirmed, but he is very mentally strong. He is very German in that sense and I am sure he will be back quicker than they say.

"The 4-3-3 was a new idea which we had to adapt to, but it doesn't matter whether the system is a 4-2-3-1 or a 4-4-2. The important thing is that the players adapt to any system." – *AFP*

GENEVA

Blatter says Qatar workers' situation 'unacceptable'

A computer-generated image, released by the Organising Committee of Qatar 2022 shows the stadium to be built in Al-Wakrah for Qatar's 2022 World Cup. Photo: AFP

THE conditions of workers in 2022 World Cup host state Qatar is unacceptable, FIFA boss Sepp Blatter said on November 20, as football's governing body called for concrete steps by March to resolve the issue.

"Economic and political leaders must contribute to improving the unacceptable situation in Qatar," Blatter said after talks in Zurich with Michael Sommer, head of the International Trade Union Confederation.

Sommer, who also leads Germany's union confederation, has demanded that FIFA give Qatar an ultimatum to halt what critics say are forced-labour style conditions or be stripped of the World Cup.

Blatter's sit-down with Sommer at FIFA's headquarters in Switzerland was brokered by German Football Association chief Wolfgang Niersbach.

"The awarding of the World Cup and the considerable public exposure give us the opportunity to point out irregularities and to exact lasting change. If we succeed, then a lot will have been achieved," Niersbach said on November 20.

FIFA's decision to name Qatar the host of the 2022 edition of global football's top tournament has been dogged by controversy from the outset.

While debate rages in the sports world over whether to shift the tournament from its traditional June and July dates to escape the scorching Gulf heat, the focus of human rights and labour activists over recent months has been squarely on the treatment of workers.

On November 18, Amnesty International urged the energy-rich emirate to end abuse of migrant construction workers, largely from South Asia.

In response, the organising committee in Doha, which rejects claims of slavery-style conditions on construction sites in one of the world's wealthiest nations per capita, pledged to impose respect for workers' rights.

Blatter visited Qatar on November 9 and received what FIFA said was a "firm commitment" on the issue from its emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

"I am convinced that Qatar is taking the situation very seriously," Blatter said on November 20.

Qatar has said its labour laws are being amended, and that government inspectors are to receive more powers to enforce the legislation.

Sommer challenged Qatar to respect international labour standards, in order to "eliminate discrimination and forced labour as well as allow freedom of association for its 1.3 million migrant workers".

Theo Zwanziger, the former head of German football who is the FIFA executive committee member overseeing the labour rights issue, said clear steps were expected within months.

"The aim is to be in a position to report on concrete measures for Qatar at the executive committee meeting in March 2014," Zwangziger said.

It was also up to the business world to do its part, he stressed.

"Large companies must be reminded of their duties in this area. The international community must also accept its responsibility." – *AFP*

A 'bluffer's guide' to the 27th Southeast Asian Games

27TH SEA GAMES MYANMAR 2013

FUTSAL

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Our 'Bluffer's Guide' to the SEA Games focuses on sports that may never make it to the Olympics but whose elite will get their chance to compete for international gold in Myanmar this December.

This week we focus on a sport born from arguably the most popular game in the world. As the child of an instantly recognisable parent, many features may seem familiar but there are notable differences.

WHILE football has been played at the SEA Games since its inception, futsal only made its debut at the last SEA Games, in 2011.

Where does it originate?

Futsal derives its name from a portmanteau of the Portuguese *futebol de salão*, basically translated as "hall football". Originally devised by Juan Carlos Ceriani of the Montevideo YMCA, *futebol de salão* continued to develop during the 1930s and 1940s as a solution to the lack of available football fields in Brazil and Uruguay's cities.

What's it all about?

A futsal pitch is recognisable from other forms of indoor football firstly by its external boundary, just like a regular football match. If the ball passes outside the boundary it is handed to the opposition who take a free kick from the point of exit.

The futsal ball is also smaller than a traditional football and is designed to bounce 30 percent lower. It is possible for players to lift the ball in the air but this tactic is risky owing to the tight confines of the playing field.

Most games are played on a flat, smooth, wooden or artificial surface. The standard size for an international futsal pitch is 40 metres by 20m (131 feet by 66 feet), with a ceiling at least 4m high. The goal posts must be 3m wide and 2m high, making a squarer goal than the short, squat rectangular goals found in other types of short-format football.

How do you play?

The speed and fluidity of the game is encouraged by additional rules. For instance, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper touches or controls the ball with his hands or feet for more than four seconds within his own half.

Five players, including the goalkeeper, may take to the field at any time. This line-up is complimented by nine substitutes to the side of the pitch. These replacements may enter the pitch at any time during the game, including while the ball is in play; and there is no limit to the number of substitutions. This regular availability of substitutes ensures, that despite the game's frenetic pace, it's not hard to keep fresh players on the field.

Just like a traditional football pitch, there is a marked area in front of the goal where the keeper is allowed to handle the ball, but this does not inhibit the free movement of other players.

The pitch has two penalty spots – the first is 6 metres from the goal line and is used as it is in football for an occasion when a player commits a foul inside their penalty area.

The second mark is at 10 metres and is employed when a team has committed six fouls.

Just as in regular football, the match is supervised by a referee, with support from two assistants, while a timekeeper sits on the sidelines recording fouls and keeping account of time.

But a departure from traditional football comes after a player is shown a red card and removed from the pitch, which normally leaves that side a man down for the rest of the game. In futsal, a substitute can be put into play two minutes after the red card. However, if the opposing team scores within this two-minute "power play" a substitute can immediately be brought on.

How do you win?

As with the majority of invasion sports, the game is won by gaining more points than the opposition, in this case by scoring goals, which are recorded when the ball passes over the goal line into the goal. Should scores be tied after two periods of 20 minutes each, then in the knockout phases of a tournament extra time will be required. If the teams are still deadlocked at the end of extra time then the game will be decided by five penalty kicks.

Where is it played?

In Brazil, futsal is now played by more people than football, although the elite competitions of the sport do not attract as many spectators as its bigger brother. There are, however, a number of futsal players who have transferred their skills and abilities to the professional football circuit.

How many medals are available?

With team events for men and women, the futsal competition offers up two gold medals in the forthcoming games.

What's the betting?

In the men's competition, the smart money is on Thailand, which sits at 15th in the world rankings; its nearest competitor, Vietnam, is 48th. Nine of 10 ASEAN futsal tournaments have been won by Thailand, and the only time the nation has not won was in 2010, when Indonesia claimed the crown after Thailand chose not to compete.

The Myanmar team will set its sights on reaching the semi-finals at least. In this year's ASEAN tournament, Myanmar narrowly failed to reach the knockout stage. However, that competition placed Myanmar in a group with an Australian team that will not be at the SEA Games.

Apart from Thailand and Vietnam, to win a medal Myanmar will most likely have to overcome Indonesia or Malaysia, both of which are ranked at least 30 places higher.

Thailand enters the women's draw as defending champions but were upstaged at a pre-SEA Games tournament by Vietnam, instructed by a Thai coach, overturning a defeat earlier in the tournament.

Myanmar will also hope to medal, after securing the bronze back in 2011.

Where will it all happen?

The futsal events will be held at the Wunna Theikdi Sports Complex in Nay Pyi Taw, kicking off on December 9. The semis will be held on the December 18 and the tournaments will conclude on December 20.

Did you know?

Two international bodies govern futsal: FIFA, the international governing body of football; and the Asociación Mundial de Futsal (AMF), a successor to the original body that governed the sport as an entity independent from football. AMF is prepared to recognise teams from states not recognised by the United Nations, such as Abkhazia, Kosovo, South Ossetia and Catalonia. This means that several nations, including top-ranked Spain, boycott AMF competitions.

Matt Roebuck is a sports writer and sports development consultant based in Yangon. He is the author of the book The Other Olympics, *published in 2012.*

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Sport

France celebrates football World Cup entry in style

SPORT 60

GENEVA

FIFA approves vanishing spray at Club World Cup

FIFA last week said it planned to deploy so-called vanishing spray at the looming Club World Cup to make life easier for referees and cut down on yellow cards.

In a statement, world football's governing body said that the spray would be used at the December 11-21 tournament in Morocco after trials at this year's Under-20 and Under-17 World Cups.

Vanishing spray, which disappears within a minute, is a foam squirted onto the pitch to mark the line where the defending team set up their defensive wall before a free kick is taken.

Referees pace the regulatory 9.15 metres (30 feet) between the ball and the nearest defender and then spray a white line to mark the correct position of the wall.

Massimo Busacca, the Swiss former top-level referee who now heads FIFA's refereeing wing, said that vanishing spray was lauded by match officials who tested it.

"A large majority of the officials considered the spray as a useful and helpful tool," Busacca said.

"The spray has a clear preventive effect: The distance was always respected, so no yellow card for not respecting the distance had to be given throughout the two tournaments played so far," he added.

FIFA is to carry out further evaluations after the Club World Cup and decide whether the spray will be used in international tournaments in the future.

The Club World Cup pits the champions of football's six regional confederations, plus the league winner from the host country.

This year's edition involves Germany's Bayern Munich, Atletico Mineiro of Brazil, Chinese side Guangzhou Evergrande, Egypt's Al-Ahly, Mexican club Monterrey, New Zealanders Auckland City and Morocco's Raja Casablanca. – *AFP*

LONDON

Hodgson values England gains above losses

ENGLAND manager Roy Hodgson is adamant that England's achievements in 2013 should not be overshadowed by their back-to-back friendly defeats against Chile and Germany.

Hodgson's side secured a place at next year's World Cup with victories over Montenegro and Poland in October, but after losing 2-0 to Chile on November 15, they were beaten 1-0 by Germany at Wembley on November 19.

It was the first time since 1977 that England had lost consecutive games on home turf, but Hodgson does not think the two results should tarnish memories of a year in which the Football Association celebrated its 150th anniversary.

"It's been a great year for the FA. It's been a great year for me, because we've qualified for the World Cup," he said.

"We've used a lot of players ... [in] these two very tough friendly matches, but I'm not prepared to accept for one minute that that's going to take the shine off what's been a very good year, and a year in which we've achieved our goal.

"We've got an awful lot to look forward to in 2014. A lot of players are going to be fiercely trying to contest their place in the squad. I'm looking very much forward to 2014 and I thank 2013 for that."

Whereas the team that lost to Chile was experimental, Hodgson drafted several of his most high-profile players into the side to face Germany, only to see them undone by a 39th-minute Per Mertesacker header.

In contrast, Germany were accused of fielding a "B" team after making eight changes to the team held 1-1 by Italy on November 15, but Hodgson said it was inaccurate to say that the line-up he had picked was his strongest.

England goalkeeper Joe Hart (in yellow) is beaten by the ball from a header struck by German captain Per Mertesacker (not pictured) as Germany go 1-0 during an international friendly football match at Wembley Stadium in north London on November 19. Photo: AFP

"Seven players who could certainly feature in my first-choice line-up weren't even in the 26-man squad," he said.

"There's a lot of players to be assessed and discussed before we can start saying this was a first-class line-up."

While Hodgson admitted that Germany were "clearly better" in terms of passing and finishing, he said England had been hindered by the departures of Steven Gerrard and Ashley Cole early in the second half.

"Steven missed all of last week's training and was stiffening up a little bit, so we took him off to protect him," Hodgson said.

"Ashley Cole has a problem with his rib and felt it at half-time, and it was pretty obvious he couldn't continue."

Germany ended the year unbeaten in seven matches, having topped their World Cup qualifying group with a superb record of nine wins and one draw.

"We began the year very positively, on a high by winning against France on their home turf, and we finished the footballing year with two classics, against Italy, where we should have won, and against England, where we did win," said Germany coach Joachim Loew.

"I think I can approach 2014 with a sense of quiet confidence. Many of the players who I wanted to test today [November 19] can be proud of having withstood the pressure of playing to such a great crowd – 85,000, it was fantastic.

"There's only one international left for me to test things and see where we are, and that's the Chile game in March.

"It's a bit of a pity, but you can't change that, so our thoughts as we end this year are already directed towards what's going to happen next year and what we need to change."

Despite professing himself "very satisfied" with his team's progress, Loew warned that Germany will be weakened if they are unable to recover a number of important players from injury.

"There were some setbacks over the year with injuries affecting players who are normally firmly established – [Bastian] Schweinsteiger, [Ilkay] Gundogan, [Sami] Khedira, [Miroslav] Klose and [Mario] Gomez," he said.

"These are players that, for the time being, we managed to compensate for, but who we'll definitely need to be fit in 2014." – *AFP*